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# [***Nearly Everything in American Politics Is Topsy-Turvy; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMR-HWS1-JBG3-619C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1618 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:** The many ways 2024 is turning into honorable versus dishonorable.

**Body**

Bret Stephens: Hi, Gail. It goes without saying that we wish Catherine, Princess of Wales, health and strength in her battle with cancer. Other than that, I think the best we can do to respect her privacy is to say as little about it as possible.

Gail Collins: Absolutely no reason to torment public figures in such dire circumstances — unless, of course, they’re running a country. Princesses are obviously a different matter. But let’s move on: Who would you like to carp at first?

Bret: Thomas Edsall had [*a great essay in The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) last week noting that the Democratic Party is losing support among nonwhite voters. Although President Biden still leads Donald Trump by wide margins among Black and Hispanic Americans, the percentages seem to be shrinking. Biden’s lead among Hispanics has dropped from 24 points in 2020 to just six points now. What gives?

Gail: A great essay indeed. Bret, I do think you have to consider the exhaustion factor. Everybody’s looking at seven to eight more months of this campaign, and it’s not surprising that voters — especially younger voters — are looking for a little variety.

Bret: If Trump qualifies as “a little variety,” I wonder what counts as a lot.

Gail: Donald Trump is a terrible, terrible guy, but he’s a professional entertainer. It’s a lot easier to be bored by Biden. And in part because Biden has a good record and personal character, there’s not much to debate.

Listening to late-night comics, you realize that they’re constantly joking about Biden’s age — I think for lack of anything else to make fun of. I’m betting that when we approach the fall with official nominees and elections around the corner, the real issues are going to surface. TV ads will remind people every night that Trump is basically a septuagenarian juvenile delinquent.

Am I too optimistic?

Bret: To quote the [*immortal line from “Airplane II*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html)”: “Just a tad.”

To me, Edsall’s findings are further evidence that the deepest fault line in American society may be not about color but about class. Over the last few years, Democrats have become a party dominated by college-educated people, which is why you see Biden spending a lot of his political capital on issues like student-debt relief. In the meantime, Trump has successfully recast the G.O.P. as a ***working-class*** party, which helps account for his gains among Black and Hispanic voters, many of whom are on his side when it comes to issues like law and order and the rising cost of living.

Gail: Real-world-wise, the ***working-class*** party is the one that fights for a higher minimum wage, affordable child care for working mothers and protecting the right of unions to organize.

But go on.

Bret: Well, if that were so, then the real-world ***working class*** wouldn’t be tilting in Trump’s direction. But they also care a lot about safer streets, affordable groceries, lower financing costs and better educational options for their children than failing public schools — none of which feel like they have improved under Biden. Democrats should be reaching out to those voters, not treating them as moral reprobates.

Gail: I totally agree that Trump voters should be regarded as targets for conversion, not contempt. Obviously that doesn’t mean every person who supports him is a worthy candidate for rehabilitation. For example, when you’re talking about the folks who are prepared to invest several billion dollars in Trump’s disastrous Twitter alternative, I’m leaning toward the reprobate interpretation.

Bret: I take it you’re referring to Truth Social, which in an honest world would be renamed Lies Sociopathic.

Gail: Your name wins.

Bret: This is another example of how Trump’s enemies are always doing him unwitting favors. Here was a company that until a few weeks ago was basically worthless but may now reap the former president a $3 billion windfall — apparently, it seems, because his supporters bought up the stock in a frenzy to help him pay off the $454 million judgment against him in a New York civil-suit judgment. If the judgment against him had come down, say, to 200 hours of community service cleaning out garbage cans in Central Park, it would have done a lot more to humble and hinder him.

And speaking of self-defeating efforts, can we talk about Marjorie Taylor Greene’s threat to oust Mike Johnson as House speaker?

Gail: Wouldn’t have imagined working up much sympathy for Mike Johnson, but Greene’s attempt to punish him for getting a budget passed really does force you to … temporarily rethink. Johnson is facing the immediate prospect of seeing his majority drop down to one, including dozens of members who won’t vote for anything that would make the government work. So Democrats in the House have actually been talking about saving him if push comes to shove.

What do you think is going to happen?

Bret: There’s a theory in political science that parliamentary majorities become more cohesive as they get smaller, since nobody wants to be the traitor who brings the majority down. But Greene or some other member of the G.O.P.’s space laser caucus just might prove the theory wrong. For them, politics isn’t about governing. It’s about getting attention. At some psychological level, today’s Republican members probably want to be in a permanent minority, because that gives them a platform with maximum TV time and minimum political responsibility.

But hey, we’re agreeing too much. How do you feel about Texas managing its own border policy?

Gail: In the long list of bad ideas to emanate from Gov. Greg Abbott, this would be close to the top of the worst. Do we want North Dakota and Montana setting up their own immigration laws? Or New York or Michigan, for that matter?

And hey, didn’t we have a bipartisan plan to deal with the border and immigration issue? Which Trump demanded the Republicans kill so he could keep yammering about the “animals” trying to cross the border.

Do you agree with me about Texas? If so, if we want to fight, we’re gonna have to go back to early childhood education or Biden’s college loan forgiveness.

Bret: Well … sorta. On the constitutional question, there’s no doubt that this is a federal responsibility and Texas is traveling down a states’ rights road that can’t have a good outcome.

But the politics of this is a different story. Abbott’s hard-line policies [*are one of the reasons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) migrants have been deterred from coming through Texas over the past months. Democrats can blame Republicans all they want for not passing the bipartisan deal, and they have a point. But most Americans also understand that Biden and Kamala Harris pretty much ignored the crisis for years until Abbott and other southern governors started sending migrants to places like Chicago and New York and Democratic officials began to see the problem at their doorstep. If Biden loses in November, this will be a major reason.

Gail: The border states had to wrestle with the migrant issue for ages before the federal government did much to help them out. Terrible burden on some Texas cities but providing labor that was a great benefit to large chunks of the economy.

Bret: Then again, if Trump loses, it might be because he insists on calling the people who assaulted the Capitol on Jan. 6 “hostages” and [*“unbelievable patriots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html).” That strikes me as not just awful but also politically crazy. Is there any method to the madness?

Gail: As I’ve pointed out a time or two, he’s a professional reality show entertainer who instinctively says something he thinks will draw attention — whether it’s true or false, good for the country or terrible. The method is in his poll numbers, but I truly, truly believe that when the public has to go deep and focus this fall, they’ll reject him.

Bret: He definitely has a genius for baiting his critics. I also think he means it when it comes to Jan. 6, which is why it’s so important that he lose the election.

I just wish the Biden team hadn’t done so much to facilitate his comeback. When the history of this administration is written, I think it will note that Biden’s biggest mistake was to tack to the left instead of the center on immigration and the economy, to use the Justice Department to go after Trump and to denounce “[*MAGA Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html)” as if they were enemies of the state. Much better would have been to never even mention “the former guy” and to have nominated Kamala Harris to the Supreme Court after Stephen Breyer announced his retirement.

But, hey, we can always pray Americans will come to their senses.

Gail: Well, pleased to say I currently have more faith in our fellow Americans than you do. But let’s talk about elections: People are starting to focus on Congress. Both of us are rooting for a Democrat, Sherrod Brown, to keep his Senate seat in Ohio, right?

Still, I wasn’t too crazy about the fact that some Brown backers were rooting for — and even financially supporting — the current Republican nominee because he seems too far to the right, even for Ohio. Never did like the idea of pursuing political goals by helping make the other side worse.

Bret: Exactly. And Brown — who is decent, smart, honest and funny, even if his politics are well to my left — is the kind of Democrat I want in the Senate; his opponent, Bernie Moreno, is the kind of Republican I don’t. I’d rather disagree with an honorable opponent than agree with a dishonorable one.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.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/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/opinion/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL MCELROY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Who the Swing Voters Are***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CWH-0XB1-DXY4-X42J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1838 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. He is the author of &amp;#8220;Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream."

**Highlight:** We analyze the voters who could decide the election.

**Body**

We analyze the voters who could decide the election.

About 18 percent of American voters have not made up their minds between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, recent polls suggest.

Some members of this 18 percent say they lean toward one of the two candidates without having a firm preference. Others say they don’t lean toward either. Yet history suggests that many of these Americans will vote — and will ultimately support the Democratic or Republican nominee. Once they do, they will probably decide the presidential election.

In today’s newsletter, I’ll offer a portrait of the country’s uncommitted voters.

Young moderates of color

A major problem for President Biden’s re-election campaign was his weakness among young voters and voters of colors. A Democratic candidate typically needs to win these groups in a landslide, and Biden wasn’t on pace to do so. Harris is faring much better, which is why the race seems virtually tied. (Nate Silver’s forecast model calls [*Trump a slight favorite*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) because Trump is stronger in swing states than he is nationwide, while The Economist’s model considers Harris’s national lead large enough to make [*her a slight favorite*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).)

Still, even with Harris’s progress among younger voters and those who are Asian, Black, Hispanic or Native American, many remain undecided. As a group, the uncommitted 18 percent of the electorate is less white and younger than decided voters, New York Times/Siena College polling shows:

If you assume that most swing voters are disaffected liberals because of their youth and diversity, however, you will be wrong. For one thing, uncommitted voters are slightly more likely to be male than decided voters are. Most also do not have a four-year college degree, and ***working-class*** voters tend to be more socially conservative.

Overall, swing voters are more likely to identify as conservative than liberal, a potential advantage for Trump. Most swing voters, not surprisingly, consider themselves moderates, separate polling by YouGov has found.

The top issues

As for the issues that matter most to swing voters, pocketbook economics is No. 1 by far. Loyal supporters of Harris or Trump, by comparison, name issues like abortion, climate change, civil rights or immigration more often than undecided voters do:

This year’s election is so close that those other issues might still sway enough voters to matter. That’s why the Harris campaign emphasizes both the Republican Party’s unpopular abortion position and the continued flip-flopping from Trump about his own views. It’s also why the Trump campaign blames Harris for the surge in illegal immigration during the Biden administration. But neither abortion nor immigration matters to as many swing voters as economic issues do.

The knowledge gap

Poll results point to another key point about uncommitted voters: They are more eager to hear about Harris and her plans than about Trump and his.

Trump has spent nearly a decade as the Republican Party’s leader, and even longer as a celebrity. Most Americans feel they know who he is. Many adore him. Many others despise him. Those in the middle generally don’t like Trump but are open to voting for him.

Harris is not as well known. As a result, much of the campaign’s final two months will revolve around trying to define her, positively or negatively.

Two recent experiments by Democratic-leaning researchers, for example, found that Harris’s ads were better at swaying voters when they focused on her rather than Trump. “Voters still have [*a lot to learn*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) about Vice President Harris and are looking for a hopeful vision of the future, not just more attacks on a well-known figure,” concluded Blueprint, a firm that surveyed thousands of voters’ views about six hypothetical ads for Harris. Likewise, two political scientists — David Broockman of the University of California, Berkeley, and Josh Kalla of Yale — [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that the most effective messages for Harris portrayed her as a typical Democrat who would protect Social Security and Medicare, expand abortion access, reduce the cost of living and so on. “Attacking Trump simply isn’t as effective for Democrats as praising Harris,” Broockman and Kalla wrote.

Trump’s campaign has come to a similar conclusion, albeit from the opposite perspective. “This is a moment in the message arc of us seeking to define her,” one Trump adviser [*told The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Trump is “a defined candidate,” the adviser said.

I know that some readers will be surprised to hear that 18 percent of voters still haven’t decided between Harris and Trump, given their stark differences. But remember that many Americans don’t follow politics as closely as you may. This year’s campaign has also been an unusual one, in which one party picked a nominee who didn’t spend many months running in primaries and talking with voters. Above all, swing voters seem to want to know more about that nominee.

Related: Times Opinion imagines that it’s Nov. 6, the morning after Election Day, and Ross Douthat explains [*how Harris won*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), while David Brooks explains [*how Trump won*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on the election

* Harris’s campaign, in a sign of financial strength, is giving around $25 million to help elect Democrats to [*Congress and other down-ballot offices*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Trump commuted a man’s life sentence in 2021. This past spring, [*the man was convicted of assaulting his wife*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), becoming the latest Trump clemency beneficiary to get in legal trouble again.
2. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s name [*will remain on the ballot in Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) even though Kennedy wants it removed, a judge ruled.
3. Trump campaign workers in Florida called the police last week, thinking their offices were bugged. The devices they found [*appear to have been part of a prank*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
4. Stephen Colbert analyzed (and joked about) [*Harris’s lead in the polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE LATEST NEWS

* Russia pounded Ukraine with a [*second day of deadly strikes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Yesterday, missiles [*struck a military academy and a hospital*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in eastern Ukraine. More than 50 people were killed.

1. Volodymyr Zelensky is [*planning a major cabinet shake-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Ukraine’s foreign minister and other senior officials have offered to resign.
2. Russia’s ballistic missiles, which can travel at supersonic speeds, give Ukrainians little time to find shelter. Zelensky asked Western allies to [*send stronger defense systems*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

* Federal prosecutors accused Linda Sun, a former aide to Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York, of [*acting illegally to help China’s government*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in exchange for payments and other benefits.

1. Tim Sheehy, the Republican Senate nominee in Montana, [*repeated racist stereotypes about Native Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), calling them “drunk at 8 a.m.” at a private fund-raiser last year.
2. In a memoir, Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson writes about her enslaved ancestors, her daughter’s autism and working at the Supreme Court. [*Read The Times’s review*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. In American elections, a [*candidate runs unopposed*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in half of all races for partisan offices, an analysis found. Republicans win most of those uncontested seats.

* U.S. prosecutors [*charged Yahya Sinwar*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), the leader of Hamas, and other senior Hamas officials with planning and carrying out years of terrorist attacks in Israel, including the Oct. 7 massacre.

1. The campaign to administer [*polio vaccines to children in Gaza*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) is going well, officials say. Israel and Hamas have adhered to a pause in fighting to allow the drive to succeed.

* U.S. and Iraqi commandos [*killed at least 14 Islamic State fighters*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Iraq last week, a sign of the terrorist group’s resurgence. Seven American troops were wounded.

1. At least 129 people died during an [*attempted jailbreak*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) at the largest prison in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. A boat carrying migrants capsized as it tried to [*cross the English Channel*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from France to Britain. At least 12 people died.
3. An Olympic runner from Uganda [*was set on fire*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) by her boyfriend, The Guardian reports.
4. Starlink, the satellite-internet service controlled by Elon Musk, reversed course and said it would comply with Brazilian government orders to [*block X*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the country.

* A [*stock market tumble*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that began in the U.S. continued across Asia and Europe. The sell-off predominantly affected technology and semiconductor stocks.

1. “This was a random act of violence”: A 30-year-old man in Chicago was charged with murder in the deaths of four passengers who were [*shot as they slept on a train*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. An 11-year-old is facing murder charges after he [*confessed to shooting*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) an 82-year-old relative, once a mayor of a small Louisiana city, and the man’s adult daughter.

How many women [*are in prison for killing their abusers*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)? Rachel Louise Snyder writes about an effort to find out.

Tech companies have long fought for our attention. They’re going further by [*building chatbots that can simulate relationships*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Yuval Noah Harari writes.

Here are columns by [*Thomas Friedman*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*Bret Stephens*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) on Benjamin Netanyahu.

MORNING READS

Floral glow-up: The chrysanthemum, a staple of grocery store bouquets, is [*back in high fashion*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Quiz: Do you have healthy brain habits? [*Answer these 12 questions*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Work Friend: “Help! [*I’m ‘older’ and on the job hunt*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).”

Health: Sitting all day can cause [*dead butt syndrome*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). The name might sound silly, but the condition can lead to chronic pain.

Sunken treasure: New photos from the Titanic wreck show a [*long-lost statue.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

Lives Lived: James Darren played Moondoggie, a California surfer, in the hit 1959 movie “Gidget.” He went on to reprise the role, appear in the 1961 World War II drama “The Guns of Navarone” and have a long career in both prime-time television and music. He [*died at 88*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

U.S. Open: The American players Frances Tiafoe and Taylor Fritz [*will face each other*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the men’s singles semifinals. No American man has won the tournament since Andy Roddick in 2003.

N.H.L.: The Edmonton Oilers [*signed superstar Leon Draisaitl*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to an eight-year contract extension worth $112 million, making the 28-year-old the highest-paid player in hockey.

W.N.B.A.: Caitlin Clark and the Indiana Fever [*clinched a playoff spot*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) last night, the franchise’s first postseason appearance in seven years.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Ayodele Casel, LaTasha Barnes and Camille Brown are at the cutting edge of contemporary dance. In motion, though, they evoke figures from the Harlem Renaissance a century ago. See videos of the three women who are [*celebrating — and remixing — Black dance*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on culture

* Meet [*the songwriter behind Sabrina Carpenter’s hits*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) (and more songs from pop’s next generation).

1. Jack Robbins — son of Tim Robbins and Susan Sarandon — pokes fun at himself, and his fellow nepo babies, in a [*series of comedy videos*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Grill [*eggplant with lentils and tahini*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Pack away [*your summer clothes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Commute safely [*with a bike light*](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 vibrant.

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 New Hampshire. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Sophie Park for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Cosmic Horror Awaits Aboard a Perilous Oil Rig***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9P-GHV1-DXY4-X0RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Lewis Gordon

**Body**

The Chinese Room has long delivered unconventional game worlds. The metal offshore structure in Still Wakes the Deep might be its most evocatively realized yet.

Christmas, 1975: an oil rig off the east coast of Scotland. Inside over breakfast, the chatter of possible strikes and crew members wolfing down baked beans, fried eggs and mugs of tea. Outside, the briny tang of windswept sea air, the North Sea swirling tempestuously below.

The teetering rig of the first-person horror game Still Wakes the Deep, which releases on Tuesday for the PC, PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X|S, is another delightfully offbeat and beautifully realized locale from The Chinese Room, a British studio.

Dear Esther, released in 2012, saw players exploring a moonlit Hebridean island, tromping through purple heather. Three years later, Everybody's Gone to the Rapture whisked them off to a quaint fictional village in the west of England, zigzagging through arable fields and well-ordered front gardens.

''It's rare, still, for video games to venture away from generic-looking alien planets, abandoned spaceships or the trenches of past wars as settings for their stories,'' said Simon Parkin, author of ''Death by Video Game: Tales of Obsession From the Virtual Frontline.''

The towering metal architecture and claustrophobic halls of Still Wakes the Deep are less naturalistic than the studio's previous game worlds, but certainly no less evocative. John McCormack, the game's creative director, possesses an instinctual familiarity with the era.

''I can remember the texture of the carpets and the thin line of cigarette smoke that hovers halfway up a room, my granny's slippers, what the ashtrays look like, how people talk -- the slang of the time,'' said McCormack, a Scot and a child of the 1970s.

At the game's outset, the calm before the unleashing of a cosmic horror storm, the player explores homely cabins littered with the paraphernalia of private lives: comforting trinkets, family photos. Your colleagues have nuanced back stories and speak with the lilt and twang of the regions they grew up in (Barnsley, Belfast, Edinburgh).

McCormack sees a direct relationship between creating a believable game space, one rich in personal and period details, and delivering a compelling drama whose characters feel truly three-dimensional.

That philosophy extends to the body of the protagonist, an electrician (or ''leccy'') known as Caz. Unusually for a first-person game, you are able to see all of his limbs; first-person shooters tend to show only hands clutching a gun. For McCormack, it was vital that the rig feel ''tactile'' and that you, as Caz, experience something of a physical connection with it. ''To have a floating view with no bodily presence just felt wrong,'' he said.

At thrillingly precarious moments -- in one, the electrician's legs dangle above a vertigo-inducing drop -- the player must squeeze both controller triggers as if Caz's hands are clasping onto the splintering rig. Letting go spells immediate death; his knuckles turn white.

''He's not an action hero,'' said Rob McLachlan, a lead designer at the studio. ''He's a middle-aged, slightly-out-of-shape boxer. Although he's physically strong, this isn't what he woke up preparing to do.''

Nor was Caz prepared to encounter a cosmic horror that is inevitably unearthed from the bedrock. Tentacular growths begin to invade the offshore structure, shimmering with oily iridescence against the rig's dull, cold steel. Laura Dodds, an associate art director, described the entity as embodying a ''terrible beauty,'' something ''unknowable, strange, beautiful, but not necessarily malevolent.''

The challenge was not in imagining such horror but rendering it, bending the underlying software of Unreal Engine to the studio's will so the supernatural phenomena looked as realistic as the rig itself.

Elsewhere, Still Wakes the Deep veers sharply toward gruesome body horror. Enemies, which the team refers to as ''puppets,'' are writhing, globular beings with more than a flicker of human presence, partly inspired by live footage of medical surgeries and various works involving Hannibal Lecter. Caz can run and hide from these foes but, crucially, does not possess the means to fight them head-on.

Still Wakes the Deep was referred to internally as ''Habitat.'' While ducking, diving, crawling and leaping amid the rig, it quickly comes to feel like a labyrinthine warren of halls and larger spaces, exposed electrical cables resembling an intricate root system. From a distance, the rig appears to loom out of the ocean like a vast metal forest.

A variety of beings come to call this tangled ecosystem home: gulls, rodents, the blighted antagonists and, of course, the crew members. In its affection for the rig's ***working-class*** human inhabitants -- pointedly not its bootlicking middle managers -- Still Wakes the Deep lays out a politics inseparable from place. By doing so, it echoes the filmmaker Ken Loach, an influence on the game.

Even just the selection of an unconventional setting is political, Parkin said: ''In an industry that is ruinously preoccupied with making money, we should celebrate any studio that appears to prioritize other, predominantly creative concerns.''

Alongside the hope that players feel ''as if they've really been somewhere,'' McCormack wants them to step away from Still Wakes the Deep with a greater appreciation for weather-beaten laborers everywhere, the ''people that allow them to drive their car, the people doing the hard jobs in the world.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/17/arts/still-wakes-the-deep-scotland.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/17/arts/still-wakes-the-deep-scotland.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The towering metal architecture and claustrophobic halls of the video game make players feel they're on the North Sea. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THE CHINESE ROOM) This article appeared in print on page C5.

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[***Democrats Set Sights On the 'Tax Doom Loop'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CWG-DDY1-JBG3-60TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Andrew Duehren

**Body**

Democrats are tired of losing to Republicans on tax policy. They're hoping to mount a comeback next year.

For more than two decades, Democrats have watched with frustration as tax policy in the United States has settled into a pattern, one that Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, calls the ''tax doom loop.''

It goes like this: Republicans pass huge tax cuts that are, at first, only temporary. By the time the tax cuts are set to end, Americans have become used to owing less to the government. Hesitant to raise taxes, Democrats join with Republicans to continue many of the cuts indefinitely.

To liberals, this cycle is to blame for a range of social and economic ills. Widening inequality. Ballooning deficits. A federal government without the resources to pay for a progressive agenda.

And next year, they hope, is their chance to finally stop it.

That's because much of the last large Republican tax cut, a 2017 law signed by President Donald J. Trump, will expire after 2025. Progressive tax experts and activists have spent years organizing to convince the Democratic Party that rather than simply extending the cuts, it needs to ensure the United States brings in more tax revenue so it can finance more generous social programs.

''People want to avenge it,'' said Lindsay Owens, the executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive advocacy group that is meeting with congressional staff and preparing advertising campaigns on the tax debate.

It's an uphill fight. Cutting taxes remains a popular political promise. Mr. Trump and Republicans are pushing to extend the law and further reduce taxes if they come into power. While Vice President Kamala Harris has pledged to raise taxes on high-income Americans and corporations, her presidential campaign has also said she would not raise taxes on any household making less than $400,000. That means she, too, wants to continue much of Mr. Trump's tax cut.

So in many ways the ''tax doom loop'' should roll on next year, with roughly 98 percent of the population politically off limits for a tax increase.

''They've already lost that battle,'' said Rohit Kumar, a former aide to Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, and co-leader of PwC's national tax office. ''For progressives to win the battle that they think they've been losing, they would have to convince the president and the Congress to contemplate a fairly significant middle-class tax hike. And that's partly why they haven't been successful.''

But Democratic tax experts still see a narrow path to redemption. They have put together what they believe are politically palatable plans for increasing taxes on very high earners and large corporations. The goal is to raise more than enough revenue to cover the costs of extending other tax cuts.

''It's now the case that billionaires can lead a lavish lifestyle and pay little or nothing in federal income taxes,'' Ms. Warren said. ''That has to be fixed first.''

While some experts may question the policy wisdom of refusing to raise taxes on all households making less than $400,000, they accept the political imperative. Not only does taxing the rich poll well, but they hope it could also bring the United States closer to a more balanced time in tax policy: the very beginning of the 21st century.

''In terms of the history of the last two decades, if we're asking: Can we have a revenue system to support the government that we have? The answer is yes,'' David Kamin, a former top economic official in the Biden White House, said. ''We about had that, and we made an explicit set of choices in the 21st century to no longer have that.''

'Bad Habits'

When Glenn Hubbard came into the White House in 2001 to serve as President George W. Bush's chief economist, the fiscal outlook was rosy. The economy was strong, and tax revenue was plentiful -- too plentiful for many Republicans.

In 2000, the government collected tax revenue equivalent to 20 percent of American gross domestic product, the second-highest share of the economy since 1930, the earliest date for the statistic kept by the White House budget office. For a couple of years the government had even run a surplus, bringing in more money than it spent.

Mr. Bush had run his 2000 campaign on returning the surplus to the American people in the form of tax cuts. For Mr. Hubbard and other Republican economic advisers at the time, draining excess tax revenue would make it harder for Congress to expand government programs in the future.

''The thinking of the president's advisers was that Congress was unlikely to save that money,'' Mr. Hubbard said.

So in 2001, and again in 2003, the Bush administration and Republican majorities in Congress cut taxes. The two pieces of legislation, together called the ''Bush tax cuts,'' reduced marginal income rates across income levels, cut taxes on capital gains and phased out the estate tax, among other steps.

Many provisions in the Bush tax cuts were scheduled to expire in order to contain the cost of the legislation and comply with procedural rules in the Senate.

But for the most part, they did not expire. Congress and President Barack Obama temporarily extended them in 2010, in part because the economy was still struggling in the wake of the Great Recession. Two years later, Democrats -- fearing the economic and political consequences of letting the wide-ranging tax cuts expire -- joined with Republicans to extend much of them again.

In a 2012 deal negotiated by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Mr. McConnell, tax rates went up only for individuals making more than $400,000 and married couples making more than $450,000. Roughly 82 percent of the Bush tax cuts became permanent law, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank.

For Democrats who want to meaningfully increase the amount of tax the federal government collects, the deal has become the party's original sin on tax policy.

''That was a place where we started to form a set of bad habits that show up over and over again in these tax negotiations,'' Senator Michael Bennet, Democrat of Colorado, said. Mr. Bennet was one of just three Democrats to oppose the deal in the Senate at the time. ''There's been an asymmetry because Democrats have been willing to capitulate in ways that we shouldn't have.''

A Turning Tide?

In 2017, after Mr. Trump unexpectedly won the White House, Republicans moved quickly to cut taxes again. The corporate tax rate plummeted to 21 percent from 35 percent, marginal rates across nearly every income bracket fell, the standard deduction became larger and the child tax credit grew, among many other changes.

As with the Bush tax cuts, Republicans passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act through a congressional procedure called reconciliation. To comply with that process's rules -- and to avoid recording a huge increase in the deficit -- many of the law's provisions were again temporary.

While the outcome in 2017 was familiar, some Democrats started to sense a change. The Bush tax cuts had largely been popular, and conservatives saw huge political upside in cutting taxes.

But the Trump tax cut wasn't popular. Democrats unanimously opposed it, branding the law as a giveaway to the rich. That attack was bolstered by analyses showing that the biggest benefits of the law flowed to upper-income Americans, though it also helped many ***working-class*** Americans. In polls, many Americans said they didn't know how the tax law would affect them.

Progressives soon started to feel that they were gaining the upper hand on tax policy. Ideas about taxing the rich and corporations that had been relegated to the party's left wing began migrating toward its center. Rather than boasting about the tax cuts, Republicans avoided them during the 2018 midterms.

''That was a moment where we actually saw that the progressive messaging against the tax law actually was effective,'' said Bryan Bennett, the senior director for polling and analytics at the Hub Project, a progressive advocacy group.

The law did help jump-start some investment and economic growth. The fiscal costs are also considerable. Mr. Kamin and Brian Deese, another former top economic official in the Biden White House, estimated in an essay last year that the tax cuts passed under Mr. Trump and Mr. Bush had reduced tax revenue as a share of gross domestic product by three percentage points.

Some conservatives agree that tax revenue as a share of G.D.P. -- which stood at 16.5 percent last fiscal year after a spike in 2022 -- is surprisingly low given the economy's performance.

''We're within the range but at a disturbingly low part of the range given the booming economy we've had in recent years,'' said George Callas, the executive vice president of public finance at Arnold Ventures and a former Republican tax aide on Capitol Hill.

Playing Hardball

Under President Biden, some tax increases did pass, including one that requires large companies to pay at least 15 percent on the income they report to investors. An infusion of funding to the Internal Revenue Service is also supposed to help the agency crack down on tax evasion and collect money that is owed to the government.

But those steps still fell far short of addressing what progressives see as an underperforming tax system. They consider the coming showdown over the Trump tax cuts their best chance to stop the doom loop.

To try to harden Democrats' hearts ahead of the talks, the party's tax experts and academics have been pushing the idea that letting the 2017 tax cuts expire entirely would not be such a bad outcome. They have pointed to soaring deficits and argued that the economy could absorb higher taxes without slowing growth. The goal is to make the party comfortable with the possibility of walking away from talks with Republicans if Democrats don't score enough victories -- and avoid repeating the saga over the Bush tax cuts.

''You do have the card of letting it all expire because, frankly, it's not going to be that noticeable of a tax increase for middle America,'' Kimberly Clausing, a former Treasury official in the Biden administration, said.

But some elected Democrats may still not share the progressive tax world's enthusiasm for raising taxes. In 2021, a single senator, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, then a Democrat, ruled out many hoped-for tax increases like raising the corporate rate.

Democrats next year are likely to want to protect tax breaks for high-earning and corporate constituents. Donors are already leaning on Ms. Harris to pare back proposed tax increases on the ultrawealthy. Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, a Democrat and the majority leader, vowed recently that a $10,000 limit on deducting state and local taxes would end next year, a change that would benefit rich Americans and cost roughly $1 trillion in tax revenue.

In any case, progressives know that the 2025 tax debate will not be the end of their quest to fundamentally change the tax code.

''Practically speaking, it's going to take a long time to get back; we're not going to do it in one fell swoop,'' said Michael Linden, a former budget official in the Biden White House. ''The key is we have to stop going in the wrong direction.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/03/us/politics/democrats-tax-policy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/03/us/politics/democrats-tax-policy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: President Biden signing the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which compels large companies to pay at least 15 percent on income they report to investors. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

In 2001 and 2003, President George W. Bush cut taxes, reducing marginal income rates across income levels. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WIN MCNAMEE/REUTERS)

The last large Republican tax cut, a 2017 law signed by President Donald J. Trump, will expire after 2025. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

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[***Can Democrats Stop the ‘Tax Doom Loop’?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CW8-TT11-DXY4-X3PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Democrats are tired of losing to Republicans on tax policy. They’re hoping to mount a comeback next year.

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To liberals, this cycle is to blame for a range of social and economic ills. Widening inequality. Ballooning deficits. A federal government without the resources to pay for a progressive agenda.

And next year, they hope, is their chance to finally stop it.

That’s because much of the last large Republican tax cut, a 2017 law signed by President Donald J. Trump, will expire after 2025. Progressive tax experts and activists have spent years organizing to convince the Democratic Party that rather than simply extending the cuts, it needs to ensure the United States brings in more tax revenue so it can finance more generous social programs.

“People want to avenge it,” said Lindsay Owens, the executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, a progressive advocacy group that is meeting with congressional staff and preparing advertising campaigns on the tax debate.

It’s an uphill fight. Cutting taxes remains a popular political promise. Mr. Trump and Republicans are pushing to extend the law and further reduce taxes if they come into power. While Vice President Kamala Harris has pledged to raise taxes on high-income Americans and corporations, her presidential campaign has also said she would not raise taxes on any household making less than $400,000. That means she, too, wants to continue much of Mr. Trump’s tax cut.

So in many ways the “tax doom loop” should roll on next year, with roughly 98 percent of the population politically off limits for a tax increase.

“They’ve already lost that battle,” said Rohit Kumar, a former aide to Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, and co-leader of PwC’s national tax office. “For progressives to win the battle that they think they’ve been losing, they would have to convince the president and the Congress to contemplate a fairly significant middle-class tax hike. And that’s partly why they haven’t been successful.”

But Democratic tax experts still see a narrow path to redemption. They have put together what they believe are politically palatable plans for increasing taxes on very high earners and large corporations. The goal is to raise more than enough revenue to cover the costs of extending other tax cuts.

“It’s now the case that billionaires can lead a lavish lifestyle and pay little or nothing in federal income taxes,” Ms. Warren said. “That has to be fixed first.”

While some experts may question the policy wisdom of refusing to raise taxes on all households making less than $400,000, they accept the political imperative. Not only does taxing the rich poll well, but they hope it could also bring the United States closer to a more balanced time in tax policy: the very beginning of the 21st century.

“In terms of the history of the last two decades, if we’re asking: Can we have a revenue system to support the government that we have? The answer is yes,” David Kamin, a former top economic official in the Biden White House, said. “We about had that, and we made an explicit set of choices in the 21st century to no longer have that.”

‘Bad Habits’

When Glenn Hubbard came into the White House in 2001 to serve as President George W. Bush’s chief economist, the fiscal outlook was rosy. The economy was strong, and tax revenue was plentiful — too plentiful for many Republicans.

In 2000, the government collected tax revenue equivalent to 20 percent of American gross domestic product, the second-highest share of the economy since 1930, the earliest date for the statistic kept by the White House budget office. For a couple of years the government had even run a surplus, bringing in more money than it spent.

Mr. Bush had run his 2000 campaign on returning the surplus to the American people in the form of tax cuts. For Mr. Hubbard and other Republican economic advisers at the time, draining excess tax revenue would make it harder for Congress to expand government programs in the future.

“The thinking of the president’s advisers was that Congress was unlikely to save that money,” Mr. Hubbard said.

So in 2001, and again in 2003, the Bush administration and Republican majorities in Congress cut taxes. The two pieces of legislation, together called the “Bush tax cuts,” reduced marginal income rates across income levels, cut taxes on capital gains and phased out the estate tax, among other steps.

Many provisions in the Bush tax cuts were scheduled to expire in order to contain the cost of the legislation and comply with procedural rules in the Senate.

But for the most part, they did not expire. Congress and President Barack Obama temporarily extended them in 2010, in part because the economy was still struggling in the wake of the Great Recession. Two years later, Democrats — fearing the economic and political consequences of letting the wide-ranging tax cuts expire — joined with Republicans to extend much of them again.

In a 2012 deal negotiated by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Mr. McConnell, tax rates went up only for individuals making more than $400,000 and married couples making more than $450,000. Roughly 82 percent of the Bush tax cuts became permanent law, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal think tank.

For Democrats who want to meaningfully increase the amount of tax the federal government collects, the deal has become the party’s original sin on tax policy.

“That was a place where we started to form a set of bad habits that show up over and over again in these tax negotiations,” Senator Michael Bennet, Democrat of Colorado, said. Mr. Bennet was one of just three Democrats to oppose the deal in the Senate at the time. “There’s been an asymmetry because Democrats have been willing to capitulate in ways that we shouldn’t have.”

A Turning Tide?

In 2017, after Mr. Trump unexpectedly won the White House, Republicans moved quickly to cut taxes again. The corporate tax rate plummeted to 21 percent from 35 percent, marginal rates across nearly every income bracket fell, the standard deduction became larger and the child tax credit grew, among many other changes.

As with the Bush tax cuts, Republicans passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act through a congressional procedure called reconciliation. To comply with that process’s rules — and to avoid recording a huge increase in the deficit — many of the law’s provisions were again temporary.

While the outcome in 2017 was familiar, some Democrats started to sense a change. The Bush tax cuts had largely been popular, and conservatives saw huge political upside in cutting taxes.

But the Trump tax cut wasn’t popular. Democrats unanimously opposed it, branding the law as a giveaway to the rich. That attack was bolstered by analyses showing that the biggest benefits of the law flowed to upper-income Americans, though it also helped many ***working-class*** Americans. In polls, many Americans said they didn’t know how the tax law would affect them.

Progressives soon started to feel that they were gaining the upper hand on tax policy. Ideas about taxing the rich and corporations that had been relegated to the party’s left wing began migrating toward its center. Rather than boasting about the tax cuts, Republicans [*avoided them*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/27/us/politics/economy-politics-midterms.html) during the 2018 midterms.

“That was a moment where we actually saw that the progressive messaging against the tax law actually was effective,” said Bryan Bennett, the senior director for polling and analytics at the Hub Project, a progressive advocacy group.

The law did help jump-start some investment and economic growth. The fiscal costs are also considerable. Mr. Kamin and Brian Deese, another former top economic official in the Biden White House, estimated in an essay last year that the tax cuts passed under Mr. Trump and Mr. Bush had reduced tax revenue as a share of gross domestic product by three percentage points.

Some conservatives agree that tax revenue as a share of G.D.P. — which stood at 16.5 percent last fiscal year after a spike in 2022 — is surprisingly low given the economy’s performance.

“We’re within the range but at a disturbingly low part of the range given the booming economy we’ve had in recent years,” said George Callas, the executive vice president of public finance at Arnold Ventures and a former Republican tax aide on Capitol Hill.

Playing Hardball

Under President Biden, some tax increases did pass, including one that requires large companies to pay at least 15 percent on the income they report to investors. An infusion of funding to the Internal Revenue Service is also supposed to help the agency crack down on tax evasion and collect money that is owed to the government.

But those steps still fell far short of addressing what progressives see as an underperforming tax system. They consider the coming showdown over the Trump tax cuts their best chance to stop the doom loop.

To try to harden Democrats’ hearts ahead of the talks, the party’s tax experts and academics have been pushing the idea that letting the 2017 tax cuts expire entirely would not be such a bad outcome. They have pointed to soaring deficits and argued that the economy could absorb higher taxes without slowing growth. The goal is to make the party comfortable with the possibility of walking away from talks with Republicans if Democrats don’t score enough victories — and avoid repeating the saga over the Bush tax cuts.

“You do have the card of letting it all expire because, frankly, it’s not going to be that noticeable of a tax increase for middle America,” Kimberly Clausing, a former Treasury official in the Biden administration, said.

But some elected Democrats may still not share the progressive tax world’s enthusiasm for raising taxes. In 2021, a single senator, Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, then a Democrat, ruled out many hoped-for tax increases like raising the corporate rate.

Democrats next year are likely to want to protect tax breaks for high-earning and corporate constituents. Donors are already leaning on Ms. Harris to [*pare back proposed tax increases on the ultrawealthy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/27/us/politics/economy-politics-midterms.html). Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, a Democrat and the majority leader, vowed recently that a $10,000 limit on deducting state and local taxes would end next year, a change that would benefit rich Americans and cost roughly $1 trillion in tax revenue.

In any case, progressives know that the 2025 tax debate will not be the end of their quest to fundamentally change the tax code.

“Practically speaking, it’s going to take a long time to get back; we’re not going to do it in one fell swoop,” said Michael Linden, a former budget official in the Biden White House. “The key is we have to stop going in the wrong direction.”

PHOTOS: President Biden signing the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which compels large companies to pay at least 15 percent on income they report to investors. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); In 2001 and 2003, President George W. Bush cut taxes, reducing marginal income rates across income levels. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WIN MCNAMEE/REUTERS); The last large Republican tax cut, a 2017 law signed by President Donald J. Trump, will expire after 2025. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** September 4, 2024

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[***Riots Push English City To Reflect on Religion, Immigration and Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNH-87Y1-DXY4-X174-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1382 words

**Byline:** By Amelia Nierenberg

**Body**

Days after an angry crowd marauded through Sunderland, people in the industrial port city are trying to make sense of what just happened.

Last Friday afternoon, as the pubs in the northeastern English city of Sunderland were filling with young men, Lesley McLaren made a decision: She was closing up shop early.

She had heard about the riots in Southport after three children there were killed in a stabbing attack. Now, she worried that trouble might be coming to her own city.

She did not want to be out when the storm broke. And given the anti-immigrant fervor and racism that have marked the riots, she especially didn't want her Sikh co-worker in the convenience shop, Simran Singh, to be on the streets.

''It's too dangerous for him,'' she said of Mr. Singh, adding, ''because of the color of his skin.''

Just hours later, a violent mob swept through the streets. Rioters attacked police officers, looted stores, burned buildings and set a car on fire. Elsewhere in England and Northern Ireland the next day, people rioted in about a dozen other cities.

Much of the rioting was set in motion by false claims circulating online that the suspect accused in the stabbing rampage in Southport was an undocumented migrant. He was born and raised in Wales, the authorities say; the BBC has reported that his parents were from Rwanda. The police have not disclosed a motive for the stabbing attack, if they have determined one. Britain has very tight restrictions on what can be reported once a case is underway.

In interviews this week, some Sunderland residents were appalled by the violence, even those who said they understood why people might be frustrated by Britain's sharply increased rate of immigration, most of it legal.

''Why trash your own town?'' asked Peter Wilson, 69, who works in the Sunderland offices of the Citizens Advice charity, which helps people in crisis navigate debt, legal issues, housing problems and other challenges. Rioters burned some of the charity's offices, though it was unclear if they were the target since they are next to a former police building that still says ''police.''

''Ransacking a vape shop in support of families in Southport -- how does this help anybody?'' Mr. Wilson said, shaking his head.

But some point to the economic stagnation that has sapped the city of its vitality as an underlying cause of anger.

''It's left a very fertile soil for far-right and extremist racist views to take root,'' said the Rev. Clare MacLaren of Sunderland Minster, the city's Anglican cathedral. She added that anti-immigrant proponents had successfully preyed over time on those who felt left behind and needed someone to blame ''because these people feel disenfranchised, abandoned, neglected, hopeless, fearful for the future.''

On Friday, the accumulated anger spilled over, even as residents voiced suspicions that some rioters were from out of town and were anti-immigrant agitators. One said people reported hearing accents that were not local.

In the aftermath of the violence, some have been looking at their own city with new eyes, and trying to make sense of what happened.

Mainstream British lawmakers, from those in the newly seated Labour government to Conservatives who made migration clampdowns a campaign issue, have all denounced the violence and called for stiff punishments. Many have said frustration over a loss of control over migration does not justify or explain riots that resulted in dozens of injured police, looted shops and, in one case, a burned library.

A more ambiguous response came from Nigel Farage, the Brexit champion whose anti-immigrant Reform U.K. party came in second in the three parliamentary districts that cover Sunderland in last month's general election.

His initial reaction to the unrest was to question official information being put out about the attacker, which some critics fear fed the rioters' own suspicions. On Monday, after a weekend of mayhem in some places, he condemned the violence.

Sunderland has been quiet since the trouble on Friday. Now, its leaders and some of its residents are trying to move past that night, worried that it could undercut the city's efforts to improve its reputation.

''People here are pretty keen to be loud and clear about the fact that those right-wing elements, those folks, don't speak for the city,'' said Kim McGuinness, the region's mayor.

But for all the suspicion that outside agitators helped drive the violence, on some level, some residents acknowledge, the unrest reflected a discontent they share.

Frustrations run deep in the city, where residents have endured years of economic deprivation and joblessness. The city lost a quarter of its jobs from 1975 to 1989 as its coal mining and shipbuilding industries declined.

That decline and fears of what Mr. Farage then called uncontrolled migration from the European Union led to the Brexit vote, and Sunderland has been held up as a symbol of Britain's divisions.

The city was a bellwether for the debate over Brexit as a prime example of a Labour-leaning, predominantly white, ***working-class*** city with anxieties about migration and national identity, but one that had a major employer, Nissan, which threatened to move away if Brexit passed.

In the 2016 vote, Sunderland shocked many by voting for Brexit by 61.3 percent to 38.7, and its early result made it clear that the referendum was going to pass. In the end, Nissan stayed after an agreement with the E.U. over trade rules.

Now, although several people who were interviewed insist that Sunderland is ''on the up,'' the repercussions of years being down still linger. The city's average wages, for example, are still lower than those in the rest of Britain, according to a recent economic master plan.

There have been other changes, some of which have become lightning rods for anti-immigrant feeling.

In 2022, Sunderland's City Council voted unanimously to become a City of Sanctuary, putting itself on record as welcoming asylum seekers and refugees, according to Kelly Chequer, the council's deputy leader.

For some residents, such openness remains a problem. ''A lot of it is the fact that, if you're white, you get branded a thug or a terrorist,'' said Rob Patterson, 75, who, like his wife, was born in Sunderland. ''You're automatically a racist. But it's actually the other way around.''

His wife, Marjorie, added that there was so much migration that ''we don't even know our own country anymore.'' And both believe the stabbing suspect was an illegal immigrant, despite the government's denials.

Zaf Iqbal, a leader of the Sunderland Inter Faith Forum, said there had always been ''an undertone of racism in Sunderland, but over the years, we've done a lot of work against that.'' Still, he locked himself inside his mosque with fellow worshipers during the riots on Friday and said the city had been ''a ticking time bomb since Brexit.''

Ms. McLaren, the convenience store worker, said she had banned some customers who have said racist things to Mr. Singh over time. But she also said that many people in the city were frustrated by what they see as government handouts for asylum seekers. ''I do see the point,'' she said.

''Where are we going to put everybody?'' she asked. ''We can't house our own. We've got pensioners who can't put the heating on. And we're bringing more people in?''

Nearby, Mr. Singh silently sold cigarettes and lottery tickets to a steady stream of customers. Many paid in exact change, counted out coin by coin.

Mr. Singh, who said he had moved to Britain in 2017, declared himself heartbroken by the riots. On Tuesday afternoon, the police could be seen taking away a person who he said had shouted racist remarks at him. ''I'm totally afraid,'' he said, his hands shaking.

The door to the convenience store is still broken: Tape laces across a gaping glassless window. Other shops in the city's center are boarded up or their windows have spider webs of cracked glass.

But the city is trying to recover.

A day after the riots, residents came out to clean the streets, sweeping debris as early light broke.

Then on Sunday, some residents gathered for a walk of peace.

Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Berlin.Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Berlin.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/06/world/europe/uk-riots-sunderland.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/06/world/europe/uk-riots-sunderland.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A7.

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[***A Disappearing President Steps Back Into the Limelight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CR9-PJW1-DXY4-X3HV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jess Bidgood Jess Bidgood is a managing correspondent for The Times and writes the On Politics newsletter, a guide to the 2024 election and beyond.

**Highlight:** At a rally today, if it looked like Biden was living in Harris’s world, he kept the focus on Trump.

**Body**

At a rally today, if it looked like Biden was living in Harris’s world, he kept the focus on Trump.

For a few minutes on Thursday afternoon, President Biden stood silently onstage in Maryland, his hands folded and his body swaying ever so softly. On one side of him was Vice President Kamala Harris, heaping praise on him; hovering on the other side was Harris’s face again, emblazoned on a shirt worn by a member of the crowd.

It was the pair’s first time onstage together since Biden withdrew from the presidential race. The appearance, three and a half weeks in the making, had great potential for awkwardness: an event for the Biden White House with the vibe of a Harris campaign rally.

If it looked like Biden was living in Harris’s world now, he kept the focus on Trump.

“Let me tell you what our Project 2025 is,” Biden said, evoking a set of conservative policy plans drawn up by allies of former President Donald Trump, once he stepped to the microphone. “Beat the hell out of ’em.”

Unburdened by the weight of defending democracy in an embattled presidential campaign, Biden joked repeatedly about his age — “I served in the Senate for 270 years!” — referred to former President Trump as “Donald Dump,” and delivered a line that had bedeviled him at the debate where his candidacy unraveled.

“This time,” he said, “we finally beat big pharma.”

It was a flash of a Biden who has not been seen much since he dropped out of the presidential race on July 21. He is no longer his party’s standard-bearer. He has not appeared on the campaign trail. He seems in many ways to have shrunk from public view.

It all got me curious about what these past weeks have meant for Biden — a man who is, of course, very much still president. My colleague [*Peter Baker*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), our chief White House correspondent, has watched Biden and Harris up close, and he spoke with me this afternoon from the event in Maryland. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity.

JB: We know Biden’s withdrawal from the presidential race upended the campaign. Did it also change his presidency?

PB: Instantaneously, his presidency as he knew it was over. Now, he had six more months to be president. There are a lot of things you can do as a lame duck. But he no longer had the authority and the attention, the bully pulpit and the power that comes with being a president who might have a second term. That’s one of the reasons he didn’t want to drop out in the first place.

Has he actually stepped out of the spotlight? Or does he simply garner less attention right now?

It’s a little of both. He’s been scheduled pretty lightly. He said he’s going to have a vigorous campaign schedule, and he hasn’t. He’ll give a speech at the Democratic convention on Monday, and then he will be on vacation until Labor Day. That doesn’t mean things aren’t happening behind the scenes — he’s paying a lot of attention to the cease-fire talks in the Middle East, he’s making a lot of calls to foreign leaders. He’s still active — but it’s a very different kind of presidency now.

Biden is an unpopular incumbent who wants his party to remain in power. If he is intentionally receding from the spotlight, is that strategic?

He’s actually a little more popular now that he’s decided not to run! Broadly speaking, voters did not want him to step aside because of some toxic political problem — it’s just that they thought, “OK, thanks very much, you’re 81, you’re good.” But I do think he’s flipped positions with Kamala Harris, in a way.

Up until now, for three and a half years, she always had to make sure nothing she did got in his way. Now, it’s his job to not upstage her. It’s his job not to do anything that gets in her way. It’s kind of an odd situation. He’s a commander in chief, but he kind of has a secondary role now.

Today’s event was a chance for Biden and Harris to celebrate [*landmark price negotiations*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) between Medicare and big pharmaceutical companies. Over the course of his presidency, Biden has struggled to communicate to the public about moves like these, which he views as major achievements. Do you think Harris is doing that any better?

She has a different way of presenting their case. She’s not focusing, the same way he did, on the latest infrastructure project, or reminding people about $35 insulin. She is tapping into a larger, broader, more emotional resonance. She’s not mired in the particulars of the record. And that contrast was on display in Maryland today.

Do we have any sense of how their relationship has been over the past three weeks, and why it’s taken this long for them to hold a buzzy joint appearance?

It’s a very good question. Years from now, when we read the memoirs, we’ll learn a lot more. Generally, I would say that they have a good working relationship. They like and respect each other, but I don’t get the sense that they’re particularly close. They are of different generations, different coasts and different backgrounds. She maintained nothing but public loyalty during the weeks that he was trying to decide whether or not to stay in the race. Today, she was very warm toward the president, lavishing him with praise and hugging him when she ceded the podium.

What role do you think he wants to play for his party and in this election going forward?

In a way, he adds an extra principal to their ticket. Biden can validate Harris for voters who may feel uncomfortable with her, who don’t really know her, who may not feel like they connect with her, but who do connect with him — in places like Scranton, Pa., and others where “***working-class*** Joe” has a longstanding connection. He can say, “She’s one of us. She gets you.” In that sense, he has a role to play.

The convention will be remarkable. We’ll see a man who was running for president passing the baton. What should we expect?

I’m sure it’s a pretty disappointing demotion to go from speaking Thursday night, when the nominee speaks, to Monday night, when he is now scheduled. I expect he will give a gracious speech and then disappear. And maybe that’s the best thing for Harris. It’s going to be her party now. She has to make it her party. Ceding the stage may be the hardest thing to do, but it’s also necessary, so the new generation can assert itself.

Biden is a proud man. He’s a stubborn man. He [*believed he still could have won*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), as our colleagues reported today, and he believed in his own resilience. But, since he made the remarkable decision to step aside, he has not tried to keep attention on himself, and maybe that’s to his credit, because he recognizes that it’s no longer his campaign to run.

An odd couple teams up in Utah

Sometimes, politics is just petty — and I, for one, find it hard to resist an innocuous helping of mess. So an ad featuring a Democrat and a Republican in Utah caught my eye. I asked my colleague [*Jonathan Weisman*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) to tell us the tale.

Talk about the enemy of my enemy being my friend.

Phil Lyman, the conservative Utah Republican who challenged Gov. Spencer Cox, who is more moderate, in the state’s Republican primary this summer, has teamed up with the long-shot Democrat running for governor, Brian King, [*for an advertisement attacking Cox*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

The one thing they both agree on, they intone together, “is that Spencer Cox should not be our next governor.”

Lyman, who is mounting a write-in campaign, urges voters to put his name on the ballot — before King interrupts him and urges people to vote for him, instead.

To say these men don’t see eye-to-eye on the issues is an understatement. King, whose campaign paid for the ad, was a combative minority leader in the Statehouse, known for pushing gun control in a state where such policies are anathema. Lyman was convicted on federal charges after organizing a protest of an all-terrain vehicle ban on Bureau of Land Management land, then was [*pardoned by former President Donald Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). He still mustered 46 percent of the vote in the June 25 primary against Cox.

In a way, the ad is a display of bipartisanship that Cox might appreciate. Cox, who has denounced Trump, saying that the former president represents “neither goodness nor kindness,” has made calls to “[*disagree better*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics)” [*central to his political brand*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).

That phrase pops up in the ad — as a punchline.

— Jonathan Weisman

— Jonathan Weisman

PHOTO: Last Thursday, President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris shared the stage for the first time since Mr. Biden exited the presidential race. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A2.

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2024

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[***Why Running Against Trump Has Just Become So Much Harder; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH8-6351-JBG3-600X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Byline:** Charles R. Kesler

**Highlight:** For his convention speech, Donald Trump faces a new, more promising rhetorical and political situation.

**Body**

It seems ages ago, but before the attempt on his life and the Supreme Court’s ruling on presidential immunity, Donald Trump was set to go from his sentencing hearing in a Manhattan courtroom to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in the course of a few days. He was going to accept his party’s presidential nomination with an emphasis on his being a convicted felon, as the Democrats like to say — or as he would have put it, as a victim of political persecution by the deep state and Democratic prosecutors.

Now his situation has altered dramatically. The legal proceedings are themselves on trial, on hold or in the process of being dismissed. Politically and legally, the cases against him, at least for the time being, have stalled, or for the documents case in Florida, collapsed, though an appeal is planned.

More strikingly, the case Mr. Trump would have made for himself in his acceptance speech as a witness, a martyr to serial partisan persecution, has suddenly been transcended. It was shoved aside by the would-be assassin’s bullet, which came within an inch of its target, drawing blood but not brain. Instead of another awful Zapruder film, Americans saw Mr. Trump rise again, shake his fist defiantly and exit on his own two feet, shouting, “Fight!”

At that moment the candidate became a civic symbol, as opposed to merely a partisan or political one. The scene instantly recalled worse American tragedies — the assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln, among others — and voters cannot forget those associations. Never Trumpers have frequently accused Mr. Trump of lacking courage — sometimes because he has never faced death on the battlefield. That criticism now seems dated.

At the convention Mr. Trump faces a new, more promising rhetorical and political situation. His acceptance speech on Thursday night presents a dramatic opportunity for political rebirth. Magnanimity may not come naturally to Mr. Trump, but a close call with mortality can change one’s perspective, as Ronald Reagan admitted after his own close call in 1981.

It will be hard for Mr. Trump’s opponents to run against a near-martyr for democracy on the ground that he is a danger to democracy. Nonetheless, they will try.

What’s more, the Republican Party is Mr. Trump’s now, in a sense that it wasn’t even in 2020. In 2016, though the party platform had a few Trumpist flourishes, it was basically written by the G.O.P. establishment. Rather than bicker over their divisions, the Republicans didn’t even issue a platform in 2020, blaming the lapse on Covid-19. [*This year’s platform*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform) is solidly Trumpist, down to its eccentric punctuation and capitalization; some flecks of establishment boilerplate remain, as a kind of vermiform appendix. No great internal struggle was needed to hammer it out.

Mr. Trump’s choice for vice president, J.D. Vance, is if anything Trumpier than Mr. Trump, particularly on policy questions, and is a MAGA favorite. On Election Day he will be 40, the bridge to a new generation — which was promised in 2020 by President Biden, but may actually be built starting in 2024 by a re-elected President Trump. Though Mr. Vance’s selection proves how easily Mr. Trump controls the party, it is also a sign that Mr. Trump will feel free, if he likes, to be less Trumpy than his vice president. Just as Karl Marx is said to have denied he was a Marxist, so Mr. Trump will pull rank on anyone who claims to speak for him or his political movement.

The more doctrinaire they are, the more he will [*deny them*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform). This is what happened to the Heritage Foundation and [*Project 2025*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform). One may search the Republican platform in vain to find any reference to so-called national conservatism.

Granted, Mr. Trump never considered himself a movement conservative and doesn’t now. In the 2016 primaries he beat a field of conservative Republicans of different stripes. Of his 16 opponents (including five who withdrew before the primaries began), he seemed especially to relish defeating those with the most impressive movement conservative credentials: Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz. He set out to reform the party in his own image, and he has largely succeeded. But that image is now larger, more solemn than it used to be.

What kind of a conservative is Mr. Trump? A common-sense conservative, he likes to say. He admits to being a nationalist, meaning he is for “America first” and wants, obviously, to “Make America Great Again.” That slogan, which appeared on the hat he was wearing when he was shot, points again to the civic dimensions of his conservatism. It presumes America was great before and could be great again, but insists that such improvement will not occur automatically but only with conscious effort, intellectual and political. (Make America … .)

It was a [*slogan*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform) used by Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Both Mr. Reagan and Mr. Trump meant it as a rebuke to declinism and decadence, to the hopeless notion that everything in the country is going downhill and there is nothing we can do about it, and to the fashionable suspicion that America was never that good to begin with, much less great, and so would have to become a different country in order to have any real chance of betterment.

For Mr. Reagan, declinism meant the acceptance of what had happened to the country in the 1970s, conveniently summarized in Jimmy Carter’s administration — energy crisis, the Iranian revolution and our hostages in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the “malaise” at home, to use the word indelibly associated with Mr. Carter, [*though he never said it*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform).

For Mr. Trump, declinism meant the establishment’s acceptance of the “American carnage” he decried in 2016 — the sacrifice of ***working-class*** jobs, health, security and self-respect to globalist and “super ZIP” (a term used to describe prosperous, highly educated demographic areas) ambition and arrogance.

In 2016 and 2020, he claimed to be able to fix these problems himself, as a kind of one-man super tribune of the people. The shortness of any presidential tenure and the shortness of life provide the backdrop for Mr. Trump’s chance of renewal Thursday night as a more sober and more tested political leader who knows that American greatness can’t afford to neglect American unity.

There is a lot of rage and resignation on both the left and the right these days. That’s partly why Trump’s reaction to the attempt on his life was so stirring. It taught by example — to fight, to struggle honorably for life and country against the odds, to never give up. It became an emblem by which the words and promises of the platform and the convention could, and will, be measured.

Charles R. Kesler is a senior fellow at the Claremont Institute, the editor of The Claremont Review of Books and a professor of government at Claremont McKenna College.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/2024-republican-party-platform).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Thalassa Raasch for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why It’s Hard to Explain Joe Biden’s Unpopularity; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHB-GR01-DXY4-X02S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 9, 2024 Saturday 12:56 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 911 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:** A theory of why Biden’s presidency has so far been a political flop.

**Body**

Joe Biden is one of the most unpopular presidents in modern American history. In Gallup [*polling*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/), his approval ratings are lower than those of any other president embarking on a re-election campaign, from Dwight Eisenhower to Donald Trump.

Yet an air of mystery hangs around his lousy polling numbers. As The Washington Free Beacon’s Joe Simonson [*noted*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/) recently, just surfing around most American media and pop culture, you probably wouldn’t realize that Biden’s job approval ratings are quite so historically terrible, worse by far than Trump’s at the same point in his term.

Apart from anxiety about his age, there isn’t a chattering-class consensus or common shorthand for why his presidency is such a political flop. Which is why, perhaps, there was a rush to declare his State of the Union address a rip-roaring success, as though all Biden needs to do to right things is to talk loudly through more than an hour of prepared remarks.

When things went south for other recent chief executives, there was usually a clearer theory of what was happening. Trump’s unpopularity was understood to reflect his chaos and craziness and authoritarian forays. The story of George W. Bush’s descending polls was all about Iraq and Hurricane Katrina. When Barack Obama was at his polling nadir, most observers blamed the unemployment rate and the Obamacare backlash, and when Bill Clinton struggled through his first two years, there was a clear media narrative about his lack of discipline and White House scandals.

With Biden, it has been different. Attempts to reduce his struggles to the inflation rate are usually met with vehement rebuttals; there’s a strong market for bad-vibes explanations of his troubles; a lot of blame gets placed on partisan polarization, even though Biden won a clear popular majority not so long ago; and even the age issue has taken center stage only in the past few months.

Some of this mystification reflects liberal media bias accentuated by contemporary conditions — an unwillingness to look closely at issues like immigration and the border, a hesitation to speak ill of a president who’s the only bulwark against Trumpism.

But I experience some mystification myself. I think that Biden’s record has big problems and that the economy isn’t as golden as some of his defenders claim. But even I look at his numbers and think, “Really, that bad?”

I also think, though, that this kind of media mystification is what you’d expect, given the political realignment we’re experiencing, where right and left are sorting increasingly by class and education and where anti-institutionalism has migrated more to the political right.

This transformation means that the Republican voters whose support Biden never had are often more culturally distant from liberal tastemakers than were the Republicans of the Clinton or Obama years. But it also means that many of the voters Biden is losing now, the swing voters driving his approval ratings down and down, are likewise fairly alien to the cultural and media establishment.

Some of them are the sort of disillusioned and infrequent voters whose grievances tend to be harder to pin down. But many are politically moderate minority voters, especially lower-middle-class Hispanics and African Americans, who already tended somewhat rightward in 2016 and 2020 but now seem to be abandoning Biden in larger numbers. In a recent Substack post, Ruy Teixeira [*described*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/) the realignment since 2012: “In that election, Obama carried nonwhite ***working-class*** (noncollege) voters by a massive 67 points, while losing white college graduates by seven points.” Whereas today, “Biden is actually doing worse among the nonwhite ***working class***, carrying them by a mere six points, than among white college graduates, where he enjoys a 15 point advantage over Trump.”

In theory, the recent push for racial representation in elite America should have made the establishment more attuned to the concerns of nonwhite voters. But in practice, this push tended to treat representation and progressive politics as a package deal, making nonwhites with moderate to conservative views more exotic, not less — as mystifying, in a way, as any MAGA-hat-wearing white guy in a rural diner.

Again, I’m part of that establishment, and I don’t want to pretend that I have my finger fully on the pulse of, say, blue-collar Hispanics who went for Biden in 2020 but now lean toward Trump.

But if you take that kind of constituency as a starting place, you may be able to reason your way to a clearer understanding of Biden’s troubles: by thinking about ways in which [*high borrowing costs*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/) for homes and cars seem especially punishing to voters trying to move up the economic ladder, for instance, or how the hold of cultural progressivism over Democratic politics might be pushing more culturally conservative minorities to the right even if wokeness has peaked in some elite settings.

These are theories; maybe there’s a better one. But the first step to saving Biden’s re-election effort is to acknowledge the need for such an explanation — because unpopularity that you can’t fathom can still throw you out of office.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://reason.com/2024/03/06/the-state-of-our-biden-is-historically-frail/).

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This article appeared in print on page SR2.

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**End of Document**



[***Decoding JD Vance’s Brand of Nationalism; Farah Stockman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKD-2CG1-DXY4-X3KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2024 Sunday 11:03 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1223 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:** What do conservatives mean when they say that America is not “an idea”? The answer is key to understanding the 2024 election.

**Body**

Is America an idea or a homeland? That question lies at the heart of this roller coaster of a presidential race. It’s about whether we Americans should continue to set our sights on global leadership and enforcing universal principles or instead hunker down and take care of our own.

President Biden, in his speech on Wednesday explaining why he withdrew his candidacy, described America as “the most powerful idea in the history of the world.” In language echoing legacy Republicans like [*Ronald Reagan*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), Mr. Biden said that it was “an idea stronger than any army, bigger than any ocean, more powerful than any dictator or tyrant.”

But Donald Trump’s Republican Party is turning away from that kind of language. At the Republican convention, JD Vance, his running mate, made a point of saying that America is “not just an idea” but a “homeland,” evoking a mountain cemetery in Eastern Kentucky where he said his ancestors are buried and where he hopes that he and his children will be buried as well.

Some of his critics immediately denounced those references to his family’s land and lineage as coded “blood and soil” nationalism, the ideology of Nazis. In The Atlantic, Adam Serwer accused Mr. Vance of signaling an “exclusivist vision of America to his far-right allies” when he asserted that America is a country made up of people who share a history rather than a “creedal nation” — one primarily based on ideas like freedom and equality. “If America is a creedal nation, then anyone can be an American,” [*Mr. Serwer wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). “But if real Americans are those who share a specific history, then some of us are more American than others.”

These critiques ignore the sense of duty that human beings everywhere feel to the places and people that raised us. Americans are no exception. And dismissing the intense debate about whether America is a creedal nation versus a specific place of specific people who share land, history and culture misses a chance to understand something important about the MAGA movement’s appeal.

People who speak of America as an idea tend to have a global outlook, arguing for more immigration, free trade and a robust role for the United States around the world. Those who emphasize that it’s also a homeland see the country’s resources as being squandered on outsiders, while the needs of citizens are brushed aside.

There is so much that is troubling about Mr. Vance and the MAGA movement in general — election denialism and support for insurrections come to mind — but this message resonates, especially among the ***working class***. I’ve spoken with American workers who compete with undocumented immigrants for low-wage jobs in home construction and landscaping and they speak of the downside of the notion that America is an idea — anybody can walk across the border to claim it. Any soldier in an ill-fated war that tried to export America’s self-evident truths to foreign lands may understandably prefer to think about the country as a homeland rather than a set of principles that must be defended everywhere.

There’s another reason that people might be attracted to the idea of an American homeland. The modern world can be disorienting, as people lose their vital ties to the places they are from. The rise of cellphones, social media and globalized commerce has created a sense of “placelessness” that often robs people of the rootedness that human beings need to flourish, along with the motivation to live “purposeful lives of self-government and civic engagement,” according to Wilfred McClay and Ted McAllister, editors of the anthology “Why Place Matters: Geography, Identity and Civic Life in Modern America.” The impulse to reclaim a sense of place in the world could be part of why nationalism is on the rise in many countries.

I can understand the risks of talking about the country as an abstract idea. Being from somewhere specific obliges us to grapple with the problems of the people who live there. Ideas, on the other hand, demand little. They are universal and portable, perfect for remote workers moving to Portugal [*on a golden visa*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html), but less useful for those who have never left their hometowns.

The irony here is that Mr. Biden has done a great deal for the forgotten hometowns that Mr. Vance speaks to.

But this debate lives on, partly because, for conservatives, this is about not just economic populism but also cultural change. Carson Holloway, a fellow at the Claremont Institute, laid out the case against thinking of America primarily as a creedal nation last year in an essay in “Up From Conservatism: Revitalizing the Right After a Generation of Decay.” Mr. Holloway argues that overemphasizing universal ideas that liberals like to talk about — freedom and equality — as the source of American identity has allowed the country to be “hijacked by novel and radical notions of freedom” that left American society adrift, full of young people who believe in gay marriage and, he told me, “an immigration policy that seeks low-wage workers rather than virtuous citizens.”

When Mr. Vance spoke about the country as a homeland, he appeared to be distinguishing himself from the corporatist, globalist part of the Republican Party. His words seemed intended to repudiate those of Paul Ryan — another young Republican vice-presidential pick from a very different era — who [*declared in 2013*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html): “America is more than just a country. It’s more than Chicago or Wisconsin. It’s more than our borders,” in a speech supporting legal immigration.

Mr. Vance is clearly skeptical about unchecked immigration and the cultural change that it can bring. But his speech was far from a call to end all immigration, or to view all immigrants as second-class citizens, let alone an appeal to Nazi ideology.

Indeed, Mr. Vance heaped praise on his wife — a Southern California native and the daughter of immigrants from India — who [*introduced him at the convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/opinion/editorialboard.html). Mr. Vance said that it was an American tradition to welcome “newcomers into our American family” — as long as it is “on our terms.” That’s not so different from the way many people — liberal and conservative — with decades of family ties to their communities think about newcomers.

As I write this, I’m sitting in a neighborhood in Detroit where people size up whether or not you truly belong by how long your grandmama lived on the block. My neighbor left me a nasty message last weekend after I parked too close to his car: “You are the new neighbor on the block and need to fall in line with reasonable requests and be respectful of those who have been and will continue to be here long after you are bored with your new purchase.”

It was brutal. But he had a point. Belonging to a place is more than a notion. It takes time, effort and willingness to adhere to community norms. That’s true of the country, too. America can be an inspiring idea. But for that idea to have meaning to those who live here, the country also must feel like home.

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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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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**End of Document**



[***Republicans Are Counting on Millionaire Candidates to Flip the Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM3-7XV1-JBG3-6023-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1666 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

With Democrats at a fund-raising advantage, the G.O.P. has backed candidates who can self-fund. But their wealth is likely to factor in the fight for Senate control.

Since his rise to the presidency, Donald J. Trump has claimed enormous wealth as proof that he is an anti-establishment ally of the ***working class***, not beholden to corporate donors or special interests.

The Republican Party, eyeing control of the Senate next year, is trying to mimic his success with a cohort of candidates who in the past might have been attacked as a bunch of rich men but this year will be sold as successful outsiders in the Trump mold.

The decision by Ohio voters on Tuesday to nominate Bernie Moreno to take on Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, is the capstone of a year that has crowned nominees -- or anointed clear front-runners -- with remarkable wealth in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Montana and now Ohio.

That might match the party's presumptive nominee, Mr. Trump, but with backgrounds in banking and hedge funds, properties in Connecticut and Laguna Beach, Calif., and education credentials from Princeton and the Naval Academy, some in the 2024 class feel more like the days of Mitt Romney, worth around $174 million, and John McCain, a Naval Academy graduate who married into a beer-distributing empire, than the current moment when blue-collar credibility is the currency of the realm.

The intentional decision by Republicans in Washington, D.C., to get behind candidates with enormous personal fortunes will most likely give the party a boost as it struggles for campaign cash against the Democrats' formidable grass-roots fund-raising operations. But the sheer affluence of the candidates -- and how they made their money -- is sure to be a factor in the fight for Senate control.

''That's who they are,'' Mr. Brown, who is worth about $263,000, said in an interview on Wednesday, commenting on the lineup of millionaire Republicans arrayed against Democratic incumbents. ''I guess I'm not surprised by that.''

Republicans say their candidates will make the case that they are successful political outsiders, running against career politicians who used their years in Washington to raise their net worth and enrich their families.

''We've recruited a roster of candidates with impressive backgrounds in business and, in many cases, military service,'' said Mike Berg, a spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee. ''Democrats have a roster of career politicians with questionable ethics. We'll take that contrast any day of the week.''

But if a clash over net worth comes down to numbers in bank accounts, the Republicans will have the bigger figures to answer for.

To call Mr. Moreno a former auto dealer, for instance, is to miss the scale of his business and investment fortune. In 2023, Mr. Moreno, a Colombian-born businessman, filed financial disclosure forms that revealed assets valued from $25.5 million to $105.7 million and an annual income nearing $6 million. Those assets include a $2.3 million Aston Martin Vulcan, one of only 24 ever made, a house listed in Ocean Reef, Fla., worth as much as $25 million, land in Zapotal, Costa Rica, condominiums in New York, Washington, D.C., and Columbus, Ohio, and a home in Avon, Ohio, valued at up to $5 million.

But like Mr. Trump, whose endorsement helped deliver his victory, Mr. Moreno is confident he can speak to the blue-collar voters who have been the backbone of Mr. Brown's support since the Democrat was elected in 2006.

''We are not the party of the elites in big business,'' Mr. Moreno told reporters on Tuesday. ''We're the party of the ***working class***.''

An unusually wealthy crop of candidates

Affluence has been a hallmark of the Senate perhaps since its inception, in both parties. The richest senator, Rick Scott, Republican of Florida, is running for re-election this fall, and has shown a ready willingness to tap his fortune to ensure electoral success. The second-richest is a Democrat, Mark Warner of Virginia.

But the Republican Party, wary of the Democrats' fund-raising prowess in recent cycles, has recruited candidates from a significantly higher economic echelon than the ***working-class*** voters it is trying to woo in swing states. With Democrats holding 51 seats, Republican control is a hairbreadth away.

The retirement of Senator Joe Manchin III, a conservative Democrat in West Virginia, virtually assures the loss of one seat to that state's governor, Jim Justice, whose days as a billionaire coal baron may have passed, according to Forbes, but who is still worth hundreds of millions.

In Pennsylvania, David McCormick, the former chief executive of Bridgewater Associates, one of the largest hedge funds in the world, is challenging Senator Bob Casey. Mr. McCormick and his wife, Dina Powell McCormick, a Trump administration official and former partner at Goldman Sachs, reported assets in 2022 worth $116 million to $290 million.

In another key swing state, Wisconsin, Republicans are banking on Eric Hovde, the chairman and chief executive of Sunwest Bank, a $2.8 billion commercial lender, to challenge Senator Tammy Baldwin.

Sunwest, based in Sandy, Utah, has operations in the West and in Florida. He considers his home to be Madison, Wis., but has been listed as a mover and shaker in Orange County, Calif., business circles. Democrats have repeatedly hit him over his $7 million home in Laguna Beach, Calif.

In Montana, Senator Jon Tester, a Democrat, faces a re-election battle in a state that gave Mr. Trump 57 percent of its vote in 2020, and his opponent, Tim Sheehy, is leaning on his background as a decorated former Navy SEAL and a firefighting pilot. But there is another piece of his résumé: Bridger Aerospace, an aerial firefighting company he founded, went public in 2022, valued at $869 million.

So far, the candidates are leaning into their success. Mr. Hovde released an advertisement on Friday saying he has ''worked hard, been fortunate'' and does not need special-interest money. He vowed to donate his Senate salary to a Wisconsin charity.

On Wednesday, in a new advertisement airing statewide in Montana, Mr. Sheehy interspersed images of his combat duties with a promise to tap his own wealth: ''I don't need the money from lobbyists,'' he said. ''I can do the right thing in office because it's the right thing for America.''

Democrats see openings for attack

For Democrats, their opponents' backgrounds offer them a choice: tie them to Mr. Trump and his brand of what they call extremism, or fall back on a tried-and-true strategy to portray them as out-of-touch elitists, with histories of harming employees and customers alike.

''The roster of Republican Senate recruits come with enough baggage to fill a bank vault,'' said David Bergstein, a spokesman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. ''Their finances demonstrate a wealth of vulnerabilities against them, from conflicts of interest to outsourcing to questionable financial practices.''

In Ohio, Mr. Moreno's Republican opponents, especially the Republican establishment's choice, State Senator Matt Dolan, repeatedly went after him for a lawsuit filed by an employee of one of his car dealerships, who sued him in 2017 for failure to pay overtime. The judge in the case determined that Mr. Moreno ''either did not retain or shredded'' monthly reports on overtime hours. The Moreno campaign has countered repeatedly that the suit stemmed from a change in Massachusetts overtime law, not the actions of Mr. Moreno's management. But Mr. Moreno did lose the suit and was ordered to pay $416,160 to his employees.

Democrats have hinted that they have many more potentially damaging stories to tell about Mr. Moreno, one reason their leadership-aligned super PAC, the Senate Majority PAC, spent big in the last days of the Ohio primary to boost the businessman's chances against Mr. Dolan.

Republicans will counter with Mr. Brown's failure for years to disclose his wife's pension assets, worth $250,001 to $500,000. Last year, he amended several years' worth of disclosure forms to account for the pension.

Mr. McCormick, Mr. Hovde and Mr. Sheehy will all face questions about their commitments to the states they seek to represent in the Senate. Mr. McCormick's home in Connecticut was the main point of attack in 2022 when he lost the Republican primary to Mehmet Oz for a vacant Senate seat in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Hovde was raised in Wisconsin, attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and counts Madison as his home. But his ties to California will be central to the Democratic case against him.

Mr. Sheehy appears to be a dream candidate for Montana, but in facing Mr. Tester, a flat-topped farmer from Big Sandy, Mont., his recent arrival in the state could prove to be an issue. He grew up in Shoreview, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis, in a multimillion-dollar lake house, went to private preparatory school, and then to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., before being discharged from the military with a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. He moved to Bozeman, Mont., in 2014 and founded Bridger Aerospace and Ascent Vision Technologies, the latter of which he sold for $350 million in 2020.

Republicans involved in the general-election campaigns say they have plenty of issues to counter those charges with, at least to muddy the waters: a $1.3 million condominium in Washington, D.C., that Ms. Baldwin bought with her partner, Maria Brisbane, in 2021; the rising net worth of Mr. Tester; and family lobbying ties connected to Mr. Casey.

As for their standard-bearer, Mr. Trump, his scramble to come up with hundreds of millions of dollars in the coming days to meet the judgment against him for business fraud is raising questions not over how he made his money, but whether he can keep it.

His campaign, facing myriad financial pressures amid mounting legal bills stemming from the criminal cases against him, is scrambling to raise cash.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/us/politics/republican-gop-senate-wealth.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/us/politics/republican-gop-senate-wealth.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: BERNIE MORENO, with former President Donald J. Trump, is running for Senate in Ohio and has assets valued up to $105.7 million. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DAVID MCCORMICK, running for Senate in Pennsylvania, and his wife, Dina, reported assets worth up to $290 million in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF SWENSEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

GOVERNOR JIM JUSTICE of West Virginia, once a billionaire coal baron, remains worth hundreds of millions of dollars. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

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[***‘Why Trash Your Own Town?’ An English City Reckons With a Riot.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNB-TTB1-JBG3-60WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

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**Highlight:** Days after an angry crowd marauded through Sunderland, people in the industrial port city are trying to make sense of what just happened.

**Body**

Days after an angry crowd marauded through Sunderland, people in the industrial port city are trying to make sense of what just happened.

Last Friday afternoon, as the pubs in the northeastern English city of Sunderland were filling with young men, Lesley McLaren made a decision: She was closing up shop early.

She had heard about the riots in Southport after three children there were killed in a [*stabbing attack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html). Now, she worried that trouble might be coming to her own city.

She did not want to be out when the storm broke. And given the anti-immigrant fervor and racism that have marked the riots, she especially didn’t want her Sikh co-worker in the convenience shop, Simran Singh, to be on the streets.

“It’s too dangerous for him,” she said of Mr. Singh, adding, “because of the color of his skin.”

Just hours later, a violent mob swept through the streets. Rioters attacked [*police officers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html), looted stores, burned buildings and set a car on fire. Elsewhere in England and Northern Ireland the next day, people rioted in about [*a dozen other*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html) cities.

Much of the rioting was set in motion by false claims circulating online that the suspect accused in the stabbing rampage in Southport was an undocumented migrant. He was born and raised in Wales, the authorities say; the BBC has reported that his parents were from Rwanda. The police have not disclosed a motive for the stabbing attack, if they have determined one. Britain has very tight restrictions on what can be reported once a case is underway.

In interviews this week, some Sunderland residents were appalled by the violence, even those who said they understood why people might be frustrated by Britain’s sharply increased rate of immigration, most of it legal.

“Why trash your own town?” asked Peter Wilson, 69, who works in the Sunderland offices of the Citizens Advice charity, which helps people in crisis navigate debt, legal issues, housing problems and other challenges. Rioters [*burned some of the charity’s offices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html), though it was unclear if they were the target since they are next to a former police building that still says “police.”

“Ransacking a vape shop in support of families in Southport — how does this help anybody?” Mr. Wilson said, shaking his head.

But some point to the economic stagnation that has sapped the city of its vitality as an underlying cause of anger.

“It’s left a very fertile soil for far-right and extremist racist views to take root,” said the Rev. Clare MacLaren of Sunderland Minster, the city’s Anglican cathedral. She added that anti-immigrant proponents had successfully preyed over time on those who felt left behind and needed someone to blame “because these people feel disenfranchised, abandoned, neglected, hopeless, fearful for the future.”

On Friday, the accumulated anger spilled over, even as residents voiced suspicions that some rioters were from out of town and were anti-immigrant agitators. One said people reported hearing accents that were not local.

In the aftermath of the violence, some have been looking at their own city with new eyes, and trying to make sense of what happened.

Mainstream British lawmakers, from those in the newly seated Labour government to Conservatives who made migration clampdowns a campaign issue, have all denounced the violence and called for stiff punishments. Many have said frustration over a loss of control over migration does not justify or explain riots that resulted in dozens of injured police, looted shops and, in one case, a burned library.

A more ambiguous response came from Nigel Farage, the Brexit champion whose anti-immigrant Reform U.K. party came in second in the three parliamentary districts that cover Sunderland in last month’s general election.

His initial reaction to the unrest was to question official information being put out about the attacker, which some critics fear fed the rioters’ own suspicions. On Monday, after a weekend of mayhem in some places, he condemned the violence.

Sunderland has been quiet since the trouble on Friday. Now, its leaders and some of its residents are trying to move past that night, worried that it could undercut the city’s efforts to improve its reputation.

“People here are pretty keen to be loud and clear about the fact that those right-wing elements, those folks, don’t speak for the city,” said Kim McGuinness, the region’s mayor.

But for all the suspicion that outside agitators helped drive the violence, on some level, some residents acknowledge, the unrest reflected a discontent they share.

Frustrations run deep in the city, where residents have endured years of economic deprivation and joblessness. The city lost a quarter of its jobs from 1975 to 1989 as its coal mining and shipbuilding industries declined.

That decline and fears of what Mr. Farage then called uncontrolled migration from the European Union led to the Brexit vote, and Sunderland has been held up as a symbol of Britain’s divisions.

The city was a bellwether for the debate over Brexit as a prime example of a Labour-leaning, predominantly white, ***working-class*** city with anxieties about migration and national identity, but one that had a major employer, Nissan, which threatened to move away if Brexit passed.

In the 2016 vote, [*Sunderland shocked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html) many by voting for Brexit by 61.3 percent to 38.7, and its early result made it clear that the referendum was going to pass. In the end, Nissan stayed after an agreement with the E.U. over trade rules.

Now, although several people who were interviewed insist that Sunderland is “on the up,” the repercussions of years being down still linger. The city’s average wages, for example, are still lower than those in the rest of Britain, according to a recent [*economic master plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html).

There have been other changes, some of which have become lightning rods for anti-immigrant feeling.

In 2022, Sunderland’s City Council voted unanimously to become a [*City of Sanctuary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html), putting itself on record as welcoming asylum seekers and refugees, according to Kelly Chequer, the council’s deputy leader.

For some residents, such openness remains a problem. “A lot of it is the fact that, if you’re white, you get branded a thug or a terrorist,” said Rob Patterson, 75, who, like his wife, was born in Sunderland. “You’re automatically a racist. But it’s actually the other way around.”

His wife, Marjorie, added that there was so much migration that “we don’t even know our own country anymore.” And both believe the stabbing suspect was an illegal immigrant, despite the government’s denials.

Zaf Iqbal, a leader of the Sunderland Inter Faith Forum, said there had always been “an undertone of racism in Sunderland, but over the years, we’ve done a lot of work against that.” Still, he locked himself inside his mosque with fellow worshipers during the riots on Friday and said the city had been “a ticking time bomb since Brexit.”

Ms. McLaren, the convenience store worker, said she had banned some customers who have said racist things to Mr. Singh over time. But she also said that many people in the city were frustrated by what they see as government handouts for asylum seekers. “I do see the point,” she said.

“Where are we going to put everybody?” she asked. “We can’t house our own. We’ve got pensioners who can’t put the heating on. And we’re bringing more people in?”

Nearby, Mr. Singh silently sold cigarettes and lottery tickets to a steady stream of customers. Many paid in exact change, counted out coin by coin.

Mr. Singh, who said he had moved to Britain in 2017, declared himself heartbroken by the riots. On Tuesday afternoon, the police could be seen taking away a person who he said had shouted racist remarks at him. “I’m totally afraid,” he said, his hands shaking.

The door to the convenience store is still broken: Tape laces across a gaping glassless window. Other shops in the city’s center are boarded up or their windows have spider webs of cracked glass.

But the city is trying to recover.

A day after the riots, residents came out to [*clean the streets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/world/europe/southport-stabbing-uk.html), sweeping debris as early light broke.

Then on Sunday, some residents gathered for a walk of peace.

Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Berlin.

Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Berlin.

This article appeared in print on page A7.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Walz, Throwing Punches at Republicans, Makes His Big Entrance With Harris***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNC-WTK1-DXY4-X0BR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 6, 2024 Tuesday 08:13 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1319 words

**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein, Erica L. Green and Katie Glueck Reid J. Epstein covers campaigns and elections from Washington. Before joining The Times in 2019, he worked at The Wall Street Journal, Politico, Newsday and The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Erica L. Green is a White House correspondent, covering President Biden and his administration. Katie Glueck covers American politics with a focus on the Democratic Party.

**Highlight:** As the vice president introduced her new running mate at an energetic rally in Philadelphia, he quickly demonstrated his ability to deliver searing attacks against Donald Trump and JD Vance.

**Body**

As the vice president introduced her new running mate at an energetic rally in Philadelphia, he quickly demonstrated his ability to deliver searing attacks against Donald Trump and JD Vance.

America’s introduction to Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota began with a half-hour of cheering for Vice President Kamala Harris and ended with some of the sharpest attacks Democrats have leveled against former President Donald J. Trump and his running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio.

Before a raucous crowd in Philadelphia, Ms. Harris and Mr. Walz presented the Minnesotan as a folksy former schoolteacher and football coach who had inspired his students, served in the military and improved his constituents’ lives.

But it was his ability to deliver searing yet accessible attacks against their Republican opponents that won Mr. Walz a place on the national ticket, and during his first rally, he did not miss his marks.

“Donald Trump sees the world a little differently than us,” he said. “First of all, he doesn’t know the first thing about service. He doesn’t have time for it because he’s too busy serving himself.”

Then came the dagger. “Violent crime was up under Donald Trump,” he said, before pausing for effect. “That’s not even counting the crimes he committed.”

The Harris campaign’s presentation of Mr. Walz brought an end to its two-week sprint to find a running mate, a process that typically takes months and involves a series of public tryouts. Instead, Ms. Harris’s search for a partner took place largely behind closed doors.

Ms. Harris, in her remarks, hailed Mr. Walz as not only the governing partner she had sought but a person of decency who she said would set an example to inspire the nation.

“Tim Walz was the kind of teacher and mentor that every child in America dreams of having and that every kid deserves,” the vice president said. “The kind of coach — because he’s the kind of person — who makes people feel like they belong and then inspires them to dream big. And that’s the kind of vice president he will be. And that’s the kind of vice president America deserves.”

Just 40 days ago, President Biden was preparing to debate Mr. Trump in what his campaign described as the kickoff to the general election. But the president delivered a performance so alarming that his party exploded in revolt, ultimately pushing him out of the race just over two weeks ago.

In short order, Ms. Harris’s emergence as the nominee has transformed what had been a Democratic Party depressed by the prospect of scrounging up votes for an unpopular 81-year-old candidate. Now the party is newly hopeful heading into the highly competitive homestretch of the election.

“The promise of America is what makes it possible for two middle-class kids — one a daughter of Oakland, California, who was raised by a working mother, the other a son of the Nebraska plains who grew up working on a farm — it’s the promise of America,” Ms. Harris said in Philadelphia. “Because only in America — only in America — is it possible for them together to make it all the way to the White House.”

Mr. Walz seemed almost overwhelmed as he took the stage to wild cheers. He spent the 30 minutes while Ms. Harris spoke alternating between bowing toward her and theatrical applause that had the effect of making him appear like a man who had just won the political lottery.

When he finally took the microphone, his exultation was clear. “Wow,” he said, before offering another small bow.

In his speech, he praised Ms. Harris’s career in law enforcement and as vice president, saying she had “fought on the side of the American people” and “never hesitated to reach across the aisle if it meant improving people’s lives.”

He emphasized his blue-collar roots, growing up in small towns in Nebraska and spending summers working on his family farm, and described how joining the military had given him purpose.

But it was his prepared zingers against Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance that led to the biggest responses from the crowd, which the Harris campaign said had totaled about 12,000 people.

Mr. Walz accused Mr. Vance of being an inauthentic tribune of the white ***working-class*** Midwesterners he says he represents. Mr. Walz, who graduated from Chadron State College in Nebraska, mocked Mr. Vance’s Ivy League education and Silicon Valley employment before effectively calling him a coward in front of a national television audience.

“I’ve got to tell you, I can’t wait to debate the guy,” Mr. Walz said, pausing again as he savored the attack line to come. “That is, if he’s willing to get off the couch and show up.”

(The line, for the blissfully uninitiated, was a wink-and-nod reference to [*a widely shared yet false social media claim*](https://www.npr.org/2024/07/31/nx-s1-5055854/vance-harris-social-media-rumors-jokes) about Mr. Vance and furniture.)

Mr. Walz catapulted himself from little-known Midwestern governor to a national Democratic star embraced by the party’s progressive wing.

He created a catchphrase for liberals in labeling Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance as “weird” characters, going so far on Tuesday as to call them “creepy and weird as hell.” He delighted key elements of his party with punchy appearances on cable television and down-home videos on social media, along with his record of enacting liberal measures as governor.

In her introduction, Ms. Harris highlighted several of Mr. Walz’s policy positions, many of which aligned with the Biden administration’s, that she said demonstrated his willingness to stand up against attacks on freedom.

Among them was being the first governor in the country to sign a new law protecting reproductive rights after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade. He also signed the most significant expansion of voting rights in Minnesota in over 50 years.

Mr. Walz cast his support for abortion rights, as many Democrats have, as a defense of personal freedom.

“In Minnesota, we respect our neighbors and the personal choices that they make,” he said. “Even if we wouldn’t make the same choices for ourselves, there’s a golden rule: Mind your own damn business.”

Mr. Walz also shared his family’s difficult experience with in vitro fertilization treatments, which have been targeted by conservatives in some states that moved to pass restrictive laws after the decision overturning Roe.

“I remember praying every night for a call for good news,” he said, describing the pit in his stomach and the “agony” he had felt hoping that the treatments had worked.

This, he said, was why he and his wife named their daughter “Hope.”

The rally also had to deal with the thorny issue of Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, who was the runner-up to join Ms. Harris on the ticket and gave a fiery speech to help kick off the rally.

Mr. Shapiro warned about the prospect of a Trump-Vance White House and spoke warmly of Mr. Walz.

“Tim Walz is a great man,” Mr. Shapiro said, adding that he was “an outstanding governor,” a “great patriot” and a “dear friend.”

“I’m going to be working my tail off to make sure we make Kamala Harris and Tim Walz the next leaders of the United States of America,” Mr. Shapiro added.

Mr. Walz, in turn, said Mr. Shapiro could “bring the fire” and called him a “visionary leader,” telling the crowd, “What a treasure you have in Josh Shapiro.” He also praised Mr. Shapiro’s ability to complete an interstate highway reconstruction last year. “Everybody in America knows, when you need a bridge fixed, call that guy,” Mr. Walz said.

The Harris campaign said that since Mr. Walz had been announced as the running mate, it had raised more than $20 million from supporters. It was one of its best fund-raising days this election cycle, the campaign said.

During his speech, Mr. Walz tried to rally supporters for the three-month dash to November, telling them, “We’ll sleep when we’re dead.”

“Over those next 91 days, and every day in the White House, I’ll have Vice President Harris’s back,” he said. “And we’ll have yours.”

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***An Affordable Housing Solution Hidden in Plain Sight: Libraries; Dear Headway***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH4-BGW1-JBG3-60C8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 17, 2024 Wednesday 18:01 EST

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**Section:** HEADWAY

**Length:** 1142 words

**Byline:** Michael KimmelmanMichael Kimmelman is The Times&amp;#8217;s architecture critic and the founder and editor-at-large of , a team of journalists focused on large global challenges and paths to progress. He has reported from more than 40 countries and was previously chief art critic.

**Highlight:** Building subsidized housing in America relies on cheap land, and creative ideas.

**Body**

Building subsidized housing in America relies on cheap land, and creative ideas.

Dear Headway reader,

The other day, I wrote about [*two new branch libraries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html) in New York City, which share an unusual feature: They’re both paired with 100 percent affordable housing developments.

I had reported a while back on [*similar projects in Chicago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html). After my recent column was published, I heard from readers about more examples in Boston, San Francisco and elsewhere. These library/apartment combos respond to the current housing shortage with a workaround to the scarcity of cheap, available land in some of these cities.

Some history is useful here. New York once owned an abundance of vacant and abandoned land, some of which came into its possession after landlords walked away from back taxes on distressed properties whose values had plummeted to zero. Back in the 1970s, teetering on bankruptcy, City Hall sold acres of this land to raise cash, even auctioning off “gutter spaces”: irregular, useless parcels, remnants of surveying errors and other zoning anomalies, which sold for as little as $25.

Today, Manhattan’s land value is somewhere in the trillions of dollars. The economics of building subsidized housing in America depends on land that costs little or nothing, which almost inevitably means building on public land. But having sold off much of what it owned, New York no longer has a large inventory of big, usable lots for deeply affordable projects, at least not in parts of the city linked to parks, grocery stores and public transportation, where residents want to live.

The city does own library branches, however. And they occupy public land in the heart of many neighborhoods.

Branches in cities like New York, some of them more than a century old, are often poorly configured for current demands, and ripe for replacement. Library systems have become some of this country’s most venturesome patrons of new architecture as a result.

The two New York branch libraries I wrote about, in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and in Inwood, at the northern tip of Manhattan — historically ***working class*** neighborhoods with large immigrant populations that rely on branch libraries — both replaced crumbling branches on the same sites. In Sunset Park, the updated branch fills the lower floors of a new eight story apartment building that has 49 subsidized units. The Inwood library — with a grand reading room harking back to the glory days of civic design in New York — sits beneath 174 units on 12 upper floors and belongs to an even larger development that includes a new pre-K, a STEM study center, a neighborhood teaching kitchen and various community spaces.

Readers shared library/housing combos in other cities that feature groceries and box stores. A library in Milwaukee is twinned with housing for grandparents raising grandchildren. Each variation on this theme highlights the role libraries have come to play as social integrators and community tent poles. For formerly homeless residents, a library on site multiplies available supportive services. For children living with older parents, the library is a communal backyard in which to meet up with young friends.

And for neighbors, it’s common ground — a safe, shared space in which to become acquainted with some of the subsidized tenants living in these developments, who may have been homeless, and whose housing may have been resisted by NIMBYs.

Built in cities that were supposedly dying decades ago, anchored by libraries that many “experts” predicted would soon be made obsolete by the internet, these projects are reminders that we perceive the future only dimly.

But they also suggest that seemingly intractable problems, like the affordable housing crunch, can begin to be tackled if we are open to new kinds of development and willing to think nimbly about what resources we have, instead of just lamenting what we lack.

Revisiting

Part of the reason it’s such a big deal for libraries to offer affordable housing are the many roadblocks standing in the way of cities building it.

[*Headway’s latest story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html), by Roshan Abraham, looks back on the nearly 50 years since New Jersey’s courts enshrined Mount Laurel rules, mandating affordable housing to be built in every city in the state. The legal framework has been repeatedly challenged since residents and activists began pushing for it, but the courts have not only kept it in place, they’ve expanded its powers.

This has led to the construction of more than 70,000 units of housing since 1980 — not nearly enough to fill the need for affordable housing, but far more than would have been built without the law.

— Matt Thompson

Links we liked

* Windsor, Ontario, one of many cities coping with rising homelessness and a mental health and addiction crisis, is about a year into a unique pilot project [*pairing police officers with E.R. nurses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html). The experiment is popular so far.

1. [*Many cities have started looking to tiny homes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html)as a short-term fix for insufficient housing, but their popularity is fueling a growing debate over what constitutes a home.
2. [*Controlled burns in forests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html)were part of Indigenous culture for generations until they were prohibited by law in the 19th Century. After extreme wildfires devastated California forests, an 1850 ban on the practice was lifted, and Indigenous tribes are now trying to restore “good fire” to the state.

Your turn

We’d love to hear from you. Where have you seen progress in your own community? Where are you not seeing progress, but wish you were? What links do you recommend to the Headway team? Let us know at [*dearheadway@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/arts/design/inwood-library-affordable-housing.html).

The Headway initiative is funded through grants from the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), with Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors serving as a fiscal sponsor. The Woodcock Foundation is a funder of Headway’s public square. Funders have no control over the selection, focus of stories or the editing process and do not review stories before publication. The Times retains full editorial control of the Headway initiative.

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PHOTO: The Inwood library sits beneath 174 subsidized units on 12 upper floors and belongs to an even larger development that includes a new pre-K, a STEM study center, a neighborhood teaching kitchen and various community spaces. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Amir Hamja for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2025

**End of Document**



[***She Dreamed of a New York Media Life. Would Her Soul Survive It?; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C57-JJN1-DXY4-X3XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 1, 2024 Saturday 23:03 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 748 words

**Byline:** Lucinda Rosenfeld

**Highlight:** In “Ambition Monster,” Jennifer Romolini recounts a rise from blue-collar dropout to “Corporate Barbie,” and what it cost her.

**Body**

In “Ambition Monster,” Jennifer Romolini recounts a rise from blue-collar dropout to “Corporate Barbie,” and what it cost her.

AMBITION MONSTER: A Memoir, by Jennifer Romolini

This spring, the website LitHub published [*an essay*](https://lithub.com/contemporary-literary-novels-are-haunted-by-the-absence-of-money/) about the lack of financial particulars in contemporary fiction. That piece stayed in my head as I read Jennifer Romolini’s spirited memoir about her transformation from an angry and self-destructive child of teen parents in ***working-class*** Philadelphia to a hard-charging fashion magazine editor and, later, a “Corporate Barbie” at a Fortune 500 tech company.

Although a work of nonfiction, the memoir, “Ambition Monster,” is at its most original when it grapples with the monetary calculations and status anxiety of a heroine who, unlike many denizens of the 21st-century mediascape, has neither a trust fund nor an Ivy League pedigree to fall back on.

Instead, pregnant, shotgun-married and a college dropout at age 21, the author seems poised to follow in the domestic footsteps of her mother. But a circuitous path leads her back to community college, then out of a stifling marriage. A collection of truly terrible boyfriends follows. Among them: a writer-musician who, unhappy about being broken up with, sends a photocopy of his middle finger, embellished with the words, “I now look at you as only a receptacle to put sperm.”

At a summer publishing course in her late 20s, Romolini makes the acquaintance of another world-class jerk: this one a “maverick” middle-aged publisher. Soon after, she washes up in New York City. There, she finds herself sharing his V.I.P. table at the nightclub Moomba, and, more generally, “submitting to sex not for pleasure but as an extension of my résumé, a gathering of useful information, a performance of independence, if not solely a means to numb out.”

It is ultimately through pavement pounding, not connections, that she lands her first editorial assistant job. But her ascent up the career ladder is slippery; after paying rent, Romolini has so little money left over that she resorts to making $3 rice and beans last two nights.

Even after landing a proper editor’s post, she discovers that she makes less than she did while waiting tables. Compelled to seek side gigs, she writes unlikely-to-win-a-Pulitzer features for Target’s in-house magazine with headlines like, “What’s Your Faucet Style?” Insecurities about her skill set and class background persist, exacerbated by the frequent experience of dating men with more success and fancier educations than her own.

But if the constant threat of precarity underscores her drive, Romolini makes the argument that it is actually childhood trauma — her early years were steeped in chaos and occasional violence — that accounts for her growing workaholism as she moves through her 30s and 40s. “Inside me is a hungry, terrified, security-craving goblin in the presence of whom I feel powerless; an ambitious monster who wants it all,” she writes.

Eventually, Romolini realizes her girlboss dreams and lands a C-suite job running the style pages of a legacy tech website. But even as she mocks the meaningless corporate lingo and “Hunger Games”-esque firings — “transitioned out” is the preferred dystopian terminology — her inability to put work away threatens to destroy her marriage.

Romolini’s honesty about her failings is laudable. Her propensity for overwork, however, is matched by a tendency to overwrite. We don’t, for instance, need to know that on Wednesday nights she and her future husband watch “Lost,” and a 26-page chapter on Romolini’s stint as a glorified caption writer at the shopping glossy Lucky might have been whittled by half.

She also packs on adjectives and clauses where just one or two would do. “In my work life, I am diligent, strategic, calculating, eyes on the prize; but after work I’m sloppy and not at all self-preserving; a pretend life-of-the-party girl, a girl who pretends she doesn’t care, the last person standing wherever I land,” reads one of countless prolix sentences.

However overstuffed, “Ambition Monster” offers an entertaining and highly relatable account of the struggle to avenge the people we once were. It also illuminates the empty promises of a life built on nothing but external metrics of achievement.

AMBITION MONSTER: A Memoir | By Jennifer Romolini | Atria | 304 pp. | $28.99

Lucinda Rosenfeld, a novelist and essayist, is the author of five books, including “Class.”

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR16.

**Load-Date:** June 18, 2024

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[***The Machines Ramen Shops In Japan Need Will Be Useless***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C74-XJV1-JBG3-60MK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 830 words

**Byline:** By Kiuko Notoya and John Yoon

**Body**

New yen notes set to be introduced this summer won't be compatible with many machines that businesses like ramen shops rely on.

The vending machine at Hiroshi Nishitani's Tokyo ramen restaurant has been reliable for a decade. Customers feed it money, and it prints out their orders while he makes fresh noodles in the kitchen. The food is served within minutes once the customer delivers the order to the pair of cooks at the counter.

But the machine's days are numbered. Japan is set to introduce a new set of bank notes this summer, something it does every 20 years or so to thwart counterfeiters. The machine, already too old to accept recent coin designs, won't accept the new bills, Mr. Nishitani said.

''There's nothing wrong with the vending machine,'' he said, expressing frustration with the need to buy an expensive new unit compatible with the new notes.

All over Japan, restaurants, cafeterias, bathhouses and other businesses are facing a similar prospect. The country has 4.1 million vending machines, according to Nikkei Compass, a database for industry reports. Many of them will be obsolete once the new 1,000-, 5,000- and 10,000-yen bills roll out in July featuring hologram technology.

In Japan, where the work force is shrinking, the machines reduce the need for cashiers and servers. Among the most reliant on the machines are ramen shops, which serve one of the Japanese ***working class***'s favorite, most affordable meals.

Ramen, wheat noodles in a richly flavored broth, became an integral part of Japanese cuisine after being popularized in the 1980s as the country's economy took off. Restaurants spread as people clamored for the quick and filling meal and as chefs experimented with new ingredients. Many chefs now dedicate their lives to perfecting the dish. Mr. Nishitani, who is 42, began making ramen at 17.

The noodles are a staple among construction and factory workers, salarymen, and students in search of inexpensive meals. Many ramen shops are clustered around train stations, catering to commuters.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, students from a nearby university filed in for a late lunch at Mr. Nishitani's nine-seat shop, Goumen Maruko.

He and his three employees sell about 100 dishes a day. Each is priced under 1,000 yen, or roughly $6.50. The most popular dish is a $5 Jiro-style bowl: noodles with a mountain of vegetables and clumps of pork fat soaked in a steaming broth of pork and chicken. The most expensive meals, which come in larger portions, cost about $6.20.

To defray the cost of upgrading or replacing vending machines, some municipalities offer subsidies, but most of the cost will fall on shop owners. A new machine can cost two million yen, or about $13,000, said Masahiro Kawamura, a sales manager at Elcom, a Tokyo company that sells vending machines that dispense tickets.

Yoshihiro Serizawa, who runs a soba shop in Tokyo, said he spent about $19,000 on his new machine, which also accepts cashless payment -- ''a huge financial burden.'' The amount is equivalent to more than 6,000 orders of his most popular dish: soba with mixed vegetables and seafood tempura, which costs just over $3.

''You have to constantly think about how you will make back the money,'' Mr. Serizawa said.

The new bank notes are heightening the pressures on Japan's small businesses. Recently, inflation has sped up after staying low for years, and the country slipped into a recession.

Increased flour and electricity prices have added to the expenses for ramen shops in particular. Analysts at Tokyo Shoko Research said that 45 ramen restaurants nationwide had filed for bankruptcy last year, the highest number since 2009. With customers unaccustomed to rising prices, businesses have struggled to increase theirs.

Among ramen chefs, the widely accepted limit for a bowl of ramen is known as the ''1,000-yen wall.''

''I really don't want to raise the price any further,'' Mr. Nishitani said.

When Japan released its last set of bills in 2004, modifying the vending machines and issuing 10 billion new bank notes cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Demand was so high that one manufacturer near Osaka, called Glory, saw its net income triple, according to an annual report.

Transitioning to new machines could take years. By the summer of 2023, only about 30 percent of drink vending machines could accept the 500 yen coins introduced in 2021, according to the Sankei Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper.

Mr. Nishitani's vending machine does not work with those coins, either. His Tokyo ward is subsidizing up to $1,900 toward new machines, a city official said. Mr. Nishitani laughed at the notion that it was nearly enough.

With two months to go before the new bills are issued, he had still not placed an order for a new machine. He recently began accepting payments through a credit card reader for the first time. But that has come with more administrative fees and more work.

''I can't get used to it at all,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/07/world/asia/japan-bank-notes-vending-machines.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/07/world/asia/japan-bank-notes-vending-machines.html)

**Graphic**

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[***Breaking Down Trumponomics 2.0; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CWY-4NW1-DXY4-X0FM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 2015 words

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**Highlight:** Higher tariffs, lower taxes, and more of Elon Musk: The former president outlined his economic vision to an audience of business leaders. But questions abound.

**Body**

Higher tariffs, lower taxes, and more of Elon Musk: The former president outlined his economic vision to an audience of business leaders. But questions abound.

Tariffs, taxes … and Musk

In the week when Vice President Kamala Harris started to spell out some of her economic policies, it was Donald Trump’s turn on Thursday to set out his fiscal agenda. It comes as slowdown concerns grow ahead of [*Friday’s jobs report*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

At the center of the proposals, which he outlined at the Economic Club of New York, are higher tariffs, lower taxes and [*more Elon Musk*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Much of these cover familiar ground and again raise as many questions as they sought to answer about how he would govern if re-elected. Still, his remarks could be a prelude to what he’ll be grilled on at next week’s debate with Harris.

Trump sought to draw a sharp contrast with Harris on who would be better for the economy. “I call it America First. This is the policy that built this country, and this is the policy that will save our country,” [*he told*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) an audience that included JPMorgan Chase’s Jamie Dimon, Blackstone’s Steve Schwarzman and the hedge fund mogul John Paulson.

Trump wants to lower taxes on companies and to rescind much of President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, a law [*popular with many business chiefs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). He has also tried to label Harris as a left-wing extremist.

Harris is trying to keep both [*progressives and her corporate backers on side*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). For instance, she has signaled she will largely keep Biden’s signature industrial policies but has scaled back the size of a proposed increase in the capital gains tax.

Whoever wins in November will most likely inherit a slowing economy. But experts warn that Trump’s policies could push the U.S. into a trade war that would [*raise inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and weaken the economy. Goldman Sachs economists this week said a Harris presidency would be [*better for growth*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) than a Trump 2.0 would be.

Here are other takeaways from Trump’s speech:

* He wants to create a commission to oversee federal spending to save “trillions,” an idea first floated by Musk. Trump also wants the tech mogul [*to run it*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), but that could create potential conflicts of interest: SpaceX, Musk’s rocket company, is a major government contractor.

1. He would lower the corporate tax rate to 15 percent from 21 percent. The catch: To supercharge manufacturing, the break would only be extended to companies that make their products in the U.S. and keep jobs onshore. But in a world of global supply chains, [*who would qualify?*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)
2. Trump painted tariffs as the panacea to America’s economic woes. He has long threatened to impose big levies to appeal to ***working class*** voters who fear their jobs will go overseas. But Trump now asserts that tariffs could also be a revenue generator that would even somehow help families [*afford soaring child-care costs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). He also paid homage to the “highly underrated president, William McKinley,” a 19th-century champion of tariffs ([*until he wasn’t*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)).

* Trump also promised lower interest rates. That too came with no explanation, as monetary policy is the job of the Fed. But Trump has threatened to [*break with the longstanding principle of central bank independence*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), saying he would like a greater “say.” (In 2019, the last time he spoke at the prestigious club, he [*also vented*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) about the Fed’s interest rate policy, part of his long-running feud with the central bank and its chair, Jay Powell.)

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

The owner of 7-Eleven rejects a big foreign takeover bid. [*Seven &amp; i Holdings*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the Japanese parent company of the convenience store chain, said that a $38 billion offer by Alimentation Couche-Tard of Canada was too low and could draw opposition from antitrust regulators. (That said, it [*didn’t completely close the door*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to a sale, which would be the biggest overseas takeover of a Japanese company.) Seven &amp; i will probably face pressure to come up with a more compelling stand-alone plan.

Saudi Arabia and other oil producers extend production cuts. The kingdom and seven other members of the OPEC Plus cartel [*unexpectedly delayed plans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), until at least December, to begin increasing production. The move came in response to a drop in oil prices tied to weaker global demand and an increase in supply from non-OPEC producers. The price of Brent crude, the international benchmark, rose slightly on the news, but remained well below its 2024 peak.

The Transportation Department opens an inquiry into frequent-flier programs. The department is examining whether the offerings from the four biggest U.S. airlines — United, Delta, American and Southwest — [*hurt consumers*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) through practices including devaluation of rewards, extra fees and dynamic pricing. Across the Atlantic, Britain’s Competition and Markets Authority is investigating whether Ticketmaster [*adequately disclosed its use of dynamic pricing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in the sale of tickets for the Oasis reunion tour.

The power behind the Paramount throne

Larry Ellison made his name, and fortune, co-founding and leading the tech giant Oracle. But the 80-year-old is adding another title, thanks to his son’s deal-making: [*controlling shareholder of Paramount*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), replacing Shari Redstone in the role.

The elder Ellison’s participation in financing the $8 billion takeover of Paramount by David Ellison’s Skydance has long been public. But the role he played in the new company’s hierarchy has only now come to light, raising big questions about who’s really in the driver’s seat at the media behemoth.

What we now know. The group led by Skydance is buying the majority of the controlling interest in Paramount currently held by Redstone. A filing with the F.C.C. applying to transfer control of Paramount’s TV stations breaks down the company’s new ownership:

* Pinnacle Media, an Ellison family investment vehicle, will own 77.5 percent of National Amusements, which owns Redstone’s controlling stake.

1. An entity affiliated with RedBird Capital Partners, an investment firm backing Skydance, will control the remaining 22.5 percent
2. Sayonara, a media company controlled by the Lawrence J. Ellison Revocable Trust, will attain control of Paramount’s licensed television broadcast stations. Larry Ellison is listed as the controlling shareholder of that trust.

Who’s in charge? Skydance has said that David Ellison, who is set to be Paramount’s C.E.O., would have operational control of Paramount after the deal closes. But the news raises questions about how much influence his father will exert.

“Maybe Larry Ellison will give David free rein,” Brian Quinn, a professor at Boston College Law School, told DealBook. “Perhaps, Larry will call all the shots, or maybe just the big shots.”

DealBook has another big question: What happens to Larry Ellison’s controlling stake when he dies?

Larry Ellison could face more scrutiny. The tech mogul has long been an influential figure in tech and finance circles. A prolific Republican donor, he hosted a fund-raiser for Donald Trump in 2020, but more recently [*backed rival candidates in the G.O.P. presidential primary.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)

Intel’s murky future

What will happen to Intel? The Biden administration bet big on the storied chip maker, seeing it as a key to reviving the domestic semiconductor industry.

But a run of horrid earnings and setbacks has raised questions about Intel’s future ahead of a [*crucial board meeting next week*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to figure out how to reverse a decline that’s being closely watched in Silicon Valley and Washington.

Qualcomm is said to be looking at buying pieces of its rival. The chip maker has looked at potentially [*acquiring parts of Intel’s design business*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), Reuters reports. The P.C. client unit, which makes laptop and desktop computer chips, is of particular interest.

Intel is weighing drastic changes. The company said it would cut 15,000 jobs, scrap its dividend and slash capital spending after reporting disastrous second-quarter results. Intel could also [*trim its stake in Mobileye*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the autonomous driving tech company, or [*sell businesses like Altera*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), its programmable chip unit.

A.I. is one big reason Intel is lagging behind its peers. Pat Gelsinger, Intel’s C.E.O., is three years into a five-year turnaround plan. But last year, the board told him to [*ramp up the company’s A.I. efforts*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) or the company could miss the boat, The Financial Times reports. Talks with SoftBank to [*produce an A.I. chip to take on Nvidia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) failed.

Investors have punished Intel, wiping about $70 billion off its value over the past year during an A.I. boom that added almost $1.4 trillion to Nvidia’s market value.

Will Intel split up? The company is considering various options to turn itself around, including separating its product-design and manufacturing businesses, or even selling its foundry division. Investors cheered the news, sending shares up almost 10 percent after [*Bloomberg reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) the potential plans.

[*Ben Thompson*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), author of the influential tech newsletter Stratechery, says a split is the only solution, an idea he pushed in 2021 when Gelsinger became C.E.O. Whatever happens, the likelihood that Intel will lead an American chip-making renaissance are in doubt. “The tech world has moved on from Intel; the only chance for U.S. leading edge manufacturing is to do the same,” he wrote in a note this week.

The venture capitalists who are thinking small

The world of venture capital is dominated by mega-firms that have raised billions of dollars across scores of various funds. That has led to a tsunami of cash pouring into start-ups, often forcing them to grow fast to justify those investments.

That phenomenon has also led to [*disastrous results*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), prompting some investors to push back. Among them is Nick Chirls of Asylum Ventures, which oversees a $55 million fund dedicated to younger tech companies. He [*explained his approach*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to The Times’s Erin Griffith:

Most venture capital funds raise money from outside investors and deploy it in dozens of start-ups within two to three years. The start-ups then raise numerous rounds of funding, with the aim of selling or going public and earning a return for investors.

But Asylum plans to make only four or five investments a year over a longer period, Mr. Chirls said. It will also focus on backing start-ups that need only a small amount of money — as little as $500,000 — to get going.

“Those are rare,” Mr. Chirls said. “There are not hundreds of them.”

He said he was inspired by A24, the independent movie company known for hits like “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” which fosters small, unusual projects that the big Hollywood studios won’t touch.

That said, many venture capital firms are still eager to shower huge sums on start-ups, especially if they’re focused on [*artificial*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) [*intelligence*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). But other investors are applauding the think-small approach. “We’re still a small minority,” Bryce Roberts, who runs Indie.vc, told The Times. “My hope is it starts to validate this approach.”

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* [*Salesforce agreed to buy Own*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a start-up that provides backup applications for cloud computing applications, for $1.9 billion. (Bloomberg)

1. Family offices, which have become bigger players in investing, are expected to [*add $2 trillion in assets by 2030*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), according to a new report. (CNBC)

Elections, politics and policy

* A federal judge temporarily [*blocked another aspect*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of President Biden’s student debt relief plan, siding with seven Republican state officials who opposed it. (NYT)

1. Federal agents seized the phones of [*several top New York City officials*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), including the police commissioner, further destabilizing the administration of Mayor Eric Adams. (NYT)

Best of the rest

* A federal judge rejected a key part of a proposed $2.8 billion settlement for an [*antitrust lawsuit against the N.C.A.A.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), potentially endangering the landmark agreement. (NYT)

1. China is [*combining two state-owned securities brokerages*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to create a bigger homegrown competitor to Wall Street giants. (Bloomberg)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: Donald Trump laid out his economic vision for business leaders at the Economic Club of New York yesterday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Spencer Platt/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Dance Performances, Festivals and More Coming This Fall; Fall Preview***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CWX-RBY1-DXY4-X0C3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ARTS; dance

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**Byline:** Margaret Fuhrer

**Highlight:** The season brings new works by Kyle Abraham and Helen Pickett, as well as revivals of City Ballet’s “Coppélia” and Bill T. Jones’s “Still/Here.”

**Body**

The season brings new works by Kyle Abraham and Helen Pickett, as well as revivals of City Ballet’s “Coppélia” and Bill T. Jones’s “Still/Here.”

The dance world is in a festive mood this fall: It seems like everyone has a big anniversary to celebrate. All that attention on the past may explain why the programming sometimes tilts conservative, especially in ballet, where evening-length storytelling remains de rigueur. But the stories are getting more ambitious, the voices telling them more varied. And there are still plenty of artists pushing in the opposite direction. Some of the season’s most exciting dances can’t even be contained by theater walls, finding their stages in parks, museums, historic buildings, farm fields. (Locations are in Manhattan unless otherwise specified; dates are subject to change.)

September

[*YANIRA CASTRO / A CANARY TORSI*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Started in July, “Exorcism = Liberation,” a sweeping public art and performance project by Castro and a team of collaborators, calling for collective change, continues with immersive, participatory events at multiple sites in New York, Illinois and Massachusetts. (Through Nov. 1; various locations)

[*THE JOYCE THEATER*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The dozen programs on offer at the Joyce from September to December feature an abundance both of dance styles and premieres. London City Ballet brings four U.S. debuts to the Joyce as part of its first international tour in more than 30 years (Sept. 17-22). A new work by Kayla Farrish reimagining two of José Limón’s lost dances highlights Limón Dance Company’s Joyce season (Nov. 5-10). Complexions Contemporary Ballet’s 30th birthday celebrations include a retrospective for Dwight Rhoden, an artistic director of the company, whose sinewy, sinuous choreography has become its hallmark (Nov. 19-Dec. 1). And the drag ensemble Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo celebrates 50 years of lovingly skewering ballet: Durante Verzola’s “Symphony,” in its New York debut, makes a comedic meal of George Balanchine’s delectable “Symphony in C” (Dec. 17-Jan. 5).

[*NEW YORK CITY BALLET*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) On the heels of its 75th birthday festivities, the company presents another anniversary-focused season, with programs commemorating 90 years of its affiliated School of American Ballet, 50 years of George Balanchine and Alexandra Danilova’s sunny “Coppélia,” and 10 years of Justin Peck’s tenure as resident choreographer. The annual fall fashion gala (Oct. 9) will include a world premiere by Caili Quan, costumed by designer Gilles Mendel. (Sept. 17-Oct. 13, David H. Koch Theater)

[*FALL FOR DANCE*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) “Eclectic” remains the word, and $20 (plus fees), the ticket price, for this long-running festival. But its five sampler-style programs are notably ballet-forward this year, with the National Ballet of Ukraine in Alexei Ratmansky’s poignant “Wartime Elegy,” Canada’s Royal Winnipeg Ballet in a premiere by Cameron Fraser-Monroe, and the American Ballet Theater stars Skylar Brandt and Herman Cornejo in Cornejo’s new production of “The Specter of the Rose.” (Sept. 18-29, New York City Center)

[*ABRONS ARTS CENTER*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Two tonally opposite dance-theater works come to Abrons this fall: Malik Nashad Sharpe’s “Marikiscrycrycry: Goner,” a solo probing the depths of horror and alienation (Sept. 19-22), and Nélida Tirado’s “Dime Quién Soy (Tell Me Who I Am),” a celebratory mixture of flamenco, bomba y plena and salsa (Dec. 13-22).

[*PAGEANT*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) This [*young and category-eluding*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) performance space in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, will mount a smorgasbord of a fall season, with shows by Molly Soda (Sept. 19-20), Anna Thérèse Witenberg (Sept. 26-27), Sebas Alarcon (Oct. 10-11), Vita Taurke (Oct. 24-25) and Cayleen del Rosario (Nov. 7-8), capped by a showing of works-in-progress by artists selected via lottery (Nov. 21-22).

[*2024 CROSSING THE LINE FESTIVAL*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) It’s an especially good dance year for the L’Alliance New York’s annual festival. Among its eight dance performances are a retrospective for the choreographer Jérôme Bel (Sept. 27-28, Florence Gould Theater), a site-specific dance by Lenio Kaklea on Governors Island (Oct. 5), and the U.S. premiere of the French transplant DD Dorvillier’s “Dance is the archaeologist, or an idol in the bone.” (Oct. 17-19, the Chocolate Factory).

[*92NY HARKNESS DANCE CENTER*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Last season, 92NY celebrated 150 years; this year, the organization’s Harkness Dance Center turns 90. Its anniversary season includes the Batsheva Ensemble from Israel (Sept. 27-29), the women-led company Dual Rivet (Oct. 18-19), the in-demand choreographer Omar Román De Jesús’ troupe Boca Tuya (Nov. 14-15), and the acclaimed company Urban Bush Women — which is celebrating its own 40th anniversary festivities (Dec. 6-7).

[*KAATSBAAN FALL FESTIVAL*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The Hudson Valley cultural park’s annual festival dedicates its final two weekends to dance: first, a program of new dance works developed during residencies at Kaatsbaan (Sept. 28-29), and then the choreographer Wayne McGregor’s “Autobiography (v100 and v101),” which incorporates an algorithm based on his DNA (Oct. 5-6).

[*WORKS &amp; PROCESS*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) This lauded series at the Guggenheim Museum offers behind-the-scenes peeks at a range of dance projects — from Baye &amp; Asa’s newly expanded “Cortege 2023” for the Martha Graham Dance Company, inspired by Graham’s “Cortege of Eagles” (Sept. 29), to a new work by the vibrant tap dance and music company Music From the Sole (Sept. 30) — as well as dance parties in the museum’s rotunda (Sept. 23, Nov. 18) and dance battles in the Manhattan West Event Plaza across town (Wednesdays in September).

October

[*RALPH LEMON*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Lemon’s irrepressibly multidisciplinary works tend to require multiple descriptors: lecture/musical, event/performance. This fall the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis will premiere his installation [*“Rant redux,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) with sound by artist Kevin Beasley (Oct. 3-13), in tandem with a new live performance, [*“Tell it anyway”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) (Oct. 4-5) — both genre-defying maelstroms of fury and grace. The next month, the two works will come to MoMA’s PS1 in New York as part of the major Lemon exhibition [*“Ceremonies Out of the Air”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) (opening Nov. 14).

[*DANCES FOR A VARIABLE POPULATION*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The multigenerational troupe will offer three free performances of “Revival 8: Then and Now,” a series in which works by renowned choreographers — Martha Graham, Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor — are reinterpreted by alumni of their companies. (Oct. 5, Yolanda Garcia Park; Oct. 18, Washington Square Park; Nov. 16, Ailey Citigroup Theater)

[*JONATHAN GONZÁLEZ*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) For multiple hours on four consecutive weekends, the six Black performers of González’s “Spectral Dances” will haunt the traditionally members-only halls of the Academy of Arts and Letters in Washington Heights — a consideration of the space and its history, real and imagined. (Oct. 5-27)

[*DANSPACE PROJECT*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Danspace celebrates its 50th anniversary this fall by foregrounding not the old but the new, with premieres by Niall Jones (Oct. 10-12), Ayano Elson and Wendell Gray II (Nov. 21-23) and Jade Manns and Glenn Potter-Takata (Dec. 12-14). On Nov. 2, the organization will look both backward and forward, screening short videos by Danspace luminaries that respond to the prompt, “The future is…”

[*BLACK LABEL MOVEMENT*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The choreographer Carl Flink examines the ethical and physical consequences of war in his new work “Battleground,” performed by the dancers of Black Label Movement in a 30-by-25-foot dirt pit on a farm outside of Durham, N.C. (Oct. 11-13)

[*AMERICAN BALLET THEATER*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Ballet Theater has mounted a few ambitious literary adaptations recently, but the choreographer Helen Pickett is taking on a particularly daunting tome: “Crime and Punishment.” Her interpretation of Dostoyevsky’s novel headlines the company’s fall season, which also features premieres by Kyle Abraham and Gemma Bond. (Oct. 16-Nov. 3, David H. Koch Theater)

[*BARYSHNIKOV ARTS CENTER*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The fall season offers several premieres by a remarkable collection of collaborators. “Woolgathering,” a spoken-word opera with music by Oliver Ray and choreography by John Heginbotham, is based on Patti Smith’s book — and features Smith among its performers (Oct. 21, 23-24). The new multidisciplinary group Prisma, helmed by the choreographer and photographer Quinn Wharton, presents a work exploring its artists’ personal mythologies (Nov. 14-16).

[*CATHY WEIS PROJECTS*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) For a decade, Weis has hosted [*“Sundays on Broadway” salons*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) — featuring works-in-process and other experiments from an impressive roster of artists — in her intimate SoHo loft. Yvonne Rainer and Deborah Hay are two of the featured artists in the fall’s five programs. (Oct. 27, Nov. 10, Nov. 17, Dec. 1, Dec. 8)

[*2024 BAM NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Anchoring the festival is Bill T. Jones’s “Still/Here” (Oct. 30-Nov. 2), a deeply personal meditation on mortality and survival in response to the AIDS epidemic, which challenged audiences (and critics) when it premiered 30 years ago. Next Wave will also feature the U.S. premiere of the Canadian choreographer Dana Gingras’s psychedelic “Frontera,” accompanied live by the experimental rock band Fly Pan Am (Nov 8-9).

November

[*OONA DOHERTY*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Irish history, mythology and trauma loom large in much of this choreographer’s work. But “Specky Clark,” premiering at the Pavillion Noir in Aix en Provence, France, explores Doherty’s personal history: Its surrealist dance-theater images are inspired by her great-grandfather’s ***working-class*** life in Belfast. (Nov. 22-23)

[*‘INK’*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Dancers sometimes talk about being choreographers’ paintbrushes, but in “Ink,” a collaboration between the dance artist Huang Yi and the audiovisual artist Ryoichi Kurokawa, that image is startlingly apt: Kurokawa’s projections turn the performers’ movements into a flow of brushstrokes, inspired by the calligraphy of Tong Yang-Tze. (Nov. 2-3, at the Rose Theater)

[*PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) The company’s resident choreographer Lauren Lovette will be in the spotlight during its fall run at Lincoln Center, which features not one but two Lovette premieres plus the return of her 2023 piece “Echo.” The troupe will also begin its anniversary tribute to Taylor’s “Esplanade,” the seminal work that he began creating 50 years ago. And Robert Battle — until last year, the artistic director of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater — will create a new work for the company’s gala, in tribute to the renowned Taylor dancer and educator Carolyn Adams. (Nov. 5-24, David H. Koch Theater)

[*SMITA SEN*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) A former ballet dancer, Sen now calls herself an interaction designer. Her first museum exhibition, “Embodied,” will combine performance and film with body art and 3D-printed sculptures. (Nov. 6-Apr. 6, 2025, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, Fla.)

[*THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Highlights of the experimental Long Island City-based organization’s fall lineup include the premiere of Levi Gonzalez’s “Hoary” (Nov. 13-16) and Tess Dworman’s wry, mordant “Everything Must Go” (Dec. 18-21).

‘NUTCRACKER’ TRADITIONS For purists, there are few better options than New York City Ballet’s wondrous [*“George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) at Lincoln Center (Nov. 29-Jan. 4). But the smallest ballet fans might fare better at New York Theater Ballet’s charming one-hour [*“Nutcracker,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) performed in multiple locations (Nov. 22-23; Dec. 1-2, 15, 21-22).

‘NUTCRACKER’ ALTERNATIVES Prefer your holidays with a twist? Consider tap ensemble Dorrance Dance’s jazzy, joyful [*“The Nutcracker Suite,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) at New York City Center (Nov. 22-24); Brooklyn Ballet’s [*“The Brooklyn Nutcracker,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) with a rich mosaic of dance styles, at the Theater at City Tech (Dec. 12-15); Mark Morris’s [*“The Hard Nut,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) a kitschy classic in its own right, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Dec. 12-22); or the Bang Group’s bubbly, batty [*“Nut/Cracked,”*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) at 92NY’s Harkness Dance Center (Dec. 14 and 19; online Dec. 20-23).

December

[*KYLE ABRAHAM*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) It’s not surprising that extraordinary dancers seem to follow Abraham wherever he goes: His compassionate choreography allows them to be both humans and superheroes. “Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful,” his new full-length work exploring the power of empathy, will feature a large cast of those magnetic performers; Abraham, himself a gorgeous mover, will join them. (Dec. 3-14, Park Avenue Armory)

[*GIBNEY COMPANY*](https://exorcism-liberation.net/) Gibney’s hungry, hyper-capable dancers will tackle a world premiere by Emilie LeRiche, the rising phenom Mthuthuzeli November’s “Vukani,” and William Forsythe’s virtuosic brainteaser “Trio.” (Dec. 10-14, New York Live Arts)

PHOTOS: Megan Fairchild in George Balanchine and Alexandra Danilova’s “Coppélia,” whose 50th anniversary New York City Ballet commemorates this fall. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL KOLNIK); Olga Golytsia and Daniil Pashchuk of the National Ballet of Ukraine in Alexei Ratmansky’s “Wartime Elegy,” part of the Fall for Dance festival. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KATERYNA YELETSKYKH); Erin Bugge soars over her colleagues in the Paul Taylor Dance Company in Taylor’s “Esplanade,” which the dance master began creating 50 years ago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Dada Masilo’s “Hamlet,” set in her native South Africa, is coming to the Joyce Theater in October. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUGE SORENSEN); Mariama Noguera-Devers and Dwayne Brown in Ralph Lemon’s “Rant.” His “Rant Redux” will come to MoMA PS1 in November. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA RALPH LEMON; PHOTO BY PAULA COURT) (AR28); Rehearsing Kyle Abraham’s “Dear Lord, Make Me Beautiful.” The production will run at the Park Avenue Armory. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ELLIOTT JEROME BROWN JR. FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); From a 1994 Brooklyn Academy performance of Bill T. Jones’s “Still/Here,” about mortality and survival in response to the AIDS epidemic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BAM HAMM ARCHIVES) (AR31) This article appeared in print on page AR28, AR31.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2024

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[***A Lot of Major Shifts Beneath the Surface in a New Trump-Harris Poll***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJY-K5T1-DXY4-X1S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 26, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1241 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

The changes among groups cancel out for now, and Trump leads narrowly, but there's a tie when candidates like Kennedy Jr. are considered.

After all the political tumult of the last month, Thursday's latest New York Times/Siena College poll is full of findings unlike any we've seen this cycle, with one exception: who leads the presidential race.

The poll found Donald J. Trump ahead of Kamala Harris by one percentage point, 48 percent to 47 percent, among likely voters. Other than the name of the Democratic candidate, ''Trump +1'' is a result that could have been from any other Times/Siena poll before President Biden's disastrous debate.

But on question after question, there are major shifts from previous Times-Siena polls, which were all taken before Vice President Harris essentially locked up her party's nomination for president, before the Republican convention, and before the attempted assassination of Mr. Trump. Even the one-point Harris deficit represents a significant improvement for Democrats from Mr. Biden's six-point deficit in our last Times/Siena poll.

As I have written, these events make it hard to know what to make of the results of recent polls, including this one. The survey is a useful marker of where the race stands now, but there's no reason to be confident that this is where the race will stand once the dust settles.

While the overall result between Ms. Harris and Mr. Trump may look familiar, the poll is full of signs that there's a lot of dust still in the political air.

Mr. Trump hits a high in popularity. Overall, 48 percent of registered voters say they have a favorable view of him, up from 42 percent in our last poll (taken after the debate but before the convention and assassination attempt). It's his highest favorable number in a Times/Siena poll, which previously always found his favorable ratings between 39 percent and 45 percent.

Ms. Harris is surging. In fact, her ratings have increased even more than Mr. Trump's. Overall, 46 percent of registered voters have a favorable view of her, up from 36 percent when we last asked about her in February. Only 49 percent have an unfavorable view, down from 54 percent in our last measure. As important, her favorable rating is higher than Mr. Biden's. In fact, it's higher than his standing in any Times/Siena poll since September 2022, which so happens to be the last time Mr. Biden led a Times/Siena national poll of registered voters.

The national political environment is a little brighter. The share of voters who say the country is on the ''right track'' is up to 27 percent -- hardly a bright and smiley public, but still the highest since the midterm elections in 2022. Mr. Biden's approval and favorable ratings are up as well. The ranks of the double haters have dwindled: With both Ms. Harris and Mr. Trump riding high, the number of voters who dislike both candidates has plunged to 8 percent, down from 20 percent in Times/Siena polls so far this year.

With all of these underlying changes in the attitudes about the candidates, there's no reason to assume that this familiar Trump +1 result means that the race has simply returned to where it stood before the debate. For now, these developments have mostly canceled out, but whether that will still be true in a few weeks is much harder to say.

By the book, Mr. Trump's gains over the last month resemble a classic ''convention bounce,'' perhaps with added good will from his survival of the assassination attempt. Historically, bounces usually fade, but not necessarily in their entirety.

What has happened to Ms. Harris over the last week doesn't follow any book at all. She'll presumably keep riding the momentum of her new candidacy for a while, but after that anything is possible. Only time will tell how the public will react to her as they hear her -- and the attacks against her -- in the days and weeks ahead.

Below, a few outtakes from our poll.

Yes, voters seem fine with the Democratic makeover

I don't think the Times/Siena poll has ever found 87 percent of voters who agreed on anything, but that's the share who say they approve of Mr. Biden's decision to stand aside in the presidential race. Only 9 percent disapprove.

Democrats, meanwhile, are ready for Kamala. Nearly four-fifths say the party should nominate her for president, compared with 14 percent who say they should nominate someone else. A slightly larger 27 percent say the party should encourage a competitive nominating process, but 70 percent say the party should unite behind Ms. Harris and quickly make her the nominee.

A more typical demographic divide

If you're a longtime reader of the Tilt, you know we've been tracking Mr. Biden's weakness among young, Black, Hispanic and low-turnout voters for nearly a year now.

It will take some time -- maybe more than a month, given the potential volatility ahead -- before we have a good sense of the demographic contours of this new race. But in this poll at least, the Harris-Trump matchup brings a different and more typical demographic divide.

In the poll, Ms. Harris fares better among young (18 to 29) and Hispanic voters than Mr. Biden did in any survey this year. She fares better among nonvoters than Mr. Biden did in all but one Times/Siena poll over the same period. Conversely, she fares worse among white ***working-class*** voters and voters over 65 than Mr. Biden did in all but one prior Times/Siena poll.

Of course, this is just one survey; the results of individual subgroups from one poll are noisy and subject to a hefty margin of error. But there's good reason to think that these demographic shifts are part of something real. The findings are consistent with those of previous Times/Siena polls. And more generally, they're in keeping with the expected relative strengths of a Black woman (who also has Indian ancestry) from California in her 50s compared with a white man from Scranton, Pa., in his 80s.

Will Kennedy help Harris?

Ms. Harris actually pulled even with Mr. Trump when all the minor-party candidates were included along with the independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Ms. Harris was at 44 percent and Mr. Trump at 43 percent (Ms. Harris's lead rounds to zero using the exact figures, 43.5 to 43.2), with Mr. Kennedy at 5 percent. That's Mr. Kennedy's lowest tally since we began naming him in our polls.

Mr. Trump led in the two-way race -- but not the multicandidate race -- because he won Mr. Kennedy's sliver of support by more than a two-to-one margin. It's a small sample, but it is Mr. Trump's largest advantage among Kennedy supporters in our polling to this point.

It's just one poll, but there's something to the idea that Mr. Kennedy's presence in the race might more clearly help Ms. Harris. Throughout the race, Mr. Kennedy's candidacy has tended to appeal more to the right than the left. In this poll, for instance, Mr. Kennedy's favorable rating is positive among Republicans but negative among Democrats. Even so, he had been drawing relatively evenly from President Biden and Mr. Trump, as he managed to win a considerable number of the disproportionately young voters disaffected with Mr. Biden.

Ms. Harris, however, does not necessarily have the same vulnerability. If she's sufficiently appealing to young, disaffected voters who ordinarily lean Democratic, Mr. Kennedy might not siphon away as much of her support -- and might start to draw disproportionately from Mr. Trump.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/25/upshot/poll-kamala-harris-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/25/upshot/poll-kamala-harris-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Donald J. Trump, with JD Vance. Overall, 48 percent of voters said they have a favorable view of Mr. Trump, up from 42 percent. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2024

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[***As the Number Of Millionaires Grows, Others Flee New York***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69TP-G841-JBG3-6359-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 8, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1231 words

**Byline:** By Stefanos Chen

**Body**

A report found that New York is gaining millionaires, despite an earlier exodus, while lower-income families are being forced to leave, raising questions about the state's tax policies.

At the height of the pandemic, the richest New Yorkers left in droves.

The trend led to months of hand-wringing, and both Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul later spurned proposals to raise taxes on the rich for fear of driving more of them to low-tax states.

Now, a new report based on the latest census and state tax filing data has found a reversal: The ranks of millionaires have come surging back, while lower- and middle-income New Yorkers are heading for the exits, according to the study, published Tuesday by the Fiscal Policy Institute, a left-leaning policy group.

The people leaving New York at the fastest rate last year were families making between $32,000 and $65,000. A disproportionately high share of these movers were Black and Hispanic. They were followed by people earning $104,000 to $172,000 a year, an above-average income in many parts of the country but a more modest one in New York City.

Continuing to lose these residents, who form the backbone of many essential services and white-collar industries, could jeopardize the city's uneven recovery, said Andrew Beveridge, the president of Social Explorer, a demographic firm that reviewed the new data.

''If you want a subway system, an office sector, a restaurant industry, you need these people,'' he said.

The report also found that affluent residents who left New York did not appear to have been driven away by recent tax increases.

More than three-quarters of rich people who left during the pandemic moved to other high-tax states, including Connecticut, New Jersey and California. The report defines this group as the top 1 percent of income-earners, making more than $815,000 a year.

The findings come at a time when the city is preparing to slash the budgets of public services including police, sanitation and schools -- cuts that could push more ***working-class*** residents out of the state, said Nathan Gusdorf, the director of the Fiscal Policy Institute.

''The main priority for policymakers should be retaining the middle- and ***working-class*** populations of New York, by making it affordable and livable,'' he added.

New York lost 431,000 residents from July 2020 to July 2022, wiping out half of the state's population gains through the last decade, according to the report. Since 2020, nearly 94 percent of the state's population loss was from New York City.

At first, the exodus was led by the wealthiest New Yorkers, who were more likely to work remotely, and had the means to move, Mr. Gusdorf said.

But the trend has turned around. While the state lost 2,400 millionaire households from 2020 to 2022, there was a net gain of 15,100 in the same period, because of strong financial markets that boosted earnings, and the return of some families.

In 2022, the most recent year data was available, the richest New Yorkers left the state at far lower rates than all other income groups, in line with prepandemic norms.

Instead, lower-income families have been moving away at higher rates. On net, more than 65,000 residents who made $32,000 to $65,000 left the state last year, or 2 percent of that population.

That is the most of any income group, and three times the rate of outbound migration for the wealthiest 1 percent of New Yorkers.

The next largest group of people who left the state last year was those who made between $104,000 and $172,000, with a net loss of 58,000 people. The median income in New York City was about $75,000 last year.

Among the lower-income group, Black and Hispanic New Yorkers were at least twice as likely to move out of the state as white residents, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.

For many ***working-class*** New Yorkers, it was the high cost of living, not taxes, that drove them away.

Danna Dennis, 40, who was raised in Queens and Brooklyn, moved to Newark, N.J., in 2019, when she was pregnant with her first child. Ms. Dennis, a community organizer for a transit nonprofit group, was making about $50,000 a year, and had been paying around $600 a month to rent a room in East Flatbush, Brooklyn.

Child care blew up her budget. To move to a two-bedroom apartment, she would have had to pay around $2,500 a month in Brooklyn. The lowest quote she received for day care was $2,700 a month. After being turned down for a below-market-rate apartment in the Bronx, she had a breakdown.

''I cried the whole way home on the 2 train,'' she recalled. ''I said, 'That's it, I give up.'''

Now she rents a three-bedroom apartment with her husband, Ifeanyi Njoku, a group-home caregiver, and their two children in East Orange, N.J., for $2,800 a month, although she still works in New York.

The couple now has a combined annual income of $130,000, but it's still not enough to comfortably afford rising rent and child care costs, including medical expenses for their older son, who has special needs.

''I call us the 'make too much, but not enough' demographic,'' she said. ''You either have to be all the way on the top, or you have to be way on the bottom.''

Raising taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers could help fund public services like free prekindergarten and housing subsidies that could help reduce those burdens -- with little impact on the city's millionaires, Mr. Gusdorf said.

The group found that there was no meaningful increase in the number of millionaires who left the state after tax increases on the richest New Yorkers in 2017 and 2021.

A spokesman for the governor referred to a recent statement in which Ms. Hochul said she would not raise taxes this year. ''Taxes are high enough in the state of New York and we have to live within our means,'' she said.

The mayor's office said that amid fiscal challenges, ''New Yorkers cannot be asked to shoulder the burden'' for the failings of the state and federal governments.

Wealthy New Yorkers are crucial to the city and state's economy, and any discussion of raising their taxes becomes delicate. Millionaires who pay taxes contributed 45 percent of New York State's total income tax revenue in 2021, the highest share since 2015, according to an analysis of state data by the Fiscal Policy Institute.

E.J. McMahon, the founding senior fellow at the Empire Center for Public Policy, a fiscally conservative research group, said New York City should ''absolutely not'' raise taxes on the rich, because it already has the highest combined personal-income-tax rate in the country.

For many ***working-class*** New Yorkers who have left, it's getting harder to justify returning.

Risalat Zakaria, 37, a film and television editor, was living in a 950-square-foot co-op in the South Bronx with his wife and son when they decided in 2021 to move to St. Louis to be closer to his wife's law school.

The couple makes around $110,000 a year -- less than they did in New York -- but their new cost of living is significantly lower. For full-day child care during the workweek, they pay $900 a month, a third of what they might pay for similar care in New York, Mr. Zakaria said.

For all the changes, Mr. Zakaria, who grew up in Corona, Queens, isn't feeling homesick. He has been back to the city just a handful of times, he said.

''Each time is more miserable than the last,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/nyregion/nyc-****working-class****-tax-rich.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/nyregion/nyc-working-class-tax-rich.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Danna Dennis moved to New Jersey after housing and child care costs in Brooklyn became untenable. At left, Risalat Zakaria moved to St. Louis from the Bronx with his son, Ilias, 4, and his wife, Amearah Elsamadicy. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

WHITNEY CURTIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***Kamala Harris Needs a 3 P.M. Agenda; Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CK1-KG51-JBG3-61CT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 26, 2024 Friday 12:13 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1276 words

**Byline:** Peter Coy 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:** To steer the economy well, a president must see beyond what keeps voters up at night.

**Body**

Vice President Kamala Harris has what she used to call a 3 a.m. agenda. To be an effective president, she’ll need to add a 3 p.m. agenda.

Let me explain. When Harris was running for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2019, she put out a [*television ad*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) that was pretty effective. She described how her mother, after putting the girls to bed, “would sit up trying to figure out how to make it all work,” presumably sometimes until 3 in the morning.

Harris said her 3 a.m. agenda was “a real plan to help you solve those worries,” including a big middle-class tax cut paid for by repealing the Trump tax cuts for high earners and corporations; Medicare for all; and fines for companies that don’t give women equal pay. “Because,” she intoned, “you’ve waited long enough to get a good night’s sleep.”

At the time, Harris was positioning herself as a liberal in an election that had the Democrats moving well to the left. She suspended her campaign in December 2019 and endorsed Joe Biden, a career centrist who himself shifted leftward to fight off the challenges of Senators Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

We’re already hearing more about the 3 a.m. agenda — without that label or those precise policy positions — now that Harris is the odds-on favorite for the Democratic nomination. In a [*speech*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) in West Allis, Wis., this week, she promised a “people-first presidency” that would deliver affordable health care and child care and paid family leave.

It makes sense for Harris to present herself as someone who cares about how ordinary Americans are feeling in the middle of the night. First, because it seems heartfelt. “I think she is personally much more passionate about the care side of the agenda” than other aspects of economic policy, Ernie Tedeschi, who was until this year the chief economist of the White House Council of Economic Advisers and now is director of economics at the Yale Budget Lab, [*told*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) The Times.

Second, because Harris knows she can’t afford to let Republicans grab the votes of ordinary working people with populist pitches. With Senator JD Vance of Ohio on his ticket, Donald Trump is making a play for the votes of ***working-class*** Americans, casting the Republican Party as the enemy of the elites.

Harris’s job — which she’s doing with gusto — is to smash Trump’s narrative. She seems more focused and joyful than I remember her as a presidential candidate in 2019, or even during her vice-presidential campaign in 2020.

So, what’s the 3 p.m. economic agenda? It’s about the issues that may not disturb voters in the middle of the night, but do have to be dealt with in the clear light of day.

The best example of a 3 p.m. agenda item is the federal budget — specifically, how to deal with the mounting federal debt and the impending exhaustion of the Social Security Trust Funds. Inevitably, [*solving the problem*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) will require some combination of tax increases and cuts in projected spending.

Politicians don’t like making hard budgetary choices when in office, and they like even less talking about them on the campaign trail. Harris would lose votes if she started getting all think-tank-serious about budget deficits while Trump blew off the problem (as his [*party’s platform*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) does) or repeated his past [*wild promises*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) to wipe out the federal debt.

But if Harris manages to defeat Trump, she will need that 3 p.m. agenda. A good resource, I suggest, is a new [*compilation*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) by the Peter G. Peterson Foundation of proposals from seven research institutions, ranging from liberal to conservative, to fix the nation’s finances over the next 30 years.

The organizations differed, of course, on whether the financial fix should come mainly on the spending side or mainly on the tax side, and on how the burden should be split between rich and poor. There were some interesting overlaps, though. A bunch of the think tanks came out for eliminating or curbing the deductibility of interest, including on mortgage loans, since the tax break induces excessive borrowing. Another idea that got a fair amount of support is taxing capital gains at death. Under the current tax code, people can pass along untaxed gains to their heirs, who owe tax only on gains made after they inherit.

The Progressive Policy Institute, one of the seven, argued that public investments in education, infrastructure and scientific research should grow at the same pace as the overall economy “to ensure a consistent share of resources are devoted to pro-growth spending.”

I agree. If anything I’d say the spending should grow faster than the overall economy to make up for years of underinvestment. Ultimately, the nation’s ability to cover its bills will depend on its productive capacity, and the best way to increase that capacity is to invest in people, ideas and physical capital. The Biden administration is very much in that camp, as evidenced by the CHIPS and Science Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other measures. So Harris has a good foundation to start from. (She can also point to the [*proposed deficit reduction*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) in the Biden administration’s budget plan, issued in March.)

Harris majored in economics at Howard University, and her father is an emeritus professor of economics at Stanford. She may not have focused on economics during her career as a prosecutor, a U.S. senator and a vice president, but she knows the field. Now is her chance to draw on economics to help ensure that Americans enjoy a good night’s sleep not just tonight but for years to come.

The Readers Write

Excellent [*article*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) on national rankings of Olympic participants. It would also be interesting to see a trend line of the rankings over, say, 20 Olympics (with a flag on the data points for host nations). Another ranking could be government spending per medal won.

Richard Jackson

Brisbane, Australia (“Olympic host 2032!!”)

Medal rankings serve no useful purpose. Ban them. The athletes compete and win, not the countries. What should be celebrated is the willingness of athletes from around the world to fairly compete against one another.

Steven Yedlin

Santa Barbara, Calif.

You [*wrote*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) about the tariffs of President William McKinley. As his opponent, William Jennings Bryan, argued, under a tariff system, the importers, the manufacturers, and the (in general) moneyed classes largely avoid being taxed, and the people who actually buy the tariffed commodity bear all of the burden. Also, domestic manufacturers are given license to increase the cost of their commodities to mirror the artificially increased costs of imported goods, once again to the disadvantage of the end user.

David Waterson

Houston

The first anti-dumping law was enacted by Canada in 1904 in response to predatory exports by U.S. Steel. That emerging steel giant was of course protected from foreign competition by the high McKinley tariffs. New Zealand and Australia followed Canada’s lead in the next two years, seeking protection from the International Harvester Trust, which also benefited from protective tariffs.

Charles Blum

Sedona, Ariz.

The writer is a former assistant U.S. trade representative.

Quote of the Day

“Time and again, U.S. citizens and leaders have rationalized unethical actions with financial justifications. Mid-20th-century white suburbanites who were resistant to Black people moving in next door, for example, often said they personally didn’t mind Black neighbors, but that they feared for their own homes’ property value.”

— Louise Story and Ebony Reed, “Fifteen Cents on the Dollar: How Americans Made the Black-White Wealth Gap” (2024)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; Images by CSA-Images/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Iowa Results: Our Columnists React***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-PWS1-JBG3-600Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 16, 2024 Tuesday 08:57 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 253 words

**Highlight:** Who will be the best of the rest?

**Body**

Ron DeSantis and Nikki Haley appeared to be in a tight fight for second place in the Iowa caucuses — but they were far behind the night’s winner, Donald Trump. Our columnists have their thoughts on the back of the pack:

Charles M. Blow: DeSantis nearly came in third in Iowa, which would have essentially ended his campaign. Think of how much damage he did in Florida — damage that bled over into other Republican-led states — in his ego-driven dream to transcend his innate, unshakable lack of political talent. It will take decades to undo the damage he inflicted in a season of fevered narcissism.

Gail Collins: Not exactly a thrilling outcome, right? Maybe if DeSantis had actually bought property in all 99 counties.

David Brooks: I’m struck once again by the education divide. Haley just did miserably with ***working-class*** voters. They look at her and just don’t see a leader. They look at Trump and see someone who gets them.

I watched some of Trump’s rallies from the weekend, and he’s much more boring and repetitive than he was in 2016 or 2020. But he does do a good job of using the word “we.”

For a narcissist, he’s good at creating a sense of belonging.

Jamelle Bouie: The most telling bit of information to come from all of this is [*a CNN entrance poll*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/15/politics/entrance-polls-iowa-caucuses/index.html) in which two-thirds of respondents said that they did not think Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election legitimately. This is, no matter how you look at it, Donald Trump’s party. That’s true in Iowa, and I suspect it will be true everywhere else, as well.

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Harris’s Shift on Tax Cheers Her Corporate Backers; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CWR-7VF1-JBG3-611M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 5, 2024 Thursday 08:06 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 2024 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch and Ephrat Livni Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder of DealBook, the flagship business and policy newsletter at The Times and an annual conference. Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch covers Wall Street, including M&amp;amp;A, executive changes, board strife and policy moves affecting business. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington.

**Highlight:** The vice president has proposed raising the levy on capital gains, a break from President Biden’s economic agenda, as she tries to keep big donors and progressives on side.

**Body**

The vice president has proposed raising the levy on capital gains, a break from President Biden’s economic agenda, as she tries to keep big donors and progressives on side.

Harris’s big business move

After weeks of largely sticking to President Biden’s economic agenda, Vice President Kamala Harris has made her first break in policy: [*scaling back a proposed increase*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of the capital gains tax.

The move’s actual economic effect may be minimal, experts say, but it shows how Harris is seeking to keep a wave of corporate backers on board without alienating her more progressive supporters.

Harris made an explicit pitch to the business community. At a speech in New Hampshire on Wednesday, she proposed raising the capital gains rate for Americans who make more than $1 million a year to 28 percent, far lower than the 39.6 percent that Biden has proposed. “We know when the government encourages investment, it leads to broad-based economic growth and it creates jobs,” Harris said.

She also introduced a plan to allow new companies to deduct [*up to $50,000 in start-up expenses*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a tenfold increase over an existing tax break.

Those plans aren’t as transformative as they first seem. That taxpayer group would face an all-in cap gains rate of 33 percent under Harris’s plan, when factoring in a 5 percent investment income surtax on the wealthiest Americans. That compares with 44.6 percent under Biden’s, including the surtax. (The current total rate is 23.8 percent.)

And one expert told The Times that the start-up tax break would mostly benefit new companies that end up failing, since they wouldn’t have to wait 15 years to deduct all of their founding expenses.

But messaging matters. While many deep-pocketed donors have flocked to the Democratic cause — to the point that Republicans are now [*worried about falling behind*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in the money race — they have been concerned that Harris would tack too far to the left.

Corporate supporters, who have already been pushing for moves like [*scrapping Biden’s proposed tax on the ultrawealthy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), celebrated the latest announcements:

* “Kamala Harris is listening to business people and getting their feedback on what’s fair and what will lead to more investment in business,” [*Mark Cuban*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the billionaire investor, wrote on X.

1. “Great to see Harris moving to the center,” [*Aaron Levie*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a founder of the software company Box, wrote.

Keeping the Democratic coalition together remains tricky. Harris is still largely committed to the existing Biden agenda, including a [*focus on price gouging*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that has irked some business leaders.

Separately, Morris Pearl, a former BlackRock executive who is chair of the advocacy group Patriotic Millionaires, said that Harris was “making a catastrophic mistake by capitulating to the petulant whining of the billionaire class.”

* In other election news: Donald Trump will [*talk about the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) at the Economic Club of New York on Thursday, and the Trump and Harris campaigns agreed to [*mute their microphones*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) during their debate next week.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

Verizon agrees to buy Frontier Communications to expand its fiber internet business. The deal, [*valued at $20 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) (including Frontier’s debt), is meant to bolster the telecom giant’s high-speed broadband division as it competes against AT&amp;T. The transaction’s high price tag appeared to dismay Verizon shareholders — the company’s shares fell on Wednesday when news of the transaction leaked — and antitrust regulators may scrutinize it closely.

SpaceX scales back its presence in Brazil. Elon Musk’s rocket company has [*told workers in the country to leave*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and warned others to avoid traveling there, according to The Wall Street Journal. The warning comes as Musk battles the Brazilian Supreme Court over an order to block accounts on X, his social network, that are accused of spreading misinformation and hate speech.

Meta’s Oversight Board protects some uses of “From the River to the Sea.” The group of experts, which has a say over the social media giant’s policies, said that the phrase — which has been adopted by pro-Palestinian supporters, but has been accused of being antisemitic — was [*acceptable in three user posts*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that didn’t call for violence or exclusion. It’s another prominent example of companies being ensnared in the contentious debate over the war in Gaza.

U.S. Steel’s political problem

Shares in U.S. Steel plunged after reports that President Biden was set to block [*Nippon Steel’s $15 billion bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to buy the company on national security grounds, despite recent efforts by both businesses to [*allay policymakers’ fears*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

But the acquisition has become ensnared by politics, with Democrats and Republicans alike opposing foreign ownership of a bastion of American industry that employs thousands of blue-collar workers.

The Biden administration told U.S. Steel that it had national security concerns. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, or CFIUS, the Treasury-led panel that vets proposed takeovers of American companies by foreign buyers, has been scrutinizing the proposed deal for months. It recently sent a letter to U.S. Steel to warn that it had identified national security issues, The Times reports.

A decision could be announced soon. A White House official told The Times that CFIUS hadn’t yet sent its recommendation to Biden, but companies often abandon deals before the president officially moves to block them.

U.S. Steel said that it hadn’t received any updates related to the CFIUS process, adding that it would pursue all legal options to complete the transaction.

The deal became a political punching bag on both sides of the aisle. Biden said in the spring that he was against the deal, and on Monday, Vice President Kamala Harris [*said the company should remain American-owned*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Donald Trump promised to block the sale.

But Biden’s decision underscores the fight for blue-collar voters. The United Steelworkers union opposed the deal, which had become a lightning rod in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, where U.S. Steel employs about 4,000 workers.

“What this deal shows is that the administration is about being the champion of the labor unions and their understanding that their political vulnerability is the ***working class***,” Ivan Schlager, a lawyer specializing in CFIUS matters at the firm Kirkland &amp; Ellis, told DealBook.

The wider ramifications are not yet clear. Some deal makers said blocking the transaction could make it harder to assess regulatory scrutiny. Others suggested that the decision underscored the importance of getting unions on board early.

The expected decision could also complicate American relations with Japan, a close ally and economic partner that has toed the line on U.S.-led moves to counter China. A leading candidate to become Japan’s next prime minister [*warned that*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) blocking the deal to court voters would be inappropriate.

What next for the economy?

Companies have been warning for months that consumers are pulling back, scrambling the soft-landing narrative.

That’s put [*investors on edge*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) ahead of tomorrow’s [*high-stakes jobs report*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

The lackluster economic data keeps coming. On Wednesday, the JOLTS labor report showed that job openings fell to a 42-month low in July. And the Fed’s Beige Book survey of regional economic activity [*warned*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook): “Employers were more selective with their hires and less likely to expand their workforces, citing concerns about demand and an uncertain economic outlook.”

The downbeat outlook may force the Fed to make a big move. The likelihood of a 0.5 percentage point cut by the central bank at its next meeting was almost 50-50 on Thursday. Weak employment numbers tomorrow would probably raise those calls.

Investors should be wary of a big cut, market pros warn. The S&amp;P 500 rallied at the start of the summer on hopes of retreating inflation, presumably giving the Fed the cover to lower borrowing costs. But the markets have become volatile recently amid growing concerns that a cooling labor market could slow the economy.

“A market correction may start to get traction if payrolls are weak on Friday,” [*Scott Rubner*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a Goldman Sachs strategist, wrote in an investor note on Wednesday.

What to watch for in tomorrow’s report:

* Economists expect the report to show that employers added [*about 160,000 jobs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) last month, up from 114,000 in July. The unemployment rate is expected to fall to 4.2 percent, from 4.3 percent.

1. A big focus will be on the labor participation rate for the latest indication of the labor market’s health.

Is the labor market in protracted decline or merely normalizing? The normalization argument seems to be winning out. The unemployment rate is “nowhere close to a recession territory,” Mohit Kumar, an economist at Jefferies, wrote in a note on Thursday.

“I am not sure why Ryan included me. He did not have my permission and I do not support this financing.”

— Philip Krim of Montauk Ventures, on being listed as a backer of Bolt, a start-up founded by Ryan Breslow. [*Several investors protested*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) being named as participating in Bolt’s latest fund-raising round and some, including BlackRock, have moved in court to halt the financing.

An A.I. star raises big money

The stock market may be on alert about the high costs of artificial intelligence, but the money continues to flow for the sector’s buzziest start-ups and founders.

The latest: [*Safe SuperIntelligence*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the three-month-old company started by Ilya Sutskever, an OpenAI co-founder, has raised a [*whopping $1 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) from investors including Sequoia and Andreessen Horowitz.

The funding round would value the 10-person company at roughly $5 billion.

There has been big speculation about Sutskever’s next move. The top A.I. scientist left OpenAI over concerns that the company wasn’t paying enough attention to safety. He clashed with Sam Altman, OpenAI’s C.E.O. and another co-founder, over the matter, and backed Altman’s brief ouster before supporting his return.

Sutskever [*told Bloomberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in June that his company would be an A.I. research organization that didn’t plan to sell A.I. products and services, allowing it to build a safe system without the commercial pressure facing some of its peers. Still, the company competes against well-capitalized rivals backed by tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon and Nvidia.

Nvidia is boosting its investing, too. The dominant maker of A.I. chips joined the venture capital firms New Enterprise Associates, Khosla Ventures and Lux Capital in [*a $100 million-plus funding round*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for Sakana AI, a Japanese start-up founded by former Google engineers.

That comes as regulatory questions around Nvidia intensify. The company’s stock fell on Wednesday on a Bloomberg report that the Justice Department had subpoenaed the chip maker and other companies over antitrust concerns. But Nvidia denied the report, saying that it had [*not received a subpoena*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

* In other A.I. news: The U.S., the European Union and Britain are close to [*signing a treaty*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that would seek to harmonize a patchwork of national laws and guidelines that govern the technology; and British antitrust officials [*ruled*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that Microsoft did not violate competition rules in hiring away former employees of Inflection AI.

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* The Nordstrom family has [*offered $3.8 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to buy the namesake department store chain and take it private. (NYT)

1. Topgolf Callaway plans to [*split itself*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) into a golf-clubs maker and a driving range operator. (WSJ)

Elections, politics and policy

* Edelman hired Nikki Haley, the former Republican presidential candidate, as [*vice chair of the communications firm’s public affairs practice*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). (PR Week)

1. The S.E.C. [*ended its legal fight*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to revive a proposed fee disclosure rule for hedge funds and private equity firms. (Bloomberg)

Best of the rest

* Andreessen Horowitz [*has closed its Miami*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) office two years after opening up shop there. (Bloomberg)

1. “[*Fyre Festival II*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) Is Happening. The Only Question Is Where. And When. And How. (WSJ)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: Vice President Kamala Harris moved toward the political center with her new tax proposals. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Erin Schaff/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2024

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[***Who Pays Tariffs? And How Do We Know?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCX-5MX1-DXY4-X06W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2024 Tuesday 14:20 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1001 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman 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.

**Highlight:** Thanks to Donald Trump, we don’t have to speculate.

**Body**

Imagine yourself as a small-business owner who produces something — say, plastic lawn ornaments — for American consumers. (One of my uncles actually was in that business.) Then for some reason, politicians propose imposing a tax of 25 percent or more on all sales of pink flamingos, garden gnomes, etc.

What will you do if that tax comes into effect? Will you pass the tax increase on to your customers, or will you try to keep consumer prices unchanged and absorb the tax yourself?

Well, you’ll certainly tell politicians that your customers will end up paying, and you’ll probably be telling the truth. Your costs, in effect, will increase, and your profit margin probably isn’t high enough to absorb the tax, even if you wanted to.

Now change the story a bit: You’re not an American small-business owner; you’re a Chinese company selling stuff to the United States — and the tax in question is a tariff, a charge levied on goods imported from China. Why should the answer be any different? Normally, we’d expect the tariff to be passed on to U.S. consumers.

Donald Trump, however, loves tariffs and insists that they are paid by foreigners. So leading Republicans, who increasingly seem to be using George Orwell’s “1984” as an instruction manual — whatever the leader says is true — have taken to claiming that tariffs (and only tariffs) are a tax on business that doesn’t hurt consumers. “The notion that tariffs are a tax on U.S. consumers is a lie pushed by outsourcers and the Chinese Communist Party,” a spokesperson for the Republican National Committee recently [*declared*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC).

But how do we know that consumers really do pay for tariffs? I just tried to convince you with a thought experiment; I could also point to the fact that a vast majority of economists believe that tariffs are primarily [*paid by consumers*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC). But not everyone finds thought experiments persuasive, and many people distrust economists. So can I offer any more direct evidence?

Why, yes, I can, thanks to a guy named Donald Trump, who imposed some high tariffs on China in 2018 and 2019, giving us an opportunity to see what happened to prices — basically what economists would call a natural experiment. There have been some careful statistical analyses of the effects of the Trump tariffs, listed in the Quick Hits below. But I thought it might also be helpful to offer a quick and dirty overview.

Here, courtesy of Chad Bown of the Peterson Institute for International Economics (now the [*chief economist*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC) of the State Department), is the recent history of U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods and vice versa:

The average U.S. tariff on imports from China rose in 2018 and ’19 to about 21 percent, from about 3 percent, an increase of 18 percentage points. The only way that could not have raised prices for American consumers would have been for Chinese companies to have cut their U.S. prices by a similar amount. But they didn’t: The average price of imports from China fell only around 2 percent, and even that small decline might have been a continuation of a long-term trend of falling Chinese export prices:

So we have an 18-point rise in tariffs offset by only a 2 percent decline in Chinese prices net of tariffs. That sure looks as if American consumers bore the great bulk of the burden.

OK, in fairness, I should mention a caveat to this conclusion. The United States is a big country, sufficiently so that if it imposes tariffs on a broad range of goods, it can improve its terms of trade, the prices of its exports relative to its imports — that is, if other countries don’t respond with tariffs on U.S. exports. (This goes under the unhelpful name of [*optimum tariff theory*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC).) In practice, this would work via a rise in the value of the dollar if the U.S. reduced imports, which would lower the dollar prices of the goods we still import. And this effect wouldn’t be confined to the prices of imports from the countries subject to high tariffs: A tariff on Chinese goods could end up reducing the prices of goods we buy from, say, Germany. So it wouldn’t show up in these charts.

But it’s a moot point because if America imposed widespread tariffs, other countries would do the same, partly as retaliation, partly just as emulation. So consumers would pay the tariffs after all.

Which consumers? Bear in mind that Trump’s economic program calls for a combination of tax hikes in the form of higher tariffs and tax cuts for corporations and high-income individuals. He has even floated the idea of replacing the income tax with tariffs, which almost certainly isn’t feasible, but we can ask what would happen if he collected as much tariff revenue as possible while cutting income taxes by the same amount. Here, according to [*Kimberly Clausing and Maurice Obstfeld*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC) of the Peterson Institute, is how that combination would affect Americans at different income levels:

The net effect would be negative for 80 percent of the population, especially for the bottom 60 percent, while extremely positive for the top 1 percent. There are two reasons for this regressive outcome. First, lower-income families spend a higher share of their income than the rich, so they would be hurt more by what would amount to a large sales tax. Second, income taxes are disproportionately paid by the affluent — around half the population doesn’t pay income taxes at all, although they pay lots in other taxes, such as the payroll tax — so the benefits of cutting that tax would flow mainly to the top.

So who would pay the tariffs that Trump will almost surely impose if he wins? Not China or foreigners in general. Everything says that the burden would fall on Americans, mainly the ***working class*** and the poor.

Quick Hits

Thinking about a [*trade war*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC).

The [*macroeconomic consequences*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC) of another Trump presidency.

The [*McKinley tariff*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC), which Trump admires, was a disaster.

The impact of the [*2018 tariffs*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC).

Facing the Muskets

Today is [*Little Round Top*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-06-17/trump-s-promised-tariffs-will-push-up-costs-for-american-households?sref=qzusa8bC) day.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; Images by ildarss, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2024

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[***The Conservative Crack-Up***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CVM-C5H1-DXY4-X12G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 38

**Length:** 4286 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler

**Body**

Liz Truss has a theory about what caused the collapse of Britain's Conservative Party, and it has little to do with her. Sitting last May in her corner office across the street from Big Ben, Truss diagnosed the multiple ailments of her party, without referring to her own calamitous, 49-day stint as prime minister. Instead, like the London Eye turning lazily on the far bank of the Thames outside her window, she spun a story about how the Conservatives had drifted away from their ideological moorings.

Mass migration, big government, anticapitalist protests, an erosion of Parliament's power over the ''deep state'' and a hothouse legal culture that prizes transgender rights over common-sense policies -- these and other nostrums of left-wing thinking had come to dominate British politics, she said. After 14 years in power, Truss went on, the Conservatives were still living in, even embracing, Tony Blair's Britain.

''We're still seeing gender ideology in schools; we've got record levels of immigration; our taxes are at an 80-year high; and the government accounts for 45 percent of G.D.P.,'' she said, in her characteristic staccato tone. ''By any objective measure, that's not a very strongly conservative set of policies.

''I tried,'' Truss said of her ill-fated premiership, the shortest in Britain's history, ''but it was too late in the day, fundamentally.''

Never mind that Truss was ultimately undone by her own policies: an ill-judged foray into Ronald Reagan-style, trickle-down tax cuts that frightened the financial markets, sent the British pound into a tailspin and provoked the kinds of warnings about financial instability from the International Monetary Fund normally issued to rogue regimes in Latin America.

Forty-eight hours after our conversation in mid-May, Truss's successor as prime minister, Rishi Sunak, called a general election for July 4. Truss, who returned to the Tory backbenches in Parliament after leaving 10 Downing Street, was summarily ousted by the voters of her district in Norfolk, northeast of London. That made her the first former British prime minister in nearly a century to lose her own seat, the highest-profile casualty in a landslide victory by the Labour Party that was less a triumph of the left than a breathtaking repudiation of the Conservatives.

''People say the Conservative Party should be united,'' Truss said, ''but you've got to unite around an idea or set of ideas. At present, I think the views are very disparate about what the ideas should be.''

In this, at least, she has a point.

Two months after their historic rout, the Conservatives are still a house divided. Facing years in the political wilderness, they have scattered into angry camps -- ''fighting like rats in the sack,'' in the words of Tim Bale, a leading scholar on the party at Queen Mary University of London -- as they argue over what caused their collapse and what can be done to pick up the pieces.

There is no shortage of culprits. Rishi Sunak, for calling the election months earlier than he needed to. Boris Johnson, for presiding over an unsavory parade of scandals that left voters disgusted with a legacy of ''Tory sleaze.'' Yet another prime minister, David Cameron, for imposing painful fiscal austerity in 2010 and then calling the self-sabotaging referendum on Brexit six years later.

It is an overstatement to say that Brexit caused the Conservative crackup -- but not by much. The scalding, seemingly never-ending debate over whether and how to leave the European Union haunted the party, dividing the Tories, pulling its leaders to the right and forcing successive governments into ever-more-extreme policies, especially after it was widely judged a failure. ''Brexit is still at the root of all this,'' says Tony Travers, a professor of politics at the London School of Economics. ''The Conservative Party damaged itself because of it. And Brexit got tangled up in the populist tide. The original referendum vote allowed a populist expression, but after eight years, it's clear Brexit did not produce the benefits promised by its supporters.''

That lingering disappointment acted as an accelerant for the anti-immigrant riots that convulsed Britain for several days this summer. Four weeks after voters threw out the government, gangs of far-right thugs stormed mosques and torched the hotels used to house asylum seekers. The spark was a brutal knife attack on a dance studio by a 17-year-old Welsh-born man whose parents immigrated from Rwanda; he was charged with killing three children and injuring 10 others.

But the deeper causes lie in the broken promises of the Brexiteers. They claimed that immigration levels would decline as a result of leaving the E.U.; instead, they have soared. Conservative governments have quietly encouraged this influx in the hope that the new arrivals, many of them highly skilled, would recharge Britain's lagging economy. At the same time, Conservative leaders pandered to anti-immigration sentiment within their political base by inflaming fears about a much smaller subset of illegal migrants: asylum seekers from countries like Afghanistan or Albania, many of whom make desperate crossings of the English Channel in rickety boats.

Now the Tories are caught in the vortex of the rancorous debate they whipped up. In September, the party will hold the first stage of a two-month contest to select a new leader. The six declared candidates are struggling to articulate a coherent policy on immigration, to say nothing of the many other social and economic problems facing the country, including low productivity and a corroded public health service. Those candidates run the gamut from middle-of-the-road figures like Tom Tugendhat and James Cleverly, military men who have somewhat awkwardly adopted the vocabulary of hard-liners, to more natural right-wingers like Kemi Badenoch and Priti Patel, children of immigrants who project a kind of ''multiethnic nativism,'' in the words of Sunder Katwala, the director of British Future, a research institute.

As if a battle for the party's soul wasn't existential enough, the Tories must contend with the resurgence of Nigel Farage, the gleeful populist and chronic political disrupter. No longer a fringe figure, he expertly stoked anger about immigration to win more than four million votes for his insurgent party, Reform U.K., with most coming from disaffected Tories. This has split the right and raised questions about whether he may engineer a hostile takeover of the Conservatives.

In their embrace of radicalism, the Conservatives bear an obvious resemblance to their American cousins in the Republican Party. Both have ridden the whirlwind of populism. Both have discarded decades of orthodoxy on core economic and social issues. Both have seen their traditional party establishments hollowed out -- in the case of the Conservatives, by the Brexiteers; in the case of the G.O.P., by Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again movement. What separates the two is that the Conservatives underwent this transformation while clinging stubbornly to power. Their psychodrama became the country's psychodrama. British politics was shaped not by Tony Blair, as Truss suggests, but by the decade-long disintegration of the Conservative Party.

As a more unified, businesslike Labour government turns the page on the Tory era, many people in Britain want to look ahead. But even in defeat, the Tories are a spectacle. Their leadership contest has become ''a battle of ideological purity,'' says Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at Kings College London. ''It's the Mensheviks versus the Trotskyites in the Bolshevik Party before the First World War.''

History suggests the party will lurch to the right, at least for a time. After the Tories were defeated by Blair in 1997, they cycled through three right-wing leaders -- and two further election defeats -- before settling on David Cameron and a centrist route back to power. Even Tories who reject links to Farage or the far right echo Truss's argument that the party must find its way back to a more authentic conservative identity. But in a Britain convulsed by riots and newly attracted to Farage and Reform, the very concept of such an identity seems up for grabs. For the party's aspiring leaders, the soul searching has scarcely begun.

''We have to recognize what we did to alienate and frustrate a lot of voters,'' Cleverly, who served as foreign secretary and home secretary, says. ''None of us should turn around and say the voters made a mistake. ''

To understand the sheer magnitude of the Conservative defeat, it helps to recall the party's record of winning elections, without peer in the West. Tories have been in power for roughly two-thirds of their existence, which dates to the 17th century, when they emerged as a factional rival to the Whigs before organizing as a party under the Conservative banner in 1834. Samuel Earle, in his book, ''Tory Nation,'' attributed that success to the party's talent for projecting stability. ''It is the Conservatives' abiding promise,'' he wrote, ''that they will keep things recognizably the same, that tomorrow will look like today. They are the safe pair of hands.''

The party of Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Rishi Sunak, the Conservatives are also a big tent, with an endless capacity to remake themselves in the face of changing circumstances. This shape-shifting quality has enabled the Tories, though rooted in the aristocracy, to expand beyond their upper-class roots and appeal to ***working-class*** voters, as they did in 2019, when Johnson won an election by vowing to ''Get Brexit done.'' Yet as Earle wrote, ''The strange dissonance between the Conservative Party's ability to win elections and its destructive record in government stands as one of the defining riddles of British politics.''

Never has that riddle been more mystifying than in the eight years since the Brexit referendum. The party cycled through no fewer than five prime ministers, a spectacle of corruption, hubris, folly and misrule.

Cameron called the referendum to settle Britain's future in Europe once and for all, but then ran such a desultory campaign to stay in the E.U. that it contributed to the narrow vote to leave. Johnson, the clown prince of British politics, threw wine-and-cheese parties in 10 Downing Street that violated his government's own lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic. Sunak, Britain's first prime minister of color, may be most remembered for championing a plan to put newly arrived asylum seekers on one-way flights to the central African country Rwanda. And then there's Truss, who occupies a special place in Tory hell. Her tax experiment turned Britain -- the birthplace of Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes -- into a global laughingstock. She herself became a punchline: Which would last longer, The Daily Star asked: Liz Truss or a lettuce? The paper bought a head of lettuce and posted a livestream of it next to her photo. The lettuce won.

For the Conservative Party, however, the consequences were longer lasting. ''Liz Truss destroyed any claim to economic credibility,'' says Rory Stewart, the broadcaster and former diplomat who served as a Tory member of Parliament from 2010 until 2019. ''She removed the central Conservative argument that they are the responsible party for managing the economy.''

Stewart's own career as a Tory ended abruptly when he and other lawmakers resisted Johnson's plan to pull out of the European Union without a trade deal and were pushed out. Now the co-host, with the onetime Blair adviser Alastair Campbell, of a popular podcast, Stewart has become an eloquent eulogist for a party he says he no longer recognizes. ''Margaret Thatcher achieved a radical economic transformation,'' Stewart told me. ''Tony Blair achieved a constitutional and cultural transformation. The problem that the Conservatives face is that it's very difficult over 14 years to identify what they've achieved beyond the catastrophe of Brexit.''

Perhaps that explains why, in the last election, the Tories simply stopped talking about it. With polls showing that nearly 60 percent of Britons now regret leaving the European Union -- a consequence both of the weak economy and of changing demographics -- Brexit has become political Kryptonite. Voters blame the Brexiteers for failing to negotiate a better departure deal with Brussels or, more plainly, for having sold them a bill of goods in the first place. ''That sense of being scammed is one of the reasons people don't want to talk about it,'' says Chris Patten, a Conservative elder who once chaired the party and later served as the last governor of colonial Hong Kong. ''Brexit became sort of the pit-bull terrier of British politics. Nobody knew whether it was house-trained or whether, if you went on walks with it the park, it would bite people.''

The radicalization of the party is also rooted in a profound shift in the behavior of the British electorate: away from voting on economic, class-based criteria toward voting on cultural identity. In this sense, the debate over Britain's place in the E.U. was a cultural debate and the Brexit vote a kind of cultural protest. ''The Tory Party's strategy has been to give ground to emerging populism to head off a threat from the right,'' says David Gauke, who served as a Conservative justice secretary and, like Stewart, was purged by Johnson in 2019. ''The Brexit debate accelerated this process and clarified it. It has forced members of the Conservative Party to choose what kind of conservatives they are.''

Broadly speaking, Bale said, the ideological fault line runs between the forces of big-state populism and neoliberal economics. Thatcher, the ''Iron Lady'' whose free-market revolution in the 1980s defined the modern-day Conservative Party, embodied both strains. But present-day Tories tend to sort into one camp or the other: Johnson was a populist, while Sunak and Truss are heirs to the neoliberal tradition. Neither, though, was willing to face down the populists on their right, and Truss has styled herself as a populist since leaving office.

Less than five years before their crushing defeat, the Conservatives used an avowedly populist message to pull off their own lopsided victory over Labour. Boris Johnson, having gained occupancy of Downing Street in the chaotic aftermath of the referendum, called an election to break an impasse in Parliament over the terms by which Britain would leave the E.U. His Brexit-themed campaign was reductive but crudely effective. To illustrate his point, Johnson drove a backhoe through a wall of foam bricks. The wall was labeled ''Gridlock,'' while the backhoe was stamped with a Union Jack and the three-word slogan, ''Get Brexit done.''

Sure enough, the Conservatives smashed Labour's ''red wall,'' a crumbling bastion of coal and factory towns in the Midlands and north of England that had voted for the Labour Party for generations. Having also widely supported Brexit, they felt betrayed by Labour's mealy-mouthed position on Europe and frustrated by those who called for a do-over referendum on membership. Labour's loss was its worst since 1935, and the Conservative majority the largest since 1987. Johnson had redrawn Britain's political map, commentators said. Some predicted the Tories would be in power for another decade. But Johnson himself recognized the evanescence of his coalition. ''You may only have lent us your vote,'' he said, adding presciently, ''You may intend to return to Labour next time.''

Johnson was able to get Brexit done -- Britain left the European Union in January 2020 -- but it failed to deliver tangible economic dividends. As many experts predicted, Britain's departure from the E.U.'s vast single market hindered trade and stunted economic growth. In a more unexpected development, driven by labor shortages and post-Brexit emphasis on attracting skilled workers, net immigration surged to 765,000 in 2022, more than twice that in the year before the referendum.

To the economically starved ''red wall,'' Johnson promised a hefty dose of state intervention. He named a ''leveling up'' minister, whose job was to pour investment into the Midlands and North to erase the wealth disparity with the richer south, especially the booming capital, London. But bureaucracy and tight finances, especially after the pandemic, put an end to those dreams.

Few places capture the disenchantment with Brexit more vividly than Shirebrook, a hard-bitten former coal town of 11,500 in the East Midlands. More than a decade ago, a sporting-goods company opened a giant warehouse on the edge of town, hiring hundreds of workers from Eastern Europe to staff it. While it provided jobs, the warehouse changed the look and feel of Shirebrook. ''You can go down to the village, and you don't know anybody,'' said Gary Attenborough, 54, who works as a groundskeeper and plays bingo at a social club for the families of retired coal miners.

That sense of dislocation fueled an anti-immigration backlash that led people in Shirebrook to vote to leave the E.U. Many of those same people turned out for the Tories in 2019. But little changed in the four years after the election. The workers at the warehouse were still there, and there were no new employers with jobs for British residents. With boarded-up storefronts, Shirebrook still looked like a place left behind. In 2024, the voters ousted the Conservative member of Parliament in favor of his Labour opponent.

''They voted Conservative'' in 2019, Attenborough said, before turning back to his bingo game. ''But now they're fed up.''

As the Tories pick their way through the political wilderness, rarely have they found the landscape rockier. While the election did not drive the party into extinction, as some feared it would, it left the Conservatives badly out of step with mainstream British politics. Nor are there obvious forces to pull them back and make them palatable to a broader share of voters. If anything, structural changes in Britain's political system are conspiring to push the party further into the right-wing weeds.

Anti-immigrant sentiment, which helped Reform soak up 14 percent of the vote and propelled Farage into Parliament for the first time in eight attempts, shows signs of hardening further, at least on the right. Brexit, while fading from the headlines, continues to impose burdens on Britain's economy. The media ecosystem that surrounds and props up the Conservatives -- from The Daily Telegraph and other pro-Tory papers to the noisy right-wing TV news channel, GB News -- keeps hammering the message that the party's problem is that it is not sufficiently right-wing.

Britain's summer of unrest presented something of a quandary for the party's candidates. They were loath to endorse the Labour government's hardheaded response to the rioters: hundreds of arrests and fast-track convictions. But in so doing, they risked blurring the line with Farage, who stirred up malefactors on the far right by questioning why the authorities were not treating the attack on the children as a terrorist act. ''I just wonder whether the truth is being withheld from us,'' he said.

While only 7 percent of the British public said they approved of the riots, a fifth of those who voted for Reform did. ''You can't win if your brand is being dragged by Reform,'' Sunder Katwala says.

Tories are evenly divided about the wisdom of merging with Reform, according to a poll taken by the market research firm YouGov after the election. That speaks to how disillusioned they have become. It also speaks to the growing gulf between the rank-and-file members and their representatives in Parliament. Tory members tend to be older, whiter and more right-wing than Tory M.P.s, let alone the general population. There are also far fewer of them: From a peak of 2.8 million in 1953, the membership has dwindled to about 170,000.

''The main parties used to be a much more authentic expression of the nation,'' says Charles Moore, a columnist and former chief editor of The Daily Telegraph, a paper so aligned with the Tories that it is often referred to as the Torygraph. ''Both of them were deeply rooted in the country: Labour, with unions and the organized ***working class***; Tories, with the butchers, bakers and candlestick makers.''

The loosening of ties between the Conservative Party and the grass roots has made voters less loyal and the electorate more volatile. It has also contributed to the party's capture by ideas like the trickle-down economics of Truss or the Rwanda asylum scheme championed by Sunak -- policies machine-tooled to appeal to the party's base, even if they were unpopular with much of the public. As the party has changed, so have its politicians. The ubiquity of social media and the emergence of GB News have given members of Parliament a way to become, as Bale puts it, ''legends in their own lunchtime.'' Farage has his own prime-time show on the channel, arguably as valuable as his seat in the House of Commons and certainly more lucrative.

Hungry for publicity and heedless of authority, the Tories have become all but unmanageable, less a big tent than a chaotic campground. During the debate over sending migrants to Rwanda, the party's right split into five dissident groups, which took to naming themselves the ''five families,'' after the mobsters who run the rackets in New York City. For months before the election, Sunak was plagued by would-be successors maneuvering to take his place after a defeat. He turned up at a reception thrown by the political magazine The Spectator, at the party's conference in Manchester last fall, to find guests in the sweaty ballroom mobbing potential leaders, as they drained warm glasses of Pol Roger, Churchill's favorite Champagne.

Now, with Sunak in a caretaker role, the candidates are pleading for party unity, even as they carry on a sharp-elbowed campaign that has featured leaked videos and other opposition research to discredit one another. The agendas they lay out for the party are tailored to the peculiarities of the selection process: While their fellow M.P.s will vote to cut the six candidates to two finalists, the winner will be chosen by party members, the same people who selected Liz Truss.

Little surprise, then, that their policies tilt uniformly to the right. Tugendhat, a 51-year-old standard-bearer for the centrists, has called for ''common-sense Conservative positions,'' which include a threat to leave the European Convention on Human Rights if it blocks Britain's effort to close its borders. Tugendhat used to warn against withdrawing from the treaty on the grounds that it would create new problems, not least for the peace in Northern Ireland. But he now says it hinders Britain's ability to deport criminals who enter the country illegally. Cleverly, 54, whose father's family is from Wiltshire and whose mother came from Sierra Leone, says immigration is woven into Britain's history but that the system breeds resentment because some people cut in line to get into the country. ''The Brits love queuing up,'' he says. ''Where there is a perception that the rules are being broken, that really hits a nerve.''

Cleverly's star is rising, but Britain's bookmakers are still betting that Badenoch or Robert Jenrick will emerge victorious. Jenrick, who is 42, resigned from the last Conservative government because he said its Rwanda plan did not go far enough. He has styled himself as an immigration absolutist; the number of migrants, he said, should be capped in the ''tens of thousands.'' He has also endorsed Donald Trump in the American election, which some said was a blunder given Trump's deep unpopularity with much of the British public. Badenoch, 44, a daughter of Nigerian immigrants and former trade secretary, wrote recently in The Times of London that the party needs to fight against ''nasty identity politics'' and ''a postmodernism that can best be described as joyless decadence.'' Bale called her the ''thinking man's Thatcherite culture warrior.'' The biggest threat to Badenoch has come from a recently resurfaced 2018 video in which she welcomed the Conservative government's proposal to relax restrictions on visas for skilled migrants. She said she has since changed her mind.

Badenoch is not the only candidate who once viewed immigration differently. Patel introduced more work visas for foreign graduates of British universities when she served as home secretary. Tugendhat campaigned to grant full citizenship to holders of British Overseas passports in Hong Kong. Cleverly fought for visas for Ukrainian refugees, while Jenrick even hosted a Ukrainian family. Some of these circumstances were extraordinary, of course, and there is broad recognition that Britain cannot sustain a net influx of nearly 700,000 migrants a year. But that Conservatives are tying themselves in knots on this issue attests to a deeper dysphoria in the party that has long dominated British politics. And it is only one of many contradictions: a party caught between big-state populism and neoliberal economic policy; a champion of national unity that also wages culture wars; a self-proclaimed change agent even after 14 years in power.

''Who is the Conservative Party for?'' Menon asked. ''Ten years ago, I could have told you: it's for relatively wealthy people who want a small state and to pay lower taxes. Who is the Conservative Party for today? God only knows.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT CHASE

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[***Cosmic Horror Awaits Aboard a Perilous Oil Rig***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8N-RP31-DXY4-X4GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The Chinese Room has long delivered unconventional game worlds. The metal offshore structure in Still Wakes the Deep might be its most evocatively realized yet.

**Body**

The Chinese Room has long delivered unconventional game worlds. The metal offshore structure in Still Wakes the Deep might be its most evocatively realized yet.

Christmas, 1975: an oil rig off the east coast of Scotland. Inside over breakfast, the chatter of possible strikes and crew members wolfing down baked beans, fried eggs and mugs of tea. Outside, the briny tang of windswept sea air, the North Sea swirling tempestuously below.

The teetering rig of the first-person horror game Still Wakes the Deep, which releases on Tuesday for the PC, PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X|S, is another delightfully offbeat and beautifully realized locale from The Chinese Room, a British studio.

Dear Esther, released in 2012, saw players exploring a moonlit Hebridean island, tromping through purple heather. Three years later, Everybody’s Gone to the Rapture whisked them off to a quaint fictional village in the west of England, zigzagging through arable fields and well-ordered front gardens.

“It’s rare, still, for video games to venture away from generic-looking alien planets, abandoned spaceships or the trenches of past wars as settings for their stories,” said Simon Parkin, author of “Death by Video Game: Tales of Obsession From the Virtual Frontline.”

The towering metal architecture and claustrophobic halls of Still Wakes the Deep are less naturalistic than the studio’s previous game worlds, but certainly no less evocative. John McCormack, the game’s creative director, possesses an instinctual familiarity with the era.

“I can remember the texture of the carpets and the thin line of cigarette smoke that hovers halfway up a room, my granny’s slippers, what the ashtrays look like, how people talk — the slang of the time,” said McCormack, a Scot and a child of the 1970s.

At the game’s outset, the calm before the unleashing of a cosmic horror storm, the player explores homely cabins littered with the paraphernalia of private lives: comforting trinkets, family photos. Your colleagues have nuanced back stories and speak with the lilt and twang of the regions they grew up in (Barnsley, Belfast, Edinburgh).

McCormack sees a direct relationship between creating a believable game space, one rich in personal and period details, and delivering a compelling drama whose characters feel truly three-dimensional.

That philosophy extends to the body of the protagonist, an electrician (or “leccy”) known as Caz. Unusually for a first-person game, you are able to see all of his limbs; [*first-person shooters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/02/magazine/who-made-that-first-person-shooter-game.html) tend to show only hands clutching a gun. For McCormack, it was vital that the rig feel “tactile” and that you, as Caz, experience something of a physical connection with it. “To have a floating view with no bodily presence just felt wrong,” he said.

At thrillingly precarious moments — in one, the electrician’s legs dangle above a vertigo-inducing drop — the player must squeeze both controller triggers as if Caz’s hands are clasping onto the splintering rig. Letting go spells immediate death; his knuckles turn white.

“He’s not an action hero,” said Rob McLachlan, a lead designer at the studio. “He’s a middle-aged, slightly-out-of-shape boxer. Although he’s physically strong, this isn’t what he woke up preparing to do.”

Nor was Caz prepared to encounter a cosmic horror that is inevitably unearthed from the bedrock. Tentacular growths begin to invade the offshore structure, shimmering with oily iridescence against the rig’s dull, cold steel. Laura Dodds, an associate art director, described the entity as embodying a “terrible beauty,” something “unknowable, strange, beautiful, but not necessarily malevolent.”

The challenge was not in imagining such horror but rendering it, bending the underlying software of Unreal Engine to the studio’s will so the supernatural phenomena looked as realistic as the rig itself.

Elsewhere, Still Wakes the Deep veers sharply toward gruesome body horror. Enemies, which the team refers to as “puppets,” are writhing, globular beings with more than a flicker of human presence, partly inspired by live footage of medical surgeries and various works involving Hannibal Lecter. Caz can run and hide from these foes but, crucially, does not possess the means to fight them head-on.

Still Wakes the Deep was referred to internally as “Habitat.” While ducking, diving, crawling and leaping amid the rig, it quickly comes to feel like a labyrinthine warren of halls and larger spaces, exposed electrical cables resembling an intricate root system. From a distance, the rig appears to loom out of the ocean like a vast metal forest.

A variety of beings come to call this tangled ecosystem home: gulls, rodents, the blighted antagonists and, of course, the crew members. In its affection for the rig’s ***working-class*** human inhabitants — pointedly not its bootlicking middle managers — Still Wakes the Deep lays out a politics inseparable from place. By doing so, it echoes [*the filmmaker Ken Loach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/02/magazine/who-made-that-first-person-shooter-game.html), an influence on the game.

Even just the selection of an unconventional setting is political, Parkin said: “In an industry that is ruinously preoccupied with making money, we should celebrate any studio that appears to prioritize other, predominantly creative concerns.”

Alongside the hope that players feel “as if they’ve really been somewhere,” McCormack wants them to step away from Still Wakes the Deep with a greater appreciation for weather-beaten laborers everywhere, the “people that allow them to drive their car, the people doing the hard jobs in the world.”

PHOTO: The towering metal architecture and claustrophobic halls of the video game make players feel they’re on the North Sea. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THE CHINESE ROOM) This article appeared in print on page C5.

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[***The Conservative Crack-Up***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CVW-CXV1-JBG3-6026-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Liz Truss has a theory about what caused the collapse of Britain's Conservative Party, and it has little to do with her. Sitting last May in her corner office across the street from Big Ben, Truss diagnosed the multiple ailments of her party, without referring to her own calamitous, 49-day stint as prime minister. Instead, like the London Eye turning lazily on the far bank of the Thames outside her window, she spun a story about how the Conservatives had drifted away from their ideological moorings.

Mass migration, big government, anticapitalist protests, an erosion of Parliament's power over the ''deep state'' and a hothouse legal culture that prizes transgender rights over common-sense policies -- these and other nostrums of left-wing thinking had come to dominate British politics, she said. After 14 years in power, Truss went on, the Conservatives were still living in, even embracing, Tony Blair's Britain.

''We're still seeing gender ideology in schools; we've got record levels of immigration; our taxes are at an 80-year high; and the government accounts for 45 percent of G.D.P.,'' she said, in her characteristic staccato tone. ''By any objective measure, that's not a very strongly conservative set of policies.

''I tried,'' Truss said of her ill-fated premiership, the shortest in Britain's history, ''but it was too late in the day, fundamentally.''

Never mind that Truss was ultimately undone by her own policies: an ill-judged foray into Ronald Reagan-style, trickle-down tax cuts that frightened the financial markets, sent the British pound into a tailspin and provoked the kinds of warnings about financial instability from the International Monetary Fund normally issued to rogue regimes in Latin America.

Forty-eight hours after our conversation in mid-May, Truss's successor as prime minister, Rishi Sunak, called a general election for July 4. Truss, who returned to the Tory backbenches in Parliament after leaving 10 Downing Street, was summarily ousted by the voters of her district in Norfolk, northeast of London. That made her the first former British prime minister in nearly a century to lose her own seat, the highest-profile casualty in a landslide victory by the Labour Party that was less a triumph of the left than a breathtaking repudiation of the Conservatives.

''People say the Conservative Party should be united,'' Truss said, ''but you've got to unite around an idea or set of ideas. At present, I think the views are very disparate about what the ideas should be.''

In this, at least, she has a point.

Two months after their historic rout, the Conservatives are still a house divided. Facing years in the political wilderness, they have scattered into angry camps -- ''fighting like rats in the sack,'' in the words of Tim Bale, a leading scholar on the party at Queen Mary University of London -- as they argue over what caused their collapse and what can be done to pick up the pieces.

There is no shortage of culprits. Rishi Sunak, for calling the election months earlier than he needed to. Boris Johnson, for presiding over an unsavory parade of scandals that left voters disgusted with a legacy of ''Tory sleaze.'' Yet another prime minister, David Cameron, for imposing painful fiscal austerity in 2010 and then calling the self-sabotaging referendum on Brexit six years later.

It is an overstatement to say that Brexit caused the Conservative crackup -- but not by much. The scalding, seemingly never-ending debate over whether and how to leave the European Union haunted the party, dividing the Tories, pulling its leaders to the right and forcing successive governments into ever-more-extreme policies, especially after it was widely judged a failure. ''Brexit is still at the root of all this,'' says Tony Travers, a professor of politics at the London School of Economics. ''The Conservative Party damaged itself because of it. And Brexit got tangled up in the populist tide. The original referendum vote allowed a populist expression, but after eight years, it's clear Brexit did not produce the benefits promised by its supporters.''

That lingering disappointment acted as an accelerant for the anti-immigrant riots that convulsed Britain for several days this summer. Four weeks after voters threw out the government, gangs of far-right thugs stormed mosques and torched the hotels used to house asylum seekers. The spark was a brutal knife attack on a dance studio by a 17-year-old Welsh-born man whose parents immigrated from Rwanda; he was charged with killing three children and injuring 10 others.

But the deeper causes lie in the broken promises of the Brexiteers. They claimed that immigration levels would decline as a result of leaving the E.U.; instead, they have soared. Conservative governments have quietly encouraged this influx in the hope that the new arrivals, many of them highly skilled, would recharge Britain's lagging economy. At the same time, Conservative leaders pandered to anti-immigration sentiment within their political base by inflaming fears about a much smaller subset of illegal migrants: asylum seekers from countries like Afghanistan or Albania, many of whom make desperate crossings of the English Channel in rickety boats.

Now the Tories are caught in the vortex of the rancorous debate they whipped up. In September, the party will hold the first stage of a two-month contest to select a new leader. The six declared candidates are struggling to articulate a coherent policy on immigration, to say nothing of the many other social and economic problems facing the country, including low productivity and a corroded public health service. Those candidates run the gamut from middle-of-the-road figures like Tom Tugendhat and James Cleverly, military men who have somewhat awkwardly adopted the vocabulary of hard-liners, to more natural right-wingers like Kemi Badenoch and Priti Patel, children of immigrants who project a kind of ''multiethnic nativism,'' in the words of Sunder Katwala, the director of British Future, a research institute.

As if a battle for the party's soul wasn't existential enough, the Tories must contend with the resurgence of Nigel Farage, the gleeful populist and chronic political disrupter. No longer a fringe figure, he expertly stoked anger about immigration to win more than four million votes for his insurgent party, Reform U.K., with most coming from disaffected Tories. This has split the right and raised questions about whether he may engineer a hostile takeover of the Conservatives.

In their embrace of radicalism, the Conservatives bear an obvious resemblance to their American cousins in the Republican Party. Both have ridden the whirlwind of populism. Both have discarded decades of orthodoxy on core economic and social issues. Both have seen their traditional party establishments hollowed out -- in the case of the Conservatives, by the Brexiteers; in the case of the G.O.P., by Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again movement. What separates the two is that the Conservatives underwent this transformation while clinging stubbornly to power. Their psychodrama became the country's psychodrama. British politics was shaped not by Tony Blair, as Truss suggests, but by the decade-long disintegration of the Conservative Party.

As a more unified, businesslike Labour government turns the page on the Tory era, many people in Britain want to look ahead. But even in defeat, the Tories are a spectacle. Their leadership contest has become ''a battle of ideological purity,'' says Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at Kings College London. ''It's the Mensheviks versus the Trotskyites in the Bolshevik Party before the First World War.''

History suggests the party will lurch to the right, at least for a time. After the Tories were defeated by Blair in 1997, they cycled through three right-wing leaders -- and two further election defeats -- before settling on David Cameron and a centrist route back to power. Even Tories who reject links to Farage or the far right echo Truss's argument that the party must find its way back to a more authentic conservative identity. But in a Britain convulsed by riots and newly attracted to Farage and Reform, the very concept of such an identity seems up for grabs. For the party's aspiring leaders, the soul searching has scarcely begun.

''We have to recognize what we did to alienate and frustrate a lot of voters,'' Cleverly, who served as foreign secretary and home secretary, says. ''None of us should turn around and say the voters made a mistake. ''

To understand the sheer magnitude of the Conservative defeat, it helps to recall the party's record of winning elections, without peer in the West. Tories have been in power for roughly two-thirds of their existence, which dates to the 17th century, when they emerged as a factional rival to the Whigs before organizing as a party under the Conservative banner in 1834. Samuel Earle, in his book, ''Tory Nation,'' attributed that success to the party's talent for projecting stability. ''It is the Conservatives' abiding promise,'' he wrote, ''that they will keep things recognizably the same, that tomorrow will look like today. They are the safe pair of hands.''

The party of Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Rishi Sunak, the Conservatives are also a big tent, with an endless capacity to remake themselves in the face of changing circumstances. This shape-shifting quality has enabled the Tories, though rooted in the aristocracy, to expand beyond their upper-class roots and appeal to ***working-class*** voters, as they did in 2019, when Johnson won an election by vowing to ''Get Brexit done.'' Yet as Earle wrote, ''The strange dissonance between the Conservative Party's ability to win elections and its destructive record in government stands as one of the defining riddles of British politics.''

Never has that riddle been more mystifying than in the eight years since the Brexit referendum. The party cycled through no fewer than five prime ministers, a spectacle of corruption, hubris, folly and misrule.

Cameron called the referendum to settle Britain's future in Europe once and for all, but then ran such a desultory campaign to stay in the E.U. that it contributed to the narrow vote to leave. Johnson, the clown prince of British politics, threw wine-and-cheese parties in 10 Downing Street that violated his government's own lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic. Sunak, Britain's first prime minister of color, may be most remembered for championing a plan to put newly arrived asylum seekers on one-way flights to the central African country Rwanda. And then there's Truss, who occupies a special place in Tory hell. Her tax experiment turned Britain -- the birthplace of Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes -- into a global laughingstock. She herself became a punchline: Which would last longer, The Daily Star asked: Liz Truss or a lettuce? The paper bought a head of lettuce and posted a livestream of it next to her photo. The lettuce won.

For the Conservative Party, however, the consequences were longer lasting. ''Liz Truss destroyed any claim to economic credibility,'' says Rory Stewart, the broadcaster and former diplomat who served as a Tory member of Parliament from 2010 until 2019. ''She removed the central Conservative argument that they are the responsible party for managing the economy.''

Stewart's own career as a Tory ended abruptly when he and other lawmakers resisted Johnson's plan to pull out of the European Union without a trade deal and were pushed out. Now the co-host, with the onetime Blair adviser Alastair Campbell, of a popular podcast, Stewart has become an eloquent eulogist for a party he says he no longer recognizes. ''Margaret Thatcher achieved a radical economic transformation,'' Stewart told me. ''Tony Blair achieved a constitutional and cultural transformation. The problem that the Conservatives face is that it's very difficult over 14 years to identify what they've achieved beyond the catastrophe of Brexit.''

Perhaps that explains why, in the last election, the Tories simply stopped talking about it. With polls showing that nearly 60 percent of Britons now regret leaving the European Union -- a consequence both of the weak economy and of changing demographics -- Brexit has become political Kryptonite. Voters blame the Brexiteers for failing to negotiate a better departure deal with Brussels or, more plainly, for having sold them a bill of goods in the first place. ''That sense of being scammed is one of the reasons people don't want to talk about it,'' says Chris Patten, a Conservative elder who once chaired the party and later served as the last governor of colonial Hong Kong. ''Brexit became sort of the pit-bull terrier of British politics. Nobody knew whether it was house-trained or whether, if you went on walks with it in the park, it would bite people.''

The radicalization of the party is also rooted in a profound shift in the behavior of the British electorate: away from voting on economic, class-based criteria toward voting on cultural identity. In this sense, the debate over Britain's place in the E.U. was a cultural debate and the Brexit vote a kind of cultural protest. ''The Tory Party's strategy has been to give ground to emerging populism to head off a threat from the right,'' says David Gauke, who served as a Conservative justice secretary and, like Stewart, was purged by Johnson in 2019. ''The Brexit debate accelerated this process and clarified it. It has forced members of the Conservative Party to choose what kind of conservatives they are.''

Broadly speaking, Bale said, the ideological fault line runs between the forces of big-state populism and neoliberal economics. Thatcher, the ''Iron Lady'' whose free-market revolution in the 1980s defined the modern-day Conservative Party, embodied both strains. But present-day Tories tend to sort into one camp or the other: Johnson was a populist, while Sunak and Truss are heirs to the neoliberal tradition. Neither, though, was willing to face down the populists on their right, and Truss has styled herself as a populist since leaving office.

Less than five years before their crushing defeat, the Conservatives used an avowedly populist message to pull off their own lopsided victory over Labour. Boris Johnson, having gained occupancy of Downing Street in the chaotic aftermath of the referendum, called an election to break an impasse in Parliament over the terms by which Britain would leave the E.U. His Brexit-themed campaign was reductive but crudely effective. To illustrate his point, Johnson drove a backhoe through a wall of foam bricks. The wall was labeled ''Gridlock,'' while the backhoe was stamped with a Union Jack and the three-word slogan, ''Get Brexit done.''

Sure enough, the Conservatives smashed Labour's ''red wall,'' a crumbling bastion of coal and factory towns in the Midlands and north of England that had voted for the Labour Party for generations. Having also widely supported Brexit, they felt betrayed by Labour's mealy-mouthed position on Europe and frustrated by those who called for a do-over referendum on membership. Labour's loss was its worst since 1935, and the Conservative majority the largest since 1987. Johnson had redrawn Britain's political map, commentators said. Some predicted the Tories would be in power for another decade. But Johnson himself recognized the evanescence of his coalition. ''You may only have lent us your vote,'' he said, adding presciently, ''You may intend to return to Labour next time.''

Johnson was able to get Brexit done -- Britain left the European Union in January 2020 -- but it failed to deliver tangible economic dividends. As many experts predicted, Britain's departure from the E.U.'s vast single market hindered trade and stunted economic growth. In a more unexpected development, driven by labor shortages and post-Brexit emphasis on attracting skilled workers, net immigration surged to 765,000 in 2022, more than twice that in the year before the referendum.

To the economically starved ''red wall,'' Johnson promised a hefty dose of state intervention. He named a ''leveling up'' minister, whose job was to pour investment into the Midlands and North to erase the wealth disparity with the richer south, especially the booming capital, London. But bureaucracy and tight finances, especially after the pandemic, put an end to those dreams.

Few places capture the disenchantment with Brexit more vividly than Shirebrook, a hard-bitten former coal town of 11,500 in the East Midlands. More than a decade ago, a sporting-goods company opened a giant warehouse on the edge of town, hiring hundreds of workers from Eastern Europe to staff it. While it provided jobs, the warehouse changed the look and feel of Shirebrook. ''You can go down to the village, and you don't know anybody,'' said Gary Attenborough, 54, who works as a groundskeeper and plays bingo at a social club for the families of retired coal miners.

That sense of dislocation fueled an anti-immigration backlash that led people in Shirebrook to vote to leave the E.U. Many of those same people turned out for the Tories in 2019. But little changed in the four years after the election. The workers at the warehouse were still there, and there were no new employers with jobs for British residents. With boarded-up storefronts, Shirebrook still looked like a place left behind. In 2024, the voters ousted the Conservative member of Parliament in favor of his Labour opponent.

''They voted Conservative'' in 2019, Attenborough said, before turning back to his bingo game. ''But now they're fed up.''

As the Tories pick their way through the political wilderness, rarely have they found the landscape rockier. While the election did not drive the party into extinction, as some feared it would, it left the Conservatives badly out of step with mainstream British politics. Nor are there obvious forces to pull them back and make them palatable to a broader share of voters. If anything, structural changes in Britain's political system are conspiring to push the party further into the right-wing weeds.

Anti-immigrant sentiment, which helped Reform soak up 14 percent of the vote and propelled Farage into Parliament for the first time in eight attempts, shows signs of hardening further, at least on the right. Brexit, while fading from the headlines, continues to impose burdens on Britain's economy. The media ecosystem that surrounds and props up the Conservatives -- from The Daily Telegraph and other pro-Tory papers to the noisy right-wing TV news channel, GB News -- keeps hammering the message that the party's problem is that it is not sufficiently right-wing.

Britain's summer of unrest presented something of a quandary for the party's candidates. They were loath to endorse the Labour government's hardheaded response to the rioters: hundreds of arrests and fast-track convictions. But in so doing, they risked blurring the line with Farage, who stirred up malefactors on the far right by questioning why the authorities were not treating the attack on the children as a terrorist act. ''I just wonder whether the truth is being withheld from us,'' he said.

While only 7 percent of the British public said they approved of the riots, a fifth of those who voted for Reform did. ''You can't win if your brand is being dragged by Reform,'' Sunder Katwala says.

Tories are evenly divided about the wisdom of merging with Reform, according to a poll taken by the market research firm YouGov after the election. That speaks to how disillusioned they have become. It also speaks to the growing gulf between the rank-and-file members and their representatives in Parliament. Tory members tend to be older, whiter and more right-wing than Tory M.P.s, let alone the general population. There are also far fewer of them: From a peak of 2.8 million in 1953, the membership has dwindled to about 170,000.

''The main parties used to be a much more authentic expression of the nation,'' says Charles Moore, a columnist and former chief editor of The Daily Telegraph, a paper so aligned with the Tories that it is often referred to as the Torygraph. ''Both of them were deeply rooted in the country: Labour, with unions and the organized ***working class***; Tories, with the butchers, bakers and candlestick makers.''

The loosening of ties between the Conservative Party and the grass roots has made voters less loyal and the electorate more volatile. It has also contributed to the party's capture by ideas like the trickle-down economics of Truss or the Rwanda asylum scheme championed by Sunak -- policies machine-tooled to appeal to the party's base, even if they were unpopular with much of the public. As the party has changed, so have its politicians. The ubiquity of social media and the emergence of GB News have given members of Parliament a way to become, as Bale puts it, ''legends in their own lunchtime.'' Farage has his own prime-time show on the channel, arguably as valuable as his seat in the House of Commons and certainly more lucrative.

Hungry for publicity and heedless of authority, the Tories have become all but unmanageable, less a big tent than a chaotic campground. During the debate over sending migrants to Rwanda, the party's right split into five dissident groups, which took to naming themselves the ''five families,'' after the mobsters who run the rackets in New York City. For months before the election, Sunak was plagued by would-be successors maneuvering to take his place after a defeat. He turned up at a reception thrown by the political magazine The Spectator, at the party's conference in Manchester last fall, to find guests in the sweaty ballroom mobbing potential leaders, as they drained warm glasses of Pol Roger, Churchill's favorite Champagne.

Now, with Sunak in a caretaker role, the candidates are pleading for party unity, even as they carry on a sharp-elbowed campaign that has featured leaked videos and other opposition research to discredit one another. The agendas they lay out for the party are tailored to the peculiarities of the selection process: While their fellow M.P.s will vote to cut the six candidates to two finalists, the winner will be chosen by party members, the same people who selected Liz Truss.

Little surprise, then, that their policies tilt uniformly to the right. Tugendhat, a 51-year-old standard-bearer for the centrists, has called for ''common-sense Conservative positions,'' which include a threat to leave the European Convention on Human Rights if it blocks Britain's effort to close its borders. Tugendhat used to warn against withdrawing from the treaty on the grounds that it would create new problems, not least for the peace in Northern Ireland. But he now says it hinders Britain's ability to deport criminals who enter the country illegally. Cleverly, 54, whose father's family is from Wiltshire and whose mother came from Sierra Leone, says immigration is woven into Britain's history but that the system breeds resentment because some people cut in line to get into the country. ''The Brits love queuing up,'' he says. ''Where there is a perception that the rules are being broken, that really hits a nerve.''

Cleverly's star is rising, but Britain's bookmakers are still betting that Badenoch or Robert Jenrick will emerge victorious. Jenrick, who is 42, resigned from the last Conservative government because he said its Rwanda plan did not go far enough. He has styled himself as an immigration absolutist; the number of migrants, he said, should be capped in the ''tens of thousands.'' He has also endorsed Donald Trump in the American election, which some said was a blunder given Trump's deep unpopularity with much of the British public. Badenoch, 44, a daughter of Nigerian immigrants and former trade secretary, wrote recently in The Times of London that the party needs to fight against ''nasty identity politics'' and ''a postmodernism that can best be described as joyless decadence.'' Bale called her the ''thinking man's Thatcherite culture warrior.'' The biggest threat to Badenoch has come from a recently resurfaced 2018 video in which she welcomed the Conservative government's proposal to relax restrictions on visas for skilled migrants. She said she has since changed her mind.

Badenoch is not the only candidate who once viewed immigration differently. Patel introduced more work visas for foreign graduates of British universities when she served as home secretary. Tugendhat campaigned to grant full citizenship to holders of British Overseas passports in Hong Kong. Cleverly fought for visas for Ukrainian refugees, while Jenrick even hosted a Ukrainian family. Some of these circumstances were extraordinary, of course, and there is broad recognition that Britain cannot sustain a net influx of nearly 700,000 migrants a year. But that Conservatives are tying themselves in knots on this issue attests to a deeper dysphoria in the party that has long dominated British politics. And it is only one of many contradictions: a party caught between big-state populism and neoliberal economic policy; a champion of national unity that also wages culture wars; a self-proclaimed change agent even after 14 years in power.

''Who is the Conservative Party for?'' Menon asked. ''Ten years ago, I could have told you: it's for relatively wealthy people who want a small state and to pay lower taxes. Who is the Conservative Party for today? God only knows.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/29/magazine/uk-politics-tories-conservatives.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/29/magazine/uk-politics-tories-conservatives.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT CHASE

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[***Major Shifts Beneath the Surface in a New Trump-Harris Poll***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJT-HW41-DXY4-X1GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** Nate CohnNate Cohn is The Times&amp;#8217;s chief political analyst. He covers elections, public opinion, demographics and polling.

**Highlight:** The changes among groups cancel out for now, and Trump leads narrowly, but there’s a tie when candidates like Kennedy Jr. are considered.

**Body**

The changes among groups cancel out for now, and Trump leads narrowly, but there’s a tie when candidates like Kennedy Jr. are considered.

After all the political tumult of the last month, Thursday’s latest [*New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html) is full of findings unlike any we’ve seen this cycle, with one exception: who leads the presidential race.

The [*poll found*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html) Donald J. Trump ahead of Kamala Harris by one percentage point, 48 percent to 47 percent, among [*likely voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html). Other than the name of the Democratic candidate, “Trump +1” is a result that could have been from any other Times/Siena poll before President Biden’s disastrous debate.

But on question after question, there are major shifts from previous Times-Siena polls, which were all taken before Vice President Harris essentially locked up her party’s nomination for president, before the Republican convention, and before the attempted assassination of Mr. Trump. Even the one-point Harris deficit represents a significant improvement for Democrats [*from Mr. Biden’s six-point deficit*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html) in our last Times/Siena poll.

As I have [*written*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html), these events make it hard to know what to make of the [*results of recent polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html), including this one. The survey is a useful marker of where the race stands now, but there’s no reason to be confident that this is where the race will stand once the dust settles.

While the overall result between Ms. Harris and Mr. Trump may look familiar, the poll is full of signs that there’s a lot of dust still in the political air.

* Mr. Trump hits a high in popularity. Overall, 48 percent of registered voters say they have a favorable view of him, up from 42 percent in our last poll (taken after the debate but before the convention and assassination attempt). It’s his highest favorable number in a Times/Siena poll, which previously always found his favorable ratings between 39 percent and 45 percent.

1. Ms. Harris is surging. In fact, her ratings have increased even more than Mr. Trump’s. Overall, 46 percent of registered voters have a favorable view of her, up from 36 percent when we last asked about her in February. Only 49 percent have an unfavorable view, down from 54 percent in our last measure. As important, her favorable rating is higher than Mr. Biden’s. In fact, it’s higher than his standing in any Times/Siena poll since September 2022, which so happens to be the last time Mr. Biden led a Times/Siena national poll of registered voters.
2. The national political environment is a little brighter. The share of voters who say the country is on the “right track” is up to 27 percent — hardly a bright and smiley public, but still the highest since the midterm elections in 2022. Mr. Biden’s approval and favorable ratings are up as well. The ranks of the double haters have dwindled: With both Ms. Harris and Mr. Trump riding high, the number of voters who dislike both candidates has plunged to 8 percent, down from 20 percent in Times/Siena polls so far this year.

With all of these underlying changes in the attitudes about the candidates, there’s no reason to assume that this familiar Trump +1 result means that the race has simply returned to where it stood before the debate. For now, these developments have mostly canceled out, but whether that will still be true in a few weeks is much harder to say.

By the book, Mr. Trump’s gains over the last month resemble a classic “convention bounce,” perhaps with added good will from his survival of the assassination attempt. Historically, bounces usually fade, but not necessarily in their entirety.

What has happened to Ms. Harris over the last week doesn’t follow any book at all. She’ll presumably keep riding the momentum of her new candidacy for a while, but after that anything is possible. Only time will tell how the public will react to her as they hear her — and the attacks against her — in the days and weeks ahead.

Below, a few outtakes from our poll.

Yes, voters seem fine with the Democratic makeover

I don’t think the Times/Siena poll has ever found 87 percent of voters who agreed on anything, but that’s the share who say they approve of Mr. Biden’s decision to stand aside in the presidential race. Only 9 percent disapprove.

Democrats, meanwhile, are [*ready for Kamala*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html). Nearly four-fifths say the party should nominate her for president, compared with 14 percent who say they should nominate someone else. A slightly larger 27 percent say the party should encourage a competitive nominating process, but 70 percent say the party should unite behind Ms. Harris and quickly make her the nominee.

A more typical demographic divide

If you’re a longtime reader of the Tilt, you know we’ve been tracking Mr. Biden’s weakness among young, Black, Hispanic and low-turnout voters [*for nearly a year now*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html).

It will take some time — maybe more than a month, given the potential volatility ahead — before we have a good sense of the demographic contours of this new race. But in this poll at least, the Harris-Trump matchup brings a different and more typical demographic divide.

In the poll, Ms. Harris fares better among young (18 to 29) and Hispanic voters than Mr. Biden did in any survey this year. She fares better among nonvoters than Mr. Biden did in all but one Times/Siena poll over the same period. Conversely, she fares worse among white ***working-class*** voters and voters over 65 than Mr. Biden did in all but one prior Times/Siena poll.

Of course, this is just one survey; the results of individual subgroups from one poll are noisy and subject to a hefty margin of error. But there’s good reason to think that these demographic shifts are part of something real. The findings are consistent with those of [*previous*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html) [*Times/Siena polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/25/us/elections/times-siena-poll-registered-voter-crosstabs.html). And more generally, they’re in keeping with the expected relative strengths of a Black woman (who also has Indian ancestry) from California in her 50s compared with a white man from Scranton, Pa., in his 80s.

Will Kennedy help Harris?

Ms. Harris actually pulled even with Mr. Trump when all the minor-party candidates were included along with the independent Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Ms. Harris was at 44 percent and Mr. Trump at 43 percent (Ms. Harris’s lead rounds to zero using the exact figures, 43.5 to 43.2), with Mr. Kennedy at 5 percent. That’s Mr. Kennedy’s lowest tally since we began naming him in our polls.

Mr. Trump led in the two-way race — but not the multicandidate race — because he won Mr. Kennedy’s sliver of support by more than a two-to-one margin. It’s a small sample, but it is Mr. Trump’s largest advantage among Kennedy supporters in our polling to this point.

It’s just one poll, but there’s something to the idea that Mr. Kennedy’s presence in the race might more clearly help Ms. Harris. Throughout the race, Mr. Kennedy’s candidacy has tended to appeal more to the right than the left. In this poll, for instance, Mr. Kennedy’s favorable rating is positive among Republicans but negative among Democrats. Even so, he had been drawing relatively evenly from President Biden and Mr. Trump, as he managed to win a considerable number of the disproportionately young voters disaffected with Mr. Biden.

Ms. Harris, however, does not necessarily have the same vulnerability. If she’s sufficiently appealing to young, disaffected voters who ordinarily lean Democratic, Mr. Kennedy might not siphon away as much of her support — and might start to draw disproportionately from Mr. Trump.

PHOTO: Donald J. Trump, with JD Vance. Overall, 48 percent of voters said they have a favorable view of Mr. Trump, up from 42 percent. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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[***Zadie Smith on Populists, Frauds and Flip Phones; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D08-D8T1-JBG3-60ST-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 6755 words

**Byline:** Ezra Klein, Ezra Klein joined Opinion in 2021. Previously, he was the founder, editor in chief and then editor at large of Vox; the host of the podcast &amp;#8220;The Ezra Klein Show&amp;#8221;; and the author of &amp;#8220;Why We&amp;#8217;re Polarized.&amp;#8221; Before that, he was a columnist and editor at The Washington Post, where he founded and led the Wonkblog vertical. He is on Threads.

**Highlight:** The novelist on everything from the “amorphous” self to aging and mystery.

**Body**

Sometimes you stumble across a line in a book and think, “Yeah, that’s exactly how that feels.” I had that moment reading the introduction to Zadie Smith’s 2018 book of essays,

“Feel Free.” She’s talking about the political stakes of that period — Brexit in Britain, Donald Trump here — and the way you could feel it changing people.

She writes: “Millions of more or less amorphous selves will now necessarily find themselves solidifying into protesters, activists, marchers, voters, firebrands, impeachers, lobbyists, soldiers, champions, defenders, historians, experts, critics. You can’t fight fire with air. But equally you can’t fight for a freedom you’ve forgotten how to identify.”

What Smith is describing felt so familiar. I see it so often in myself and people around me. And yet you rarely hear it talked about — that moment when politics feels like it demands we put aside our internal conflict, our uncertainty, and solidify ourselves into what the cause or the moment needs us to be, as if curiosity were a luxury or a decadence suited only to peacetime.

Smith is a novelist and an essayist; she’s been one of my favorite writers for years. If you’ve not read her back catalog, “White Teeth” and “On Beauty” and “Swing Time,” I almost envy you. But still, I was surprised when I finally read “[*The Fraud*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/568108/the-fraud-by-zadie-smith/),” the book she released last year. I didn’t expect this novel about a trial in 19th-century London to be so resonant with 21st-century America. But Smith has said Trump and populism were front of mind when she wrote it, and you can feel it in the book, as she explores the Tichborne trial, based on a real, very strange case in which a man who seemed to be a clear fraud claimed to be the heir to a storied estate, and built a huge movement of passionate supporters who utterly flummoxed the day’s elites. Smith has moved to another time and another place to protect the ability to have that amorphous self, to explore something current from more perspectives than the current moment sometimes allows.

Smith joined me for a conversation on my podcast. This is an edited transcript of part of our conversation. For the full conversation, listen to “[*The Ezra Klein Show*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ezra-klein-podcast).” Please note this episode contains strong language.

In the introduction to your essay collection “Feel Free,” you make this point that we have these “amorphous” identities that then, under political pressure, “solidify.” Tell me about that, that experience, that dynamic.

I think, for me, it’s a tension in my thought, which I perhaps extrapolate to others. But I guess I don’t often define myself. But if I had to, I would call myself a radical humanist, a socialist but also an existentialist. And those three things combined are sometimes hard to think from. The existentialist part means I think people are thrown into life. I don’t believe in people having essences, essentially — and that leads to a certain kind of fiction, a certain kind of thought. But it also has a political angle, because if you think people are thrown into life, then the circumstances they’re thrown into are of absolute significance. And in 2016, the circumstances we were all about to be thrown into were my focus, whereas in quieter or more peaceful times, the idea of what you’re thrown into being the beauty of the world, nature itself, your relations with other people, this kind of private, domestic world — that had to be put to one side.

Something you went on to say in that introduction was that you can’t fight fire with air. I took you to be saying, at least in part, that internal conflict is at times a luxury — or if not a luxury, something that at certain moments you’re forced to give up in order to achieve a goal. We’re in an election year. And I do find there are times when people are very comfortable with you both having and expressing your doubt, your conflict, on the one hand, and then there are times when both internally and externally people view that as a kind of decadence.

That’s absolutely the case. Given that a huge amount of people are very willing to suppress or ignore any kind of contradiction, ambivalence in themselves, there should be space, theoretically, for one or two people to remind people of their wholeness. So when I’m writing, that’s what I’m thinking about. I know I cannot perform the roles that other people play. But the role I play, which is far smaller, but makes an attempt to deal with people in their privacy as well as in their public selves.

Tell me about the Tichborne case, which is at the heart of your book “The Fraud.” How did you get interested in that?

I got interested in it through a strange pathway because the man himself, this ***working-class*** butcher who claimed to be an aristocrat, is buried in an unmarked grave right next to my house and has always been right next door to me. Even when I lived in a housing estate, that housing estate looked over the graveyard where he’s buried. So he’s always been on my mind, and he always interested me as an example of a kind of left-wing populism.

The first time I started thinking about him properly was during the O.J. Simpson trial, when I was young. That was, it seemed to me, another example of a case that you know, fundamentally, is not true. No spoilers to the younger public there, but in my view, O.J. did do it. But the idea that a court case could express not a particular act of truth or justice but a more generalized feeling about justice really interested me. And the fact that in the O.J. case, even though the subject of it was a lie, there was a larger truth being told in that case, which was that the courts were institutionally racist, that America itself had run a court system that was institutionally racist. So that larger truth was told around a lie. That’s what interested me. And that’s what interests me about Tichborne, too. It’s not the way I would ever want justice to come about, but it’s a recognition sometimes that when all other outlets seem blocked, populism rears its head

In the Tichborne case, you have this apparent butcher who is claiming to be the heir to a great noble estate. But give me a bit more setup.

It’s such a silly story. But a man called Roger Tichborne, who was a Catholic, French- speaking, Anglo French aristocrat went off on a boat, actually to Jamaica, and the boat sank. He was about 22. And his mother, who was completely obsessed with him, refused to believe it, and put adverts out all over the world — first in England, then Britain, then Europe, then as far as Australia — offering larger and larger rewards for the discovery of her son, who she believed had been rescued from the shipwreck and was somewhere.

The reward got so large that, inevitably, pretenders would turn up. And this particular pretender was a ***working-class*** man called Arthur Orton. He’d been a butcher. He had traveled away from England, ended up in Australia, and in Australia, bumped into a Black man, an ex-slave, a Jamaican, who had worked for this Tichborne family. He’s called Andrew Bogle.

And these two men sail to England and claim that the butcher is the long lost son, and the mother says, yes, you are, and then promptly dies. And that started this enormous court case between the family, the Tichbornes, who obviously didn’t want to give their property and money and lands to a stranger, and Orton and Bogle who steadfastly insisted they were telling the truth.

One of my favorite lines in the book comes at one of the trials after there was a spray of conspiracy theories about how the initial trial was rigged.

You write, “Mrs. Touchet did not recall an excess of aristocrats or Jesuits at the first trial, and was quite certain she’d seen many a poor man. And what choice did government have but to accept the cost of cases imposed upon it? But such dry and inconvenient facts were of no consequence here, in this ocean of feeling.”

That had the sort of ring of recognition in a lot of both my reporting and just moments in my own life, where the dry facts seem somehow to pale before the emotional structure of a thing.

Right, but I’m also not willing to submit entirely to feeling. My ideal — and this is not perfectly practiced in my own life and certainly not perfectly practiced in my work — but it’s that Aristotelian idea: That you have logic, you have pathos. These things work together. And you have your will. You have to combine these things. Every time I’m writing something, I’m trying to balance the claims of those things. Sometimes the ethics of a situation are all that matters. Sometimes you have to cede to emotion. And sometimes logic is what’s required. But the tricky thing about life is there’s no guidebook to how exactly those three things should be balanced. It’s something you have to enact every day of your life. It’s work.

That made me think of an experience I had some years ago. There was a rise of an online intellectual movement known as the rationalists. I think it was Ben Shapiro who was very associated with the line “facts don’t care about your feelings.” During that period, I remember trying to think a lot about emotion and politics, and recognizing particularly that emotion does point toward things. It doesn’t tell you what is true. But if people feel strongly about something, there is a deep intelligence in people’s emotional reactions. And if you keep seeing it point in a direction, I feel like you should bring curiosity to that.

“The facts don’t care about my feelings” is a truly fascistic sentence, to be honest. We are creatures of feeling, in part. So to deny that is to deny a part of the kind of animal we are in the world. I think you see plenty of that in Palo Alto and many other places. But to take it as a principle is extraordinary to me. Even in the hardest sciences, emotion plays some role, instinct plays some role. And it also dismisses huge areas of people’s human experience — the entirety of religious experience, almost the entirety of emotive experience, experience of the natural world, philosophical experience. So for me, that movement is — it’s just so distant from the way I think about humans and what they need.

And I do think some of this obsession with rational argument, I really notice it when people are arguing about transgender issues or very intimate and complicated personal matters. Sometimes people will argue with this fierce logic, as if all our experiences of identity or personal experience are run on these logical terms. But of course it’s not the case. So why should this particular area be subjected to absolute rationality?

I would say that most of our experiences of ourselves are quite deeply irrational. If you stop a couple in the street and say to them, why are you married? You are not going to get a rational answer from them. You’re going to get murmurings, some sentimental, some partially logical, some apologetic, some unsure. But there’s a large area of our intimate lives, some of our most serious decisions, which can’t be presented to logic in that way. I think you have to allow people an area of self that doesn’t submit to a mathematical program.

Fights over identity have been a big part of our politics in recent years. This all gets called “wokeness,” although I don’t love that term. But what has always shocked me, having lived through this period, is how powerfully that moral wave hit between, I guess I would call it 2015 and 2021, and then in the last couple of years, how rapidly it feels like it is ebbed. And I’m not saying that it hasn’t left quite a lot behind or changed us. But there has been this whiplash for me. And I’m curious what your experience of it has been.

So much of it happens at a meta level, in newspapers and think pieces. I can’t honestly say in my classrooms — I just don’t even recognize the category. If I’m teaching “Pride and Prejudice,” it’s not a battle between woke thought and unwoke thought. I’m only interested in truth.

To me, there is no friction and no battle between teaching the beauty and artistry of Austen’s novels — discussing where Darcy’s money comes from, which is most certainly the Caribbean, understanding the political situation in England in the 1810s. Those things happen simultaneously. The ***working-class*** movement, which is off to the side in that novel, the complacency of the middle classes in that novel, the artistry of Jane Austen.

I don’t take the bait. I don’t accept the argument in the first place that I have two kinds of students who are in some kind of football game of ideas, and if one wins, the other loses. That’s not how I teach literature. That’s not how I think of history. That’s not how I think of the relationship between Black and white people. So I don’t engage, because I think it’s a bait and that what you’re meant to do in response to it is move further and further to the right in response to this boogeyman.

I’m not asking you to take the bait of choosing a side. I don’t think this was happening just at newspapers. I think this was a genuine social movement and a genuine shift in ideologies and things people believed. One thing educators have told me is that they feel like things shifted a lot in young people for a while, and now they’re maybe shifting back. What of that ideological wave do you think has held? What is now just common wisdom? And what has left?

The thing which is satisfying for me was the first and initial hierarchical reversal. It’s something that I dreamed about all my life, that people who thoughtlessly considered themselves at the center of history, culture, would be made to look at the world another way. That first hierarchical reversal is a revolution in thought, and it’s incredible.

So I would not have been able to write this book without an incredible flowering of African diasporic thought on the historical question, on the history of slavery, on what happened to the African diaspora. All of that just simply did not exist when I started writing. So I am in absolute debt to all of those writers who tried to centralize the idea of Africa as a major part of our collective human history and of that story as fundamental to Europe and to the politics we’re in now. That is all essential. So I’m excited that when I talk to students now, they don’t just know one novel from Africa. They don’t have some kind of vague sense of what happened in African history and in contemporary history in relation to Africa.

But I did not come to create a hierarchical revolution and then have my thought suddenly calcify the way the previous version of thought was calcified. That’s not what I believe in and that’s not what I’m here for. To become that person to me would be death. So I can’t take any role that’s presented to me as my role. I have to keep thinking every day.

You were talking about who gets to be seen as the center of history, and also maybe another way of putting that is: who gets to be seen as not having identity. When we talked about identity politics in America, at least, one of my sort of endless arguments is that identity politics was strongest when it was least visible, right? When there was no conflict —

But that’s what the hierarchical reversal was about. That everybody had an identity apart from white people. They had no identity. They were the universal. They were human beings. And so part of that turn is everybody saying, “Why don’t you try having an identity for once? See how you like it.” And the answer was, nobody liked it.

The lesson from that, for me, is that straitjacket is something that nobody really wants. Sometimes it’s needed politically. We absolutely need to gather in our identity groups sometimes for our freedoms, for our civil rights. There’s absolutely no doubt about that. But for that role to be the thing that is you existentially all the way down — that is something that I personally believe all human beings revolt from at some level.

You’ve written about how very stable notions of identity can create a kind of “containment” around people. What do you mean by that?

When I think of my identity, I think of myself as a Black British woman. I think of myself as a writer, a mother, a friend, occasional drug-taker, dancer, clubber — many things. Those things are all me. They’re probably best described by your name. So, what I’m trying to do when I’m writing is to try and defend that fundamental sense that we are, in the end, this person — I am a Zadie, you are an Ezra. I really think there’s a way that you can acknowledge that truth about yourself and still do your political work and still participate in struggle, but still know that humans are essentially uncontainable by these terms entirely.

There’s some connection here with language. And I was always struck by how many fights that could have been materialist ended up being about language. Oftentimes the demands were about how we spoke about each other — the backlash ended up being termed “free speech,” which I always thought was not accurate, but nevertheless. I guess the question is, what do you win and what do you lose when you wrap yourself in language? I heard you say on a podcast that it’s possible “there are wild freedoms — sexual, personal, existential — that come with having no language at all for what you feel and what you do.” And it struck me that you maybe have some ambivalence there.

I don’t blame anyone for the linguistic turn. It was a linguistic turn mostly on the part of young people. But how can you blame them? Given that they had no money, really, no tools, very little physical, material freedoms in the world, it seems natural to me that they fought in the only place they knew where to fight, which was language. The actual means of production are out of their hands. They were enveloped by this technological revolution, which basically kind of owned them. It doesn’t surprise me that the battleground ended up being language. Because language is the thing that’s right in front of you. You can do something about it. You can’t really do anything about late capitalism, or you didn’t feel like you could in 2012. You felt trapped.

So it doesn’t surprise me, but it’s wildly inefficient. It’s not good enough. I’m always happy that people use the “right” words around me and others. But it’s nothing compared to decent wages, decent housing, health care, human rights. So it’s not that I think it’s worthless. But to have it so wildly overburdened with meaning and power is a kind of trick that was played on us.

How do you see the way that using language to define ourselves online constantly has changed the self-definition of the people around you or the people you teach?

I don’t want to talk through emotional hysteria. I just talk about the facts. And the facts of this technology is that it was designed as, and is intended to be, a behavior modification system. That is the right term for it.

When you wake up in the morning and you turn to your social app, you are being instructed on what issue of the day is what to be interested in. The news has always played some element in doing that, but this is total. And it’s not even, to me, the content of those thoughts. There’s a lot of emphasis put on the kind of politics expressed on these platforms to the right or to the left. To me, it’s the structure — that it’s structured in a certain way. That an argument is this long, that there are two sides to every debate, that they must be in fierce contest with each other — that is actually structuring the way you think about thought.

And I don’t think anyone of my age who knows anyone they knew in 2008 thinks that that person has not been seriously modified.

And that’s OK. All mediums modify you. Books modify you, TV modifies you, radio modifies you. The social life of a 16th-century village modifies you. But the question becomes: Who do you want to be modified by, and to what degree? That’s my only question.

And when I look at the people who have designed these things — what they want, what their aims are, what they think a human being is or should be — the humans I know and love, this machinery is not worthy of them. That’s the best way I can put it.

And I speak as someone who grew up as an entirely TV-addicted human. I love TV. I love reading. Modification is my bread and butter. And when the internet came, I was like, hallelujah. Finally, we’ve got a medium which isn’t made by the man or centralized. We’re just going to be talking to each other, hanging out with each other, peer to peer. It’s going to be amazing. That is not the internet that we have. That is not what occurred.

A couple of years back, I got very into reading Marshall McLuhan and Neil Postman, media theorists from the rise of the television age. And the things they were saying television would do to us and do to our culture are right. There’s a straightforward argument in Neil Postman’s great book, “Amusing Ourselves to Death,” where he says that the thing television is going to do to politics is make us believe politics should always be entertaining, and that’s going to make politics a space dominated by entertainers. And like here we literally are, with a reality television superstar running for president, having already been president once before. For better and for worse, they saw it all coming, and they described a world way less warped and deranged by all this than the one we actually live in. If you went back and told them what happened, I think they would look at you with their mouth agape.

I think Neil Postman is a prophet and a genius, and I give that book to everybody all the time. It blew my mind.

It’s about capture. All mediums in the past have had partial capture. What blows my mind and what I think is the paradigm shift is, this is total. When I get on a train in the morning and I look down a carriage, there isn’t a single person who is looking up from their phones. So that was my question: What happens when it’s everybody? And it’s not just a medium, but it’s also the way you work, live. What happens when you enter into the medium and that’s how your life is structured?

I have total faith that people can metabolize technology. And I also know that technology is a culture. And though I’ve missed most of it, I know that the internet is a culture and it’s joyful to so many people. And it’s been nothing but L.O.L.s and pleasure and there’s been delight all over it, just as there was delight in television for me. But the political consequences are clear. It’s so boring to say, but just the effect on people’s ability to attend has been radical.

You don’t have a smartphone, which is a potent choice. What modification of yourself are you trying to protect against if you did?

It’s sometimes funny to think about. I mean, I cannot imagine.

Have you ever had one?

I had one for three months in 2008, when it came out. Other people’s opinions matter to me, as I’m sure they matter to everybody. The thought of being exposed to those opinions every second of every day, of having to present my life to other people in some other form than it exists every day, like a media presentation — I cannot imagine what my mind would be, what my books would be, what my relationships would be, what my relationship with my children would be.

Apart from anything else, I am an addictive person, so I would be on that thing nine hours a day. Easy. I watched TV nine hours a day throughout the whole of the ’80s. I would be what my kids call brain rot.

There’s the modification of the self but also the modification of the way you see others. One reason I’ve left a lot of platforms is I realized they were changing how I felt about other people. I was being exposed to parts of them that I didn’t like.

I think it’s important to be a bit more forgiving when they’re being those people online. I see that too — people I love, I see them online, and I’m like, who are you? This is not the same person I hang out with. This is a different person. But it’s really important to take the responsibility and the blame off individuals. It’s a behavior modification system. It’s meant to do that. It’s really well designed. People aren’t terrible. The system is terrible. You want to lift that off people, that sense of guilt or shame, and make it more about anger — anger toward the people who created this.

In an older essay about the film “The Social Network,” you wrote: “I am dreaming of a Web that caters to a kind of person who no longer exists. A private person, a person who is a mystery, to the world and — which is more important — to herself.” That really connected for me, that idea of mystery as something we actually might want to cultivate. I’m curious to hear you unpack that word — not just what is unknown, but what space is offered by mystery.

Technologies aren’t neutral. They are a philosophy and an ideology. The technology of these algorithms is the idea that everything in the world can get classified. And that’s not just a practical matter. That’s a philosophy — that there’s nothing in the world that cannot be organized, classified and labeled. And I just don’t believe that. But I also still dream of a peer-to-peer internet. And there are interesting clues as to the parts of the internet which are genuinely joyful and fantastic, of how we might go forward.

You’re saying that all these are behavioral modification devices and they’re also aspiration devices. They’re telling you what you should value in life. And I think one of the things you’re saying is, you’d value having a lot of connections. You write in “The Fraud” about something that happens in the character Eliza’s thinking at the end of her life: “When she was young she had wanted to know everyone, touch everyone, be everyone, go everywhere! Now she thought that if you truly loved — and were truly loved by! — two people in your lifetime, you had every right to think yourself a Midas.” I’m curious where that thought came from for you, and how you’ve experienced it.

It’s one of the most personal lines in the book. I believe it. I think that’s what a radical humanism means. It means you don’t ever dismiss people. You don’t ever call them trash. You don’t ever think that they are boring or limited. You think that they are infinite. They may not be to your taste, fair play. But as I heard Elizabeth Strout saying somewhere recently, every person is a world.

I also know that a good friend is a rare, rare thing, that we don’t get many in our lives. You can have acquaintances, but friendship is something else.

Even today, maybe a silly example, but I was just going to the shops in my neighborhood and I saw the father of an old school friend who is suddenly quite old and incapacitated — he’s been put in a wheelchair for the first time — being pushed down the street by another school friend, like the younger sister of a friend of mine. So the younger sister is about in her late 30s and this man is 80, and I just saw it and I thought, wow. These bonds — these are not two people who are good friends, but they’re people who lived in the same neighborhood their whole lives and she has come to his service. She’s not a relative. She’s not the daughter. And I looked at both these people and thought, this is the kind of bind I want with people.

How do you get to that kind of connection with another person? It’s rare. I think it can be cultivated, but the way I used to conduct my life when I was young, which was just running around talking for five minutes to a thousand people at a party, that is not something that I want to do anymore. I think it’s wild fun. I still love a party. But I’ve just become more aware of how difficult it is to have genuine relations with other humans. It’s really hard, and it takes time.

“The Fraud” felt to me like a book about aging as much as it was about anything else. One of the things you’re tracking is this relationship between aging and loneliness, which is deeply true for a lot of people. I was wondering if you could read a passage from the book.

“In the silence, Eliza was pricked, on the sudden, by an overwhelming and acute sense of loneliness. A severe, revisionist feeling, it worked upon her cruelly, making her feel that loneliness was all she had ever known. A consequence, perhaps, of what old women called ‘The Change.’ A special, feminine form of delusion, not to be trusted, and yet apparently impossible to avoid. ‘The Change’ marked, in the mind of Mrs. Touchet, the final hurdle in the ladies’ steeplechase: The humiliations of girlhood, the separating of the beautiful from the plain and the ugly, the terror of maidenhood, the trials of marriage or childbirth — or their absence, the loss of that same beauty around which the whole system appears to revolve, the change of life. What strange lives women lead!”

Tell me why the connection for you in that sequence, that steeplechase, was with loneliness.

I think it is hard to go through these stages of life. You do feel lonely. And on the surface, I have the thing which is meant to not make you feel lonely — a family. But I think there is a deep isolation in people. You can have 20 kids and you can get married four times, or you can be part of a great, massive chosen family of wonderful club kids or whatever it is, and there will be moments when you will feel this isolation. I think it’s existential. I think it’s a feeling of being lost in the world sometimes. I think people are super frightened of it and anything to avoid feeling it.

The phone is obviously one of the great comforts in that moment. You can pick it up, pick it up, pick it up, pick it up. And I use books in exactly that way. My family will often say to me, you know, even if I have a 30-second waiting period for something, the train’s coming down the track, I’ve still got a book open. So that kind of avoidance, I’m absolutely a part of.

The inquiry in the book is more around the aging of Mrs. Touchet. Do you think aging is a different process for men from what you see in your own generation?

It’s so fundamentally different. I don’t think in essences, so I’m always aware of it changing somewhat. The physical pressure on men, boys even, in the realm of the physical, of the beautiful, has transformed from when I was young. So it may well be that they will be subject to what were traditionally coded as feminine anxieties around age. That could totally happen. Maybe it’s already happening.

But for me, absolutely, the loss of whatever beauty you had, whether it’s small or large, has to be conceived of in some way. It has to be dealt with. And because I’m a writer, it’s interesting to watch in myself. But it doesn’t mean I don’t feel it.

And even more than that, physical capacity. I love to run. I love to swim. I don’t like to say this in New York, because I know New York has a very permanent belief that you can get faster forever. But watching these things slow down, it’s strange.

But I am trying to find the beauty in it, as far as I can find it. I think it’s only recently that, if you said to me, “Do you want to be 27 again?” I think on balance, I think I would say “no.” But that’s very recent.

It seems to me the scourge of aging for men is also a kind of deep loneliness — and that there aren’t many ways to talk about it. It just sort of happens and you bear it.

I have always felt sorry for men. The lack of social networks. When you have small children, the kind of men who don’t look after their small children — or maybe don’t get the opportunity to, that also does happen — never know what it is to walk into a playground and have literally no choice but to talk to a load of strangers because your child is talking to another child. But those kinds of networks that traditionally women have been heavily involved with are an absolute advantage later in life.

But again, there’s no essential truth here, because it seems to me that younger men are having different friendships with each other, which hopefully will pay off later down the line, more intimate relationships, perhaps. But even when all those networks are in place, I still feel maybe I’m just a terrible pessimist and also maybe I’m not good at making friends. That is a possibility. But I do often feel sometimes, even when I’m in great company, how unbelievably difficult it is to know another human being. It’s just so hard.

Nobody ever has a good word to say about marriage, and I get it. But one thing marriage has offered me, at least, is this place of intimacy, where sometimes when you’re out in the world, you can feel like a lot of life is a performance, even friendships that seem intimate sometimes have this performative aspect. When I retreat to the privacy of my marriage — and I don’t mean marriage has to be the form in which you do this, but just any social thing that you have that is essentially private and intimate — that all goes away. I am myself. I am absolutely myself. I’m free.

And I think that’s another way sometimes the discourse is a bit banal. It’s got this kind of liberalized idea of freedom. So freedom is only getting to do whatever you want. And there’s no conception that sometimes there might be things that provide a different form of freedom that is actually quite valuable. And for me, privacy — anywhere where you can go, where you’re not onstage, where you’re not having to keep up some kind of idea of yourself, where you can just be — that is freedom. And any form that gives you that is really valuable to me.

Do you think you’ve gotten better at knowing people deeply over time?

I talk too much. I’ve always talked too much. And to know people, you need to listen. I think I have the gift of a comic novelist, which is a problematic gift where you see someone in the street and you can guess a lot about them almost immediately. The paper they read, the ideas they hold. And you can write novels that way. And you can also go through your life that way, making those smartass guesses and being right in some broad way. But it’s just not the whole story, and it’s not sufficient.

Elizabeth Strout’s in my mind today. I was just reading an interview with her. Her last novel is called “Tell Me Everything.” And there’s a line in “The Fraud,” which is basically the same sentence — “tell me everything.” And that, to me, is the key — being able to sit in front of another human being and just listening. Not projecting, not trying to make them agree with you, not trying to make them say what you want them to say. Just listening to them. And that is so hard.

I’m going to ask you to read one more passage because it connected to this one for me and was one of the ones that was a bit of a gut punch.

“Mrs. Touchet had been a third wheel for so much of her life. This was different. This was a desolate, an almost dizzying feeling of exclusion. She felt an acute awareness of every part of her face and body, as if her own person had suddenly become estranged from her, as if she herself were the exotic item, burst so suddenly onto the scene. Oh, but what nonsense! It was simply too hot, she was not as young as she once had been, her thoughts were confused. When young, she had never understood why old women dithered so. Why they led conversations down dead ends and almost always overstayed their welcome. She did not know then what it was to have no definition in the world, no role and no reason. To be no longer even decorative.”

Toward the end of the book, you begin talking about the exclusion of aging and the way that it leads to a psychic feeling of being lost in the world. And we don’t have good — not just politics, but language for that. Because for young people, we fear it. To look at it too closely in the face is to admit it will come for you too. I’m curious just to hear you say a little bit more about that idea of losing definition and losing the ability to be included, to be on the inside of something rather than the outside of it.

That paragraph is one of my favorite paragraphs. Thank you for choosing it. It’s partly because what’s happening there is that Mrs. Touchet as a white lady is for the first time in her life in a social situation with only Black people. And she experiences herself as the exotic person.

And I know from talking to white people that this sometimes happens, right? If they go to China or if they go to West Africa, they suddenly for the first time in their lives are like, oh, I’m the other in this context suddenly. And I think that feeling is so interesting. Like experientially, you need to hold onto it and know it and track all the feelings that it brings up in you.

What I think about those kind of binary debates and arguments — Black, white, young, old — when it comes to Black and white, it makes complete sense to me because a Black person is not in their lifetime going to become a white person. A white person is not going to become a Black person. There’s this gap of experience, history, sometimes social power, all of those things. So it makes sense as a political dialectic.

Old/young is crazy. The kind of violent discourse that goes between old and young people is one of the most delusional things in contemporary discourse. You are literally fighting the person you’re about to become. You’re covering in contempt. When you say, “OK, boomer” or whatever it is, do you not imagine that there will be a phrase for you very soon? It’s such a strange war to begin because you’re about to enter it as the victim of it so soon, like sooner than you can even begin to imagine.

I think you’re totally right that the discourse of age has gotten very weird. And I also noticed it in the other direction. I’m a very elder millennial, and one thing I find so funny about my own generation — or at least its online discourse, I should say — is this desperation to be liked by the younger generations.

Oh god, they hate you so much. It’s so embarrassing.

And they should. [Laughs] Sometimes I’ll see these articles — like, “You’re not supposed to use a crying face emoji anymore. Gen Z doesn’t do that. They use a tombstone.” It’s like, they’re supposed to have different things than me. We’re not supposed to be the same. But there’s something about online discourse — and maybe it’s a fear of the “OK boomer” thing happening — that gave millennials this panting desire for acceptance by younger generations. Like, are we this fragile and insecure?

But to be fair to them, it’s been the same for every generation since the war. Youth is a premium and everybody who becomes young and comes into their youth thinks they’re doing it in the ultimate way. I totally believe that. Gen X thought, oh, well, this is it. This is how you be young. And we’ve solved it. What is wrong with those sentimental ’68 peace and love — we know what we’re doing. The problem of men and women is solved. We’re done here.

And the millennials absolutely believed they had solved sex — that they’ve solved everything. And I’m raising two kids of the younger generation, and it’s been widely reported everywhere, but yes, the Generation Z find the millennials literally excruciating, even perhaps more excruciating than they find us, which is amazing.

But to me, it doesn’t have to be this kind of violent battle. The thing I’m so moved by is my generation, because they’re my time cohorts. They’re my people. I love everybody else, and good luck to you. But I’m talking, when I’m writing, foremost to the people I came up with. We’re going through this life thing together, and I’m like, well, how are you doing? This is how I’m doing. How’s this striking you?

I’m talking to them, and I’m delighted if anyone younger or older listens in, but I am explicitly talking to my people and those are the people who came through these years with me. They’re meaningful to me.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” on the [*NYT Audio App*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Apple*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Amazon Music*](https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/c4a3b1da-5433-49e6-8c14-0e1da53be78c/the-ezra-klein-show), [*YouTube*](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLdMrbgYfVl-szepgVpArP0obwYgbKdfvx), [*iHeartRadio*](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/326-the-ezra-klein-show-31142409/) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/ezra-klein-show-book-recs.html).

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Annie Galvin. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris, with Kate Sinclair. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Aman Sahota and Efim Shapiro. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. 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.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ben Bailey-Smith FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***To Win Over Trump, Vice-Presidential Hopefuls Show Off Ties to Wealthy Donors***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCM-9FG1-JBG3-60R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 1, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1052 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender and Theodore Schleifer

**Body**

Vice-presidential hopefuls are posturing as part of a bid to highlight their ties to wealthy donors.

During his 2016 campaign, Donald J. Trump orchestrated a takeover of the Republican Party in part by blasting wealthy political donors as the root of corruption and delivering a populist message that appealed to ***working-class*** voters.

Eight years later, one of his key decision points in choosing a running mate is connections to the superrich.

As the end of the selection process approaches, with an announcement expected in the next two weeks after months of suggestion and misdirection, Republican hopefuls are looking to convince Mr. Trump that they have the financial backing behind them that could help swing the race.

There are other factors that could make for a good match. Mr. Trump is said to be considering candidates with discipline on the campaign trail, who will not steal his precious spotlight and would fare well in a debate with Vice President Kamala Harris.

But the money definitely matters -- and some Republican donors with direct access to Mr. Trump have left unmistakable fingerprints on his process. Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, for example, became a top contender late in the selection process after persistent lobbying from Steve Wynn, the billionaire former casino mogul who is close to Mr. Trump. Mr. Wynn has also played a role in persuading some other donors, such as Elon Musk, to be more supportive of the campaign.

Many vice-presidential hopefuls, including some outside contenders wise to the financial dynamic, have responded, boasting -- and sometimes exaggerating -- the amount they could raise for the ticket. The posturing, in some cases, has drawn sneers from some Republican donors, who feel like they are being used as pawns in internecine warfare.

But the most successful financial jockeying has come from the three contenders who are, as of now, viewed as the top candidates for the job: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida.

Mr. Burgum, a former software executive who sold a company to Microsoft, has an estimated net worth of at least $100 million, according to Forbes, suggesting he could inject some of his fortune into the race. He spent more than $10 million on his own short-lived, long-shot presidential bid last year.

He has also sought to demonstrate his fund-raising potential for Mr. Trump by luring wealthy first-time donors to the president's corner. On Tuesday, Mr. Burgum hosted a video conference with donors where the campaign charged $10,000 merely to join the call, and $25,000 to participate in a question-and-answer session, according to a copy of the invitation.

Tom Siebel, a billionaire tech investor, wrote his first check to Mr. Trump -- for $500,000 -- because Mr. Burgum was in the mix for the Republican ticket. Dick Boyce, a longtime Republican fund-raiser in Silicon Valley who is a former chairman for both Burger King and Del Monte Foods, said he had also made his second donation to Mr. Trump -- a $100,000 contribution -- in part owing to his consideration of Mr. Burgum, who was a classmate at Stanford Business School.

''I'm inclined to do more with Doug in the V.P. position, and the complimentary nature of him and Trump would give confidence to a lot more people, too,'' Mr. Boyce, a former partner at Bain & Company, said in an interview. ''The vice president is someone who you could picture being president, not someone who might deliver a certain state, and sometimes that gets lost.''

Then there is Mr. Vance. A former venture capitalist, Mr. Vance organized a $12 million fund-raising event this month in Silicon Valley, part of an attempt to show his ability to draw tech industry donations.

Despite those efforts and Mr. Vance's rise in Trumpworld, Mr. Vance's single biggest donor remains a glaring holdout: the Silicon Valley megadonor Peter Thiel. Mr. Thiel, who put $15 million into an effort to elect Mr. Vance to the Senate in 2022 and used to employ him, said definitively on Thursday, for the first time, that he would not be a major financial supporter of Mr. Trump, as he had been in 2016. And it didn't sound as if naming Mr. Vance to the ticket would change that.

''If you hold a gun to my head, I will vote for Trump,'' Mr. Thiel said at the Aspen Ideas Festival. ''I'm not going to give any money to his super PAC.''

Mr. Rubio, who built a formidable fund-raising operation for his own presidential bid in 2016, could be an attractive option for the Republican donors and groups who helped plow more than $146 million into an effort to nominate former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, who was Mr. Trump's last remaining primary opponent this year.

Ms. Haley's supporters include some prominent Republican holdouts in the billionaire class, such as the hedge fund titans Paul Singer and Kenneth Griffin.

And then there are outside contenders like Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, who has aggressively sought to position himself as a darling of the donor class, claiming support from people including Mr. Singer and Larry Ellison, the Oracle founder. A week ago in Washington, Mr. Scott hosted a gathering for supporters of his new policy group that, three attendees say, had little subtlety as to its purpose.

The event, in their view, was an overt show of his support among well-heeled Republican donors. Speakers included billionaires like the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen, the billionaire investor Bill Ackman, the oil developer Tim Dunn and Marc Rowan, the chief executive of the investment firm Apollo Global Management.

Some donors tied to the event have bristled at the way the Scott team and the news media have implicitly positioned them as endorsers of a Trump-Scott ticket, according to a person close to these donors. In reality, this person said, many people signed onto Mr. Scott's event believing that he is likely to be the next powerful chair of the Senate Banking Committee. An aide to Mr. Scott declined to comment.

There was not much talk from Mr. Scott about the vice presidency explicitly, or even Mr. Trump, at the event, according to two attendees. And though he drew big potential donors, many big Scott supporters say privately they are pessimistic about his chances in the veepstakes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/us/politics/trump-vice-president-donors.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/us/politics/trump-vice-president-donors.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A13.

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**End of Document**



[***The Revolutionary Power of Women's Grief***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNK-2HY1-JBG3-60P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 29, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 12; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1712 words

**Byline:** By Aruna D'Souza

**Body**

Käthe Kollwitz's fierce belief in social justice and her indelible images made her one of Germany's best printmakers. A dazzling MoMA show reminds us why.

An artist friend texted me recently, asking how to contend with the anger and sadness she was feeling about the state of the world. I can think of no better balm than the Museum of Modern Art's Käthe Kollwitz retrospective, the first ever at a New York museum that encompasses this German artist's groundbreaking prints and drawings and her sculpture, posters and magazine illustrations.

Once you're there, go straight over to her series ''Peasants' War,'' which she started in 1902, to find her own outlet for her burning desire for radical change. She was about 10 years into her already successful career when she made it, a remarkable feat given that she was a woman in a country that still didn't allow women into art schools. In 1898, she had been nominated for a gold medal at the Greater Berlin Art Exhibition for her first major print cycle, ''A Weavers' Revolt'' (1893-97), but did not receive it: The Prussian minister of culture thought her subject matter -- a fictional uprising based on a contemporary play about an 1844 revolt, a watershed moment for many German socialists -- too politically subversive, while Kaiser Wilhelm II himself objected to the idea of a woman garnering top prize.

Born in 1867, Kollwitz was an avowed socialist whose career stretched from the 1890s to the 1940s, a period of tremendous social upheaval and two world wars. Though she was a member of the progressive Berlin Secession art movement, she kept a distance from the elite art world, living in a ***working-class*** Berlin neighborhood with her husband, a doctor who tended to the poor.

With ''Peasants' War,'' Kollwitz again turned to the past to share her outrage at the injustices around her ''which are never ending and as large as a mountain.'' The seven-part series deals with the historical revolt that swept German-speaking countries of Central Europe in the 16th century, not as a transcription of historical events but as an imagined narrative showing the exploitation of farm workers (men treated no better than animals yoked to a plow, a woman in the aftermath of a rape by a landowner), their explosive response, and the chilling repression that followed. It is a story worthy of Charles Dickens or Émile Zola, told from a woman's point of view.

The largest print, ''Charge,'' focuses on the figure of ''Black Anna,'' reputed to be a catalyst of the violence, urging a mob of peasants to action. She is no ''Liberty Leading the People.'' Unlike Eugène Delacroix's 1830 image of a beautiful and bare-breasted personification of French freedom, Kollwitz's crone is shown from the back, her sinewy arms raised and hands clenched urgently, practically launching herself into the crowd.

It makes you want to jump on the barricades. The feminist art historian Linda Nochlin said of the series that where other artists of the time focused on addressing social issues and were intent on persuading the bourgeoisie to sympathize with the plight of the poor, Kollwitz was generating class consciousness. Her audience was, first and foremost, her ***working-class*** neighbors. It's why she focused on making prints, which could be widely circulated, and stuck to realism even as her peers turned to more avant-garde styles (Expressionism, Dada, Neue Sachlichkeit). She wanted her message to be as accessible as possible.

But her content was only as important as her artistry. Kollwitz deployed a dizzying range of printmaking techniques in a single image: She used drypoint, different kinds of etching, and even sandpaper to mark up her metal plates in ''Peasants' War,'' while in others of her series she incorporated lithography and aquatint as well; she would sometimes go in afterward with colored washes, charcoal or pastel to heighten the emotional effects of her work.

Printmaking is an oddly indirect medium -- you never really know what's going to result until you make an impression of the plate you're marking up. This quality, combined with her almost obsessive perfectionism, means her output wasn't huge -- she made only around 275 prints in her lifetime, and around 1,500 drawings, many of which were studies for those prints. (The MoMA show, curated by Starr Figura with Maggie Hire, includes around 110 objects.)

A fascinating gallery shows the painstaking development of ''Sharpening the Scythe,'' the third plate of ''Peasants' War.'' Over eight drawings and prints, you witness the transformation of an aged woman into a revolutionary: in the first few, a man leans over her seated figure, almost pinning her down as he shows her how to lift her weapon. In subsequent images, he disappears until, in the last iteration, she is seen sharpening the scythe, ready to take her place in the fighting. (A terrific video in this gallery walks you through Kollwitz's process.)

It's hard to miss the oppressiveness of the male figure in the earliest versions; that she titled them ''Inspiration,'' turning the man into a muse, suggests that Kollwitz felt the weight of her own artistic call to arms deeply. ''I felt that I have no right to withdraw from the responsibility of being an advocate,'' she wrote.

Kollwitz may not have been prolific by the standards of other giants of printmaking (Dürer, Rembrandt, Goya, Degas), but her images are indelible. One persistent theme is that of maternal grief, born of personal circumstance (the death of her baby brother in his infancy, and her observation of her mother's reaction to the tragedy, as well as the death of her own son later). It was borne, as well, because, in her time, infant mortality was commonplace among the poor.

''Woman With Dead Child,'' from 1903, depicts a mother embracing her child so tightly their bodies become one; the curators have managed to gather six artist's proofs -- test runs, in effect, in which Kollwitz experiments with color and other effects. (Her equally gutting series, ''Pietà,'' from the same year, focuses on a father's mourning.) In these and other explorations of the theme, she paradoxically draws from erotic imagery -- by Edvard Munch, Auguste Rodin, even Constantin Brancusi -- to show the rawness of parental suffering.

When her younger son Peter died on the front lines of the Great War only months after it began in 1914, Kollwitz was stricken with a grief so profound that it changed the political direction of her work; she felt guilty for allowing him, still underage, to enlist. The triumphant proletarian crowds dancing around the guillotine in ''The Carmagnole'' (1901) gave way to an equally fervent pacifism, with women as protectors from violence rather than instigators of revolt. In her series ''War'' (1921-22), she turned to woodcuts -- popularized years before by the German Expressionist artists -- to convey the horrors of the home front. One sheet in the portfolio -- ''The Mothers'' -- shows women huddled around their children with locked arms, a solid mass; in the 1930s, she would translate this group into a bronze sculpture (''Tower of Mothers'').

Against the backdrop of the 1918 November Revolution which saw the establishment of the Weimar Republic the following year, Kollwitz turned to the quicker and more expressive medium of lithography for posters that addressed everything from the release of German prisoners of war to food shortages to legalizing abortion. Her most famous, ''Never Again War!'' (1924), was reproduced widely in leftist publications, turning her into an icon of socially engaged art.

Though she declared herself long past the age of believing that revolution was worth the price of violence, it didn't stop her from making a print marking the funeral of Karl Liebknecht, a Communist leader who, with the socialist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, was killed for his role in an armed revolt in Berlin in 1919. Kollwitz didn't have to agree with him politically to understand what his loss meant to his ***working-class*** followers, whose faces she focuses on in her rendering.

Her increasing fame both in Germany and abroad led to her being the first woman admitted to the Prussian Academy in 1919, but it also resulted in her persecution by the Nazis in the years leading up to World War II. After Hitler became chancellor in 1933, she was forced to resign from teaching for having signed petitions opposing the Nazi party. Two years later, her work was declared ''degenerate,'' and she was threatened with confinement in a concentration camp. Unlike so many of her peers, however, she never left the country; she lost her husband in 1940 and her grandson on the battlefield two years later, and she died in 1945.

Since then, her reputation has ebbed and flowed -- thanks to her focus on printmaking (often considered a lesser art compared to painting and sculpture), her style (too close to Soviet Socialist realism for Cold War tastes), and her attention to women's experience (too ''sentimental'' for American critics of the 1950s and '60s). Yet she remained a fixture of feminist histories of modern art, and, as I discovered thanks to an excellent essay by Sarah Rapoport in the show's handsome catalog, had a profound influence on African American artists fighting for social change, including Jacob Lawrence, Charles White and Elizabeth Catlett, who channeled ''Black Anna'' in her 1946 linocut of Harriet Tubman leading the enslaved to freedom.

Kollwitz's harrowing final print series, ''Death'' (1934-37), is defiantly, if subtly, political. She had turned to lithography, which allowed her to make emphatic, sweeping strokes quickly on the stone, as close to painting as printmaking can come. In the final plate, which has the air of a self-portrait, she is sanguine as Death's hand reaches out to her. Whatever there is to fear about one's own demise, she seems to say, it couldn't be worse than the evils of the world she was living in already.

Käthe Kollwitz

Member previews Thursday-Saturday; opens Sunday--July 20, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, Manhattan, (212) 708-9400; moma.org. Käthe KollwitzMember previews through Saturday; opens Sunday and runs July 20 at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/arts/design/kathe-kollwitz-moma-prints-art.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/arts/design/kathe-kollwitz-moma-prints-art.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, posters by Käthe Kollwitz, left to right: ''Vienna Is Dying! Save Its Children'' (1920)

''The Survivors'' (1923)

''Help Russia'' (1921)

''Never Again War!'' (1924)

''Down With the Abortion Paragraphs!'' (1923)

and ''Release Our Prisoners'' (1919). Clockwise from center: ''Woman With Dead Child'' (1903)

''Call of Death'' (circa 1937)

''The Carmagnole'' (1901)

and ''Sharpening the Scythe,'' from the series ''Peasants' War'' (1905). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

DANIEL STOLL AND SIBYLLE VON HEYDEBRAND COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND

WILLIAM BENTON MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT) This article appeared in print on page C12.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Kamala Harris Presidency Could Mean More of the Same on A.I. Regulation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJJ-1461-DXY4-X05F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 24, 2024 Wednesday 23:04 EST

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**Section:** TECHNOLOGY

**Length:** 1206 words

**Byline:** David McCabe and Cecilia Kang David McCabe is a Times reporter who covers the complex legal and policy issues created by the digital economy and new technologies. Cecilia Kang reports on technology and regulatory policy and is based in Washington D.C. She has written about technology for over two decades.

**Highlight:** The presumptive Democratic nominee has won concessions from Big Tech leaders on A.I., but she hasn’t successfully pushed Congress to regulate.

**Body**

The presumptive Democratic nominee has won concessions from Big Tech leaders on A.I., but she hasn’t successfully pushed Congress to regulate.

Over the past three years, Vice President Kamala Harris has taken a leading role inside the White House on artificial intelligence as the [*technology is taking off*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/technology/generative-ai-chatgpt-investments.html).

As A.I. czar, she brought the chiefs of OpenAI, Microsoft, Google and Anthropic to the White House to agree on voluntary safety standards for the technology. She led a White House executive order mandating how the federal government would use and develop A.I. And she pushed Congress to adopt regulations to protect individuals from A.I. killing jobs and other harms — although little legislation has emerged and the companies have so far faced few roadblocks.

We “reject the false choice that suggests we can either protect the public or advance innovation,” Ms. Harris [*said in a speech in November*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/technology/generative-ai-chatgpt-investments.html), calling for both global regulation and further accountability from companies. “We can and we must do both.”

Now, as the Democratic Party’s presumptive presidential nominee, a win for Ms. Harris could mean a continued relatively smooth runway for A.I. companies, which have enjoyed little U.S. regulation and the chance to shape White House and Congressional views on the technology.

Ms. Harris has previously taken tougher stances on Big Tech. As the former district attorney of San Francisco, and then attorney general of California, she pushed for laws against cyberbullying and to promote greater privacy for children online. As the state’s attorney general, she worked to stem the spread of intimate images, taken without their subject’s consent, on big tech platforms.

“She brings a very kind of lawyerly, kind of thoughtful, mind-set about thinking about all sides of the issue,” said Alondra Nelson, a former director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The Harris campaign referred a request for comment to the White House. Jeff Zients, the White House chief of staff, said in an emailed statement that the administration “has taken unprecedented actions to maximize the potential and manage the risks of A.I. — and at every turn, both the president and the vice president have pushed us to act quickly and pull every lever.”

Under the Biden administration, Big Tech has faced [*increased scrutiny on antitrust*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/technology/generative-ai-chatgpt-investments.html). Regulators have sued Google, Meta, Amazon and Apple, accusing them of monopolistic behavior. Many of those investigations were started under Donald J. Trump, the Republican nominee for president.

Meanwhile, generative A.I. that powers humanlike chatbots and realistic image generators has taken off, fueling concerns that the technology could take jobs and cause other harms, alongside doomsday scenarios that it could destroy humanity. Although Congressional leaders have said they must take action and have held forums to discuss the technology, few concrete efforts to regulate A.I. have materialized.

“She has years of service demonstrating her conviction in corporate accountability,” said Dan Geldon, a former aide to Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts. “It seems unlikely that a President Harris would disrupt all the existing litigation and momentum, based on her long history of holding corporations who break the law accountable.”

Ms. Harris has connections to tech companies from her time in California, and her brother-in-law, Tony West, is the top lawyer at Uber.

When she was campaigning to become state attorney general in 2010, Ms. Harris appeared for a question-and-answer session at Google’s campus in Mountain View. She told employees she saw the tech industry’s expertise as central to making sure that the government communicated well and had up-to-date systems.

“I want these relationships and I want to cultivate them, because I want you to be an advisory group,” Ms. Harris said at the time, [*according to a recording of the session*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/technology/generative-ai-chatgpt-investments.html). “This is a short drive to come here. This is backyard. We’re family.”

In 2015, as California’s attorney general, she visited Facebook’s headquarters in Menlo Park to promote safer internet use. In the event for high school students, Sheryl Sandberg, then chief operating officer of the company now known as Meta, said “we can work together to show the internet can be a tool for good,” according to media reports.

Ms. Sandberg is backing Ms. Harris’s candidacy, as is the investor Reid Hoffman, a major donor to the Democratic Party.

Ms. Harris could draw on her tech ties to build new advisory teams, tech policy experts said.

“Biden had a close circle of advisers who had been with him for decades, none of whom had deep roots in tech,” said Blair Levin, a former chief of staff for the Federal Communications Commission and an adviser for New Street Research. “Her advisers will come from sources, including California, that have tech backgrounds.”

The work Ms. Harris has done so far as the White House A.I. czar reflects her moderation and willingness to listen to both sides, experts say.

In October, President Biden [*signed the A.I. executive order*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/07/technology/generative-ai-chatgpt-investments.html) she led requiring companies to talk to the government about the most severe risks associated with their systems, alongside outlining steps for the federal government to adopt the technology.

“We have a moral, ethical and societal duty to make sure that A.I. is adopted and advanced in a way that protects the public from potential harm and ensures that everyone is able to enjoy its benefits,” Ms. Harris said at the White House in October while announcing the order. (The Republican Party’s platform calls for repealing that executive order because it “hinders A.I. innovation.”)

Mr. Zients said in his emailed statement that the commitments by the companies to rigorously test their systems had been Ms. Harris’s idea.

“I was meeting with the vice president in one of our weekly check-ins last year,” he said. “The vice president said to me, ‘Let’s bring the C.E.O.s down here and let’s get some commitments in place now while we work on our executive actions.’”

Those commitments were only part of the solution, Ms. Harris said in a speech in November.

“Let me be clear, these voluntary commitments are an initial step toward a safer A.I. future with more to come, because, as history has shown, in the absence of regulation and strong government oversight, some technology companies choose to prioritize profit over the well-being of their customers, the safety of our communities and the stability of our democracies,” she said.

Dr. Nelson, the former White House official, said that Ms. Harris was curious about the technology industry and wanted to see what tech companies could produce. But the vice president also believes, Dr. Nelson said, that companies should be held to account for whether their work provided benefits to Americans.

“I would describe her philosophy of technology as not inherently cautious,” Dr. Nelson said. “What does this mean for a regular ***working class*** family’s life? That’s always the litmus test.”

PHOTO: Little legislation has emerged from Vice President Kamala Harris’s work on A.I. policy, and the Big Tech companies have faced few roadblocks. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID WALTER BANKS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B4.

**Load-Date:** July 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Revolutionary Power of Women’s Rage and Grief; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BND-3T01-DXY4-X2YW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 28, 2024 Thursday 10:46 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1813 words

**Byline:** Aruna D’Souza Aruna D&#39;Souza writes about modern and contemporary art and is the author of &amp;#8220;Whitewalling: Art, Race &amp;amp; Politics in 3 Acts.&amp;#8221; In 2021 she was awarded a Rabkin Prize for Art Journalism.

**Highlight:** Käthe Kollwitz’s fierce belief in social justice and her indelible images made her one of Germany’s best printmakers. A dazzling MoMA show reminds us why.

**Body**

Käthe Kollwitz’s fierce belief in social justice and her indelible images made her one of Germany’s best printmakers. A dazzling MoMA show reminds us why.

An artist friend texted me recently, asking how to contend with the anger and sadness she was feeling about the state of the world. I can think of no better balm than [*the Museum of Modern Art’s Käthe Kollwitz retrospective*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625), the first ever at a New York museum that encompasses this German artist’s groundbreaking prints and drawings and her sculpture, posters and magazine illustrations.

Once you’re there, go straight over to her series “Peasants’ War,” which she started in 1902, to find her own outlet for her burning desire for radical change. She was about 10 years into her already successful career when she made it, a remarkable feat given that she was a woman in a country that still didn’t allow women into art schools. In 1898, she had been nominated for a gold medal at the Greater Berlin Art Exhibition for her first major print cycle, [*“A Weavers’ Revolt”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) (1893-97), but did not receive it: The Prussian minister of culture thought her subject matter — a fictional uprising based on a contemporary play about an 1844 revolt, a watershed moment for many German socialists — too politically subversive, while Kaiser Wilhelm II himself objected to the idea of a woman garnering top prize.

Born in 1867, Kollwitz was an avowed socialist whose career stretched from the 1890s to the 1940s, a period of tremendous social upheaval and two world wars. Though she was a member of the progressive Berlin Secession art movement, she kept a distance from the elite art world, living in a ***working-class*** Berlin neighborhood with her husband, a doctor who tended to the poor.

With “Peasants’ War,” Kollwitz again turned to the past to share her outrage at the injustices around her “which are never ending and as large as a mountain.” The seven-part series deals with the historical revolt that swept German-speaking countries of Central Europe in the 16th century, not as a transcription of historical events but as an imagined narrative showing the exploitation of farm workers (men treated no better than animals yoked to a plow, a woman in the aftermath of a rape by a landowner), their explosive response, and the chilling repression that followed. It is a story worthy of Charles Dickens or Émile Zola, told from a woman’s point of view.

The largest print, “Charge,” focuses on the figure of “Black Anna,” reputed to be a catalyst of the violence, urging a mob of peasants to action. She is no “[*Liberty Leading the People*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625).” Unlike Eugène Delacroix’s 1830 image of a beautiful and bare-breasted personification of French freedom, Kollwitz’s crone is shown from the back, her sinewy arms raised and hands clenched urgently, practically launching herself into the crowd.

It makes you want to jump on the barricades. The feminist art historian Linda Nochlin said of the series that where other artists of the time focused on addressing social issues and were intent on persuading the bourgeoisie to sympathize with the plight of the poor, Kollwitz was generating class consciousness. Her audience was, first and foremost, her ***working-class*** neighbors. It’s why she focused on making prints, which could be widely circulated, and stuck to realism even as her peers turned to more avant-garde styles ([*Expressionism*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625), Dada, [*Neue Sachlichkeit*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625)). She wanted her message to be as accessible as possible.

But her content was only as important as her artistry. Kollwitz deployed a dizzying range of printmaking techniques in a single image: She used drypoint, different kinds of etching, and even sandpaper to mark up her metal plates in “Peasants’ War,” while in others of her series she incorporated lithography and aquatint as well; she would sometimes go in afterward with colored washes, charcoal or pastel to heighten the emotional effects of her work.

Printmaking is an oddly indirect medium — you never really know what’s going to result until you make an impression of the plate you’re marking up. This quality, combined with her almost obsessive perfectionism, means her output wasn’t huge — she made only around 275 prints in her lifetime, and around 1,500 drawings, many of which were studies for those prints. (The MoMA show, curated by Starr Figura with Maggie Hire, includes around 110 objects.)

A fascinating gallery shows the painstaking development of [*“Sharpening the Scythe,” the third plate*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) of “Peasants’ War.” Over eight drawings and prints, you witness the transformation of an aged woman into a revolutionary: in the first few, a man leans over her seated figure, almost pinning her down as he shows her how to lift her weapon. In subsequent images, he disappears until, in the last iteration, she is seen sharpening the scythe, ready to take her place in the fighting. (A [*terrific video*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) in this gallery walks you through Kollwitz’s process.)

It’s hard to miss the oppressiveness of the male figure in the earliest versions; that she titled them “Inspiration,” turning the man into a muse, suggests that Kollwitz felt the weight of her own artistic call to arms deeply. “I felt that I have no right to withdraw from the responsibility of being an advocate,” she wrote.

Kollwitz may not have been prolific by the standards of other giants of printmaking (Dürer, Rembrandt, Goya, Degas), but her images are indelible. One persistent theme is that of maternal grief, born of personal circumstance (the death of her baby brother in his infancy, and her observation of her mother’s reaction to the tragedy, as well as the death of her own son later). It was borne, as well, because, in her time, infant mortality was commonplace among the poor.

[*“Woman With Dead Child,”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) from 1903, depicts a mother embracing her child so tightly their bodies become one; the curators have managed to gather six artist’s proofs — test runs, in effect, in which Kollwitz experiments with color and other effects. (Her equally gutting series, “Pietà,” from the same year, focuses on a father’s mourning.) In these and other explorations of the theme, she paradoxically draws from erotic imagery — by Edvard Munch, Auguste Rodin, even Constantin Brancusi — to show the rawness of parental suffering.

When her younger son Peter died on the front lines of the Great War only months after it began in 1914, Kollwitz was stricken with a grief so profound that it changed the political direction of her work; she felt guilty for allowing him, still underage, to enlist. The triumphant proletarian crowds dancing around the guillotine in [*“The Carmagnole”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) (1901) gave way to an equally fervent pacifism, with women as protectors from violence rather than instigators of revolt. In her series “War” (1921-22), she turned to woodcuts — popularized years before by the German Expressionist artists — to convey the horrors of the home front. One sheet in the portfolio — [*“The Mothers”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) — shows women huddled around their children with locked arms, a solid mass; in the 1930s, she would translate this group into a bronze sculpture (“Tower of Mothers”).

Against the backdrop of the 1918 November Revolution which saw the establishment of the Weimar Republic the following year, Kollwitz turned to the quicker and more expressive medium of lithography for posters that addressed everything from the release of German prisoners of war to food shortages to legalizing abortion. Her most famous, [*“Never Again War!”*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) (1924), was reproduced widely in leftist publications, turning her into an icon of socially engaged art.

Though she declared herself long past the age of believing that revolution was worth the price of violence, it didn’t stop her from making a print marking the funeral of Karl Liebknecht, a Communist leader who, with the socialist revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, was killed for his role in an armed revolt in Berlin in 1919. Kollwitz didn’t have to agree with him politically to understand what his loss meant to his ***working-class*** followers, whose faces she focuses on in her rendering.

Her increasing fame both in Germany and abroad led to her being the first woman admitted to the Prussian Academy in 1919, but it also resulted in her persecution by the Nazis in the years leading up to World War II. After Hitler became chancellor in 1933, she was forced to resign from teaching for having signed petitions opposing the Nazi party. Two years later, her work was declared “degenerate,” and she was threatened with confinement in a concentration camp. Unlike so many of her peers, however, she never left the country; she lost her husband in 1940 and her grandson on the battlefield two years later, and she died in 1945.

Since then, her reputation has ebbed and flowed — thanks to her focus on printmaking (often considered a lesser art compared to painting and sculpture), her style (too close to Soviet Socialist realism for Cold War tastes), and her attention to women’s experience (too “sentimental” for American critics of the 1950s and ’60s). Yet she remained a fixture of feminist histories of modern art, and, as I discovered thanks to an excellent essay by Sarah Rapoport in the show’s handsome catalog, had a profound influence on African American artists fighting for social change, including Jacob Lawrence, Charles White and Elizabeth Catlett, who channeled “Black Anna” in her 1946 [*linocut of Harriet Tubman*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625) leading the enslaved to freedom.

Kollwitz’s harrowing final print series, “Death” (1934-37), is defiantly, if subtly, political. She had turned to lithography, which allowed her to make emphatic, sweeping strokes quickly on the stone, as close to painting as printmaking can come. In the final plate, which has the air of a self-portrait, she is sanguine as Death’s hand reaches out to her. Whatever there is to fear about one’s own demise, she seems to say, it couldn’t be worse than the evils of the world she was living in already.

Käthe Kollwitz

Member previews Thursday-Saturday; opens Sunday—July 20, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, Manhattan, (212) 708-9400; [*moma.org*](https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5625).

Käthe Kollwitz Member previews through Saturday; opens Sunday and runs July 20 at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org.

PHOTOS: Top, posters by Käthe Kollwitz, left to right: “Vienna Is Dying! Save Its Children” (1920); “The Survivors” (1923); “Help Russia” (1921); “Never Again War!” (1924); “Down With the Abortion Paragraphs!” (1923); and “Release Our Prisoners” (1919). Clockwise from center: “Woman With Dead Child” (1903); “Call of Death” (circa 1937); “The Carmagnole” (1901); and “Sharpening the Scythe,” from the series “Peasants’ War” (1905). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM; MUSEUM OF MODERN ART; DANIEL STOLL AND SIBYLLE VON HEYDEBRAND COLLECTION, SWITZERLAND; WILLIAM BENTON MUSEUM OF ART, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT) This article appeared in print on page C12.

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[***A ‘Love Activist’ D.J. Opened the Olympics. Then Came a Wave of Hate.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CMH-CTT1-JBG3-6023-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1272 words

**Byline:** Catherine Porter and Ségolène Le Stradic Catherine Porter is an international reporter for The Times, covering France. She is based in Paris.

**Highlight:** The French D.J. Barbara Butch wanted to deliver a message of peace in the opening ceremony, but ended up getting savaged online.

**Body**

The Paris Olympics [*opening ceremony*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4) made the French D.J. Barbara Butch famous and infamous around the world. Already known in France as an outspoken lesbian and activist for fat people, Butch — her stage name, of course — appeared with a crown and her mixing board in one of the last scenes, called “Festivity.”

For 45 minutes, dancers, including drag queens, showcased their talent along a raised catwalk that stretched down the stage before, at the very end, the French singer Philippe Katerine emerged from under a giant silver dome, painted entirely in blue and wearing little clothing, to sing part of “Nude,” one of his songs.

The scene incited an almost instant public fury, particularly among those who interpreted it as parodying Leonardo da Vinci’s “The Last Supper” and, by extension, mocking Christianity. Even after [*the ceremony’s artistic director, Thomas Jolly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4), explained the inspiration was [*a grand pagan festival*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4) connected to the gods of Olympus, the fury continued, with Donald J. Trump calling the scene “a disgrace” on social media.

On Monday, Butch filed a complaint for cyber-harassment, and the Paris prosecutor’s office opened an investigation for discrimination based on religion or sexual orientation. The next day, [*Jolly followed suit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4), and an investigation was opened into his case, too.

Butch has become accustomed to hate, though not at this level. She is a Jew from a ***working-class*** family who grew up in a small apartment above her parents’ restaurant in Paris, and antisemitism had provoked her grandmother to leave France for Israel years ago, she said.

Then, as an out lesbian and a proud fat person, Butch is a regular target of hostility — both in person and online.

“My image bothers people,” said Butch, 43. “My mere existence is political.”

A D.J. celebrated in L.G.B.T.-friendly bars and clubs, Butch became known for drawing words like “dyke” and “fat” on her chest, belly and arms, as a response to the poisonous attacks.

“She represents people who are invisible in France,” said Zouzou Auzou, the owner of Rosa Bonheur, the Paris bar where Butch has held a regular Sunday soiree for many years. “And she is someone who is very friendly and nice. There is nothing mean about her.”

Butch, who plays techno and electro music, as well as French pop songs, said she considers herself a “love activist.” She spoke in a video interview from southern France, where she had fled with her fiancée, two cats and two dogs. The conversation, which was held in French, has been edited for length and clarity.

How did you end up in that scene of the ceremony?

The lead choreographer thought of me for this scene because of my story, my music, my experience as a D.J. During lockdown in 2020, while everyone was locked in their homes, I organized virtual get-togethers every Saturday, to get people across France dancing. There were 2,000 to 3,000 people together on Zoom. She said, “What you did to reunite people that come from everywhere, regardless of class, sexual or religious differences, we want to represent that during the Olympics. It needs to be put on the main stage.”

So, we built [*a playlist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4). I built it with songs I personally love to play when I’m mixing, and songs that are very important in French culture and that represent the history of music in France, that would bring people together because everyone knows the lyrics by heart. I wanted to make people sing, particularly the athletes, because it was the moment when the French athletes would float under the bridge, and they would have a blast on their boat.

It must have seemed like a dream for you.

I try in my life not to put limits on myself and not to stick to beliefs. Women are always told they are less good, they shouldn’t do too much or do all that, they should be a little more self-effacing, because otherwise they won’t go as far, or won’t find love. For fat people, it’s even worse because we are constantly told that the moment we will be happy is when we are thin. So, I said to myself, all the barriers people try to put in me, I’m breaking them down and I’m doing it for all the people who can’t do it or who don’t dare to do it.

We all need models that represent us. I didn’t have one when I was younger and I want young girls, little boys, who say to themselves that they cannot achieve their goals because they’re short or fat, or because they’re L.G.B.T., to say, “Look, she did it, I can do it.” It was really to give hope and be a positive role model for people with my body type, with my identity, with my sexual orientation.

It’s really, really important to say we exist. What bothered people was the fact that all those people on the dance floor in that festivity scene exist.

Were you told that you were representing a feast of the Greek gods?

Yes, of course. We were told Dionysus would be played by Philippe Katerine. And why Dionysus? Because he is the god of the wine festival, which is part of French culture. And so it made complete sense that we all ended up behind him, celebrating. Above all, the message was truly a message of peace.

Can you tell us about your outfit and the crown?

I chose the French designer Gilles Asquin, who made this outfit with [*Victoria Luzion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/world/olympics/paris-olympics-opening-ceremony.html?searchResultPosition=4) — she made the corset. The crown is actually the headset that I mixed with. Well, I didn’t really mix, because it was pouring rain and I could have been electrocuted.

What was it like performing in that downpour?

It was amazing. It was magical. It was raining like crazy. They asked me, “It is pouring, do you mind?” I said, “No, I don’t mind.” From the very first song, I was totally into it. I was, like, “Wow, here I am, there are one or two billion people watching. This is huge.”

It’s not the first time you’ve been the target of attacks and harassment. How was this different?

It’s because it’s on a different scale, an international scale. We’re talking about evangelists worldwide — and these are no jokesters. They’re very aggressive in their words and in their hatred. Most messages were like, “You won’t replace us.” We’re not claiming to replace anything. We’re just asking for people to be free to exist, for dignity for all.

And I realized I couldn’t let that go unanswered. I get a lot of death threats and rape threats. I also get anti-lesbian, transphobic and antisemitic abuse. So I said to myself, at some point this really has to stop. That’s why my lawyer and I filed a complaint, and we called in a company that is analyzing all the accounts that have sent messages and comments that break the law. And we’re identifying everyone.

You have tracked down some already?

Sure, we have phone numbers and addresses — in Poland, in the U.S., in France and in Germany. I want them to pay for this. I want the courts to deal with them and I want to win the cases.

My aim is not to make money. If we got money out of it, it would go to anti-harassment groups and child protection groups. Let’s not forget, harassment leads to death. Most of all, I was thinking of the thousands of kids throughout the world who commit suicide because of behavior like this. I’m doing this for them.

Daphné Anglès helped with translation.

Daphné Anglès helped with translation.

PHOTOS: Above, Barbara Butch, the “Love Activist,” says, “My mere existence is political.” Left, Butch wore a costume by the designers Gilles Asquin and Victoria Luzion at the Olympics opening ceremony. Below, delegations arrived at the Olympics as the singer Philippe Katerine performed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCE KEYSER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BERTHON FLAVIEN/BARBARA BUTCH, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; LUDOVIC MARIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page C5.

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[***Backed by a Revived Party, Harris Fights an Uphill Battle in Arizona***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CP5-7C31-JBG3-60PC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1501 words

**Byline:** By Kellen Browning and Nicholas Nehamas

**Body**

The battleground state, where Kamala Harris will rally on Friday, has drifted toward Donald Trump since he lost it in 2020. Democrats hope her momentum could turn their fortunes around there.

As Vice President Kamala Harris fights for the votes of Americans threatening to abandon the Democratic Party, she faces challenges across the battleground states, from ***working-class*** Nevada communities to Arab American enclaves in Michigan.

But perhaps no swing state has vexed Democrats as much this year as Arizona.

A longtime Republican stronghold before President Biden's victory in 2020, the state is tricky political territory for Democrats, who confront magnified concerns over the number of migrants coming across the U.S.-Mexico border. A handful of polls in recent weeks have shown former President Donald J. Trump leading Ms. Harris by the mid-single digits, even as her numbers have improved in other vital states.

On Friday, Ms. Harris will take the stage in a Phoenix suburb alongside her new running mate, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota -- part of a renewed push to put Sun Belt states back in play and keep Arizona's 11 electoral votes in the Democratic column. She faces an uphill battle there as Republicans work to paint her as the architect of the border crisis, but her allies say the energy she has brought to drained Democratic voters could also attract moderate swing voters.

''She seems to have captured some of that lightning in a bottle that the Obama campaign had,'' said John Giles, the Republican mayor of Mesa, east of Phoenix, who endorsed Ms. Harris last month. Still, he cautioned, ''she absolutely has to run like she's behind in Arizona, because I think she is.''

Immigration consistently ranks as a top issue in Arizona, where voters will decide in November whether to make unlawfully crossing the border from Mexico a state crime. Even as border apprehensions have dropped sharply nationwide this year, they have continued to climb in Arizona. Border officials in the area south of Tucson have tallied nearly 430,000 apprehensions and other encounters since October, out of roughly 1.4 million across the entire southwestern border. That is up from about 235,000 in roughly the same time period the year before.

Mr. Trump and his allies have hammered Ms. Harris on immigration, highlighting her previous statements that ''an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal'' to portray her as soft on the border. They have castigated her as the ''border czar,'' though Mr. Biden gave her the responsibility of solving the ''root causes'' of migration from Central America, rather than dealing with problems at the southern border.

A top pro-Trump super PAC, MAGA Inc., released an advertisement late last month in several battleground states, including Arizona, blasting the vice president over the border. ''Why is our border a chaotic mess?'' the ad asks. ''Kamala Harris.''

But Democrats say Ms. Harris has a ready-made defense: It was Mr. Trump who tanked a bipartisan border deal this year, which would have effectively mandated that the border be shut down to migrants when numbers reached certain levels and would have vastly expanded detentions and deportations.

''Republicans walked away from this because Donald Trump told them to walk away from it,'' Senator Mark Kelly, the Arizona Democrat, who was a top contender to become Ms. Harris's running mate, said in an interview. ''They don't actually want to fix this. They don't want to solve it. They just want to talk about it.''

Sean McEnerney, Ms. Harris's state campaign manager in Arizona, said Mr. Trump's gamesmanship on the border deal would make for a potent argument. ''Arizona voters are not looking for people who are playing politics with this issue,'' he said.

Ms. Harris's campaign also believes that abortion will propel voters to her side in November, after the State Supreme Court in April reinstated an 1864 near-total ban on the procedure. The state's Legislature eventually repealed the ban, but a 15-week restriction is still in effect, and voters will weigh in on a ballot measure that would enshrine the right to an abortion until fetal viability in the state's Constitution.

Ms. Harris had some good news on Thursday, when the Cook Political Report, a nonpartisan political publication, moved Arizona from ''lean Republican'' to ''tossup'' in its ratings, along with the other Sun Belt swing states of Georgia and Nevada.

''For the first time in a long time, Democrats are united and energized, while Republicans are on their heels,'' wrote Amy Walter, the report's editor in chief.

For Ms. Harris to capitalize on her momentum, she must reunite the fragile coalition that helped Mr. Biden flip Arizona in 2020 for the first time in decades: young people, Latinos, Native Americans, white Phoenix-area suburban voters and moderates who have traditionally voted Republican.

Latino voters, who made up roughly 20 percent of the state's electorate four years ago, are particularly important.

Mr. Biden won those voters handily in 2020, but as his campaign struggled to energize Democrats this time around, Mr. Trump made significant gains with them. At the same time, he called some migrants ''animals,'' referred to immigration from Latin America as an ''invasion'' that is ''poisoning the blood'' of the country -- an echo of language used by Adolf Hitler -- and vowed mass deportations if elected.

On Thursday, the Harris campaign sought to contrast its approach with Mr. Trump's, releasing an ad in English and Spanish targeted to Latino voters. The ad highlights that Ms. Harris, who is Black and of South Asian heritage, was raised by an immigrant mother and worked at McDonald's as a young woman. It also focuses on her fight against big banks as California's attorney general and her role in the Biden administration's efforts to lower costs for expensive prescription drugs.

Latino voters say inflation is a major concern, and the ad reflects Ms. Harris's aggressive tone in talking about big business.

''As our president, determination is how she'll stop the corporations who gouge our families on rent and groceries,'' the ad's narrator says.

Another new Harris campaign ad takes the border issue head-on, referring to her as a former ''border state prosecutor'' who took on drug cartels and who will, as president, ''hire thousands more border agents and crack down on fentanyl and human trafficking.''

Both Democrats and Republicans have invested heavily in television advertising in the state. Since Mr. Biden dropped out, the Harris campaign and its allies have booked nearly $25 million worth of advertising time through Election Day, according to the media-tracking firm AdImpact. The Trump campaign and its allies have reserved roughly $13.5 million over the same period.

Early signs have emerged that Ms. Harris has galvanized her party in Arizona. At polling places during last week's primary election, Democrats in purple suburbs said they were feeling a newfound resolve.

When Ms. Harris stepped in, ''I felt a huge sense of relief, like the Democrats actually had a fighting chance,'' said Rochelle Garcia, 57, of Glendale. ''I have family members who were not going to vote for the office of president, who have changed their minds.''

Skylar Anderson, 28, of Phoenix, said Ms. Harris had motivated young voters and people of color like herself.

''It's amazing to see a woman of color, a Black woman, to be at the top of the ticket,'' Ms. Anderson said. She and others said Ms. Harris needed to blanket the state with appearances and information, to help people get to know her better and ''debunk'' attacks.

Friday's rally, when Ms. Harris will speak at Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, northwest of Phoenix, could be the start of that. Her campaign says it has a robust presence in Arizona, with 12 offices across the state and more than 120 full-time staff members. And since Mr. Biden dropped out, nearly 21,000 volunteers have signed up.

The Trump campaign said it had more than half a dozen offices around the state, a joint effort with the Republican National Committee.

''Years of the Biden-Harris's administration's failed policies have made living in Arizona harder, less safe, and has left many residents feeling increasingly uncertain about the future,'' said Halee Dobbins, the Trump campaign's Arizona communications director. ''Kamala Harris's open border agenda has normalized a migrant invasion and created a deadly stream of fentanyl flowing into our communities.''

Daniel Scarpinato, a Republican consultant in Arizona and the chief of staff to former Gov. Doug Ducey, said he thought that while Mr. Trump had the edge on Arizona voters' top issues, the race would be extremely tight.

Arizona has become a state, Mr. Scarpinato said, where ''anybody who's running statewide, whether it's for president or state mine inspector, has to view it as a coin flip.''

Jazmine Ulloa contributed reporting.Jazmine Ulloa contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/09/us/politics/kamala-harris-arizona.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/09/us/politics/kamala-harris-arizona.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A sign warning visitors of elevated human smuggling activity at Coronado National Monument in Cochise County, Ariz. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL RATJE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

An abortion rights rally in Phoenix this year. Kamala Harris's campaign believes that abortion will move voters to her side. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2024

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[***To Woo Trump, VP Contenders Show Off Their Rich Friends***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCD-V3V1-JBG3-600X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1062 words

**Byline:** Michael C. Bender and Theodore Schleifer Michael C. Bender is a Times political correspondent covering Donald J. Trump, the Make America Great Again movement and other federal and state elections. Theodore Schleifer writes about campaign finance and the influence of billionaires in American politics.

**Highlight:** Vice-presidential hopefuls are posturing as part of a bid to highlight their ties to wealthy donors.

**Body**

Vice-presidential hopefuls are posturing as part of a bid to highlight their ties to wealthy donors.

[*J.D. Vance is Trump’s pick for vice president. Follow live updates.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden)

During his 2016 campaign, Donald J. Trump orchestrated a takeover of the Republican Party in part by blasting wealthy political donors as the root of corruption and delivering a populist message that appealed to ***working-class*** voters.

Eight years later, one of his key decision points in choosing a running mate is connections to the superrich.

As the end of the selection process approaches, with an announcement expected in the next two weeks after months of suggestion and misdirection, Republican hopefuls are looking to convince Mr. Trump that they have the financial backing behind them that could help swing the race.

There are other factors that could make for a good match. Mr. Trump is said to be considering candidates with [*discipline*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) on the campaign trail, who will not [*steal his precious spotlight*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) and would [*fare well in a debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) with Vice President Kamala Harris.

But the money definitely matters — and some Republican donors with direct access to Mr. Trump have left unmistakable fingerprints on his process. Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, for example, became [*a top contender late in the selection process*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) after persistent lobbying from Steve Wynn, the billionaire former casino mogul who is close to Mr. Trump. Mr. Wynn has also played a role in persuading some other donors, such as Elon Musk, to be more supportive of the campaign.

Many vice-presidential hopefuls, including some outside contenders wise to the financial dynamic, have responded, boasting — and sometimes exaggerating — the amount they could raise for the ticket. The posturing, in some cases, has drawn sneers from some Republican donors, who feel like they are being used as pawns in internecine warfare.

But the most successful financial jockeying has come from the three contenders who are, as of now, viewed as the top candidates for the job: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida.

Mr. Burgum, a former software executive who sold a company to Microsoft, has an estimated net worth of at least $100 million, according to [*Forbes*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden), suggesting he could inject some of his fortune into the race. He spent more than $10 million on his own short-lived, long-shot presidential bid last year.

He has also sought to demonstrate his fund-raising potential for Mr. Trump by luring wealthy first-time donors to the president’s corner. On Tuesday, Mr. Burgum hosted a video conference with donors where the campaign charged $10,000 merely to join the call, and $25,000 to participate in a question-and-answer session, according to a copy of the invitation.

Tom Siebel, a billionaire tech investor, [*wrote his first check to Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) — for $500,000 — because Mr. Burgum was in the mix for the Republican ticket. Dick Boyce, a longtime Republican fund-raiser in Silicon Valley who is a former chairman for both Burger King and Del Monte Foods, said he had also made his second donation to Mr. Trump — a $100,000 contribution — in part owing to his consideration of Mr. Burgum, who was a classmate at Stanford Business School.

“I’m inclined to do more with Doug in the V.P. position, and the complimentary nature of him and Trump would give confidence to a lot more people, too,” Mr. Boyce, a former partner at Bain &amp; Company, said in an interview. “The vice president is someone who you could picture being president, not someone who might deliver a certain state, and sometimes that gets lost.”

Then there is Mr. Vance. A former venture capitalist, Mr. Vance organized a $12 million fund-raising event this month in Silicon Valley, part of an attempt to show his ability to draw tech industry donations.

Despite those efforts and Mr. Vance’s rise in Trumpworld, Mr. Vance’s single biggest donor remains a glaring holdout: the Silicon Valley megadonor Peter Thiel. Mr. Thiel, who put $15 million into an effort to elect Mr. Vance to the Senate in 2022 and used to employ him, said definitively on Thursday, for the first time, that he would not be a major financial supporter of Mr. Trump, as he had been in 2016. And it didn’t sound as if naming Mr. Vance to the ticket would change that.

“If you hold a gun to my head, I will vote for Trump,” Mr. Thiel said at the Aspen Ideas Festival. “I’m not going to give any money to his super PAC.”

Mr. Rubio, who built a formidable fund-raising operation for his own presidential bid in 2016, could be an attractive option for the Republican donors and groups who helped plow more than [*$146 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) into an effort to nominate former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, who was Mr. Trump’s last remaining primary opponent this year.

Ms. Haley’s supporters include some prominent Republican holdouts in the billionaire class, such as the hedge fund titans Paul Singer and Kenneth Griffin.

And then there are outside contenders like Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, who has aggressively sought to position himself as a darling of the donor class, claiming support from people including Mr. Singer and Larry Ellison, the Oracle founder. A week ago in Washington, Mr. Scott hosted a gathering for supporters of his new policy group that, three attendees say, had little subtlety as to its purpose.

The event, in their view, was an overt show of his support among well-heeled Republican donors. Speakers included billionaires like the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen, the billionaire investor Bill Ackman, the oil developer Tim Dunn and Marc Rowan, the chief executive of the investment firm Apollo Global Management.

Some donors tied to the event have bristled at the way the Scott team and the news media have implicitly [*positioned them*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/15/us/trump-rnc-news-biden) as endorsers of a Trump-Scott ticket, according to a person close to these donors. In reality, this person said, many people signed onto Mr. Scott’s event believing that he is likely to be the next powerful chair of the Senate Banking Committee. An aide to Mr. Scott declined to comment.

There was not much talk from Mr. Scott about the vice presidency explicitly, or even Mr. Trump, at the event, according to two attendees. And though he drew big potential donors, many big Scott supporters say privately they are pessimistic about his chances in the veepstakes.

This article appeared in print on page A13.

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[***Why Silicon Valley Is Abuzz Over ‘Founder Mode’; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CW9-88B1-JBG3-6002-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1976 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch and Ephrat Livni Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder of DealBook, the flagship business and policy newsletter at The Times and an annual conference. Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch covers Wall Street, including M&amp;amp;A, executive changes, board strife and policy moves affecting business. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington.

**Highlight:** A debate is brewing among investors and entrepreneurs: Are hands-on founders, such as Steve Jobs and Brian Chesky of Airbnb, the key to start-up success?

**Body**

A debate is brewing among investors and entrepreneurs: Are hands-on founders, such as Steve Jobs and Brian Chesky of Airbnb, the key to start-up success?

How should a C.E.O. operate?

Silicon Valley has been abuzz in recent days over one topic in particular: How hands-on should founders be in their companies? [*In the framing*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of Brian Chesky, the Airbnb co-founder and C.E.O., and Paul Graham, the Y Combinator co-founder, it comes down to “founder mode” versus “manager mode.”

It’s [*not a new question*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) — and it draws on longstanding examples like Steve Jobs — but it has taken on fresh significance as start-ups struggle with how to grow while keeping antsy investors happy.

Graham kicked off the latest discussion. “Till now most people even in Silicon Valley have implicitly assumed that scaling a start-up meant switching to manager mode,” he wrote. “But we can infer the existence of another mode from the dismay of founders who’ve tried it, and the success of their attempts to escape from it.”

He explained how the founder C.E.O. operates:

It’s pretty clear that it’s going to break the principle that the C.E.O. should engage with the company only via his or her direct reports. “Skip-level” meetings will become the norm instead of a practice so unusual that there’s a name for it. And once you abandon that constraint there are a huge number of permutations to choose from.

Graham took a shot at business schools for missing the trend, saying of the more hands-on founder mode, they “don’t know it exists.”

The prime example Graham cited was Chesky. The Airbnb boss shared his story at a recent Y Combinator event, and also discussed it [*on a podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook): “The less hands-on I was, the more I got sucked into problems. And by the time I got sucked into a problem, it was like 10 times as much work,” Chesky said on the podcast.

Instead, he decided: “I’m going to be involved in every single detail. And Airbnb is not going to do anything more than I can personally focus on.”

That has gotten results, Graham wrote, with Airbnb now having some of the best free cash flow in Silicon Valley. Then again, Airbnb’s stock price is 31 percent below its 52-week high.

Examples of founder mode include Jobs, whose approach Chesky said he studied; Jensen Huang of Nvidia, who has 60 direct reports; Elon Musk, who is deeply immersed in the operations of his many companies; Mark Zuckerberg of Meta; and Sam Altman of OpenAI.

Outside tech, Howard Schultz, who built Starbucks from a local Seattle coffee chain into a global colossus and was [*famously hands-on*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), also fits the mold.

Many founder-C.E.O.s applauded the approach, including [*Tobias Lütke*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of the e-commerce company Shopify. (Graham noted that among those who reviewed drafts of his post were Musk, Patrick Collison of Stripe, and Ryan Petersen of Flexport, as well as the investors Ron Conway and Jessica Livingston, and the Y Combinator leaders Garry Tan and Harj Taggar.)

[*Dan Rose*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), who held leadership positions at Amazon and Meta, wrote that Jeff Bezos and Zuckerberg “were both micro-managers, deep in the details of the product and business. They never set expectations of autonomy, and they fired anyone who resisted their oversight.”

Others said there were nuances. [*Jessica Lessin, the founder of The Information*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), argued that founders do need capable managers, noting that Jobs relied on Tim Cook to oversee the vast and intricate manufacturing operation that became one of Apple’s most crucial assets.

A start-up investor, Henrik Torstensson, [*agreed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that execution mattered, citing Microsoft under Satya Nadella as a “Hall of Fame example” of manager mode done right.

Others riffed on the debate with [*memes and humor*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), joking that it’s another phrase for micromanaging. “Everyone loves founder mode this weekend until the average ceo starts applying it on Tuesday,” [*Packy McCormick*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a writer, posted on X.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

The E.U.’s top court says the bloc’s regulator should not have investigated the Illumina-Grail deal. The Court of Justice ruled that the European Commission [*overstepped its authority*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) when it examined and then blocked the $7 billion deal, even though Grail had no presence in the European Union. Illumina has already abandoned the transaction because of antitrust concerns on both sides of the Atlantic.

HPE will pursue its $4 billion claim against the late British tech mogul Mike Lynch. HPE, a successor to Hewlett-Packard, said it would [*continue legal proceedings*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in London, seeking compensation over its $11 billion acquisition of Autonomy, the tech company he founded. Lynch died last month when his yacht sank off the coast of Sicily, just months after he was acquitted in a U.S. court of fraudulently inflating Autonomy’s value.

China escalates its trade spat with the West, zeroing in on Canada. China’s commerce ministry said on Tuesday that it would [*investigate imports of canola*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and other goods to see if they were unfairly priced in China, days after Ottawa announced that it would impose a 100 percent tariff on Chinese-made electric vehicles. The news comes as Beijing has [*reportedly threatened to retaliate*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) against Japan for restricting access to the top semiconductors.

Harris’s pitch to union workers

The Harris-Walz campaign spent Labor Day seeking to shore up support from blue-collar workers, an effort that included Vice President Kamala Harris [*publicly opposing Nippon Steel’s $15 billion bid to buy U.S. Steel*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

It’s part of the Democratic ticket’s pitch in key battleground states including Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. But Harris needs to strike a balance between appeasing ***working-class*** supporters and deep-pocketed donors wary of her veering too far to the left.

“U.S. Steel should remain American-owned and American-operated,” Harris said at a campaign event in Pittsburgh on Monday. The move — which aligned her with President Biden, who also spoke at the event, and Donald Trump — won the approval of the United Steelworkers union that has firmly opposed the deal with Japan’s Nippon Steel.

That makes the fate of the transaction [*increasingly cloudy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), though Nippon Steel has been betting that the merger review would continue past November, potentially sapping unions of sway.

Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota also warned unions about a second Trump presidency. Speaking in Milwaukee, he suggested that Republicans would seek to cut overtime pay, raise the age for social security and Medicare and repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Democrats have largely enjoyed the backing of union leaders, including Shawn Fain of the United Automobile Workers and Randi Weingarten of the American Federation of Teachers. They have pledged to use their organizing muscle to get out the vote for Harris, particularly in industrial battleground states.

But Trump has also been making a play for blue-collar voters, arguing that he would deliver more for them than Harris. His campaign has resonated with many of the white male workers who represent a large portion of organized labor. And one major union leader, Sean O’Brien of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, spoke at the Republican National Convention and hasn’t committed to endorsing Harris.

That said, some unions were outraged when Trump [*joked about*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) strikebreaking with Elon Musk, one of the former president’s biggest backers, whose Tesla company doesn’t have a unionized work force.

Harris must also work to keep corporate backers on board. While business supporters have flocked to the vice president, they have also pushed her to abandon the tough antitrust regulation approach [*overseen by Lina Khan*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and, more recently, [*reconsider a tax on the wealthiest Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

* In other election news: A recent Wall Street Journal poll showed that Americans were feeling [*(slightly) more optimistic about the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). And here’s how [*some backers of Nikki Haley’s presidential run*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) are weighing the Harris-Trump contest.

OpenAI’s growing pains

Months ago, OpenAI endured a brief civil war that saw the ouster of Sam Altman as C.E.O., largely over his commitment to the safety of the start-up’s artificial intelligence products.

Now it’s [*reorganizing itself*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to help pull in more investment. But that effort comes despite unresolved questions about whether the company is meant to serve the public good or simply make money, The Times’s Cade Metz and Mike Isaac write.

OpenAI may change its corporate structure. The company was initially formed as a nonprofit research lab, but formed a for-profit subsidiary in 2019 to allow outside investment. That arm has since drawn billions of dollars, including $13 billion from Microsoft. The tech giant is in talks to participate in yet another fund-raising round — alongside existing investors like Thrive Capital and new ones like Apple and Nvidia — that could elevate OpenAI’s valuation to [*more than $100 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

The board of the original nonprofit OpenAI controls the organization, without official input from investors. But the company is considering changes to that structure, Metz and Isaac write, though it hasn’t settled on a specific approach.

OpenAI needs more money. The A.I. race is becoming increasingly expensive, as tech titans including Alphabet and, yes, Microsoft, spend big on research. While OpenAI has annual revenues of more than $2 billion, Metz and Isaac report, one estimate puts its potential costs this year at [*$7 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

The company has already evolved in ways that depart from its founding principles. Of the 13 people who helped found OpenAI, only three remain. Among those who have left are Ilya Sutskever, the A.I. scientist who pushed for Altman’s ouster, and John Schulman, who led a team focused on the technology’s risks.

OpenAI has recently hired veteran tech executives including Sarah Friar, the former C.E.O. of Nextdoor, as C.F.O.; Kevin Weil, who led product at Twitter, as chief product officer; and Chris Lehane, a former Clinton White House official and Airbnb executive, who is set to become head of global policy.

The transition points to the identity crisis at the heart of OpenAI. Other employees who were uncomfortable with Altman’s management have left. [*Elon Musk*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), who co-founded the company, has [*sued it twice*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), claiming that it put profits ahead of the public good.

Some former OpenAI employees see more problems on the way. They point to questions about the safety of the technology the company is creating and note that executives tasked with monitoring those products have left.

OpenAI says it’s the cost of growing up. “Scaling a company is really hard,” Jason Kwon, the company’s chief strategy officer, told The Times. “You have to make trade-off decisions all the time. And some people might not like those decisions.”

(The New York Times [*sued*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) OpenAI and Microsoft in December for copyright infringement of news content related to A.I. systems.)

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* Private equity firms are [*raising record sums*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for real estate secondary funds, which buy assets from other investors. (NYT)

1. An Australian real estate company owned by Rupert Murdoch said it was [*interested in buying Rightmove*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a dominant player in Britain’s real estate listings market. (CNBC)

Artificial intelligence

* “[*Mickey Mouse Smoking*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook): How A.I. Image Tools Are Generating New Content-Moderation Problems” (WSJ)

1. Blackstone reportedly [*plans to buy AirTrunk*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), an Australian data center operator, for about $13.5 billion in a bet on A.I. in the Asia-Pacific market. (FT)

Best of the rest

* Volkswagen is weighing [*a sweeping closure of factories*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in Germany, the first in its history, setting up a potential clash with labor unions. (NYT)

1. “Will Automation Replace Jobs? Port Workers [*May Strike Over It*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).” (NYT)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: “The less hands-on I was, the more I got sucked into problems,” Brian Chesky, Airbnb’s C.E.O., has said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY J. Emilio Flores for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Harris Has a Brief Window to Define Herself***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CM7-D511-DXY4-X090-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1445 words

**Byline:** By Chris Whipple

**Body**

In the span of a few weeks, Kamala Harris has accomplished the seemingly impossible. The presumptive Democratic nominee has navigated the most politically fraught situation imaginable -- a president's reluctant abdication from the Democratic ticket -- and rallied the party around her. She's outmaneuvered potential rivals, galvanized voters and volunteers, shattered fund-raising records and pulled the Democratic campaign out of free fall.

Now comes the hard part: She must gird for a take-no-prisoners general election battle against Donald Trump. Between now and when the Democratic convention kicks off on Aug. 19, the vice president should frame the race on her own terms by establishing her identity, projecting strength, parrying Mr. Trump's attacks immediately and continuing her pivot to offense.

Ms. Harris's nearly flawless start knocked the Trump campaign on its heels. Convinced that Joe Biden, a doddering octogenarian, would be the nominee, Mr. Trump and his running mate, JD Vance, have groped for a line of attack against the relatively youthful Ms. Harris.

''They wanted this to be about a weak, dithering president who couldn't handle the fact that the world was on fire and inflation and the border were out of control,'' said Tim Miller, a former communications director for Jeb Bush. ''And then this happens and discombobulates it all. And they haven't landed on how to pivot.''

But Mr. Trump has plenty of heavy weaponry at his disposal. Unlike his previous races, when he went through campaign managers the way the Borgias went through family, the former president's 2024 campaign has been a relatively no-drama affair, run by the political veterans Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita.

Ms. Harris has her own formidable team, including the campaign chair, Jennifer O'Malley Dillon, inherited from the Biden campaign, and the spokesman Brian Fallon. Her campaign is rumored to be talking with David Plouffe, who led Barack Obama's winning 2008 campaign and whose strategic acumen would be a good fit with Ms. O'Malley Dillon's ground game.

Ms. Harris should be preparing for a barrage of incoming negative attacks. Mr. Trump's allies have already stirred up racist and sexist innuendo against Ms. Harris -- just a preview of what may come. A Trump campaign version of the ''Willie Horton'' attack -- the notorious 1988 commercial produced by a political action committee supporting the Republican nominee, George H.W. Bush -- isn't inconceivable. In that ad, widely criticized as racist, Mr. Bush's Democratic opponent, Michael Dukakis, was excoriated for granting furloughs to violent criminals as governor of Massachusetts.

In a recent memo, Mr. Trump's pollster Anthony Fabrizio hinted at such an attack on Ms. Harris, alleging that as a California district attorney, she'd freed ''illegals'' who'd gone on to commit violent crimes. Those tactics are part of the Trump campaign's DNA. It was Mr. LaCivita who, in 2004, spearheaded the infamous ''Swift Boat Veterans for Truth'' ad campaign, which helped to sink the presidential hopes of the Democratic nominee, John Kerry.

In the 2022 U.S. Senate race in Wisconsin, with Mr. LaCivita as a general consultant, the winning campaign of the Republican incumbent, Ron Johnson, along with other groups, aimed a devastating ad blitz at the Democratic challenger, Mandela Barnes, accusing him of coddling criminals. ''It was images of crime scenes,'' recalled Ben Wikler, chairman of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. ''They darkened his skin in their mailers. They stamped his name over crime scenes. And there was the spray-painted slogan 'Defund the Police' with Mandela Barnes in front of it, insinuating that he'd supported it.''

Mr. Barnes, strapped for money, was unable to respond quickly. ''When the resources did arrive later in the race,'' Mr. Wikler said, ''and the Barnes campaign was able to simultaneously defend and go on offense, he started gaining a point a week and wound up losing the race by a single percentage point.'' The clear lesson for Ms. Harris is to answer every attack, pivot quickly to offense and pound her message home every day until the polls close. Given the flood of donations she's already unleashed -- $200 million and counting -- and the truncated general election calendar, money should be no object for the vice president.

In the weeks before the Democratic convention, with the wind at her back so far, the vice president has a chance to chart a course to victory.

Above all, Ms. Harris must affirmatively define herself before Mr. Trump and his allies can define her. Despite having served for decades as California's attorney general, a senator and vice president of the United States, she is barely known to many voters. ''That's why the explosion of resources for Vice President Harris has been really critical,'' said Mr. Wikler, ''because she's going to have to do multiple things at once in a way that Joe Biden, who's already firmly defined in voters' minds, didn't have to.''

Ms. Harris must tell a compelling story that connects with ordinary Americans. What is her positive vision for the future? For ***working-class*** and middle-class Americans who have endured the worst of inflation, especially, an understanding of how she intends to bring down prices will be critical. She also should emphasize her confidence in America and Americans and contrast her positive vision for the future with Mr. Trump's preoccupation with the past -- something Democrats have struggled to do in recent years.

So far her performance is a striking improvement over her uncertain footing during her early days as vice president. ''People see her and they're like, 'Well, wait a minute. She looks pretty good to me,''' said Mark McKinnon, former chief media adviser to George W. Bush and John McCain. Indeed, in the rarefied air of a historically unprecedented campaign, she's performed a high-wire act worthy of the Flying Wallendas.

Any candidate vying for the executive office must project strength -- a trait voters associate with Mr. Trump. Ms. Harris's recent, pointed call for an end to the war in Gaza, issued after her meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, should be the template. Wading into a politically fraught subject, the vice president forcefully denounced the killing of ''far too many innocent civilians'' and the ''dire humanitarian situation.'' She vowed, ''I will not be silent.'' It was the language of leadership.

Ms. Harris must define herself between now and the Democratic convention -- because Mr. Trump and his MAGA posse will pounce soon thereafter. '''She's a radical San Francisco liberal' will be one line of attack,'' said Rich Bond, a veteran G.O.P. strategist who served as Republican National Committee chair under George H.W. Bush. ''And 'the borders are a complete failure' will be another. 'Part of the Biden wrecking crew of the American economy' will be another.''

One move that could help Ms. Harris on this front is her swift selection of a running mate. (But not too swift: George McGovern's failure to properly vet Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri, who had been treated for depression, doomed his 1972 campaign.) Ms. Harris has a deep bench of Democratic talent from which to choose, among them Mark Kelly, the senator from the border state of Arizona, who could help her on the immigration front; and Andy Beshear, the popular governor of Kentucky, who at 46 would reinforce the message that she represents a new generation of Americans.

The jabs against Ms. Harris will be blunted if she can burnish her identity now and pivot to prosecuting Mr. Trump's flaws. Even with Joe Biden out of the race, Mr. Trump's best hope is to run against the Biden-Harris record. If the race is about Mr. Trump's character, the 34-count felon faces an uphill battle.

Mr. Bond, the G.O.P. veteran, sums up the Trump playbook: ''They have a two-part list. One is take Harris down.'' The second is don't let Mr. Trump be a jerk. ''That's the entire list,'' he said -- ''and the second part may be impossible.''

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 and has written about 10 presidential administrations.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/31/opinion/kamala-harris-campaign.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/31/opinion/kamala-harris-campaign.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***On Governors Island, You Can Dance at a Jazz Age Lawn Party; New York today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNY-J2T1-DXY4-X33R-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1419 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:** Michael Arenella will be the bandleader at the event, and he’ll also be dancing the Charleston.

**Body**

Michael Arenella will be the bandleader at the event, and he’ll also be dancing the Charleston.

Good morning. It’s Friday. Today, and on Fridays through the summer, we’ll focus on things to do in New York over the weekend.

Dancing the Charleston — which you can do this weekend on Governors Island, across New York Harbor from Lower Manhattan — “takes more confidence than skill, I think,” Michael Arenella said.

He knows how, and there will be moments when he will be doing the Charleston — or the Black Bottom or the fox trot, all dances rooted in the 1920s — to whip up the crowd at the event on Governors Island, the [*Jazz Age Lawn Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Arenella, the bandleader and impresario behind this weekend of phantasmagoria, will provide the soundtrack for the dancing, the wine and vintage cocktails that will be available and the croquet that can be played. It begins tomorrow at 11 a.m. and continues on Sunday.

There will be Charleston lessons led by Roddy Caravella, whose 1920s bona fides include owning a 1929 DeSoto, according to Arenella, the former owner of a 1925 Studebaker. He himself now has a 1930 Buick. “I modernized,” he said. “Got to stay with the times, you know?”

The music is also authentic, Arenella said: He transcribed it himself, from 78 r.p.m. recordings of songs like “The Vo-do-deo-do Blues,” (Vo-do-deo-do was [*“a meaningless jazz refrain” from the 1920s, according to the Oxford English Dictionary*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).) Arenella is also partial to Duke Ellington songs like “Jig Walk,” from before Ellington took the A train and became a household name.

It’s the sound of the Roaring Twenties, and the Jazz Age Lawn Party also has a look. Some attendees dress as people did in the decade between World War I and the Great Depression. There are slim and sleeveless flapper dresses and feather boas — and seersucker suits and suspenders.

But there is more to the Jazz Age Lawn Party than appearances. If anyone has F. Scott Fitzgerald in mind, Arenella does not.

“Everyone talks about ‘The Great Gatsby,’” he said, “but there was so much better literature that that era yielded, so much literature with much more depth and more culturally relevant that shaped the thought of the era.” He mentioned “the likes of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Langston Hughes and Gertrude Stein” before saying that “‘Gatsby’ was about idle wealthy people. That doesn’t speak to the ***working class*** and the Black culture of that time, which is where the art was happening and the dance and the music.”

Arenella started the Jazz Age Lawn Party 19 years ago on Governors Island, a former military outpost that grew in the early years of the 20th century — nearly 4.8 million cubic yards of rocks and dirt excavated for the Lexington Avenue subway line added just over 100 acres to the island’s girth.

In the Roaring Twenties, Governors Island, still under the Army’s control, was the scene of polo matches and mock battles that the public could watch. And it was a place to watch the shape of New York City change as skyscrapers rose across the harbor in Manhattan.

“The spirit of the 1920s was one of looking forward,” Arenella said. “The 1920s cut ties with the past so quickly and clearly. It created newfound freedom for young people.”

And that fueled the exuberance of jazz, which, as Arenella noted, was “still considered the underground music” when the 1920s began. The audience changed with the bandleader Paul Whiteman, who he said “made jazz digestible for the quote-unquote upper classes” with “Rhapsody in Blue,” which Whiteman commissioned from George Gershwin and which is celebrating its centennial this year. That milestone will be observed at the Jazz Age Lawn Party with a performance of a solo arrangement by the pianist Elliot Sneider. (The composer Ferde Grofé was responsible for three orchestra versions, including the one for the premiere.)

“‘Rhapsody in Blue’ was the soundtrack of American progress, American innovation,” he said. “It was the soundtrack of the skyscrapers being built in New York City and the soundtrack of the workingman and woman having mobility. And it’s melded with the blues. That’s what it is at the Lawn Party. It’s the sound of progress, of social suffering, of social striving. It’s uniquely American, and something our country should be a lot more proud of.”

While [*Tropical Storm Debby’s power will diminish*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings), prepare for chances of showers and thunderstorms on a breezy Friday and early Saturday. On Sunday, enjoy a mostly sunny day. Throughout the weekend, temperatures will be in the low to mid-80s during the day. At night, temperatures will range from the high 60s to the mid-70s.

In effect until Tuesday (Tisha B’Av).

What Else to Do This Weekend

Exhibits closing on Sunday

* Weekend at Whitney: The [*museum’s biennial*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) ends this weekend, but enjoy [*free entry*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) on Friday starting at 5 p.m., with drinks and music.

1. An exhibit on the “Archaeology of Memory”: On Sunday, see a retrospective of the artist [*Amalia Mesa-Bains’s work at El Museo del Barrio*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Enjoy the great outdoors, with music

* Blues and Barbecue: At 1 p.m. on Saturday, enjoy performances, games and food from several New York barbecue joints for the [*Blues festival in Hudson River Park*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

1. Great Jazz on the Great Hill: Listen to some jazz and have a picnic [*in Central Park this Saturday at 3:30 p.m.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)
2. Celebrating merengue: Attend the [*Dominican Day Parade*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) on Sunday at 1 p.m. in Manhattan.
3. The Battery Dance Festival: Enjoy performances this Sunday by [*dance companies from around the world*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

For more events in New York, here’s a list of what to do [*this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

A close-by island cruise

Manhattan has its characters, and so do places in New York that are technically uninhabited.

My colleague Laurel Graeber writes that Classic Harbor Line offers opportunities to observe them during its narrated [*Urban Naturalist Tour*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings). On Sundays and Mondays at sunset, a three-hour cruise on a 1920s-style yacht sails past points like [*U Thant Island*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings), Mill Rock and the [*North and South Brother Islands*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings). Those are out-of-the-way places where species like ospreys, double-crested cormorants, snowy egrets and various kinds of herons now nest.

Binoculars are a must, but if you’re lucky, you may see one of these majestic birds swoop just overhead or take off from a channel marker. The tour also covers harbor history, with lore about shipwrecks, the Statue of Liberty and Typhoid Mary, the cook who infected more than 50 New Yorkers in the early years of the 20th century. She was exiled to North Brother Island, which the writer Anthony Bourdain called “a ramshackle Alcatraz” roughly half a mile from another island that houses a real prison, Rikers Island.

Volleyball practice

Dear Diary:

I was on my way to meet a high school friend for lunch on the Upper West Side and had walked from Midtown through Central Park.

Leaving the park, I hustled in the direction of Amsterdam Avenue. I passed the schoolyard outside the Anderson School on the way. I saw some boys playing volleyball without a net, and I watched their ball fly over the very high chain-link fence and land at my feet.

I looked at my watch. I had three minutes to get to lunch on time. I placed the ball at the base of the fence. A boy of about 13 locked eyes with me from the other side.

“You’re going to have to come out and get this,” I said. I did not trust my throwing skills.

He shook his head calmly.

“Please,” he said. “Just try.”

I tried to lob the ball over the fence but failed to make it even a third of the way to the top.

By now, a medium-size crowd of middle schoolers had gathered to watch. I could not fail my audience.

I looked at the boy again.

“Try again,” he said, crouching into a deep squat with his arms extended. “Like this.”

Using this new technique, I tried again. This time, I was just a few feet shy of the top. The crowd was cheering me on.

I tried once more, this time with more force, and ball went over the fence.

The crowd went wild. I turned and saw an older woman standing nearby who was also cheering.

I waved farewell to my fans and hurried off to lunch. I was about 10 minutes late.

— Estee Pierce

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 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).

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[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Desiree Rios for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Harris Fights Uphill Against Trump in Arizona, Backed by a Revived Party***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CP0-M3K1-JBG3-600J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1548 words

**Byline:** Kellen Browning and Nicholas NehamasKellen Browning is a Times reporter covering the 2024 election, with a focus on the swing states of Nevada and Arizona.

**Highlight:** The battleground state, where Kamala Harris will rally on Friday, has drifted toward Donald Trump since he lost it in 2020. Democrats hope her momentum could turn their fortunes around there.

**Body**

The battleground state, where Kamala Harris will rally on Friday, has drifted toward Donald Trump since he lost it in 2020. Democrats hope her momentum could turn their fortunes around there.

As Vice President Kamala Harris fights for the votes of Americans threatening to abandon the Democratic Party, she faces challenges across the battleground states, from ***working-class*** Nevada communities to Arab American enclaves in Michigan.

But perhaps no swing state has vexed Democrats as much this year as Arizona.

A longtime Republican stronghold before President Biden’s victory in 2020, the state is tricky political territory for Democrats, who confront magnified concerns over the number of migrants coming across the U.S.-Mexico border. A [*handful*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) of [*polls*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) in recent weeks have shown former President Donald J. Trump leading Ms. Harris by the mid-single digits, even as her numbers have improved in other vital states.

On Friday, Ms. Harris will take the stage in a Phoenix suburb alongside her new running mate, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota — part of [*a renewed push to put Sun Belt states back in play*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) and keep Arizona’s 11 electoral votes in the Democratic column. She faces an uphill battle there as Republicans work to [*paint her as the architect of the border crisis*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000), but her allies say the energy she has brought to drained Democratic voters could also attract moderate swing voters.

“She seems to have captured some of that lightning in a bottle that the Obama campaign had,” said John Giles, the Republican mayor of Mesa, east of Phoenix, who [*endorsed Ms. Harris last month*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000). Still, he cautioned, “she absolutely has to run like she’s behind in Arizona, because I think she is.”

Immigration consistently ranks as a top issue in Arizona, where [*voters will decide in November*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) whether to make unlawfully crossing the border from Mexico a state crime. Even as border apprehensions have dropped sharply nationwide this year, they have continued to climb in Arizona. Border officials in the area south of Tucson have tallied [*nearly 430,000 apprehensions*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) and other encounters since October, out of roughly 1.4 million across the entire southwestern border. That is up from about 235,000 in roughly the same time period the year before.

Mr. Trump and his allies have hammered Ms. Harris on immigration, highlighting her previous statements that “an undocumented immigrant is not a criminal” to portray her as soft on the border. They have [*castigated her as the “border czar,”*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) though Mr. Biden gave her the responsibility of solving the “root causes” of migration from Central America, rather than dealing with problems at the southern border.

A top pro-Trump super PAC, MAGA Inc., released an advertisement late last month in several battleground states, including Arizona, blasting the vice president over the border. “Why is our border a chaotic mess?” the ad asks. “Kamala Harris.”

But Democrats say Ms. Harris has a ready-made defense: It was Mr. Trump who [*tanked a bipartisan border deal*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) this year, which would have effectively mandated that the border be shut down to migrants when numbers reached certain levels and would have vastly expanded detentions and deportations.

“Republicans walked away from this because Donald Trump told them to walk away from it,” Senator Mark Kelly, the Arizona Democrat, who was a [*top contender*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) to become Ms. Harris’s running mate, said in an interview. “They don’t actually want to fix this. They don’t want to solve it. They just want to talk about it.”

Sean McEnerney, Ms. Harris’s state campaign manager in Arizona, said Mr. Trump’s gamesmanship on the border deal would make for a potent argument. “Arizona voters are not looking for people who are playing politics with this issue,” he said.

Ms. Harris’s campaign also believes that abortion will propel voters to her side in November, after the State Supreme Court in April [*reinstated an 1864 near-total ban*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) on the procedure. The state’s Legislature eventually [*repealed the ban*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000), but a 15-week restriction is still in effect, and voters will weigh in on a ballot measure that would enshrine the right to an abortion until fetal viability in the state’s Constitution.

Ms. Harris had some good news on Thursday, when the Cook Political Report, a nonpartisan political publication, [*moved Arizona*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) from “lean Republican” to “tossup” in its ratings, along with the other Sun Belt swing states of Georgia and Nevada.

“For the first time in a long time, Democrats are united and energized, while Republicans are on their heels,” wrote Amy Walter, the report’s editor in chief.

For Ms. Harris to capitalize on her momentum, she must reunite the fragile coalition that helped Mr. Biden flip Arizona in 2020 for the first time in decades: young people, Latinos, Native Americans, white Phoenix-area suburban voters and moderates who have traditionally voted Republican.

Latino voters, who made up [*roughly 20 percent*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) of the state’s electorate four years ago, are particularly important.

Mr. Biden won those voters handily in 2020, but as his campaign struggled to energize Democrats this time around, Mr. Trump [*made significant gains*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) with them. At the same time, he called some migrants “[*animals*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000),” referred to immigration from Latin America as an “invasion” that is “poisoning the blood” of the country — [*an echo of language used by Adolf Hitler*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) — and vowed [*mass deportations*](https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000191-0bfd-d871-af95-affdc1b80000) if elected.

On Thursday, the Harris campaign sought to contrast its approach with Mr. Trump’s, releasing an ad in English and Spanish targeted to Latino voters. The ad highlights that Ms. Harris, who is Black and of South Asian heritage, was raised by an immigrant mother and worked at McDonald’s as a young woman. It also focuses on her fight against big banks as California’s attorney general and her role in the Biden administration’s efforts to lower costs for expensive prescription drugs.

Latino voters say inflation is a major concern, and the ad reflects Ms. Harris’s aggressive tone in talking about big business.

“As our president, determination is how she’ll stop the corporations who gouge our families on rent and groceries,” the ad’s narrator says.

Another new Harris campaign ad takes the border issue head-on, referring to her as a former “border state prosecutor” who took on drug cartels and who will, as president, “hire thousands more border agents and crack down on fentanyl and human trafficking.”

Both Democrats and Republicans have invested heavily in television advertising in the state. Since Mr. Biden dropped out, the Harris campaign and its allies have booked nearly $25 million worth of advertising time through Election Day, according to the media-tracking firm AdImpact. The Trump campaign and its allies have reserved roughly $13.5 million over the same period.

Early signs have emerged that Ms. Harris has galvanized her party in Arizona. At polling places during last week’s primary election, Democrats in purple suburbs said they were feeling a newfound resolve.

When Ms. Harris stepped in, “I felt a huge sense of relief, like the Democrats actually had a fighting chance,” said Rochelle Garcia, 57, of Glendale. “I have family members who were not going to vote for the office of president, who have changed their minds.”

Skylar Anderson, 28, of Phoenix, said Ms. Harris had motivated young voters and people of color like herself.

“It’s amazing to see a woman of color, a Black woman, to be at the top of the ticket,” Ms. Anderson said. She and others said Ms. Harris needed to blanket the state with appearances and information, to help people get to know her better and “debunk” attacks.

Friday’s rally, when Ms. Harris will speak at Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, northwest of Phoenix, could be the start of that. Her campaign says it has a robust presence in Arizona, with 12 offices across the state and more than 120 full-time staff members. And since Mr. Biden dropped out, nearly 21,000 volunteers have signed up.

The Trump campaign said it had more than half a dozen offices around the state, a joint effort with the Republican National Committee.

“Years of the Biden-Harris’s administration’s failed policies have made living in Arizona harder, less safe, and has left many residents feeling increasingly uncertain about the future,” said Halee Dobbins, the Trump campaign’s Arizona communications director. “Kamala Harris’s open border agenda has normalized a migrant invasion and created a deadly stream of fentanyl flowing into our communities.”

Daniel Scarpinato, a Republican consultant in Arizona and the chief of staff to former Gov. Doug Ducey, said he thought that while Mr. Trump had the edge on Arizona voters’ top issues, the race would be extremely tight.

Arizona has become a state, Mr. Scarpinato said, where “anybody who’s running statewide, whether it’s for president or state mine inspector, has to view it as a coin flip.”

Jazmine Ulloa contributed reporting.

Jazmine Ulloa contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: A sign warning visitors of elevated human smuggling activity at Coronado National Monument in Cochise County, Ariz. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL RATJE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); An abortion rights rally in Phoenix this year. Kamala Harris’s campaign believes that abortion will move voters to her side. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Choosing This Bling, Rappers Speak Volumes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CW2-G8J1-JBG3-60NM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1856 words

**Byline:** By Seph Rodney

**Body**

Hip-hop jewelry does a lot of heavy lifting in a new exhibition in Manhattan. It signifies elite membership, romantic courtship and ambition for greatness.

Of the New York museums that would create an exhibition on jewelry associated with hip-hop culture, I would not have imagined the American Museum of Natural History to be one. Yet, ''Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry'' did open this May in a tiny gallery of their Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. With 66 objects, it has an astute premise -- that precious stones might attract more attention if regarded through the lens of hip-hop, likely the most widely proliferating music movement that the United States has ever produced.

This show might have been organized to absorb the energy around the 50th anniversary of hip-hop's inception last year or anticipate the Hip Hop Museum's opening in the Bronx in 2025. More cynically, some might see ''Ice Cold'' as an act of penance for the museum's admitted possession and use of the remains of Indigenous and enslaved people, as the museum faces criticism about the legality and the ethics of these acquisitions. Either way, the venture feels successful. I visited the show twice, on a Thursday evening and on a Monday morning, and each time the gallery was filled with visitors.

The show is beautifully laid out. It's installed in a small, dark, semicircular gallery, with jewelry in vitrines spotlighted against a black acetate and Plexiglas. The diamonds glint and coruscate as you move across the displays. One could linger, bedazzled and charmed by the bold inventiveness of pieces like ASAP Rocky's EXO grenade pendant -- its ''pin'' sets the time -- displayed on two disks set inside a locket. However, the exhibition offers more, including the concealed and paradoxical implications of wearing these constellations of bling.

The curators, Vikki Tobak, author of ''Ice Cold: A Hip-Hop Jewelry History,'' Kevin ''Coach K'' Lee, a founder of the Quality Control music label, and Karam Gill, the director of a documentary on the subject, took the important step of historically situating hip-hop's ostentatious display of wealth. They refer to an Asante chief in Ghana whose ceremonial dress consisted of copious amounts of gold (though the date of an image referenced turns out to be 2005, which makes the ancestral connection vague).

Shrewdly, the curators also name check each jeweler (when they are known), so they are properly recognized as collaborators and makers alongside the musical stars, such as Ghostface Killah's eagle bracelet by Jason Arasheben -- a massive 14 karat gold wrist cuff with an eagle alighting onto it. The Notorious B.I.G.'s Jesus necklace, made by Tito Caicedo of Manny's New York, is another icon. It features the head and neck of a figure in gold whose beard, locks, clothing and crown are festooned with diamonds. In terms of the meaning they convey, these chains do a lot of heavy lifting.

For starters, they indicate membership in a very exclusive club, such as Quality Control's QC necklace for members of its label, including Migos and Lil Yachty. The Roc-A-Fella pendant -- which notoriously can't be bought but has to be bestowed -- was made for the eponymous label founded by Jay-Z, Damon Dash and Kareem Burke. And after releasing their 1986 song ''My Adidas,'' each Run-DMC member received a solid-gold sneaker-shaped pendant by Adidas upon signing an endorsement deal.

Roxanne Shanté of the Juice Crew, and one of the few women rappers to achieve stardom in the early days of hip-hop, has her Juice Crew ring shown here. ''Having the Juice Crew ring is like a royalty stance, and you had to represent certain things in the community to wear it,'' she says in the show's text. ''It stands for so much: community, loyalty and greatness.''

This jewelry is also used by men in courting rituals. Nelly, who wears a diamond Nefertiti piece in one of the exhibition photos, sings in ''Ride Wit Me'' (2000): ''And if shorty wanna pop, we popping the Crist' / Shorty wanna see the ice, then I ice the wrist.'' Both parties benefit here: The man, bestowing Cristal Champagne, is recognized as a lavish provider; the woman as a valued object deserving of expensive expenditure. What's unrecognized is just how restrictive these roles can be. (Insightfully, though, queer experience is not ignored in the exhibition, which includes the jeweler David Tamargo's grill set commissioned by Lil Nas X in 2021 to celebrate the artist's unabashedly homoerotic single, ''Montero (Call Me By Your Name).'')

These pieces also serve as a kind of memorial. On display is the Capital Steez necklace commissioned by Joey Badass in honor of his friend Capital Steez, who died in 2012 at 19 years old. Badass became a founding member of the Progressive Era or Pro Era collective along with Steez and other rappers. The necklace features the late rapper's likeness, in gold, on a diamond-studded Gucci link chain. Pouring one out for a homie who has passed on is a well-known ritual, but imprinting his image on a pendant moves him up into the pantheon of public attention.

But more important, the jewelry also stands for the ambition to be elite, to have the means to spend money extravagantly on personal adornment. And this desire usually outpaces the actual assets that aspirational rappers have at their disposal.

On his 2004 debut album ''The College Dropout,'' Kanye West, lately Ye, rapped about buying $25,000 jewelry before owning a house, then adding: ''I got a couple past-due bills, I won't get specific/I got a problem with spendin' before I get it/We all self-conscious, I'm just the first to admit it.'' Ye, one of the most emotionally transparent (and most unstable) voices in hip-hop, articulates its fake-it-till-you-make-it ethos.

This is a critique often leveled at hip-hop culture: that lavish self-presentation -- not only jewelry but also clothing and cars -- says what you buy, as opposed to what you produce, is the measure of your value; that hip-hop glorifies a lifestyle that is fake or irresponsible and, either way, out of reach for most people on this planet. There is some truth to all of this. But this is not hip-hop's cross to bear alone. The fault lies in American popular culture at large.

Throughout the 1980s, during hip-hop's commercial rise, the television show ''Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous'' flogged the clichéd notion that ''making it'' consisted of having exclusive wristwatches, automobiles, boats and real estate. In hip-hop culture, rappers say it with their chests, out loud, without shame, in the streets. The trappings are worn for public view, rather than obscured by shell companies.

Still, this shamelessness permits callous and spiteful parts of the culture to feel entitled. ''Run the Jewels,'' released in 2013 by the eponymous rap duo, encouraged violently stealing jewelry from anyone who seems privileged: ''So when we say, 'Run the jewels'/Just run 'em, baby, please don't delay me/She clutched the pearls, said, 'What in the world?'/ And, 'I won't give up shit!'/I put the pistol on that poodle and I shot that bitch.''

So, while ''Ice Cold'' sings from the hip-hop songbook in the key of celebration, it avoids the messier bits of the culture: the misogyny, the persistent though lessening homophobia, the endorsement of physical violence.

I wish hip-hop culture as it is presented here was more aware of and willing to acknowledge these contradictions and brave enough to try resolve them. But this show doesn't aim to do this. It doesn't feature the weird parts of hip-hop, underground acts, ''conscious'' or feminist rap, or hip-hop produced outside the United States. Still, Latin artists are present, including Fat Joe and Big Pun. As are some women rappers, including MC Lyte and Queen Latifah.

The show does take seriously the less expensive signs of Black Liberation that act as adornment, such as DJ Kool Herc's leather medallion on which he drew his self-portrait and graffiti tag. Kool Herc is one of the pioneers of hip-hop from the early 1970s, so his inclusion is a nod to the historical tradition. Within that tradition is Public Enemy, arguably the most overtly political group of the early 1990s. The show offers clock pendants (adopted on a dare) worn by their hype man, Flavor Flav, and the pendant designed by Chuck D, a founder of the group, that features a Black man caught in the cross hairs of a rifle sight -- meant to symbolize the plight of all Black men in the U.S.

But there is an internal contradiction in the show and within hip-hop itself: The people whom the culture purports to represent are, to an extent, ignored in favor of the celebrities who hold the mic and whose voices boom loudest. These are the one percent.

Yet, the orientation toward the street and the desire to show the neighborhood that you have arrived financially impels innovation. T Pain's ''Big Ass Chain'' necklace weighs more than 10 pounds and has almost 200 carats of diamonds. According to the caption, he commissioned this piece on a dare from a person he does not even remember.

Tyler, the Creator's bellhop necklace, a bejeweled golden figure carrying a suitcase in each hand, is my favorite piece not because, as the text conveys, it ''incorporates 186 carats in diamonds and 60 carats in sapphire, as well as more than 23,000 handset stones.'' Rather, it alludes to the history of Black people laboring in service jobs, such as hotel bellhops, because -- on the basis of their race alone -- they were denied employment commensurate with their skills, abilities and ambitions. It's a symbol of Tyler's success and a nod to his ancestors who could not radiate their gifts so publicly.

I know something about the impulse to celebrate one's achievements with jewelry. I got my first black diamond ring a few years ago and had to overcome significant anxiety to do it. I grew up in a ***working-class*** home that convinced me that extravagance was permissible only after achieving a firmly middle-class life. I don't know that I have. But after the protracted struggle to attain my doctorate, I felt I deserved it. It wasn't until the third visit to a Midtown jeweler that I noticed pictures on the walls of various hip-hop luminaries. What connects us is the years we spent working in obscurity, and our willingness to invest in an object that pays gleaming tribute to the work we've done.

During a recent public forum, Nikole Hannah-Jones, the author of ''The 1619 Project,'' discussed the importance of Black people presenting themselves in ways that read as authentic. She said, ''One of the things I love about Black people is our sense of style and flair.'' She argues that in the struggle to achieve success, ''What is important is if you make it, make it intact.''

''Ice Cold,'' despite its limitations, emphasizes the aspect of hip-hop that genuinely nourishes its audiences: recognizing and acknowledging that we deserve more than simply being intact; we have every right to shine.Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop JewelryThrough Jan. 5 at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan; amnh.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/31/arts/design/ice-cold-hip-hop-jewelry-museum.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/31/arts/design/ice-cold-hip-hop-jewelry-museum.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A necklace honoring Capital Steez, on view in ''Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Below from left: Ghostface Killah's cuff, designed by Jason Arasheben

the QC necklace, made of diamonds and 14-karat white gold and designed by Wafi of Jewelry Unlimited

the Capital Steez necklace, which Joey Badass commissioned when Steez died in 2014

Roxanne Shanté's Juice Crew ring

the Roc-a-Fella pendant, which can only be bestowed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALVARO KEDING/AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

MIDDLE, VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Second row, Slick Rick's crown and eyepatch in ''Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry'' at the American Museum of Natural History. Above from left: a gold necklace featuring Missy Elliott, Lauryn Hill, Beyoncé, Queen Latifah, Mary J. Blige and Erykah Badu

A$AP Rocky's Lego pendant

T Pain's necklace, which weighs more than 10 pounds. Below, the show is in a gallery within the museum's Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALVARO KEDING/AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY) (C6) This article appeared in print on page C1, C6.

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[***How the Tories Lost Britain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CV6-YP31-JBG3-600K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 4280 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:** Brexit and immigration upended their 14-year reign — setting the stage for a pitched battle to remake British conservatism.

**Body**

Liz Truss has a theory about what caused the collapse of Britain’s Conservative Party, and it has little to do with her. Sitting last May in her corner office across the street from Big Ben, Truss diagnosed the multiple ailments of her party, without referring to her own calamitous, 49-day stint as prime minister. Instead, like the London Eye turning lazily on the far bank of the Thames outside her window, she spun a story about how the Conservatives had drifted away from their ideological moorings.

Mass migration, big government, anticapitalist protests, an erosion of Parliament’s power over the “deep state” and a hothouse legal culture that prizes transgender rights over common-sense policies — these and other nostrums of left-wing thinking had come to dominate British politics, she said. After 14 years in power, Truss went on, the Conservatives were still living in, even embracing, Tony Blair’s Britain.

“We’re still seeing gender ideology in schools; we’ve got record levels of immigration; our taxes are at an 80-year high; and the government accounts for 45 percent of G.D.P.,” she said, in her characteristic staccato tone. “By any objective measure, that’s not a very strongly conservative set of policies.

“I tried,” Truss said of her ill-fated premiership, the shortest in Britain’s history, “but it was too late in the day, fundamentally.”

Never mind that Truss was ultimately undone by her own policies: an ill-judged foray into Ronald Reagan-style, trickle-down tax cuts that frightened the financial markets, sent the British pound into a tailspin and provoked the kinds of warnings about financial instability from the International Monetary Fund normally issued to rogue regimes in Latin America.

Forty-eight hours after our conversation in mid-May, Truss’s successor as prime minister, Rishi Sunak, called a general election for July 4. Truss, who returned to the Tory backbenches in Parliament after leaving 10 Downing Street, was summarily ousted by the voters of her district in Norfolk, northeast of London. That made her the first former British prime minister in nearly a century to lose her own seat, the highest-profile casualty in a landslide victory by the Labour Party that was less a triumph of the left than a breathtaking repudiation of the Conservatives.

“People say the Conservative Party should be united,” Truss said, “but you’ve got to unite around an idea or set of ideas. At present, I think the views are very disparate about what the ideas should be.”

In this, at least, she has a point.

Two months after their historic rout, the Conservatives are still a house divided. Facing years in the political wilderness, they have scattered into angry camps — “fighting like rats in the sack,” in the words of Tim Bale, a leading scholar on the party at Queen Mary University of London — as they argue over what caused their collapse and what can be done to pick up the pieces.

There is no shortage of culprits. Rishi Sunak, for calling the election months earlier than he needed to. Boris Johnson, for presiding over an unsavory parade of scandals that left voters disgusted with a legacy of “Tory sleaze.” Yet another prime minister, David Cameron, for imposing painful fiscal austerity in 2010 and then calling the self-sabotaging referendum on Brexit six years later.

It is an overstatement to say that Brexit caused the Conservative crackup — but not by much. The scalding, seemingly never-ending debate over whether and how to leave the European Union haunted the party, dividing the Tories, pulling its leaders to the right and forcing successive governments into ever-more-extreme policies, especially after it was widely judged a failure. “Brexit is still at the root of all this,” says Tony Travers, a professor of politics at the London School of Economics. “The Conservative Party damaged itself because of it. And Brexit got tangled up in the populist tide. The original referendum vote allowed a populist expression, but after eight years, it’s clear Brexit did not produce the benefits promised by its supporters.”

That lingering disappointment acted as an accelerant for the anti-immigrant riots that convulsed Britain for several days this summer. Four weeks after voters threw out the government, gangs of far-right thugs stormed mosques and torched the hotels used to house asylum seekers. The spark was a brutal knife attack on a dance studio by a 17-year-old Welsh-born man whose parents immigrated from Rwanda; he was charged with killing three children and injuring 10 others.

But the deeper causes lie in the broken promises of the Brexiteers. They claimed that immigration levels would decline as a result of leaving the E.U.; instead, they have soared. Conservative governments have quietly encouraged this influx in the hope that the new arrivals, many of them highly skilled, would recharge Britain’s lagging economy. At the same time, Conservative leaders pandered to anti-immigration sentiment within their political base by inflaming fears about a much smaller subset of illegal migrants: asylum seekers from countries like Afghanistan or Albania, many of whom make desperate crossings of the English Channel in rickety boats.

Now the Tories are caught in the vortex of the rancorous debate they whipped up. In September, the party will hold the first stage of a two-month contest to select a new leader. The six declared candidates are struggling to articulate a coherent policy on immigration, to say nothing of the many other social and economic problems facing the country, including low productivity and a corroded public health service. Those candidates run the gamut from middle-of-the-road figures like Tom Tugendhat and James Cleverly, military men who have somewhat awkwardly adopted the vocabulary of hard-liners, to more natural right-wingers like Kemi Badenoch and Priti Patel, children of immigrants who project a kind of “multiethnic nativism,” in the words of Sunder Katwala, the director of British Future, a research institute.

As if a battle for the party’s soul wasn’t existential enough, the Tories must contend with the resurgence of Nigel Farage, the gleeful populist and chronic political disrupter. No longer a fringe figure, he expertly stoked anger about immigration to win more than four million votes for his insurgent party, Reform U.K., with most coming from disaffected Tories. This has split the right and raised questions about whether he may engineer a hostile takeover of the Conservatives.

In their embrace of radicalism, the Conservatives bear an obvious resemblance to their American cousins in the Republican Party. Both have ridden the whirlwind of populism. Both have discarded decades of orthodoxy on core economic and social issues. Both have seen their traditional party establishments hollowed out — in the case of the Conservatives, by the Brexiteers; in the case of the G.O.P., by Donald Trump and his Make America Great Again movement. What separates the two is that the Conservatives underwent this transformation while clinging stubbornly to power. Their psychodrama became the country’s psychodrama. British politics was shaped not by Tony Blair, as Truss suggests, but by the decade-long disintegration of the Conservative Party.

As a more unified, businesslike Labour government turns the page on the Tory era, many people in Britain want to look ahead. But even in defeat, the Tories are a spectacle. Their leadership contest has become “a battle of ideological purity,” says Anand Menon, a professor of European politics at Kings College London. “It’s the Mensheviks versus the Trotskyites in the Bolshevik Party before the First World War.”

History suggests the party will lurch to the right, at least for a time. After the Tories were defeated by Blair in 1997, they cycled through three right-wing leaders — and two further election defeats — before settling on David Cameron and a centrist route back to power. Even Tories who reject links to Farage or the far right echo Truss’s argument that the party must find its way back to a more authentic conservative identity. But in a Britain convulsed by riots and newly attracted to Farage and Reform, the very concept of such an identity seems up for grabs. For the party’s aspiring leaders, the soul searching has scarcely begun.

“We have to recognize what we did to alienate and frustrate a lot of voters,” Cleverly, who served as foreign secretary and home secretary, says. “None of us should turn around and say the voters made a mistake. ”

To understand the sheer magnitude of the Conservative defeat, it helps to recall the party’s record of winning elections, without peer in the West. Tories have been in power for roughly two-thirds of their existence, which dates to the 17th century, when they emerged as a factional rival to the Whigs before organizing as a party under the Conservative banner in 1834. Samuel Earle, in his book, “Tory Nation,” attributed that success to the party’s talent for projecting stability. “It is the Conservatives’ abiding promise,” he wrote, “that they will keep things recognizably the same, that tomorrow will look like today. They are the safe pair of hands.”

The party of Benjamin Disraeli and Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Rishi Sunak, the Conservatives are also a big tent, with an endless capacity to remake themselves in the face of changing circumstances. This shape-shifting quality has enabled the Tories, though rooted in the aristocracy, to expand beyond their upper-class roots and appeal to ***working-class*** voters, as they did in 2019, when Johnson won an election by vowing to “Get Brexit done.” Yet as Earle wrote, “The strange dissonance between the Conservative Party’s ability to win elections and its destructive record in government stands as one of the defining riddles of British politics.”

Never has that riddle been more mystifying than in the eight years since the Brexit referendum. The party cycled through no fewer than five prime ministers, a spectacle of corruption, hubris, folly and misrule.

Cameron called the referendum to settle Britain’s future in Europe once and for all, but then ran such a desultory campaign to stay in the E.U. that it contributed to the narrow vote to leave. Johnson, the clown prince of British politics, threw wine-and-cheese parties in 10 Downing Street that violated his government’s own lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic. Sunak, Britain’s first prime minister of color, may be most remembered for championing a plan to put newly arrived asylum seekers on one-way flights to the central African country Rwanda. And then there’s Truss, who occupies a special place in Tory hell. Her tax experiment turned Britain — the birthplace of Adam Smith and John Maynard Keynes — into a global laughingstock. She herself became a punchline: Which would last longer, The Daily Star asked: Liz Truss or a lettuce? The paper bought a head of lettuce and posted a livestream of it next to her photo. The lettuce won.

For the Conservative Party, however, the consequences were longer lasting. “Liz Truss destroyed any claim to economic credibility,” says Rory Stewart, the broadcaster and former diplomat who served as a Tory member of Parliament from 2010 until 2019. “She removed the central Conservative argument that they are the responsible party for managing the economy.”

Stewart’s own career as a Tory ended abruptly when he and other lawmakers resisted Johnson’s plan to pull out of the European Union without a trade deal and were pushed out. Now the co-host, with the onetime Blair adviser Alastair Campbell, of a popular podcast, Stewart has become an eloquent eulogist for a party he says he no longer recognizes. “Margaret Thatcher achieved a radical economic transformation,” Stewart told me. “Tony Blair achieved a constitutional and cultural transformation. The problem that the Conservatives face is that it’s very difficult over 14 years to identify what they’ve achieved beyond the catastrophe of Brexit.”

Perhaps that explains why, in the last election, the Tories simply stopped talking about it. With polls showing that nearly 60 percent of Britons now regret leaving the European Union — a consequence both of the weak economy and of changing demographics — Brexit has become political Kryptonite. Voters blame the Brexiteers for failing to negotiate a better departure deal with Brussels or, more plainly, for having sold them a bill of goods in the first place. “That sense of being scammed is one of the reasons people don’t want to talk about it,” says Chris Patten, a Conservative elder who once chaired the party and later served as the last governor of colonial Hong Kong. “Brexit became sort of the pit-bull terrier of British politics. Nobody knew whether it was house-trained or whether, if you went on walks with it in the park, it would bite people.”

The radicalization of the party is also rooted in a profound shift in the behavior of the British electorate: away from voting on economic, class-based criteria toward voting on cultural identity. In this sense, the debate over Britain’s place in the E.U. was a cultural debate and the Brexit vote a kind of cultural protest. “The Tory Party’s strategy has been to give ground to emerging populism to head off a threat from the right,” says David Gauke, who served as a Conservative justice secretary and, like Stewart, was purged by Johnson in 2019. “The Brexit debate accelerated this process and clarified it. It has forced members of the Conservative Party to choose what kind of conservatives they are.”

Broadly speaking, Bale said, the ideological fault line runs between the forces of big-state populism and neoliberal economics. Thatcher, the “Iron Lady” whose free-market revolution in the 1980s defined the modern-day Conservative Party, embodied both strains. But present-day Tories tend to sort into one camp or the other: Johnson was a populist, while Sunak and Truss are heirs to the neoliberal tradition. Neither, though, was willing to face down the populists on their right, and Truss has styled herself as a populist since leaving office.

Less than five years before their crushing defeat, the Conservatives used an avowedly populist message to pull off their own lopsided victory over Labour. Boris Johnson, having gained occupancy of Downing Street in the chaotic aftermath of the referendum, called an election to break an impasse in Parliament over the terms by which Britain would leave the E.U. His Brexit-themed campaign was reductive but crudely effective. To illustrate his point, Johnson drove a backhoe through a wall of foam bricks. The wall was labeled “Gridlock,” while the backhoe was stamped with a Union Jack and the three-word slogan, “Get Brexit done.”

Sure enough, the Conservatives smashed Labour’s “red wall,” a crumbling bastion of coal and factory towns in the Midlands and north of England that had voted for the Labour Party for generations. Having also widely supported Brexit, they felt betrayed by Labour’s mealy-mouthed position on Europe and frustrated by those who called for a do-over referendum on membership. Labour’s loss was its worst since 1935, and the Conservative majority the largest since 1987. Johnson had redrawn Britain’s political map, commentators said. Some predicted the Tories would be in power for another decade. But Johnson himself recognized the evanescence of his coalition. “You may only have lent us your vote,” he said, adding presciently, “You may intend to return to Labour next time.”

Johnson was able to get Brexit done — Britain left the European Union in January 2020 — but it failed to deliver tangible economic dividends. As many experts predicted, Britain’s departure from the E.U.’s vast single market hindered trade and stunted economic growth. In a more unexpected development, driven by labor shortages and post-Brexit emphasis on attracting skilled workers, net immigration surged to 765,000 in 2022, more than twice that in the year before the referendum.

To the economically starved “red wall,” Johnson promised a hefty dose of state intervention. He named a “leveling up” minister, whose job was to pour investment into the Midlands and North to erase the wealth disparity with the richer south, especially the booming capital, London. But bureaucracy and tight finances, especially after the pandemic, put an end to those dreams.

Few places capture the disenchantment with Brexit more vividly than Shirebrook, a hard-bitten former coal town of 11,500 in the East Midlands. More than a decade ago, a sporting-goods company opened a giant warehouse on the edge of town, hiring hundreds of workers from Eastern Europe to staff it. While it provided jobs, the warehouse changed the look and feel of Shirebrook. “You can go down to the village, and you don’t know anybody,” said Gary Attenborough, 54, who works as a groundskeeper and plays bingo at a social club for the families of retired coal miners.

That sense of dislocation fueled an anti-immigration backlash that led people in Shirebrook to vote to leave the E.U. Many of those same people turned out for the Tories in 2019. But little changed in the four years after the election. The workers at the warehouse were still there, and there were no new employers with jobs for British residents. With boarded-up storefronts, Shirebrook still looked like a place left behind. In 2024, the voters ousted the Conservative member of Parliament in favor of his Labour opponent.

“They voted Conservative” in 2019, Attenborough said, before turning back to his bingo game. “But now they’re fed up.”

As the Tories pick their way through the political wilderness, rarely have they found the landscape rockier. While the election did not drive the party into extinction, as some feared it would, it left the Conservatives badly out of step with mainstream British politics. Nor are there obvious forces to pull them back and make them palatable to a broader share of voters. If anything, structural changes in Britain’s political system are conspiring to push the party further into the right-wing weeds.

Anti-immigrant sentiment, which helped Reform soak up 14 percent of the vote and propelled Farage into Parliament for the first time in eight attempts, shows signs of hardening further, at least on the right. Brexit, while fading from the headlines, continues to impose burdens on Britain’s economy. The media ecosystem that surrounds and props up the Conservatives — from The Daily Telegraph and other pro-Tory papers to the noisy right-wing TV news channel, GB News — keeps hammering the message that the party’s problem is that it is not sufficiently right-wing.

Britain’s summer of unrest presented something of a quandary for the party’s candidates. They were loath to endorse the Labour government’s hardheaded response to the rioters: hundreds of arrests and fast-track convictions. But in so doing, they risked blurring the line with Farage, who stirred up malefactors on the far right by questioning why the authorities were not treating the attack on the children as a terrorist act. “I just wonder whether the truth is being withheld from us,” he said.

While only 7 percent of the British public said they approved of the riots, a fifth of those who voted for Reform did. “You can’t win if your brand is being dragged by Reform,” Sunder Katwala says.

Tories are evenly divided about the wisdom of merging with Reform, according to a poll taken by the market research firm YouGov after the election. That speaks to how disillusioned they have become. It also speaks to the growing gulf between the rank-and-file members and their representatives in Parliament. Tory members tend to be older, whiter and more right-wing than Tory M.P.s, let alone the general population. There are also far fewer of them: From a peak of 2.8 million in 1953, the membership has dwindled to about 170,000.

“The main parties used to be a much more authentic expression of the nation,” says Charles Moore, a columnist and former chief editor of The Daily Telegraph, a paper so aligned with the Tories that it is often referred to as the Torygraph. “Both of them were deeply rooted in the country: Labour, with unions and the organized ***working class***; Tories, with the butchers, bakers and candlestick makers.”

The loosening of ties between the Conservative Party and the grass roots has made voters less loyal and the electorate more volatile. It has also contributed to the party’s capture by ideas like the trickle-down economics of Truss or the Rwanda asylum scheme championed by Sunak — policies machine-tooled to appeal to the party’s base, even if they were unpopular with much of the public. As the party has changed, so have its politicians. The ubiquity of social media and the emergence of GB News have given members of Parliament a way to become, as Bale puts it, “legends in their own lunchtime.” Farage has his own prime-time show on the channel, arguably as valuable as his seat in the House of Commons and certainly more lucrative.

Hungry for publicity and heedless of authority, the Tories have become all but unmanageable, less a big tent than a chaotic campground. During the debate over sending migrants to Rwanda, the party’s right split into five dissident groups, which took to naming themselves the “five families,” after the mobsters who run the rackets in New York City. For months before the election, Sunak was plagued by would-be successors maneuvering to take his place after a defeat. He turned up at a reception thrown by the political magazine The Spectator, at the party’s conference in Manchester last fall, to find guests in the sweaty ballroom mobbing potential leaders, as they drained warm glasses of Pol Roger, Churchill’s favorite Champagne.

Now, with Sunak in a caretaker role, the candidates are pleading for party unity, even as they carry on a sharp-elbowed campaign that has featured leaked videos and other opposition research to discredit one another. The agendas they lay out for the party are tailored to the peculiarities of the selection process: While their fellow M.P.s will vote to cut the six candidates to two finalists, the winner will be chosen by party members, the same people who selected Liz Truss.

Little surprise, then, that their policies tilt uniformly to the right. Tugendhat, a 51-year-old standard-bearer for the centrists, has called for “common-sense Conservative positions,” which include a threat to leave the European Convention on Human Rights if it blocks Britain’s effort to close its borders. Tugendhat used to warn against withdrawing from the treaty on the grounds that it would create new problems, not least for the peace in Northern Ireland. But he now says it hinders Britain’s ability to deport criminals who enter the country illegally. Cleverly, 54, whose father’s family is from Wiltshire and whose mother came from Sierra Leone, says immigration is woven into Britain’s history but that the system breeds resentment because some people cut in line to get into the country. “The Brits love queuing up,” he says. “Where there is a perception that the rules are being broken, that really hits a nerve.”

Cleverly’s star is rising, but Britain’s bookmakers are still betting that Badenoch or Robert Jenrick will emerge victorious. Jenrick, who is 42, resigned from the last Conservative government because he said its Rwanda plan did not go far enough. He has styled himself as an immigration absolutist; the number of migrants, he said, should be capped in the “tens of thousands.” He has also endorsed Donald Trump in the American election, which some said was a blunder given Trump’s deep unpopularity with much of the British public. Badenoch, 44, a daughter of Nigerian immigrants and former trade secretary, wrote recently in The Times of London that the party needs to fight against “nasty identity politics” and “a postmodernism that can best be described as joyless decadence.” Bale called her the “thinking man’s Thatcherite culture warrior.” The biggest threat to Badenoch has come from a recently resurfaced 2018 video in which she welcomed the Conservative government’s proposal to relax restrictions on visas for skilled migrants. She said she has since changed her mind.

Badenoch is not the only candidate who once viewed immigration differently. Patel introduced more work visas for foreign graduates of British universities when she served as home secretary. Tugendhat campaigned to grant full citizenship to holders of British Overseas passports in Hong Kong. Cleverly fought for visas for Ukrainian refugees, while Jenrick even hosted a Ukrainian family. Some of these circumstances were extraordinary, of course, and there is broad recognition that Britain cannot sustain a net influx of nearly 700,000 migrants a year. But that Conservatives are tying themselves in knots on this issue attests to a deeper dysphoria in the party that has long dominated British politics. And it is only one of many contradictions: a party caught between big-state populism and neoliberal economic policy; a champion of national unity that also wages culture wars; a self-proclaimed change agent even after 14 years in power.

“Who is the Conservative Party for?” Menon asked. “Ten years ago, I could have told you: it’s for relatively wealthy people who want a small state and to pay lower taxes. Who is the Conservative Party for today? God only knows.”

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT CHASE; QUATROX PRODUCTION/SHUTTERSTOCK; NASEEMDOGAR JI/SHUTTERSTOCK) (MM38-MM39) This article appeared in print on page MM38, MM39, MM40, MM41, MM42, MM43.

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[***New York City's Comptroller Will Run Against Mayor in the Democratic Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CM1-F0F1-JBG3-6042-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Body**

Mr. Lander, a progressive Democrat from Brooklyn, is the most prominent candidate to challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year's primary.

Brad Lander, the New York City comptroller, announced on Tuesday that he would challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year's Democratic primary, setting up a rare matchup between the two most prominent citywide elected officials.

Mr. Lander is one of a handful of Democrats seeking to run to the left of Mr. Adams, a moderate whose approval rating has fallen to a record low.

But Mr. Lander made no mention of his progressive roots in his campaign launch video, instead highlighting the concerns of New Yorkers who are worried about budget cuts to libraries and the high costs of child care.

Voters, Mr. Lander says in his video, ''can replace a leader when they fail the basic tests of the job: to be honest with us, to keep our families safe, to make sure our kids learn. The basic things New Yorkers need their government to do.''

As the city comptroller, Mr. Lander, 55, serves as a natural foil to the mayor, performing audits and overseeing spending. In one notable example, Mr. Lander restricted the mayor's emergency spending powers last December after problems arose with a company that had been given a no-bid $432 million contract to provide services to migrants. Mr. Lander's office is also organizing lawsuits to force congestion pricing to move forward.

He has been a forceful critic of Mr. Adams, singling out the mayor's handling of the migrant influx as emblematic of his inability to navigate crises.

''In many ways, City Hall has substituted cruelty for management,'' he said in an interview preceding his announcement.

Mr. Adams, the city's second Black mayor, refused to directly address Mr. Lander's candidacy at a news conference on Tuesday, but alluded to racial politics in suggesting that Democrats should be more focused on electing Vice President Kamala Harris as president.

''I thought his announcement was to assist the first woman of color to be the president of the United States, not taking the second man of color from being the mayor of the city of New York,'' Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Lander's decision is a sign of Mr. Adams's perceived vulnerability. It is unusual for a citywide elected official to run against an incumbent mayor from the same party in a New York City primary. The last time it happened was in 1989, when Harrison J. Goldin, then the comptroller, ran against Mayor Edward I. Koch in the Democratic primary. Mr. Koch had low approval ratings and lost the primary to David N. Dinkins; Mr. Goldin finished fourth.

Abraham D. Beame is the only comptroller to become mayor in recent history, and he won an open race in 1973. Four years later, he was ousted in the Democratic primary by Mr. Koch.

Mr. Lander will face challenges. He will be able to shift his comptroller campaign fund-raising account to the mayor's race, and expects to have more than $3 million with matching funds. Still, Mr. Adams's campaign has said it expects to have nearly $8 million.

And Mr. Lander, who is white, must prove that he can win support from voters in communities of color -- a key part of Mr. Adams's base.

Hazel Dukes, an ally of the mayor and the president of the N.A.A.C.P. New York State Conference, defended Mr. Adams and echoed his comments about ''not attacking the second Black mayor.''

''The mayor's record is excellent: lower crime, more jobs, historic investments in housing and child care,'' she said.

Mr. Lander said that he had a ''track record of working with really diverse coalitions of New Yorkers,'' including helping secure a minimum wage for delivery workers and job protections for fast food workers.

''I really don't think this is a moment where people are focused on ideology,'' Mr. Lander said in the interview. ''People want a compelling vision and someone who can actually deliver the goods.''

But Mr. Adams is likely to pounce on Mr. Lander's background in wealthy brownstone Brooklyn as an example of his being out of touch with ***working-class*** New Yorkers; the mayor already holds Mr. Lander in particular disdain, publicly mocking his voice and calling him the ''loudest person in the city.''

Two other Democrats have already announced their intention to challenge Mr. Adams and have started raising money ahead of the primary next June: Scott Stringer, Mr. Lander's predecessor as comptroller, and Zellnor Myrie, a state senator from Brooklyn. Both have supported left-leaning policies; they, like Mr. Lander, are presenting themselves as capable and trustworthy leaders in contrast to the mayor.

Mr. Lander acknowledged that there may come a time to strategize about how to defeat Mr. Adams under the city's ranked-choice voting system, but said it was too early to discuss the idea of forming a coalition to unite left-leaning New Yorkers.

''I certainly share -- and I believe the other candidates do -- the clarity that we need a new mayor, and it will be important to be strategic about that,'' he said.

Mr. Adams presents an alluring target. He faces a federal investigation into his campaign fund-raising, and has seen his approval rating plunge to 28 percent -- the lowest for any New York City mayor in a Quinnipiac University poll since it began surveying the city in 1996.

Mr. Adams and his allies have suggested that some criticism of him is based on his race, comparing it to discrimination against Mr. Dinkins, the city's first Black mayor.

And if the current roster of progressive challengers remains unchanged, Mr. Adams will have a clear lane to himself as the race's only moderate.

Mr. Lander, in contrast, previously held the same City Council seat in Park Slope once held by Mayor Bill de Blasio, and helped create the Council's progressive caucus.

Mr. Lander won a competitive race for comptroller in 2021, uniting the city's progressive movement with endorsements from Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Working Families Party and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

Rebecca Rodriguez, a former campaign manager for Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, is working with Mr. Lander as a senior adviser and coordinating his campaign operations.

William C. Thompson Jr., a former comptroller who ran for mayor in 2013, said in an interview that Mr. Lander had done an ''excellent job'' and had focused on critical issues.

''Being comptroller really does help to prepare you to look at the big picture in the city,'' he said.

Liz Krueger, a state senator from Manhattan, said she had known Mr. Lander since the 1990s, when he led the Fifth Avenue Committee, an affordable housing nonprofit in Brooklyn, and later the Pratt Center for Community Development.

''I've been so impressed by what a good job he's done with this very large responsibility,'' she said of his work as comptroller.

Ms. Krueger also praised Mr. Myrie and Kathryn Garcia, the city's former sanitation commissioner, who finished second to Mr. Adams in the 2021 primary. She said she would prefer any of the three over the current mayor.

''Some days, I'm not even sure if he's a Democrat,'' she said of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Lander grew up in St. Louis and described himself as a ''ride-or-die St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan.'' He said that he also supports New York sports teams and has season tickets for the New York Liberty women's basketball team.

His campaign video shows another hobby that could be useful during a combative primary: boxing at JukeBox, a woman-owned boxing gym in Park Slope.

Mr. Lander's bid for mayor would create an open seat in next year's comptroller election, and Democrats are already lining up to succeed him, including Mark Levine, the Manhattan borough president; Antonio Reynoso, the Brooklyn borough president; and Jenifer Rajkumar, a state assemblywoman from Queens who is close with the mayor.

Mr. Reynoso said that Mr. Lander had been a mentor to him in the City Council, where they supported legislation to make the city more affordable.

''All the things we've been fighting for -- they speak to livability, and Brad has been a co-author or a partner on a lot of policies that would have value for young families like mine,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/30/nyregion/brad-lander-mayor-adams.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/30/nyregion/brad-lander-mayor-adams.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Brad Lander is seeking to be the first New York City comptroller since Abraham D. Beame in the 1970s to become mayor. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL FRANGIPANE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Kamala Harris Has a Brief Window Before the Attacks Really Begin; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CM1-THR1-DXY4-X0NB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Chris Whipple

**Highlight:** Ms. Harris must affirmatively define herself before Mr. Trump and his allies can define her.

**Body**

In the span of a few weeks, Kamala Harris has accomplished the seemingly impossible. The presumptive Democratic nominee has navigated the most politically fraught situation imaginable — a president’s reluctant abdication from the Democratic ticket — and rallied the party around her. She’s outmaneuvered potential rivals, galvanized voters and volunteers, shattered fund-raising records and pulled the Democratic campaign out of free fall.

Now comes the hard part: She must gird for a take-no-prisoners general election battle against Donald Trump. Between now and when the Democratic convention kicks off on Aug. 19, the vice president should frame the race on her own terms by establishing her identity, projecting strength, parrying Mr. Trump’s attacks immediately and continuing her pivot to offense.

Ms. Harris’s nearly flawless start knocked the Trump campaign on its heels. Convinced that Joe Biden, a doddering octogenarian, would be the nominee, Mr. Trump and his running mate, JD Vance, have groped for a line of attack against the relatively youthful Ms. Harris.

“They wanted this to be about a weak, dithering president who couldn’t handle the fact that the world was on fire and inflation and the border were out of control,” said Tim Miller, a former communications director for Jeb Bush. “And then this happens and discombobulates it all. And they haven’t landed on how to pivot.”

But Mr. Trump has plenty of heavy weaponry at his disposal. Unlike his previous races, when he went through campaign managers the way the Borgias went through family, the former president’s 2024 campaign has been a relatively no-drama affair, run by the political veterans Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita.

Ms. Harris has her own formidable team, including the campaign chair, Jennifer O’Malley Dillon, inherited from the Biden campaign, and the spokesman Brian Fallon. Her campaign is rumored to be talking with David Plouffe, who led Barack Obama’s winning 2008 campaign and whose strategic acumen would be a good fit with Ms. O’Malley Dillon’s ground game.

Ms. Harris should be preparing for a barrage of incoming negative attacks. Mr. Trump’s allies have already stirred up racist and sexist innuendo against Ms. Harris — just a preview of what may come. A Trump campaign version of the “Willie Horton” attack — the notorious 1988 commercial produced by a political action committee supporting the Republican nominee, George H.W. Bush — isn’t inconceivable. In that ad, widely criticized as racist, Mr. Bush’s Democratic opponent, Michael Dukakis, was excoriated for granting furloughs to violent criminals as governor of Massachusetts.

In a [*recent memo*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf), Mr. Trump’s pollster Anthony Fabrizio hinted at such an attack on Ms. Harris, alleging that as a California district attorney, she’d freed “illegals” who’d gone on to commit violent crimes. Those tactics are part of the Trump campaign’s DNA. [*It was Mr. LaCivita*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf) who, in 2004, spearheaded the infamous “Swift Boat Veterans for Truth” ad campaign, which helped to sink the presidential hopes of the Democratic nominee, John Kerry.

In the 2022 U.S. Senate race in Wisconsin, with Mr. LaCivita as a general consultant, the winning campaign of the Republican incumbent, Ron Johnson, along with other groups, aimed a devastating ad blitz at the Democratic challenger, Mandela Barnes, accusing him of coddling criminals. “It was images of crime scenes,” recalled Ben Wikler, chairman of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. “They darkened his skin in their mailers. They stamped his name over crime scenes. And there was the spray-painted slogan ‘Defund the Police’ with Mandela Barnes in front of it, insinuating that he’d supported it.”

Mr. Barnes, strapped for money, was unable to respond quickly. “When the resources did arrive later in the race,” Mr. Wikler said, “and the Barnes campaign was able to simultaneously defend and go on offense, he started gaining a point a week and wound up losing the race by a single percentage point.” The clear lesson for Ms. Harris is to answer every attack, pivot quickly to offense and pound her message home every day until the polls close. Given the flood of donations she’s already unleashed — $200 million and counting — and the truncated general election calendar, money should be no object for the vice president.

In the weeks before the Democratic convention, with the wind at her back so far, the vice president has a chance to chart a course to victory.

Above all, Ms. Harris must affirmatively define herself before Mr. Trump and his allies can define her. Despite having served for decades as California’s attorney general, a senator and vice president of the United States, she is barely known to many voters. “That’s why the explosion of resources for Vice President Harris has been really critical,” said Mr. Wikler, “because she’s going to have to do multiple things at once in a way that Joe Biden, who’s already firmly defined in voters’ minds, didn’t have to.”

Ms. Harris must tell a compelling story that connects with ordinary Americans. What is her positive vision for the future? For ***working-class*** and middle-class Americans who have endured the worst of inflation, especially, an understanding of how she intends to bring down prices will be critical. She also should emphasize her confidence in America and Americans and contrast her positive vision for the future with Mr. Trump’s preoccupation with the past — something Democrats have struggled to do in recent years.

So far her performance is a striking improvement over her uncertain footing during her early days as vice president. “People see her and they’re like, ‘Well, wait a minute. She looks pretty good to me,’” said Mark McKinnon, former chief media adviser to George W. Bush and John McCain. Indeed, in the rarefied air of a historically unprecedented campaign, she’s performed a high-wire act worthy of [*the Flying Wallendas*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf).

Any candidate vying for the executive office must project strength — a trait voters associate with Mr. Trump. Ms. Harris’s recent, pointed call for an end to the war in Gaza, issued after her meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, should be the template. Wading into a politically fraught subject, the vice president [*forcefully denounced*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf) the killing of “far too many innocent civilians” and the “dire humanitarian situation.” She vowed, “I will not be silent.” It was the language of leadership.

Ms. Harris must define herself between now and the Democratic convention — because Mr. Trump and his MAGA posse will pounce soon thereafter. “‘She’s a radical San Francisco liberal’ will be one line of attack,” said Rich Bond, a veteran G.O.P. strategist who served as Republican National Committee chair under George H.W. Bush. “And ‘the borders are a complete failure’ will be another. ‘Part of the Biden wrecking crew of the American economy’ will be another.”

One move that could help Ms. Harris on this front is her swift selection of a running mate. (But not too swift: George McGovern’s failure to properly vet Senator Thomas Eagleton of Missouri, who had been treated for depression, doomed his 1972 campaign.) Ms. Harris has a deep bench of Democratic talent from which to choose, among them Mark Kelly, the senator from the border state of Arizona, who could help her on the immigration front; and Andy Beshear, the popular governor of Kentucky, who at 46 would reinforce the message that she represents a new generation of Americans.

The jabs against Ms. Harris will be blunted if she can burnish her identity now and pivot to prosecuting Mr. Trump’s flaws. Even with Joe Biden out of the race, Mr. Trump’s best hope is to run against the Biden-Harris record. If the race is about Mr. Trump’s character, the 34-count felon faces an uphill battle.

Mr. Bond, the G.O.P. veteran, sums up the Trump playbook: “They have a two-part list. One is take Harris down.” The second is don’t let Mr. Trump be a jerk. “That’s the entire list,” he said — “and the second part may be impossible.”

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 and has written about 10 presidential administrations.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2024/07/7-23-24-harris-honeymoon.pdf).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***A Potential Harris Running Mate Has a Word for G.O.P. Rivals: 'Weird'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CM1-F0F1-JBG3-602X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

''These guys are just weird,'' Gov. Tim Walz, a former schoolteacher, has said of the opposition.

No one would accuse Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota of being flashy. He taught social studies for 20 years before trying politics. During six terms in Congress, he was regarded more as a workhorse than a showboat.

Neither has Mr. Walz really been a household name outside of Minnesota -- at least, not until this past week, when he made a flurry of cable news appearances pointedly pressing Kamala Harris's case and dismissing Donald J. Trump's agenda as divisive and extreme. And weird.

''These guys are just weird,'' Mr. Walz said on Saturday of the Republican ticket. He was talking to a crowd of canvassers for the Harris campaign in St. Paul, but the ''weird'' line of attack, which he has been using for months, went viral. (Ms. Harris herself used the words ''just plain weird'' over the weekend to describe the ways in which Republicans have chosen to criticize her.)

Weird is not a word most people would use to describe Mr. Walz, and that may well be one reason he is among a handful of Democrats under consideration as Ms. Harris's potential running mate. Mr. Walz is seen as offering a steady, down-to-earth, everyman persona. His supporters say he also would bring a record of winning over moderate voters and deep roots in the rural Midwest that might serve as a counterpoint to JD Vance, Mr. Trump's running mate.

Mr. Walz, 60, was raised in a small town in Nebraska. He attended public schools and graduated from Chadron State College in Nebraska. He taught at a public school in Mankato, Minn., a small city south of Minneapolis where Mr. Walz and his wife, a fellow teacher, raised two children. Outside of the classroom, he coached high school football and served in the Army National Guard for 24 years, ascending to the rank of command sergeant major.

In 2006, Mr. Walz got his start in politics by defeating a longtime Republican member of Congress in a largely rural district, a feat that has become increasingly rare in recent years.

''Here's a guy who actually knows how to fish, this is a guy who actually knows how to hunt, this is a guy who served our country in the National Guard,'' said Heidi Heitkamp, a former senator and fellow Democrat who lost her post representing nearby North Dakota, a rural and conservative state, in 2018.

As a running mate to Ms. Harris, Mr. Walz could help Democrats shore up support in battleground states by appealing to the ***working-class***, white, rural voters who have drifted away from the party, Ms. Heitkamp said. ''When you look at Tim Walz, what you have is someone with a lived experience that is so comparable to so many of the people in rural America who are willing to maybe reconsider just blindly voting for the Republican Party candidate,'' she said.

As governor of Minnesota, though, Mr. Walz's policy moves have sharply steered the state to the left.

Mr. Walz won a second term in 2022 as Democrats flipped the State Senate. That sealed a trifecta that gave Democrats control of the State Capitol and Mr. Walz presided over the state's most productive legislative session in decades.

Democrats enshrined a right to abortion under state law, legalized recreational marijuana, funded free meals at schools across the state, required employers to offer paid medical and family leave, expanded background checks for gun purchases and established a goal to transition to a carbon-free electricity grid by 2040.

Mr. Walz, who is currently chair of the Democratic Governors Association, was unapologetic about all the change. ''Right now, Minnesota is showing the country you don't win elections to bank political capital,'' he wrote as the 2023 legislative session ended. ''You win elections to burn political capital and improve lives.''

Choosing Mr. Walz for the national ticket would not directly answer the most pressing geographic concerns in this election. While presidential elections have sometimes been close in Minnesota, voters there have not selected a Republican presidential candidate since Richard Nixon in 1972. Still, the Trump campaign has made it clear that it hopes to be competitive in Minnesota, and Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance held a rally in St. Cloud over the weekend.

Even if Minnesota is not a political battleground, some supporters say that having Mr. Walz on the ticket could resonate with other upper Midwestern voters, including those in the swing states of Wisconsin and Michigan.

But David Hann, the chairman of the Minnesota Republican Party, said that Mr. Walz's inclusion on Ms. Harris's list of running mates showed that Democrats were struggling, even in traditionally blue states like Minnesota. Polls conducted before President Biden gave up his re-election bid have given Republicans hope that Minnesota could flip to their party in November. But a Fox News poll conducted last week showed Minnesotans supporting Ms. Harris over Mr. Trump by six percentage points.

Mr. Hann said that if Mr. Walz were to be selected as the vice-presidential pick, he would prove to be a liability. Mr. Hann said Mr. Walz was responsible for failing to prevent the chaos and damage that followed the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police in 2020. In riots after the killing, a five-mile stretch of the city sustained extraordinary damage, including a police precinct that was set on fire.

Mr. Walz deployed hundreds of National Guard troops three days after Mr. Floyd's murder as looting, arsons and demonstrations spread through Minneapolis. Critics said that the governor should have acted sooner to quell mounting unrest. The Walz administration has said that the city of Minneapolis failed to provide detailed information needed to deploy the Guard earlier.

Mr. Hann and other critics said that as governor, Mr. Walz led the ''most partisan administration'' in recent memory, passing a trove of liberal legislation that Republicans called extreme and fiscally irresponsible. ''There's such great dissatisfaction with Democrats at the national level and certainly in the state, where in the last two years they've run everything,'' Mr. Hann said.

But Mr. Walz's supporters say his approach is anything but divisive. Representative Angie Craig, a Minnesota Democrat in a competitive district, called Mr. Walz ''an antidote to this divide we see in our nation today.'' He is the rare politician, she said, who is as comfortable attending an agribusiness festival as a gala for a gay-rights group.

Across the state, Mr. Walz's approval ratings fell after the turbulent era that followed Mr. Floyd's killing. But he easily won re-election in 2022, and recent polls show that a majority of Minnesotans approve of his performance.

As a member of Congress from 2007 to 2019, Mr. Walz had a reputation as a hard-worker who found common ground with Republicans, particularly on initiatives to help veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Representative Betty McCollum, a Democrat who is the longest-serving Minnesotan currently in Congress, said Mr. Walz's negotiation style and experience on Capitol Hill would help a Harris administration pass difficult legislation.

''He will not twist an arm,'' she said. ''He will ask somebody what they need, what they're missing or what the legislation is missing, and whether there is some way to get to yes.''

Mr. Walz, who declined to be interviewed for this article, has said that he spoke to Ms. Harris the day that Mr. Biden announced he was quitting the race. Like the other potential running mates, Mr. Walz has demurred publicly about his interest in joining the ticket. Close friends have privately described him as eager to be picked and hit the campaign trail.

During the event for canvassers in St. Paul on Saturday, Mr. Walz once again steered away from questions about being among the top finalists for running mate. He told reporters that he was ''honored to be in this conversation.''

''I love them all,'' Mr. Walz, who wore a ''Minnesota Grown'' T-shirt and a baseball cap, said of the other Democrats who are said to be under consideration. ''I tell you what, I trust her judgment.''

Jay Senter contributed reporting from St. Paul, Minn.Jay Senter contributed reporting from St. Paul, Minn.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/us/tim-walz-minnesota-kamala-harris.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/29/us/tim-walz-minnesota-kamala-harris.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota at a canvassing event for Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign in St. Paul, Minn., on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Walz's policies have shifted the state to the left. Supporters celebrated in 2023 after the Minnesota Senate voted to legalize recreational marijuana. Mr. Walz deployed National Guard troops when unrest spread in Minneapolis after George Floyd's killing in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***With Son's Future in Spotlight, Vance's Mother Faces Her Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D2V-K351-DXY4-X3K8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Shawn McCreesh

**Body**

Here is the way JD Vance introduced his mother to the world in his 2016 memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy'':

He described how she hit him. Trapped him in a car, floored the gas pedal and told him they were going to die. Made him pee into a jar so she could use his clean urine to pass a drug test. Moved him around a lot. Overshared. Disappeared. Burned through other people's money. Slit her wrists. Crashed her minivan into a telephone pole.

These days, when Mr. Vance's mother, Beverly Aikins, introduces herself, it is often in far simpler language. ''Hi, family. I'm Bev,'' she said at her regular Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Middletown, Ohio, one Sunday this month. ''I'm an alcoholic addict.''

A group of mostly older men murmured back, ''Hi, Bev.''

She had invited a reporter from The New York Times along on the condition that none of her fellow group members would be identified. They were meeting in a tough-looking part of town, inside a squat brick building with cracked concrete floors and cinder-block walls painted white. Ms. Aikins wore denim overall cutoffs and a white T-shirt, her highlighted hair piled atop her head. She picked up some recovery literature and began to read from it: ''These are our 12 traditions. ...''

It has been almost 10 years since she got sober from alcohol and heroin and all other manner of substances she used to put down her throat and up her nose. In that time, the book her son wrote became a best seller and then a movie. He got elected to the Senate. He may very well be this country's next vice president.

His rise has thrust her, unexpectedly, into the world of national politics. This summer, he brought her to the Republican National Convention and shouted out her sobriety, framing the arc of her life as a tale of redemption.

It is all still a bit new to her. She is dimly aware that her son has become the figure of much outrage of late, but, for the sake of her own sanity and sobriety, she says she remains purposefully oblivious to many of the controversies swirling around him.

Last Sunday, after her A.A. meeting wrapped up, she stuck around to explain that she would like to use this new platform of hers to help others who struggle with addiction. ''I want people to know to reach out, to try to get help,'' she said, ''and that recovery is hard but it's so worth it.''

It was nine years ago that her son first told her about his memoir. They were at a Waffle House. ''He said, 'Mom, I wrote a book, and there's probably some things in it that aren't very favorable,''' Ms. Aikins recalled. ''I just said, 'Will it help you heal?' He said, 'I think it will.'''

She remembered reading it for the first time. ''It was heartbreaking in some parts,'' she said. ''But it helped us grow as a family, and it opened up a line of communication that we never really had. Addiction in our house was like the elephant in the room. Nobody ever said anything about it. We do now.''

She grew up in an abusive household herself. Her father was an alcoholic who beat her mother, Bonnie Vance, who was known as ''Mamaw'' to JD Vance. When Ms. Aikins was 19, she had a daughter, Lindsay, who is five years older than Mr. Vance. Mamaw and Lindsay looked after Mr. Vance when his own mother could not.

Ms. Aikins's struggle with addiction began many years ago one day at work. She was a nurse. She got a bad headache and took a Vicodin pill. She loved the way it made her feel. She went home, bathed her children and cleaned her house. Soon she began to purloin stronger pharmaceuticals, such as Percocet. She lost her job and her nursing license and, with it, her access to prescription pills. She began to snort heroin. ''My brain loved it,'' she said.

She lived that way for a long time. ''For years, I had made excuses for Mom,'' Mr. Vance writes in his book. ''I had tried to help manage her drug problem, read those stupid books about addiction, and accompanied her to N.A. meetings. I had endured, never complaining, a parade of father figures, all of whom left me feeling empty and mistrustful of men.''

She eventually lost touch with her children. Rock bottom came in 2015, when she was living out of her car, a red Chevrolet Aveo. She checked into a sober living facility across the Ohio River in Covington, Ky. After she got out, her daughter helped her find a place to live back in Middletown. But life was hard. ''The apartment that I had was in the ghetto, and it used to be a trap house,'' Ms. Aikins said. ''Do you know what that is?''

A ''trap house'' is a drug den. Ms. Aikins would wake up to find addicts on her front porch, searching for the dealer who lived there before she did. She would threaten to call the police. ''I just dug my heels in,'' she said.

Five years later, her son, who had by that point graduated from Yale Law School and worked in private equity, bought her a house in a safer neighborhood. (She lives there now with her daughter.)

Around that time, Netflix was making Mr. Vance's book into a movie. During production, Ms. Aikins attended a dinner with the film's director, Ron Howard, and the actress who would play her, Amy Adams. It was a manic portrayal, all frizzy-haired and frenzied. ''She said she wanted to get my sarcasm down,'' Ms. Aikins said of Ms. Adams. ''I think she did an amazing job. I was very flattered.'' (This was said unsarcastically.) The real-life Ms. Aikins comes across today as a more hardened, confident character. She has the sort of unfazed affect of a person who has lived many years on the edge.

When the film came out, Ms. Aikins watched it for the first time with her children on Mr. Vance's porch in Cincinnati. At first, she could not understand why they were so emotional. She said they told her: '''Mom, you were out of it all those years. You don't even remember.' It's like, 'Oh, yes, OK. Go ahead and cry.''' She laughed and then added, a touch defensively, ''It's a movie! Quit crying.''

'JD's mom!'

When Republicans gathered in Milwaukee in July to officially nominate former President Donald J. Trump and Mr. Vance as the top of their ticket, one of the more cinematic moments involved an unexpected cheer for Ms. Aikins.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Vance described ''single moms like mine, who struggled with money and addiction but never gave up.''

He continued: ''I'm proud to say my mom is here, 10 years clean and sober. I love you, Mom.'' The cameras panned to a teary-eyed Ms. Aikins as the convention hall broke into a spontaneous chant: JD's mom! JD's mom! JD's mom!

It was a surreal experience for a woman who had never even watched a political convention on television before. None of it was remotely familiar, including her seatmate in the V.I.P. box that evening. ''I said, 'Hi, what's your name?''' she recounted. ''He goes, 'Mike Johnson.' I went, 'What do you do here?' He goes, 'I'm the speaker of the House.' I went, 'That sounds very impressive, but I'm not sure exactly what you do.'''

Ms. Aikins's parents were Democrats -- Mamaw had an affinity for Bill Clinton -- but these days she is a registered Republican. She described herself as ''bipartisan,'' but then wondered: ''Is that the right word? I don't vote the party. I vote the person.'' In 2016, the person was Mr. Trump. ''Nobody can buy him,'' she said. She got to meet him at the convention. ''He was just very humble and very nice to me, and told me I had a great kid,'' she said.

Part of the reason her son's book was such a hit was that it was read by elites and the commentariat as a field guide for understanding places like Middletown and its inhabitants, the sorts of people who would send Mr. Trump to Washington. Back in those days, Mr. Vance's view was that Mr. Trump was cynically preying on the despair of a destabilized white ***working class***. How did he go from describing Mr. Trump as ''cultural heroin'' to becoming his running mate?

''I'm probably not the best person to answer that,'' Ms. Aikins said. ''But I do think that JD saw, when he was in office, that things for people in our area got better. I think that's why he changed his mind.''

'Trump country'

The day before Ms. Aikins attended the A.A. meeting in Middletown, she was out in the Appalachian foothills, in Hillsboro, Ohio. It is a place of winding roads and cornfields and tiny graveyards that poke out from hillsides. Off one particularly barren stretch of road sat parked a classic square-body pickup truck. A large sign had been propped up in the bed of the truck for anyone who happened down that lonely way to see. It read: ''FENTANYL KILLS.''

Beside the truck was a long, narrow drive that led to a field with a pitched roof and a pavilion in the center of it. Gathered there were a few dozen people. There were parents who had lost children to drug overdoses and fentanyl poisoning. And there were children who had lost parents the same way. They were all mad with grief. They wore it on their faces, and you could hear it in their voices.

They had heard that JD Vance's mom was going to be there. Many of them had seen her moment at the convention.

''I was so excited, because I really wanted to meet her,'' said Debbie Evans, a 68-year-old retiree from Woodbridge, Va. She was wearing a Trump hat that had belonged to her son before he had died. ''I like how she came from where she came from, and how he did, and how wonderful he is now, and how far he went,'' she said.

Margie Perkins, a 66-year-old hospice nurse from Spotsylvania County, Va., brought a copy of ''Hillbilly Elegy'' with her. ''I hope she signs it,'' she said. ''I want her to be an example that family can come back together after all of this,'' Ms. Perkins said.

It was not a political event, but, as one mother pointed out, ''This is Trump country.''

Ms. Aikins took a seat a few rows back from a stage at the front of the pavilion. She sipped from a Diet Mountain Dew bottle as people got up to talk about how addiction had robbed them. One young woman wailed while recounting what it was like to grow up the child of an addict, how she had seen the inside of motel rooms and strip clubs and crack houses, and how, finally, her mother had died. The young woman held up a plastic bag that contained her mother's last belongings -- what had been found on her body. There was a bus pass and a cheap piece of jewelry in there. ''This is all I have left of my mom,'' said the woman.

Ms. Aikins was there with two colleagues who work with her at a substance abuse treatment center called Seacrest. The colleagues are also in recovery. One got up and talked about what it was like to get dope-sick while seven months pregnant and in jail.

Then it was Ms. Aikins's turn. She seemed almost shy. ''For my five-year clean anniversary, my son bought me a house,'' she told the crowd. She did not mention who her son was. But everyone knew.

''Wow, this lady's got some street cred,'' said the man who got onstage after her. The parents in the crowd nodded as Ms. Aikins quietly returned to her seat in the back. ''She's got a heck of a story,'' the man continued, ''and if you guys know her, well, you know her.''

A small group of mothers approached Ms. Aikins and asked if they could take a picture with her. ''You're famous,'' one said.

'My own little bubble'

Two days after Mr. Vance's convention speech, Ms. Aikins posted a long message on Facebook. ''It's been an exciting week,'' she began, but then the post took a turn: ''Seeing how my town, that I choose to live in and love has so much vitriol and hate for my child is devastating to my peace of mind I've fought so hard to have.'' She wrote that she would stay off social media until after the election.

''You see this hometown boy who's doing so good, you would think no matter what your politics, you would just want to get behind him and root him on,'' she said after her A.A. meeting in Middletown this month.

But her son's combative style and his commentary about ''childless cat ladies'' and ''the childless left'' running the country have turned off many Americans, who find his views to be rather retrograde and judgmental. How could someone who was raised by women -- his sister, his ''Mamaw'' and Ms. Aikins -- end up being so dismissive of so many women's lives?

Perhaps he has idealized a traditional family unit precisely because he never had one growing up. ''I would agree with that statement,'' his mother said. ''For both of my kids, they didn't grow up with a positive family unit. I know that they seemed to gravitate towards that in their adulthood.''

Asked how Mr. Vance's wife, Usha Vance, has weathered the scrutiny, Ms. Aikins said: ''She's very supportive of JD. She's quite brilliant. They kind of feed off of each other. You will never, ever, ever, ever hear JD ever say anything bad about Usha. That's his No. 1, and I love that for them, and I think she's doing really well.''

Three of the most famous women in the world -- Oprah Winfrey, Taylor Swift and Jennifer Aniston -- have all knocked Ms. Aikins's son for his ''childless cat ladies'' comment. ''I just choose to ignore that,'' she said, ''and ignoring the bad, I also have to ignore the good. I can live in my own little bubble and be comfortable.''

That bubble is important to her continued sobriety. The morning of her A.A. meeting, her son had given an eye-popping interview to CNN in which he tried to explain why he was spreading a debunked rumor that Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, were feasting on people's pets. ''If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people,'' he said, ''then that's what I'm going to do.''

Not only had Ms. Aikins not seen this, she also claimed to have no idea what was happening (or not happening) in Springfield, which is just 50 miles from Middletown. ''I'm not even on social media,'' she said. ''I watch Investigation Discovery. Is there something happening in Springfield?''

Cats. Dogs. Haitians. Her son.

''I'm sorry,'' she said, shaking her head. ''I don't know.''

She added that she was really too busy with her own work to keep up with the news. She said she got her nursing license back and she teaches at the treatment facility. ''This week, we're talking about sexually transmitted infections,'' she said, ''so I've been doing a lot of research on chlamydia.''

One political program Ms. Aikins does intend to watch is Mr. Vance's debate against Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, on Oct 1. Asked what she thought of Mr. Walz, Ms. Aikins replied: ''I don't really think about him either way. Is that bad?'' She thought for a moment. ''I've heard he was a teacher, which I have a lot of respect for teachers. If he attacks my baby, he might want to hide from me. But I think my baby can pretty much handle himself.''

And yet, this is a dangerous job her baby has taken. It did not end so well for the last guy who had it. When former Vice President Mike Pence tried to certify Mr. Trump's defeat on Jan. 6, 2021, the mob of pro-Trump rioters that attacked the U.S. Capitol chanted, ''Hang Mike Pence!'' and accused him of being controlled by the Devil. Mr. Trump watched it all on TV.

Ms. Aikins said she did not worry about any of this. ''I think that JD is probably the smartest, most amazing young man, and everything he touches turns to gold,'' she said.

In fact, she added, ''JD will be president one day. You know how I know that?''

She said that ''he used to watch all these political shows'' when he was little. ''I would say, 'Why do you watch that?' He would say, 'Mom, this is about our country. I need information.' I would just think, 'What a nerd.'''

One night, he was desperate to watch a debate, but his stepbrothers at the time would not give up the remote, because there was a wrestling match on. ''So we went and got a motel room, so my baby could watch the debate on TV,'' Ms. Aikins said proudly.

But who was debating?

''I don't even remember,'' she said with a laugh. ''I was probably high.''

Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.Sheelagh McNeill contributed research. Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/26/us/elections/jd-vance-mother-beverly-aikins-relationship.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/26/us/elections/jd-vance-mother-beverly-aikins-relationship.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator JD Vance of Ohio, and his mother, Beverly Aikins. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Beverly Aikins, JD Vance's mother, speaking at an event to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs among preteens and teenagers. She has been sober from alcohol and heroin for almost 10 years. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Ms. Aikins and a young JD in a family photograph. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA BEVERLY AIKINS)

The actors Owen Asztalos, as a young Mr. Vance, and Amy Adams, as Ms. Aikins, in the 2020 film, ''Hillbilly Elegy.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY LACEY TERRELL/NETFLIX) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2024

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[***The Secret to Tom Wolfe’s Irresistible Snap, Crackle and Pop; Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CR7-C4K1-JBG3-63P3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 15, 2024 Thursday 12:37 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1581 words

**Byline:** David Brooks David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about political, social and cultural trends.

**Highlight:** How the author of “The Right Stuff,” “Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers” and other classics turned sociology into art.

**Body**

How the author of “The Right Stuff,” “Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers” and other classics turned sociology into art.

There are certain writers you should never read before you yourself sit down to write, like P.G. Wodehouse and Tom Wolfe. For if you do, you will not be able to get their voices and rhythms out of your head, and you will have to confront the absolute certainty that you can’t pull off what they did. In Wolfe’s case you’ll find that you can’t quite replicate the raw energy of his prose: the fun; the snap, crackle, pop; the fuzzy effusions of new sociological categories — masters of the universe, social X-rays.

And then there’s his sheer audacity. His essay “Radical Chic” — about a cocktail party the conductor Leonard Bernstein and his wife, Felicia, threw for the Black Panthers in 1970 — begins with Bernstein waking up in the middle of the night in a state of wild alarm. He had mentioned having a bad dream in an interview somewhere, and Wolfe took that little autobiographical morsel and spun it into a grand tour through the inside of Bernstein’s brain. Any responsible journalist can report, “Bernstein had a nightmare,” but Wolfe has the guts to take a flight of fancy and describe the nightmare from the inside, with its moments of narcissistic grandiosity and its descent into degrading humiliation.

Wolfe was known for his style, but it was his worldview that made him. He read Max Weber at Yale and [*it all clicked*](https://niemanstoryboard.org/stories/where-tom-wolfe-got-his-status-obsession/): Life is a contest for status. Some people think humans are driven by money, or love, or to heal the wounds they suffered in childhood, but Wolfe put the relentless scramble up the pecking order at the center of his worldview. It gave him his brilliant eye for surfaces, for the care with which people put on their social displays. He had the ability to name the status rules that envelop us in ways we are hardly aware of. He had a knack for capturing what it feels like to be caught up in a certain sort of social dilemma.

He was drawn to times and places where the status rules were shifting. His book “The Right Stuff,” about the U.S. space program, takes place at such a moment. Before, the combat pilots were the tippy-top alpha males in the world of flight, but then along came the astronauts to knock them off their perch. In “Radical Chic,” you can catch glimpses of the old blue-blood Protestant elite — the Astors, the Whitneys, the Rockefellers. But this is 1970. A new crowd is beginning to displace them: the Bernsteins, Barbara Walters. The members of this rising elite have often made their money in culture and the media, and include the formerly unthinkables — Catholics, Jews, Black people.

The old aristocrats had it so easy, those stately bankers in the J.P. Morgan mold. They may have been frequently bewildered about why the masses didn’t like them, but their own place in the social aristocracy was secure. It was right there in their bloodlines — the generations of grandees stretching back centuries. The status rules were simple. All you had to do was live like an English earl and collect European culture by the boatload, and you could cruise through Manhattan amid the sound of others bowing and scraping.

The members of the new cultural elite could never be so secure. Their status — their very reason for being — was based on their own superior sensibility. They lived by their wits and their public attitudes. These media-age aristocrats had to excel at tasks that members of the beau monde have always excelled at — being rich, thin and well connected; keeping the duplexes adorned with the design trends. But they had to do so much more. They had to be morally avant-garde, able to articulate the luxury opinions du jour. They had to perform all these inversions — rising to the social stratosphere by ostentatiously demonstrating their solidarity with the oppressed, assuring their place atop the structures of power by striking radical poses and pretending to support tearing those structures down. Wolfe was there at the dawn of 20th-century one-downmanship, when you could rise to the social stratosphere by donning peasant and revolutionary garb.

Some people think “Radical Chic” is simply about race relations. It’s not. His essay “Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers” deals with this issue more squarely in its study of the bureaucratic tangle at the center of the chillingly named Office of Economic Opportunity in San Francisco, where white fears around political correctness collide with entrenched poverty in the city’s Black, Chicano, Filipino and Samoan communities. The program is supposed to help create opportunity for disadvantaged groups but ends up becoming a farce in which jobs and money are manipulated from harassed and clueless office workers. “Radical Chic” is about status codes and narcissism. The Black Panthers in the essay are treated by the white characters as luxury goods, beings who bring a frisson of righteous danger to the safe tranquillity of the Upper East Side.

Wolfe would later say that he learned about that evening at the Bernsteins’ when he was visiting the offices of Harper’s Magazine. He wandered into David Halberstam’s office (Halberstam wasn’t there), and noticed on his desk a handwritten invitation from Mrs. Leonard Bernstein to attend a soiree with the Black Panthers. He saw immediately what the members of the beau monde were too oblivious to see: that if you told the people in Queens or Topeka that the rich white residents of the Upper East Side were throwing parties for the Panthers, they would fall all over themselves laughing. He called the R.S.V.P. number, gave his own name and said he’d be happy to attend. At the party he sat quietly in a chair, his notebook prominently displayed, taking it all down in shorthand. A New York Times reporter was also there, allowed to record the festivities. The Bernsteins were being so noble! Who could possibly ridicule them for it?

Wolfe captures all the little challenges that afflict the new elite. Of course you can’t have Black servants at a Panther party, but where do you find white servants? Sideburns are symbols that you’re on board with the revolution, but how low should you wear them? Should they go down to the “intertragic notch,” that spot near the lower rim of the ear, or should you flaunt full mutton chops, with all their countercultural glory? And what do you call Black people, anyway? Wolfe has his characters wondering. This was the moment when the notion that the word “Negro” was offensive was beginning to penetrate even these patrician circles. With your fellow militant-by-invitation elites, you say “Black,” but what happens when you’re talking to your white servants? If you use that word, they’ll think you’re just one of those limousine liberals.

Wolfe recognizes the climax of a cultural moment when he sees it. It comes when an uptown art gallery owner in a tuxedo, pregaming before a private party at the Met, rises in full revolutionary fervor and cries out, “Who do you call to give a party?”

Any college lampooner could make fun of this stuff. But Wolfe goes several levels deeper. There’s a lot of double-track thinking going on here, he writes. The partygoers really do care for those who are oppressed. Racial injustice really is one of the core themes of American history. It’s just that these people want to care in a way that makes them look gorgeous. Wolfe is asking a question that decades later would be at the heart of Instagram activism: How much of all this is about caring for the oppressed, and how much is about the image of you caring for the oppressed?

Wolfe’s goal was to be like Balzac, not JD Vance. He was a provocateur, not an advocate. He came to examine fashions, not legislate morality. His writing rests upon a quiet self-confidence. As a young man, he came up from the South to graduate school at Yale and found that all those Northeastern preppies looked down on Southerners. He could have tried to conform to his new milieu, but he became even more his idiosyncratic Southern self. Then he came to New York, and there, too, he could have lost himself in all the glamour, in the if-you-can-make-it-here-you-can-make-it-anywhere ambition. He sipped from the cup of that ambition, but mostly he stationed himself where writers are supposed to station themselves, off to the side, observing, never quite belonging. It’s lonely there, but it allowed him a peek at what was emerging: The new coastal elites had made themselves insufferable to ***working-class*** Americans, and sooner or later there would be hell to pay.

Wolfe satirized the upper crust, but he had empathy, fellow feeling and sometimes admiration. He labored to accurately get inside their heads. What made him humane was that his sensibility was ultimately literary; his goal was to simply depict modern life, to describe people in their foibles and follies, to capture the way their sad and sometimes wonderful longings tortured, drove and uplifted them. Wolfe pulled off an astounding trick, turning sociology into art.

David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times. This essay is adapted from his introduction to a new edition of “Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers,” to be published by Picador in August.

PHOTOS: Tom Wolfe in Midtown Manhattan in 1968. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM FALK/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR12); Wolfe’s goal was to be like Balzac, not JD Vance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANGEL FRANCO/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR13) This article appeared in print on page BR12, BR13.

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2024

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[***Who Is Robert Fico, the Slovakian Prime Minister?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1N-7HK1-DXY4-X015-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 720 words

**Byline:** Matthew Mpoke Bigg Matthew Mpoke Bigg is a London-based reporter on the Live team at The Times, which covers breaking and developing news.

**Highlight:** Much of the recent international discussion of Mr. Fico’s leadership has focused on his ties to President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary.

**Body**

Much of the recent international discussion of Mr. Fico’s leadership has focused on his ties to President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary.

Robert Fico, 59, has played a pivotal role in Slovakian politics in the years since it gained independence in 1993 and has served as prime minister longer than any other leader.

Slovakia — a landlocked country of around 5 million people — gained independence after the so-called Velvet Revolution, a series of popular and nonviolent protests in 1989 against the Communist Party in what was at that time still Czechoslovakia. That year, the Berlin Wall fell, Communist power in much of Eastern Europe collapsed and the Cold War in effect ended.

Mr. Fico, who had been a Communist Party member while it was in power, founded the Smer party in the late 1990s. He began the first of his three terms as prime minister in 2006, serving for four years before going into opposition after his coalition lost an election. Mr. Fico returned to power in 2012 but resigned as prime minister in July 2018 following mass demonstrations over the murder of a journalist, Jan Kuciak, and his fiancée, Martina Kusnirova, who had been uncovering government corruption. The protests, which rocked the country, were the largest seen since the Velvet Revolution; demonstrators demanded the resignation of the government and new elections.

Slovakia ranks high in [*independent assessments*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking) of press freedom, but the protesters had also sought deeper changes in the country Mr. Fico had overseen.

The Smer party started out on the political left but has increasingly embraced right-wing views on immigration and cultural issues. Much of the international discussion of Mr. Fico’s leadership in recent years has focused on his ties to President Vladimir Putin of Russia and to Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary, Slovakia’s southern neighbor. Like Mr. Orban, Mr. Fico has been a staunch critic of the European Union.

After a [*parliamentary election*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking) last fall, Mr. Fico began his third term as prime minister, then had heart surgery the next month. He emerged to form a coalition government after securing around 23 percent of the vote, having campaigned against sanctions that were imposed on Russia after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in February 2022. Not one round of the country’s ammunition should be sent to Ukraine, he had told voters.

That stance, in a country where pro-Russian sentiment had historically been significant, worried E.U. leaders in Brussels, who said they feared that Slovakia could form a [*pro-Russian alliance*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking) with Mr. Orban and, potentially, Italy’s leader, Giorgia Meloni, that would impede support for Ukraine in the European Union. At the time, it was also seen as a sign of the apparent erosion of the pro-Ukrainian bloc that Europe had formed after the invasion.

Slovakia’s military contributions to Ukraine were negligible compared with countries such as the United States and Britain. But last year it became one of several European Union countries on Ukraine’s borders to [*block imports*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking) of its grain, fearing that it could undermine Slovakia’s farmers.

In April, an ally of Mr. Fico, Peter Pellegrini, [*won a vote*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking) to become Slovakia’s president. The position is largely ceremonial, but analysts said the victory strengthened the grip of political forces friendly to Russia in Central Europe, given that Mr. Pellegrini opposed providing military and financial aid to Ukraine.

Mr. Fico was born on Sept. 15, 1964, into a ***working-class*** family in the city of Topolcany in the Nitra Region of what is now Slovakia. He graduated in 1986 from Comenius University Bratislava, where he received a law degree, according to the [*Slovak government’s website*](https://rsf.org/en/ranking). He earned a doctorate at the Institute of State and Law at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and served in the military from 1986 to 1987.

Mr. Fico studied in the United States, Britain, Finland, Belgium and France, specializing in human rights and criminal law, according to the government website. He married Svetlana Ficova, a lawyer and professor, and they have a son. News reports in Slovakia say the couple is separated.

PHOTO: Prime Minister Robert Fico was shot and seriously wounded on Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Vladimir Simicek/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

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[***Biden Pressed To Shift Blame For High Prices***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6R-0F51-DXY4-X1V3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 8, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1898 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Nehamas, Jim Tankersley and Kellen Browning

**Body**

''Greedflation'' is a moniker about corporate price increases that has bolstered some Democratic senators, and now the president is being encouraged to lean in on the issue for his economic messaging.

As high prices at grocery stores, gas pumps and pharmacies have soured many voters on his first term, President Biden has developed a populist riposte: Blame big corporations for inflation, not me.

But despite facing a tough re-election battle where economic issues will be central, Mr. Biden has not leaned into that message as frequently or naturally as some other Democrats, including senators running in competitive seats across the southwest and the industrial Midwest. The Biden campaign has not focused its television or online advertisements on messages berating companies for high prices, unlike Senators Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who have made the issue a centerpiece of their campaigns -- and who are outrunning Mr. Biden in polls.

Now, some progressives are urging Mr. Biden to follow those senators' lead and make ''greedflation,'' as they call it, a driving theme of his re-election bid. They say that taking the fight to big business could bolster the broader Main Street vs. Wall Street argument he is pursuing against former President Donald J. Trump, particularly with the ***working-class*** voters of color Mr. Biden needs to motivate. And they believe polls show voters are primed to hear the president condemn big corporations in more forceful terms.

''It's a winning message for Democrats,'' said April Verrett, the president of the Service Employees International Union, which is knocking on doors in battleground states as part of a $200 million voter-turnout operation. ''And clearly Bob Casey, who's doing better in the polls than the president, is proving that it's the winning message.''

Inflation soared under Mr. Biden in 2021 and 2022, as the economy emerged from pandemic recession. Its causes were complex, including snarled global supply chains, stimulative policies by the Federal Reserve and, to a degree, federal fiscal policies including Covid relief bills signed by Mr. Trump and the $1.9 trillion emergency spending measure Mr. Biden signed soon after taking office to help people and businesses hurt by the downturn.

What Republicans call ''Bidenflation'' has become one of the president's biggest political liabilities in his rematch with Mr. Trump. In response, Mr. Biden has sought to simultaneously cheer progress in stabilizing or bringing down prices -- growth has slowed sharply from a year ago -- while acknowledging the pain voters still feel in their pocketbooks.

Mr. Biden has also attacked corporations for pricing practices in certain sectors such as meatpacking, snack foods, concert tickets and gasoline. His administration has worked to limit prices for prescription drugs like insulin and inhalers, rein in bank overdraft and credit card fees and make airline travel cheaper and more transparent, achievements that he often discusses on the campaign trail.

''We're taking on corporate greed to bring down the price of gas, food and rent, eliminating junk fees,'' Mr. Biden told a crowd of 1,000 cheering supporters in Philadelphia last week.

Still, leaning into that combative message is not always a natural fit for Mr. Biden. He proudly calls himself a ''capitalist'' and has long had a close, if sometimes contentious, relationship with corporate America. Some economists close to his White House disagree that corporations' raising prices to juice profits is a major driver of inflation.

And while Mr. Biden delights in telling a folksy anecdote about Snickers bars shrinking in size without doing the same in price, other Democrats have sounded far more aggressive on the issue. The push to blame corporations has united many factions of the Democratic Party, including progressives, swing-state populists, union leaders and environmentalists.

Mr. Brown, who represents a state that Mr. Trump won handily in 2020, has released several web ads proclaiming he is ''cracking down on the companies that rip off Ohio.'' Mr. Casey cut a campaign ad showing corporate executives in suits sneaking into a grocery store under cover of night and switching out cereal boxes for smaller replacements. Senate Democrats in tight races like Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Jacky Rosen of Nevada are making similar pitches.

''President Biden has quite a bit of latitude here to put the blame where it belongs and he should not be shy about voicing it,'' said Julián Castro, the former Housing and Urban Development secretary who ran against Mr. Biden for the Democratic nomination in 2020. ''The alternative is that they're going to blame you.''

But some of Mr. Biden's progressive allies say the president has found effective -- and popular -- ways to talk about corporate pricing practices, including his focus on ''junk fees'' levied by airlines, concert promoters and more. They also say he must balance the issue with a broad set of campaign messages, including on abortion and democracy.

''You're going to be more focused on kitchen-table issues in a Senate race,'' said Lindsay Owens, executive director of the progressive Groundwork Collaborative in Washington. Mr. Biden, she added, is ''doing the exact right thing. He's not focusing on the wonky, eggheaded debates on where inflation is coming from, and he's focusing a lot more on the ways Americans are feeling and experiencing price increases in their daily lives.''

The liberal argument that corporate greed has driven prices higher flows from a recent surge in corporate profits, notching record highs after the pandemic. They say many companies, particularly in industries with relatively little competition, have used the reopening of the economy to test how aggressively they can raise prices.

Mr. Biden has tailored his arguments about corporate greed to sectors where profit margins have remained consistently high even as inflation has begun to fall, like groceries and gasoline. White House economists calculated this year that profit margins had risen by 2 percentage points for food and beverage stores from the eve of the pandemic, an increase that could explain some -- but not nearly all -- of the nation's grocery price increases.

Many economists, including libertarians and even some former top aides to Democratic presidents, reject that argument, noting that there is little historical link between profit levels and the inflation rate. Economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco wrote last month that evidence suggests corporate price markups have not been a ''main driver'' of the inflation increase under Mr. Biden, though they also found markups have persisted in certain sectors like motor vehicles and petroleum.

Republican lawmakers have long accused Democrats of seeking a political distraction by blaming companies for price increases.

''For the last three years the American people have been ravaged by inflation,'' Senator John Kennedy, Republican of Louisiana, said last month in a Senate subcommittee hearing on price gouging. ''That inflation, like all inflation, is man-made. That man's name is Joe Biden.''

Mr. Biden has carefully targeted his arguments about corporate pricing to evidence provided to him by his economic team, said Bharat Ramamurti, a former deputy director of Mr. Biden's National Economic Council.

''Maybe that ends up in something that is slightly more reserved,'' Mr. Ramamurti said. But when it comes to price gouging, he said, ''I think he's been pretty full-throated in calling it out when he sees it, and when the economic data supports it.''

Andrew Bates, a spokesman for the White House, said that ''President Biden's top priority is beating inflation, which is why he has taken historic action and continues to fight the corporate greed that is keeping prices high.''

Few Democrats have done more to push the message that corporations are driving inflation than Mr. Casey, who is running for re-election in Pennsylvania and introduced a Senate bill that would crack down on ''shrinkflation'' -- a term for companies reducing the size of their goods but not cutting prices. Mr. Biden praised that legislation during his State of the Union address.

In an interview, Mr. Casey acknowledged that Democrats had generally been slow to follow his lead in blaming companies for higher prices.

''We may have been late,'' he said. ''But now that we've begun to make this point, I think a lot of voters have a sense that we get it and we're trying to do something about it.''

For now, polling shows Mr. Trump with a clear edge: 58 percent of voters across six of the top battleground states say Mr. Trump would do a better job handling the economy, compared with 36 percent who prefer Mr. Biden, a New York Times/Siena College/Philadelphia Inquirer poll found last month.

But Democratic pollsters have found that many voters agree with the contention that corporations are responsible for inflation. Nearly 6 in 10 voters said corporations' being ''greedy'' was a major cause of inflation, including a majority of independent voters, according to a poll by the progressive-leaning group Navigator Research.

The Biden campaign's internal polling analyses have found similar trends.

Akhenaton Mikell, a mental health therapist from Philadelphia, agreed that corporate greed was ''the main reason'' for rising prices. But after voting for Mr. Biden in 2020, he's unsure about doing so again.

''I used to be able to go to the supermarket and get a pack of chicken wings for $6-7-8 and now it's like $14-15-16,'' said Mr. Mikell, 55. ''I haven't been able to save as much. I've had to cut back on a number of things.''

There are signs that Mr. Biden plans to emphasize this issue more in the coming weeks. His team has produced an ad on corporate greed and the tax code that it plans to release soon. Lauren Hitt, a campaign spokeswoman, said Mr. Biden had ''repeatedly taken on corporate greed'' and would be ''telling that story every day in every possible way on the campaign trail, from ads to door knocking and more.''

As for Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden and his allies have already worked to paint him as a friend of billionaires and plutocrats who would do little to address rising costs.

''The effort to bear down on corporate price gouging is part of the sharp contrast between Biden and Trump,'' said Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who has been a leading Democratic voice on the issue. ''Trump cheers on the corporate profiteers. Joe Biden fights them.''

In the meantime, allies of Mr. Biden are doing their part to amplify the message that corporations are taking advantage of average Americans. The progressive groups Climate Power and Future Forward USA Action have begun a $50 million ad campaign that includes one spot featuring a South Carolina family farmer accusing big oil companies of making ''huge profits off us.''

Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of Nevada's Culinary Workers Union, which is knocking on doors around the state, said that voters were responding to such messages.

''What resonates with ***working-class*** voters is price gouging,'' Mr. Pappageorge said. ''Big oil and big food are going to have to get reined in.''

Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Philadelphia.Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Philadelphia.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/us/politics/biden-inflation-greedflation-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/us/politics/biden-inflation-greedflation-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The rising prices of many goods have soured voters on President Biden. Some Democrats have leaned in to blaming businesses. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

YURI GRIPAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Bob Casey has pushed the message that corporations are driving inflation.

Berating companies for high prices is part of Senator Sherrod Brown's campaign (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** June 8, 2024

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[***Brad Lander, New York City’s Comptroller, Will Run Against Mayor Adams***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKT-FVG1-JBG3-600M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1383 words

**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons Emma G. Fitzsimmons is the City Hall Bureau Chief for The Times, covering Mayor Eric Adams and his administration.

**Highlight:** Mr. Lander, a progressive Democrat from Brooklyn, is the most prominent candidate to challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year’s primary.

**Body**

Mr. Lander, a progressive Democrat from Brooklyn, is the most prominent candidate to challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year’s primary.

Brad Lander, the New York City comptroller, announced on Tuesday that he would challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year’s Democratic primary, setting up a rare matchup between the two most prominent citywide elected officials.

Mr. Lander is one of a handful of Democrats seeking to run to the left of Mr. Adams, a moderate whose approval rating has [*fallen to a record low*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html).

But Mr. Lander made no mention of his progressive roots in his [*campaign launch video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html), instead highlighting the concerns of New Yorkers who are worried about [*budget cuts to libraries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) and the [*high costs of child care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html).

Voters, Mr. Lander says in his video, “can replace a leader when they fail the basic tests of the job: to be honest with us, to keep our families safe, to make sure our kids learn. The basic things New Yorkers need their government to do.”

As the city comptroller, Mr. Lander, 55, serves as a natural foil to the mayor, performing audits and overseeing spending. In one notable example, Mr. Lander [*restricted the mayor’s emergency spending powers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) last December after [*problems arose*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) with a company that had been given a no-bid $432 million contract to provide services to migrants. Mr. Lander’s office is also [*organizing lawsuits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) to force congestion pricing to move forward.

He has been a forceful critic of Mr. Adams, singling out the mayor’s handling of the migrant influx as emblematic of his inability to navigate crises.

“In many ways, City Hall has substituted cruelty for management,” he said in an interview preceding his announcement.

Mr. Adams, the city’s second Black mayor, refused to directly address Mr. Lander’s candidacy at a news conference on Tuesday, but alluded to racial politics in suggesting that Democrats should be more focused on electing Vice President Kamala Harris as president.

“I thought his announcement was to assist the first woman of color to be the president of the United States, not taking the second man of color from being the mayor of the city of New York,” Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Lander’s decision is a sign of Mr. Adams’s perceived vulnerability. It is unusual for a citywide elected official to run against an incumbent mayor from the same party in a New York City primary. The last time it happened was in 1989, when Harrison J. Goldin, then the comptroller, ran against Mayor Edward I. Koch in the Democratic primary. Mr. Koch had low approval ratings and lost the primary to David N. Dinkins; Mr. Goldin finished fourth.

Abraham D. Beame is the only comptroller to become mayor in recent history, and he won an open race in 1973. Four years later, he was ousted in the Democratic primary by Mr. Koch.

Mr. Lander will face challenges. He will be able to shift his comptroller campaign fund-raising account to the mayor’s race, and expects to have more than $3 million with matching funds. Still, Mr. Adams’s campaign has said it expects to have nearly $8 million.

And Mr. Lander, who is white, must prove that he can win support from voters in communities of color — a key part of Mr. Adams’s base.

Hazel Dukes, an ally of the mayor and the president of the N.A.A.C.P. New York State Conference, defended Mr. Adams and echoed his comments about “not attacking the second Black mayor.”

“The mayor’s record is excellent: lower crime, more jobs, historic investments in housing and child care,” she said.

Mr. Lander said that he had a “track record of working with really diverse coalitions of New Yorkers,” including helping [*secure a minimum wage for delivery workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) and [*job protections for fast food workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html).

“I really don’t think this is a moment where people are focused on ideology,” Mr. Lander said in the interview. “People want a compelling vision and someone who can actually deliver the goods.”

But Mr. Adams is likely to pounce on Mr. Lander’s background in wealthy brownstone Brooklyn as an example of his being out of touch with ***working-class*** New Yorkers; the mayor already [*holds Mr. Lander*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) in particular disdain, publicly mocking his voice and calling him the “loudest person in the city.”

Two other Democrats have already announced their intention to challenge Mr. Adams and have [*started raising money ahead of the primary next June*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html): Scott Stringer, Mr. Lander’s predecessor as comptroller, and Zellnor Myrie, a state senator from Brooklyn. Both have supported left-leaning policies; they, like Mr. Lander, are presenting themselves as capable and trustworthy leaders in contrast to the mayor.

Mr. Lander acknowledged that there may come a time to strategize about how to defeat Mr. Adams under the city’s [*ranked-choice voting system*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html), but said it was too early to discuss the idea of forming a coalition to unite left-leaning New Yorkers.

“I certainly share — and I believe the other candidates do — the clarity that we need a new mayor, and it will be important to be strategic about that,” he said.

Mr. Adams presents an alluring target. He faces a [*federal investigation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) into his campaign fund-raising, and has [*seen his approval rating plunge to 28 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) — the lowest for any New York City mayor in a Quinnipiac University poll since it began surveying the city in 1996.

Mr. Adams and his allies have suggested that some criticism of him is based on his race, [*comparing it to discrimination against Mr. Dinkins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html), the city’s first Black mayor.

And if the current roster of progressive challengers remains unchanged, Mr. Adams will have a clear lane to himself as the race’s only moderate.

Mr. Lander, in contrast, previously held the same City Council seat in Park Slope once held by Mayor Bill de Blasio, and helped create the Council’s progressive caucus.

Mr. Lander [*won a competitive race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) for comptroller in 2021, uniting the city’s progressive movement with endorsements from Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the Working Families Party and Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

Rebecca Rodriguez, a former campaign manager for Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, is working with Mr. Lander as a senior adviser and coordinating his campaign operations.

William C. Thompson Jr., a former comptroller who ran for mayor in 2013, said in an interview that Mr. Lander had done an “excellent job” and had focused on critical issues.

“Being comptroller really does help to prepare you to look at the big picture in the city,” he said.

Liz Krueger, a state senator from Manhattan, said she had known Mr. Lander since the 1990s, when he led the Fifth Avenue Committee, an affordable housing nonprofit in Brooklyn, and later the Pratt Center for Community Development.

“I’ve been so impressed by what a good job he’s done with this very large responsibility,” she said of his work as comptroller.

Ms. Krueger also praised Mr. Myrie and Kathryn Garcia, the city’s former sanitation commissioner, who finished second to Mr. Adams in the 2021 primary. She said she would prefer any of the three over the current mayor.

“Some days, I’m not even sure if he’s a Democrat,” she said of Mr. Adams.

Mr. Lander [*grew up in St. Louis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html) and described himself as a “ride-or-die St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan.” He said that he also supports New York sports teams and has season tickets for the New York Liberty women’s basketball team.

His campaign video shows another hobby that could be useful during a combative primary: boxing at JukeBox, a [*woman-owned boxing gym in Park Slope*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html).

Mr. Lander’s bid for mayor would create an open seat in next year’s comptroller election, and [*Democrats are already lining up to succeed him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-poll.html), including Mark Levine, the Manhattan borough president; Antonio Reynoso, the Brooklyn borough president; and Jenifer Rajkumar, a state assemblywoman from Queens who is close with the mayor.

Mr. Reynoso said that Mr. Lander had been a mentor to him in the City Council, where they supported legislation to make the city more affordable.

“All the things we’ve been fighting for — they speak to livability, and Brad has been a co-author or a partner on a lot of policies that would have value for young families like mine,” he said.

PHOTO: Brad Lander is seeking to be the first New York City comptroller since Abraham D. Beame in the 1970s to become mayor. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL FRANGIPANE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Trump’s Big Win in Iowa***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B41-YN41-DXY4-X00V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1780 words

**Highlight:** The Times’s chief political analyst explains the caucus results.

**Body**

The Times’s chief political analyst explains the caucus results.

If there was any question whether Donald Trump was on track to win the Republican nomination, it was answered Monday night by the voters of Iowa.

The first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses delivered him [*a sweeping victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/trump-wins-iowa.html?smid=url-share), offering the most concrete proof yet of his dominance over the Republican Party.

With nearly [*all the votes counted*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/15/us/elections/results-iowa-caucus.html), Trump’s share was 51 percent. Ron DeSantis finished a distant second at 21 percent, with Nikki Haley at 19 percent. ([*See maps of the results*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/15/us/elections/iowa-republican-precinct-results.html).)

The result is not surprising or even unexpected, but Trump’s victory is still noteworthy. A year ago, Iowa looked more difficult for the former president. In an upset eight years ago, Iowa voters rejected Trump [*in favor of Ted Cruz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/02/us/ted-cruz-wins-republican-caucus.html). And unlike the rest of the country, the Iowa political establishment has refused to get in line behind Trump.

Not only did he win in a landslide anyway, but his 30-point margin of victory set a record for a contested Iowa Republican caucus.

Better still for Trump, neither DeSantis nor Haley posted a strong second-place showing that might have bestowed clear momentum for future races. If anything, DeSantis’s second-place finish might dampen Haley’s momentum heading into New Hampshire.

How he won

Trump’s decisive victory was built on his usual — if still remarkable — strengths among ***working-class*** and rural voters, who made up a preponderance of the Iowa electorate. In county after county across the Iowa countryside, Trump obtained more than 60 percent of the vote — and sometimes 70 percent — with his rivals languishing in the teens or single digits.

He also excelled among white evangelical Christians and self-described “very conservative” voters — two groups that held him back here eight years ago. It’s a coalition that naturally gives him a commanding advantage in a party that’s disproportionately conservative, ***working class***, evangelical and rural. It was enough for him to win all but one of the state’s counties, with his one defeat by a single vote in Johnson County.

A disappointment for DeSantis

DeSantis’s finish is a serious setback to his already ailing candidacy. He seemed like a perfect fit for Iowa, as the caucus electorate usually favors ideologically conservative candidates. He followed the winning caucus playbook, including campaigning in [*all 99 counties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/us/politics/desantis-iowa-tour-2024.html) and earning high-profile endorsements from the state’s governor, many other elected Republicans in the state and prominent evangelical leaders. None of it seemed to make a difference.

The road ahead for him is bleak. No upcoming contest plainly offers DeSantis a better chance of victory, and his poll numbers are even weaker in the states ahead. If he can’t compete in Iowa, it’s hard to imagine where he can. It has [*raised the question*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/desantis-second-iowa-caucus.html) of whether he will continue in the race, though he has [*said*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/14/politics/desantis-2024-iowa-caucus/index.html) he’s staying in. Either way, Haley has overtaken DeSantis as Trump’s nearest, if still distant, rival.

Haley’s path forward

For Haley, the third-place finish is a disappointment but not dire. She showed important strength among college-educated, independent and suburban voters, who have long been Trump’s greatest skeptics. She defeated Trump by a comfortable margin in precincts where most residents held a four-year college degree. She also won 64 percent of self-described moderates.

Haley’s strength among moderates and college graduates wasn’t enough for second in Iowa, as several late polls suggested, but voters like these will represent a much larger share of later primary electorates. It might just be enough for her to compete in relatively well-educated states with larger numbers of independent voters, including New Hampshire next week — where the polls already show a close and tightening race.

But the results also confirmed that her appeal is extraordinarily narrow, all but confined to those moderate and highly educated voters. She routinely failed to reach 10 percent of the vote in rural, ***working-class*** precincts. The entrance polls found that she won just 9 percent among voters who never attended college.

College-educated and independent voters can only take a candidate so far in a ***working-class*** Republican Party. It certainly didn’t take her very far in Iowa on Monday night. There is no path for Haley to win the nomination without greatly expanding her appeal.

More on Iowa

* In his victory speech, Trump struck an [*uncharacteristically upbeat tone*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/trump-wins-iowa.html). “I want to congratulate Ron and Nikki,” he said. “I think they both actually did very well.”

1. Haley congratulated Trump but made the case that the country did not want another Trump-Biden election: “Both lack a vision for our country’s future because both are consumed by the past, by investigations, by vendettas, by grievances,” she said.
2. Vivek Ramaswamy, the 38-year-old entrepreneur, [*dropped out of the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/vivek-ramaswamy-drops-out.html?smid=url-share) after finishing fourth.
3. DeSantis and his allies bashed the news media for calling the race [*a half-hour after the caucuses began*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/trump-iowa-caucus-race-call.html), which they said might have biased Iowans who had not yet cast a vote.
4. Far fewer Iowans [*voted last night*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/iowa-caucus-turnout-cold.html) than in 2016. The frigid weather likely kept turnout low. [*Read five takeaways*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/iowa-caucus-takeaways.html) from the caucuses.
5. Trump’s [*connection with his supporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/trump-iowa-win-voters.html) is one of the most durable forces in American politics, Michael Bender and Katie Glueck write.

Commentary

* The battle between [*DeSantis and Haley for second place*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/11/opinion/briefing/iowa-caucus-results-depressing) doesn’t matter: The general election has already started, Times Opinion’s Michelle Goldberg writes.

1. The wishful thinking that someone can [*stop Trump from winning the nomination*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2024/01/15/trump-wins-iowa-caucus-coronation-2024/) is coming to an end, Karen Tumulty writes in The Washington Post.
2. Elevating Haley over DeSantis as the non-Trump candidate only [*makes a Trump victory easier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/trump-iowa-desantis-haley.html), Times Opinion’s Ross Douthat writes.
3. Trump’s win “serves as an endorsement of the [*constant drumbeat for vengeance*](https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/trump-wins-iowa-caucus-2024-results-rcna133671) that Trump has made the centerpiece of his campaign,” MSNBC’s Hayes Brown writes.
4. News organizations were “[*irresponsible to call the race for Trump*](https://www.mediaite.com/opinion/opinion-the-early-projection-of-trumps-win-in-iowa-was-irresponsible/) before a remotely representative sample of votes had been counted,” Isaac Schorr writes for Mediaite.

THE LATEST NEWS

Middle East

* Houthi militants in Yemen, undeterred by U.S.-led missile strikes, [*launched more attacks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/middleeast/houthis-ships-red-sea.html) on ships in the Red Sea.

1. Israeli officials said they were astonished by the scale and quality of [*Gaza’s tunnel network*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/politics/israel-gaza-tunnels.html).
2. Israel said it had [*concluded its “intensive” ground operations*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/01/16/world/israel-hamas-news/israels-defense-minister-outlines-shift-in-war?smid=url-share) in northern Gaza and would soon end that stage of fighting in the south.
3. Hamas said [*Israeli airstrikes killed two hostages*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/middleeast/israel-hamas-hostage-video-argamani.html?smid=url-share). The Israeli military cast doubt on the claim.
4. Turkey [*briefly detained an Israeli soccer player*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/middleeast/israel-soccer-sagiv-jehezkel-turkey.html) after he displayed a pro-Israel message during a game. His Turkish club suspended him.

Weather

* Freezing temperatures are covering much of the U.S. [*See maps of the forecast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/cold-weather-snow-forecast.html).

1. The weather has [*prompted schools to close*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/school-closures-cold-weather-south.html) across the South, and Texas has asked residents to [*limit energy use*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/texas-weather-cold-power-schools.html) to prevent the grid from failing.
2. A storm surge on the Maine coast knocked two 19th-century shacks into the sea. [*See the video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/maine-fishing-shacks-tide-storms.html).

Politics

* Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin [*left the hospital after a two-week stay*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/us/politics/defense-secretary-lloyd-austin-hospital-release.html) for complications from prostate cancer surgery.

1. The conservative billionaire [*Charles Koch is quietly backing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/climate/koch-chevron-deference-supreme-court.html) a commercial fishing group’s Supreme Court case — one that could curtail the government’s regulatory authority.

International

* Colombia created its latest, and perhaps last, national park. It is [*teeming with wildlife*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/science/colombia-park-manacacias.html) — caimans and anacondas, anteaters and bush dogs.

1. Iran [*released two journalists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/middleeast/iran-journalists-mahsa-amini.html) whose coverage of a woman’s death in police custody led to nationwide protests. But the authorities extended the sentence of Narges Mohammadi, an activist who won the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize.
2. Lava is menacing a town in Iceland. The country’s president said a [*new period of seismic activity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/world/europe/iceland-lava-grindavik-volcano-eruption.html) on the island had begun.
3. North Korea has formally abandoned its goal of [*reunification with South Korea*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/world/asia/north-korea-reunification-policy.html), according to state news reports.

Other Big Stories

* Diabetes is [*fueling an amputation crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/us/diabetes-san-antonio-texas-amputations.html), especially among Latino men in Texas.

1. A 45-year-old man was [*shot to death on a subway train*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/nyregion/nyc-subway-shooting-brooklyn.html) in Brooklyn after intervening in an argument over loud music.

Opinions

Progressives helped Republicans [*limit free trade*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/trump-trade-nafta.html). Neither are eager to talk about it, Farah Stockman writes.

Negotiating with Russia on a cease-fire deal now would mean the end of war in Ukraine and [*the beginning of occupation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/opinion/putin-ukraine-war.html), Nataliya Gumenyuk writes.

Tightening the labor market [*reduces racial inequality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/opinion/full-employment-economy-mlk.html), Paul Krugman argues.

MORNING READS

A celebration and a plea: A crochet coral reef, sometimes described as the environmental version of the AIDS quilt, thrives with [*a sea of volunteers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/science/mathematics-crochet-coral.html).

Hot boxing: Can Mike Tyson [*become a heavyweight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/nyregion/mike-tyson-weed-cannabis-nyc.html) in the New York marijuana industry?

Lives Lived: Roy Calne was the rare physician to be both a groundbreaking surgeon and researcher. He developed operating techniques involved in organ transplantation, while at the same time working to identify drugs to overcome organ rejection. He [*died at 93*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/health/roy-calne-dead.html).

SPORTS

N.F.L.: The Tampa Bay Buccaneers [*cruised past the Philadelphia Eagles*](https://theathletic.com/5204681/2024/01/15/eagles-buccaneers-wild-card-results/), 32-9, and Josh Allen plowed through snow and defenders in the Buffalo Bills’ [*31-17 playoff win*](https://theathletic.com/5199266/2024/01/15/steelers-bills-wild-card-results/) over the Pittsburgh Steelers.

2024 draft: Caleb Williams, the U.S.C. quarterback and projected No. 1 overall pick, [*declared for the draft*](https://theathletic.com/5166280/2024/01/15/caleb-williams-nfl-draft-usc-quarterback/).

ARTS AND IDEAS

No shocks: The 75th Emmy Awards, delayed from September because of the Hollywood strikes, took place on Monday night — [*and there were few surprises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/arts/television/emmys-best-worst-moments.html). Hulu’s “The Bear” secured six awards, including best comedy; and HBO’s “Succession” also took home six, including the best drama award and best actress and actor in a drama for Sarah Snook and Kieran Culkin. Elsewhere, Elton John, with a win for his variety special, joined [*the EGOT club*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/egot-winners-history.html) — an acronym for winning an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar and a Tony.

For more: See a [*full list of the winners*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/arts/television/emmy-winners-list.html) and [*red carpet looks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/style/emmys-fashion.html) from the night.

More on culture

* “Happy Days” at 50: The cast, including Henry Winkler and Ron Howard, [*look back on the show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/arts/television/happy-days-50-anniversary.html).

1. The chairman of Sinclair television stations [*bought The Baltimore Sun*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/baltimore-sun-david-smith-sinclair.html), the largest newspaper in Maryland.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Treat yourself to a [*breakfast of spiced Irish oatmeal*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020724-spiced-irish-oatmeal-with-cream-and-crunchy-sugar) with heavy cream and crunchy Demerara sugar.

Develop [*healthy habits with these tools*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/money/new-year-deals/).

Start thinking about Valentine’s Day with gifts for [*him*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/gifts/valentines-day-gifts-for-him/) and [*her*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/gifts/valentines-day-gifts-for-her/).

GAMES

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

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.

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

**Load-Date:** January 16, 2024

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[***Harris Ruthless On Hard Crime As a Prosecutor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D1H-W381-JBG3-61CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 2690 words

**Byline:** By Robert Draper

**Body**

From the moment that Kamala Harris took her place among 57 counterparts at the 2004 California District Attorneys Association annual conference, it was an open question how, if at all, the first Black, Asian American and female D.A. in the state's history would fit in.

Ms. Harris, whose mother was Indian and whose father is Jamaican American, did not even blend in back home in liberal San Francisco County's law enforcement circles. The county had never before elected a woman, a Black person or an Asian American as its district attorney, much less all three at the same time. She was equally rare nationwide: When Ms. Harris won in December 2003, she became one of only three elected Black district attorneys in the entire country.

''They looked at her like she had four heads,'' said Debbie Mesloh, Ms. Harris's communications director at the time, about her appearance a month later at the district attorneys' conference in Santa Barbara, a conclave of conservative, throw-the-book-at-them prosecutors.

''It was an organization of mostly older Caucasian Republican men,'' said Gilbert Otero, the former district attorney of Imperial County, who was there. Ms. Harris, he said, had ''these beliefs that didn't normally jibe with our crowd. She and I had a little spat at one roundtable over the death penalty and the three-strikes-and-you're-out policy -- me for both and her against.''

But over time Mr. Otero came to view Ms. Harris as a law enforcement ally. He endorsed her as the Democratic candidate for state attorney general in 2010. One of her first trips after she won was to tour a tunnel dug by Mexican traffickers to transport drugs into Mr. Otero's county.

''She kept her promise that she would show up,'' Mr. Otero said. ''It meant a lot to law enforcement down there.''

Vice President Kamala Harris's rise from strong-willed law enforcement official to standard-bearer in liberal Democratic politics is unusual and, some might conjecture, mutually incompatible. Navigating both paths has left her open to criticism as the Democratic presidential nominee that she either betrayed liberal ideas or prioritized those ideals over law and order. Certainly her star potential fueled speculation that she intended to use her elected positions as steppingstones to higher office -- which, ultimately, she did.

But a close examination of her 12 years as an elected prosecutor, including interviews with more than 30 people who worked with her, shows a coherent record that is for the most part consistent. Ms. Harris seemed particularly focused on protecting the most vulnerable victims by cracking down on violent offenders while seeking alternatives to incarceration for less serious criminals. Her priorities as a prosecutor became especially clear once she was given the authority by voters to establish them, after more than a decade spent working for other district attorneys. Those efforts were not always successful or politically advantageous, yet she undertook them anyway.

Ms. Harris's defenders argue that her professional history makes perfect sense to anyone who grew up as she did, in a ***working-class*** Black neighborhood in Berkeley governed by mostly white leaders. Her former chief of administration in the district attorney's office, Paul Henderson, recalled their first conversation in the early 1990s, when Ms. Harris was starting out as a prosecutor in Oakland and he was graduating from law school.

''We talked about living in a community where the entire decision-making process was removed from those being impacted by those decisions,'' Mr. Henderson said in an interview. ''And she said, 'Why can't we be in those rooms?'''

She soon made her way in.

Tough on Child Abuse

Among the three candidates for San Francisco district attorney standing on the debate stage in the fall of 2003, two were white males: Terence Hallinan, the liberal incumbent who was also Ms. Harris's former boss, and Bill Fazio, a more conservative criminal lawyer who had been defeated by Mr. Hallinan in the previous election.

The third candidate, Ms. Harris, had positioned herself as the moderate in the race. She was also the former girlfriend of the outgoing San Francisco mayor, Willie Brown, and a frequent presence in the local society pages. Mr. Hallinan had not-so-subtly encouraged voters to see her as someone who had not gotten as far as she had on professional merits alone.

''He has an interest,'' Mr. Hallinan speculated about Mr. Brown, ''in having a friend in the district attorney's office.''

Ms. Harris framed her distinctiveness in a wholly different manner. ''I'm the only one up here,'' she informed the debate audience, ''who's been a prosecutor all my professional life.''

That characterization, while accurate, was not exactly foretold. Although Ms. Harris has said she was inspired to become a prosecutor in part to help people like a high school friend whose father was molesting her, her own family was puzzled by the decision.

''With some of them I had to defend the decision like one would a thesis,'' Ms. Harris said in 2019. Her argument, she said, was that justice was better served when life-or-death decisions were handled by people ''who went to our church, had children in our schools, coached our Little League teams and knew our neighborhoods.''

In 1990, the year after Ms. Harris graduated from law school, she started in the district attorney's office in Oakland. Eight years later, she joined the higher-profile district attorney's office in San Francisco. Two years later, following disagreements with her boss, Mr. Hallinan, she jumped to the San Francisco city attorney's office. By then her courtroom presentations had became required viewing for many of her colleagues.

A former prosecutor, Michael Weiss, recalled watching a closing argument she delivered as a prosecutor in San Francisco ''without any notes, skillfully recalling every important detail, and the jurors paying rapt attention to every word. To this day, I'm not sure I've seen it done better.''

Ms. Harris, who beat Mr. Hallinan in a runoff election with 56 percent of the vote, quickly established herself as different kind of prosecutor in arguably the most liberal county in California.

She did not share Mr. Hallinan's tolerance of open-air drug markets or his passion for legalizing marijuana, though she did decree that jail time would never be sought for those who possessed small amounts of marijuana. She came down harder on cases involving firearms or child abuse. She placed more resources in the office's domestic violence and sexual assault units.

And she established a new program to combat sex trafficking, one that dispelled the view that the victims in such cases were somehow complicit. As she crisply informed one colleague, ''There's no such thing as child prostitutes. They're survivors of rape.''

But Ms. Harris opposed the death penalty and had vowed to voters never to seek it. That promise was put to the test three months into her tenure when an undercover policeman, Isaac Espinoza, was gunned down by a 19-year old gang member. The new district attorney announced that she would abide by her campaign pledge four days after Mr. Espinoza's murder. The police union expressed outrage, as did Senator Dianne Feinstein. Even some subordinates viewed the swiftness of her decision as a rookie mistake, especially given that she had not first explained her reasoning to Mr. Espinoza's widow.

Ms. Harris apparently agreed. In the wake of the controversy, she started a more deliberative review process for death penalty cases that included outreach to the victims' families.

Ms. Harris's best-known innovation as district attorney was the Back on Track initiative, a pilot program she began in 2005 to address high recidivism rates among nonviolent drug offenders between the ages of 18 and 30. The program was both progressive in outlook and ''very, very difficult for those who entered it,'' said Lateefah Simon, who ran the program and is now a Democratic candidate for the House.

To qualify for Back on Track, Ms. Simon said in an interview, an offender had to enter a guilty plea and then get a job within 60 days. After a full year of employment, education, community service, regular meetings with a supervising judge and crime-free behavior, the charge would be expunged from the offender's record. In its first two years, fewer than 10 percent of Back on Track's participants reoffended.

Officials throughout California visited San Francisco in hopes of copying the Back on Track model back home. What was hard for them to replicate, Ms. Simon said, was ''how Kamala went through her Rolodex with those manicured fingers'' and used her contacts to find jobs for the young offenders at Goodwill and in Nordstrom clothing warehouses, among others. She also found a dental clinic that would fix their teeth before going in for job interviews.

Still, the county's limited resources meant that Ms. Harris's brainchild did not grow beyond the pilot stage. Fewer than 300 offenders graduated from Back on Track. Seven people who entered the program turned out to be undocumented immigrants whose ineligibility was not detected by program staffers, because of a screening loophole, until 2008, after one of the immigrants stole a woman's purse and fractured her skull while getting away.

That crime was featured in a Republican National Committee ad in July, saying that the Democratic candidate for president ''allowed illegal immigrant drug dealers to enter job training and have their criminal records wiped clean.''

An Upward Trajectory

By 2007, when Ms. Harris won re-election as San Francisco district attorney without opposition, her upward trajectory was a foregone conclusion. She had been featured on Oprah Winfrey's show, was the state's most high-profile Democrat campaigning for the presidential candidate Barack Obama and was already mulling a run for state attorney general.

But there were episodes that bedeviled her second term. In 2006, her office trumpeted a 28-count indictment against a prominent building contractor who had provided substandard concrete for major city construction projects. Two years later, as it became apparent that the charges were overblown, her office quietly whittled the charge down to a single misdemeanor, to which the contractor pleaded guilty.

Two years later, Ms. Harris's office tried an actor and hip-hop artist named Jamal Trulove for murder, largely on the basis of a single eyewitness whose account had repeatedly changed. Mr. Trulove's conviction was thrown out on appeal, but only after he had spent six years in prison. He sued, and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors agreed to pay Mr. Trulove $13.1 million. (Ms. Harris had attended Mr. Trulove's sentencing but was not named in the lawsuit.)

The most vexing scandal during Ms. Harris's tenure occurred when she was running for attorney general. Prosecutors in her office had determined that a technician in the city's crime lab was behaving erratically and could not be counted on to provide testimony. But it took three months before this opinion was conveyed to the defense attorneys whose cases rested on crime lab analyses.

Finger-pointing ensued between the D.A.'s office and the city's police department. The technician, Deborah Madden, later pleaded guilty to stealing drug samples for her personal use. Hundreds of convictions were soon thrown out because of potentially tainted evidence.

Though Ms. Harris's former subordinates maintained in interviews that she was unaware of the crime lab scandal when it first materialized, her political opponents maintained that she was guilty of incompetence and possibly a cover-up.

''It was hugely significant in the primary,'' said Brian Brokaw, her campaign manager at the time. ''She had to stop campaigning to deal with it.''

Ms. Harris managed to eke out a victory in November against Steve Cooley, the Los Angeles County district attorney.

Jailing Parents

As attorney general, Ms. Harris expanded a program she had started in San Francisco to combat truancy, a phenomenon that comprised nearly 30 percent of the state's public school student body in 2011. As district attorney, she had her office send out letters to the parents of truant children and threaten the parents with fines or even imprisonment if they did not ensure that their children attended class.

No parent went to prison, but that changed when Ms. Harris took the anti-truancy program statewide. ''Not every parent needed to be incarcerated,'' said Tori Verber Salazar, the former district attorney of San Joaquin County. ''But some did. And she gave us the hammer.''

In Orange County, a police sweep in 2013 resulted in the arrest of six parents of truant students, including a mother whose daughter had not attended school because she suffered from sickle-cell anemia. In 2019 as a presidential candidate, Ms. Harris expressed regret for jailing parents, saying ''that was certainly not the intention'' of the initiative.

In other instances, her office acted on behalf of California's governor, Jerry Brown, to fight federal judicial mandates to relieve the state's chronically overcrowded prisons. At one point her attorneys unsuccessfully resisted a court order to release certain nonviolent inmates, saying they were needed to help fight wildfires in the state. At another point they contested a federal court order granting transition surgery to an inmate who had been repeatedly assaulted in a male prison. (The inmate was paroled before the case was adjudicated and ultimately had the surgery as a private citizen.)

In both cases Ms. Harris later told reporters she was dismayed to learn of her office's efforts.

But Ms. Harris did not shrink from using her perch to wade into national issues. Following a succession of police misconduct cases nationwide in 2014 and 2015, her office started a police training course to address implicit bias. She also directed the California Department of Justice to adopt a program providing resources for body cameras. Both were heralded by her press office as firsts in the nation, though participation in each was voluntary.

More substantively, Ms. Harris wielded her clout during the 2008 home foreclosure crisis by scuttling a modest settlement offer from the major banks to several affected states. ''I don't know that this will work for California,'' she said.

In 2012, the banks agreed to about $20 billion in homeowner relief for California, mostly in loan forgiveness rather than cash subsidies. But Ms. Harris had succeeded in getting a settlement in a year's time that was roughly four times the original offer, according to two of her former associates.

Ms. Harris's legal battle that may have been the most emotionally satisfying to her was when she openly defied her state's position. As a candidate for attorney general in 2010, she pledged not to defend Proposition 8, the California ballot initiative ratified in 2008 that exclusively recognized marriage as between a man and a woman.

Once in office, she went a step further. Siding with two gay California couples in a federal lawsuit seeking to overturn Proposition 8, her attorneys filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that the state law was unconstitutional. On June 26, 2013, the court agreed that opponents of same-sex marriage lacked legal standing.

Two days later, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit formally lifted the injunction against same-sex marriage in California. That same day, two of the plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit, Kris Perry and her partner Sandy Stier, walked into San Francisco's City Hall to get married. Ms. Harris was in town and heard of the nuptials.

She found the two on the City Hall balcony. ''She was beaming from ear to ear, saying, 'Isn't this incredible?''' Ms. Perry said.

Ms. Harris quickly got down to business. She pulled out a piece of paper, read the wedding vows, and 30 seconds later, the formalities were over.

As the brides kissed, the attorney general held her fists in the air. Then she was on her way.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/22/us/politics/kamala-harris-prosecutor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/22/us/politics/kamala-harris-prosecutor.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: After the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit lifted an injunction against same-sex marriage in California, Ms. Harris married two of the plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit, Sandy Stier and her partner Kris Perry, right.

Clockwise from left: Kamala Harris, as attorney general of California, speaking at the State Capitol in Sacramento in 2012

San Francisco police officer Isaac Espinoza's widow, Renata, at his vigil in 2004, a crime in which Ms. Harris angered the police union by taking the death penalty off the table

and officers facing protesters in Oakland after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014. In response to the unrest, she started police bias training. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LACY ATKINS/THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICH PEDRONCELLI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

STEPHEN LAM/REUTERS

JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18-A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18, A19.

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[***Donald Trump and the Stakes of the Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHN-S2V1-DXY4-X1F6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 20, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; LETTERS

**Length:** 1386 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''Biden Is Said to Soften on Ending His Campaign'' (front page, July 19):

Here is a scenario: President Biden bows out in July. At the Democratic National Convention in August, delegates are energized. They find themselves going big and bold.

They nominate Vice President Kamala Harris for president and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a swing state, for vice president. Two women who are smart, energetic and politically astute.

Two women. It's a shocker. All Americans take note. The presidential race suddenly comes alive.

Kamala Harris and Gretchen Whitmer are impressive as the campaign unfolds in the fall. Democratic voters come to see these tough, experienced women as the perfect candidates to take on and actually defeat Donald Trump.

The Democratic base gets fired up and organized. Its relatively youthful ticket has a sudden appeal to younger generations of voters. The campaign keeps on building steam, eventually taking on a life of its own.

The convention's bold gamble in August pays off big in November.

David DillmanOccidental, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re ''Pelosi Presses Biden on Odds'' (news analysis, front page, July 19):

As much as we love him and respect his accomplishments, Democratic and independent voters everywhere are hoping that President Biden's Covid diagnosis might give him the medical rationale he needs to gracefully and honorably withdraw.

The most compelling idea I've heard for what comes next is for a ''blitz primary.'' Mr. Biden steps aside with a heroic speech; Kamala Harris readily agrees to join in this process as the presumptive -- but not actual -- nominee, so that she can earn it rather than have it handed to her.

Six finalists participate in a series of interviews, town halls and debates, leading up to a secret ranked-choice vote just before the convention by all of the delegates.

The whole process is designed to draw the attention of the American electorate (and the world) to a movement that is deeply committed to defeating an avowed autocrat and protecting democracy, women's bodily rights and the planet -- and is ready to innovate on a grand scale to make it happen.

Momentum can swing in both directions. Just imagine all the electricity this would generate!

Andy CalkinsGloucester, Mass.

To the Editor:

I am an 80-year-old registered Democrat who has voted for every Democratic presidential candidate since 1968, but I am seriously considering abstaining from this year's election because of the behavior of the Democratic leadership.

President Biden should have announced last year that he would not run for re-election, keeping his 2020 pledge to be a ''bridge'' to a new generation of leaders. The primary elections could then have served their intended purpose, allowing Democratic voters the opportunity to choose from among Kamala Harris, Gretchen Whitmer, Gavin Newsom or any other candidates.

Instead, the primaries were an empty exercise in Mr. Biden's coronation, and the party's elites are now debating how to proceed at a point where voters no longer have any say.

As a result, the Democratic candidate who appears on November's ballot will either be the incumbent, in whom a large portion of his own party has vocally lost confidence, or a pinch-hitter who will have been thrust upon the voters without their input.

Either option increases the likelihood of Donald Trump returning to the White House, an outcome I dread but that I will bitterly blame on the Democratic Party.

Susan BrumbaughWest Chester, Pa.

To the Editor:

Joe from Scranton, meet Bridget from Maryland. Lifelong Democrat. Have knocked on doors and or called Democrats since 1998. I believe you when you say you will fight your best up to the election. I fear that your best is not enough to ensure a Democratic victory.

I think of the ***working class***, poor children and our ailing planet that will suffer if you do not prevail. I think of our fragile democracy that Donald Trump will tear apart if you do not prevail.

We need a person who can bring energy and excitement to the campaign. We need a person who can fire back with a rapid response to every lie that Mr. Trump will utter in these next few months.

You have served your country well. You can step away knowing you changed the lives of millions of Americans in a positive way. You have put our country on a sound path to prosperity and good health. And we thank you!

Bridget BohaczClarksville, Md.

The G.O.P. Convention: 'Like Watching a Dystopian Movie'

To the Editor:

Watching the Republican convention this week was like watching a dystopian movie about the demise of a great nation that starts with the rise of a dangerous and messianic leader, continues with followers who ignore the stark history lessons staring them in the face, and ends with an election that erodes the people's hard-won freedoms in exchange for a handful of empty promises.

The only thing another Donald Trump term guarantees is four more years of divisive politics among family and friends and a lifetime of consequences for the rest of us.

Just pick your poison -- more gun violence, a widening gap between rich and poor, fewer freedoms for women, minorities, L.G.B.T.Q. folk, non-Christians, teachers, workers, doctors and the press; fewer environmental and health care protections; an isolated America that turns its back on allies; an unchecked, ultra-right-leaning judiciary; more rulings that grant free rein to a megalomaniacal president; and the list goes on.

As Americans, our only response to this real-life horror show should be ''fight, fight, fight back!''

Lisa La ValleeChicago

To the Editor:

Donald J. Trump -- failed businessman, inveterate liar, serial philanderer, twice-impeached former president, denier of the results of the 2020 election, instigator of a violent attempted coup, tax cheat and convicted felon -- is the candidate of the Republican Party for the third time. Is this man really the best that the G.O.P. can do?

How pathetic, sad and frighteningly dangerous.

Jeremy ThornerBerkeley, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re ''Donald Trump Is Unfit to Lead'' (editorial, July 14):

I greatly applaud your incisive editorial on Donald Trump being unfit to lead. Yet it was notable that you did not mention his cognitive deficits, especially given the repeated scrutiny of President Biden's.

We seem to hold Mr. Biden to a much higher standard than Mr. Trump. Mr. Biden's every verbal slippage and fumble is highlighted ad nauseam, but journalists tend to gloss over the fact that Mr. Trump cannot string a sentence together.

Mr. Trump's incompetence to serve is on full display every time he opens his mouth, as he is unable to communicate his thoughts in a coherent fashion even when reading from a teleprompter.

Please add that to the long list of reasons that he is unqualified to serve as our president.

Barbara CornMilford, Conn.

To the Editor:

Thank you for creating a timeline to remind readers of the cruel realities of Donald Trump's first presidential administration. It is critical that these deep, long-view perspectives do not get lost in the daily news cycle.

Now that you have outlined the stakes, please make clear to readers that voting for the Democratic presidential ticket, regardless of who is on it, is the only action that will keep Mr. Trump out of office. Not voting or voting for a third-party candidate will have the impact of allowing Mr. Trump an electoral victory that will jeopardize future elections.

Amy LiebBoston

Vance's Scary Stands

To the Editor:

Re ''Where Vance Stands on Key Political Issues, From Abortion to the Middle East'' (news article, July 17):

As we witness blood baths in Russia's assault on Ukrainian villages, hospitals and schools, JD Vance had this to say last year: ''I don't really care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other.''

Climate change? Not a threat, he has said.

Should Donald Trump be elected in November, this man, with all his youthful vigor and Ivy League credentials, will be that proverbial heartbeat away from becoming our next president. It is so terrifying.

Cathy BernardNew York

To the Editor:

Re ''An Apology Broke the Ice as Vance Courted Trump'' (front page, July 18):

It sounds as if JD Vance played Donald Trump like a violin.

Winnie BoalCincinnati

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/19/opinion/joe-biden-withdrawal.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/19/opinion/joe-biden-withdrawal.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***Many Questions Remain For France After Voters Provided Mix of Answers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CFB-31X1-JBG3-60PC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 9, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1169 words

**Byline:** By Adam Nossiter and Aurelien Breeden

**Body**

It was a day of big surprises in France, with the left surging unexpectedly, the far right falling far short of expectations and the question of who will be the next prime minister still unclear.

France's left-wing parties surged unexpectedly in nationwide legislative elections on Sunday, denying the nationalist, anti-immigration National Rally party a majority in the lower house of Parliament.

But official results showed that no party or bloc had secured an absolute majority, leaving one of Europe's largest countries headed for gridlock or political instability.

Here are five takeaways from the election.

Big Surprise No. 1

There were two big surprises as France voted for a new Parliament in snap elections, neither one foreseen by pundits, pollsters or prognosticators.

The biggest was the triumph of the New Popular Front, a coalition of left-wing parties that is now the dominant force in a bloc of about 190 lawmakers and that has emerged as the lower house's leading political group.

It was the French left's most surprising victory since François Mitterrand brought it back from its postwar wilderness, winning the presidency as a Socialist in 1981.

President Emmanuel Macron, backed by much of France's commentariat, has spent the last seven years proclaiming the left -- and especially the Socialists -- dead, and its more radical fringes like France Unbowed as dangerous troublemakers. Both won big Sunday.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the founder of France Unbowed, which is projected to have won about 75 seats -- perhaps over a dozen more than the Socialists -- declared that Mr. Macron now had a ''duty'' to name a prime minister from the left's coalition, the New Popular Front. He boldly said that he would refuse to ''enter into negotiations with the president.''

In Paris, a large, boisterous crowd assembled to celebrate in the mostly ***working-class*** neighborhood around the Place de la Bataille-de-Stalingrad on Sunday night.

The two other parties in the New Popular Front are the Greens, which are projected to get about 35 seats, and the Communists, who are projected to get about 10.

Big Surprise No. 2

The other shocker was the third-place finish of the National Rally and its allies, which had been expected to win the most seats, if not an absolute majority, in the 577-member National Assembly, the more powerful lower house.

The party was already preparing to govern alongside Mr. Macron in what is known as a cohabitation, when the prime minister and the president are on opposing political sides.

Still, the National Rally and its allies did win about 140 seats -- more than at any time in its history, which the party was quick to point out.

''The tide is rising,'' Marine Le Pen, the party's longtime leader and perennial presidential candidate, told reporters on Sunday. ''It didn't rise high enough this time, but it's still rising. And as a result, our victory, in reality, is only delayed.''

But the fundamental mutation predicted before Sunday -- that France would become a country of the hard right -- did not occur.

And so for all Ms. Le Pen's bluster, the National Rally's election night party was glum.

The 'republican front' may have worked

It is still too early to say how voting patterns shifted between the two rounds of voting and how the New Popular Front pulled off its surprise victory. But strategies aimed at preventing the far right from winning by forming a ''republican front'' appear to have played a big role.

France's left-wing parties and Mr. Macron's centrist coalition pulled out over 200 candidates from three-way races in districts where the far right had a chance of clinching a seat. Many voters who abhorred the far right then cast their ballot for whoever was left -- even if the candidate was hardly their first choice.

''I never would have voted for France Unbowed under normal circumstances'' said Hélène Leguillon, 43, after voting in Le Mans. ''We are forced to make a choice that we would not have made otherwise in order to block the National Rally.''

The far right argued that the tactic was unfair and that it robbed its voters of a voice.

''Depriving millions of French people of the possibility of seeing their ideas brought to power will never be a viable path for France,'' Jordan Bardella, the National Rally president, told supporters in a speech, accusing Mr. Macron and the left of making ''dangerous electoral deals.''

Turnout soared

Official figures for the final-round turnout were not immediately available on Sunday night, but pollsters projected that it would be about 67 percent, far more than in 2022, when France last held legislative elections. That year, only about 46 percent of registered voters went to the polls for the second round.

The turnout on Sunday is the highest since 1997, reflecting intense interest in a race that had much higher stakes than usual.

France's legislative elections normally occur just weeks after the presidential race and usually favor the party that has won the presidency. That makes legislative votes less likely to draw in voters, many of whom feel as if the outcome is preordained.

This time, though, voters believed that their ballot could fundamentally alter the course of Mr. Macron's presidency -- and they appear to have been right.

What's next is unclear

With no party having an absolute majority, and the lower house of Parliament about to be filled by factions that detest one another, it is unclear just exactly how France is to be governed, and by whom.

Mr. Macron has to appoint a prime minister capable of forming a government that the National Assembly's newly seated lawmakers won't topple with a no-confidence vote.

There is no clear picture yet of who that might be, and none of the three main blocs -- which also have their own internal disagreements -- appear ready to work with the others.

''French political culture is not conducive to compromise,'' said Samy Benzina, a public law professor at the University of Poitiers.

Mr. Mélenchon is disliked by many in the Socialist Party (and even by some within his own party, who resent the hold he has on it even though he is no longer its formal leader); Mr. Macron's Renaissance party contains members who resent the president for having called the snap election; and most lawmakers who are not members of the National Rally abhor it.

Mr. Macron himself is a potent generator of anger, as he has proved repeatedly during his seven years as president, although he has already ruled out resigning. The latest survey from the Ifop polling institute, conducted after his decision to call a snap election but before the vote itself, gave him an approval rating of only 26 percent.

Where will France's next prime minister come from? What legislative sway does Mr. Macron still have? Can he even continue to preside if the lower house is ungovernable?

Stay tuned.

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Le Mans, France.Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Le Mans, France.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-key-takeaways.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-key-takeaways.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Voter turnout on Sunday for the second round of French elections was about 67 percent, which was far more than in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** July 9, 2024

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[***From Biggie to Lil Yachty, Rappers Speak Volumes With Their Bling; Critic’s NOTEBOOK***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CVM-X5F1-DXY4-X1PP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 31, 2024 Saturday 10:12 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 2039 words

**Byline:** Seph Rodney, Seph Rodney is a curator and art critic in Newburgh, N.Y. He is co-curating a show on sports that should open at SF MoMA in 2024.

**Highlight:** Hip-hop jewelry does a lot of heavy lifting in a new exhibition in Manhattan. It signifies elite membership, romantic courtship and ambition for greatness.

**Body**

Hip-hop jewelry does a lot of heavy lifting in a new exhibition in Manhattan. It signifies elite membership, romantic courtship and ambition for greatness.

Of the New York museums that would create an exhibition on jewelry associated with hip-hop culture, I would not have imagined the American Museum of Natural History to be one. Yet, “[*Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry*](https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/ice-cold-hip-hop-jewelry)” did open this May in a tiny gallery of their Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. With 66 objects, it has an astute premise — that precious stones might attract more attention if regarded through the lens of hip-hop, likely the most widely proliferating music movement that the United States has ever produced.

This show might have been organized to absorb the energy around the 50th anniversary of hip-hop’s inception last year or anticipate the Hip Hop Museum’s opening in the Bronx in 2025. More cynically, some might see “Ice Cold” as an act of penance for the museum’s [*admitted possession and use*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/arts/american-museum-natural-history-human-remains.html) of [*the remains of Indigenous and enslaved people,*](https://www.propublica.org/article/repatriation-nagpra-museums-human-remains) as the museum faces criticism about the legality and the ethics of these acquisitions. Either way, the venture feels successful. I visited the show twice, on a Thursday evening and on a Monday morning, and each time the gallery was filled with visitors.

The show is beautifully laid out. It’s installed in a small, dark, semicircular gallery, with jewelry in vitrines spotlighted against a black acetate and Plexiglas. The diamonds glint and coruscate as you move across the displays. One could linger, bedazzled and charmed by the bold inventiveness of pieces like ASAP Rocky’s EXO grenade pendant — its “pin” sets the time — displayed on two disks set inside a locket. However, the exhibition offers more, including the concealed and paradoxical implications of wearing these constellations of bling.

The curators, Vikki Tobak, author of “Ice Cold: A Hip-Hop Jewelry History,” [*Kevin “Coach K” Lee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/21/arts/music/migos-lil-yachty-quality-control-coach-k-pee.html), a founder of the Quality Control music label, and [*Karam Gill*](https://www.karam-gill.com/ice-cold), the director of a [*documentary on the subject,*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sqSbmP18fQ) took the important step of historically situating hip-hop’s ostentatious display of wealth. They refer to an Asante chief in Ghana whose ceremonial dress consisted of copious amounts of gold (though the date of an image referenced turns out to be 2005, which makes the ancestral connection vague).

Shrewdly, the curators also name check each jeweler (when they are known), so they are properly recognized as collaborators and makers alongside the musical stars, such as Ghostface Killah’s eagle bracelet by Jason Arasheben — a massive 14 karat gold wrist cuff with an eagle alighting onto it. The Notorious B.I.G.’s Jesus necklace, made by Tito Caicedo of Manny’s New York, is another icon. It features the head and neck of a figure in gold whose beard, locks, clothing and crown are festooned with diamonds. In terms of the meaning they convey, these chains do a lot of heavy lifting.

For starters, they indicate membership in a very exclusive club, such as Quality Control’s QC necklace for members of its label, including Migos and Lil Yachty. The Roc-A-Fella pendant — which notoriously [*can’t be bought but has to be bestowed*](https://time.com/6149657/jean-yuhs-kanye-west-roc-a-fella-chain/) — was made for the eponymous label founded by Jay-Z, Damon Dash and Kareem Burke. And after releasing their 1986 song “My Adidas,” each Run-DMC member received a solid-gold sneaker-shaped pendant by Adidas upon signing an endorsement deal.

[*Roxanne Shanté of the Juice Crew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/arts/music/the-juice-crew-a-rap-history-reunion.html), and one of the few women rappers to achieve stardom in the early days of hip-hop, has her Juice Crew ring shown here. “Having the Juice Crew ring is like a royalty stance, and you had to represent certain things in the community to wear it,” she says in the show’s text. “It stands for so much: community, loyalty and greatness.”

This jewelry is also used by men in courting rituals. Nelly, who wears a diamond Nefertiti piece in one of the exhibition photos, sings in “Ride Wit Me” (2000): “And if shorty wanna pop, we popping the Crist’ / Shorty wanna see the ice, then I ice the wrist.” Both parties benefit here: The man, bestowing Cristal Champagne, is recognized as a lavish provider; the woman as a valued object deserving of expensive expenditure. What’s unrecognized is just how restrictive these roles can be. (Insightfully, though, queer experience is not ignored in the exhibition, which includes the jeweler David Tamargo’s grill set commissioned by Lil Nas X in 2021 to celebrate the artist’s unabashedly homoerotic single, [*“Montero (Call Me By Your Name).”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQRbeSlfq00))

These pieces also serve as a kind of memorial. On display is the [*Capital Steez necklace commissioned by Joey Bada*](https://www.complex.com/music/a/omar-burgess/joey-badass-capital-steez-medallion)ss in honor of his friend Capital Steez, who died in 2012 at 19 years old. Badass became a founding member of the Progressive Era or Pro Era collective along with Steez and other rappers. The necklace features the late rapper’s likeness, in gold, on a diamond-studded Gucci link chain. Pouring one out for a homie who has passed on is a well-known ritual, but imprinting his image on a pendant moves him up into the pantheon of public attention.

But more important, the jewelry also stands for the ambition to be elite, to have the means to spend money extravagantly on personal adornment. And this desire usually outpaces the actual assets that aspirational rappers have at their disposal.

On his 2004 debut album “The College Dropout,” Kanye West, lately Ye, rapped about buying $25,000 jewelry before owning a house, then adding: “I got a couple past-due bills, I won’t get specific/I got a problem with spendin’ before I get it/We all self-conscious, I’m just the first to admit it.” Ye, one of the most emotionally transparent (and most unstable) voices in hip-hop, articulates its fake-it-till-you-make-it ethos.

This is a critique often leveled at hip-hop culture: that lavish self-presentation — not only jewelry but also clothing and cars — says what you buy, as opposed to what you produce, is the measure of your value; that hip-hop glorifies a lifestyle that is fake or irresponsible and, either way, out of reach for most people on this planet. There is some truth to all of this. But this is not hip-hop’s cross to bear alone. The fault lies in American popular culture at large.

Throughout the 1980s, during hip-hop’s commercial rise, the television show “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous” flogged the clichéd notion that “making it” consisted of having exclusive wristwatches, automobiles, boats and real estate. In hip-hop culture, rappers say it with their chests, out loud, without shame, in the streets. The trappings are worn for public view, rather than obscured by shell companies.

Still, this shamelessness permits callous and spiteful parts of the culture to feel entitled. “Run the Jewels,” released in 2013 by the eponymous rap duo, encouraged violently stealing jewelry from anyone who seems privileged: “So when we say, ‘Run the jewels’/Just run ’em, baby, please don’t delay me/She clutched the pearls, said, ‘What in the world?’/ And, ‘I won’t give up shit!’/I put the pistol on that poodle and I shot that bitch.”

So, while “Ice Cold” sings from the hip-hop songbook in the key of celebration, it avoids the messier bits of the culture: the misogyny, the persistent though lessening homophobia, the endorsement of physical violence.

I wish hip-hop culture as it is presented here was more aware of and willing to acknowledge these contradictions and brave enough to try resolve them. But this show doesn’t aim to do this. It doesn’t feature the weird parts of hip-hop, underground acts, “conscious” or feminist rap, or hip-hop produced outside the United States. Still, Latin artists are present, including Fat Joe and Big Pun. As are some women rappers, including MC Lyte and Queen Latifah.

The show does take seriously the less expensive signs of Black Liberation that act as adornment, such as DJ Kool Herc’s leather medallion on which he drew his self-portrait and graffiti tag. Kool Herc is one of the pioneers of hip-hop from the early 1970s, so his inclusion is a nod to the historical tradition. Within that tradition is Public Enemy, arguably the most overtly political group of the early 1990s. The show offers clock pendants (adopted on a dare) worn by their hype man, [*Flavor Flav*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTd3tyxuRQ4), and the pendant designed by Chuck D, a founder of the group, that features a Black man caught in the cross hairs of a rifle sight — meant to symbolize the plight of all Black men in the U.S.

But there is an internal contradiction in the show and within hip-hop itself: The people whom the culture purports to represent are, to an extent, ignored in favor of the celebrities who hold the mic and whose voices boom loudest. These are the one percent.

Yet, the orientation toward the street and the desire to show the neighborhood that you have arrived financially impels innovation. T Pain’s “Big Ass Chain” necklace weighs more than 10 pounds and has almost 200 carats of diamonds. According to the caption, he commissioned this piece on a dare from a person he does not even remember.

Tyler, the Creator’s bellhop necklace, a bejeweled golden figure carrying a suitcase in each hand, is my favorite piece not because, as the text conveys, it “incorporates 186 carats in diamonds and 60 carats in sapphire, as well as more than 23,000 handset stones.” Rather, it alludes to the history of Black people laboring in service jobs, such as hotel bellhops, because — on the basis of their race alone — they were denied employment commensurate with their skills, abilities and ambitions. It’s a symbol of Tyler’s success and a nod to his ancestors who could not radiate their gifts so publicly.

I know something about the impulse to celebrate one’s achievements with jewelry. I got my first black diamond ring a few years ago and had to overcome significant anxiety to do it. I grew up in a ***working-class*** home that convinced me that extravagance was permissible only after achieving a firmly middle-class life. I don’t know that I have. But after the protracted struggle to attain my doctorate, I felt I deserved it. It wasn’t until the third visit to a Midtown jeweler that I noticed pictures on the walls of various hip-hop luminaries. What connects us is the years we spent working in obscurity, and our willingness to invest in an object that pays gleaming tribute to the work we’ve done.

During [*a recent public forum*](https://www.facebook.com/forharriet), Nikole Hannah-Jones, the author of “The 1619 Project,” discussed the importance of Black people presenting themselves in ways that read as authentic. She said, “One of the things I love about Black people is our sense of style and flair.” She argues that in the struggle to achieve success, “What is important is if you make it, make it intact.”

“Ice Cold,” despite its limitations, emphasizes the aspect of hip-hop that genuinely nourishes its audiences: recognizing and acknowledging that we deserve more than simply being intact; we have every right to shine.

Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry Through Jan. 5 at the American Museum of Natural History in Manhattan; amnh.org.

PHOTOS: A necklace honoring Capital Steez, on view in “Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Below from left: Ghostface Killah’s cuff, designed by Jason Arasheben; the QC necklace, made of diamonds and 14-karat white gold and designed by Wafi of Jewelry Unlimited; the Capital Steez necklace, which Joey Badass commissioned when Steez died in 2014; Roxanne Shanté’s Juice Crew ring; the Roc-a-Fella pendant, which can only be bestowed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALVARO KEDING/AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY; MIDDLE, VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Second row, Slick Rick’s crown and eyepatch in “Ice Cold: An Exhibition of Hip-Hop Jewelry” at the American Museum of Natural History. Above from left: a gold necklace featuring Missy Elliott, Lauryn Hill, Beyoncé, Queen Latifah, Mary J. Blige and Erykah Badu; A$AP Rocky’s Lego pendant; T Pain’s necklace, which weighs more than 10 pounds. Below, the show is in a gallery within the museum’s Mignone Halls of Gems and Minerals. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ALVARO KEDING/AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY) (C6) This article appeared in print on page C1, C6.

**Load-Date:** February 11, 2025

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[***France's Election Results Are Astounding***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CFB-31X1-JBG3-60R4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** By David Broder

**Body**

The far right was at the gates of power.

In the initial round of voting on June 30, Marine Le Pen's National Rally came first with 33 percent support, topping more than half the local races. With the party projected to fall just short of an absolute majority, France was in a frenzy of speculation and anxiety. National Rally's lead candidate, the 28-year-old Jordan Bardella, insisted that he'd agree to become prime minister only if he had Parliament behind him. On the evidence of the polls, he seemed well placed to demand a mandate.

But Sunday's second round proved him wrong. Mr. Bardella not only fell far short of winning the prime minister's office; his party came in third, with 143 seats. Although an expansion from its previous tally of 89, this was a far cry from what was projected just days ago. President Emmanuel Macron's coalition, which had lagged throughout the short campaign, flouted expectations to come in second, with 168 seats. The biggest surprise was who came in first. The left-wing New Popular Front, a coalition of four parties hastily put together before this election, emerged as the largest force, with 182 seats.

This is a truly astounding result. Through a stunning act of collective responsibility, the far right has been stopped. But France is not suddenly fixed. With no group taking more than one-third of the National Assembly's 577 seats, there is trouble ahead. The far right, though chastened, is in a stronger position than ever before, commanding a growing electoral coalition and decently placed for the presidential election in 2027. But France, on the back of pragmatic collaboration between parties and enthusiastic resistance from voters, has won a brilliant reprieve.

Cooperation among National Rally's opponents was central to the turnaround. After the first round, over 200 third-place candidates from the New Popular Front and Mr. Macron's coalition stood down, allowing other candidates clear runs. In what the Green leader Marine Tondelier called a ''new republican front,'' nodding to the tradition of French voters combining to thwart the far right, voters were asked to back whoever could beat the National Rally candidate.

They answered the call, left-wing voters especially. According to a poll, in duels in which either Mr. Macron's allies or conservatives faced National Rally, seven in 10 left-wingers turned out for the anti-Le Pen candidate, with most others abstaining. The front held less well in duels between the left and Ms. Le Pen's party: About half of Mr. Macron's supporters backed the left, and one in six voted for the far right. The result, though, was stark. In seat after seat, the far right's strong position wasn't enough to overcome its combined opponents.

The strength of this mobilization was especially remarkable, given the mixed messages from government figures. In the days after the first round, the president's camp split between those who called for a vote for any anti-Le Pen candidate and others who refused to stand down in favor of Jean-Luc Mélenchon's France Unbowed -- the biggest and most radical force on the left. Many on the center-right called on voters to block both Mr. Mélenchon and Ms. Le Pen, undermining the suggestion that the main issue was to stop the far right.

The New Popular Front is far from united. Mr. Mélenchon -- who does not have a seat in Parliament -- has tumultuous relations with the center-left Socialists and Greens, as well as the Communists, who will all want to avoid his taking the lead. On Sunday night, center-left figures in this camp gestured toward the need for broader dialogue and a change of political culture, already hinting at a rapprochement with Mr. Macron and a split with the more radical left. The New Popular Front, with barely a moment to enjoy its success, may soon begin to splinter.

Yet the problem runs deeper than bickering among parties. While the far right was stopped -- as it was before in France -- it has still advanced significantly. In parliamentary elections, the party has historically performed poorly because of its weak local roots: In recent decades it had only a handful of deputies. Now it has 143, a historic high. It will fight the 2027 presidential election from a much stronger starting point, including through an expansion of its support into the mainstream right-wing electorate.

That support is considerable. Since 2022, National Rally -- which has long had a strong base among blue-collar workers -- has nearly doubled its support among white-collar employees, so-called midranking professionals and top managers. Its vote still tilts toward low-income and less-educated people, but it is rising fastest among those earning over 3,000 euros a month. Its more recent messaging -- summed up by Mr. Bardella's offer ''to restore order in the public accounts, as well as in the streets'' -- resonates with homeowners and people with middle-income jobs. The party's rise derives not from a ***working-class*** revolt, as some would have it, but from the support of a widening cross-section of French society.

In this election, an ad hoc alliance ensured the defeat of National Rally candidates. But the New Popular Front's relatively good score relied on its bedrock of lower-income voters, built through opposition to the current government. As in Spain last year, a broad-left coalition headed off the far right by both warning against the reactionary threat and offering real material benefits to its own supporters. Yet for this same reason, the anti-Le Pen vote is full of contradictions. The left has sharply opposed Mr. Macron not only on economic policy but also on questions of identity and border controls. More ructions are surely to come.

Beyond relief, the real result of this election is gridlock. The new National Assembly will be even messier than the last one, with Mr. Macron possibly tempted to play fast and loose with alliances to strengthen his authority. His decision to call snap elections has not been quite the disaster for his presidency that it had seemed to be. Still, shedding 77 seats was not a stroke of political genius, and Parliament is now extraordinarily fragmented. Mr. Macron has already rejected the resignation of his prime minister, Gabriel Attal. What comes next is unclear.

But one thing is certain. Thanks to an energetic campaign -- and a healthy dose of flexibility -- France won't be getting a far-right government. And that is something to celebrate.

David Broder (@broderly) is the author of ''Mussolini's Grandchildren: Fascism in Contemporary Italy.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/09/opinion/france-election-far-right.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/09/opinion/france-election-far-right.html)

**Graphic**

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[***What Just Happened in France Is Astounding; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CF9-T2Y1-DXY4-X01T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1160 words

**Byline:** David Broder

**Highlight:** Through a stunning act of collective responsibility, the far right has been stopped.

**Body**

The far right was at the [*gates of power*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0).

In the initial round of voting on June 30, Marine Le Pen’s National Rally came first with 33 percent support, topping more than half the local races. With the party projected to fall [*just short*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) of an absolute majority, France was in a frenzy of speculation and anxiety. National Rally’s lead candidate, the 28-year-old Jordan Bardella, [*insisted*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) that he’d agree to become prime minister only if he had Parliament behind him. On the evidence of the polls, he seemed well placed to demand a mandate.

But Sunday’s [*second round*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) proved him wrong. Mr. Bardella not only fell far short of winning the prime minister’s office; his party came in third, with 143 seats. Although an expansion from its previous tally of 89, this was a far cry from what was projected just days ago. President Emmanuel Macron’s coalition, which had lagged throughout the short campaign, flouted expectations to come in second, with 168 seats. The biggest surprise was who came in first. The left-wing New Popular Front, a coalition of four parties hastily put together before this election, emerged as the largest force, with 182 seats.

This is a truly astounding result. Through a stunning act of collective responsibility, the far right has been stopped. But France is not suddenly fixed. With no group taking more than one-third of the National Assembly’s [*577 seats*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0), there is trouble ahead. The far right, though chastened, is in a stronger position than ever before, commanding a growing electoral coalition and decently placed for the presidential election in 2027. But France, on the back of pragmatic collaboration between parties and enthusiastic resistance from voters, has won a brilliant reprieve.

Cooperation among National Rally’s opponents was central to the turnaround. After the first round, [*over 200*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) third-place candidates from the New Popular Front and Mr. Macron’s coalition stood down, allowing other candidates clear runs. In what the Green leader Marine Tondelier called a “[*new republican front*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0),” nodding to the tradition of French voters combining to thwart the far right, voters were asked to back whoever could beat the National Rally candidate.

They answered the call, left-wing voters especially. According to a poll, in duels in which either Mr. Macron’s allies or conservatives faced National Rally, [*seven in 10 left-wingers*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) turned out for the anti-Le Pen candidate, with most others abstaining. The front held less well in duels between the left and Ms. Le Pen’s party: About half of Mr. Macron’s supporters backed the left, and one in six voted for the far right. The result, though, was stark. In seat after seat, the far right’s strong position wasn’t enough to overcome its combined opponents.

The strength of this mobilization was especially remarkable, given the mixed messages from government figures. In the days after the first round, the president’s camp split between those who called for a vote for any anti-Le Pen candidate and others who refused to stand down in favor of Jean-Luc Mélenchon’s France Unbowed — the biggest and most radical force on the left. Many on the [*center*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0)-[*right*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) called on voters to block both Mr. Mélenchon and Ms. Le Pen, undermining the suggestion that the main issue was to stop the far right.

The New Popular Front is far from united. Mr. Mélenchon — who does not have a seat in Parliament — has tumultuous relations with the center-left Socialists and Greens, as well as the Communists, who will all want to avoid his taking the lead. On Sunday night, [*center-left figures*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) in this camp gestured toward the need for broader dialogue and a change of political culture, already hinting at a rapprochement with Mr. Macron and a split with the more radical left. The New Popular Front, with barely a moment to enjoy its success, may soon begin to splinter.

Yet the problem runs deeper than bickering among parties. While the far right was stopped — as it was before in France — it has still advanced significantly. In parliamentary elections, the party has historically performed poorly because of its weak local roots: In recent decades it had only a handful of deputies. Now it has 143, a historic high. It will fight the 2027 presidential election from a much stronger starting point, including through an expansion of its support into the mainstream right-wing electorate.

That support is considerable. Since 2022, National Rally — which has long had a strong base among blue-collar workers — has [*nearly*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) [*doubled*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) its support among white-collar employees, so-called midranking professionals and top managers. Its vote still tilts toward low-income and less-educated people, but it is rising fastest among those earning over 3,000 euros a month. Its more recent messaging — summed up by Mr. Bardella’s offer “to [*restore order*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) in the public accounts, as well as in the streets” — [*resonates*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) with homeowners and people with middle-income jobs. The party’s rise derives not from a ***working-class*** revolt, as some would [*have it*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0), but from the support of a widening cross-section of French society.

In this election, an ad hoc alliance ensured the defeat of National Rally candidates. But the New Popular Front’s relatively good score relied on its bedrock of lower-income voters, built through opposition to the current government. As [*in Spain*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) last year, a broad-left coalition headed off the far right by both warning against the reactionary threat and offering real material benefits to its own supporters. Yet for this same reason, the anti-Le Pen vote is full of contradictions. The left has sharply opposed Mr. Macron not only on economic policy but also on questions of identity and border controls. More ructions are surely to come.

Beyond relief, the real result of this election is gridlock. The new National Assembly will be even messier than the last one, with Mr. Macron possibly tempted to play fast and loose with alliances to strengthen his authority. His decision to call snap elections has not been quite the disaster for his presidency that it had seemed to be. Still, shedding 77 seats was not a stroke of political genius, and Parliament is now extraordinarily fragmented. Mr. Macron has already [*rejected the resignation*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) of his prime minister, Gabriel Attal. What comes next is unclear.

But one thing is certain. Thanks to an energetic campaign — and a healthy dose of flexibility — France won’t be getting a far-right government. And that is something to celebrate.

David Broder ([*@broderly*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0)) is the author of “Mussolini’s Grandchildren: Fascism in Contemporary Italy.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.ouest-france.fr/elections/legislatives/le-rn-aux-portes-du-pouvoir-desastre-pour-emmanuel-macron-a-la-une-de-la-presse-ce-matin-1f9681d6-3760-11ef-beb3-b5dffeb610b0).

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The author of “Mussolini’s Grandchildren: Fascism in Contemporary Italy.”

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Liberals on Their High Horse About 'Rich Men'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692K-6C61-JBG3-6060-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 31, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 1065 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

What's wrong here?

A self-described high school dropout living in a camper with a tarp on the roof sings a plaintive cri de coeur about blue collar workers being shafted by the wealthy, and it is right-wing Republicans who rush to embrace him while Democrats wag their fingers and scold him for insensitivity.

Huh? Have Democrats retreated so far from their workingman roots that their knee-jerk impulse is to dump on a blue collar guy who highlights ''folks in the street, ain't got nothin' to eat''?

If you've been on Mars for the last couple of weeks, I'm talking of course about Oliver Anthony, a country singer who a month ago was unknown and now has had his song, ''Rich Men North of Richmond,'' soar from nowhere to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the last two weeks.

''I've been sellin' my soul, workin' all day,'' Anthony laments. He blames the travails of workers on ''rich men north of Richmond'' -- a swipe at Washington and elites generally. Some of his lines aren't so different from elements in F.D.R.'s speech about ''the forgotten man'' or in Robert Kennedy's elegy for ''the shattered dreams of others.''

Yet in this case, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene labeled ''Rich Men'' the ''anthem of the forgotten Americans,'' and Fox News asked participants in the Republican presidential debate to discuss it. Meanwhile, some on the left pounced on it as right-wing propaganda and even as ''racist trash.''

Does the left really want to leave battered, angry workers to be defended by a G.O.P. that periodically guts unions, targets Social Security, resists health care coverage and opposes increases in the minimum wage?

Anthony, who calls himself ''just some idiot and his guitar,'' seemed taken aback by the assumption that he must be a right-winger. He said his song was meant to blast politicians on both sides, including those in the G.O.P. presidential debate who were trying to weaponize his words. ''I wrote that song about those people,'' he said.

''It's aggravating seeing people on conservative news try to identify with me like I'm one of them,'' he added.

I don't agree with everything Anthony says, but his principal theme is that ***working-class*** Americans have been screwed over -- and he's right on that. He's also correct that both parties bear some responsibility and have twiddled their thumbs as ***working-class*** Americans die by the tens of thousands from drugs, alcohol and suicide.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics figures offer a metric of the catastrophe: Average weekly nonsupervisory wages, a metric for blue-collar earnings, were actually higher in 1969 (adjusted for inflation) than they were this year. Meanwhile, bosses are earning far, far more.

A new report from the Institute for Policy Studies says that the C.E.O. of Live Nation Entertainment, a concert company, earned $139 million in 2022 -- while workers earned a median pay of $25,673. The report adds that since 2020 at Dollar Tree, where many struggling Americans shop and work, prices have increased, average worker pay has dipped and the C.E.O.'s stock holdings increased in value by more than 2,000 percent.

This is the context in which many ***working-class*** Americans have lost hope and are self-medicating or simply killing themselves. It constitutes a social great depression: We lose more Americans to ''deaths of despair'' every 10 days than the total of all the service members killed in two decades of war in Afghanistan and Iraq -- yet we have all been far too complacent about the suffering. This was the topic of my last book, it's a theme of my next and it's the focus of my ''How America Heals'' series this year, so I'm all for Anthony bellowing his frustrations and calling attention to these issues.

He makes the valid point that these disparate social crises reflect a broader pathology that is holding America back. ''People talk about epidemics in this country, and the homelessness and the drug use and the lack of skilled labor and the suicide rates,'' he said. ''Those aren't problems, those are symptoms of a bigger universal problem ... we don't talk about it enough.''

Anthony says he dropped out of high school, earned a G.E.D. and worked in a paper mill for $14.50 an hour until he fractured his skull in a workplace accident. He has wrestled with alcohol and drug use and with mental health issues, he acknowledges.

''I am living in a 27-foot camper with a tarp on the roof that I got off of craigslist for $750,'' he wrote on Facebook. His message and his story resonate deeply with frustrated workers -- that's why the internet is full of ''Oliver Anthony for President'' T-shirts.

Liberals are properly attentive to racial injustice, but have a blind spot about class, driven in part by unfair stereotypes that members of the white ***working class*** are invariably bigots. In fact, you can't think seriously about inequality in America without contemplating race, but that's also true of class. And as the Harvard professor Michael Sandel has noted, one of the last acceptable prejudices is disdain for the less educated.

Anthony sounded some conservative themes in his song, including complaining about taxes -- and that led to some liberal jeers. But as Noah Smith observed in his economics blog, a Virginian earning the median factory wage pays a total tax rate of more than 24 percent --higher than one estimate of the rate paid by the 400 richest Americans.

I wish Anthony hadn't complained in his song about obese people on food stamps; that's a horrible stereotype and was simply mean. But just as Anthony should show more compassion for people struggling on food stamps, liberals should show more compassion for workers who have been left behind. It's partly this condescension that has driven many ***working-class*** voters, initially white voters and more recently brown and Black ones as well, into the arms of conservative politicians who would shaft them even more.

If we're going to achieve a more progressive agenda, then we need to win elections -- and that means respecting workers rather than scorning them, insulting their faith and casually dismissing them as bigots. If we believe in empathy, let's show some.

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/2023/08/30/opinion/oliver-anthony-liberals.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/opinion/oliver-anthony-liberals.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** August 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Better Angels***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5G-2571-JBG3-604D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 2, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 20; NONFICTION

**Length:** 886 words

**Byline:** By Andrew Graybill

**Body**

''Our Kindred Creatures'' details the rise, and contradictions, of the animal welfare movement.

OUR KINDRED CREATURES: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals, by Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy

In 2007, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals moistened eyes with TV ads featuring the singer Sarah McLachlan. As her song ''Angel'' played in the background, viewers were confronted with a parade of despair: images of neglected and abused cats and dogs, some of them grievously injured. ''Will you be an angel for a helpless animal?'' McLachlan pleaded.

The commercials were a huge success, raising $30 million for the organization despite the fact that many viewers couldn't bear even to look at them, including McLachlan herself. ''It was brutal doing those ads,'' she recalled years later. ''I can't watch them. It kills me.''

In their powerful new book, ''Our Kindred Creatures,'' the journalist Bill Wasik (an editor at The New York Times) and the veterinarian Monica Murphy argue that such compassion for suffering animals was in short supply throughout the United States until an ''awakening'' in the late 19th century. The authors -- who have co-written a previous book about rabies -- explain that this movement began in England, where animal welfare commingled with and evolved alongside other moral crusades, including abolitionism. After the end of slavery in the United States, American activists turned their attention to other struggles. The plight of animals during the Gilded Age spoke loudly to some of them.

The stories of two men provide a loose structure to the book. Henry Bergh had his conversion moment while attending a bullfight in Seville. Though appalled by the treatment of the animals, he was no less agitated by what he called ''cruelism'' -- the degrading effect of such violence on spectators, especially children. In 1866 he founded the A.S.P.C.A.

George Thorndike Angell joined the movement around the same time. He launched a monthly publication in 1868 and later established a network of educational clubs. But his most indelible contribution may have been the unauthorized reprinting, in 1890, of ''Black Beauty,'' an English novel that the authors describe as ''the bildungsroman of a ***working-class*** horse.'' It sold 371,000 copies in the United States in less than a year, drawing comparisons to Harriet Beecher Stowe's galvanizing antislavery novel ''Uncle Tom's Cabin.''

The other main characters in ''Our Kindred Creatures'' are, appropriately, the animals themselves, whose distress -- propagandized by their advocates -- bludgeons the modern conscience. Take, for instance, the stray dogs culled from the streets of 19th-century New York City; if unclaimed by 4 p.m. on any given day, they were drowned in a metal crate that could accommodate several dozen in a single dunking. Or the live rabbits once used in medical school classes, their throats flayed open to demonstrate the workings of the nervous system. And the millions of birds harvested annually for their feathers, which adorned the hats of stylish women.

Wasik and Murphy conclude that the awakening reached its apotheosis with the establishment of the nation's first pet cemetery, in 1896. To their credit, however, the authors do not offer a narrative of simple progress. Rather, they highlight the movement's internal contradictions. Bergh, who was known to prowl the streets in search of animal abusers, embraced flogging and foot-caning as methods of corporal punishment. Activists like Caroline Earle White, who opposed experimentation on laboratory animals, delayed scientific advances aimed at saving human lives. The taxidermist William Temple Hornaday, alarmed by the near extinction of the bison, traveled west in 1886 to hunt them for display in the Smithsonian, so that future generations might behold the species.

The most striking paradox is that, even as Americans learned to empathize with some of their kindred creatures, they reconciled themselves to the immiseration of others. After all, it was during the post-bellum era that the mechanized slaughter of livestock took off, with Chicago as the industry's capital city. Its famous (or notorious) stockyards occupied hundreds of acres south of downtown and became a tourist draw during the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Wasik and Murphy are right to say that market forces helped the people clutching copies of ''Black Beauty'' overcome their aversion to the carnage, whether because of corporate profits or cheap meat. But the cognitive dissonance is astounding all the same.

The authors' tone is restrained throughout the book but they make a hard -- and welcome -- pivot in the final chapter. In those pages, they press the case for a ''new type of goodness'' that would elevate food animals and other mistreated species to the realm of our concern. For skeptics who insist that such a task is too great, Wasik and Murphy counter that ''moral change does happen, often at profound scale and remarkable speed.'' Let us hope so, for the sake of not just livestock, but all creatures -- including humans -- suffering in our unfolding environmental catastrophe.

OUR KINDRED CREATURES: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals | By Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy | Knopf | 450 pp. | $35

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/15/books/review/our-kindred-creatures-wasik-murphy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/15/books/review/our-kindred-creatures-wasik-murphy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A New York City dogcatcher at work in the 1940s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NAT FEIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR20.

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2024

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[***One Word Has Elevated Minnesota’s Governor to the Democrats’ V.P. Wish List***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKN-YM71-DXY4-X016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2024 Monday 23:07 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1463 words

**Byline:** Ernesto Londoño Ernesto Londo&amp;#241;o is a Times reporter based in Minnesota, covering news in the Midwest and drug use and counternarcotics policy.

**Highlight:** “These guys are just weird,” Gov. Tim Walz, a former schoolteacher, has said of the opposition.

**Body**

“These guys are just weird,” Gov. Tim Walz, a former schoolteacher, has said of the opposition.

No one would accuse Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota of being flashy. He taught social studies for 20 years before trying politics. During six terms in Congress, he was regarded more as a workhorse than a showboat.

Neither has Mr. Walz really been a household name outside of Minnesota — at least, not until this past week, when he made a flurry of cable news appearances pointedly pressing Kamala Harris’s case and dismissing Donald J. Trump’s agenda as divisive and extreme. And weird.

“These guys are just weird,” Mr. Walz said on Saturday of the Republican ticket. He was talking to a crowd of canvassers for the Harris campaign in St. Paul, but the “weird” line of attack, which he has been using for months, [*went viral*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/). (Ms. Harris herself [*used the words “just plain weird”*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) over the weekend to describe the ways in which Republicans have chosen to criticize her.)

Weird is not a word most people would use to describe Mr. Walz, and that may well be one reason he is among a handful of Democrats under consideration as Ms. Harris’s potential running mate. Mr. Walz is seen as offering a steady, down-to-earth, everyman persona. His supporters say he also would bring a record of winning over moderate voters and deep roots in the rural Midwest that might serve as a counterpoint to JD Vance, Mr. Trump’s running mate.

Mr. Walz, 60, was raised in a small town in Nebraska. He attended public schools and graduated from Chadron State College in Nebraska. He taught at a public school in Mankato, Minn., a small city south of Minneapolis where Mr. Walz and his wife, a fellow teacher, raised two children. Outside of the classroom, he coached high school football and served in the Army National Guard for 24 years, ascending to the rank of command sergeant major.

In 2006, Mr. Walz got his start in politics by defeating a longtime Republican member of Congress in a largely rural district, a feat that has become increasingly rare in recent years.

“Here’s a guy who actually knows how to fish, this is a guy who actually knows how to hunt, this is a guy who served our country in the National Guard,” said Heidi Heitkamp, a former senator and fellow Democrat who lost her post representing nearby North Dakota, a rural and conservative state, in 2018.

As a running mate to Ms. Harris, Mr. Walz could help Democrats shore up support in battleground states by appealing to the ***working-class***, white, rural voters who have drifted away from the party, Ms. Heitkamp said. “When you look at Tim Walz, what you have is someone with a lived experience that is so comparable to so many of the people in rural America who are willing to maybe reconsider just blindly voting for the Republican Party candidate,” she said.

As governor of Minnesota, though, Mr. Walz’s policy moves have sharply steered the state to the left.

Mr. Walz won a second term in 2022 as Democrats flipped the State Senate. That sealed a trifecta that gave Democrats control of the State Capitol and Mr. Walz presided over the state’s [*most productive legislative session*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) in decades.

Democrats enshrined a right to abortion under state law, legalized recreational marijuana, funded free meals at schools across the state, required employers to offer paid medical and family leave, expanded background checks for gun purchases and established a goal to transition to a carbon-free electricity grid by 2040.

Mr. Walz, who is currently chair of the Democratic Governors Association, was unapologetic about all the change. “Right now, Minnesota is showing the country you don’t win elections to bank political capital,” [*he wrote*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) as the 2023 legislative session ended. “You win elections to burn political capital and improve lives.”

Choosing Mr. Walz for the national ticket would not directly answer the most pressing geographic concerns in this election. While presidential elections have sometimes been close in Minnesota, voters there [*have not selected a Republican presidential candidate*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) since Richard Nixon in 1972. Still, the Trump campaign has made it clear that it hopes to be competitive in Minnesota, and Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance [*held a rally in St. Cloud*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) over the weekend.

Even if Minnesota is not a political battleground, some supporters say that having Mr. Walz on the ticket could resonate with other upper Midwestern voters, including those in the swing states of Wisconsin and Michigan.

But David Hann, the chairman of the Minnesota Republican Party, said that Mr. Walz’s inclusion on Ms. Harris’s list of running mates showed that Democrats were struggling, even in traditionally blue states like Minnesota. Polls conducted before President Biden gave up his re-election bid [*have given Republicans*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) hope that Minnesota could flip to their party in November. But a [*Fox News poll*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/) conducted last week showed Minnesotans supporting Ms. Harris over Mr. Trump by six percentage points.

Mr. Hann said that if Mr. Walz were to be selected as the vice-presidential pick, he would prove to be a liability. Mr. Hann said Mr. Walz was responsible for failing to prevent the chaos and damage that followed the murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police in 2020. [*In riots after the killing*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/), a five-mile stretch of the city sustained extraordinary damage, including a police precinct that was set on fire.

Mr. Walz deployed hundreds of National Guard troops three days after Mr. Floyd’s murder as looting, arsons and demonstrations spread through Minneapolis. Critics said that the governor should have acted sooner to quell mounting unrest. The Walz administration has said that the city of Minneapolis failed to provide detailed information needed to deploy the Guard earlier.

Mr. Hann and other critics said that as governor, Mr. Walz led the “most partisan administration” in recent memory, passing a trove of liberal legislation that Republicans called extreme and fiscally irresponsible. “There’s such great dissatisfaction with Democrats at the national level and certainly in the state, where in the last two years they’ve run everything,” Mr. Hann said.

But Mr. Walz’s supporters say his approach is anything but divisive. Representative Angie Craig, a Minnesota Democrat in a competitive district, called Mr. Walz “an antidote to this divide we see in our nation today.” He is the rare politician, she said, who is as comfortable attending an agribusiness festival as a gala for a gay-rights group.

Across the state, Mr. Walz’s approval ratings fell after the turbulent era that followed Mr. Floyd’s killing. But he easily won re-election in 2022, and recent polls show that a majority of Minnesotans [*approve of his performance.*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-vp-harris-running-mate/600386460/)

As a member of Congress from 2007 to 2019, Mr. Walz had a reputation as a hard-worker who found common ground with Republicans, particularly on initiatives to help veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Representative Betty McCollum, a Democrat who is the longest-serving Minnesotan currently in Congress, said Mr. Walz’s negotiation style and experience on Capitol Hill would help a Harris administration pass difficult legislation.

“He will not twist an arm,” she said. “He will ask somebody what they need, what they’re missing or what the legislation is missing, and whether there is some way to get to yes.”

Mr. Walz, who declined to be interviewed for this article, has said that he spoke to Ms. Harris the day that Mr. Biden announced he was quitting the race. Like the other potential running mates, Mr. Walz has demurred publicly about his interest in joining the ticket. Close friends have privately described him as eager to be picked and hit the campaign trail.

During the event for canvassers in St. Paul on Saturday, Mr. Walz once again steered away from questions about being among the top finalists for running mate. He told reporters that he was “honored to be in this conversation.”

“I love them all,” Mr. Walz, who wore a “Minnesota Grown” T-shirt and a baseball cap, said of the other Democrats who are said to be under consideration. “I tell you what, I trust her judgment.”

Jay Senter contributed reporting from St. Paul, Minn.

Jay Senter contributed reporting from St. Paul, Minn.

PHOTOS: Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota at a canvassing event for Vice President Kamala Harris’s campaign in St. Paul, Minn., on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Walz’s policies have shifted the state to the left. Supporters celebrated in 2023 after the Minnesota Senate voted to legalize recreational marijuana. Mr. Walz deployed National Guard troops when unrest spread in Minneapolis after George Floyd’s killing in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; VICTOR J. BLUE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Harris Cracked Down on Violent Offenders; Showed Leniency on Less Serious Crime***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D1B-96W1-JBG3-60GN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 22, 2024 Sunday 12:17 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 2818 words

**Highlight:** Her record as a prosecutor navigating both paths has left her open to criticism that she either betrayed liberal ideals or prioritized them over law and order.

**Body**

From the moment that Kamala Harris took her place among 57 counterparts at the 2004 California District Attorneys Association annual conference, it was an open question how, if at all, the first Black, Asian American and female D.A. in the state’s history would fit in.

Ms. Harris, whose mother was Indian and whose father is Jamaican American, did not even blend in back home in liberal San Francisco County’s law enforcement circles. The county had never before elected a woman, a Black person or an Asian American as its district attorney, much less all three at the same time. She was equally rare nationwide: When Ms. Harris won in December 2003, she became one of only three elected Black district attorneys in the entire country.

“They looked at her like she had four heads,” said Debbie Mesloh, Ms. Harris’s communications director at the time, about her appearance a month later at the district attorneys’ conference in Santa Barbara, a conclave of conservative, throw-the-book-at-them prosecutors.

“It was an organization of mostly older Caucasian Republican men,” said Gilbert Otero, the former district attorney of Imperial County, who was there. Ms. Harris, he said, had “these beliefs that didn’t normally jibe with our crowd. She and I had a little spat at one roundtable over the death penalty and the three-strikes-and-you’re-out policy — me for both and her against.”

But over time Mr. Otero came to view Ms. Harris as a law enforcement ally. He endorsed her as the Democratic candidate for state attorney general in 2010. One of her first trips after she won was to tour a tunnel dug by Mexican traffickers to transport drugs into Mr. Otero’s county.

“She kept her promise that she would show up,” Mr. Otero said. “It meant a lot to law enforcement down there.”

Vice President Kamala Harris’s rise from strong-willed law enforcement official to standard-bearer in liberal Democratic politics is unusual and, some might conjecture, mutually incompatible. Navigating both paths has left her open to criticism as the Democratic presidential nominee that she either betrayed liberal ideas or prioritized those ideals over law and order. Certainly her star potential fueled speculation that she intended to use her elected positions as steppingstones to higher office — which, ultimately, she did.

But a close examination of her 12 years as an elected prosecutor, including interviews with more than 30 people who worked with her, shows a coherent record that is for the most part consistent. Ms. Harris seemed particularly focused on protecting the most vulnerable victims by cracking down on violent offenders while seeking alternatives to incarceration for less serious criminals. Her priorities as a prosecutor became especially clear once she was given the authority by voters to establish them, after more than a decade spent working for other district attorneys. Those efforts were not always successful or politically advantageous, yet she undertook them anyway.

Ms. Harris’s defenders argue that her professional history makes perfect sense to anyone who grew up as she did, in a ***working-class*** Black neighborhood in Berkeley governed by mostly white leaders. Her former chief of administration in the district attorney’s office, Paul Henderson, recalled their first conversation in the early 1990s, when Ms. Harris was starting out as a prosecutor in Oakland and he was graduating from law school.

“We talked about living in a community where the entire decision-making process was removed from those being impacted by those decisions,” Mr. Henderson said in an interview. “And she said, ‘Why can’t we be in those rooms?’”

She soon made her way in.

Tough on Child Abuse

Among the three candidates for San Francisco district attorney standing on the debate stage in the fall of 2003, two were white males: Terence Hallinan, the liberal incumbent who was also Ms. Harris’s former boss, and Bill Fazio, a more conservative criminal lawyer who had been defeated by Mr. Hallinan in the previous election.

The third candidate, Ms. Harris, had positioned herself as the moderate in the race. She was also the former girlfriend of the outgoing San Francisco mayor, Willie Brown, and a frequent presence in the local society pages. Mr. Hallinan had not-so-subtly encouraged voters to see her as someone who had not gotten as far as she had on professional merits alone.

“He has an interest,” Mr. Hallinan speculated about Mr. Brown, “in having a friend in the district attorney’s office.”

Ms. Harris framed her distinctiveness in a wholly different manner. “I’m the only one up here,” she informed the debate audience, “who’s been a prosecutor all my professional life.”

That characterization, while accurate, was not exactly foretold. Although Ms. Harris has said she was inspired to become a prosecutor in part to help people like a high school friend whose father was molesting her, her own family was puzzled by the decision.

“With some of them I had to defend the decision like one would a thesis,” Ms. Harris said in 2019. Her argument, she said, was that justice was better served when life-or-death decisions were handled by people “who went to our church, had children in our schools, coached our Little League teams and knew our neighborhoods.”

In 1990, the year after Ms. Harris graduated from law school, she started in the district attorney’s office in Oakland. Eight years later, she joined the higher-profile district attorney’s office in San Francisco. Two years later, after disagreements with her boss, Mr. Hallinan, she jumped to the San Francisco city attorney’s office. By then her courtroom presentations had became required viewing for many of her colleagues.

A former prosecutor, Michael Weiss, recalled watching a closing argument she delivered as a prosecutor in San Francisco “without any notes, skillfully recalling every important detail, and the jurors paying rapt attention to every word. To this day, I’m not sure I’ve seen it done better.”

Ms. Harris, who beat Mr. Hallinan in a runoff election with 56 percent of the vote, quickly established herself as different kind of prosecutor in arguably the most liberal county in California.

She did not share Mr. Hallinan’s tolerance of open-air drug markets or his passion for legalizing marijuana, though she did decree that jail time would never be sought for those who possessed small amounts of marijuana. She came down harder on cases involving firearms or child abuse. She placed more resources in the office’s domestic violence and sexual assault units.

And she established a new program to combat sex trafficking, one that dispelled the view that the victims in such cases were somehow complicit. As she crisply informed one colleague, “There’s no such thing as child prostitutes. They’re survivors of rape.”

But Ms. Harris opposed the death penalty and had vowed to voters never to seek it. That promise was put to the test three months into her tenure when an undercover policeman, Isaac Espinoza, was gunned down by a 19-year old gang member. The new district attorney announced that she would abide by her campaign pledge four days after Mr. Espinoza’s murder. The police union expressed outrage, as did Senator Dianne Feinstein. Even some subordinates viewed the swiftness of her decision as a rookie mistake, especially given that she had not first explained her reasoning to Mr. Espinoza’s widow.

Ms. Harris apparently agreed. In the wake of the controversy, she started a more deliberative review process for death penalty cases that included outreach to the victims’ families.

Ms. Harris’s best-known innovation as district attorney was the Back on Track initiative, a pilot program she began in 2005 to address high recidivism rates among nonviolent drug offenders between the ages of 18 and 30. The program was both progressive in outlook and “very, very difficult for those who entered it,” said Lateefah Simon, who ran the program and is now a Democratic candidate for the House.

To qualify for Back on Track, Ms. Simon said in an interview, an offender had to enter a guilty plea and then get a job within 60 days. After a full year of employment, education, community service, regular meetings with a supervising judge and crime-free behavior, the charge would be expunged from the offender’s record. In its first two years, fewer than 10 percent of Back on Track’s participants reoffended.

Officials throughout California visited San Francisco in hopes of copying the Back on Track model back home. What was hard for them to replicate, Ms. Simon said, was “how Kamala went through her Rolodex with those manicured fingers’’ and used her contacts to find jobs for the young offenders at Goodwill and in Nordstrom clothing warehouses, among others. She also found a dental clinic that would fix their teeth before going in for job interviews.

Still, the county’s limited resources meant that Ms. Harris’s brainchild did not grow beyond the pilot stage. Fewer than 300 offenders graduated from Back on Track. Seven people who entered the program turned out to be undocumented immigrants whose ineligibility was not detected by program staffers, because of a screening loophole, until 2008, after one of the immigrants stole a woman’s purse and fractured her skull while getting away.

That crime was featured in a Republican National Committee ad in July, saying that the Democratic candidate for president “allowed illegal immigrant drug dealers to enter job training and have their criminal records wiped clean.”

An Upward Trajectory

By 2007, when Ms. Harris won re-election as San Francisco district attorney without opposition, her upward trajectory was a foregone conclusion. She had been featured on Oprah Winfrey’s show, was the state’s most high-profile Democrat campaigning for the presidential candidate Barack Obama and was already mulling a run for state attorney general.

But there were episodes that bedeviled her second term. In 2006, her office trumpeted a 28-count indictment against a prominent building contractor who had provided substandard concrete for major city construction projects. Two years later, as it became apparent that the charges were overblown, her office quietly whittled the charge down to a single misdemeanor, to which the contractor pleaded guilty.

Two years later, Ms. Harris’s office tried an actor and hip-hop artist named Jamal Trulove for murder, largely on the basis of a single eyewitness whose account had repeatedly changed. Mr. Trulove’s conviction was thrown out on appeal, but only after he had spent six years in prison. He sued, and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors agreed to pay Mr. Trulove $13.1 million. (Ms. Harris had attended Mr. Trulove’s sentencing but was not named in the lawsuit.)

The most vexing scandal during Ms. Harris’s tenure occurred when she was running for attorney general. Prosecutors in her office had determined that a technician in the city’s crime lab was behaving erratically and could not be counted on to provide testimony. But it took three months before this opinion was conveyed to the defense attorneys whose cases rested on crime lab analyses.

Finger-pointing ensued between the D.A.’s office and the city’s police department. The technician, Deborah Madden, later pleaded guilty to stealing drug samples for her personal use. Hundreds of convictions were soon thrown out because of potentially tainted evidence.

Though Ms. Harris’s former subordinates maintained in interviews that she was unaware of the crime lab scandal when it first materialized, her political opponents maintained that she was guilty of incompetence and possibly a cover-up.

“It was hugely significant in the primary,” said Brian Brokaw, her campaign manager at the time. “She had to stop campaigning to deal with it.”

Ms. Harris managed to eke out a victory in November against Steve Cooley, the Los Angeles County district attorney.

Jailing Parents

As attorney general, Ms. Harris expanded a program she had started in San Francisco to combat truancy, a phenomenon that comprised nearly 30 percent of the state’s public school student body in 2011. As district attorney, she had her office send out letters to the parents of truant children and threaten the parents with fines or even imprisonment if they did not ensure that their children attended class.

No parent went to prison, but that changed when Ms. Harris took the anti-truancy program statewide. “Not every parent needed to be incarcerated,” said Tori Verber Salazar, the former district attorney of San Joaquin County. “But some did. And she gave us the hammer.”

In Orange County, a police sweep in 2013 resulted in the arrest of six parents of truant students, including a mother whose daughter had not attended school because she suffered from sickle-cell anemia. In 2019 as a presidential candidate, Ms. Harris expressed regret for jailing parents, saying “that was certainly not the intention” of the initiative.

In other instances, her office acted on behalf of California’s governor, Jerry Brown, to fight federal judicial mandates to relieve the state’s chronically overcrowded prisons. At one point her attorneys unsuccessfully resisted a court order to release certain nonviolent inmates, saying they were needed to help fight wildfires in the state. At another point they contested a federal court order granting transition surgery to an inmate who had been repeatedly assaulted in a male prison. (The inmate was paroled before the case was adjudicated and ultimately had the surgery as a private citizen.)

In both cases Ms. Harris later told reporters she was dismayed to learn of her office’s efforts.

But Ms. Harris did not shrink from using her perch to wade into national issues. After a succession of police misconduct cases nationwide in 2014 and 2015, her office started a police training course to address implicit bias. She also directed the California Department of Justice to adopt a program providing resources for body cameras. Both were heralded by her press office as firsts in the nation, though participation in each was voluntary.

More substantively, Ms. Harris wielded her clout during the 2008 home foreclosure crisis by scuttling a modest settlement offer from the major banks to several affected states. “I don’t know that this will work for California,” she said.

In 2012, the banks agreed to about $20 billion in homeowner relief for California, mostly in loan forgiveness rather than cash subsidies. But Ms. Harris had succeeded in getting a settlement in a year’s time that was roughly four times the original offer, according to two of her former associates.

Ms. Harris’s legal battle that may have been the most emotionally satisfying to her was when she openly defied her state’s position. As a candidate for attorney general in 2010, she pledged not to defend Proposition 8, the California ballot initiative ratified in 2008 that exclusively recognized marriage as between a man and a woman.

Once in office, she went a step further. Siding with two gay California couples in a federal lawsuit seeking to overturn Proposition 8, her attorneys filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that the state law was unconstitutional. On June 26, 2013, the court agreed that opponents of same-sex marriage lacked legal standing.

Two days later, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit formally lifted the injunction against same-sex marriage in California. That same day, two of the plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit, Kris Perry and her partner Sandy Stier, walked into San Francisco’s City Hall to get married. Ms. Harris was in town and heard of the nuptials.

She found the two on the City Hall balcony. “She was beaming from ear to ear, saying, ‘Isn’t this incredible?’” Ms. Perry said.

Ms. Harris quickly got down to business. She pulled out a piece of paper, read the wedding vows, and 30 seconds later, the formalities were over.

As the brides kissed, the attorney general held her fists in the air. Then she was on her way.

PHOTOS: After the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit lifted an injunction against same-sex marriage in California, Ms. Harris married two of the plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit, Sandy Stier and her partner Kris Perry, right.; Clockwise from left: Kamala Harris, as attorney general of California, speaking at the State Capitol in Sacramento in 2012; San Francisco police officer Isaac Espinoza’s widow, Renata, at his vigil in 2004, a crime in which Ms. Harris angered the police union by taking the death penalty off the table; and officers facing protesters in Oakland after the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., in 2014. In response to the unrest, she started police bias training. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LACY ATKINS/THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; RICH PEDRONCELLI/ASSOCIATED PRESS; STEPHEN LAM/REUTERS; JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18-A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2024

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[***On Their High Horse, Too Many Liberals Disdain Oliver Anthony; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692F-WYY1-JBG3-6018-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1057 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** Democrats wag their fingers at a blue-collar singer when they should be applauding his core message about left-behind Americans.

**Body**

What’s wrong here?

A self-described high school dropout living in a camper with a tarp on the roof sings a plaintive cri de coeur about blue-collar workers being shafted by the wealthy, and it is right-wing Republicans who rush to embrace him while Democrats wag their fingers and scold him for insensitivity.

Huh? Have Democrats retreated so far from their workingman roots that their knee-jerk impulse is to dump on a blue-collar guy who highlights “folks in the street, ain’t got nothin’ to eat”?

If you’ve been on Mars for the last couple of weeks: I’m talking, of course, about Oliver Anthony, a country singer who a month ago was unknown and now has had his song “Rich Men North of Richmond” soar from nowhere to [*the top*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/28/arts/music/rich-men-north-of-richmond-billboard-chart.html) of the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the past two weeks.

“I’ve been sellin’ my soul, workin’ all day,” Anthony laments. He blames the travails of workers on “rich men north of Richmond” — a swipe at Washington and elites generally. Some of his lines aren’t so different from elements in F.D.R.’s [*speech*](https://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/research/faculty-research/new-deal/roosevelt-speeches/fr040732.htm) about “the forgotten man” or in [*Robert Kennedy’s elegy*](https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/robert-f-kennedy/robert-f-kennedy-speeches/remarks-to-the-cleveland-city-club-april-5-1968) for “the shattered dreams of others.”

Yet in this case, Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene [*labeled*](https://twitter.com/RepMTG/status/1689987536511258624) “Rich Men” the “anthem of the forgotten Americans,” and Fox News asked participants in the Republican presidential debate to discuss it. Meanwhile, some on the left pounced on it as right-wing propaganda and even as [*“racist trash.”*](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)

Does the left really want to leave battered, angry workers to be defended by a G.O.P. that periodically guts unions, targets Social Security, [*resists health care coverage*](https://www.vox.com/policy/2023/5/12/23712447/medicaid-work-requirements-us-debt-ceiling) and opposes increases in the minimum wage?

Anthony, who calls himself “just some idiot and his guitar,” seemed taken aback by the assumption that he must be a right-winger. He said his song was meant to blast politicians on both sides, including those in the G.O.P. presidential debate who were trying to weaponize his words. “I wrote that song about those people,” he [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/arts/music/oliver-anthony-rich-men-north-of-richmond.html).

“It’s aggravating seeing people on conservative news try to identify with me like I’m one of them,” he added.

I don’t agree with everything Anthony says, but his principal theme is that ***working-class*** Americans have been screwed over — and he’s right on that. He’s also correct that both parties bear some responsibility and have twiddled their thumbs as ***working-class*** Americans die by the tens of thousands from drugs, alcohol and suicide.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics figures offer a metric of the catastrophe: Average weekly nonsupervisory wages, a metric for blue-collar earnings, were actually higher in 1969 (adjusted for inflation) than they were this year. Meanwhile, bosses are earning far, far more.

A new [*report*](https://ips-dc.org/report-executive-excess-2023/) from the Institute for Policy Studies says that the C.E.O. of Live Nation Entertainment, a concert company, earned $139 million in 2022 — while its workers earned a median of $25,673. The report adds that since 2020 at Dollar Tree, where many struggling Americans shop and work, prices have increased, average worker pay has dipped and the C.E.O.’s stock holdings increased in value by more than 2,000 percent.

This is the context in which many ***working-class*** Americans have lost hope and are self-medicating or simply killing themselves. It constitutes a social great depression: We lose more Americans to deaths of despair every 10 days than the total of all the service members killed in two decades of war in Afghanistan and Iraq — yet we have all been far too complacent about the suffering. This was the topic of my [*last book*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/588999/tightrope-by-nicholas-d-kristof-and-sheryl-wudunn/), it’s a theme of [*my next*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/720814/chasing-hope-by-nicholas-d-kristof/), and it’s the focus of my [*“How America Heals”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/opinion/health-care-life-expectancy-poverty.html) series this year, so I’m all for Anthony bellowing his frustrations and calling attention to these issues.

He makes the valid point that these disparate social crises reflect a broader pathology that is holding America back. “People talk about epidemics in this country and the homelessness and the drug use and the lack of skilled labor and the suicide rates,” he [*said*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmxyMJd7IQ8). “Those aren’t problems; those are symptoms of a bigger universal problem. … We don’t talk about it enough.”

Anthony says he dropped out of high school, earned a G.E.D. and worked in a paper mill for $14.50 an hour until he fractured his skull in a workplace accident. He has wrestled with alcohol and drug use and with mental health issues, he acknowledges.

“I am living in a 27-foot camper with a tarp on the roof that I got off of craigslist for $750,” he [*wrote*](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0vp6ygWFYuBLWrsveewXU5dJkPNGCZt3RJWFaNMoChdzsNmEXHvtRcvViWAova51bl&amp;id=100085643337139) on Facebook. His message and his story resonate deeply with frustrated workers — that’s why the internet is full of “Oliver Anthony for president” T-shirts.

Liberals are properly attentive to [*racial injustice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/opinion/sunday/when-whites-just-dont-get-it-part-6.html) but have a blind spot about class, driven in part by unfair stereotypes that members of the white ***working class*** are invariably bigots. In fact, you can’t think seriously about inequality in America without contemplating race, but that’s also true of class. And as the Harvard professor Michael Sandel has [*noted*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374289980/thetyrannyofmerit), one of the last acceptable prejudices is disdain for the less educated.

Anthony sounded some conservative themes in his song, including complaining about taxes — and that led to some liberal jeers. But as Noah Smith [*observed*](https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/the-economics-of-rich-men-north-of) in his economics blog, a Virginian earning the median factory wage pays a total tax rate of more than 24 percent — higher than [*one estimate*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/06/opinion/income-tax-rate-wealthy.html) of the rate paid by the 400 richest Americans.

I wish Anthony hadn’t complained in his song about obese people on food stamps; that’s a horrible stereotype and was simply mean. But just as Anthony should show more compassion for people struggling on food stamps, liberals should show more compassion for workers who have been left behind. It’s partly this condescension that has driven many ***working-class*** voters, initially white voters and more recently brown and Black ones as well, into the arms of conservative politicians who would shaft them even more.

If we’re going to achieve a more progressive agenda, then we need to win elections — and that means respecting workers rather than scorning them, insulting their faith and casually dismissing them as bigots. If we believe in empathy, let’s show some.

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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[***Whose Fault Is Inflation? Liberals Want Biden to Blame Big Business.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6B-77V1-DXY4-X026-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1947 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Nehamas, Jim Tankersley and Kellen Browning Nicholas Nehamas is a Times political reporter covering the re-election campaign of President Biden. Jim Tankersley writes about economic policy at the White House and how it affects the country and the world. He has covered the topic for more than a dozen years in Washington, with a focus on the middle class. Kellen Browning is a Times reporter covering the 2024 election, with a focus on the swing states of Nevada and Arizona.

**Highlight:** “Greedflation” is a moniker about corporate price increases that has bolstered some Democratic senators, and now the president is being encouraged to lean in on the issue for his economic messaging.

**Body**

“Greedflation” is a moniker about corporate price increases that has bolstered some Democratic senators, and now the president is being encouraged to lean in on the issue for his economic messaging.

As high prices at grocery stores, gas pumps and pharmacies have soured many voters on his first term, President Biden has developed a populist riposte: Blame big corporations for inflation, not me.

But despite facing a tough re-election battle where economic issues will be central, Mr. Biden has not leaned into that message as frequently or naturally as some other Democrats, including senators running in competitive seats across the southwest and the industrial Midwest. The Biden campaign has not focused its television or online advertisements on messages berating companies for high prices, unlike Senators Bob Casey of Pennsylvania and Sherrod Brown of Ohio, who have made the issue a centerpiece of their campaigns — and who are outrunning Mr. Biden in polls.

Now, some progressives are urging Mr. Biden to follow those senators’ lead and make “greedflation,” as they call it, a driving theme of his re-election bid. They say that taking the fight to big business could bolster the broader Main Street vs. Wall Street argument he is pursuing against former President Donald J. Trump, particularly with the ***working-class*** voters of color Mr. Biden [*needs to motivate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html). And they believe polls show voters are primed to hear the president condemn big corporations in more forceful terms.

“It’s a winning message for Democrats,” said April Verrett, the president of the Service Employees International Union, which is knocking on doors in battleground states as part of [*a $200 million voter-turnout operation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html). “And clearly Bob Casey, who’s doing better in the polls than the president, is proving that it’s the winning message.”

Inflation soared under Mr. Biden in 2021 and 2022, as the economy emerged from pandemic recession. Its causes were complex, including snarled global supply chains, stimulative policies by the Federal Reserve and, to a degree, federal fiscal policies including Covid relief bills signed by Mr. Trump and the $1.9 trillion emergency spending measure Mr. Biden signed soon after taking office to help people and businesses hurt by the downturn.

What Republicans call “Bidenflation” has become one of the president’s biggest political liabilities in his rematch with Mr. Trump. In response, Mr. Biden has sought to simultaneously cheer progress in stabilizing or bringing down prices — growth has slowed sharply from a year ago — while acknowledging the pain voters still feel in their pocketbooks.

Mr. Biden has also [*attacked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) corporations for pricing practices in certain sectors such as meatpacking, snack foods, concert tickets and gasoline. His administration has worked to limit prices for prescription drugs like [*insulin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) and inhalers, rein in [*bank overdraft*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) and credit card fees and make [*airline travel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) cheaper and more transparent, achievements that he often discusses on the campaign trail.

“We’re taking on corporate greed to bring down the price of gas, food and rent, eliminating junk fees,” Mr. Biden told a crowd of 1,000 cheering supporters in Philadelphia last week.

Still, leaning into that combative message is not always a natural fit for Mr. Biden. He proudly calls himself a “capitalist” and has long had a close, if sometimes contentious, [*relationship*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) with corporate America. Some economists close to his White House disagree that corporations’ raising prices to juice profits is a major driver of inflation.

And while Mr. Biden delights in telling a folksy anecdote about Snickers bars shrinking in size without doing the same in price, other Democrats have sounded far more aggressive on the issue. The push to blame corporations has united many factions of the Democratic Party, including progressives, swing-state populists, union leaders and environmentalists.

Mr. Brown, who represents a state that Mr. Trump won handily in 2020, has released several [*web ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) proclaiming he is “cracking down on the companies that rip off Ohio.” Mr. Casey cut a campaign ad showing corporate executives in suits [*sneaking into a grocery store*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) under cover of night and switching out cereal boxes for smaller replacements. Senate Democrats in tight races like Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Jacky Rosen of Nevada are making similar pitches.

“President Biden has quite a bit of latitude here to put the blame where it belongs and he should not be shy about voicing it,” said Julián Castro, the former Housing and Urban Development secretary who [*ran*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) against Mr. Biden for the Democratic nomination in 2020. “The alternative is that they’re going to blame you.”

But some of Mr. Biden’s progressive allies say the president has found effective — and popular — ways to talk about corporate pricing practices, including his focus on “junk fees” levied by airlines, concert promoters and more. They also say he must balance the issue with a broad set of campaign messages, including on abortion and democracy.

“You’re going to be more focused on kitchen-table issues in a Senate race,” said Lindsay Owens, executive director of the progressive Groundwork Collaborative in Washington. Mr. Biden, she added, is “doing the exact right thing. He’s not focusing on the wonky, eggheaded debates on where inflation is coming from, and he’s focusing a lot more on the ways Americans are feeling and experiencing price increases in their daily lives.”

The liberal argument that [*corporate greed has driven prices higher*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) flows from a recent [*surge in corporate profits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html), notching record highs after the pandemic. They say many companies, particularly in industries with relatively little competition, have used the reopening of the economy to test how aggressively they can raise prices.

Mr. Biden has tailored his arguments about corporate greed to sectors where profit margins have remained consistently high even as inflation has begun to fall, like groceries and gasoline. White House economists calculated this year that profit margins had risen by 2 percentage points for food and beverage stores from the eve of the pandemic, an increase that could explain some — but not nearly all — of the nation’s grocery price increases.

Many economists, including libertarians and even some former top aides to Democratic presidents, [*reject that argument*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html), noting that there is little historical link between profit levels and the inflation rate. [*Economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) wrote last month that evidence suggests corporate price markups have not been a “main driver” of the inflation increase under Mr. Biden, though they also found markups have persisted in certain sectors like motor vehicles and petroleum.

Republican lawmakers have long accused Democrats of seeking a political distraction by blaming companies for price increases.

“For the last three years the American people have been ravaged by inflation,” Senator John Kennedy, Republican of Louisiana, [*said last month in a Senate subcommittee hearing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) on price gouging. “That inflation, like all inflation, is man-made. That man’s name is Joe Biden.”

Mr. Biden has carefully targeted his arguments about corporate pricing to evidence provided to him by his economic team, said Bharat Ramamurti, a former deputy director of Mr. Biden’s National Economic Council.

“Maybe that ends up in something that is slightly more reserved,” Mr. Ramamurti said. But when it comes to price gouging, he said, “I think he’s been pretty full-throated in calling it out when he sees it, and when the economic data supports it.”

Andrew Bates, a spokesman for the White House, said that “President Biden’s top priority is beating inflation, which is why he has taken historic action and continues to fight the corporate greed that is keeping prices high.”

Few Democrats have done more to push the message that corporations are driving inflation than Mr. Casey, who is running for re-election in Pennsylvania and introduced a Senate bill that would crack down on “[*shrinkflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html)” — a term for companies reducing the size of their goods but not cutting prices. Mr. Biden praised that legislation during his State of the Union address.

In an interview, Mr. Casey acknowledged that Democrats had generally been slow to follow his lead in blaming companies for higher prices.

“We may have been late,” he said. “But now that we’ve begun to make this point, I think a lot of voters have a sense that we get it and we’re trying to do something about it.”

For now, polling shows Mr. Trump with a clear edge: 58 percent of voters across six of the top battleground states say Mr. Trump would do a better job handling the economy, compared with 36 percent who prefer Mr. Biden, a New York Times/Siena College/Philadelphia Inquirer poll [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) last month.

But Democratic pollsters have found that many voters agree with the contention that corporations are responsible for inflation. Nearly 6 in 10 voters said corporations&#39; being “greedy” was a major cause of inflation, including a majority of independent voters, according to a [*poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/us/politics/biden-philadelphia-black-voters.html) by the progressive-leaning group Navigator Research.

The Biden campaign’s internal polling analyses have found similar trends.

Akhenaton Mikell, a mental health therapist from Philadelphia, agreed that corporate greed was “the main reason” for rising prices. But after voting for Mr. Biden in 2020, he’s unsure about doing so again.

“I used to be able to go to the supermarket and get a pack of chicken wings for $6-7-8 and now it’s like $14-15-16,” said Mr. Mikell, 55. “I haven’t been able to save as much. I’ve had to cut back on a number of things.”

There are signs that Mr. Biden plans to emphasize this issue more in the coming weeks. His team has produced an ad on corporate greed and the tax code that it plans to release soon. Lauren Hitt, a campaign spokeswoman, said Mr. Biden had “repeatedly taken on corporate greed” and would be “telling that story every day in every possible way on the campaign trail, from ads to door knocking and more.”

As for Mr. Trump, Mr. Biden and his allies have already worked to paint him as a friend of billionaires and plutocrats who would do little to address rising costs.

“The effort to bear down on corporate price gouging is part of the sharp contrast between Biden and Trump,” said Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who has been a leading Democratic voice on the issue. “Trump cheers on the corporate profiteers. Joe Biden fights them.”

In the meantime, allies of Mr. Biden are doing their part to amplify the message that corporations are taking advantage of average Americans. The progressive groups Climate Power and Future Forward USA Action have begun a $50 million ad campaign that includes one spot featuring a South Carolina family farmer accusing big oil companies of making “huge profits off us.”

Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of Nevada’s Culinary Workers Union, which is knocking on doors around the state, said that voters were responding to such messages.

“What resonates with ***working-class*** voters is price gouging,” Mr. Pappageorge said. “Big oil and big food are going to have to get reined in.”

Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Philadelphia.

Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Philadelphia.

PHOTOS: The rising prices of many goods have soured voters on President Biden. Some Democrats have leaned in to blaming businesses. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES; YURI GRIPAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Bob Casey has pushed the message that corporations are driving inflation.; Berating companies for high prices is part of Senator Sherrod Brown’s campaign (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** June 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Feeling Unvalued, Some Young Men See Trump as Beacon of Masculinity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CTC-KP11-DXY4-X2CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 25, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1811 words

**Byline:** By Claire Cain Miller

**Body**

Men under 30 are much more likely to support Donald Trump than women their age. It's a far bigger gender gap than in older generations.

In some ways, this presidential election has become a referendum on gender roles -- and the generation with the biggest difference in opinion between male and female voters is Generation Z.

On one side are young women, who as a group are very liberal, and who have been politically galvanized by gender bombshells like #MeToo, the overturning of Roe v. Wade, and the candidacy of Vice President Kamala Harris.

On the other are young men, some of whom feel that rapidly changing gender roles have left them behind socially and economically, and see former President Donald J. Trump as a champion of traditional manhood.

When President Biden was still in the race, men ages 18 to 29 favored Mr. Trump by an average of 11 percentage points, while young women favored Mr. Biden by 28 points, according to four national New York Times/Siena College polls conducted from last December to June. That was a 39-point gender gap -- far exceeding that of any older generation.

And in Times/Siena polls of six swing states this month -- taken after Ms. Harris became the presumptive Democratic nominee -- young men favored Mr. Trump by 13 points, while young women favored Ms. Harris by 38 points, a 51-point gap. (Our companion article on the shift among young women is here.)

Mr. Trump's message has been particularly resonant for young men without college degrees and young men of color. Among men under 30 who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020, those who were sticking with him in swing-state polls in May were more likely to be white and have college degrees than those shifting to Mr. Trump.

''Economically they're getting shafted, politically they're getting shafted, culturally no one's looking out for them,'' said Daniel A. Cox, director of the Survey Center on American Life at the American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning think tank, who has written about the youth gender gap. ''They're drawn to his message, his persona, the unapologetic machismo he tries to exude.''

Gen Z men are not making a rightward shift en masse, and they are still somewhat more likely to identify as Democratic than Republican, 30 percent to 24 percent, according to data from P.R.R.I., a public opinion research firm (the rest are independents). Majorities of them support abortion rights and same-sex marriage, and even young men voting Republican are not necessarily socially conservative.

In interviews with young men planning to vote for Mr. Trump, they described feeling unvalued. They said it had become harder to be a man. They valued strength in a president. Yet they didn't express bitter misogyny or praise the exaggerated displays of brawn embraced by the Trump campaign. Their concerns were mostly economic, like whether they could fulfill the traditionally masculine role of supporting a family.

In recent years, the two parties have been seen as offering men different visions of their place in American society, researchers said. While the right has embraced conventional masculinity, the left has seemed to shun it, leaving many young men looking for an alternative.

''I'm going to talk as a feminist: We do it, when we try to suggest women are brilliant and men are the problem,'' said Niobe Way, a professor of developmental psychology at N.Y.U. who has studied boys and men for four decades and in July published ''Rebels With a Cause: Reimagining Boys, Ourselves and Our Culture.''

Conversely, she said, ''Trump is definitely saying, 'I see you, I value you, I see your masculinity.'''

Ranger Irwin, a 20-year-old Trump voter who works at a Discount Tire in North Las Vegas, Nev., said American society no longer ''lets boys be boys.''

''Men my age, from a very young age we were told, 'You're not supposed to do this, you're not supposed to do that, you're just supposed to sit here and be quiet,''' he said. It's made being a man ''a little bit harder than it used to be.''

Feeling unmoored

Since women began entering the work force and higher education in large numbers in the 1970s, each generation has made strides toward economic equality with men. Today's young women are the most educated ever -- earning more college degrees than men, increasingly serving as their families' breadwinners, and reaching pinnacles of power in American society.

For men, the last few decades have been more complicated. The share of men working has gone down. Many of the jobs that mostly men did, especially manual labor not requiring a college degree, have disappeared. The share of men without partners is growing.

As the old script for men changed, some felt as if they were left without a new one to follow.

Alec Torres, 21, a high school graduate who works in retail in Canton, Ga., and who planned to vote for Mr. Trump based on concerns about prices, said that what he wants is simple: to be able to support a family.

''We can't afford to have children, we can barely afford three meals a day,'' he said. ''I want to be able to go to the doctor and afford it, I want to be able to own a home, I want to be able to have a car, I want to have a job I enjoy. I want to live, not just survive.''

He supports abortion rights, and leans progressive on other social issues: ''You want to be gay or trans? Cool,'' he said. But he said that boys are no longer raised to be good fathers or to provide for their families.

Democrats have been losing support among young nonwhite people (though still retaining their backing overall). Mr. Torres, who is Hispanic, Native American and Black, is planning to vote for Mr. Trump, and also liked Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

In recent years, as social progress has helped women chip away at centuries of sexism, parts of the movement have seemed to dismiss or even demonize men, with phrases like ''the future is female'' and ''toxic masculinity'' and books with titles like ''The End of Men: And the Rise of Women.'' As Mr. Cox noted, a page titled ''Who We Serve'' on the Democratic Party's website lists 16 demographic groups, including ''women'' -- but not men.

The ideas show up in broader society, too. American parents, who have long preferred sons, may no longer favor boys, data shows, perhaps because of a sense that boys cause more trouble. The jobs that have been increasing, like those involving caregiving, have traditionally been considered women's work.

The shifts have left some young men feeling attacked.

Almost half of men 18 to 29 say there is some or a lot of discrimination against men in American society -- more than older age groups, and up from a third in 2019, Mr. Cox's group found.

When Pew Research Center asked people whether women's gains have come at the expense of men, less than one-fifth of respondents said yes. But among young, Trump-supporting men, 40 percent did.

''We tend to be just in general looked down upon,'' said Daniel Romstad, 28, a Trump voter and a high school graduate in Lapeer, Mich., who works in auto body repair. It starts early, he said: ''The school system in general is more geared toward girls just because they're easier.''

The 'testosterone ticket'

Mr. Trump, with his cage-fighting, shirt-ripping, insult-hurling campaign, has offered an alternative, aggressive version of masculinity. His running mate, JD Vance, offers another, in his emphasis on the importance of patriarchal families and women raising children.

Together, said Christine Matthews, a pollster, they've created ''the testosterone ticket.''

''Vance himself has said that the Democratic Party is run by childless cat ladies, and that is his projection of a sort of feminine, intolerant, not all-American party,'' she said. ''And then their party is exalting this sort of male, muscular, ***working-class***, drive-a-pickup-truck, made-in-the-USA version of the party.''

In interviews, many of the young men supporting Mr. Trump said they admired his strength and macho demeanor.

Yet they did not necessarily buy into the caricature of traditional masculinity on display at the Republican convention, or the deeply misogynistic version in the ''manosphere'' online.

Mr. Romstad said a president should be macho: ''When you're talking about a candidate, especially as the president of the United States, you don't want somebody who's a pushover.''

He identifies with that type of masculinity, he said: ''Oh, for sure. I do man stuff, I fix cars, I build stuff.''

But he also wishes that being a man left more room for vulnerability, ''especially when it comes to mental health issues, expressing yourself type stuff,'' he said. ''Just overall, if you're a dude with a problem, it's like, 'Just get over it.'''

Malachi Bohlmann, 23, a veteran, student and real estate entrepreneur in Phoenix, said Mr. Trump's strength was beneficial for border control and foreign policy.

''What I do like about Trump is his overall aura when it comes to geopolitics, and just his ability to just show the U.S. as a strong superpower,'' he said. ''You're not going to mess with us.''

But while he didn't want to vote for Mr. Biden, he's now unsure if he'll vote for Mr. Trump or Ms. Harris. He wants to research her plans for addressing affordable housing and border control before he decides.

Nicholas Wickizer, 22, a high school graduate in Ionia, Mich., who works on a bumper assembly line, said his vote for Mr. Trump was ''set in stone'' by the toughness Mr. Trump showed when he raised his fist after being shot.

But he doesn't believe that men have lost status in modern-day society. ''All the industries are dominated by men, bosses are men, there hasn't been a woman president,'' he said. ''I think women deserve a little bit more.''

Though gender issues like reproductive rights are a centerpiece of Ms. Harris's presidential campaign, she has not made her own gender a focus. Instead, it's her running mate, Gov. Tim Walz, who has done so, by offering a different version of masculinity.

He's a veteran, a Second Amendment supporter and a former high school football coach. Yet he worked in a female-dominated profession, teaching, and he's comfortable talking about fatherhood and championing the rights of women and gay and transgender people.

''He represents an entirely new way of being a man, hard and soft, valuing equally both sides of his humanity,'' Professor Way said.

To be successful, politicians need to see both sides of voters too, she said.

''My message to Democrats is we have to be including the needs of the people who are voting for Trump, and addressing them smack on,'' she said. ''Not trying to convince them they should care about immigrants or Black people or women. But what are your concerns, and what can we do to help your family thrive?''

Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting.Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/24/upshot/trump-polls-young-men.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/24/upshot/trump-polls-young-men.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Some planning to vote for Donald J. Trump said it had become harder to be a man, and they valued strength in a president. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLISON DINNER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2024

**End of Document**



[***It’s Primary Day in New York. Here’s What to Know.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBB-HN81-JBG3-6002-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 25, 2024 Tuesday 08:22 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1071 words

**Byline:** Claire FahyClaire Fahy reports on New York City and the surrounding area for The Times.

**Highlight:** Representative Jamaal Bowman faces George Latimer in the state’s most-watched race, a costly contest that may speak to the Democratic Party’s direction.

**Body**

Representative Jamaal Bowman faces George Latimer in the state’s most-watched race, a costly contest that may speak to the Democratic Party’s direction.

Tuesday is Primary Day in New York.

Several high-profile races are on the ballot, including an expensive and [*bitterly fought Democratic contest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html) between Representative Jamaal Bowman and George Latimer in a district covering parts of Westchester County and the Bronx.

Other congressional contests have also drawn interest, including one in eastern Long Island, where a media and political luminary [*made a late entry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html) into the Democratic primary against an established candidate.

The Democratic-led State Legislature is also up for election in November, and a [*number of Assembly primary races*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html) are expected to be close.

Here’s what to know.

Finding out where to vote

Polls will open at 6 a.m. and close at 9 p.m. Voters can find their local polling places on [*the Board of Elections website*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html).

New York is a closed primary state, meaning Democrats and Republicans can vote only in their own parties’ primaries. Unaffiliated or independent voters cannot participate in the primary. The last day to register to vote ahead of the primaries was June 15, and early voting ended Sunday.

All absentee ballots must be dropped off at a polling place by 9 p.m. or postmarked June 25.

The heavyweight matchup

The results of Tuesday’s contest in the 16th Congressional District between Mr. Bowman and Mr. Latimer may serve as harbingers of many political benchmarks.

The primary could test the durability of the Democratic Party’s progressive faction: If Mr. Bowman loses, he would be the first member of the House’s left-wing “squad” to be unseated.

And it may be seen as a barometer of where a diverse group of voters stands on Israel; the [*district*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html) contains some of the nation’s wealthiest white suburbs and an influential Jewish community, but nearly half its residents are African American or Latino.

Mr. Bowman has been one of the House’s most outspoken critics of Israel and was one of the first lawmakers to call for a cease-fire in Gaza, but his repeated criticisms have at times veered into conspiracy theories and invited charges of antisemitism. Mr. Latimer is largely supportive of Israel, calling for a return of all hostages before any potential cease-fire.

The race may also serve as a road map for groups seeking to influence a race through outside spending. Mr. Latimer [*has received $14.5 million in support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html) from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The race’s importance has been reflected by the involvement of some of the left’s biggest stars, including Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who have campaigned on Mr. Bowman’s behalf. It has also featured negative characterizations, with Mr. Latimer portraying Mr. Bowman as distracted by national politics and not in tune with the needs of his district, and Mr. Bowman consistently accusing Mr. Latimer of racism.

Late-stage intrigue colors two House races

The Democratic primary in New York’s First Congressional District, which encompasses a number of wealthy neighborhoods in eastern Long Island, was thought to be fairly routine. Nancy Goroff, a retired chemistry professor who ran in 2020, looked to be a shoo-in for the nomination and the right to face the Republican incumbent, Nick LaLota.

That quickly changed in February, when John Avlon, a former CNN political analyst who helped found the centrist political group [*No Labels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html), entered the race.

Mr. Avlon moved to the district in 2017 after he and his wife, Margaret Hoover, [*a conservative host on PBS*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html), bought a home in Sag Harbor. Ms. Goroff, in contrast, has lived in Suffolk County for over two decades, and has sought to cast Mr. Avlon as a carpetbagger.

She has also highlighted Mr. Avlon’s ties to the Republican Party, particularly his past work for Rudolph W. Giuliani, while Mr. Avlon has continually brought attention to Ms. Goroff’s 10-point loss to Lee Zeldin in November 2020.

The winner will face a challenge in November; Cook Political Report has characterized the seat as “likely Republican.”

In Central New York, State Senator John W. Mannion faces Sarah Klee Hood, an Air Force veteran who is a town councilor in DeWitt. The two Democrats are vying to challenge Representative Brandon Williams, a Republican who is considered the most vulnerable among New York incumbents.

The race was colored by 11th-hour accusations from former staff members of Mr. Mannion, claiming that he had fostered a hostile workplace. Mr. Mannion has vehemently denied the claims, which are being investigated by the State Senate.

Democrats test party’s direction in Assembly races

A longtime fissure between institutional and progressive Democrats has dominated many debates inside the State Legislature, particularly those involving housing and criminal justice. Progressives feel that their Democratic colleagues have not done enough for ***working-class*** people of color, while those mainstream lawmakers are skeptical that the left-wing agitators could enact lasting change.

That tension is on display in Assembly primaries across the state. In Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman is fending off a challenge from Eon Huntley, a first-time candidate who is supported by the Democratic Socialists of America. Ms. Zinerman has the backing of Hakeem Jeffries, the House majority leader, and Letitia James, the state attorney general.

In the Hudson Valley, Didi Barrett, a six-term assemblywoman, is trying to survive a primary against Claire Cousin, who has called Ms. Barrett’s record on environmental issues into question while also staking her campaign on the need for more affordable housing.

And in East Harlem, Assemblyman Eddie Gibbs is facing a challenge from Xavier Santiago, the head of the local community board. The race has devolved into a debate over representation that has seen a number of personal insults traded between the two candidates. Mr. Gibbs, who is Black, has maintained that efforts to defeat him are centered on having a Latino represent the district, which is 41 percent Hispanic.

Grace Ashford, Jeffery C. Mays and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

Grace Ashford, Jeffery C. Mays and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

PHOTO: A number of high-profile races are on the ballot on Tuesday in New York. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Graham Dickie/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Viral Hit ‘Rich Men North of Richmond’ Debuts at No. 1; The Charts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690H-97P1-JBG3-61XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 21, 2023 Monday 00:14 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 501 words

**Byline:** Ben Sisario

**Highlight:** Oliver Anthony Music’s song expressing frustration over ***working-class*** struggles shot to the top of the Billboard chart after a wave of support from conservative commentators.

**Body**

Oliver Anthony Music’s song expressing frustration over ***working-class*** struggles shot to the top of the Billboard chart after a wave of support from conservative commentators.

“Rich Men North of Richmond,” an independently released track by the little-known performer billed as Oliver Anthony Music, became the surprise No. 1 song in the United States this week, topping hits by superstars like Taylor Swift, Morgan Wallen and Olivia Rodrigo.

The song, which was uploaded to YouTube just two weeks ago, caught fire with conservative commentators including Matt Walsh and Laura Ingraham, who described it as an authentic expression of ***working-class*** struggle, though some critics winced at anti-welfare sentiments that seemed to hark back to the [*Reagan era*](https://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2013/12/linda_taylor_welfare_queen_ronald_reagan_made_her_a_notorious_american_villain.html): “If you’re 5-foot-3 and you’re 300 pounds/Taxes ought not to pay for your bags of fudge rounds,” sings Anthony, whose real name is Christopher Anthony Lunsford.

“Rich Men” shoots to the top of Billboard’s Hot 100 singles chart with 17.5 million streams and 147,000 downloads, according to the tracking service Luminate. After Jason Aldean’s “[*Try That in a Small Town*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/02/arts/music/jason-aldean-small-town-newjeans-billboard.html),” it is the second country song in less than a month to reach No. 1 after stirring political controversy and sparking download sales — a very small part of the contemporary music business, but one that can have an outsize impact on the charts, thanks to the weighting formulas that Billboard and Luminate use to reconcile streams and sales.

According to [*Billboard*](https://www.billboard.com/music/chart-beat/oliver-anthony-music-rich-men-north-of-richmond-number-one-debut-hot-100-1235396681/#recipient_hashed=71d9a6e636bb2570d65f864361560da138f825ccbc5174cdecd9a4c65f0d371e&amp;recipient_salt=169d98d8159c5dd704a0391c49b29fdd69f7a730f8b5119e496c9c558b03e70a&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=exacttarget&amp;utm_campaign=billboard_BreakingNews&amp;utm_content=457587_08-21-2023&amp;utm_term=428150), it is the first time that an artist has made a debut at No. 1 on the Hot 100 without any prior chart history “in any form.”

Whether “Rich Man” can hold the top spot for long is yet to be seen. When Aldean, a Nashville hitmaker for years, rode a wave of culture-war controversy for “Try That in a Small Town” after its music video was criticized as a coded call to vigilantism, the song spent a single week at No. 1; it [*dropped 20 spots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/08/arts/music/travis-scott-utopia-billboard-chart.html) after streams and downloads plunged.

On the album chart, Travis Scott’s “Utopia” holds No. 1 for a third week, thanks in part to a flash sale on the rapper’s website that priced the double vinyl version at $5. Scott sold 99,000 copies of his album, 93,000 of which were on vinyl; he also had 124 million streams. Altogether, “Utopia” was credited with the equivalent of 185,000 sales in the United States, according to Luminate.

The neon-haired Colombian pop star [*Karol G*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/arts/music/karol-g-manana-sera-bonito.html) debuts at No. 3 with her latest release, “Mañana Será Bonito (Bichota Season),” which had the equivalent of 67,000 sales, including 68 million streams. The mixtape is a companion collection to Karol G’s last studio album, the similarly titled “Mañana Será Bonito,” which [*opened at No. 1*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/arts/music/karol-g-manana-sera-bonito-billboard.html) in March.

Also this week, Wallen’s “One Thing at a Time” holds at No. 2, the “Barbie” soundtrack is No. 4 and Swift’s “Speak Now (Taylor’s Version)” is in fifth place.

PHOTO: Oliver Anthony Music independently released his song “Rich Men North of Richmond.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY @RADIOWV, VIA YOUTUBE) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Harris V.P. Search Lands In Most Eager Phase Yet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CN3-8WT1-DXY4-X07X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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August 5, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1407 words

**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein, Lisa Lerer and Katie Glueck

**Body**

With Kamala Harris expected to announce her running mate by Tuesday, contenders are making last-ditch efforts to showcase what they could bring to the ticket and keep themselves in the public eye.

Follow live updates on the 2024 election here.

Just in case anyone had forgotten, Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois released a nearly four-minute video this week promoting his accomplishments in office.

If there were any questions about the home life of Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, his wife, Gabrielle Giffords, resurfaced a testimonial about their loving marriage and posted it to social media.

And if someone was wondering about, say, fund-raising ability, Govs. Tim Walz of Minnesota and Andy Beshear of Kentucky were scheduled to appear at last-minute simultaneous events on Monday afternoon in Minneapolis and Chicago. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg was also set to do a fund-raiser on Saturday night in New Hampshire.

It is all for an audience of one: Vice President Kamala Harris. As the clock ticks down on her timeline to select a running mate, whom Ms. Harris is expected to announce by Tuesday, the men still in contention are doing whatever they can to showcase what they could bring to the ticket and keep themselves in the public eye.

That thirst has prompted a flood of gauzy videos, cable news appearances, fund-raisers and other stops -- Mr. Walz will campaign for Ms. Harris on Sunday, also in New Hampshire -- serving as a capstone to what has been a two-week sprint toward the first major decision of her presidential campaign. The vetting team, led by former Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr., completed its work on Thursday, leaving the choice in Ms. Harris's hands after she conducts in-person interviews and spends time deliberating with her advisers.

The lobbying efforts come as Ms. Harris is having to choose a running mate without the typical months to spend time with potential candidates, weighing who would be best as both a political and a governing partner.

Past nominees have used the weeks leading up to their vice-presidential announcement as public tryouts, stumping with finalists as a test of camaraderie while spending important time deliberating behind the scenes.

In 2012, Mitt Romney held campaign events with each of the five finalists to be his running mate before choosing Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. Mr. Romney said on Friday that he did not watch any of the TV appearances his potential running mates made during that period.

''Nope, never saw them on the screen,'' Mr. Romney wrote in a text message. ''Went on the trail together. Emphasis was capability if elected, not election impact, which we thought was minimal.''

Under this rushed time frame, the auditions have been more diffuse, spaced out across social media, cable television hits and speeches.

Whether those appearances matter to Ms. Harris remains unclear. It is not known how much of the outside content Ms. Harris, who plans to be in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, is consuming herself.

Representative Barbara Lee, a California Democrat and an early endorser of Ms. Harris's previous presidential campaign, suggested that the question of who could draw sharp contrasts with Senator JD Vance of Ohio, former President Donald J. Trump's running mate, and the Republican ticket as a whole was relevant. But she sounded skeptical of the in-plain-view tryouts.

''I don't think people talking publicly is going to sway her from her basic decision-making process,'' she said.

In the meantime, Ms. Harris's team has received reams of documents from each of the finalists, and it conducted video interviews this week.

Some of the top contenders canceled planned events for Friday and Saturday -- when Ms. Harris had set aside time to conduct final interviews, according to two people who had been briefed on her schedule but were not authorized to speak publicly about the process. Aides for some of the contenders said they wanted to keep their schedules clear in case Ms. Harris's team called.

Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania canceled a three-event fund-raising swing through the Hamptons, and Mr. Beshear pulled out of a stop in western Kentucky, prompting a new wave of headlines on Thursday.

''I was going to perform, of course, with Blink-182 on Sunday, but I've canceled in order to clear my schedule,'' joked Mr. Pritzker in an interview on MSNBC, referring to the Lollapalooza music festival in Chicago this weekend.

But for the scores of Democratic busybodies and political obsessives who carefully track the process, the prolific public appearances have provided seemingly endless fodder for each candidate's backers to push out -- and plenty of content for Ms. Harris to consume should she so choose.

Mr. Shapiro spent Friday at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, a historically Black college west of Philadelphia. There, he demonstrated his attack-dog chops, calling Mr. Trump a ''coward'' who had made ''offensive'' remarks this week by falsely questioning Ms. Harris's Black identity. The first-term governor also called Mr. Vance a ''phony.''

''Attacking the identify of the vice president doesn't at all reflect on Vice President Harris, but shows a real insecurity about Donald Trump,'' Mr. Shapiro said.

Mr. Walz wooed a group of Democratic donors on Friday in a remote meeting with the Democracy Alliance, a powerful network of major liberal donors, regaling a packed Zoom meeting with his strategies for winning over rural and ***working-class*** voters. He is heading to New Hampshire on Sunday for a series of surrogate events for Ms. Harris, including a summer barbecue with the New Hampshire Young Democrats.

Mr. Kelly spent the final days of the week doing a parade of cable TV hits in which he sought to focus attention on Mr. Trump's torpedoing of a border security bill in February -- an issue that Ms. Harris has made a focal point of her stump speeches and campaign videos.

''When Kamala Harris is president, we're going to continue to work on this,'' Mr. Kelly said on ''Morning Joe,'' an MSNBC show favored by Mr. Biden and many of the aides who work on the Harris campaign. ''I'm looking forward to seeing Kamala Harris in the White House.''

Mr. Buttigieg, a popular news media presence for Democrats, has made the round of cable networks, with dozens of appearances.

On Sunday, he defended Ms. Harris's record on immigration in a heated exchange on Fox News. On Monday, he cracked jokes with Jon Stewart on ''The Daily Show.'' On Thursday, he discussed the importance of his appearances on Fox News to reach Republicans, making an appearance that effectively promoted the significance of his other appearances.

And on Friday, he charmed the ladies of ''The View,'' who had high hopes for his running-mate chances.

''If offered the position would you accept? Because we'd like that,'' said Ana Navarro, a host of the show.

Mr. Buttigieg replied with the noncommittal ease of a practiced media star: ''Of course, I'm flattered to be even mentioned in this context,'' he said. ''She's going to make the choice that's right for her, for the ticket, the campaign and of course the country.''

At times, Mr. Beshear has seemed ubiquitous on television, using his appearances to show how he might challenge Mr. Vance.

''He claims to be from eastern Kentucky, tries to write a book about it to profit off our people, and then he calls us lazy,'' Mr. Beshear said recently on CNN.

Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, an admitted Shapiro partisan, said he did not know how the public jockeying might shape Ms. Harris's perceptions. But it all amounted to positive advertising, he said, for the eventual ticket.

''When there's a general sense as to who is in consideration, I think it's natural that people would pay a lot of attention,'' he said. ''The main thing that each of these potential vice-presidential nominees are doing is they're affirming the candidacy of Kamala Harris. They're talking about her plans for the future, what she wants to do if she were elected president, and I think that can only help us win in November.''

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting from Washington, Ken Bensinger contributed reporting from Los Angeles, and Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Cheyney, Pa.Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting from Washington, Ken Bensinger contributed reporting from Los Angeles, and Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Cheyney, Pa.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/03/us/politics/harris-vice-president-selection.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/03/us/politics/harris-vice-president-selection.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, center, is scheduled to campaign for Vice President Kamala Harris in a series of events. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, a popular news media presence for Democrats, has made the round of cable networks. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois released a nearly four-minute video last week promoting his accomplishments in office. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM VONDRUSKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania showed his attack-dog chops in defense of Ms. Harris against ex-President Donald J. Trump. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona did a parade of cable shows last week, focusing on Mr. Trump's torpedoing of a border security bill. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky has used his television appearances to show how he might challenge Mr. Trump's running mate. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL MUMMEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Many Gen Z Men Feel Left Behind. Some See Trump as an Answer.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CT5-3S21-DXY4-X21T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Claire Cain Miller Claire Cain Miller is a Times reporter covering gender, families and education.

**Highlight:** Men under 30 are much more likely to support Donald Trump than women their age. It’s a far bigger gender gap than in older generations.

**Body**

Men under 30 are much more likely to support Donald Trump than women their age. It’s a far bigger gender gap than in older generations.

In some ways, this presidential election has become a referendum on gender roles — and the generation with the biggest difference in opinion between male and female voters is Generation Z.

On one side are young women, who as a group are very liberal, and who have been politically galvanized by gender bombshells like #MeToo, the overturning of Roe v. Wade, and the candidacy of Vice President Kamala Harris.

On the other are young men, some of whom feel that rapidly changing gender roles have left them behind socially and economically, and see former President Donald J. Trump as a champion of traditional manhood.

When President Biden was still in the race, men ages 18 to 29 favored Mr. Trump by an average of 11 percentage points, while young women favored Mr. Biden by 28 points, according to four national New York Times/Siena College polls conducted from last December to June. That was a 39-point [*gender gap*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) — far exceeding that of any older generation.

And in Times/Siena polls of six swing states this month — taken after Ms. Harris became the presumptive Democratic nominee — young men favored Mr. Trump by 13 points, while young women favored Ms. Harris by 38 points, a 51-point gap. (Our companion article on the shift among young women is [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).)

Mr. Trump’s message has been particularly resonant for young men without college degrees and young men of color. Among men under 30 who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020, those who were sticking with him in swing-state polls in May were more likely to be white and have college degrees than those shifting to Mr. Trump.

“Economically they’re getting shafted, politically they’re getting shafted, culturally no one’s looking out for them,” said Daniel A. Cox, director of the Survey Center on American Life at the American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning think tank, who has [*written about*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) the youth [*gender gap*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html). “They’re drawn to his message, his persona, the unapologetic machismo he tries to exude.”

Gen Z men are not making a rightward shift en masse, and they are still somewhat more likely to identify as Democratic than Republican, 30 percent to 24 percent, according to data from P.R.R.I., a public opinion research firm (the rest are independents). [*Majorities of them support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) abortion rights and same-sex marriage, and even young men voting Republican are not necessarily socially conservative.

In interviews with young men planning to vote for Mr. Trump, they described feeling unvalued. They said it had become harder to be a man. They [*valued strength*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) in a president. Yet they didn’t express bitter misogyny or praise the [*exaggerated displays of brawn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) embraced by the Trump campaign. Their concerns were mostly economic, like whether they could fulfill the traditionally masculine role of supporting a family.

In recent years, the two parties have been seen as offering men different visions of their place in American society, researchers said. While the right has embraced conventional masculinity, the left has seemed to shun it, leaving many young men looking for an alternative.

“I’m going to talk as a feminist: We do it, when we try to suggest women are brilliant and men are the problem,” said Niobe Way, a professor of developmental psychology at N.Y.U. who has studied boys and men for four decades and in July [*published*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) “Rebels With a Cause: Reimagining Boys, Ourselves and Our Culture.”

Conversely, she said, “Trump is definitely saying, ‘I see you, I value you, I see your masculinity.’”

Ranger Irwin, a 20-year-old Trump voter who works at a Discount Tire in North Las Vegas, Nev., said American society no longer “lets boys be boys.”

“Men my age, from a very young age we were told, ‘You’re not supposed to do this, you’re not supposed to do that, you’re just supposed to sit here and be quiet,’” he said. It’s made being a man “a little bit harder than it used to be.”

Feeling unmoored

Since women began entering the work force and higher education in large numbers in the 1970s, each generation has made strides toward economic equality with men. Today’s young women are the most educated ever — earning [*more college degrees*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) than men, increasingly serving as their [*families’ breadwinners*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html), and reaching pinnacles of power in American society.

For men, the last few decades have been [*more complicated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html). The share of men working has [*gone down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html). Many of the jobs that mostly men did, especially manual labor not requiring a college degree, have disappeared. The share of men without partners is [*growing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

As the old script for men changed, some felt as if they were left without a new one to follow.

Alec Torres, 21, a high school graduate who works in retail in Canton, Ga., and who planned to vote for Mr. Trump based on concerns about prices, said that what he wants is simple: to be able to support a family.

“We can’t afford to have children, we can barely afford three meals a day,” he said. “I want to be able to go to the doctor and afford it, I want to be able to own a home, I want to be able to have a car, I want to have a job I enjoy. I want to live, not just survive.”

He supports abortion rights, and leans progressive on other social issues: “You want to be gay or trans? Cool,” he said. But he said that boys are no longer raised to be good fathers or to provide for their families.

Democrats have been losing support among young nonwhite people (though still retaining their backing overall). Mr. Torres, who is Hispanic, Native American and Black, is planning to vote for Mr. Trump, and also liked Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

In recent years, as social progress has helped women chip away at centuries of sexism, parts of the movement have seemed to dismiss or even demonize men, with phrases like “the future is female” and “toxic masculinity” and books with titles like “The End of Men: And the Rise of Women.” As Mr. Cox noted, a page titled “[*Who We Serve*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html)” on the Democratic Party’s website lists 16 demographic groups, including “women” — but not men.

The ideas show up in broader society, too. American parents, who have long preferred sons, [*may no longer favor boys, data shows*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html), perhaps because of a sense that boys cause more trouble. The jobs that have been [*increasing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html), like those involving caregiving, have traditionally been [*considered women’s work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

The shifts have left some young men feeling attacked.

Almost half of men 18 to 29 say there is some or a lot of discrimination against men in American society — more than older age groups, and up from a third in 2019, Mr. Cox’s group [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

When Pew Research Center [*asked people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) whether women’s gains have come at the expense of men, less than one-fifth of respondents said yes. But among young, Trump-supporting men, 40 percent did.

“We tend to be just in general looked down upon,” said Daniel Romstad, 28, a Trump voter and a high school graduate in Lapeer, Mich., who works in auto body repair. It starts early, he said: “The school system in general is more geared toward girls just because they’re easier.”

The ‘testosterone ticket’

Mr. Trump, with his [*cage-fighting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html), [*shirt-ripping*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html), [*insult-hurling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) campaign, has offered an alternative, aggressive version of masculinity. His running mate, JD Vance, offers another, in his emphasis on the importance of [*patriarchal families*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) and [*women raising children*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

Together, said Christine Matthews, a pollster, they’ve created “the testosterone ticket.”

“Vance himself has said that the Democratic Party is run by childless cat ladies, and that is his projection of a sort of feminine, intolerant, not all-American party,” she said. “And then their party is exalting this sort of male, muscular, ***working-class***, drive-a-pickup-truck, made-in-the-USA version of the party.”

In interviews, many of the young men supporting Mr. Trump said they admired his strength and macho demeanor.

Yet they did not necessarily buy into the caricature of traditional masculinity on display at the Republican convention, or the deeply [*misogynistic version*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) in the “[*manosphere*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html)” [*online*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

Mr. Romstad said a president should be macho: “When you’re talking about a candidate, especially as the president of the United States, you don’t want somebody who’s a pushover.”

He identifies with that type of masculinity, he said: “Oh, for sure. I do man stuff, I fix cars, I build stuff.”

But he also wishes that being a man left more room for vulnerability, “especially when it comes to mental health issues, expressing yourself type stuff,” he said. “Just overall, if you’re a dude with a problem, it’s like, ‘Just get over it.’”

Malachi Bohlmann, 23, a veteran, student and real estate entrepreneur in Phoenix, said Mr. Trump’s strength was beneficial for border control and foreign policy.

“What I do like about Trump is his overall aura when it comes to geopolitics, and just his ability to just show the U.S. as a strong superpower,” he said. “You’re not going to mess with us.”

But while he didn’t want to vote for Mr. Biden, he’s now unsure if he’ll vote for Mr. Trump or Ms. Harris. He wants to research her plans for addressing affordable housing and border control before he decides.

Nicholas Wickizer, 22, a high school graduate in Ionia, Mich., who works on a bumper assembly line, said his vote for Mr. Trump was “set in stone” by the toughness Mr. Trump showed when he raised his fist after being shot.

But he doesn’t believe that men have lost status in modern-day society. “All the industries are dominated by men, bosses are men, there hasn’t been a woman president,” he said. “I think women deserve a little bit more.”

Though gender issues like reproductive rights are a centerpiece of Ms. Harris’s presidential campaign, she has not made [*her own gender*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html) a focus. Instead, it’s her running mate, Gov. Tim Walz, who has done so, by offering a [*different version of masculinity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/opinion/gender-gap-biden-trump-2024.html).

He’s a veteran, a Second Amendment supporter and a former high school football coach. Yet he worked in a female-dominated profession, teaching, and he’s comfortable talking about fatherhood and championing the rights of women and gay and transgender people.

“He represents an entirely new way of being a man, hard and soft, valuing equally both sides of his humanity,” Professor Way said.

To be successful, politicians need to see both sides of voters too, she said.

“My message to Democrats is we have to be including the needs of the people who are voting for Trump, and addressing them smack on,” she said. “Not trying to convince them they should care about immigrants or Black people or women. But what are your concerns, and what can we do to help your family thrive?”

Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting.

Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Some planning to vote for Donald J. Trump said it had become harder to be a man, and they valued strength in a president. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLISON DINNER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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**End of Document**



[***From 'Darkness' to Oscar Buzz***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CV6-KC81-JBG3-60TC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2043 words

**Byline:** By Kyle Buchanan

**Body**

There has never been a movie quite like ''Emilia Pérez,'' so it's fitting that its star Karla Sofía Gascón is one of a kind, too.

In the film from the director Jacques Audiard, Gascón plays a Mexico City cartel kingpin who fakes death in order to transition abroad in secret. Years after her gender-affirming surgery, the newly rechristened Emilia contacts the lawyer who helped arrange it (Zoe Saldaña) and has one more request: a reunion with the unsuspecting wife (Selena Gomez) and children she left behind, even though returning to the scene of her old crimes could have dire consequences.

The multitude of genres suggested by this synopsis -- a gritty drug-world exposé, a family melodrama, a trans-empowerment narrative -- are further complicated by the fact that ''Emilia Pérez'' is a musical, meaning the characters are liable to break into song whether they're in a love scene or clashing in a heated gunfight. In a film full of big swings, it's hard to imagine any of the wild ideas holding together if it weren't for Gascón, who can contain all of those multitudes in a single freighted look. Many pundits believe that after Netflix releases ''Emilia Pérez'' in November, Gascón will make history as the first openly trans actress nominated for an Oscar.

In May, the 52-year-old Gascón was the breakout star of the Cannes Film Festival, where ''Emilia Pérez'' won a best actress award that was shared among all of the movie's leading women. Since her castmates had returned home before the awards ceremony, an overcome Gascón took the stage on their behalf, and her emotional speech was the night's highlight. At the microphone for nearly six minutes, Gascón flitted between Spanish and English as she tearfully asserted the humanity of trans people, joked about bribing the jurors, paid romantic tribute to her co-star Gomez, then apologized to Gomez's boyfriend for her ardor.

Afterward, Gascón tried to explain her speech's breathless sprawl. ''I've never been given a prize,'' she told reporters. ''I've mostly been given blows and kicks.''

Spanish-speaking audiences may already be familiar with Gascón, a veteran of Mexican telenovelas who starred in the hit 2013 film ''Nosotros los Nobles'' and transitioned six years ago while in the public eye. ''It was very difficult,'' she told me recently over lunch in Los Angeles. ''People knew me a certain way and then I changed, so I constantly felt that I had to justify myself. I was always fighting with everyone.''

To have her identity and transition dissected in editorials and on talk shows was a constant struggle. ''When you go through those moments, you have the impression that the whole world is against you,'' she said. ''Some of the criticism is people saying, 'What you did to yourself is going against your nature.' I want to tell them, look at yourself in the mirror! If you're that natural, take off your clothes, go hunt for rabbits in the wild, and let your nails grow. Let's see how nature will suit you then!''

Gascón, speaking in Spanish with a translator present, talks with the excitement of someone who knows herself well and can't wait to tell you what she's learned. As we lunched by the pool at the Sunset Tower Hotel, she sometimes held court at such length that her translator filled three pages of a legal pad just scribbling down a single story. (Whenever the translator struggled to catch up, Gascón's eyes flickered with comic impatience.) In that way, she is quite unlike Emilia, who needs to say very little to be heard.

Most of the time, though, Gascón can't help but recall her character. As we ate, I noticed the same quicksilver shifts from gravity to levity that had proved so compelling in her performance. When I mentioned that to Saldaña on a call a few days later, she laughed. ''I'm telling you,'' she said, ''there were moments in which I was like, what is the difference between Emilia and Karla?''

Audiard put it more bluntly: ''I think that Emilia is Karla Sofía. I wouldn't know where one starts and the other ends.''

At times, even Gascón was confused. Before filming ''Emilia Pérez,'' she had shared her own life experiences with Audiard, who began to tailor the titular role to his star. Once production began, Gascón burrowed so deeply into character that she wondered whether Emilia would ever be possible to shake.

''To remove this character, it's almost like I had to do an exorcism,'' she said.

GASCÓN HAS NEVER been afraid to dream big. Born in Alcobendas, Spain, a town near Madrid, she was raised in a ***working-class*** family but felt destined for stardom.

''At 16 years old, I woke up one day knowing what I had to do -- don't ask me how,'' Gascón said.

She used her mother's old rotary phone to call Televisión Española to inform the broadcaster that she wanted to appear onscreen. Gascón's ambition far outstripped her opportunities -- the only jobs available then were background-player gigs -- but she took everything she could find and kept at it, eventually working her way up to commercials and minor TV shows.

Still, she yearned for more. The director Julián Pastor encouraged her to move to Mexico, where she was cast in projects that required horse-riding and sword fighting. ''It was full of action and adventure, exactly what I was looking for,'' she said.

To adapt to Mexico's exaggerated telenovela style, an acting teacher advised her to go in the opposite direction, encouraging her to be more naturalistic, less broad. ''That got me into a lot of trouble because instead it was the producers who had to adapt to me,'' she said. But the biggest adaptation was still to come.

By her mid-40s, with several career successes under her belt, Gascón still had not yet begun to live openly as a woman, and the years spent in secret had taken their toll. ''There were some very painful moments,'' she said. ''I even thought of taking my own life at some points.'' With the support of her family, she made the decision to pursue gender-affirming surgery. Of her wife, Marisa, whom Gascón has been with since they met in a nightclub as teenagers, she said: ''We've obviously shared a big chunk of our lives together, but I've never deceived her about who I was.''

Still, Gascón made the decision knowing it could cost her everything in the career she had worked so hard for. ''When I finished my transition, I didn't know if I was going to have a career after that,'' she said.

IN 2022, WHEN Audiard, the director of acclaimed dramas like ''A Prophet'' and ''Rust and Bone,'' embarked on his casting search for ''Emilia Pérez,'' he found himself frustrated. Sessions in Los Angeles and Mexico City had come up empty, in part because Audiard originally conceived the character as much younger. ''I realized I was wrong about the character's age,'' he said. ''If they were too young, it's as if they didn't have a history.''

That much, Gascón had in spades. After transitioning, a diverse creative portfolio had helped her get by -- Gascón has written two books and competed on a celebrity edition of ''MasterChef'' in Mexico -- and an eight-episode role in the Netflix series ''Rebelde'' served to re-establish her as a performer. But she had never made anything like ''Emilia Pérez,'' and when the audition came her way, she nearly passed, fearing the musical elements were out of her reach.

Still, she put herself on tape and earned a flight to Paris to meet Audiard, who said they formed an instant connection. ''The minute I saw her, that was it,'' he explained, praising Gascón's sense of authority and playfulness: ''That's what you call presence.''

While making ''Emilia Pérez,'' Gascón moved to Paris without her family in an effort to commit fully to the character. Sometimes, that intensity could be destabilizing.

''There were two moments in particular when I went to the depth of darkness in my own life,'' she said, singling out scenes when Emilia wakes up in the hospital after surgery and later when she is reunited with a son who no longer recognizes her. ''My brain didn't want to go back to that place.''

Just as Emilia does, Gascón leaned on Saldaña and Gomez to get by.

''Karla was very much the center of the whole story, so making sure that she had what she needed was important for all of us,'' said Saldaña, who marveled at how deeply Gascón went into character: ''I met Karla a year before we started shooting, and then I met Karla at the wrap party.''

Saldaña and Gomez invited her to shake off the production at a Beyoncé concert, but Gascón demurred and headed home to Madrid. She needed to see her family, though her teenage daughter couldn't believe the concert (and company) she'd just turned down.

''When my daughter found out, she was like, 'Are you insane? How could you say no to that?''' Gascón said, laughing.

WHILE IN LOS ANGELES, GASCÓN dropped by Netflix to discuss her promotional tour, which will involve a flurry of film festivals, then a sustained awards campaign that may make history. (Though she would be the first openly trans actress recognized by the Oscars, the first openly trans performer to receive any nomination was the singer Anohni, who was up for best song in 2016 but boycotted the ceremony. Elliot Page, who was nominated for the 2007 film ''Juno,'' came out publicly as trans in 2020.)

After a screening at Netflix, Gascón told me that a staffer there had praised her performance but failed to realize she also played Emilia before her transition, when the character presents as a gruff, bearded drug lord.

''I can tell you that from an egocentric point of view, I'm mad that people don't realize it's me playing both,'' she said, ''but at the same time, I feel very proud, too.''

Audiard initially sought to cast a cisgender male actor as Emilia before her transition, presuming that Gascón wouldn't want to play that portion of the role. Instead, she fought for it.

''Now I understand why she was so interested, because for her, playing the role of a man is an activity that requires creativity,'' Audiard said. ''As an actress, this is something you don't refuse.''

Gascón knows that when ''Emilia Pérez'' debuts on Netflix, her trans identity will be subjected to scrutiny from a global audience. Even during her Cannes speech in May, she predicted, ''Tomorrow, there will be plenty of comments from terrible people saying the same things about all of us trans people.'' Indeed, the morning after, the French politician Marion Maréchal posted on X a comment that translated to: ''So a man has won best actress.''

Gascón filed a legal complaint about the insult and posted her own colorful rejoinder on X a few days later: ''No matter how much you bark, you gargoyles of Beelzebub,'' Gascón wrote, ''you will not be able to blur what I have achieved.''

This pattern -- for every personal victory, a public controversy -- is one Gascón has gotten used to, though going forward, she hopes she will be less inclined to engage with people who attack her in bad faith.

''I think I can contribute more just by talking about my work,'' she said, ''even though I've received hundreds of offers to talk to people and I still get the hunch sometimes to talk to J.K. Rowling and tell her, 'Hey, what's your problem?''' She was referring to the ''Harry Potter'' author's negative comments on trans women and her criticism of the Olympic boxer Imane Khelif, whose eligibility was questioned despite the International Olympic Committee's strong defense: ''It's always the same story of these people trying to find a new victim to generate more hate.''

Though she conceded that words could sometimes wound her, Gascón felt it was a small price to pay for personal authenticity. ''I have a level of freedom that many would envy,'' she said. She said she hoped that feeling of inner peace could be retained during the monthslong awards campaign about to begin.

''I am 52 years old, and at this age I am in balance,'' she said. ''Other people are thinking, 'Wow, this is a special moment, you must be very nervous or very excited.' No, I am normal. I prefer it that way.''

Whether she makes Oscar history for ''Emilia Pérez,'' only one thing has her truly concerned.

''What I'm afraid of,'' she said, ''is how am I going to be able to top this?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/28/movies/karla-sofia-gascon-emilia-perez-oscar.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/28/movies/karla-sofia-gascon-emilia-perez-oscar.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In ''Emilia Pérez,'' Karla Sofía Gascón plays a cartel kingpin who transitions in secret, then reunites with her family, a role tailored to her. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Near right, Karla Sofía Gascón accepting the best actress award at Cannes on behalf of the ''Emilia Pérez'' leads. Far right, Gascón with co-stars Zoe Saldaña, center, and Selena Gomez. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIEN NOGIER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

YARA NARDI/REUTERS

RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5) This article appeared in print on page C1, C5.

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**End of Document**



[***Vance’s Mother Deals With Her Past and His Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D26-4YS1-DXY4-X00S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; elections

**Length:** 2767 words

**Byline:** Shawn McCreesh, Shawn McCreesh is a White House reporter for The Times covering the Trump administration.

**Highlight:** In his 2016 memoir, Senator JD Vance of Ohio described a rough childhood owing to his mother’s devastating drug addiction. Today, he and his mother, Beverly Aikins, are a remarkable team.

**Body**

Here is the way JD Vance introduced his mother to the world in his 2016 memoir, “Hillbilly Elegy”:

He described how she hit him. Trapped him in a car, floored the gas pedal and told him they were going to die. Made him pee into a jar so she could use his clean urine to pass a drug test. Moved him around a lot. Overshared. Disappeared. Burned through other people’s money. Slit her wrists. Crashed her minivan into a telephone pole.

These days, when Mr. Vance’s mother, Beverly Aikins, introduces herself, it is often in far simpler language. “Hi, family. I’m Bev,” she said at her regular Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in Middletown, Ohio, one Sunday this month. “I’m an alcoholic addict.”

A group of mostly older men murmured back, “Hi, Bev.”

She had invited a reporter from The New York Times along on the condition that none of her fellow group members would be identified. They were meeting in a tough-looking part of town, inside a squat brick building with cracked concrete floors and cinder-block walls painted white. Ms. Aikins wore denim overall cutoffs and a white T-shirt, her highlighted hair piled atop her head. She picked up some recovery literature and began to read from it: “These are our 12 traditions. …”

It has been almost 10 years since she got sober from alcohol and heroin and all other manner of substances she used to put down her throat and up her nose. In that time, the book her son wrote became a best seller and then a movie. He got elected to the Senate. He may very well be this country’s next vice president.

His rise has thrust her, unexpectedly, into the world of national politics. This summer, he brought her to the Republican National Convention and shouted out her sobriety, framing the arc of her life as a tale of redemption.

It is all still a bit new to her. She is dimly aware that her son has become the figure of much outrage of late, but, for the sake of her own sanity and sobriety, she says she remains purposefully oblivious to many of the controversies swirling around him.

Last Sunday, after her A.A. meeting wrapped up, she stuck around to explain that she would like to use this new platform of hers to help others who struggle with addiction. “I want people to know to reach out, to try to get help,” she said, “and that recovery is hard but it’s so worth it.”

It was nine years ago that her son first told her about his memoir. They were at a Waffle House. “He said, ‘Mom, I wrote a book, and there’s probably some things in it that aren’t very favorable,’” Ms. Aikins recalled. “I just said, ‘Will it help you heal?’ He said, ‘I think it will.’”

She remembered reading it for the first time. “It was heartbreaking in some parts,” she said. “But it helped us grow as a family, and it opened up a line of communication that we never really had. Addiction in our house was like the elephant in the room. Nobody ever said anything about it. We do now.”

She grew up in an abusive household herself. Her father was an alcoholic who beat her mother, Bonnie Vance, who was known as “Mamaw” to JD Vance. When Ms. Aikins was 19, she had a daughter, Lindsay, who is five years older than Mr. Vance. Mamaw and Lindsay looked after Mr. Vance when his own mother could not.

Ms. Aikins’s struggle with addiction began many years ago one day at work. She was a nurse. She got a bad headache and took a Vicodin pill. She loved the way it made her feel. She went home, bathed her children and cleaned her house. Soon she began to purloin stronger pharmaceuticals, such as Percocet. She lost her job and her nursing license and, with it, her access to prescription pills. She began to snort heroin. “My brain loved it,” she said.

She lived that way for a long time. “For years, I had made excuses for Mom,” Mr. Vance writes in his book. “I had tried to help manage her drug problem, read those stupid books about addiction, and accompanied her to N.A. meetings. I had endured, never complaining, a parade of father figures, all of whom left me feeling empty and mistrustful of men.”

She eventually lost touch with her children. Rock bottom came in 2015, when she was living out of her car, a red Chevrolet Aveo. She checked into a sober living facility across the Ohio River in Covington, Ky. After she got out, her daughter helped her find a place to live back in Middletown. But life was hard. “The apartment that I had was in the ghetto, and it used to be a trap house,” Ms. Aikins said. “Do you know what that is?”

A “trap house” is a drug den. Ms. Aikins would wake up to find addicts on her front porch, searching for the dealer who lived there before she did. She would threaten to call the police. “I just dug my heels in,” she said.

Five years later, her son, who had by that point graduated from Yale Law School and worked in private equity, bought her a house in a safer neighborhood. (She lives there now with her daughter.)

Around that time, Netflix was making Mr. Vance’s book into a movie. During production, Ms. Aikins attended a dinner with the film’s director, Ron Howard, and the actress who would play her, Amy Adams. It was a manic portrayal, all frizzy-haired and frenzied. “She said she wanted to get my sarcasm down,” Ms. Aikins said of Ms. Adams. “I think she did an amazing job. I was very flattered.” (This was said unsarcastically.) The real-life Ms. Aikins comes across today as a more hardened, confident character. She has the sort of unfazed affect of a person who has lived many years on the edge.

When the film came out, Ms. Aikins watched it for the first time with her children on Mr. Vance’s porch in Cincinnati. At first, she could not understand why they were so emotional. She said they told her: “‘Mom, you were out of it all those years. You don’t even remember.’ It’s like, ‘Oh, yes, OK. Go ahead and cry.’” She laughed and then added, a touch defensively, “It’s a movie! Quit crying.”

‘JD’s mom!’

When Republicans gathered in Milwaukee in July to officially nominate former President Donald J. Trump and Mr. Vance as the top of their ticket, one of the more cinematic moments involved an unexpected cheer for Ms. Aikins.

In his acceptance speech, Mr. Vance described “single moms like mine, who struggled with money and addiction but never gave up.”

He continued: “I’m proud to say my mom is here, 10 years clean and sober. I love you, Mom.” The cameras panned to a teary-eyed Ms. Aikins as the convention hall broke into a spontaneous chant: JD’s mom! JD’s mom! JD’s mom!

It was a surreal experience for a woman who had never even watched a political convention on television before. None of it was remotely familiar, including her seatmate in the V.I.P. box that evening. “I said, ‘Hi, what’s your name?’” she recounted. “He goes, ‘Mike Johnson.’ I went, ‘What do you do here?’ He goes, ‘I’m the speaker of the House.’ I went, ‘That sounds very impressive, but I’m not sure exactly what you do.’”

Ms. Aikins’s parents were Democrats — Mamaw had an affinity for Bill Clinton — but these days she is a registered Republican. She described herself as “bipartisan,” but then wondered: “Is that the right word? I don’t vote the party. I vote the person.” In 2016, the person was Mr. Trump. “Nobody can buy him,” she said. She got to meet him at the convention. “He was just very humble and very nice to me, and told me I had a great kid,” she said.

Part of the reason her son’s book was such a hit was that it was read by elites and the commentariat as a field guide for understanding places like Middletown and its inhabitants, the sorts of people who would send Mr. Trump to Washington. Back in those days, Mr. Vance’s view was that Mr. Trump was cynically preying on the despair of a destabilized white ***working class***. How did he go from describing Mr. Trump as “cultural heroin” to becoming his running mate?

“I’m probably not the best person to answer that,” Ms. Aikins said. “But I do think that JD saw, when he was in office, that things for people in our area got better. I think that’s why he changed his mind.”

‘Trump country’

The day before Ms. Aikins attended the A.A. meeting in Middletown, she was out in the Appalachian foothills, in Hillsboro, Ohio. It is a place of winding roads and cornfields and tiny graveyards that poke out from hillsides. Off one particularly barren stretch of road sat parked a classic square-body pickup truck. A large sign had been propped up in the bed of the truck for anyone who happened down that lonely way to see. It read: “FENTANYL KILLS.”

Beside the truck was a long, narrow drive that led to a field with a pitched roof and a pavilion in the center of it. Gathered there were a few dozen people. There were parents who had lost children to drug overdoses and fentanyl poisoning. And there were children who had lost parents the same way. They were all mad with grief. They wore it on their faces, and you could hear it in their voices.

They had heard that JD Vance’s mom was going to be there. Many of them had seen her moment at the convention.

“I was so excited, because I really wanted to meet her,” said Debbie Evans, a 68-year-old retiree from Woodbridge, Va. She was wearing a Trump hat that had belonged to her son before he had died. “I like how she came from where she came from, and how he did, and how wonderful he is now, and how far he went,” she said.

Margie Perkins, a 66-year-old hospice nurse from Spotsylvania County, Va., brought a copy of “Hillbilly Elegy” with her. “I hope she signs it,” she said. “I want her to be an example that family can come back together after all of this,” Ms. Perkins said.

It was not a political event, but, as one mother pointed out, “This is Trump country.”

Ms. Aikins took a seat a few rows back from a stage at the front of the pavilion. She sipped from a Diet Mountain Dew bottle as people got up to talk about how addiction had robbed them. One young woman wailed while recounting what it was like to grow up the child of an addict, how she had seen the inside of motel rooms and strip clubs and crack houses, and how, finally, her mother had died. The young woman held up a plastic bag that contained her mother’s last belongings — what had been found on her body. There was a bus pass and a cheap piece of jewelry in there. “This is all I have left of my mom,” said the woman.

Ms. Aikins was there with two colleagues who work with her at a substance abuse treatment center called Seacrest. The colleagues are also in recovery. One got up and talked about what it was like to get dope-sick while seven months pregnant and in jail.

Then it was Ms. Aikins’s turn. She seemed almost shy. “For my five-year clean anniversary, my son bought me a house,” she told the crowd. She did not mention who her son was. But everyone knew.

“Wow, this lady’s got some street cred,” said the man who got onstage after her. The parents in the crowd nodded as Ms. Aikins quietly returned to her seat in the back. “She’s got a heck of a story,” the man continued, “and if you guys know her, well, you know her.”

A small group of mothers approached Ms. Aikins and asked if they could take a picture with her. “You’re famous,” one said.

‘My own little bubble’

Two days after Mr. Vance’s convention speech, Ms. Aikins posted a long message on Facebook. “It’s been an exciting week,” she began, but then the post took a turn: “Seeing how my town, that I choose to live in and love has so much vitriol and hate for my child is devastating to my peace of mind I’ve fought so hard to have.” She wrote that she would stay off social media until after the election.

“You see this hometown boy who’s doing so good, you would think no matter what your politics, you would just want to get behind him and root him on,” she said after her A.A. meeting in Middletown this month.

But her son’s combative style and his commentary about “childless cat ladies” and “the childless left” running the country have turned off many Americans, who find his views to be rather retrograde and judgmental. How could someone who was raised by women — his sister, his “Mamaw” and Ms. Aikins — end up being so dismissive of so many women’s lives?

Perhaps he has idealized a traditional family unit precisely because he never had one growing up. “I would agree with that statement,” his mother said. “For both of my kids, they didn’t grow up with a positive family unit. I know that they seemed to gravitate towards that in their adulthood.”

Asked how Mr. Vance’s wife, Usha Vance, has weathered the scrutiny, Ms. Aikins said: “She’s very supportive of JD. She’s quite brilliant. They kind of feed off of each other. You will never, ever, ever, ever hear JD ever say anything bad about Usha. That’s his No. 1, and I love that for them, and I think she’s doing really well.”

Three of the most famous women in the world — Oprah Winfrey, Taylor Swift and Jennifer Aniston — have all knocked Ms. Aikins’s son for his “childless cat ladies” comment. “I just choose to ignore that,” she said, “and ignoring the bad, I also have to ignore the good. I can live in my own little bubble and be comfortable.”

That bubble is important to her continued sobriety. The morning of her A.A. meeting, her son had given an eye-popping interview to CNN in which he tried to explain why he was spreading a debunked rumor that Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio, were feasting on people’s pets. “If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people,” he said, “then that’s what I’m going to do.”

Not only had Ms. Aikins not seen this, she also claimed to have no idea what was happening (or not happening) in Springfield, which is just 50 miles from Middletown. “I’m not even on social media,” she said. “I watch Investigation Discovery. Is there something happening in Springfield?”

Cats. Dogs. Haitians. Her son.

“I’m sorry,” she said, shaking her head. “I don’t know.”

She added that she was really too busy with her own work to keep up with the news. She said she got her nursing license back and she teaches at the treatment facility. “This week, we’re talking about sexually transmitted infections,” she said, “so I’ve been doing a lot of research on chlamydia.”

One political program Ms. Aikins does intend to watch is Mr. Vance’s debate against Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee, on Oct 1. Asked what she thought of Mr. Walz, Ms. Aikins replied: “I don’t really think about him either way. Is that bad?” She thought for a moment. “I’ve heard he was a teacher, which I have a lot of respect for teachers. If he attacks my baby, he might want to hide from me. But I think my baby can pretty much handle himself.”

And yet, this is a dangerous job her baby has taken. It did not end so well for the last guy who had it. When former Vice President Mike Pence tried to certify Mr. Trump’s defeat on Jan. 6, 2021, the mob of pro-Trump rioters that attacked the U.S. Capitol chanted, “Hang Mike Pence!” and accused him of being controlled by the Devil. Mr. Trump watched it all on TV.

Ms. Aikins said she did not worry about any of this. “I think that JD is probably the smartest, most amazing young man, and everything he touches turns to gold,” she said.

In fact, she added, “JD will be president one day. You know how I know that?”

She said that “he used to watch all these political shows” when he was little. “I would say, ‘Why do you watch that?’ He would say, ‘Mom, this is about our country. I need information.’ I would just think, ‘What a nerd.’”

One night, he was desperate to watch a debate, but his stepbrothers at the time would not give up the remote, because there was a wrestling match on. “So we went and got a motel room, so my baby could watch the debate on TV,” Ms. Aikins said proudly.

But who was debating?

“I don’t even remember,” she said with a laugh. “I was probably high.”

Sheelagh McNeill contributed research.

Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

Sheelagh McNeill contributed research. Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

PHOTOS: Senator JD Vance of Ohio, and his mother, Beverly Aikins. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Beverly Aikins, JD Vance’s mother, speaking at an event to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs among preteens and teenagers. She has been sober from alcohol and heroin for almost 10 years. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Ms. Aikins and a young JD in a family photograph. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA BEVERLY AIKINS); The actors Owen Asztalos, as a young Mr. Vance, and Amy Adams, as Ms. Aikins, in the 2020 film, “Hillbilly Elegy.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY LACEY TERRELL/NETFLIX) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

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[***In a Life of Challenges, She Had Guts and Grit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM3-7XV1-JBG3-6029-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday

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**Length:** 485 words

**Byline:** By Devika Girish

**Body**

This staid biopic of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, is less interested in what she did than what she represented.

Shirley Chisholm was an American heroine who challenged simplistic political narratives of victory and defeat. Though her most famous effort -- her bid for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1972 -- wasn't successful, it was one chapter in a life's worth of grit and innumerable wins, only a few of which can be measured by votes or contests.

She was the ***working-class*** daughter of Caribbean immigrants who achieved academic excellence despite financial struggles; an educator who advocated powerfully the rights of children, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds; a self-made politician who, at the local and state levels, fought successfully for better representation for women and minorities; and, in 1968, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

It is a pity, then, that ''Shirley,'' John Ridley's new biopic starring Regina King, focuses rather narrowly on Chisholm's failed presidential campaign. The film reaches for the urgency of a political thriller, jumping between campaign meetings, backroom negotiations and rousing speeches. But the staid visuals -- bright period colors softened by a nostalgic glow -- and a script made up of a string of losses convey a dull sense of a fait accompli.

Complex, meaningful events from Chisholm's life and career become reductive paving stones in a despairing story of ill-timed ambition. An early scene, set soon after her election to Congress, shows her railing against her appointment to the Agriculture Committee and convincing the speaker of the House to reassign her. No mention is made of the fact that she served for two years on the committee, and found a way to use her position to expand the food stamp program.

The problem is that ''Shirley'' is interested less in what Chisholm actually did than in what she represented, as a Black woman daring to see herself as the leader of the nation. At home, Chisholm struggles to maintain her relationships with her husband and her sister, who resent the self-absorption her career requires. Her advisers (played suavely by Terrence Howard and Lance Reddick) clash with her over her unwillingness to take partisan stances; younger, more radical supporters dislike her liberalism; and in public, she receives both support and racist, sexist barbs.

King is magnetic onscreen, nailing Chisholm's accent and her steely persona. But there is little for her to do other than trade quips with the other characters, in a drama that is too content with telling rather than showing.

ShirleyRated PG-13 for discomfiting depictions of misogynoir. Running time: 1 hour 57 minutes. Watch on Netflix.ShirleyRated PG-13 for discomfiting depictions of misogynoir. Running time: 1 hour 57 minutes. On Netflix.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/movies/shirley-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/movies/shirley-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Regina King as Shirley Chisholm in ''Shirley,'' written and directed by John Ridley. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GLEN WILSON/NETFLIX) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Vance, Trump Sees the G.O.P.'s Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH1-Y6K1-JBG3-6019-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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

**Length:** 1336 words

**Byline:** By Matthew Continetti

**Body**

Donald Trump's contempt for the Washington establishment is well known. He challenges, confronts and subverts its institutions, its media, its consultants, its euphemisms and its unwritten codes of conduct. Choosing Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio to be his running mate is the latest example of the former president's willingness to flout political convention.

Previous vice-presidential nominees were selected to forge party unity, capture a crucial swing state or help an outsider president navigate Washington. Mr. Vance doesn't fit these criteria. But then Mr. Trump has never been a traditional candidate. And he probably had more on his mind than 2024 when he put Mr. Vance on the ticket. He was probably thinking of 2028 and beyond -- and where he wants the G.O.P. to go.

The last time Mr. Trump named a running mate, he had more pressing concerns. He was the underdog to Hillary Clinton in 2016. Many Republicans, especially social and religious conservatives, viewed him with suspicion.

Mr. Trump selected Mike Pence, who had close ties to evangelical Christian voters and had served 12 years in Congress, to allay their fears. Mr. Pence was the governor of a Midwestern state. The idea was that he could help Mr. Trump deal with insiders and power brokers.

The Trump-Pence alliance held until Jan. 6, 2021. Now, having narrowly escaped an assassin's bullet and being constitutionally limited to one more term, Mr. Trump is prioritizing loyalty and legacy over qualities that past presidents have looked for in vice-presidential nominees.

Mr. Trump appears to value Mr. Vance's evolution from opponent to stalwart. Mr. Vance has the zeal of a convert to Mr. Trump and to Trumpism and is unlikely to use the vice-presidential residence as a base of operations for pro-immigration, interventionist Republicans. He defends Mr. Trump's conduct after the 2020 election and has adopted Mr. Trump's enemies as his own.

Mr. Vance's biography must have also appealed to Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance grew up in poverty, joined the Marines after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, wrote a best-selling autobiography and succeeded in business. His ***working-class*** roots may appeal to the forgotten men and women of the Rust Belt who are at the heart of Mr. Trump's campaign.

Another potential asset is Mr. Vance's age. Republicans are doing comparatively well with young male voters this year, and Mr. Vance may help the party capitalize on this growing advantage. There is a long tail to the Vance nomination. Richard Nixon was also 39 years old when Dwight Eisenhower chose him as a running mate in 1952. Mr. Nixon played a central role in American politics for 22 years.

Mr. Trump so totally dominates today's Republican Party that he feels no need to build bridges within it. By choosing Mr. Vance, Mr. Trump made a clean break with the Republican free traders, entitlement reformers and foreign policy hawks who remain wary of him. He believes he doesn't need their votes to win, and he's probably right.

As a relatively recent convert to the Make America Great Again movement, Mr. Vance rejects the foreign and economic policies of the supporters of the former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley in this year's G.O.P. primaries. The Vance nomination is another step in Mr. Trump's plan to dislodge the old guard and make the Republican Party his own -- from defeating his critics in primaries or forcing their early retirement to reportedly reviewing and editing a party platform whose brevity, terseness and ambiguities reflect his personality, his preferences, his love of improvisation and his transactional nature.

Under Mr. Trump, the G.O.P. has moved away from the Reaganite triad of religious conservatism, free-market capitalism and hawkish internationalism. This updated policy mix hasn't limited the party's appeal; it has broadened the party to include more minority voters.

Mr. Vance's political appeal is not entirely clear. Ohio has turned bright red, voting for Mr. Trump by an eight-point margin in 2016 and 2020. In a CBS News/YouGov poll released on the eve of the Republican National Convention, he led Mr. Biden in every swing state, including the Rust Belt states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

And Mr. Vance is a newcomer to Washington. He will turn 40 years old in August and would be among the youngest vice presidents in American history. His two years in the Senate would also make him one of the least experienced vice presidents ever. If Mr. Trump wins, Mr. Vance's youth and brief tenure inside the Beltway would make him more like Kamala Harris than any other recent vice presidents. Mr. Trump would be his wizened mentor. Mr. Vance would be the apprentice.

We don't normally think of Mr. Trump as a patient tutor or a long-term planner. But his recent conviction and the attempt on his life might have heightened the stakes in this election and reinforced the necessity not only of victory but also of building something that lasts.

The Vance pick is the clearest sign yet of how Mr. Trump sees the G.O.P.'s future. If Mr. Vance becomes vice president, he will also become the front-runner for the 2028 Republican nomination. That nomination will be contested, but there is no question that Mr. Trump intends for the Republican Party to remain nationalist, populist and ''America First.''

Mr. Vance, who graduated from Yale Law School, is perhaps the most articulate defender of the MAGA worldview. He is a critic of the financial sector, corporate monopolies, free trade, global intervention and illegal immigration. He has kind words for organized labor and for industrial policy; joined progressive icons like Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, in efforts to rein in Wall Street; and praised the work of Lina Khan, the Federal Trade Commission chairwoman. He opposed the national security supplemental bill that provided military aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan this year.

Last week, when Mr. Vance spoke at the National Conservatism conference in Washington, D.C., he was greeted as a star. He spoke casually and comfortably. He name-checked prominent policy wonks in the audience like Elbridge Colby, an advocate of foreign policy prioritization that would limit overseas commitments to contain China, and Oren Cass, a critic of libertarian economics.

Mr. Vance extolled the growing influence of nationalist populism in the Republican Party. ''Even though we didn't win the debate'' over Ukraine aid, he said, ''we're starting to win the debate within our own party, and I think that really matters.'' His elevation to the vice presidency would guarantee a MAGA West Wing and empower advocates of foreign policy restraint and of government action to rebuild the defense industrial base and domestic manufacturing.

Mr. Vance's harshest words dealt with immigration. ''The real threat to American democracy,'' he told the conservative conference, ''is that American voters keep on voting for less immigration and our politicians keep on rewarding us with more.'' He added, ''The thing on immigration is that no one can avoid that it has made our societies poorer, less safe, less prosperous and less advanced.'' And he summarized his public philosophy by saying, ''American leaders should look out for Americans.''

Mr. Trump has riveted global politics for close to a decade. The nomination of his new apprentice suggests that the Trump style, the Trump policies and the Trump appeal to non-college-educated voters of every race and ethnicity will rule the Republican Party for decades to come.

Matthew Continetti is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of ''The Right: The Hundred Year War for American Conservatism.''

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**Graphic**

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

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**End of Document**



[***Meet the Trans Actress Who Could Make Oscar History***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CV2-2B01-JBG3-601D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2024 Wednesday 15:27 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 2102 words

**Byline:** Kyle BuchananKyle Buchanan is a pop culture reporter and also serves as , the awards season columnist for The Times.

**Highlight:** Karla Sofía Gascón plays a drug kingpin who undergoes gender-affirming surgery in a performance that wowed Cannes. Is the academy next?

**Body**

There has never been a movie quite like [*“Emilia Pérez,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3HupHq8-eE) so it’s fitting that its star Karla Sofía Gascón is one of a kind, too.

In the film from the director Jacques Audiard, Gascón plays a Mexico City cartel kingpin who fakes death in order to transition abroad in secret. Years after her gender-affirming surgery, the newly rechristened Emilia contacts the lawyer who helped arrange it (Zoe Saldaña) and has one more request: a reunion with the unsuspecting wife (Selena Gomez) and children she left behind, even though returning to the scene of her old crimes could have dire consequences.

The multitude of genres suggested by this synopsis — a gritty drug-world exposé, a family melodrama, a trans-empowerment narrative — are further complicated by the fact that “Emilia Pérez” is a musical, meaning the characters are liable to break into song whether they’re in a love scene or clashing in a heated gunfight. In a film full of big swings, it’s hard to imagine any of the wild ideas holding together if it weren’t for Gascón, who can contain all of those multitudes in a single freighted look. Many pundits believe that after Netflix releases “Emilia Pérez” in November, Gascón will make history as the first openly trans actress nominated for an Oscar.

In May, the 52-year-old Gascón was the breakout [*star of the Cannes Film Festival*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3HupHq8-eE), where “Emilia Pérez” won a best actress award that was shared among all of the movie’s leading women. Since her castmates had returned home before the awards ceremony, an overcome Gascón took the stage on their behalf, and her emotional speech was the night’s highlight. At the microphone for nearly six minutes, Gascón flitted between Spanish and English as she tearfully asserted the humanity of trans people, joked about bribing the jurors, paid romantic tribute to her co-star Gomez, then apologized to Gomez’s boyfriend for her ardor.

Afterward, Gascón tried to explain her speech’s breathless sprawl. “I’ve never been given a prize,” she told reporters. “I’ve mostly been given blows and kicks.”

Spanish-speaking audiences may already be familiar with Gascón, a veteran of Mexican telenovelas who starred in the hit 2013 film “Nosotros los Nobles” and transitioned six years ago while in the public eye. “It was very difficult,” she told me recently over lunch in Los Angeles. “People knew me a certain way and then I changed, so I constantly felt that I had to justify myself. I was always fighting with everyone.”

To have her identity and transition dissected in editorials and on talk shows was a constant struggle. “When you go through those moments, you have the impression that the whole world is against you,” she said. “Some of the criticism is people saying, ‘What you did to yourself is going against your nature.’ I want to tell them, look at yourself in the mirror! If you’re that natural, take off your clothes, go hunt for rabbits in the wild, and let your nails grow. Let’s see how nature will suit you then!”

Gascón, speaking in Spanish with a translator present, talks with the excitement of someone who knows herself well and can’t wait to tell you what she’s learned. As we lunched by the pool at the Sunset Tower Hotel, she sometimes held court at such length that her translator filled three pages of a legal pad just scribbling down a single story. (Whenever the translator struggled to catch up, Gascón’s eyes flickered with comic impatience.) In that way, she is quite unlike Emilia, who needs to say very little to be heard.

Most of the time, though, Gascón can’t help but recall her character. As we ate, I noticed the same quicksilver shifts from gravity to levity that had proved so compelling in her performance. When I mentioned that to Saldaña on a call a few days later, she laughed. “I’m telling you,” she said, “there were moments in which I was like, what is the difference between Emilia and Karla?”

Audiard put it more bluntly: “I think that Emilia is Karla Sofía. I wouldn’t know where one starts and the other ends.”

At times, even Gascón was confused. Before filming “Emilia Pérez,” she had shared her own life experiences with Audiard, who began to tailor the titular role to his star. Once production began, Gascón burrowed so deeply into character that she wondered whether Emilia would ever be possible to shake.

“To remove this character, it’s almost like I had to do an exorcism,” she said.

GASCÓN HAS NEVER been afraid to dream big. Born in Alcobendas, Spain, a town near Madrid, she was raised in a ***working-class*** family but felt destined for stardom.

“At 16 years old, I woke up one day knowing what I had to do — don’t ask me how,” Gascón said.

She used her mother’s old rotary phone to call Televisión Española to inform the broadcaster that she wanted to appear onscreen. Gascón’s ambition far outstripped her opportunities — the only jobs available then were background-player gigs — but she took everything she could find and kept at it, eventually working her way up to commercials and minor TV shows.

Still, she yearned for more. The director Julián Pastor encouraged her to move to Mexico, where she was cast in projects that required horse-riding and sword fighting. “It was full of action and adventure, exactly what I was looking for,” she said.

To adapt to Mexico’s exaggerated telenovela style, an acting teacher advised her to go in the opposite direction, encouraging her to be more naturalistic, less broad. “That got me into a lot of trouble because instead it was the producers who had to adapt to me,” she said. But the biggest adaptation was still to come.

By her mid-40s, with several career successes under her belt, Gascón still had not yet begun to live openly as a woman, and the years spent in secret had taken their toll. “There were some very painful moments,” she said. “I even thought of taking my own life at some points.” With the support of her family, she made the decision to pursue gender-affirming surgery. Of her wife, Marisa, whom Gascón has been with since they met in a nightclub as teenagers, she said: “We’ve obviously shared a big chunk of our lives together, but I’ve never deceived her about who I was.”

Still, Gascón made the decision knowing it could cost her everything in the career she had worked so hard for. “When I finished my transition, I didn’t know if I was going to have a career after that,” she said.

IN 2022, WHEN Audiard, the director of acclaimed dramas like “A Prophet” and “Rust and Bone,” embarked on his casting search for “Emilia Pérez,” he found himself frustrated. Sessions in Los Angeles and Mexico City had come up empty, in part because Audiard originally conceived the character as much younger. “I realized I was wrong about the character’s age,” he said. “If they were too young, it’s as if they didn’t have a history.”

That much, Gascón had in spades. After transitioning, a diverse creative portfolio had helped her get by — Gascón has written two books and competed on a celebrity edition of “MasterChef” in Mexico — and an eight-episode role in [*the Netflix series “Rebelde”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3HupHq8-eE) served to re-establish her as a performer. But she had never made anything like “Emilia Pérez,” and when the audition came her way, she nearly passed, fearing the musical elements were out of her reach.

Still, she put herself on tape and earned a flight to Paris to meet Audiard, who said they formed an instant connection. “The minute I saw her, that was it,” he explained, praising Gascón’s sense of authority and playfulness: “That’s what you call presence.”

While making “Emilia Pérez,” Gascón moved to Paris without her family in an effort to commit fully to the character. Sometimes, that intensity could be destabilizing.

“There were two moments in particular when I went to the depth of darkness in my own life,” she said, singling out scenes when Emilia wakes up in the hospital after surgery and later when she is reunited with a son who no longer recognizes her. “My brain didn’t want to go back to that place.”

Just as Emilia does, Gascón leaned on Saldaña and Gomez to get by.

“Karla was very much the center of the whole story, so making sure that she had what she needed was important for all of us,” said Saldaña, who marveled at how deeply Gascón went into character: “I met Karla a year before we started shooting, and then I met Karla at the wrap party.”

Saldaña and Gomez invited her to shake off the production at a Beyoncé concert, but Gascón demurred and headed home to Madrid. She needed to see her family, though her teenage daughter couldn’t believe the concert (and company) she’d just turned down.

“When my daughter found out, she was like, ‘Are you insane? How could you say no to that?’” Gascón said, laughing.

WHILE IN LOS ANGELES, GASCÓN dropped by Netflix to discuss her promotional tour, which will involve a flurry of film festivals, then a sustained awards campaign that may make history. (Though she would be the first openly trans actress recognized by the Oscars, the first openly trans performer to receive any nomination was the singer Anohni, who was up for best song in 2016 but boycotted the ceremony. Elliot Page, who was nominated for the 2007 film “Juno,” came out publicly as trans in 2020.)

After a screening at Netflix, Gascón told me that a staffer there had praised her performance but failed to realize she also played Emilia before her transition, when the character presents as a gruff, bearded drug lord.

“I can tell you that from an egocentric point of view, I’m mad that people don’t realize it’s me playing both,” she said, “but at the same time, I feel very proud, too.”

Audiard initially sought to cast a cisgender male actor as Emilia before her transition, presuming that Gascón wouldn’t want to play that portion of the role. Instead, she fought for it.

“Now I understand why she was so interested, because for her, playing the role of a man is an activity that requires creativity,” Audiard said. “As an actress, this is something you don’t refuse.”

Gascón knows that when “Emilia Pérez” debuts on Netflix, her trans identity will be subjected to scrutiny from a global audience. Even during her Cannes speech in May, she predicted, “Tomorrow, there will be plenty of comments from terrible people saying the same things about all of us trans people.” Indeed, the morning after, the French politician Marion Maréchal posted on X a comment that translated to: “So a man has won best actress.”

Gascón filed a legal complaint about the insult and posted her own colorful rejoinder on X a few days later: “No matter how much you bark, you gargoyles of Beelzebub,” Gascón [*wrote*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3HupHq8-eE), “you will not be able to blur what I have achieved.”

This pattern — for every personal victory, a public controversy — is one Gascón has gotten used to, though going forward, she hopes she will be less inclined to engage with people who attack her in bad faith.

“I think I can contribute more just by talking about my work,” she said, “even though I’ve received hundreds of offers to talk to people and I still get the hunch sometimes to talk to J.K. Rowling and tell her, ‘Hey, what’s your problem?’” She was referring to the “Harry Potter” author’s negative comments on trans women and her criticism of the Olympic boxer Imane Khelif, whose [*eligibility was questioned*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3HupHq8-eE) despite the International Olympic Committee’s strong defense: “It’s always the same story of these people trying to find a new victim to generate more hate.”

Though she conceded that words could sometimes wound her, Gascón felt it was a small price to pay for personal authenticity. “I have a level of freedom that many would envy,” she said. She said she hoped that feeling of inner peace could be retained during the monthslong awards campaign about to begin.

“I am 52 years old, and at this age I am in balance,” she said. “Other people are thinking, ‘Wow, this is a special moment, you must be very nervous or very excited.’ No, I am normal. I prefer it that way.”

Whether she makes Oscar history for “Emilia Pérez,” only one thing has her truly concerned.

“What I’m afraid of,” she said, “is how am I going to be able to top this?”

PHOTOS: In “Emilia Pérez,” Karla Sofía Gascón plays a cartel kingpin who transitions in secret, then reunites with her family, a role tailored to her. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Near right, Karla Sofía Gascón accepting the best actress award at Cannes on behalf of the “Emilia Pérez” leads. Far right, Gascón with co-stars Zoe Saldaña, center, and Selena Gomez. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIEN NOGIER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; YARA NARDI/REUTERS; RYAN PFLUGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5) This article appeared in print on page C1, C5.

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**End of Document**



[***A Shift in Economic Opportunities***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRM-Y451-DXY4-X550-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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

**Length:** 1717 words

**Byline:** By German Lopez and Ashley Wu

**Body**

New research shows that the Black-white opportunity gap closed by about 30 percent for people born poor. It's also harder for poor white people to climb into the middle class.

Lawrence Cain Jr., a Black millennial in Cincinnati, did not have a comfortable upbringing. His family didn't have much money. They took few vacations. But Mr. Cain did have a strong community -- which he said taught him entrepreneurship and showed him he could dream big. His mom took double shifts at nursing homes. She and her father ran their own businesses. Mr. Cain worked at his grandfather's deli starting at 11 years old.

Mr. Cain, 35, got a two-year degree in business management and first worked as a bank teller and financial adviser. In 2015, he was ready to forge his own path. He started a financial coaching business, Abundance University. Business is booming. Today, Mr. Cain identifies as solidly middle-class. He and his wife, a teacher, can support themselves, their three children and then some. They take holidays around the country. ''My kids are spoiled,'' he joked.

Mr. Cain in many ways reflects the trends captured by a new Harvard study. It looked at two groups: a Gen X cohort born in 1978 and a millennial cohort born in 1992. The researchers combed through decades of anonymized census and tax records to which the federal government gave them access. The data covered 57 million children, which offered the researchers a more detailed view into recent generations than previous economic studies had. Adjusting for inflation, they then measured these groups' ability to rise to the middle and upper classes -- their economic mobility.

The researchers found that Black millennials born to low-income parents had an easier time rising than the previous Black generation did. At the same time, white millennials born to poor parents had a harder time than their white Gen X counterparts. Black people still, on average, make less money than white people, and the overall income gap remains large. But it has narrowed for Black and white Americans born poor -- by about 30 percent.

The community you come from has a huge effect on your economic mobility. For centuries, this meant a tremendous advantage for white Americans, even those born into low-income families. But in a surprising shift, the study suggests that advantage is not as large as it once was.

On the flip side of Mr. Cain is someone like Derek Brown, a white millennial in Cincinnati. His parents were separated, and he was raised in two worlds, one middle class and one poor. His dad worked at a General Electric factory, a steady job that provided a more middle-class life. His mom worked long hours at gas stations, Mr. Brown said, but she struggled. Sometimes, she couldn't pay the bills, and their power was cut off at home. ''It was never the dream,'' he said.

Unlike Mr. Cain, Mr. Brown did not have a strong sense of community, as he bounced between his mother, his father and his grandparents. Watching his mother, he came to believe that hard work does not necessarily lead to a better life. He once hoped to become a journalist when he grew up, but he gave up that dream to pursue what he believed would be a more realistic way to pay the bills.

Today, Mr. Brown, 34, feels that he is behind where his father was. He works as a hairstylist at Great Clips. He lives paycheck to paycheck. He currently has a $3,000 medical bill that his insurance didn't cover, and he doesn't know how he'll pay for it. He's always scared of the next big cost. ''I have really bad financial anxiety,'' he said. ''I don't even want to drive to places. What if my car breaks down?''

''It's instilled in your head: Anything is possible if you work hard for it,'' Mr. Brown added. ''What no one tells you is that for some people there is a glass ceiling, and you just don't see it until you hit it.''

As the Harvard study shows, the difference in outcomes between Mr. Cain and Mr. Brown is increasingly typical. But the racial differences weren't the only findings. Over the decade and a half of the study, the opportunity gap between white people born rich and those born poor expanded by roughly 30 percent. One possible interpretation: ''Class is becoming more important in America,'' while race is becoming less so, Raj Chetty, the study's lead author, told me.

The data didn't just show that people's lives were guided by immutable facts like class and race. It suggested that a person's community -- the availability of work, schooling, social networks and so on -- plays a central role.

Imagine a thriving American community. What makes it successful? Jobs are an important factor. So are effective schools, nice parks, low crime rates and a general sense that success is achievable. In a thriving place, people not only get good jobs, but they also know that those jobs can lead to better lives, because they see and feel it all the time. ''Our fates are intertwined,'' said Stefanie A. DeLuca, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University who was not part of the Harvard study. ''The fortunes of those around you in your community also impact what happens to you.''

On an individual level, Lawrence Cain Jr. benefited from both his mother's jobs and his family's support and entrepreneurship. They helped plant the idea that he could work hard and become a business owner. ''If your networks are doing well, you may think that you can do well, too,'' said David B. Grusky, a sociologist at Stanford who was also not part of the Harvard study.

The inverse is also true. Derek Brown said that his childhood was too chaotic for him to develop strong social roots. Across a community, bad events can cascade and cause things to fall apart. Consider a neighborhood in which crime rises. Businesses move to safer locations. The tax base shrinks, and infrastructure deteriorates along with schools. People flee, and social networks splinter. A sense of despair takes over among the people who remain.

Real-world effects

Why did things get worse for poor white people and their communities, but not for their Black counterparts? One explanation focuses on the availability of jobs. The researchers found that community employment levels are an important predictor of differences in economic mobility.

In the real world, the situation might have played out like this: Over the past few decades, globalization and changes in technology have caused many jobs to go from the United States to China, India and elsewhere. These shifts appear to have pushed white people out of the work force, while Black people found other jobs.

There are several explanations for the racial disparity. White workers might have had more wealth or savings to weather unemployment than their Black counterparts did, but at a cost to their upward mobility. They might also have been less willing to find another job. A steel mill that shut down could have employed not just one worker but his father and grandfather, making it a family occupation. People in that situation might feel that they lost something more than a job -- and might not settle for any other work.

The places where Black workers live were generally less affected by job flight than the places where white workers live. And compared with earlier generations, Black workers today are less likely to face racial prejudice in the labor force, making it easier for them to find work. While a white worker might have a generational connection to a steel mill job, a Black worker often does not, because segregation kept his parents and grandparents out.

These trends add up to decades of lost economic progress for low-income white people and the opposite for Black Americans.

The findings do not show that Black opportunity took away from white opportunity. In fact, the study found that white mobility had deteriorated least in the places where Black mobility had improved most.

In some ways, the research might prove politically controversial. Conservatives have long argued that white ***working-class*** Americans fell behind, while liberals have emphasized helping minority groups through policies like affirmative action. The left points out that Black and brown people remain far behind their white counterparts and therefore need more help from social programs. The right believes that's outdated thinking, if it was ever correct. The study provides fodder for both sides.

''The left and the right have very different views on race and class,'' said Ralph Richard Banks, a law professor at Stanford who wasn't involved in the research. ''The value of the study is that it brings some unimpeachable evidence to bear on these questions.'' He added, ''There's something in it for everyone.''

For their part, the Harvard researchers feel optimistic about one major finding: Economic mobility can change relatively quickly. It improved in Charlotte, N.C., since 2014, after an earlier study by the Harvard group drove the city to make new investments. Local leaders got nonprofits and businesses, including Bank of America, which is based there, to provide job training, education, housing and other services to poorer residents. The researchers hope the results persuade other policymakers around the country to make similar investments.

''It actually is possible for opportunity to change in a serious way, even in a relatively short time frame,'' said Benjamin Goldman, one of the Harvard researchers.

These trends don't apply evenly to every part of the country. Some places had bigger or smaller gains for Black Americans and bigger or smaller losses for white Americans, as this map shows:

Mr. Cain believes his story shows that hard work can make a better life possible. He saw just how much his mother, as a Black woman, needed to do to get by. He faced his own doubts and troubles, including racism and discrimination, growing up. But he always remembered what his mother and grandfather taught him -- that he could achieve his version of the American dream.

''I can chase that feeling every day of doing things for me, doing things with people I love and making an impact on the community,'' Mr. Cain said. ''That's success for me.''

How common are stories like Mr. Cain's where you live? You can see how economic mobility has changed in your county through this interactive:

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/16/briefing/headline-who-can-achieve-the-american-dream-race-matters-less-than-it-used-to.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/16/briefing/headline-who-can-achieve-the-american-dream-race-matters-less-than-it-used-to.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Lawrence Cain Jr. of Cincinnati grew up in a family that struggled financially. But being raised in a strong community helped him achieve his version of the American dream. Top, a cookout in Cincinnati. (B1)

The Northside neighborhood in Cincinnati, home to people from various racial and economic backgrounds.

Over-The-Rhine, an area in downtown Cincinnati, features a wide range of shopping, dining and nightlife. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASA FEATHERSTONE IV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Trump Rages at U.A.W. President After Biden Endorsement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6V-54C1-JBG3-601N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Highlight:** The provocation for the former president’s comments appeared to be remarks that Shawn Fain, the union’s leader, made on Sunday.

**Body**

The provocation for the former president’s comments appeared to be remarks that Shawn Fain, the union’s leader, made on Sunday.

A few days after the United Auto Workers [*endorsed President Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/us/politics/biden-uaw-union-speech-endorsement.html) for re-election, former President Donald J. Trump raged at the union’s leader, Shawn Fain, on Sunday night.

[*Mr. Trump wrote*](https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/111836879573790815) on his social media platform that Mr. Fain “is selling the Automobile Industry right into the big, powerful, hands of China.”

He claimed that Mr. Biden’s support for electric vehicles would destroy the American auto industry and send jobs overseas. “Shawn Fain doesn’t understand this or have a clue,” he wrote. “Get rid of this dope &amp; vote for DJT. I will bring the Automobile Industry back to our Country.”

The provocation for Mr. Trump’s comments appeared to be [*a CBS News interview*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/shawn-fain-uaw-face-the-nation-transcript-01-28-2024/) on Sunday in which Mr. Fain said that Mr. Biden had “a history of serving others and serving the ***working class***,” while Mr. Trump had “a history of serving himself and standing for the billionaire class.”

Mr. Fain also emphasized Mr. Biden’s decision to [*meet with striking U.A.W. workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) in September, which made him the first sitting president to join a picket line. Mr. Trump has sought to position himself as a champion of the workers’ interests, and he tried to court blue-collar workers with [*a speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-autoworkers-detroit.html) the same week — but at a nonunion factory.

Michael Tyler, a spokesman for Mr. Biden’s campaign, said in a statement, “Apparently losing the U.A.W. endorsement to Joe Biden has left Donald Trump’s wounded ego with quite the SCAB.” He argued that the corporate tax changes Mr. Trump signed as president had themselves encouraged companies to move jobs overseas.

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump speaks at a campaign event on Saturday in Las Vegas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY John Locher/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Key Stops***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9B-PHY1-JBG3-602N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 10, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 368 words

**Body**

Key stops

Gallerie d'Italia, a museum that opened in 2022 in a renovated Baroque palazzo, has a collection ranging from medieval panel paintings to contemporary video art.

Magazzino 52 offers contemporary takes on Piedmontese cuisine -- like a silky veal tartare -- and a wine list with hundreds of bottles, along with by-the-glass options.

Caffè Fiorio, a former haunt of Friedrich Nietzsche's, serves excellent hot chocolate in plush rooms of chandeliers and gilded mirrors.

La Pista 500, once a rooftop test track for a Fiat factory, offers plants, art installations and Alpine vistas.

Where to Eat

Scannabue serves Piedmontese comfort food and wines in a homey, lively environment.

Fondoo specializes in, yes, fondue (and raclette) in a Scandinavian-minimalist room.

Pasticceria Ghigo dal 1870, an old-fashioned pastry shop, pours thick hot chocolate.

Isola is a bar that displays shelves of vinyl albums and bottles of natural wines.

La Cuite is a cozy bar in which to try regional wines next to a wood-burning fireplace.

Nikkei, half hidden at the back of Azotea restaurant, serves some of Turin's finest cocktails.

Where to stay

Agora Boutique Stays offers nine stylish, individually designed apartments on the atriumlike ground floor of a 17th-century palazzo next to Piazza San Carlo. Apartments in February start at 185 euros, or about $200.

Hotel Victoria has an old-world British feel and offers a lobby fireplace and a spa with a sauna and a heated swimming pool. Rooms in February start at ?161.

Combo is a hostel in a former firehouse. The soaring industrial-chic lobby contains a coffee shop, a cocktail bar and a concert stage, while the mixed private and dorm-style rooms convey a minimalist Zen aesthetic. Private rooms in February start at around ?53.

For short-term rentals, the Centro, or city center, is your most practical base for historical sites, museums, cafes and shopping. Nearby, to the east, the classy Vanchiglia residential district runs alongside the Po River and offers refined dining and drinking options. The historically ***working-class*** San Salvario, close to the main train station, is now filled with trattorias, wine bars, cocktail bars and coffee shops.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/travel/10hours-turin-box.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/travel/10hours-turin-box.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C8.

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**End of Document**



[***Japan Runs on Vending Machines. It’s About to Break Millions of Them.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6H-CP71-DXY4-X0MK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 7, 2024 Friday 03:30 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; asia

**Length:** 842 words

**Byline:** Kiuko Notoya and John Yoon Kiuko Notoya is a Tokyo-based reporter and researcher, covering news and features from Japan. John Yoon is a Times reporter based in Seoul who covers breaking and trending news.

**Highlight:** New yen notes were introduced that won’t be compatible with many machines that businesses like ramen shops rely on.

**Body**

New yen notes were introduced that won’t be compatible with many machines that businesses like ramen shops rely on.

This story was first published on June 7. It was updated on July 3 when Japan introduced the new yen notes.

The vending machine at Hiroshi Nishitani’s Tokyo ramen restaurant has been reliable for a decade. Customers feed it money, and it prints out their orders while he makes fresh noodles in the kitchen. The food is served within minutes once the customer delivers the order to the pair of cooks at the counter.

But the machine’s days are numbered. Japan has introduced a new set of bank notes, something it does [*every 20 years*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) or so to thwart counterfeiters. The machine, already too old to accept recent coin designs, won’t accept the new bills, Mr. Nishitani said.

“There’s nothing wrong with the vending machine,” he said, expressing frustration with the need to buy an expensive new unit compatible with the new notes.

All over Japan, restaurants, cafeterias, bathhouses and other businesses are facing a similar prospect. The country has [*4.1 million*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) vending machines, according to Nikkei Compass, a database for industry reports. Many of them will be obsolete now that the new 1,000-, 5,000- and 10,000-yen bills featuring [*hologram technology*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) have been rolled out.

In Japan, where the work force is shrinking, the machines reduce the need for cashiers and servers. Among the most reliant on the machines are ramen shops, which serve one of the Japanese ***working class***’s favorite, most affordable meals.

Ramen, wheat noodles in a richly flavored broth, became an integral part of Japanese cuisine after being [*popularized in the 1980s*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) as the country’s economy took off. Restaurants spread as people clamored for the quick and filling meal and as chefs experimented with new ingredients. Many chefs now dedicate their lives to perfecting the dish. Mr. Nishitani, who is 42, began making ramen at 17.

The noodles are a staple among construction and factory workers, salarymen, and students in search of inexpensive meals. Many ramen shops are clustered around train stations, catering to commuters.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, students from a nearby university filed in for a late lunch at Mr. Nishitani’s nine-seat shop, Goumen Maruko.

He and his three employees sell about 100 dishes a day. Each is priced under 1,000 yen, or roughly $6.50. The most popular dish is a $5 Jiro-style bowl: noodles with a mountain of vegetables and clumps of pork fat soaked in a steaming broth of pork and chicken. The most expensive meals, which come in larger portions, cost about $6.20.

To defray the cost of upgrading or replacing vending machines, some municipalities offer subsidies, but most of the cost will fall on shop owners. A new machine can cost two million yen, or about $13,000, said Masahiro Kawamura, a sales manager at [*Elcom*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/), a Tokyo company that sells vending machines that dispense tickets.

Yoshihiro Serizawa, who runs a soba shop in Tokyo, said he spent about $19,000 on his new machine, which also accepts cashless payment — “a huge financial burden.” The amount is equivalent to more than 6,000 orders of his most popular dish: soba with mixed vegetables and seafood tempura, which costs just over $3.

“You have to constantly think about how you will make back the money,” Mr. Serizawa said.

The new bank notes are heightening the pressures on Japan’s small businesses. Recently, [*inflation has sped up*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) after staying low for years, and the country [*slipped into a recession*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/).

Increased flour and electricity prices have added to the expenses for ramen shops in particular. Analysts at [*Tokyo Shoko Research*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/) said that 45 ramen restaurants nationwide had filed for bankruptcy last year, the highest number since 2009. With customers unaccustomed to rising prices, businesses have struggled to increase theirs.

Among ramen chefs, the widely accepted limit for a bowl of ramen is known as the [*“1,000-yen wall*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/).”

“I really don’t want to raise the price any further,” Mr. Nishitani said.

When Japan released its last set of bills [*in 2004*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/), modifying the vending machines and issuing 10 billion new bank notes cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Demand was so high that one manufacturer near Osaka, called Glory, saw its net income triple, according to an annual report.

Transitioning to new machines could take years. By the summer of 2023, only about 30 percent of drink vending machines could accept the 500 yen coins introduced in 2021, according to the [*Sankei Shimbun*](https://www.npb.go.jp/en/n_banknote/faq/), a Japanese newspaper.

Mr. Nishitani’s vending machine does not work with those coins, either. His Tokyo ward is subsidizing up to $1,900 toward new machines, a city official said. Mr. Nishitani laughed at the notion that it was nearly enough.

With two months to go before the new bills are issued, he had still not placed an order for a new machine. He recently began accepting payments through a credit card reader for the first time. But that has come with more administrative fees and more work.

“I can’t get used to it at all,” he said.

This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Takeaways From Day One of the Republican Convention***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CGT-J3N1-DXY4-X0PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 16, 2024 Tuesday 01:23 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1225 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:** Donald Trump and his newly minted running mate, J.D. Vance, were officially nominated, but Mr. Trump’s triumphal prime-time emergence in the arena that might prove the indelible moment of the whole event.

**Body**

Donald Trump and his newly minted running mate, J.D. Vance, were officially nominated, but Mr. Trump’s triumphal prime-time emergence in the arena that might prove the indelible moment of the whole event.

An emotional first day of the Republican National Convention ended Monday night with an official ticket for 2024, Donald J. Trump and J.D. Vance, but it was Mr. Trump’s triumphal prime-time emergence in the arena, just two days after a failed assassination attempt, that might prove the indelible moment of the whole event.

The opening session signaled how unified and confident the G.O.P. was behind its preternaturally resilient nominee, and set the tone for a four-day conclave that will project Republican strength and conviction that a red wave is in the making.

At 9 p.m., as the country star Lee Greenwood sang the anthem that Mr. Trump has made his own, “God Bless the U.S.A.,” the former president stepped into view at Milwaukee’s Fiserv Forum, a gauze bandage over the ear wounded by his would-be assassin, his eyes seemingly close to tears. It was his first public appearance since the shooting, and the applause was rapturous from the delegates, elected officials and Republican elites, many of whom have doubted his leadership in the past.

“You will not take this man down,” Mr. Greenwood said, attributing the former president’s survival to divine intervention. “He has the courage, the strength and he will be the next president of the United States.”

Here are four takeaways from the convention’s first day:

It’s Trump’s party.

There was a time when Mr. Trump did not like to share the spotlight. On Monday, with a fresh bandage on his right ear, he showed no insecurities atop a political party he has molded into his own, despite 34 felony convictions, two impeachments, civil judgments for business fraud, sexual abuse and defamation, and pending indictments tied to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

As Mr. Greenwood sang, Mr. Trump shook hands with Tucker Carlson, the former Fox News personality; Representative Byron Donalds of Florida; his sons Don Jr. and Eric; and his running mate, Mr. Vance. For the final hour of the session, as others took to the podium, the camera repeatedly swung back to the nominee, who sat beaming. He never stepped to a microphone.

After the Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021, a bipartisan majority of the House voted to impeach Mr. Trump for inciting an insurrection. Most Republican senators declined to convict him, a verdict that would have ended his political career. They did not think it would be wise or necessary.

On Monday, Mr. Trump’s political comeback reached the necessary milestone of renomination and party unification. He feels tantalizingly close to the final step: returning to the White House.

J.D. Vance was chosen for legacy, not electoral gain.

Eight years ago, Mr. Vance [*said he feared Mr. Trump could become “America’s Hitler.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-vp.html) On Monday, Mr. Trump anointed Mr. Vance, a 39-year-old freshman senator from Ohio, the heir apparent of his “America First” movement, trusting that his party control was absolute and his election was secure.

As a vice-presidential nominee from a reliably Republican state, Mr. Vance may not be much help securing any of the battleground states needed to deliver Mr. Trump a second term.

But as the first millennial running mate, Mr. Vance has a long political future ahead of him. And no one can articulate Mr. Trump’s vision of “America First” better than the smooth-talking senator, who viscerally understands a platform ostensibly designed to lift ***working-class*** Americans by crushing competition from immigrants, stopping imports through trade protectionism, and ending American entanglements abroad.

Mr. Vance, of course, is not the first Republican who was once harshly critical of Mr. Trump and is now obsequiously respectful. Senators Marco Rubio of Florida, Ted Cruz of Texas and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina were at least as brutal. But Mr. Trump passed over those three competitors in 2016 to choose as his running mate Mike Pence, then the governor of Indiana, who was always content to stand in Mr. Trump’s shadow.

This time, Mr. Trump looked beyond the personal and political as he sought to ensure his brand of isolationist nationalism survives long after his departure.

Republicans try to chisel away at the Democratic coalition.

Black men dominated the early sessions, a Latina took the stage just after Mr. Trump’s emotional entry, a union leader gave the final speech, and a California lawyer closed the night with a Sikh prayer.

They all hailed from voting blocs core to the Democratic coalition.

The flurry of Black male speakers was particularly striking. Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson of North Carolina, Representative Wesley Hunt of Texas and Representative John James of Michigan came one after another, followed later by Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina and Mr. Donalds. Trump campaign officials are determined to peel off a significant chunk of Black male votes from the Democrats in November, but they’d better hope those voters were tuned in Monday.

The closing speech by Sean O’Brien, the Teamsters president, was even more remarkable. He started it by saying that no Teamsters leader had ever addressed a Republican convention, and he acknowledged that his presence had divided his own union.

A significant percentage of the Teamsters’ 1.3 million members is already with Mr. Trump, but the leadership of organized labor has been a bulwark of support for President Biden. If nothing else, the Republicans’ invitation to Mr. O’Brien undermined the image of a united union front backing the Democrats.

President Biden is on defense.

Since a gunman nearly took Mr. Trump’s life, Mr. Biden has been in a difficult political position. He has tried to project statesmanship, addressing the nation with an appeal to unity and a plea to turn down the political heat. He called Mr. Trump to personally express his support, and temporarily pulled down political advertisements.

On Monday night, as one Republican speaker after another castigated Mr. Biden’s leadership, the president was questioned on NBC News about whether he had contributed to the violence of American politics.

Mr. Biden told NBC’s Lester Holt that it had been [*“a mistake”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-vp.html) to tell donors a week ago that he wanted to “put Trump in a bull’s-eye.”

But he added: “How do you talk about the threat to democracy, which is real, when a president says things like he says? Do you just not say anything because it may incite somebody? Look, I’m not engaged in that rhetoric. Now, my opponent is engaged in that rhetoric.”

Republicans have continued to suggest that Mr. Biden’s attacks on Mr. Trump incited the gunman, whose motives in fact are still unknown.

If Mr. Biden was playing defense, Republicans showed no reluctance to lace into the president.

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia declared, “The Democrat economy is of, by, and for illegal aliens.” Charlie Kirk, the youthful founder of the pro-Trump group Turning Point U.S.A., said Mr. Biden had embraced a “fake, pathetic, mutilated version of the American dream.”

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump appeared alongside Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, his newly announced running mate, on Monday night at the Republican National Convention. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Todd Heisler/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2024

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[***Why Trump Picked J.D. Vance; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CGV-X321-DXY4-X224-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 16, 2024 Tuesday 13:18 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1342 words

**Byline:** Matthew Continetti

**Highlight:** The former president was probably thinking of 2028 and beyond — and where he wants the G.O.P. to go.

**Body**

Donald Trump’s contempt for the Washington establishment is well known. He challenges, confronts and subverts its institutions, its media, its consultants, its euphemisms and its unwritten codes of conduct. Choosing Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio to be his running mate is the latest example of the former president’s willingness to flout political convention.

Previous vice-presidential nominees were selected to forge party unity, capture a crucial swing state or help an outsider president navigate Washington. Mr. Vance doesn’t fit these criteria. But then Mr. Trump has never been a traditional candidate. And he probably had more on his mind than 2024 when he put Mr. Vance on the ticket. He was probably thinking of 2028 and beyond — and where he wants the G.O.P. to go.

The last time Mr. Trump named a running mate, he had more pressing concerns. He was the underdog to Hillary Clinton in 2016. Many Republicans, especially social and religious conservatives, viewed him with suspicion.

Mr. Trump selected Mike Pence, who had close ties to evangelical Christian voters and had served 12 years in Congress, to allay their fears. Mr. Pence was the governor of a Midwestern state. The idea was that he could help Mr. Trump deal with insiders and power brokers.

The Trump-Pence alliance held until Jan. 6, 2021. Now, having narrowly escaped an assassin’s bullet and being constitutionally limited to one more term, Mr. Trump is prioritizing loyalty and legacy over qualities that past presidents have looked for in vice-presidential nominees.

Mr. Trump appears to value Mr. Vance’s evolution from opponent to stalwart. Mr. Vance has the zeal of a convert to Mr. Trump and to Trumpism and is unlikely to use the vice-presidential residence as a base of operations for pro-immigration, interventionist Republicans. He defends Mr. Trump’s conduct after the 2020 election and has adopted Mr. Trump’s enemies as his own.

Mr. Vance’s biography must have also appealed to Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance grew up in poverty, joined the Marines after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, wrote a best-selling autobiography and succeeded in business. His ***working-class*** roots may appeal to the forgotten men and women of the Rust Belt who are at the heart of Mr. Trump’s campaign.

Another potential asset is Mr. Vance’s age. Republicans are doing comparatively well with young male voters this year, and Mr. Vance may help the party capitalize on this growing advantage. There is a long tail to the Vance nomination. Richard Nixon was also 39 years old when Dwight Eisenhower chose him as a running mate in 1952. Mr. Nixon played a central role in American politics for 22 years.

Mr. Trump so totally dominates today’s Republican Party that he feels no need to build bridges within it. By choosing Mr. Vance, Mr. Trump made a clean break with the Republican free traders, entitlement reformers and foreign policy hawks who remain wary of him. He believes he doesn’t need their votes to win, and he’s probably right.

As a relatively recent convert to the Make America Great Again movement, Mr. Vance rejects the foreign and economic policies of the supporters of the former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley in this year’s G.O.P. primaries. The Vance nomination is another step in Mr. Trump’s plan to dislodge the old guard and make the Republican Party his own — from defeating his critics in primaries or forcing their early retirement to reportedly reviewing and editing a party platform whose brevity, terseness and ambiguities reflect his personality, his preferences, his love of improvisation and his transactional nature.

Under Mr. Trump, the G.O.P. has moved away from the Reaganite triad of religious conservatism, free-market capitalism and hawkish internationalism. This updated policy mix hasn’t limited the party’s appeal; it has broadened the party to include more minority voters.

Mr. Vance’s political appeal is not entirely clear. Ohio has turned bright red, voting for Mr. Trump by an eight-point margin in 2016 and 2020. In a CBS News/YouGov [*poll*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-trump-biden-battlegrounds-michigan-pennsylvania-wisconsin-july-2024/) released on the eve of the Republican National Convention, he led Mr. Biden in every swing state, including the Rust Belt states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

And Mr. Vance is a newcomer to Washington. He will turn 40 years old in August and would be among the youngest vice presidents in American history. His two years in the Senate would also make him one of the least experienced vice presidents ever. If Mr. Trump wins, Mr. Vance’s youth and brief tenure inside the Beltway would make him more like Kamala Harris than any other recent vice presidents. Mr. Trump would be his wizened mentor. Mr. Vance would be the apprentice.

We don’t normally think of Mr. Trump as a patient tutor or a long-term planner. But his recent conviction and the attempt on his life might have heightened the stakes in this election and reinforced the necessity not only of victory but also of building something that lasts.

The Vance pick is the clearest sign yet of how Mr. Trump sees the G.O.P.’s future. If Mr. Vance becomes vice president, he will also become the front-runner for the 2028 Republican nomination. That nomination will be contested, but there is no question that Mr. Trump intends for the Republican Party to remain nationalist, populist and “America First.”

Mr. Vance, who graduated from Yale Law School, is perhaps the most articulate defender of the MAGA worldview. He is a critic of the financial sector, corporate monopolies, free trade, global intervention and illegal immigration. He has kind words for organized labor and for industrial policy; joined progressive icons like Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, in efforts to rein in Wall Street; and praised the work of Lina Khan, the Federal Trade Commission chairwoman. He opposed the national security supplemental bill that provided military aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan this year.

Last week, when Mr. Vance spoke at the National Conservatism conference in Washington, D.C., he was greeted as a star. He spoke casually and comfortably. He name-checked prominent policy wonks in the audience like Elbridge Colby, an advocate of foreign policy prioritization that would limit overseas commitments to contain China, and Oren Cass, a [*critic*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-trump-biden-battlegrounds-michigan-pennsylvania-wisconsin-july-2024/) of libertarian economics.

Mr. Vance extolled the growing influence of nationalist populism in the Republican Party. “Even though we didn’t win the debate” over Ukraine aid, he said, “we’re starting to win the debate within our own party, and I think that really matters.” His elevation to the vice presidency would guarantee a MAGA West Wing and empower advocates of foreign policy restraint and of government action to rebuild the defense industrial base and domestic manufacturing.

Mr. Vance’s harshest words dealt with immigration. “The real threat to American democracy,” he told the conservative conference, “is that American voters keep on voting for less immigration and our politicians keep on rewarding us with more.” He added, “The thing on immigration is that no one can avoid that it has made our societies poorer, less safe, less prosperous and less advanced.” And he summarized his public philosophy by saying, “American leaders should look out for Americans.”

Mr. Trump has riveted global politics for close to a decade. The nomination of his new apprentice suggests that the Trump style, the Trump policies and the Trump appeal to non-college-educated voters of every race and ethnicity will rule the Republican Party for decades to come.

Matthew Continetti is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of “The Right: The Hundred Year War for American Conservatism.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-trump-biden-battlegrounds-michigan-pennsylvania-wisconsin-july-2024/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-trump-biden-battlegrounds-michigan-pennsylvania-wisconsin-july-2024/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-trump-biden-battlegrounds-michigan-pennsylvania-wisconsin-july-2024/).

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

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[***Trump and Harris Reflect Partisan Divide on Poverty Fight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CTS-MXV1-DXY4-X0NK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2024 Tuesday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 2235 words

**Byline:** By Jason DeParle

**Body**

The two presidential candidates can both point to records of pushing poverty rates down, but their approaches could hardly be more different.

Follow the latest updates on the Harris and Trump campaigns.

The presidential race between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald J. Trump presents the sharpest clash in antipoverty policy in at least a generation, and its outcome could shape the economic security of millions of low-income Americans.

As the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 threatened to decimate the economy, Mr. Trump signed a large stimulus package that included substantial aid for the poor. When President Biden and Ms. Harris took office in 2021, their administration pushed more big aid expansions through Congress as part of their pandemic-recovery plan, driving the poverty rate still lower.

But if the two candidates' responses to that extraordinary period had elements in common, the lessons they took from it were very different.

In the pandemic-era programs, now mostly expired or reduced, Ms. Harris and other Democrats found reinforcement of their faith in the government's power to ameliorate hardship. If elected, she would seek to sustain or expand many of them, including subsidies for food, health care and housing, and revive a change to the child tax credit that essentially created a guaranteed income for families with children. Those policies helped temporarily cut the poverty rate by more than half from prepandemic levels.

She backs a $15 federal minimum wage, which Republicans have fought, and is a vocal supporter of programs like subsidized child care and paid family leave meant to help balance work and family.

Mr. Trump says little about his role in pandemic-era poverty programs, which many Republicans view as having been excessive and fraud-ridden. Instead, he touts his 2017 tax cuts, which he credits for boosting the economy and reducing poverty to a prepandemic low, and he has vowed to extend them when they expire next year. Most of the direct benefit from those cuts went to corporations and the wealthy.

Mr. Trump's poverty plans are otherwise vague, but his record is one of animosity toward the programs Ms. Harris would defend or expand. He sought to remove millions of people from Medicaid and food stamps, many of them low-wage workers. He has sought to reduce the number of people with subsidized housing and raise their rents.

While Democrats would build on pandemic policies, Republicans blame trillions in federal spending under President Biden and Ms. Harris for triggering inflation and say the aid discouraged work.

''The parties are further apart than they have ever been, at least in my memory, and I'm pretty old,'' said Isabel V. Sawhill of the centrist Brookings Institution, who has been tracking antipoverty policy since the Kennedy administration. ''The Democrats have gone left and the Republicans have gone right.''

There is often a difference between how candidates campaign and how they govern, and either aspirant's power to carry out their policies will depend on who controls Congress.

Both candidates have been short on detail, and there are divisions within the parties. Senator JD Vance of Ohio, Mr. Trump's running mate, recently suggested a large tax credit for families with children, though it is not clear whether it would be available to the poor or if it has Mr. Trump's support.

But their records while in office provide a road map to their priorities and approaches.

Poverty was already falling when Mr. Trump won his tax cut in his first year in office, but the pace of decline more than doubled in the next two years, to 11.8 percent in 2019, then a record low, using a Census Bureau figure that includes taxes and aid. While economists debate whether tax cuts were responsible, the episode reinforced Republican faith in them.

Still, about twice as many Americans would have been poor that year without safety net programs for food, housing, health care and other needs -- many of which Mr. Trump sought to cut -- according to an analysis of census data by the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy. ''I don't see how you can say these programs don't make a difference,'' said Christopher Wimer, the center's director.

When pandemic aid kicked in, the poverty rate fell further, to 9.1 percent in 2020 under Mr. Trump, and to 7.8 percent in the first year of the Biden-Harris administration. That is a reduction of a third from prepandemic levels, despite the crisis. As the aid fell, poverty rose to 12.4 percent in 2022, the last year for which there is data.

Here is a look at the partisan differences on anti-poverty programs:

Health Care

No anti-poverty measure costs more, affects more people or divides the parties as much as health care. The 2010 Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, added millions of people to Medicaid, subsidized private insurance and cut the share of Americans who are uninsured nearly in half. Democrats regard it as a generational achievement.

Republicans say it costs the government and consumers too much and stifles innovation. They voted to repeal it dozens of times, and Mr. Trump's high-profile effort to do so failed only narrowly. He then took action to suppress enrollment in the private plans and last year wrote, ''Obamacare Sucks!''

Mr. Trump says he is no longer committed to killing the law but would make it ''much better'' without saying how. The Republican Study Committee, a Trump-aligned faction of House Republicans, recently proposed cutting $4.2 trillion over 10 years from the subsidies, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, a reduction of more than half. Democrats call such plans a repeal by another name.

Ms. Harris previously supported a version of ''Medicare for all,'' a government-run system for everyone, but now says she would focus on strengthening the Affordable Care Act. Her campaign suggested she would preserve temporary increases in the subsidies for private plan, which led to record enrollment. The latest Biden White House budget also seeks new aid for people in the 10 states where Republicans declined to expand Medicaid.

Nutrition

The modern food stamp program was created a half-century ago in a bipartisan deal and has intermittently retained bipartisan support. But Republican criticism of the program grew after a large increase in the rolls during the Great Recession proved enduring.

Mr. Trump has been especially critical, arguing that the program discourages work and attracts fraud. He repeatedly sought to shrink eligibility and expand work requirements, and every budget he issued would have cut spending on it by at least 25 percent, according to a forthcoming analysis by Robert Greenstein of the Brookings Institution. Alleging abuse, Mr. Trump once warned of a ''food stamp crime wave.''

Where Republicans see ''welfare,'' Democrats see ''nutritional support.'' The Supplemental Nutrition Program, as food stamps are formally known, ''must not only be protected but expanded,'' Ms. Harris said as a senator, while proposing a large increase in children's benefits.

By revising nutritional standards over Republican objections, the Biden administration raised average benefits by more than a quarter, the largest gain in the program's history. About one in eight Americans now receives a monthly benefit of about $210 a person.

Similar fights have emerged over free school meals, which were offered to all students during the pandemic. Supporters say universal meals reduce stigma, and the Biden administration changed the program's rules to encourage more schools to provide them. Republicans see wasteful spending. At least eight states have adopted universal meals, including Minnesota, where Ms. Harris's running mate, Gov. Tim Walz, championed the change.

Housing

Ms. Harris and Mr. Biden broke new ground in their 2020 campaign with a party platform that promised housing aid ''for every eligible family,'' seeking to address funding shortfalls that have left only a quarter of eligible households receiving help and wait times extending to years.

But they made little progress.

Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris included expanded housing aid for the poor in the 2021 ''Build Back Better'' plan, a multitrillion-dollar package of domestic initiatives. It would have renovated public housing and significantly increased the number of vouchers available to rent private apartments. Congress narrowly rejected the plan (which the conservative Heritage Foundation called the ''largest welfare increase in U.S. history'') and the administration did not return to the issue in a significant way.

While Ms. Harris emphasized housing in a recent economic plan, she focused on home buyers and housing production, not subsidies to poor renters. This year's party platform trims the ambition of the promised voucher expansion to low-income veterans and people leaving foster care.

Mr. Trump pursued opposite aims. He proposed to reduce housing vouchers by 250,000, or about 10 percent, a cut about the same size as the increase the Biden-Harris team proposed. He unsuccessfully sought new work requirements and rent increases. And he undid a high-profile rule meant to reduce racial discrimination, saying it would ''destroy the suburbs.'' The Biden administration has worked to reinstate it but has not finalized a new rule.

The parties clash on homelessness policy, too. The Biden-Harris administration embraces ''Housing First,'' which provides apartments to the homeless without demanding treatment for problems like drug abuse or mental health. Getting people off the streets saves lives, supporters say, and treatment is more effective when people have homes.

The Trump administration said the approach encouraged self-destructive behavior and urged Congress to curb it. Mr. Trump has campaigned on putting homeless people in camps.

The Child Tax Credit

On one issue, the candidates sometimes sound the same: Mr. Trump and Ms. Harris both helped expand the child tax credit and both boast about it. But they support very different plans.

Mr. Trump doubled the credit in his 2017 tax cut, giving families up to $2,000 per child to defray child-rearing costs. But his measure omitted the poorest children. About a third failed to get the full credit because their parents earned too little, and a tenth received nothing. Republicans saw a simple principle: tax cuts aid taxpayers, not low-income people who pay little or nothing in federal income taxes.

Democrats revamped the credit during the pandemic, temporarily raising it to $3,000 per child ($3,600 for the youngest children). Most notably, the money went to all poor and middle-class children, regardless of whether parents had jobs. That turned a tax credit into a policy the United States had never embraced: a guaranteed income for families with children, at a one-year cost of more than $100 billion. Child poverty fell by more than half from prepandemic levels as a result of the credit and other pandemic aid.

That measure expired after one year, and the Biden administration, facing unified Republican opposition, lost a fight to extend it. The credit reverted to its Trump-era form and child poverty returned to the highest level since 2018.

Ms. Harris has called the return of the broad credit a top priority and would add a $6,000 benefit for infants. In Minnesota, Mr. Walz won a state credit of $1,750 that includes all low- and moderate-income families. ''This is what takes children out of poverty,'' he said.

Most Republicans have called such programs welfare schemes, warning that unconditional cash aid will discourage work and marriage, leading to more poverty.

The seemingly fixed lines blurred a few weeks ago when Mr. Vance suggested in a television interview he might back a $5,000 per child credit. He is loosely affiliated with a conservative faction sympathetic to ***working-class*** aid, and some saw his comments as an effort to reposition the party. But Mr. Vance has not said if the poor would qualify, and queries to his campaign went unanswered.

Taxes and Budget

Aid for the poor depends in part on tax policy: More revenue makes it easier to provide help, less makes it harder. The candidates diverge in profound ways.

Mr. Trump would permanently extend his 2017 tax cut, which expires next year, at a 10-year cost of roughly $4 trillion, with the benefits concentrated among corporations and the richest Americans. Republicans argue the costs can be offset by increased growth and decreased spending. But his previous tax cuts swelled deficits.

Each of his budget proposals while in office sought large Medicaid and food stamp reductions. An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal group, found he would have reduced nondefense discretionary spending to its lowest level as a share of the economy since Herbert Hoover.

The Harris campaign has said she would preserve the tax cuts for households making $400,000 or less, around 98 percent of Americans. The administration's most recent budget, released in March, also called for about $5 trillion in new taxes on corporations and the wealthy over the next decade.

It aimed to divide the new revenue between deficit reduction and new programs, including two of Ms. Harris's priorities -- the $3,000 child tax credit that includes the poorest families and paid family leave.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/26/us/politics/trump-harris-poverty-policies.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/26/us/politics/trump-harris-poverty-policies.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Health care is a powerful weapon against poverty, but it is politically divisive and expensive. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CARLSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

The ballooning costs of housing are being felt in large metro areas and in rural towns. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Republicans see food stamps as welfare while Democrats call them nutritional support. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL WOOLF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Trump and Ms. Harris helped expand the child tax credit but support different plans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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**End of Document**



[***Pro-Palestinian Groups Seek to Keep Shapiro Out of the Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CMF-CDH1-JBG3-601G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 2, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1486 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman and Hiroko Masuike

**Body**

Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania took the stage at Wissahickon High School in the Philadelphia suburbs on Monday to the roars of his fellow Democrats, a campaign appearance and an audition all in one.

As he enthusiastically shouted out his support for Vice President Kamala Harris's presidential campaign, the pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had dogged Democratic politicians last spring were nowhere in evidence. There was only the adoration of an audience from his native Montgomery County, which the Democratic ticket must carry by sizable margins in November to win Pennsylvania.

But as Ms. Harris prepares to name her running mate ahead of a rally on Tuesday in Philadelphia, those protests are very much part of the calculus surrounding Mr. Shapiro, who is believed to be on her shortlist of potential running mates.

Efforts by a motley collection of left-wing and pro-Palestinian activists to derail his nomination have presented the Harris campaign with a decision as the vice president prepares to make one of most significant choices of her career: Should she take the opportunity to stand up to her far-left flank in an appeal to the center of the party and to independents, or should she shy away from inflaming an issue that has divided and bedeviled the party -- Israel's war in Gaza?

''Harris needs to win Pennsylvania, signal moderation and reassure Haley voters that she'll stand up to the left,'' said Representative Jake Auchincloss, a Massachusetts Democrat, a Jewish military veteran and an admirer of Mr. Shapiro, referring to Republican supporters of Nikki Haley. ''The more the Twitter left piles on him, the more helpful he is to Harris.''

Mr. Shapiro, an observant Jew who speaks openly about his faith, has taken a position on the war that is not all that different from any of the other Democrats under consideration to be the vice president's running mate, or from Ms. Harris's.

The 51-year-old governor has stood by Israel's right to self-defense and has condemned overt displays of antisemitism amid pro-Palestinian protests. He has been unapologetic in his love for Israel; he has visited often and even proposed to his wife there. He has also called Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, ''one of the worst leaders of all time.''

But Palestinian rights activists see someone different, the public face of intransigent support for Israel. They point to Mr. Shapiro's suggestion in April that people would not tolerate ''people dressed up in K.K.K. outfits or K.K.K. regalia,'' and thus should not tolerate antisemitism on campuses either, as a comparison of pro-Palestinian demonstrators to the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. Shapiro supported the dismissal of the University of Pennsylvania's president, Elizabeth Magill, amid accusations that she had tolerated a climate of antipathy for Jewish students. He also recently updated a code of conduct for state employees to forbid them from engaging in ''scandalous or disgraceful'' behavior, a move interpreted as targeting Palestinian rights activists.

The campaign to thwart his nomination is, by its own admission, not well organized. People working against Mr. Shapiro come from groups such as the Democratic Socialists of America; Uncommitted, which waged a campaign to convince Democratic primary voters to register protest votes against President Biden; the progressive Jewish group IfNotNow; and a group of anonymous pro-Palestinian aides on Capitol Hill known as Dear White Staffers. It does not include some of the largest Palestinian rights groups, nor have more prominent progressive groups joined, like Justice Democrats.

Opponents of the governor have posted a website, No Genocide Josh; promoted an online petition; circulated anti-Shapiro articles on social media; drummed up a Signal channel; and issued internet provocations to whip up opposition from activists who had been focused on chasing Mr. Biden from the race.

But the people who put up the website declined to be interviewed, instead boasting in an unsigned email to The Times, ''In less than one week our petition has garnered more than 850 signatures and our messages on social media have caught the attention of reporters and politicians from across the country.'' For a national campaign, 850 signatures hardly represent bragging rights. Mr. Shapiro received 3,031,137 votes in his 15-percentage-point victory for Pennsylvania governor in 2022.

It's not clear whether such criticism will hurt or help Mr. Shapiro, as Ms. Harris weighs a pick that soothes the political center or calms the fringes of her coalition. The buzz on the left should simply be ignored, said Paige G. Cognetti, the Democratic mayor of the predominantly ***working-class*** city of Scranton, Pa.

''There's always going to be some faction on the far left and the far right that says no one's good enough,'' she said with a shrug.

Indeed, the Harris campaign has an opportunity to expand its appeal by adding Mr. Shapiro to the ticket, his supporters say. The progressive wing of the party is already becoming less vocal in its criticism over Gaza, believing the vice president is inching toward them on Israel and Palestine with her forthright calls for a cease-fire in Gaza, her acknowledgment of ''catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity'' in the territory and her pledge to ''not be silent'' on Palestinian suffering.

With progressive voters coming back to the Democrats, Mr. Shapiro, who declined to be interviewed, would complete the coalition that helped Democrats win back the White House in 2020, reassuring Jewish and pro-Israel voters that the Harris administration would not lurch leftward.

Some supporters also see bigotry at work in the Shapiro opposition.

''Every potential nominee for Vice President is pro-Israel,'' Representative Ritchie Torres, Democrat of New York, wrote on social media on Friday. ''The reason he is treated differently from the rest? Antisemitism.''

But to the pro-Palestinian movement, there are plenty of other candidates for the ticket. Mr. Shapiro might help win Pennsylvania, but Rabiul Chowdhury, an executive board member of the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Philadelphia and a co-chairman of the Abandon Biden organization, driven by the Palestinian cause, said in an interview that he would hurt Ms. Harris's chances in Michigan, where a large Muslim and Arab American population had already turned on Mr. Biden. .

Critics of Mr. Shapiro raise the specter of mass protests at the Democratic convention in Chicago. Some also cite other issues, including Mr. Shapiro's past support for vouchers to send children to private schools and allegations that he swept charges of sexual impropriety against an aide under the rug.

The message from his critics on the left is simple: Mr. Shapiro is just not worth it.

''He's got a perfect storm on his hands when there's less controversial options available,'' said Waleed Shahid, a spokesman for the progressive group Uncommitted.

Manuel Bonder, a spokesman for Mr. Shapiro, staunchly defended Mr. Shapiro's record on public education. He said while the state government could not comment on personnel matters, the Shapiro administration ''takes allegations of discrimination and harassment seriously. Robust procedures are in place for thoroughly investigating reports of discrimination and harassment.''

Some left-wing Jews have joined the anti-Shapiro cause.

''IfNotNow and the left are excited to see an opportunity to create more distance'' from the Biden administration's policies toward Israel, said Sara Abramson, 30, a leader of IfNotNow's Philadelphia chapter. She credited Ms. Harris for doing that. ''Naming Josh Shapiro would diminish that distance that we're looking for.''

The governor's supporters say he most certainly is worth it. A Fox News poll released on Friday found Mr. Shapiro had a 61 percent approval rating in the state, among the highest of any governor. It found that in a theoretical head-to-head matchup, he would beat former President Trump by 10 percentage points in the state.

Whatever the politics of the choice, Mr. Shapiro is proudly, religiously Jewish and an ardent backer of the Jewish state, those who know him say.

''It animates who he is,'' said David Glanzberg-Krainin, the chief rabbi of Mr. Shapiro's synagogue in suburban Elkins Park, Pa.

The sanctuary of the synagogue, Beth Sholom, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright to fuse the indomitability of ancient Israel with the greatness of a rising America. Mr. Shapiro had his bar mitzvah beneath its vaulted ceiling and talks and texts with its head rabbi, though Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin is quick to say he was in no way the governor's spiritual adviser.

Using a Yiddish term that roughly means ''person of integrity,'' Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin added, ''Besides being very ambitious, and someone who is really talented, he's -- on a personal level, he's a mensch.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/01/us/politics/shapiro-vp-israel.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/01/us/politics/shapiro-vp-israel.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, an observant Jew, is seen by many as bringing plenty of upsides to the Democratic ticket.

Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin called Mr. Shapiro a ''mensch,'' which is a Yiddish term that roughly means ''person of integrity.''

Sara Abramson, a leader of a progressive Jewish group, said she wanted to create distance from the U.S. policies toward Israel. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** August 2, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Housing Availability in New York City Is Worst It Has Been in Over 50 Years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B94-MXC1-DXY4-X05M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 9, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 853 words

**Byline:** By Mihir Zaveri

**Body**

Only 1.4 percent of the city's rentals were available in 2023, according to new data, the lowest portion since 1968. The market was even tighter for lower-cost apartments.

New York City's housing crunch is the worst it has been in more than 50 years.

The portion of rentals that were vacant and available dropped to a startling 1.4 percent in 2023, according to city data released on Thursday. It was the lowest vacancy rate since 1968 and shows just how drastically home construction lags behind the demand from people who want to live in the city.

Housing experts often consider a ''healthy'' vacancy rate to be somewhere around 5 to 8 percent. A higher vacancy rate typically means it is easier for people to find apartments when they want to move. It also means that property owners are more likely to have to compete for renters, conditions that would moderate rent increases.

The data suggests New York City's housing crisis is only getting worse, especially during the economic rebound from the coronavirus pandemic. The 1.4 percent rate was down from 4.5 percent in 2021, the last time the survey was conducted. New York officials consider a vacancy rate of less than 5 percent a ''housing emergency.''

''The data is clear: The demand to live in our city is far outpacing our ability to build housing,'' Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement announcing the numbers on Thursday. ''New Yorkers need our help, and they need it now.''

The scale of the problem is putting more pressure on officials to do something about it. High housing costs continue to force families and ***working class*** people out of the city, threatening the economy. An influx of migrants has overwhelmed the city's homeless shelter system, and homelessness among non-migrants is also on the rise.

Housing experts estimate that the number of homes the city needs to build is in the hundreds of thousands.

So far, however, the city and state have not made moves that could accelerate enough housing development to solve the crisis.

State lawmakers failed last year to pass several major housing proposals, including a push by Gov. Kathy Hochul to increase development in the suburbs. This year, less ambitious measures appear to be stuck in limbo, as the real estate industry, labor unions and tenant advocates remain at an impasse over tax incentives for new construction and tenant protections.

Ms. Hochul said in a statement on Thursday that the survey was ''the latest reminder that we can only build our way out of this crisis.''

''There's no time to waste,'' she said.

Mr. Adams has proposed local solutions, like an overhaul of the city's zoning code. He estimates that the changes could make way for as many as 100,000 additional homes in the coming years. They would need to be approved by the City Council, and a vote could come as early as the fall.

But city officials acknowledge that these changes would be modest and not have much effect without state action.

''We need our leaders in Albany and New York City to take immediate action on a coordinated plan that helps build up our housing supply,'' Rachel Fee, the executive director of the New York Housing Conference, a nonprofit that favors more development, said in a statement.

The data released on Thursday was collected in the first half of 2023 as part of a survey run by the U.S. Census Bureau every three years. The first survey was conducted in 1965.

In many ways, the results affirm the experience of many New Yorkers.

Rents plummeted at the height of the pandemic as people moved away and the vacancy rate increased. But as people have moved back to the city, rents have reached some of the highest levels ever over the past two years. The median rent on new Manhattan leases in December 2023, for example, was $4,050, according to the brokerage Douglas Elliman.

The vacancy rate is calculated by first totaling the number of homes ''available to rent'' in the city. This does not include vacant apartments that are ''dilapidated'' or empty because the owner uses the unit as a pied-à-terre or a short-term rental, like an Airbnb.

Then, that number -- about 33,210 units in 2023 -- is divided by the roughly 2.3 million total rental homes in the city that are either available or occupied by tenants.

The vacancy rate dropped to 1.4 percent even as the city added some 60,000 homes over the past two years, according to the city data. In the last survey before the pandemic, in 2017, the vacancy rate was 3.63 percent.

As in previous years, the data also shows how the housing crisis hits New York's lowest-income people the hardest. The vacancy rate of apartments that rent below $1,650 per month -- around the citywide median -- was less than 1 percent. The typical New York City household, which has an income of about $70,000, spent more than half of that income on rent, the survey showed.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, the crunch is now hitting higher-rent apartments, too. Fewer than 4 percent of apartments renting for more than $2,400 were available in 2023, according to the survey, less than half of similar estimates in 2021 and 2017.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/08/nyregion/apartment-vacancy-rate-housing-crisis.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/08/nyregion/apartment-vacancy-rate-housing-crisis.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: High housing costs continue to force families and ***working class*** people out of New York City, threatening the region's economy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Think You’ve Planned for Retirement? Beware the Tax Torpedo.; Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CP1-5Y11-DXY4-X3FF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 9, 2024 Friday 11:52 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1594 words

**Byline:** Peter Coy 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:** The complicated way Social Security is taxed can catch middle-income earners by surprise.

**Body**

Look out for the Social Security tax torpedo. It may be heading toward the hull of your retirement accounts as we speak. And if it hits, you may not even realize it.

I’m in favor of taxing Social Security benefits, as the United States [*has done*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) since 1983. I [*blogged*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) this week against Donald Trump’s plan to stop that taxation.

But there is a problem with how it’s done. For middle-income taxpayers, different provisions of the tax code amplify one another. In certain circumstances, because of the tax torpedo and another twist nicknamed the capital gains bump zone, someone in the 12 percent tax bracket who takes a $1,000 retirement distribution could end up paying $499.50 in tax — for a marginal rate of nearly 50 percent.

There are ways to protect yourself from paying more tax than necessary, but they’re not simple. And you may not even know you could be doing better because no one tells you — least of all the Internal Revenue Service.

One of the people pointing out this problem is Wade Pfau, a retirement researcher who has a doctorate in economics from Princeton. In his [*“Retirement Planning Guidebook,”*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) he calls the tax formula “loopy,” which he doesn’t mean as an insult. He means there’s literally a loop in the formulas: You don’t know your adjusted gross income until you know how much your Social Security will be taxed, “but you don’t know how much of your benefit is taxed until you know your A.G.I.,” he writes.

I talked to some other financial experts about the tax torpedo. Aaron Brask, an independent investment adviser in Lake Worth, Fla., called it “a very significant factor” for people whose annual retirement income is in the five-figure range. Brask is a former Wall Street quant with a doctorate in applied math, so he knows about complex calculations. “It’s virtually impossible for somebody to just work this out on the back of a piece of paper,” he said.

The tax torpedo is “nasty business,” Laurence Kotlikoff, an economist at Boston University who created MaxiFi financial planning software, told me.

Here’s the problem. The share of Social Security benefits that the government subjects to taxation depends on your provisional income, which is defined as your modified adjusted gross income plus half of your Social Security benefit, plus any tax-exempt interest. (That includes income from pensions, 401(k)s, savings accounts and so on. Modified A.G.I. is just A.G.I. with a few items added back and excluding the taxable portion of Social Security.)

Retirees can make their provisional income go up or down by changing how much they take each year in distributions from their retirement accounts.

For married couples filing jointly, Social Security benefits are untaxed if provisional income is under $32,000. Starting at that point, each additional dollar of provisional income causes another 50 cents of Social Security benefit to be taxable. And starting at $44,000, each additional dollar of provisional income causes another 85 cents of Social Security benefit to be taxable.

The tax torpedo is headed your way whenever the share of your Social Security benefit that’s taxable is greater than zero but less than 85 percent. In that middle range, an additional dollar of income triggers ordinary taxes on that income, plus the torpedo: a tax on an additional increment of your Social Security benefit, also at the ordinary tax rate. (If you’re a high-earner, you’re already paying tax on 85 percent of your benefits, so an additional dollar of income won’t trigger further taxation of those benefits.) Here’s a [*video*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) by Brask that explains the phenomenon.

The Social Security Administration says that about 40 percent of recipients pay taxes on some portion of their benefits. Pfau told me about three-quarters of those are affected at least somewhat by the tax torpedo.

What can make matters worse is the capital gains bump zone. Here’s how that works: The I.R.S. taxes your capital gains at a rate that depends on your total income, not just the size of the gains. It’s as if the capital gains are stacked on top of ordinary income. So when your ordinary income goes up — possibly because of the Social Security tax torpedo — some portion of your long-term capital gains may be “bumped” out of the zero-tax bracket.

Let’s say you’re a single person in the 12 percent tax bracket with a decent Social Security benefit and some long-term capital gains, and you need to pull $1,000 out of your I.R.A. (This can affect joint filers to some degree as well, but let’s stick with this example.) First, of course, you pay $120 on that ordinary income. Second, the increase in your ordinary income pushes $1,000 of your capital gains, which are stacked on top of ordinary income, from the zero bracket into the 15 percent bracket. That’s another $150 in tax. Third, the $1,000 increase in your ordinary income exposes $850 more of your Social Security benefit to taxation as ordinary income at a rate of 12 percent, for $102 in tax. Fourth and mercifully last, the $850 increase in ordinary income from Social Security bumps an additional $850 of your capital gains into the 15 percent tax bracket, for another $127.50 in tax. Total tax: $499.50.

There are, by the way, similar [*spikes in marginal tax rates*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) scattered through the tax code. For example, the earned-income tax credit phases out as people’s income rises, so the tax penalty for earning an extra dollar is higher than it might seem if you look only at the income tax rate. The tax torpedo and the bump zone stand out in that they affect a lot of middle-income people in retirement.

The tax torpedo would go away if everyone paid taxes on the same percentage of their Social Security benefits. But that would be more regressive than the current formula — hitting the poor harder than the rich. There’s no obvious fix, which is probably why it’s stayed basically this way for four decades.

One way to minimize the hit from the tax torpedo and the bump zone is to realize more of your taxable income before you collect Social Security. If you retire at, say, 62 and don’t start taking Social Security until age 70, the period in between is a good time to convert an ordinary, tax-deferred Individual Retirement Account or 401(k) into a Roth I.R.A. You’ll pay taxes on the money you put into the Roth, of course, but you’ll do it at your current relatively low tax rate, and then you won’t have to pay taxes later when you pull money out of the Roth. Plus you’ll avoid the tax on Social Security benefits, which you aren’t receiving yet.

“The time to act or strategize is before you turn on the Social Security,” Brask said. “There are not many do-over options.”

At the risk of making this too complicated, I’ll mention another tax trick I learned in researching this piece. Conventional wisdom says that you should hold off on spending down your Roth I.R.A.’s until you’ve used up all your other savings, so the money inside the Roth I.R.A.’s can continue to grow tax-free.

But you may actually want to save some taxable savings for your later years. The first dollars of your income aren’t taxed because they fall within the standard deduction. The taxable portion of your Social Security (and annuity income if you have it) might not completely use up your standard deduction. If you’ve already spent all your taxable savings, you’ll be letting room in the standard deduction go to waste. It’s a mistake that’s hard to spot, until it’s too late.

The tax code and the Social Security formulas are byzantine. I welcome ideas from readers on how to cope with their complexities — or better yet simplify them for all.

The Readers Write

Only time will tell whether [*David Rosenberg*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) is right, and his views are certainly shared by many others. However, despite all of the supposed signals of an impending recession, the outlook for gross domestic product growth has remained positive. One month’s disappointment in the employment numbers does not a trend make. The U.S. economy remains near full employment. The stock market is not the economy.

Scott Boone

Pasadena, Calif.

I spent 40 years as a lawyer and the last 20 of them in the gas utility business. America has a permitting problem and if you are against [*Senator Joe Manchin’s bill*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com) then what you are really saying is that climate change isn’t enough of a risk to actually work across the aisle and get what you need while giving others what they need. In this divided country environmental purists are the greatest climate risk there is.

Would you wait four or eight or 12 more years to get the “ideal” solution and delay all of the capital expenditures needed for clean energy and waste the tremendous incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act because you wouldn’t let other industries also benefit from permitting reform? That’s a really dumb idea.

Gary Kruse

Allentown, Pa.

Quote of the Day

“Left-wing populists, such as the Five Stars movement in Italy, Jean-Luc Mélenchon in France, and Bernie Sanders in the United States, support climate action because they see such measures as necessary to rein in greedy corporations that use fossil fuels and pollute the environment to the detriment of ordinary people. By contrast, right-wing populists see climate policies as driven by transnational political elites who want to impose taxes and regulations no matter the burdens they place on ***working-class*** people.”

— Edoardo Campanella and Robert Lawrence, “The Populist Revolt Against Climate Policy,” Foreign Affairs ([*July 25*](mailto:coy-newsletter@nytimes.com))

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; images by CSA Images/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Pro-Palestinian Groups Seek to Thwart Josh Shapiro’s Chances for Harris’s V.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CM7-SJS1-JBG3-60S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1551 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman and Hiroko Masuike Jonathan Weisman is a politics writer, covering campaigns with an emphasis on economic and labor policy. He is based in Chicago. Hiroko Masuike is a New York-based photographer and photo editor for The Times.

**Highlight:** Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, an observant Jew, is seen as bringing plenty of upsides to the Democratic ticket. But some worry about setting off opposition to the Democratic ticket from pro-Palestinian demonstrators.

**Body**

Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania took the stage at Wissahickon High School in the Philadelphia suburbs on Monday to the roars of his fellow Democrats, a campaign appearance and an audition all in one.

As he enthusiastically shouted out his support for Vice President Kamala Harris’s presidential campaign, the pro-Palestinian demonstrators who had dogged Democratic politicians last spring were nowhere in evidence. There was only the adoration of an audience from his native Montgomery County, which the Democratic ticket must carry by sizable margins in November to win Pennsylvania.

But as Ms. Harris prepares to name her running mate ahead of a rally on Tuesday in Philadelphia, those protests are very much part of the calculus surrounding Mr. Shapiro, who is believed to be on her shortlist of potential running mates.

Efforts by a motley collection of left-wing and pro-Palestinian activists to derail his nomination have presented the Harris campaign with a decision as the vice president prepares to make one of most significant choices of her career: Should she take the opportunity to stand up to her far-left flank in an appeal to the center of the party and to independents, or should she shy away from inflaming an issue that has divided and bedeviled the party — Israel’s war in Gaza?

“Harris needs to win Pennsylvania, signal moderation and reassure Haley voters that she’ll stand up to the left,” said Representative Jake Auchincloss, a Massachusetts Democrat, a Jewish military veteran and an admirer of Mr. Shapiro, referring to Republican supporters of Nikki Haley. “The more the Twitter left piles on him, the more helpful he is to Harris.”

Mr. Shapiro, an observant Jew who speaks openly about his faith, has taken a position on the war that is not all that different from any of the other Democrats under consideration to be the vice president’s running mate, or from Ms. Harris’s.

The 51-year-old governor [*has stood by Israel’s right to self-defense*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) and has condemned overt displays of antisemitism amid pro-Palestinian protests. He has been unapologetic in his love for Israel; he has visited often and even proposed to his wife there. He has also called Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, [*“one of the worst leaders of all time.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html)

But Palestinian rights activists see someone different, the public face of intransigent support for Israel. They point to Mr. Shapiro’s [*suggestion in April*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) that people would not tolerate “people dressed up in K.K.K. outfits or K.K.K. regalia,” and thus should not tolerate antisemitism on campuses either, as a comparison of pro-Palestinian demonstrators to the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. Shapiro supported the dismissal of the University of Pennsylvania’s president, Elizabeth Magill, amid accusations that she had tolerated a climate of antipathy for Jewish students. He also recently updated a code of conduct for state employees to forbid them from engaging in “scandalous or disgraceful” behavior, a move interpreted as targeting Palestinian rights activists.

The campaign to thwart his nomination is, by its own admission, not well organized. People working against Mr. Shapiro come from groups such as the Democratic Socialists of America; Uncommitted, which waged a campaign to convince Democratic primary voters to register protest votes against President Biden; the progressive Jewish group IfNotNow; and a group of anonymous pro-Palestinian aides on Capitol Hill known as Dear White Staffers. It does not include some of the largest Palestinian rights groups, nor have more prominent progressive groups joined, like Justice Democrats.

Opponents of the governor have posted a website, No Genocide Josh; promoted an online petition; [*circulated anti-Shapiro articles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) on social media; drummed up a Signal channel; and [*issued internet provocations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) to whip up opposition from activists who had been focused on chasing Mr. Biden from the race.

But the people who put up the website declined to be interviewed, instead boasting in an unsigned email to The Times, “In less than one week our petition has garnered more than 850 signatures and our messages on social media have caught the attention of reporters and politicians from across the country.” For a national campaign, 850 signatures hardly represent bragging rights. Mr. Shapiro received 3,031,137 votes in [*his 15-percentage-point victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) for Pennsylvania governor in 2022.

It’s not clear whether such criticism will hurt or help Mr. Shapiro, as Ms. Harris weighs a pick that soothes the political center or calms the fringes of her coalition. The buzz on the left should simply be ignored, said Paige G. Cognetti, the Democratic mayor of the predominantly ***working-class*** city of Scranton, Pa.

“There’s always going to be some faction on the far left and the far right that says no one’s good enough,” she said with a shrug.

Indeed, the Harris campaign has an opportunity to expand its appeal by adding Mr. Shapiro to the ticket, his supporters say. The progressive wing of the party is already becoming less vocal in its criticism over Gaza, believing the vice president is inching toward them on Israel and Palestine with her forthright calls for a cease-fire in Gaza, her acknowledgment of [*“catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) in the territory and her [*pledge to “not be silent”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) on Palestinian suffering.

With progressive voters coming back to the Democrats, Mr. Shapiro, who declined to be interviewed, would complete the coalition that helped Democrats win back the White House in 2020, reassuring Jewish and pro-Israel voters that the Harris administration would not lurch leftward.

Some supporters also see bigotry at work in the Shapiro opposition.

“Every potential nominee for Vice President is pro-Israel,” Representative Ritchie Torres, Democrat of New York, [*wrote on social media on Friday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html). “The reason he is treated differently from the rest? Antisemitism.”

But to the pro-Palestinian movement, there are plenty of other candidates for the ticket. Mr. Shapiro might help win Pennsylvania, but Rabiul Chowdhury, an executive board member of the Council on American-Islamic Relations in Philadelphia and a co-chairman of the Abandon Biden organization, driven by the Palestinian cause, said in an interview that he would hurt Ms. Harris’s chances in Michigan, where a large Muslim and Arab American population had already turned on Mr. Biden.

Critics of Mr. Shapiro raise the specter of mass protests at the Democratic convention in Chicago. Some also cite other issues, including Mr. Shapiro’s past support for vouchers to send children to private schools and [*allegations that he swept charges of sexual impropriety*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/11/us/politics/josh-shapiro-pennsylvania.html) against an aide under the rug.

The message from his critics on the left is simple: Mr. Shapiro is just not worth it.

“He’s got a perfect storm on his hands when there’s less controversial options available,” said Waleed Shahid, a spokesman for the progressive group Uncommitted.

Manuel Bonder, a spokesman for Mr. Shapiro, staunchly defended Mr. Shapiro’s record on public education. He said while the state government could not comment on personnel matters, the Shapiro administration “takes allegations of discrimination and harassment seriously. Robust procedures are in place for thoroughly investigating reports of discrimination and harassment.”

Some left-wing Jews have joined the anti-Shapiro cause.

“IfNotNow and the left are excited to see an opportunity to create more distance” from the Biden administration’s policies toward Israel, said Sara Abramson, 30, a leader of IfNotNow’s Philadelphia chapter. She credited Ms. Harris for doing that. “Naming Josh Shapiro would diminish that distance that we’re looking for.”

The governor’s supporters say he most certainly is worth it. A Fox News poll released on Friday found Mr. Shapiro had a 61 percent approval rating in the state, among the highest of any governor. It found that in a theoretical head-to-head matchup, he would beat former President Trump by 10 percentage points in the state.

Whatever the politics of the choice, Mr. Shapiro is proudly, religiously Jewish and an ardent backer of the Jewish state, those who know him say.

“It animates who he is,” said David Glanzberg-Krainin, the chief rabbi of Mr. Shapiro’s synagogue in suburban Elkins Park, Pa.

The sanctuary of the synagogue, Beth Sholom, was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright to fuse the indomitability of ancient Israel with the greatness of a rising America. Mr. Shapiro had his bar mitzvah beneath its vaulted ceiling and talks and texts with its head rabbi, though Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin is quick to say he was in no way the governor’s spiritual adviser.

Using a Yiddish term that roughly means “person of integrity,” Rabbi Glanzberg-Krainin added, “Besides being very ambitious, and someone who is really talented, he’s — on a personal level, he’s a mensch.”

PHOTOS: Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, an observant Jew, is seen by many as bringing plenty of upsides to the Democratic ticket.; Rabbi David Glanzberg-Krainin called Mr. Shapiro a “mensch,” which is a Yiddish term that roughly means “person of integrity.”; Sara Abramson, a leader of a progressive Jewish group, said she wanted to create distance from the U.S. policies toward Israel. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2024

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[***For 'Blondie' at 93, Another Chef Enters the Kitchen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW4-95N1-JBG3-600K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 24, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 611 words

**Byline:** By George Gene Gustines

**Body**

Creators will spotlight Blondie in the comic strip, as she brings someone on board for her catering business.

The 93-year-old newspaper comic strip Blondie could have been called Dagwood, given how often its gags revolve around Dagwood Bumstead's insatiable appetite, chronic lateness and his love of napping.

Beginning Tuesday, however, Dagwood will be ceding panels to his wife, Blondie, as she begins a search for a new employee for her catering company. And Alexander and Cookie, their children, will get some new friends in coming weeks. It is all part of an effort by the strip's creators to keep things fresh.

''We're adding a pastry chef to Blondie's catering kitchen,'' said Dean Young, the Blondie writer who inherited the strip in 1973 upon the death of his father, Chic Young, the cartoonist who created Blondie in 1930. Young said that his father centered the strip on eating, sleeping, raising children and making money. ''But the most important thing was to be funny,'' he said in a recent Zoom interview; his two daughters who are part of the Blondie enterprise were also on the call.

The introduction of the pastry chef includes fan engagement: Readers will be able to vote for one of five names for the character selected by Young.

Fans want to see more Blondie, said Dana Coston, one of Young's daughters who works on the strip with him. ''We want to show her in a real situation, not always in the kitchen cooking,'' she said. ''Most moms are out there working and raising a family. Let's show her doing it and doing it well.''

Alexander and Cookie will also be the focus of more installments: They will take over the family's basement to hang out with friends. ''We're going to see some fresh faces, some younger teens in there,'' Coston said.

Coston is the lead writer on the daily strips and her father takes charge of Sundays. He and Coston review, edit and tease each other about their efforts -- something of a family tradition.

''I trained her the same way my father trained me,'' Young said, recalling, with a laugh, that his father said his first strip was pretty good, asked him to try another and crumpled up the first. Coston said she was more successful with a recent Sunday strip. ''He didn't throw it in the trash,'' she said.

''She's starting to get lucky,'' he retorted.

Blondie, which is in 883 publications worldwide, according to King Features Syndicate, which distributes the strip, has come a long way. In its beginnings, Blondie Boopadoop was a ***working-class*** party girl and Dagwood was a rich playboy. Dagwood was briefly written out by Chic Young, but readers wanted him back. Dagwood returned and married Blondie in 1933, but his parents did not approve of his bride and disinherited him, which paved the way for the more modest life the Bumsteads live.

The strip has been drawn since 2005 by John Marshall, one of several artists who have worked on Blondie. Young's other daughter involved in Blondie is Dianne Erwin, the head of social media and marketing.

The story line that kicks off on Tuesday will see the debut of a more vibrant color palette, she said. The search for a new employee will also provide fodder for humor as Blondie interviews applicants. The new pastry chef, a young woman, will also open up story possibilities. ''She's able to bring some spontaneity to the catering company,'' Erwin said. ''She's able to understand social media that can help Blondie's business grow.''

Coston said the character is of Indian descent, and it's ''a nice nod to our faithful fans,'' in India.

But the key to success is that she must be funny. ''If she can't be, she'll probably get the boot,'' Young said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/22/arts/blondie-comic-strip.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/22/arts/blondie-comic-strip.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

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[***How Biden Changed His Party***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CS9-DSJ1-JBG3-600K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2024 Tuesday 07:25 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1951 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. He is the author of &amp;#8220;Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream."

**Highlight:** We explore three ways the president has shaped the Democratic Party.

**Body**

We explore three ways the president has shaped the Democratic Party.

President Biden has never exactly been a liberal Democrat or a conservative Democrat. He has instead stayed in his party’s mainstream. When the party moved right in the 1990s, he moved with it. When it moved left in the 2010s, so did he.

But Biden has not simply gone with the Democratic flow. Over his more than 50 years in politics, he has periodically shown strong opinions about how his party should change — and helped it do so.

Last night in Chicago, Biden took a big step in his long political goodbye, [*delivering a 52-minute speech at the Democratic convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). In today’s newsletter, I’ll examine how Biden’s presidency shaped his party — and consider whether Kamala Harris is likely to continue these shifts. I think three points are key.

1. Biden’s neopopulism

Biden has always understood the class resentments that many Americans feel. (If you haven’t read Robert Draper’s profile of Biden for The Times Magazine, [*I recommend it*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), including the section in which Biden analyzes George W. Bush.)

Biden’s political career began in 1972, when he defeated an incumbent Republican senator in Delaware even as Richard Nixon won a landslide. Biden ran as a subtly different kind of Democrat, with [*a more* ***working-class*** *image*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) than the party’s presidential nominee that year, George McGovern. Biden simultaneously distanced himself from the liberal fervor of the 1960s and portrayed himself as an economic populist. He criticized both draft dodgers and “millionaires who don’t pay any taxes at all.”

Five decades later, Biden became the most populist Democratic president in modern times. This positioning wasn’t just about his background, either. Populism has recently gained a new appeal, thanks to the failure of the market-based economic policies of the past half-century — which are often known as neoliberalism — to deliver broad-based prosperity.

Instead of focusing on trade deals, Biden tried to build up American manufacturing. He joined a picket line with autoworkers and appointed labor-friendly regulators. He gave Medicare the power to negotiate drug prices. He cracked down on “junk fees.” He tried to end decades of gentle antitrust regulation.

Biden devoted much of his speech last night to this agenda. He claimed to have rebuilt “the backbone of the middle class.” He said, “We finally beat big Pharma,” and “Wall Street didn’t build America, the middle class built America.” When the crowd chanted, “Union Joe,” he replied, “I agree. I’m proud.”

These economic policies are largely popular even though Biden is not. If the Democratic Party’s shift away from neoliberalism — toward what I’ve called [*neopopulism*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) — continues, Biden’s presidency will be a major reason. And Harris’s initial economic proposals suggest that much of the shift will continue if she wins.

2. Bipartisanship lives

Biden loves to talk about how he has proved his doubters wrong, sometimes with a dash or two of hyperbole. Yet there is at least one aspect of his presidency for which he deserves to gloat: his surprising success at passing bipartisan legislation.

He has signed bipartisan bills on infrastructure, semiconductor chips, Ukraine aid and TikTok — as well as on anti-Asian hate crimes, the aviation system, the electoral process, gun violence, the Postal Service, same-sex marriage and veterans’ health. In a polarized Washington, Biden has demonstrated that bipartisanship remains possible.

“Remember, we were told we couldn’t get it done?” he asked in last night’s speech.

He drew on his long Senate career to help pass these bills. He refused to treat the Republican Party as the enemy and remained upbeat — and often in the background — even when negotiations stalled.

Would Harris show similar patience? And would congressional Republicans be willing to work with her? It’s hard to know.

3. A new cold war

Biden’s signature line about foreign policy is that the world is witnessing [*a struggle between democracy and autocracy*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). You can quibble with the details, but his basic point is correct.

U.S. allies are mostly democracies — including Western Europe, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Australia, Mexico and Canada. The countries that treat the U.S. as an enemy are autocracies — China, Russia, Iran and North Korea. Increasingly, these autocracies are collaborating with one another.

Biden has defined the United States as the leading player in an alliance to combat autocracy. “Who can lead the world other than the United States of America?” he asked last night.

As president, he confronted China economically and promised to defend Taiwan. He rallied a pro-Ukraine coalition after Russia invaded. He withdrew from Afghanistan — chaotically — partly because of its limited strategic importance. He abandoned his initial reluctance to work with Saudi Arabia, an autocratic ally, and embraced it as a counterweight to Iran. He continued to embrace Israel for similar reasons, despite the death and destruction in Gaza.

Biden’s foreign policy is based on the idea that the world has entered a new cold war (even if he rejects the term). And Harris? Her campaign has said little about foreign policy or her worldview. Maybe that will start to change in Chicago this week.

More on the convention

* “[*America, I gave my best to you*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing),” Biden said in a speech that also criticized Donald Trump.

1. Biden called picking Harris as his running mate the best decision of his career. He joked that “like many of our best presidents, she was also vice president.”
2. Introduced by his daughter Ashley, Biden dabbed tears as convention delegates held signs reading “We ❤\xB8\x8F Joe.”
3. Speaking earlier, Hillary Clinton said, “On the other side of that glass ceiling is Kamala Harris [*raising her hand and taking the oath of office*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).”
4. Several speakers contrasted Harris’s background with Trump’s felony convictions. Clinton smiled and nodded as the audience chanted “lock him up.”
5. Shawn Fain of the United Auto Workers union wore a T-shirt that read “Trump is a scab.”
6. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the House progressive, praised Harris for supporting populist economic policies [*and seeking a cease-fire in Gaza*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
7. Biden and other speakers at times exaggerated or left out context. [*Read a fact check*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
8. Senate Democrats in tough races, including Jon Tester of Montana and Sherrod Brown of Ohio, [*are skipping the convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
9. A pro-Palestinian protest outside the hall was [*smaller than organizers had expected*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). The police detained a few people who lobbed signs and cans.

More on the campaign

* Trump, [*campaigning in Pennsylvania*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), referred to Harris as “Comrade Kamala” and “an economy wrecker and a country destroyer.”

1. Iran hacked Trump’s campaign and tried to hack Biden and Harris’s, [*U.S. intelligence agencies said*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. On social media, Trump shared A.I.-generated images [*suggesting that Taylor Swift had endorsed him*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). She hasn’t.

THE LATEST NEWS

Israel-Hamas War

* American officials say Israel has accepted a [*U.S. intermediate proposal*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in cease-fire talks with Hamas, which is meant to help work through their remaining disagreements.

1. Hamas officials have not yet agreed to the deal, which they have called slanted toward Israel. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the proposal “probably the best, maybe the last, opportunity” to secure a truce.
2. An Israeli airstrike [*demolished an apartment*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in central Gaza. Israel said it had targeted a member of the group Islamic Jihad. Locals said the strike killed a teacher and her six children.
3. Hamas and Islamic Jihad took responsibility for an explosion in Tel Aviv, which they [*said was a suicide bombing*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). There hasn’t been one in Israel since around 2016.

War in Ukraine

* Women in Ukraine are [*stepping into male-dominated jobs*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) as war depletes the work force.

1. Ukraine [*destroyed several bridges*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the Kursk region, the part of Russia where it has made an incursion, cutting off Moscow’s routes for resupply or retreat.

More International News

* Federal judges across Mexico [*voted to strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). They are protesting President Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s push for judges to be elected rather than appointed.

1. Six people are missing after a yacht sank in a storm off the coast of Sicily, including [*a British software mogul*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) who was recently acquitted of fraud charges.
2. India plans to [*build ports and expand docks*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) as part of a push to become a global manufacturing giant.

Other Big Stories

* George Santos, the former House Republican who lied about his background, [*pleaded guilty to identity theft and wire fraud*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). He faces at least two years in prison.

1. The F.D.A.’s top regulator for medical devices is married to a lawyer whose firm represents medical device companies. A Times investigation [*uncovered instances where their jobs intersected*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. New rules around real estate commissions took effect over the weekend, but many buyers — and even some brokers — [*still aren’t sure*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) what they mean. Here’s a [*guide to the changes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

* A blue supermoon will be visible through Wednesday. [*Read what to know*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Opinions

Times Opinion columnists picked [*their best and worst moments*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) of the first day of the Democratic National Convention.

Trump got overconfident while Biden was still running — and [*now he’s chasing his losses*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Nate Silver writes.

Here is a column by Paul Krugman on [*Harris’s economic platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Bootmobile: Riding shotgun through New England inside [*a giant L.L. Bean boot*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Energy: Coal power [*defined this Minnesota town*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Can solar win it over?

Animal welfare: The last horse-drawn carriage operator in Brussels has [*gone electric*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Solid start: More parents are [*giving their babies solid food*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that they feed to themselves in place of spoon-feeding.

Lives Lived: The chef Michel Guérard’s efforts to lose weight, and his disgust with traditional diet dishes, inspired him to develop what he called “cuisine minceur” — a low-fat, no-sugar application of nouvelle cuisine. He [*died at 91*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

M.L.B.: Austin Riley, the Atlanta Braves’ star third baseman, is [*expected to miss six to eight weeks*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) with a fractured hand.

N.F.L.: The Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa spoke about [*playing under the team’s former coach Brian Flores*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), describing him as a negative presence who told him he “shouldn’t be here.”

ARTS AND IDEAS

It has been a year since the British Museum fired a curator for stealing artifacts from its storerooms and selling them online. While a police investigation continues, the institution has appointed a team of eight, each person focusing on a different area, to help recover around 1,500 stolen artifacts. They’re trawling the internet, public auctions and the collections of other museums. A Times reporter, Alex Marshall, [*spoke to the recovery team*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on culture

* Phil Donahue, the longtime daytime TV talk show host who revolutionized the form by inviting the audience to participate, [*died at 88*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. The late night hosts discussed [*the first night of the Democratic National Convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Roast soft and deliciously spiced [*rounds of eggplant*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Save money when [*cooking for one*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Try [*rødgrød med fløde*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), a berry pudding that tastes like summer in Denmark.

Preserve summer produce with [*a great food dehydrator*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Clean [*your headphones*](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 atrophy.

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

P.S. A group of Times colleagues has been meeting [*to read and discuss Emily Wilson’s translation of the “Iliad.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) As Wilson tweeted, “Ancient epics are fun to talk about!”

[*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: President Biden and Jill Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ruth Fremson/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***In Catholicism, Vance Adopts A 'Resistance'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CTC-KP11-DXY4-X2DC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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

**Length:** 2078 words

**Byline:** By Elizabeth Dias

**Body**

In his 30s, the Republican vice-presidential nominee read works on theology, mysticism, and political and moral philosophy. And he discovered his faith.

From his new home in Cincinnati, JD Vance would go to St. Gertrude to meet the friar.

It was a fitting place for the millennial aspiring politician, who was drawn to the Roman Catholic Church's ancient ways. For years he had flirted with joining the church. Now he wanted to explore the desire in earnest.

St. Gertrude Church was led by the Dominican Friars from the Province of St. Joseph, part of a religious order founded in 1216. Its sanctuary smelled of incense but felt modern, its concrete walls pierced with bright stained-glass rectangles in reds and blues.

Mr. Vance would meet with Father Henry Stephan. For months, they read works of theology, mysticism, and political and moral philosophy. Sometimes they went to coffee or lunch. It was bespoke private instruction, a hallmark of Dominicans who are known for their lives of intellect and study.

Then, one summer day in 2019, Mr. Vance, then 35, returned to St. Gertrude, this time to be baptized and receive his first communion in the Dominicans' private chapel. The friars hosted a celebratory reception for his family with doughnuts. He chose as his patron Saint Augustine, the political theologian whose fifth-century treatise ''City of God'' challenged Rome's ruling class and drew Mr. Vance to the faith.

''It was the best criticism of our modern age I'd ever read,'' Mr. Vance later explained in a Catholic literary journal. ''A society oriented entirely towards consumption and pleasure, spurning duty and virtue.''

Much has been made of Mr. Vance's very public conversion to Trumpism, and his seemingly mutable political stances. But his quieter, private conversion to Catholicism, occurring over a similar stretch of years, reveals some core values at the heart of his personal and political philosophy and their potential impact on the country.

Becoming Catholic for Mr. Vance, who was loosely raised as an evangelical, was a practical way to counter what he saw as elite values, especially secularism. He was drawn not just to the church's theological ideas, but also to its teachings on family and social order and its desire to instill virtue in modern society.

That worldview served as a counterpoint to much of his messy childhood, and meshed with his own criticisms of contemporary America, from what he saw as the abandonment of workers to the unhappiness of ''childless cat ladies.'' It has also infused his politics, which seeks to advance a family-oriented, socially conservative future through economic populism and by standing with abortion opponents.

Converting to Catholicism was joining ''the resistance,'' he wrote in the Catholic journal.

This portrait of Mr. Vance's Catholic conversion and beliefs is drawn from dozens of his public remarks and writings, and interviews with Catholics in his religious and intellectual circles in Ohio and Washington. Mr. Vance declined to comment for this story, as did Father Stephan, and several other thinkers and converts close to the candidate.

''My views on public policy and what the optimal state should look like are pretty aligned with Catholic social teaching,'' Mr. Vance said in an interview with Rod Dreher, a conservative writer and Orthodox Christian who attended his baptism. ''I saw a real overlap between what I would like to see and what the Catholic Church would like to see.''

A New Generation of Catholics

Catholics of every generation debate how to best express church teaching. If President Biden, who was raised Catholic, represents the ***working class*** and social justice-oriented Catholicism that defined his era, Mr. Vance reflects the traditionalist wing of the church that has taken root in his own generation.

His small, energetic world of conservative Catholic intellectuals, lawyers and politicians prioritizes its traditional views on family, as well as the public value of Christianity. It sees allies in people like Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito.

And this slice of the Christian movement has grown and increased in power in Republican circles, even as its views seem out of step with the American mainstream.

Yet on a personal level, Mr. Vance's turn to Catholicism was tied to his maturation: graduating from Yale Law School, falling in love and marrying his classmate Usha Chilukuri, becoming a father and figuring out his professional aspirations.

He began to assess the elite, academic world around him.

''I would be judged on, did I get a Supreme Court clerkship, did I work at a fancy bank or consulting or law firm,'' he said in a 2021 podcast. ''I just realized to myself, this is an incredibly hollow and even gross way to think about character and virtue.''

He had a different set of questions, particularly after his troubled childhood: ''How do you be a better husband, a better man, a better father?'' he asked in the 2021 podcast. ''How do you build a sense of masculinity that is protective and defensive and aggressive but isn't just showy? Elites don't care at all about the difference between men and women and how we need to inculcate masculine virtues and feminine virtues. But Christianity really does.''

His conversion happened at a time when many American Catholics have been returning to traditionalist practices, like the old Latin Mass, largely against Pope Francis' wishes. Speaking to the Napa Institute, a conservative Catholic-oriented network, during his Senate run in 2021, Mr. Vance said he is ''not a big Latin mass guy,'' though he really liked the stability of a church that was ''just really old,'' standing against the flux of the modern world.

Mr. Vance is also part of the changing coalition of conservative Christians in Republican politics. Traditional social conservatives, like Donald Trump's first vice-presidential pick, Mike Pence, emphasized personal morality and social causes like fighting against abortion rights and gay marriage.

Mr. Vance joined a stream of Catholic converts working to reshape Republican politics, challenging free-market principles and championing the welfare of workers.

''Look, my basic view is that if the Republican Party, if the conservative movement stands for anything -- and I'm running as a politician trying to advocate for what we should stand for -- the number one thing that we should be is pro-babies and pro-families,'' he said at the Napa event. ''That's what this whole thing is all about.''

At an evangelical prayer breakfast with anti-abortion supporters the week of the Republican National Convention, he suggested that he and Mr. Trump would be with them in a second term, despite their apparent softening on abortion.

And he told the room he saw the hand of God in the failed assassination attempt of Mr. Trump. ''You will never be able to convince me that that last second turn of a head was anything other than a miracle,'' he said. ''I absolutely believe that.''

Finding Catholicism From Chaos

Growing up, Mr. Vance rarely went to church but absorbed the lived Christianity of his grandmother. ''In the broken world I saw around me -- and for the people struggling in that world -- religion offered tangible assistance to keep the faithful on track,'' he wrote in his memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy.''

As an adolescent, he went to his father's church, where he was immersed in evangelical teaching. He learned to defend young-earth creationism, abandon his Black Sabbath music, anticipate the Rapture and try to convert people, like his seventh-grade science teacher who was Muslim. He became ''pro-life'' at age 14. He said that Christianity provided structure and ''moral pressure'' to his father, and to him.

''Not drinking, treating people well, working hard, and so forth, requires a lot of willpower when you didn't grow up in privilege,'' he said in a 2016 interview with Mr. Dreher. ''That feeling -- whether it's real or entirely fake -- that there's something divine helping you and directing your mind and body, is extraordinarily powerful.''

By the time he started Yale Law School, after joining the Marines and graduating Ohio State, he had been through an ''angry, atheist phase,'' he said in a later interview with Mr. Dreher, where he rejected the anti-intellectualism of his family's Christianity. But he encountered Catholic groups at Yale, and his own intellectual curiosity grew. He also admired the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known for its family focus, in part because of its emphasis on community.

In Washington, he connected with a Yale Law alumnus who had become a priest at the Dominican House of Studies. Before joining the order, Father Dominic Legge had clerked for Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. And he was the first priest with whom Mr. Vance discussed becoming Catholic.

The Dominican House of Studies is known in Washington for attracting a conservative intellectual crowd, and potential converts who hold high professional positions. ''Like Nicodemus, they come knocking on the door at night,'' Father Aquinas Guilbeau, a Dominican priest, said.

In 2016, to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the order's founding, the Dominican House of Studies hosted a celebration with speakers like Supreme Court Justices Alito and Antonin Scalia, as well as guests like the conservative activist Leonard Leo. Some of the younger Dominicans formed a bluegrass band called the Hillbilly Thomists, taking their name not from Mr. Vance's book, but from a quote from Flannery O'Connor, the Southern gothic novelist.

When Mr. Vance moved to Cincinnati in 2018, Father Legge connected him with Father Stephan at St. Gertrude Church. As a Princeton undergraduate, Father Stephan had interned with Judge O'Scannlain, who suggested he become a Catholic priest.

St. Gertrude is hub for the order in the region -- the place where Dominican novices, the young men considering joining the order, spend their first year before going to the House of Studies in Washington.

Designed by an architect in the 1960s determined to counter the ''God is dead'' philosophy of his time, St. Gertrude was built to show that the church could be both modern and deeply rooted in the past. On summer evenings, friars hosted ''Drinking With Dominicans'' at a local bar to explore the thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas. It advertised retreats for husbands and fathers on how to become ''a courageous leader for your family and in your workplace.''

And like Mr. Vance, it is deeply opposed to abortion. Parishioners bring their own hammers to pound thousands of small white ''crosses of the innocents'' into the lawn to commemorate children not born.

Adults who convert to Catholicism tend to be known for their zealous commitment to their new worldviews. They are rare, just 2 percent of the adult population, according to the Pew Research Center. And for every one new convert, six Catholic adults have left the church.

Mr. Vance worried about joining a church mired in yet another sexual abuse crisis, and that his conversion might be ''unfair'' to his wife, who had not married a Catholic, he wrote. She was supportive, he often pointed out, and saw it made him a better father and husband, more forgiving and patient.

And, as with many conversions, there is often an element of mystery that can be hard for those on the outside to understand.

On that 2021 podcast, he described his pull toward the church. Riding a train to Washington, missing his wife and young son, he listened to a beloved recording of a priest chanting an old psalm in Aramaic during Pope Francis' visit to Georgia in 2016. He went to the Dominican House to meet a priest for midday prayers -- and heard the same psalm.

'''The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good,''' the psalm reads, according to a translation from Mr. Dreher. It felt, he wrote, like a ''touch from God.''

After his conversion, he had planned to write a second book to be called, ''A Relevant Faith: Searching for a Meaningful American Christianity.'' But after he won his Senate primary, his publisher announced that the deal would not proceed.

Instead, he is raising his three children in the Roman Catholic Church, and bringing his views directly to the American political stage.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/25/us/jd-vance-catholic-church-conversion.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/25/us/jd-vance-catholic-church-conversion.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: JD VANCE, after his conversion to Catholicism in 2019. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN MATUREN/GETTY IMAGES)

St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church in Madeira, Ohio. In a Catholic literary journal, Senator JD Vance described converting to the faith as joining ''the resistance.''

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After he moved to his home in Cincinnati, Mr. Vance came to meet with a priest to explore his interest in becoming Catholic. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADELEINE HORDINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

The Dominican House of Studies in Washington has attracted a stream of conservative intellectuals and potential converts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

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[***New York’s Millionaire Class Is Growing. Other People Are Leaving.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T2-JTG1-DXY4-X1CS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 5, 2023 Tuesday 10:33 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1285 words

**Byline:** Stefanos Chen Stefanos Chen is a Times reporter covering New York City&amp;#8217;s economy. He previously covered real estate in the city for over a decade.

**Highlight:** A report found that New York is gaining millionaires, despite an earlier exodus, while lower-income families are being forced to leave, raising questions about the state’s tax policies.

**Body**

A report found that New York is gaining millionaires, despite an earlier exodus, while lower-income families are being forced to leave, raising questions about the state’s tax policies.

At the height of the pandemic, the richest New Yorkers left in droves.

The trend led to months of hand-wringing, and both Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul later spurned proposals to raise taxes on the rich for fear of driving more of them to low-tax states.

Now, [*a new report*](https://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FPI-Who-is-Leaving-Full-Report-Dec-2023.pdf) based on the latest census and state tax filing data has found a reversal: The ranks of millionaires have come surging back, while lower- and middle-income New Yorkers are heading for the exits, according to the study, published Tuesday by the Fiscal Policy Institute, a left-leaning policy group.

The people leaving New York at the fastest rate last year were families making between $32,000 and $65,000. A disproportionately high share of these movers were [*Black and Hispanic.*](https://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FPI-Who-is-Leaving-Full-Report-Dec-2023.pdf) They were followed by people earning $104,000 to $172,000 a year, an above-average income in many parts of the country but a more modest one in New York City.

Continuing to lose these residents, who form the backbone of many essential services and white-collar industries, could jeopardize the city’s [*uneven recovery*](https://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FPI-Who-is-Leaving-Full-Report-Dec-2023.pdf), said Andrew Beveridge, the president of Social Explorer, a demographic firm that reviewed the new data.

“If you want a subway system, an office sector, a restaurant industry, you need these people,” he said.

The report also found that affluent residents who left New York did not appear to have been driven away by recent tax increases.

More than three-quarters of rich people who left during the pandemic moved to other high-tax states, including Connecticut, New Jersey and California. The report defines this group as the top 1 percent of income-earners, making more than $815,000 a year.

The findings come at a time when the city is preparing to [*slash the budgets*](https://fiscalpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FPI-Who-is-Leaving-Full-Report-Dec-2023.pdf) of public services including police, sanitation and schools — cuts that could push more ***working-class*** residents out of the state, said Nathan Gusdorf, the director of the Fiscal Policy Institute.

“The main priority for policymakers should be retaining the middle- and ***working-class*** populations of New York, by making it affordable and livable,” he added.

New York lost 431,000 residents from July 2020 to July 2022, wiping out half of the state’s population gains through the last decade, according to the report. Since 2020, nearly 94 percent of the state’s population loss was from New York City.

At first, the exodus was led by the wealthiest New Yorkers, who were more likely to work remotely, and had the means to move, Mr. Gusdorf said.

But the trend has turned around. While the state lost 2,400 millionaire households from 2020 to 2022, there was a net gain of 15,100 in the same period, because of strong financial markets that boosted earnings, and the return of some families.

In 2022, the most recent year data was available, the richest New Yorkers left the state at far lower rates than all other income groups, in line with prepandemic norms.

Instead, lower-income families have been moving away at higher rates. On net, more than 65,000 residents who made $32,000 to $65,000 left the state last year, or 2 percent of that population.

That is the most of any income group, and three times the rate of outbound migration for the wealthiest 1 percent of New Yorkers.

The next largest group of people who left the state last year was those who made between $104,000 and $172,000, with a net loss of 58,000 people. The median income in New York City was about $75,000 last year.

Among the lower-income group, Black and Hispanic New Yorkers were at least twice as likely to move out of the state as white residents, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.

For many ***working-class*** New Yorkers, it was the high cost of living, not taxes, that drove them away.

Danna Dennis, 40, who was raised in Queens and Brooklyn, moved to Newark, N.J., in 2019, when she was pregnant with her first child. Ms. Dennis, a community organizer for a transit nonprofit group, was making about $50,000 a year, and had been paying around $600 a month to rent a room in East Flatbush, Brooklyn.

Child care blew up her budget. To move to a two-bedroom apartment, she would have had to pay around $2,500 a month in Brooklyn. The lowest quote she received for day care was $2,700 a month. After being turned down for a below-market-rate apartment in the Bronx, she had a breakdown.

“I cried the whole way home on the 2 train,” she recalled. “I said, ‘That’s it, I give up.’”

Now she rents a three-bedroom apartment with her husband, Ifeanyi Njoku, a group-home caregiver, and their two children in East Orange, N.J., for $2,800 a month, although she still works in New York.

The couple now has a combined annual income of $130,000, but it’s still not enough to comfortably afford rising rent and child care costs, including medical expenses for their older son, who has special needs.

“I call us the ‘make too much, but not enough’ demographic,” she said. “You either have to be all the way on the top, or you have to be way on the bottom.”

Raising taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers could help fund public services like free prekindergarten and housing subsidies that could help reduce those burdens — with little impact on the city’s millionaires, Mr. Gusdorf said.

The group found that there was no meaningful increase in the number of millionaires who left the state after tax increases on the richest New Yorkers in 2017 and 2021.

A spokesman for the governor referred to a recent statement in which Ms. Hochul said she would not raise taxes this year. “Taxes are high enough in the state of New York and we have to live within our means,” she said.

The mayor’s office said that amid fiscal challenges, “New Yorkers cannot be asked to shoulder the burden” for the failings of the state and federal governments.

Wealthy New Yorkers are crucial to the city and state’s economy, and any discussion of raising their taxes becomes delicate. Millionaires who pay taxes contributed 45 percent of New York State’s total income tax revenue in 2021, the highest share since 2015, according to an analysis of state data by the Fiscal Policy Institute.

E.J. McMahon, the founding senior fellow at the Empire Center for Public Policy, a fiscally conservative research group, said New York City should “absolutely not” raise taxes on the rich, because it already has the highest combined personal-income-tax rate in the country.

For many ***working-class*** New Yorkers who have left, it’s getting harder to justify returning.

Risalat Zakaria, 37, a film and television editor, was living in a 950-square-foot co-op in the South Bronx with his wife and son when they decided in 2021 to move to St. Louis to be closer to his wife’s law school.

The couple makes around $110,000 a year — less than they did in New York — but their new cost of living is significantly lower. For full-day child care during the workweek, they pay $900 a month, a third of what they might pay for similar care in New York, Mr. Zakaria said.

For all the changes, Mr. Zakaria, who grew up in Corona, Queens, isn’t feeling homesick. He has been back to the city just a handful of times, he said.

“Each time is more miserable than the last,” he said.

Audio produced by Sarah Diamond.

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PHOTOS: Danna Dennis moved to New Jersey after housing and child care costs in Brooklyn became untenable. At left, Risalat Zakaria moved to St. Louis from the Bronx with his son, Ilias, 4, and his wife, Amearah Elsamadicy. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; WHITNEY CURTIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2024

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[***How JD Vance Found His Way to the Catholic Church***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CTB-RRJ1-JBG3-600P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 25, 2024 Sunday 13:01 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 2191 words

**Byline:** Elizabeth Dias Elizabeth Dias is The Times&amp;#8217;s national religion correspondent, covering faith, politics and values.

**Highlight:** In his 30s, the Republican vice-presidential nominee read works on theology, mysticism, and political and moral philosophy. And he discovered his faith.

**Body**

In his 30s, the Republican vice-presidential nominee read works on theology, mysticism, and political and moral philosophy. And he discovered his faith.

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It was a fitting place for the millennial aspiring politician, who was drawn to the Roman Catholic Church’s ancient ways. For years he had flirted with joining the church. Now he wanted to explore the desire in earnest.

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Designed by an architect in the 1960s determined to counter the “God is dead” philosophy of his time, St. Gertrude was built to show that the church could be both modern and deeply rooted in the past. On summer evenings, friars hosted “Drinking With Dominicans” at a local bar to explore the thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas. It advertised retreats for husbands and fathers on how to become “a courageous leader for your family and in your workplace.”

And like Mr. Vance, it is deeply opposed to abortion. Parishioners bring their own hammers to pound thousands of small white “crosses of the innocents” into the lawn to commemorate children not born.

Adults who convert to Catholicism tend to be known for their zealous commitment to their new worldviews. They are rare, just 2 percent of the adult population, according to the [*Pew Research Center*](https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance). And for every one new convert, six Catholic adults have left the church.

Mr. Vance worried about joining a church mired in yet another [*sexual abuse crisis*](https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance), and that his conversion might be “unfair” to his wife, who had not married a Catholic, he [*wrote*](https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance). She was supportive, he often pointed out, and saw it made him a better father and husband, more forgiving and patient.

And, as with many conversions, there is often an element of mystery that can be hard for those on the outside to understand.

On that 2021 [*podcast*](https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance), he described his pull toward the church. Riding a train to Washington, missing his wife and young son, he listened to a beloved recording of a priest chanting an old psalm in Aramaic during Pope Francis’ visit to Georgia in 2016. He went to the Dominican House to meet a priest for midday prayers — and heard the same psalm.

“‘The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good,’” the psalm reads, according to a translation from Mr. Dreher. It felt, he [*wrote*](https://thelampmagazine.com/blog/how-i-joined-the-resistance), like a “touch from God.”

After his conversion, he had planned to write a second book to be called “A Relevant Faith: Searching for a Meaningful American Christianity.” But after he won his Senate primary, his publisher announced that the deal would not proceed.

Instead, he is raising his three children in the Roman Catholic Church, and bringing his views directly to the American political stage.

PHOTOS: JD VANCE, after his conversion to Catholicism in 2019. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN MATUREN/GETTY IMAGES); St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church in Madeira, Ohio. In a Catholic literary journal, Senator JD Vance described converting to the faith as joining “the resistance.”; St. Gertrude Roman Catholic Church in Madeira, Ohio. In a Catholic literary journal, Senator JD Vance described converting to the faith as joining “the resistance.”; After he moved to his home in Cincinnati, Mr. Vance came to meet with a priest to explore his interest in becoming Catholic. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADELEINE HORDINSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); The Dominican House of Studies in Washington has attracted a stream of conservative intellectuals and potential converts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2024

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[***Dagwood Takes a Back Seat as Blondie Hires a Pastry Chef***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVP-R141-DXY4-X35N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 22, 2024 Monday 23:11 EST

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**Section:** ARTS

**Length:** 609 words

**Byline:** George Gene Gustines George Gene Gustines has been writing about comic books for The Times for more than two decades.

**Highlight:** Creators will spotlight Blondie in the comic strip, as she brings someone on board for her catering business.

**Body**

Creators will spotlight Blondie in the comic strip, as she brings someone on board for her catering business.

The 93-year-old newspaper comic strip Blondie could have been called Dagwood, given how often its gags revolve around Dagwood Bumstead’s insatiable appetite, chronic lateness and his love of napping.

Beginning Tuesday, however, Dagwood will be ceding panels to his wife, Blondie, as she begins a search for a new employee for her catering company. And Alexander and Cookie, their children, will get some new friends in coming weeks. It is all part of an effort by the strip’s creators to keep things fresh.

“We’re adding a pastry chef to Blondie’s catering kitchen,” said Dean Young, the Blondie writer who inherited the strip in 1973 upon the death of his father, [*Chic Young,*](https://www.nytimes.com/1973/03/16/archives/chic-young-creator-of-blondie-dead-appeared-in-60-countries.html) the cartoonist who created Blondie in 1930. Young said that his father centered the strip on eating, sleeping, raising children and making money. “But the most important thing was to be funny,” he said in a recent Zoom interview; his two daughters who are part of the Blondie enterprise were also on the call.

The introduction of the pastry chef includes fan engagement: Readers will be able to vote for one of five names for the character selected by Young.

Fans want to see more Blondie, said Dana Coston, one of Young’s daughters who works on the strip with him. “We want to show her in a real situation, not always in the kitchen cooking,” she said. “Most moms are out there working and raising a family. Let’s show her doing it and doing it well.”

Alexander and Cookie will also be the focus of more installments: They will take over the family’s basement to hang out with friends. “We’re going to see some fresh faces, some younger teens in there,” Coston said.

Coston is the lead writer on the daily strips and her father takes charge of Sundays. He and Coston review, edit and tease each other about their efforts — something of a family tradition.

“I trained her the same way my father trained me,” Young said, recalling, with a laugh, that his father said his first strip was pretty good, asked him to try another and crumpled up the first. Coston said she was more successful with a recent Sunday strip. “He didn’t throw it in the trash,” she said.

“She’s starting to get lucky,” he retorted.

Blondie, which is in 883 publications worldwide, according to King Features Syndicate, which distributes the strip, has come a long way. In its beginnings, Blondie Boopadoop was a ***working-class*** party girl and Dagwood was a rich playboy. Dagwood was briefly written out by Chic Young, but readers wanted him back. Dagwood returned and married Blondie in 1933, but his parents did not approve of his bride and disinherited him, which paved the way for the more modest life the Bumsteads live.

The strip has been drawn since 2005 by John Marshall, one of several artists who have worked on Blondie. Young’s other daughter involved in Blondie is Dianne Erwin, the head of social media and marketing.

The story line that kicks off on Tuesday will see the debut of a more vibrant color palette, she said. The search for a new employee will also provide fodder for humor as Blondie interviews applicants. The new pastry chef, a young woman, will also open up story possibilities. “She’s able to bring some spontaneity to the catering company,” Erwin said. “She’s able to understand social media that can help Blondie’s business grow.”

Coston said the character is of Indian descent, and it’s “a nice nod to our faithful fans,” in India.

But the key to success is that she must be funny. “If she can’t be, she’ll probably get the boot,” Young said.

This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** April 23, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘A Fierce Capacity to Go Right After Trump’: Three Writers on Kamala Harris and the 2024 Shakeup; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJJ-1461-DXY4-X053-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 24, 2024 Wednesday 10:47 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2942 words

**Byline:** Frank Bruni, Mallory McMorrow and Simon Rosenberg Frank Bruni is a professor of journalism and public policy at Duke University, the author of the book &amp;#8220;The Age of Grievance&amp;#8221; and a contributing Opinion writer. He writes a weekly email newsletter. Instagram Threads

**Highlight:** Coconut trees and Republican missteps.

**Body**

Frank Bruni, a contributing Opinion writer, hosted a written online conversation on Tuesday with Mallory McMorrow, a Democratic state senator in Michigan, and Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist and author of the newsletter “Hopium Chronicles,” to review the extraordinary events of the past week in American politics and discuss the upended presidential race.

Frank Bruni: Thank you for joining me on what will, no exaggeration, go down as one of the most fascinating, disorienting, consequential months in American political history. I’m still waiting to wake up and realize that it was all a dream: the debate, the attempted assassination, President Biden’s [*Rehoboth reckoning*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni), the quicksilver ascent of Vice President Kamala Harris. I feel at least slightly more hopeful than a week ago that Donald Trump may be stopped on Nov. 5, but dear God, am I nervous. Briefly summarize for me the magnitude of — and reasons for — your optimism or, conversely, your panic.

Mallory McMorrow: The last few days have felt like nothing I’ve ever experienced. I have teachers texting and calling me from out of state who have never donated to a political candidate asking how to do it the right way to ensure it gets to the Harris campaign. Thousands of new volunteers have signed up. A staggering amount of content has been produced, all organically. The memes! It feels very “hopey changey.” I tuned in (along with hundreds of thousands of others) to watch Harris speak to the staff at campaign headquarters and walked away inspired. We’re going to win.

Simon Rosenberg: I am very excited about what is happening in our party. The transition from Biden to Harris has been remarkably seamless and successful. Her initial remarks on Monday were strong, powerful and clearly her own words, not things cribbed from the previous campaign. All of us are now very optimistic about going out and winning this election.

Bruni: I, too, am very, very impressed with how fast, organized and poised Harris came out of the gate. Talk about execution. But I’m mindful that she has had persistently low approval ratings, her campaign in 2020 didn’t even last to the Iowa caucuses and Democratic voters haven’t really gotten a say in her emergence now as the presumptive — or is it de facto? — nominee.

Does she substantially improve Democrats’ prospects with particular groups of voters and in particular places — or is that just willed Democratic cheer? Mallory, you’re in Michigan, where polls suggested that Biden was really struggling. How might Harris, who’s from California, versus “Scranton Joe,” who’s from Pennsylvania, play there? Or, for that matter, in Pennsylvania itself and in Wisconsin?

McMorrow: So, 2024 is no 2020. I attended the Democratic presidential primary debates when they were in Detroit in 2019 — two nights, too many candidates. Then, Harris had a hard time finding a lane. But now, with three years on the job as vice president, she is polished, prepared and ready. And there is no better lane right now than a prosecutor against the first felon ex-president. I can tell you from where I sit in Michigan that Harris is exactly who we need to fire up voters from Detroit to the suburbs.

Rosenberg: Harris has been vice president for years now, and is a far more experienced and capable politician. The election is close and competitive, and that was the case even before a series of very positive events for us — Biden’s courageous and selfless act, this rallying around Harris, her eventual V.P. pick and the Democratic convention.

Bruni: Mallory, I want to play devil’s advocate and return to the geography and sensibility of the Rust Belt. Do you see Harris doing well with voters without college degrees? With white ***working-class*** men? Let’s have some brutal realism — because I believe brutal realism, and then the strategic adjustments to it, are how we avoid the, er, brutality of a second Trump administration.

McMorrow: That brutal sensibility is the right approach. But we have the perfect foil in JD Vance, who has staked his identity on his time in Appalachia but comes across as who he is as an adult — an Ivy-educated tech bro with billionaire donors. Authenticity matters. If Harris can lean into her prosecutor credibility, she can pull in some non-college-educated white voters looking for someone who’s tough who would otherwise not give her a chance.

Bruni: Simon, I concur heartily with your point about how the example of Biden’s exit is positive for Democrats; it allows them to emphasize their existence in reality versus Republicans’ existence in fiction. I explored that a bit in the [*essay*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) I wrote about Biden’s ending of his candidacy. But, again, in the interests of brutal realism, what are Harris’s greatest vulnerabilities — and how should she address them?

Rosenberg: Those of us in politics and campaigns don’t start with the vulnerabilities. We start first with the assets, try to understand the contrast with our opponent and work to limit the vulnerabilities. Right now the Democratic Party is more fired up and unified beyond Harris than we’ve been for any candidate in a long time, perhaps since Barack Obama’s first election. We need to give the vice president some time to develop her argument and narrative. What I saw yesterday was a very good start — a fierce capacity to go right after Trump in a way Biden has not been able to.

Bruni: Let me mention something that I worry is a vulnerability — and everything I say is in the context of believing that defeating Trump is everything: for America, for morality, for, well, fill in the blank. I’m not 100 percent sure who Harris is. Her pre-Senate path was a law-and-order one, and she cut a somewhat moderate figure before 2020. But in her bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, she tacked left, and the Trump campaign and its allies are having no trouble rummaging selectively through her statements and record to portray her as, in their slur du jour, “radical.”

How important is it that she stake out ground that repels that label? And how naturally would such a pivot come to her? Who is she and who, to win in November, does she need to be?

McMorrow: I’d push back on that a little bit because the same argument was made about Biden: Who was he and where did he stand on issues? In a way, he succeeded in 2020 because of that flexibility. People weren’t looking for a purist or someone cemented in his ideology — they were looking for a leader who responds with the times. Harris is, in many ways, cut from the same cloth. But she’s tough where it matters: on reproductive rights, women’s rights, voting rights. If she can present herself as a fighter on values — for freedom, equality and opportunity for everyone — she can bring back together a fractured Democratic coalition.

Rosenberg: We cannot be spooked by the attacks from Republicans that are going to come. She will make Trump’s historic liabilities far more apparent. She will have to be aggressive about defining herself, telling her story before the Republicans get to it. That’s why she is already on the campaign trail, and she is more in command of this moment than people understand.

Bruni: How important is her choice of a running mate? What do you think are the crucial considerations in selecting someone and, given those considerations, who’s the best pick? You have the chance to advise her here and now. Seize the day! Also, who will be the pick, if you had to guess?

McMorrow: I’m a huge supporter of “normie” Dems. It has to be a Democrat who has proved he or she can win in a battleground or red-leaning state (especially to balance Harris’s California roots). If I had to put my money on it, my guesses are Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania or Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan. Pete Buttigieg, secretary of transportation, is also a great choice — hands down, nobody in the party is a better communicator. But I think Harris goes outside of Washington on this one.

Bruni: Regarding Buttigieg, we must shout out his recent [*Bill Maher appearance*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni). It illustrated your point perfectly. His comments on Silicon Valley and on Vance were everything, and all in about one succinct minute.

Rosenberg: She has only good picks ahead of her. Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona — Navy fighter pilot, astronaut, husband to Gabby Giffords — is getting a lot of buzz. I also really like Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina and Governor Shapiro. Whatever happens, the Dems will be making a clear generational handoff, and creating a much clearer contrast with the man who will be the oldest presidential nominee in American history.

Bruni: I get the sense that many Democrats, some with the vice president’s ear, are attracted to Governor Cooper or Senator Kelly, both in swing states, both white men who have a nonelite, non-Acela-corridor, moderate vibe with appeal to so-called ***working-class*** voters.

But neither is a dynamite communicator. Neither really radiates charisma. And neither accentuates the youthfulness of the Democratic ticket. I like the idea of Shapiro, 51, who’s so good on his feet, and has been so impressive since his election in 2022, and if you’re going to look to your running mate to deliver a swing state, why not go with the one with the most Electoral College votes?

And, Mallory, while I’m also a huge fan of Governor Whitmer, mightn’t an all-woman ticket — which I love in theory, and think would be terrific in practice when it comes to governing — be a real roll of the dice? Too much so?

McMorrow: I know. I would love to live in a country where a two-woman ticket can succeed, but I’m not sure we’re there yet. (One day!) That said, Harris has said of her becoming vice president, “While I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last.” There may be something to just going for it in this moment. Women’s sports are having a moment and defying all the odds and bringing in more wins, eyeballs and money than men’s are. But I’d be surprised if a two-woman ticket happens.

Rosenberg: Whatever happens, I think Governor Whitmer is one of the most impressive political leaders I’ve seen since I entered politics.

Bruni: We’ve touched, briefly, on abortion, and less briefly on women in politics. In many Democrat-Republican matchups, we tend to see a gender gap. If Harris is the nominee, are we looking at an upsized version of that — at a gender canyon? Or is that too reductive?

McMorrow: Elections are frequently decided by one group: white women. And unfortunately (I say as a white woman myself), white women put Trump in the White House. I do think we’ll see a gender gap, but it may surprise us. Here in Michigan, I heard from a lot of women in 2016 that they just couldn’t get themselves to vote for Hillary Clinton, not because she was a woman, but because she was a Clinton. There was this elitist-institutional persona she couldn’t shake. Harris doesn’t have that.

Rosenberg: The picking of Vance — given his abortion extremism and long history of public statements, many on video — and our new nominee has made the discussions of these rights and freedoms a central issue in the campaign.

Bruni: Abortion will very much be center stage, and that’s very good for Harris, who seems surer and is more eloquent on that issue than on some others. But there’s another interesting dimension to her matchup against Trump: We’ve all observed the particular savagery with which he attacks opponents who are women and/or people of color, and my colleagues Maggie Haberman and Jonathan Swan just wrote a very, very [*smart story*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) about how a Harris candidacy could bring out the ugliest in Trump and his allies. In what ways and how much could that redound to Democrats’ advantage?

McMorrow: This is such an interesting moment because I don’t think Trump and his team are prepared for [*“brat” summer*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) and the savagery of Gen Z. Over the past few days, every attack I’ve seen them make has been such an unforced error.

The entire meme of the coconut tree — now flooding social media feeds in emojis in screen names and Charli XCX remixes and fancam TikToks — exists because the R.N.C. Research account found a clip of Harris recalling a story about her mother. Harris’s mother used to give her a hard time, saying, “I don’t know what’s wrong with you young people. You think you just fell out of a coconut tree?’” Her grandmother answered her own question with the line “You exist in the context of all in which you live and what came before you.” It was meant as a knock on her by Republicans, but the internet has turned it into a social media phenomenon.

Rosenberg: The contrast between us and them has become clearer. The noise around Biden’s frailty obscured the ugliness of Trump and now Vance. They are far more exposed, and vulnerable. Remember the critical issue that has been driving our politics for years now has been the fear and opposition to MAGA. It helped us win in 2018 and 2022, and outperform expectations in elections of all kinds since Dobbs. Look at what we’ve seen in France and Britain. Voters in the West just are not letting the extremists come to power.

Bruni: Let’s move to and end with a lightning round of sorts. My first question reflects the fondness you demonstrated earlier for the person at its center. Please suggest a title for JD Vance’s sequel to “Hillbilly Elegy.”

McMorrow: “[*Dew*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) or Dew Not. There Is No Diet.”

Rosenberg: “Careful What You Wish For.”

Bruni: I’m going with “The Sycophant” or “My MAGA Metamorphosis (With Apologies to Kafka).”

Next question: If Harris, as an aisle-crossing gesture, suggested a Republican (Never Trumpers included) she’d want in her cabinet, who should that be?

McMorrow: Nikki Haley. There was a not-insignificant Haley vote in the G.O.P. primary in Michigan.

Rosenberg: If Liz Cheney goes out and works it on the trail as she did in 2022, she would be my pick.

Bruni: How about Mitt Romney? He’s getting on in years, yes, but he seems to be in great shape and has, over recent years, established himself as quintessentially sensible and a real patriot.

Moving on: From best to “meh” to “heaven help us,” please rank, in order, these one-term presidents, with a phrase for each explaining why you’re placing him where you are. Biden, Trump, George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter?

McMorrow: In order: Biden will go down as one of the best presidents in history. Carter: an eternally good-hearted man, perhaps to the detriment of his political instinct but surely to the benefit of humanity. George H.W. Bush: By today’s standards, I believe he would be a conservative Democrat, one of the last before the obstructionist era of the G.O.P. Trump: a many times over failed businessman-turned-reality-TV-star who took our country to the brink of collapse and diminished America’s standing in the world.

Rosenberg: I was very young in Carter’s term, so I will leave him out: Biden: great. He will be seen as a transformational leader, particularly on climate. Bush: important president. He helped to end the Cold War and transition the world to something better, more free. He struggled at home but his foreign policy achievements were significant and lasting. Trump: worst president in American history, single most dangerous politician America has ever produced.

Bruni: Agree or disagree: Justice Sonia Sotomayor should [*retire*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni) quickly from the Supreme Court so that Democrats are assured of choosing her replacement.

McMorrow: I say this as someone who idolized and looked up to Ruth Bader Ginsburg and feel a personal sense of guilt that we (myself included) put her up on such a platform to paint her as a hero instead of a fallible human being that she felt she couldn’t step down: Sotomayor may want to follow in the president’s footsteps and put the country first.

Rosenberg: I don’t think that we can count on Senators Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema to play ball. The corruption of the Supreme Court and its illiberal direction is a central reason we need to go win this thing.

Bruni: Great point, Simon. OK, finally, the maelstrom of political news has crowded out the arrival of … the Olympics! In their honor, what Summer Olympics sport would Kamala Harris be best at and which would most suit Donald Trump?

McMorrow: I could see Harris as an incredible goalie for the U.S. women’s soccer team (and do it with a smile). Is cornhole in the Olympics yet? Maybe that for Trump?

Rosenberg: For Harris, the 100-meter dash. Similar to what she has to do now in the presidential election. For Trump, I am sure there is a donor box he can sit in, eat his hamburgers and madtruth all day.

Bruni: How about the hurdles for Harris: Every presidential candidate has to jump over a bunch of them. I think of Trump and I think of the shot put. Standing still, spinning in circles: That’s about his athletic and moral speed. Though I’m sure he believes he’d win the golf tournament. Actually, at his rate of confabulation and deterioration, he’ll probably claim in a stump speech sometime soon that he has an Olympic gold for golf. Meantime, you two get the Olympic gold for game and nimble commentary. Thank you enormously.

Source photo by Samuel Corum, via Getty Images.

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Mallory McMorrow ([*@MalloryMcMorrow*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni)) is a Democratic state senator from Michigan.

Simon Rosenberg is a Democratic strategist and the author of the newsletter [*Hopium Chronicles*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/frank-bruni).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Photo illustration by The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2024

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[***What Trump Looks Like to Historians; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C33-VKM1-JBG3-6470-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 12:42 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3091 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:** Trump has changed everything and nothing.

**Body**

When historians and political scientists rank presidents from best to worst, Donald Trump invariably comes out at the bottom.

This year, to give one example, the 2024 Presidential Greatness Project [*released the results*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) of a survey of 154 current and former members of the presidents and executive politics section of the American Political Science Association.

The highest ranked included no surprises: on a scale of 0 to 100, Abraham Lincoln (95.03), Franklin Roosevelt (90.83), George Washington (90.32), Teddy Roosevelt (78.58) and Thomas Jefferson (77.53).

Dead last: Donald Trump (10.92), substantially below James Buchanan (16.71), Andrew Johnson (21.56), Franklin Pierce (24.6) and William Henry Harrison (26.01).

There are other ways to rank American presidents, however: How consequential were they?

By these standards, Trump no longer falls at the bottom of the pack. That’s not necessarily a good thing. My view is that Trump is a consequential president for all the wrong reasons.

After the nation rejected the presidential bids of George Wallace, Pat Buchanan and David Duke, Trump demonstrated that the contemporary American electorate would put a candidate who appeals to voters’ worst instincts in the White House.

Trump has capitalized on the anger, fears and resentments of a besieged but fundamentally decent ***working class*** to exacerbate ethnonationalist hostility to immigrants and minorities, creating a right-wing populist antidemocratic movement.

In the process of building this MAGA coalition, Trump has made explicit the racist, anti-immigrant themes that have underpinned the Republican Party for the past half-century.

Persistently, insistently [*repeating election lies*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), [*subverting election norms*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), raising doubts about [*election integrity*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) and [*refusing to commit*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) to accepting the 2020 — or 2024 — vote count, Trump is focused on transforming the Republican Party into a cult with adherents willing to support a nominee who openly plans to undermine — indeed ravage — American democracy.

In that sense, Trump ranks high as a transformative president.

A 2022 paper, “[*Donald Trump and the Lie*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/),” by [*Kevin Arceneaux*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) and [*Rory Truex*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), political scientists at Sciences Po Paris and Princeton, provides a case study of Trump’s impact on American politics. The authors studied “the evolution of public opinion about Donald Trump’s ‘big lie’ using a rolling cross-sectional daily tracking survey” from Oct. 27, 2020, through Jan. 29, 2021. They found:

The number of Republicans and independents saying that they believe the 2020 election was fraudulent is substantial, and this proportion did not change appreciably over time or shift after important political developments. Belief in the lie may have buoyed some of Trump supporters’ self-esteem.

“Republican voters reward politicians who perpetuate the lie,” Arceneaux and Truex concluded, “giving Republican candidates an incentive to continue to do so in the next electoral cycle.”

I asked a range of experts on the American presidency to evaluate Trump in terms of impact. Their answers varied in terms of substance, tone and the level of harshness of their assessment of Trump’s policies, rhetoric and initiatives.

For a number of presidential scholars, Trump represents not an innovative force but rather a revival of — and capitalization on — the [*darker strains*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) in this country’s history.

[*Marjorie R. Hershey*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Indiana University, Bloomington, wrote in an email:

I’d rate Trump as a significant president. Not a great president or even a good one, but significant in that he has pushed a movement to reverse many of the gains in acceptance of diversity that have been so hard-fought in recent decades.

“That’s not new,” Hershey declared, adding:

In some ways, Trump is a modern-day version of the grisly race baiters of the Old South in that he’s understood that whipping up fears and hatred and stimulating chaos allows those with real power to accumulate more profits while the rest of the public is busy hating and fearing one another.

Nor, Hershey contended, is Trump a political genius:

It’s not that Trump is a brilliant politician. He’s just met his time. So many people’s anxiety level has been increased by 9/11 and other terrorism and Covid and, especially, rapid sociodemographic change. Nativism has long shadowed U.S. politics, but the speed of this particular change, in which the population has dropped from about 85 percent non-Hispanic white to less than 70 percent in just a few decades, has raised some pretty base fears.

Along similar but not parallel lines, Lori Cox Han, a political scientist at Chapman University, wrote to say that “Trump could definitely be called transformational, but in a negative way.”

The nation, she added, has

never experienced a president (or ex-president) who has been this disrespectful of the Constitution, the rule of law, the norms of the office or just basic decency. So yes, I would say that he has shifted the common understanding of what is good and sensible and that he has gravely damaged principles and values within the Republican Party on issues such as foreign policy and immigration, transforming it into something unrecognizable to where the party stood during the Reagan years.

Clearly, Han concluded, “Trump is still a significant presence in American politics, but he has turned much of the traditional discussion about presidential leadership on its head.”

[*Nicole Hemmer*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a historian at Vanderbilt and the director of the Center for the American Presidency, argued in an email, “I consider Trump a transformative, or at least pivotal, president for his impact on the policy preferences of Republican voters, his role in supercharging polarization and his part in the Jan. 6 insurrection.”

Hemmer continued:

He did not innovate on the policy front: Many of his policy preferences were either longstanding Republican preferences, like budget-busting tax cuts and appointing judges to overturn Roe v. Wade, or had been prefigured by politicians like Pat Buchanan a generation earlier.

Nor would I consider his presidency world-historical in any real sense. He may have foregrounded different issues in the debate over foreign policy, breaking through bipartisan consensus, but he did not remake the role of the U.S. in the world in any meaningful or lasting way. He certainly elevated harsh rhetoric on immigration and attempted to institute restrictionist and nativist policies, but nothing he did restructured the immigration system like the 1921 and 1924 quota systems or the 1965 Immigration Act.

The most consequential act of Trump’s presidency, according to Hemmer,

was his rejection of the peaceful transfer of power. While I’m not sure that is a world-historical event — not enough time has passed to fully evaluate the long tail of Jan. 6 — it marks a pivotal moment in the history of the United States, and it is enough to single him out in the history books. How transformative the insurrection, and thus his presidency, was will depend on how well U.S. democratic systems survive the next few decades.

Elaborating on this point, [*Corey Brettschneider*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Brown University, argued in an email that other presidents, including John Adams and Richard Nixon, have challenged democratic principles only to see their successors restore these traditions. Trump, in contrast, poses a more serious challenge:

What makes Trump’s threat different from previous ones is that in the past the nation recovered. Future presidents followed those who threatened democracy and, at the behest of citizens, sought to bolster the institutions and norms that had been trampled on. Also, none of those previous presidents who threatened democracy recaptured office.

This moment is different. Despite various attempts at legal accountability and to challenge him politically, the fact is Trump will be the nominee of one of the two major parties for office, and he is in a dead heat with the incumbent in the polls.

If he wins, unlike even the most dangerous of our former presidents, Trump is explicit in his desire for dictatorship and the destruction of current checks on presidential power. Trump has learned from his previous term where choke points of American democracy lie. He knows, for instance, that by installing a loyalist attorney general, he can avoid even the limited accountability he faced in his previous term. And like Adams, he promises to prosecute political opponents. Past presidents have threatened democracy. But Trump might succeed where they failed.

If so, could he conceivably qualify as a world historical figure?

[*Jeffrey Engel*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), the founding director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University, replied by email to my inquiry, concentrating his attention on the fact that if Trump wins again in November, he would be serving his second term. Such a second Trump term, Engel argued,

would indeed prove structural and foundational, affecting our diplomacy, our sense of the rule of law and frankly our faith in elections and the democratic process writ large. I used to think such a sentence impossible, unreasonable or at least the product of over-agitation. Now I think it may be understating the case.

[*Alan Taylor*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a professor of history at the University of Virginia, argued in an email that Trump has already had a significant impact on American politics:

He certainly has transformed the Republican Party and eliminated almost all previous norms of civility and bipartisanship in foreign policy.

Trump has tapped into and mobilized a vast following of discontented people — so the transformation is at least as much about them rather than his leadership (which is chaotic and has accomplished little save for the big thing of mobilizing and inflaming discontent).

Taylor noted that the evaluation of Trump crucially depends on your vantage point:

If I am ranking in terms of transforming a major party and roiling our public discourse, then I can’t think of anyone more transformative, with the possible exception of F.D.R. If ranking the ability to accomplish things legislatively and diplomatically, then Trump is one of the least effective presidents, down there with James Buchanan.

Of those I contacted, [*Bruce Cain*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Stanford, was the most skeptical of the significance and consequence of Trump’s presidency. In Cain’s view, the problem with describing Trump as politically transformative is the fact that Trump has already so scrambled the allegiance, the sense of purpose and the respect for history that once characterized the Republican Party that it is now completely adrift.

Cain made the point that “it is questionable whether Trump’s charismatic hold on MAGA will have staying power without him, especially since it has not translated into significant legislative achievements other than usual Republican stuff of tax cuts and regulatory relief.”

Importantly, in terms of the longevity of Trump’s impact, Cain argued that “the congressional party is currently in complete disarray, the party seems to be unwilling to offer a party platform and could not revise health policy even when it had trifecta control.”

Similarly skeptical — but for very different reasons — [*Marc Landy*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Boston College, wrote by email:

A political transformation is indeed taking place in the United States, Western and Eastern Europe, but I resist giving Trump too much credit. What we used to think of as “conservatism” has changed its spots, but this is due as much to a new version of liberalism that is unable to control immigration, that lionizes “victims,” belittles religion and patriotism, as it is to Trump or any other individual.

Trump, Landy added, “is far from world historical, a term that should be reserved for the most important founders — Washington, Napoleon, Lenin and Mao.”

Trump’s “great sin,” Landy wrote,

is his disregard for the Constitution and the great republican norms and procedures it puts in place. Jan. 6 is a day that will live in infamy. His efforts to undermine the electoral process were reprehensible. His retention of sensitive documents and his leaking them to others verges on treason.

Despite these caveats, Landy acknowledged:

Trump was an influential president. Biden has followed his lead in turning away from free trade, instead using tariffs as a means to resuscitate American manufacturing and protecting national security and in taking China seriously as a threat.

[*John Judis*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), who wrote “[*Where Have All the Democrats Gone?*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) The Soul of the Party in the Age of Extremes” with [*Ruy Teixeira*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), argued that Trump’s reversal of the Washington consensus in favor of free trade makes him a transformative president. In an email, Judis wrote:

His election in 2016 and his presidency transformed American politics. He repudiated a consensus on free trade, free markets and footloose corporations, immigration, military adventures abroad and the need to reduce deficits by cutting “entitlements.” Republicans had enthusiastically endorsed this consensus since Ronald Reagan’s presidency and Democratic administrations had either accepted it or were coerced into doing so by Republican Congresses.

Biden has followed Trump’s lead on trade, and China and is being forced by Republicans and public opinion to do so on immigration.

In contrast to Cain and Landy, [*Francis Fukuyama*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Stanford, contended that Trump has permanently changed the direction of American politics: “Given the completeness with which the Republican Party has been transformed and how that transformation is likely to outlast Trump, the answer to your question is definitely yes, he has transformed the U.S. political system and perhaps politics outside the U.S.”

In Fukuyama’s view, there is one key element lacking in Trump’s imprint: “an intellectual framework to situate his transformation; some are trying, but I don’t see a coherent ideology that would define the change he’s wrought.”

Of all those I contacted, only [*Matthew Dickinson*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a political scientist at Middlebury College, stressed what I consider to be a crucial factor in the evaluation of the former president: “Trump’s historical significance is mostly due to his ability to give voice to the growing number of Americans who feel unrepresented by the political class — Republican and Democrat — that exercises predominant power today.”

A part of Trump’s appeal, Dickinson wrote by email,

is likely rooted in ethnonationalism among whites who worry that they are losing status in an increasingly racially diverse society. But attributing Trump’s popularity solely to “racial resentment" misses an important source of his support: the belief among mostly ***working-class*** Americans that the economic and political playing field, as constructed by political elites in both parties, is tilted against them.

This perspective, Dickinson added, “extends to ***working-class*** voters of color; recent voting patterns suggest that some Latino and, to a lesser extent, Black voters are shifting allegiances away from the Democratic Party — to be sure, how large and durable a shift is not yet clear.”

On the last full day of the Trump presidency, Jan. 19, 2021, the BBC published “[*U.S. Historians on What Donald Trump’s Legacy Will Be*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/),” a series of illuminating interviews. [*Laura Belmonte*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a history professor and the dean of the Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, told the BBC:

The moment I found jaw-dropping was the press conference Trump had with Vladimir Putin in 2018 in Helsinki, where he took Putin’s side over U.S. intelligence in regard to Russian interference in the election. I can’t think of another episode of a president siding full force with a nondemocratic society adversary.

She described the incident as “very emblematic of a larger assault on any number of multilateral institutions and treaties and frameworks that Trump has unleashed, like the withdrawal from the Paris climate accord, the withdrawal of the Iranian nuclear framework.”

In addition, Belmonte said she was struck by “Trump’s applauding Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro and meeting with North Korea’s Kim Jong-un, really turning himself inside out to align the U.S. with regimes that are the antithesis of values that the U.S. says it wants to promote.”

The BBC asked [*Kathryn Brownell*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a professor of history at Purdue University, “What’s Trump’s key legacy?” Her answer:

Broadly speaking: Donald Trump and his enablers in the Republican Party and conservative media have put American democracy to the test in an unprecedented way. It is truly striking the ways in which he has convinced millions of people that his fabricated version of events is true.

Just as the Watergate impeachment inquiry “dominated historical interpretations of Richard Nixon’s legacy for decades,” Brownell maintained, “this particular postelection moment will be at the forefront of historical assessments of his presidency.”

What else stands out?

Kellyanne Conway’s first introduction of the notion of “alternative facts” just days into the Trump administration when disputing the size of the inaugural crowds between Trump and Barack Obama.

Presidents across the 20th century have increasingly used sophisticated measures to spin interpretation of policies and events in favorable ways and to control the media narrative of their administrations. But the assertion that the administration had a right to its own alternative facts went far beyond spin, ultimately foreshadowing the ways in which the Trump administration would govern by misinformation.

What do we make of all this?

On Monday, [*Andrew Prokop*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/), a senior political correspondent at Vox, wrote that during Trump’s four years in the White House, “the guardrails held.” The courts, Congress, public opinion, senior aides, top officials and Trump’s own mismanagement held him in check, preventing the adoption of some of his more outrageous proposals.

This time around, Trump would have a sympathetic Supreme Court majority, compliant Republicans in the House and Senate and a staff that wouldn’t block his most aberrant and outrageous ideas — and would even contribute their own.

What could go wrong?

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://presidentialgreatnessproject.com/).

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

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[***At The Ballet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5G-2571-JBG3-605D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Danyel Smith

**Body**

THE SWANS OF HARLEM: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History, by Karen Valby

The sense of loss in ''The Swans of Harlem: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History'' is strong. No matter how painstaking the detail or how sparkly its jubilee energy, these women -- Lydia Abarca, Gayle McKinney-Griffith, Sheila Rohan, Marcia Sells and Karlya Shelton -- were robbed of laurels upon which they might now be resting. Abarca's family was so concerned by her erasure from dance history (and her apparent attendant depression) that they instigated the telling of this story. If it were just a quest for cultural redress, the result might have been a dusty scroll of the Swans' ballet bona fides. It's by getting personal that it leaps high.

This is not to say that the book, which dances between narrative storytelling and as-told-tos, doesn't give ballet's broad strokes. The author, Karen Valby, skillfully maps the ugliness of a segregated art form in which too recently, blackface was still defended. And there are long looks at the idiosyncrasies of Dance Theater of Harlem's co-founders, the charismatic ballet legends Karel Shook and Arthur Mitchell. The company was so influential that just two years after its 1969 founding, George Balanchine invited his former protégé, Mitchell, to share the stage with City Ballet at Lincoln Center. After that historic performance, members of the Bolshoi would dip into rehearsals to see, as one founding board member recalled, ''dancers with athleticism and technique and exuberance and freshness and something to prove.'' This was the Swans' milieu.

All of this is absorbing. Yet it's the odd details that shine brightest: Sells recalls painfully losing whole toenails while learning to dance on pointe -- and eventually pirouetting with such speed that she could ''feel the actual physics of it all.'' At age 7, Rohan contracted polio, ''a bird of a child with legs suddenly caged in thick braces.'' Shelton recounts a fairy-tale first date during a stint in Paris, riding the Ferris wheel at Jardin des Tuileries. And what is most remembered about a performance to Tchaikovsky's ''Serenade for Strings'' is ''the transcendent scene of 17 women onstage, swathed in the palest and pearliest of blues.'' Precisely because there's so much meaning and humanity in this kind of minutiae, it has been methodically clipped from stories of Black women's lives. It's unsurprising that early news reports about the Swans and their cohort described them as ''black slum youngsters.''

If asked about their homes, in fact, the Swans could have cited just as three examples: Staten Island's tight-knit West Indian enclave, Connecticut's green exurbs and the aspirational Black ***working class*** of Denver. If asked about their families, it might be on the record that Sheila's softball-playing sister, Delores, loved watching her sibling at the barre. (''She let me be in my imagination for a bit.'') By their teens, these Swans' lives were already being pruned for presentation to a hostile ballet universe. It's a demonstration of radical vulnerability for them now to share, say, how they painted on and rinsed off chemical hair relaxers in backstage bathrooms.

Black women's lives are too often told in summary, or rushed through in well-intentioned biopics that, in a more equitably greenlit world, would be 10-episode documentary series. Promising books flatten quickly to literary curriculum vitae, complete with palatable headshots and the centering of ''firsts'': first Black woman this; first Black woman that. These five ballerinas claim their share of what we so benignly call ''breaking barriers,'' but the slothful pace of ''change'' that weights so many of those firsts can tarnish a trophy before it's home.

The Swans are more than banners to be unrolled for Black History Month. But many of us minimize our own depth and fullness of character. It's a soul-crushing habit we picked up hundreds of years ago. ''For most of my career, I didn't put my performing background on my résumé,'' says Sells, who went on to become a dean of students at Harvard Law School and is currently the chief diversity officer at the Metropolitan Opera. ''I thought it might make me sound unserious, to be frank. I thought people might think it was silly. But then when people did find out, they'd be like, Oh my God, you were an actual ballerina!''

Actual ballerinas: Abarca, McKinney-Griffith, Rohan, Sells and Shelton. Recognition delayed is recognition denied. And the process of reclamation is not only painful, like a dancer's training, it is never quite complete. This expectation of being under-credited, and worse, the fear of being only superficially known, is why many Black ballerinas -- many Black women -- layer on mental Kevlar the way others do T-shirts and hoodies. It's heavy. The moral of this important and tear-stained book is actually a reminder: Bare oneself, fly into the grandest of jetés and live free.

THE SWANS OF HARLEM: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History | By Karen Valby | Pantheon | 304 pp. | $29

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/books/review/swans-of-harlem-karen-valby.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/books/review/swans-of-harlem-karen-valby.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A Dance Theater of Harlem performance of Balanchine's ''Serenade'' in 1979. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONT ROW PHOTOS) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

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[***‘House of the Dragon’ Season 2, Episode 6 Recap: The Black Queen’s Gambit; House of the Dragon***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJ2-XJ31-DXY4-X35N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Rhaenyra sends a gift to the common people of King’s Landing. There may be some strings attached.

**Body**

Rhaenyra sends a gift to the common people of King’s Landing. There may be some strings attached.

Season 2, Episode 6: ‘Smallfolk’

The hug lasts 45 seconds before they kiss. Yes, I counted. In the terms of that episode of “Curb Your Enthusiasm” where [*Larry hugs Auntie Rae*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn35qUjCG8E) for a little too long, it’s nine “five Mississippi”s. And like any long, drawn-out take on this densely packed show, it stops everything in its tracks.

For three quarters of a minute, we watch empathy, respect, gratitude, warmth, heat, curiosity, desire and, finally, passion all play out in the silent embrace between Queen Rhaenyra and her friend and counselor Mysaria. For the first time in their lives, each of these two very different people has found somebody she sees as an equal, and who sees her as an equal in turn, and the thought quickly goes from comforting to intoxicating. Dragons are flying, men are burning, reigns are teetering, but for as long as that embrace lasts, the world of “House of the Dragon” exists between these two women’s arms.

But this week’s episode of “Dragon” specialized in all kinds of people getting the things they want and need — or trying to, anyway — in all kinds of ways. Rhaenyra and Mysaria’s interrupted clinch was just one example.

In King’s Landing, the acting regent prince, Aemond, is throwing his weight around. He boots his mother from his small council, and rejects Lord Larys Strong for the position of hand in favor of his cunning but loyal grandfather, Otto Hightower. He then sends Ser Criston — the man who knows he tried to murder his brother, King Aegon — off to root Daemon out of the hotly contested Riverlands, with his uncle Ser Gwayne Hightower in tow. The two men look as if they still haven’t washed off all the ash from their previous encounter with a hostile dragon, and this time Aemond is playing coy about when, or even if, he’ll fly out to protect them.

Aemond saves his harshest cruelties for his big brother the king, whom he torments in his sickbed, the threat of murder hanging thick in the air. “I remember nothing,” the barely conscious Aegon repeatedly croaks, clearly scared for his life. Fortunately for Aegon, though, someone else recognizes what’s going on: the Clubfoot, Larys Strong.

In his most emotionally unguarded moment to date, the cagey Master of Whisperers lays bare the pain and humiliation of a lifetime of being looked down upon because of his physical deformity and disability. This, he says with a tear falling from his eye, is the life Aegon now has to look forward to. But it comes with an upside: He will now be underestimated, and he can use that to his advantage.

“Help me,” Aegon whispers. Larys looks down at him. Hard cut to black. The whole scene was raw enough to move me to tears as well. To reference a phrase Alicent uses with Aemond, the indignities of childhood can linger a long, long time.

Elsewhere in King’s Landing, things are looking up for the small folk. Let me say that again: Things are looking up for the small folk. In this franchise, it bears repeating! Mysaria and Rhaenyra’s two-pronged scheme to win the hearts and minds of the capital city’s poor and ***working class*** works wonders — first by starting a whispering campaign that the royals are heedlessly feasting inside the walls of their Red Keep, then by launching a flotilla of food across the bay to keep the starving people alive, in rafts bearing Rhaenyra’s red-on-black sigil.

But it also hints at horrors to come. Hugh, the blacksmith who has been trying to keep his sick daughter alive, mugs a guy for his share of the goods. Ulf, the tavern-goer (Tom Bennett), swallows the Blacks’ propaganda so completely that it makes you wonder what else these desperate people will be willing to believe. And poor Queen Helaena once again finds herself at the center of an ugly scene in the streets, as she and her mother, Alicent, are pelted with rotten fish.

On the other side of Blackwater Bay, Lord Corlys officially accepts Rhaenyra’s offer to make him her hand, thus earning the Black Queen the support of the most impressive man in the Seven Kingdoms — and his mighty fleet, to boot. For his part, Corlys names the hardworking sailor Alyn of Hull his new first mate, rewarding the younger man for saving his life in a previous campaign. It’s an honor Alyn accepts only after ordered to do so, though.

As Alyn scrupulously shaves the white-blond hair that would give him away as the blood of Old Valyria, his younger brother, Addam, expresses disbelief. Alyn, like Addam, is Corlys’s bastard son, but he is the only one Corlys pays attention to. (He is also the only one with white-blond hair.) Why not benefit from the obvious truth? Addam asks.

But an entirely different order of being will soon come looking to enlist Addam, or so it seems. The dragon Sea Smoke, once bonded to the runaway Laenor Velaryon, flees Dragonstone after a nail-bitingly tense, ultimately horrific attempt to unite him with the Queensguard knight Ser Steffon Darklyn. The casting here seems telling: As Ser Steffon, the actor Anthony Flanagan bears no resemblance at all to the thin white dukes of House Targaryen, nor to their darker-skinned but equally high-cheekboned Valyrian kin in House Velaryon. (Even there, young Rhaena is reluctant to hunt down the wild dragon lurking in the Vale, a secret heretofore hidden by Lady Jeyne Arryn.) You want the poor guy to succeed, even though your eyes tell you he’s doomed.

Could it be that Sea Smoke has another rider in mind? With Corlys’s son Laenor halfway across the world, it’s probably not a coincidence that the silvery beast makes a beeline for another son of the great sailor lord, conducting repeated flyovers before finally cornering the fleeing man in a forest — but, notably, never snapping his jaws or firing up his biological bellows. The episode ends with Queen Rhaenyra riding out to meet Sea Smoke and his new rider, whose identity is unknown. But I’d bet all the wealth in Casterly Rock that it’s Addam.

Speaking of Casterly Rock, Lord Jason Lannister (Jefferson Hall, who also plays Jason’s younger twin brother, Tyland) has ridden forth with a great host, a pair of captive lions … and no great desire to actually go fight Daemon and his dragon, Caraxes, without Aemond and Vhagar backing him up, thank you very much. Meanwhile, the Riverlords whom Daemon had hoped to rally to his banner — he has all but given up the pretense of working on Rhaenyra’s behalf — refuse to move unless their aged and ailing Lord Paramount, Grover Tully, gives the go-ahead.

So we come once more to someone getting what they want. Daemon has been plagued by horrible dreams both night and day, to the point where he is ready to flee the cursed castle of Harrenhal for fear he is being poisoned. The most likely candidate, of course, is Alys Rivers, a raven-haired precursor to the Red Woman of “Game of Thrones,” the sorceress Melisandre.

But rather than recoil from the medicine woman and witch, Daemon asks her for advice as guilelessly as we’ve seen him speak to anyone all season long. She tells him cryptically to wait three days before doing anything, cursing him to three more days of psychological torment and traumatic flashbacks.

Then two remarkable breakthroughs happen. The recalcitrant Lord Grover dies, and the new ruler is more amenable to treating with Daemon’s cause. But more important, Daemon finally has a good dream — sad, but good.

He sees himself with his beloved older brother, Viserys, before the body of Viserys’s wife Aemma. The king is devastated, both by his loss and by the knowledge that his own order to conduct a cesarean section caused it. But this time, Daemon isn’t out drinking to the death of the infant Aemma died bringing into the world. He is holding his brother, comforting him, giving him the love and support he needs.

Our last glimpse of Daemon is of him sobbing — not out of joy that the Riverlands may now be his, but because he had done right by his brother at last, if only in a dream. For that brief time, his whole world existed in another’s arms, too.

PHOTO: Rhaenyra (Emma D’Arcy) knows that her efforts at taking back the throne are in peril. She is going to need some extra help. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Theo Whiteman/HBO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***At the Top, and at a Crossroads***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRW-TG11-DXY4-X07F-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Salonen, who will soon be a free agent for the first time in decades, could do pretty much anything at this stage. What will it be?

On a late afternoon in May, pop and classical music luminaries gathered in the neo-Gothic sanctuary of a 19th-century church-turned-Soho House in Stockholm. With drinks in hand, they listened as the media personality Cilla Benkö asked Esa-Pekka Salonen, ''So what's going on in your head at the moment?''

''Well, I'm at a crossroads,'' said Salonen, the composer and conductor, who is a year away from becoming a free agent for the first time in decades. ''I'm kind of figuring out what to do, if anything.''

Salonen is in a good position to choose what comes next. He is a conductor at the top of his field, and the kind of composer who can bring on not just one high-profile commissioner but several for each new piece he writes. The day after his interview with Benkö, he received the Polar Music Prize, an honor that has been called the Nobel Prize of music, directly from the hands of the Swedish king.

The award is given to a classical and a pop artist annually; Salonen's counterpart was Nile Rodgers, the mind behind songs like ''We Are Family'' and ''Le Freak'' and albums by Madonna, David Bowie and Beyoncé. Guests at the ceremony included the royal family, the megaproducer Max Martin and a member of ABBA, all gathered for a televised evening of tributes and black-tie diners dancing in the aisles to music related to the prize winners.

With royalty grooving to Daft Punk but also listening attentively to Salonen's ''Concert Étude for Solo Horn,'' it was a fitting celebration for Salonen, one of the most open-minded, open-eared and fundamentally cool artists in classical music, who at 66 is beloved and respected across the field.

''It's kind of impossible to imagine this industry without his incredibly huge influence over the past decades,'' the violinist Leila Josefowicz, a frequent collaborator, said in an interview later. ''Whether it's the compositions he's written or the contributions he's made to other composers, he's a giant and a superhero.''

Salonen has been compared to Pierre Boulez, an earlier composer-conductor with lofty visions for the art form. (Salonen, though, is less prickly.) When he leaves his post as music director of the San Francisco Symphony next year, after an excruciatingly public break with the orchestra's board, he could do pretty much whatever he wants.

''I'm not rushing into anything,'' Salonen said in an interview. ''I just want to get my priorities right. When I was in my 30s or 40s, I was like, OK, I'll do this and see how it goes. Now, with a bit of luck there's still time, but it doesn't feel unlimited like it does to someone who's 25.''

A BIT OF LUCK is also how Salonen describes how he got to where he is today. He was born in Helsinki, Finland, to ***working-class*** parents; his mother, thinking he might have some innate musical talent, tried to get him started with piano lessons at 4. He said no, thinking that his future was in ice hockey. ''She was wise enough,'' he recalled, ''not to push.''

Several years later, he heard the Finnish pop singer Kirka's version of the ''Ode to Joy'' on the radio. Fascinated, he looked up Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, where the tune comes from, in his father's record collection, then listened and thought, ''This is the most amazing thing.''

By that time, his mother was as a server at what Salonen described as a ''posh restaurant,'' where she befriended an elderly widower who asked her to become his housekeeper. The aristocratic brother of Finland's president during World War II, he became Salonen's godfather and facilitated his entry to the experimental, top-ranked school Helsingin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu. It was an elite institution but, unlike similar schools in the United States, was free except for a couple hundred dollars in fees.

Salonen took up music in earnest there and had access to some of the best teachers in the country. After graduating from recorder to trumpet, he switched to the horn because an upperclassman told him that, according to Robert Schumann, the horn was the soul of a symphony orchestra.

He got a new teacher, the principal horn of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, who had himself been taught by the principal horn of the Vienna Philharmonic, a friend of the musician who premiered Richard Strauss's Second Horn Concerto. ''All of the sudden,'' Salonen said, ''I got access to this kind of perspective.''

By the time he was 11, he knew that music was the profession for him. ''I wouldn't have gotten this far if I didn't have some talent,'' he said. ''But I feel very lucky.'' His future was secured with a precollege spot at the Sibelius Academy, where his teachers included the eminent composer Einojuhani Rautavaara and the conductor Jorma Panula. He took up the baton, he likes to say, mostly to lead his own music and works by now-famous classmates and friends, like Kaija Saariaho and Magnus Lindberg, in concerts with an anarchic spirit. Salonen remembers those performances as having been attended by tens of people.

Quickly, though, Salonen and his peers entered the establishment. By his mid-20s, Salonen had conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, where he would eventually become the music director, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which he would also later lead. His first full-time job was conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

He went on to build an enormous discography that includes his own works, as well as an expansive repertoire with much lesser-known and contemporary music. (Next up, the premiere recording of Saariaho's opera ''Adriana Mater,'' from San Francisco.) Salonen's interpretations of the classics, though, crackle with vitality and interpretive insight that, it seems, was there from the start and continues to this day.

Along the way, he became a favorite among listeners, critics and fellow musicians. The choreographer Alonzo King, with whom Salonen has collaborated on projects including Ravel's ''Mother Goose'' at the San Francisco Symphony in June, said that some conductors need to work to win over audience members. But, he added, ''at Esa-Pekka's performances, people are ready. You feel it in the air, like it's going to rain. There's an electrical stir.''

Players feel that, too. ''There's a ferocity in his music-making that is so raw, and that is so rare because it's so brutally honest at all times,'' said the flutist Claire Chase, who was hired by the San Francisco Symphony as a collaborative partner when Salonen was appointed. ''It's actually quite difficult to not play your best with him.''

Salonen balances the standard repertoire with a tendency to push boundaries, both on and offstage, and a canny ability to prod institutions. He worked closely with the architect Frank Gehry to build Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in 2003. That same year, motivated by a blend of ecology, politics and music, he founded the Baltic Sea Festival, where he will conduct the opera ''Khovanshchina'' there this month. At the Colburn School, the conducting program that he leads was just endowed in perpetuity.

He oversaw a virtual-reality project at the Philharmonia that gave audience members an opportunity to embed in the orchestra. In 2014, he was featured in an Apple commercial that showed him weaving the iPad into his daily work. During the pandemic, he and the San Francisco Symphony's collaborative partners worked on ''Throughline,'' a piece by Nico Muhly designed so thoroughly for digital media, it couldn't be played live.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

''I just wanted something to be honest, something that would be good and would not feel like a substitution,'' Salonen said of the piece. ''The moment we move beyond just really distributing existing material in a different way to actually creating new art for the new medium, then things are going to get really interesting.''

SALONEN'S TENURE in San Francisco started in 2020, with the promise of building on his ambitions in a city that has become synonymous with innovation. Even the idea of hiring collaborative partners was radical, defying the maestro myth to welcome perspectives from the worlds of avant-garde and popular music, as well as technology.

''We had all kinds of thoughts and ideas about what could be and what might be,'' said Matthew Spivey, the orchestra's chief executive. But earlier this year, Salonen stunned the classical music world by announcing that he would leave when his contract expires in 2025. In a moment of rare candor for the field, he explained why: ''I do not share the same goals for the future of the institution as the Board of Governors does.''

The orchestra was staring down budget cuts that made Salonen's ambitions for it untenable. Collaborative partners were quietly done away with. Open seats couldn't be offered to new musicians at competitive salaries. Ominously, there was talk of programming that prioritized audience growth over artistic integrity.

''It's heartbreaking,'' Chase said. ''Esa-Pekka had a vision that was absolutely achievable, but we lost the opportunity to see that vision actualized.''

Players didn't want Salonen to leave. For the rest of the season, they handed out fliers to audience members that accused management of having ''no clear artistic vision.'' In June, a concertgoer held up a sign in Finnish that criticized the board with a harsh expletive, a sight practically unheard-of in concert halls.

During that time, Salonen said, he and the orchestra found that ''to be onstage performing music is actually a sanctuary, where we can do what we are supposed to be doing.'' He was also touched by the public's response. Around San Francisco, people would stop him at coffee shops and bars to express sadness and gratitude.

''We in this classical music industry sometimes wonder what we're doing in this bubble,'' he said. ''But this tells us that it actually matters that there's a symphony orchestra in a town. We are the good guys, in the cultural side of things. We are constructive forces of society, and it's nice to be reminded of that.''

So, what now? Within five minutes of the announcement that he was leaving San Francisco, Salonen had the first of many job offers. At the moment, he's not interested in taking on another orchestra, but there are many other ways to remain active. He is working on a horn concerto for Stefan Dohr of the Berlin Philharmonic, and he is considering writing his first opera.

Chase said that Salonen's ideas for the field are ''more porous and ultimately more powerful than institutions''; there's a possibility that his work as a freelancer could evolve into something more project-based, with orchestral partners worldwide. When he was at the Soho House in Stockholm, he told Benkö, the interviewer, that it was kind of odd to see his old classmates start to retire.

''They're growing organic carrots somewhere, and that's nice, but I'm not interested in that yet,'' Salonen told her. ''I'm going to do something, but I haven't quite decided what.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/arts/music/esa-pekka-salonen-conductor-composer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/arts/music/esa-pekka-salonen-conductor-composer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Esa-Pekka Salonen, 66, will leave his post as music director of the San Francisco Symphony next year. The flutist Claire Chase said, ''It's actually quite difficult to not play your best with him.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY DONAVON SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR6.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***At Festival, MAGA Faithful Brought Joy, Rage and Smirnoff Ice***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CPK-5SK1-JBG3-601F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1642 words

**Byline:** By Richard Fausset

**Body**

Alan Jeanetti, a 73-year-old retired barber, was tailgating with friends before Rock the Country, a touring music festival headlined by the pro-Trump musician Kid Rock. Mr. Jeanetti's head was wrapped in a star-spangled bandanna. His T-shirt declared, ''I Don't Care.''

Mr. Jeanetti actually cares about many things, including the toll that his political leanings have taken on his personal life. ''I have lost so many friends because I was a Trump lover,'' he said. ''I wouldn't do that to them.''

On this broiling July day in Anderson, S.C., however, Mr. Jeanetti had a safe space. A tribe. All around him were fellow fans of former President Donald J. Trump, many with big trucks lining the green fields around the outdoor concert venue. Trump flags fluttered above R.V.s and tents, alongside American flags and a few of the Confederate variety.

Some 22,500 people would come on this first day of the two-day festival, according to the local sheriff's office, drawn by Kid Rock and an abundance of country performers. ''It's going to be another Woodstock One,'' Mr. Jeanetti said.

Starting in April in Gonzales, La., and stopping in six other midsize Southern cities through late July, Rock the Country offered a vision of the MAGA movement in pure party mode.

The shows felt like Trump rallies without the former president, unburdened by policy talk, speeches from lesser-known G.O.P. players, and the buzz-kill tendencies of Mr. Trump himself, who tends to noodle at the lectern like a jam-band soloist.

What remained was a snapshot of a maturing American subculture, with unwritten conventions rivaling those of Deadheads or Swifties, and a dizzying mash-up of hedonism and piety, angry rebellion and beer-guzzling pursuit of happiness.

It was also more evidence that Kid Rock, the 53-year-old Michigan entertainer and festival co-owner whose real name is Robert James Ritchie, has emerged as a chief cultural standard-bearer of Trumpism. At the Republican National Convention in July, Mr. Ritchie, who says he golfs regularly with Mr. Trump, performed shortly before the former president's speech accepting the nomination, leading the crowd in chants of ''Fight! Fight!'' and setting a defiantly salty tone with his anthem, ''American Bad Ass.''

In a phone interview last week, Mr. Ritchie said that Rock the Country had been designed to appeal to the conservative demographic that had made TV shows like ''Duck Dynasty'' and ''Yellowstone'' so popular.

Mr. Ritchie, who began his career as a rather apolitical party rapper, has not only ridden the wave of ***working-class*** anger that propels the MAGA movement, but he has also done much to shape it. His 2023 protest of Bud Light, after the beer brand partnered with a transgender influencer, sent its sales plummeting.

After the November election, Mr. Ritchie said, he would try to ''lower the tone'' politically, ''and go back to trying to make good music that anybody can enjoy.'' But for now, he said, ''I'm going to go hard in the paint through this election for my guy, because I believe in his policies.''

At one point in the conversation, he was asked about prominent conservatives who have raised doubts about Mr. Trump's fitness for office. Mr. Ritchie, chuckling, referred to those doubters with a homophobic slur; two days later, he texted The New York Times to note that his comment was a line from the 1982 film ''Fast Times at Ridgemont High.''

In South Carolina, Kid Rock was the biggest act on the first day of the festival, with the country star Jason Aldean headlining on the second. By late afternoon on Day 1, thousands of people -- young and old, overwhelmingly white -- had crowded into the open field in front of the stage. Young women clopped across the grass in cherry-red cowgirl boots and Daisy Dukes. Men tried to outdo each other with T-shirts with politically incorrect remarks (''Taxes are Gay''; ''Ammosexual''; ''I'm voting CONVICTED FELON 2024'').

It had been five days since President Biden announced he would not seek re-election and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic nominee -- too soon, it seemed, for the rollout of anti-Harris shirts.

It had also been two weeks since a gunman had tried to assassinate Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania, and one shirt seemed to set the tone more than others: It showed Mr. Trump raising his middle fingers, with the words ''YOU MISSED,'' followed by an expletive.

The conservative movement once proudly defined itself in opposition to the recreational drug use of the leftist counterculture. At Rock the Country, a cannabis tent did a brisk business in prerolled joints and Delta-9 space pops. Another company sold gummies containing a ''proprietary mushroom and nootropics'' blend, the packaging said, for a ''mind-bending experience.'' Bud Light was the conspicuous sponsor of a two-story outdoor bar.

A lighting rig facing the stage had been designed, an organizer told the crowd, to resemble a cross, a reminder that ''the true hope for the United States is Jesus Christ.''

Taking it all in from a picnic table were Margie Guden, 58, a supervisor at a fast-food restaurant from Zirconia, N.C., and her husband William, 62, who works at a farm supply store. ''There's no Biden fans here,'' Ms. Guden said. ''Fantastic!''

The Gudens said they identified with neither political party. They said they would like to see everyone currently in office voted out, and Mr. Trump voted in to cleanse a corrupt system. They also thought he could rein in inflation.

''There ain't no such thing as balancing a budget no more, when you go to work and you're making, let's say, $10 to $15 an hour, and it costs you $22 an hour to live where you are,'' Mr. Guden said. ''How do you make up and adjust for that cost of living? Credit card.''

Mr. Jeanetti, a North Carolina resident, spoke over a happy din that mounted as the parking lot filled and his friends sipped from cans of Smirnoff Ice.

Mr. Trump, he said, bore some responsibility for the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. But Mr. Jeanetti added that practical issues took precedence when it came to his vote: ''The bottom line is called the economy.''

Faith in Mr. Trump seemed to paper over some serious disagreements among the concertgoers. Mr. Jeanetti said he was staunchly in favor of abortion rights. ''I grew up in the '70s,'' he said. ''Who the hell are you to say I have to have this baby?''

But a few yards away, Jeremy Morey, 47, a plumber from Boyne Falls, Mich., said he believed that liberals' support for abortion was proof they had aligned themselves with satanic forces when there were ''actual angels and demons fighting right now for the soul of this country.''

Others were split on whether the MAGA movement was on the cusp of open rebellion. Edwin Poteet Black Jr., a longtime Kid Rock fan from Michigan with convictions for robbery, assaulting a police officer and other crimes, said that it was time for conservatives to rise up in a civil war against liberals. ''We are to the point our forefathers would have already been out in the streets, shooting,'' said Mr. Black, whose grandson had given him tickets to the festival for his 60th birthday.

Through the spring and summer, the Rock the Country shows mixed and matched performers, but most were from the world of country -- a genre wide enough to encompass all manner of politics, both ''rednecks and bluenecks,'' as the writer Chris Willman once put it, but one that often aligns with conservative ideals.

In South Carolina, warm-up acts for Kid Rock repurposed recent rock sounds, from grunge to metal. But they mostly stuck to traditional country themes: patriotism, love and lust, God and family, trucks and beer.

Elvie Shane, a singer-songwriter from Kentucky, kicked off the show with ''Forgotten Man,'' a booming song about the pride and travails of the working life that segued into a cover of Bruce Springsteen's ''Born in the U.S.A.'' In between songs, he sounded a rare note of concern about the way Americans seemed to have turned on each other.

''I feel like we're just so divided these days. I know y'all ain't,'' he said with a laugh that seemed to acknowledge the crowd's unified politics. He encouraged them to reach out to friends or family who might be on the other side of the political divide. ''If you love them, you be the bigger man -- you make the phone call and say, 'Hey look, I know we disagree. But I still love you.'''

Before Kid Rock's set, Shane Quick, one of the festival organizers, took the stage and asked the fans to join him in prayer. He thanked God for the military, the police, barbecue and Southeastern Conference football. ''Dear God,'' he said, ''we thank you that just a few days ago, you kept the future president Donald Trump safe from the assassination attempt.''

The crowd went wild. Moments later, Kid Rock took the stage, flanked by dancers who gyrated on poles topped with American flags. He danced and rapped about his rough and rowdy ways. He performed his signature song, ''Cowboy,'' with its provocative line, ''I can smell a pig from a mile away.'' At one point he sang in a bluesman's voice about the nefarious cultural imports of soccer and tofu.

Late in the show, Mr. Trump's face hovered above the stage in a prerecorded video. He told the crowd they were the ''true backbone'' of the country.

''Let's make America rock again,'' Mr. Trump said in the video.

Mr. Ritchie said that he hopes Rock the Country will become a regular fixture on the American festival calendar, and predicted that Trumpism would live on as a cultural phenomenon beyond Mr. Trump's time in politics, like Grateful Dead fans after Jerry Garcia died.

''I think the MAGA movement is probably bigger than Trump at the end of the day,'' he said. ''Whatever this is, I think it will continue without him.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/11/us/kid-rock-trump-maga.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/11/us/kid-rock-trump-maga.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Kid Rock performing, left, at the Rock the Country festival in Anderson, S.C., in July. Some 22,500 people would come on this first day of the two-day festival, according to the local sheriff's office.

Alan Jeanetti, above left, actually cares about many things, including losing friends because of his politics. He tailgated with friends at the festival, which also included corn hole, top, a mechanical bull, above center, and country music (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***As Suspense Builds, Trump May Reveal His Running Mate This Week. Or Not.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CFS-1R51-DXY4-X0SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 11, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1232 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender

**Body**

Donald J. Trump's monthslong search for a running mate, orchestrated to feed speculation and attention, is nearing an end, but questions of who, and when, remain.

Donald J. Trump's running-mate search, as much a theatrical production as a political one, is now in its final act.

In exactly one week, the Republican vice-presidential nominee is scheduled to address the party's convention in Milwaukee.

The leading contenders -- Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida -- have sat for repeated cable news interviews. They've attended campaign fund-raisers, mingled with members of Mr. Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort and flown on the Trump plane. And they've all completed perhaps the most crucial test: addressing the devoted core of the former president's MAGA movement onstage at a Trump rally.

Mr. Trump has orchestrated his monthslong selection process with the flair and finesse of a seasoned marionette puppeteer, relying on dramatic pronouncements to feed speculation, draw in his audience and try to redirect any lingering attention away from his 34 felony convictions.

Now, in true Trumpian fashion, the finale includes a bit of suspense.

Just one public campaign event remains on Mr. Trump's schedule before the Republican National Convention -- a rally in western Pennsylvania on Saturday. Several of the former president's allies believe he may want to bring his running mate to the rally. Some aides are preparing for the possibility that Mr. Trump will announce his pick on social media just before the event.

Mr. Trump's preference, however, seems to be revealing his pick in a made-for-television announcement onstage at the convention. When asked in an interview on Monday about the timing of his announcement, he spent much of his answer talking about craving such a moment.

''I'd love to do it during the convention,'' Mr. Trump said on Fox News. ''It would be a very interesting buildup and important for the convention.''

But the former president also acknowledged a rather significant problem with such a situation: He might be the only person in his campaign who prefers that timing.

The endless speculation has fatigued many Trump allies, who are eager for him to announce his decision. Pushing it to next week would disrupt the Trump aides who are working around the clock to iron out innumerable logistics to prepare for the four-day convention, which is expected to draw more than 50,000 Republican officials, activists, donors and members of the media.

Another example of a complication with a reveal in Milwaukee: Convention rules require the party to nominate its presidential ticket on Monday, and it would be hard to nominate a ticket that's not yet officially announced. Republicans could vote on a rule change, but that would be just one of many changes that would ripple across the convention program.

''My people say that's a little complicated,'' Mr. Trump said during the Fox News interview, suggesting his timing for an announcement would be most likely ''probably a little before the convention -- but not much.''

A campaign spokesman said that only Mr. Trump knows who he will select, and that he will announce the decision when he is ready.

On Saturday, Mr. Trump will visit Butler County, Pa., a predominantly white and largely rural area about 50 miles east of the Ohio border that has long supported Republican presidential candidates. The county is nestled in a region near the state's western border where pro-gun, pro-coal voters -- less diverse and less highly educated than the rest of the state -- have mostly shed past ties to the Democratic Party and have become reliable Republican supporters.

The location would seem to be an ideal setting to introduce Mr. Vance, the former venture capitalist and best-selling author of ''Hillbilly Elegy.'' He would appear to offer more natural appeal to Mr. Trump's white, ***working-class*** base than would Mr. Burgum, a wealthy former software executive, or Mr. Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants and a fluent Spanish speaker.

Another potential hint: One of the closest Ohio towns to Butler County is East Palestine, where Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump teamed up in February 2023 to criticize the Biden administration's response to a train derailment that forced residents to evacuate and escape toxic chemicals. The White House pushed back at the time by accusing the Trump administration of having dismantled safety measures that were meant to prevent episodes like the East Palestine derailment.

Just five months earlier, when Mr. Vance was running for Senate, he joined Mr. Trump at a campaign rally only to be mocked by the former president, whose endorsement had helped deliver the party's nomination to Mr. Vance. ''J.D. is kissing my ass he wants my support so much,'' Mr. Trump told the crowd.

But after the East Palestine event, which Mr. Trump later described to aides as an effective and energizing campaign stop, he has been more generous when speaking about Mr. Vance.

At a campaign rally in Ohio in March, Mr. Trump mentioned Mr. Vance at least a dozen times, including once to express some mix of surprise and relief that the first-term senator ''has really turned out to be great.''

''When you endorse somebody you don't know, you think they're going to be good and they turn on you,'' Mr. Trump said, adding that Mr. Vance was ''a young star and he's a great senator and a real fighter.''

Mr. Vance briefly joined Mr. Trump onstage, where he attacked Mr. Biden, praised Mr. Trump and claimed, mostly incorrectly, that ''all of the net job growth under Biden's presidency has gone to the foreign-born.''

''Let's rebuild prosperity for America's citizens and re-elect Donald J. Trump,'' Mr. Vance said to cheers.

In May, Mr. Trump invited Mr. Burgum to a rally in Wildwood, N.J., where the former president praised the governor's intellect and business acumen.

Mr. Burgum, a mild-mannered two-term governor, engaged the crowd in an energetic call-and-response about sending Mr. Trump back to the White House.

''OK one more time, and this one has to be so loud that they can hear it in Biden's basement in Delaware,'' Mr. Burgum said to laughter and applause.

On Tuesday, Mr. Rubio became the last of the three leading vice-presidential contenders to join Mr. Trump at a rally this year. Mr. Rubio has not campaigned for the presidential ticket as overtly as Mr. Vance or Mr. Burgum, both of whom are relative newcomers to Mr. Trump's political orbit. Mr. Rubio, however, quietly developed a close relationship with Mr. Trump during their four years together in Washington.

Onstage at an event at Trump National Doral Golf Club near Miami on Tuesday, Mr. Rubio displayed his self-assuredness by gently ribbing the former president. He feigned ignorance about knowing the golf course's owner and urged the crowd to plead with the former president to find an indoor venue for his next summer rally in South Florida.

Mr. Trump thanked Mr. Rubio, describing him to the crowd as ''someone who has really become a friend of mine.''

''We had a vicious campaign for a while,'' Mr. Trump said, referring to their caustic rivalry during the 2016 presidential primary. ''He was tough, and he was smart and I got to really know him well over the years -- and he's a fantastic guy.''

He left it at that, keeping the suspense alive.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/10/us/politics/trump-running-mate-finale.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/10/us/politics/trump-running-mate-finale.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio would appear to offer more natural appeal to Donald J. Trump's base.

Mr. Trump has praised the business acumen of Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota

Senator Marco Rubio of Florida has developed a close relationship with Mr. Trump. This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** July 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***German Soccer Team’s Deal With a Weapons Maker Prompts Some Boos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C56-RKY1-DXY4-X2MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 911 words

**Byline:** Melissa Eddy Melissa Eddy is based in Berlin and reports on Germany&amp;#8217;s politics, businesses and its economy.

**Highlight:** For some fans of Borussia Dortmund, an advertising deal with Rheinmetall, a major arms manufacturer, has overshadowed the run-up to the Champions League final on Saturday.

**Body**

For some fans of Borussia Dortmund, an advertising deal with Rheinmetall, a major arms manufacturer, has overshadowed the run-up to the Champions League final on Saturday.

Borussia Dortmund, one of Germany’s most successful soccer clubs, is rooted in the industrial Ruhr region and prides itself on retaining its ***working-class*** roots, community engagement and anti-establishment mentality.

That’s why, in the week before one of the biggest games in the club’s history, some Dortmund fans are angry about a sponsorship deal with Rheinmetall, a major German weapons producer. Everyone from club officials to lawmakers have weighed in on the move, which has provoked a debate about the normalization of the military in German society. Still, many fans would rather just focus on Dortmund’s appearance in the showcase game of the European season, the Champions League final on Saturday against Real Madrid.

Dortmund’s three-year partnership with Rheinmetall, [*announced on Wednesday*](https://www.bvb.de/eng/Partners/Business-News/News/Taking-responsibility-Rheinmetall-to-become-Champion-Partner-to-BVB), includes advertising and marketing rights in Dortmund’s stadium and club grounds but not — crucially for some — a place on the team’s famed black and yellow jerseys. Neither side would confirm the amount of the deal.

Generations of Germans, raised on the postwar idea that “never again” should their nation foment an armed conflict, remain uneasy associating with the defense industry. Unlike in the United States, where professional and college-level sports games often feature soldiers in uniform unfurling American flags and flyovers from fighter jets, at sporting events in Germany outward displays of patriotism and associations with the military are rare.

Some fans would like to keep it that way.

“Borussia Dortmund is a soccer club that has been a standard-bearer for tolerance and social projects,” said Inge Fahle, a retired teacher from Dortmund and a fan of the club since childhood. “A sponsorship with a weapons manufacturer just doesn’t work,” she said.

Hans-Joachim Watzke, Dortmund’s chief executive, said in a statement that the club was “consciously opening ourselves up to a dialogue” by becoming partners with a weapons manufacturer. He said the partnership reflected the role that a company like Rheinmetall has come to play in German society, since the country stepped in to support Ukraine after it was invaded by Russia.

“Security and defense are fundamental cornerstones of our democracy,” Mr. Watzke said. “Especially today, when we see every day how freedom must be defended in Europe. We should deal with this new normality.”

Robert Habeck, Germany’s economy minister, this week also defended the sponsorship, noting it reflected the geopolitical reality now facing Europe. Germany has provided about $30 billion in military support for Ukraine, which include munitions, tanks and other materials made by Rheinmetall.

“Rheinmetall sponsoring a soccer club is unusual, but it shows where we are at,” Mr. Habeck said.

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Rheinmetall’s business has surged. Shares of the company, which makes the Leopard tanks that Germany and some of its NATO partners have sent to Ukraine, have risen sixfold over the past three years.

Armin Papperger, the Rheinmetall chief executive, said he expected the company would receive roughly a third of the 100 billion euros ($109 billion) that [*Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged*](https://www.bvb.de/eng/Partners/Business-News/News/Taking-responsibility-Rheinmetall-to-become-Champion-Partner-to-BVB) to revitalize the German military in the coming years.

Dortmund’s fortunes are also on the rise, thanks to its performance in the Champions League. The club, which like all German teams is controlled by its members but is also the only club in the country’s top league with shares that trade on the stock exchange, has upgraded its financial forecasts two times this year. It now expects to see a net profit of up to €50 million, roughly double its target at the beginning of the season. Dortmund has the second-highest revenue in the German league, behind Bayern Munich, [*according to Deloitte*](https://www.bvb.de/eng/Partners/Business-News/News/Taking-responsibility-Rheinmetall-to-become-Champion-Partner-to-BVB).

When asked about the sponsorship, Dortmund’s sporting director, Sebastian Kehl, said that [*he would prefer to concentrate on Saturday’s game*](https://www.bvb.de/eng/Partners/Business-News/News/Taking-responsibility-Rheinmetall-to-become-Champion-Partner-to-BVB).

Fans play a powerful role in German soccer and have been known to stage demonstrations against decisions they see as overly commercial or otherwise compromising the sport.

Earlier this year, a backlash [*forced the league to abandon talks*](https://www.bvb.de/eng/Partners/Business-News/News/Taking-responsibility-Rheinmetall-to-become-Champion-Partner-to-BVB) with a private equity firm over a deal that would have provided teams with a $1 billion cash injection in exchange for a portion of broadcasting revenues. Mr. Watzke of Dortmund is chairman of the league’s supervisory board.

The leaders of Dortmund’s fans relations department issued a terse statement saying that they were focusing on the Champions League final. But they confirmed that management had spoken with them about the deal in advance and they had objected to it.

“It is not always possible to reach a consensus in these dialogues,” they said. “As was the case in this instance.”

Anna Neumann, who works in local politics in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and will be rooting for Dortmund on Saturday, said that several Premier League teams in England are sponsored by gambling companies and firms with ties to countries criticized by human rights organizations in Germany.

“Rheinmetall is helping people in Ukraine to defend freedom and self-determination,” Ms. Neumann said. “I have heard from friends and people that they don’t think it’s such a bad deal, nor is the debate surrounding it.”

This article appeared in print on page B6.

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[***German Soccer Club's Deal With Weapons Maker Draws Criticism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C57-FKM1-DXY4-X395-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 1, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 914 words

**Byline:** By Melissa Eddy

**Body**

For some fans of Borussia Dortmund, an advertising deal with Rheinmetall, a major arms manufacturer, has overshadowed the run-up to the Champions League final on Saturday.

Borussia Dortmund, one of Germany's most successful soccer clubs, is rooted in the industrial Ruhr region and prides itself on retaining its ***working-class*** roots, community engagement and anti-establishment mentality.

That's why, in the week before one of the biggest games in the club's history, some Dortmund fans are angry about a sponsorship deal with Rheinmetall, a major German weapons producer. Everyone from club officials to lawmakers have weighed in on the move, which has provoked a debate about the normalization of the military in German society. Still, many fans would rather just focus on Dortmund's appearance in the showcase game of the European season, the Champions League final on Saturday against Real Madrid.

Dortmund's three-year partnership with Rheinmetall, announced on Wednesday, includes advertising and marketing rights in Dortmund's stadium and club grounds but not -- crucially for some -- a place on the team's famed black and yellow jerseys. Neither side would confirm the amount of the deal.

Generations of Germans, raised on the postwar idea that ''never again'' should their nation foment an armed conflict, remain uneasy associating with the defense industry. Unlike in the United States, where professional and college-level sports games often feature soldiers in uniform unfurling American flags and flyovers from fighter jets, at sporting events in Germany outward displays of patriotism and associations with the military are rare.

Some fans would like to keep it that way.

''Borussia Dortmund is a soccer club that has been a standard-bearer for tolerance and social projects,'' said Inge Fahle, a retired teacher from Dortmund and a fan of the club since childhood. ''A sponsorship with a weapons manufacturer just doesn't work,'' she said.

Hans-Joachim Watzke, Dortmund's chief executive, said in a statement that the club was ''consciously opening ourselves up to a dialogue'' by becoming partners with a weapons manufacturer. He said the partnership reflected the role that a company like Rheinmetall has come to play in German society, since the country stepped in to support Ukraine after it was invaded by Russia.

''Security and defense are fundamental cornerstones of our democracy,'' Mr. Watzke said. ''Especially today, when we see every day how freedom must be defended in Europe. We should deal with this new normality.''

Robert Habeck, Germany's economy minister, this week also defended the sponsorship, noting it reflected the geopolitical reality now facing Europe. Germany has provided about $30 billion in military support for Ukraine, which include munitions, tanks and other materials made by Rheinmetall.

''Rheinmetall sponsoring a soccer club is unusual, but it shows where we are at,'' Mr. Habeck said.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Rheinmetall's business has surged. Shares of the company, which makes the Leopard tanks that Germany and some of its NATO partners have sent to Ukraine, have risen sixfold over the past three years.

Armin Papperger, the Rheinmetall chief executive, said he expected the company would receive roughly a third of the 100 billion euros ($109 billion) that Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged to revitalize the German military in the coming years.

Dortmund's fortunes are also on the rise, thanks to its performance in the Champions League. The club, which like all German teams is controlled by its members but is also the only club in the country's top league with shares that trade on the stock exchange, has upgraded its financial forecasts two times this year. It now expects to see a net profit of up to ?50 million, roughly double its target at the beginning of the season. Dortmund has the second-highest revenue in the German league, behind Bayern Munich, according to Deloitte.

When asked about the sponsorship, Dortmund's sporting director, Sebastian Kehl, said that he would prefer to concentrate on Saturday's game.

Fans play a powerful role in German soccer and have been known to stage demonstrations against decisions they see as overly commercial or otherwise compromising the sport.

Earlier this year, a backlash forced the league to abandon talks with a private equity firm over a deal that would have provided teams with a $1 billion cash injection in exchange for a portion of broadcasting revenues. Mr. Watzke of Dortmund is chairman of the league's supervisory board.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/01/business/dortmund-rheinmetall-sponsorship.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/01/business/dortmund-rheinmetall-sponsorship.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page B6.

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[***How Steve Bannon Sees the Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDY-1NS1-DXY4-X24V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 7, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 12; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 3717 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

I felt as if I were talking with Leon Trotsky in the years before the Russian Revolution.

I was sitting in Steve Bannon's Washington living room in 2019. His stint in Donald Trump's White House had ended ingloriously, but he had resumed his self-appointed role as populism's grand strategist, its propagandist, its bad-boy visionary. He sat there that day sketching out his plans for how MAGA-type movements could take over the world.

By then populists had already racked up some big wins -- Brexit in Britain, Trump's victory in 2016. Right-wing populists were in power in Hungary and Poland, Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy party was surging and populists were rising across Latin America. Bannon knew I opposed him in every particular and abhorred much of what he said, but he laid out his grand vision cheerfully, confidently. He didn't seem concerned about old-fashioned conservatives, moderates and classical liberals like me; we were destined for the ash heap of history.

I decided to check in with Bannon again about a week ago. This year, populists have scored yet another string of triumphs, and a second Trump victory is possible or even probable this November. I found Bannon, currently the host of the podcast ''War Room,'' to be embroiled and embattled as usual. He's going to prison on Monday to begin serving a four-month sentence for contempt of Congress. If anything, he is more confident than ever.

What follows is a transcript of our conversation, edited for clarity and length -- and to remove the F-bombs that Bannon dropped with machine gun regularity. I should emphasize that I wasn't trying to debate Bannon or rebut his beliefs; I wanted to understand how he sees the current moment. I wanted to understand the global populist surge from the inside. What he told me now seems doubly terrifying, given Joe Biden's performance at the first presidential debate.

DAVID BROOKS: Since we last spoke, in fact in just the past few months, there have been populist victories in the Netherlands, with Geert Wilders. We have the Chega movement doing well in Portugal, with the young especially. In Germany, the ultraright-wing Alternative for Germany surged in last month's European parliamentary elections. In France, Marine Le Pen's populist party also triumphed in the European election, a result that prompted President Emmanuel Macron to call new national elections and throw the entire French political system into meltdown. In the U.K.'s forthcoming national elections, Nigel Farage's Reform Party is on pace to win seats for the first time. So if you're a historian telling the big story of what's happening, what would it be? What's the core narrative here?

STEVE BANNON: Well, I think it's very simple: that the ruling elites of the West lost confidence in themselves. The elites have lost their faith in their countries. They've lost faith in the Westphalian system, the nation-state. They are more and more detached from the lived experience of their people.

On our show ''War Room,'' I probably spend at least 20 percent of our time talking about international elements in our movement. So we've made Nigel a rock star, Giorgia Meloni a rock star. Marine Le Pen is a rock star. Geert is a rock star. We talk about these people all the time.

Do you see yourself in the same business that Fox News's Roger Ailes was in, sort of right-wing journalism?

I'm not a journalist. I'm not in the media. This is a military headquarters for a populist revolt. This is how we motivate people. This show is an activist show. If you watch this show, you're a foot soldier. We call it the Army of the Awakened.

I mean, Murdoch is a bigger enemy of ours than MSNBC. Because he's the epitome of neoliberal neocon. And they're the opiate of the masses. They're the controlled opposition, right? They're never going to want fundamental change. They'll throw some shiny toys -- Obama's a Muslim, the kind of issues which we mock all the time.

Let's get back to the big narrative. Do you think immigration is the core issue here? That seems to be one issue that drives populist support everywhere.

Immigration, spending -- it's the lack of confidence and self-loathing of their own civilization and their own culture. That's the spiritual part that's at the base. Immigration is just the manifestation of a loss of self-confidence. And it's shocking.

I came up in the golden age of Pax Americana, a ***working-class*** dad who had a housewife and five kids. All went to Catholic schools. I mean, a guy who was a foreman and then lower-level white-collar management. That's the kind of thing we aspire to have in this country. If you look at it country by country, it's all the same. The lack of jobs, the lack of opportunities, the lack of self-confidence.

What we should be doing is cutting the number of foreign students in American universities by 50 percent immediately, because we're never going to get a Hispanic and Black population in Silicon Valley unless you get them into the engineering schools. No. 2, we should staple an exit visa to their diploma. The foreign students can hang around for a week and party, but then they got to go home and make their own country great.

Our movement is metastasizing to something that's different than America First; it's American Citizens First.

What does that mean?

It means Americans have to get a better deal. Right now, the American citizen has all the obligations of serving in the military, of paying taxes, of going through this grind that is American late-stage technofeudal capitalism. But tell me what the bonus is.

Like everybody, I've been trying to figure out why populism is having this broad resurgence. My story may be a little different from yours. My quick story is that 20 percent of Americans go to nice colleges and get professional-type jobs. They marry each other. They move into cities like Washington, Denver, Austin, San Francisco. They invest in their kids, who get into the same colleges, who then get good jobs. The people who are not in this hereditary educated elite conclude that it has too much cultural power, media power and now financial power, so much of the rest of the country says: Enough is enough.

Well, they have power. But we're going to win. We're ascendant in Europe. We're ascendant here. We've had no money. We're not organized. It's self-organizing. But our enemies -- and they are enemies -- continue to overplay their hand, and so we continue to rise.

After the financial crisis I thought it would be a great time to be a leftist. You've got a financial crisis caused by irresponsible capitalism, wages are stagnant, inequality is rising. Heck, even I almost turned into a Marxist. But somehow this has been a better era for the populist right than the populist left.

You're seeing America First Democrats. Look at John Fetterman. Fetterman and Steve Bannon are closer in their economics than Steve Bannon and the Republican establishment. The left didn't have what it took because of the cultural issues and the issues of race, all that madness that they're embedded in. They had to have open borders. They had to have D.E.I.

The historical left is in full meltdown. They always focus on noise, never on signal. They don't understand that the MAGA movement, as it gets momentum and builds, is moving much farther to the right than President Trump. They will look back fondly at Donald Trump. They'll ask: Where's Trump when we need him?

You said something I've got to ask you about, that Trump's a moderate. In what areas is the MAGA movement farther right than Trump?

I think farther right on radical cuts of spending, No. 1. I think we're much more hard-core on things like Ukraine. President Trump is a peacemaker. He wants to go in and negotiate and figure something out as a dealmaker. I think 75 percent of our movement would want an immediate, total shutdown -- not one more penny in Ukraine, and massive investigations about where the money went. On the southern border and mass deportations, I don't think President Trump's close to where we are. They all got to go home.

Also, on artificial intelligence, we're virulently anti-A.I. I think big regulations have to come.

President Trump is a kindhearted person. He's a people person, right? On China, I think he admires Xi Jinping. But we're super-hawks. We want to see an elimination of the Chinese Communist Party.

What do you think a second Trump administration would look like in the first few weeks? Months?

Project 2025 and others are working on it -- to immediately focus on immigration, the forever wars and on the fiscal and the financial. And simultaneously the deconstruction of the administrative state, and going after the complete, total destruction of the deep state.

In the first 100 days -- this is going to be different than '16 -- we will have 3,000 political appointees ready to go.

Have those people been selected and trained? When Trump came in, in '17, you guys had a lot of the Republican holdovers --

We had nothing. You have five or six groups that are building up subject matter expertise, laying out position papers. They're vetting people right now.

So you're going to go to war with the existing administrative state and the Praetorian Guard deep state. My point is, let's, in the transition, get all the federal contracts. Close them all down. Let's get MAGA in there. Right. Let's get our guys in on the contracts. It'll be a hostile takeover of the apparatus.

Who's the inner circle? Who is the chief of staff?

I think you're going to have somebody that knows what's going on. Guys like Dr. Kevin Roberts and others. Also, I strongly believe that right after The Associated Press calls the election that Jerome Powell will tender his resignation. And so you'll pick a new Federal Reserve chief. And you'll pick a Treasury secretary and attorney general.

Would you like to have some role?

No, no, no, no. We run this like a military command post. So I would only be giving up power. I went there before. I wanted out. I'm not a staff guy. I can't do it. And also that's not where the center of power is. It's not how President Trump thinks. A big center of power is just media.

I call Trump a Marshall McLuhanesque figure. McLuhan called it, right? He says this mass thing called media, or what Pierre Teilhard de Chardin said of the noosphere, is going to so overwhelm evolutionary biology that it will be everything. And Trump understands that. That's why he watches TV.

He understands that to get anything done, you have to make the people understand. And so therefore, constantly, we're in a battle of narrative. Unrestricted narrative warfare. Everything is narrative. And in that regard, you have to make sure you forget about the noise and focus on the signal.

And remember, our audience is virtually all activists. So even though it may not be the biggest, it doesn't have to be. It's the people that are out there in the hinterland that are on the school boards. They now control so many state parties. Our mantra is you must use your agency. It's a spiritual war. The divine providence works through your agency.

I remember a precinct captain strategy: You called on people to get active on that level to monitor elections and gain control of the G.O.P. from the ground up.

The Republican Party is structured as basically a grass-roots party. But they've never filled the precincts. And that's where we fill them, just with our guys. That's how we control all these political parties, from Utah to Arizona to Georgia. Governor Brian Kemp doesn't control that. It's all controlled by the grass roots.

The Republican establishment never was interested?

No, hated it. Not just not interested. The Republican establishment is all guys in blue blazers and khakis going to the club. These are the unclubbable people.

And think about what this movement did. It did three things that have never been done before, with no money. It removed a sitting speaker of the House for the first time in history. It removed the minority leader, who I would argue is the most powerful Republican you've had in 50 years, Mitch McConnell. And then we removed the entire R.N.C. Think about it. Ronna McDaniel and all her people.

These guys are never going home unless you beat them.

Victory begets victory.

Do you know the demographics of these activists? Education? Race? Income?

First off, I would say 60 percent female. Female and over 40 years old. A lot of that, a third of them brought in by the pandemic, and the Moms for America. A ton of moms, women who didn't read a lot of books in college. They're not politically active. They had no interest. It was only later in life, as they became the C.O.O. of the American family, they realized how tough it was to make ends meet.

And then they saw the lack of education, and it was really the pandemic when they walked by the computer and saw what the kids are doing. They're now at the tip of the spear.

Do you worry that your broader movement will be fatally poisoned by antisemitic elements, the conspiracy crazies?

We're the most pro-Israel and pro-Jewish group out there. What I say is that not just the future of Israel but the future of American Jews, not just safety but their ability to thrive and prosper as they have in this country, is conditional upon one thing, and that's a hard weld with Christian nationalism.

If I can make one comparison: Early in my career, I worked for Bill Buckley. His manner at National Review reminds me a little of some of the things you do. He created an intense sense of belonging: We're the conservative movement. We're all in this together. Every day we're marching forward. But he also had a strong sense of who was a wack job, a conspiracist. And he was going to draw a line. Pat Buchanan was on the other side of the line.

So what I admire about Buckley is obviously the intense thing of belonging. What I don't admire is the no-fight. It's very much an intellectual debating society, right?

I use you and George Will as examples of this all the time. Brilliant guys, but this is a street fight. We need to be street fighters. This is going to be determined on social media and getting people out to vote. It's not going to be debated on the Upper East Side or Upper West Side.

I've found that most people are pretty reasonable. You can have a conversation, and you'll at least see where they're coming from.

I think you're dead [expletive] wrong.

That's where we disagree.

No, it's 100 percent disagree. What are you talking about? They think you're an exotic animal. You're a conservative, but you're not dangerous. You're reasonable. We're not reasonable. We're unreasonable because we're fighting for a republic. And we're never going to be reasonable until we get what we achieve. We're not looking to compromise. We're looking to win.

Now, the biggest element that Buckley had that the book ''Bowling Alone'' had, and you talk about, is the atomization of our society. There's no civic bonding. There's no national cohesion. There's not even the Lions Club things that you used to have before. People tell me all the time: ''You changed my life. I ran for the board of supervisors, and now I'm on the board of supervisors.'' They have friends that they never had met before, and they're in a common cause, and it's changed their life. They're on social media. Every day, they have action they have to do.

This was Hannah Arendt's point that loneliness is a seedbed for authoritarianism. But you're not about conversing with the other side, you're just fighting with the other side.

What do you mean, not conversing with? There's nothing to talk about.

Well, how about you have a conversation with the Biden administration. The Biden administration has spent a lot of money. And now, when I go to central Ohio, they've got an Intel plant coming in. You go to upstate New York, they've got a Micron plant. These are benefits for the ***working class***.

Some of that stuff's OK. But on the fundamental direction of the country, we are separate. We are two different worldviews. And those worldviews can't be bridged.

That's not the way George Washington communicated. It's certainly not the way Abraham Lincoln communicated. I mean, I know that's cliché, but go to the second inaugural. Slavery is not a North or South problem; it's an American problem. He was emphasizing national unity.

Hang on, hang on, hang on. After he had burnt -- good god, man, I can't believe you used that example. After he burned the South to the ground --

They declared war.

In fact, let's go back to the speech. He actually leads, what led up to it, and then that powerful phrase, ''the war came.'' Basically, we tried to compromise. ''The war came.'' Columbia, Atlanta. I burned it to the ground. The inherent powers of the Constitution. He was a military dictator because he had to be, right?

Don't sit there and say, oh, that's all happy-talk language at the end. Remember, in war, take the moral high ground, totally and completely destroy your opponent.

What does that mean, though? If they have 50 percent of the country, then they have 50 percent of the Congress.

Well, let's say this. We win, we pick up five or six seats -- we have 55 seats in the Senate. We pick up five or six seats in the House, and we have the executive branch. And this time, we have much more savvy and understanding.

What does the Justice Department look like? What kinds of changes would Trump make?

I think they'll hit it with a blowtorch.

When did you come to see the world this way? I mean, obviously, you were at Harvard Business School and Goldman Sachs. Did you have a front-row seat and think, ''Oh, this sucks''?

I took Michael Porter's classes at Harvard back in the '80s, and globalization was -- Harvard, at that time, treated this as the second law of thermodynamics. It was a natural property that could not be questioned. And then I went to the M&A department at Goldman Sachs and I worked with Hank Paulson. I was put on a lot of things to sell companies. You could just see America was being gutted. You had Mike Milken and the junk bond guys, and they were after these companies. And you go out there, and the companies were not particularly well run.

The guys were always going to the country club, and the management was very detached from labor -- you see this evisceration, you saw these jobs going, and they were never coming back.

And then I read Christopher Lasch. I was just doing my thing, had my own finance firm. And then 9/11 happens. And everybody's down singing ''God Bless America.'' And I said, ''I wonder how long this 'God Bless America' phase is going to go.'' I was adamantly opposed to Iraq and Afghanistan. And one of the things that got me the most was I couldn't believe that George W. Bush didn't have his daughters go into the military. How do you do this? I remember reading guys saying we could have much better recruiting if we had those two as symbols.

We're so removed from that kind of Middle America. And my daughter then went to West Point. And when I went up to West Point when she was there, I was blown away by how ***working-class*** West Point was -- the students. This is the heart of the country. And these kids are going right into this war.

But then, it was 2008 when the collapse hit. I mean, for my dad, AT&T stock was right next to the Catholic Church. In fact, it would be like having shares in the Catholic Church. And when Jim Cramer came on that day and said, If you need cash in the next five years, you got to dump. This thing's over. And when my dad notified me a couple of days later he had dumped his AT&T stock, I go, wow.

I said, this is a guy. He has been a systems player the entire time, right? Telephone company, 50 years, the little guy. You can work your whole life and get [expletive] by this. And who's responsible?

We have a capitalist economy that has no capitalists, right? It has hypercapitalists or state capitalism. You've got to not just reallocate income, you have to reallocate assets. People have to have a stake in this. That's all they're asking for.

The MAGA movement controls the Republican Party and backs President Trump. So yes, Trump is a revolution -- remember, General Washington, the revolution and the foundation, and then Lincoln, the birth of the new America. And he's the most nationalist guy we've ever had. Remember, fighting the Civil War as a warlord, to make sure that we were a nation. Remember, he's a nationalist.

I hate to say this, but Trump's the third. Trump is taking America back to its more constitutional Republic for the third time, and that drives the credentialed left nuts because he's not just a class traitor, he's a low-end guy from Queens. He's not up to their social -- it's too tacky. It's the gold. It's the Trump stuff. They hate him. They hate him to a passionate level. They look at the noise around Trump and miss the signal of what's really happening, and they can't get past that, and they're blinded by it.

Finally, I've got to ask you about what's about to happen to you -- going to prison.

I spent my 20s on a Navy ship. If I have to spend my 70s in a prison, I'm still fighting. This show will be bigger. My message will be stronger.

You're not concerned?

No. I'll get the message out and fight for this. History is a process. I'm kind of honored, in one way, that they hate me so much they feel they have to put Bannon away. Their thing is that if we put Bannon in prison or get him away from his microphone, that'll help us win. It will be the exact opposite.

Every day is a fight. People in this movement, when they talk to me, they say they have a purpose. Once they have a purpose, you can't stop this movement. We're not going to win everything. Just like in Europe, you're going to have defeats. Some days are going to be cloudy. But the sunlit uplands are in front of you. Just keep your head down and keep grinding.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR12.

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[***A Week After Shooting, Trump Leaves Unity Behind and Returns to Insults and Election Denial***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHW-4191-JBG3-604V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** A week after an assassination attempt led him to call for unity, former President Donald J. Trump returned to the campaign trail, lashing out at his rivals and claiming persecution.

**Body**

A week after an assassination attempt led him to call for unity, former President Donald J. Trump returned to the campaign trail, lashing out at his rivals and claiming persecution.

At his first campaign rally since he survived an assassination attempt last week, former President Donald J. Trump on Saturday launched a litany of attacks that suggested his call for national unity in the wake of the shooting had faded entirely into the background.

Over the course of an almost two-hour speech in Grand Rapids, Mich., Mr. Trump insulted President Biden’s intelligence repeatedly, calling him “stupid” more than once. He said Vice President Kamala Harris was “crazy” and gleefully jeered the Democratic Party’s infighting over Mr. Biden’s political future.

Even as Mr. Trump made numerous false claims accusing his political opponents of widespread election fraud, he presented the continuing push by some Democrats to replace Mr. Biden on their ticket as an anti-democratic effort.

By contrast, Mr. Trump — who falsely insisted he won the 2020 election and whose effort to overturn it spurred a violent attack on the Capitol that threatened the peaceful transfer of power — presented himself as an almost martyr trying to protect the United States from its downfall.

“They keep saying, ‘He’s a threat to democracy,’” Mr. Trump told the crowd of thousands inside the Van Andel Arena. “I’m saying, ‘What the hell did I do with democracy’? Last week, I took a bullet for democracy.”

The line — one of the few additions to a speech that culled from Mr. Trump’s standard rally repertoire — came as Mr. Trump was trying to rebut Democrats’ claims that he was an extremist and distance himself from [*Project 2025*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/project-2025.html), a set of conservative policy proposals for a potential second term that would overhaul the federal government.

The Biden campaign has repeatedly tried to tie Mr. Trump to the effort, which has involved Trump allies and former advisers. But Mr. Trump on Saturday criticized the project as the work of the “radical right,” even as he acknowledged that he knew some of those involved.

“They’re seriously extreme, but I don’t know anything about it,” Mr. Trump said of Project 2025 — which he kept calling “Project 25,” even as he has previously referred to it by its full name.

Saturday’s speech was the latest signal that the assassination attempt on Mr. Trump had done little to change his political message. Though his closing convention speech on Thursday opened with a somber call for unity, he reverted quickly to standard rally repertoire, including an aside comparing himself to the gangster Al Capone and a discursive tangent regarding sharks and electric boats.

Mr. Trump did discuss the assassination attempt, in which his ear was struck by a bullet at a rally last week in Butler, Pa., even though he said on Thursday that after his convention speech he would not describe it in detail again.

Sporting a light brown bandage on his ear, smaller than the large white gauze he had been wearing, Mr. Trump once again cited divine intervention, telling the crowd, “I shouldn’t be here.” He offered praise for Corey Comperatore, a volunteer firefighter and rally attendee who was killed in the gunfire, and thanked officials in Butler for their efforts.

But where Mr. Trump was somber and visibly affected in front of the Republican delegates and national network cameras, a moment of seeming vulnerability, on Saturday he at times struck a somewhat lighter tone discussing the shooting.

At one point, referring to a screen showing a chart on immigration that he was pointing to when the shooting began, Mr. Trump joked that “I owe immigration” my life and that the “sign was very good — I think I’m going to sleep with it tonight.”

Before Mr. Trump spoke, his newly chosen running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio, took the stage and marveled at the former president’s resilience.

“I find it hard to believe that a week ago an assassin tried to take Donald Trump’s life, and now we have a hell of a crowd to welcome him back on the campaign trail,” Mr. Vance said, in his first joint rally with Mr. Trump since he joined the Republican ticket.

Though the security procedures at the rally were largely unchanged from past Trump rallies, the venue was held indoors after the Trump campaign had largely held events outdoors. There was a heavier police presence than typical inside and outside the building.

Sean Solano, a 22-year-old missionary to Nicaragua, said he had taken one extra precaution in light of the shooting.

“On Wednesday, I prayed over the building,” Mr. Solano, of Cutlerville, Mich., said about the rally’s venue. Echoing several other rally attendees who spoke of Mr. Trump’s survival in religious terms, Mr. Solano added that he thought God had given the former president a chance and that now Mr. Trump would “fight with fury like never before.”

Mr. Trump’s dark message about the pernicious threat to the country posed by undocumented immigrants, Democrats and foreign adversaries, a signature theme from previous rallies, was largely intact. He broadly characterized those crossing the border as “prisoners and people from mental institutions,” whom he again likened to the fictional cannibal Hannibal Lecter. And he promised once more the largest deportation operation in U.S. history if elected.

Mr. Trump also joyously mocked Democrats as they contended with the viability of Mr. Biden’s place as the party’s presidential nominee. Mr. Trump called his rivals “the enemies of democracy” because Democrats who called for Mr. Biden’s replacement would have to answer to the millions of primary votes the president secured over other candidates.

“They have no idea who their candidate is, and neither do we. That’s a problem,” Mr. Trump said in a tone that suggested he thought anything but.

Building on months of attacking Democrats as a threat to democracy, usually based on his false insistence that Mr. Biden has directed all four criminal cases against him, he argued once more that it was his political opponents who were anti-democratic.

“This guy goes, and he gets the votes, and now we’ll take it away,” Mr. Trump scoffed. “That’s democracy.”

Still, Mr. Trump showed little sympathy for Mr. Biden. After mostly, though not entirely, avoiding direct personal attacks against the president in his convention speech, Mr. Trump repeatedly called him unintelligent, saying that he had a low I.Q. compared with other world leaders and that he was incompetent.

He widened his focus to include Ms. Harris, insulting her laugh and calling her “nuts.” He similarly called Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker, “crazy,” and then mocked her over her having privately told Mr. Biden that he might not win in November, which he characterized as a sudden display of disloyalty.

“Crazy Nancy,” Mr. Trump said. “Did you see Nancy Pelosi is selling out Biden now? Did you see she turned on him like a dog?”

Republicans, he pointed out, were unified largely behind him. As evidence, Mr. Trump ceded the stage to a display of party unity: Sandy Pensler, a Republican running in Michigan’s Senate primary, took the stage to end his bid and endorse his Trump-endorsed rival, Representative Mike Rogers.

“Unifying the party,” Mr. Trump said as he took back the microphone, “it’s beautiful to watch.”

Michigan is seen as a critical battleground state for both Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden in November. It is one of several that Mr. Trump won in 2016 only to lose to Mr. Biden four years later.

The decision to hold Mr. Trump’s first joint rally with Mr. Vance in the state offered another signal of its electoral importance. Mr. Trump, when he announced Mr. Vance’s selection, singled out his ability to win over workers in the state, and Mr. Vance several times in his convention speech mentioned ***working-class*** people in Michigan as crucial to the nation.

Mr. Vance gave a well-received 13-minute speech — a small fraction of Mr. Trump’s lengthy remarks — more than an hour before Mr. Trump took the stage. He returned later to introduce the former president to raucous applause, and the two embraced in front of the crowd.

“I chose him because he’s for the worker,” Mr. Trump said after Mr. Vance left the stage. “He’s for the people that work so hard and perhaps weren’t treated like they should have been.”

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump, right, and his new running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio, at a campaign rally in Grand Rapids, Mich., on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Tougher Than The Rest***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3M-9661-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1736 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

Politics is a tough business, so you'd think most politicians would be tough people. In fact, in my experience they're often not. A lot of people go into politics because they want to be universally liked, and from Abraham Lincoln on down, many of them have detested personal confrontation. Several years ago it occurred to me that in every administration I had covered to that point -- from Reagan through Obama -- the White House staff seemed to fear the first lady more than they feared the commander in chief.

This has obviously changed in recent times. Donald Trump was tough, mean and self-pitying (a nifty combination). President Biden is tougher than he looks. And the woman who is now Trump's chief challenger, Nikki Haley, is one of the toughest politicians in America -- by which I mean confrontational, willing to hammer her foes.

When you read accounts of her days in South Carolina, her bellicosity fairly ripples off the pages. In a fantastic 2021 profile in Politico Magazine, Tim Alberta quotes a former South Carolina Republican Party chair: ''Listen, man. She will cut you to pieces. Nikki Haley has a memory. She has a memory. She will remember who was with her and who was against her. And she won't give a second chance to anyone who she thinks did her wrong.''

But the most telling quotation is the one Haley gave to Alberta herself: ''I don't trust, because I've never been given a reason to trust.''

She grew up in the only Indian American family in a small ***working-class*** South Carolina town. The stories she tells about her girlhood are often about exclusion: being disqualified from a beauty pageant because it was set up to allow for only one Black and one white winner (though some locals dispute this); a fruit-stand vendor calling the cops because her father was a brown-skinned man wearing a turban. She once described her childhood as ''survival mode.''

Today, many people think of Haley as part of the older Republican establishment, a political descendant of the Bushes and Mitt Romney who suddenly finds herself trying to thrive in a party dominated by Trumpian populists. This is not quite right. Haley entered politics as a Tea Party maverick. As Hanna Rosin noted in The Atlantic in 2011, the Tea Party was female-led, and most of its supporters were right-wing women who, among other things, wanted to take on the Republican old boys network. Women like Haley and Sarah Palin presented themselves as whistle-blowers, taking down corruption.

Haley ran her first campaign, for state legislature, against a 30-year Republican incumbent. What ensued was classic South Carolina politics. A mailer went out attacking her and referring to her by her birth name, Nimrata Randhawa. A whisper campaign suggested she was Buddhist or Hindu. (In fact, she is a Christian who attends a Methodist church). When she got to the legislature, she didn't fit in with the old guard. ''I'm telling you, nobody liked her. Nobody wanted to work with her. They hated her,'' another state representative, who became a close friend, told Alberta.

Alberta captured this period of her career this way: ''She came to be loathed by many of her fellow Republicans for not being a team player, for going rogue on certain votes and procedures that made them look slimy or stupid to her benefit.''

In 2010, she was given little shot at winning the governor's race until Palin visited the state to enthusiastically endorse her. Once again the rough rules of South Carolina politics prevailed. Two men surfaced at the height of the campaign, including a lobbyist who had worked for one of her rivals, claiming to have had affairs with her, while lacking evidence. A fellow lawmaker called her a ''raghead.''

After his own political career imploded, Gov. Mark Sanford gave Haley a $400,000 donation at a crucial moment in the campaign. ''And then she cut me off,'' Sanford recalled to Alberta. ''This is systematic with Nikki: She cuts off people who have contributed to her success. It's almost like there's some weird psychological thing where she needs to pretend it's self-made.''

As governor it was more of the same. She frequently went to war with lawmakers to get her agenda passed. ''I have called out legislators from Year 1,'' she once declared. ''I go to their districts and call them out. I mean, it's what I'm known for. I put their votes up on Facebook.'' One of her great successes as governor was relentlessly lobbying corporations to build their plants in South Carolina. When she left office, the state had 400,000 more jobs than when she entered.

She brought the same pummeling manner to her job as U.N. ambassador. All U.S. ambassadors to the United Nations defend Israel, but Haley made it the centerpiece of her job. She waded into a famously anti-Israel institution with fists raised. She was one of the people who made the Trump administration so supportive of the Jewish state. When close allies like Britain and France voted for a resolution condemning the U.S. decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, she did not invite their representatives to a U.S. Mission reception, which is practically war in U.N. terms.

Seen through one lens, she is a ruthlessly ambitious person who is happy to bruise people to succeed. Seen from another perspective, she is a brave renegade who fights the old guard to get things done. Seen through a third lens, she is a needlessly competitive personality who makes enemies in profusion. All three viewpoints seem to contain a piece of the truth.

A few things need to be said to complicate this picture. First, though she knows how to play hardball, her heart has not been callused over. When nine parishioners at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston were gunned down by a white supremacist in 2015, she was vulnerable and grieving in public and private. She went to all of the funerals. Her friends worried she was losing a dangerous amount of weight. Mobilized by sadness and anger, she helped persuade more than two-thirds of both houses of the legislature to remove the Confederate flag from the State Capitol grounds, which was an astounding act of political craftsmanship and moral fortitude that even her detractors admire.

Second, if she's often tough as nails, she has generally been tough as tulips about Donald Trump. As The Times' Sharon LaFraniere has reported, she was not one of the Trump officials who would stand up to try to prevent him from carrying out his more crackpot ideas. ''Every time she criticizes me, she uncriticizes me about 15 minutes later,'' Trump told Vanity Fair in 2021, which is pretty accurate.

I wonder if Haley would be seen as tougher if she were a man. I also wonder if her toughness was forged by being a woman in a conservative, male-dominated state. Maya Angelou offered some wisdom on female toughness in her 1993 book, ''Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now.'' She wrote, ''The woman who survives intact and happy must be at once tender and tough. She must have convinced herself, or be in the unending process of convincing herself, that she, her values and her choices are important. In a time and world where males hold sway and control, the pressure upon women to yield their rights of way is tremendous. And it is under those very circumstances that the woman's toughness must be in evidence.''

By this measure, Haley has succeeded amazingly well. But then Angelou added a wrinkle: A woman ''will need to prize her tenderness and be able to display it at appropriate times in order to prevent toughness from gaining total authority and to avoid becoming a mirror image of those men who value power above life, and control over love.''

There's often been a wariness around Haley, people worrying she's mostly about herself. Donald Trump, who really is all about himself, has somehow made himself into the much-beloved tribune of the ***working class*** in a way his opponents just haven't.

The Republican Party has come a long way in the last few decades. The party is no longer in the mood for compassionate conservatism or even Ronald Reagan's sunny optimism. Republicans feel besieged and want a bruiser type who will defend them. In their different ways, Trump and Haley are both products of and architects of the current G.O.P. vibe. Neither Trump nor Haley sits around reading Adam Smith and Edmund Burke. Neither Trump nor Haley has what you would call fully developed philosophies. Neither is conventionally partisan; both made their bones attacking the G.O.P. establishment, not working their way up within it.

Mike Pence was too boring to match the party's current mood. Tim Scott was too nice. Trump and the woman who is now his leading challenger are different versions of a bare-knuckled ethos, and if you look at their records, it's pretty clear that Haley is actually more effectively tough than Trump. She's confrontational in pursuit of policy, whereas he is confrontational in pursuit of ratings. She's a doer; his attention span isn't long enough to make him an effective executive. If Republicans want someone who will execute their agenda, they should go with her.

Unfortunately, Haley's support in the G.O.P. seems to have a low ceiling. This campaign is about toughness and finding someone who can defend a party that feels under siege, but it's also about identity and class. Haley is surging, but she is surging mostly among college-educated voters. In general, Haley does better among more educated voters than less, slightly better among men than women, and she does poorly among evangelicals, which these days is as much a nationalist identity category as a religious one.

Trump also has an advantage that Haley can't match. He is reviled by the coastal professional classes. That's a sacred bond with ***working-class*** and rural voters who feel similarly slighted and unseen. The connection between ***working-class*** voters and a shady real estate billionaire is a complex psychological phenomenon that historians will have to unpack. But it's a bond no amount of Nikki Haley toughness can break.

Source photograph by Christian Monterrosa, via Getty Images.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/opinion/haley-trump-iowa-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/13/opinion/haley-trump-iowa-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN MONTERROSA, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR4, SR5.

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[***How Peer Pressure Affects Voting***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM3-W9B1-DXY4-X1SK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1976 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:** Why some voters of color no longer support the Democratic Party.

**Body**

Why some voters of color no longer support the Democratic Party.

The political scientists Chryl Laird and Ismail White used a creative strategy several years ago to study the voting patterns of Black Americans. Laird and White took advantage of the fact that some surveys are conducted through in-person interviews — and keep track of the interviewer’s race — while other surveys are done online.

In the online surveys that Laird and White examined, about 85 percent of Black respondents identified as Democrats. The share was almost identical during in-person surveys done by non-Black interviewers. But when Black interviewers conducted in-person surveys, more than 95 percent of Black respondents identified as Democrats.

It is a fascinating pattern: Something about talking with a person of the same race makes Black Americans more likely to say they are Democrats. As Laird and White concluded, voting for Democrats has been a behavioral norm in Black communities. People feel social pressure from their neighbors, relatives and friends to support the Democratic Party.

Similar social pressure exists in other communities, of course. A liberal who attends a white evangelical Southern church — or a conservative who lives in an upscale Brooklyn neighborhood — knows the feeling. And Laird and White emphasized in their 2020 book, [*“Steadfast Democrats,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that Black Americans have behaved rationally by sticking together. It has allowed them to assert political influence despite being a minority group. Consider that President Biden’s vice president and his only Supreme Court pick are both Black.

Still, the political unity of Black Americans is surprising in some ways. “Although committed to the Democratic Party, African Americans are actually one of the most conservative blocs of Democratic supporters,” White and Laird wrote.

One important thing about behavioral norms, though, is that they can change. If voting Republican becomes more acceptable in Black communities, the number of moderate and conservative Black Americans who do so could rise quickly.

Ideology vs. identity

This newsletter is the second in a two-part series on [*the recent rightward shift of Black, Asian and Hispanic voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Today, I want to look at possible explanations.

The first is the social dynamic that White and Laird described. It also applies to Asian and Hispanic voters. Across minority groups, voting Republican recently seems to have become more acceptable.

“Nonwhite Americans who previously may have voted Democrat for identity-based reasons are increasingly likely to vote more sincerely according to their conservative ideology,” Emily West, a political scientist at the University of Pittsburgh, [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) Thomas Edsall of Times Opinion.

The second explanation is that today’s Democratic Party is out of step with the views of many voters of color, especially ***working-class*** voters. On some issues, the problem fits a simple right-left framing: Democrats are to the left of most voters.

Even when elected Democrats are more moderate, the party’s image is shaped by highly educated progressives who have an outsize voice because they dominate higher education, the entertainment industry and parts of the media and nonprofit sectors. It’s worth remembering, as the Pew Research Center has reported, that the most liberal slice of Americans is [*disproportionately white*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing):

Voters of color are often more moderate. They are more religious on average than progressive Democrats. Most voters of color favor [*tighter border security*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Many support expansions of charter schools or vouchers. Many [*favor*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) both police reform and more policing. Many support civil rights for trans Americans — but not allowing all athletes [*to choose*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) whether they participate in female or male sports.

Racial minorities, as Marc Hetherington of the University of North Carolina told Thomas Edsall, “are much more tradition-minded and authority-minded” than white Democrats.

Other political issues are more nuanced than a right-left framing. Ro Khanna, a Democratic congressman from California, [*has suggested*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that voters of color may be frustrated with his party’s lack of a bold economic vision, and that’s plausible. Many ***working-class*** voters lean to the right on social issues and to the left on economic issues (but not so far left as to be intrigued by socialism). They favor a higher minimum wage, trade restrictions and expanded government health insurance.

Biden favors these policies, too. But Democrats have come to be seen as the party of the establishment, my colleague Nate Cohn notes. Many ***working-class*** voters see Democrats as socially liberal defenders of the status quo. Republicans, especially Donald Trump, increasingly seem to represent change, as ill-defined as that change may be.

Political diversity

My list here isn’t exhaustive. ([*Here is Nate’s list*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).) Some voters of color, like white voters, also seem frustrated by recent price increases and worried about Biden’s age. And voters of color are obviously a politically diverse group, who include many liberals and who have a wide array of views.

But that’s the point. Many Democrats have imagined people of color to be a uniform, loyal, progressive group, defined by their race. They are not. The party will have a better chance to win their votes if it spends more time listening to what these voters believe.

Related: I tell the story of modern U.S. immigration policy in an episode of Freakonomics Radio called [*“What both parties get wrong about immigration.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* Civilians collect bodies from the front lines in Ukraine. [*See photos of their work*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Despite sanctions, the West still depends on Russia for [*products like titanium*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), The Washington Post reports.

Israel-Hamas War

* Antony Blinken, the secretary of state, has [*arrived in Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). It is his final stop on a Middle East tour in pursuit of a cease-fire in Gaza.

1. House Speaker Mike Johnson said he would invite Benjamin Netanyahu [*to address a joint session of Congress*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. What is antisemitism? A Columbia University task force would [*rather not say.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

More International News

* In Wales, Vaughan Gething [*became the first Black person*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to lead a national government in Europe.

1. Luis Rubiales, the former Spanish soccer head who kissed a female player against her will, faces arrest as part of an [*investigation into accusations*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) of corruption and money laundering.
2. The U.S. is trying to keep its troops in Niger after a junta [*said troops had to leave*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Business

* The Justice Department sued Apple and [*accused it of violating antitrust laws*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) by creating a smartphone monopoly.

1. As the U.S. considers banning TikTok, India is a case study: A few years ago, [*the country blocked the platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Users just moved to other sites.
2. Reddit shares [*rose 48 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the company’s first day of trading.

2024 Elections

* This year, Republican Senate nominees [*are very rich*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). The party sought candidates who could finance their own campaigns to counter Democrats’ fund-raising advantage.

1. Electric vehicles are central to Biden’s strategy to combat climate change. Trump has [*escalated his criticism of the cars*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. Trump’s new fund-raising deal with the Republican National Committee ensures that donations first [*go to the PAC that pays his legal bills*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) before going to the party.

* No Labels, the centrist group that has pledged to run a third-party presidential campaign, [*has failed to recruit a candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Deadlines to appear on state ballots are approaching.

1. Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, who faces federal bribery charges, said he wouldn’t seek re-election as a Democrat. He left open the possibility of [*running as an independent*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on Politics

* Congress aims to pass a bill today to fund the government through September. Without an agreement, a partial government shutdown [*will begin at midnight*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Sixteen Republican-led states [*sued the Biden administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) over its decision to stop approving permits for new natural gas terminals.
2. Shortly before the Jan. 6 Capitol attack, Trump told Mike Pence that certifying Biden’s 2020 election victory [*would be “a political career killer,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) according to an aide.

Other Big Stories

* Surgeons in Boston transplanted a [*genetically engineered pig kidney*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) into a patient. Doctors hope the procedure will someday make dialysis obsolete.

1. In Mississippi, six officers were sentenced for torturing people. Their cases revealed details of a sheriff’s department that [*encouraged deputies to use extreme violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Opinions

Growing support for the Republican Party among racial minorities could be [*a good thing for American politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), David French writes.

The United States and the press should do everything in their power to win the release of the [*two American journalists in Russian prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), the Times editorial board writes.

For Republicans, [*the key to winning the Senate*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) is to make sure Trump feels appreciated. So far, it’s working, Michelle Cottle writes.

Here is a column by Paul Krugman on [*why Ohio voters like Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

For the birds: Some parrot owners have turned to children’s mobile games to [*keep the pets engaged*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Ghost Army: A special group of American troops waged psychological war on the Germans in World War II. [*Only a few survive*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Lawsuit: The National Park Service is trying to go cashless in some locations. Visitors who want to be off the grid [*have objected*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Today’s Great Read: He was arguably the world’s most famous psychedelic researcher. [*Was he a true believer?*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

Lives Lived: M. Emmet Walsh always made an impression, no matter how small the part, as a character actor in films like “Blade Runner” and “Knives Out.” He [*died at 88*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

N.C.A.A. tournament: Oakland, a No. 14 seed, [*beat No. 3 seed Kentucky*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Oakland’s Jack Gohlke hit 10 3-pointers (and attempted no 2-pointers).

More upsets: Three No. 11 seeds — Duquesne, N.C. State and Oregon — also took down higher-seeded opponents. [*Read more about the upsets*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Busted brackets: A total of 2,400 Morning readers entered our men’s tournament pool. After one day, no perfect brackets remain.

M.L.B.: Shohei Ohtani and the Dodgers [*refused to comment*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) a day after a betting scandal involving the player’s former translator.

Basketball: The G League Ignite — once an innovative path for high school prospects to reach the N.B.A. — [*will shut down*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) after this season.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Affordable beauty: California’s Monterey Peninsula connotes wealth, with exclusive spots like the Pebble Beach golf courses and towns like Carmel-by-the-Sea. But it is possible to enjoy the beautiful seaside area [*without depleting your bank account*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), writes Elaine Glusac, The Times’s Frugal Traveler columnist.

She suggests visiting in winter — “a quiet and thrifty time of year” — and enjoying parks and preserves. You can find unsung hotels in the old part of Monterey, like the Hotel Abrego ($130 a night), with an easy walk to the lively downtown area. And splurge on the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which is worth the $60 admission.

More on culture

* The Free Blockbuster project, which sets up [*neighborhood DVD lending libraries,*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) has an answer to viewers’ streaming fatigue.

1. The novelist Lorrie Moore won a National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction for “I Am Homeless if This Is Not My Home.” [*Read more about the book*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Top these [*delicious doubles*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) with mint-cilantro chutney or tamarind sauce.

Cultivate a healthier relationship [*with your phone*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Wear [*a good raincoat*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Snuggle into [*a throw blanket*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Take [*our news quiz*](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 pangrams were detoxified and toxified.

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) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

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

P.S. Jess Bidgood is rejoining The Times [*to lead the On Politics newsletter*](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: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rory Doyle for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Paradox of Trump's G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKD-DDM1-JBG3-6326-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1736 words

**Byline:** By Julius Krein

**Body**

Before last week's Republican convention, Donald Trump seemed to be moving away from the populism that characterized his 2016 campaign. ''This time around, the former president isn't even pretending to stand up to corporate power,'' Rogé Karma observed in The Atlantic. ''He's defending big business, cozying up to billionaires, and wooing C.E.O.s.''

When Mr. Trump named Senator JD Vance of Ohio as his running mate, though, pundits quickly concluded that he was doubling down on populism. Mr. Vance has been a leading critic of Reagan-Bush policy orthodoxy in the G.O.P., has expressed skepticism of further corporate tax cuts and has even voiced approval of President Biden's Federal Trade Commission chair, Lina Khan, whose aggressive antitrust enforcement has angered big business. In his convention speech, Mr. Vance denounced NAFTA and China trade deals and promised to prioritize American workers over multinational corporations.

On the other hand, in a long interview with Bloomberg (conducted in late June) that came out after the announcement of Mr. Vance's selection, Mr. Trump hardly sounded like a firebrand economic populist. He floated the idea of reducing corporate tax rates to 15 percent and said he'd consider the chief executive of JPMorgan Chase, Jamie Dimon, as a potential Treasury secretary.

Mr. Trump's own convention speech hardly clarified his policy priorities. He simultaneously promised to cut taxes, leave Social Security unchanged, reduce the deficit, raise tariffs and lower inflation.

Mr. Trump's Republican Party thus presents a paradox. On the one hand, Mr. Trump has clearly succeeded in uniting the party around him. At the same time, the Republican policy conversation has only grown more diffuse -- if not confusing and cacophonous. In other words, Mr. Trump's consolidated control of the Republican Party has had the surprising effect of making its policies more, not less, unsettled.

We saw plenty of evidence of this throughout the Republican convention and in the party platform. Speakers on the first day alone ranged from anti-union, pro-free-trade, low-taxes Senator Ron Johnson to Teamsters union President Sean O'Brien, who excoriated Amazon, Uber and other giant corporations for exploiting workers and selling out national interests.

The party's official platform offers divergent planks without any attempt to reconcile them. Commentators have already highlighted a number of apparent contradictions: Tighter labor markets resulting from a crackdown on illegal immigration and ''the largest deportation operation in American history,'' coupled with more tariffs, would, at least in the immediate term, seem to conflict with the goal of lowering inflation. According to some analysts, including at times Senator Vance, the call to ''keep the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency'' might inhibit the goal of turning the United States into a ''manufacturing superpower.''

Since 2016, pundits and politicians have divided the Republican Party into pro-Trump and anti-Trump, or populist and establishment, factions. These factions are said to have fundamentally different constituencies (the party's ***working-class*** base versus major donors, corporate lobbies and establishment institutions) that pursue fundamentally different ends (MAGA nationalism versus global neoliberalism). The trajectory of the Trump 2024 campaign, however, suggests it may be time to retire, or at least revise, this framing.

G.O.P. factional quarrels still occur, but the combatants no longer contest the party's first principles or ultimate aims. Mr. Trump cannot be seriously challenged in setting the goals of the party; those who continue to reject him, like Liz Cheney, have simply become irrelevant to Republican politics.

Instead, factional battles are largely confined to disputes over the means to achieve Trumpian goals. Additionally, the lines between factions are blurring. Senator Vance is enthusiastically supported by the party's economic nationalists, but he is also a favorite of Silicon Valley donors, including Elon Musk, a group otherwise known for libertarian and socially liberal instincts.

In this sense, the Trump G.O.P. is increasingly coming to resemble the Democratic Party of recent decades (leaving aside the convulsions of the current moment). Paralleling Republican fault lines, centrist Democrats can be distinguished from progressive populists, but the two sides seldom question each other's basic legitimacy in the way that Never Trumpers once sought to purge MAGA populism.

Both Democratic factions, each with its own respectable and sometimes overlapping donor base, typically claim to share the same worldview and primarily debate the means to realizing it. Centrists as well as progressives, for example, claim they want to reduce housing costs for low earners, but centrists tend to argue that environmental permitting reform and relaxing zoning restrictions are better policy tools than rent control and subsidization.

The G.O.P. increasingly replicates these dynamics. As the convention speeches indicate, middle-of-the road Republicans like Senator Tim Scott are now generally happy to follow Mr. Trump's lead in calling for a revival of U.S. manufacturing and other populist goals. Look closer, however, and there remains a divide over how to get there. Some stick to a conventional conservative tool kit of tax cuts and deregulation; others urge more interventionist measures like tariffs.

But the Republican factional divide differs in key respects from the Democrats'. On the Democratic side, most of the party's technocrats align firmly with the centrist faction. When it comes to the unglamorous business of governing and staffing bureaucracies, this gives centrist Democrats a significant advantage over both their progressive and Republican rivals. Centrist liberals still tend to think of themselves -- and are still often perceived as -- the adults in the room. Agree with their policy positions or not, they typically emphasize pragmatism and responsibility over progressives' moral and ideological purity, and policy rigor over populist bluster.

Among Republicans, by contrast, there are not many competent technocrats in either faction. To be sure, there are more intellectuals and organizations on the populist right than there were eight years ago, and the staffing of a second Trump administration would almost certainly be better organized than in 2017. But populist Republicans still lack institutional depth.

Legacy conservative institutions remain well endowed, but their number of serious policy scholars with credibility among both Republican officeholders and the wider intellectual elite is vanishingly small.

This problem is visible in the party platform, perhaps the clearest indication to date of Mr. Trump's own policy preferences and the G.O.P.'s center of gravity.

The platform's 20 bullet points feature many populist economic commitments (''seal the border,'' ''stop outsourcing,'' ''no cuts'' to Social Security and Medicare). Perhaps surprisingly, the platform does not call for making all of the 2017 tax cuts permanent, mentioning only the expanded standard deduction and child tax credit. But the ensuing 10 chapters of explanatory gloss are light on specifics -- the whole document is only 16 pages -- with details on the more populist elements virtually nonexistent. There is a vague mention of tariffs, but little in the way of a plan to ''turn the United States into a manufacturing superpower'' or ''modernize our military,'' which might involve industrial policy measures or defense procurement reform.

A common response to such omissions is that Mr. Trump has always been a ''fake populist,'' out to dupe gullible voters with deceptive sloganeering. This explanation seems too glib. Would Mr. Trump, at this point, lose any support for dropping or softening talk of reshoring and tariffs? It seems unlikely -- Republican economic nationalists have nowhere else to turn, while many donors would cheer -- and yet, these items remain.

Mr. Trump did not hesitate to support softening longstanding G.O.P. commitments to a federal abortion ban or traditional definitions of marriage in this year's platform. It seems difficult to argue, then, that Mr. Trump's economic populism is totally insincere, though it remains questionable whether he and his inner circle are capable of developing a coherent agenda, much less carrying out one.

On this point, the Reagan-Bush old guard would still like to claim for itself the mantle of policy seriousness and administrative competence. But its ideological adherence to fundamentally discredited policy positions undermines its credibility. Tax cuts, at least in recent decades, have not paid for themselves. The erosion of the U.S. industrial base is a major problem.

Whether or not one agrees with the solutions offered by right-populists, they are responding to real problems, and on issues such as Social Security, they have displayed more political realism and flexibility than, say, Bush-era Republicans. Nevertheless, they have not quite established themselves as a new center -- among Republicans or in the nation as a whole -- and many seem to prefer to cast themselves as insurgents and outsiders rather than assume the responsibilities of a governing establishment.

Here, the G.O.P.'s crosscutting policy impulses arguably reflect deeper challenges that go beyond partisan dynamics. With the rise of China as a peer competitor, increasingly assertive and aligned with Russia, we face a new geopolitical and geoeconomic order. The tailwinds supporting consumption and financial asset appreciation that arose from the unipolar moment after the Cold War -- and which covered over U.S. industrial decline -- are slowly fading.

America faces many difficult choices in the years ahead that will be costly for any party or politician to confront. More and more, these incoherent policy positions simply point to problems with no easy solutions, and decisions that no one wants to make.

Julius Krein is the editor of American Affairs.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/23/opinion/trump-vance-republican-party.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/23/opinion/trump-vance-republican-party.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY THALASSA RAASCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR4.

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[***Trump’s V.P. Reveal May Be This Week. Or Not.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CFJ-DRP1-DXY4-X08N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 10, 2024 Wednesday 06:05 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** Michael C. Bender Michael C. Bender is a Times political correspondent covering Donald J. Trump, the Make America Great Again movement and other federal and state elections.

**Highlight:** Donald J. Trump’s monthslong search for a running mate, orchestrated to feed speculation and attention, is nearing an end, but questions of who, and when, remain.

**Body**

Donald J. Trump’s monthslong search for a running mate, orchestrated to feed speculation and attention, is nearing an end, but questions of who, and when, remain.

Donald J. Trump’s running-mate search, as much a theatrical production as a political one, is now in its final act.

In exactly one week, the Republican vice-presidential nominee is scheduled to address the party’s convention in Milwaukee.

The leading contenders — Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida — have sat for repeated cable news interviews. They’ve attended campaign fund-raisers, mingled with members of Mr. Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort and flown on the Trump plane. And they’ve all completed perhaps the most crucial test: addressing the devoted core of the former president’s MAGA movement onstage at a Trump rally.

Mr. Trump has orchestrated his monthslong selection process with the flair and finesse of a seasoned marionette puppeteer, relying on dramatic pronouncements to feed speculation, draw in his audience and try to redirect any lingering attention away from his 34 felony convictions.

Now, in true Trumpian fashion, the finale includes a bit of suspense.

Just one public campaign event remains on Mr. Trump’s schedule before the Republican National Convention — a rally in western Pennsylvania on Saturday. Several of the former president’s allies believe he may want to bring his running mate to the rally. Some aides are preparing for the possibility that Mr. Trump will announce his pick on social media just before the event.

Mr. Trump’s preference, however, seems to be revealing his pick in a made-for-television announcement onstage at the convention. When asked in an interview on Monday about the timing of his announcement, he spent much of his answer talking about craving such a moment.

“I’d love to do it during the convention,” Mr. Trump said on Fox News. “It would be a very interesting buildup and important for the convention.”

But the former president also acknowledged a rather significant problem with such a situation: He might be the only person in his campaign who prefers that timing.

The endless speculation has fatigued many Trump allies, who are eager for him to announce his decision. Pushing it to next week would disrupt the Trump aides who are working around the clock to iron out innumerable logistics to prepare for the four-day convention, which is expected to draw more than 50,000 Republican officials, activists, donors and members of the media.

Another example of a complication with a reveal in Milwaukee: Convention rules require the party to nominate its presidential ticket on Monday, and it would be hard to nominate a ticket that’s not yet officially announced. Republicans could vote on a rule change, but that would be just one of many changes that would ripple across the convention program.

“My people say that’s a little complicated,” Mr. Trump said during the Fox News interview, suggesting his timing for an announcement would be most likely “probably a little before the convention — but not much.”

A campaign spokesman said that only Mr. Trump knows who he will select, and that he will announce the decision when he is ready.

On Saturday, Mr. Trump will visit Butler County, Pa., a predominantly white and largely rural area about 50 miles east of the Ohio border that has long supported Republican presidential candidates. The county is nestled in a region near the state’s western border where pro-gun, pro-coal voters — less diverse and less highly educated than the rest of the state — have mostly shed past ties to the Democratic Party and have become reliable Republican supporters.

The location would seem to be an ideal setting to introduce Mr. Vance, the former venture capitalist and best-selling author of “[*Hillbilly Elegy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html).” He would appear to offer more natural appeal to Mr. Trump’s white, ***working-class*** base than would Mr. Burgum, a wealthy former software executive, or Mr. Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants and a fluent Spanish speaker.

Another potential hint: One of the closest Ohio towns to Butler County is East Palestine, where Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump [*teamed up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) in February 2023 to criticize the Biden administration’s response to a [*train derailment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) that forced residents to evacuate and escape toxic chemicals. The White House pushed back at the time by accusing the Trump administration of having dismantled safety measures that were meant to prevent episodes like the East Palestine derailment.

Just five months earlier, when Mr. Vance was running for Senate, he joined Mr. Trump at a campaign rally only to be [*mocked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) by the former president, whose endorsement had helped deliver the party’s nomination to Mr. Vance. “J.D. is kissing my ass he wants my support so much,” Mr. Trump told the crowd.

But after the East Palestine event, which Mr. Trump later described to aides as an effective and energizing campaign stop, he has been more generous when speaking about Mr. Vance.

At a campaign rally in Ohio in March, Mr. Trump mentioned Mr. Vance at least a dozen times, including once to express some mix of surprise and relief that the first-term senator “has really turned out to be great.”

“When you endorse somebody you don’t know, you think they’re going to be good and they turn on you,” Mr. Trump said, adding that Mr. Vance was “a young star and he’s a great senator and a real fighter.”

Mr. Vance briefly joined Mr. Trump onstage, where he attacked Mr. Biden, praised Mr. Trump and claimed, [*mostly incorrectly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html), that “all of the net job growth under Biden’s presidency has gone to the foreign-born.”

“Let’s rebuild prosperity for America’s citizens and re-elect Donald J. Trump,” Mr. Vance said to cheers.

In May, Mr. Trump invited Mr. Burgum to a rally in Wildwood, N.J., where the former president praised the governor’s intellect and business acumen.

Mr. Burgum, a mild-mannered two-term governor, engaged the crowd in an energetic call-and-response about sending Mr. Trump back to the White House.

“OK one more time, and this one has to be so loud that they can hear it in Biden’s basement in Delaware,” Mr. Burgum said to laughter and applause.

On Tuesday, Mr. Rubio became the last of the three leading vice-presidential contenders to join Mr. Trump at a rally this year. Mr. Rubio has not campaigned for the presidential ticket as overtly as Mr. Vance or Mr. Burgum, both of whom are relative newcomers to Mr. Trump’s political orbit. Mr. Rubio, however, quietly developed a close relationship with Mr. Trump during their four years together in Washington.

Onstage at an event at Trump National Doral Golf Club near Miami on Tuesday, Mr. Rubio displayed his self-assuredness by gently ribbing the former president. He feigned ignorance about knowing the golf course’s owner and urged the crowd to plead with the former president to find an indoor venue for his next summer rally in South Florida.

Mr. Trump thanked Mr. Rubio, describing him to the crowd as “someone who has really become a friend of mine.”

“We had a vicious campaign for a while,” Mr. Trump said, referring to their caustic rivalry during the 2016 presidential primary. “He was tough, and he was smart and I got to really know him well over the years — and he’s a fantastic guy.”

He left it at that, keeping the suspense alive.

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio would appear to offer more natural appeal to Donald J. Trump’s base.; Mr. Trump has praised the business acumen of Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota; Senator Marco Rubio of Florida has developed a close relationship with Mr. Trump. This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2024

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[***Democrats' Mission: Win the Blue-Collar Vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FY-G5F1-DXY4-X3K3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 14, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1757 words

**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

We're covering a new poll about the Democratic Party, Donald Trump's court appearance and the N.B.A. finals.

About 60 percent of U.S. voters do not have a four-year college degree, and they live disproportionately in swing states. As a result, these voters -- often described as the American ***working class*** -- are crucial to winning elections. Yet many of them are deeply skeptical of today's Democratic Party.

Republicans retook control of the House last year by winning most districts with below-median incomes. In nearly 20 Western and Southern states, Democrats are virtually shut out of statewide offices largely because of their weakness among the white ***working class***. Since 2018, the party has also lost ground with Black, Asian and especially Latino voters.

Unless the party improves its standing with blue-collar voters, ''there's no way for progressive Democrats to advance their agenda in the Senate,'' according to a study that the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics, a left-leaning research group, released this morning.

The class inversion of American politics -- with most professionals supporting Democrats and more ***working-class*** people backing Republicans -- is one of the most consequential developments in American life (and, as regular readers know, a continuing theme of this newsletter).

Today, I'll be writing about what Democrats might do about the problem, focusing on a new YouGov poll, conducted as part of the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics study. In an upcoming newsletter, I'll examine the issue from a conservative perspective and specifically how Republicans might alter their economic agenda to better serve their new ***working-class*** base.

A key point is that even modest shifts in the ***working-class*** vote can decide elections. If President Biden wins 50 percent of the non-college vote next year, he will almost certainly be re-elected. If he wins only 45 percent, he will probably lose.

'Fight for us all'

Elections can be tricky for social scientists to study. The sample sizes are small and idiosyncratic. Researchers can't conduct hundreds of elections in a laboratory, changing one variable at a time and analyzing how the results change. But researchers can conduct polls that pit hypothetical candidates against each other and see how the results change when the candidates' biographies, messages and policy proposals change.

This approach, which has become more common among pollsters, is the one that YouGov used. It focused on swing voters -- those who don't identify strongly with either party, many of whom are ***working class***. The poll described a pair of Democratic candidates, each with a biography and a campaign platform, and asked respondents which one they preferred.

Among the findings:

Voters preferred a candidate who was a teacher, construction worker, warehouse worker, doctor or nurse. The least popular candidate professions were lawyer and corporate executive.

Many effective messages involved jobs, including both moderate policies (like tax credits for training at small businesses) and progressive ones (like a federal jobs guarantee). ''People are obviously interested in good-paying jobs,'' said Bhaskar Sunkara, the founder of Jacobin, a leftist magazine that helped sponsor the project. ''They have an identity that's rooted in their work.''

Black and Latino candidates were slightly more popular than other candidates, mostly because some voters of color preferred candidates of color. (Related: Black candidates -- of different ideologies -- have beaten non-Black candidates in recent mayoral primaries and elections in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia, Matthew Yglesias of Substack pointed out to me.) But candidate messages that explicitly mentioned race were unpopular.

Voters liked Democrats who criticized both political parties as ''out of touch.'' There is real-world evidence to support this finding, too: Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona and Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio won close races last year while highlighting their differences with Democratic leaders, as Data for Progress, another research group, has noted.

Moderate social policies fared better than more liberal ones. The single most effective message in the poll was a vow to ''protect the border''; decriminalization of the border was very unpopular.

Swing voters liked tough, populist messages such as ''Americans who work for a living are being betrayed by superrich elites'' and ''Americans need to come together and elect leaders who will fight for us all.'' As Jared Abbott, the director of the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics, argued, ''Democrats need to be less concerned with rhetorical niceties.'' Doing so would hardly be new: Harry Truman and Franklin Roosevelt used such red-blooded language.

The bottom line

I find the study's conclusions fascinating because they are both original and consistent with other evidence. Democrats who have won difficult recent elections, including both progressives and moderates, have often presented a blue-collar image.

President Biden talks about growing up in a ***working-class*** neighborhood. Marie Gluesenkamp Pérez, who owns a car-repair shop, flipped a House district in Washington State partly by criticizing her own party for being elitist. Senator Sherrod Brown, the only Democrat to win statewide in Ohio since 2011, is a populist. So is John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, the only Senate candidate from either party to flip a seat last year.

Many Americans are frustrated with the country's direction, and they want candidates who will promise to fight for their interests. One of the vulnerabilities of today's Democratic Party, as my colleague Nate Cohn has written, is that it has come to be associated with the establishment.

More on politics

During a CNN town hall last night, Chris Christie called Donald Trump angry and vengeful.

Hard-right House Republicans will give Kevin McCarthy a reprieve from a weeklong blockade of the House floor to allow legislative business to move forward.

The Senate said it would investigate the merger between the PGA Tour and the Saudi-backed LIV Golf. (This story goes behind the scenes of the deal.)

THE LATEST NEWS

Trump Indictment

Trump will appear in court in Miami today.

He is expected to plead not guilty on charges that he illegally kept documents and obstructed the government's efforts to retrieve them.

Trump has tested several defenses, including painting himself as a victim. But the evidence already presented could make them hard to sustain in court.

Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee, will preside over the trial.

There have been about a dozen cases involving classified information in recent years. Many of them ended in prison sentences.

Business and Media

JPMorgan Chase will pay $290 million to the victims of Jeffrey Epstein. The bank kept him as a customer despite media reports about him abusing teenage girls.

Fox News told Tucker Carlson to stop posting videos on Twitter. Although Fox canceled his show, Carlson is under contract with the network until 2025.

The F.T.C. sued to stop Microsoft from buying Activision Blizzard, a major video game company.

Fred Ryan, the publisher and chief executive of The Washington Post, is stepping down.

Other Big Stories

Russia struck a residential building in central Ukraine this morning, killing at least six people. Rescuers were searching for survivors.

A climate trial has begun in Montana. Sixteen young people are accusing the state of robbing their future by embracing fossil fuels.

Keechant Sewell, the N.Y.P.D.'s first female commissioner, will resign after less than 18 months. She didn't give a reason.

New York City set a minimum wage for food delivery workers: $17.96 per hour before tips.

Opinions

Silvio Berlusconi provided a template for Trump's political career, Mattia Ferraresi writes.

To achieve universal health coverage, the United States should take inspiration from other countries, Aaron E. Carroll writes.

Ezra Klein and Carlos Lozada discuss how Ron DeSantis's books make the case for his candidacy over Trump's.

Here are columns by Lydia Polgreen on the decline of free news and Jamelle Bouie on Republican loyalty to Trump.

MORNING READS

Mr. Beast: His headline-grabbing giveaways made him the Willy Wonka of YouTube. Why do people think he's evil?

Health: Sleep is more challenging for women than for men.

Lives Lived: Treat Williams, famous for his roles in the movies ''Hair'' and ''Deep Rising'' and the TV show ''Everwood,'' died at 71.

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

N.B.A. finals: The Denver Nuggets beat the Miami Heat to win their first championship. Nikola Jokic cemented his spot in the pantheon of N.B.A. greats with a stunning performance.

A departure: The Oklahoma softball ace Jordy Bahl said she would leave the program.

A mission: Christian McCaffrey's voice was the last thing Logan Hale heard. Now McCaffrey, a 49ers running back, is helping fulfill his young fan's final wish.

ARTS AND IDEAS

An ancient reunion: It's not a coincidence that so many of the statues in museums are missing their heads: Throughout history, invaders would target statues when they attacked a city, decapitating the likenesses of local leaders to make a statement. And the statues that survived were often chopped up by smugglers, who wanted two artifacts to sell instead of one. Now, as Graham Bowley writes in The Times, those ancient acts of vandalism have made it hard for museums to match heads with their long-lost torsos.

More on culture

Pat Sajak is retiring from ''Wheel of Fortune'' after 41 seasons as its host.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which was at the center of recent scandals, is shutting down. The Golden Globes will continue.

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of ''Eat, Pray, Love,'' delayed her new novel indefinitely after being criticized for setting the story in Russia.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS ...

Make a one-pot vegetable pulao, which combines rice, vegetables and spices.

Try the best summer eats in New York.

Visit vineyards in California that are far from the Napa crowds.

Read an old magazine. You'll understand the past in a new way.

GAMES

Here are today's Spelling Bee and the Bee Buddy, which helps you find remaining words. Yesterday's pangram was expletive.

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

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/2023/06/13/briefing/democrats-elections-poll.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/briefing/democrats-elections-poll.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page a15.

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[***Hourslong Lines as Voters Surge to Polls in Venezuela’s Pivotal Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKC-WT21-JBG3-62XY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2024 Sunday 20:19 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; americas

**Length:** 1498 words

**Byline:** Anatoly Kurmanaev, Frances Robles and Julie Turkewitz Anatoly Kurmanaev covers Russia and its transformation following the invasion of Ukraine. Frances Robles is a Times investigative reporter covering the United States and Latin America. She has been a journalist for more than 30 years. Julie Turkewitz is the Andes Bureau Chief for The Times, based in Bogot&amp;#225;, Colombia, covering Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

**Highlight:** Sunday’s vote could end a generation of control by Venezuela’s socialist party. It could also usher in a period of profound uncertainty.

**Body**

Sunday’s vote could end a generation of control by Venezuela’s socialist party. It could also usher in a period of profound uncertainty.

They arrived at polling stations long before dawn, slept in the streets so they could be the first in line, and then cried as they cast their votes.

On Sunday, millions of Venezuelans headed to the ballot box in an election that will determine the fate of the socialist movement that has governed oil-rich, crisis-laden Venezuela for 25 years.

Polls started closing at 6 p.m., though some stayed open to accommodate people waiting to cast a ballot.

For the first time in more than a decade, the country’s authoritarian president, Nicolás Maduro, faces a strong challenger, [*Edmundo González*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html), a previously little-known former diplomat who has the backing of a popular leader, [*María Corina Machado*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html).

The vote represents an existential moment for Chavismo, the socialist movement that swept to power in Venezuela in 1999. Founded by former President Hugo Chávez, Mr. Maduro’s mentor, the movement promised to lift millions out of poverty.

For a time, it did. But, over the course of a generation, the movement shattered the nation’s democracy, presided over [*an economic contraction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html) unlike any seen outside of war and became the source of [*one of the largest migrant crises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html) in the world.

The country’s travails have drawn voters to Ms. Machado, a conservative former lawmaker who has promised to restore democracy and bring millions of Venezuelans back home. When the government barred her from running, her coalition managed to get Mr. González on the ballot instead.

On Sunday, turnout appeared to be high.

“There could be an earthquake, a landslide, rain — we are going to vote,” said Henry Mayora, 74, who arrived at his polling station in Caracas, the capital, at 2:30 a.m., hours before polls opened at 6.

Mr. Mayora, who walks with a cane and said he supports the opposition, was first in his line to cast a ballot.

For years the government of Mr. Maduro has used coercion, suppression and confusion to win elections. And throughout the day on Sunday, there were many complaints of problems with the vote, including polling places that opened hours late and voting machines that did not work.

Phil Gunson, a longtime analyst in Venezuela for International Crisis Group, said the irregularities were “within the ‘normal’ range” for an election in Venezuela in recent years.

Mr. Maduro has rarely, if ever, mentioned an outcome in which his party loses. In one recent campaign speech, he threatened that there would be a “blood bath” if his party lost.

But on Sunday, [*speaking to reporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html), he appeared to strike a more conciliatory tone.

“I recognize and will recognize the electoral arbiter,” he said, a reference to the country’s election body, “and I will make the electoral arbiter’s holy word be respected.”

The electoral council is headed by an acolyte of Mr. Maduro’s party, Elvis Amoroso.

At the Liceo Andrés Bello, a voting center in Caracas, a journalist with The New York Times watched roughly 15 men in unmarked black jackets temporarily block access to the center in the early morning. One volunteer vote monitor was punched.

Finally the crowd erupted in a chant — “We want to vote!” — and a long line of people began moving inside, more than an hour and a half after the official start of the balloting.

In the city of Maturín, in the east, a woman was hit by a bullet when men on motorcycles passed by a line of people waiting to vote, according to a former lawmaker, María Gabriela Hernández, who was at the scene.

In one voting place in the city of Carúpano, in the north, citizens and local journalists said that government security forces had tried to remove a vote monitor allied with the opposition and replace the person with a monitor lacking credentials from the country’s electoral body.

In the nearby city of Cumaná, five people said that a new unofficial voting station had been installed in a community center. A journalist working for The New York Times who tried to enter the site was blocked by supporters of the government.

At another polling place in Cumaná, roughly 50 armed police officers and national guardsmen had formed a long line outside by midmorning, wearing helmets and bullet-resistant vests, clearly projecting the state’s strength to anyone considering voting against those in power.

In the city of Maracaibo, in the west, voters reported having their voting places moved without their knowledge. Sonia Gómez, 65, said she had checked the election council website on Saturday to verify her polling station. But when she arrived on Sunday, election workers told her she was registered somewhere else.

“They moved us older people because they know we don’t have that much energy,” she said, “but I’m going to look for someone to take me to vote.”

In other places, voting went more smoothly. At one of Caracas’s largest voting centers, in the ***working-class*** Petare neighborhood, Rony Velázquez, a personal trainer, said he chose to vote for the government.

He said that he was sympathetic to the opposition but sought improvements within the current political system, out of fear that a different government would plunge the country into a new period of uncertainty.

“It would take them years to change things,” he said.

In an interview a day before the vote, Nicolás Maduro Guerra, a legislator and the son of the president, said he was sure his father would win re-election.

“We are confident in the victory, not because we are triumphalists, but because we have done our homework,” he said. But, in the case of a loss, “we will recognize the result and become the opposition,” he said. “Life goes on.”

If the main opposition candidate, Mr. González, wins and is allowed to take office, he is likely to face immense challenges, including the fact that nearly all institutions — including the legislature — remain loyal to Mr. Maduro.

Mr. Chávez, the founder of the country’s socialist project, swept to power in 1999 following a democratic election, vowing to remake a system led by a corrupt elite. Today, his movement runs a state widely viewed as corrupt, his party’s leaders are the elite — and Ms. Machado is promising to oust them.

Mr. Maduro has maintained his grip by [*punishing dissidents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html), crushing protests and co-opting state institutions. At the same time, the socialist model he once hailed has given way to brutal capitalism, economists say, with a small state-connected minority [*controlling much of the nation’s wealth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html).

Mr. Maduro is holding an election in part because of international pressure: The United States has [*promised to lift punishing economic sanctions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/06/world/americas/edmundo-gonzalez-venezuela-elections.html) on the country’s oil industry only if a competitive presidential vote is held.

Many analysts say Mr. Maduro never thought Ms. Machado and Mr. González would gain so much momentum.

And many in Venezuela believe that Mr. Maduro has little incentive to allow for a result that shows he has lost. The United States has accused him of narco-trafficking and has offered $15 million for information leading to his arrest. The International Criminal Court is investigating him for crimes against humanity. Both make him vulnerable to prosecution if he leaves office.

Francisco Rodríguez, a Venezuelan economist and professor of international affairs at the University of Denver, said he could foresee three possible outcomes.

First, the vote could represent the beginning of a democratic transition. Second, it could completely consolidate Mr. Maduro’s power.

Or, he said, “this could be — and is what I fear most — the moment of an escalation and a deepening of the conflict, the destructive conflict that continues to do more damage to society and the Venezuelan economy.”

Whatever result is announced, it is very likely to be disputed by the other side, possibly leading to protest and a violent response from the armed forces.

The next president wouldn’t assume power until January, leaving a lengthy period of uncertainty.

In recent interviews across the country, some supporters of Ms. Machado vowed to take to the streets if Mr. Maduro declared victory.

Luis Bravo, who attended a recent Machado campaign event, said that if Mr. Maduro claimed a win and protests began, he would join them.

“I am praying that it doesn’t come to that because, obviously, a lot of people are going to die. But if I have to, I have to.”

Reporting was contributed by Isayen Herrera and Alejandro Cegarra from Caracas, Venezuela, Nayrobis Rodríguez from Sucre, Venezuela, Sheyla Urdaneta from Maracaibo, Venezuela, and Genevieve Glatsky from Bogotá, Colombia.

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PHOTO: A long line outside a polling station in Caracas, Venezuela, on Sunday as people voted in what promises to be a watershed election. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Marian Carrasquero for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Democratic Party Is Having an 'Identity Crisis'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X03T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

''Look, I view myself as a bridge, not as anything else,'' Joe Biden said at a rally four years ago in Detroit, flanked by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris. ''There's an entire generation of leaders you saw standing behind me. They are the future of this country.''

That was the line then. Biden was the old warrior strapping on his armor one last time. Once Donald Trump was vanquished, the new guard could take over. ''If Biden is elected,'' a Biden adviser told Politico in 2019, ''he's going to be 82 years old in four years, and he won't be running for re-election.'' The Democratic Party was becoming something else. Perhaps a party built around democratic socialism, as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez would have it. Perhaps a party more firmly rooted in identity and diversity. Either way, Biden was the last of his kind.

Today, Biden is 81 years old and he is running for re-election. Trumpism is anything but vanquished. And the Democratic Party no longer looks to be in transition. The Squad feels more like a faction than a future. Few think leadership of the party will smoothly pass to Vice President Harris. Polls have long shown Democrats aren't enthusiastic about Biden running for re-election, but he's avoided any serious primary challenge or pressure to drop out.

The orderliness of the Democrats in the past few years stands in stark contrast to the chaos among Republicans. The G.O.P. has humiliated and deposed a string of House speakers and potential House speakers, run critics like Liz Cheney out of office and refused to admit Trump lost the 2020 election. And now Republicans plan to nominate Trump again. That has been and continues to be a driver of Democratic unity.

''Donald Trump posed such a serious threat to so many Democrats that there was a strong desire both for stability and to win,'' Ro Khanna, a Democratic congressman from Silicon Valley and co-chair of Sanders's 2020 campaign, told me. ''And that was at least as much a force or more of a force than the voices saying we need transformation.''

The cliché used to be that Democrats fell in love and Republicans fell in line. The reality, in recent years, has been that Democrats fall in line and Republicans fall apart. The Democratic Party's establishment has held, even as the Republican Party's establishment has buckled.

Perhaps the Democratic Party's establishment has held because the Republican Party's establishment has buckled.

The Trump era has stretched the Democratic Party into an awkward shape. It has become both the party of progressivism and of preservation, the party that promises both to defend American institutions and to reform them. It has not lost its yen for policy change. Biden's first term has been impressive, legislatively speaking, and the bills he and the Democrats passed are the most ambitious effort to change America's built environment since the construction of the Interstate System of highways, if not before.

But his re-election campaign began not by describing what he has transformed but by describing what he is still seeking to safeguard. ''Whether democracy is still America's sacred cause is the most urgent question of our time, and it's what the 2024 election is all about,'' Biden said. Before it is anything else, the national Democratic Party, for the ninth year running, is the not-Trump coalition. It is that first and everything else second.

''The antidemocratic radicalization of the Republican Party places a unique burden on the opposition party,'' Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut told me. ''When you have a movement trying to tear down the country's fundamentals, your responsibility and your burden widens. I think you can feel that tugging at the party's infrastructure. It's really hard to protect democracy and the rule of law while also trying to fundamentally change the way in which government gives people a shot at the American dream.''

Democrats are aware that what has energized their voters most is not the better life that has been gained through Democratic wins but the rights and certainties that have been lost to Republican victories. ''I've definitely been in rooms where people are frustrated they're spending so much of their time protecting things that our parents' generation fought for,'' Booker, of New Jersey, said. ''Union organizing rights, women's rights, civil rights, voting rights. A lot of the battles we're fighting are battles where we feel we're in the majority. That is frustrating but also motivating.''

The difficulty for Democrats is how to balance the two sides of their modern mission. There are voters for whom the defense of liberal democracy and the restoration of reproductive rights are paramount. There are also voters who see politics more instrumentally -- not as a titanic clash over the future of the Republic or fundamental rights but as an imperfect and usually disappointing tool in their own bid to live a slightly better and easier life.

Democrats look and sound a bit different in the states they most fear losing, where those less ideological voters are the margin between victory and defeat. In 2018 -- a banner year for Democrats -- Jared Polis won the Colorado governorship by almost 11 percentage points. In 2022 -- a much harder year for Democrats -- he won re-election by nearly 20 points.

''Democrats can't just be the party of protecting liberal democracy,'' he told me. ''That's not the top voting issue for most Americans. For them, it's really about how you'll improve my life. We focus our agenda on reducing costs -- particularly on reducing housing costs.''

In Michigan, the Democratic Party now holds both Senate seats, all statewide executive offices and both chambers of the State Legislature. Part of that, Lavora Barnes, Michigan's Democratic Party state chairwoman, told me, is that the Republican Party became so extreme that it scared off many of its traditional voters. But part of it is that the Democratic Party molded itself into a shape that fit an anxious electorate.

''We have become almost the pragmatic party,'' she said. ''The party that recognizes the importance of building a government that supports its people and supporting that government in the process. If you look at what's happened in Michigan and the sheer volume of work that this legislature was able to do in one year of this trifecta majority, it was about being practical.''

Democrats have won in Colorado and Michigan as well as in Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin in a deliberate, understated way. ''The experience of being in a really competitive state suggests that what the Democratic Party is, at its core, is very different than what you see on Twitter or in the national debates,'' Ben Wikler, the chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, said. ''Fundamentally, Democrats are the people who are in politics to make government work for people, which is a very old, New Deal conception of what the Democratic Party is about.''

As Wikler watched this message win Tony Evers the governorship of Wisconsin and Gretchen Whitmer the governorship of Michigan, he came to a theory of why it works so well in places where Democrats have so recently struggled. ''When you talk to inconsistent voters and swing voters, you see a very high level of cynicism that government can ever deliver,'' he told me. ''To be persuasive to them, you need to credibly describe what kind of change you can generate and on what kind of things. And it tends to be on things that people know the government already does. That's how you wind up with Whitmer and Evers running on fixing the damn roads in 2018. Then they did fix the damn roads. And then they got re-elected.''

Wikler likes to tell a story about the huge piles of coal in downtown Green Bay, near the Fox River, that have sat there for decades. ''It's an eyesore,'' he says. ''No one likes driving by giant piles of coal. And the Democratic mayor of Green Bay and our Democratic governor and now the president -- supported with a tiebreaking vote from Tammy Baldwin -- pulled together the money to move the piles of coal out of Green Bay. Democrats are the party that gets rid of the giant piles of coal.''

But Democrats have notched these wins with a different kind of coalition from the one they once had. Democrats now typically win college-educated voters and lose voters without a college education. This is not how Democrats think of themselves. ''We are the party of fighting for working families,'' Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada told me. The ***working class*** is core to the Democratic identity even as it has ceased to be the core of the Democratic coalition.

''We need people who can really speak to those ***working-class*** voters, and we still don't have enough of them in the Democratic Party,'' Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, the chairwoman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, told me. ''We don't have enough people holding that microphone and comfortable holding that microphone.''

Republicans were once the party of voters who liked things pretty much as they were. Voters who thought America was already great. Now many of those voters back Democrats. Those are the voters who've made the Democrats' anti-MAGA coalition into a winning force in American politics. But they have also placed a tension at the center of the party.

''We're the party that now wants to preserve American-style democracy and make sure things work, and to that extent, we become the party of the status quo,'' Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii told me. ''But there's discomfort in that. As progressives, we are accustomed to saying things are not good enough and need to change. The coalition we have has people who basically want nothing to change and people who want everything to change.''

Biden and his allies are framing this election as order against chaos. The party that gets things done against the party that will make America come undone. Kristen Soltis Anderson, a co-founder of the Republican polling firm Echelon Insights, believes that the Democrats are right that voters are craving stability. But she thinks they refuse to see that Trump is leading in many polls because voters believe that he is the one who might offer it. What Trump is pitching, she said, is a ''push for order -- 'I am going to be the one who secures the border. I'm going to be the one that cracks down on crime. I'm going to be the one that tries to stabilize your prices.''' To that list one might add Trump's skepticism of America's support for Ukraine and many voters' dislike of Biden's handling of the war in Gaza.

I've struggled with this portrayal of Trump as the candidate of stability. I doubt it can survive the gale-force winds of the actual campaign he will run, of the things people will hear and see from him when they tune in to the election. But I think Soltis Anderson is right when she says that Democrats are having trouble persuading voters of their central pitch: that they are the party of stability. It does not feel like a stable time. It is not Biden's fault that the world is tumultuous. But that does not mean he will not be blamed for it.

Biden's best argument is his record. Violent crime is falling, fast, and is now near a 50-year low. Inflation has fallen beneath 3 percent and done so without the recession economists overwhelmingly believed would come. Growth is strong, and rental prices are falling. More Americans than ever have health insurance, in part because of the boost Biden gave the Affordable Care Act. America is producing more energy than at any other time in its history -- and, despite the Biden administration's focus on climate change, that includes oil, where America now leads the world in production.

Some of this reflects Biden's policies, and some of it reflects larger trends, like the world unkinking itself after the derangement and dislocation of the pandemic. But Biden has what so many candidates would give anything for: a brightening reality around which to build a message.

Biden's worst argument is himself. The Democratic Party has been riven over the question of Biden's age and whether it does, or should, matter. Whether it should matter is irrelevant. To voters, it clearly does matter. It undercuts the heart of the Democratic Party's message. Democrats are selling themselves as the party of stability, the party that places competent, capable people in positions of power. But Biden is abnormal -- he is the oldest sitting president ever and seems it -- and he is not projecting to voters the competence and capability that his party is promising them.

There are ways a deft campaign might reframe this, but that argument needs to be made, and it needs to be made by Biden himself, who is, instead, doing far fewer real interviews and holding far fewer news conferences than his predecessors.

''I tell Democrats all the time, we have to run toward it, not run away from it,'' Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist, said. ''It's front of mind for voters, and we can't pretend that it isn't. I think we have to make the case that when you get older, you do not just lose a step. You also gain wisdom, experience and capabilities, and that wisdom, experience and capability have been central to Biden's success.''

At some point, though, both Biden and Trump will pass from the scene. And then some of the tensions in the Democratic Party that have been suppressed by their collision will re-emerge. One will be whether a party that represents those who like America as it is can also represent those who've been left out of this era of American prosperity. ''As long as I am in public service, I will resist the Democratic Party becoming the party of normalcy,'' Khanna told me. ''We need to be the party of transformational change. A lot of Americans are frustrated with the system, and that anger is justified.''

The other tension will be what it means for the party that believes itself to represent the ***working class*** to be losing ***working-class*** voters. ''It's hard to say you're the party of lower-income working families when they are rapidly leaving the ranks of your movement,'' Murphy said. ''I think our party has to squarely grapple with an identity crisis that will get worse as more and more low-income voters vote Republican even though we continue to claim those are the voters we are fighting for. Low-income voters get to decide for themselves who their chosen party is. If we don't start listening to them about what they really want, we will no longer be the party of the ***working class***, no matter how we label ourselves.''

For now, Biden is still trying to build his bridge. For now, Trump still stalks the Republic, uniting the normally fractious Democrats against his challenge. For now, the Democratic Party can perhaps be the party of both those who want transformational change and those who fear it. But for how long?

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PABLO DELCAN) (SR6-SR7) This article appeared in print on page SR6, SR7.

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[***Kid Rock Threw the Party. MAGA Faithful Brought the Joy, Rage and Smirnoff Ice.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CPC-GBM1-JBG3-6005-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1707 words

**Byline:** Richard Fausset Richard Fausset, based in Atlanta, writes about the American South, focusing on politics, culture, race, poverty and criminal justice.

**Highlight:** A music festival headlined by the pro-Trump musician offered a snapshot of a maturing American subculture, with a mash-up of hedonism, rebellion and beer-guzzling pursuit of happiness.

**Body**

Alan Jeanetti, a 73-year-old retired barber, was tailgating with friends before Rock the Country, a touring music festival headlined by the pro-Trump musician Kid Rock. Mr. Jeanetti’s head was wrapped in a star-spangled bandanna. His T-shirt declared, “I Don’t Care.”

Mr. Jeanetti actually cares about many things, including the toll that his political leanings have taken on his personal life. “I have lost so many friends because I was a Trump lover,” he said. “I wouldn’t do that to them.”

On this broiling July day in Anderson, S.C., however, Mr. Jeanetti had a safe space. A tribe. All around him were fellow fans of former President Donald J. Trump, many with big trucks lining the green fields around the outdoor concert venue. Trump flags fluttered above R.V.s and tents, alongside American flags and a few of the Confederate variety.

Some 22,500 people would come on this first day of the two-day festival, according to the local sheriff’s office, drawn by Kid Rock and an abundance of country performers. “It’s going to be another Woodstock One,” Mr. Jeanetti said.

Starting in April in Gonzales, La., and stopping in six other midsize Southern cities through late July, Rock the Country offered a vision of the MAGA movement in pure party mode.

The shows felt like Trump rallies without the former president, unburdened by policy talk, speeches from lesser-known G.O.P. players, and the buzz-kill tendencies of Mr. Trump himself, who tends to noodle at the lectern like a jam-band soloist.

What remained was a snapshot of a maturing American subculture, with unwritten conventions rivaling those of Deadheads or Swifties, and a dizzying mash-up of hedonism and piety, angry rebellion and beer-guzzling pursuit of happiness.

It was also more evidence that Kid Rock, the 53-year-old Michigan entertainer and festival co-owner whose real name is Robert James Ritchie, has emerged as a chief cultural standard-bearer of Trumpism. At the Republican National Convention in July, Mr. Ritchie, who says he [*golfs regularly*](https://www.happyscribe.com/public/the-joe-rogan-experience/2106-kid-rock) with Mr. Trump, performed shortly before the former president’s speech accepting the nomination, leading the crowd in chants of “Fight! Fight!” and setting a defiantly salty tone with his anthem, “American Bad Ass.”

In a phone interview last week, Mr. Ritchie said that Rock the Country had been designed to appeal to the conservative demographic that had made TV shows like “Duck Dynasty” and “Yellowstone” so popular.

Mr. Ritchie, who began his career as a rather apolitical party rapper, has not only ridden the wave of ***working-class*** anger that propels the MAGA movement, but he has also done much to shape it. His 2023 protest of Bud Light, after the beer brand partnered with a transgender influencer, sent its sales plummeting.

After the November election, Mr. Ritchie said, he would try to “lower the tone” politically, “and go back to trying to make good music that anybody can enjoy.” But for now, he said, “I’m going to go hard in the paint through this election for my guy, because I believe in his policies.”

At one point in the conversation, he was asked about prominent conservatives who have [*raised doubts*](https://www.happyscribe.com/public/the-joe-rogan-experience/2106-kid-rock) about Mr. Trump’s fitness for office. Mr. Ritchie, chuckling, referred to those doubters with a homophobic slur; two days later, he texted The New York Times to note that his comment was a line from the 1982 film “Fast Times at Ridgemont High.”

In South Carolina, Kid Rock was the biggest act on the first day of the festival, with the country star Jason Aldean headlining on the second. By late afternoon on Day 1, thousands of people — young and old, overwhelmingly white — had crowded into the open field in front of the stage. Young women clopped across the grass in cherry-red cowgirl boots and Daisy Dukes. Men tried to outdo each other with T-shirts with politically incorrect remarks (“Taxes are Gay”; “Ammosexual”; “I’m voting CONVICTED FELON 2024”).

It had been five days since President Biden announced he would not seek re-election and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic nominee — too soon, it seemed, for the rollout of anti-Harris shirts.

It had also been two weeks since a gunman had tried to assassinate Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania, and one shirt seemed to set the tone more than others: It showed Mr. Trump raising his middle fingers, with the words “YOU MISSED,” followed by an expletive.

The conservative movement once proudly defined itself in opposition to the recreational drug use of the leftist counterculture. At Rock the Country, a cannabis tent did a brisk business in prerolled joints and Delta-9 space pops. Another company sold gummies containing a “proprietary mushroom and nootropics” blend, the packaging said, for a “mind-bending experience.” Bud Light was the conspicuous sponsor of a two-story outdoor bar.

A lighting rig facing the stage had been designed, an organizer told the crowd, to resemble a cross, a reminder that “the true hope for the United States is Jesus Christ.”

Taking it all in from a picnic table were Margie Guden, 58, a supervisor at a fast-food restaurant from Zirconia, N.C., and her husband William, 62, who works at a farm supply store. “There’s no Biden fans here,” Ms. Guden said. “Fantastic!”

The Gudens said they identified with neither political party. They said they would like to see everyone currently in office voted out, and Mr. Trump voted in to cleanse a corrupt system. They also thought he could rein in inflation.

“There ain’t no such thing as balancing a budget no more, when you go to work and you’re making, let’s say, $10 to $15 an hour, and it costs you $22 an hour to live where you are,” Mr. Guden said. “How do you make up and adjust for that cost of living? Credit card.”

Mr. Jeanetti, a North Carolina resident, spoke over a happy din that mounted as the parking lot filled and his friends sipped from cans of Smirnoff Ice.

Mr. Trump, he said, bore some responsibility for the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. But Mr. Jeanetti added that practical issues took precedence when it came to his vote: “The bottom line is called the economy.”

Faith in Mr. Trump seemed to paper over some serious disagreements among the concertgoers. Mr. Jeanetti said he was staunchly in favor of abortion rights. “I grew up in the ’70s,” he said. “Who the hell are you to say I have to have this baby?”

But a few yards away, Jeremy Morey, 47, a plumber from Boyne Falls, Mich., said he believed that liberals’ support for abortion was proof they had aligned themselves with satanic forces when there were “actual angels and demons fighting right now for the soul of this country.”

Others were split on whether the MAGA movement was on the cusp of open rebellion. Edwin Poteet Black Jr., a longtime Kid Rock fan from Michigan with convictions for robbery, assaulting a police officer and other crimes, said that it was time for conservatives to rise up in a civil war against liberals. “We are to the point our forefathers would have already been out in the streets, shooting,” said Mr. Black, whose grandson had given him tickets to the festival for his 60th birthday.

Through the spring and summer, the Rock the Country shows mixed and matched performers, but most were from the world of country — a genre wide enough to encompass all manner of politics, both “[*rednecks and bluenecks,*](https://www.happyscribe.com/public/the-joe-rogan-experience/2106-kid-rock)” as the writer Chris Willman once put it, but one that often aligns with conservative ideals.

In South Carolina, warm-up acts for Kid Rock repurposed recent rock sounds, from grunge to metal. But they mostly stuck to traditional country themes: patriotism, love and lust, God and family, trucks and beer.

Elvie Shane, a singer-songwriter from Kentucky, kicked off the show with “Forgotten Man,” a booming song about the pride and travails of the working life that segued into a cover of Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” In between songs, he sounded a rare note of concern about the way Americans seemed to have turned on each other.

“I feel like we’re just so divided these days. I know y’all ain’t,” he said with a laugh that seemed to acknowledge the crowd’s unified politics. He encouraged them to reach out to friends or family who might be on the other side of the political divide. “If you love them, you be the bigger man — you make the phone call and say, ‘Hey look, I know we disagree. But I still love you.’”

Before Kid Rock’s set, Shane Quick, one of the festival organizers, took the stage and asked the fans to join him in prayer. He thanked God for the military, the police, barbecue and Southeastern Conference football. “Dear God,” he said, “we thank you that just a few days ago, you kept the future president Donald Trump safe from the assassination attempt.”

The crowd went wild. Moments later, Kid Rock took the stage, flanked by dancers who gyrated on poles topped with American flags. He danced and rapped about his rough and rowdy ways. He performed his signature song, “Cowboy,” with its provocative line, “I can smell a pig from a mile away.” At one point he sang in a bluesman’s voice about the nefarious cultural imports of [*soccer and tofu*](https://www.happyscribe.com/public/the-joe-rogan-experience/2106-kid-rock).

Late in the show, Mr. Trump’s face hovered above the stage in a prerecorded video. He told the crowd they were the “true backbone” of the country.

“Let’s make America rock again,” Mr. Trump said in the video.

Mr. Ritchie said that he hopes Rock the Country will become a regular fixture on the American festival calendar, and predicted that Trumpism would live on as a cultural phenomenon beyond Mr. Trump’s time in politics, like Grateful Dead fans after Jerry Garcia died.

“I think the MAGA movement is probably bigger than Trump at the end of the day,” he said. “Whatever this is, I think it will continue without him.”

PHOTOS: Kid Rock performing, left, at the Rock the Country festival in Anderson, S.C., in July. Some 22,500 people would come on this first day of the two-day festival, according to the local sheriff’s office.; Alan Jeanetti, above left, actually cares about many things, including losing friends because of his politics. He tailgated with friends at the festival, which also included corn hole, top, a mechanical bull, above center, and country music (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICOLE CRAINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** August 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘Shirley’ Review: A Woman Who Contained Multitudes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-N4J1-JBG3-60R2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 21, 2024 Thursday 10:56 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 510 words

**Byline:** Devika Girish

**Highlight:** This staid biopic of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, is less interested in what she did than what she represented.

**Body**

This staid biopic of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, is less interested in what she did than what she represented.

Shirley Chisholm was an American heroine who challenged simplistic political narratives of victory and defeat. Though her most famous effort — her bid for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination in 1972 — wasn’t successful, it was one chapter in a life’s worth of grit and innumerable wins, only a few of which can be measured by votes or contests.

She was the ***working-class*** daughter of Caribbean immigrants who achieved academic excellence despite financial struggles; an educator who advocated powerfully the rights of children, particularly those from immigrant backgrounds; a self-made politician who, at the local and state levels, fought successfully for better representation for women and minorities; and, in 1968, the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/hjBeKNHIdMY)]

It is a pity, then, that “Shirley,” John Ridley’s new biopic starring Regina King, focuses rather narrowly on Chisholm’s failed presidential campaign. The film reaches for the urgency of a political thriller, jumping between campaign meetings, backroom negotiations and rousing speeches. But the staid visuals — bright period colors softened by a nostalgic glow — and a script made up of a string of losses convey a dull sense of a fait accompli.

Complex, meaningful events from Chisholm’s life and career become reductive paving stones in a despairing story of ill-timed ambition. An early scene, set soon after her election to Congress, shows her railing against her appointment to the Agriculture Committee and convincing the speaker of the House to reassign her. No mention is made of the fact that she served for two years on the committee, and found a way to use her position to expand the food stamp program.

The problem is that “Shirley” is interested less in what Chisholm actually did than in what she represented, as a Black woman daring to see herself as the leader of the nation. At home, Chisholm struggles to maintain her relationships with her husband and her sister, who resent the self-absorption her career requires. Her advisers (played suavely by Terrence Howard and Lance Reddick) clash with her over her unwillingness to take partisan stances; younger, more radical supporters dislike her liberalism; and in public, she receives both support and racist, sexist barbs.

King is magnetic onscreen, nailing Chisholm’s accent and her steely persona. But there is little for her to do other than trade quips with the other characters, in a drama that is too content with telling rather than showing.

Shirley

Rated PG-13 for discomfiting depictions of misogynoir. Running time: 1 hour 57 minutes. [*Watch on Netflix.*](http://youtube.com/embed/hjBeKNHIdMY)

Shirley Rated PG-13 for discomfiting depictions of misogynoir. Running time: 1 hour 57 minutes. On Netflix.

PHOTO: Regina King as Shirley Chisholm in “Shirley,” written and directed by John Ridley. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GLEN WILSON/NETFLIX) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Democrats Can Win Workers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FS-1Y61-JBG3-62C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2023 Tuesday 23:48 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1739 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** We’re covering a new poll about the Democratic Party, Donald Trump’s court appearance and the N.B.A. finals.

**Body**

We’re covering a new poll about the Democratic Party, Donald Trump’s court appearance and the N.B.A. finals.

About 60 percent of U.S. voters do not have a four-year college degree, and they live disproportionately in swing states. As a result, these voters — often described as the American ***working class*** — are crucial to winning elections. Yet many of them are deeply skeptical of today’s Democratic Party.

Republicans retook control of the House last year by winning most districts with below-median incomes. In nearly 20 Western and Southern states, Democrats are virtually shut out of statewide offices largely because of their weakness among the white ***working class***. Since 2018, the party has also [*lost ground*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/briefing/poll-hispanic-voters-us-elections.html) with Black, Asian and especially Latino voters.

Unless the party improves its standing with blue-collar voters, “there’s no way for progressive Democrats to advance their agenda in the Senate,” according to [*a study*](https://jacobin.com/2023/06/trumps-kryptonite-progressive-working-class-voting-report) that the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics, a left-leaning research group, released this morning.

The class inversion of American politics — with most professionals supporting Democrats and more ***working-class*** people backing Republicans — is one of the most consequential developments in American life (and, as regular readers know, [*a continuing theme*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html) of this newsletter).

Today, I’ll be writing about what Democrats might do about the problem, focusing on a new YouGov poll, conducted as part of the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics study. In an upcoming newsletter, I’ll examine the issue from a conservative perspective and specifically how Republicans might alter their economic agenda to better serve their new ***working-class*** base.

A key point is that even modest shifts in the ***working-class*** vote can decide elections. If President Biden wins 50 percent of the non-college vote next year, he will almost certainly be re-elected. If he wins only 45 percent, he will probably lose.

‘Fight for us all’

Elections can be tricky for social scientists to study. The sample sizes are small and idiosyncratic. Researchers can’t conduct hundreds of elections in a laboratory, changing one variable at a time and analyzing how the results change. But researchers can conduct polls that pit hypothetical candidates against each other and see how the results change when the candidates’ biographies, messages and policy proposals change.

This approach, which has become more common among pollsters, is the one that YouGov used. It focused on swing voters — those who don’t identify strongly with either party, many of whom are ***working class***. The poll described a pair of Democratic candidates, each with a biography and a campaign platform, and asked respondents which one they preferred.

Among the findings:

* Voters preferred a candidate who was a teacher, construction worker, warehouse worker, doctor or nurse. The least popular candidate professions were lawyer and corporate executive.

1. Many effective messages involved jobs, including both moderate policies (like tax credits for training at small businesses) and progressive ones (like a federal jobs guarantee). “People are obviously interested in good-paying jobs,” said Bhaskar Sunkara, the founder of Jacobin, a leftist magazine that helped sponsor the project. “They have an identity that’s rooted in their work.”
2. Black and Latino candidates were slightly more popular than other candidates, mostly because some voters of color preferred candidates of color. (Related: Black candidates — of different ideologies — have beaten non-Black candidates in recent mayoral primaries and elections in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Philadelphia, [*Matthew Yglesias of Substack*](https://www.slowboring.com/) pointed out to me.) But candidate messages that explicitly mentioned race were unpopular.
3. Voters liked Democrats who criticized both political parties as “out of touch.” There is real-world evidence to support this finding, too: Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona and Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio won close races last year while highlighting their differences with Democratic leaders, as Data for Progress, another research group, [*has noted*](https://www.filesforprogress.org/memos/dfp_democrats_on_offense.pdf).
4. Moderate social policies fared better than more liberal ones. The single most effective message in the poll was a vow to “protect the border”; decriminalization of the border was very unpopular.
5. Swing voters liked tough, populist messages such as “Americans who work for a living are being betrayed by superrich elites” and “Americans need to come together and elect leaders who will fight for us all.” As Jared Abbott, the director of the Center for ***Working-Class*** Politics, argued, “Democrats need to be less concerned with rhetorical niceties.” Doing so would hardly be new: Harry Truman and Franklin Roosevelt used such red-blooded language.

The bottom line

I find the study’s conclusions fascinating because they are both original and consistent with other evidence. Democrats who have won difficult recent elections, including both progressives and moderates, have often presented a blue-collar image.

President Biden [*talks about*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/briefing/biden-2024.html) growing up in a ***working-class*** neighborhood. Marie Gluesenkamp Pérez, who owns a car-repair shop, flipped a House district in Washington State partly [*by criticizing her own party for being elitist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/opinion/marie-gluesenkamp-perez-democratic-voters.html). Senator Sherrod Brown, the only Democrat to win statewide in Ohio since 2011, is a populist. So is John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, the only Senate candidate from either party to flip a seat last year.

Many Americans are frustrated with the country’s direction, and they want candidates who will promise to fight for their interests. One of the vulnerabilities of today’s Democratic Party, as my colleague Nate Cohn [*has written*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/upshot/millennials-polling-politics-republicans.html), is that it has come to be associated with the establishment.

More on politics

* During a CNN town hall last night, Chris Christie called Donald Trump [*angry and vengeful*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/politics/chris-christie-trump-cnn-town-hall.html).

1. Hard-right House Republicans will [*give Kevin McCarthy a reprieve*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/politics/house-republicans-mccarthy.html) from a weeklong blockade of the House floor to allow legislative business to move forward.
2. The Senate said it would [*investigate the merger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/sports/golf/pga-liv-merger-senate-probe.html) between the PGA Tour and the Saudi-backed LIV Golf. (This story goes [*behind the scenes of the deal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/10/sports/golf/pga-liv-merger-monahan-rumayyan.html).)

THE LATEST NEWS

Trump Indictment

* Trump [*will appear in court in Miami*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/us/politics/trump-miami-court-documents.html) today.

1. He is expected to plead not guilty on charges that he illegally kept documents and obstructed the government’s efforts to retrieve them.
2. Trump has tested several defenses, including painting himself as a victim. But the evidence already presented could make them [*hard to sustain in court*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/politics/trump-legal-documents.html).
3. Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee, [*will preside over the trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/judge-aileen-cannon-trump-trial.html).
4. There have been about a dozen cases involving classified information in recent years. Many of them [*ended in prison sentences*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/politics/trump-espionage-act.html).

Business and Media

* JPMorgan Chase will pay [*$290 million to the victims of Jeffrey Epstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/business/jpmorgan-settlement-jeffrey-epstein-victims.html). The bank kept him as a customer despite media reports about him abusing teenage girls.

1. Fox News told Tucker Carlson to [*stop posting videos on Twitter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/business/media/fox-news-tucker-carlson-twitter.html). Although Fox canceled his show, Carlson is under contract with the network until 2025.
2. The F.T.C. sued to [*stop Microsoft from buying Activision Blizzard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/technology/ftc-sue-microsoft-activision-deal.html), a major video game company.
3. Fred Ryan, the publisher and chief executive of The Washington Post, [*is stepping down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/business/media/fred-ryan-publisher-washington-post.html).

Other Big Stories

* Russia struck a residential building in central Ukraine this morning, [*killing at least six people*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/13/world/russia-ukraine-news/ukraine-kryvyi-rih-russia-attack?smid=url-share). Rescuers were searching for survivors.

1. A climate trial has begun in Montana. Sixteen young people are accusing [*the state of robbing their future*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/us/montana-youth-climate-trial.html) by embracing fossil fuels.
2. Keechant Sewell, the N.Y.P.D.’s first female commissioner, [*will resign after less than 18 months*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/nyregion/keechant-sewell-resign-nypd.html). She didn’t give a reason.
3. New York City set a minimum wage for food delivery workers: [*$17.96 per hour before tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/nyregion/nyc-delivery-workers-minimum-wage.html).

Opinions

Silvio Berlusconi [*provided a template for Trump’s political career*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/berlusconi-italy-trump.html), Mattia Ferraresi writes.

To achieve universal health coverage, the United States [*should take inspiration from other countries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/health-care-reform.html), Aaron E. Carroll writes.

Ezra Klein and Carlos Lozada discuss how [*Ron DeSantis’s books*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-carlos-lozada.html) make the case for his candidacy over Trump’s.

Here are columns by Lydia Polgreen on [*the decline of free news*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/media-layoffs-journalism-internet.html) and Jamelle Bouie on [*Republican loyalty to Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/trump-indictment-republicans.html).

MORNING READS

Mr. Beast: His headline-grabbing giveaways made him the Willy Wonka of YouTube. Why do [*people think he’s evil*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/magazine/mrbeast-youtube.html)

Health: Sleep is [*more challenging for women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/well/women-sleep-issues-hormones.html) than for men.

Lives Lived: Treat Williams, famous for his roles in the movies “Hair” and “Deep Rising” and the TV show “Everwood,” [*died at 71*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/arts/television/treat-williams-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

N.B.A. finals: The Denver Nuggets beat the Miami Heat to win their first championship. Nikola Jokic [*cemented his spot*](https://theathletic.com/4580558/2023/06/13/nikola-jokic-nba-all-time-rank-nuggets/) in the pantheon of N.B.A. greats with a stunning performance.

A departure: The Oklahoma softball ace Jordy Bahl said she would [*leave the program*](https://theathletic.com/4603590/2023/06/12/jordy-bahl-oklahoma-transfer/).

A mission: Christian McCaffrey’s voice was the last thing Logan Hale heard. Now McCaffrey, a 49ers running back, is helping [*fulfill his young fan’s final wish*](https://theathletic.com/article/4575069).

ARTS AND IDEAS

An ancient reunion: It’s not a coincidence that so many of the statues in museums are missing their heads: Throughout history, invaders would target statues when they attacked a city, decapitating the likenesses of local leaders to make a statement. And the statues that survived were often chopped up by smugglers, who wanted two artifacts to sell instead of one. Now, as Graham Bowley writes in The Times, those ancient acts of vandalism have made it hard for museums to [*match heads with their long-lost torsos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/arts/headless-statues-museums.html).

More on culture

* Pat Sajak is [*retiring from “Wheel of Fortune”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/arts/television/pat-sajak-retire-wheel-of-fortune.html) after 41 seasons as its host.

1. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which was at the center of recent scandals, is shutting down. The [*Golden Globes will continue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/business/media/golden-globes-sale.html).
2. Elizabeth Gilbert, author of “Eat, Pray, Love,” [*delayed her new novel indefinitely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/books/elizabeth-gilbert-book-russia.html) after being criticized for setting the story in Russia.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Make a [*one-pot vegetable pulao*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024240-vegetable-pulao), which combines rice, vegetables and spices.

Try the [*best summer eats in New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/new-york-summer-food-map.html).

Visit vineyards in California that are [*far from the Napa crowds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/travel/silicon-valley-south-bay-wine-vineyards.html).

Read an old magazine. You’ll [*understand the past in a new way*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/magazine/old-magazines.html).

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 pangram was expletive.

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

[*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).

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[***Self-Determined***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C10-NCY1-DXY4-X074-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 11; FICTION

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** By Wilson Wong

**Body**

REAL AMERICANS, by Rachel Khong

As the story goes, after the death of China's first emperor in 210 B.C., Chen Sheng, a military captain, organized a motley band of soldiers in a revolt against the Qin dynasty and its harsh penal laws. Sheng was defeated, but he became known for his belief that one's status is not intrinsic -- that one can change, grow, transcend. ''Are kings, generals and ministers merely born into their kind?'' he asked, a rhetorical question that became a rallying cry about identity and self-determination.

That is the same kind of query that propels Rachel Khong's new novel, ''Real Americans,'' which begins with a scene involving an enchanted lotus seed supposedly ''carried to the first emperor of united China in the mouth of a dragon.'' Part historical fiction and part family saga, the book homes in on this inquiry: Can we change who we fundamentally are, or who we were meant to be? Or, are we inevitable? What do we make, then, of those who come after us?

''Real Americans,'' which comes after Khong's 2017 debut, ''Goodbye, Vitamin,'' is a sprawling novel, divided into three sections, each told from a different generation of a Chinese American family. It opens in New York in 1999, with Lily, a poor, unpaid media intern, falling in love with Matthew, a ''distractingly hot'' WASP-y aristocrat (read: blue-eyed, blond, white and rich). After a complicated courtship that is buoyed by passion but unsettled by their class differences, they get married and have a son; then Lily learns that her family and Matthew's family are secretly more intertwined than she thought.

Before we see how this discovery plays out, we jump to 2021. Matthew and Lily's child, Nick, is now a teenager, plagued by the usual jitters that accompany adolescence: puberty, first love, college applications. He and Lily now live in Washington, but curiously absent from their life is Matthew, whom Nick does not know. An auspicious match on a DNA test brings him to clandestine encounters with his father, meetings that threaten to unravel Nick's world because they prompt him to question what role, if any, Matthew should play in his life and force him to reckon with his mother's shrouded past.

Then the story leaps forward again, now to 2030 from the perspective of Lily's mother and Nick's grandmother, a geneticist named May. She recounts the turbulent conditions she endured under Mao Zedong's China, the difficult circumstances she overcame to escape to and survive in the United States and how one scientific discovery caroms through her posterity.

The story is full of family secrets and discoveries that could easily veer into melodrama, but Khong is a deft writer who grounds even the most sweeping themes and scenes. Her eye is especially attuned to the fickle markers of race and the illusion of the American dream. ''Real Americans'' -- which covers more than 80 years, and touches on everything from the Cultural Revolution to Sept. 11 to the fight against affirmative action -- is as much about being Asian in America as it is about the ***working class***, the politically disenfranchised and the universal quest to understand the self.

As the novel unfolds, the story drops delicious mysteries that guide the reader: Why and how did Lily and Matthew's fairy-tale relationship come to an end? How is Nick, who is mixed race, somehow a clone of Matthew who bears no resemblance to his Chinese American mother, Lily? And how and why is May familiar, perhaps too familiar, with Matthew's father, a pharmaceutical executive? Khong has a gift for building suspense, crafting a story so compulsively bingeable that the pages essentially turn themselves.

That tension, however, is sometimes lost for banal sentences (''This was an artist's task, he explained, to observe''). And Khong hammers the novel's theme of who or what constitutes an American so bluntly and so repetitively -- ''I was as American as they came''; ''We may look Chinese, but we have no loyalty to China. We want to be American'' -- that the writing can feel didactic.

Still, the novel's ambition is admirable, and it's easy to get lost in the unspoken truths between Lily, Nick and May as they try to knit themselves into a coherent whole. It appears to matter less, Khong suggests, what our environment or nationality is than the people, both chosen and biological, that we elect to surround ourselves with. ''Aren't we lucky?'' she writes. ''Our DNA encodes innumerable people, and yet it's you and I who are here.'' Indeed how lucky we readers are to be acquainted with these Americans, imagined and alive.

REAL AMERICANS | By Rachel Khong | Knopf | 399 pp. | $29Wilson Wong is an editing resident at the Book Review.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/books/review/real-americans-rachel-khong.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/30/books/review/real-americans-rachel-khong.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR11.

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[***Race and Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-X0S1-DXY4-X0MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 21, 2024 Thursday 21:50 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1894 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:** We’re covering the rightward shift among voters of color.

**Body**

We’re covering the rightward shift among voters of color.

After Donald Trump won the presidency in 2016, many political scientists and pundits came forth with a simple explanation. Trump had won, they said, because of white Americans’ racial resentment.

These analysts looked at surveys and argued that the voters who had allowed Trump to win were distinguished not by social class, economic worries or any other factor but by their racial fears. “Another study shows Trump won because of racial anxieties — not economic distress,” as a typical headline, in The Intercept, put it.

I [*never found*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) this argument to be persuasive. Yes, race played a meaningful role in Trump’s victory, given [*his long history*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) of remarks demeaning people of color. But politics is rarely monocausal. And there were good reasons — including Barack Obama’s earlier success with Trump voters — to believe that the 2016 election was complex, too.

Eight years later, the “it’s all racial resentment” argument doesn’t look merely questionable. It looks wrong.

Skewed polls?

Since Trump’s victory, a defining feature of American politics has been the rightward shift of voters of color. Asian, Black and Hispanic voters have all become less likely to support Democratic candidates and more likely to support Republicans, including Trump.

In each group, the trend is pronounced among ***working-class*** voters, defined as those without a four-year college degree. (The Democrats’ performance among nonwhite voters with a college degree has held fairly stable.)

If anything, Democrats’ weakness among voters of colors appears to have intensified since 2022. Among white voters, President Biden has about as much support as he did four years ago, Nate Cohn, The Times’s chief political analyst, [*has pointed out*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). But Biden’s support among Black, Hispanic and Asian voters has plummeted. (My colleagues Jennifer Medina and Ruth Igielnik focused on [*the Latino shift*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in a recent article.)

This chart compares the 2020 results with the findings from the most recent New York Times/Siena College poll:

As John Burn-Murdoch, the chief data reporter at The Financial Times, [*wrote last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing): “I think this is simultaneously one of the most important social trends in the U.S. today, and one of the most poorly understood.”

This newsletter is the first of a two-part series about the development. Today, I hope to convince you that the trend is real and not simply, as some Democrats hope, a reflection of inaccurate poll numbers. In part two, I’ll look more closely at the likely causes.

Young populists

It’s true that polls are not the same as elections, and Biden may improve his standing by November. With far more campaign cash than Trump, Biden will have a chance to frame the election as a choice between the two, rather than a referendum on the country’s condition.

But the evidence for the trend is much stronger than the 2024 polls. A decade ago, many Democrats assumed that the extremely high levels of support they received from voters of color during Obama’s presidency would continue. They haven’t. In 2022, for instance, the party’s disappointing performance among nonwhite voters helped Republicans win the national popular vote in House elections. This year, Biden may need to improve on the party’s 2022 showing — which would be vastly different from what polls now show — to win re-election.

“There’s been a lot of whistling past the graveyard about this,” Nate Silver wrote [*in his newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) about the trend. “Dems ought to invest more time in figuring out why this is happening instead of hoping that the polls are skewed.”

The most helpful frame is social class. In many ways, the rightward shift of voters of color is surprising, given this country’s history of racial politics. I certainly did not expect the Trump era to feature a narrowing of racial polarization.

But when viewed through a class lens, the shift makes more sense. In much of the world, ***working-class*** voters, across racial groups, have become attracted to a populism that leans right while sometimes including left-wing economic ideas, such as trade restrictions. This populism is skeptical of elites, political correctness, high levels of immigration and other forms of globalization.

Today’s populists “are more diverse than the stereotypical ‘angry old white men’ who, we are frequently told, will soon be replaced by a new generation of tolerant Millennials,” Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin, two British scholars of politics, [*have written*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Indeed, Democrats today [*particularly struggle*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) with young voters of color, Nate Cohn has explained.

The old racial-resentment story about Trump’s victory was alluring to many progressives because it absolved them of responsibility. If Trump’s appeal was all about racism, there was no honorable way for Democrats to win back their previous supporters.

The true story is both more challenging and more hopeful. The multiracial, predominantly ***working-class*** group of Americans who have soured on mainstream politics and modern liberalism are not all hateful and ignorant. They are frustrated, and their political loyalties are up for grabs.

Related: I discuss [*the art of middlebrow politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in a Times review of two new books about U.S. history.

THE LATEST NEWS

Israel-Hamas War

* Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the Middle East. He is [*there to push for a temporary cease-fire*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Gaza.

1. Benjamin Netanyahu [*addressed Senate Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) remotely after Senator Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, criticized him and called for a new election in Israel.
2. Why isn’t aid getting to people in Gaza? It’s complicated, but inspections and violence have contributed to delays. [*See graphics that explain the issue*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More International News

* Ireland’s prime minister, Leo Varadkar, is [*resigning from his post*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). His resignation [*was a surprise*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. The E.U. has found a way to [*make Moscow pay for weapons*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for Ukraine: using interest earned on frozen Russian assets.
2. A Mexican cartel is swindling retirees. Call centers offer to buy seniors’ timeshare properties then [*drain their bank accounts*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

2024 Elections

* Trump said he’d likely support a [*nationwide abortion ban after 15 weeks of pregnancy*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) with some exceptions, calling it a reasonable compromise.

1. Biden’s campaign had [*more than twice the amount of money*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) the Trump campaign had at the end of last month.
2. California voters narrowly approved a $6.4 billion bond to [*help homeless people with mental illnesses and addiction*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. Democratic lawyers plan to challenge third-party candidates’ [*efforts to get on the ballot*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). They fear the candidates might siphon votes from Biden in swing states.

Texas Border

* An appeals court heard arguments over a Texas law that lets the police arrest migrants who illegally enter the state. [*The law is blocked for now*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Texas has been testing the limits of its state-run border control. [*Explore this stretch of the southern border*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to see how.
2. The fight over the border is an example of [*how some states*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) are circumventing gridlock in Washington. Other Republican states are [*working on immigration bills*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Climate

* The E.P.A. issued new tailpipe pollution limits meant to ensure that most new cars [*are electric or hybrid*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) by 2032. Fossil fuel companies are likely to [*challenge the regulations in court*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. A [*record-breaking heat wave*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) hit West Africa in mid-February. Climate change made this heat 10 times as likely, a report found.

Economy

* The Federal Reserve [*left interest rates unchanged*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) but signaled that it was likely to cut rates three times this year.

1. Reddit [*priced its shares high*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for its initial public offering. The site’s journey from toxic cesspool to trusted news source is a [*content moderation success story*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Kevin Roose writes.

Other Big Stories

* A bipartisan bill to fund the government [*contains wins for both parties*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Democrats reauthorized a program that fights H.I.V. worldwide; Republicans secured cuts to foreign aid.

1. A group of [*politically connected lawyers made millions*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from one of the largest Medicaid settlements in history, a Times investigation found.
2. The U.S. hit a [*new low in the World Happiness Report*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) — 23rd place — in large part because of unhappiness among people under 30.

Opinions

Oprah’s special on weight loss highlighted how [*the industry is rebranding*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Telling people obesity is a disease and not their fault changes decades of messaging, Tressie McMillan Cottom writes.

New York’s governor wants [*the subway system to be safe*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). She should start with making stations accessible for disabled people, Julie Kim writes.

Senegal’s president, who refuses to leave office, [*threatens the country’s hard-won stability*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Boubacar Boris Diop writes.

Here is a column by Pamela Paul on [*the funny stories behind our injuries*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Preserved remains: This is what village life was like in Britain [*3,000 years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Mental health: Climate cafes are offering a place for Americans to discuss their [*anxiety about the changing planet*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Antique: A British woman bought a brooch at a fair. She didn’t know [*how much it was worth*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Talking or yapping? TikTok has [*repurposed an old term*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Lives Lived: Martin Greenfield made suits for presidents, movie stars and athletes. For years, none knew the origin of his expertise: He learned to sew at Auschwitz. [*Greenfield died at 95*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

M.L.B.: The [*Dodgers fired*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) Ippei Mizuhara, translator for superstar Shohei Ohtani, after the player’s representatives accused Mizuhara of “massive theft” to use Ohtani’s money for gambling purposes.

March Madness: The first round of the men’s tournament tips off at noon Eastern. [*Sixteen games will air*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) today. (Before the first game begins, you still have time to join The Morning’s bracket pools for the [*men’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*women’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) tournaments. Let us know you did with [*this Google form*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).)

N.F.L.: Mike Williams signed a one-year contract with the New York Jets yesterday; [*a breakfast sandwich*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) may have convinced him.

ARTS AND IDEAS

How it started: A century ago tonight, a dinner party in New York set in motion one of the most influential cultural movements of the 20th century. Charles S. Johnson and Alain Locke, two Black academic titans, gathered the brightest of Harlem’s creative and political scene to mingle with white purveyors of culture. The relationships formed that night would soon blossom into the Harlem Renaissance.

At the time, little was written in the news media about the party. But Veronica Chambers, a Times journalist, and Michelle May-Curry, a curator in Washington, D.C., have [*reconstructed the evening*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). They used rarely seen letters and other archival material.

More on culture

* Letters from a love triangle: [*Eric Clapton’s handwritten messages*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), being auctioned this week, shed light on how Clapton wooed Pattie Boyd away from George Harrison.

1. Late-night hosts [*joked about Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and March Madness.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Serve seared [*boneless chicken thighs*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) over a bed of herbs, browned whole garlic cloves and greens.

Buy a classic white T-shirt. (For [*men*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*women*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).)

Use [*the best tumbler*](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 fanciful.

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) and [*Connections*](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: Voters at MacArthur Park polling station on March 5, 2024 in Long Beach, Calif. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ariana Drehsler for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***What Makes Nikki Haley Tougher Than the Rest; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3D-4D11-DXY4-X18M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 13, 2024 Saturday 14:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1740 words

**Highlight:** She’s seen as a descendant of the Republican establishment, but she’s actually the kind of bruiser who’s in line with the current G.O.P. vibe.

**Body**

Politics is a tough business, so you’d think most politicians would be tough people. In fact, in my experience, they’re often not. A lot of people go into politics because they want to be universally liked, and from Abraham Lincoln on down, many of them have detested personal confrontation. Several years ago it occurred to me that in every administration I had covered to that point — from Reagan through Obama — the White House staff seemed to fear the first lady more than they feared the commander in chief.

This has obviously changed in recent times. Donald Trump was tough, mean and self-pitying (a nifty combination). President Biden is tougher than he looks. And the woman who is now Trump’s chief challenger, Nikki Haley, is one of the toughest politicians in America — by which I mean confrontational, willing to hammer her foes.

When you read accounts of her days in South Carolina, her bellicosity fairly ripples off the pages. In a fantastic 2021 profile [*in Politico Magazine*](https://www.politico.com/interactives/2021/magazine-nikki-haleys-choice/), Tim Alberta quotes a former South Carolina Republican Party chair: “Listen, man. She will cut you to pieces. Nikki Haley has a memory. She has a memory. She will remember who was with her and who was against her. And she won’t give a second chance to anyone who she thinks did her wrong.”

But the most telling quotation is the one Haley gave to Alberta herself: “I don’t trust, because I’ve never been given a reason to trust.”

She grew up in the only Indian American family in a small ***working-class*** South Carolina town. The stories she tells about her girlhood are often about exclusion: being disqualified from a beauty pageant because it was set up to allow for only one Black and one white winner (though some locals dispute this); a fruit-stand vendor calling the cops because her father was a brown-skinned man wearing a turban. She once described her childhood as “survival mode.”

Today, many people think of Haley as part of the older Republican establishment, a political descendant of the Bushes and Mitt Romney who suddenly finds herself trying to thrive in a party dominated by Trumpian populists. This is not quite right. Haley entered politics as a Tea Party maverick. As Hanna Rosin [*noted in The Atlantic*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/01/good-ol-girl/308348/) in 2011, the Tea Party was female-led, and most of its supporters were right-wing women who, among other things, wanted to take on the Republican old boys network. Women like Haley and Sarah Palin presented themselves as whistle-blowers, taking down corruption.

Haley ran her first campaign, for state legislature, against a 30-year Republican incumbent. What [*ensued*](https://www.newsweek.com/woman-verge-74367) was classic South Carolina politics. A mailer went out attacking her and referring to her by her birth name, Nimrata Randhawa. A whisper campaign suggested she was Buddhist or Hindu. (In fact, she is a Christian who attends a Methodist church.) When she got to the legislature, she didn’t fit in with the old guard. “I’m telling you, nobody liked her. Nobody wanted to work with her. They hated her,” another state representative, who became a close friend, told Alberta.

Alberta captured this period of her career this way: “She came to be loathed by many of her fellow Republicans for not being a team player, for going rogue on certain votes and procedures that made them look slimy or stupid to her benefit.”

In 2010 she was given little shot at winning [*the governor’s race*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/01/07/nikki-haley-south-carolina-governor/) until Palin visited the state to enthusiastically endorse her. Once again the rough rules of South Carolina politics prevailed. Two men surfaced at the height of the campaign, including a lobbyist who had worked for one of her rivals, claiming to have had affairs with her, while lacking evidence. A fellow lawmaker called her a “raghead.”

After his political career imploded, Gov. Mark Sanford gave Haley a $400,000 donation at a crucial moment in the campaign. “And then she cut me off,” Sanford recalled to Alberta. “This is systematic with Nikki: She cuts off people who have contributed to her success. It’s almost like there’s some weird psychological thing where she needs to pretend it’s self-made.”

When she was governor, it was more of the same. She frequently went to war with lawmakers to get her agenda passed. “I have called out legislators from Year 1,” she once declared. “I go to their districts and call them out. I mean, it’s what I’m known for. I put their votes up on Facebook.” One of her great successes as governor was relentlessly lobbying corporations to build their plants in South Carolina. When she left office, the state had 400,000 more jobs than when she entered.

She brought the same pummeling manner to her job as U.N. ambassador. All U.S. ambassadors to the United Nations defend Israel, but Haley made it the centerpiece of her job. She waded into a famously anti-Israel institution with fists raised. She was one of the people who made the Trump administration so supportive of the Jewish state. When close allies like Britain and France voted for a resolution condemning the U.S. decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, she [*did not invite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/15/us/politics/nikki-haley-israel-trump.html) their representatives to a U.S. Mission reception, which is practically war in U.N. terms.

Seen through one lens, she is a ruthlessly ambitious person who is happy to bruise people to succeed. Seen from another perspective, she is a brave renegade who fights the old guard to get things done. Seen through a third lens, she is a needlessly competitive personality who makes enemies in profusion. All three viewpoints seem to contain a piece of the truth.

A few things need to be said to complicate this picture. First, though she knows how to play hardball, her heart has not been callused over. When nine parishioners at Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston were gunned down by a white supremacist in 2015, she was vulnerable and [*grieving*](https://www.postandcourier.com/archives/on-my-watch-grieving-governor-forever-changed-by-church-massacre/article_e8494588-52a8-5a47-b6fc-7991b99f48c4.html) in public and private. She went to all of the funerals. Her friends worried she was losing a dangerous amount of weight. Mobilized by sadness and anger, she helped persuade more than two-thirds of both houses of the legislature to remove the Confederate flag from the State Capitol grounds, which was an astounding act of political craftsmanship and moral fortitude that even her detractors admire.

Second, if she’s often tough as nails, she has generally been tough as tulips about Trump. As The Times’s Sharon LaFraniere has [*reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/us/politics/nikki-haley-trump.html), she was not one of the Trump officials who would stand up to try to prevent him from carrying out his more crackpot ideas. “Every time she criticizes me, she uncriticizes me about 15 minutes later,” [*Trump told Vanity Fair*](https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2021/09/the-race-to-inherit-trumps-maga-base-is-already-on) in 2021, which is pretty accurate.

I wonder if Haley would be seen as tougher if she were a man. I also wonder if her toughness was forged by being a woman in a conservative, male-dominated state. Maya Angelou offered some wisdom on female toughness in her 1993 book, “Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now.” She wrote, “The woman who survives intact and happy must be at once tender and tough. She must have convinced herself, or be in the unending process of convincing herself, that she, her values and her choices are important. In a time and world where males hold sway and control, the pressure upon women to yield their rights of way is tremendous. And it is under those very circumstances that the woman’s toughness must be in evidence.”

By this measure, Haley has succeeded amazingly well. But then Angelou added a wrinkle: A woman “will need to prize her tenderness and be able to display it at appropriate times in order to prevent toughness from gaining total authority and to avoid becoming a mirror image of those men who value power above life, and control over love.”

There’s often been a wariness around Haley, people worrying she’s mostly about herself. Trump, who really is all about himself, has somehow made himself into the much-beloved tribune of the ***working class*** in a way his opponents just haven’t.

The Republican Party has come a long way in the last few decades. The party is no longer in the mood for compassionate conservatism or even Ronald Reagan’s sunny optimism. Republicans feel besieged and want a bruiser type who will defend them. In their different ways, Trump and Haley are both products of and architects of the current G.O.P. vibe. Neither Trump nor Haley sits around reading Adam Smith and Edmund Burke. Neither Trump nor Haley has what you would call fully developed philosophies. Neither is conventionally partisan; both made their bones attacking the G.O.P. establishment, not working their way up within it.

Mike Pence was too boring to match the party’s current mood. Tim Scott was too nice. Trump and the woman who is now his leading challenger are different versions of a bare-knuckled ethos, and if you look at their records, it’s pretty clear that Haley is actually more effectively tough than Trump. She’s confrontational in pursuit of policy, whereas he is confrontational in pursuit of ratings. She’s a doer; his attention span isn’t long enough to make him an effective executive. If Republicans want someone who will execute their agenda, they should go with her.

Unfortunately, Haley’s support in the G.O.P. seems to have a low ceiling. This campaign is about toughness and finding someone who can defend a party that feels under siege, but it’s also about identity and class. Haley is surging, but she is surging mostly among college-educated voters. In general, Haley does better among more educated voters than less, slightly better among men than women, and she does poorly among evangelicals, which these days is as much a nationalist identity category as a religious one.

Trump also has an advantage that Haley can’t match. He is reviled by the coastal professional classes. That’s a sacred bond with ***working-class*** and rural voters who feel similarly slighted and unseen. The connection between ***working-class*** voters and a shady real estate billionaire is a complex psychological phenomenon that historians will have to unpack. But it’s a bond no amount of Nikki Haley toughness can break.

Source photograph by Christian Monterrosa, via Getty Images.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIAN MONTERROSA, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR4, SR5.

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[***French Stocks Tumble to Worst Week in Years Over Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C86-SP71-JBG3-60NS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2024 Saturday

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

**Length:** 1031 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

Investors worry about a possible debt crisis in the country as polls show the far right could be brought to the brink of power in less than a month.

A growing realization that President Emmanuel Macron's decision to hold snap elections in France may backfire sent the French stock market tumbling on Friday to its lowest level in two years, and prompted warnings from the French finance minister that the economy risks stumbling into a financial crisis.

Amid growing signs that Marine Le Pen's far-right party may be ushered to the brink of power, France's benchmark stock index, the CAC 40, slumped 2.7 percent. The losses capped a weeklong losing streak that sent shares down more than 6 percent, wiping out all the bourse's gains since the start of the year.

Among the hardest hit stocks were France's biggest banks, including BNP Paribas and Société Générale, which hold hefty amounts of French sovereign debt.

Equally worrisome, the risk premium that investors demand to hold French government bonds over Germany's, a eurozone benchmark, rose to the highest since 2017, the biggest weekly jump since 2012, when the euro debt crisis was underway.

Bruno Le Maire, the finance minister, said on Friday that France ''would face guaranteed economic collapse'' if voters allowed parties on the extreme right or left to gain power. Mr. Le Maire, who is essentially campaigning these days for Mr. Macron and may lose his spot in the next government, cited what he said were free-spending populist economic platforms that could tip the already heavily indebted country further into debt.

If the far right wins a majority and establishes its populist economic program, with an estimated price tag of 100 billion euros, economists said France could face financial turmoil as Britain did two years ago. In 2022, Prime Minister Liz Truss ignited a financial market meltdown with outsize tax cuts and spending increases that risked raising the country's deficit.

''We could face a situation similar to Liz Truss in Britain, as the risk of a similar public debt crisis in France is very real if the far right comes to power,'' said Nicolas Bouzou, a founding director of Asterès, a Paris-based economic consultancy.

Political polls show growing odds that the National Rally, led by Ms. Le Pen and her firebrand protégé, Jordan Bardella, could hold greater sway than ever in the French government, despite Mr. Macron's gamble that he could keep the far right at bay by holding new elections, a decision he made after his centrist party lost in European Parliament elections last weekend.

At the same time, France's once fragmented leftist parties swiftly united on Friday in a grand coalition, the Popular Front, that could also grab seats from Mr. Macron's party. Economists said that could throw Mr. Macron's government into gridlock and raise the prospect of France's economy stagnating.

''Everything was looking so nice for Europe until about a week ago,'' said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank. ''But now we face the risk of uncertainty.''

Mr. Macron's call for new parliamentary elections set off a wild week in French politics, bewildering voters and creating chaos on the right and fostering a rare unity on the left. But it has also unleashed an increasingly uncertain financial situation in a country long been considered the most stalwart, next to Germany, in Europe.

In the space of just a few days, investors have rapidly driven up the interest rates they charge the French state to borrow. The yield on France's 10-year government bonds rose sharply for a fifth day amid investor unease over the government's ability to manage its finances should Mr. Macron lose his grip on power. At 3.12 percent, France's borrowing costs are now closer to those of Portugal, a much smaller economy, rather than Germany's, a stark turnaround.

Inside Mr. Macron's entourage, officials scrambled on Friday to remind voters and investors of the economic benefits that have grown in the country since Mr. Macron took office seven years ago. These include the creation of two million jobs and an employment rate that is the highest in 40 years.

France was declared by Ernst & Young to be the most attractive country for investors in Europe for five consecutive years, starting in 2019, and under Mr. Macron's watch, the country has won billions of euros in investment pledges from more than 300 foreign companies. Mr. Macron has also established some ?50 billion in tax breaks for households, businesses and large companies.

But his rivals on the left and right have painted such developments as gifts to corporations and the rich, and they are pressing ahead with populist spending platforms that they say will give more to ***working class*** people who have struggled with inequality and a loss of purchasing power since Mr. Macron has been in office.

On Friday, Mr. Bardella, who is widely thought to become France's next prime minister should the National Rally party sweep most parliamentary seats, said that his major focus would be to restore purchasing power to beleaguered households, along with its main plank of combating illegal immigration.

As his first act in office, he said, he would slash sales taxes on energy and food products to 5.5 percent from 20 percent and authorize companies to raise salaries 10 percent across the board, without forcing them to pay additional social security contributions.

Mr. Le Maire said on Friday that the program would blow a ?24-billion hole in the French budget and called the far right's platform ''Marxist.'' He said that investors would lose further confidence in a government that spent freely without finding offsetting savings.

He also cautioned that the economic program put together by the new Popular Front, the left-wing coalition, would ''assure France's exit from the European Union'' by flagrantly flouting the bloc's fiscal rules.

The Popular Front has pledged to increase France's monthly minimum wage to 1,600 euros after tax, index all salaries to inflation and lower the retirement age to 60, among other things.

''It's madness,'' Mr. Le Maire said, adding that it would lead to ''mass unemployment.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/business/france-stock-market-macron-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/business/france-stock-market-macron-election.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A6.

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[***If Biden Drops Out, Imagine These Scenarios; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHH-DSF1-DXY4-X15G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1368 words

**Highlight:** Readers offer suggestions if President Biden ends his campaign. Also: The Republican convention and the election stakes; JD Vance’s positions.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*Biden Is Said to Soften on Ending His Campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (front page, July 19):

Here is a scenario: President Biden bows out in July. At the Democratic National Convention in August, delegates are energized. They find themselves going big and bold.

They nominate Vice President Kamala Harris for president and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a swing state, for vice president. Two women who are smart, energetic and politically astute.

Two women. It’s a shocker. All Americans take note. The presidential race suddenly comes alive.

Kamala Harris and Gretchen Whitmer are impressive as the campaign unfolds in the fall. Democratic voters come to see these tough, experienced women as the perfect candidates to take on and actually defeat Donald Trump.

The Democratic base gets fired up and organized. Its relatively youthful ticket has a sudden appeal to younger generations of voters. The campaign keeps on building steam, eventually taking on a life of its own.

The convention’s bold gamble in August pays off big in November.

David Dillman

Occidental, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Pelosi Presses Biden on Odds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (news analysis, front page, July 19):

As much as we love him and respect his accomplishments, Democratic and independent voters everywhere are hoping that President Biden’s Covid diagnosis might give him the medical rationale he needs to gracefully and honorably withdraw.

The most compelling idea I’ve heard for what comes next is for a [*“blitz primary.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3) Mr. Biden steps aside with a heroic speech; Kamala Harris readily agrees to join in this process as the presumptive — but not actual — nominee, so that she can earn it rather than have it handed to her.

Six finalists participate in a series of interviews, town halls and debates, leading up to a secret ranked-choice vote just before the convention by all of the delegates.

The whole process is designed to draw the attention of the American electorate (and the world) to a movement that is deeply committed to defeating an avowed autocrat and protecting democracy, women’s bodily rights and the planet — and is ready to innovate on a grand scale to make it happen.

Momentum can swing in both directions. Just imagine all the electricity this would generate!

Andy Calkins

Gloucester, Mass.

To the Editor:

I am an 80-year-old registered Democrat who has voted for every Democratic presidential candidate since 1968, but I am seriously considering abstaining from this year’s election because of the behavior of the Democratic leadership.

President Biden should have announced last year that he would not run for re-election, keeping his 2020 pledge to be a “bridge” to a new generation of leaders. The primary elections could then have served their intended purpose, allowing Democratic voters the opportunity to choose from among Kamala Harris, Gretchen Whitmer, Gavin Newsom or any other candidates.

Instead, the primaries were an empty exercise in Mr. Biden’s coronation, and the party’s elites are now debating how to proceed at a point where voters no longer have any say.

As a result, the Democratic candidate who appears on November’s ballot will either be the incumbent, in whom a large portion of his own party has vocally lost confidence, or a pinch-hitter who will have been thrust upon the voters without their input.

Either option increases the likelihood of Donald Trump returning to the White House, an outcome I dread but that I will bitterly blame on the Democratic Party.

Susan Brumbaugh

West Chester, Pa.

To the Editor:

Joe from Scranton, meet Bridget from Maryland. Lifelong Democrat. Have knocked on doors and or called Democrats since 1998. I believe you when you say you will fight your best up to the election. I fear that your best is not enough to ensure a Democratic victory.

I think of the ***working class***, poor children and our ailing planet that will suffer if you do not prevail. I think of our fragile democracy that Donald Trump will tear apart if you do not prevail.

We need a person who can bring energy and excitement to the campaign. We need a person who can fire back with a rapid response to every lie that Mr. Trump will utter in these next few months.

You have served your country well. You can step away knowing you changed the lives of millions of Americans in a positive way. You have put our country on a sound path to prosperity and good health. And we thank you!

Bridget Bohacz

Clarksville, Md.

The G.O.P. Convention: ‘Like Watching a Dystopian Movie’

To the Editor:

Watching the Republican convention this week was like watching a dystopian movie about the demise of a great nation that starts with the rise of a dangerous and messianic leader, continues with followers who ignore the stark history lessons staring them in the face, and ends with an election that erodes the people’s hard-won freedoms in exchange for a handful of empty promises.

The only thing another Donald Trump term guarantees is four more years of divisive politics among family and friends and a lifetime of consequences for the rest of us.

Just pick your poison — more gun violence, a widening gap between rich and poor, fewer freedoms for women, minorities, L.G.B.T.Q. folk, non-Christians, teachers, workers, doctors and the press; fewer environmental and health care protections; an isolated America that turns its back on allies; an unchecked, ultra-right-leaning judiciary; more rulings that grant free rein to a megalomaniacal president; and the list goes on.

As Americans, our only response to this real-life horror show should be “fight, fight, fight back!”

Lisa La Vallee

Chicago

To the Editor:

Donald J. Trump — failed businessman, inveterate liar, serial philanderer, twice-impeached former president, denier of the results of the 2020 election, instigator of a violent attempted coup, tax cheat and convicted felon — is the candidate of the Republican Party for the third time. Is this man really the best that the G.O.P. can do?

How pathetic, sad and frighteningly dangerous.

Jeremy Thorner

Berkeley, Calif.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Donald Trump Is Unfit to Lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (editorial, July 14):

I greatly applaud your incisive editorial on Donald Trump being unfit to lead. Yet it was notable that you did not mention his cognitive deficits, especially given the repeated scrutiny of President Biden’s.

We seem to hold Mr. Biden to a much higher standard than Mr. Trump. Mr. Biden’s every verbal slippage and fumble is highlighted ad nauseam, but journalists tend to gloss over the fact that Mr. Trump cannot string a sentence together.

Mr. Trump’s incompetence to serve is on full display every time he opens his mouth, as he is unable to communicate his thoughts in a coherent fashion even when reading from a teleprompter.

Please add that to the long list of reasons that he is unqualified to serve as our president.

Barbara Corn

Milford, Conn.

To the Editor:

Thank you for creating [*a timeline*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3) to remind readers of the cruel realities of Donald Trump’s first presidential administration. It is critical that these deep, long-view perspectives do not get lost in the daily news cycle.

Now that you have outlined the stakes, please make clear to readers that voting for the Democratic presidential ticket, regardless of who is on it, is the only action that will keep Mr. Trump out of office. Not voting or voting for a third-party candidate will have the impact of allowing Mr. Trump an electoral victory that will jeopardize future elections.

Amy Lieb

Boston

Vance’s Scary Stands

To the Editor:

Re “[*Where Vance Stands on Key Political Issues, From Abortion to the Middle East*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (news article, July 17):

As we witness blood baths in Russia’s assault on Ukrainian villages, hospitals and schools, JD Vance had this to say last year: [*“I don’t really care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3) what happens to Ukraine one way or the other.”

Climate change? Not a threat, he has said.

Should Donald Trump be elected in November, this man, with all his youthful vigor and Ivy League credentials, will be that proverbial heartbeat away from becoming our next president. It is so terrifying.

Cathy Bernard

New York

To the Editor:

Re “[*An Apology Broke the Ice as Vance Courted Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/18/us/politics/biden-election-drop-out.html?searchResultPosition=3)” (front page, July 18):

It sounds as if JD Vance played Donald Trump like a violin.

Winnie Boal

Cincinnati

This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***New Enforcer Is Demanding MAGA Fealty: Trump's Son***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHF-VR41-DXY4-X09S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher

**Body**

The former president's son played a pivotal role in getting Mr. Vance on the G.O.P. ticket. Though he has never held elected office, he has emerged as a key enforcer of MAGA loyalty.

When J.D. Vance did his initial walk-through of the Republican National Convention stage this week after he was named Donald J. Trump's running mate, the Ohio senator was joined not just by aides and event organizers.

He was accompanied by a man who had pushed behind the scenes as hard as almost anyone to put him on the ticket in the first place: Donald Trump Jr.

When they each delivered a prime-time address on Wednesday night, the moment marked not only Mr. Vance's national debut but the unquestioned arrival of Donald Trump Jr. as a political force to be reckoned with in his own right.

The younger Mr. Trump is now the rarest of political creatures: a top confidant not only to the Republican presidential nominee but also the vice-presidential nominee. Soon after Mr. Vance got the call from the former president that he would be on the ticket, one of the first outbound calls he made was to the younger Mr. Trump to thank him for his help, according to a person with knowledge of the call.

''Don is a power player and I think anybody in Republican politics is realizing that he's on a list of five of the most powerful conservative voices and influencers alive,'' said Charlie Kirk, a close Trump ally who co-founded Turning Point, a constellation of influential groups on the right, and who hosts a popular streaming show.

The 46-year-old eldest son and namesake of the former president did not enter the first Trump White House in an official role. And he said in a brief interview on Wednesday that he would not serve in a second.

Donald Trump Jr. instead fashioned himself as a MAGA enforcer who would seek a ''veto'' over any administration appointments that he views as being at odds with his father's agenda.

''I just want to make sure those snakes and the liars don't get those positions of power,'' said the younger Mr. Trump, who has always made clear that his father is the star of the Republican show. ''I think we'll do a much better job of that this time around because we actually have the experience. We understand who those people are.''

It is an assertive posture for a man who has never been elected to any office and has never served in a formal government post. While his sister Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner, have receded from the political scene after holding top White House posts, the younger Mr. Trump has firmly established himself as the most political of the Trump children. His incendiary online attacks sometimes even outstrip his own father's, regularly outraging Democrats.

In his speech to delegates in Milwaukee on Wednesday, Mr. Trump mocked one of President Biden's old political slogans. ''Remember 'Build Back Better'?'' Mr. Trump asked. ''Instead, we got broke, bumbling, Biden.''

The combination of his aggressive public media presence policing MAGA loyalty and his private push for Mr. Vance reveals the remarkable degree to which the younger Mr. Trump is looking to mold the Republican Party far beyond a potential second Trump term.

''My biggest role is just making sure that we have an America First, a MAGA bench for the future,'' the younger Mr. Trump said in the interview. ''So that after my father's second term it doesn't revert back to the neocon warmongering that we've seen from the Republican Party, that it doesn't go back to forgetting about ***working-class*** Americans.''

Mr. Trump has also emerged as a critical bridge between his father's political operation and Senate Republicans, a group that has long been among the party's most skeptical of the former president and Trumpism.

The younger Mr. Trump is close with Senator Steve Daines of Montana, the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the campaign arm of the Senate G.O.P. In early 2023, Mr. Daines went on the younger Mr. Trump's podcast to endorse his father for president. It was a key early backing that lent the former president credibility inside the still-doubtful party establishment.

Mr. Daines, who is an occasional fishing and hunting partner with the younger Mr. Trump, praised both his marksmanship and political instincts. ''He would rather spend his time with me with a fly rod in Montana talking about catching a trout than even policy,'' Mr. Daines said in an interview. ''But we do both.''

In the eight years since a clean-shaved Donald Trump Jr. delivered New York's delegates for his father in 2016, formally clinching the nomination, he has fostered an expanding political footprint and sphere of influence among conservatives.

He has traveled across the nation, endorsing and recruiting allies. Republican strategists say fund-raising messages he has signed are some of the most lucrative in the industry, and he is a sought-after surrogate -- both to sign solicitations and appear on the campaign trail.

Today, the diaspora of Don Jr. is wide and influential.

His former chief of staff is running the main pro-Trump super PAC. His longtime political consigliere has played a similar role for Mr. Vance. And his business partner in a publishing company is running a second pro-Trump super PAC.

And then there is Mr. Kirk, who was once the younger Mr. Trump's personal aide, carrying his bags and fetching sugar-free Red Bulls for him during the 2016 general election. Mr. Kirk credits the size of his multimillion-dollar conservative advocacy group in part to the younger Mr. Trump's support.

''Don Jr. is one of the biggest reasons why we are what we are today,'' Mr. Kirk said of Turning Point, which is hosting a Right Wing Revolution party on Wednesday night across from the convention hall. ''The people that know Don the most are ascendant in the MAGA movement right now.''

Mr. Trump remains a key adviser to his father, as well. At an Axios event in Milwaukee this week, the younger Mr. Trump said he had spent three hours working and reworking the former president's planned convention speech -- the day before a gunman tried to assassinate his father.

He told the story of reconnecting with his father after the former president defiantly rose up and pumped his fist after a bullet grazed his ear.

''To be shot and to stand up with that kind of resolve, I just told him -- I go, 'Hey man, you're the biggest badass I know,''' the younger Mr. Trump recalled at the event. ''That was my opening salvo and then we started joking about hair, and I said, can I call you Evander Holyfield because of the little missing chunk of ear?''

The younger Mr. Trump has taken pride in embracing the politically incorrect, naming his book ''Triggered'' -- for outraging the left -- and his streaming show the same. Dating to 2015, the younger Mr. Trump has been fluent in the language and outrage of the Republican base, which he came to channel through an aggressive presence on the social media site now known as X.

This week, on the first day of the convention, Donald Trump Jr. got into an argument with an MSNBC reporter on the floor of the hall, as his brother, Eric, was about to enter their father's name into nomination. The reporter asked about the Trump-era policy of separating undocumented immigrant children from families, and then pushed back after Donald Trump Jr. mentioned President Obama.

''I expect nothing less from you clowns,'' Mr. Trump told the reporter. ''Even, even today, even 48 hours later. You couldn't wait. You couldn't wait with your lies and with your nonsense, so just get out of here.''

In an interview on Fox News on Tuesday, Sean Hannity told Don Jr. that ''I talked to your dad about it today.'' Mr. Hannity recounted the former president saying, ''Yeah, sometimes Don gets a little hot. That's what he said to me.''

Don Jr. deadpanned. ''I thought,'' he said, ''it was remarkably restrained.''

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/donald-trump-jr-convention.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/donald-trump-jr-convention.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Donald Trump Jr. is ''on a list of five of the most powerful conservative voices and influencers alive,'' said Charlie Kirk, co-founder of the conservative group Turning Point. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NIC ANTAYA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Investors Brace for a Jobs Wipeout; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CSH-R5P1-JBG3-601X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch, Ephrat Livni and Benjamin Mullin Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder of DealBook, the flagship business and policy newsletter at The Times and an annual conference. Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch covers Wall Street, including M&amp;amp;A, executive changes, board strife and policy moves affecting business. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington. Benjamin Mullin reports on the major companies behind news and entertainment. Contact Ben securely on Signal at +1 530-961-3223 or email at , [*benjamin.mullin@nytimes.com*](mailto:benjamin.mullin@nytimes.com)

**Highlight:** Economists forecast that a revision to payrolls data could undercut a robust picture of the labor market, further pressuring the Federal Reserve to cut rates.

**Body**

Economists forecast that a revision to payrolls data could undercut a robust picture of the labor market, further pressuring the Federal Reserve to cut rates.

Are jobs really vanishing?

The torrid weeklong stocks rally has taken a breather as investors again shift their focus to the weakening labor market.

With inflation in retreat, the steady rise in unemployment is expected to receive [*added attention from Jay Powell,*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) the Fed chair, and his colleagues at the annual Jackson Hole economic symposium that begins tomorrow. On Wednesday, markets will face another big test when the Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes its annual payroll revisions data, a release that has investors on edge.

A topsy-turvy run in the markets has renewed focus on the economy. Weaker hiring data at the start of the month helped prompt [*a big sell-off*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in global stocks and other risky assets. But investors stormed back into the markets last week after better-than-expected retail data, which suggested that consumer resilience might help avert a recession.

Despite the wild swings, the S&amp;P 500 is up about 1 percent for August so far.

Investors are bracing for Wednesday’s payroll figures, which economists say could see up to [*1 million jobs disappear*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) from previous tallies. Normally, this accounting update gets little attention, because the revisions apply to data that can be more than a year old. (Last year’s announcement [*wiped out 306,000 job gains*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), but markets largely shrugged off the news.)

But a jumbo-size revision could add more pressure on the Fed, which has faced more questions about whether it has waited too long to cut interest rates and risked an economic downturn. Adding to the volatility: Bond traders are [*making huge bets*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) (with borrowed funds) that the Fed will soon cut rates.

Markets on Wednesday are pricing in a rate cut in September, the Fed’s first in four years. But by how much? A big revision on Wednesday, followed by a lackluster report on Sept. 6 could add to the calls for an aggressive cut — and reignite a political debate. (Donald Trump has warned the Fed not to cut until after Election Day, while Senator Elizabeth Warren and other Democrats have urged the central bank not to delay.)

“The best for the Fed would be to stay out of the limelight as much as possible during and right after the campaign so that Fed actions — and Fed independence — do not turn into a significant campaign issue,” Holger Schmieding, the chief economist at the investment bank Berenberg, wrote in a research note on Wednesday.

Schmieding added that a steady series of small cuts, perhaps of a quarter-percentage point each, “would likely be the least controversial option — as long as fundamentals continue to support such a strategy.”

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

Target delivers upbeat quarterly results, and the stock soars. Shares in the company were up more than 14 percent in premarket trading on Wednesday after it reported [*higher-than-expected fiscal second quarter revenues*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Investors have been glued to retailers’ earnings for signs of consumer strength amid growing recession concerns.

A federal judge strikes down a ban on noncompetes. The reversal of the Biden administration’s planned prohibition on such clauses, which had been set to go into effect next month, is [*a blow to a key initiative*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for promoting competition in the workplace. The F.T.C. has estimated that removing noncompetes would cause worker earnings to rise by up to $400 billion over the next decade; it may appeal the ruling.

Walmart is said to sell its holdings in a Chinese e-commerce giant. Shares of JD.com fell nearly 9 percent in Hong Kong on Wednesday after Reuters [*reported the stake sale*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), which [*could net Walmart roughly $3.6 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Walmart plans to increase investment in its Sam’s Club China business.

The tech mogul Mike Lynch remains missing. The Italian Coast Guard is [*continuing to search*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for six passengers — including Lynch; his daughter Hannah Lynch; Jonathan Bloomer, the chairman of Morgan Stanley International; and Chris Morvillo, one of Lynch’s lead criminal defense lawyers — who are still missing after a luxury yacht sank on Monday. But a [*spokesman for the Coast Guard said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that “we are more likely to find the missing people inside the boat.”

The money gusher for Harris continues

The second night of the Democratic National Convention saw two of the party’s biggest stars, Barack and Michelle Obama, [*making their cases*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for Kamala Harris.

But just as big of a story is how Harris has continued to raise eye-catching amounts of campaign donations, more than keeping pace with Donald Trump in a race that both sides caution remains achingly close.

Here’s a recap of last night’s event:

* Former President [*Barack Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) sought to burnish Harris’s record on policing business, describing her fights with banks and for-profit universities as California’s attorney general and with pharmaceutical companies as vice president. He also said that Harris “won’t just cater to her own supporters,” perhaps a dig at Trump promising to [*roll back environmental rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) if oil executives were to back his campaign.

1. Yes, Obama also poked fun at Trump’s fixation on crowd sizes.
2. [*Michelle Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)revamped her approach to taking on Trump, openly criticizing his attacks on her family. She also made one of the night’s biggest zingers, turning his “Black jobs” campaign line against him.
3. Harris herself campaigned in Wisconsin on Tuesday, seeking to shore up ***working-class*** support in a key battleground state.

Harris’s fund-raising success continues to grow. Her campaign has [*raised around $500 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in the month since President Biden dropped out of the race, Reuters reports. Female donors have been an especially [*active funding source*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

That has helped Democrats erode Republicans’ recent lead in fund-raising. Trump’s campaign raised $47.5 million in July, and [*was outspent*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) by Harris’s campaign by roughly three-to-one. Both the Republican National Committee and the Democratic National Committee reported raising nearly $31 million for July.

Still, the conservative megadonor [*Timothy Mellon gave $50 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) last month to a pro-Trump super PAC, taking his total donations to the group to $115 million since the start of last year.

The pros and cons of Bronfman Jr.’s Paramount bid

The deal that Wall Street has been talking about for nearly a year — the sale of Paramount — is dominating conversations among rainmakers and investors again.

This time, one question is the talk of the town: Does Edgar Bronfman Jr.’s bid for Paramount have a chance at toppling the entertainment company’s agreement with Skydance?

The case for Bronfman: His bid’s structure could change as he raises more money; that could mean making a tender offer, in which his group would directly buy from shareholders. Bronfman’s group also has ties to people associated with Shari Redstone, Paramount’s controlling shareholder. One of his advisers is Jonathan Miller, the C.E.O. of Integrated Media Company, who previously partnered with Redstone on an investment firm, Advancit Capital.

Bronfman’s proposal carries a potential investment upside. If he were to pursue a tender offer, it would mean buying out nonvoting shareholders at a higher $16-per-share price than what Skydance is offering ($15 a share).

Bronfman also has extensive experience running a media company facing drastic challenges, having helped usher Warner Music Group [*into the digital age.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)

The case against Bronfman: Unlike Skydance, which has the backing of the tech billionaire Larry Ellison (the father of its C.E.O., David Ellison), Bronfman’s partners are an eclectic array of backers, including: Brock Pierce, a [*crypto entrepreneur*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) who as a child actor starred in “D2: The Mighty Ducks”; Jeff Ubben, the activist investor, and his wife; Simon Falic, the chairman of the retailer Duty Free Americas; and Nurali Aliyev, a telecom executive and grandson of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the autocratic former president of Kazakhstan.

The presence of some international backers — as well as Fortress Investment Group, the investment firm partly owned by Mubadala Investment Company, an Emirati sovereign wealth fund (but controlled by Fortress management) — may draw concerns from U.S. regulators who oversee foreign investment. That’s especially because Paramount owns the CBS broadcast network.

As of now, Bronfman’s deal offers no cash to Paramount’s common shareholders, which Skydance does. It’s not clear what plans or resources Bronfman’s group brings to turn Paramount around.

Shareholders so far seem unconvinced: Shares in Paramount closed down a little over 1 percent on Tuesday.

And then there’s this from Rich Greenfield, an analyst at LightShed Partners, who wonders if the Redstones are again having “second thoughts” about selling to Skydance.

“Remember, just before the Skydance deal was reached, it appeared the entire transaction had collapsed,” he wrote in a research note. “Or maybe this is all an elaborate ploy to drive up the price on Skydance/Ellison and force them to increase their bid.”

When a legal shield for tech becomes a weapon against it

For years, tech giants relied on one provision of a 1996 law — Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act — as an expansive legal shield from liability for content posted by users on their online platforms.

But a lawsuit against Meta with a novel interpretation of the law could [*redefine the debate over online speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), The Times’s David McCabe reports.

The background: Lawyers for Meta sent a cease-and-desist letter to the creator of a tool that allowed users to automatically unfollow everyone on Facebook. That app was taken down.

But in May, Ethan Zuckerman, a public policy professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, sued Meta, arguing that he has the right to offer a similar app. (He has not done so yet.)

Zuckerman is relying on a little-noticed aspect of Section 230. He is citing a part of it that spells out protection for blocking objectionable material online.

Some lawyers say that Section 230 could also be used to justify scrubbing content users don’t want to see.

His lawsuit could open a new front in the debate over online content. Most proposals seeking to rein in social media either rely on the government introducing regulations, or leaving it up to tech giants to make tough calls. (For context: A majority of respondents to a Pew Research Center poll conducted this year said that social media companies already had [*too much influence in politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).)

Apps that filter certain content would give more control to the user. “It is one of these solutions on the table that I think does help us avoid both of these dystopias,” Ramya Krishnan, a lawyer at the Knight Institute who is working on the case, told The Times.

Meta has moved to dismiss the case. “This suit is baseless, and was filed by the plaintiff over a hypothetical browser extension that he has not even built,” a company spokesman told The Times.

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* Jeff Bezos reportedly [*doesn’t plan to bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for the Boston Celtics despite speculation that he was interested in buying the N.B.A. team. (The Information)

1. For Wall Street banks, Elon Musk’s takeover of Twitter is now [*the worst buyout since the financial crisis.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) (WSJ)

Elections, politics and policy

* “A Russian warlord’s new Cybertruck shows how [*Western sanctions are full of holes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)” (Business Insider)

1. President Biden approved a highly classified nuclear strategic plan that reoriented America’s deterrence strategy to [*focus more on China*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). (NYT)

Best of the rest

* A group of authors filed a [*class-action lawsuit against Anthropic*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), accusing the artificial intelligence start-up of plundering their works to train its Claude chatbot. (Reuters)

1. Alex Cooper, the host of the popular podcast “Call Her Daddy,” is [*jumping to SiriusXM*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) from Spotify for a three-year deal reportedly worth $125 million. (Hollywood Reporter)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: Concerns about a hiring slowdown have investors on edge. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nam Y. Huh/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***It’s Not Your Father’s Democratic Party. But Whose Party Is It?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YD-14V1-DXY4-X32N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3022 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** The prospect of a Trump-Biden rematch masks how much the party coalitions have reoriented themselves.

**Body**

Has the left’s half-century struggle to return the Democratic Party to its ***working-class*** roots become an exercise in futility? This is perhaps the most vexing question facing the party of liberal America.

It is not an easy one to answer. In recent years, the Democratic electorate has moved in two directions.

First: The percentage of Democrats with a college degree has almost doubled, growing to 41 percent in 2019 from 22 percent in 1996.

Second: While the percentage of Democrats who are non-Hispanic and white has fallen to 59 percent from 76 percent over the same period, [*according to Pew Research*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/), nonwhite Democrats — Black, Hispanic, Asian American or members of other minority groups — have grown to 41 percent from 24 percent.

In terms of the [*entire U.S. population*](https://www.pewresearch.org/2020/09/23/the-changing-racial-and-ethnic-composition-of-the-u-s-electorate/#fnref-375848-2) (as of July 2022), those described by the census as “white alone, not Hispanic or Latino” made up 58.9 percent of the United States — down from 69.1 percent in [*2000*](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/census_2000/cb01cn61.html) — while the percentage of Black, Hispanic, Asian American and other minorities increased to 41.1 percent from 30.9 percent over the same period.

Have American politics reached a tipping point?

[*Eitan Hersh*](https://www.eitanhersh.com/) and [*Sarang Shah*](http://www.sarangshah.com/), political scientists at Tufts and Berkeley, contended in their Aug. 1 paper, “[*The Partisan Realignment of American Business*](https://www.eitanhersh.com/uploads/7/9/7/5/7975685/hersh_shah_business_realignment_080123_.pdf),” that both the Democratic and the Republican Parties have undergone radical reorientations:

The ongoing development of the Democratic Party as a party not of labor but of socioeconomic elites, and the ongoing development of the Republican Party as a party not of business but of ***working-class*** social conservatives, represents a major, perhaps the major, American political development of the 21st century.

In an email, Hersh elaborated on their analysis: “This is one of the most important developments in recent American political history because we seem to be in the midst of a realignment, and that doesn’t happen every day or even every decade.”

One reflection of this trend, according to Hersh, is the growing common ground that cultural liberals and corporate America are finding on social issues:

A company taking a position on L.G.B.T.Q. rights may at first seem like it’s a company not staying in its lane and getting into political questions unrelated to its core business. But if the company needs to take a position in order to satisfy its work force or because potential new hires demand political activism, then the decision is no longer just social; it’s economic.

Another example: For a while it looked like the Republican Party could appeal to social conservatives but maintain the economic policy supported by business elites. But now, you start to see real attempts by Republican thought leaders to be more assertive in meeting the economic needs of their constituencies.

As a result of this realignment, Hersh argued, a crucial battleground in elections held in the near future will be an intensifying competition for the support of minority voters:

Democrats can win with college-educated whites plus nonwhite voters. They can’t win with more defection from nonwhite voters. The Republicans are making the argument that their cultural and economic values are consistent with ***working-class*** Americans and that their positions transcend racial categories.

If the Republican Party “could move beyond Trump and focus on this vision (which, of course, is impossible with Trump there making everything about Trump), they’d be presenting a set of arguments and policies that will be very compelling to a large number of Americans,” Hersh wrote.

[*Ruy Teixeira*](https://www.aei.org/profile/ruy-teixeira/), a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who has long argued that Democrats need to regain support from white voters without college degrees and to stop defections among ***working-class*** Black and Hispanic voters, argued that the socioeconomic elite — well-educated, largely white liberals — are imposing damaging policies on the Democratic Party.

In a recent essay, “[*Brahmin Left vs. Populist Right*](https://www.liberalpatriot.com/p/brahmin-left-vs-populist-right?utm_source=profile&amp;utm_medium=reader2),” Teixeira wrote:

The fact is that the cultural left in and around the Democratic Party has managed to associate the party with [*a series of views*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/p/the-democrats-common-sense-problem) on crime, immigration, policing, free speech and, of course, race and gender that are quite far from those of the median ***working-class*** voter (including [*the median nonwhite* ***working-class*** *voter*](https://www.liberalpatriot.com/p/the-democrats-nonwhite-working-class-1dc?utm_source=profile&amp;utm_medium=reader2)).

Instead, Teixeira contended:

Democrats continue to be [*weighed down*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/p/the-fox-news-fallacy) by those whose tendency is to oppose firm action to control crime or the southern border as concessions to racism, interpret concerns about ideological school curriculums and lowering educational standards as manifestations of white supremacy and generally emphasize the identity politics angle of virtually every issue. With this baggage, rebranding the party — making it more ***working-class*** oriented and less Brahmin — is very difficult, since decisive action that might lead to such a rebranding is immediately undercut by a torrent of criticism.

I asked Teixeira whether the changing Democratic Party has reached a point of no return on this front, and he emailed back:

A good and big question. In the short run it looks very difficult for them to shed much of their cultural radicalism and generally make the party more attractive to normal ***working-class*** voters. Over the medium to long term, though, I certainly think it’s possible, if there’s an internal movement and external pressures/market signals consistent with the need for a broader coalition. That is, if enough of the party becomes convinced their coalition is too narrow and therefore some compromises and different approaches are necessary. That may take some time.

[*Michael Podhorzer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Podhorzer), a former political director of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., agreed that “There is no way to define ‘socioeconomic elites’ in which it isn’t obvious that both parties are dominated by socioeconomic elites.” He added that “since the 1970s, both left and right parties now represent different factions within the socioeconomic elites.”

In the process, Podhorzer argued, “Labor and working people have been demoted from a seat at the table to a constituency to be appealed to.”

The idea that the Democratic Party is a pro-business party, Podhorzer wrote, “is hardly a bulletin. It’s been pro-business since Carter. Deregulation (including Glass-Steagall, holding companies, communications, etc.) as well as trade agreements (NAFTA, China W.T.O., proposed T.P.P., etc.) are all Democratic Party ‘accomplishments.’”

Podhorzer, however, took sharp issue with Hersh, Shah and Teixeira. “I find Teixeira’s constant harping on Democratic elites, as well as Hersh’s and others’ use of the term to be playing with fire at this moment,” he told me.

The focus on cultural elitism, in Podhorzer’s view, masks

billionaires’ collective influence over the political process or the ways in which their success is responsible for immiseration and what we call inequality. This enables fascist politicians to shift the blame to intellectual and cultural elites, like liberals or people with college degrees, redirecting the inevitable resentments of the losers in the winner-take-all economy.

For that reason, Podhorzer continued,

centrist commentators and Democratic strategists who have aggressively and continuously diagnosed the party’s capture by a woke elite unwittingly — and without justification — affirm the fascist worldview in which cultural, rather than economic or political, elites are the source of their disappointments.

However these disputes are resolved, there is clear evidence of the demographic realignment of the Democratic Party.

[*Brian Schaffner,*](https://facultyprofiles.tufts.edu/brian-schaffner) a political scientist at Tufts, writing by email, demonstrated the evolution of the Democratic and Republican electorates by citing data from the Cooperative Election Study, which he oversees:

We ask workers what industries they work in, and just between 2014 and 2020 we saw some notable shifts, depending on the category. In 2014, 42 percent of people working in construction identified as Republican, and 38 percent called themselves Democrats, a four-point advantage for Republicans. Just six years later, that group was 49 percent Republican and 29 percent Democratic, a 20-point gap. By contrast, Republicans had a nine-point edge among people who work in finance and insurance in 2014 (48 percent Republican, 39 percent Democratic), but by 2020, Democrats held a three-point edge (45 percent Democratic, 42 percent Republican).

The Republican advantage among manufacturing workers has grown to 13 points from seven points over those six years, according to Schaffner, and the four-point Democratic advantage among transportation and warehouse workers has turned into an eight-point Republican edge. Workers in professional, scientific and technical industries were evenly split in 2014, but by 2020, Democrats had gained a 15-point advantage. In the education industry, Democrats increased their advantage from a 14-point gap in 2014 to a 22-point advantage in 2020.

Schaffner wrote that “these are pretty sizable shifts in partisanship, which fit the narrative that white-collar workers are shifting more Democratic at the same time that blue-collar industries are becoming more Republican.”

There are, however, strong arguments that despite the ascendance of well-educated, relatively comfortable Democrats, the party has retained its commitment to the less well off, as evidenced by the policies enacted by the Biden administration.

Most of those who challenged the Hersh-Shah thesis did not dispute the ascendance of the well educated in Democratic ranks; instead they argued that the party has retained its ideological commitments to the bottom half of the income distribution and to organized labor.

[*Jacob Hacker*](https://politicalscience.yale.edu/people/jacob-hacker), a political scientist at Yale, expressed strong disagreement with the Hersh-Shah paper in an email responding to my inquiry.

“There is no question that the class profile of Democratic voters has become U-shaped, with both poorer and higher-income voters siding most strongly with the party,” Hacker wrote, but he went on to say:

Even as the Democratic Party has come to rely more heavily on affluent suburban voters, its platform, legislative agenda and national elected representatives’ communications via Twitter have all remained highly focused on economic issues. In fact, the national platform and Democratic agenda have become substantially bolder — that is, bigger in scope, broader in policy instruments (e.g., industrial policy), and generally more redistributive overall.

Hacker specifically challenged Hersh and Shah’s claim that corporate America is shifting to the Democratic Party, citing evidence of the Republican tilt of contributions by [*Fortune 1,500 C.E.O.s*](https://academic.oup.com/jla/article/doi/10.1093/jla/laz002/5552028), by the [*Forbes Wealthiest 100*](https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/B/bo29143391.html) and in the distribution pattern of dark money.

[*Steve Rosenthal*](http://www.organizinginc.com/team.html), a former political director of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. who is now a political consultant, agreed with Hacker on the pro-labor commitment of the Biden administration, despite the severe weakening of the labor movement in recent decades. Biden, he wrote by email, “has been the most pro-union, pro-worker president we have had in my lifetime.”

Rosenthal acknowledged, however, that the union movement has suffered terrible setbacks in recent years, especially in Midwest battleground states:

For decades, we’ve been saying both parties are too accommodating to corporate America. Perhaps the biggest change is not in how the parties operate or what they stand for but the decline in the labor movement. In the mid-90s, between 30 and 40 percent of the electorate in states like Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Ohio came from union households, and they were voting 60 percent-plus Democratic. I used to say even back then that the only white ***working-class*** voters who were voting Democratic were in unions.

Since then, Rosenthal wrote, “their vote share has decreased precipitously, to a low of now something like 14 percent in Wisconsin to the mid-20 percent in the other states.”

[*Julie Wronski*](https://politicalscience.olemiss.edu/julie-a-wronski/), a political scientist at the University of Mississippi, contended that the Hersh-Shah paper creates a false dichotomy:

The partisan business and labor interests are an either-or scenario. The Democratic Party can be the party of labor and the party of socioeconomic elites. The Republican Party can be the party of business and ***working-class*** social conservatives.

Democrats can support labor interests, Wronski wrote by email,

through initiatives to raise the minimum wage and bolster unions and can support the more progressive social issues of socioeconomic elites that relate to D.E.I. initiatives. Republicans can provide tax breaks and the like to businesses while still firmly espousing socially conservative positions on issues related to racial, religious and gender identity. Republicans can be the party of supporting red state businesses, while Democrats can be the party of supporting blue state businesses.

Business, Wronski argued, is not so much realigning with the Democratic Party as it is polarizing into different camps based on “cleavages in how businesses interact with the political realm based upon social issues,” with “partisan polarization of businesses based on social issues and the group identities of the company’s stakeholders, employees and clients.”

[*Matt Grossmann*](https://polisci.msu.edu/people/directory/grossmann-matt.html), a political scientist at Michigan State, agreed by email that

there is definitely a significant change in the party coalitions, though it has occurred slowly rather than in one critical election. The main demographic change is in education among white Americans: College-educated whites are moving toward Democrats, while non-college-educated whites are moving toward Republicans.

This has not reversed the traditional class divide of the parties, Grossmann argued, “because high-income, low-education voters are the most Republican and low-income, high-education voters are the most Democratic,” while “nonwhite voters also remain much more Democratic.”

Despite these shifts, Grossmann wrote that he does not “see evidence that the Democratic Party has abandoned redistributive politics or changed its positions on business regulation. Instead, they are increasingly emphasizing social issues and combining social concerns with their traditional economic concerns.”

[*David Hopkins*](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/morrissey/departments/political-science/people/faculty-directory/david-hopkins.html), a political scientist at Boston College, is writing a book with Grossmann. Hopkins argued in an email that “we are in the midst of a realignment, in the sense that the education gap between the two parties (separating degree-holding Democrats from degree-lacking Republicans) is now much larger than the income gap.”

But, Hopkins stressed,

party change on economic policy is the dog that hasn’t barked here. For all its conspicuously populist style, the Trump presidency’s biggest legislative achievement was a tax reform package that provided most of its benefits to wealthy and corporate taxpayers. And the Democrats show no signs of rethinking their traditional advocacy of an expanded welfare state funded by redistributing wealth downward from rich individuals and businesses — with Biden’s policy agenda ranging from greater education spending to a federal child tax credit to subsidized child care and prescription drug costs.

Despite their new source of support among the well-educated affluent, Hopkins continued,

Democrats still fundamentally see themselves as the defenders of the interests of the socially underprivileged. And despite their own contemporary popularity among the white ***working class***, Republicans still define themselves as the champions of capitalism and entrepreneurship.

[*Sean Westwood*](https://govt.dartmouth.edu/people/sean-j-westwood), a political scientist at Dartmouth, cast doubt on Hersh and Shah’s claims in an emailed response to my inquiry: “There are clearly changes in the role of socioeconomic elites in the Democratic Party and the role of the ***working class*** in the Republican Party, but the evidence doesn’t show that either party has abandoned its traditional base.”

On average, Westwood continued,

the Republican Party still maintains a wealthier base than Democrats, and Democrats still capture more support from labor than Republicans. Similarly, Republicans continue to vote for business interests, and Democrats continue to back pro-labor regulation. It is hard to say we are at a turning point in party composition and focus while these things are still true.

It is possible, Westwood wrote, that the Hersh-Shah paper “could be prophetic, but a complete picture of American politics suggests it is too early to assess if we have truly seen a major development in American politics.”

In the meantime, as the Democratic Party continues to win college-educated white voters by larger and larger numbers, the development of most concern to those determined to maintain the party’s commitment to the less well off is the incremental but steady decline in Democratic support from nonwhite voters.

Over the past three presidential elections, according to a detailed [*Catalist*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ka9n5gzxwotfu1a/wh2020_public_release_crosstabs.xlsx?dl=0) analysis of recent elections, Democratic margins among Black voters without college degrees have steadily fallen: Barack Obama 97 to 3 percent, or a 94-point advantage in 2012; Hillary Clinton 93 to 6 percent, or an 87-point advantage in 2016; and Biden 90 to 8 percent, or an 82-point edge in 2020. The same pattern was true for Hispanic voters without degrees: Obama 70 to 27 percent, or 43 points; Clinton 68 to 27 percent, or 41 points; and Biden 60 to 38 percent, or 22 points.

The current Democratic Party may actually be the best coalition that the left can piece together at a time when American politics is notable for contradictory, crosscutting economic, racial and cultural issues. But can the party, with its many factions, outcompete the contemporary Republican Party, a party that has its own enormous liabilities — most notably Donald Trump himself?

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PHOTO: No longer part of the Democratic coalition. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Democratic Party Is Having an ‘Identity Crisis’; Ezra Klein***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7N-6Y11-JBG3-60MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2534 words

**Highlight:** They’re built to win in 2024. But what happens afterward?

**Body**

“Look, I view myself as a bridge, not as anything else,” Joe Biden said at a rally four years ago in Detroit, flanked by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris. “There’s an entire generation of leaders you saw standing behind me. They are the future of this country.”

That was the line then. Biden was the old warrior strapping on his armor one last time. Once Donald Trump was vanquished, the new guard could take over. “If Biden is elected,” a Biden adviser told [*Politico*](https://www.politico.com/news/2019/12/11/biden-single-term-082129) in 2019, “he’s going to be 82 years old in four years, and he won’t be running for re-election.” The Democratic Party was becoming something else. Perhaps a party built around democratic socialism, as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez would have it. Perhaps a party more firmly rooted in identity and diversity. Either way, Biden was the last of his kind.

Today, Biden is 81 years old and he is running for re-election. Trumpism is anything but vanquished. And the Democratic Party no longer looks to be in transition. The Squad feels more like a faction than a future. Few think leadership of the party will smoothly pass to Vice President Harris. Polls have long shown Democrats aren’t enthusiastic about Biden running for re-election, but he’s avoided any serious primary challenge or pressure to drop out.

The orderliness of the Democrats in the past few years stands in stark contrast to the chaos among Republicans. The G.O.P. has humiliated and deposed a string of House speakers and potential House speakers, run critics like Liz Cheney out of office and refused to admit Trump lost the 2020 election. And now Republicans plan to nominate Trump again. That has been and continues to be a driver of Democratic unity.

“Donald Trump posed such a serious threat to so many Democrats that there was a strong desire both for stability and to win,” Ro Khanna, a Democratic congressman from Silicon Valley and co-chair of Sanders’s 2020 campaign, told me. “And that was at least as much a force or more of a force than the voices saying we need transformation.”

The cliché used to be that Democrats fell in love and Republicans fell in line. The reality, in recent years, has been that Democrats fall in line and Republicans fall apart. The Democratic Party’s establishment has held, even as the Republican Party’s establishment has buckled.

Perhaps the Democratic Party’s establishment has held because the Republican Party’s establishment has buckled.

The Trump era has stretched the Democratic Party into an awkward shape. It has become both the party of progressivism and of preservation, the party that promises both to defend American institutions and to reform them. It has not lost its yen for policy change. Biden’s first term has been impressive, legislatively speaking, and the bills he and the Democrats passed are the most ambitious effort to change [*America’s built environment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-felicia-wong.html) since the construction of the Interstate System of highways, if not before.

But his re-election campaign began not by describing what he has transformed but by describing what he is still seeking to safeguard. “Whether democracy is still America’s sacred cause is the most urgent question of our time, and it’s what the 2024 election is all about,” Biden said. Before it is anything else, the national Democratic Party, for the ninth year running, is the not-Trump coalition. It is that first and everything else second.

“The antidemocratic radicalization of the Republican Party places a unique burden on the opposition party,” Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut told me. “When you have a movement trying to tear down the country’s fundamentals, your responsibility and your burden widens. I think you can feel that tugging at the party’s infrastructure. It’s really hard to protect democracy and the rule of law while also trying to fundamentally change the way in which government gives people a shot at the American dream.”

Democrats are aware that what has energized their voters most is not the better life that has been gained through Democratic wins but the rights and certainties that have been lost to Republican victories. “I’ve definitely been in rooms where people are frustrated they’re spending so much of their time protecting things that our parents’ generation fought for,” Booker, of New Jersey, said. “Union organizing rights, women’s rights, civil rights, voting rights. A lot of the battles we’re fighting are battles where we feel we’re in the majority. That is frustrating but also motivating.”

The difficulty for Democrats is how to balance the two sides of their modern mission. There are voters for whom the defense of liberal democracy and the restoration of reproductive rights are paramount. There are also voters who see politics more instrumentally — not as a titanic clash over the future of the Republic or fundamental rights but as an imperfect and usually disappointing tool in their own bid to live a slightly better and easier life.

Democrats look and sound a bit different in the states they most fear losing, where those less ideological voters are the margin between victory and defeat. In 2018 — a banner year for Democrats — Jared Polis won the Colorado governorship by almost 11 percentage points. In 2022 — a much harder year for Democrats — he won re-election by nearly 20 points.

“Democrats can’t just be the party of protecting liberal democracy,” he told me. “That’s not the top voting issue for most Americans. For them, it’s really about how you’ll improve my life. We focus our agenda on reducing costs — particularly on reducing housing costs.”

In Michigan, the Democratic Party now holds both Senate seats, all statewide executive offices and both chambers of the State Legislature. Part of that, Lavora Barnes, Michigan’s Democratic Party state chairwoman, told me, is that the Republican Party became so extreme that it scared off many of its traditional voters. But part of it is that the Democratic Party molded itself into a shape that fit an anxious electorate.

“We have become almost the pragmatic party,” she said. “The party that recognizes the importance of building a government that supports its people and supporting that government in the process. If you look at what’s happened in Michigan and the sheer volume of work that this legislature was able to do in one year of this trifecta majority, it was about being practical.”

Democrats have won in Colorado and Michigan as well as in Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin in a deliberate, understated way. “The experience of being in a really competitive state suggests that what the Democratic Party is, at its core, is very different than what you see on Twitter or in the national debates,” Ben Wikler, the chairman of the Wisconsin Democratic Party, said. “Fundamentally, Democrats are the people who are in politics to make government work for people, which is a very old, New Deal conception of what the Democratic Party is about.”

As Wikler watched this message win Tony Evers the governorship of Wisconsin and Gretchen Whitmer the governorship of Michigan, he came to a theory of why it works so well in places where Democrats have so recently struggled. “When you talk to inconsistent voters and swing voters, you see a very high level of cynicism that government can ever deliver,” he told me. “To be persuasive to them, you need to credibly describe what kind of change you can generate and on what kind of things. And it tends to be on things that people know the government already does. That’s how you wind up with Whitmer and Evers running on fixing the damn roads in 2018. Then they did fix the damn roads. And then they got re-elected.”

Wikler likes to tell a story about the huge piles of coal in downtown Green Bay, near the Fox River, that have sat there for decades. “It’s an eyesore,” he says. “No one likes driving by giant piles of coal. And the Democratic mayor of Green Bay and our Democratic governor and now the president — supported with a tiebreaking vote from Tammy Baldwin — pulled together the money to move the piles of coal out of Green Bay. Democrats are the party that gets rid of the giant piles of coal.”

But Democrats have notched these wins with a different kind of coalition from the one they once had. Democrats now typically win college-educated voters and lose voters without a college education. This is not how Democrats think of themselves. “We are the party of fighting for working families,” Senator Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada told me. The ***working class*** is core to the Democratic identity even as it has ceased to be the core of the Democratic coalition.

“We need people who can really speak to those ***working-class*** voters, and we still don’t have enough of them in the Democratic Party,” Representative Pramila Jayapal of Washington, the chairwoman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, told me. “We don’t have enough people holding that microphone and comfortable holding that microphone.”

Republicans were once the party of voters who liked things pretty much as they were. Voters who thought America was already great. Now many of those voters back Democrats. Those are the voters who’ve made the Democrats’ anti-MAGA coalition into a winning force in American politics. But they have also placed a tension at the center of the party.

“We’re the party that now wants to preserve American-style democracy and make sure things work, and to that extent, we become the party of the status quo,” Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii told me. “But there’s discomfort in that. As progressives, we are accustomed to saying things are not good enough and need to change. The coalition we have has people who basically want nothing to change and people who want everything to change.”

Biden and his allies are framing this election as order against chaos. The party that gets things done against the party that will make America come undone. Kristen Soltis Anderson, a co-founder of the Republican polling firm Echelon Insights, believes that the Democrats are right that voters are craving stability. But she thinks they refuse to see that Trump is leading in many polls because voters believe that he is the one who might offer it. What Trump is pitching, she said, is a “push for order — ‘I am going to be the one who secures the border. I’m going to be the one that cracks down on crime. I’m going to be the one that tries to stabilize your prices.’” To that list one might add Trump’s skepticism of America’s support for Ukraine and many voters’ dislike of Biden’s handling of the war in Gaza.

I’ve struggled with this portrayal of Trump as the candidate of stability. I doubt it can survive the gale-force winds of the actual campaign he will run, of the things people will hear and see from him when they tune in to the election. But I think Soltis Anderson is right when she says that Democrats are having trouble persuading voters of their central pitch: that they are the party of stability. It does not feel like a stable time. It is not Biden’s fault that the world is tumultuous. But that does not mean he will not be blamed for it.

Biden’s best argument is his record. Violent crime is [*falling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/briefing/us-crime-rate.html), fast, and is now near [*a 50-year low*](https://jasher.substack.com/p/crime-in-2023-murder-plummeted-violent). Inflation has fallen beneath 3 percent and done so without the recession economists [*overwhelmingly believed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/business/economy/economy-recession-soft-landing.html#:~:text=The%20recession%20America%20was%20expecting,treat%20it%20as%20a%20given.) would come. Growth is strong, and rental prices are falling. More Americans than ever have health insurance, in part because of [*the boost*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/us/politics/obamacare-affordable-care-act-signups-record.html) Biden gave the Affordable Care Act. America is producing more energy than at any other time in its history — and, despite the Biden administration’s focus on climate change, that [*includes oil*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/12/us-producing-more-oil-climate-change/676893/), where America now leads the world in production.

Some of this reflects Biden’s policies, and some of it reflects larger trends, like the world unkinking itself after the derangement and dislocation of the pandemic. But Biden has what so many candidates would give anything for: a brightening reality around which to build a message.

Biden’s worst argument is himself. The Democratic Party has been riven over the question of Biden’s age and whether it does, or should, matter. Whether it should matter is irrelevant. To voters, it clearly does matter. It undercuts the heart of the Democratic Party’s message. Democrats are selling themselves as the party of stability, the party that places competent, capable people in positions of power. But Biden is abnormal — he is the oldest sitting president ever and seems it — and he is not projecting to voters the competence and capability that his party is promising them.

There are ways a deft campaign might reframe this, but that argument needs to be made, and it needs to be made by Biden himself, who is, instead, [*doing far fewer*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/17/biden-media-strategy-online-influencers/) real interviews and holding far fewer news conferences than his predecessors.

“I tell Democrats all the time, we have to run toward it, not run away from it,” Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist, said. “It’s front of mind for voters, and we can’t pretend that it isn’t. I think we have to make the case that when you get older, you do not just lose a step. You also gain wisdom, experience and capabilities, and that wisdom, experience and capability have been central to Biden’s success.”

At some point, though, both Biden and Trump will pass from the scene. And then some of the tensions in the Democratic Party that have been suppressed by their collision will re-emerge. One will be whether a party that represents those who like America as it is can also represent those who’ve been left out of this era of American prosperity. “As long as I am in public service, I will resist the Democratic Party becoming the party of normalcy,” Khanna told me. “We need to be the party of transformational change. A lot of Americans are frustrated with the system, and that anger is justified.”

The other tension will be what it means for the party that believes itself to represent the ***working class*** to be losing ***working-class*** voters. “It’s hard to say you’re the party of lower-income working families when they are rapidly leaving the ranks of your movement,” Murphy said. “I think our party has to squarely grapple with an identity crisis that will get worse as more and more low-income voters vote Republican even though we continue to claim those are the voters we are fighting for. Low-income voters get to decide for themselves who their chosen party is. If we don’t start listening to them about what they really want, we will no longer be the party of the ***working class***, no matter how we label ourselves.”

For now, Biden is still trying to build his bridge. For now, Trump still stalks the Republic, uniting the normally fractious Democrats against his challenge. For now, the Democratic Party can perhaps be the party of both those who want transformational change and those who fear it. But for how long?

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PABLO DELCAN) (SR6-SR7) This article appeared in print on page SR6, SR7.

**Load-Date:** February 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Whirlwind Harris Veepstakes Reaches Its Most Eager Phase Yet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CMN-R4R1-JBG3-600X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 3, 2024 Saturday 08:20 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1564 words

**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein, Lisa Lerer and Katie Glueck Reid J. Epstein covers campaigns and elections from Washington. Before joining The Times in 2019, he worked at The Wall Street Journal, Politico, Newsday and The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Lisa Lerer is a national political reporter for The Times, based in New York. She has covered American politics for nearly two decades. Katie Glueck covers American politics with a focus on the Democratic Party.

**Highlight:** With Kamala Harris expected to announce her running mate by Tuesday, contenders are making last-ditch efforts to showcase what they could bring to the ticket and keep themselves in the public eye.

**Body**

With Kamala Harris expected to announce her running mate by Tuesday, contenders are making last-ditch efforts to showcase what they could bring to the ticket and keep themselves in the public eye.

Just in case anyone had forgotten, Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois released a [*nearly four-minute video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc) this week promoting his accomplishments in office.

If there were any questions about the home life of Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, his wife, Gabrielle Giffords, [*resurfaced a testimonial*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc) about their loving marriage and posted it to social media.

And if someone was wondering about, say, fund-raising ability, Govs. Tim Walz of Minnesota and Andy Beshear of Kentucky were scheduled to appear at last-minute simultaneous events on Monday afternoon in Minneapolis and Chicago. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg was also set to do a fund-raiser on Saturday night in New Hampshire.

It is all for an audience of one: Vice President Kamala Harris. As the clock ticks down on her timeline to select a running mate, whom Ms. Harris is expected to announce by Tuesday, the men still in contention are doing whatever they can to showcase what they could bring to the ticket and keep themselves in the public eye.

That thirst has prompted a flood of gauzy videos, cable news appearances, fund-raisers and other stops — Mr. Walz will campaign for Ms. Harris on Sunday, also in New Hampshire — serving as a capstone to what has been a two-week sprint toward the first major decision of her presidential campaign. The vetting team, led by former Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr., [*completed its work on Thursday*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc), leaving the choice in Ms. Harris’s hands after she conducts in-person interviews and spends time deliberating with her advisers.

The lobbying efforts come as Ms. Harris is having to choose a running mate without the typical months to spend time with potential candidates, weighing who would be best as both a political and a governing partner.

Past nominees have used the weeks leading up to their vice-presidential announcement as public tryouts, stumping with finalists as a test of camaraderie while spending important time deliberating behind the scenes.

In 2012, Mitt Romney held campaign events with each of the five finalists to be his running mate before choosing Representative Paul Ryan of Wisconsin. Mr. Romney said on Friday that he did not watch any of the TV appearances his potential running mates made during that period.

“Nope, never saw them on the screen,” Mr. Romney wrote in a text message. “Went on the trail together. Emphasis was capability if elected, not election impact, which we thought was minimal.”

Under this rushed time frame, the auditions have been more diffuse, spaced out across social media, cable television hits and speeches.

Whether those appearances matter to Ms. Harris remains unclear. It is not known how much of the outside content Ms. Harris, who plans to be in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, is consuming herself.

Representative Barbara Lee, a California Democrat and an early endorser of Ms. Harris’s previous presidential campaign, suggested that the question of who could draw sharp contrasts with Senator JD Vance of Ohio, former President Donald J. Trump’s running mate, and the Republican ticket as a whole was relevant. But she sounded skeptical of the in-plain-view tryouts.

“I don’t think people talking publicly is going to sway her from her basic decision-making process,” she said.

In the meantime, Ms. Harris’s team has received reams of documents from each of the finalists, and it conducted video interviews this week.

Some of the top contenders canceled planned events for Friday and Saturday — when Ms. Harris had set aside time to conduct final interviews, according to two people who had been briefed on her schedule but were not authorized to speak publicly about the process. Aides for some of the contenders said they wanted to keep their schedules clear in case Ms. Harris’s team called.

[*Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania canceled a three-event fund-raising*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc) swing through the Hamptons, and Mr. Beshear pulled out of a stop in western Kentucky, prompting a new wave of headlines on Thursday.

“I was going to perform, of course, with Blink-182 on Sunday, but I’ve canceled in order to clear my schedule,” joked Mr. Pritzker in an interview on MSNBC, referring to the Lollapalooza music festival in Chicago this weekend.

But for the scores of Democratic busybodies and political obsessives who carefully track the process, the prolific public appearances have provided seemingly endless fodder for each candidate’s backers to push out — and plenty of content for Ms. Harris to consume should she so choose.

Mr. Shapiro spent Friday at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, a historically Black college west of Philadelphia. There, he demonstrated his attack-dog chops, calling Mr. Trump a “coward” who had made “offensive” remarks this week by falsely questioning Ms. Harris’s Black identity. The first-term governor also called Mr. Vance a “phony.”

“Attacking the identity of the vice president doesn’t at all reflect on Vice President Harris, but shows a real insecurity about Donald Trump,” Mr. Shapiro said.

Mr. Walz wooed a group of Democratic donors on Friday in a remote meeting with the Democracy Alliance, a powerful network of major liberal donors, regaling a packed Zoom meeting with his strategies for winning over rural and ***working-class*** voters. He is heading to New Hampshire on Sunday for a series of surrogate events for Ms. Harris, including [*a summer barbecue with the New Hampshire Young Democrats*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc).

Mr. Kelly spent the final days of the week doing a parade of cable TV hits in which he sought to focus attention on Mr. Trump’s torpedoing of a border security bill in February — an issue that Ms. Harris has made a focal point of her stump speeches and campaign videos.

“When Kamala Harris is president, we’re going to continue to work on this,” [*Mr. Kelly said on “Morning Joe,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc) an MSNBC show favored by Mr. Biden and many of the aides who work on the Harris campaign. “I’m looking forward to seeing Kamala Harris in the White House.”

Mr. Buttigieg, a popular news media presence for Democrats, has made the round of cable networks, with dozens of appearances.

On Sunday, he defended Ms. Harris’s record on immigration in a heated exchange on Fox News. On Monday, he cracked jokes with Jon Stewart on “The Daily Show.” On Thursday, he discussed the importance of his appearances on Fox News to reach Republicans, making an appearance that effectively promoted the significance of his other appearances.

And on Friday, he charmed the ladies of “The View,” who had high hopes for his running-mate chances.

“If offered the position would you accept? Because we’d like that,” said Ana Navarro, a host of the show.

Mr. Buttigieg replied with the noncommittal ease of a practiced media star: “Of course, I’m flattered to be even mentioned in this context,” he said. “She’s going to make the choice that’s right for her, for the ticket, the campaign and of course the country.”

At times, Mr. Beshear has seemed ubiquitous on television, using his appearances to show how he might challenge Mr. Vance.

“He claims to be from eastern Kentucky, tries to write a book about it to profit off our people, and then he calls us lazy,” Mr. Beshear [*said recently*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SUxU2NBaHzc) on CNN.

Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, an admitted Shapiro partisan, said he did not know how the public jockeying might shape Ms. Harris’s perceptions. But it all amounted to positive advertising, he said, for the eventual ticket.

“When there’s a general sense as to who is in consideration, I think it’s natural that people would pay a lot of attention,” he said. “The main thing that each of these potential vice-presidential nominees are doing is they’re affirming the candidacy of Kamala Harris. They’re talking about her plans for the future, what she wants to do if she were elected president, and I think that can only help us win in November.”

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting from Washington, Ken Bensinger contributed reporting from Los Angeles, and Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Cheyney, Pa.

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting from Washington, Ken Bensinger contributed reporting from Los Angeles, and Jon Hurdle contributed reporting from Cheyney, Pa.

PHOTOS: Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, center, is scheduled to campaign for Vice President Kamala Harris in a series of events. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, a popular news media presence for Democrats, has made the round of cable networks. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois released a nearly four-minute video last week promoting his accomplishments in office. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM VONDRUSKA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania showed his attack-dog chops in defense of Ms. Harris against ex-President Donald J. Trump. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona did a parade of cable shows last week, focusing on Mr. Trump’s torpedoing of a border security bill. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky has used his television appearances to show how he might challenge Mr. Trump’s running mate. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL MUMMEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***French Stocks Tumble to Worst Week in Two Years Over Election Fears***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C82-N291-JBG3-601R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 14, 2024 Friday 22:43 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1029 words

**Byline:** Liz Alderman Liz Alderman is the chief European business correspondent, writing about economic, social and policy developments around Europe.

**Highlight:** Investors worry about a possible debt crisis in the country as polls show the far right could be brought to the brink of power in less than a month.

**Body**

Investors worry about a possible debt crisis in the country as polls show the far right could be brought to the brink of power in less than a month.

A growing realization that President Emmanuel Macron’s decision to hold snap elections in France may backfire sent the French stock market tumbling on Friday to its lowest level in two years, and prompted warnings from the French finance minister that the economy risks stumbling into a financial crisis.

Amid growing signs that Marine Le Pen’s far-right party may be ushered to the brink of power, France’s benchmark stock index, the CAC 40, slumped 2.7 percent. The losses capped a weeklong losing streak that sent shares down more than 6 percent, wiping out all the bourse’s gains since the start of the year.

Among the hardest hit stocks were France’s biggest banks, including BNP Paribas and Société Générale, which hold hefty amounts of French sovereign debt.

Equally worrisome, the risk premium that investors demand to hold French government bonds over Germany’s, a eurozone benchmark, rose to the highest since 2017, the biggest weekly jump since 2012, when the euro debt crisis was underway.

Bruno Le Maire, the finance minister, said on Friday that France “would face guaranteed economic collapse” if voters allowed parties on the extreme right or left to gain power. Mr. Le Maire, who is essentially campaigning these days for Mr. Macron and may lose his spot in the next government, cited what he said were free-spending populist economic platforms that could tip the already heavily indebted country further into debt.

If the far right wins a majority and establishes its populist economic program, with an estimated price tag of 100 billion euros, economists said France could face financial turmoil as Britain did two years ago. In 2022, Prime Minister Liz Truss [*ignited a financial market meltdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/liz-truss-britain-resigns.html) with outsize tax cuts and spending increases that risked raising the country’s deficit.

“We could face a situation similar to Liz Truss in Britain, as the risk of a similar public debt crisis in France is very real if the far right comes to power,” said Nicolas Bouzou, a founding director of Asterès, a Paris-based economic consultancy.

Political polls show growing odds that the National Rally, led by Ms. Le Pen and her [*firebrand protégé, Jordan Bardella,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/liz-truss-britain-resigns.html) could hold greater sway than ever in the French government, despite Mr. Macron’s gamble that he could keep the far right at bay by holding new elections, a decision he made after his centrist party lost in European Parliament elections last weekend.

At the same time, France’s once fragmented leftist parties swiftly [*united on Friday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/liz-truss-britain-resigns.html) in a grand coalition, the Popular Front, that could also grab seats from Mr. Macron’s party. Economists said that could throw Mr. Macron’s government into gridlock and raise the prospect of France’s economy stagnating.

“Everything was looking so nice for Europe until about a week ago,” said Holger Schmieding, chief economist at Berenberg Bank. “But now we face the risk of uncertainty.”

Mr. Macron’s call for new parliamentary elections set off [*a wild week in French politics,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/liz-truss-britain-resigns.html) bewildering voters and creating chaos on the right and fostering a rare unity on the left. But it has also unleashed an increasingly uncertain financial situation in a country long been considered the most stalwart, next to Germany, in Europe.

In the space of just a few days, investors have rapidly driven up the interest rates they charge the French state to borrow. The yield on France’s 10-year government bonds rose sharply for a fifth day amid investor unease over the government’s ability to manage its finances should Mr. Macron lose his grip on power. At 3.12 percent, France’s borrowing costs are now closer to those of Portugal, a much smaller economy, rather than Germany’s, a stark turnaround.

Inside Mr. Macron’s entourage, officials scrambled on Friday to remind voters and investors of the economic benefits that have grown in the country since Mr. Macron took office seven years ago. These include the creation of two million jobs and an employment rate that is the highest in 40 years.

France was declared by Ernst &amp; Young to be the most attractive country for investors in Europe for five consecutive years, starting in 2019, and under Mr. Macron’s watch, the country has won billions of euros in investment pledges from more than 300 foreign companies. Mr. Macron has also established some €50 billion in tax breaks for households, businesses and large companies.

But his rivals on the left and right have painted such developments as gifts to corporations and the rich, and they are pressing ahead with populist spending platforms that they say will give more to ***working class*** people who have struggled with inequality and a loss of purchasing power since Mr. Macron has been in office.

On Friday, Mr. Bardella, who is widely thought to become France’s next prime minister should the National Rally party sweep most parliamentary seats, said that his major focus would be to restore purchasing power to beleaguered households, along with its main plank of combating illegal immigration.

As his first act in office, he said, he would slash sales taxes on energy and food products to 5.5 percent from 20 percent and authorize companies to raise salaries 10 percent across the board, without forcing them to pay additional social security contributions.

Mr. Le Maire said on Friday that the program would blow a €24-billion hole in the French budget and called the far right’s platform “Marxist.” He said that investors would lose further confidence in a government that spent freely without finding offsetting savings.

He also cautioned that the economic program put together by the new Popular Front, the left-wing coalition, would “assure France’s exit from the European Union” by flagrantly flouting the bloc’s fiscal rules.

The Popular Front has pledged to increase France’s monthly minimum wage to 1,600 euros after tax, index all salaries to inflation and lower the retirement age to 60, among other things.

“It’s madness,” Mr. Le Maire said, adding that it would lead to “mass unemployment.”

This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[***U.S. Schools Are Facing a Major Budget Crunch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBS-GMP1-JBG3-60T1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 27, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 24

**Length:** 1183 words

**Byline:** By Sarah Mervosh and Madeleine Ngo

**Body**

Federal pandemic aid helped keep school districts afloat, but that money is coming to an end.

After several cash-flush pandemic years, school districts across the country are facing budget shortfalls, with pressure closing in on multiple fronts.

A flow of federal dollars -- $122 billion meant to help schools recover from the pandemic -- is running dry in September, leaving schools with less money for tutors, summer school and other supports that have funded pandemic recovery efforts over the last three years.

At the same time, declining student enrollment -- a consequence of lower birthrates and a growing school choice movement -- is catching up to some districts.

The result: Districts across the country must make tough decisions about cuts that will affect millions of families as soon as the next school year. The cuts, which many districts put off during the pandemic, could interrupt the recovery of U.S. students, who by and large have not made up their pandemic losses.

''I'm concerned that too many state and district leaders had their heads in the sand about the coming fiscal cliff, and now they are being confronted with really painful decisions,'' said Thomas S. Dee, a Stanford University professor who has studied student enrollment trends.

The cutbacks span districts rich and poor. In the Edmonds, Wash., school district, an upper-middle income area north of Seattle, music classes were a target of district slashes, mobilizing a local foundation to raise more than $200,000 to try to save them. In Montgomery County, Md., an upscale suburb, the district is slightly increasing class sizes to save money.

But experts say the cuts are likely to be felt most in low-income and urban school areas -- districts that received larger shares of federal pandemic aid, and that have also been hit hard by declining student enrollment.

When students leave the public school system, districts receive less state and federal money. Losing too many students can strain district budgets, which come with fixed costs. Salaries and benefits, for example, make up about 80 percent of a typical budget.

In many districts, enrollment has been dropping for years. But the pandemic ''accelerated that decline,'' said Dr. Dee, whose research has found that U.S. public schools lost more than 1 million students between 2019 and 2022. About half of the decline can be explained by population trends, but much of the rest is driven by a sustained interest in private school and home-schooling, Dr. Dee found.

''It's been clear for a while now -- at least two years -- that the enrollment declines appear to be the new normal,'' he said.

High inflation in recent years has also driven up costs. Many districts gave out larger raises than usual to remain competitive, which is now more difficult for them to sustain, said Marguerite Roza, the director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University.

At the same time, many states are facing slower revenue growth and ''might not really be in a position to give out bigger than normal increases to districts,'' Dr. Roza said.

Some districts used their pandemic aid to help plug holes in their budget, making the current moment particularly perilous.

That was the case in Minneapolis, which has been losing students and faced a deficit of more than $100 million. About 300 teaching positions are being cut.

Without the extra funding, Minneapolis would most likely have had to lay off staff or make other dramatic changes earlier, just as students were trying to recover from the pandemic, said Ibrahima Diop, the district's senior financial officer.

The district chose to continue to invest in instruction. ''That is what everybody should have been doing, because doing that meant you were supporting students,'' Mr. Diop said.

Hartford, Conn., made a similar trade-off: The district used stimulus dollars to fund 260 positions, including school counselors, social workers and academic tutors -- positions that officials heard ''loud and clear'' were needed to support students, said Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, the superintendent.

But the district, which has dealt with budget woes and declining enrollment, now must shuffle employees to other positions in an attempt to reduce layoffs. ''Those districts that are facing the most acute cliffs now are the ones that spent most of the money on servicing and programming for students,'' Dr. Torres-Rodriguez said.

Some districts tried to stave off potential layoffs, but even they are planning cuts to programs.

Officials for Baltimore City Public Schools were ''very careful from the beginning'' to make investments that did not result in abrupt cuts once the relief funds ran out, said Alison Perkins-Cohen, the district's chief of staff. District officials did not use the money to hire new permanent workers in schools or raise teacher salaries, she said.

Instead, Baltimore provided tutoring, gave one-time stipends to teachers and upgraded bathrooms, science labs and HVAC systems.

Yet Baltimore will still have to reduce some tutoring contracts and may have to scale back summer school next year, programs that had been funded with federal dollars.

Waterbury, Conn., has also been able to avoid layoffs, in large part because it tried not to hire many new staff members with the relief funds, said Verna Ruffin, the district's superintendent.

Still, Dr. Ruffin said, officials will no longer be able to offer students a 24/7 virtual tutoring program for the coming school year. And they will have to scale back after-school enrichment programs that give students the opportunity to visit museums and attend plays and concerts.

Birmingham, Ala., is among the districts that have made outsize academic progress since the pandemic, but now must decide which programs to keep.

A program that gave students extra instructional time over fall, winter and spring breaks yielded promising results, according to an analysis by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama.

But the district must now cut one session -- over winter break -- and can no longer afford to pay teachers a higher, $60 an hour rate to participate, said the Birmingham superintendent, Mark Sullivan.

A free after-school program, which was subsidized with pandemic aid, will move back to a paid model, a change Dr. Sullivan was loath to make. He knows the cost -- about $160 a month, for a single student -- could be the difference between paying a bill for many poor and ***working-class*** parents in his district.

The district must also cut 70 positions financed with stimulus dollars.

Dr. Sullivan said he did not regret making the short-term hires of mental health counselors, math and reading interventionists and other specialists to get students through the worst of the pandemic. The federal aid represented a rare opportunity for his district, where money is tight and nearly 90 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

''When you are able to provide supports that students desperately need, even if we can do it for a short period of time,'' he said, ''I think that was worth it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/26/us/schools-budget-cuts-pandemic-aid.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/26/us/schools-budget-cuts-pandemic-aid.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: In Washington State, a school district hosted an ''Ales for the Arts'' fund-raising event at a brewery. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHONA KASINGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Kamala Harris Report Card***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJY-K5T1-DXY4-X1PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 26, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1492 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

At the beginning of 2019 I wrote a column enthusiastically arguing that Kamala Harris was the Democratic Party's strongest candidate to take on Donald Trump. My core argument was pretty simple: If Democrats hoped to defeat him, they needed the toughest gladiator they could get, and Harris filled that bill.

Her campaign memoir from that year features a string of scenes in which she trounced powerful men. People who watched her as a prosecutor and a rising political star have testified to her skills in the art of confrontation. In the column, I quoted something that Gary Delagnes, the former head of San Francisco's police union, told Politico: ''She's an intelligent person. She is a -- let's see, I better pick this word carefully: ruthless.''

Looking back, that column was not wrong, but it was limited. We've seen a lot more of Harris in the ensuing years. Today, as she seemingly cruises to the Democratic nomination, I find myself experiencing a dizzying range of emotions. Some moments, I share the jolt of enthusiasm many are feeling. Other moments, I think the Democrats are suffering from a mass hypnotic delusion, nominating a candidate who is seriously flawed. In order to make sense of this mishmash of thoughts, I thought I'd put together a report card of her strengths and weaknesses.

Toughness: A. Harris still has it. In the rallies and events she has done since her ascension, Harris has been dominating, poised and exuberant. She prosecutes Trump with smiling self-confidence and an undertone of utter contempt. If playful aggression is a thing, she projects it.

Leadership and management skills: C. Harris's ability to get pretty much the entire party behind her in just a few days after Joe Biden dropped out is tremendously impressive. On the other hand, from her time as the San Francisco district attorney straight through her time as vice president, Harris has earned a reputation for degrading underlings and burning through staff. Biden has a coterie of people who have been with him for decades, but Harris has no such group. The Substack newsletter Open the Books ran the numbers and calculated that as of March 31 over 90 percent of the staff she had at the beginning of her vice-presidential term had left.

''It's clear that you're not working with somebody who is willing to do the prep and the work,'' a former staff member told The Washington Post in a December 2021 article. ''With Kamala you have to put up with a constant amount of soul-destroying criticism and also her own lack of confidence. So you're constantly sort of propping up a bully and it's not really clear why.''

This criticism is incredibly damning, but the turmoil in her office was more evident at the beginning of her time as vice president than more recently.

Analytical abilities: B+. As vice president, Harris has earned a reputation for being focused in meetings, for asking the right questions, for asking people to get to the point, for her ability to size up a situation. ''My bias has always been to speak factually, to speak accurately, to speak precisely about issues and matters that have potentially great consequence,'' she told The Times last fall. ''I find it off-putting to just engage in platitudes. I much prefer to deconstruct an issue and speak of it in a way that hopefully elevates public discourse and educates the public.''

Vision: C. One problem with her terrible 2020 presidential campaign was that she was running as a prosecutor at a time when her party was lurching leftward. Another was identified by the former Obama adviser David Axelrod in an interview with Elaina Plott Calabro of The Atlantic: ''It looked as if she didn't know where to plant her feet. That she wasn't sort of grounded, that she didn't know exactly who she was.'' That's still somewhat true. She hasn't shown that she has the kind of coherent worldview -- the way, say, Biden does -- you need to be a good decision maker in the White House. Over the past few years, when Harris has been asked to articulate her overall philosophy, she often produces a meaningless word salad, ripe for ridicule.

In California politics the safe thing to do is to play to the progressive base. So in interviews she gave during her 2020 run she would often revert to positions that some progressives loved, even though they were politically suicidal in the swing states. She said she wanted to ban fracking, decriminalize illegal immigration, end the filibuster to pass the Green New Deal and eliminate private health insurance. Republicans are now making hay out of these statements, but it's not clear how much she believes what she claimed to believe back then.

Relatability: B. Some of Harris's best moments come not when she is giving a speech to an audience but when she is listening to others describe their lives and problems. She is good at compassionate exchange. To me, when Republicans criticize her laugh, it's both trivial and politically counterproductive. Her laugh is big, genuine and unguarded -- a rare feature in any politician.

Her larger problem of course is that she's a member of the progressive educated elite from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her father was a Stanford professor and her mother was a cancer researcher. She has lived her life in a very unusual slice of America. This is not an ideal background if your job is to win over ***working-class*** voters in western Pennsylvania, small-town Michigan and suburban Georgia.

Composure: C. Some politicians have minds like a jukebox. You mention a topic, and they will play whatever record they have stored in their brain that goes with that topic. Harris has seemed less good at handling that kind of spontaneous exchange. This has led to some of her worst and most insecure moments. In 2021, after she was tasked with finding the root causes of the immigration crisis, NBC's Lester Holt asked her if she would visit the U.S.-Mexico border. She replied, ''At some point, you know, I -- we are going to the border. We've been to the border. So this whole, this whole -- this whole thing about the border. We've been to the border. We've been to the border.'' Holt reminded her that in fact she hadn't yet visited the border. Harris cut back on media interviews after that humiliating encounter.

Overall reputation: C. Today, many Democrats are smitten by Harris. Having endured despair as the Biden campaign foundered, they are thrilled to have a strong, dynamic and fresh candidate who at least gives them a chance. But this was not how well-informed Democrats thought of her over most of the Biden term. In February of 2023, my Times colleagues Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Katie Rogers and Peter Baker surveyed Democratic views on Harris. Here is the core of their reporting:

''The painful reality for Ms. Harris is that in private conversations over the last few months, dozens of Democrats in the White House, on Capitol Hill and around the nation -- including some who helped put her on the party's 2020 ticket -- said she had not risen to the challenge of proving herself as a future leader of the party, much less the country. Even some Democrats whom her own advisers referred reporters to for supportive quotes confided privately that they had lost hope in her,'' they wrote.

''Through much of the fall, a quiet panic set in among key Democrats about what would happen if President Biden opted not to run for a second term. Most Democrats interviewed, who insisted on anonymity to avoid alienating the White House, said flatly that they did not think Ms. Harris could win the presidency in 2024. Some said the party's biggest challenge would be finding a way to sideline her without inflaming key Democratic constituencies that would take offense.''

My bottom line, I guess, is that Harris is a smart and forceful person with a commanding political presence. But as of 18 months ago, she would not have made an effective president or even a good candidate. She ran a disastrous presidential campaign and has been a mediocre vice president, even measured by the low standards of the office. She could always repeat the normal Democratic positions but had no distinctive view for where the country needed to go.

The crucial question is: Has she learned and grown? Democrats keep telling me that she's a much more confident campaigner, a much more effective manager, a much more focused thinker. I'm open to that possibility. But I just spent a week in Milwaukee during which Republicans kept reassuring me that Trump had changed for the better, was a man transformed.

The Republican arguments turned out to be hokum. The Harris 2.0 theory had better be more correct.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

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**End of Document**



[***Donald Trump Jr. Is Building a ‘MAGA Bench.’ J.D. Vance Is Just the Start.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH4-H4Y1-JBG3-60CH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1360 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher Shane Goldmacher is a national political correspondent, covering the 2024 campaign and the major developments, trends and forces shaping American politics. He can be reached at , [*shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com)

**Highlight:** The former president’s son played a pivotal role in getting Mr. Vance on the G.O.P. ticket. Though he has never held elected office, he has emerged as a key enforcer of MAGA loyalty.

**Body**

The former president’s son played a pivotal role in getting Mr. Vance on the G.O.P. ticket. Though he has never held elected office, he has emerged as a key enforcer of MAGA loyalty.

When J.D. Vance did his initial walk-through of the Republican National Convention stage this week after he was named Donald J. Trump’s running mate, the Ohio senator was joined not just by aides and event organizers.

He was accompanied by a man who had pushed behind the scenes as hard as almost anyone to put him on the ticket in the first place: Donald Trump Jr.

When they each delivered a prime-time address on Wednesday night, the moment marked not only Mr. Vance’s national debut but the unquestioned arrival of Donald Trump Jr. as a political force to be reckoned with in his own right.

The younger Mr. Trump is now the rarest of political creatures: a top confidant not only to the Republican presidential nominee but also the vice-presidential nominee. Soon after Mr. Vance got the call from the former president that he would be on the ticket, one of the first outbound calls he made was to the younger Mr. Trump to thank him for his help, according to a person with knowledge of the call.

“Don is a power player and I think anybody in Republican politics is realizing that he’s on a list of five of the most powerful conservative voices and influencers alive,” said Charlie Kirk, a close Trump ally who co-founded Turning Point, a constellation of influential groups on the right, and who hosts a popular streaming show.

The 46-year-old eldest son and namesake of the former president did not enter the first Trump White House in an official role. And he said in a brief interview on Wednesday that he would not serve in a second.

Donald Trump Jr. instead fashioned himself as a MAGA enforcer who would seek a “veto” over any administration appointments that he views as being at odds with his father’s agenda.

“I just want to make sure those snakes and the liars don’t get those positions of power,” said the younger Mr. Trump, who has always made clear that his father is the star of the Republican show. “I think we’ll do a much better job of that this time around because we actually have the experience. We understand who those people are.”

It is an assertive posture for a man who has never been elected to any office and has never served in a formal government post. While his sister Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner, have receded from the political scene after holding top White House posts, the younger Mr. Trump has firmly established himself as the most political of the Trump children. His incendiary online attacks sometimes even outstrip his own father’s, regularly outraging Democrats.

In his speech to delegates in Milwaukee on Wednesday, Mr. Trump mocked one of President Biden’s old political slogans. “Remember ‘Build Back Better’?” Mr. Trump asked. “Instead, we got broke, bumbling, Biden.”

The combination of his aggressive public media presence policing MAGA loyalty and his private push for Mr. Vance reveals the remarkable degree to which the younger Mr. Trump is looking to mold the Republican Party far beyond a potential second Trump term.

“My biggest role is just making sure that we have an America First, a MAGA bench for the future,” the younger Mr. Trump said in the interview. “So that after my father’s second term it doesn’t revert back to the neocon warmongering that we’ve seen from the Republican Party, that it doesn’t go back to forgetting about ***working-class*** Americans.”

Mr. Trump has also emerged as a critical bridge between his father’s political operation and Senate Republicans, a group that has long been among the party’s most skeptical of the former president and Trumpism.

The younger Mr. Trump is close with Senator Steve Daines of Montana, the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, the campaign arm of the Senate G.O.P. In early 2023, Mr. Daines went on the younger Mr. Trump’s podcast to endorse his father for president. It was [*a key early backing*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com) that lent the former president credibility inside the still-doubtful party establishment.

Mr. Daines, who is an occasional fishing and hunting partner with the younger Mr. Trump, praised both his marksmanship and political instincts. “He would rather spend his time with me with a fly rod in Montana talking about catching a trout than even policy,” Mr. Daines said in an interview. “But we do both.”

In the eight years since a clean-shaved Donald Trump Jr. [*delivered New York’s delegates for his father in 2016*](mailto:shane.goldmacher@nytimes.com), formally clinching the nomination, he has fostered an expanding political footprint and sphere of influence among conservatives.

He has traveled across the nation, endorsing and recruiting allies. Republican strategists say fund-raising messages he has signed are some of the most lucrative in the industry, and he is a sought-after surrogate — both to sign solicitations and appear on the campaign trail.

Today, the diaspora of Don Jr. is wide and influential.

His former chief of staff is running the main pro-Trump super PAC. His longtime political consigliere has played a similar role for Mr. Vance. And his business partner in a publishing company is running a second pro-Trump super PAC.

And then there is Mr. Kirk, who was once the younger Mr. Trump’s personal aide, carrying his bags and fetching sugar-free Red Bulls for him during the 2016 general election. Mr. Kirk credits the size of his multimillion-dollar conservative advocacy group in part to the younger Mr. Trump’s support.

“Don Jr. is one of the biggest reasons why we are what we are today,” Mr. Kirk said of Turning Point, which is hosting a Right Wing Revolution party on Wednesday night across from the convention hall. “The people that know Don the most are ascendant in the MAGA movement right now.”

Mr. Trump remains a key adviser to his father, as well. At an Axios event in Milwaukee this week, the younger Mr. Trump said he had spent three hours working and reworking the former president’s planned convention speech — the day before a gunman tried to assassinate his father.

He told the story of reconnecting with his father after the former president defiantly rose up and pumped his fist after a bullet grazed his ear.

“To be shot and to stand up with that kind of resolve, I just told him — I go, ‘Hey man, you’re the biggest badass I know,’” the younger Mr. Trump recalled at the event. “That was my opening salvo and then we started joking about hair, and I said, can I call you Evander Holyfield because of the little missing chunk of ear?”

The younger Mr. Trump has taken pride in embracing the politically incorrect, naming his book “Triggered” — for outraging the left — and his streaming show the same. Dating to 2015, the younger Mr. Trump has been fluent in the language and outrage of the Republican base, which he came to channel through an aggressive presence on the social media site now known as X.

This week, on the first day of the convention, Donald Trump Jr. got into an argument with an MSNBC reporter on the floor of the hall, as his brother, Eric, was about to enter their father’s name into nomination. The reporter asked about the Trump-era policy of separating undocumented immigrant children from families, and then pushed back after Donald Trump Jr. mentioned President Obama.

“I expect nothing less from you clowns,” Mr. Trump told the reporter. “Even, even today, even 48 hours later. You couldn’t wait. You couldn’t wait with your lies and with your nonsense, so just get out of here.”

In an interview on Fox News on Tuesday, Sean Hannity told Don Jr. that “I talked to your dad about it today.” Mr. Hannity recounted the former president saying, “Yeah, sometimes Don gets a little hot. That’s what he said to me.”

Don Jr. deadpanned. “I thought,” he said, “it was remarkably restrained.”

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Donald Trump Jr. is “on a list of five of the most powerful conservative voices and influencers alive,” said Charlie Kirk, co-founder of the conservative group Turning Point. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NIC ANTAYA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Why U.S. Schools Are Facing Their Biggest Budget Crunch in Years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBJ-V2X1-JBG3-6008-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 26, 2024 Wednesday 12:48 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1202 words

**Byline:** Sarah Mervosh and Madeleine Ngo Sarah Mervosh covers education for The Times, focusing on K-12 schools. Madeleine Ngo covers U.S. economic policy and how it affects people across the country.

**Highlight:** Federal pandemic aid helped keep school districts afloat, but that money is coming to an end.

**Body**

Federal pandemic aid helped keep school districts afloat, but that money is coming to an end.

After several cash-flush pandemic years, school districts across the country are facing budget shortfalls, with pressure closing in on multiple fronts.

A flow of federal dollars — $122 billion meant to help schools recover from the pandemic — is running dry in September, leaving schools with less money for tutors, summer school and other supports that have funded pandemic recovery efforts over the last three years.

At the same time, declining student enrollment — a consequence of lower birthrates and a growing school choice movement — is catching up to some districts.

The result: Districts across the country must make tough decisions about cuts that will affect millions of families as soon as the next school year. The cuts, which many districts put off during the pandemic, could interrupt the recovery of U.S. students, who by and large [*have not made up their pandemic losses*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html).

“I’m concerned that too many state and district leaders had their heads in the sand about the coming fiscal cliff, and now they are being confronted with really painful decisions,” said Thomas S. Dee, a Stanford University professor who has studied student enrollment trends.

The cutbacks span districts rich and poor. In the Edmonds, Wash., school district, an upper-middle income area north of Seattle, music classes were [*a target of district slashes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html), mobilizing a local foundation to raise more than $200,000 to try to save them. In Montgomery County, Md., an upscale suburb, the district is [*slightly increasing class sizes*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html) to save money.

But experts say the cuts are likely to be felt most in low-income and urban school areas — districts that received larger shares of federal pandemic aid, and that have [*also been hit hard*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html) by declining student enrollment.

When students leave the public school system, districts receive less state and federal money. Losing too many students can strain district budgets, which come with fixed costs. Salaries and benefits, for example, make up about 80 percent of a typical budget.

In many districts, enrollment has been dropping for years. But the pandemic “accelerated that decline,” said Dr. Dee, whose research has found that U.S. public schools lost more than 1 million students between 2019 and 2022. About half of the decline can be explained by population trends, but much of the rest is driven by a sustained interest in private school and home-schooling, Dr. Dee found.

“It’s been clear for a while now — at least two years — that the enrollment declines appear to be the new normal,” he said.

High inflation in recent years has also driven up costs. Many districts gave out larger raises than usual to remain competitive, which is now more difficult for them to sustain, said Marguerite Roza, the director of the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University.

At the same time, many states are facing slower revenue growth and “might not really be in a position to give out bigger than normal increases to districts,” Dr. Roza said.

Some districts used their pandemic aid to help plug holes in their budget, making the current moment particularly perilous.

That was the case [*in Minneapolis*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html), which has been losing students and faced a deficit of more than $100 million. About 300 teaching positions are being cut.

Without the extra funding, Minneapolis would most likely have had to lay off staff or make other dramatic changes earlier, just as students were trying to recover from the pandemic, said Ibrahima Diop, the district’s senior financial officer.

The district chose to continue to invest in instruction. “That is what everybody should have been doing, because doing that meant you were supporting students,” Mr. Diop said.

Hartford, Conn., made a similar trade-off: The district used stimulus dollars to fund 260 positions, including school counselors, social workers and academic tutors — positions that officials heard “loud and clear” were needed to support students, said Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, the superintendent.

But the district, which has dealt with budget woes and declining enrollment, now must shuffle employees to other positions in an attempt to reduce layoffs. “Those districts that are facing the most acute cliffs now are the ones that spent most of the money on servicing and programming for students,” Dr. Torres-Rodriguez said.

Some districts tried to stave off potential layoffs, but even they are planning cuts to programs.

Officials for Baltimore City Public Schools were “very careful from the beginning” to make investments that did not result in abrupt cuts once the relief funds ran out, said Alison Perkins-Cohen, the district’s chief of staff. District officials did not use the money to hire new permanent workers in schools or raise teacher salaries, she said.

Instead, Baltimore provided tutoring, gave one-time stipends to teachers and upgraded bathrooms, science labs and HVAC systems.

Yet Baltimore will still have to reduce some tutoring contracts and may have to scale back summer school next year, programs that had been funded with federal dollars.

Waterbury, Conn., has also been able to avoid layoffs, in large part because it tried not to hire many new staff members with the relief funds, said Verna Ruffin, the district’s superintendent.

Still, Dr. Ruffin said, officials will no longer be able to offer students a 24/7 virtual tutoring program for the coming school year. And they will have to scale back after-school enrichment programs that give students the opportunity to visit museums and attend plays and concerts.

Birmingham, Ala., is among the districts that have made [*outsize academic progress*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html) since the pandemic, but now must decide which programs to keep.

A program that gave students extra instructional time over fall, winter and spring breaks yielded promising results, according to [*an analysis by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/31/us/pandemic-learning-loss-recovery.html).

But the district must now cut one session — over winter break — and can no longer afford to pay teachers a higher, $60 an hour rate to participate, said the Birmingham superintendent, Mark Sullivan.

A free after-school program, which was subsidized with pandemic aid, will move back to a paid model, a change Dr. Sullivan was loath to make. He knows the cost — about $160 a month, for a single student — could be the difference between paying a bill for many poor and ***working-class*** parents in his district.

The district must also cut 70 positions financed with stimulus dollars.

Dr. Sullivan said he did not regret making the short-term hires of mental health counselors, math and reading interventionists and other specialists to get students through the worst of the pandemic. The federal aid represented a rare opportunity for his district, where money is tight and nearly 90 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

“When you are able to provide supports that students desperately need, even if we can do it for a short period of time,” he said, “I think that was worth it.”

PHOTO: In Washington State, a school district hosted an “Ales for the Arts” fund-raising event at a brewery. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHONA KASINGER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Great Tension Inside the Trump G.O.P.; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNM-R9S1-DXY4-X3JP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 29, 2024 Friday 09:01 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2094 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:** How long can a populist party support a libertarian Congress?

**Body**

This week the populist think tank American Compass released [*polling*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) showing that larger shares of Republican voters said they believed that the federal government should be doing more, rather than less, to provide “support for the poor, disabled, needy” and “medical care for those who need help affording insurance” and to sustain Social Security and Medicare.

How might these commitments be paid for if these pro-government Republicans had their way? A different [*poll*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/), from Bloomberg and Morning Consult, suggested one possible answer: Surveying voters in seven swing states, it found that 58 percent of self-described conservative Republicans strongly or somewhat supported raising taxes on Americans making $400,000 or more a year.

These populist perspectives — tax the upper class and spend on health care and income support — aren’t especially surprising, given the Republican Party’s slow transformation into a more downscale coalition, a process in which it has gained blue-collar and non-college-educated supporters and lost affluent suburbanites to the Democratic Party.

But good luck finding evidence of this populist transformation in the party’s current policy proposals. Consider, for instance, the latest [*budget*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) proposal from the Republican Study Committee, the conservative House caucus that claims about 80 percent of Republican representatives as members. The document makes the same general pledges that the party’s conservatives have made for decades, from the era of Newt Gingrich to the years of Paul Ryan: It wants to make the Trump-era tax cuts permanent, it calls for “extending and improving” tax cuts for corporations and abolishing the estate tax, and it wants to pay for its tax cuts by reducing what the government spends on Medicaid, Obamacare and old-age entitlements.

Whatever you think of these ideas, they don’t seem to match especially well onto either the American Compass polling or the general transformation of the Republican coalition.

This mismatch existed already in the Gingrich era and in the Ryan years, but the gap has clearly widened. And across years of analysis and disputation — to which I’ve contributed too many words to contemplate — there’s often been an assumption that at some point, the basic commitments of the median G.O.P. politician will have to shift to match the increasing populism of constituents.

Instead, every time a Republican leader tried to forge a less libertarian agenda — as George W. Bush did with “compassionate conservatism” and the “ownership society” and as Donald Trump did by running directly against the party’s small-government wing in 2016 — the pendulum swung back again as soon as the G.O.P. was out of power.

In the case of the current congressional G.O.P., you could argue that the pendulum swing has been less dramatic than it was in the Tea Party era; there’s more of a sense that groups like the Republican Study Committee are going through the motions, that there’s less apocalyptic urgency in demanding spending cuts and more room for Republicans to make policy deals with the Biden administration than there was under Barack Obama.

Still, the pattern is enduring enough that one can imagine a future in which the Republican base of 2050 responds to every economic polling question with “Workers of the world, unite!” — and yet House Republicans are still putting out budget blueprints that cut health care and retirement spending to fund upper-bracket tax cuts.

What sustains this contradictory-seeming arrangement? Here are a few explanations:

The modified Thomas Frank thesis. This argument comes from “What’s the Matter With Kansas?,” the Bush-era best seller in which Frank argued that Republican politicians and the conservative media complex were essentially tricking middle-American voters into voting against their own economic interests — whipping up moral panics and culture-war excitement on television while in their legislation they were building a plutocracy.

In a simplified form, this argument has always had an obvious attraction for liberals, since it suggests that the rival coalition consists of bigoted rubes led by greedy knaves. But one might update it more sympathetically for the Trump era — when the Republican coalition includes more infrequent and disaffected voters — and say that the G.O.P. now also has more constituents who aren’t paying close attention to politics, which would presumably make it easier for party elites to take policy positions that are out of step with voters. (It might also make issue polling more unreliable, since the infrequent and alienated voter is probably less likely to have especially coherent policy preferences.)

The postmaterialism argument. This explanation gives more credit to conservative voters: They aren’t being tricked or deceived into supporting libertarian politicians; they just don’t care enough about economic policy to force some big change in the G.O.P. Throw them back into the Depression era, and they probably wouldn’t vote Republican. But in a rich society with a long-established welfare state and a lot of expert control over the economy, in which plenty of ***working-class*** voters are doing just fine by any reasonable standard, it can be perfectly rational to prioritize cultural issues over economic ones, values over crude materialism.

This prioritization clearly happens on the left: Some [*responses*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) to Frank’s book noted that a similar book could have been written with the title “What’s the Matter With the Upper West Side?” since there are plenty of liberal millionaires and upper-middle-class professionals who stand to lose from tax increases but still reliably vote Democratic because they’re social liberals.

Then, too, it makes a difference that the current Republican Party is pretty obviously held together by negative polarization, a shared desire not to be governed by contemporary progressivism, but for a variety of different reasons. If that’s what binds your coalition, if there isn’t a coherent right in America so much as a fractious anti-left, it’s not surprising that Republican economic policy would often be handed over to the faction that most objects to progressive economics — the limited government types — while other right-of-center factions focus on other issues, threats and grievances.

The “small-government conservatism is fake” theory. This explanation supplements the previous one by suggesting that it’s especially easy for the other factions on the right to let the libertarians write the budget proposals because those proposals never go anywhere. ***Working-class*** voters may not love limited-government conservatism, but neither do they fear it, because years of experience have taught them that it never succeeds in making the kind of big spending cuts that it claims to want.

Clearly the limited-government tendency isn’t entirely impotent: If you elect a conservative governor, your state will be less likely to accept a Medicaid expansion, and if you elect a conservative president, you will get deregulation in some form. But when it comes to the big picture of federal spending, a vote for Republican governance has never really been a vote for austerity or big entitlement cuts; it’s just a vote for the free lunch of deficit-financed tax cuts. So why would populist voters worry overmuch about the proposals that a bunch of House Republicans put forward when they’re safely out of power?

And because, again, the G.O.P. coalition is organized primarily around fear of progressive governance, the seemingly unprincipled way that Republicans turn libertarian when they’re out of power but freely spend when they control the government is, in its way, fealty to their coalition’s organizing principle: Conservatives don’t trust progressives to spend money, but they do trust themselves.

The “Trump holds it together” theory. This final explanation notes that whatever House Republicans propose, they aren’t in charge of the G.O.P. these days; Trump is. And he didn’t run a primary campaign promising to cut entitlements, nor has he come out guns blazing in favor of budgetary austerity. Instead, his most recent policy intervention was a disavowal of his prior calls to repeal and replace Obamacare and a [*pledge*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) to “MAKE THE ACA, or OBAMACARE, AS IT IS KNOWN, MUCH BETTER, STRONGER, AND FAR LESS EXPENSIVE.”

If you’re a Trump-friendly or Trump-curious downscale voter, this is the Republican Party you’re voting for — one in which the budget nerds might want to bring back the old Ryan agenda but the big man keeps them in their place.

True, Trump didn’t fully transform the G.O.P. agenda while he was president; he deferred to Ryan and Mitch McConnell in the design of his tax cuts and never delivered on some of his “[*worker’s party*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/)” promises. But he abandoned the right’s zeal for entitlement reform and hard money, he ran a hot prepandemic economy that was [*good for* ***working-class*** *wages*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/), and he never really tried to carry out the budget proposals that [*his administration’s nerds*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) produced. So a lot of Republican or Republican-leaning voters, remembering that record, trust him not to be a libertarian, whatever the rest of his party’s leaders might prefer.

But this theory also implies that without a Trump figure as its leader, the contradictions within the G.O.P., the tensions between populist voters and libertarian elites, could come more sharply to the fore.

Even with Trump, those tensions may matter more in a potential second term than in his first one. If elected, he’ll face a very different fiscal and economic landscape than in 2017, in which the shadow of inflation will make a stronger policy case for austerity than eight years ago, with a party whose elites still hate tax increases and whose voters may be more hostile than ever to serious spending cuts.

Those pressures could force a second Trump administration to resolve the libertarian-populist tension. Or more likely, they could just undermine its policymaking and unravel its coalition.

Breviary

Emma Green [*on the rise*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/) of classical education.

Sohrab Ahmari [*on the ethnic cleansing of Armenians*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/).

Michael Ledger-Lomas on the fairy tales [*of Andrew Lang*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/).

Tanner Greer on America [*from China’s vantage*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/).

The Lancet looks into [*the low-fertility future*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/).

The case [*against the lab-leak hypothesis*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/).

This Week in Decadence

— Aaron Timms “[*The Age of Cultural Stagnation*](https://americancompass.org/the-american-appetite-for-government/),” The New Republic (March 19)

[Kyle] Chayka has spent much of the past decade devising labels for various aspects of algorithmic culture. In 2016, he introduced “AirSpace” as a term for the stripped-down, generic interior design aesthetic advanced by lifestyle platforms like Airbnb and Instagram; more recently, he’s written about “ambient TV,” the intellectually untaxing, Muzak-like programming of the streaming platforms (symbolized most potently by the Netflix series “Emily in Paris”), and has claimed that the widespread use of moisturizer is proof that we live in a “culture of negation.” “Filterworld” is the latest addition to the lexical roster, and it’s not entirely clear why he chose it, since algorithmic recommendations, rather than filters, are the real object of the book’s ire.

“Filterworld,” Chayka explains, “is my word for the vast, interlocking and yet diffuse network of algorithms that influence our lives today” — and it’s the reason for our cultural immobility, for “the perception that culture is stuck and plagued by sameness.” Since they’re designed to feed the user new cultural products similar to those already consumed, Chayka’s argument goes, algos are engines for the perpetuation of homogeneity. And since most of us are addicted to our phones and the big platforms that control the social internet (Google, Amazon, Facebook, TikTok, Spotify, Airbnb, Twitter; sorry, I refuse to call it X), the version of culture we encounter daily is one that’s accessible, replicable, unobtrusive and unchallenging.

Culture today is uninteresting because that’s what the algos are optimized to produce. The brilliant and restless civilization that rampaged through the second half of the 20th century, the culture whose genius spanned the wrestling guitars of “I Saw Her Standing There” to the shoulder pads of Yves Saint Laurent, has come to a standstill. At some point over the past 30 years, we passed from a world in which Ezra Pound’s old command to “make it new” held real currency to one that makes it moo: Culture today is an endless repackaging of tested tropes into the technological equivalent of chaff, mere filler to keep the grazing consumer content.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alain Pilon FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2024

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[***Scott Event Aims to Lure New Donors To Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C09-VRK1-DXY4-X04Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 777 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender

**Body**

The South Carolina senator is said to be high on Donald Trump's list of potential running mates, and his fund-raising ability could lift his chances of being selected.

Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, one of the top contenders to become Donald J. Trump's running mate, will host a gathering in Washington next month featuring Republican donors who so far remain publicly uncommitted to the party's presidential ticket.

Pitched as a meeting of Great Opportunity Policy, a tax-exempt group that supports Mr. Scott's political agenda, the private event on June 19 will double as a fund-raiser just as Mr. Trump's vice-presidential search is expected to start heating up.

A financial show of force for Mr. Scott's group could lift his chances of being selected by Mr. Trump, who has spoken to advisers at Mar-a-Lago about which potential running mates could help the campaign raise money. For Mr. Scott, the event may help signal that he is a more palatable political figure for centrist donors and that adding him to the ticket could expand the network of financial resources Mr. Trump could tap into this year.

According to a copy of the invitation obtained by The New York Times, Mr. Scott's event will feature remarks from a range of major donors and other well-known figures:

Marc Andreessen, the software engineer turned investor who has given more than $11 million to non-Trump political causes this cycle

Kenneth Griffin, the founder of the hedge fund Citadel, who has made nearly $60 million in political contributions this cycle, much of which helped finance Mr. Trump's Republican primary challengers

Marc Rowan, the chief executive of Apollo Global Management, who supported Mr. Scott's presidential bid

Bill Ackman, the founder of Pershing Square Capital Management, who has said he is deciding whether to support Mr. Trump or Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an independent presidential candidate

Tim Dunn, a founder of CrownQuest, who has already supported Mr. Trump with a $5 million contribution to Make America Great Again Inc., the former president's super PAC

Kellyanne Conway, a former senior counselor in the Trump White House

Mr. Trump has become increasingly worried about a range of money problems. On the campaign trail, his advisers expect to be outgunned by President Biden's fund-raising operation. In the courtroom, his four criminal cases have led to sky-high legal bills, sapping roughly $50 million from his Save America political action committee last year.

The former president has responded by leaning into his own fund-raising efforts -- a major shift from his first campaign, in 2016, when he appealed to voters by portraying political donors as a malignant force undermining the interests of ***working-class*** Americans.

At a private fund-raiser on Saturday at his Mar-a-Lago club in South Florida, Mr. Trump told donors that they would not receive a picture with him if ''you didn't pay enough,'' and added that he occasionally told his aides they scheduled too many photos before an event.

''They said, 'Well, they're paying $100,000 apiece for a picture' -- I say, 'OK, I'll do it,''' Mr. Trump said to applause from donors, according to a recording of the event.

Attending the event was a large group of Republican officials, including Mr. Scott, whom the former president highlighted for the crowd as an ''unbelievable'' pro-Trump surrogate.

Mr. Scott, the only Black Republican in the Senate, has also been active in helping Mr. Trump raise money. This year, he helped organize a major fund-raiser before a key presidential primary contest in his home state.

Later this month, Mr. Scott is scheduled to attend a fund-raiser in Manhattan hosted by a group of billionaires, financial executives and longtime Republican donors, according to a person familiar with the planning who insisted on anonymity to discuss the private deliberations. Hosts for that event include Howard Lutnick, the chief executive of the investment firm Cantor Fitzgerald; John Paulson, a hedge fund billionaire who hosted an event for Mr. Trump last month in Palm Beach, Fla.; and J. Pepe Fanjul, a top executive at Florida Crystals, according to an invitation.

The policy gathering in Washington hosted by Mr. Scott next month, which seeks contributions of up to $250,000 from attendees, is expected to focus on antisemitism on college campuses and financial issues.

In a statement, Mr. Scott said the topics would be aimed at ''expanding opportunity and access to the American dream.''

''For too many Americans, prosperity is slipping out of reach,'' he said.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/us/politics/tim-scott-trump-fundraiser.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/us/politics/tim-scott-trump-fundraiser.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Making Peace With the Kamala Harris Nomination; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJT-PFN1-JBG3-6095-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 25, 2024 Thursday 14:45 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1488 words

**Byline:** David Brooks David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about political, social and cultural trends.

**Highlight:** A strong politician in some ways, but also deeply flawed. Now, she’s ours.

**Body**

At the beginning of 2019 [*I wrote a column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html) enthusiastically arguing that Kamala Harris was the Democratic Party’s strongest candidate to take on Donald Trump. My core argument was pretty simple: If Democrats hoped to defeat him, they needed the toughest gladiator they could get, and Harris filled that bill.

Her campaign memoir from that year features a string of scenes in which she trounced powerful men. People who watched her as a prosecutor and a rising political star have testified to her skills in the art of confrontation. In the column, I quoted something that Gary Delagnes, the former head of San Francisco’s police union, told Politico: “She’s an intelligent person. She is a — let’s see, I better pick this word carefully: ruthless.”

Looking back, that column was not wrong, but it was limited. We’ve seen a lot more of Harris in the ensuing years. Today, as she seemingly cruises to the Democratic nomination, I find myself experiencing a dizzying range of emotions. Some moments, I share the jolt of enthusiasm many are feeling. Other moments, I think the Democrats are suffering from a mass hypnotic delusion, nominating a candidate who is seriously flawed. In order to make sense of this mishmash of thoughts, I thought I’d put together a report card of her strengths and weaknesses.

Toughness: A. Harris still has it. In the rallies and events she has done since her ascension, Harris has been dominating, poised and exuberant. She prosecutes Trump with smiling self-confidence and an undertone of utter contempt. If playful aggression is a thing, she projects it.

Leadership and management skills: C. Harris’s ability to get pretty much the entire party behind her in just a few days after Joe Biden dropped out is tremendously impressive. On the other hand, from her time as the San Francisco district attorney straight through her time as vice president, Harris has earned a reputation for degrading underlings and burning through staff. Biden has a coterie of people who have been with him for decades, but Harris has no such group. The Substack newsletter Open the Books ran the numbers and calculated that as of March 31 over 90 percent of the staff she had at the beginning of her vice-presidential term had left.

“It’s clear that you’re not working with somebody who is willing to do the prep and the work,” a former staff member told The Washington Post in [*a December 2021*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html) article. “With Kamala you have to put up with a constant amount of soul-destroying criticism and also her own lack of confidence. So you’re constantly sort of propping up a bully and it’s not really clear why.”

This criticism is incredibly damning, but the turmoil in her office was more evident at the beginning of her time as vice president than more recently.

Analytical abilities: B+. As vice president, Harris has earned a reputation for being focused in meetings, for asking the right questions, for asking people to get to the point, for her ability to size up a situation. “My bias has always been to speak factually, to speak accurately, to speak precisely about issues and matters that have potentially great consequence,” she [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html) The Times last fall. “I find it off-putting to just engage in platitudes. I much prefer to deconstruct an issue and speak of it in a way that hopefully elevates public discourse and educates the public.”

Vision: C. One problem with her terrible 2020 presidential campaign was that she was running as a prosecutor at a time when her party was lurching leftward. Another was identified by the former Obama adviser David Axelrod in an [*interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html) with Elaina Plott Calabro of The Atlantic: “It looked as if she didn’t know where to plant her feet. That she wasn’t sort of grounded, that she didn’t know exactly who she was.” That’s still somewhat true. She hasn’t shown that she has the kind of coherent worldview — the way, say, Biden does — you need to be a good decision maker in the White House. Over the past few years, when Harris has been asked to articulate her overall philosophy, she often produces a meaningless word salad, ripe for ridicule.

In California politics the safe thing to do is to play to the progressive base. So in interviews she gave during her 2020 run she would often revert to positions that some progressives loved, even though they were politically suicidal in the swing states. She said she wanted to ban fracking, decriminalize illegal immigration, end the filibuster to pass the Green New Deal and eliminate private health insurance. Republicans are now making hay out of these statements, but it’s not clear how much she believes what she claimed to believe back then.

Relatability: B. Some of Harris’s best moments come not when she is giving a speech to an audience but when she is listening to others describe their lives and problems. She is good at compassionate exchange. To me, when Republicans criticize her laugh, it’s both trivial and politically counterproductive. Her laugh is big, genuine and unguarded — a rare feature in any politician.

Her larger problem of course is that she’s a member of the progressive educated elite from the San Francisco Bay Area. Her father was a Stanford professor and her mother was a cancer researcher. She has lived her life in a very unusual slice of America. This is not an ideal background if your job is to win over ***working-class*** voters in western Pennsylvania, small-town Michigan and suburban Georgia.

Composure: C. Some politicians have minds like a jukebox. You mention a topic, and they will play whatever record they have stored in their brain that goes with that topic. Harris has seemed less good at handling that kind of spontaneous exchange. This has led to some of her worst and most insecure moments. In 2021, after she was tasked with finding the root causes of the immigration crisis, NBC’s Lester Holt asked her if she would visit the U.S.-Mexico border. She replied, “At some point, you know, I — we are going to the border. We’ve been to the border. So this whole, this whole — this whole thing about the border. We’ve been to the border. We’ve been to the border.” Holt reminded her that in fact she hadn’t yet visited the border. Harris cut back on media interviews after that humiliating encounter.

Overall reputation: C. Today, many Democrats are smitten by Harris. Having endured despair as the Biden campaign foundered, they are thrilled to have a strong, dynamic and fresh candidate who at least gives them a chance. But this was not how well-informed Democrats thought of her over most of the Biden term. In February of 2023, my Times colleagues Zolan Kanno-Youngs, Katie Rogers and Peter Baker surveyed Democratic views on Harris. Here is the core of their reporting:

“The painful reality for Ms. Harris is that in private conversations over the last few months, dozens of Democrats in the White House, on Capitol Hill and around the nation — including some who helped put her on the party’s 2020 ticket — said she had not risen to the challenge of proving herself as a future leader of the party, much less the country. Even some Democrats whom her own advisers referred reporters to for supportive quotes confided privately that they had lost hope in her,” they wrote.

“Through much of the fall, a quiet panic set in among key Democrats about what would happen if President Biden opted not to run for a second term. Most Democrats interviewed, who insisted on anonymity to avoid alienating the White House, said flatly that they did not think Ms. Harris could win the presidency in 2024. Some said the party’s biggest challenge would be finding a way to sideline her without inflaming key Democratic constituencies that would take offense.”

My bottom line, I guess, is that Harris is a smart and forceful person with a commanding political presence. But as of 18 months ago, she would not have made an effective president or even a good candidate. She ran a disastrous presidential campaign and has been a mediocre vice president, even measured by the low standards of the office. She could always repeat the normal Democratic positions but had no distinctive view for where the country needed to go.

The crucial question is: Has she learned and grown? Democrats keep telling me that she’s a much more confident campaigner, a much more effective manager, a much more focused thinker. I’m open to that possibility. But I just spent a week in Milwaukee during which Republicans kept reassuring me that Trump had changed for the better, was a man transformed.

The Republican arguments turned out to be hokum. The Harris 2.0 theory had better be more correct.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.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/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/kamala-harris-2020.html).

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This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***New York City’s Housing Crunch Is the Worst It Has Been in Over 50 Years***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B91-2891-JBG3-6056-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 8, 2024 Thursday 11:17 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 880 words

**Byline:** Mihir Zaveri Mihir Zaveri covers housing in the New York City region for The Times.

**Highlight:** Only 1.4 percent of the city’s rentals were available in 2023, according to new data, the lowest portion since 1968. The market was even tighter for lower-cost apartments.

**Body**

Only 1.4 percent of the city’s rentals were available in 2023, according to new data, the lowest portion since 1968. The market was even tighter for lower-cost apartments.

New York City’s housing crunch is the worst it has been in more than 50 years.

The portion of rentals that were vacant and available dropped to a startling 1.4 percent in 2023, according to city data released on Thursday. It was the lowest vacancy rate since 1968 and shows just how drastically [*home construction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html) lags behind the demand from people who want to live in the city.

Housing experts often consider a “healthy” vacancy rate to be somewhere around 5 to 8 percent. A higher vacancy rate typically means it is easier for people to find apartments when they want to move. It also means that property owners are more likely to have to compete for renters, conditions that would moderate rent increases.

The data suggests New York City’s housing crisis is only getting worse, especially during the economic rebound from the coronavirus pandemic. The 1.4 percent rate was down from 4.5 percent in 2021, the last time the survey was conducted. New York officials consider a vacancy rate of less than 5 percent a “housing emergency.”

“The data is clear: The demand to live in our city is far outpacing our ability to build housing,” Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement announcing the numbers on Thursday. “New Yorkers need our help, and they need it now.”

The scale of the problem is putting more pressure on officials to do something about it. High housing costs continue to force families and ***working class*** people out of the city, threatening the economy. An influx of migrants has overwhelmed the city’s homeless shelter system, and homelessness among [*non-migrants is also on the rise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html).

Housing experts estimate that the number of homes the city needs to build is in the hundreds of thousands.

So far, however, the city and state have not made moves that could accelerate enough housing development to solve the crisis.

State lawmakers [*failed last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html) to pass several major housing proposals, including a push by Gov. Kathy Hochul to increase development in the suburbs. This year, less ambitious measures appear to [*be stuck in limbo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html), as the real estate industry, labor unions and tenant advocates remain at an impasse over [*tax incentives*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html) for new construction and tenant protections.

Ms. Hochul said in a statement on Thursday that the survey was “the latest reminder that we can only build our way out of this crisis.”

“There’s no time to waste,” she said.

Mr. Adams has proposed local solutions, like [*an overhaul*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/01/nyregion/nyc-affordable-apartment-rent.html) of the city’s zoning code. He estimates that the changes could make way for as many as 100,000 additional homes in the coming years. They would need to be approved by the City Council, and a vote could come as early as the fall.

But city officials acknowledge that these changes would be modest and not have much effect without state action.

“We need our leaders in Albany and New York City to take immediate action on a coordinated plan that helps build up our housing supply,” Rachel Fee, the executive director of the New York Housing Conference, a nonprofit that favors more development, said in a statement.

The data released on Thursday was collected in the first half of 2023 as part of a survey run by the U.S. Census Bureau every three years. The first survey was conducted in 1965.

In many ways, the results affirm the experience of many New Yorkers.

Rents plummeted at the height of the pandemic as people moved away and the vacancy rate increased. But as people have moved back to the city, rents have reached some of the highest levels ever over the past two years. The median rent on new Manhattan leases in December 2023, for example, was $4,050, according to the brokerage Douglas Elliman.

The vacancy rate is calculated by first totaling the number of homes “available to rent” in the city. This does not include vacant apartments that are “dilapidated” or empty because the owner uses the unit as a pied-à-terre or a short-term rental, like an Airbnb.

Then, that number — about 33,210 units in 2023 — is divided by the roughly 2.3 million total rental homes in the city that are either available or occupied by tenants.

The vacancy rate dropped to 1.4 percent even as the city added some 60,000 homes over the past two years, according to the city data. In the last survey before the pandemic, in 2017, the vacancy rate was 3.63 percent.

As in previous years, the data also shows how the housing crisis hits New York’s lowest-income people the hardest. The vacancy rate of apartments that rent below $1,650 per month — around the citywide median — was less than 1 percent. The typical New York City household, which has an income of about $70,000, spent more than half of that income on rent, the survey showed.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, the crunch is now hitting higher-rent apartments, too. Fewer than 4 percent of apartments renting for more than $2,400 were available in 2023, according to the survey, less than half of similar estimates in 2021 and 2017.

PHOTO: High housing costs continue to force families and ***working class*** people out of New York City, threatening the region’s economy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Esa-Pekka Salonen: A Conductor at the Top, and at a Crossroads***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CPT-DSW1-DXY4-X1WB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 13, 2024 Tuesday 13:55 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1882 words

**Byline:** Joshua Barone Joshua Barone is the assistant classical music and dance editor on the Culture Desk and a contributing classical music critic.

**Highlight:** Salonen, who will soon be a free agent for the first time in decades, could do pretty much anything at this stage. What will it be?

**Body**

Salonen, who will soon be a free agent for the first time in decades, could do pretty much anything at this stage. What will it be?

On a late afternoon in May, pop and classical music luminaries gathered in the neo-Gothic sanctuary of a 19th-century church-turned-Soho House in Stockholm. With drinks in hand, they listened as the media personality Cilla Benkö asked Esa-Pekka Salonen, “So what’s going on in your head at the moment?”

“Well, I’m at a crossroads,” said Salonen, the composer and conductor, who is a year away from becoming a free agent for the first time in decades. “I’m kind of figuring out what to do, if anything.”

Salonen is in a good position to choose what comes next. He is a conductor at the top of his field, and the kind of composer who can bring on not just one high-profile commissioner but several for each new piece he writes. The day after his interview with Benkö, he received the [*Polar Music Prize*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/), an honor that has been called the Nobel Prize of music, directly from the hands of the Swedish king.

The award is given to a classical and a pop artist annually; Salonen’s counterpart was Nile Rodgers, the mind behind songs like “We Are Family” and “Le Freak” and albums by Madonna, David Bowie and Beyoncé. Guests at the ceremony included the royal family, the megaproducer Max Martin and a member of ABBA, all gathered for a televised evening of tributes and black-tie diners dancing in the aisles to music related to the prize winners.

With royalty grooving to Daft Punk but also listening attentively to Salonen’s “Concert Étude for Solo Horn,” it was a fitting celebration for Salonen, one of the most open-minded, open-eared and fundamentally cool artists in classical music, who at 66 is beloved and respected across the field.

“It’s kind of impossible to imagine this industry without his incredibly huge influence over the past decades,” the violinist Leila Josefowicz, a [*frequent collaborator*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/), said in an interview later. “Whether it’s the compositions he’s written or the contributions he’s made to other composers, he’s a giant and a superhero.”

Salonen has been compared to Pierre Boulez, an earlier composer-conductor with lofty visions for the art form. (Salonen, though, is less prickly.) When he leaves his post as music director of the San Francisco Symphony next year, after an excruciatingly public break with the orchestra’s board, he could do pretty much whatever he wants.

“I’m not rushing into anything,” Salonen said in an interview. “I just want to get my priorities right. When I was in my 30s or 40s, I was like, OK, I’ll do this and see how it goes. Now, with a bit of luck there’s still time, but it doesn’t feel unlimited like it does to someone who’s 25.”

A BIT OF LUCK is also how Salonen describes how he got to where he is today. He was born in Helsinki, Finland, to ***working-class*** parents; his mother, thinking he might have some innate musical talent, tried to get him started with piano lessons at 4. He said no, thinking that his future was in ice hockey. “She was wise enough,” he recalled, “not to push.”

Several years later, he heard the Finnish pop singer Kirka’s version of the “Ode to Joy” on the radio. Fascinated, he looked up Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, where the tune comes from, in his father’s record collection, then listened and thought, “This is the most amazing thing.”

By that time, his mother was as a server at what Salonen described as a “posh restaurant,” where she befriended an elderly widower who asked her to become his housekeeper. The aristocratic brother of Finland’s president during World War II, he became Salonen’s godfather and facilitated his entry to the experimental, top-ranked school Helsingin Suomalainen Yhteiskoulu. It was an elite institution but, unlike similar schools in the United States, was free except for a couple hundred dollars in fees.

Salonen took up music in earnest there and had access to some of the best teachers in the country. After graduating from recorder to trumpet, he switched to the horn because an upperclassman told him that, according to Robert Schumann, the horn was the soul of a symphony orchestra.

He got a new teacher, the principal horn of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, who had himself been taught by the principal horn of the Vienna Philharmonic, a friend of the musician who premiered Richard Strauss’s Second Horn Concerto. “All of the sudden,” Salonen said, “I got access to this kind of perspective.”

By the time he was 11, he knew that music was the profession for him. “I wouldn’t have gotten this far if I didn’t have some talent,” he said. “But I feel very lucky.” His future was secured with a precollege spot at the Sibelius Academy, where his teachers included the eminent composer Einojuhani Rautavaara and the conductor [*Jorma Panula*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/). He took up the baton, he likes to say, mostly to lead his own music and works by now-famous classmates and friends, like Kaija Saariaho and Magnus Lindberg, in concerts with an anarchic spirit. Salonen remembers those performances as having been attended by tens of people.

Quickly, though, Salonen and his peers entered the establishment. By his mid-20s, Salonen had conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra in London, where he would eventually become the music director, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which he would also later lead. His first full-time job was conductor of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra.

He went on to build an enormous discography that includes his own works, as well as an expansive repertoire with much lesser-known and contemporary music. (Next up, the premiere recording of Saariaho’s opera “Adriana Mater,” [*from San Francisco*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/).) Salonen’s interpretations of the classics, though, crackle with vitality and interpretive insight that, it seems, was there from the start and continues to this day.

Along the way, he became a favorite among listeners, critics and fellow musicians. The choreographer Alonzo King, with whom Salonen has collaborated on projects including Ravel’s “Mother Goose” at the San Francisco Symphony in June, said that some conductors need to work to win over audience members. But, he added, “at Esa-Pekka’s performances, people are ready. You feel it in the air, like it’s going to rain. There’s an electrical stir.”

Players feel that, too. “There’s a ferocity in his music-making that is so raw, and that is so rare because it’s so brutally honest at all times,” said the flutist Claire Chase, who was hired by the San Francisco Symphony as a collaborative partner when Salonen was appointed. “It’s actually quite difficult to not play your best with him.”

Salonen balances the standard repertoire with a tendency to push boundaries, both on and offstage, and a canny ability to prod institutions. He worked closely with the architect Frank Gehry to build Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in 2003. That same year, motivated by a blend of ecology, politics and music, he founded the Baltic Sea Festival, where he will [*conduct the opera “Khovanshchina”*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/) there this month. At the Colburn School, the conducting program that he leads was just endowed in perpetuity.

He oversaw a virtual-reality project at the Philharmonia that gave audience members an opportunity to embed in the orchestra. In 2014, he was featured in [*an Apple commercial*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/) that showed him weaving the iPad into his daily work. During the pandemic, he and the San Francisco Symphony’s collaborative partners worked on “[*Throughline*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/),” a piece by Nico Muhly designed so thoroughly for digital media, it couldn’t be played live.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/)]

“I just wanted something to be honest, something that would be good and would not feel like a substitution,” Salonen said of the piece. “The moment we move beyond just really distributing existing material in a different way to actually creating new art for the new medium, then things are going to get really interesting.”

SALONEN’S TENURE in San Francisco started in 2020, with the promise of building on his ambitions in a city that has become synonymous with innovation. Even the idea of hiring collaborative partners was radical, defying the maestro myth to welcome perspectives from the worlds of avant-garde and popular music, as well as technology.

“We had all kinds of thoughts and ideas about what could be and what might be,” said Matthew Spivey, the orchestra’s chief executive. But earlier this year, Salonen stunned the classical music world by [*announcing*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/) that he would leave when his contract expires in 2025. In a moment of rare candor for the field, he explained why: “I do not share the same goals for the future of the institution as the Board of Governors does.”

The orchestra was staring down budget cuts that made Salonen’s ambitions for it untenable. Collaborative partners were quietly done away with. Open seats couldn’t be offered to new musicians at competitive salaries. Ominously, there was talk of programming that prioritized audience growth over artistic integrity.

“It’s heartbreaking,” Chase said. “Esa-Pekka had a vision that was absolutely achievable, but we lost the opportunity to see that vision actualized.”

Players didn’t want Salonen to leave. For the rest of the season, [*they handed out fliers*](https://www.polarmusicprize.org/) to audience members that accused management of having “no clear artistic vision.” In June, a concertgoer held up a sign in Finnish that criticized the board with a harsh expletive, a sight practically unheard-of in concert halls.

During that time, Salonen said, he and the orchestra found that “to be onstage performing music is actually a sanctuary, where we can do what we are supposed to be doing.” He was also touched by the public’s response. Around San Francisco, people would stop him at coffee shops and bars to express sadness and gratitude.

“We in this classical music industry sometimes wonder what we’re doing in this bubble,” he said. “But this tells us that it actually matters that there’s a symphony orchestra in a town. We are the good guys, in the cultural side of things. We are constructive forces of society, and it’s nice to be reminded of that.”

So, what now? Within five minutes of the announcement that he was leaving San Francisco, Salonen had the first of many job offers. At the moment, he’s not interested in taking on another orchestra, but there are many other ways to remain active. He is working on a horn concerto for Stefan Dohr of the Berlin Philharmonic, and he is considering writing his first opera.

Chase said that Salonen’s ideas for the field are “more porous and ultimately more powerful than institutions”; there’s a possibility that his work as a freelancer could evolve into something more project-based, with orchestral partners worldwide. When he was at the Soho House in Stockholm, he told Benkö, the interviewer, that it was kind of odd to see his old classmates start to retire.

“They’re growing organic carrots somewhere, and that’s nice, but I’m not interested in that yet,” Salonen told her. “I’m going to do something, but I haven’t quite decided what.”

PHOTO: Esa-Pekka Salonen, 66, will leave his post as music director of the San Francisco Symphony next year. The flutist Claire Chase said, “It’s actually quite difficult to not play your best with him.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY DONAVON SMALLWOOD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page AR6.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***No Man's Land***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0M-PFY1-DXY4-X041-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 31, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Books; Pg. 18; FICTION

**Length:** 787 words

**Byline:** By CJ Hauser

**Body**

In Gabrielle Korn's debut novel, ''Yours for the Taking,'' a feminist cultural icon runs a lifesaving artificial habitat, but a secret, and controversial, agenda guides her project.

YOURS FOR THE TAKING, by Gabrielle Korn

''Yours for the Taking'' follows an ensemble cast in a dystopian, near-future world where climate change and capitalism have rendered Earth toxic. The ultrarich have fled to luxury shuttles in outer space. Back on the planet, an enterprise called the Inside Project is creating sealed habitats on top of cities, designed to shield humanity from the climate's dangers. Each ''Inside'' is funded and designed by a different corporate sponsor, but there isn't enough room for everyone who seeks refuge.

Korn's novel focuses on the Inside built over New York City, bankrolled by Jacqueline Millender, a white cis woman, feminist, multibillionaire and cultural icon known for creating Instagrammable women's clubs (reminiscent of the Wing) and writing books about her rise to power (reminiscent of Sheryl Sandberg's ''Lean In''). But Millender has a secret agenda for her Inside: Only women will be allowed. And the accepted residents won't know this until they've arrived and been locked in.

What does Millender mean by ''women,'' though? She's unconvinced trans women should be allowed in her ''women only'' Inside. She's also unsure about trans men and nonbinary folks and, really, anyone who isn't a cis woman. Millender's logic for defining ''womanhood'' will leave the reader queasy, but applauding Korn's satire of TERF rhetoric. At its core, this novel is an exploration of the violence of white, trans-exclusionary radical feminism.

A plot recalling ''Brave New World'' props up the book's commentary. The characters who gain entry to Millender's Inside discover a steep price for their safety: They are drugged, brainwashed and coerced into carrying and raising a new generation of children, all in service of yet another of Millender's secret goals. The drama of the novel comes from watching the characters be changed and challenged as they try to survive in Millender's warped dollhouse.

The action of the book will keep the reader turning the pages, but it does not compensate for the characters' lack of complexity. Millender is an entertaining parody of white feminism, but she crumples into a one-dimensional villain as the book goes on. The characters orbiting her fare even worse. The book also follows Ava, a queer, upper-middle-class white cis woman who is accepted to the New York Inside; her ex-girlfriend Orchid, a ***working-class*** white cis woman who is rejected for residency; Olympia, a Black, queer cis woman and medical doctor pressured into running Millender's Inside; Shelby, a white trans woman who becomes Millender's devoted employee; and Brook and July, Ava's children, young cis girls of Generation A who were born in Inside.

If these descriptions seem overly concerned with identity signifiers, that's because the book is deeply concerned with identity. We are meant to see the tension between Millender's white feminist ideals and the realities of the Black, trans and ***working-class*** lives of the people forced to live in her world. But it is hard to get excited about Korn's representative efforts when her characterization of those lives doesn't go deep. The characters of diverse backgrounds are frequently sidelined, ushered offstage by a variety of plot developments, only to return at the 11th hour to facilitate a rainbow coalition denouement. These characters feel hemmed in, allowed to speak only when conveniently performing ideological functions. Despite aiming to critique exclusionary feminism, Korn struggles to extend ample page time and complexity to marginalized identities -- to offer them true narrative inclusion.

Is it possible to dismantle white feminism from the inside or ''the Inside''? At the action-packed end of this book, the characters make big moves and Korn seems to suggest it is. (The ending sets up a sequel, which is in the works.)

Queer writers and writers of color have long been publishing science fiction that radically reimagines the world and challenges our ideas for living in it. Think of Octavia Butler, Ryka Aoki, Samuel Delany, Rivers Solomon and N.K. Jemisin. ''Yours for the Taking'' is an effective scale model of the white feminism we already know, and there's value in this, even if Korn's world building isn't as ambitiously radical as that of her literary antecedents. Still, despite its hopeful ending, this novel's shortcomings remind the reader that we're not red-pilling our way out of the matrix of exclusionary feminisms anytime soon.

YOURS FOR THE TAKING | By Gabrielle Korn | St. Martin's | 322 pp. | $29

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/books/review/yours-for-the-taking-gabrielle-korn.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/books/review/yours-for-the-taking-gabrielle-korn.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR18.

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[***In a Coastal English City, 'Sometimes It Feels Like Our World Is Crumbling'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDG-6N01-JBG3-60R9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 5, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 1214 words

**Byline:** By Megan Specia

**Body**

As voters cast their ballots in a pivotal election, many in the southern English city of Portsmouth expressed disillusionment over what they see as national and local decline.

Voters streamed into a polling station in Portsmouth, a city nestled along England's southern coast that is known for its naval base and historic dockyard, on Thursday morning as ballot workers greeted them warmly.

Older couples walked hand in hand into the local church, which had been temporarily fitted out with ballot boxes, alongside parents with children in strollers, and young adults rushing in on the way to work.

One by one, they weighed in on the future of the nation in a vote that polls suggested could end 14 years of Conservative-led government.

''I just want to see change,'' said Sam Argha, 36, as he left his local polling station on Thursday morning having just cast a ballot for the Labour Party. ''I just really want to see us do something differently.''

Many people in the city expressed a similar desire for a new start at a moment of intense national uncertainty, even if their politics differed. Polls have predicted that the election could be a major turning point, with the center-left Labour Party expected to unseat the right-wing Conservative Party.

Portsmouth North is considered a bellwether seat -- the area has voted for the winning political party in every general election since 1974. And while the results of the area were not expected until the early hours of Friday morning, many voters were anticipating a shift in the political landscape.

It also serves as a microcosm of the broader national challenge facing the governing party: a longstanding Conservative constituency held by a popular candidate that is now at risk of being lost, and a largely disillusioned electorate that expressed frustrations with their quality of life and what many see as a lack of leadership.

The seat has been held since 2010 by Penny Mordaunt, a Conservative lawmaker whose prominent role at the coronation of King Charles III last year, when she wielded a heavy, jewel encrusted ceremonial sword, drew international attention to her steadiness and poise.

Ms. Mordaunt, who is seen as a possible contender for her party's leadership, is widely liked in Portsmouth, and some locals said they had no intention of heading in a new direction. But polls have suggested that Labour voters in the constituency could still overtake Conservative support in Thursday's vote.

The centrist Liberal Democrats -- considered the third most popular party here -- and the hard-right Reform U.K. party could also siphon off votes from the Conservatives.

''My hopes are for a much more compassionate government from Friday,'' said Grahame Milner, 62, who was walking in the city center with his husband of three decades on Wednesday afternoon. He voted for the Labour Party candidate and said he ''hoped to be celebrating on Friday'' with a new prime minister in place.

Many of the shops surrounding the couple were vacant or boarded up. Graffiti marked the sides of shuttered department stores. There is little to attract people to the area, other than the bookmakers, charity shops and small stores selling vapes, Mr. Milner said.

He first came here to serve in the Navy -- the city is home to the country's biggest naval base -- and was deployed during the 1980s Falklands War as a chef aboard a military vessel. He was pushed out of the military because of his sexual orientation, he said, and later became deeply involved in union work after returning to civilian life. He had already cast his ballot by postal vote last week.

''The austerity program has been absolutely crippling to ***working-class*** people,'' Mr. Milner said, pointing to the number of working people relying on food banks just to get by. ''This is just not the Britain that I served in the military for.''

Concerns about the hollowing-out of the National Health Service, a cost-of-living crisis that has left many struggling, debates about immigration, and the fallout from Britain's withdrawal from the European Union were front of mind for many locals.

Some said they had no plans to vote at all, disillusioned by politicians from across the spectrum.

''It's always been Labour for us, but I am not voting this year,'' said Tracy Patton, 59, who has lived in the city all her life and said she was fed up with politics. She sat outside a cafe on Wednesday evening, reminiscing with friends about how the once busy marketplace had changed.

''It was bustling, there was atmosphere,'' she said. ''But now, it's going through decline. There is just no money in England anymore.''

For some younger voters, the prospect of an uncertain future has weighed heavy. Daisy Quelch, 28, and Kiran Kaur, 24, were packing up after an outdoor boxing class near the waterfront on Southsea Common.

''Sometimes it feels like our world is crumbling,'' Ms. Quelch said, adding that she was particularly worried about climate change and the environment and planned to vote for the Green Party. ''We want to see changes, but it can't happen quickly enough.''

Earlier this year, residents were warned not to swim in the sea as the local water company had released raw sewage along the coastline, contaminating the water.

Water pollution has become a campaign issue in many parts of Britain, as some blame the government for its inability to stop the water industry -- which was privatized during the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s -- from releasing untreated waste into the waterways.

Some formerly stalwart Conservative supporters said they were rethinking their vote. Several were considering casting their ballots for Reform U.K., the populist anti-immigration party led by Nigel Farage, a brash and polarizing figure who has shaken up the general election campaign.

''They are saying the right things for me,'' said Gemma Hobday, 43, even as her husband said he was planning to continue to back Ms. Mordaunt, who, like him, is a veteran.

But others defended the Conservative Party. In Dixie's Pub just off the high street, a group of patrons played pool on the eve of the election, the clack of billiard balls mingling with chatter.

Andrew Revis, 57, was enjoying a pint at the bar after finishing work at his nearby accountancy office, and said he felt that the Conservatives and Ms. Mordaunt, whom he described as a capable and committed lawmaker, were receiving undue criticism.

''They are getting a lot of stick, but I don't think it's entirely been in their control,'' he said, pointing to the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine that created unexpected hardship.

''It's the cost of living,'' said Kerry Harris, 36, who sat outside the Iceland supermarket with her niece Shanice Bakes, 19, on Wednesday evening. She gestured to their bags. There was a time, Ms. Harris said, when a full shopping cart of groceries would cost about 50 pounds, or $65, but now she couldn't fill one bag for that price.

''And they don't put your wages up, do they?'' she added.

Ms. Harris has voted for the Conservative Party in the past, but in this election, she was hesitant to give them her vote.

''They all promise us the world, and then nothing ever comes, nothing changes.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/04/world/europe/uk-election-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/04/world/europe/uk-election-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, near the city center of Portsmouth this week. Right, Tracy Patton, who did not plan to vote and, lamenting the economic decline of the city, said: ''There is just no money in England anymore.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2024

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[***Republican Populists Are Responding to Something Real; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJB-1WY1-DXY4-X471-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1739 words

**Byline:** Julius Krein

**Highlight:** Trump’s consolidated control of the G.O.P. has had the surprising effect of making its policies more, not less, unsettled.

**Body**

Before last week’s Republican convention, Donald Trump seemed to be moving away from the populism that characterized his 2016 campaign. “This time around, the former president isn’t even pretending to stand up to corporate power,” Rogé Karma [*observed*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) in The Atlantic. “He’s defending big business, cozying up to billionaires, and wooing C.E.O.s.”

When Mr. Trump named Senator JD Vance of Ohio as his running mate, though, pundits quickly concluded that he was doubling down on populism. Mr. Vance has been a leading critic of Reagan-Bush policy orthodoxy in the G.O.P., has expressed skepticism of further corporate tax cuts and has even [*voiced approval*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) of President Biden’s Federal Trade Commission chair, Lina Khan, whose aggressive antitrust enforcement has angered big business. In his convention speech, Mr. Vance denounced NAFTA and China trade deals and promised to prioritize American workers over multinational corporations.

On the other hand, in a long [*interview*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) with Bloomberg (conducted in late June) that came out after the announcement of Mr. Vance’s selection, Mr. Trump hardly sounded like a firebrand economic populist. He floated the idea of reducing corporate tax rates to 15 percent and said he’d consider the chief executive of JPMorgan Chase, Jamie Dimon, as a potential Treasury secretary.

Mr. Trump’s own convention speech hardly clarified his policy priorities. He simultaneously promised to cut taxes, leave Social Security unchanged, reduce the deficit, raise tariffs and lower inflation.

Mr. Trump’s Republican Party thus presents a paradox. On the one hand, Mr. Trump has clearly succeeded in uniting the party around him. At the same time, the Republican policy conversation has only grown more diffuse — if not confusing and cacophonous. In other words, Mr. Trump’s consolidated control of the Republican Party has had the surprising effect of making its policies more, not less, unsettled.

We saw plenty of evidence of this throughout the Republican convention and in the party platform. Speakers on the first day alone ranged from anti-union, pro-free-trade, low-taxes Senator Ron Johnson to Teamsters union President Sean O’Brien, who excoriated Amazon, Uber and other giant corporations for exploiting workers and selling out national interests.

The party’s [*official platform*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) offers divergent planks without any attempt to reconcile them. Commentators have already highlighted a number of apparent contradictions: Tighter labor markets resulting from a crackdown on illegal immigration and “the largest deportation operation in American history,” coupled with more tariffs, would, at least in the immediate term, seem to conflict with the goal of lowering inflation. According to some analysts, including at times Senator Vance, the call to “keep the U.S. dollar as the world’s reserve currency” might inhibit the goal of turning the United States into a “manufacturing superpower.”

Since 2016, pundits and politicians have divided the Republican Party into pro-Trump and anti-Trump, or populist and establishment, factions. These factions are said to have fundamentally different constituencies (the party’s ***working-class*** base versus major donors, corporate lobbies and establishment institutions) that pursue fundamentally different ends (MAGA nationalism versus global neoliberalism). The trajectory of the Trump 2024 campaign, however, suggests it may be time to retire, or at least revise, this framing.

G.O.P. factional quarrels still occur, but the combatants no longer contest the party’s first principles or ultimate aims. Mr. Trump cannot be seriously challenged in setting the goals of the party; those who continue to reject him, like Liz Cheney, have simply become irrelevant to Republican politics.

Instead, factional battles are largely confined to disputes over the means to achieve Trumpian goals. Additionally, the lines between factions are blurring. Senator Vance is enthusiastically supported by the party’s economic nationalists, but he is also a [*favorite*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) of Silicon Valley donors, including Elon Musk, a group otherwise known for libertarian and socially liberal instincts.

In this sense, the Trump G.O.P. is increasingly coming to resemble the Democratic Party of recent decades (leaving aside the convulsions of the current moment). Paralleling Republican fault lines, centrist Democrats can be distinguished from progressive populists, but the two sides seldom question each other’s basic legitimacy in the way that Never Trumpers once sought to purge MAGA populism.

Both Democratic factions, each with its own respectable and sometimes overlapping donor base, typically claim to share the same worldview and primarily debate the means to realizing it. Centrists as well as progressives, for example, claim they want to reduce housing costs for low earners, but centrists tend to argue that environmental permitting reform and relaxing zoning restrictions are better policy tools than rent control and subsidization.

The G.O.P. increasingly replicates these dynamics. As the convention speeches indicate, middle-of-the road Republicans like Senator Tim Scott are now generally happy to follow Mr. Trump’s lead in calling for a revival of U.S. manufacturing and other populist goals. Look closer, however, and there remains a divide over how to get there. Some [*stick*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) to a conventional conservative tool kit of tax cuts and deregulation; others urge more interventionist measures like tariffs.

But the Republican factional divide differs in key respects from the Democrats’. On the Democratic side, most of the party’s technocrats align firmly with the centrist faction. When it comes to the unglamorous business of governing and staffing bureaucracies, this gives centrist Democrats a significant advantage over both their progressive and Republican rivals. Centrist liberals still tend to think of themselves — and are still often perceived as — the adults in the room. Agree with their policy positions or not, they typically emphasize pragmatism and responsibility over progressives’ moral and ideological purity, and policy rigor over populist bluster.

Among Republicans, by contrast, there are not many competent technocrats in either faction. To be sure, there are more intellectuals and organizations on the populist right than there were eight years ago, and the staffing of a second Trump administration would almost certainly be better organized than in 2017. But populist Republicans still lack institutional depth.

Legacy conservative institutions remain well endowed, but their number of serious policy scholars with credibility among both Republican officeholders and the wider intellectual elite is vanishingly small.

This problem is visible in the party platform, perhaps the clearest indication to date of Mr. Trump’s own policy preferences and the G.O.P.’s center of gravity.

The platform’s 20 bullet points feature many populist economic commitments (“seal the border,” “stop outsourcing,” “no cuts” to Social Security and Medicare). Perhaps surprisingly, the platform does not call for making all of the 2017 tax cuts permanent, mentioning only the expanded standard deduction and child tax credit. But the ensuing 10 chapters of explanatory gloss are light on specifics — the whole document is only 16 pages — with details on the more populist elements virtually nonexistent. There is a vague mention of tariffs, but little in the way of a plan to “turn the United States into a manufacturing superpower” or “modernize our military,” which might involve industrial policy measures or defense procurement reform.

A common response to such omissions is that Mr. Trump has always been a “fake populist,” out to dupe gullible voters with deceptive sloganeering. This explanation seems too glib. Would Mr. Trump, at this point, lose any support for dropping or softening talk of reshoring and tariffs? It seems unlikely — Republican economic nationalists have nowhere else to turn, while many donors would cheer — and yet, these items remain.

Mr. Trump did not hesitate to [*support softening*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) longstanding G.O.P. commitments to a federal abortion ban or traditional definitions of marriage in this year’s platform. It seems difficult to argue, then, that Mr. Trump’s economic populism is totally insincere, though it remains questionable whether he and his inner circle are capable of developing a coherent agenda, much less carrying out one.

On this point, the Reagan-Bush old guard would still like to claim for itself the mantle of policy seriousness and administrative competence. But its ideological adherence to fundamentally discredited policy positions undermines its credibility. Tax cuts, at least in recent decades, have not paid for themselves. The erosion of the U.S. industrial base is a major problem.

Whether or not one agrees with the solutions offered by right-populists, they are responding to real problems, and on issues such as Social Security, they have displayed more political realism and flexibility than, say, Bush-era Republicans. Nevertheless, they have not quite established themselves as a new center — among Republicans or in the nation as a whole — and many seem to prefer to cast themselves as insurgents and outsiders rather than assume the responsibilities of a governing establishment.

Here, the G.O.P.’s crosscutting policy impulses arguably reflect deeper challenges that go beyond partisan dynamics. With the rise of China as a peer competitor, increasingly assertive and aligned with Russia, we face a new geopolitical and geoeconomic order. The tailwinds supporting consumption and financial asset appreciation that arose from the unipolar moment after the Cold War — and which covered over U.S. industrial decline — are slowly fading.

America faces many difficult choices in the years ahead that will be costly for any party or politician to confront. More and more, these incoherent policy positions simply point to problems with no easy solutions, and decisions that no one wants to make.

Julius Krein is the editor of [*American Affairs*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/).

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2024/07/trump-pandering-corporate-america/678976/).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY THALASSA RAASCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR4.

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**End of Document**



[***After Haley Falls Short, Is the G.O.P. Race Over?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5Y-4CC1-JBG3-6031-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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

**Length:** 859 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

New Hampshire was just about the ideal state for Nikki Haley. It doesn't get better from here.

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 J. Trump on Tuesday night. And if your definition of ''over'' is whether Mr. 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 44 percent.

Mr. Trump's 11-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 Mr. Trump's victory so important -- and what raises the question about whether the race is over -- is that New Hampshire was Ms. Haley's very best opportunity to change the trajectory of the race. It was arguably her very 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.

Mr. Trump leads the national polls by more than 50 percentage points 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.

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.

History. The state has a long track record of backing moderate and mainstream Republican candidates, including John McCain and Mitt Romney. Mr. Trump won the state with 35 percent of the vote in 2016, but mostly because the moderate vote was divided.

The electorate. Ms. 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.

The endorsements. In contrast with most states, New Hampshire's political elite did not coalesce behind Mr. Trump. Ms. Haley even had the support of the state's popular Republican governor, Chris Sununu.

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. A later victory in a similar state like Vermont -- whose Republicans also tend to be more moderate -- could be drowned out by other primary results that day and dismissed as too-little-too-late.

Ms. Haley made good on all of these advantages Tuesday. 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.

But it wasn't close to enough. Ms. Haley lost Republicans by a staggering 74 percent to 25 percent -- a group of no small import in a Republican primary, especially in the states where only registered Republicans can vote. Conservatives gave Mr. Trump a full 70 percent of the vote. Voters without a college degree backed Mr. 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, Ms. Haley's strength among independents and Democrats will make it even harder for her to expand her appeal, as Mr. Trump and other Republicans will depict her campaign as a liberal Trojan horse.

If Ms. 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 Mr. Trump who has the momentum. He has gained nationwide in polls taken since the Iowa caucuses. Even skeptical Republican officials who were seen as Ms. 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 Mr. Trump on a comfortable path to the nomination. The Republican Party's rules for awarding delegates, which allow states to award all of their delegates to the winner, could let him clinch the nomination in early March. Mr. Trump's legal challenges add an extra twist -- 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, Mr. Trump could easily sweep all 50 states.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/upshot/new-hampshire-primary-haley-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/upshot/new-hampshire-primary-haley-trump.html)

**Graphic**

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[***My Unsettling Interview With Steve Bannon; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCM-NXB1-JBG3-600N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3699 words

**Byline:** David Brooks, David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about political, social and cultural trends.

**Highlight:** On the eve of going to prison, populism’s grand strategist talks about what another Trump presidency would look like and the rise of MAGA-type movements around the world.

**Body**

I felt as if I were talking with Leon Trotsky in the years before the Russian Revolution.

I was sitting in Steve Bannon’s Washington living room in 2019. His stint in Donald Trump’s White House had ended ingloriously, but he had resumed his self-appointed role as populism’s grand strategist, its propagandist, its bad-boy visionary. He sat there that day sketching out his plans for how MAGA-type movements could take over the world.

By then populists had already racked up some big wins — Brexit in Britain, Trump’s victory in 2016. Right-wing populists were in power in Hungary and Poland, Giorgia Meloni’s Brothers of Italy party was surging and populists were rising across Latin America. Bannon knew I opposed him in every particular and abhorred much of what he said, but he laid out his grand vision cheerfully, confidently. He didn’t seem concerned about old-fashioned conservatives, moderates and classical liberals like me; we were destined for the ash heap of history.

I decided to check in with Bannon again about a week ago. This year, populists have scored yet another string of triumphs, and a second Trump victory is possible or even probable this November. I found Bannon, currently the host of the podcast “War Room,” to be embroiled and embattled as usual. He’s going to prison on Monday to begin serving a four-month sentence for contempt of Congress. If anything, he is more confident than ever.

What follows is a transcript of our conversation, edited for clarity and length — and to remove the F-bombs that Bannon dropped with machine gun regularity. I should emphasize that I wasn’t trying to debate Bannon or rebut his beliefs; I wanted to understand how he sees the current moment. I wanted to understand the global populist surge from the inside. What he told me now seems doubly terrifying, given Joe Biden’s performance at the first presidential debate.

DAVID BROOKS: Since we last spoke, in fact in just the past few months, there have been populist victories in the Netherlands, with Geert Wilders. We have the Chega movement doing well in Portugal, with the young especially. In Germany, the ultraright-wing Alternative for Germany surged in last month’s European parliamentary elections. In France, Marine Le Pen’s populist party also triumphed in the European election, a result that prompted President Emmanuel Macron to call new national elections and throw the entire French political system into meltdown. In the U.K.’s forthcoming national elections, Nigel Farage’s Reform Party is on pace to win seats for the first time. So if you’re a historian telling the big story of what’s happening, what would it be? What’s the core narrative here?

STEVE BANNON: Well, I think it’s very simple: that the ruling elites of the West lost confidence in themselves. The elites have lost their faith in their countries. They’ve lost faith in the Westphalian system, the nation-state. They are more and more detached from the lived experience of their people.

On our show “War Room,” I probably spend at least 20 percent of our time talking about international elements in our movement. So we’ve made Nigel a rock star, Giorgia Meloni a rock star. Marine Le Pen is a rock star. Geert is a rock star. We talk about these people all the time.

Do you see yourself in the same business that Fox News’s Roger Ailes was in, sort of right-wing journalism?

I’m not a journalist. I’m not in the media. This is a military headquarters for a populist revolt. This is how we motivate people. This show is an activist show. If you watch this show, you’re a foot soldier. We call it the Army of the Awakened.

I mean, Murdoch is a bigger enemy of ours than MSNBC. Because he’s the epitome of neoliberal neocon. And they’re the opiate of the masses. They’re the controlled opposition, right? They’re never going to want fundamental change. They’ll throw some shiny toys — Obama’s a Muslim, the kind of issues which we mock all the time.

Let’s get back to the big narrative. Do you think immigration is the core issue here? That seems to be one issue that drives populist support everywhere.

Immigration, spending — it’s the lack of confidence and self-loathing of their own civilization and their own culture. That’s the spiritual part that’s at the base. Immigration is just the manifestation of a loss of self-confidence. And it’s shocking.

I came up in the golden age of Pax Americana, a ***working-class*** dad who had a housewife and five kids. All went to Catholic schools. I mean, a guy who was a foreman and then lower-level white-collar management. That’s the kind of thing we aspire to have in this country. If you look at it country by country, it’s all the same. The lack of jobs, the lack of opportunities, the lack of self-confidence.

What we should be doing is cutting the number of foreign students in American universities by 50 percent immediately, because we’re never going to get a Hispanic and Black population in Silicon Valley unless you get them into the engineering schools. No. 2, we should staple an exit visa to their diploma. The foreign students can hang around for a week and party, but then they got to go home and make their own country great.

Our movement is metastasizing to something that’s different than America First; it’s American Citizens First.

What does that mean?

It means Americans have to get a better deal. Right now, the American citizen has all the obligations of serving in the military, of paying taxes, of going through this grind that is American late-stage technofeudal capitalism. But tell me what the bonus is.

Like everybody, I’ve been trying to figure out why populism is having this broad resurgence. My story may be a little different from yours. My quick story is that 20 percent of Americans go to nice colleges and get professional-type jobs. They marry each other. They move into cities like Washington, Denver, Austin, San Francisco. They invest in their kids, who get into the same colleges, who then get good jobs. The people who are not in this hereditary educated elite conclude that it has too much cultural power, media power and now financial power, so much of the rest of the country says: Enough is enough.

Well, they have power. But we’re going to win. We’re ascendant in Europe. We’re ascendant here. We’ve had no money. We’re not organized. It’s self-organizing. But our enemies — and they are enemies — continue to overplay their hand, and so we continue to rise.

After the financial crisis I thought it would be a great time to be a leftist. You’ve got a financial crisis caused by irresponsible capitalism, wages are stagnant, inequality is rising. Heck, even I almost turned into a Marxist. But somehow this has been a better era for the populist right than the populist left.

You’re seeing America First Democrats. Look at John Fetterman. Fetterman and Steve Bannon are closer in their economics than Steve Bannon and the Republican establishment. The left didn’t have what it took because of the cultural issues and the issues of race, all that madness that they’re embedded in. They had to have open borders. They had to have D.E.I.

The historical left is in full meltdown. They always focus on noise, never on signal. They don’t understand that the MAGA movement, as it gets momentum and builds, is moving much farther to the right than President Trump. They will look back fondly at Donald Trump. They’ll ask: Where’s Trump when we need him?

You said something I’ve got to ask you about, that Trump’s a moderate. In what areas is the MAGA movement farther right than Trump?

I think farther right on radical cuts of spending, No. 1. I think we’re much more hard-core on things like Ukraine. President Trump is a peacemaker. He wants to go in and negotiate and figure something out as a dealmaker. I think 75 percent of our movement would want an immediate, total shutdown — not one more penny in Ukraine, and massive investigations about where the money went. On the southern border and mass deportations, I don’t think President Trump’s close to where we are. They all got to go home.

Also, on artificial intelligence, we’re virulently anti-A.I. I think big regulations have to come.

President Trump is a kindhearted person. He’s a people person, right? On China, I think he admires Xi Jinping. But we’re super-hawks. We want to see an elimination of the Chinese Communist Party.

What do you think a second Trump administration would look like in the first few weeks? Months?

Project 2025 and others are working on it — to immediately focus on immigration, the forever wars and on the fiscal and the financial. And simultaneously the deconstruction of the administrative state, and going after the complete, total destruction of the deep state.

In the first 100 days — this is going to be different than ’16 — we will have 3,000 political appointees ready to go.

Have those people been selected and trained? When Trump came in, in ’17, you guys had a lot of the Republican holdovers —

We had nothing. You have five or six groups that are building up subject matter expertise, laying out position papers. They’re vetting people right now.

So you’re going to go to war with the existing administrative state and the Praetorian Guard deep state. My point is, let’s, in the transition, get all the federal contracts. Close them all down. Let’s get MAGA in there. Right. Let’s get our guys in on the contracts. It’ll be a hostile takeover of the apparatus.

Who’s the inner circle? Who is the chief of staff?

I think you’re going to have somebody that knows what’s going on. Guys like Dr. Kevin Roberts and others. Also, I strongly believe that right after The Associated Press calls the election that Jerome Powell will tender his resignation. And so you’ll pick a new Federal Reserve chief. And you’ll pick a Treasury secretary and attorney general.

Would you like to have some role?

No, no, no, no. We run this like a military command post. So I would only be giving up power. I went there before. I wanted out. I’m not a staff guy. I can’t do it. And also that’s not where the center of power is. It’s not how President Trump thinks. A big center of power is just media.

I call Trump a Marshall McLuhanesque figure. [*McLuhan*](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marshall-McLuhan) called it, right? He says this mass thing called media, or what [*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Pierre-Teilhard-de-Chardin) said of the [*noosphere*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8626383/), is going to so overwhelm evolutionary biology that it will be everything. And Trump understands that. That’s why he watches TV.

He understands that to get anything done, you have to make the people understand. And so therefore, constantly, we’re in a battle of narrative. Unrestricted narrative warfare. Everything is narrative. And in that regard, you have to make sure you forget about the noise and focus on the signal.

And remember, our audience is virtually all activists. So even though it may not be the biggest, it doesn’t have to be. It’s the people that are out there in the hinterland that are on the school boards. They now control so many state parties. Our mantra is you must use your agency. It’s a spiritual war. The divine providence works through your agency.

I remember a precinct captain strategy: You called on people to get active on that level to monitor elections and gain control of the G.O.P. from the ground up.

The Republican Party is structured as basically a grass-roots party. But they’ve never filled the precincts. And that’s where we fill them, just with our guys. That’s how we control all these political parties, from Utah to Arizona to Georgia. Governor Brian Kemp doesn’t control that. It’s all controlled by the grass roots.

The Republican establishment never was interested?

No, hated it. Not just not interested. The Republican establishment is all guys in blue blazers and khakis going to the club. These are the unclubbable people.

And think about what this movement did. It did three things that have never been done before, with no money. It removed a sitting speaker of the House for the first time in history. It removed the minority leader, who I would argue is the most powerful Republican you’ve had in 50 years, Mitch McConnell. And then we removed the entire R.N.C. Think about it. Ronna McDaniel and all her people.

These guys are never going home unless you beat them.

Victory begets victory.

Do you know the demographics of these activists? Education? Race? Income?

First off, I would say 60 percent female. Female and over 40 years old. A lot of that, a third of them brought in by the pandemic, and the Moms for America. A ton of moms, women who didn’t read a lot of books in college. They’re not politically active. They had no interest. It was only later in life, as they became the C.O.O. of the American family, they realized how tough it was to make ends meet.

And then they saw the lack of education, and it was really the pandemic when they walked by the computer and saw what the kids are doing. They’re now at the tip of the spear.

Do you worry that your broader movement will be fatally poisoned by antisemitic elements, the conspiracy crazies?

We’re the most pro-Israel and pro-Jewish group out there. What I say is that not just the future of Israel but the future of American Jews, not just safety but their ability to thrive and prosper as they have in this country, is conditional upon one thing, and that’s a hard weld with Christian nationalism.

If I can make one comparison: Early in my career, I worked for Bill Buckley. His manner at National Review reminds me a little of some of the things you do. He created an intense sense of belonging: We’re the conservative movement. We’re all in this together. Every day we’re marching forward. But he also had a strong sense of who was a wack job, a conspiracist. And he was going to draw a line. Pat Buchanan was on the other side of the line.

So what I admire about Buckley is obviously the intense thing of belonging. What I don’t admire is the no-fight. It’s very much an intellectual debating society, right?

I use you and George Will as examples of this all the time. Brilliant guys, but this is a street fight. We need to be street fighters. This is going to be determined on social media and getting people out to vote. It’s not going to be debated on the Upper East Side or Upper West Side.

I’ve found that most people are pretty reasonable. You can have a conversation, and you’ll at least see where they’re coming from.

I think you’re dead [expletive] wrong.

That’s where we disagree.

No, it’s 100 percent disagree. What are you talking about? They think you’re an exotic animal. You’re a conservative, but you’re not dangerous. You’re reasonable. We’re not reasonable. We’re unreasonable because we’re fighting for a republic. And we’re never going to be reasonable until we get what we achieve. We’re not looking to compromise. We’re looking to win.

Now, the biggest element that Buckley had that the book “Bowling Alone” had, and you talk about, is the atomization of our society. There’s no civic bonding. There’s no national cohesion. There’s not even the Lions Club things that you used to have before. People tell me all the time: “You changed my life. I ran for the board of supervisors, and now I’m on the board of supervisors.” They have friends that they never had met before, and they’re in a common cause, and it’s changed their life. They’re on social media. Every day, they have action they have to do.

This was Hannah Arendt’s point that loneliness is a seedbed for authoritarianism. But you’re not about conversing with the other side, you’re just fighting with the other side.

What do you mean, not conversing with? There’s nothing to talk about.

Well, how about you have a conversation with the Biden administration. The Biden administration has spent a lot of money. And now, when I go to central Ohio, they’ve got an Intel plant coming in. You go to upstate New York, they’ve got a Micron plant. These are benefits for the ***working class***.

Some of that stuff’s OK. But on the fundamental direction of the country, we are separate. We are two different worldviews. And those worldviews can’t be bridged.

That’s not the way George Washington communicated. It’s certainly not the way Abraham Lincoln communicated. I mean, I know that’s cliché, but go to the second inaugural. Slavery is not a North or South problem; it’s an American problem. He was emphasizing national unity.

Hang on, hang on, hang on. After he had burnt — good god, man, I can’t believe you used that example. After he burned the South to the ground —

They declared war.

In fact, let’s go back to the speech. He actually leads, what led up to it, and then that powerful phrase, “the war came.” Basically, we tried to compromise. “The war came.” Columbia, Atlanta. I burned it to the ground. The inherent powers of the Constitution. He was a military dictator because he had to be, right?

Don’t sit there and say, oh, that’s all happy-talk language at the end. Remember, in war, take the moral high ground, totally and completely destroy your opponent.

What does that mean, though? If they have 50 percent of the country, then they have 50 percent of the Congress.

Well, let’s say this. We win, we pick up five or six seats — we have 55 seats in the Senate. We pick up five or six seats in the House, and we have the executive branch. And this time, we have much more savvy and understanding.

What does the Justice Department look like? What kinds of changes would Trump make?

I think they’ll hit it with a blowtorch.

When did you come to see the world this way? I mean, obviously, you were at Harvard Business School and Goldman Sachs. Did you have a front-row seat and think, “Oh, this sucks”?

I took Michael Porter’s classes at Harvard back in the ’80s, and globalization was — Harvard, at that time, treated this as the second law of thermodynamics. It was a natural property that could not be questioned. And then I went to the M&amp;A department at Goldman Sachs and I worked with Hank Paulson. I was put on a lot of things to sell companies. You could just see America was being gutted. You had Mike Milken and the junk bond guys, and they were after these companies. And you go out there, and the companies were not particularly well run.

The guys were always going to the country club, and the management was very detached from labor — you see this evisceration, you saw these jobs going, and they were never coming back.

And then I read [*Christopher Lasch*](https://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/15/obituaries/christopher-lasch-is-dead-at-61-wrote-about-america-s-malaise.html). I was just doing my thing, had my own finance firm. And then 9/11 happens. And everybody’s down singing “God Bless America.” And I said, “I wonder how long this ‘God Bless America’ phase is going to go.” I was adamantly opposed to Iraq and Afghanistan. And one of the things that got me the most was I couldn’t believe that George W. Bush didn’t have his daughters go into the military. How do you do this? I remember reading guys saying we could have much better recruiting if we had those two as symbols.

We’re so removed from that kind of Middle America. And my daughter then went to West Point. And when I went up to West Point when she was there, I was blown away by how ***working-class*** West Point was — the students. This is the heart of the country. And these kids are going right into this war.

But then, it was 2008 when the collapse hit. I mean, for my dad, AT&amp;T stock was right next to the Catholic Church. In fact, it would be like having shares in the Catholic Church. And when Jim Cramer came on that day and said, If you need cash in the next five years, you got to dump. This thing’s over. And when my dad notified me a couple of days later he had dumped his AT&amp;T stock, I go, wow.

I said, this is a guy. He has been a systems player the entire time, right? Telephone company, 50 years, the little guy. You can work your whole life and get [expletive] by this. And who’s responsible?

We have a capitalist economy that has no capitalists, right? It has hypercapitalists or state capitalism. You’ve got to not just reallocate income, you have to reallocate assets. People have to have a stake in this. That’s all they’re asking for.

The MAGA movement controls the Republican Party and backs President Trump. So yes, Trump is a revolution — remember, General Washington, the revolution and the foundation, and then Lincoln, the birth of the new America. And he’s the most nationalist guy we’ve ever had. Remember, fighting the Civil War as a warlord, to make sure that we were a nation. Remember, he’s a nationalist.

I hate to say this, but Trump’s the third. Trump is taking America back to its more constitutional Republic for the third time, and that drives the credentialed left nuts because he’s not just a class traitor, he’s a low-end guy from Queens. He’s not up to their social — it’s too tacky. It’s the gold. It’s the Trump stuff. They hate him. They hate him to a passionate level. They look at the noise around Trump and miss the signal of what’s really happening, and they can’t get past that, and they’re blinded by it.

Finally, I’ve got to ask you about what’s about to happen to you — going to prison.

I spent my 20s on a Navy ship. If I have to spend my 70s in a prison, I’m still fighting. This show will be bigger. My message will be stronger.

You’re not concerned?

No. I’ll get the message out and fight for this. History is a process. I’m kind of honored, in one way, that they hate me so much they feel they have to put Bannon away. Their thing is that if we put Bannon in prison or get him away from his microphone, that’ll help us win. It will be the exact opposite.

Every day is a fight. People in this movement, when they talk to me, they say they have a purpose. Once they have a purpose, you can’t stop this movement. We’re not going to win everything. Just like in Europe, you’re going to have defeats. Some days are going to be cloudy. But the sunlit uplands are in front of you. Just keep your head down and keep grinding.

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[***It's a Whole New Era in Politics. Right?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKT-Y9J1-DXY4-X013-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, we're beginning a whole new era in presidential politics, and before we get rolling, I want to give you ample opportunity to retract your threat not to vote in a Trump versus Harris election.

Bret Stephens: My feelings about this election are approximately what Henry Kissinger's were about the Iran-Iraq war: It's a pity both sides can't lose. You know that I will never, ever vote for Donald Trump. But I can't quite see why I should cast my New York vote -- a meaningless vote, as we both know -- in favor of a politician whose views I oppose and whose judgment I doubt.

Persuade me that I'm wrong.

Gail: Democracy is ideally about voting for the good guys and rejecting the bad, but we're all well aware of the many, many elections that feature two unwelcome options.

Refusing to pick a less-bad choice is being, well, a kinda snob.

Bret: Guilty as charged.

Gail: And when you've got a choice between a woman who you don't agree with about taxes and spending versus a man who's shown himself perfectly capable of trying to overthrow the government if he loses, the options are pretty obvious.

Bret: That was pretty much my reasoning when I cast my votes for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden: two liberal Democrats who nonetheless struck me as safe pairs of hands, particularly when it came to world affairs.

I just don't have the same faith in Kamala Harris. She's given no indication that she can run a campaign or an office competently, much less a country. She frequently speaks in inanities. Her contribution to fixing the border crisis was less than zero -- in fact, she publicly denied there was a crisis. I doubt she strikes fear in the hearts of the tyrants in Tehran, Beijing or Moscow at a moment when all of those dictatorships are on the march.

Gail: Hey, nobody knows what Putin's thinking.

Sorry, I'm being snippy. Go on.

Bret: She doesn't even seem to be a particularly nice person, at least to judge by this report in The Washington Post: ''Staffers who worked for Harris before she was vice president said one consistent problem was that Harris would refuse to wade into briefing materials prepared by staff members, then berate employees when she appeared unprepared.''

Gail: Could be, but you often hear those complaints from people whose job it is to prepare those briefing materials.

Bret: And there's this additional damning detail, noted by the liberal legal scholar Lara Bazelon in a 2019 guest essay in The Times: ''Most troubling, Ms. Harris fought tooth and nail to uphold wrongful convictions that had been secured through official misconduct that included evidence tampering, false testimony and the suppression of crucial information by prosecutors.''

Come on: Is this someone I'm supposed to be enthusiastic about?

Gail: Did not ask for enthusiasm, Bret. Just hold-your-nose-and-pick-the-least-bad-option.

Although I have to say, so far I'm pleased with the choice. Harris is a politician who has most definitely grown in her jobs. The criticism from years ago doesn't necessarily apply to the woman we're looking at now.

And yeah, all things being equal, I do like the idea of a woman.

Bret: Too bad Biden never gave his party the chance to have a real primary that might have yielded a better nominee. Although the one silver lining of a Harris victory, should it come about, is that it might finally end the Trump cult and restore normality to the Republican Party. Of course, that's what I said after the last presidential election, to my everlasting embarrassment.

I will say, however, that I'd be more reconciled to the idea of a Harris presidency if she chose a running mate with deep foreign policy experience -- sort of a Dick Cheney to her George W. Bush. My favorite candidate is Jim Stavridis, a former NATO commander, or perhaps Jim Mattis, Trump's first defense secretary. Anyone who strikes fear in the hearts of our enemies would be fine by me. Your preferences?

Gail: I have confidence that Harris can bring in a cabinet full of foreign affairs experts without needing to borrow one of Trump's. For vice president, must admit I'm kinda drawn to Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, because he's got an unusual astronaut background and a strong history on gun safety.

Bret: I like him, too. And he flew Intruders in the Navy, which is always a recommendation. Also? He's not a lawyer.

Gail: But there's quite a list of guy governors she's apparently considering. I might want to toss in Andy Beshear of Kentucky, who's good at winning votes from a conservative electorate. And as a former state attorney general, he can go arm in arm with Harris, a former prosecutor and attorney general herself, in reminding the public about Trump's, um, troubled history with the law.

Speaking of vice presidents, am I right in feeling JD Vance has already become a political disaster area?

Bret: As in Dan Quayle with a brain or Sarah Palin with a beard? His job is to present himself as a smarter and more articulate version of Trump. So far, he's just been a younger and meaner one. His stupid jibe against ''childless cat ladies'' may come back to haunt him on Nov. 5, not least among the 46 million American women who are childless. He would not fare well against Kelly in a debate.

That said, I still think this election remains Trump's to lose. Harris is tied to Biden's record, which is deeply unpopular. How would you advise her to campaign and separate herself from her boss?

Gail: Hard to have this argument, since I think Biden has done a pretty darn good job. The economy is under control, pricewise; employment is way up; the country's at least making strides in environmental control that will allow the parents of today to look their grandkids in the eyes.

I, um, know you don't quite agree.

Bret: My disagreement is almost beside the point. It's public perception that counts. Only 17 percent of Americans feel they are better off financially today than they were four years ago. Food is way more expensive. Rents are higher. Interest payments are up. Harris's political problem is that her boss gets most of the blame for this, and she has to find a way to distance herself from him without dissing him. Question is: How would a Harris administration differ?

Gail: In 2019 a top Harris priority was tax relief for the ***working class***. Which you can pay for by raising taxes on the rich. Part of which can be spent on universal pre-K programs. We have argued about this before, but I think the possibility of low-income kids going to school at a very early age is supercritical. Then when the time comes, they'll be ready to learn reading, writing and other academic skills.

Bret: Poorer kids trapped in failing public schools deserve the same schooling options that wealthier families have, including access to private schools through vouchers. So far, Harris has only pandered to the teachers' unions that are wedded to a disastrous status quo. I'm no fan of her opposition to free trade deals, though on this subject she's no worse than Trump. And I don't understand what Harris believes when it comes to socializing medicine and abolishing private insurance; it isn't entirely clear that she knows what she believes, either.

Bottom line, for me, is that Harris is either a furtive progressive or a rank opportunist, and neither wins my vote. But, of course, she's not Trump. That's just about her only recommendation.

Gail: Pretty big recommendation.

Well, Bret, we've got -- what? -- 14 weeks until the election. Be ready for 14 more nags about voting.

Bret: I get it. Trump is the worst president of my lifetime. And he's also done the most to reshape the Republican Party into something unrecognizable to someone like me, who grew up in Ronald Reagan's shadow. In fact, of all the damage Trump has done, probably the worst is to the old conservative consensus, which believed in classically liberal ideals like free trade, strong international alliances and the benefits of immigration, as well as some classically conservative ones, like the necessity of moral character in political leadership and civility in public life. Watching the Republican convention, which was the extended worship of a man rather than of a set of principles, was just four days of nausea. I'll never be reconciled to it. Being politically homeless just ... sucks.

Gail: Just remember there's a light in the Harris window for you. True, it's casting a few shadows of taxation and government spending you may not love. But you could have a Harris voters' room reserved for NABATs -- the folks whose political philosophy this year is nothing's as bad as Trump.

Bret: I'll remember NABATs. And I promise to think on it, Gail.

And before we go: I don't think there's a better critic in America today than The Times's Dwight Garner. So it's a double delight to read his review of another great critic, Peter Schjeldahl, who died a couple of years ago and whose last book, ''The Art of Dying,'' collected his pieces from the final years of his life. I found this paragraph from Garner's review, about the 2022 Whitney Biennial, apropos of our conversation:

The Biennial review is a reminder that Schjeldahl exited lockdown into a world transformed by new social and political forces, including Black Lives Matter. Art fueled by these forces could be galvanizing, by braving the ''routine chaos'' of the world, but it was too often predictable and prescriptive. ''Must ideology define us?'' he asked, in a review of another show dominated by political themes. ''Can we demur from one extreme without implicitly being lumped in with its opposite?''

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***It’s Fair to Ask: Is the Republican Race Over?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5R-GBW1-JBG3-603S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 858 words

**Highlight:** New Hampshire was just about the ideal state for Nikki Haley. It doesn’t get better from here.

**Body**

New Hampshire was just about the ideal state for Nikki Haley. It doesn’t get better from here.

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 J. Trump on Tuesday night. And if your definition of “over” is whether Mr. 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 44 percent.

Mr. Trump’s 11-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 Mr. Trump’s victory so important — and what raises the question about whether the race is over — is that New Hampshire was Ms. Haley’s very best opportunity to change the trajectory of the race. It was arguably her very 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.

Mr. 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.

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. Mr. Trump won the state with 35 percent of the vote in 2016, but mostly because the moderate vote was divided.
2. The electorate. Ms. 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 endorsements. In contrast with most states, New Hampshire’s political elite did not coalesce behind Mr. Trump. Ms. Haley even had the support of the state’s popular Republican governor, Chris Sununu.
4. 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. A later victory in a similar state like Vermont — whose Republicans also tend to be more moderate — could be drowned out by other primary results [*that day*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/18/us/politics/trump-haley-super-tuesday.html) and dismissed as too-little-too-late.

Ms. Haley made good on all of these advantages Tuesday. 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.

But it wasn’t close to enough. Ms. Haley lost Republicans by a staggering 74 percent to 25 percent — a group of no small import in a Republican primary, especially in the states where only registered Republicans can vote. Conservatives gave Mr. Trump a full 70 percent of the vote. Voters without a college degree backed Mr. 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, Ms. Haley’s strength among independents and Democrats will make it even harder for her to expand her appeal, as Mr. Trump and other Republicans will depict her campaign as a liberal Trojan horse.

If Ms. 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 Mr. Trump who has the momentum. He has gained nationwide in polls taken since the Iowa caucuses. Even skeptical Republican officials who were seen as Ms. 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 Mr. Trump on a comfortable path to the nomination. The Republican Party’s rules for awarding delegates, which allow states to award all of their delegates to the winner, could let him clinch the nomination in early March. Mr. Trump’s legal challenges add an extra twist — 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, Mr. Trump could easily sweep all 50 states.

This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***Trump and Harris Embody a Stark Partisan Divide on Fighting Poverty***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CTM-3YT1-JBG3-6019-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 2317 words

**Byline:** Jason DeParle Jason DeParle is a Times reporter who covers poverty in the United States.

**Highlight:** The two presidential candidates can both point to records of pushing poverty rates down, but their approaches could hardly be more different.

**Body**

The two presidential candidates can both point to records of pushing poverty rates down, but their approaches could hardly be more different.

Follow the latest updates on the [*Harris and Trump campaigns*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election).

The presidential race between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald J. Trump presents the sharpest clash in antipoverty policy in at least a generation, and its outcome could shape the economic security of millions of low-income Americans.

As the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 threatened to decimate the economy, Mr. Trump signed a large stimulus package that included substantial aid for the poor. When President Biden and Ms. Harris took office in 2021, their administration pushed more big aid expansions through Congress as part of their pandemic-recovery plan, driving the poverty rate still lower.

But if the two candidates’ responses to that extraordinary period had elements in common, the lessons they took from it were very different.

In the pandemic-era programs, now mostly expired or reduced, Ms. Harris and other Democrats found reinforcement of their faith in the government’s power to ameliorate hardship. If elected, she would seek to sustain or expand many of them, including subsidies for food, health care and housing, and revive a change to the child tax credit that essentially created a guaranteed income for families with children. Those policies helped temporarily cut the poverty rate by more than half from prepandemic levels.

She backs a $15 federal minimum wage, which Republicans have fought, and is a vocal supporter of programs like subsidized child care and paid family leave meant to help balance work and family.

Mr. Trump says little about his role in pandemic-era poverty programs, which many Republicans view as having been excessive and fraud-ridden. Instead, he touts his 2017 tax cuts, which he credits for boosting the economy and reducing poverty to a prepandemic low, and he has vowed to extend them when they expire next year. Most of the direct benefit from those cuts went to corporations and the wealthy.

Mr. Trump’s poverty plans are otherwise vague, but his record is one of animosity toward the programs Ms. Harris would defend or expand. He sought to remove millions of people from Medicaid and food stamps, many of them low-wage workers. He has sought to reduce the number of people with subsidized housing and raise their rents.

While Democrats would build on pandemic policies, Republicans blame trillions in federal spending under President Biden and Ms. Harris for triggering inflation and say the aid discouraged work.

“The parties are further apart than they have ever been, at least in my memory, and I’m pretty old,” said Isabel V. Sawhill of the centrist Brookings Institution, who has been tracking antipoverty policy since the Kennedy administration. “The Democrats have gone left and the Republicans have gone right.”

There is often a difference between how candidates campaign and how they govern, and either aspirant’s power to carry out their policies will depend on who controls Congress.

Both candidates have been short on detail, and there are divisions within the parties. Senator JD Vance of Ohio, Mr. Trump’s running mate, recently suggested a large tax credit for families with children, though it is not clear whether it would be available to the poor or if it has Mr. Trump’s support.

But their records while in office provide a road map to their priorities and approaches.

Poverty was already falling when Mr. Trump won his tax cut in his first year in office, but the pace of decline more than doubled in the next two years, to 11.8 percent in 2019, then a record low, using a Census Bureau figure that includes taxes and aid. While economists debate whether tax cuts were responsible, the episode reinforced Republican faith in them.

Still, about twice as many Americans would have been poor that year without safety net programs for food, housing, health care and other needs — many of which Mr. Trump sought to cut — according to an analysis of census data by the Columbia University Center on Poverty and Social Policy. “I don’t see how you can say these programs don’t make a difference,” said Christopher Wimer, the center’s director.

When pandemic aid kicked in, the poverty rate fell further, to 9.1 percent in 2020 under Mr. Trump, and to 7.8 percent in the first year of the Biden-Harris administration. That is a reduction of a third from prepandemic levels, despite the crisis. As the aid fell, poverty rose to 12.4 percent in 2022, the last year for which there is data.

Here is a look at the partisan differences on anti-poverty programs:

Health Care

No anti-poverty measure costs more, affects more people or divides the parties as much as health care. The 2010 Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, added millions of people to Medicaid, subsidized private insurance and [*cut the share of Americans who are uninsured nearly in half*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election). Democrats regard it as a generational achievement.

Republicans say it costs the government and consumers too much and stifles innovation. They voted to repeal it dozens of times, and Mr. Trump’s high-profile effort to do so failed only narrowly. He then took action to suppress enrollment in the private plans and last year wrote, [*“Obamacare Sucks!”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election)

[*Mr. Trump says he is no longer committed to killing the law*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election) but would make it “much better” without saying how. The Republican Study Committee, a Trump-aligned faction of House Republicans, recently proposed cutting $4.2 trillion over 10 years from the subsidies, Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, a reduction of more than half. Democrats call such plans a repeal by another name.

Ms. Harris [*previously supported a version of “Medicare for all*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election),” a government-run system for everyone, but now says she would focus on strengthening the Affordable Care Act. Her campaign suggested she would preserve temporary increases in the subsidies for private plan, which led to record enrollment. The latest Biden White House budget also seeks new aid for people in the 10 states where Republicans declined to expand Medicaid.

Nutrition

The modern food stamp program was created a half-century ago in a bipartisan deal and has intermittently retained bipartisan support. But Republican criticism of the program grew after a large increase in the rolls during the Great Recession proved enduring.

[*Mr. Trump has been especially critical*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election), arguing that the program discourages work and attracts fraud. He repeatedly sought to shrink eligibility and expand work requirements, and every budget he issued would have cut spending on it by at least 25 percent, according to a forthcoming analysis by Robert Greenstein of the Brookings Institution. Alleging abuse, Mr. Trump once warned of a “food stamp crime wave.”

Where Republicans see “welfare,” Democrats see “nutritional support.” The Supplemental Nutrition Program, as food stamps are formally known, “must not only be protected but expanded,” Ms. Harris said as a senator, while proposing a large increase in children’s benefits.

By revising nutritional standards over Republican objections, the Biden administration [*raised average benefits by more than a quarter*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election), the largest gain in the program’s history. About one in eight Americans now receives a monthly benefit of about $210 a person.

Similar fights have emerged over [*free school meals*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election), which were offered to all students during the pandemic. Supporters say universal meals reduce stigma, and the Biden administration changed the program’s rules to encourage more schools to provide them. Republicans see wasteful spending. At least eight states have adopted universal meals, including Minnesota, where Ms. Harris’s running mate, Gov. Tim Walz, championed the change.

Housing

Ms. Harris and Mr. Biden broke new ground in their 2020 campaign with a party platform that promised housing aid “for every eligible family,” seeking to address funding shortfalls that have left only a quarter of eligible households receiving help and wait times extending to years.

But they made little progress.

Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris included expanded housing aid for the poor in the 2021 “Build Back Better” plan, a multitrillion-dollar package of domestic initiatives. It would have renovated public housing and significantly increased the number of vouchers available to rent private apartments. Congress narrowly rejected the plan (which the conservative Heritage Foundation called the [*“largest welfare increase in U.S. history”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election)) and the administration did not return to the issue in a significant way.

While Ms. Harris emphasized housing in a recent economic plan, she focused on home buyers and housing production, not subsidies to poor renters. [*This year’s party platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election) trims the ambition of the promised voucher expansion to low-income veterans and people leaving foster care.

Mr. Trump pursued opposite aims. He proposed to reduce housing vouchers by 250,000, or about 10 percent, a cut about the same size as the increase the Biden-Harris team proposed. He unsuccessfully sought new work requirements and rent increases. And he undid a high-profile rule meant to reduce racial discrimination, saying it would “destroy the suburbs.” The Biden administration has worked to reinstate it but has not finalized a new rule.

The parties clash on homelessness policy, too. The Biden-Harris administration embraces [*“Housing First,*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election)” which provides apartments to the homeless without demanding treatment for problems like drug abuse or mental health. Getting people off the streets saves lives, supporters say, and treatment is more effective when people have homes.

The Trump administration said the approach encouraged self-destructive behavior and urged Congress to curb it. Mr. Trump has campaigned on putting homeless people in camps.

The Child Tax Credit

On one issue, the candidates sometimes sound the same: Mr. Trump and Ms. Harris both helped expand the child tax credit and both boast about it. But they support very different plans.

Mr. Trump doubled the credit in his 2017 tax cut, giving families up to $2,000 per child to defray child-rearing costs. But his measure [*omitted the poorest children*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election). About a third failed to get the full credit because their parents earned too little, and a tenth received nothing. Republicans saw a simple principle: tax cuts aid taxpayers, not low-income people who pay little or nothing in federal income taxes.

Democrats revamped the credit during the pandemic, temporarily raising it to $3,000 per child ($3,600 for the youngest children). Most notably, the money went to all poor and middle-class children, regardless of whether parents had jobs. That turned a tax credit into a policy the United States had never embraced: a guaranteed income for families with children, at a one-year cost of more than $100 billion. Child poverty fell by more than half from prepandemic levels as a result of the credit and other pandemic aid.

That measure expired after one year, and the Biden administration, facing unified Republican opposition, lost a fight to extend it. The credit reverted to its Trump-era form and child poverty returned to the highest level since 2018.

Ms. Harris has called the return of the broad credit a top priority and would add a $6,000 benefit for infants. In Minnesota, Mr. Walz won a state credit of $1,750 that includes all low- and moderate-income families. “This is what takes children out of poverty,” he said.

Most Republicans have called such programs welfare schemes, warning that unconditional cash aid will discourage work and marriage, leading to more poverty.

The seemingly fixed lines blurred a few weeks ago when Mr. Vance suggested in a television interview he might back a $5,000 per child credit. He is loosely affiliated with a conservative faction sympathetic to ***working-class*** aid, and some saw his comments as an effort to reposition the party. But Mr. Vance has not said if the poor would qualify, and queries to his campaign went unanswered.

Taxes and Budget

Aid for the poor depends in part on tax policy: More revenue makes it easier to provide help, less makes it harder. The candidates diverge in profound ways.

Mr. Trump would permanently extend his 2017 tax cut, which expires next year, at a 10-year cost of roughly $4 trillion, with the benefits concentrated among corporations and the richest Americans. Republicans argue the costs can be offset by increased growth and decreased spending. But his previous tax cuts swelled deficits.

Each of his budget proposals while in office sought large Medicaid and food stamp reductions. An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal group, found he would have reduced nondefense discretionary spending to its lowest level as a share of the economy since Herbert Hoover.

The Harris campaign has said she would preserve the tax cuts for households making $400,000 or less, around 98 percent of Americans. The administration’s most recent budget, released in March, also called for about [*$5 trillion in new taxes*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/08/26/us/harris-trump-election) on corporations and the wealthy over the next decade.

It aimed to divide the new revenue between deficit reduction and new programs, including two of Ms. Harris’s priorities — the $3,000 child tax credit that includes the poorest families and paid family leave.

PHOTOS: Health care is a powerful weapon against poverty, but it is politically divisive and expensive. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CARLSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS); The ballooning costs of housing are being felt in large metro areas and in rural towns. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Republicans see food stamps as welfare while Democrats call them nutritional support. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL WOOLF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Trump and Ms. Harris helped expand the child tax credit but support different plans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELA BHASKAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***This English Naval City Is a Bellwether Seat. How Do Voters Feel?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CD9-6MN1-JBG3-6002-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1248 words

**Byline:** Megan Specia Megan Specia reports on Britain, Ireland and the Ukraine war for The Times. She is based in London.

**Highlight:** As voters cast their ballots in a pivotal election, many in the southern English city of Portsmouth expressed disillusionment over what they see as national and local decline.

**Body**

As voters cast their ballots in a pivotal election, many in the southern English city of Portsmouth expressed disillusionment over what they see as national and local decline.

Voters streamed into a polling station in Portsmouth, a city nestled along England’s southern coast that is known for its naval base and historic dockyard, on Thursday morning as ballot workers greeted them warmly.

Older couples walked hand in hand into the local church, which had been temporarily fitted out with ballot boxes, alongside parents with children in strollers, and young adults rushing in on the way to work.

One by one, they weighed in on the future of the nation in a vote that polls suggested could end [*14 years of Conservative-led government*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html).

“I just want to see change,” said Sam Argha, 36, as he left his local polling station on Thursday morning having just cast a ballot for the Labour Party. “I just really want to see us do something differently.”

Many people in the city expressed a similar desire for a new start at a moment of intense national uncertainty, even if their politics differed. Polls have predicted that [*the election could be a major turning point*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html), with the [*center-left Labour Party expected to unseat the right-wing Conservative Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html).

Portsmouth North is considered a bellwether seat — the area has voted for the winning political party in every general election since 1974. And while the results of the area were not expected until the early hours of Friday morning, many voters were anticipating a shift in the political landscape.

It also serves as a microcosm of the broader national challenge facing the governing party: a longstanding Conservative constituency held by a popular candidate that is now at risk of being lost, and a largely disillusioned electorate that expressed frustrations with their quality of life and what many see as a lack of leadership.

The seat has been held since 2010 by Penny Mordaunt, a Conservative lawmaker whose prominent role at the coronation of King Charles III last year, when [*she wielded a heavy, jewel encrusted ceremonial sword*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html), drew international attention to her steadiness and poise.

Ms. Mordaunt, who is seen as a possible contender for her party’s leadership, is widely liked in Portsmouth, and some locals said they had no intention of heading in a new direction. But polls have suggested that [*Labour voters in the constituency could still overtake Conservative support in Thursday’s vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html).

The centrist Liberal Democrats — considered the third most popular party here — and the hard-right Reform U.K. party could also siphon off votes from the Conservatives.

“My hopes are for a much more compassionate government from Friday,” said Grahame Milner, 62, who was walking in the city center with his husband of three decades on Wednesday afternoon. He voted for the Labour Party candidate and said he “hoped to be celebrating on Friday” with a new prime minister in place.

Many of the shops surrounding the couple were vacant or boarded up. Graffiti marked the sides of shuttered department stores. There is little to attract people to the area, other than the bookmakers, charity shops and small stores selling vapes, Mr. Milner said.

He first came here to serve in the Navy — the city is home to the country’s biggest naval base — and was deployed during the 1980s Falklands War as a chef aboard a military vessel. He was pushed out of the military because of his sexual orientation, he said, and later became deeply involved in union work after returning to civilian life. He had already cast his ballot by postal vote last week.

“The austerity program has been absolutely crippling to ***working-class*** people,” Mr. Milner said, pointing to the number of working people relying on food banks just to get by. “This is just not the Britain that I served in the military for.”

Concerns about the hollowing-out of the National Health Service, a cost-of-living crisis that has left many struggling, debates about immigration, and the fallout from Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union were front of mind for many locals.

Some said they had no plans to vote at all, disillusioned by politicians from across the spectrum.

“It’s always been Labour for us, but I am not voting this year,” said Tracy Patton, 59, who has lived in the city all her life and said she was fed up with politics. She sat outside a cafe on Wednesday evening, reminiscing with friends about how the once busy marketplace had changed.

“It was bustling, there was atmosphere,” she said. “But now, it’s going through decline. There is just no money in England anymore.”

For some younger voters, the prospect of an uncertain future has weighed heavy. Daisy Quelch, 28, and Kiran Kaur, 24, were packing up after an outdoor boxing class near the waterfront on Southsea Common.

“Sometimes it feels like our world is crumbling,” Ms. Quelch said, adding that she was particularly worried about climate change and the environment and planned to vote for the Green Party. “We want to see changes, but it can’t happen quickly enough.”

Earlier this year, residents were warned not to swim in the sea as the local water company had [*released raw sewage along the coastline*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html), [*contaminating the water*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html).

Water pollution has become a campaign issue in many parts of Britain, as some blame the government for its inability to stop the water industry — which was privatized during the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s — from [*releasing untreated waste*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html) into the waterways.

Some formerly stalwart Conservative supporters said they were rethinking their vote. Several were considering casting their ballots for Reform U.K., the populist anti-immigration party led by [*Nigel Farage, a brash and polarizing figure who has shaken up the general election campaign.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/07/03/world/europe/uk-election-better-worse.html)

“They are saying the right things for me,” said Gemma Hobday, 43, even as her husband said he was planning to continue to back Ms. Mordaunt, who, like him, is a veteran.

But others defended the Conservative Party. In Dixie’s Pub just off the high street, a group of patrons played pool on the eve of the election, the clack of billiard balls mingling with chatter.

Andrew Revis, 57, was enjoying a pint at the bar after finishing work at his nearby accountancy office, and said he felt that the Conservatives and Ms. Mordaunt, whom he described as a capable and committed lawmaker, were receiving undue criticism.

“They are getting a lot of stick, but I don’t think it’s entirely been in their control,” he said, pointing to the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine that created unexpected hardship.

“It’s the cost of living,” said Kerry Harris, 36, who sat outside the Iceland supermarket with her niece Shanice Bakes, 19, on Wednesday evening. She gestured to their bags. There was a time, Ms. Harris said, when a full shopping cart of groceries would cost about 50 pounds, or $65, but now she couldn’t fill one bag for that price.

“And they don’t put your wages up, do they?” she added.

Ms. Harris has voted for the Conservative Party in the past, but in this election, she was hesitant to give them her vote.

“They all promise us the world, and then nothing ever comes, nothing changes.”

PHOTOS: Above, near the city center of Portsmouth this week. Right, Tracy Patton, who did not plan to vote and, lamenting the economic decline of the city, said: “There is just no money in England anymore.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** July 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Williamsburg. What Happened?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X07G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style; Pg. 10

**Length:** 413 words

**Body**

\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Lizard's Tail hosts poets, rock bands and one-act plays in a makeshift space under the Williamsburg Bridge, in a neighborhood of mainly Hispanic and Hasidic residents. The New York Times calls the club ''pure bohemia, reminiscent of the Lower East Side in the early 1980s.'' \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Kerry Smith, a former firefighter, opens the Right Bank Cafe on Kent Avenue. An early customer, the writer Ando Arike, describes it as a place for ''the lost, the confused, the drunks, the drug-addled, the drinkers, the poets,'' as well as ''the old-timers, the Latinos, the Russians, the Poles, the Hasidic Jews, the bridge workers, the bikers,'' and other types. Local bands play on its modest courtyard stage.\_\_\_\_\_\_

The artist Phyllis Yampolsky founds Independent Friends of McCarren Park with the aim of restoring McCarren Park Pool, a lake-size pool built on the Willamsburg-Greenpoint border in the 1930s. It has fallen into disrepair since it closed in 1983.\_\_\_\_\_\_

It's an art show. It's a concert. It's a party. It's Cat's Head, an all-night event featuring local artists and musicians. It takes place on Bastille Day at the vacant Old Dutch Mustard factory on Metropolitan Avenue, drawing 750 revelers.\_\_\_\_\_\_

Waterfront Week, a zine for the neighborhood's growing community of writers, artists and musicians, starts regular publication.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

In a former auto repair shop on North First Street, Annie Herron opens Herron Test-Site, one of the neighborhood's first commercial art galleries. Below, Ken Butler's ''Hybrid Visions.''\_\_\_\_\_\_

Keep Refrigerated, a club that hosts wee-hours raves, punk shows and art installations, opens in a former meatpacking plant on North Sixth Street. Roughly 300 people squeeze into its three floors.\_\_\_\_\_\_

Williamsburg makes the cover of New York magazine. The story reports that an estimated 2,000 artists are living in this ''***working-class*** neighborhood.'' Medea de Vyse, a performance artist, provides the money quote: ''In the '70s, it was SoHo. In the '80s, the East Village. In the '90s, it will be Williamsburg.''\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mugs Ale House, on Bedford Avenue, becomes a saloon of choice for artists and musicians priced out of Lower Manhattan. The old-school barroom is ''dark and dingy,'' The Daily News reports. Newcomers smoke cigarettes, drink craft beers and eat burgers and chops alongside Polish and Ukrainian locals.\_\_\_\_\_\_Christy Harmon contributed research and reporting. Produced by Gabriel Gianordoli and Shannon Lin.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/29/style/williamsburg-brooklyn-history-timeline.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/01/29/style/williamsburg-brooklyn-history-timeline.html)

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘Bank of Dave’ Review: A Dave and Goliath Story***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6914-3SJ1-JBG3-63SF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 24, 2023 Thursday 16:57 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 335 words

**Byline:** Brandon Yu

**Highlight:** This sometimes sleepy feel-good drama follows the story of a ***working-class*** man’s battle against London’s financial elite.

**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.*](http://youtube.com/embed/nBXsRgy_EtM)]

A man of the people who has made a modest fortune selling vans, Dave (Rory Kinnear) is a [*Ted Lasso*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/14/arts/television/ted-lasso-review.html) 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 Dave

Rated 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.justwatch.com/us/movie/bank-of-dave).

This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Adams Campaign Seizes the Spotlight on Public Safety***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BR2-SK21-JBG3-60N9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 5, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

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

**Length:** 1350 words

**Byline:** By Jeffery C. Mays

**Body**

Mayor Eric Adams keeps finding eye-catching ways to seize the spotlight on the issue of public safety, even when the narrative turns against him.

It was the day after a New York City police officer had been fatally shot in the line of duty and a man killed after being shoved onto the subway tracks, and Mayor Eric Adams had reached the end of a somber hourlong news conference.

He had spoken emotionally about the loss of the officer; blamed the two deaths on a system that he said left the city vulnerable to the effects of recidivism and mental illness; and sought to counter the narrative that New York had descended into chaos.

And now it was time for Burger King.

''Give me those two pictures from Burger King,'' the mayor commanded, launching into an explanation for a recent unannounced visit to an outpost of the fast-food chain in Lower Manhattan that has attracted complaints for drug dealing. After some research and face-to-face conversations there, Mr. Adams concluded the complaints were unwarranted.

''I did something revolutionary,'' he said. ''I went to talk to them and said, 'Who are you?'''

Earlier that morning, Mr. Adams had visited Rikers Island for another closed-press drop-in, and watched the baptisms of several detainees. Three days later, he returned to Rikers for his own rebaptism, with the Rev. Al Sharpton doing the honors that included a thorough washing of the mayor's feet.

The visits were part of the mayor's unorthodox messaging strategy as he prepares to run for re-election next year, and faces what seems likely to be a contested Democratic primary.

Many of Mr. Adams's events seem to be rooted in political theater or old-time religion, and sometimes a combination of both: the baptism at Rikers; the drop-in at Burger King; accompanying the police on an early-morning raid targeting a major robbery ring. On Wednesday, he announced a ''Five-Borough Multifaith Tour,'' a series of conversations with clergy and faith leaders.

For the mayor, getting rebaptized at Rikers was a ''fortifying ritual that makes sense to a lot of his base,'' said Christina Greer, a political science professor who is currently a fellow at the City University of New York. She likened the rebaptism to his trip to Ghana, where he received a spiritual cleansing, shortly after he was elected in 2021.

''But I don't know if that's enough,'' Ms. Greer added. ''A lot of his base wants to know where the city is going.''

In the view of many New Yorkers, the city is pointed in the wrong direction. Mr. Adams has the lowest approval rating of any New York mayor since Quinnipiac University began conducting city polls in 1996.

His standing among Black registered voters, typically among his most steadfast supporters, has also dipped. In Quinnipiac's December poll, 38 percent of Black voters disapproved of the way Mr. Adams was handling his job, up from 29 percent last February.

Recent front-page headlines in the city's tabloids have contributed to the impression that the city is spinning out of control, as has the mayor's own rhetoric.

But since December, he has repeated variations of a new city slogan -- jobs are up, crimes are down -- and said that New York was in fine shape.

''I know a city out of control,'' he said last week. ''I visit some of them in this country. This is not one of them.''

Yet the mayor has been selective about who hears that message. He has limited his interactions with the City Hall press corps to a single weekly news conference, typically held on Tuesdays. He prefers to conduct one-on-one interviews, often on radio and frequently on programs with significant Black and Latino audiences.

Late last week, the mayor faced off against one of his most ardent critics, Olayemi Olurin, a lawyer and a political commentator who hosts a YouTube show. The two appeared together on ''The Breakfast Club,'' a popular morning show on Power 105.1 FM co-hosted by the author and media host Charlamagne Tha God.

The result was a volatile, nearly hourlong debate over his public safety policies, which Ms. Olurin said were most damaging to the Black and Latino, poor and ***working-class*** people who helped elect Mr. Adams.

Frank Carone, the mayor's former chief of staff, said he wasn't surprised to see Mr. Adams in the studio across from a vocal opponent or being rebaptized at Rikers Island. The mayor is comfortable with dissonance, Mr. Carone said, especially around his signature issue of crime and public safety.

''He believes that he's the one who runs into the fire and doesn't run away from it,'' Mr. Carone said. ''In this case, the fire is the conversation on criminal justice and public safety. He's trying to articulate that real leadership addresses both.''

Clips of Mr. Adams sparring with Ms. Olurin have garnered hundreds of thousands of views. She criticized the rise in stop-and-frisk encounters during his administration and the return of plainclothes police squads focused on recovering guns. She asserted that as the mayor highlighted the killing of the police officer in the line of duty, he had ignored civilians who have been killed by the police.

''We've had a tradition of overpolicing for generations,'' Mr. Adams said, deflecting blame away from his administration.

''And it's gotten worse now that you're here,'' Ms. Olurin shot back.

The criticism struck directly at the mayor's core political identity: a Black New Yorker with ***working-class*** roots; a teenager who said he was beaten by the police, and who used the confrontation to propel him toward a police career that saw him rise to captain; a politician who understood firsthand how government needed to work for people.

But the policies of Mr. Adams's administration, as Ms. Olurin noted, have not always reflected that.

During his time in office, the city has ramped up the use of policing tactics such as stop and frisk, and has conducted too many unlawful stops, according to a federal monitor. Complaints to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, which investigates police misconduct, are on the rise. The arrest and detention rates of young people have increased.

The long-troubled Rikers Island is in danger of being taken over by federal authorities and the mayor has questioned whether the jail can be closed by the legally mandated August 2027 deadline.

And Mr. Adams canceled $17 million in funding for programs on Rikers Island designed to prepare those same men he was baptized alongside to re-enter society. All but $3 million of the funding was restored, but new contracts must now go to bid, causing a delay in providing those services.

Sandy Nurse, a city councilwoman who represents Bushwick and Brownsville and leads the Council's Committee on Criminal Justice, praised Mr. Adams for visiting Rikers. ''As a Black man, as the second Black mayor of New York City, that's important,'' she said. ''But it can't just be visits with photographs. It has to come with material support.''

Ms. Olurin said in an interview that she was glad that she was able to challenge some of the mayor's rhetoric on a Black platform like 105.1 FM radio, where Mr. Adams has appeared a handful of times.

''People got to see how he answers things and evades things,'' she said. ''A lot of the things his administration is doing are not defensible.''

Charlamagne said in an interview that he also believed that the city's tendency toward overpolicing did not necessarily make people feel safer. ''With stuff like stop and frisk, it increases the amount of encounters between Black and brown people and police officers, and a lot of times those don't end well.''

He added that he did not tell Mr. Adams in advance that Ms. Olurin would be questioning him.

In his Tuesday news conference, Mr. Adams seemed to evade a question about whether he was prepared for the adversarial interview, or, as a reporter worded the question, ''Did they kind of punk you?''

''Well, one thing for sure,'' the mayor replied. ''I'm not a punk.''

Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/04/nyregion/adams-olayemi-olurin-baptism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/04/nyregion/adams-olayemi-olurin-baptism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The fatal shooting of a police officer has prompted Mayor Eric Adams to push back on the idea that the city is spinning out of control. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Americans Learned to Be Kinder to (Some) Animals; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1M-28H1-JBG3-600D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 15, 2024 Wednesday 20:33 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 900 words

**Byline:** Andrew Graybill

**Highlight:** “Our Kindred Creatures” details the rise, and contradictions, of the animal welfare movement.

**Body**

“Our Kindred Creatures” details the rise, and contradictions, of the animal welfare movement.

OUR KINDRED CREATURES: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals, by Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy

In 2007, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals moistened eyes with TV ads featuring the singer Sarah McLachlan. As her song “Angel” played in the background, viewers were confronted with a parade of despair: images of neglected and abused cats and dogs, some of them grievously injured. “Will you be an angel for a helpless animal?” McLachlan pleaded.

The commercials were a huge success, [*raising $30 million for the organization*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/26/us/26charity.html) despite the fact that many viewers couldn’t bear even to look at them, including McLachlan herself. “It was brutal doing those ads,” she recalled years later. “I can’t watch them. It kills me.”

In their powerful new book, “Our Kindred Creatures,” the journalist Bill Wasik (an editor at The New York Times) and the veterinarian Monica Murphy argue that such compassion for suffering animals was in short supply throughout the United States until an “awakening” in the late 19th century. The authors — who have co-written a [*previous book about rabies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/26/us/26charity.html) — explain that this movement began in England, where animal welfare commingled with and evolved alongside other moral crusades, including abolitionism. After the end of slavery in the United States, American activists turned their attention to other struggles. The plight of animals during the Gilded Age spoke loudly to some of them.

The stories of two men provide a loose structure to the book. Henry Bergh had his conversion moment while attending a bullfight in Seville. Though appalled by the treatment of the animals, he was no less agitated by what he called “cruelism” — the degrading effect of such violence on spectators, especially children. In 1866 he founded the A.S.P.C.A.

George Thorndike Angell joined the movement around the same time. He launched a monthly publication in 1868 and later established a network of educational clubs. But his most indelible contribution may have been the unauthorized reprinting, in 1890, of “Black Beauty,” an English novel that the authors describe as “the bildungsroman of a ***working-class*** horse.” It sold 371,000 copies in the United States in less than a year, drawing comparisons to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s galvanizing antislavery novel “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

The other main characters in “Our Kindred Creatures” are, appropriately, the animals themselves, whose distress — propagandized by their advocates — bludgeons the modern conscience. Take, for instance, the stray dogs culled from the streets of 19th-century New York City; if unclaimed by 4 p.m. on any given day, they were drowned in a metal crate that could accommodate several dozen in a single dunking. Or the live rabbits once used in medical school classes, their throats flayed open to demonstrate the workings of the nervous system. And the millions of birds harvested annually for their feathers, which adorned the hats of stylish women.

Wasik and Murphy conclude that the awakening reached its apotheosis with the establishment of the nation’s first pet cemetery, in 1896. To their credit, however, the authors do not offer a narrative of simple progress. Rather, they highlight the movement’s internal contradictions. Bergh, who was known to prowl the streets in search of animal abusers, embraced flogging and foot-caning as methods of corporal punishment. Activists like Caroline Earle White, who opposed experimentation on laboratory animals, delayed scientific advances aimed at saving human lives. The taxidermist William Temple Hornaday, alarmed by the near extinction of the bison, traveled west in 1886 to hunt them for display in the Smithsonian, so that future generations might behold the species.

The most striking paradox is that, even as Americans learned to empathize with some of their kindred creatures, they reconciled themselves to the immiseration of others. After all, it was during the post-bellum era that the mechanized slaughter of livestock took off, with Chicago as the industry’s capital city. Its famous (or notorious) stockyards occupied hundreds of acres south of downtown and became a tourist draw during the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Wasik and Murphy are right to say that market forces helped the people clutching copies of “Black Beauty” overcome their aversion to the carnage, whether because of corporate profits or cheap meat. But the cognitive dissonance is astounding all the same.

The authors’ tone is restrained throughout the book but they make a hard — and welcome — pivot in the final chapter. In those pages, they press the case for a “new type of goodness” that would elevate food animals and other mistreated species to the realm of our concern. For skeptics who insist that such a task is too great, Wasik and Murphy counter that “moral change does happen, often at profound scale and remarkable speed.” Let us hope so, for the sake of not just livestock, but all creatures — including humans — suffering in our unfolding environmental catastrophe.

OUR KINDRED CREATURES: How Americans Came to Feel the Way They Do About Animals | By Bill Wasik and Monica Murphy | Knopf | 450 pp. | $35

PHOTO: A New York City dogcatcher at work in the 1940s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NAT FEIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR20.

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***French Voters Are Resigned To a Cost-of-Living Crisis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CG5-YTV1-JBG3-60MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 13, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

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

**Length:** 1254 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

France's parliamentary elections were intended to bring change, but many fear the political gridlock means their struggle to pay bills will continue.

Celine Gallois is more careful these days about what she puts in her shopping basket. Prices at French supermarkets have jumped by nearly a third in the last couple of years, and two bags, filled mainly with basics including pasta, milk, meat and fruit, now cost her about 80 euros -- the most she can afford to spend each week.

The cost to fill up the gas tank of her small car jumped to ?90 a week from ?60. And Ms. Gallois's electricity bills, which President Emmanuel Macron's government had capped during an energy crisis last year, shot up again last month after the subsidy ended.

All of this led her to cast a vote for Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally party for the first time during France's parliamentary elections this weekend.

''People are struggling, and there seems to be no relief in sight,'' said Ms. Gallois, her frustration clear as she wandered through an artisanal market in the northern French city of Beauvais with her fiancé, but refrained from buying. ''The government says they've addressed it, but we keep falling behind.''

As the dust settles from France's elections, one thing has not changed: anger over a cost-of-living crisis that continues to affect households across the country.

A two-year streak of rapid inflation has left low- and middle-income French families struggling to pay for essentials like energy, gas and food, while wages, in some cases, have failed to keep pace. Polls showed that ''purchasing power'' was a top concern of voters, alongside immigration and security.

The problem was so acute that the major parties sought to put pocketbook issues out front: The National Rally, an anti-immigration party, pledged to slash energy bills. The New Popular Front, a left-wing alliance, said it would raise the minimum wage. Mr. Macron's centrist coalition said it would increase social benefits for poor households by around ?5 billion a year.

But after the election, in which no party won a majority and the French National Assembly was left in gridlock, many citizens feared that a new government would not accomplish anything, leaving them continuing to grapple with their daily lives -- and nursing their discontent.

On Sunday, those worries rippled through the local market in Beauvais, the administrative capital of the l'Oise department of northern France, which voted almost entirely for the National Rally in the elections.

In the town's main square, dominated by a statue of Jeanne Hachette, a celebrated heroine who helped stop an invasion by the Duke of Burgundy in the 15th century, tepid sales among artisans selling goods like honey, hamburgers, jewelry and purses were a mirror of the increasing strain.

''Before, it seemed like our income allowed us to live a decent life,'' said Noëlla Lamotte, who owns a small business making hand-painted lamps and decorative home furnishings. ''But our electricity bills are huge, and so is food,'' added Ms. Lamotte, who, with her husband, Joel, backed the far-right party. ''Everyone is feeling the impact and so they're watching what they spend.''

Even the square's fairground attraction, anchored by an elegant carousel and a popular hook-a-duck game, was short on customers; the owner said teenagers and families with young children had been cutting back.

In France, it seems as if things should not be unfolding this way. Inflation has dropped to 2.4 percent from a record high 6.3 percent annualized rate early last year. When food and fuel prices began flaring after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Mr. Macron's government subsidized household energy bills and pressured food producers and supermarkets to slow the run-up in grocery prices.

At the same time, wages increased as workers demanded more to keep up with inflation. The government increased France's official monthly minimum wage six times in the last two years. Salaries in the private sector, based on negotiated wage agreements, rose an average of 4 percent in 2023. And the Bank of France said purchasing power was improving.

But for many, those statistics do not feel real in everyday life. Despite the wage gains, ''purchasing power has been eroded by high inflation,'' the French bank Crédit Agricole said in a recent analysis.

The feeling of precariousness is widespread.

In Bauvin, a ***working-class*** town in northwest France, Bruno Loez, 56, said the last few years had been difficult. ''Two months ago, we barely had enough money to get to the end of the month,'' said Mr. Loez, who has worked as a tiler since he was 17.

''We used to be able to fill our gas tank without any problem. But now we can't afford it,'' he said. ''Shopping is the same: If you want a full cart, you need between ?300 and ?400.'' He decided to vote for the National Rally after the party pledged to lower fuel bills.

In the southern town of L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, Robert Rocchi, 69, a wine shop owner, said inflation had hit people in his region badly. ''For the small earners, it's very difficult,'' said Mr. Rocchi, who voted for a Socialist candidate.

At the Beauvais market, there was a sense that it would be hard to put the genie back in the bottle.

As people leaned in to taste free samples of artisanal beer at a stand called Pap's Biere, the owner, Remi, who declined to give his last name, looked at his unsold stock. He had marked down his bottles to ?3.30 euros from ?4, ''because no one will buy at that price.'' Still, his sales were slow. And his production costs had surged 40 percent in the last two years because the cost of glass and hops remained high.

''Purchasing power is the No. 1 issue on people's minds,'' he said. ''But I don't believe any of the political parties can do much about it.''

Later in the afternoon, Claire Marais-Beuil, the National Rally candidate in Beauvais, stopped by the market to greet voters.

She had campaigned hard on cost-of-living issues, and echoed the same grievances that many voters had. Beneath that appeal was the party's pledge to target what it said were immigrants tapping France's welfare system, and redirect some of those benefits in favor of ''hard-working'' French people.

''There's a feeling that living standards have declined dramatically,'' said Ms. Marais-Beuil, who wound up beating her opponent from the center-right Les Republicans party. ''People say they are fed up, and they want change.''

Ms. Gallois said her vote for the far right had been cast partly out of desperation at financial woes -- and partly out of hope that the party could reverse a sense of decline. ''We felt like we were middle class and that ground has been eroding,'' she said. ''Things just can't keep going on this way.''

For Noémie Duhamel, 38, the owner of a sewing shop called the Magic Thread, the shake-up in French politics did not necessarily mean a change for the better. ''Politicians have promised many things to get elected,'' she said, tidying the custom-made toiletry bags and children's outfits at her market stall as she waited for the occasional customer.

''But after the elections, it's going to be more difficult because everything will be blocked,'' she said. ''People are still uncertain about the future.''

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Bauvin and Cassandra Vinograd from L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue.Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Bauvin and Cassandra Vinograd from L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/11/business/france-elections-voter-discontent.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/11/business/france-elections-voter-discontent.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''People are struggling, and there seems to be no relief in sight,'' said one resident as she strolled through Beauvais, a city in northern France, above.

Léon Fersing, a worker at an amusement stand in Beauvais, noted a drop in the number of customers as people cut back on nonessential costs. (B1)

An artisanal beer stand at a market in Beauvais, France, top. Tepid sales among artisans selling goods are a mirror of the increasing economic strain felt by households across the country. Center, posters for candidates in the runoff for the legislative elections where Claire Marais-Beuil of the National Rally, above center, was the narrow winner.

Celine Gallois, with her fiancé, Stéphane Marcellot, voted for the far-right National Rally party out of frustration over the high cost of living. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B6) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6.

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2024

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[***Why Adams’s Campaign Strategy Involves Burger King and Baptisms at Rikers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPV-XGW1-DXY4-X0MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 4, 2024 Thursday 08:38 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1370 words

**Byline:** Jeffery C. Mays Jeffery C. Mays is a Times reporter covering politics with a focus on New York City Hall.

**Highlight:** Mayor Eric Adams keeps finding eye-catching ways to seize the spotlight on the issue of public safety, even when the narrative turns against him.

**Body**

Mayor Eric Adams keeps finding eye-catching ways to seize the spotlight on the issue of public safety, even when the narrative turns against him.

It was the day after a New York City [*police officer had been fatally shot in the line of duty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) and a man [*killed after being shoved onto the subway tracks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html), and Mayor Eric Adams had reached the end of a somber hourlong news conference.

He had spoken emotionally about the loss of the officer; blamed the two deaths on a system that he said left the city vulnerable to the effects of recidivism and mental illness; and sought to counter the narrative that New York had descended into chaos.

And now it was time for Burger King.

“Give me those two pictures from Burger King,” the mayor commanded, launching into an explanation for a recent [*unannounced visit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) to an outpost of the fast-food chain in Lower Manhattan that has attracted complaints for drug dealing. After some research and [*face-to-face conversations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) there, Mr. Adams concluded the complaints were unwarranted.

“I did something revolutionary,” he said. “I went to talk to them and said, ‘Who are you?’”

Earlier that morning, Mr. Adams had visited Rikers Island for another closed-press drop-in, and watched the baptisms of several detainees. Three days later, he returned to Rikers for his own rebaptism, with the Rev. Al Sharpton doing the honors that included a thorough washing of the mayor’s feet.

The visits were part of the mayor’s unorthodox messaging strategy as he prepares to run for re-election next year, and faces what seems likely to be a contested Democratic primary.

Many of Mr. Adams’s events seem to be rooted in political theater or old-time religion, and sometimes a combination of both: the baptism at Rikers; the drop-in at Burger King; accompanying the police on an [*early-morning raid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) targeting a major robbery ring. On Wednesday, he announced a “Five-Borough Multifaith Tour,” a series of conversations with clergy and faith leaders.

For the mayor, getting rebaptized at Rikers was a “fortifying ritual that makes sense to a lot of his base,” said Christina Greer, a political science professor who is currently a fellow at the City University of New York. She likened the rebaptism to his [*trip to Ghana*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html), where he received [*a spiritual cleansing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html), shortly after he was elected in 2021.

“But I don’t know if that’s enough,” Ms. Greer added. “A lot of his base wants to know where the city is going.”

In the view of many New Yorkers, the city is [*pointed in the wrong direction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html). Mr. Adams has the [*lowest approval rating of any New York mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) since Quinnipiac University began conducting city polls in 1996.

His standing among Black registered voters, typically among his most steadfast supporters, has also dipped. In Quinnipiac’s December poll, 38 percent of Black voters disapproved of the way Mr. Adams was handling his job, up from 29 percent last February.

Recent front-page headlines in the city’s tabloids have contributed to the impression that the city is [*spinning out of control*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html), as has the mayor’s own rhetoric.

But since December, he has repeated variations of a new city slogan — jobs are up, crimes are down — and said that New York was in fine shape.

“I know a city out of control,” he said last week. “I visit some of them in this country. This is not one of them.”

Yet the mayor has been selective about who hears that message. He has limited his interactions with the City Hall press corps to a single weekly news conference, typically held on Tuesdays. He prefers to conduct one-on-one interviews, often on radio and frequently on programs with significant Black and Latino audiences.

Late last week, the mayor faced off against one of his most ardent critics, Olayemi Olurin, a lawyer and a political commentator who [*hosts a YouTube show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html). The two appeared together on “The Breakfast Club,” a popular morning show on Power 105.1 FM co-hosted by the author and media host Charlamagne Tha God.

The result was a volatile, nearly [*hourlong debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) over his public safety policies, which Ms. Olurin said were most damaging to the Black and Latino, poor and ***working-class*** people who helped elect Mr. Adams.

Frank Carone, the mayor’s former chief of staff, said he wasn’t surprised to see Mr. Adams in the studio across from a vocal opponent or being rebaptized at Rikers Island. The mayor is comfortable with dissonance, Mr. Carone said, especially around his signature issue of crime and public safety.

“He believes that he’s the one who runs into the fire and doesn’t run away from it,” Mr. Carone said. “In this case, the fire is the conversation on criminal justice and public safety. He’s trying to articulate that real leadership addresses both.”

Clips of Mr. Adams sparring with Ms. Olurin have garnered hundreds of thousands of views. She criticized the rise in stop-and-frisk encounters during his administration and the return of plainclothes police squads focused on recovering guns. She asserted that as the mayor highlighted [*the killing of the police officer in the line of duty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html), he had ignored civilians who have been killed by the police.

“We’ve had a tradition of overpolicing for generations,” Mr. Adams said, deflecting blame away from his administration.

“And it’s gotten worse now that you’re here,” Ms. Olurin shot back.

The criticism struck directly at the mayor’s core political identity: a Black New Yorker with ***working-class*** roots; a teenager who said he was beaten by the police, and who used the confrontation to propel him toward a police career that saw him rise to captain; a politician who understood firsthand how government needed to work for people.

But the policies of Mr. Adams’s administration, as Ms. Olurin noted, have not always reflected that.

During his time in office, the city has ramped up the use of [*policing tactics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) such as stop and frisk, and has conducted too many unlawful stops, according to a federal monitor. Complaints to the Civilian Complaint Review Board, which investigates police misconduct, are on the rise. The arrest and detention rates of young people have increased.

The long-troubled Rikers Island is in danger of being [*taken over by federal authorities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) and the mayor has questioned whether the [*jail can be closed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) by the legally mandated August 2027 deadline.

And Mr. Adams canceled $17 million in funding for programs on Rikers Island designed to prepare those same men he was baptized alongside to re-enter society. All but $3 million of the funding was restored, but new contracts must now go to bid, causing a delay in providing those services.

Sandy Nurse, a city councilwoman who represents Bushwick and Brownsville and leads the Council’s Committee on Criminal Justice, praised Mr. Adams for visiting Rikers. “As a Black man, as the second Black mayor of New York City, that’s important,” she said. “But it can’t just be visits with photographs. It has to come with material support.”

Ms. Olurin said in an interview that she was glad that she was able to challenge [*some of the mayor’s rhetoric*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/28/nyregion/nypd-officer-shooting-charges-rivera.html) on a Black platform like 105.1 FM radio, where Mr. Adams has appeared a handful of times.

“People got to see how he answers things and evades things,” she said. “A lot of the things his administration is doing are not defensible.”

Charlamagne said in an interview that he also believed that the city’s tendency toward overpolicing did not necessarily make people feel safer. “With stuff like stop and frisk, it increases the amount of encounters between Black and brown people and police officers, and a lot of times those don’t end well.”

He added that he did not tell Mr. Adams in advance that Ms. Olurin would be questioning him.

In his Tuesday news conference, Mr. Adams seemed to evade a question about whether he was prepared for the adversarial interview, or, as a reporter worded the question, “Did they kind of punk you?”

“Well, one thing for sure,” the mayor replied. “I’m not a punk.”

Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Dana Rubinstein contributed reporting.

PHOTO: The fatal shooting of a police officer has prompted Mayor Eric Adams to push back on the idea that the city is spinning out of control. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2024

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[***JD Vance, D.E.I. Candidate; Lydia Polgreen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHX-8361-JBG3-605W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 21, 2024 Sunday 17:16 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1585 words

**Byline:** Lydia Polgreen Lydia Polgreen is an Opinion columnist and a co-host of the &amp;#8220;Matter of Opinion&amp;#8221; podcast for The Times.

**Highlight:** He benefited from one of the most powerful forms of affirmative action that elite universities practice.

**Body**

Ever since speculation began that Vice President Kamala Harris might replace President Biden at the top of the Democratic ticket, there has been a steady, ugly chorus on the right. The New York Post published a column that declared that Harris would be a “[*D.E.I. president*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion),” and quickly the phrase ricocheted across the conservative media ecosystem.

The invocation of diversity, equity and inclusion programs meant to bring people from underrepresented backgrounds into institutions of power and influence clearly implied that a Black woman got power because of racial preferences. Black achievement, in this narrative, is always unearned and conferred without regard to merit.

Listening to JD Vance’s speech at the Republican convention on Wednesday night, as he laid out his remarkable biography — a young man with roots in an economically devastated backwater who scaled the heights of the American elite — I couldn’t help thinking to myself: If Harris is a D.E.I. candidate, so is Vance. It just depends on what kind of diversity you mean. It depends, indeed, on how you understand the role of identity in shaping the opportunities that define anyone’s life.

All politics is, at some level, identity politics — the business of turning identity into power, be it the identity of a candidate or demographic group or political party or region of the country. For modern presidential and vice-presidential candidates, one of their most valuable assets is their life story. Some elements of that story are bequeathed at birth, but what makes politicians successful is their talent at narrating that story in a manner that allows voters to see some version of themselves and their own aspirations in the candidate. This kind of storytelling, embedded in American archetypes and ideals, has shaped our politics.

Vance’s entire business and political career has flowed from his life story, which is embedded in identities he did not choose: Born a “hillbilly,” of Scottish-Irish descent, he grew up in poverty, son of a single mother who was addicted to drugs. Overcoming this adversity, these disadvantages, lies at the core of his personal narrative. His ascent would hardly be so remarkable if he started from a life of middle-class comfort. But no one is portraying Vance’s elevation to the Republican ticket as the outcome of some kind of illegitimate identity politics, nor is Vance perceived as having benefited from a political form of affirmative action.

And yet he almost certainly did. Race is not the only kind of diversity that gets noticed and embraced. Elite institutions love up-by-your-bootstraps Americans, and that archetype is all over Vance’s life story. A promising white candidate from a county that sends few students to an elite college like Yale would get a strong look, even if that person’s grades and test scores were less impressive than other applicants’. (To be clear, I have no idea what kind of grades or scores Vance had.) Regardless of race, applicants from ***working-class*** backgrounds, especially if they were the first in their family to attend college, are deemed to add class diversity.

Natasha Warikoo, a professor of sociology at Tufts University whose scholarship focuses on affirmative action and ideas about meritocracy, told me that race is a highly visible identity and the one that is most likely to be associated with unearned advantage. Yet race is not the only kind of identity that excites elite institutions looking for diversity. “We want a variety of perspectives and lived experiences,” Warikoo said.

The labor historian Gabriel Winant, who crossed paths with Vance at Yale, [*wrote of him*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) last year: “If you spend enough time at elite universities, you should be able to recognize this as a type: conservative white men from outside the WASP elite who have figured out how to present themselves as persecuted minorities and be rewarded for it. Although Vance no doubt did feel out of place at Yale, elite universities love promising young conservative men like him. Institutions often seek them out and do them favors; doing so makes faculty and administrators feel broad-minded.”

Vance benefited from one of the most powerful forms of affirmative action that elite universities practice to attract low-income students: need-blind admissions. Like many elite schools, Yale pledges to [*help cover the cost of attending*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) for poor students, and Vance [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) about receiving generous financial aid for law school not “because of anything I’d done or earned — it was because I was one of the poorest kids in school.” I am familiar with this phenomenon; my much less elite college had a similar policy. Our family was penniless, so I received aid that covered nearly the entire cost of my expensive education.

The sort of affirmative action that helped Vance gets easily overlooked; it’s less visible than race, making it easier to ascribe the achievements of white men to merit alone. The playing field is never tilted to help white men, the theory goes. If anything, it is tilted against them, in favor of women and minorities, we’re told by the right. And if there are any advantages for white men, they exist only to help elites remain elites — legacy admissions, preferences for athletes and players of expensive sports like sailing, old-boy networks.

In truth, it is pretty common for white men to get a leg up for some special part of their identity. Yet these men do not get labeled D.E.I. beneficiaries. People don’t worry that their surgeon or pilot or president was a D.E.I. hire, even though he might have gotten his spot at an elite college because he was the son of a wealthy alumnus or because he happened to come from a state that is historically underrepresented in elite higher education. Indeed, he might have impressed an admissions officer with an unusual story of overcoming obstacles — a family rived by poverty and addiction in a forgotten corner of the country.

I wonder: Why do people look at Vance’s life story and achievements and see a vice president and they look at Harris’s life story and achievements and see a D.E.I. candidate?

You have to look pretty far into history to find a vice-presidential nominee with a slimmer résumé than Vance. In fairness, he is only 39. Before he entered the Senate 18 months ago, his public service experience consisted of a stint in the Marine Corps, which is a solid early entry on a political résumé. This champion of forgotten America made his fortune by writing a best-selling book that [*portrayed*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) the rural white community he came from as lazy and undisciplined, [*responsible*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) for its poverty and misery. He got even richer working as a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley, [*hobnobbing*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) with the billionaire fleece-vest crowd at invitation-only conferences among the über-elite. He is clearly a person of talent and drive. But it is hard to imagine that he could have gotten this far were it not for the value that elite institutions place on biographies like his.

Affirmative action of a kind is built into our political system. The drafters of the Constitution did not have the term “diversity, equity and inclusion” at hand, but how else do you describe a system that gives two senators and at least three Electoral College votes to a state that based on population qualifies for only one member of the House of Representatives? Our Constitution does not lecture Wyoming, Alaska, the Dakotas, Vermont and Delaware to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and do a better job of competing for residents with states like California and New York in order to earn their disproportionate representation.

Some of the earliest settlers of the United States were religious minorities fleeing persecution, and protection of the rights of certain minorities lies at the core of our founding documents. For better or worse, our Constitution finds value in tempering the power of the majority, though that has worked out in ways no one fathomed in the 18th century. It is telling that these kinds of preferences, the valuing of geographic and religious diversity, are so deeply embedded in our history and do not read to most people as unearned or unjust.

Personally, I think powerful institutions should value this kind of diversity. Over the course of my career I have hired and promoted many people, and diversity in the broadest sense has always been important to me. I have found that the best leaders I have worked with are eager to build teams from as wide a range of geographic, religious, class, ideological and, yes, racial and ethnic backgrounds as possible.

Kamala Harris and JD Vance, despite their political differences, have a few things in common. They were raised by tough, charismatic matriarchs. They both pursued legal careers. They both sought and won high elected office. They both come from backgrounds that are underrepresented in the halls of power. And now they are both engaged in the core work of politics — translating their stories into power. We would do well to ask why only one of these two remarkable Americans stands accused of getting where she is based on D.E.I. The answer, I fear, is written on their faces.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion) 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/column/matter-of-opinion). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/matter-of-opinion).

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

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2024

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[***Venezuela’s Autocrat Is Declared Winner in Tainted Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKJ-FYP1-DXY4-X3RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2024 Sunday 11:53 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; americas

**Length:** 1678 words

**Byline:** Anatoly Kurmanaev, Frances Robles and Julie Turkewitz Anatoly Kurmanaev covers Russia and its transformation following the invasion of Ukraine. Frances Robles is a Times investigative reporter covering the United States and Latin America. She has been a journalist for more than 30 years. Julie Turkewitz is the Andes Bureau Chief for The Times, based in Bogot&amp;#225;, Colombia, covering Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

**Highlight:** The result, which would give Nicolás Maduro six more years as president, was disputed by the opposition, and the United States said it had “serious concerns.”

**Body**

The result, which would give Nicolás Maduro six more years as president, was disputed by the opposition, and the United States said it had “serious concerns.”

Venezuela’s authoritarian leader, Nicolás Maduro, was declared the winner of the country’s tumultuous presidential election early Monday, despite enormous momentum from an opposition movement that had been convinced this was the year it would oust Mr. Maduro’s socialist-inspired party.

The vote was riddled with irregularities, and citizens were angrily protesting the government’s actions at voting centers even as the results were announced.

With 80 percent of voting stations counted, the country’s election authority claimed that Mr. Maduro had received 51.2 percent of the vote, while the main opposition candidate, Edmundo González, had received 44.2 percent.

Mr. Maduro’s government [*has invented election results before*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html), and this tally was immediately called into question by the opposition and by several officials in the region.

“We won and the whole world knows it,” the country’s most popular opposition leader, María Corina Machado, told reporters in Caracas, the capital, early Monday. She called the declared result “impossible,” given information her team had collected about turnout.

Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, speaking to reporters in Tokyo, said the U.S. government had “serious concerns that the result announced does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people.”

Officials at some polling places refused to release printouts verifying the electronic vote count, and there were reports of voter intimidation and other irregularities.

In a televised speech, Mr. Maduro called his victory a “triumph of peace, of stability” and “of the idea of equality.” He denied accusations of electoral fraud.

Even before the announcement, there was concern that a declaration of victory for Mr. Maduro could plunge the oil-rich, crisis-laden nation into a period of deep uncertainty, with fear that street demonstrations could follow.

In the past, security forces aligned with Mr. Maduro have crushed protests with violence.

During the 25 years Mr. Maduro’s party has been in power, it has presided over [*an economic contraction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html) unlike any seen outside war and has become the source of [*one of the largest migrant crises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html) in the world.

Millions of Venezuelans had rallied behind the opposition candidate, [*Mr. González*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html), a previously little-known former diplomat who became the contender after Ms. Machado was barred from running for office by the Maduro government.

Ms. Machado, a conservative former legislator, had electrified great swaths of the country with a promise to restore democracy and bring home millions of Venezuelans who had fled their country.

But in the end, Mr. Maduro’s time-tested tactics of voter coercion, suppression and confusion, combined with the opposition’s limited ability to monitor the vote, seem to have tipped the balance in his favor.

There are two vote counts in Venezuela, a digital tally received by the country’s election body — which is led by an ally of Mr. Maduro — and a paper count printed by each voting machine at polling places.

The paper counts are typically the way that everyday citizens can verify that the digital count is correct.

But this year, in some key stations, election officials refused to hand over the paper tallies to election monitors. This was the case at one of the largest voting stations in the capital, Caracas, the Rafael Napoleon Baute school in Petare, where about 15,000 people vote.

In Venezuela’s second largest city, Maracaibo, local leaders said they had not been able to get the paper counts for all the voting centers in their region. At one school, Colegio Gonzaga, people protested outside, calling on the electoral body to turn over the voting receipts.

With limited paper counts, the country was left without a way to verify the result announced by the ruling party.

For months, Venezuelans have been preparing to vote, and a spirit of civic duty and a strong desire for change permeated the nation during the election on Sunday. Many polls showed Mr. González with a significant advantage over Mr. Maduro.

In some places, voters began lining up as early as 10 p.m. on Saturday, eight hours before voting places were scheduled to open, and slept in the streets ahead of the vote. [*One photograph*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html), taken in the western state of Táchira, showed citizens packed into a narrow alley before dawn, eager to cast a ballot, and quickly became emblematic of the moment.

Speaking at a polling place in Caracas just after dawn, Henry Mayora, 74, said he had arrived at 2:30 a.m. with his own chair, making him the first in line.

“There could be an earthquake, a landslide, rain,” said Mr. Mayora, who walks with a cane and was supporting the opposition. “And we are going to vote.”

The election was being watched closely in Washington, which has spent years trying push Mr. Maduro from office, levying brutal sanctions in 2019 that have strangled the country’s already crippled economy.

A change of government has become even more important to the United States in recent years, as a [*vast number of Venezuelans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html) have begun migrating north, and as the country’s oil becomes ever more valuable in a changing geopolitical landscape.

Mr. Maduro’s cozy relationship with U.S. adversaries, including Russia, Iran and China, has only worried Washington more.

In the weeks before the election, Mr. Maduro’s government made enormous efforts to tilt the results in its favor, including arresting members of the Machado-González campaign and [*preventing most people living abroad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html) from casting a vote.

And as the polls opened on Sunday morning, there were signs of problems in various parts of the country.

At the Andrés Bello school, a voting station in Caracas, a journalist with The New York Times watched about 15 men in unmarked black jackets temporarily block access to the center. In a scuffle, one woman was punched.

In the city of Maturín, in the east, a woman was hit by a bullet as men on motorcycles passed by a line of people waiting to vote, according to a former lawmaker, María Gabriela Hernández, who was at the scene.

Many polling places across the country opened late. At times, voting machines stopped functioning. Some official witnesses were barred from entering their polling stations. Other stations stayed open late as members of Mr. Maduro’s party rounded up voters who had yet to cast their ballots.

In one voting center in the city of Carúpano, in the northern department of Sucre, citizens and local journalists said that government security forces had tried to remove a vote monitor allied with the opposition and replace the person with a monitor lacking credentials from the country’s electoral body.

In the city of Cumaná, in Sucre, five people said that a new, unofficial voting station had been installed in a community center. Supporters of the government blocked a journalist working for The Times who tried to enter the site.

At another polling place in Cumaná, about 50 armed police officers and national guardsmen had formed a long line outside by midmorning, wearing helmets and bullet-resistant vests, clearly projecting the state’s strength to anyone considering voting against those in power.

In Maracaibo, in the west, voters reported that their polling places had been moved without their knowledge. Sonia Gómez, 65, said she had checked the election council website on Saturday to verify her polling station. But when she arrived on Sunday, election workers told her she was registered somewhere else.

“They moved us older people because they know we don’t have that much energy,” she said, “but I’m going to look for someone to take me to vote.”

In other places, voting went more smoothly. At one of Caracas’s largest voting centers in the ***working-class*** Petare neighborhood, Rony Velázquez, a personal trainer, said he had chosen to cast his vote for the government.

He said that he was sympathetic to the opposition but chose to seek improvements within the current political system. “It would take them years to change things,” he said of the opposition.

If the election decision holds and Mr. Maduro remains in power, he will carry Chavismo, the country’s socialist-inspired movement, into its third decade in Venezuela. Founded by former President Hugo Chávez, Mr. Maduro’s mentor, the movement initially promised to lift millions out of poverty.

For a time it did. But in recent years, the socialist model has given way to brutal capitalism, economists say, with a small state-connected minority [*controlling much of the nation’s wealth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/world/americas/venezuela-election-turnout.html).

Mr. Chávez swept to power in 1999 following a democratic election, vowing to remake a system led by a corrupt elite. Today, his movement runs a state widely viewed as corrupt, and his party’s leaders are the elite — and Ms. Machado and Mr. González had promised to oust them.

In recent interviews across the country, some supporters of the opposition vowed to take to the streets if Mr. Maduro declared victory.

Luis Bravo, a voter who was selling water at an opposition event recently, said that if Mr. Maduro declared a win and there were demonstrations, he would join.

“I am praying that it doesn’t come to that because, obviously, a lot of people are going to die,” he said. “But if I have to, I have to.”

Isayen Herrera and Alejandro Cegarra contributed reporting from Caracas, Venezuela, Nayrobis Rodríguez from Sucre, Venezuela, Sheyla Urdaneta from Maracaibo, Venezuela, Genevieve Glatsky from Bogotá, Colombia, and Edward Wong from Tokyo.

Isayen Herrera and Alejandro Cegarra contributed reporting from Caracas, Venezuela, Nayrobis Rodríguez from Sucre, Venezuela, Sheyla Urdaneta from Maracaibo, Venezuela, Genevieve Glatsky from Bogotá, Colombia, and Edward Wong from Tokyo.

PHOTO: President Nicolas Maduro addressing supporters gathered outside the Miraflores presidential palace after electoral authorities declared him the winner of the presidential election in Caracas, Venezuela, on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Fernando Vergara/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Squaring a Life, A Brutal Crime And a Man***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-603W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 6; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 2859 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof and Dru Donovan

**Body**

My old pal Bill Beard was as complicated as America, as creative, as loving and sometimes as troubled.

As I sat by Bill's deathbed recently, we reminisced about searching in the woods as boys for Bigfoot. (It's just as well, we decided, that we never caught one.) We spoke of long-ago crushes, of his prison time, of his love for his wife. Gingerly, we discussed the young woman he had brutalized.

When we were boys, Bill tried to teach me how to fix cars; he wasn't so successful at that. But with the bumpy course of his life, he taught me how Americans can better support those left behind.

I'm not sure Bill would have much patience for the way I'm telling his story, though. He didn't make excuses. ''I made bad choices,'' he told me. ''A lot of them.''

But I think there's more to it than that, as I contemplate a very decent man who did very bad things. And in his story there are perhaps larger lessons that can help us prevent other young people from following his path. So, Bill, if you're looking down at me, rolling your eyes, just hear me out.

Walter William Beard, or Billy, as he was then, grew up down the road from me, on a farm near Yamhill, Ore. I hung out with him partly because he lived a more interesting life than I did. Most of us waited to drive until we were 15 and could get a permit, but Billy began to chauffeur his grandmother around at the age of 10, even on highways. The police never caught him, and I burned with jealousy.

But there was a lonely, traumatized Bill, too. His parents separated when he was a baby, and his mom abandoned him when he was a year and a half old, leaving him toddling outside the house wearing only a diaper. His dad and various relatives then juggled him, so he lived in seven different houses in his first five years.

He stopped going to high school, and by the time anyone noticed and he returned, he didn't have enough credits to graduate. Our high school handed him a diploma anyway, even though he didn't have the skills to compete in the job market, because it wanted to be done with him.

Well-paying union jobs in sawmills and factories were disappearing, and drugs were moving into communities like ours. Bill couldn't find a solid job or a sense of purpose, and he self-medicated. He began to steal and sell drugs to pay for his habit. He seemed lost and became reckless. Then, one time when he was with a girlfriend on the Oregon coast in 1986, in the tourist town of Lincoln City, he did something so terrible that I still can't square it with the buddy I admired.

It was evening at a Circle K convenience store, and Betty Gerhardt, 23, was working alone at the register. Bill walked in and asked for some bacon, so she walked over to the cooler and turned her back on him.

''He grabbed me and pushed me into the back room,'' she recalled, and he hit her over the head with a jar of honey, knocking her to the ground. ''He went for my pants. And when he did that, I started fighting.''

Bill pulled her pants and underwear down to her ankles, she said. Fearing she was going to be raped, she struggled back furiously, even as Bill grabbed empty bottles stacked nearby and smashed them over her head and body. The glass cut her badly -- she had scars on her forehead and arm from the attack -- and he left her bloody and unconscious on the floor.

After failing to break into the cash register, Bill walked out of the store and drove off with his girlfriend. Gerhardt awoke and called 911, and an ambulance rushed her to a hospital, where she remained for three days. The police promptly caught Bill, still covered in Gerhardt's blood.

Deeply ashamed of what he had done, Bill always claimed to me that he had been so high on meth, cocaine and alcohol that he was in ''a stupor,'' as he put it. ''I blacked out,'' he told me.

It could have been even worse. ''I got lucky because I had a gun in the car, and I always carried it,'' Bill told me. But that time he left it behind; we both were silent as we pondered what he might have done if he had been armed.

For Gerhardt, the assault was devastating: She quit the job and was never again able to work with money for fear of being robbed. For decades, she was terrified of being alone in the dark. Even years later, when she worked a shift that ended in the wee hours, her father would wake himself up every night to drive to her workplace and then escort her back to her home. (Gerhardt died in November of a brain infection, at age 61, after we had spoken.)

A judge sentenced Bill to 20 years in prison.

''That was one of the hardest things to go through,'' Sue Buchholz, his stepmother, who raised him for most of his boyhood, told me. ''His dad and I could never understand it.'' Bill's dad, a truck driver and a stern believer in law and order, was shattered that his son could have committed such a monstrous crime; Buchholz thinks that's one reason Bill's father's heart began to fail, leading to his death at the age of 58.

Frankly, in writing this essay, I worry that sharing details of this crime will leave the impression that this horrific action represented all of who Bill was. He had another side full of humor, warmth and eagerness to help others. Forgive me, Bill -- for nobody should be remembered for the worst thing he ever did.

I also fear that some readers may believe that I'm minimizing a brutal assault, or will be perplexed that I remained friends with a violent drug dealer who in many ways destroyed a young woman's life. I make no excuses for Bill or his actions. But one thing I've learned in a lifetime of reporting is that humans contain multitudes, and in this case I hope we might learn from Bill's troubled journey how trauma self-replicates: When we let so many Americans fall behind, they not only suffer greatly but also inflict great suffering on others.

Bill Beard never lived up to his rich potential. He hurt. And he hurt others. For those struggling in America, pain can be transitive.

When Betty Friedan called attention in the 1960s to the lack of women's rights, she described it as ''the problem that has no name.'' In a similar way, there isn't a good term for the bundle of pathologies that have afflicted ***working-class*** Americans like Bill.

My ''How America Heals'' series has explored how to overcome these afflictions, which include stagnant incomes, addiction, homelessness, suicide, chronic pain, loneliness and early death. We still don't fully understand how they are correlated or why most of them affect men more than women. I do believe that, as with Friedan's probing of gender inequity, our explorations of these problems will help us chip away at them. That's the reason for this series: A nation cannot thrive when so many have been left behind.

One gauge of how many Americans are struggling is that average weekly nonsupervisory wages, a metric for blue-collar earnings, were lower in the first half of 2023 than they had been (adjusted for inflation) in the first half of 1969. That's not a misprint.

Another: If the federal minimum wage of 1968 had kept pace with inflation and productivity, it would now be more than $25 an hour. Instead, it's stuck at $7.25.

The Princeton economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton popularized the term ''deaths of despair'' for the tumbling life expectancy among ***working-class*** Americans since 2010, but the tragedy goes far beyond the staggering mortality. For each person who dies from drugs, alcohol and suicide, many others are mired in addiction and heap pain on their families. Gerhardt told me that she had been addicted to heroin for years, underscoring how widespread this malady is: Perpetrator and victim shared a parallel suffering, and both died before the age of 65.

The challenges are particularly acute for Black and Native American men. Native American males have a life expectancy of only 61.5 years, shorter than men in India, Egypt and Venezuela. And the median wage of Black men in 2020 was only 55 percent of that of white men, a smaller share than it had been in the late 1960s.

The burden of the inequities, for people of all races, is compounded for America's less educated -- like Bill.

''Capitalism in America today is not working for the two-thirds of adults who do not have a B.A.,'' Professor Deaton said in a lecture in Amsterdam. When a Nobel Prize-winning economist warns that capitalism is failing most Americans, it's worth paying attention. That failure has been etched into the lives of people like Bill Beard and Betty Gerhardt.

Despite his 20-year sentence, Bill was released after less than five years, apparently because he behaved well in prison and because friends of Gerhardt who were also inmates were beating him up. He then worked at a plastics factory and quickly became indispensable, the man who could get any piece of machinery to work. More important, he met Elizabeth, a fellow employee.

Bill had two ex-wives with whom he had three children, and neither he nor Elizabeth was looking for a partner. But a year later they married.

''My world changed again,'' he told me.

''He's kind, he's loving, he's honorable,'' Elizabeth said about Bill. ''He would do anything for anyone.''

Elizabeth disapproved of drugs, and Bill's drug use subsided. He started a taxi company driving people to Oregon wineries, and this grew into a successful wine tour business. The way Bill thrived when he was an entrepreneur married to Elizabeth underscored his talent, and also how much potential had been squandered earlier in his life.

He and Elizabeth lived in a trailer with a sign posted beside the driveway: ''We Support Law Enforcement.'' I teased Bill about that, wondering aloud what the police officers who arrested him would have thought. But he meant it. Like many ***working-class*** white Americans, he was also sympathetic to Donald Trump, although he added that he'd never voted in his life. Bill thought politicians were corrupt, condescending, out-of-touch elitists who didn't care about people like him, but he felt Trump spoke to him in a way that many politicians did not.

Bill could be prone to conspiracy theories. During the coronavirus pandemic, he asked me if Covid-19 was real. I told him it was and encouraged him to get vaccinated. ''I never get vaccinated for anything,'' he told me.

After years of rough living, Bill developed health problems and suffered three heart attacks. Then, when he felt abdominal pain a couple of years ago, he found it difficult to locate a specialist willing to accept his insurance. Finally, when the pain became unbearable, he went to the emergency room -- and was diagnosed with late-stage rectal cancer.

He and I had discussed for several years the possibility of my writing about him, and he was happy to oblige. We kept putting it off, and he was terminally ill and in pain when I last interviewed him -- but still in characteristic good spirits.

We spoke of old friends who had died from overdoses or been tormented by addictions. One mutual friend who abused fentanyl was homeless. So I asked Bill if he regretted having sold drugs.

''I don't feel like I have regrets for their addiction,'' he said. ''I did what I did to make the money.''

That answer surprised me because Bill tended to be softhearted. But he also had a strong belief in personal responsibility.

''As long as you have the mental capacity to know right from wrong, it's your own damn fault'' if you get into trouble, he said. ''You can't blame anyone else. It's ludicrous. Who is there to blame?''

I pushed back. Didn't the addiction crisis have something to do with larger forces like lost jobs, declining earning power and failed education and mental health policies?

Yes, he acknowledged that there was something to that, but he wouldn't budge from his embrace of 100 percent personal responsibility, including when it came to his assault on Betty Gerhardt. ''I was high; I was angry,'' he said, about his mental state at the time. ''Nobody else made me do it. How can you blame anybody else?''

While I admire Bill's acceptance of responsibility, it's also true that none of this unfolded in a vacuum. He made appalling decisions -- but why was it that tens of millions of Americans were suddenly making bad decisions?

The previous generation of ***working-class*** Americans had thrived with a booming economy, rising education levels and union jobs. But in blue-collar neighborhoods, the generation that Bill and I belonged to imploded. Among our close neighbors where we grew up, two other boys were later convicted of raping young girls in separate incidents, another was convicted of armed robbery, a girl was convicted of attempted murder and a boy set someone on fire in a drug deal gone wrong.

I've struggled to process all this in a community that I love, but I don't believe this was a spontaneous collapse of morals. Nor do I think it can be separated from the context: a poorly educated work force that had few options when good blue-collar jobs went away; the proliferation of hard drugs and a lack of treatment programs; and an atomization of society following the unraveling of the social fabric and the collapse of churches, clubs and other local institutions.

The no-excuses personal responsibility narrative has been absorbed by many ***working-class*** Americans, and it can be highly motivating; it's often a pillar of efforts to overcome addiction. Yet this narrative can also be dispiriting when people fall short of their aspirations, amplifying their sense that they are hopeless screw-ups -- and that in turn can mean one more reason to reach for narcotics to numb the pain.

I wonder: What killed my buddy Bill Beard? In one sense, he killed himself by making bad choices. That's what he would say. Yet as long as we're talking about responsibility, shouldn't we also be having a conversation about our collective responsibility for the squeeze on ***working-class*** Americans that made dumb moves more likely?

So what are the solutions to this kind of tragedy?

Private-sector unions have a good record of improving blue-collar earnings and can provide a sense of belonging and purpose. Job-training programs like Per Scholas (one of the nonprofits I recommended in my 2023 gift guide) have an outstanding record of turning low-income workers into productive tech-sector employees. Early childhood programs put children from troubled homes on a path to success. Drug treatment and mental health programs can turn lives around; it should be a national scandal that only about 6 percent of those with substance use disorder get treatment.

John Collins, a retired judge who thinks he faced Bill in his court decades ago, believes that mentoring makes a big difference. He supports Friends of the Children, which provides paid counselors for struggling children beginning in kindergarten that stay with them through high school graduation.

Another mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters, has an excellent record of opening doors for needy boys and girls. Yet it has a long waiting list of boys who want a mentor but can't get one.

Adults also benefit from mentoring. Just 10 miles from where Bill and I grew up is Blanchet Farm, a nonprofit that offers people who have wrestled with addiction and homelessness a chance to get sober and start over.

It's now run by Ross Sears, who understands well the human capacity to screw up: He was an alcoholic by the time he turned 21. Relationships and marriages fell apart, and he floundered. ''There were no good jobs,'' he said. ''It was brutal.''

In Sears's case, his route out of life's quagmires came when he eventually found a spot at Blanchet Farm. ''I started working with the pigs,'' Sears recalled. ''A little bit of humility, but it's honest.''

It helped that he was stuck in the countryside, without any access to alcohol, and that it was a long program where most people stay six months or more. It also gives people job skills, such as carpentry and cooking, so they can earn money when they leave.

I think wistfully of Bill. If he had had the chance to have a Big Brother or another mentor, or if he could have spent time at Blanchet Farm when he was a young man, perhaps his life would have taken a different course and Gerhardt would have been spared her nightmare.

Bill died one night in October at the age of 64. It may be too late to help him, but across America, millions of others are now teetering.

We as a nation have the tools to help kids like Billy -- not perfectly, but perhaps enough to make a difference for many of them.

I think back to when Billy was a cheerful, hopeful child traipsing through the woods with me as we searched for Bigfoot, back when he was struggling in school, and I think: How could grown-ups have let him go astray without even trying to help?

Today I see millions of American children floundering in foster care, dropping out of school and slipping into gangs, and I think once more: Where are the grown-ups?

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)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Below, Bill and Elizabeth Beard at home in Yamhill, Ore., in September. Above, Bill and Elizabeth in 2017. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DRU DONOVAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ELIZABETH BEARD) (SR5-SR6) This article appeared in print on page SR5, SR6.

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2024

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[***Kentucky's Governor, A Smiling Attack Dog, Auditions for Harris***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKD-DDM1-JBG3-634T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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

**Length:** 1685 words

**Byline:** By Nick Corasaniti

**Body**

A political scion with the most famous last name in Kentucky Democratic politics, Andy Beshear, the affable, aw-shucks governor, is best known around the state for showing up.

Everywhere.

He hosted nightly ''Andy Hour'' broadcasts for months during the pandemic. He met with families and held daily briefings after tornadoes tore through western Kentucky and flooding drowned eastern parts of the state. He's constantly cutting the ribbon on a road or a bridge or a factory.

This boundless public schedule helps explain why Mr. Beshear is one of the rarest politicians in the country: a two-term Democratic governor in a deeply red, and deeply rural, state. His singular achievement, capped by a comfortable re-election victory in 2023, has made him tantalizing to national Democrats, who are eager for a candidate who can mend the party's broken bonds with rural and ***working-class*** voters.

Now Mr. Beshear is squarely in the mix of potential running mates for Vice President Kamala Harris, who is considering several white, male Democrats who have proven their ability to attract moderate voters. He has said he received one of the first calls she made after President Biden dropped out.

Like the other contenders, Mr. Beshear is playing it coy.

''What I'm able to confirm,'' he said in an interview, a smile escaping as he evaded a series of vice-presidential questions, ''is that it's an honor to be under consideration.'' He declined to confirm whether he was being vetted or whether he had received requests for personal documents from the Harris campaign.

Working against Mr. Beshear is the fact that his party has no hope of flipping Kentucky in a presidential election. Republicans have also largely rendered him a policymaking figurehead in his state, where they hold legislative supermajorities. But plenty of Democrats believe his biography, rather than strict geography, could help the Californian at the top of the ticket.

''She would get a guy who knows how to talk to rural Americans, who knows how to reflect the most positive aspects of rural America, and therefore able to make our case to the folks in rural America who felt abandoned by the Democratic Party,'' said Mike Ward, a Democratic former representative from Kentucky.

But with his television-ready presence, trial-lawyer training and a teaspoon of Appalachian drawl, Mr. Beshear appears ready and willing to take on another role: attack dog.

'JD Vance ain't from here'

Tryouts have already begun.

Mr. Beshear, like other vice-presidential hopefuls, has been making the rounds on cable news. He has notably hit out at Senator JD Vance of Ohio, the newly minted Republican vice-presidential nominee, questioning his Appalachian street cred.

''JD Vance ain't from here,'' Mr. Beshear said this week on MSNBC, assailing the senator as an Ohio interloper. (Mr. Vance spent summers in Kentucky, according to his best-selling memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy.'')

Mr. Beshear kept it up later on CNN.

''He claims to be from eastern Kentucky, tries to write a book about it to profit off our people, and then he calls us lazy,'' he said of Mr. Vance, who has suggested that Mr. Beshear, the son of former Gov. Steve Beshear, owes his own success to nepotism. ''This makes me angry.''

The harsh words might seem surprising from a governor who often promises to put policy over party loyalties and turn down the political temperature. But for Republicans in Kentucky, it was familiar.

''He is a partisan Democrat to his core,'' said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist in Kentucky. ''He carries all of their views.''

Mr. Beshear has been outspoken on one of Democrats' strongest issues: abortion rights. During his re-election campaign, he ran a series of emotional and cutting ads attacking his opponent's anti-abortion position as extreme.

Though he speaks frequently of his Christian faith, Mr. Beshear sees no conflict with his support for abortion rights, an issue he would be expected to campaign on aggressively if Ms. Harris makes him her running mate.

''My faith doesn't prevent me from supporting that a woman should be able to make her own health-care decisions,'' he said in the interview. ''We men certainly can. And no one's tried to take that away from us.''

National ambitions

On Thursday, his weekly news conference in Frankfort, the state capital, morphed into yet another vice-presidential audition of sorts, as he unintentionally -- or perhaps quite intentionally -- pitched what he would bring to a ticket.

''You travel around Kentucky right now and you see a state where the temperature is turned down, where neighbors aren't yelling at neighbors,'' Mr. Beshear said as he responded to a question about his interactions with the vice president.

He recounted a recent event he had held with two Republican legislators announcing a new investment in rural Allen County. ''Whoever makes up this ticket, if we can get to that type of place in the United States of America, I think everyone will take a breath. I think everyone will smile a little bit more.''

Mr. Beshear's mission to broaden his political appeal beyond Kentucky began well before his recent ascension to the vice-presidential parlor game.

Soon after his 2023 victory, he formed a political action committee called In This Together, whose stated aim is to help Democrats in both battleground states and Republican strongholds. The group, however, has raised just $493,000 this year, according to the most recent campaign finance reports, and has announced only five endorsements so far.

But Mr. Beshear has hit the campaign trail for Democrats in such areas. This year, he traveled to Montana in support of Senator Jon Tester, one of this year's most endangered Democrats, who has also managed to hang on in a deep-red state.

''He was talking my language,'' said Evan Barrett, a Democratic operative from Montana who attended the fund-raising event. ''He was talking Jon Tester's language. He was talking the language of anybody successful in a business where you don't have doctrinaire control.''

The omnipresent governor

In Kentucky, Mr. Beshear's comfort zone is anywhere outside Frankfort, his uniform a shirt and jacket, no tie and rubber-soled loafers. All he needs is a government-sponsored project or windfall.

On Wednesday, that project was the Governor's School for the Arts, a summer program for high school students held this year at the University of Kentucky. The governor ricocheted around campus to congratulate graduating students and listen to some performances.

''Programs like this helped my confidence immeasurably,'' Mr. Beshear told a student choir that had just finished a rehearsal. ''To the point where now, I don't care what anybody says about me -- which I hope you all have seen!''

Few governors have been as adept at drawing federal money to their home state and showing off the rewards. Kentucky had received $8 billion in federal infrastructure money as of May, according to records from the Biden administration, including $1.6 billion for a much-needed project to rebuild a bridge connecting Cincinnati and Kentucky.

Mr. Beshear has a visual flair: As he posed with local companies to roll out a $386 million investment in broadband internet, he often brought along an oversize check.

But he was most visible during the pandemic. Like many governors, Mr. Beshear tried to reassure his state with nightly broadcasts.

''His daily briefings were like an appointment-TV event for people,'' said Joshua A. Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky.

A weak governor with a strong reputation

Despite what his public appearances project, Mr. Beshear is limited in his powers. The Kentucky Constitution ensures that the governor remains weak, and Republican supermajorities in the Legislature can override the governor's vetoes.

Mr. Beshear says this has forced him to work across the aisle and forge momentary partnerships on budget deals -- or to play hardball to pass controversial bills on issues like sports betting and medical marijuana.

While the Legislature ''said they would never pass while I was governor,'' Mr. Beshear said, he managed to pass both. ''Those took bipartisan votes.''

Republicans in Frankfort feel differently.

''He doesn't communicate with us, he doesn't talk with us, he fights against and speaks against a lot of our initiatives,'' said State Senator Damon Thayer, a Republican. ''He's vetoed over 100 of them, and we overrun them. And then he takes credit for our work when we're not in session.''

Mr. Beshear brushed off Republican criticisms.

''I have been Monday in somebody's district and they stand up and say, 'Thank you to Andy Beshear for showing up here, for bringing this money,''' he said. ''And then Wednesday, they're on the floor in Frankfort saying, 'Andy Beshear has never been in my district.'''

According to Jake Cox, a Republican operative in the state, the G.O.P.-led Legislature has overridden 107 of 127 vetoes by the governor since 2020.

These veto overrides, however, help explain Mr. Beshear's strong political standing. They allow him to defend Democratic values -- he vetoed a bill last year to restrict transgender rights -- even as Republicans in the state ultimately get what they want, leaving conservative voters with little to agitate over.

Some Democratic voters in Kentucky think Mr. Beshear could bring balance to a presidential ticket with Ms. Harris.

''I think he would bring her more into a moderate lane,'' said Stephen Smallwood, 57, of rural Menifee County, east of Lexington.

For now, Mr. Beshear professes to be focused on Kentucky, though his digs at Mr. Vance are telling.

At a roadside sandwich joint with a famous pimento cheese melt, Mr. Beshear offered up a bottle of Ale-8-One, a soft drink he described as ''insanely caffeinated ginger ale.''

''That's what we drink in Appalachia,'' he said, before taking a swipe at the lime-green soda Mr. Vance had recently signaled a softness for. ''Not Diet Mountain Dew.''

Sharon LaFraniere contributed reporting.Sharon LaFraniere contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/27/us/politics/andy-beshear-kamala-harris-vp.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/27/us/politics/andy-beshear-kamala-harris-vp.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: GOV. ANDY BESHEAR, who promised to turn down the political temperature in his state. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Left, Mr. Beshear and his wife, Britainy Beshear, at a state dinner last year at the White House. He is keen on promoting projects like the Governor's School for the Arts, right, and has a visual flair. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAMUEL CORUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2024

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[***Why Working-Class Parents Don’t Buy What D.C. Is Selling; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63KX-D681-DXY4-X3KH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1329 words

**Byline:** Patrick T. Brown

**Highlight:** In focus groups, many said work is the price of admission for eligibility for government benefits like the expanded child tax credit.

**Body**

By making an [*expanded child tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/16/upshot/child-tax-credit-spending.html) available for one year to all but the wealthiest households, the Biden administration is aiming both to strike a major blow against child poverty and to create a political constituency to guarantee the benefit’s longevity.

[*Polling*](https://washingtonmonthly.com/2021/08/04/the-expanded-child-tax-credit-isnt-selling-itself/), however, finds the child benefits have lagged in popularity. A new YouGov/American Compass poll [*found*](https://americancompass.org/essays/child-tax-credit-expansion-survey/) that only 28 percent of voters said they preferred the expanded child tax credit to be made permanent and go to “all families, regardless of whether they work to earn money.” This could be because of the credit’s slow rollout and the submerged nature of carrying out social policy through the tax code. But it could have more to do with the disconnect between policymakers in D.C. and ***working-class*** parents, particularly when it comes to family policy.

The biggest divide may be on the importance of work. For [*a new report*](https://ifstudies.org/ifs-admin/resources/ifs-workingclassreport-final.pdf), the Institute for Family Studies (a conservative think tank) and partner organizations hosted focus groups of white parents in southeastern Ohio, Black parents around Atlanta and Hispanic parents in the San Antonio area. We heard parents talk about work as a way of paying into the system, the price of admission for being eligible for government benefits like the expanded child tax credit. “Some people will be responsible with it,” said a Hispanic dad in Texas. “The other people will just live off of it.”

My ideal form of child benefit would look like the [*one*](https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2021/03/22/biden-american-rescue-plan-romney-child-tax-credit-240262) proposed by Senator Mitt Romney this year, which would streamline the tangle of tax code provisions for families into one monthly benefit. But it’s clear from talking to ***working-class*** parents that they want something more from family policy than just a check. They want to feel that their benefits were earned. If politicians want expanded child benefits to stick, they need to listen to the families that will benefit most.

For the focus groups, we recruited participants mostly without college degrees, some married, some single or cohabiting, ranging in age from their 20s to their early 50s. We talked to parents putting in the hours without expecting much in the way of a career progression, in jobs like retail clerk, HVAC installer, stay-at-home mom and part-time entrepreneur, and social worker. Our goal was to see if the proposals and framing popular in policy circles resonated with parents busy with putting bread on the table.

Our findings pour cold water on some of the left’s favored policy solutions but don’t fit comfortably with the political vision of most Republican politicians, either. ***Working-class*** parents don’t want to dramatically increase or shrink the size of government but want to improve how it works on their behalf — to make work pay, expand the options available to them and help them afford the ever-increasing cost of living.

The government has a responsibility for boosting families with a worker present, most parents said, even while admitting the frustration that long, unpredictable hours can inflict on a family. Unprompted, parents in all three groups volunteered feeling damned if they do, damned if they don’t, with take-home pay seemingly insufficient to keep up with the bills yet too high to qualify for safety-net benefits.

One Georgia working mother remembered her frustration with finding out her income was slightly too high to qualify for Head Start. Unable to afford any other child care for her then-preschool-age son, she said, “I had to lie and say I wasn’t working.” That incident colors her view of policy proposals now. Sometimes, she said, “it seems like the people who are not working seem like they’re better off, because they get all the assistance.”

Of course, those receiving government assistance would likely tell a different story about their challenges. Before the pandemic, nondisabled households with children in the bottom tenth of the income scale received an average of [*roughly $15,000*](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/226/The-Economic-Security-of-American-Households-the-Safety-Net.pdf) from safety net and social insurance programs — unlikely to be truly better off than those with steady employment.

The parents we talked to felt a tension between the obvious benefits a monthly benefit could bring but still wanting some kind of work requirement. Work made a family deserving of government support; without it, family benefits were seen as welfare. A Hispanic mom in her late 30s ticked off her monthly expenses — food, rent, car — and admitted that an extra $300 to $400 per month would be “really beneficial.” But, she added, “it could also coddle people that don’t want to work and are playing the system.”

Not all ***working-class*** parents were against the idea of a child allowance. One Atlanta mom in her 30s noted that a dichotomy of working or not working does not cover other situations, such as being unable to work because of family obligations or disability. “Regardless of whether you work or not, you should be able to get that help, that extra supplemental income for your kids,” she said. Other participants pointed out that for some moms in low-wage jobs, child care expenses can eat up what they earn.

There is [*good reason*](https://ifstudies.org/blog/building-a-unified-front-on-family-credits-) for policymakers to prefer the administrative simplicity and egalitarianism of universal benefits. One Texas mom noted a strict work requirement would leave out parents who were most in need: “Some people are working and doing their best, but they’re working at, like, McDonald’s, you know? They’re still low-income.” But among most of the ***working-class*** parents we talked to, fairness was seen not in uniformity but in more actuarial terms: If you want to receive a benefit, you have to pay into it.

We also heard parents wish government benefits would be flexible instead of one size fits all, especially when it comes to the trade-off between work and family life. Even the more self-described progressive parents tended to not want government-run child care programs, preferring vouchers or tax credits. Our participants also recognized trade-offs; most were in favor of raising the minimum wage but were quick to note the negative effects too large an increase could have on the economy.

Some parents expressed frustration with tax benefits or safety-net programs that can provide more assistance to cohabiting couples than to married ones. One participant in Georgia shared that she and her partner had chosen not to marry because marriage penalties in the tax code and the child support system would leave their household financially worse off. Another participant spoke for the group: “It’s sad that she has to choose between marrying a man she loves or losing the benefits that she has.”

***Working-class*** parents’ feelings on work and parenthood don’t comfortably fit a partisan script, frustrating the attempts of political opportunists hoping to harness their energy to advance their favored policies. Progressive agendas tend to reflect the cares of college-educated, dual-career couples in big cities. (The Biden administration’s proposed American Families Plan, for example, [*polls much stronger*](https://assets.morningconsult.com/wp-uploads/2021/05/05062006/2104156_crosstabs_POLITICO_RVs_v1_SH.pdf) among highly educated voters than those without a college degree.) Meanwhile, too many politicians on the right offer cultural red meat in lieu of a meaningful pro-family economic agenda.

These blind spots are real and endemic. They are what could undermine the political future of an expanded child tax credit. But they also point the way forward for a political movement that would devote time to open-ended discussions with parents from all walks of life and craft an agenda that responds accordingly.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Matt Chase FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2021

**End of Document**



[***17 New Books Coming in June***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4T-M101-DXY4-X1MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 30, 2024 Thursday 06:12 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 950 words

**Highlight:** A biography of Joni Mitchell, two hotly anticipated horror novels, a behind-the-scenes exposé about Donald Trump’s years on “The Apprentice” and more.

**Body**

[*Fire Exit*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Morgan Talty

In Talty’s novel, Charles — who was raised on a Penobscot reservation in Maine before being asked to leave because he wasn’t Native — reflects on his life and what he has lost in the years since his expulsion.

Tin House, June 4

[*Godwin*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Joseph O’Neill

O’Neill’s new novel is about soccer in the way his acclaimed book “Netherland” was about cricket, which is to say that it’s less about the sport itself than what it signifies in an unfair world. A restless technical writer joins a sports scout on a global search for an African soccer prodigy, whom they’ve seen only on video. The story builds into a study of greed, labor and ambition.

Pantheon, June 4

[*The Friday Afternoon Club*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Griffin Dunne

His father was the Vanity Fair journalist [*Dominick Dunne;*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/) his uncle the screenwriter [*John Gregory Dunne*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/); his uncle’s wife the essayist [*Joan Didion*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/). With this memoir, Griffin Dunne, best known as an actor and producer, becomes the latest published author in the clan, sharing stories of his family and their celebrity encounters.

Penguin Press, June 11

[*Horror Movie*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Paul Tremblay

Years after a curse — and deaths of those involved — thwarted the release of an art-house film called “Horror Movie,” Hollywood has decided it’s ripe for a remake.

Morrow, June 11

[*Margo’s Got Money Troubles*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Rufi Thorpe

Broke, adrift and pregnant — what’s a girl to do? Margo finds an extremely 21st-century solution to her financial bind: OnlyFans. But semi-pornographic internet fame is perhaps the least of the shenanigans contained within the pages of Thorpe’s comic novel.

Morrow, June 11

[*One of Our Kind*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Nicola Yoon

An established star of contemporary Y.A. (known for her book “Everything, Everything”), Yoon pivots to adult fiction with her latest — a slow-burn thriller that crosses the cinematic vectors of “Get Out” and “Stepford Wives” in a story about a young family that moves to a prosperous Black community, only to find that all is not as utopian as it seems.

Knopf, June 11

[*Traveling*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Ann Powers

This is a warts-and-all consideration of Joni Mitchell, whose comeback after a 2015 aneurysm and [*appearance at the 2024 Grammy Awards*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), have only burnished her exalted reputation in the pantheon of modern singer-songwriters.

Dey Street, June 11

[*Apprentice in Wonderland*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Ramin Setoodeh

Setoodeh, the co-editor in chief of Variety, goes deep behind the scenes at “The Apprentice,” the show that transformed Donald Trump from a bankrupt businessman and tabloid fixture into a reality TV star.

Harper, June 18

[*Little Rot*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Akwaeke Emezi

Emezi’s latest is part deep dive into Nigeria’s underworld, part exploration of love and desire. The story opens as Aima and Kalu end their relationship. Each decides to join their friends for an independent night out, but instead of helping them relax, the evening spirals, exposing both of them to a dangerous side of Lagos.

Riverhead, June 18

[*On Call*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Anthony Fauci

The unflappable doctor who led the United States through public-health maelstroms — including the AIDS epidemic and Covid-19 — traces his six-decade career. Sharing his life story, he said, may “inspire younger individuals in particular to consider careers in public health and public service.”

Viking, June 18

[*Middle of the Night*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Riley Sager

When he was 10, Ethan spent an evening camping in his yard with his best friend Billy, but when he woke up in the morning, he found that something — or someone — had violently ripped open their tent, and Billy had vanished. Thirty years later, Ethan tries to get to the bottom of what happened.

Dutton, June 18

[*Parade*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Rachel Cusk

In her new novel, Cusk presents the enigmatic lives and predicaments of several artists identified by the initial “G”: a man who becomes famous for painting his wife upside down; a painter who escapes her troubled childhood, only to wind up in a troubled marriage; a filmmaker considering the legacy of his imperious mother. Throughout the book, Cusk takes on knotty questions about art, family and selfhood.

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux, June 18

[*Same As It Ever Was*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Claire Lombardo

Lombardo’s novel takes readers to the heart of domestic drama. As her youngest child prepares to leave home, a middle-age woman looks back on the choices that landed her where she is now.

Doubleday, June 18

[*When the Clock Broke*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by John Ganz

For this account of America in the 1990s, Ganz ditches the familiar narrative about a decade of relative peace and prosperity for a disturbing tale of populists, nativists and demagogues, who, acting on the margins of U.S. politics, helped shatter the post-Cold War consensus and usher in anti-democratic forces that plague the country today.

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux, June 18

[*Bear*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Julia Phillips

Two ***working-class*** sisters struggle for happiness on a small island off the coast of Washington. Enter … an enormous bear. The author’s debut, [*“Disappearing Earth,”*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/) was a New York Times Best Book of 2019.

Hogarth, June 25

[*Cue the Sun*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/)!, by Emily Nussbaum

From “Queen for a Day” to “The Real World,” “Survivor” and “The Apprentice,” it’s all here in the [*New Yorker staff writer’s*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/) capacious look at the early history and explosive growth of reality TV — the pop-culture genre we love to hate, hate to love and just can’t quit.

Random House, June 25

[*Frostbite*](https://tinhouse.com/book/fire-exit/), by Nicola Twilley

The food and science writer travels the length of the cold chain, talking up the people who fill our shipping containers and cheese caves. She meets a frozen dumpling billionaire, explores “the largest concentrated juice-storage facility in North America” and even explains why being chilly really does encourage you to catch a cold.

Penguin Press, June 25

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

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2024

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[***After French Election, Voters Are Resigned to Cost-of-Living Crisis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CFT-94V1-JBG3-603N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 11, 2024 Thursday 21:15 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1389 words

**Byline:** Liz Alderman Liz Alderman is the chief European business correspondent, writing about economic, social and policy developments around Europe.

**Highlight:** France’s parliamentary elections were intended to bring change, but many fear the political gridlock means their struggle to pay bills will continue.

**Body**

France’s parliamentary elections were intended to bring change, but many fear the political gridlock means their struggle to pay bills will continue.

Celine Gallois is more careful these days about what she puts in her shopping basket. Prices at French supermarkets have jumped by nearly a third in the last couple of years, and two bags, filled mainly with basics including pasta, milk, meat and fruit, now cost her about 80 euros — the most she can afford to spend each week.

The cost to fill up the gas tank of her small car jumped to €90 a week from €60. And Ms. Gallois’s electricity bills, which President Emmanuel Macron’s government had capped during an energy crisis last year, shot up again last month after the subsidy ended.

All of this led her to cast a vote for Marine Le Pen’s far-right National Rally party for the first time during France’s parliamentary elections this weekend.

“People are struggling, and there seems to be no relief in sight,” said Ms. Gallois, her frustration clear as she wandered through an artisanal market in the northern French city of Beauvais with her fiancé, but refrained from buying. “The government says they’ve addressed it, but we keep falling behind.”

As the dust settles from France’s [*elections,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html) one thing has not changed: anger over a cost-of-living crisis that continues to affect households across the country.

A two-year streak of rapid inflation has left low- and middle-income French families struggling to pay for essentials like energy, gas and food, while wages, in some cases, have failed to keep pace. Polls showed that “purchasing power” was a top concern of voters, alongside immigration and security.

The problem was so acute that the major parties sought to put [*pocketbook issues*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html) out front: The National Rally, an anti-immigration party, pledged to slash energy bills. The New Popular Front, a left-wing alliance, said it would raise the minimum wage. Mr. Macron’s centrist coalition said it would increase social benefits for poor households by around €5 billion a year.

But after the election, in which no party won a majority and the French National Assembly was left in [*gridlock*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html), many citizens feared that a new government would not accomplish anything, leaving them continuing to grapple with their daily lives — and nursing their discontent.

On Sunday, those worries rippled through the local market in Beauvais, the administrative capital of the l’Oise department of northern France, which voted almost entirely for the National Rally in the elections.

In the town’s main square, dominated by a statue of Jeanne Hachette, a celebrated heroine who helped stop an invasion by the Duke of Burgundy in the 15th century, tepid sales among artisans selling goods like honey, hamburgers, jewelry and purses were a mirror of the increasing strain.

“Before, it seemed like our income allowed us to live a decent life,” said Noëlla Lamotte, who owns a small business making hand-painted lamps and decorative home furnishings. “But our electricity bills are huge, and so is food,” added Ms. Lamotte, who, with her husband, Joel, backed the far-right party. “Everyone is feeling the impact and so they’re watching what they spend.”

Even the square’s fairground attraction, anchored by an elegant carousel and a popular hook-a-duck game, was short on customers; the owner said teenagers and families with young children had been cutting back.

In France, it seems as if things should not be unfolding this way. [*Inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html) has dropped to 2.4 percent from a record high 6.3 percent annualized rate early last year. When food and fuel prices began flaring after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Mr. Macron’s government subsidized household energy bills and pressured food producers and supermarkets to slow the run-up in grocery prices.

At the same time, wages increased as workers demanded more to keep up with inflation. The government increased France’s official monthly minimum wage six times in the last two years. Salaries in the private sector, based on negotiated wage agreements, rose an average of 4 percent in 2023. And the [*Bank of France*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html) said purchasing power was improving.

But for many, those statistics do not feel real in everyday life. Despite the wage gains, “purchasing power has been eroded by high inflation,” the French bank Crédit Agricole said in a recent [*analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/08/world/europe/france-election-whats-next.html).

The feeling of precariousness is widespread.

In Bauvin, a ***working-class*** town in northwest France, Bruno Loez, 56, said the last few years had been difficult. “Two months ago, we barely had enough money to get to the end of the month,” said Mr. Loez, who has worked as a tiler since he was 17.

“We used to be able to fill our gas tank without any problem. But now we can’t afford it,” he said. “Shopping is the same: If you want a full cart, you need between €300 and €400.” He decided to vote for the National Rally after the party pledged to lower fuel bills.

In the southern town of L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, Robert Rocchi, 69, a wine shop owner, said inflation had hit people in his region badly. “For the small earners, it’s very difficult,” said Mr. Rocchi, who voted for a Socialist candidate.

At the Beauvais market, there was a sense that it would be hard to put the genie back in the bottle.

As people leaned in to taste free samples of artisanal beer at a stand called Pap’s Biere, the owner, Remi, who declined to give his last name, looked at his unsold stock. He had marked down his bottles to €3.30 euros from €4, “because no one will buy at that price.” Still, his sales were slow. And his production costs had surged 40 percent in the last two years because the cost of glass and hops remained high.

“Purchasing power is the No. 1 issue on people’s minds,” he said. “But I don’t believe any of the political parties can do much about it.”

Later in the afternoon, Claire Marais-Beuil, the National Rally candidate in Beauvais, stopped by the market to greet voters.

She had campaigned hard on cost-of-living issues, and echoed the same grievances that many voters had. Beneath that appeal was the party’s pledge to target what it said were immigrants tapping France’s welfare system, and redirect some of those benefits in favor of “hard-working” French people.

“There’s a feeling that living standards have declined dramatically,” said Ms. Marais-Beuil, who wound up beating her opponent from the center-right Les Republicans party. “People say they are fed up, and they want change.”

Ms. Gallois said her vote for the far right had been cast partly out of desperation at financial woes — and partly out of hope that the party could reverse a sense of decline. “We felt like we were middle class and that ground has been eroding,” she said. “Things just can’t keep going on this way.”

For Noémie Duhamel, 38, the owner of a sewing shop called the Magic Thread, the shake-up in French politics did not necessarily mean a change for the better. “Politicians have promised many things to get elected,” she said, tidying the custom-made toiletry bags and children’s outfits at her market stall as she waited for the occasional customer.

“But after the elections, it’s going to be more difficult because everything will be blocked,” she said. “People are still uncertain about the future.”

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Bauvin and Cassandra Vinograd from L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue.

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Bauvin and Cassandra Vinograd from L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue.

PHOTOS: “People are struggling, and there seems to be no relief in sight,” said one resident as she strolled through Beauvais, a city in northern France, above.; Léon Fersing, a worker at an amusement stand in Beauvais, noted a drop in the number of customers as people cut back on nonessential costs. (B1); An artisanal beer stand at a market in Beauvais, France, top. Tepid sales among artisans selling goods are a mirror of the increasing economic strain felt by households across the country. Center, posters for candidates in the runoff for the legislative elections where Claire Marais-Beuil of the National Rally, above center, was the narrow winner.; Celine Gallois, with her fiancé, Stéphane Marcellot, voted for the far-right National Rally party out of frustration over the high cost of living. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B6) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2024

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[***Tracing the Steady Shift Of a Political Conversion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CK5-GJW1-DXY4-X2T2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 27, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1661 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender and Chris Cameron

**Body**

A review of JD Vance's writings and interviews reveals the gradual, complicated process behind his conversion from anti-Trump author to pro-Trump senator.

Few political reversals have been as dramatic and complete as the transformation of Senator JD Vance of Ohio from a self-proclaimed Never Trumper into former President Donald J. Trump's new running mate.

Democrats have used Mr. Vance's turnabout to paint him as untrustworthy, while Republicans have described his shift as another sign of Mr. Trump's influence on the party. Whatever the case, Mr. Vance's U-turn was a gradual one that played out in stages during the past eight years.

In many ways, Mr. Vance's life has echoed the theme of change. He twice changed his name, a result of a tumultuous upbringing, and was baptized into the Catholic Church just five years ago. He has been unapologetic about his political change of heart, even weaponizing his flip-flop by blaming the news media for distorting voters' views of Mr. Trump.

''I was critical of President Trump,'' Mr. Vance said this week in Ohio. ''But he cares about human beings. He is not the caricature or the lie that the media has told you that he is.''

But a review of Mr. Vance's writings and interviews since 2016, when he first rose to fame as the author of ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' reveals a more complicated process behind his political conversion than the ''media lies'' explanation he often uses.

A fierce Trump critic during the promotion of his memoir, Mr. Vance softened during Mr. Trump's first two years in the White House. He actively began defending Mr. Trump during the second half of the president's first term, before effectively apologizing for his own rebukes during his own Senate run. By the time he was mentioned as a potential running mate, Mr. Vance ranked as one of the most combative foot soldiers in the former president's Make America Great Again movement.

Here's a look at his step-by-step conversion:

At first, he was more sympathetic to Trump voters than to Trump.

In 2015, before the publication of his memoir, Mr. Vance told his book editor in an email that Mr. Trump's rise in the Republican primary would be a lasting one. His editor, Mr. Vance said, replied that Mr. Trump would flame out as another conservative fringe candidate, but Mr. Vance pushed back.

''I said, 'No, I don't think that he is -- there's something different about this, there's something substantively different,''' Mr. Vance would later recall.

By 2016, he excoriated Mr. Trump as ''America's Hitler'' and said that he was ''noxious and is leading the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.'' And although he ultimately voted for a third-party presidential candidate in 2016, he regularly voiced an understanding of why a former reality television show host like Mr. Trump inspired so much support.

In an interview with Charlie Rose, Mr. Vance suggested that casting judgment on Trump voters would only deepen their resolve for him.

''You're playing into the very thing that gave rise to Trump in the first place,'' Mr. Vance said, ''which is a feeling that the elites think that they are smarter than you and just think you're a bunch of idiots.''

Mr. Vance, who had once worked as an aide for Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, said in 2017 that he was considering a future in politics during a podcast with David Axelrod, the director of the University of Chicago Institute of Politics and a former Democratic strategist.

Mr. Axelrod said in an interview that he had privately discussed with Mr. Vance the prospect of running for office, and that he had urged the author to consider becoming a Democrat. Mr. Axelrod recalled that Mr. Vance did not react to that advice.

''He brought up the prospect of running for office, and he was trying to figure out how and where,'' Mr. Axelrod said. ''He was thinking about the Republican Party, but was clearly troubled by the direction it was taking.''

Then he became, in a word, Trump-curious.

By 2018, Mr. Vance's sensitivity toward Trump supporters shifted into more of a personal curiosity about the president.

In an updated version of his memoir that year, Mr. Vance wrote that he was intrigued by Mr. Trump's ''disdain for the elites and criticism of foreign policy blunders in Iraq and Afghanistan'' and blamed Republicans for not adopting Mr. Trump's ''populist rhetoric'' from the campaign trail.

In a February 2018 interview with The Financial Times, Mr. Vance called Mr. Trump the ''least worrisome part of the Republican Party's problem.''

''He is one of the few political leaders in America,'' Mr. Vance said, ''that recognizes the frustration that exists in large parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, eastern Kentucky.''

During a conference with business executives that year, Mr. Vance was shaken when the head of a hotel chain complained to him that anti-immigration laws had made it more difficult to hire workers and looked to the author for sympathy.

''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,'' Mr. Vance said in an interview last month with Ross Douthat, a New York Times columnist. ''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.''

Mr. Trump's nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court in July 2018, which started a bitter partisan fight in Washington, also resonated with Mr. Vance. His wife, Usha, had clerked for Mr. Kavanaugh when he was a circuit court judge in Washington.

''Trump's popularity in the Vance household went up pretty substantially during the Kavanaugh fight,'' Mr. Vance later said.

His praise for Trump broadened.

By 2019, Mr. Vance had started appearing as a guest on Tucker Carlson's prime-time show on Fox News. The two bonded over a similar brand of economic populism, and Mr. Vance continued shifting his criticism away from Mr. Trump and instead targeting the Republican Party.

In May 2019, at the annual gala for The American Conservative, a Washington-based magazine, Mr. Vance said Mr. Trump had proved to be ''a wild success'' in transforming U.S. policy on China and by not starting a new war in the Middle East.

''He's been more of a success than I thought he would be,'' Mr. Vance said.

In 2020, his defense of Mr. Trump deepened after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

''One of the core arguments of the Trump 2016 campaign is that in our supply chains, in our manufacturing economy, we had become too dependent on a globalized world, especially China,'' Mr. Vance said on NPR in April 2020. ''It turns out that if you want to have an economy that can weather a crisis, you actually have to be able to make some core things for yourself, whether it's wireless technology, whether it's pharmaceutical products, whether it's ventilators and hospital masks.''

Mr. Vance voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, he later said. By the time he opened his Senate campaign in Ohio in July 2021, he had deleted posts on social media that were critical of Mr. Trump.

''I ask folks not to judge me based on what I said in 2016,'' he said on Fox News. ''I regret being wrong about the guy. He was a good president. I think he made a lot of good decisions for people.''

Early in his Senate run, he had a ''just suck it up'' phase.

The day after he announced his Senate bid in 2021, Mr. Vance told Time that he had understood Mr. Trump's appeal, but that he had viewed him as someone who ''was not serious and was not going to be able to really make progress on the issues I cared about.''

He added, ''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.''

Later in his Senate campaign, he tried to sand down his past criticisms, suggesting that those rebukes had been rooted more in a broader disdain for politics and that he had come to view Mr. Trump as a successful president.

''I assumed that everybody who ran was basically a scumbag so I had a certain mistrust that any politician would deliver on his promises, and Trump actually did a good job,'' he told the Vindicator newspaper in Youngstown, Ohio. ''So one of the important things is when the facts change, you change your mind. The facts to me were he actually honored his promises.''

Mr. Vance spent much of his campaign sharpening his attacks on the news media to explain away his Never-Trump past, and his praise for Mr. Trump proved effective. He won the former president's endorsement, which helped seal the party's nomination and, eventually, the general election.

Finally, he more fully embraced an ''I was wrong'' mantra.

Mr. Vance became one of Mr. Trump's fiercest defenders in the Senate, where his political pivot remained a point of fascination as he was increasingly mentioned as a potential running mate for the former president.

''He proved me wrong,'' Mr. Vance said in February 2024 during in an interview on ABC's ''This Week.'' ''He also proved a lot of other people wrong, which is why I think he's doing so well in the polls these days.''

In June, he said his opposition to the former president was focused ''on the stylistic element,'' ignoring the substance of Mr. Trump's policy proposals. In his interview with Mr. Douthat, Mr. Vance said that he had been ''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.''

Mr. Vance suggested that the process of becoming a Trump supporter was a piecemeal one, and he paused as he seemed to struggle to put it into words.

''This is why I say it's hard to reconstruct this stuff,'' he said, ''it's so gradual.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/us/politics/vance-political-conversion.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/26/us/politics/vance-political-conversion.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A12.

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[***Bill Beard Was a Good Man. Then He Committed a Terrible Crime.; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B4W-XSJ1-JBG3-600P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2868 words

**Highlight:** When we let so many Americans fall behind, they not only suffer greatly but also inflict great suffering on others.

**Body**

My old pal Bill Beard was as complicated as America, as creative, as loving and sometimes as troubled.

As I sat by Bill’s deathbed recently, we reminisced about searching in the woods as boys for Bigfoot. (It’s just as well, we decided, that we never caught one.) We spoke of long-ago crushes, of his prison time, of his love for his wife. Gingerly, we discussed the young woman he had brutalized.

When we were boys, Bill tried to teach me how to fix cars; he wasn’t so successful at that. But with the bumpy course of his life, he taught me how Americans can better support those left behind.

I’m not sure Bill would have much patience for the way I’m telling his story, though. He didn’t make excuses. “I made bad choices,” he told me. “A lot of them.”

But I think there’s more to it than that, as I contemplate a very decent man who did very bad things. And in his story there are perhaps larger lessons that can help us prevent other young people from following his path. So, Bill, if you’re looking down at me, rolling your eyes, just hear me out.

Walter William Beard, or Billy, as he was then, grew up down the road from me, on a farm near Yamhill, Ore. I hung out with him partly because he lived a more interesting life than I did. Most of us waited to drive until we were 15 and could get a permit, but Billy began to chauffeur his grandmother around at the age of 10, even on highways. The police never caught him, and I burned with jealousy.

But there was a lonely, traumatized Bill, too. His parents separated when he was a baby, and his mom abandoned him when he was a year and a half old, leaving him toddling outside the house wearing only a diaper. His dad and various relatives then juggled him, so he lived in seven different houses in his first five years.

He stopped going to high school, and by the time anyone noticed and he returned, he didn’t have enough credits to graduate. Our high school handed him a diploma anyway, even though he didn’t have the skills to compete in the job market, because it wanted to be done with him.

Well-paying union jobs in sawmills and factories were disappearing, and drugs were moving into communities like ours. Bill couldn’t find a solid job or a sense of purpose, and he self-medicated. He began to steal and sell drugs to pay for his habit. He seemed lost and became reckless. Then, one time when he was with a girlfriend on the Oregon coast in 1986, in the tourist town of Lincoln City, he did something so terrible that I still can’t square it with the buddy I admired.

It was evening at a Circle K convenience store, and Betty Gerhardt, 23, was working alone at the register. Bill walked in and asked for some bacon, so she walked over to the cooler and turned her back on him.

“He grabbed me and pushed me into the back room,” she recalled, and he hit her over the head with a jar of honey, knocking her to the ground. “He went for my pants. And when he did that, I started fighting.”

Bill pulled her pants and underwear down to her ankles, she said. Fearing she was going to be raped, she struggled back furiously, even as Bill grabbed empty bottles stacked nearby and smashed them over her head and body. The glass cut her badly — she had scars on her forehead and arm from the attack — and he left her bloody and unconscious on the floor.

After failing to break into the cash register, Bill walked out of the store and drove off with his girlfriend. Gerhardt awoke and called 911, and an ambulance rushed her to a hospital, where she remained for three days. The police promptly caught Bill, still covered in Gerhardt’s blood.

Deeply ashamed of what he had done, Bill always claimed to me that he had been so high on meth, cocaine and alcohol that he was in “a stupor,” as he put it. “I blacked out,” he told me.

It could have been even worse. “I got lucky because I had a gun in the car, and I always carried it,” Bill told me. But that time he left it behind; we both were silent as we pondered what he might have done if he had been armed.

For Gerhardt, the assault was devastating: She quit the job and was never again able to work with money for fear of being robbed. For decades, she was terrified of being alone in the dark. Even years later, when she worked a shift that ended in the wee hours, her father would wake himself up every night to drive to her workplace and then escort her back to her home. (Gerhardt died in November of a brain infection, at age 61, after we had spoken.)

A judge sentenced Bill to 20 years in prison.

“That was one of the hardest things to go through,” Sue Buchholz, his stepmother, who raised him for most of his boyhood, told me. “His dad and I could never understand it.” Bill’s dad, a truck driver and a stern believer in law and order, was shattered that his son could have committed such a monstrous crime; Buchholz thinks that’s one reason Bill’s father’s heart began to fail, leading to his death at the age of 58.

Frankly, in writing this essay, I worry that sharing details of this crime will leave the impression that this horrific action represented all of who Bill was. He had another side full of humor, warmth and eagerness to help others. Forgive me, Bill — for nobody should be remembered for the worst thing he ever did.

I also fear that some readers may believe that I’m minimizing a brutal assault, or will be perplexed that I remained friends with a violent drug dealer who in many ways destroyed a young woman’s life. I make no excuses for Bill or his actions. But one thing I’ve learned in a lifetime of reporting is that humans contain multitudes, and in this case I hope we might learn from Bill’s troubled journey how trauma self-replicates: When we let so many Americans fall behind, they not only suffer greatly but also inflict great suffering on others.

Bill Beard never lived up to his rich potential. He hurt. And he hurt others. For those struggling in America, pain can be transitive.

When Betty Friedan called attention in the 1960s to the lack of women’s rights, she described it as “the problem that has no name.” In a similar way, there isn’t a good term for the bundle of pathologies that have afflicted ***working-class*** Americans like Bill.

My “How America Heals” series has explored how to overcome these afflictions, which include stagnant incomes, addiction, homelessness, suicide, chronic pain, loneliness and early death. We still don’t fully understand how they are correlated or why most of them affect men more than women. I do believe that, as with Friedan’s probing of gender inequity, our explorations of these problems will help us chip away at them. That’s the reason for this series: A nation cannot thrive when so many have been left behind.

One gauge of how many Americans are struggling is that average weekly nonsupervisory wages, a metric for blue-collar earnings, were lower in the first half of 2023 than they had been (adjusted for inflation) in the first half of 1969. That’s not a misprint.

Another: If the federal minimum wage of 1968 had kept pace with inflation and productivity, it would now be more than $25 an hour. Instead, it’s stuck at $7.25.

The Princeton economists [*Anne Case and Angus Deaton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/opinion/life-expectancy-college-degree.html) popularized the term “deaths of despair” for the tumbling life expectancy among ***working-class*** Americans since 2010, but the tragedy goes far beyond the staggering mortality. For each person who dies from drugs, alcohol and suicide, many others are mired in addiction and heap pain on their families. Gerhardt told me that she had been addicted to heroin for years, underscoring how widespread this malady is: Perpetrator and victim shared a parallel suffering, and both died before the age of 65.

The challenges are particularly acute for Black and Native American men. Native American males have a life expectancy of only 61.5 years, shorter than men in India, Egypt and Venezuela. And the median wage of Black men in 2020 was only 55 percent of that of white men, a smaller share than it had been in the late 1960s.

The burden of the inequities, for people of all races, is compounded for America’s less educated — like Bill.

“Capitalism in America today is not working for the two-thirds of adults who do not have a B.A.,” Professor Deaton said in [*a lecture*](https://deaton.scholar.princeton.edu/sites/g/files/toruqf3726/files/documents/Nexus%20Lecture%20with%20figures%20%28002%29.pdf) in Amsterdam. When a Nobel Prize-winning economist warns that capitalism is failing most Americans, it’s worth paying attention. That failure has been etched into the lives of people like Bill Beard and Betty Gerhardt.

Despite his 20-year sentence, Bill was released after less than five years, apparently because he behaved well in prison and because friends of Gerhardt who were also inmates were beating him up. He then worked at a plastics factory and quickly became indispensable, the man who could get any piece of machinery to work. More important, he met Elizabeth, a fellow employee.

Bill had two ex-wives with whom he had three children, and neither he nor Elizabeth was looking for a partner. But a year later they married.

“My world changed again,” he told me.

“He’s kind, he’s loving, he’s honorable,” Elizabeth said about Bill. “He would do anything for anyone.”

Elizabeth disapproved of drugs, and Bill’s drug use subsided. He started a taxi company driving people to Oregon wineries, and this grew into a successful wine tour business. The way Bill thrived when he was an entrepreneur married to Elizabeth underscored his talent, and also how much potential had been squandered earlier in his life.

He and Elizabeth lived in a trailer with a sign posted beside the driveway: “We Support Law Enforcement.” I teased Bill about that, wondering aloud what the police officers who arrested him would have thought. But he meant it. Like many ***working-class*** white Americans, he was also sympathetic to Donald Trump, although he added that he’d never voted in his life. Bill thought politicians were corrupt, condescending, out-of-touch elitists who didn’t care about people like him, but he felt Trump spoke to him in a way that many politicians did not.

Bill could be prone to conspiracy theories. During the coronavirus pandemic, he asked me if Covid-19 was real. I told him it was and encouraged him to get vaccinated. “I never get vaccinated for anything,” he told me.

After years of rough living, Bill developed health problems and suffered three heart attacks. Then, when he felt abdominal pain a couple of years ago, he found it difficult to locate a specialist willing to accept his insurance. Finally, when the pain became unbearable, he went to the emergency room — and was diagnosed with late-stage rectal cancer.

He and I had discussed for several years the possibility of my writing about him, and he was happy to oblige. We kept putting it off, and he was terminally ill and in pain when I last interviewed him — but still in characteristic good spirits.

We spoke of old friends who had died from overdoses or been tormented by addictions. One mutual friend who abused fentanyl was homeless. So I asked Bill if he regretted having sold drugs.

“I don’t feel like I have regrets for their addiction,” he said. “I did what I did to make the money.”

That answer surprised me because Bill tended to be softhearted. But he also had a strong belief in personal responsibility.

“As long as you have the mental capacity to know right from wrong, it’s your own damn fault” if you get into trouble, he said. “You can’t blame anyone else. It’s ludicrous. Who is there to blame?”

I pushed back. Didn’t the addiction crisis have something to do with larger forces like lost jobs, declining earning power and failed education and mental health policies?

Yes, he acknowledged that there was something to that, but he wouldn’t budge from his embrace of 100 percent personal responsibility, including when it came to his assault on Betty Gerhardt. “I was high; I was angry,” he said, about his mental state at the time. “Nobody else made me do it. How can you blame anybody else?”

While I admire Bill’s acceptance of responsibility, it’s also true that none of this unfolded in a vacuum. He made appalling decisions — but why was it that tens of millions of Americans were suddenly making bad decisions?

The previous generation of ***working-class*** Americans had thrived with a booming economy, rising education levels and union jobs. But in blue-collar neighborhoods, the generation that Bill and I belonged to imploded. Among our close neighbors where we grew up, two other boys were later convicted of raping young girls in separate incidents, another was convicted of armed robbery, a girl was convicted of attempted murder and a boy set someone on fire in a drug deal gone wrong.

I’ve struggled to process all this in a community that I love, but I don’t believe this was a spontaneous collapse of morals. Nor do I think it can be separated from the context: a poorly educated work force that had few options when good blue-collar jobs went away; the proliferation of hard drugs and a lack of treatment programs; and an atomization of society following the unraveling of the social fabric and the collapse of churches, clubs and other local institutions.

The no-excuses personal responsibility narrative has been absorbed by many ***working-class*** Americans, and it can be highly motivating; it’s often a pillar of efforts to overcome addiction. Yet this narrative can also be dispiriting when people fall short of their aspirations, amplifying their sense that they are hopeless screw-ups — and that in turn can mean one more reason to reach for narcotics to numb the pain.

I wonder: What killed my buddy Bill Beard? In one sense, he killed himself by making bad choices. That’s what he would say. Yet as long as we’re talking about responsibility, shouldn’t we also be having a conversation about our collective responsibility for the squeeze on ***working-class*** Americans that made dumb moves more likely?

So what are the solutions to this kind of tragedy?

Private-sector unions have a good record of improving blue-collar earnings and can provide a sense of belonging and purpose. Job-training programs like [*Per Scholas*](https://kristofimpact.org/perscholas/?utm_source=nyt&amp;utm_medium=column&amp;utm_content=nick_ps&amp;utm_campaign=hip23) (one of the nonprofits I recommended in my [*2023 gift guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/18/opinion/holiday-giving-gift-guide.html)) have an outstanding record of turning low-income workers into productive tech-sector employees. Early childhood programs put children from troubled homes on a path to success. Drug treatment and mental health programs can turn lives around; it should be a national scandal that only about [*6 percent*](https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/01/04/samhsa-announces-national-survey-drug-use-health-results-detailing-mental-illness-substance-use-levels-2021.html) of those with substance use disorder get treatment.

John Collins, a retired judge who thinks he faced Bill in his court decades ago, believes that mentoring makes a big difference. He supports [*Friends of the Children*](https://friendsofthechildren.org/), which provides paid counselors for struggling children beginning in kindergarten that stay with them through high school graduation.

Another mentoring program, Big Brothers Big Sisters, has an excellent record of opening doors for needy boys and girls. Yet it has a long waiting list of boys who want a mentor but can’t get one.

Adults also benefit from mentoring. Just 10 miles from where Bill and I grew up is [*Blanchet Farm*](https://blanchethouse.org/blanchet-farm-residential-recovery-program/), a nonprofit that offers people who have wrestled with addiction and homelessness a chance to get sober and start over.

It’s now run by Ross Sears, who understands well the human capacity to screw up: He was an alcoholic by the time he turned 21. Relationships and marriages fell apart, and he floundered. “There were no good jobs,” he said. “It was brutal.”

In Sears’s case, his route out of life’s quagmires came when he eventually found a spot at Blanchet Farm. “I started working with the pigs,” Sears recalled. “A little bit of humility, but it’s honest.”

It helped that he was stuck in the countryside, without any access to alcohol, and that it was a long program where most people stay six months or more. It also gives people job skills, such as carpentry and cooking, so they can earn money when they leave.

I think wistfully of Bill. If he had had the chance to have a Big Brother or another mentor, or if he could have spent time at Blanchet Farm when he was a young man, perhaps his life would have taken a different course and Gerhardt would have been spared her nightmare.

Bill died one night in October at the age of 64. It may be too late to help him, but across America, millions of others are now teetering.

We as a nation have the tools to help kids like Billy — not perfectly, but perhaps enough to make a difference for many of them.

I think back to when Billy was a cheerful, hopeful child traipsing through the woods with me as we searched for Bigfoot, back when he was struggling in school, and I think: How could grown-ups have let him go astray without even trying to help?

Today I see millions of American children floundering in foster care, dropping out of school and slipping into gangs, and I think once more: Where are the grown-ups?

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).

PHOTOS: Below, Bill and Elizabeth Beard at home in Yamhill, Ore., in September. Above, Bill and Elizabeth in 2017. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DRU DONOVAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ELIZABETH BEARD) (SR5-SR6) This article appeared in print on page SR5, SR6.

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[***Income Gap May Widen With Cuts By Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHF-VR41-DXY4-X09G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Ana Swanson, Andrew Duehren and Luke Broadwater

**Body**

Some Republicans want to use revenue collected from higher duties on foreign goods to finance tax cuts. Economists say such a shift could widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

When former President Donald J. Trump met with House Republicans last month, he touched on a mix of policies core to his economic agenda: cutting income taxes while also significantly raising tariffs on foreign goods.

Mr. Trump told Republicans he would ''love to raise tariffs'' and cut income taxes on Americans, potentially to zero, said Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia.

''Everyone was clapping in the room,'' Ms. Greene said. ''He said, 'If you guys are going to go vote on something today, vote to lower taxes on Americans.'''

Tariffs and tax cuts were central to Mr. Trump's economic thinking while he was in the White House. If he wins in November, he is promising a much more aggressive approach, including potentially a blanket 10 percent tariff on nearly all imports and a 60 percent tax on Chinese goods.

Mr. Trump and his supporters say that mixing tariffs with tax cuts will revitalize American businesses and manufacturing, boosting jobs and benefiting ***working-class*** Americans. And they see tariffs on foreign products as a lucrative source of revenue, one that could be used to offset a drop in tax receipts.

Some economists have a different view, saying that cutting taxes while raising tariffs could have harmful consequences by widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Companies often pass on the cost of tariffs to consumers in the form of higher prices. As a result, economists say, lower-income households would be hit hardest by tariffs since they spend a greater share of their income on goods. Income taxes tend to fall more heavily on wealthier Americans since many low-income workers do not make enough money to owe federal income taxes.

Kimberly Clausing, an economist at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, who served in the Treasury Department under President Biden, said combining tax cuts and tariffs would increase income inequality substantially and ''hurt the very voters that Trump is counting on to put him in the White House.''

The income tax ''acts to reduce income inequality in our country by asking more for those at the top,'' she said. ''A tariff is never going to achieve that.''

Robert Lighthizer, who served as Mr. Trump's chief trade negotiator and continues to advise his campaign on trade issues, contended in an interview that tariffs were neither inflationary nor regressive. To the extent that tariffs increase production and create more high-paying manufacturing jobs, he said, ''they are probably deflationary.''

Mr. Lighthizer said studies that showed that tariffs were paid by American consumers were ''fundamentally wrong,'' maintaining that tariffs are very often paid by foreign producers and importers.

He also said a tax cut could be structured to benefit middle-class Americans more. Even if you buy the argument that consumers pay for the tariffs or the tariffs are inflationary, Mr. Lighthizer said, ''you can very easily have a tax reduction for middle-class people that more than offsets the tiny increase.''

''A tax-and-tariff regime can be progressive,'' he said. ''What it will do is it will change the relationship between importers and American manufacturers. It will create jobs.''

Those in the room with Mr. Trump on Capitol Hill in June described his statement as more of an off-the-cuff remark than a firm policy proposal. Still, the idea appears to be attracting more interest in the Republican Party, where even politicians who have traditionally been skeptical of tariffs have shown signs of favoring them if the generated revenue is used to help finance further tax cuts.

Representative Thomas Massie, a Republican from Kentucky who is known as a libertarian, described Mr. Trump's proposal as vague but ''intriguing'' after the meeting last month.

Some Senate Republicans said they wanted to see more information about Mr. Trump's plans. ''I'm for increased tariffs,'' said Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri. ''Tariffs do raise revenue, so why not use the revenue to reduce taxes? I'd start with working people.''

Mr. Trump's proposal to impose tariffs on most foreign products would have been anathema to many Republicans in previous decades, when the party was more staunchly in favor of ''free but fair'' trade. Tariffs can protect American manufacturers from foreign competition and have been shown to boost U.S. factory production. But some economists argue that they do so in a costly way, relative to the number of jobs created.

The Republican Party, however, has strongly shifted toward a platform that mirrors Mr. Trump's views. In a video on his campaign website, Mr. Trump describes ''a sweeping pro-American overhaul of our tax and trade policy'' as ''the heart of my vision.'' His pick of Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio as the Republican nominee for vice president this week is another sign of the party's direction. Mr. Vance has harshly criticized Chinese trade practices and called for protecting American manufacturers from ''all of the competition.''

In a statement, Anna Kelly, a spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, said Mr. Trump had ''put America first by instituting tariffs while simultaneously keeping inflation and consumer prices low.''

''President Trump's policies brought forward a booming economy, and he will once again lower taxes, impose tariffs on foreign producers, bring jobs back to the U.S. and put America first on Day 1,'' she said.

At the core of Mr. Trump's tax agenda is extending the cuts that he enacted in 2017. Many of those -- including lower individual tax rates and a larger standard deduction -- are set to expire at the end of next year, setting up a high-stakes legislative battle in Washington. While low- and middle-income Americans benefit from the tax cuts, the gains still disproportionately accrue to the rich, according to an analysis by the Tax Policy Center, a Washington think tank that studies fiscal issues.

Republicans have largely rallied around extending the expiring provisions. Mr. Trump and some of his economic advisers are also eyeing tax cuts that go beyond the 2017 law, including lowering the 21 percent corporate tax rate and suspending the payroll taxes that businesses and employees pay to fund Social Security and Medicare.

Stephen Moore, a Trump economic adviser, is ambivalent about raising tariffs. But if the revenue collected from doing so helps pay for cutting, if not eliminating, income taxes, he said, the trade-off could be worthwhile.

''I'm not a fan of tariffs, but if it were an across-the-board revenue tariff, and you use the revenue to reduce taxes that are harmful to growth, I think it could make sense,'' he said.

Michael Stumo, the chief executive of the Coalition for a Prosperous America, which advocates for more protectionist trade policies, said the conversation about swapping some taxes for tariffs was ''pregnant with potential.''

''We saw much more intriguing and thoughtful comments based on that proposal than I've seen in the old guard before,'' he said. ''Clearly there's a tax-cut wing of substance in the Republican Party, and if you finance that with tariffs, it's a very different conversation.''

The U.S. government was largely funded by tariffs when the country was in its infancy. But starting around the time of the Civil War, the government introduced other taxes to generate more revenue for the state, said Douglas A. Irwin, an economic historian at Dartmouth College. The income tax was introduced in 1913 in part to counteract the soaring income inequality of the Gilded Age.

Charging a 10 percent tariff on most foreign goods, as Mr. Trump has suggested, could generate as much as $2.5 trillion over 10 years, according to an estimate by the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. That could help fill the fiscal hole created by extending the 2017 tax cuts, which the Congressional Budget Office projects could cost more than $4 trillion over 10 years.

But a 10 percent across-the-board tariff would not come close to replacing roughly $2 trillion in income tax the government collects annually. A study by Ms. Clausing and Maurice Obstfeld, also of the Peterson Institute, found that the maximum revenue the United States could earn from tariffs would peak at about $780 billion, less than 40 percent of what income taxes currently bring in.

It would also be likely to trigger a trade war, which could prompt Mr. Trump to once again use tariff revenue to compensate farmers and other businesses that suffer losses. In Mr. Trump's first term, his tariffs prompted retaliation from foreign governments, which put their own taxes on American exports. American farmers in particular were hit hard by retaliation, prompting the Trump administration to give them $23 billion to offset their losses.

Ms. Clausing and Mr. Obstfeld also calculated what would happen if the United States imposed enough tariffs to earn the maximum level of revenue, $780 billion, and then cut income taxes by a similar amount across all income groups. They found that the result would be a net 8.5 percent reduction in after-tax income for the lowest-earning 20 percent of Americans, compared with an 11.6 percent increase for the highest-earning 1 percent.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/trump-tax-cuts-increased-tariffs.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/trump-tax-cuts-increased-tariffs.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump and his supporters see tariffs on foreign goods as a powerful source of revenue to offset a drop in tax receipts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

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[***Away From the Confines of a Courtroom, Trump Rallies Beachside at the Jersey Shore***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0Y-3Y91-JBG3-6001-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Michael Gold Michael Gold is a political correspondent for The Times covering the campaigns of Donald J. Trump and other candidates in the 2024 presidential elections.

**Highlight:** Former President Donald J. Trump held a rally in Wildwood, N.J., on Saturday, declaring that his campaign would “officially play” in a state he has lost twice by double digits.

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump held a rally in Wildwood, N.J., on Saturday, declaring that his campaign would “officially play” in a state he has lost twice by double digits.

After a long and often tense week in his criminal trial in Manhattan, former President Donald J. Trump on Saturday took part in a time-honored ritual enjoyed by countless New Yorkers in need of a break: He went to the shore.

Sandwiched between the boardwalk and the Atlantic Ocean, Mr. Trump stood in front of tens of thousands of people at a rally on the beach in Wildwood, N.J., where he largely repeated the same criticisms of President Biden that have characterized his stump speech in recent months.

Fresh from court, Mr. Trump insisted that his case in Manhattan, on charges that he falsified business records related to a hush-money payment, was a “Biden show trial,” even though there is no evidence to suggest that Mr. Biden has been involved in the case.

Mr. Trump railed against pro-Palestinian protests on college campuses, vowed to crack down on immigration and repeated his false claims that Democrats stole the 2020 election from him.

But if Mr. Trump’s speech largely consisted of what has become his standard fare, the setting stood out. Though New Jersey has voted for Democratic presidential candidates in every election since 1992, and Mr. Trump lost the state by double-digit margins in both 2016 and 2020, he insisted that he could win there in November.

“We’re expanding the electoral map, because we are going to officially play in the state of New Jersey,” Mr. Trump said to a packed crowd on the beach. “We’re going to win the state of New Jersey.”

Mr. Trump, who once owned casinos in Atlantic City, N.J., and who often spends summers at his golf club in Bedminster, N.J., has been publicly bullish on his chances in New Jersey for months. Political experts, and even some of his advisers, are skeptical.

Still, parts of the state are deeply conservative, including the area around Wildwood, a boardwalk town on the southern end of the Jersey Shore and a beach destination popular with ***working-class*** families. Many visitors come from Pennsylvania, a battleground state that backed Mr. Trump in 2016 but swung to Mr. Biden in 2020.

Mr. Trump’s rally, held shortly before the start of the summer season, brought hordes of people to the boardwalk, where many of the vendors who usually hawk an array of novelty items filled the front of their stores with Trump-related T-shirts and hats. Supporters stretched out on blankets and dabbed on sunscreen hours ahead of Mr. Trump’s arrival.

Against the backdrop of classic Americana, Mr. Trump repeated his typical criticism that Mr. Biden’s economic policies were hurting the middle class. With an amusement park operating rides in the background, he insisted that only he could preserve the summer shore tradition.

“The choice for New Jersey and Pennsylvania is simple,” Mr. Trump said, telling supporters to vote for him if they wanted “lower costs, higher income and more weekends down at the shore.” (The area’s locals usually say “down the shore,” but judging by the cheers of the crowd, the point was well received.)

The rally was a stark contrast to the scene at the Manhattan courthouse, where proceedings are more sober and Mr. Trump’s comments are limited to remarks to reporters before he enters and leaves the courtroom.

At his rally, Mr. Trump largely built on statements he has made in those limited appearances. He once again criticized Mr. Biden for warning Israel that he would not supply the country with weapons if it launched a major ground offensive, and he made his most explicit approval yet of Israel’s military strategy.

“I support Israel’s right to win its war on terror,” he told the crowd. “Is that OK? I don’t know. I don’t know if that’s good or bad politically. I don’t care.”

The rally in New Jersey was only Mr. Trump’s third since his trial began last month. Last week, he held back-to-back events in Wisconsin and Michigan, two battleground states expected to be more critical than New Jersey in the November election.

Mr. Trump, who is bound by a gag order in the case that keeps him from commenting on witnesses and jurors, limited his criticism of the case on Saturday. The judge in the case has found him in contempt, fining him $10,000 for violating the order and warning of possible jail time.

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump during a campaign rally in Wildwood, N.J., on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Thursday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH7-D621-JBG3-6020-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2024 Thursday 00:29 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1532 words

**Byline:** Natasha Frost Natasha Frost writes The Times&amp;#8217;s weekday newsletter The Europe Morning Briefing and reports on Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. She is based in Melbourne, Australia.

**Highlight:** Here’s what you need to know.

**Body**

President Biden tests positive for Covid-19.

Biden’s still in but ‘willing to listen,’ Democrats say

President Biden has become more receptive in the last several days to hearing arguments about [*why he should drop his re-election bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), Democrats said, after Senator Chuck Schumer and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the party’s top leaders in Congress, privately told him they were deeply concerned about his prospects.

The president [*tested positive for Covid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) yesterday, according to the White House, forcing him to cancel an event in Las Vegas and most likely sidelining him for days. A spokeswoman said he was “experiencing mild symptoms” and would “carry out the full duties of the office while in isolation.”

Three weeks after Biden’s disastrous debate performance, allies and supporters continue to press him to quit the race, saying he has little chance to defeat Donald Trump in November. Democratic Party leaders agreed to delay the start of Biden’s nomination by a week, prolonging the debate over the viability of his candidacy.

Quotable: One person close to the president said he was “willing to listen” to the case for dropping out but had no plans to abandon his campaign.

A growing rebellion: Nearly two-thirds of Democratic voters [*want Biden to quit the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), according to a recent survey. And Congressional Democrats have warned that his sagging prospects will make it much harder for them to win critical House and Senate races in November.

Biden’s mind-set: What would cause the president to drop out of the race? He has offered [*a list of scenarios*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) — which has recently grown.

New details emerge about Trump’s would-be assassin

In a private call, F.B.I. officials told members of Congress that the gunman who tried to kill Donald Trump [*had searched for images of Trump and President Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), as well as for the dates of Trump appearances and the Democratic National Convention. Yet the bureau has found no indication that he had strong partisan political views, based on their analysis of two phones that were among his possessions. [*Read our analysis of how the gunman slipped past the police*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

The director of the Secret Service, Kimberly Cheatle, will face sharp scrutiny next week over the assassination attempt. She is scheduled to appear before two congressional committees that are examining the shooting, and inquiries by law enforcement departments, Congress and federal agencies are also underway.

Representative Ronny Jackson, Republican of Texas, who was Trump’s White House doctor, [*described the former president’s injuries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html). “The bullet took a little bit off the top of his ear in an area that, just by nature, bleeds like crazy,” he said. “The dressing’s bulked up a bit because you need a bit of absorbent. You don’t want to be walking around with bloody gauze on his ear.”

At the Republican National Convention: In a prime-time speech, Donald Trump’s running mate, Senator J.D. Vance, accepted their party’s nomination for vice president and connected his difficult upbringing to challenges confronting the American ***working class***. [*Read highlights from the speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

The Upshot: Times reporters asked 65 convention attendees [*six questions about their political views*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

Britain’s new government lays out its priorities

King Charles III [*formally opened Britain’s Parliament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) yesterday, presenting the new Labour government’s center-left legislative agenda, which includes efforts to curb climate change and cultivate closer ties with the E.U.

The new government plans to create two new public companies, Great British Energy, which would invest in clean-energy projects across the country, and Great British Railways, which would put Britain’s private rail companies back into public ownership. And it will no longer exempt private schools from paying value-added tax, using the revenue raised from that to hire 6,500 teachers for public schools.

Poker face: Nothing in the king’s demeanor suggested that he was any more enthusiastic about this year’s agenda than he was about last year’s, even though this one aligns more closely with his stated interests. That’s the product of a lifetime of studied political neutrality, Mark Landler, our London bureau chief, writes.

MORE TOP NEWS

* New Zealand: A [*carcass of the world’s rarest whale*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) — so elusive that the species has never been documented alive — washed up on a South Island beach.

1. Thailand: Investigators in Bangkok [*found traces of cyanide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) in a luxury hotel room where six people died.
2. Hong Kong: A Wall Street Journal reporter said [*she was fired*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) for leading a journalists’ union that had been criticized by Hong Kong’s pro-Beijing leaders.
3. Taiwan: In an interview, Trump said [*Taiwan should pay the U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) for defending it from China.
4. ISIS: The number of attacks claimed by the group in Iraq and Syria this year is [*on track to double last year’s total*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), the U.S. military said.
5. Science: A major study found that frequent moves in childhood had a bigger effect on [*the risk of depression in adulthood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) than poverty did.
6. Coronavirus: New research suggests that [*vaccines significantly reduce*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) the risk of developing long Covid among those who are infected.
7. Emmys: The FX series “Shogun” [*dominated the awards race with 25 nominations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), and “The Bear” [*notched 23*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), the most in a single year for a comedy.

News From Europe

* E.U.: A court reprimanded the European Commission for [*refusing to disclose the terms of its contracts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) to purchase Covid-19 vaccines during the pandemic.

1. Ukraine: The country’s war-ravaged energy grid is contending with another threat: [*a sizzling heat wave*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).
2. Italy: The renaming of [*Milan’s airport to honor Silvio Berlusconi*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) has prompted protests from left-leaning lawmakers, a barrage of memes and an online petition.

* France: The last-minute surge of voting against the far right was driven in part by collective memory of the Vichy government’s [*collaboration with the Nazis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

1. Paris: The city’s mayor [*swam in the cleaned-up Seine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) and fulfilled a promise that has become a symbol of the Paris Olympics.
2. Romania: Lawmakers [*voted to double the number of brown bears that hunters can kill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), after a wild bear attack led to the death of a hiker last week.

SPORTS NEWS

* Copa América: The French Football Federation [*plans to file a legal complaint*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) over an “unacceptable, racist and discriminatory” chant sung by Argentina’s soccer team after it won the championship.

1. Golf: Here’s a [*guide to the British Open*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), where [*short holes can befuddle golfers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html). Brian Harman [*reflected on his victory last year in an interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).
2. Wimbledon: The Athletic picked the players, matches and [*moments that made this year’s tournament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).
3. Cycling: At the Tour de France, Tadej Pogacar is [*closing in on his third victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

MORNING READ

Tired of predictable travel experiences, the writer Ben Buckland set out to walk across Switzerland without a smartphone or a planned route. Instead, over 12 days, he relied on maps hand-drawn by people he met along the way. [*Read more about his journey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

Lives lived: Winston, a silverback gorilla at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park whose 451-pound frame concealed a tender personality, [*has died at 52*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

CONVERSATION STARTERS

* Tips for a happy life: [*Dr. Ruth’s best advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) on sex, relationships and how to approach delicate subjects.

1. Ancient treasure: The National Museum of Ireland [*received two copper Bronze Age ax heads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) in a porridge box. Now it needs to figure out who sent them.
2. Farewell, Childish Gambino: Donald Glover [*plans to retire his rap alter ego for good*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) after the release of his sixth album, “Bando Stone &amp; the New World.”
3. Dressing the ultrarich: How [*stylists developed looks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) for family members at the wedding of [*Anant Ambani*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), the youngest son of India’s richest man.

ARTS AND IDEAS

The best croissant

In the competitive and often absurd era of [*extreme croissants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), elite pâtissiers around the world are stuffing the pastries with exotic fillings, sculpting them into modish forms and decorating them with fragrant ganache.

But the best croissant, our food critic Tejal Rao [*writes in this appraisal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html), has none of these fripperies — just a crisp outside, housing a tender, bubbled interior. A first bite wafts warm, butter-scented air into the face of the eater, she says.

The plain croissant may not be made for the camera. But its simultaneous crispness and softness has a special magic, Tejal writes: “The way it can embody such a mind-boggling extent of textures within just a few bites, from the dark, crackling crisp of its edge, to the pale, weightless puff of its honeycomb.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cook: [*Bake eggs in a tomato sauce*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) that’s scented with cardamom and garam masala.

Consider: Here’s how to [*weigh artificial sweeteners against sugar*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

Read: A new telling of [*Alexander the Great’s final years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) shows what happened when dreams of conquest met reality.

Streamline: Pack for a three-day trip [*with a single “personal item” bag*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

Play the [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html). And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html) and [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

That’s it for today’s briefing. See you tomorrow. — Natasha

Reach Natasha and the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/17/us/politics/dnc-biden-nomination.html).

PHOTO: President Biden’s third bout with Covid sidelined him as he was trying to re-energize his campaign in Nevada. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Eric Lee/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2024

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[***10 Senate Races to Watch in 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNT-CTN1-JBG3-600J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 30, 2024 Saturday 14:16 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1470 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:** With Democrats holding a one-seat majority and defending seats from Maryland to Arizona, control of the Senate could easily flip to the G.O.P.

**Body**

With Democrats holding a one-seat majority and defending seats from Maryland to Arizona, control of the Senate could easily flip to the G.O.P.

The fight for Senate control is playing out almost entirely in Democratically held seats this year as Vice President Kamala Harris’s party defends a slim 51-49 seat majority.

The retirement of Senator Joe Manchin III, a Democrat, in deep-red West Virginia has all but ceded one seat to the Republicans, who are targeting a number of vulnerable Democratic incumbents in red or swing states. And if former President Donald J. Trump wins the White House, one seat is all the G.O.P. needs to flip the chamber. Should the Senate come down to a 50-50 split, the vice president plays tiebreaker.

For Democrats to hold the Senate, the party would most likely need all their incumbents to win; for their candidates to prevail in open seats in Arizona, Michigan and Maryland; and for Ms. Harris to be elected so that her running mate, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, can play the tiebreaker in an evenly split chamber.

The party is targeting two Republican-held seats, but those are considered more difficult terrain.

Here are the Senate races to watch in 2024.

Montana: Farmer vs. former Navy SEAL

Senator Jon Tester, the flat-topped farmer from Big Sandy, Mont., has defied the odds before in his increasingly Republican state, but his Senate victories in 2006, 2012 and 2018 all came in strong Democratic years nationally. His fight for a fourth term will be considerably tougher in a state that Mr. Trump won by 16 percentage points in 2020. The Republican Party’s candidate, Tim Sheehy, is a decorated former Navy SEAL and businessman with the wealth to self-finance his campaign, as well as Mr. Trump’s backing.

Mr. Tester has the power of incumbency, and the authenticity of a third-generation Montanan. In 2012, President Barack Obama received 41.7 percent of the vote. Mr. Tester earned 48.6 percent. He may need even more ticket-splitters — people who will vote for Mr. Trump for president and him for Senate — this November.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Leaning toward Republicans*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Ohio: Sherrod Brown faces the fight of his political life

Besides Mr. Tester, [*Senator Sherrod Brown*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings) is the only other Democrat defending a seat in a solidly Republican state. He too has had the advantage of winning in strong Democratic years — 2006, 2012 and 2018 — and like Mr. Tester, he has established an image as a stalwart supporter of the ***working-class*** voters who will decide the election. As a powerful member of the Senate — he is the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee — Mr. Brown has amassed a considerable war chest for his re-election campaign.

Unlike Mr. Tester, he will be running against a Republican who was not the Ohio G.O.P. establishment’s choice. Bernie Moreno, instead, was the candidate of Mr. Trump. The [*Republican’s sizable fortune*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings) will seed fund-raising and undergird his campaign against the incumbent, but Democrats boosted Mr. Moreno’s candidacy during the primary because they believe his business background will make him vulnerable to attack.

Cook Political Report rating: [*A toss-up*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Arizona: Kari Lake, a prominent election denier, tries again

The retirement of Senator Kyrsten Sinema, the Democrat-turned-independent iconoclast, has set up a stark Senate race between Representative Ruben Gallego, a progressive, and Kari Lake, a former television news anchor and a favorite of Mr. Trump’s Make America Great Again movement who lost her race for governor in 2022.

President Biden narrowly won Arizona in 2020, and unlike Ohio and Montana, the state promises to be a presidential battleground, potentially warping the Senate race. Ms. Lake made a name for herself by falsely claiming that Democrats stole the Arizona election for Mr. Biden in 2020, then falsely claiming that her Democratic opponent in the governor’s race, Katie Hobbs, stole her election. Mr. Gallego is less well-known outside of his Phoenix House district, but as a Latino with a Harvard pedigree and combat experience in Iraq with the Marine Corps, he has a compelling biography.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Leaning toward Democrats*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Michigan: Trump looms large

The fight is on for the seat of Senator Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat who is retiring. Mike Rogers, the mainstream Republican who said the party needed to move on from Mr. Trump, then wooed and won Mr. Trump’s endorsement for Senate and embraced him, faces Representative Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat who has used her national security credentials to win over swing voters in Central Michigan since 2018.

Her trick will be to keep those centrist voters and energize more liberal voters in and around Detroit. And looming above it all is the presidential contest.

Cook Political Report rating: [*A toss-up*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Nevada: Low-key incumbent vs. political newcomer

In recent years, Nevada Democrats have profited off Republican voters’ penchant for nominating candidates from the G.O.P.’s extremes, but this year, party leaders rallied around Sam Brown, a political neophyte with an extraordinary story. The West Point graduate nearly died in Kandahar, Afghanistan, when a roadside bomb burned him badly and left him permanently scarred. His thin political résumé could be a plus, since it will make him difficult to label.

Senator Jacky Rosen, the incumbent Democrat, isn’t flashy, but the power of incumbency matters.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Leaning toward Democrats*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Wisconsin: A wealthy Republican candidate faces questions over his ties to the state

Senator Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat, has been a low-key fixture in Wisconsin politics since her election to the State Assembly in 1992. With her comes little drama, but Wisconsin, a state that just re-elected its famously quiet governor, Tony Evers, in 2022, seems to like Democrats who speak softly.

Republicans have nominated Eric Hovde, a banker and businessman who, if nothing else, can finance his own campaign. But his connections to Southern California in a state full of Badger pride have helped keep this race leaning toward the incumbent.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Leaning toward Democrats*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Pennsylvania: David McCormick tries again

The Keystone State may be a key battleground in the presidential election this year, but Senator Bob Casey, the Democratic incumbent, is an institution. His Republican opponent is David McCormick, the former chief executive of Bridgewater Associates, one of the largest hedge funds in the world. Mr. McCormick lost the Republican Senate primary in 2022 to Mehmet Oz, and the lines of attack honed two years ago on his wealth and [*his mansion in Connecticut*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings) are sure to be recycled.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Leaning toward Democrats*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Maryland: Larry Hogan makes things interesting

Reliably blue Maryland should not be in play, but Larry Hogan, the moderate former Republican governor, has decided to run for the Senate seat of Ben Cardin, the retiring Democrat, making the race one to watch.

Democrats nominated Angela Alsobrooks, the Prince George’s County executive who is a former state’s attorney.

Cook Political Report rating: [*Likely Democratic*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Texas and Florida: Democrats try to flip seats in reliably red states

Democrats have only two races to play offense in: Senator Ted Cruz’s campaign in Texas and Senator Rick Scott’s in Florida. Both men have never been personally popular in their states, but those states have been reliably Republican of late. Democrats like their candidates, Representative Colin Allred in Texas and former Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell in Florida, but it would most likely take severe erosion of Mr. Trump’s support to put those Senate seats in play.

Cook Political Report ratings: [*Likely Republican*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

Bonus races to watch: Long shots

Utah is nobody’s idea of a swing state, but one Democrat made waves with a [*unique announcement video*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings): Caroline Gleich, a professional ski mountaineer. But the favorite for the seat of retiring Senator Mitt Romney is the Republican nominee, Representative John Curtis.

Nebraska is almost as red as Utah, with an incumbent Republican, Deb Fischer, running for re-election. Her main opponent is not a Democrat but an independent, [*Dan Osborn, who led a strike at the Kellogg’s plant in Omaha*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings) in 2021 and is testing whether his pro-labor, ***working-class*** message can resonate at a time when the union movement is resurgent.

Cook Political Report ratings: [*Solidly Republican*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings)

PHOTOS: Senator Jon Tester, a Montana Democrat, is facing a tough fight for a fourth term in a state that has turned reliably Republican. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Tim Sheehy, the Republican Party’s selected candidate to challenge Mr. Tester, has the wealth to self-finance his campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL LEATHE/BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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[***The Thread***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX1-2X51-JBG3-638M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 728 words

**Body**

Readers respond to the 4.14.24 issue.

RE: KHRUANGBIN Ryan Bradley wrote about the popular band from Texas.

Our college-age kids turned us on to Khruangbin a few years ago because they were obsessed. Now, Mom and Dad are obsessed! Their music spans generations and is the ultimate in chill. We're hoping to see them in concert someday! Jenny

I discovered Khruangbin some time ago. I'm 71 now and I love their sound: so new, fresh, yet so familiar. I always loved soul music as a kid, so Khruangbin just fit right in. I find myself swaying a bit when I listen to them -- they take me to melancholy and bring me back again from the distance. Cabbar Komek, New Jersey

This article is a stunning piece of music journalism. A quest to find the magic behind a band with an unmatchable vibe seems quixotic, but the layers that were gently revealed and deeply explored added up to the sum of the vibe, leaving me with a new, deeper appreciation for a band whose music I've loved for years. I hope that Khruangbin continues to find the ''space between'' and hold onto their vibe and friendship (and that barn) for many years to come. Manny K., Brooklyn, N.Y.

I feel obliged to leave a comment online and thank the author for an outstanding article. I have been listening to Khruangbin and noticed the peculiarity of their sound. Their music is on my playlists, but I never knew their name. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about their story and about how such music is made. I'm always looking for good music. Listening to ''White Gloves'' after reading the article brought me to tears. M.R. Guru

I came across Khruangbin when somehow I found ''Texas Sun'' a few years ago. It was my perfect song for a while. Thanks for this article that illuminates a lovely group of friends. Playing music with people you love is one of the highest joys in life. Christopher, Asheville, N.C.

I watched this group on PBS a while back, and the sound lingers with me to today. The guitar rift moves are soft and enlightening; the sound is both melancholy and holy; and the performers are intoxicating, rhythmic and hypnotic. Max B., California

As someone who has spent most of my adult life living and working with Thai people, I'm disappointed that in such a long article, other than stating that ''khruangbin'' is a Thai word, the band's special connection to Thailand and its music essentially went unmentioned. The influence, particularly of 1960s-70s Thai pop music, is obvious in Khruangbin's sound. I know Thais who, upon hearing Khruangbin, say it ''sounds like Thai music,'' and for the writer to ignore that borders on being culturally irresponsible, i.e., not giving credit where it's due. The members of Khruangbin seem deeply fascinated by Thai culture, particularly vintage pop culture, and that is especially obvious in their 2024 video for the song ''A Love International,'' which stars Thai actors and was largely filmed at a ***working-class*** Thai beach. The breezy ''sabai'' vibes of Thailand seem intricately woven into Khruangbin's music, sound, disposition and even stage appearance, and to ignore that really does a disservice to readers as well as to Thai people, music and culture. David, Boston

''Music now exists primarily within the stream, which is to say, passively: We turn it on, like a faucet, and out pour songs representing some mood or emotion.'' Exactly! What a great piece. I'm a little sad that I read it, though, because Khruangbin has always been so mysterious to me, and this was a bit like peeking under the wig. Love their vibe. May they never lose it. Ben H.

I happened upon Khruangbin a few years ago when they played Austin City Limits. Even on TV they were mesmerizing, superb and indelibly memorable -- and I say this as a man in his eighth decade of living who listens to nothing but country. Michel Willems, Texas

RE: SUZAN-LORI PARKS Imani Perry profiled the playwright.

One article can't possibly capture all that makes Suzan-Lori Parks extraordinary, but I have to bring up her skill with language. I saw her play ''Father Comes Home From the Wars'' several years ago, and was enraptured by the beauty of her words. She writes in easy vernacular speech so unpretentious that I had to get a copy of the play to see that, yup, it was literally poetry. Darn good plot and character too. Name Withheld

Send your thoughts to [*magazine@nytimes.com*](mailto:magazine@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/pageoneplus/27rex-1.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/pageoneplus/27rex-1.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP MONTGOMERY) This article appeared in print on page MM6.

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[***France Is on the Brink of Something Terrifying***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8F-MT11-DXY4-X2Y9-00000-00&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. 4; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1202 words

**Byline:** By Cole Stangler

**Body**

Whatever happens next, it'll go down as one of the wildest gambles in modern French history. President Emmanuel Macron's decision to dissolve the National Assembly and hold snap legislative elections on June 30 and July 7 has given the far right its best shot at governing France for the first time since the Vichy regime of World War II.

The move stunned the country's political class, including high-ranking Macronists from whom the president's plans were reportedly heavily guarded. And for much of France, the decision remains perplexing. For those with the most to lose from the far right in power -- above all, immigrants and the descendants of recent immigrants -- the news is downright terrifying. Mr. Macron, who has a habit of disregarding conventional wisdom, will surely hope the move redounds to his benefit. But make no mistake: France is in danger.

In many respects, Mr. Macron's domestic agenda was already in crisis. Since the 2022 legislative elections denied his electoral alliance a majority in the National Assembly, his coalition has been forced to seek support from other parties, namely the right-wing Republicans. At times, the government bypassed Parliament altogether. But for the bulk of its work, the administration was dependent on the Republicans' backing.

The historic triumph of Marine Le Pen's National Rally in Sunday's elections for the European Parliament -- in which her party took 31 percent of the vote, more than double that of the president's party -- threatened this arrangement. Without a dissolution of the National Assembly, the National Rally would have continued to ramp up pressure on the Republicans, aiming to woo conservative voters and punish Republican leaders for their tacit support of the president. The prospect of a lame-duck presidency would have only grown.

The new elections are an attempt to salvage Mr. Macron's second term. And he may genuinely believe voters will deliver him a fresh parliamentary majority, hoping his base of old and wealthy voters will once again show up to the polls in much greater numbers than the young and ***working-class*** voters who are less sympathetic to his presidency. Lingering animosity among various left-wing parties and a generalized fear of the far right coming to power could also play in his favor.

But there is a more cynical way of viewing Mr. Macron's wager. As France's far right continues to gain traction -- its various obsessions propelled by a newly sympathetic media landscape and, in some cases, even inspiring pieces of legislation -- it is increasingly favored to win the 2027 presidential election. Against this backdrop, Mr. Macron's tactic can also be seen as an effort to derail the National Rally's march to the Élysée Palace by, counterintuitively, forcing the party to govern.

In other words, the move could be a last-ditch bid to demystify the party's anti-establishment allure by bringing it into the messy real world of policymaking, probably as part of a wider coalition. Under this theory, even the prospects of the National Rally securing an absolute majority and naming a prime minister of its own can be seen as a kind of worthy sacrifice: better to have Prime Minister Jordan Bardella, the rising star of the National Rally, than President Le Pen.

Such a scenario is far from unlikely, as there is ample reason to believe Mr. Macron's party will suffer at the polls this summer. For one, he is extremely unpopular. Much of the country views him as an out-of-touch leader who favors the interests of the wealthy, and the past two years have not helped his case. After a tempestuous first term in office, he kicked off his second by ramming through a fiercely contested rise in the retirement age and clamping down on unemployment benefits. Today his approval ratings hover around 30 percent, even lower than President Biden's.

What's more, France's so-called republican front -- the tradition of voters and parties joining forces to support whichever candidates take on the far right -- is in its death throes. Much of the responsibility lies with Mr. Macron. He and his allies opted not to endorse left-wing candidates en masse against the National Rally in the last legislative elections, making it far less likely that left-wing voters will turn out for Macronists this time around. His government has cracked down on civil liberties, smeared progressives and passed an immigration bill that Ms. Le Pen cheered as an ''ideological victory.''

Now he appears willing to accept the possibility of handing over the keys of government to a party founded by a former Waffen SS section officer and a colonial nostalgist who infamously downplayed the Holocaust. Many voters may wonder: What's the point of a republican front if the president has already decided the republic can accommodate the far right? On Tuesday the leader of the Republicans, Éric Ciotti, seemed to come to an answer when he called for an alliance with the National Rally.

Mr. Ciotti was widely rebuked and expelled from the party, but he is swimming with the tide. The National Rally is expected to win more votes than any other party. In addition to its various victories in the battleground of ideas, the party showed on Sunday that it is more than capable of turning out its base in high-stakes elections. It may also benefit from a potential alliance with Reconquest, an even more extreme party that rails against the ravages of wokism and openly embraces the ''great replacement'' conspiracy theory.

But there is a wild card. While Mr. Macron's strategy appeared to rule out the possibility that France's four major left-wing parties would join forces, they announced within 24 hours their intention to do just that. The parties aim to run single candidates in each legislative district under the banner of a new Popular Front, a nod to the 1936 electoral alliance that was forged amid fears of mounting fascism.

The most recent legislative elections demonstrated the strength of the French left when it unites. In 2022 a similar alliance won more seats than the National Rally and defeated Mr. Macron's coalition in scores of districts. This time around, left-wing parties may also benefit from their more uncompromising opposition to Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Bardella. A strong showing by the left could alter the complexion of the campaign. At the very least, the far right can expect no simple procession to power.

In 2017 Mr. Macron, then a candidate, boldly announced his intent to ''eradicate the anger'' fueling support for the National Rally. Seven years later, it appears safe to say he has failed. He may well be remembered for a very different reason: not as a principled opponent of the far right, but as a reckless enabler in chief.

Cole Stangler (@ColeStangler) is a journalist based in France and the author of ''Paris Is Not Dead: Surviving Hypergentrification in the City of Light.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY POOL PHOTO BY STEPHANE MAHE) This article appeared in print on page SR4.

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[***Tim Scott Fund-Raiser Includes Trump-Resistant Donors as V.P. Race Heats Up***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C05-JRS1-JBG3-613G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

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**Byline:** Michael C. Bender Michael C. Bender is a Times political correspondent covering Donald J. Trump, the Make America Great Again movement and other federal and state elections.

**Highlight:** The South Carolina senator is said to be high on Donald Trump’s list of potential running mates, and his fund-raising ability could lift his chances of being selected.

**Body**

The South Carolina senator is said to be high on Donald Trump’s list of potential running mates, and his fund-raising ability could lift his chances of being selected.

Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, one of the top contenders to become Donald J. Trump’s running mate, will host a gathering in Washington next month featuring Republican donors who so far remain publicly uncommitted to the party’s presidential ticket.

Pitched as a meeting of Great Opportunity Policy, a tax-exempt group that supports Mr. Scott’s political agenda, the private event on June 19 will double as a fund-raiser just as Mr. Trump’s vice-presidential search is expected to start heating up.

A financial show of force for Mr. Scott’s group could lift his chances of being selected by Mr. Trump, who has spoken to advisers at Mar-a-Lago about [*which potential running mates could help the campaign raise money*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html). For Mr. Scott, the event may help signal that he is a more palatable political figure for centrist donors and that adding him to the ticket could expand the network of financial resources Mr. Trump could tap into this year.

According to a copy of the invitation obtained by The New York Times, Mr. Scott’s event will feature remarks from a range of major donors and other well-known figures:

* Marc Andreessen, the software engineer turned investor who has given [*more than $11 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html) to non-Trump political causes this cycle

1. Kenneth Griffin, the founder of the hedge fund Citadel, who has made nearly $60 million in political contributions this cycle, much of which helped finance Mr. Trump’s Republican primary challengers
2. Marc Rowan, the chief executive of Apollo Global Management, who supported Mr. Scott’s presidential bid
3. Bill Ackman, the founder of Pershing Square Capital Management, who has said he is deciding whether to support [*Mr. Trump or Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html), an independent presidential candidate
4. Tim Dunn, a founder of CrownQuest, who has already supported Mr. Trump with [*a $5 million contribution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html) to Make America Great Again Inc., the former president’s super PAC
5. Kellyanne Conway, a former senior counselor in the Trump White House

Mr. Trump has become increasingly worried about a range of money problems. On the campaign trail, his advisers expect to be outgunned by President Biden’s fund-raising operation. In the courtroom, his four criminal cases have led to sky-high legal bills, [*sapping roughly $50 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html) from his Save America political action committee last year.

The former president has responded by leaning into his own fund-raising efforts — a major shift from his first campaign, in 2016, when he appealed to voters by portraying political donors as a malignant force undermining the interests of ***working-class*** Americans.

At a private fund-raiser on Saturday at his Mar-a-Lago club in South Florida, Mr. Trump told donors that they would not receive a picture with him if “you didn’t pay enough,” and added that he occasionally told his aides they scheduled too many photos before an event.

“They said, ‘Well, they’re paying $100,000 apiece for a picture’ — I say, ‘OK, I’ll do it,’” Mr. Trump said to applause from donors, [*according to a recording of the event*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html).

Attending the event was a large group of Republican officials, including Mr. Scott, whom the former president highlighted for the crowd as an “unbelievable” pro-Trump surrogate.

Mr. Scott, the only Black Republican in the Senate, has also been active in helping Mr. Trump raise money. This year, he helped organize a major fund-raiser before a key presidential primary contest in his home state.

Later this month, Mr. Scott is scheduled to attend a fund-raiser in Manhattan hosted by a group of billionaires, financial executives and longtime Republican donors, according to a person familiar with the planning who insisted on anonymity to discuss the private deliberations. Hosts for that event include Howard Lutnick, the chief executive of the investment firm Cantor Fitzgerald; John Paulson, a hedge fund billionaire who [*hosted an event for Mr. Trump last month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/14/us/politics/trump-vice-president-pick.html) in Palm Beach, Fla.; and J. Pepe Fanjul, a top executive at Florida Crystals, according to an invitation.

The policy gathering in Washington hosted by Mr. Scott next month, which seeks contributions of up to $250,000 from attendees, is expected to focus on antisemitism on college campuses and financial issues.

In a statement, Mr. Scott said the topics would be aimed at “expanding opportunity and access to the American dream.”

“For too many Americans, prosperity is slipping out of reach,” he said.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

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[***'This Is the Pick of a Very Confident Presidential Nominee'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH7-V0P1-DXY4-X3T7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 24; ROSS DOUTHAT, DAVID FRENCH, MICHELLE GOLDBERG AND BRET STEPHENS

**Length:** 3285 words

**Byline:** By Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Patrick Healy, the deputy Opinion editor, hosted an online conversation with the Times Opinion columnists Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Bret Stephens to discuss Donald Trump's choice of J.D. Vance as his running mate -- why Mr. Trump picked him, how Mr. Vance could help the ticket, what's surprising and unusual about the vice-presidential nominee, and what if anything worries our columnists about Mr. Vance.

Patrick Healy: The answer to one of the biggest questions of the presidential election has now been revealed: Donald Trump has chosen J.D. Vance as his running mate. What was the first thing that popped into your minds when you heard Trump had picked the first-term senator from Ohio and why?

Bret Stephens: My first thought was a memory: In 2016, on the eve of the election, Vance and I were guests on Fareed Zakaria's CNN show. At the time, he was still a Never Trumper. Later, we took a walk around Columbus Circle and commiserated about the sad state of the Republican Party with Trump as its leader. Another reminder that what was once a unified anti-Trump conservative movement wound up moving in very different directions.

Ross Douthat: If elected he will be the first vice president of the United States with whom I was friends before he became a politician. That's quite a strange feeling and one that mostly inspired me to say some prayers for him and for the country.

Michelle Goldberg: God help the people of Ukraine. As Vance told Steve Bannon, ''I got to be honest with you, I don't really care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other.''

David French: I share your concerns about Ukraine, Michelle, and that was my first thought as well. A century from now, historians will be talking about the war in Ukraine. Trump's choice sends a message to America's allies, especially Ukraine, that they might find themselves facing Russia largely on their own. To the extent that Vance will have a real voice in the administration (and we should never assume that of any vice president), he'll be pushing Trump away from Ukraine. He'll be a China hawk, but that's cold comfort to the Ukrainian people or to the European alliance.

Healy: My mind went to two things: the Electoral College map and the Republican Party's future. Presidential politics boils down to getting to 270 Electoral College votes, and Vance could help Trump in the industrial Midwestern states that are those must-win ''blue wall'' states for President Biden. Trump-Vance will pack a wallop in Michigan, western Pennsylvania, parts of Wisconsin. And Vance strikes me as a vision pick too -- offering a more fully formed and, I would argue, ideological vision for the party's future than Trump. David, are you surprised by the pick?

French: I'm not. From the beginning of the selection process, the real question was whether Trump was going to select someone who could perhaps reach the middle or someone who would help him double down on the MAGA ethos and MAGA ideology. Trump's obviously chosen to double down. This is the choice of a man who's confident he's going to win.

Stephens: I am surprised, though I shouldn't be. From an electoral standpoint, Vance doesn't seem to bring a lot to the ticket: Ohio is already in Trump's corner, and Vance represents the voters who are the Trumpiest part of Trump's base. Especially after the assassination attempt, Trump had an opportunity to widen his base geographically by choosing someone like Gov. Glenn Youngkin of Virginia, given that Trump is running only a point behind Biden there in the polling average, or culturally by choosing someone like Marco Rubio, helping to make inroads for Republicans among Hispanic voters, or ideologically by reaching out to Nikki Haley, thereby appealing to more centrist-leaning voters who thought of her as the sort of Republican they could get behind. Instead, Trump went with the guy who'll play well at his rallies and will never cross the boss. Again, why am I surprised?

Goldberg: I'm not surprised only because everything was telegraphing this choice, including the fact that Vance's friend Don Jr. was slated to introduce him at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday, and that the mayor of East Palestine, Ohio -- the site of a toxic train derailment that Republicans accuse Biden of ignoring -- is also scheduled to speak there.

Douthat: The choice had been telegraphed, but it is still a striking choice. I agree with David that the pick signals that Trump thinks he's going to win; Vance might help him in the Rust Belt but it's much less of a signal of outreach than, say, picking Youngkin would have been, because Vance has a more combative and polarizing persona, and it carries more political risks than picking a cipher like Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota. More important, though, it sends an unusually clear policy signal about Trump's second term -- indicating that on at least a subset of issues, from trade and tariffs and immigration to foreign policy, he intends to govern in a more focused and intentional way than he ever did in his first term, as a populist in full.

Healy: Ross, you recently had that fascinating in-depth interview with Vance where I felt that I was reading a far more coherent vision of conservatism and the future of the G.O.P. than anything Trump has articulated. What stood out to you the most from your conversation with Vance and what he represents for Republicans and conservatives?

Douthat: The interview tried to cover a lot of ground, because I think his personal odyssey is inherently fascinating -- from writing a best-selling book about ***working-class*** dysfunction that made him the toast of the establishment to deciding that the establishment was rotten and aligning with their great enemy, Donald Trump. But for the purposes of a potential vice presidency, the most important parts of our conversation are obviously his breaks with pre-Trump G.O.P. policy orthodoxy, his anti-libertarianism on economic policy and his vision of an American empire that's overstretched and needs to rebalance and rebuild its strength, and then his willingness to defend Trump (almost, not unto Sidney Powell territory) all the way on the attempts to challenge the results of the 2020 election.

Goldberg: There's one point Vance made in that interview that has stuck with me: ''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.'' I can tell you for a fact that lots of liberals have not in fact read that infamous Nazi jurist, even if, as Jennifer Szalai wrote in a great recent piece, he has some currency in the academic left. But it's telling that Vance imagines that liberals are operating according to Schmittian principles, in which all law derives from the leader, equal justice is a joke, and what matters is the friend/enemy distinction. It's pure projection.

At a moment when Trump seemed likely to lose, Vance texted a former roommate that Trump would either be ''a cynical asshole like Nixon'' or ''America's Hitler.'' But Vance is an ambitious guy, and once Trump was in power, he had good reason to hop on the MAGA train. To justify doing so, he had to convince himself that he was fighting diabolical forces, and that because his enemies betrayed liberal democratic values, he needn't be bound by them either. It's an ideology of Caesarism disguising itself -- as all authoritarian creeds do -- as self-defense.

French: The thing that stood out to me about Ross's conversation is that Trump has impulses, whereas Vance has an ideology. He's done more work than just about any politician in America to create something coherent out of MAGA's concerns and MAGA's grievances. He doesn't just want to possess power, he wants to wield it in quite specific ways. To the extent that MAGA has ideological legs after Trump leaves the scene, it will in large part be because of Vance.

Healy: What stands out to you most about Vance -- his ideas, ideology, record, history?

French: In many ways, Vance is an avatar for countless Republicans who've significantly changed their assessments of Trump since 2016. Trump loves it when his previous critics bend the knee, and few people have bent the knee more deeply than Vance. He's gone from being vitriolically Never Trump to perhaps his most enthusiastic supporter in the Senate. I've personally known a number of Republicans who've made the exact same transition.

Stephens: It's his isolationist instincts that stand out the most, and worry me the most. Vance really is one of those Republicans who think that practically the only foreign policy we need as a country is a secure, militarized southern border -- and perhaps a northern one, too. He has been a vociferous critic of our support for Ukraine, making a case in the pages of The Times that reminds me of how one of his predecessors in the Senate, Robert Taft of Ohio, made the case before the Pearl Harbor attack against helping Britain defeat the Nazis. A Vance vice presidency is likely to consolidate the G.O.P.'s reversion to that disastrous pre-World War II form.

Douthat: I think Vance has more of an isolationist streak than most recent contenders for high office, but in practice I expect him to be much more of an Asia-first Republican and would-be Nixonian or George H.W. Bushian figure than a Pat Buchanan-style, ''Come home, America'' paleoconservative. He portrays himself as a foreign policy realist (including in our conversation) and he's frequently couched his critiques of Biden administration policy in terms of limited U.S. resources and the need to prioritize other threats -- meaning China's threat to Taiwan above Russia's threat to Ukraine. How that stance actually cashes out will be an open question, but that's going to be the framing of a Trump-Vance administration foreign policy: try to forge an armistice in Eastern Europe to enable the pivot to Asia that every administration since Barack Obama's has arguably sought.

Healy: What does Vance do to help Trump win?

French: To the extent the pick matters at all, it's a net negative for the ticket. In 2022 in Ohio, the Republican governor, Mike DeWine, won by 25 points; Vance won by only six points. Vance underperformed DeWine by almost 400,000 votes. He's drunk deeply of MAGA grievances and the MAGA ethos. He's the vice-presidential pick for the base, for the people who want to see revolutionary disruption in the American government. This is the pick of a very confident presidential nominee.

Goldberg: Vance does nothing to help Trump: He is loved by MAGA but no one else. He's as demagogic as Trump but entirely lacks his dark charisma. I also imagine Vance will energize an opposition that's in desperate need of a boost. Speaking to Ross, Vance suggested that there was a legitimate path to trying to overturn the 2020 election. He will be in every way a Trump enabler, and if Trump wins, I can't imagine him certifying a Democratic victory in 2028.

After the assassination attempt against Trump, Vance has been trying to intimidate Democrats out of talking about the ex-president's authoritarian tendencies, pretending that telling the truth about Trump constitutes incitement to violence. But with Vance on the ticket, Democrats are going to have to talk about how democracies devolve into systems of what political scientists call competitive authoritarianism.

French: Michelle, I'm glad you brought up his inflammatory post-assassination rhetoric. We've been seeing reports that Trump might be wanting to change the tone after his genuinely terrifying experience last Saturday. But Vance is the attack-dog choice. At the same time, however, he'll take his cues from Trump, and if Trump wants him to moderate his tone, Vance will obey.

Stephens: Much as I think that Trump made a serious mistake in choosing Vance, it's worth considering his strengths. He has a compelling life story, which he turned into a best-selling memoir. He's smart and has had an important range of life experiences: not just his ''hillbilly'' upbringing, but his time in the Marine Corps, including service in the Iraq war, his Yale Law School degree, his stint in venture capital. He fared well in his Senate debates with Tim Ryan, a capable Democratic opponent, and beat him handily. He speaks for millions of Americans who feel forgotten, disdained, condescended to or despised by the proverbial coastal elites.

And he's young: He turns 40 next month. It will underscore the idea that the Trump-Vance ticket represents the future, while Biden and Kamala Harris speak for the past.

Douthat: You would assume that Vance could have upside for the Trump ticket with some (not all) persuadable voters in Pennsylvania and Michigan. It's also possible that Trump himself intends to go further in his own outreach to swing voters: He already dialed back the ideological conservatism in his party platform, he's promising a more unifying convention speech after the assassination attempt (we'll see), and you could imagine a world where he spends the next few months promising ideological flexibility and Vance helps him mostly by being more right-wing and reassuring parts of the MAGA world that Trump isn't going wobbly. (The traditional V.P. role, in a sense -- though there are parts of movement conservatism that strongly dislike everything Vance represents, so his reassurance won't sell everywhere.)

I agree that Vance's youth and smarts help make a contrast with the Biden-Harris ticket. And there's even a way in which his having been a prominent Never Trumper could help him sell Trump to others, by saying, ''Look, I used to hate him too; here's what you're missing.''

Fundamentally, though, I don't think this is the pick you make if you're just trying to add votes to your coalition. It's a pick that sets governing priorities, a pick that probably reflects Trump's personal preferences and comfort levels, and a pick made by a candidate who felt that his last vice president was foisted on him and this time he'll have someone he likes and someone who likes him.

Healy: What do you think a Vance-Harris debate might be like?

French: To the extent that Vance can help Trump at all, it will be at the debate. Vance might be extreme, but he's also a very effective communicator. He makes the policy case for MAGA far more comprehensively than Trump can, and he'll be ready to answer questions about his Never Trump past.

Stephens: David makes an important point. Vance is sharp, shrewd, quick on his feet. And his debate will count more than most vice-presidential debates do, because many people will think that Harris will eventually be president if she and Biden win.

Goldberg: He's smart and cutting, so imagine he'll hold his own. But Kamala Harris -- assuming she's still the V.P. and not the Democratic presidential nominee -- will enjoy reminding people, over and over, that Vance argued against exceptions to abortion bans for rape and incest victims.

Vance has a particularly bitter contempt for women without children; he's railed against ''childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable too.'' It will be interesting to see if Harris can draw his misogyny out for all to see.

Healy: How is Vance like Trump -- and not like Trump? This is a running mate who once scorned the former president.

French: Don't underestimate the power of his personal story. Trump was born with an immense amount of power and privilege. Vance was born into an incredibly challenging family situation, and he showed tremendous grit and determination to reach the Senate and now the vice-presidential nomination. People connected to his book, ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' for good reasons. He's overcome a lot in his life, and when he highlights his story, a lot of ***working-class*** voters will identify his past and see themselves in him. He's got a much more relatable story than Trump, he's younger than Trump, and he's far more informed about policy than Trump.

Goldberg: They're similar in that they're both somewhat ideologically labile, and both seem to simultaneously hate and resent traditional elites and long for their respect. But Vance is clearly more disciplined and methodical.

Stephens: Michelle makes an important point: Vance, like Trump, represents the same reflexive disdain for the allegedly soft and self-satisfied elites typified by people like Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama. In that sense Vance and Trump have more in common with the brooding resentments of Richard Nixon than they do with the sunny optimism of Ronald Reagan or the noblesse oblige instincts of George H.W. Bush.

Douthat: The expectation will be that Vance will win any debate on points, since Harris has her well-earned reputation for ''Veep''-like stumbles and he's very fluent and policy-oriented and, as Michelle says, disciplined. I think the main question will be the mood he brings to the debate: Does he seem too dark and mordant and apocalyptic (a vibe that all bearded conservative populists carry with them), or can he be not just sharper than Harris but come across as an optimist as well?

Healy: One dynamic for any Trump V.P. is, of course, navigating Trump himself. Should he win, Trump will automatically be a lame duck president, and his vice president will be as close to an heir apparent as American politics usually get. What has Vance shown us about his ability to navigate Trump? And do you see any rough waters for him?

Stephens: I'm glad you think Trump would automatically be a lame duck if he wins and won't set about repealing the 22nd Amendment!

Douthat: Several of us have talked about Vance's loyalty to Trump. In that sense he's a lower-risk pick for Trump than someone like Youngkin, who's never fully committed himself to a MAGA worldview. But Vance also, much more than some of the others who might have received the nomination, has a real identity and persona and celebrity that's separate from his new boss. There are lots of people on the right who like Vance for being Vance, the young populist who turned his back on the liberal elite, and who are excited for this pick in a way that nobody was going to be excited about, say, Burgum or Elise Stefanik. And that means that as a Trumpian second term wears on, Vance will have a stronger spotlight on him, a bigger cheering section (and more enemies) than another vice president might have had -- which could create certain tensions with Trump and within his administration that you wouldn't have with a different, more fully Trump-dependent pick.

Goldberg: People clash with Trump to the extent that they're not willing to completely subordinate themselves to his will. Maybe Vance will eventually discover that he has interests separate from Trump. But he could just as easily become a Stephen Miller-type figure, existing wholly in relation to the source of his power.

Stephens: Vance will soon find, if he hasn't already, that Trump will not only demand complete fealty but also insist on a fealty that involves self-abasement and a willingness to do anything for the boss, including violating his oath of office. Then again, the political prize that awaits Vance if the ticket wins in November might be worth the humiliation. I mean, to borrow the line from ''A Man for All Seasons'': ''It might profit a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world ... but for Wales!''

Goldberg: I have been referring to this quote for eight years, but I think we've seen that, when it comes to Trump, a lot of people are willing to give their souls for even less than Wales!

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/15/opinion/jd-vance-donald-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/15/opinion/jd-vance-donald-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

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**End of Document**



[***Can Biden make Trump seem like Mitt Romney?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVS-Y181-DXY4-X3GC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1625 words

**Byline:** Jess Bidgood Jess Bidgood is a managing correspondent for The Times and writes the On Politics newsletter, a guide to the 2024 election and beyond.

**Highlight:** The president may be making a similar case against his wealthy rival that Obama made against the G.O.P. nominee in 2012.

**Body**

The president may be making a similar case against his wealthy rival that Obama made against the G.O.P. nominee in 2012.

President Biden made a populist case for re-election during his swing through Pennsylvania over three days last week, laying out plans on [*tariffs*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) and [*taxes*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) and seeking to burnish his ***working-class*** bona fides as a son of Scranton.

But he also used the trip to sharpen the story he tells about former President Donald Trump, depicting him as a creature of rarefied playgrounds like Mar-a-Lago and a pawn of the billionaires who frequent them.

“He learned the very best way to get rich is to inherit it,” Biden said in Scranton. “He learned that telling people, ‘You’re fired,’ was something to laugh about.”

Twelve years ago, Democrats including then-Vice President Biden relentlessly pilloried a different wealthy Republican as an elitist: Mitt Romney, who was once a Massachusetts governor and chief executive of Bain Capital who won the Republican presidential nomination during a burst of national anger over Wall Street excess. Democrats poked fun at his wealth — remember the [*car elevator*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics)? — and slammed him for his free-market views on the auto industry bailout and the foreclosure crisis.

Those attacks stuck, and Barack Obama beat Romney to secure his re-election as president. Now, in 2024, Biden is seemingly trying to Romnify Donald Trump as he attempts to wear down the former president’s own populist claims.

It may not be easy. Sure, Trump frequently boasts about his wealth, spends much of his spare time on expensive pastimes like golf, and lives at Mar-a-Lago, the opulent property he owns that contains a private club. But he has always been able to convince the voters who make up his base that he gets them.

“Trump has made a cultural connection with working people that has benefited him. Part of it is manner, part of it is his TV persona, part of it is his preternatural ability to sense grievance and exploit it,” said David Axelrod, a Democrat who was a senior strategist for both of Obama’s presidential campaigns.

But the Biden campaign is also evoking a second, less remembered element of the attacks on Romney, which were at their core an attempt to contrast Obama from Romney and portray the latter as ill-equipped to manage a fragile economy while looking out for regular people.

“You’re not turning him into Mitt Romney, you’re prosecuting his record, which has been very much to the benefit of wealthy people at the expense of the ***working class***,” Axelrod said, adding, “They’re beginning to bring the alternative into sharper focus here.”

The Romney caricature

Wealth, on its face, has never been something voters find disqualifying. George Washington was fabulously wealthy. President John F. Kennedy and both President Roosevelts came from families with large fortunes — and Biden and other Democrats hold Franklin D. Roosevelt as an icon.

So in 2012, the Obama campaign itself focused on the idea that Romney’s wealth — [*he was thought to have a net worth of as much as $250 million or more*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) — and his business career left him out of touch with most people’s lives, and with the needs of an economy still recovering from the shock of the 2008 financial crisis. They pilloried him for his association with private equity, for talking about his friendships with the owners of professional sports teams and for leaked comments in which he dismissed “47 percent” of Obama’s supporters as, essentially, freeloaders.

“We didn’t spend our time saying, Romney was a rich guy,” said Joel Benenson, a Democratic strategist who worked on both Obama campaigns and Hillary Clinton’s campaign in 2016. “His own words did him in.”

The real goal, veterans of Obama’s 2012 campaign said, was to convince voters that Obama was better positioned than Romney to fight for most voters’ economic interests.

The message was, “We need to build an economy from the middle out, not the top down,” Benenson said, adding that Romney “could not own that territory against Obama.”

Some veterans of that campaign see a parallel between that approach and the one Biden can take in 2024.

Taking aim at Trump’s wealth

On a [*summer day in 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), Hillary Clinton, then the presumptive Democratic nominee, went to Atlantic City and stood in front of a failed Trump casino project to make a different kind of attack on his wealth: It was the result, she said, of reckless business practices.

“People get hurt,” she said, “and Donald gets paid.”

It was part of a larger strategy Clinton was employing to highlight Trump’s business failures and to cast doubt on his tales of wealth and fabulous success.

“On the Clinton campaign, we tried, ‘He’s not as rich as you think, he’s probably not actually a billionaire, he doesn’t pay his bills, he went bankrupt,’” said Jennifer Palmieri, a Democratic strategist who directed communications for Clinton’s campaign.

But, Palmieri said, it was too difficult to shift people’s longstanding perception of a figure who had been spinning his own mythology in tabloids and television shows for decades.

That portrayal of Trump “was just too much at odds with what the public thought him to be, which was a decisive billionaire from ‘The Apprentice,’” Palmieri said. “It just didn’t connect.”

In 2020, the Biden campaign tried a different approach, casting the election as a clash between two different economic worldviews: [*Scranton vs. Park Avenue*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). And now, Palmieri said, the campaign has even more to work with.

“The difference between the argument we tried to make and the argument Biden can make is there are now two records — not just a record for Trump, but a record for Biden,” she said.

On the campaign trail, Biden has sought to tie his stories about Trump’s biography directly to issues of policy, repeatedly hitting Trump for his 2017 tax cuts, which [*benefited the wealthy*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics). He has sometimes replaced the Scranton vs. Park Avenue frame with a Scranton vs. Mar-a-Lago frame — a shift that partly reflects the fact that Trump now lives at his Florida property, but that also evokes the wealthy campaign donors he entertains there.

“He wakes up in the morning at Mar-a-Lago thinking about himself. How he can help his billionaire friends gain power and control, and force their extreme agenda on the rest of us,” Biden said in his Scranton speech that also invoked leaked footage of Trump praising his guests’ wealth and promising them tax cuts.

“Trump wants to renew another round of billionaire tax breaks and corporate giveaways,” Biden said, promising that his tax plan would raise the minimum tax rate for billionaires and corporations and expand the child tax credit.

The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment, but [*last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics) a spokeswoman said Trump’s tax cuts were the largest in history.

Trump has often tried to fight any perception that he is an elitist — using his penchant for well-done steaks, for example, as a counterpoint to his love of gold leaf on his property. But Biden is trying to make the case that Trump’s economic policies will help the gold-leaf crowd more than anyone else.

A busy day for Trump’s trials in New York

* As [*opening arguments began in his criminal trial in New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics), prosecutors told jurors a tawdry tale of wrongdoing they said was aimed at influencing the election.

1. Defense lawyers for Trump denied wrongdoing and hinted at their plans to destroy [*the key witnesses*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).
2. The first witness, a man once known as the “tabloid king,” [*took the stand*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics).
3. [*At a hearing*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics)related to New York state’s civil fraud case against Trump, the terms of a $175 million bond posted by the former president were slightly modified.

A Democratic super PAC distills the battle to control state legislatures

It’s not just the race for the presidency and control of Congress that will matter this year. My colleague Nick Corasaniti joins us this evening with some news about the state legislative races that could attract the most attention this fall.

Races for state legislatures are different from congressional elections. The money is far less, the districts are smaller and the maps are more unwieldy, with each state carved into dozens of districts.

But this year, they’ll still be hot battlegrounds, since whoever controls statehouses has the power to shape critical issues like voting rules, abortion access and much more.

Forward Majority, a Democratic super PAC that focuses on state legislative races, has distilled the sprawling state legislative landscape into a simple road map: 41 districts that the group says “are essential to protecting our democracy” in a [*memo shared exclusively with the Times.*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/on-politics)

The path, Forward Majority argues, runs largely through the suburbs in four battleground states with close margins in their legislative chambers: Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. They will focus almost exclusively in the suburbs around the biggest cities like Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Detroit and Milwaukee.

The group’s founder, Vicky Hausman, said in an interview that state legislative races could prove a salve for President Biden in states where his approval ratings are sagging. The hope, she explained, is that voters who care deeply about an issue like abortion rights will come out to vote for a state senator — and then the president.

“Looking at Arizona right now,” Ms. Hausman said, “how important it will be to actually be mobilizing people from the ground up and making sure they’re coming out for the issues that are really captivating and enraging them when Biden has been less popular overall.”

— Nick Corasaniti

— Nick Corasaniti

PHOTO: Former President Donald Trump frequently talks about his wealth but has been able to convince the voters who make up his base that he gets them. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Saul Martinez for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Biden Must Face Down the Left on Immigration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3C-F061-DXY4-X0M6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 13, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 997 words

**Byline:** By Mike Madrid

**Body**

The negotiations on Ukraine funding and stricter border protections have exposed a growing rift between President Biden and his own party. Republican hard-liners have demanded a bill that mirrors policies advanced during the Trump administration, especially ones related to asylum seekers, increased border security and the mandate that companies institute the E-Verify employment eligibility system.

Democrats such as Representative Pramila Jayapal called the proposals ''cruel, inhumane and unworkable,'' but Republicans believe they have found solid ground with voters. Recent polling suggests the Republicans are right. A CBS News/YouGov poll released on Sunday found that 68 percent of Americans disapprove of Mr. Biden's handling of border security.

There are many, both inside and outside his party, who believe that by agreeing to the Republican deal, Mr. Biden would be surrendering too much moral high ground and any future policy leverage. But in fact, this is a chance for him to make meaningful border-security policy changes and redefine his party as the home of an aspirational multiethnic, ***working-class*** coalition.

Securing the borders of a sovereign state isn't racism -- it's among the first responsibilities of government. And many voters, including Democrats, are demanding that the Biden administration do a better job with that responsibility. A recent Fox News poll showed that fully 22 percent of Democrats favor Republican candidates on border security.

More than any other group, Latinos have political views that correlate with -- indeed, are racially and ethnically defined by -- the immigrant experience. Yet even these voters are conveying growing concerns about border security. According to an April 2021 survey by the Pew Research Center, about 44 percent of Hispanics and 48 percent of respondents overall think illegal immigration is a major problem, an increase of more than 15 percentage points since June 2020.

The supposition among much of the Democratic establishment and progressive activists is that Latino voters prioritize more relaxed immigration policies over border security. To win re-election, President Biden must redefine the narrative that has become orthodoxy and lead his party toward supporting significantly enhanced border security measures.

While this would be a prudent political move, such a shift would most likely lead to an internal Democratic civil war. While Mr. Biden's election efforts in 2020 hinged on just enough white Republican suburban women leaving the G.O.P., the defection of traditional minority Democrats -- notably Latino, Black and Asian voters -- narrowed his margin of victory. Younger voters and voters of color, a key coalition, have shown the largest drop in support. But brokering a deal with the Republicans could help him shore up the nontraditional alliance that got him elected four years ago.

Latinos have flummoxed Democrats by shifting right in three of the last four national elections. This shift is about far more than immigration reform, but it is undeniable that it has been pronounced in border communities, especially in Texas and New Mexico, where the crisis is most acute. The failure of Democrats to propose meaningful border security measures has led to their being vulnerable to Republican attacks of supporting ''open borders.''

Mr. Biden, whose campaign has only recently and reluctantly begun to acknowledge the slide in support by Latino (in fact, all nonwhite) voters for the Democratic Party, is facing growing pressure from advocacy groups to take a more progressive position on immigration than the party in past decades -- even though polling and electoral data suggest Latino voters are moving in the opposite direction.

The president will have to challenge the Democrats' established doctrine on the border and party's view of how Latinos view border policy -- a move that will reposition the Democratic coalition to better benefit from the demographic changes among Latino voters in the short, medium and long term. The rightward shift among Latino voters has exposed an uncomfortable cleavage between the Latino immigrant-advocacy groups that rose to prominence in the 1990s and the views of their first- and second-generation children, who dominate the Latino voting population.

President Biden's re-election strategy is clearly not working -- but it is fixable. Immigration, the undocumented and related issues have been overemphasized by institutional Democratic Latino voices, including consultants and organizations vested in an outdated narrative. Latino voters, meanwhile, are far more focused on basic economic concerns and public safety, issues where Republicans tend to poll better among ***working-class*** voters.

The immigration measures that progressive and establishment Latino Democrats favor, while desperately needed and a moral imperative, are a nonstarter for House Republicans and not terribly important to Latino voters. Mr. Biden would be smart to agree to beef up border security, restrict asylum and move on to economic messaging, precisely the issue Latino voters are telling pollsters they want to hear more of.

The president finds himself and his re-election prospects at a crossroads. He can double down on a strategy of outwardly opposing increased border protection, or he can reframe the debate and begin to rebuild the ethnic and racial coalitions that brought him and Barack Obama to power. To do that, he must assert that a Latino agenda, as it exists, has grown far bigger than one predominantly focused on ethnic ties to immigration.

Mike Madrid is a Republican political consultant and a co-founder of the Lincoln Project.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/opinion/immigration-politics-biden-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/10/opinion/immigration-politics-biden-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***New Plants and Jobs Fail to Stem France's Far-Right Surge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDP-BMR1-DXY4-X16H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 6, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1390 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

President Emmanuel Macron's promise of re-industrialization in northern France has helped stimulate the economy, but ''people feel defeated and angry.''

Between abandoned coal mines and an engine plant scheduled for closure, a gleaming new factory hovers like a phoenix over Billy-Berclau, a small industrial town in northern France. Inside, 700 newly hired workers are making next-generation electric vehicle batteries for the Automotive Cells Company -- part of a grand project to revive the wider region's flailing fortunes.

A ''Battery Valley'' is rising here from the remains of industries that shuttered during a wave of globalization. Three more giant electric car battery plants are expected to open by 2026, a testament to a re-industrialization strategy that President Emmanuel Macron's government has trumpeted as an antidote to the far-right National Rally party, which has gained ground in areas decimated by job losses.

''Industry is an anti-National Rally weapon, because in places where anger has risen, we're restoring hope,'' Roland Lescure, Mr. Macron's deputy industry minister, said earlier this year.

But the bet is not paying off politically. Billy-Berclau and nearly every other town in this region of Pas-de-Calais handed a resounding victory last week to National Rally in parliamentary elections -- a trend that is likely to be repeated in a final voting round on Sunday.

''There's a sense of disconnect,'' said André Kuchcinski, president of the Artois-Flandres Industrial Park, an area covering more than 1,100 acres where Automotive Cells Company, known as ACC, is expanding its new plant. ''You have a government that pushed for development and job creation, but a lot of people are still struggling and feel insecure,'' he said. ''A new factory doesn't address that, but there's a feeling that the far right does.''

Around Billy-Berclau, people speak in hushed tones of a political earthquake coming.

''There used to be thousands of more jobs. The new factory only makes up a fraction of the ones lost,'' said Marc Vandamme, 54, a home care nurse, sipping a beer at the Europe Cafe, a local hangout where people buy lottery tickets or down a coffee before work.

''People feel defeated and angry,'' Mr. Vandamme said. ''The cost of everything keeps rising, and they're also worried about immigration,'' he said. ''The National Rally is promising to fix all that, and many are saying, let's give them a shot at running things.''

The Battery Valley initiative was supposed to address such worries. Pas-de-Calais, a former mining area that stretches from the flat plains around Billy-Berclau to Dunkirk on the coast and toward the Belgian border, has lived through wrenching cycles of industrial blight and rebirth since the end of World War II.

Heavily unionized, Pas-de-Calais had tended to vote for Communist or left-leaning candidates representing workers' rights before swinging in the early 2000s to support more centrist politicians. In the 2012 presidential elections, François Hollande, a Socialist, won over half of the vote.

But by then, globalization had started to bite. Over decades, tire makers, steel and paint plants, as well as the French automakers Renault and Peugeot (now part of Stellantis after a merger with the Italian automaker Fiat) had been relocating manufacturing to lower-cost countries to battle cheaper competition from Eastern Europe and Asia.

Marine Le Pen, the far-right candidate for the movement then called the National Front, capitalized on the malaise. She rebranded the image of the party, long associated with overt racism, antisemitism and Holocaust denial, into one that championed workers and purchasing power. She campaigned fiercely in towns across France that had lost jobs to globalization -- especially in Pas-de-Calais, where she set up her election office to attract ***working class*** voters.

By the time Mr. Macron ran in France's 2017 presidential elections, nearly 40,000 more industrial jobs had disappeared from the region. Ms. Le Pen won 52 percent of the Pas-de-Calais vote that year, nearly twice the amount for Mr. Macron. In the 2022 presidential election, she captured 57 percent of the vote.

Mr. Macron, who once defended globalization, swung to a new priority: reindustrialize France with ''technologies of the future.'' In Battery Valley, ProLogium of Taiwan is expected to open a battery plant, along with two others involving French and international investors. A series of new electric battery recycling plants will also be built. Mr. Macron says there will be 20,000 direct jobs created over the next decade, and as many indirect ones.

Inside ACC, which is co-owned by Stellantis, Mercedes and TotalEnergies, some are clinging to Mr. Macron's promise of a better future. Eight soccer fields long, the plant, which opened last summer, received about 840 million euros ($910 million) in state subsidies. It sits on a site once dominated by Française de Mécanique, a subsidiary of Stellantis that manufactures internal combustion engines, which has downsized to about 1,400 workers, from 6,000 workers at its height. As it continues to wind down, ACC has pledged to take on 700 of its former employees.

Among them is Christophe Lequimme, 52, who built car engines for 22 years before being retrained by ACC to work on lithium car batteries.

Billy-Berclau's wavering fortunes could be traced through his family, starting with his grandfather, who lost his job in the mines when they closed in the 1960s, but found work at Française de Mécanique. Mr. Lequimme's father and mother spent their careers in that same factory, and Mr. Lequimme followed in their footsteps. When the layoffs came, he jumped at the chance to work at ACC.

''It's a great opportunity for a new beginning,'' he said.

But such optimism hasn't echoed through the broader community.

In last weekend's parliamentary elections, Bruno Bilde, a local National Rally politician who is close to Ms. Le Pen, won nearly 60 percent of the vote, knocking out his main rival, Steve Bossart, the center-left mayor of Billy-Berclau.

Mr. Bilde declined requests for an interview. But in the lead-up to the election, he was actively courting voters at the ACC factory, posting a photo on X of him with a group of supporters brandishing National Rally pamphlets. ''Thank you for your welcome,'' he wrote, adding: ''The National Rally is the leading party for workers!''

Such talk unnerves officials at ACC. Matthieu Hubert, the company's secretary general, noted that National Rally has branded electric vehicles as cars for the elites, and its platform calls for ending a European Union ban on gas-powered vehicles starting in 2035 that is designed to combat climate change.

''I can't say it doesn't worry me,'' Mr. Hubert said, adding that European automakers are racing to stay ahead of Asian and American rivals by producing cleaner vehicles, taking back supply chains and building batteries. ''This factory represents the future.''

For Billy-Berclau's mayor, Mr. Bossart, the rise of the far right in a region where billions in new investments are pouring in is a paradox that goes beyond economics.

''We have many people who own their own homes, who have decent pensions. People have jobs and there's low unemployment,'' said Mr. Bossart, 28, who was born in Billy-Berclau. ''And we're drawing big investments like the ACC factory.''

Even so, locals had grown increasingly concerned by a sense of insecurity, even though the town did not have crime like larger cities. But on television, news programs frequently show images of migrants in Calais near the English Channel and link them to reports of crime, stoking worries.

There was also a sense that Mr. Macron had grown out of touch and did not understand their struggles, Mr. Bossart said. They were angry that he raised the retirement age to 64 from 62, and felt he had not done enough to address a cost of living crisis, including high energy bills that the National Rally has promised to reduce.

''This region is more attractive than it has ever been for investors,'' said Mr. Bossart. ''But people's anger has accumulated. As soon as they can vote, they are showing their despair.''

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Billy-Berclau.Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Billy-Berclau.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/05/business/france-election-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/05/business/france-election-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: After two decades building car engines, Christophe Lequimme now makes lithium batteries in Billy-Berclau, France. Others in the region are fearful of the future.

Billy-Berclau, a bucolic town in northern France, has lost jobs as mines shuttered and manufacturers moved to lower-cost countries. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** July 6, 2024

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[***Harris vs. Trump Is Taking Shape. And Then There’s Vance.; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKK-W0X1-JBG3-653Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1654 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens Gail Collins is a Times Opinion columnist focusing on domestic politics. Bret Stephens is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about foreign policy, domestic politics and cultural issues.

**Highlight:** It’s a whole new era in presidential politics. Right?

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, we’re beginning a whole new era in presidential politics, and before we get rolling, I want to give you ample opportunity to retract your threat not to vote in a Trump versus Harris election.

Bret Stephens: My feelings about this election are approximately what Henry Kissinger’s were about the Iran-Iraq war: It’s a pity both sides can’t lose. You know that I will never, ever vote for Donald Trump. But I can’t quite see why I should cast my New York vote — a meaningless vote, as we both know — in favor of a politician whose views I oppose and whose judgment I doubt.

Persuade me that I’m wrong.

Gail: Democracy is ideally about voting for the good guys and rejecting the bad, but we’re all well aware of the many, many elections that feature two unwelcome options.

Refusing to pick a less-bad choice is being, well, a kinda snob.

Bret: Guilty as charged.

Gail: And when you’ve got a choice between a woman who you don’t agree with about taxes and spending versus a man who’s shown himself perfectly capable of trying to overthrow the government if he loses, the options are pretty obvious.

Bret: That was pretty much my reasoning when I cast my votes for Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden: two liberal Democrats who nonetheless struck me as safe pairs of hands, particularly when it came to world affairs.

I just don’t have the same faith in Kamala Harris. She’s given no indication that she can run a campaign or an office competently, much less a country. She frequently speaks in inanities. Her contribution to fixing the border crisis was less than zero — in fact, she [*publicly denied*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html) there was a crisis. I doubt she strikes fear in the hearts of the tyrants in Tehran, Beijing or Moscow at a moment when all of those dictatorships are on the march.

Gail: Hey, nobody knows what Putin’s thinking.

Sorry, I’m being snippy. Go on.

Bret: She doesn’t even seem to be a particularly nice person, at least to judge by this report in [*The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html): “Staffers who worked for Harris before she was vice president said one consistent problem was that Harris would refuse to wade into briefing materials prepared by staff members, then berate employees when she appeared unprepared.”

Gail: Could be, but you often hear those complaints from people whose job it is to prepare those briefing materials.

Bret: And there’s this additional damning detail, noted by the liberal legal scholar Lara Bazelon in a [*2019 guest essay in The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html): “Most troubling, Ms. Harris fought tooth and nail to uphold wrongful convictions that had been secured through official misconduct that included evidence tampering, false testimony and the suppression of crucial information by prosecutors.”

Come on: Is this someone I’m supposed to be enthusiastic about?

Gail: Did not ask for enthusiasm, Bret. Just hold-your-nose-and-pick-the-least-bad-option.

Although I have to say, so far I’m pleased with the choice. Harris is a politician who has most definitely grown in her jobs. The criticism from years ago doesn’t necessarily apply to the woman we’re looking at now.

And yeah, all things being equal, I do like the idea of a woman.

Bret: Too bad Biden never gave his party the chance to have a real primary that might have yielded a better nominee. Although the one silver lining of a Harris victory, should it come about, is that it might finally end the Trump cult and restore normality to the Republican Party. Of course, that’s what I said after the last presidential election, to my [*everlasting embarrassment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html).

I will say, however, that I’d be more reconciled to the idea of a Harris presidency if she chose a running mate with deep foreign policy experience — sort of a Dick Cheney to her George W. Bush. My favorite candidate is Jim Stavridis, a former NATO commander, or perhaps Jim Mattis, Trump’s first defense secretary. Anyone who strikes fear in the hearts of our enemies would be fine by me. Your preferences?

Gail: I have confidence that Harris can bring in a cabinet full of foreign affairs experts without needing to borrow one of Trump’s. For vice president, must admit I’m kinda drawn to Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, because he’s got an unusual astronaut background and a strong history on gun safety.

Bret: I like him, too. And he flew [*Intruders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html) in the Navy, which is always a recommendation. Also? He’s not a lawyer.

Gail: But there’s quite a list of guy governors she’s apparently considering. I might want to toss in Andy Beshear of Kentucky, who’s good at winning votes from a conservative electorate. And as a former state attorney general, he can go arm in arm with Harris, a former prosecutor and attorney general herself, in reminding the public about Trump’s, um, troubled history with the law.

Speaking of vice presidents, am I right in feeling JD Vance has already become a political disaster area?

Bret: As in Dan Quayle with a brain or Sarah Palin with a beard? His job is to present himself as a smarter and more articulate version of Trump. So far, he’s just been a younger and meaner one. His stupid jibe against “childless cat ladies” may come back to haunt him on Nov. 5, not least among the 46 million American women who are childless. He would not fare well against Kelly in a debate.

That said, I still think this election remains Trump’s to lose. Harris is tied to Biden’s record, which is deeply unpopular. How would you advise her to campaign and separate herself from her boss?

Gail: Hard to have this argument, since I think Biden has done a pretty darn good job. The economy is under control, pricewise; employment is way up; the country’s at least making strides in environmental control that will allow the parents of today to look their grandkids in the eyes.

I, um, know you don’t quite agree.

Bret: My disagreement is almost beside the point. It’s public perception that counts. Only 17 percent of Americans feel they are better off financially today than they were four years ago. Food is way more expensive. Rents are higher. Interest payments are up. Harris’s political problem is that her boss gets most of the blame for this, and she has to find a way to distance herself from him without dissing him. Question is: How would a Harris administration differ?

Gail: In 2019 a top Harris priority was tax relief for the ***working class***. Which you can pay for by raising taxes on the rich. Part of which can be spent on universal pre-K programs. We have argued about this before, but I think the possibility of low-income kids going to school at a very early age is supercritical. Then when the time comes, they’ll be ready to learn reading, writing and other academic skills.

Bret: Poorer kids trapped in failing public schools deserve the same schooling options that wealthier families have, including access to private schools through vouchers. So far, Harris [*has only pandered to the teachers’ unions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html) that are wedded to a disastrous status quo. I’m no fan of her opposition to free trade deals, though on this subject she’s no worse than Trump. And I don’t understand what Harris believes when it comes to socializing medicine and abolishing private insurance; [*it isn’t entirely clear that she knows what she believes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), either.

Bottom line, for me, is that Harris is either a furtive progressive or a rank opportunist, and neither wins my vote. But, of course, she’s not Trump. That’s just about her only recommendation.

Gail: Pretty big recommendation.

Well, Bret, we’ve got — what? — 14 weeks until the election. Be ready for 14 more nags about voting.

Bret: I get it. Trump is the worst president of my lifetime. And he’s also done the most to reshape the Republican Party into something unrecognizable to someone like me, who grew up in Ronald Reagan’s shadow. In fact, of all the damage Trump has done, probably the worst is to the old conservative consensus, which believed in classically liberal ideals like free trade, strong international alliances and the benefits of immigration, as well as some classically conservative ones, like the necessity of moral character in political leadership and civility in public life. Watching the Republican convention, which was the extended worship of a man rather than of a set of principles, was just four days of nausea. I’ll never be reconciled to it. Being politically homeless just … sucks.

Gail: Just remember there’s a light in the Harris window for you. True, it’s casting a few shadows of taxation and government spending you may not love. But you could have a Harris voters’ room reserved for NABATs — the folks whose political philosophy this year is nothing’s as bad as Trump.

Bret: I’ll remember NABATs. And I promise to think on it, Gail.

And before we go: I don’t think there’s a better critic in America today than The Times’s Dwight Garner. So it’s a double delight to read his [*review*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html) of another great critic, [*Peter Schjeldahl*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), who died a couple of years ago and whose last book, “The Art of Dying,” collected his pieces from the final years of his life. I found this paragraph from Garner’s review, about the 2022 Whitney Biennial, apropos of our conversation:

The Biennial review is a reminder that Schjeldahl exited lockdown into a world transformed by new social and political forces, including Black Lives Matter. Art fueled by these forces could be galvanizing, by braving the “routine chaos” of the world, but it was too often predictable and prescriptive. “Must ideology define us?” he asked, in a review of another show dominated by political themes. “Can we demur from one extreme without implicitly being lumped in with its opposite?”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.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/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html).

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), [*WhatsApp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), [*X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html) and [*Threads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html).

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Bridge Troubles Waters Of a Testy House Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-W1Y1-DXY4-X48Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/us/politics/aging-bridge-is-a-flashpoint-in-competitive-washington-state-house-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/02/us/politics/aging-bridge-is-a-flashpoint-in-competitive-washington-state-house-race.html)

**Graphic**

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[***Aging Bridge Is a Flashpoint in Competitive Washington State House Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG2-2BH1-JBG3-62JC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

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**Byline:** Annie Karni Annie Karni is a congressional correspondent for The Times. She writes features and profiles, with a recent focus on House Republican leadership.

**Highlight:** Representative Marie Gluesenkamp Perez is running on fixing one of the busiest bridges in the region. Her far-right opponent calls it an “Antifa superhighway.”

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**Load-Date:** March 4, 2024

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[***How Democrats Lost Voters With a ‘Compensate Losers’ Strategy; Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JY-DVH1-DXY4-X3X9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1529 words

**Byline:** Peter Coy

**Highlight:** A shift from preventing inequality in the first place to fixing it after the fact has cost the party, a paper argues.

**Body**

A lot of Democrats are bewildered by why their party isn’t doing better in campaigns against a Republican Party that is deeply dysfunctional. A new paper by three economists proposes a fresh explanation that seems persuasive to me. It says the Democrats went astray right around … 1976.

The argument, in a nutshell, is that the Democratic Party has gained educated voters but lost less educated voters because of a change in how it tried to help the ***working class*** and the poor. Instead of trying to prevent market forces from generating inequality, it has leaned toward giving free rein to market forces and then fixing the resulting inequalities through the tax-and-transfer system, taking some of the gains of the most successful and sharing them with the least successful.

The [*working paper*](https://www.nber.org/papers/w31794?utm_campaign=ntwh&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_source=ntwg22), from the National Bureau of Economic Research, is titled “‘Compensate the Losers?’ Economic Policy and Partisan Realignment in the U.S.” Its three authors are Ilyana Kuziemko, a professor at Princeton; Nicolas Longuet Marx, a doctoral candidate at Columbia; and Suresh Naidu, a Columbia professor.

Historically, the Democratic Party was a party of the ***working class***. Democrats inspired by the successes of the New Deal stood for helping working people earn a decent living through measures such as a higher minimum wage, unionization and restrictions on imports of cheap goods that would take jobs away from Americans.

But in the 1970s, New Democrats began to exert more influence over the party. They argued that many traditional Democratic policies were inefficient, creating what economists call deadweight losses. For example, they contended that high minimum wages killed jobs and that tariffs harmed consumers (including low-income ones) by raising prices.

The New Democrats weren’t heartless. They wanted to help the poor and ***working class***. But they wanted to let the free market do what it does best, namely create wealth, and then use government policy to take from the rich and give to the poor. That’s “compensating the losers,” as the paper’s title has it. Their economics-inflected strategy was aimed at recapturing white, middle-class voters who had defected to the Republican Party.

For decades, Democratic primaries pitted traditional Democrats against New Democrats. Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Jesse Jackson were traditionalists. Gary Hart, Bill and Hillary Clinton and John Kerry were revisionists. Gradually the revisionists gained the upper hand. The Democratic Leadership Council, formed in 1985, was their think tank. Bill Clinton’s victories in 1992 and 1996 were seen as proof of the rightness of their approach.

Something wasn’t working, though. The Democratic Party was picking up college-educated suburban voters, but the ***working class*** was abandoning it in droves. The Democratic Party went from being less educated than the Republican Party to more educated.

“In the 1940s, every additional year of education predicts a three-percentage-point decrease in the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat,” Kuziemko, Marx and Naidu wrote. “This relationship holds with little change until an inflection point, which we estimate as occurring in 1976. Since then, the pace of realignment remains relatively steady.”

Party leaders consoled themselves that at least they had managed to hang on to Black and Hispanic voters, but lately Hispanic voters, too, have begun drifting toward the G.O.P.

To understand the party realignment, the three economists analyzed results of more than 800 surveys of about two million respondents since the 1940s. They also studied congressional voting records, party platforms and data on donations. They found that at least since the 1940s, “less educated voters appear to prefer a less market-based and more interventionist economic program that aims to promote domestic employment and wages.” Those voters left the Democratic Party when the party left them.

The authors labeled the traditional, New Deal approach as “predistributionist” and the New Democrat approach as “redistributionist.” The authors didn’t have data on why less educated voters prefer predistributionist policies. One explanation could be the dignity of work: People want to feel that they earned their own way (even if their earnings were invisibly bolstered by government policies such as tariffs). Or “voters may believe that the tax-and-transfer system is more opaque, corrupt or inefficient,” they wrote.

The traditional knock on a “compensate the losers” strategy is that the promises of compensation are often unfulfilled. For example, people who lose their jobs because of cheap imports don’t get the retraining they need to start new careers. When I emailed Kuziemko and Naidu about that, Naidu wrote back, in part: “Our paper is more about the political efficacy of the ‘compensate the losers’ view than whether or not it’s actually economically efficient. It might be that less educated voters don’t trust that it will happen, or it could be that even if it did happen, it wouldn’t preserve what people like about their current job.” He added, “We can’t disentangle those things.”

In reality, every government does some predistribution and some redistribution. It’s just that the Democratic Party has tipped more toward redistribution in recent decades. Whether that is good or bad from an economic perspective is not something the paper addresses.

From a political perspective, the tilt toward the preferences of the more educated might have won the Democrats a firmer majority of the electorate if the rate of college completion had continued to grow as vigorously as it did in the 1970s and 1980s, but it did not, Kuziemko told me in a phone interview with her and Naidu.

An alternative theory you sometimes hear is that the culture wars caused the party realignment. But that doesn’t match the evidence, the authors wrote. College-educated voters tend to be socially liberal, whereas Bill Clinton and other New Democrats were actually less socially liberal than old-fashioned Democrats such as McGovern. The fact that educated voters chose New Democrats anyway is evidence that economic factors were so important to them that they outweighed social ones, the authors wrote.

President Biden doesn’t fit the paper’s thesis. He is a throwback to the New Deal era of the Democratic Party. He has more in common with Humphrey than with Clinton or Barack Obama, whom he served as vice president. When he supported the United Auto Workers in its strike against General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, he became [*the first*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) sitting president to walk a picket line.

Kuziemko and Naidu told me that their research didn’t extend to the Biden presidency but that Biden’s unrelenting emphasis on creating good, well-paying jobs is consistent with trying to win back less educated voters.

I ran the paper’s thesis past some people at a conference of progressive Democrats, Bold New Consensus, that was held in New York on Thursday at Cooper Union. Felicia Wong, the president of the Roosevelt Institute, said Biden is on the right track in emphasizing predistributionist policies, although she said there will always be a need for redistribution as well. Dorian Warren, who is a co-president of the progressive organizing group Community Change and co-chair of the Economic Security Project, said predistributionist and redistributionist policies can reinforce one another, to workers’ benefit.

I wouldn’t say that pre- versus re- is the entire explanation for what has happened in party politics over the past half-century, and I don’t think the authors would, either. At the conference of progressives in New York, the author Anand Giridharadas said, “We need to throw a more fun party than the other side,” calling Democrats “tedious, moralistic, scolding and wonky.” That sounds about right. My colleague Pamela Paul just [*interviewed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/opinion/democrats-elite-judis-teixeira.html) John B. Judis and Ruy Teixeira, whose new book “Where Have All the Democrats Gone?” pins the blame for Democrats’ losses on a mix of economic and social policies.

That said, I do think that Kuziemko, Marx and Naidu have put their collective finger on a genuinely important factor in the Democrats’ loss of an important constituency. Assuming their analysis holds up to peer review — and I don’t know why it wouldn’t — this research is likely to be cited by economists and political scientists for years.

Outlook: Andrew Hunter

Judging from the weakness in recent economic data, “it is increasingly hard to imagine” that the Federal Reserve will increase interest rates any more, Andrew Hunter, the deputy chief U.S. economist of Capital Economics, wrote in a note to clients on Friday. He pointed to the slowdown of payroll and wage growth and a decline in the number of people reported as employed in the October [*jobs report*](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm). “Overall, we suspect the softening in labor market conditions has much further to run and still expect the Fed to be cutting interest rates again in the first half of next year,” he wrote.

Quote of the Day

“Remember what I always say: People first, then money, then things.”

— Suze Orman (frequently)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; images by CSA Images/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 6, 2023

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[***Let the Beat Take You Across the City***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C51-6TG1-JBG3-62YT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 31, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1063 words

**Body**

Looking for something to do in New York? Celebrate the legacy of the jazz pioneer Eric Dolphy or catch the last weekend of imaginative dance performances at the LaMama Moves! festival.

Comedy

Theo Von

May 31 at 8 p.m. at the Beacon Theater, 2124 Broadway, Manhattan; msg.com/beacon-theatre.

Theo Von has come a long way since he first appeared on television as a teenager competing on MTV's ''Road Rules'' in 2000. It took years for him to persuade people to see him as a stand-up comedian and not just another reality-TV personality. What finally helped set him apart was his podcast, ''This Past Weekend,'' which he started in 2016.

The show is a top 10 hit on Spotify, drawing in millions of listeners wanting to hear Von's stream-of-consciousness style, responses to callers' voice mail messages and interviews with a wide range of guests, from the astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson to a New York City sanitation worker. Championing the Everyman has been a theme: For his second Netflix special, ''Regular People,'' which came out in 2021, he waxed nostalgic about the people he grew up with in small-town Louisiana.

Only a handful of tickets, which are $56 on Ticketmaster, remain for Von's one-night-only stop in New York City on his ''Return of the Rat Tour.'' SEAN L. McCARTHY

Music

Anitta

June 2-3 at 8 p.m. at the Brooklyn Paramount, 385 Flatbush Avenue Extension, Brooklyn; brooklynparamount.com.

After garnering attention in her native Brazil through the early 2010s with Portuguese dance-pop tracks like ''Show das Poderosas,'' Anitta made inroads in Latin America's broader Spanish-language market through collaborations with artists like Maluma. From there, she set her sights on crossing over to the United States.

But, increasingly, artists need not water down their homegrown sounds -- or perform in English -- to reach American audiences. To date, Anitta's biggest Hot 100 hit is ''Bellakeo,'' a sweaty reggaeton duet with the Mexican singer Peso Pluma. And on her latest album, ''Funk Generation,'' Anitta is firmly anchored in her Brazilian roots, paying tribute to funk carioca -- a bawdy fusion of Miami bass and samba born in the ***working-class*** favelas of Rio de Janeiro -- while singing in three languages.

Anitta's ''Baile Funk Experience'' tour stops at the Brooklyn Paramount on Sunday and Monday. Tickets start at around $70 on LiveNation. OLIVIA HORN

Eric Dolphy: Freedom of Sound

June 1-2 at John L. Tishman Auditorium, the New School, 63 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; seedartists.org.

A festival celebrating the music of the trailblazing jazz explorer Eric Dolphy (1928-64) should itself be pointedly unpredictable. A source of inspiration for boundary-pushing jazz musicians who is perhaps best known for his epochal 1964 LP ''Out to Lunch!'' (Blue Note), Dolphy mastered multiple instruments (alto sax, flute, bass clarinet), led bold ensembles, challenged harmonic conventions and proved a crucial collaborator to Charles Mingus and John Coltrane as they smashed boundaries of their own.

A decade has passed since the first Freedom of Sound festival (held at Montclair State University in 2014), and this gathering again assembles a host of the jazz world's top players-thinkers-troublemakers, like Nicole Mitchell, Angelica Sanchez, Don Byron, Patricia Brennan, Matthew Shipp and James Brandon Lewis. The programming includes a dance concert and a symposium, as well as performances of lost Dolphy compositions and Geri Allen's ''Celebration Ensemble Suite for Eric Dolphy'' -- but most of all allows plenty of room for surprise.

Performances begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday and 3 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are $35 for a day pass, or $60 for the weekend, at Seed Artists' website. ALAN SCHERSTUHL

Kids

Teens Take the Met!

May 31, 4-8 p.m., at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; metmuseum.org.

It's rare to be able to enjoy creative activities from more than 15 museums by entering just one. But that's the enviable opportunity that awaits teenagers on Friday at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

That afternoon and evening, the museum is inviting imaginative young people to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Teens Take the Met!, an annual revel for adolescent artists, performers, writers, scientists and spectators. Free for students 13 and older with a middle school or high school ID, the event features partnerships with over 50 cultural organizations.

That means, for instance, that visitors can create zines with the Bronx Museum Teen Council, build massive dowel structures with the New York Hall of Science and make a feminist-inspired altar with El Museo del Barrio. They can also experience a Battle of the Bards with Titan Theater Company and compose riddles with Writopia Lab.

The Met itself will teach about collection care and object conservation. Met Teens, participants in the museum's internship programs, will present work including ''Harlem Then & Now,'' an immersive art installation. (A full schedule is online.)

And if the hordes are hungry -- or just hungry to move -- they can enjoy snacks and silent dance parties, too. LAUREL GRAEBER

Dance

The LaMaMa Moves! Dance Festival

Through June 2 at various locations in Manhattan; lamama.org.

Since the 1960s, LaMaMa has been a haven for adventurous artists freed from the rigid confines of genres, and since 2006, it has been home to this eclectic and imaginative festival of movement under the astute, longtime curation of Nicky Paraiso. The 19th edition concludes this weekend with a trio of distinct, probing performances.

On Saturday, Dancers Unlimited, a company based in New York and Hawaii, presents ''Edible Tales: HoÊ»okupu <The Offering>,'' an interactive work exploring cultural heritage and sustainability through dance and food, drawing on the dancers' own histories (at 2 and 7 p.m. at the Ellen Stewart Theater, 66 East 4th Street). Also on Saturday, Ryuji Yamaguchi draws on his years of living in Jordan and collaborating with Palestinian artists in ''Love Story Palestine'' (at 2 p.m. at the Center for Remembering and Sharing, 41 East 11th Street). And throughout the weekend, John Scott physically responds to famous German operas in ''Heroes'' (Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:30 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Club at La MaMa, 74A East 4th Street).

Tickets start at $10 on LaMaMa's website. BRIAN SCHAEFER

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/arts/things-to-do-in-new-york-city.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/29/arts/things-to-do-in-new-york-city.html)

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2024

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[***Democratic Race May Test Party's Views on Israel***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBB-GCY1-DXY4-X0P4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 25, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:** By Claire Fahy

**Body**

Mr. Bowman faces George Latimer in a House primary in New York that will test the party's views on Israel and the strength of its left-wing faction.

When Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York won a Democratic primary in 2020 as an untested middle-school principal, his upset was heralded as evidence of the left's ascent.

Four years later, Mr. Bowman is now the one fighting for his political life, battling to turn back a primary challenge from George Latimer, the Westchester County executive heavily backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The results of Tuesday's contest in the 16th Congressional District, which covers parts of Westchester County and the Bronx, may test the durability of the Democratic Party's progressive faction: If Mr. Bowman was to lose, he would be the first member of the House's left-wing ''squad'' to be unseated.

With Mr. Bowman trailing in the polls, some of the left's biggest luminaries have come to his defense, including Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who joined Mr. Bowman at rallies over the weekend.

But their late-stage support has been countered by a fusillade of political advertising on behalf of Mr. Latimer. In barely a month, an AIPAC-affiliated super PAC has spent $14.5 million -- up to $17,000 an hour -- on the race.

Here's what to know.

Who is Jamaal Bowman?

Jamaal Bowman was elected to the House during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, after his primary upset of Eliot L. Engel, a 16-year incumbent backed by Hillary Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Andrew M. Cuomo, then the governor of New York.

He was born in New York City and grew up in public housing before he eventually founded a Bronx middle school, Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, and served as its principal for 10 years.

Mr. Bowman's campaign for Congress happened against the backdrop of widespread social justice protests during the summer of 2020, in response to the police killing of George Floyd. Mr. Bowman, who is Black and said he had been physically attacked by the police as a child, used the protests as a centerpiece of his campaign.

His victory, which came two years after Ms. Ocasio-Cortez stunned the Democratic establishment by defeating another powerful incumbent in a primary, was treated as proof that the appeal of her brand of progressive politics was not a one-time thing, but a longer-term trend.

Mr. Bowman has fashioned himself as a different kind of politician, less formal and more relatable to ***working-class*** voters, especially those of color. But at a rally with Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Mr. Sanders in the Bronx on Saturday, where the focus was to drive young voter participation, his obscenity-laced tirades attracted some scrutiny.

''The level of profanity here is so shocking as to be unbecoming of a member of Congress,'' Representative Ritchie Torres posted on social media. Mr. Torres, a Democrat who represents a neighboring district in the South Bronx, is a staunch supporter of Israel and has been critical of Mr. Bowman's stance on the war.

Who is George Latimer?

Mr. Latimer, a former state lawmaker now serving as the Westchester County executive, was recruited by Jewish leaders to run largely in response to Mr. Bowman's views on Israel.

Before his entry into politics, Mr. Latimer was a marketing executive for more than two decades, according to his Westchester County bio. He then served in a number of local government roles before his election to the New York State Assembly in 2004; he has also served in the State Senate.

Mr. Latimer, who is white, has run on a ''results, not rhetoric'' platform, accusing Mr. Bowman of being more about showmanship than substance. He has portrayed himself as a local leader with decades of connections to Westchester communities and has said he supports many of the progressive stances on housing, climate change and transportation that Mr. Bowman has championed.

Mr. Bowman has repeatedly accused Mr. Latimer of racism, following remarks Mr. Latimer made in debates about Mr. Bowman not caring for all the people in the district and being distracted by outside influence.

On Sunday, Mr. Latimer gave Mr. Bowman more fuel for his argument. In a post on Facebook, Mr. Latimer incorrectly listed Chance the Rapper as one of the luminaries whom he said Mr. Bowman spent time with last week instead of focusing on the needs of the district. The post has since been corrected to reflect that the musician he was referring to was actually the rapper Cash Cobain.

Mr. Bowman quickly jumped on the gaffe, posting on social media that Mr. Latimer ''can't tell the difference between Black men'' and ''says I have an 'ethnic benefit.'''

What are Mr. Bowman's views on Israel?

Mr. Bowman has consistently been one of the most vocal pro-Palestinian members of Congress since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7. He was one of the country's first lawmakers to call for a cease-fire in the region and has long characterized Israel's military actions in Gaza as ''genocide.''

Mr. Bowman also cast doubt on the claim that sexual violence by Hamas was a major part of the Oct. 7 attacks, a stance for which he later apologized.

His views on Israel have also lost him at least one key supporter. Mondaire Jones, with whom Mr. Bowman made history when they were both elected to Congress in 2020 as young, left-leaning Democrats, has come out in support of Mr. Latimer, criticizing Mr. Bowman for sowing ''pain and anxiety'' among Jewish New Yorkers.

Mr. Bowman has rejected all accusations of antisemitism, reiterating that rather than being anti-Israel or anti-Jewish, he is simply pro-peace. He has confirmed his belief that Hamas's attack was a war crime but said it does not justify the Israeli counteroffensive.

What role has AIPAC played in the race?

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying group, had long warned politicians to either moderate their views on the Israel-Hamas war or face a deluge of opposition. It has made good on its promise in the Bowman-Latimer race.

The $14.5 million spent by an AIPAC-affiliated super PAC easily eclipsed what any other political group has ever spent on a House race. The attack ads, mailers and phone calls rarely mention Israel; instead they criticize Mr. Bowman for the times he has broken with President Biden and paint him as a candidate who courts ''controversy, chaos and conspiracy.''

It remains to be seen whether AIPAC's involvement might backfire. At a rally for Mr. Bowman on Friday, Mr. Sanders warned against allowing the race to be bought, and many voters voiced their concerns about a powerful political group's involvement in their district.

Why else is Mr. Bowman considered vulnerable?

In October, the congressman was charged with a misdemeanor after he pulled a fire alarm in a House office building, creating chaos while Democrats attempted to stall a vote on a Republican-written stopgap spending bill designed to avert a government shutdown.

Mr. Bowman was accused of pulling the alarm in an attempt to delay the vote; he has said it was an accident and paid a $1,000 fine after being censured by his colleagues.

His comments on Israel have not been the only ones to stir controversy. Mr. Bowman wrote a number of posts on a blog that was active until 2014 in which he promoted unfounded conspiracy theories relating to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City. The blog posts had been deleted, but were discovered and published by The Daily Beast in January. The congressman explained that his website was a place where he processed his personal thoughts ''in a personal blog that few people ever read.''

Jesse McKinley and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.Jesse McKinley and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/24/nyregion/bowman-latimer-primary.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/24/nyregion/bowman-latimer-primary.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS:Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York, above, has been one of the most vocal pro-Palestinian members of Congress. George Latimer, left, is backed by Jewish leaders. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***5 Takeaways From Jamaal Bowman’s Loss***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBH-T8D1-DXY4-X0F9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1343 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Fandos Nicholas Fandos is a Times reporter covering New York politics and government.

**Highlight:** The congressman, who lost to George Latimer, was the first “squad” member to fall, in a painful defeat for the Democratic left.

**Body**

The congressman, who lost to George Latimer, was the first “squad” member to fall, in a painful defeat for the Democratic left.

Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York became the first member of the House’s progressive “squad” [*to lose a seat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) in Congress on Tuesday, dealing a stinging defeat to the Democratic left after a brutal intraparty fight.

The contest on the outskirts of New York City centered on Democrats’ disagreements over Israel’s war in Gaza. Progressive groups raced to try to save Mr. Bowman, a leading voice against the war. Pro-Israel political groups pumped record-shattering sums into defeating him.

But by the end, it devolved into a broader spat over race and class that tested the Democratic coalition. Mr. Bowman’s opponent, the Westchester County executive, George Latimer, also benefited from old-fashioned local alliances and a series of embarrassing missteps by the incumbent.

Here are five takeaways from the results.

AIPAC notched its first big win.

After the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attacks, political groups aligned with Israel issued a message to its critics like Mr. Bowman: Moderate your views or prepare for stiff political opposition.

Tuesday’s result showed that was no idle threat.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Democratic Majority for Israel and other affiliated organizations ultimately [*spent more than $16 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) to defeat Mr. Bowman, more than any outside group has ever put into a House race.

Critics of the war and supporters of Israel now believe the show of force has not only helped take out a powerful pro-Palestinian voice in Congress, but could have a chilling effect on other critics of Israel at a crucial point in the war.

“The outcome in this race once again shows that the pro-Israel position is both good policy and good politics — for both parties,” said Marshall Wittmann, an AIPAC spokesman, who called Mr. Bowman’s statements a “vituperative barrage of scurrilous attacks against the pro-Israel community.”

But it is less clear that the approach is advancing AIPAC’s broader goal of reinforcing support for Israel among Democrats writ large. Few of the ads that the group paid for in New York mentioned Israel. And AIPAC’s attacks have galvanized a concerted countercampaign by the left to try to discredit the group, which is bipartisan, among Democratic voters.

The defeat spells trouble for ‘the squad’ and the left.

Left-leaning groups like Justice Democrats, who once played the role of conquering insurgents, found themselves running a desperate rescue operation in an overwhelmingly Democratic district. They depleted bank accounts and redirected staff to the race full-time.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York declared the race her most urgent electoral priority and rallied with Mr. Bowman and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont on Saturday. She followed up on Monday, appearing in Mount Vernon with Representative Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts for a rally and to door-knock voters.

Ultimately, they could not compete with the other side’s vast resources.

But Mr. Bowman also lost traction with the type of liberal voters who delivered progressives’ wins in 2018 and 2020. Many past supporters who abandoned him for Mr. Latimer said they came to see their congressman as too extreme to help solve the nation’s problems.

Mr. Bowman may not be the last member of the House’s influential left-wing “squad” to lose his seat — even this year. AIPAC and other groups have now turned their attention to [*defeating Representative Cori Bush of Missouri*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) in an August primary.

The contest revealed racial, class and generational splits.

For decades, Democrats in New York and across the country have succeeded when they hold together a coalition of Black, Latino and Jewish voters, young people and the ideologically liberal of all stripes.

The race between Mr. Bowman and Mr. Latimer showed how badly that coalition has cracked — by race, class and age — and just how much work President Biden will need to do ahead of November.

It may take weeks to fully analyze Tuesday’s results, but early returns indicated that Mr. Bowman performed best in areas home to large Black, Latino and progressive white populations. Mr. Latimer ran up large margins in more moderate suburban communities, including ones with sizable Jewish populations.

Both candidates stoked the divisions.

Mr. Bowman, who is Black, openly campaigned as the candidate of the ***working class***, progressives and people of color. He called Mr. Latimer, who is white, a candidate for the wealthy suburban class. And he alienated many Jewish voters with harsh criticism of Israel and comments like one suggesting [*“the Jews”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) in his district had intentionally chosen to live apart from other people.

Mr. Latimer, in turn, portrayed the incumbent as a sideshow, preoccupied with making his name and playing an “ethnic game.” He repeatedly made racially coded comments that fed Mr. Bowman’s case, including by suggesting that the congressman did not care about voters “who are not Black or brown.”

Local relationships made a difference.

Mr. Bowman’s campaign had no shortage of national star power. In the last week alone, he appeared on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert,” rapped with Cash Cobain and rallied with Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Mr. Sanders.

But on the ground, Mr. Latimer, 70, was the one with renown. A local leader who first took office in the Reagan era, he had racked up friendships, favors and familiarity through decades of retail politics at the local, state and county levels, overseeing a huge county budget and showing up at senior bingo hours.

Some local officials said Mr. Bowman, a former middle-school principal, was comparatively hard to find.

“I could see Latimer maybe five times a week,” said Paul Feiner, the longtime town supervisor of Greenburgh. “I’ve only seen Bowman maybe three or four times since he’s been a congressmember.”

Marsha Gordon, the head of Westchester’s main business council, described a similar experience. She said she had invited Mr. Bowman to come speak shortly after he was elected and then never heard from him again, even though her group represents some of the region’s largest employers, hospitals and colleges.

“That says a lot about where his priorities are,” Ms. Gordon said. “Jamaal Bowman has just not been engaged.”

Once the race grew turbulent, Mr. Bowman, 48, struggled to find fellow elected Democrats willing to vouch for him in the face of withering attacks.

Mr. Latimer won the endorsement of every local Democratic Party committee in the district that took sides, including the one representing Mr. Bowman’s hometown, Yonkers. And prominent Black officials helped him get past [*charges of race baiting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html).

A fire alarm haunted the race.

Mr. Bowman’s opponents churned out an unusually large amount of opposition research against him, including [*old blog posts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) dabbling in Sept. 11 conspiracy theories.

But the blunder that may have cost Mr. Bowman most took place right in the open.

Last fall, Mr. Bowman pulled a false fire alarm in a House office building, sending the Capitol into chaos on national television as Congress raced to avert a government shutdown. Mr. Bowman claimed he thought the device would open a locked door, but video of the incident suggested otherwise and he later [*pleaded guilty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/nyregion/bowman-latimer-house-new-york.html) to a misdemeanor charge and apologized.

Mr. Latimer returned to the episode repeatedly to argue that Mr. Bowman was more interested in social media stardom than serious work. In interviews, several voters brought it up without prompting to explain why they had lost faith in Mr. Bowman.

“He’s making the party look really bad,” said Sandra Altman, citing Mr. Bowman’s fire alarm episode and his left-leaning views, as she voted for Mr. Latimer in Scarsdale. “He’s on the fringe doing all kinds of stuff.”

Molly Longman contributed reporting from Scarsdale, N.Y.

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PHOTO: Representative Jamaal Bowman lost in a race that centered on the Israel-Hamas war. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Gregg Vigliotti for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2024

**End of Document**



[***New Factories and Jobs Are Not Enough to Stem France’s Far Right Surge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDG-P351-DXY4-X0PX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 5, 2024 Friday 22:22 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1439 words

**Byline:** Liz Alderman Liz Alderman is the chief European business correspondent, writing about economic, social and policy developments around Europe.

**Highlight:** President Emmanuel Macron’s promise of re-industrialization in northern France has helped stimulate the economy, but “people feel defeated and angry.”

**Body**

President Emmanuel Macron’s promise of re-industrialization in northern France has helped stimulate the economy, but “people feel defeated and angry.”

Between abandoned coal mines and an engine plant scheduled for closure, a gleaming new factory hovers like a phoenix over Billy-Berclau, a small industrial town in northern France. Inside, 700 newly hired workers are making next-generation electric vehicle batteries for the Automotive Cells Company — part of a grand project to revive the wider region’s flailing fortunes.

A “[*Battery Valley*](https://dunkerquepromotion.org/en/investments/9-dunkrik-at-the-heart-of-frances-battery-valley/)” is rising here from the remains of industries that shuttered during a wave of globalization. Three more giant electric car battery plants are expected to open by 2026, a testament to a re-industrialization strategy that President Emmanuel Macron’s government has trumpeted as an antidote to the far-right [*National Rally party*](https://dunkerquepromotion.org/en/investments/9-dunkrik-at-the-heart-of-frances-battery-valley/), which has gained ground in areas decimated by job losses.

“Industry is an anti-National Rally weapon, because in places where anger has risen, we’re restoring hope,” Roland Lescure, Mr. Macron’s deputy industry minister, said earlier this year.

But the bet is not paying off politically. Billy-Berclau and nearly every other town in this region of Pas-de-Calais handed a resounding victory last week to National Rally in parliamentary elections — a trend that is likely to be repeated in a final voting round on Sunday.

“There’s a sense of disconnect,” said André Kuchcinski, president of the Artois-Flandres Industrial Park, an area covering more than 1,100 acres where Automotive Cells Company, known as ACC, is expanding its new plant. “You have a government that pushed for development and job creation, but a lot of people are still struggling and feel insecure,” he said. “A new factory doesn’t address that, but there’s a feeling that the far right does.”

Around Billy-Berclau, people speak in hushed tones of a political earthquake coming.

“There used to be thousands of more jobs. The new factory only makes up a fraction of the ones lost,” said Marc Vandamme, 54, a home care nurse, sipping a beer at the Europe Cafe, a local hangout where people buy lottery tickets or down a coffee before work.

“People feel defeated and angry,” Mr. Vandamme said. “The cost of everything keeps rising, and they’re also worried about immigration,” he said. “The National Rally is promising to fix all that, and many are saying, let’s give them a shot at running things.”

The Battery Valley initiative was supposed to address such worries. Pas-de-Calais, a former mining area that stretches from the flat plains around Billy-Berclau to Dunkirk on the coast and toward the Belgian border, has lived through wrenching cycles of industrial blight and rebirth since the end of World War II.

Heavily unionized, Pas-de-Calais had tended to vote for Communist or left-leaning candidates representing workers’ rights before swinging in the early 2000s to support more centrist politicians. In the 2012 presidential elections, François Hollande, a Socialist, won over half of the vote.

But by then, globalization had started to bite. Over decades, tire makers, steel and paint plants, as well as the French automakers Renault and Peugeot (now part of Stellantis after a merger with the Italian automaker Fiat) had been relocating manufacturing to lower-cost countries to battle cheaper competition from Eastern Europe and Asia.

Marine Le Pen, the far-right candidate for the movement then called the National Front, capitalized on the malaise. She rebranded the image of the party, long associated with overt racism, antisemitism and Holocaust denial, into one that [*championed workers and purchasing power*](https://dunkerquepromotion.org/en/investments/9-dunkrik-at-the-heart-of-frances-battery-valley/). She campaigned fiercely in towns across France that had lost jobs to globalization — especially in Pas-de-Calais, where she set up her election office to attract ***working class*** voters.

By the time Mr. Macron ran in France’s 2017 presidential elections, nearly 40,000 more industrial jobs had disappeared from the region. Ms. Le Pen won 52 percent of the Pas-de-Calais vote that year, nearly twice the amount for Mr. Macron. In the 2022 presidential election, she captured 57 percent of the vote.

Mr. Macron, who once defended globalization, swung to a new priority: reindustrialize France with “technologies of the future.” In Battery Valley, ProLogium of Taiwan is expected to open a battery plant, along with two others involving French and international investors. A series of new electric battery recycling plants will also be built. Mr. Macron says there will be 20,000 direct jobs created over the next decade, and as many indirect ones.

Inside ACC, which is co-owned by Stellantis, Mercedes and TotalEnergies, some are clinging to Mr. Macron’s promise of a better future. Eight soccer fields long, the plant, which opened last summer, received about 840 million euros ($910 million) in state subsidies. It sits on a site once dominated by Française de Mécanique, a subsidiary of Stellantis that manufactures internal combustion engines, which has downsized to about 1,400 workers, from 6,000 workers at its height. As it continues to wind down, ACC has pledged to take on 700 of its former employees.

Among them is Christophe Lequimme, 52, who built car engines for 22 years before being retrained by ACC to work on lithium car batteries.

Billy-Berclau’s wavering fortunes could be traced through his family, starting with his grandfather, who lost his job in the mines when they closed in the 1960s, but found work at Française de Mécanique. Mr. Lequimme’s father and mother spent their careers in that same factory, and Mr. Lequimme followed in their footsteps. When the layoffs came, he jumped at the chance to work at ACC.

“It’s a great opportunity for a new beginning,” he said.

But such optimism hasn’t echoed through the broader community.

In last weekend’s parliamentary elections, Bruno Bilde, a local National Rally politician who is close to Ms. Le Pen, won nearly 60 percent of the vote, knocking out his main rival, Steve Bossart, the center-left mayor of Billy-Berclau.

Mr. Bilde declined requests for an interview. But in the lead-up to the election, he was actively courting voters at the ACC factory, posting a [*photo on X*](https://dunkerquepromotion.org/en/investments/9-dunkrik-at-the-heart-of-frances-battery-valley/) of him with a group of supporters brandishing National Rally pamphlets. “Thank you for your welcome,” he wrote, adding: “The National Rally is the leading party for workers!”

Such talk unnerves officials at ACC. Matthieu Hubert, the company’s secretary general, noted that National Rally has branded electric vehicles as cars for the elites, and its platform calls for ending a European Union ban on gas-powered vehicles starting in 2035 that is designed to combat climate change.

“I can’t say it doesn’t worry me,” Mr. Hubert said, adding that European automakers are racing to stay ahead of Asian and American rivals by producing cleaner vehicles, taking back supply chains and building batteries. “This factory represents the future.”

For Billy-Berclau’s mayor, Mr. Bossart, the rise of the far right in a region where billions in new investments are pouring in is a paradox that goes beyond economics.

“We have many people who own their own homes, who have decent pensions. People have jobs and there’s low unemployment,” said Mr. Bossart, 28, who was born in Billy-Berclau. “And we’re drawing big investments like the ACC factory.”

Even so, locals had grown increasingly concerned by a sense of insecurity, even though the town did not have crime like larger cities. But on television, news programs frequently show images of migrants in Calais near the English Channel and link them to reports of crime, stoking worries.

There was also a sense that Mr. Macron had grown out of touch and did not understand their struggles, Mr. Bossart said. They were angry that he raised the retirement age to 64 from 62, and felt he had not done enough to address a cost of living crisis, including high energy bills that the National Rally has promised to reduce.

“This region is more attractive than it has ever been for investors,” said Mr. Bossart. “But people’s anger has accumulated. As soon as they can vote, they are showing their despair.”

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Billy-Berclau.

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Billy-Berclau.

PHOTOS: After two decades building car engines, Christophe Lequimme now makes lithium batteries in Billy-Berclau, France. Others in the region are fearful of the future.; Billy-Berclau, a bucolic town in northern France, has lost jobs as mines shuttered and manufacturers moved to lower-cost countries. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***France Is on the Brink of Something Terrifying; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7S-J901-DXY4-X4W5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2024 Thursday 23:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1210 words

**Byline:** Cole Stangler

**Highlight:** In calling snap elections, Emmanuel Macron has taken a dangerous gamble.

**Body**

Whatever happens next, it’ll go down as one of the wildest gambles in modern French history. President Emmanuel Macron’s decision [*to dissolve*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) the National Assembly and hold snap legislative elections on June 30 and July 7 has given the far right its best shot at governing France for the first time since the Vichy regime of World War II.

The move stunned the country’s political class, including high-ranking Macronists from whom the president’s plans were reportedly [*heavily guarded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html). And for much of France, the decision remains perplexing. For those with the most to lose from the far right in power — above all, immigrants and the descendants of recent immigrants — the news is downright terrifying. Mr. Macron, who has a habit of disregarding conventional wisdom, will surely hope the move redounds to his benefit. But make no mistake: France is in danger.

In many respects, Mr. Macron’s domestic agenda was already in crisis. Since the 2022 legislative elections denied his electoral alliance a majority in the National Assembly, his coalition has been forced to seek support from other parties, namely the right-wing Republicans. At times, the government [*bypassed Parliament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) altogether. But for the bulk of its work, the administration was dependent on the Republicans’ backing.

The historic triumph of Marine Le Pen’s National Rally in Sunday’s elections for the European Parliament — in which her party took [*31 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) of the vote, more than double that of the president’s party — threatened this arrangement. Without a dissolution of the National Assembly, the National Rally would have continued to ramp up pressure on the Republicans, aiming to woo conservative voters and punish Republican leaders for their tacit support of the president. The prospect of a lame-duck presidency would have only grown.

The new elections are an attempt to salvage Mr. Macron’s second term. And he may genuinely believe voters will deliver him a fresh parliamentary majority, hoping his base of old and wealthy voters will once again show up to the polls in much greater numbers than the young and ***working-class*** voters who are less sympathetic to his presidency. Lingering animosity among various left-wing parties and a generalized fear of the far right coming to power could also play in his favor.

But there is a more cynical way of viewing Mr. Macron’s wager. As France’s far right continues to gain traction — its various obsessions propelled by a newly sympathetic [*media*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) landscape and, in some cases, even [*inspiring*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) pieces of legislation — it is increasingly [*favored*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) to win the 2027 presidential election. Against this backdrop, Mr. Macron’s tactic can also be seen as an effort to derail the National Rally’s march to the Élysée Palace by, counterintuitively, forcing the party to govern.

In other words, the move could be a last-ditch bid to demystify the party’s anti-establishment allure by bringing it into the messy real world of policymaking, probably as part of a wider coalition. Under this theory, even the prospects of the National Rally securing an absolute majority and naming a prime minister of its own can be seen as a kind of worthy sacrifice: better to have Prime Minister [*Jordan Bardella*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html), the rising star of the National Rally, than President Le Pen.

Such a scenario is far from unlikely, as there is ample reason to believe Mr. Macron’s party will suffer at the polls this summer. For one, he is extremely unpopular. Much of the country views him as an out-of-touch leader who favors the interests of the wealthy, and the past two years have not helped his case. After a tempestuous first term in office, he kicked off his second by ramming through a fiercely contested rise in the [*retirement age*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) and clamping down on [*unemployment benefits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html). Today his approval ratings hover [*around 30 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html), even lower than President Biden’s.

What’s more, France’s so-called republican front — the tradition of voters and parties joining forces to support whichever candidates take on the far right — is in its death throes. Much of the responsibility lies with Mr. Macron. He and his allies [*opted not to endorse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) left-wing candidates en masse against the National Rally in the last legislative elections, making it far less likely that left-wing voters will turn out for Macronists this time around. His government has cracked down on [*civil liberties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html), [*smeared progressives*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) and passed an [*immigration bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) that Ms. Le Pen cheered as an “ideological victory.”

Now he appears willing to accept the possibility of handing over the keys of government to a party founded by a former Waffen SS section officer and a colonial nostalgist who infamously [*downplayed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) the Holocaust. Many voters may wonder: What’s the point of a republican front if the president has already decided the republic can accommodate the far right? On Tuesday the leader of the Republicans, Éric Ciotti, seemed to come to an answer when he called for [*an alliance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) with the National Rally.

Mr. Ciotti was widely rebuked and [*expelled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) from the party, but he is swimming with the tide. The National Rally is [*expected*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html) to win more votes than any other party. In addition to its various victories in the battleground of ideas, the party showed on Sunday that it is more than capable of turning out its base in high-stakes elections. It may also benefit from a potential alliance with Reconquest, an even more extreme party that rails against the ravages of wokism and openly embraces the “great replacement” conspiracy theory.

But there is a wild card. While Mr. Macron’s strategy appeared to rule out the possibility that France’s four major left-wing parties would join forces, they announced within 24 hours their intention to do just that. The parties aim to run single candidates in each legislative district under the banner of a new [*Popular Front*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html), a nod to the 1936 electoral alliance that was forged amid fears of mounting fascism.

The most recent legislative elections demonstrated the strength of the French left when it [*unites*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html). In 2022 a similar alliance won more seats than the National Rally and defeated Mr. Macron’s coalition in [*scores of districts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html). This time around, left-wing parties may also benefit from their more uncompromising opposition to Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Bardella. A strong showing by the left could alter the complexion of the campaign. At the very least, the far right can expect no simple procession to power.

In 2017 Mr. Macron, then a candidate, boldly announced his intent to “[*eradicate the anger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html)” fueling support for the National Rally. Seven years later, it appears safe to say he has failed. He may well be remembered for a very different reason: not as a principled opponent of the far right, but as a reckless enabler in chief.

Cole Stangler ([*@ColeStangler*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html)) is a journalist based in France and the author of “[*Paris Is Not Dead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/world/europe/france-european-elections.html): Surviving Hypergentrification in the City of Light.”

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY POOL PHOTO BY STEPHANE MAHE) This article appeared in print on page SR4.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2024

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[***France Is in Danger***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7S-V901-DXY4-X0D6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2024 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Editorial Desk; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1202 words

**Byline:** By Cole Stangler

**Body**

Whatever happens next, it'll go down as one of the wildest gambles in modern French history. President Emmanuel Macron's decision to dissolve the National Assembly and hold snap legislative elections on June 30 and July 7 has given the far right its best shot at governing France for the first time since the Vichy regime of World War II.

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The historic triumph of Marine Le Pen's National Rally in Sunday's elections for the European Parliament -- in which her party took 31 percent of the vote, more than double that of the president's party -- threatened this arrangement. Without a dissolution of the National Assembly, the National Rally would have continued to ramp up pressure on the Republicans, aiming to woo conservative voters and punish Republican leaders for their tacit support of the president. The prospect of a lame-duck presidency would have only grown.

The new elections are an attempt to salvage Mr. Macron's second term. And he may genuinely believe voters will deliver him a fresh parliamentary majority, hoping his base of old and wealthy voters will once again show up to the polls in much greater numbers than the young and ***working-class*** voters who are less sympathetic to his presidency. Lingering animosity among various left-wing parties and a generalized fear of the far right coming to power could also play in his favor.

But there is a more cynical way of viewing Mr. Macron's wager. As France's far right continues to gain traction -- its various obsessions propelled by a newly sympathetic media landscape and, in some cases, even inspiring pieces of legislation -- it is increasingly favored to win the 2027 presidential election. Against this backdrop, Mr. Macron's tactic can also be seen as an effort to derail the National Rally's march to the Élysée Palace by, counterintuitively, forcing the party to govern.

In other words, the move could be a last-ditch bid to demystify the party's anti-establishment allure by bringing it into the messy real world of policymaking, probably as part of a wider coalition. Under this theory, even the prospects of the National Rally securing an absolute majority and naming a prime minister of its own can be seen as a kind of worthy sacrifice: better to have Prime Minister Jordan Bardella, the rising star of the National Rally, than President Le Pen.

Such a scenario is far from unlikely, as there is ample reason to believe Mr. Macron's party will suffer at the polls this summer. For one, he is extremely unpopular. Much of the country views him as an out-of-touch leader who favors the interests of the wealthy, and the past two years have not helped his case. After a tempestuous first term in office, he kicked off his second by ramming through a fiercely contested rise in the retirement age and clamping down on unemployment benefits. Today his approval ratings hover around 30 percent, even lower than President Biden's.

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The most recent legislative elections demonstrated the strength of the French left when it unites. In 2022 a similar alliance won more seats than the National Rally and defeated Mr. Macron's coalition in scores of districts. This time around, left-wing parties may also benefit from their more uncompromising opposition to Ms. Le Pen and Mr. Bardella. A strong showing by the left could alter the complexion of the campaign. At the very least, the far right can expect no simple procession to power.

In 2017 Mr. Macron, then a candidate, boldly announced his intent to ''eradicate the anger'' fueling support for the National Rally. Seven years later, it appears safe to say he has failed. He may well be remembered for a very different reason: not as a principled opponent of the far right, but as a reckless enabler in chief.

Cole Stangler (@ColeStangler) is a journalist based in France and the author of ''Paris Is Not Dead: Surviving Hypergentrification in the City of Light.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/13/opinion/macron-france-elections.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/13/opinion/macron-france-elections.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pool photo by Stephane Mahe FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2024

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[***Why Biden Must Collide With the Democratic Party on Immigration; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B2R-WRM1-DXY4-X0NP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 10, 2024 Wednesday 23:24 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 997 words

**Byline:** Mike Madrid

**Highlight:** Brokering a deal could help the president shore up the nontraditional alliance that got him elected four years ago.

**Body**

The negotiations on Ukraine funding and stricter border protections have exposed a [*growing rift*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/us/democrats-asylum-ukraine-israel.html) between President Biden and his own party. Republican hard-liners have demanded a bill that mirrors policies advanced during the Trump administration, especially ones related to asylum seekers, increased border security and the mandate that companies institute [*the E-Verify employment eligibility system*](https://www.e-verify.gov/about-e-verify).

Democrats such as Representative Pramila Jayapal called the proposals “cruel, inhumane and unworkable,” but Republicans believe they have found solid ground with voters. Recent polling suggests the Republicans are right. A [*CBS News/YouGov poll*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cbs-news-opinion-poll-americans-border-crisis/) released on Sunday found that 68 percent of Americans disapprove of Mr. Biden’s handling of border security.

There are many, both inside and outside his party, who believe that by agreeing to the Republican deal, Mr. Biden would be surrendering too much moral high ground and any future policy leverage. But in fact, this is a chance for him to make meaningful border-security policy changes and redefine his party as the home of an aspirational multiethnic, ***working-class*** coalition.

Securing the borders of a sovereign state isn’t racism — it’s among the first responsibilities of government. And many voters, including Democrats, are demanding that the Biden administration do a better job with that responsibility. A recent Fox News poll showed that fully [*22 percent*](https://www.foxnews.com/official-polls/fox-news-poll-republicans-preferred-top-issues-inflation-security) of Democrats favor Republican candidates on border security.

More than any other group, Latinos have political views that correlate with — indeed, are racially and ethnically defined by — the immigrant experience. Yet even these voters are conveying growing concerns about border security. According to an April 2021 [*survey*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/04/20/most-latinos-say-u-s-immigration-system-needs-big-changes/) by the Pew Research Center, about 44 percent of Hispanics and 48 percent of respondents overall think illegal immigration is a major problem, an increase of more than 15 percentage points since June 2020.

The supposition among much of the Democratic establishment and progressive activists is that Latino voters prioritize more relaxed immigration policies over border security. To win re-election, President Biden must redefine the narrative that has become orthodoxy and lead his party toward supporting significantly enhanced border security measures.

While this would be a prudent political move, such a shift would most likely lead to an internal Democratic civil war. While Mr. Biden’s election efforts in 2020 hinged on just enough white Republican suburban women leaving the G.O.P., the defection of traditional minority Democrats — notably Latino, Black and Asian voters — narrowed his margin of victory. Younger voters and voters of color, a key coalition, have shown the largest drop in support. But brokering a deal with the Republicans could help him shore up the nontraditional alliance that got him elected four years ago.

Latinos have flummoxed Democrats by shifting right in three of the last four national elections. This shift is about far more than immigration reform, but it is undeniable that it has been pronounced in border communities, especially in [*Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/20/us/politics/election-hispanics-asians-voting.html) and New Mexico, where the crisis is most acute. The failure of Democrats to propose meaningful border security measures has led to their being vulnerable to Republican attacks of supporting “[*open borders*](https://www.cfr.org/article/bidens-new-southern-border-plan-might-just-work).”

Mr. Biden, whose campaign has only recently and reluctantly begun to acknowledge the slide in support by Latino (in fact, [*all nonwhite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/upshot/democrats-biden-hispanic-black-voters.html)) voters for the Democratic Party, is facing growing pressure from advocacy groups to take a more progressive position on immigration than the party in past decades — even though polling and electoral data suggest Latino voters are moving in the opposite direction.

The president will have to challenge the Democrats’ established doctrine on the border and party’s view of how Latinos view border policy — a move that will reposition the Democratic coalition to better benefit from the demographic changes among Latino voters in the short, medium and long term. The rightward shift among Latino voters has exposed an uncomfortable cleavage between the Latino immigrant-advocacy groups that rose to prominence in the 1990s and the views of their first- and second-generation children, who [*dominate*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/28/8-facts-about-recent-latino-immigrants-to-the-us/#:~:text=Nearly%2020%20million%20Latino%20immigrants,total%20Latino%20population%20that%20year.) the Latino voting population.

President Biden’s re-election strategy is clearly not working — but it is fixable. Immigration, the undocumented and related issues have been overemphasized by institutional Democratic Latino voices, including consultants and organizations vested in an outdated narrative. Latino voters, meanwhile, are far [*more focused*](https://unidosus.org/hispanicvote/polling-issues/) on basic economic concerns and public safety, issues where Republicans tend to poll better among ***working-class*** voters.

The immigration measures that progressive and establishment Latino Democrats favor, while desperately needed and a moral imperative, are a nonstarter for House Republicans and not terribly important to Latino voters. Mr. Biden would be smart to agree to beef up border security, restrict asylum and move on to economic messaging, precisely the issue Latino voters are telling pollsters they want to hear more of.

The president finds himself and his re-election prospects at a crossroads. He can double down on a strategy of outwardly opposing increased border protection, or he can reframe the debate and begin to rebuild the ethnic and racial coalitions that brought him and Barack Obama to power. To do that, he must assert that a Latino agenda, as it exists, has grown far bigger than one predominantly focused on ethnic ties to immigration.

Mike Madrid is a Republican political consultant and a co-founder of the Lincoln Project.

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**End of Document**



[***The Amiable Attack Dog From Kentucky Who Could Join the Harris Ticket***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CK5-XPC1-DXY4-X3CN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1738 words

**Byline:** Nick Corasaniti Nick Corasaniti is a Times reporter covering national politics, with a focus on voting and elections.

**Highlight:** Andy Beshear, the Democratic governor of a deep-red state, is an intriguing Southern contender to become Kamala Harris’s running mate. He’s already straining to go after JD Vance.

**Body**

A political scion with the most famous last name in Kentucky Democratic politics, Andy Beshear, the affable, aw-shucks governor, is best known around the state for showing up.

Everywhere.

He hosted nightly “Andy Hour” broadcasts for months during the pandemic. He met with families and held daily briefings after tornadoes tore through western Kentucky and flooding drowned eastern parts of the state. He’s constantly cutting the ribbon on a road or a bridge or a factory.

This boundless public schedule helps explain why Mr. Beshear is one of the rarest politicians in the country: a two-term Democratic governor in a deeply red, and deeply rural, state. His singular achievement, capped by a comfortable re-election victory in 2023, has made him tantalizing to national Democrats, who are eager for a candidate who can mend the party’s broken bonds with rural and ***working-class*** voters.

Now Mr. Beshear is squarely in the mix of potential running mates for Vice President Kamala Harris, who is [*considering several white, male Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html) who have proven their ability to attract moderate voters. He has said he received one of the first calls she made after President Biden dropped out.

Like [*the other contenders*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html), Mr. Beshear is playing it coy.

“What I’m able to confirm,” he said in an interview, a smile escaping as he evaded a series of vice-presidential questions, “is that it’s an honor to be under consideration.” He declined to confirm whether he was being vetted or whether he had received requests for personal documents from the Harris campaign.

Working against Mr. Beshear is the fact that his party has no hope of flipping Kentucky in a presidential election. Republicans have also largely rendered him a policymaking figurehead in his state, where they hold legislative supermajorities. But plenty of Democrats believe his biography, rather than strict geography, could help the Californian at the top of the ticket.

“She would get a guy who knows how to talk to rural Americans, who knows how to reflect the most positive aspects of rural America, and therefore able to make our case to the folks in rural America who felt abandoned by the Democratic Party,” said Mike Ward, a Democratic former representative from Kentucky.

But with his television-ready presence, trial-lawyer training and a teaspoon of Appalachian drawl, Mr. Beshear appears ready and willing to take on another role: attack dog.

‘JD Vance ain’t from here’

Tryouts have already begun.

Mr. Beshear, like other vice-presidential hopefuls, has been making the rounds on cable news. He has notably hit out at Senator JD Vance of Ohio, the newly minted Republican vice-presidential nominee, questioning his Appalachian street cred.

“JD Vance ain’t from here,” Mr. Beshear said this week on MSNBC, assailing the senator as an Ohio interloper. (Mr. Vance spent summers in Kentucky, according to his best-selling memoir, “Hillbilly Elegy.”)

Mr. Beshear kept it up later [*on CNN*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html).

“He claims to be from eastern Kentucky, tries to write a book about it to profit off our people, and then he calls us lazy,” he said of Mr. Vance, who has suggested that Mr. Beshear, the son of former Gov. Steve Beshear, owes his own success to nepotism. “This makes me angry.”

The harsh words might seem surprising from a governor who often promises to put policy over party loyalties and turn down the political temperature. But for Republicans in Kentucky, it was familiar.

“He is a partisan Democrat to his core,” said Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist in Kentucky. “He carries all of their views.”

Mr. Beshear has been outspoken on one of Democrats’ strongest issues: abortion rights. During his re-election campaign, he [*ran a series of emotional and cutting ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html) attacking his opponent’s anti-abortion position as extreme.

Though he speaks frequently of his Christian faith, Mr. Beshear sees no conflict with his support for abortion rights, an issue he would be expected to campaign on aggressively if Ms. Harris makes him her running mate.

“My faith doesn’t prevent me from supporting that a woman should be able to make her own health-care decisions,” he said in the interview. “We men certainly can. And no one’s tried to take that away from us.”

National ambitions

On Thursday, his weekly news conference in Frankfort, the state capital, morphed into yet another vice-presidential audition of sorts, as he unintentionally — or perhaps quite intentionally — pitched what he would bring to a ticket.

“You travel around Kentucky right now and you see a state where the temperature is turned down, where neighbors aren’t yelling at neighbors,” Mr. Beshear said as he responded to a question about his interactions with the vice president.

He recounted a recent event he had held with two Republican legislators announcing a new investment in rural Allen County. “Whoever makes up this ticket, if we can get to that type of place in the United States of America, I think everyone will take a breath. I think everyone will smile a little bit more.”

Mr. Beshear’s mission to broaden his political appeal beyond Kentucky began well before his recent ascension to the vice-presidential parlor game.

Soon after his 2023 victory, he formed a political action committee called In This Together, whose stated aim is to help Democrats in both battleground states and Republican strongholds. The group, however, [*has raised just $493,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html) this year, according to the most recent campaign finance reports, and has [*announced only five endorsements*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html) so far.

But Mr. Beshear has hit the campaign trail for Democrats in such areas. This year, he traveled to Montana in support of Senator Jon Tester, one of this year’s most endangered Democrats, who has also managed to hang on in a deep-red state.

“He was talking my language,” said Evan Barrett, a Democratic operative from Montana who attended the fund-raising event. “He was talking Jon Tester’s language. He was talking the language of anybody successful in a business where you don’t have doctrinaire control.”

The omnipresent governor

In Kentucky, Mr. Beshear’s comfort zone is anywhere outside Frankfort, his uniform a shirt and jacket, no tie and rubber-soled loafers. All he needs is a government-sponsored project or windfall.

On Wednesday, that project was the Governor’s School for the Arts, a summer program for high school students held this year at the University of Kentucky. The governor ricocheted around campus to congratulate graduating students and listen to some performances.

“Programs like this helped my confidence immeasurably,” Mr. Beshear told a student choir that had just finished a rehearsal. “To the point where now, I don’t care what anybody says about me — which I hope you all have seen!”

Few governors have been as adept at drawing federal money to their home state and showing off the rewards. Kentucky had received $8 billion in federal infrastructure money as of May, [*according to records from the Biden administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html), including $1.6 billion for a much-needed project to rebuild a bridge connecting Cincinnati and Kentucky.

Mr. Beshear has a visual flair: As he posed with local companies to roll out a $386 million investment in broadband internet, he often brought along an oversize check.

But he was most visible during the pandemic. Like many governors, Mr. Beshear tried to reassure his state with nightly broadcasts.

“His daily briefings were like an appointment-TV event for people,” said Joshua A. Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky.

A weak governor with a strong reputation

Despite what his public appearances project, Mr. Beshear is limited in his powers. The Kentucky Constitution ensures that the governor remains weak, and Republican supermajorities in the Legislature can override the governor’s vetoes.

Mr. Beshear says this has forced him to work across the aisle and forge momentary partnerships on budget deals — or to play hardball to pass controversial bills on issues like sports betting and medical marijuana.

While the Legislature “said they would never pass while I was governor,” Mr. Beshear said, he managed to pass both. “Those took bipartisan votes.”

Republicans in Frankfort feel differently.

“He doesn’t communicate with us, he doesn’t talk with us, he fights against and speaks against a lot of our initiatives,” said State Senator Damon Thayer, a Republican. “He’s vetoed over 100 of them, and we overrun them. And then he takes credit for our work when we’re not in session.”

Mr. Beshear brushed off Republican criticisms.

“I have been Monday in somebody’s district and they stand up and say, ‘Thank you to Andy Beshear for showing up here, for bringing this money,’” he said. “And then Wednesday, they’re on the floor in Frankfort saying, ‘Andy Beshear has never been in my district.’”

According to Jake Cox, a Republican operative in the state, the G.O.P.-led Legislature has overridden 107 of 127 vetoes by the governor since 2020.

These veto overrides, however, help explain Mr. Beshear’s strong political standing. They allow him to defend Democratic values — he vetoed a bill last year [*to restrict transgender rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html) — even as Republicans in the state ultimately get what they want, leaving conservative voters with little to agitate over.

Some Democratic voters in Kentucky think Mr. Beshear could bring balance to a presidential ticket with Ms. Harris.

“I think he would bring her more into a moderate lane,” said Stephen Smallwood, 57, of rural Menifee County, east of Lexington.

For now, Mr. Beshear professes to be focused on Kentucky, though his digs at Mr. Vance are telling.

At a roadside sandwich joint with a famous pimento cheese melt, Mr. Beshear offered up a bottle of Ale-8-One, a soft drink he described as “insanely caffeinated ginger ale.”

“That’s what we drink in Appalachia,” he said, before taking a swipe at [*the lime-green soda Mr. Vance had recently signaled a softness for*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/us/politics/kamala-harris-vp-pick.html). “Not Diet Mountain Dew.”

Sharon LaFraniere contributed reporting.

Sharon LaFraniere contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: GOV. ANDY BESHEAR, who promised to turn down the political temperature in his state. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Left, Mr. Beshear and his wife, Britainy Beshear, at a state dinner last year at the White House. He is keen on promoting projects like the Governor’s School for the Arts, right, and has a visual flair. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAMUEL CORUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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**End of Document**



[***The Stages of Vance’s Political Conversion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJY-YGF1-JBG3-6166-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1662 words

**Byline:** Michael C. Bender and Chris Cameron Michael C. Bender is a Times political correspondent covering Donald J. Trump, the Make America Great Again movement and other federal and state elections. Chris Cameron covers politics for The Times, focusing on breaking news and the 2024 campaign.

**Highlight:** A review of JD Vance’s writings and interviews reveals the gradual, complicated process behind his conversion from anti-Trump author to pro-Trump senator.

**Body**

A review of JD Vance’s writings and interviews reveals the gradual, complicated process behind his conversion from anti-Trump author to pro-Trump senator.

Few political reversals have been as dramatic and complete as the transformation of Senator JD Vance of Ohio from a self-proclaimed Never Trumper into former President Donald J. Trump’s new running mate.

Democrats have used Mr. Vance’s turnabout to paint him as untrustworthy, while Republicans have described his shift as another sign of Mr. Trump’s influence on the party. Whatever the case, Mr. Vance’s U-turn was a gradual one that played out in stages during the past eight years.

In many ways, Mr. Vance’s life has echoed the theme of change. He twice changed his name, a result of a tumultuous upbringing, and was baptized into the Catholic Church just five years ago. He has been unapologetic about his political change of heart, even weaponizing his flip-flop by blaming the news media for distorting voters’ views of Mr. Trump.

“I was critical of President Trump,” Mr. Vance said this week in Ohio. “But he cares about human beings. He is not the caricature or the lie that the media has told you that he is.”

But a review of Mr. Vance’s writings and interviews since 2016, when he first rose to fame as the author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” reveals a more complicated process behind his political conversion than the “media lies” explanation he often uses.

A fierce Trump critic during the promotion of his memoir, Mr. Vance softened during Mr. Trump’s first two years in the White House. He actively began defending Mr. Trump during the second half of the president’s first term, before effectively apologizing for his own rebukes during his own Senate run. By the time he was mentioned as a potential running mate, Mr. Vance ranked as one of the most combative foot soldiers in the former president’s Make America Great Again movement.

Here’s a look at his step-by-step conversion:

At first, he was more sympathetic to Trump voters than to Trump.

In 2015, before the publication of his memoir, Mr. Vance told his book editor in an email that Mr. Trump’s rise in the Republican primary would be a lasting one. His editor, Mr. Vance said, replied that Mr. Trump would flame out as another conservative fringe candidate, but Mr. Vance pushed back.

“I said, ‘No, I don’t think that he is — there’s something different about this, there’s something substantively different,’” Mr. Vance would later [*recall*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/).

By 2016, he excoriated Mr. Trump as “America’s Hitler” and said that he was “noxious and is leading the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.” And although he ultimately voted for a third-party presidential candidate in 2016, he regularly voiced an understanding of why a former reality television show host like Mr. Trump inspired so much support.

In an [*interview*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) with Charlie Rose, Mr. Vance suggested that casting judgment on Trump voters would only deepen their resolve for him.

“You’re playing into the very thing that gave rise to Trump in the first place,” Mr. Vance said, “which is a feeling that the elites think that they are smarter than you and just think you’re a bunch of idiots.”

Mr. Vance, who had once worked as an aide for Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas, said in 2017 that he was considering a future in politics during a podcast with David Axelrod, the director of the University of Chicago Institute of Politics and a former Democratic strategist.

Mr. Axelrod said in an interview that he had privately discussed with Mr. Vance the prospect of running for office, and that he had urged the author to consider becoming a Democrat. Mr. Axelrod recalled that Mr. Vance did not react to that advice.

“He brought up the prospect of running for office, and he was trying to figure out how and where,” Mr. Axelrod said. “He was thinking about the Republican Party, but was clearly troubled by the direction it was taking.”

Then he became, in a word, Trump-curious.

By 2018, Mr. Vance’s sensitivity toward Trump supporters shifted into more of a personal curiosity about the president.

In an updated version of his memoir that year, Mr. Vance wrote that he was intrigued by Mr. Trump’s “disdain for the elites and criticism of foreign policy blunders in Iraq and Afghanistan” and blamed Republicans for not adopting Mr. Trump’s “populist rhetoric” from the campaign trail.

In a February 2018 [*interview*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) with The Financial Times, Mr. Vance called Mr. Trump the “least worrisome part of the Republican Party’s problem.”

“He is one of the few political leaders in America,” Mr. Vance said, “that recognizes the frustration that exists in large parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, eastern Kentucky.”

During a conference with business executives that year, Mr. Vance was shaken when the head of a hotel chain complained to him that anti-immigration laws had made it more difficult to hire workers and looked to the author for sympathy.

“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,” Mr. Vance said in an [*interview*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) last month with Ross Douthat, a New York Times columnist. “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.”

Mr. Trump’s nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court in July 2018, which started a bitter partisan fight in Washington, also resonated with Mr. Vance. His wife, Usha, had clerked for Mr. Kavanaugh when he was a circuit court judge in Washington.

“Trump’s popularity in the Vance household went up pretty substantially during the Kavanaugh fight,” Mr. Vance later said.

His praise for Trump broadened.

By 2019, Mr. Vance had started appearing as a guest on Tucker Carlson’s prime-time show on Fox News. The two bonded over [*a similar brand of economic populism*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/), and Mr. Vance continued shifting his criticism away from Mr. Trump and instead targeting the Republican Party.

In May 2019, at the annual gala for The American Conservative, a Washington-based magazine, Mr. Vance said Mr. Trump had proved to be “a wild success” in transforming U.S. policy on China and by not starting a new war in the Middle East.

“He’s been more of a success than I thought he would be,” Mr. Vance [*said*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/).

In 2020, his defense of Mr. Trump deepened after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“One of the core arguments of the Trump 2016 campaign is that in our supply chains, in our manufacturing economy, we had become too dependent on a globalized world, especially China,” Mr. Vance said on NPR in April 2020. “It turns out that if you want to have an economy that can weather a crisis, you actually have to be able to make some core things for yourself, whether it’s wireless technology, whether it’s pharmaceutical products, whether it’s ventilators and hospital masks.”

Mr. Vance voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, he later said. By the time he opened his Senate campaign in Ohio in July 2021, he had [*deleted posts on social media*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) that were critical of Mr. Trump.

“I ask folks not to judge me based on what I said in 2016,” he said on Fox News. “I regret being wrong about the guy. He was a good president. I think he made a lot of good decisions for people.”

Early in his Senate run, he had a “just suck it up” phase.

The day after he announced his Senate bid in 2021, Mr. Vance [*told*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) Time that he had understood Mr. Trump’s appeal, but that he had viewed him as someone who “was not serious and was not going to be able to really make progress on the issues I cared about.”

He added, “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.”

Later in his Senate campaign, he tried to sand down his past criticisms, suggesting that those rebukes had been rooted more in a broader disdain for politics and that he had come to view Mr. Trump as a successful president.

“I assumed that everybody who ran was basically a scumbag so I had a certain mistrust that any politician would deliver on his promises, and Trump actually did a good job,” he [*told*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) the Vindicator newspaper in Youngstown, Ohio. “So one of the important things is when the facts change, you change your mind. The facts to me were he actually honored his promises.”

Mr. Vance spent much of his campaign sharpening his attacks on the news media to explain away his Never-Trump past, and his praise for Mr. Trump proved effective. He won the former president’s endorsement, which helped seal the party’s nomination and, eventually, the general election.

Finally, he more fully embraced an “I was wrong” mantra.

Mr. Vance became one of Mr. Trump’s fiercest defenders in the Senate, where his political pivot remained a point of fascination as he was increasingly mentioned as a potential running mate for the former president.

“He proved me wrong,” Mr. Vance said in February 2024 during in an [*interview*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) on ABC’s “This Week.” “He also proved a lot of other people wrong, which is why I think he’s doing so well in the polls these days.”

In June, he said his opposition to the former president was focused “on the stylistic element,” ignoring the substance of Mr. Trump’s policy proposals. In his [*interview*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/video/j-d-vance-remarks-on-a-new-direction-for-pro-worker-pro-family-conservatism-tac-gala-5-2019/) with Mr. Douthat, Mr. Vance said that he had been “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.”

Mr. Vance suggested that the process of becoming a Trump supporter was a piecemeal one, and he paused as he seemed to struggle to put it into words.

“This is why I say it’s hard to reconstruct this stuff,” he said, “it’s so gradual.”

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump with Senator JD Vance of Ohio at a rally in Grand Rapids, Mich. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Track and Field to Pay Gold Medalists As Games' Amateurism Keeps Fading***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSB-PHP1-DXY4-X0S3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Victor Mather

**Body**

Winners in Paris will get $50,000 each from track and field's governing body, as Olympic amateurism continues to fade away.

Track and field will be the first sport to give direct cash payments for Olympic gold medals, the sport's federation announced Wednesday.

For decades, the Olympics trumpeted the ideal of amateurism. It took pride in being a competition where elite athletes battled for nothing more than the joy of representing their country.

Amateurism was touted as the best way to keep sports clean, fair and honest. ''Professionalism'' was looked down on as vulgar and mercenary. But the notion of amateurism at the Olympics has eroded over the last three decades, as professional athletes have been allowed to participate.

Now World Athletics, the global governing body for track and field, will break new ground by making payments to competitors more straightforward: All individual gold medalists in the sport at the Paris Games this summer will receive $50,000. (Winning relay teams will share the money.) The federation said it would begin paying silver and bronze medalists lesser amounts in 2028.

The federation president, Sebastian Coe, a two-time gold medalist in the amateur era, called the decision ''a pivotal moment for World Athletics and the sport of athletics as a whole, underscoring our commitment to empowering the athletes and recognizing the critical role they play in the success of any Olympic Games.''

Mr. Coe is considered a leading candidate to be the next president of the International Olympic Committee, and could perhaps pave the way for an expansion of the payments to other sports.

Depending on the athlete, the prize money could be a significant reward. ''On the surface, $50,000 probably does not seem like a great deal of money for an Olympic champion,'' said Kyle Merber, a former elite miler and a contributor to the track and field news website Citius Mag. ''But for many of the individuals in non-premier events, who perhaps compete for a smaller country, this money can go a long way.''

The ideal of amateurism, which developed as a concept in the 19th century, was also a convenient way for the Olympics to keep out ***working-class*** athletes who couldn't afford to skip work to compete against ''gentlemen.''

As professional leagues in many sports started popping up around the world in the 20th century, the Olympics drew a hard line, disqualifying any athletes who were tainted by accepting filthy lucre. Most notoriously, the American Jim Thorpe, regarded as the world's greatest athlete, was stripped of his two gold medals from the 1912 Games when it was discovered he had accepted a few dollars for playing professional baseball some years before. (That decision was not fully reversed until 2022.)

Amateurism was taken extremely seriously. A seemingly harmless proposal to allow amateurs and professionals to compete in the same events was described as a ''radical scheme'' in The New York Times in 1913.

Eventually, as the Olympics grew in global popularity, amateurism allowed the International Olympic Committee to benefit from essentially free labor and keep as much of the billions of dollars in TV money it earned as possible.

Amateurism also gave the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries a big edge in international competition after World War II. Since there were nominally no professional athletes in a Communist system, entrants from those countries could compete in the Olympics through their 20s and 30s while earning a living as ''coaches'' or ''teachers.'' Western athletes often quit competing in the Games after college to play professionally or get a real job. Opponents of the system denounced it as ''shamateurism.''

With the Olympic committee eager to lure the world's best athletes to the Games, strict amateurism rules started to ease in the 1990s. It worked, most notably with the likes of Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson playing basketball for the United States. But the newly arrived professional athletes still were not directly paid prize money for their medals, although certain national federations often offered cash bonuses.

Amateurism is no longer the watchword of the Olympic movement: The word appears nowhere in the 112 pages of the current Olympic Charter. Much like athletes competing in the nude, as they did at the ancient Greek Games, Olympic amateurism may be slipping into history.

Scott Cacciola contributed reporting.Scott Cacciola contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/sports/olympics/paris-olympics-track-field-prize-money.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/sports/olympics/paris-olympics-track-field-prize-money.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Individual track and field champions in Paris will each receive $50,000. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL EULER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page B12.

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**End of Document**



[***How Starmer Made Britain's Labour Party Electable Again***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9P-GHV1-DXY4-X0T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 22, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1268 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler

**Body**

In less than five years, the opposition Labour Party has gone from massive defeat to the favorite to win next month's election. How did they do it?

Two weeks before an election that is expected to catapult him into 10 Downing Street, the leader of Britain's Labour Party, Keir Starmer, is tiptoeing on the campaign trail, the latest practitioner of the ''Ming vase strategy.''

The phrase, which refers to a politician gingerly avoiding slips to protect a lead in the polls, is credited to Roy Jenkins, a more freewheeling British politician, who likened a previous Labour candidate, Tony Blair, on the eve of his 1997 landslide, to a man ''carrying a priceless Ming vase across a highly polished floor.''

In truth, Mr. Starmer has been carrying the vase for a lot longer than this six-week campaign. He has nursed his party's double-digit polling lead for more than 18 months, methodically repositioning Labour as a credible center-left alternative to the divided, erratic, sometimes extremist Conservatives.

It's the culmination of an extraordinary four-year project, in which Mr. Starmer, 61, purged his left-wing predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, and his loyalists; went after the anti-Semitism that had contaminated the party's ranks; and pulled its economic and national security policies closer to the center.

''When he first became leader in 2020, he made it his business to take away all the negatives that prevented people from voting Labour in 2019,'' said Steven Fielding, an emeritus professor of political history at the University of Nottingham. As a result, ''He's been able to expand the pool of voters.''

Robert Ford, a professor of political science at the University of Manchester, said, ''Four years ago, Keir Starmer was basically offering Corbynism with a human face -- and he's ditched all that. He's moved to the center because the incentives have moved there, and the audience has moved there.''

It is tempting to compare Mr. Starmer's remaking of the Labour Party to that of Mr. Blair in the 1990s. Both took their party out of the political wilderness by rebranding it as business-friendly, more about economic opportunity than tax-and-spend liberalism or socialist-style wealth redistribution.

Mr. Blair's New Labour loosened the links between the party and trade unions, much as Mr. Starmer cast off Mr. Corbyn's pledge to renationalize Britain's energy network (though Labour does plan to create a new publicly owned company, Great British Energy, to stimulate investment in clean energy).

Still, analysts say there are profound differences between the New Labour of 1997 and the Labour Party of today. Mr. Blair campaigned as an apostle of the global economy, one who believed that government should not intervene in markets. Mr. Starmer takes a far more activist approach, arguing that a robust state role is critical to providing economic security for ***working-class*** people.

Security is a mantra that runs through Labour's messaging, from the economy to immigration and national security. That reflects Mr. Starmer's view of a world that has become economically more turbulent since the financial crisis of 2009 and geopolitically more dangerous since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

''The very foundation of any good government is economic security, border security, national security,'' Mr. Starmer said in his first major campaign speech last month in the coastal town of Lancing. ''This is the foundation, the bedrock that our manifesto and our first steps, will be built upon.''

The contrast between Mr. Starmer and Mr. Blair, Professor Fielding said, is similar to that between former President Bill Clinton, who preached the virtues of free trade and the global economy, and President Biden, who has avoided trade deals in favor of vast new investments in America's infrastructure.

''Blair really was a globalizing liberal: free trade, economic growth, dynamism is good, disruption is good,'' Professor Ford said. ''Starmer's worldview is very different: he thinks change needs to be managed and controlled.''

Mr. Starmer, like Mr. Biden, will inherit an economy that is still shaking off the effects of the Covid pandemic. Britain's growth has trailed that of the United States, and its public services, notably its revered National Health Service, are depleted after years of fiscal austerity under Conservative-led governments.

A Labour government will operate under strict financial constraints, which has raised questions about whether Mr. Starmer will have to raise taxes to pay for promised investments in the N.H.S. and other public services. He has issued a blanket promise not to raise taxes on ''working people.''

But Labour is expected to raise taxes on oil and gas companies, private equity firms and high-income foreigners who live in Britain. It will also remove a tax break for private schools, a move that it says will pay for an additional 6,500 public school teachers.

Labour's promise to be fiscally prudent is personified by Rachel Reeves, who would be the chancellor of the Exchequer in the new government. A onetime banker and economist at the Bank of England, Ms. Reeves confirmed last February that the party would scale back its ambitious climate policy, projected to cost 28 billion pounds ($35 billion) a year, until Britain's finances stabilized.

That reversal was calculated to shield Labour from accusations that it would run a tax-and-spend government, though Prime Minister Rishi Sunak still accuses it of planning to raise taxes on households -- a claim that Labour disputes.

Ms. Reeves is part of an inner circle around Mr. Starmer that reflects his moderate instincts. Some of them refused to serve under Mr. Corbyn, though as Mr. Starmer's opponents note, he was on his predecessor's team.

''These people are signaling to more centrist voters that this is a Labour Party you can feel relatively comfortable with,'' said Jill Rutter, a senior research fellow at the U.K. in a Changing Europe, a research group.

Mr. Starmer has also shown no interest in relitigating the bitter debate over Brexit. He has ruled out returning to the European Union, though he has opened the door to a closer trade relationship with Brussels. The Conservatives used that issue to their advantage in 2019 by promising to ''get Brexit done.''

On foreign policy, too, Mr. Starmer has worked to inoculate Labour from the accusations of a lack of patriotism that haunted it under Mr. Corbyn, who once said he hoped to see the NATO alliance disbanded. Mr. Starmer has vowed to increase spending on the military and maintain Britain's steadfast support of Ukraine.

He has also hewed closely to the Conservative government's support of Israel in the war in Gaza. That is in keeping with his campaign to rid Labour of anti-Semitism, though it has alienated some Muslim supporters, and looms as one of the party's only stumbling blocks in the July 4 election.

''It's the one part of their tent that has sprung a leak,'' Professor Ford said.

Of all the reasons Labour appears more electable, analysts said, the biggest might simply be the collapse of its opponents, not just the Conservatives but also the Scottish National Party, which has been discredited by a financial scandal involving its former leaders. Few analysts would have predicted, in the wake of Labour's landslide defeat in 2019, that it would be on the cusp of national power today.

''Keir Starmer has been incredibly lucky,'' Ms. Rutter said. ''He's managed to rehabilitate the Labour Party at the same moment that his opponents have downgraded their offer to voters significantly.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/world/europe/uk-election-labour-party.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/world/europe/uk-election-labour-party.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Keir Starmer has pulled Labour's economic and national security policies closer to the center while Conservatives have dithered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***'Music Speaks to Some Deep Need'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C74-XJV1-JBG3-60N3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; LETTERS

**Length:** 1258 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''Delving Into the Archaeology of Music'' (Science Times, May 21):

Virtually all our achievements as a species depend upon humans working together. One human alone, in a state of nature, is a medium-sized animal struggling for survival (and with no use for music). Working in tandem, we produce homes, towns, cities, factories and all the rest.

Music is a vital part of that process. Most traditional music is highly functional. It's used for religious ceremonies, community events, family gatherings, dancing, courtship and labor (keeping workers in sync). Sometimes, as in the case of the Scottish bagpipe, it plays a role in battle.

Music is like an intangible thread tying us together. Anything that facilitates human cooperation confers a major survival advantage. It's no wonder that music, like language, is universal among us.

David GoldbergNew York

To the Editor:

I was interested to read the latest research into music using big data, as your article reports. My late father, David Epstein, a conductor and a professor of music at M.I.T., did a lot of research into musical performance that pointed to how and why music taps into some fundamental human abilities, across cultures.

His work focused on tempo/rhythm/pulse, and he uncovered some fascinating features of tempo that were of interest to scientists from many disciplines. One of his main findings (with the use of a stopwatch -- not big data!) was that highly skilled musicians have such a fine-tuned sense of rhythm that they can play with the tempo in a piece, take a phrase and stretch it out here, and then speed up somewhere else, landing exactly where they might have if they had played a straight (and boring) metronome tempo through the whole piece. Audiences respond to the drama in that playful interpretation.

I don't think my father ever questioned that music speaks to some deep need among humans -- for a language beyond words that allows us to tie our very heartbeats to one another.

Eve EpsteinPort Townsend, Wash.

To the Editor:

Your article presents new research pointing to universal differences between spoken language and song/instrumental music. A golden age of musicology may well be upon us, with insightful, well-crafted studies in ethnomusicology and new findings from comparative musicology and the sciences.

Over a century ago my grandfather John Lomax began recording the songs of ordinary Americans, depositing more than 10,000 recordings in the Library of Congress. His influential work documented and celebrated America's sui generis ***working-class*** music and identity. His son Alan Lomax took a similar path but went global, searching for patterns among the world's musical forms.

Music research points in many directions: When music changes, what does it retain? Do factors such as climate, subsistence and diet influence musical styles? Will a warming planet, shifting migration patterns, and availability of water and food affect music? While we don't yet know why music came into being, we've always known that it is a direct line to the human heart.

Anna Lomax WoodNew YorkThe writer, an anthropologist and ethnomusicologist, is co-founder of the Association for Cultural Equity at Hunter College.

Will Politicians Accept the Election Results?

To the Editor:

On the last day of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, a woman asked Ben Franklin, ''What have we got, a republic or a monarchy?'' He replied, ''A republic, if you can keep it.'' We are about to find out if we can keep it.

Former President Donald Trump is once again laying the groundwork for rejection of the upcoming election results if he loses. Mistrust of free and fair elections is now firmly embedded in G.O.P. culture, thanks to Mr. Trump.

Republican leadership is falling in line, as a growing number of senators and representatives are declaring that they are not prepared to accept the results of our November election. We may have entered a time when audits, recounts and the courts will no longer be able to resolve election challenges.

Mr. Trump and his allies not only assail the fair administration of elections, but also our system of justice and other democratic institutions. The former president is turning the party of Lincoln against democracy, the rule of law, and the institutions that bind us together and ensure order.

The question posed to Ben Franklin 237 years ago at the birth of our nation has prophetically returned.

David PedersonExcelsior, Minn.

To the Editor:

Several recent articles and opinion pieces highlight the refusal of former President Donald Trump and other Republican politicians to say without equivocation that they will accept the results of this year's elections. I am a Democrat and I think that Mr. Trump was a terrible president, but I think these articles are unfair.

No honest politician could unconditionally commit to accepting future election results. What if there really are significant election irregularities? It is possible that such irregularities might occur this year, although I see them as being more likely to come from the Republican side. What will Democrats do if they believe the Republican governor in a swing state improperly manipulated the election results?

It is appropriate for politicians to say that they will accept the election results if the election is honest. Of course, any politician who says that should subsequently act in good faith in deciding whether the election was honest, and there is every reason to fear that Mr. Trump and some other prominent Republican politicians will not act in good faith. But it is not reasonable to expect politicians to commit unconditionally to accepting future election results.

Jonathan R. SiegelChevy Chase, Md.The writer is a professor of law at George Washington University Law School.

Honoring the Dead

To the Editor:

Re ''How Should We Honor the Dead of Our Failed Wars?,'' by Phil Klay (Opinion guest essay, May 26):

Mr. Klay's moving piece, with its focus on Iraq and Afghanistan, stirred up my always close-to-the-surface emotions about my generation's catastrophic war, Vietnam.

While I was a young adult in the 1960s, the horror and moral bankruptcy of Vietnam, brought home graphically by daily TV video and news, were magnified by my own fears that I would be drafted and dragged into the killing. Turning thoughts of the war over in my mind, talking to friends and family and reading about nonviolent social movements led me to become a conscientious objector.

I am continually astounded that our species, which is so brilliant scientifically and technologically, has not figured out a way to sublimate our aggressive and greedy impulses and address our fears and differences in a more just, humane and respectful way -- instead of killing one another.

Paul GoldbergArlington, Mass.

Fear of Crime

To the Editor:

Re ''As Violent Crime Drops, Voters Remain Uneasy'' (news article, May 27):

Many crimes and instances of threatening behavior go unreported, and even those reported in the statistics often underestimate the number of people affected. The sense of fear is exacerbated by brazen forms of violence and disruptive behavior in public settings and workplaces.

The rise in gun ownership and use of home security devices is a better indicator. More important, the general public's experience over the last five to 10 years speaks the truth. Public leaders lose the trust of their constituents by using questionable data to deny everyday experience.

Edward AbahoonieSparkill, N.Y.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/opinion/music-evolution-cultures.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/09/opinion/music-evolution-cultures.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Britain’s Labour Party Became Electable Again***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9G-5331-JBG3-614T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 21, 2024 Friday 22:22 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1291 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:** In less than five years, the opposition Labour Party has gone from massive defeat to the favorite to win next month’s election. How did they do it?

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It’s the culmination of an extraordinary [*four-year project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/world/europe/keir-starmer-labour-party-uk.html), in which Mr. Starmer, 61, [*purged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/world/europe/keir-starmer-labour-party-uk.html) his left-wing predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, and his loyalists; went after the [*anti-Semitism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/world/europe/keir-starmer-labour-party-uk.html) that had contaminated the party’s ranks; and pulled its economic and national security policies closer to the center.

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Still, analysts say there are profound differences between the New Labour of 1997 and the Labour Party of today. Mr. Blair campaigned as an apostle of the global economy, one who believed that government should not intervene in markets. Mr. Starmer takes a far more activist approach, arguing that a robust state role is critical to providing economic security for ***working-class*** people.

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On [*foreign policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/world/europe/keir-starmer-labour-party-uk.html), too, Mr. Starmer has worked to inoculate Labour from the accusations of a lack of patriotism that haunted it under Mr. Corbyn, who once said he hoped to see the NATO alliance disbanded. Mr. Starmer has vowed to increase spending on the military and maintain Britain’s steadfast support of Ukraine.

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PHOTO: Keir Starmer has pulled Labour’s economic and national security policies closer to the center while Conservatives have dithered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** June 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Some Major Wall Street Donors Are Putting Harris on Spot Over Chief of F.T.C.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CN3-8WT1-DXY4-X07R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 5, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 3; DEALBOOK NEWSLETTER

**Length:** 2055 words

**Byline:** By Lauren Hirsch and Sarah Kessler

**Body**

Two billionaire Democratic donors have publicly pressured Vice President Kamala Harris to replace the F.T.C. chair, Lina Khan. Wall Street insiders are worried that could backfire.

Wall Street Democrats have spent the last eight years complaining about their relationship with Washington. They found former President Donald Trump's presidency unpredictable, and then became estranged from the Democratic Party as President Biden hired the most aggressive antitrust regulators in recent memory. But now that Vice President Kamala Harris is the party's presumptive presidential nominee, they see a chance to regain influence.

Some have returned to a long tradition of writing checks, scheduling fund-raising dinners and orchestrating subtle campaigns. But others, embracing the public lobbying welcomed by Trump and employed by outspoken C.E.O.s like Elon Musk and Bill Ackman, are openly calling for Harris to oust Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission: ''I think she's a dope,'' Barry Diller, the chairman of IAC, told CNBC. (He later apologized for calling her a dope, but not for critiquing her policies.)

Reid Hoffman, the LinkedIn co-founder, spoke to CNN twice about his Khan concerns. ''Antitrust is fine,'' Hoffman said. ''Waging war is not.'' (He later clarified that he would support Harris regardless of whether she replaced Khan.)

Few on Wall Street would disagree with that stance -- Khan has moved to block deals with seemingly little concern over losing in court. But behind the scenes, many are irked by this kind of public lobbying, arguing that it exposes a misunderstanding of the way the Washington game is played, and that it could backfire.

Their concerns are echoed by strategists: ''I'm not really sure if it's very effective,'' Stuart Stevens, a political consultant who previously worked for Mitt Romney, told DealBook. ''I've always felt once you make these things public, it makes it harder for politicians to do.''

Critics immediately called the public lobbying self-interested. The F.T.C. has reportedly opened multiple investigations that involve subsidiaries of Diller's IAC, according to CNN, and Hoffman has a seat on the board of Microsoft, whose investment in OpenAI is also under scrutiny from the F.T.C.

''We didn't see this in recent elections, because the Democratic Party was Wall Street-friendly on issues like antitrust and trade,'' said Michael Sandel, a professor at Harvard and the author of ''Democracy's Discontent,'' speaking about the public lobbying around Khan. ''The Biden administration broke with these policies, which is why the donors are complaining.''

Khan's detractors on Wall Street argue that their frustration is warranted. Deal activity has dropped precipitously under the Biden administration as regulators have demonstrated an eagerness to test the law by taking proposed mergers to trial.

But expressing the desire to oust Khan so publicly, some Wall Street insiders say, makes it nearly impossible for Harris to do so without it seeming as if she's kowtowing to donor interests. It also reinforces Khan's stature as a celebrity in her own right.

Donor concern extends beyond Khan's vocation. Not since Teddy Roosevelt has antitrust enforcement been a cornerstone election issue, and it is not clear it will be in 2024, either. But a clumsy approach could complicate Wall Street's nascent relationship with a potential Harris administration, particularly if she views it as one that threatens her election chances.

Harris needs to win votes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, where the administration's antitrust policies and Trump-era tariffs remain popular.

''It seems to me that the last thing Kamala Harris needs is to take direction from plutocrat donors and cryptocurrency fans,'' Chris Whipple, author of ''The Fight of His Life: Inside Joe Biden's White House,'' told DealBook. ''She should be listening instead to ***working-class*** voters in battleground states.''

The pressure campaign comes as Trump redeploys a winning tactic from 2016 by courting the populist vote. He invited Sean O'Brien, the president of the Teamsters union, to speak at the Republican National Convention. His pick for vice president, JD Vance, has applauded Khan's take on big business.

Executives are increasingly becoming their own lobbyists. Companies typically try to influence antitrust policy behind closed doors. Google executives frequented the Obama White House during its antitrust investigation of the internet giant. Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google fortified their Washington presence during Trump's presidency, spending millions on congressional calls, advertising and think-tank funding.

But Trump's more blatantly transactional tenure was followed by a rise in public pleading, as Ackman, Musk and Silicon Valley billionaires have used social media to proclaim their political views on everything from the war in Ukraine to tax policy.

It's ''a continuation of social media where you have a forum that no thought can go unexpressed,'' said Stevens. ''This is what we used to pay lobbyists to do.''

Washington insiders prefer the art of subtle pressure. DealBook asked donors, lobbyists and insiders how they would pressure the vice president to replace Khan. Their hypothetical strategies involved highlighting economic studies that question Khan's policies; enlisting support from organizations of smaller companies; and containing the ire that replacing Khan would provoke from progressive politicians like Senator Elizabeth Warren.

The latter is easier said than done, adding to the significant political and logistical challenges in replacing Khan.

Those surveyed said a more easily achieved goal might be pushing for appointments in roles that could curb the administration's antitrust priorities, like the director of the national economic council.

As for the potential political problem created by donors, a longtime Washington policy strategist, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized by his employer to speak publicly, had a recommendation.

''It's a huge problem for Harris,'' he told DealBook of public calls for Khan's removal. He offered his thoughts on how the vice president should handle them: Reject executives publicly, and then tell donors privately, ''Sorry, I had to do that.'' -- Lauren Hirsch

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A lackluster jobs report sank stocks, and put pressure on the Fed. Employers added 114,000 jobs in July, well below economists' forecasts. That, and a revision showing 29,000 fewer hires in May and June, led to more calls for the central bank to lower interest rates at the next policy meeting in September as concerns grow that the U.S. economy is slowing.

Journalist Evan Gershkovich and two other Americans were freed from Russia in an elaborate prisoner swap. Gershkovich, the Wall Street Journal reporter, plus the former Marine Paul Whelan and the radio journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, landed in the U.S. late on Thursday, following a six-nation deal that President Biden called a triumph of international diplomacy. Republican congressional leaders warned though that ''the costs of hostage diplomacy will continue to rise'' and that the swap would do nothing to dissuade Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, from wrongfully detaining political prisoners.

Kamala Harris won the votes needed to secure the Democratic Party's nomination, setting Harris up to become the first Black woman and person of South Asian heritage to run for president on a major political ticket. Speculation that she will pick Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania as her running mate gained steam as he canceled a fund-raising trip, though some pro-Palestinian activists oppose his selection.

Katie Ledecky became the most decorated U.S. female Olympian. She reached the milestone after winning her 13th Olympic medal, in the 4x200 freestyle relay. In other Olympic highlights: Simone Biles and the U.S. women's team each won gold in the Olympics gymnastics all-around competitions; the U.S. men's gymnastics team won its first medal in 16 years; and the U.S. won its first women's rugby medal.

Big Tech's big spending

For nearly two years, Wall Street hasn't blinked when tech C.E.O.s pledged to invest whatever it takes to realize the potential of artificial intelligence. And this week many of the industry's titans confirmed double-digit percentage increases in capital expenditures, the bulk tied to A.I. spending, over the same time last year.

Shares in Alphabet, Microsoft and Amazon all fell after they reported earnings, despite delivering good news about their bottom lines. Only Meta, which both exceeded expectations and made the case for A.I. helping its core business, and Apple, which hasn't defined the technology as existential to its future, avoided earnings-related stock slumps.

Ticket resellers are sitting out this Olympics

When Andrew covered the 2000 Olympic Games, scalping tickets was as competitive as some of the athletic events, with an army of resellers descending on Sydney from all around the world to hustle tickets. The marketplace for the Paris Games couldn't look more different.

QR codes, distributed via an official Olympics app, have replaced paper tickets. If you want to sell a ticket, your only option is in the app, for face value. Trying your luck with an unsanctioned sales channel could be viewed as a crime, the Olympics website warns. The threat seems to be working: The biggest online ticket resellers, including StubHub, Ticketmaster and SeatGeek, have no inventory.

By adopting such a restrictive stance, the Olympics may be circumventing problems that have plagued the events industry, like deceptive pricing (the District of Columbia's attorney general sued StubHub this week over what he calls junk fees); scalpers using bots to monopolize the supply of hot tickets; and speculative resellers who buy tickets only after they've sold them at a higher price.

But you're not likely to see the Paris approach at the next Summer Games in Los Angeles, or trending at venues across the U.S. any time soon. Here's why.

The U.S. is generally more open to resellers. A handful of states, including Connecticut, Illinois, Virginia, New Jersey and Colorado, make it unlawful to limit or restrict a consumer's right to resell tickets, says Laura Nemeth, a partner at the law firm Squire Patton Boggs who represents clients in the event ticketing industries. That said, there is no U.S. federal law that spells out consumers' rights to resell tickets or that prohibits event organizers from restricting them.

In Europe, consumers are generally more skeptical about ticket reselling and regulations that govern it are more restrictive.

Some U.S. professional sports rely on the resale market. ''Going to all 81 home baseball games is a challenge, even for the most dedicated fans,'' says Russ D'Souza, a co-founder of the ticketing platform SeatGeek. The option to resell tickets makes season tickets more valuable.

Rights holders often pocket from the practice. When events name official reselling partners, they typically get a cut of the sales fee a platform charges. As such, the platform is often integrated into the event's ticketing system, or gets other preferential positioning.

The Eras Tour has put the spotlight on ticketing. Sky-high prices at Taylor Swift concerts are commonly cited to show how predatory resellers can box out all but those willing to pay well above face value for entry. Some popular U.S. artists, like Billie Eilish, have requested that all tickets be restricted from transfer to ''give fans, not scalpers, the best chance to buy tickets at face value.''

Paris is facing a different problem. Some of the buzzier events -- including the men's and women's 100-meter finals this weekend -- had a stockpile of tickets available as of Thursday.

Could dynamic pricing on an open resale market have put more fans in the Stade de France?

''What's so powerful about the secondary market is that it's a true marketplace,'' D'Souza says. ''And the price will reflect supply and demand.''

Michael J. de la Merced contributed reporting.

Thanks for reading! We'll see you Monday.

We'd like your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com.Michael*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com.Michael) J. de la Merced contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/03/business/dealbook/saying-the-quiet-part-out-loud.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/03/business/dealbook/saying-the-quiet-part-out-loud.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission, has come under fire for her aggressive antitrust actions. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B3.

**Load-Date:** August 5, 2024

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[***The Limits of the Working-Class Hero Pitch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YD0-RG91-JBG3-630G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 10, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1688 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina and Sydney Ember

**Body**

Mr. Sanders's enduring base shows the fissures along class lines in the Democratic Party, with those struggling most eager for his promises of change.

PHOENIX -- ''This is a campaign of the ***working class***, by the ***working class*** and for the ***working class***!''

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont nearly shouted those words to a raucously supportive crowd here last week. The line received thunderous applause, as it always does.

At campaign events over the past year, Mr. Sanders has spoken to tens of thousands of people who come to hear his message of political revolution -- who come to imagine a country with universal health care, no student debt and a $15 minimum wage. Almost every line he says onstage rises to a crescendo, inviting cheers of appreciation. With every promise and policy proposal, the crowd becomes a sea of waving blue and white signs with the ''Bernie'' logo.

The Sanders campaign has exposed a class divide within the Democratic Party: His promises of a leg up are most alluring to those who need it, and most confounding to those who do not.

Six more states go to the polls on Tuesday in what is now a head-to-head matchup in the Democratic presidential race between Mr. Sanders and former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. The path for Mr. Sanders to retake a delegate lead is much narrower than it was a week ago, but no matter how the primaries turn out for Mr. Sanders, he has built a fierce following of voters who want and expect more from their party, from their government, from their country.

That's how Audrey Yanos views Mr. Sanders and this political moment. Ms. Yanos, a 39-year-old medical administrator, has voted for the Democratic candidate in every presidential election in her adult life. But Ms. Yanos has misgivings: Those Democrats, she believes, have never done all that much to deliver the promise of the American dream. She has begun to feel that the country has betrayed people like her.

Mr. Sanders, she says, is different. Ms. Yanos voted for him in 2016, and did so again last Tuesday in the Colorado primary, which he won easily over Mr. Biden.

''We are struggling all the time, and what we have is not working,'' she said one evening last week during a brief break between dinner and her son's basketball practice. ''We're all scraping by, one disaster away from real catastrophe, and we need someone who understands that.''

That sentiment -- that Mr. Sanders understands the catastrophe looming for so many people, and that so many other politicians do not -- is central to Sanders supporters, and crucial to understanding where these voters might turn if Mr. Sanders is not the nominee. If the Democratic Party wants to keep such voters engaged and committed to showing up in the fall, leaders will have to speak more directly to them and better address their needs.

Many of his supporters know what it's like to struggle in one way or another. They need prescription drugs but can't afford them. They are buried under relentless student debt. They juggle jobs with caring for ailing parents or young children, or both. They want better lives, more stable lives, and need some help.

When Mr. Sanders has asked people at his town halls to tell their stories -- often by prodding them to share their insurance premiums or deductibles -- their voices have sometimes shaken. Sometimes there are tears.

Ms. Yanos was the first person in her family to attend college. She considers herself lucky because a scholarship paid for tuition and books, so she graduated with about $25,000 in debt, which she paid off last year. Financially, she is far better off than her parents were when she was a child. And yet she sees no evidence of a booming economy in her own life.

''I look around and see so many other people barely holding on,'' Ms. Yanos said, choking back tears as her kids did their homework at the kitchen table. ''It's not that I think it will be all rainbows and sunshine if he's elected, things won't change overnight. But people younger than me, they are going to demand change in their lifetime.''

Everything seemed to be clicking for Mr. Sanders before last week. He had finished at the top of the nominating contests in Iowa and New Hampshire, then dominated in Nevada. But on Super Tuesday, a surging Mr. Biden all but extinguished that momentum, winning 10 of 14 states with the support of many black ***working-class*** voters. Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders are now heading into primaries in Michigan and other major Midwestern states that are favorable in many ways to the former vice president. But Mr. Sanders also enjoys plenty of support in these states, particularly from white ***working-class*** voters.

In both of his bids for the White House, Mr. Sanders has shown that his populist message resonates in some corners, even as it repels much of the Democratic establishment, which has steadily lined up behind Mr. Biden. Rallies for Mr. Sanders often resemble rock concerts, drawing tens of thousands of people who come decked out in campaign gear, with T-shirts that proclaim ''Unidos con Bernie'' and signs that say ''Not me, Us.''

Polling throughout the campaign has shown Mr. Sanders drawing some of his strongest support from voters with household incomes under $50,000; his numbers taper off as incomes rise. A month ago, when he was leading in the polls, people with household incomes of $50,000 and under supported Mr. Sanders twice as much as any other candidate. At that time, he commanded the support of most Democratic voters making $100,000 and under.

Exit polls on Super Tuesday did not ask respondents directly about their income. But in the three states where he won and exit polls were conducted -- Colorado, Vermont and California -- Mr. Sanders performed five to eight percentage points better among those without a college degree than those with one. In Massachusetts and Minnesota, both states he had hoped to win but ended up losing decisively to Mr. Biden, Mr. Sanders's numbers among college graduates lagged his showing among those without degrees by double digits.

''Bernie is the only candidate I've ever felt a connection to, in a sense that he genuinely cares about the ***working class*** in a way that no other candidate has ever shown support to us,'' said Andrew Hilbert, 26, who came to see Mr. Sanders in Phoenix.

Mr. Sanders's support this year has proved particularly enduring in the West, where many communities remain visibly scarred by the Great Recession. And his focus on the ***working class*** helps explain part of his appeal to Latino voters, who are disproportionately young and are more likely to come from a ***working-class*** background. Many such voters point to the illusion of an ''up by your bootstraps'' mentality and strongly believe that the only way to create a fair economy is to drastically change the way the current one works.

''We've had decades of policies fail to meet our needs, and we've got to break that cycle,'' said Antonio Arellano, the executive director of Jolt, a group in Texas that focuses on turning out young Latino voters and that endorsed Mr. Sanders. ''What we're seeing for the first time ever is the courage to break from the past and radically build the future. Not taking us as a given entity, but as a constituency that is demanding something more.''

Having spent her life in Orange County, California, Rita Xochitl Estrada, a 39-year-old fitness instructor and student at California State University, Fullerton, has seen countless examples of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Ms. Estrada calls herself a ''romantic but pragmatic'' socialist, and said she was not all that optimistic that Mr. Sanders would win the primary, let alone the presidency. Her biggest hope, she said, is that he is ushering in a new era of politics with more of a focus on the poor.

''If nobody pushes it, we will never get there, which is why we are still stuck the way we are,'' said Ms. Estrada, who came to the polls with her 21-year-old son, who also voted for Mr. Sanders. Like other Latino supporters of the Vermont senator, Ms. Estrada views herself as part of a movement that will live on regardless of his political fate, and that harks back to the Chicano movement of the 1960s and '70s. ''This is a country that wants the current class structure to stay in place, and it's really hard to fight against that.''

Many ***working-class*** supporters point to Mr. Sanders's opposition to the Iraq war as the initial issue that drew them into his orbit. Having watched many friends sign up for the military as a path to the middle class only to come back with traumatic mental and physical injuries, they are deeply skeptical of American intervention overseas, as Mr. Sanders has been for his entire career.

There are also voters who are drawn to Mr. Sanders's consistency in a chaotic, punishing world.

Originally from El Salvador, Ruth Trujillo-Acosta, 59, and her husband, Gustavo Acosta, 61, are just trying to make things work. They worry about retiring, afraid that they have no savings. They worry that their children are not even thinking about college because it's too expensive. They both went to college as adults, but still have student loans to pay off.

The two now live in Holyoke in western Massachusetts. She is a mental health clinician. He is an academic adviser at a community college. They consider themselves independents, but are unequivocal about supporting Mr. Sanders.

''We really are paycheck to paycheck and this is the guy -- he really is going to be able to change that,'' she said as the couple waited for Mr. Sanders to begin a rally last month in Springfield, Mass.

She was cleareyed that Mr. Sanders might not be able to carry out all of his policy proposals -- ''I don't think that he's going to create a complete revolution right away,'' she said -- but she said he at least provided hope, and it was worth giving him a shot.

Their support of Mr. Sanders, she said, comes down to this: ''Our values are with this guy.''

Sydney Ember reported from Phoenix, and Jennifer Medina reported from Denver. Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/09/us/politics/bernie-sanders-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/09/us/politics/bernie-sanders-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Audrey Yanos, left, voted for Bernie Sanders in Colorado's primary. ''It's not that I think it will be all rainbows and sunshine if he's elected,'' she said. ''Things won't change overnight.'' Right, supporters of the Vermont senator at a rally in Phoenix last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

KITRA CAHANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

''This is a campaign of the ***working class***, by the ***working class*** and for the ***working class***!'' Mr. Sanders proclaimed to enthusiastic supporters at the Phoenix campaign rally. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KITRA CAHANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2020

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[***Trump’s Proposed Tax Cuts and Increased Tariffs Could Hurt Poorer Households***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH2-6XV1-DXY4-X37K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1596 words

**Byline:** Ana Swanson, Andrew Duehren and Luke Broadwater Ana Swanson covers trade and international economics for The Times and is based in Washington. She has been a journalist for more than a decade. Luke Broadwater covers Congress with a focus on congressional investigations.

**Highlight:** Some Republicans want to use revenue collected from higher duties on foreign goods to finance tax cuts. Economists say such a shift could widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

**Body**

Some Republicans want to use revenue collected from higher duties on foreign goods to finance tax cuts. Economists say such a shift could widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

When former President Donald J. Trump met with House Republicans last month, he touched on a mix of policies core to his economic agenda: cutting income taxes while also significantly raising tariffs on foreign goods.

Mr. Trump told Republicans he would “love to raise tariffs” and cut income taxes on Americans, potentially to zero, said Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia.

“Everyone was clapping in the room,” Ms. Greene said. “He said, ‘If you guys are going to go vote on something today, vote to lower taxes on Americans.’”

Tariffs and tax cuts were central to Mr. Trump’s economic thinking while he was in the White House. If he wins in November, he is promising a much more aggressive approach, including [*potentially a blanket 10 percent tariff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html) on nearly all imports and a 60 percent tax on Chinese goods.

Mr. Trump and his supporters say that mixing tariffs with tax cuts will revitalize American businesses and manufacturing, boosting jobs and benefiting ***working-class*** Americans. And they see tariffs on foreign products as a lucrative source of revenue, one that could be used to offset a drop in tax receipts.

Some economists have a different view, saying that cutting taxes while raising tariffs could have harmful consequences by widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Companies often pass on the cost of tariffs to consumers in the form of higher prices. As a result, economists say, lower-income households would be hit hardest by tariffs since they spend a greater share of their income on goods. Income taxes tend to fall more heavily on wealthier Americans since many low-income workers do not make enough money to owe federal income taxes.

Kimberly Clausing, an economist at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, who served in the Treasury Department under President Biden, said combining tax cuts and tariffs would increase income inequality substantially and “hurt the very voters that Trump is counting on to put him in the White House.”

The income tax “acts to reduce income inequality in our country by asking more for those at the top,” she said. “A tariff is never going to achieve that.”

Robert Lighthizer, who served as Mr. Trump’s chief trade negotiator and continues to advise his campaign on trade issues, contended in an interview that tariffs were neither inflationary nor regressive. To the extent that tariffs increase production and create more high-paying manufacturing jobs, he said, “they are probably deflationary.”

Mr. Lighthizer said studies that showed that tariffs were paid by American consumers were “fundamentally wrong,” maintaining that tariffs are very often paid by foreign producers and importers.

He also said a tax cut could be structured to benefit middle-class Americans more. Even if you buy the argument that consumers pay for the tariffs or the tariffs are inflationary, Mr. Lighthizer said, “you can very easily have a tax reduction for middle-class people that more than offsets the tiny increase.”

“A tax-and-tariff regime can be progressive,” he said. “What it will do is it will change the relationship between importers and American manufacturers. It will create jobs.”

Those in the room with Mr. Trump on Capitol Hill in June described his statement as more of an off-the-cuff remark than a firm policy proposal. Still, the idea appears to be attracting more interest in the Republican Party, where even politicians who have traditionally been skeptical of tariffs have shown signs of favoring them if the generated revenue is used to help finance further tax cuts.

Representative Thomas Massie, a Republican from Kentucky who is known as a libertarian, described Mr. Trump’s proposal as vague but “intriguing” after the meeting last month.

Some Senate Republicans said they wanted to see more information about Mr. Trump’s plans. “I’m for increased tariffs,” said Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri. “Tariffs do raise revenue, so why not use the revenue to reduce taxes? I’d start with working people.”

Mr. Trump’s proposal to impose tariffs on most foreign products would have been anathema to many Republicans in previous decades, when the party was more staunchly in favor of “free but fair” trade. Tariffs can protect American manufacturers from foreign competition and [*have been shown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html) to boost U.S. factory production. But some economists argue that they do so in [*a costly way*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html), relative to the number of jobs created.

The Republican Party, however, has strongly [*shifted toward a platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html) that mirrors Mr. Trump’s views. In a video on his campaign website, Mr. Trump describes “a sweeping pro-American overhaul of our tax and trade policy” as “the heart of my vision.” His pick of Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio as the Republican nominee for vice president this week is another sign of the party’s direction. Mr. Vance has harshly criticized Chinese trade practices and called for protecting American manufacturers from “all of the competition.”

In a statement, Anna Kelly, a spokeswoman for the Republican National Committee, said Mr. Trump had “put America first by instituting tariffs while simultaneously keeping inflation and consumer prices low.”

“President Trump’s policies brought forward a booming economy, and he will once again lower taxes, impose tariffs on foreign producers, bring jobs back to the U.S. and put America first on Day 1,” she said.

At the core of Mr. Trump’s tax agenda is extending the cuts that he enacted in 2017. Many of those — including lower individual tax rates and a larger standard deduction — are set to expire at the end of next year, setting up a high-stakes legislative battle in Washington. While low- and middle-income Americans benefit from the tax cuts, the gains still disproportionately accrue to the rich, according to an analysis by the Tax Policy Center, a Washington think tank that studies fiscal issues.

Republicans have largely rallied around extending the expiring provisions. Mr. Trump and some of his economic advisers are also eyeing tax cuts that go beyond the 2017 law, including lowering the 21 percent corporate tax rate and suspending the payroll taxes that businesses and employees pay to fund Social Security and Medicare.

Stephen Moore, a Trump economic adviser, is ambivalent about raising tariffs. But if the revenue collected from doing so helps pay for cutting, if not eliminating, income taxes, he said, the trade-off could be worthwhile.

“I’m not a fan of tariffs, but if it were an across-the-board revenue tariff, and you use the revenue to reduce taxes that are harmful to growth, I think it could make sense,” he said.

Michael Stumo, the chief executive of the Coalition for a Prosperous America, which advocates for more protectionist trade policies, said the conversation about swapping some taxes for tariffs was “pregnant with potential.”

“We saw much more intriguing and thoughtful comments based on that proposal than I’ve seen in the old guard before,” he said. “Clearly there’s a tax-cut wing of substance in the Republican Party, and if you finance that with tariffs, it’s a very different conversation.”

The U.S. government was largely funded by tariffs when the country was in its infancy. But starting [*around the time of the Civil War,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html) the government introduced other taxes to generate more revenue for the state, said Douglas A. Irwin, an economic historian at Dartmouth College. The income tax was introduced in 1913 in part to counteract the soaring income inequality of the Gilded Age.

Charging a 10 percent tariff on most foreign goods, as Mr. Trump has suggested, could generate as much as $2.5 trillion over 10 years, according to an estimate by the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. That could help fill the fiscal hole created by extending the 2017 tax cuts, which the Congressional Budget Office projects could cost more than $4 trillion over 10 years.

But a 10 percent across-the-board tariff would not come close to replacing roughly $2 trillion in income tax the government collects annually. A study by Ms. Clausing and Maurice Obstfeld, also of the Peterson Institute, found that the maximum revenue the United States could earn from tariffs would peak at about $780 billion, less than 40 percent of what income taxes currently bring in.

It would also be likely to trigger a trade war, which could prompt Mr. Trump to once again use tariff revenue to compensate farmers and other businesses that suffer losses. In Mr. Trump’s first term, his tariffs prompted retaliation from foreign governments, which put their own taxes on American exports. American farmers in particular were hit hard by retaliation, prompting the Trump administration to give them [*$23 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/27/us/politics/trump-trade-tariffs-imports.html) to offset their losses.

Ms. Clausing and Mr. Obstfeld also calculated what would happen if the United States imposed enough tariffs to earn the maximum level of revenue, $780 billion, and then cut income taxes by a similar amount across all income groups. They found that the result would be a net 8.5 percent reduction in after-tax income for the lowest-earning 20 percent of Americans, compared with an 11.6 percent increase for the highest-earning 1 percent.

PHOTO: Former President Donald J. Trump and his supporters see tariffs on foreign goods as a powerful source of revenue to offset a drop in tax receipts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STELLA KALININA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2024

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[***A Gripping Family Saga Asks, What Makes for ‘Real Americans’?; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXD-GJ91-JBG3-611K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** Wilson Wong

**Highlight:** Rachel Khong’s new novel follows three generations of Chinese Americans as they all fight for self-determination in their own way.

**Body**

REAL AMERICANS, by Rachel Khong

As the story goes, after the death of China’s first emperor in 210 B.C., Chen Sheng, a military captain, organized a motley band of soldiers in a revolt against the Qin dynasty and its harsh penal laws. Sheng was defeated, but he became known for his belief that one’s status is not intrinsic — that one can change, grow, transcend. “Are kings, generals and ministers merely born into their kind?” he asked, a rhetorical question that became a rallying cry about identity and self-determination.

That is the same kind of query that propels Rachel Khong’s new novel, “Real Americans,” which begins with a scene involving an enchanted lotus seed supposedly “carried to the first emperor of united China in the mouth of a dragon.” Part historical fiction and part family saga, the book homes in on this inquiry: Can we change who we fundamentally are, or who we were meant to be? Or, are we inevitable? What do we make, then, of those who come after us?

“Real Americans,” which comes after Khong’s 2017 debut, “Goodbye, Vitamin,” is a sprawling novel, divided into three sections, each told from a different generation of a Chinese American family. It opens in New York in 1999, with Lily, a poor, unpaid media intern, falling in love with Matthew, a “distractingly hot” WASP-y aristocrat (read: blue-eyed, blond, white and rich). After a complicated courtship that is buoyed by passion but unsettled by their class differences, they get married and have a son; then Lily learns that her family and Matthew’s family are secretly more intertwined than she thought.

Before we see how this discovery plays out, we jump to 2021. Matthew and Lily’s child, Nick, is now a teenager, plagued by the usual jitters that accompany adolescence: puberty, first love, college applications. He and Lily now live in Washington, but curiously absent from their life is Matthew, whom Nick does not know. An auspicious match on a DNA test brings him to clandestine encounters with his father, meetings that threaten to unravel Nick’s world because they prompt him to question what role, if any, Matthew should play in his life and force him to reckon with his mother’s shrouded past.

Then the story leaps forward again, now to 2030 from the perspective of Lily’s mother and Nick’s grandmother, a geneticist named May. She recounts the turbulent conditions she endured under Mao Zedong’s China, the difficult circumstances she overcame to escape to and survive in the United States and how one scientific discovery caroms through her posterity.

The story is full of family secrets and discoveries that could easily veer into melodrama, but Khong is a deft writer who grounds even the most sweeping themes and scenes. Her eye is especially attuned to the fickle markers of race and the illusion of the American dream. “Real Americans” — which covers more than 80 years, and touches on everything from the Cultural Revolution to Sept. 11 to the fight against affirmative action — is as much about being Asian in America as it is about the ***working class***, the politically disenfranchised and the universal quest to understand the self.

As the novel unfolds, the story drops delicious mysteries that guide the reader: Why and how did Lily and Matthew’s fairy-tale relationship come to an end? How is Nick, who is mixed race, somehow a clone of Matthew who bears no resemblance to his Chinese American mother, Lily? And how and why is May familiar, perhaps too familiar, with Matthew’s father, a pharmaceutical executive? Khong has a gift for building suspense, crafting a story so compulsively bingeable that the pages essentially turn themselves.

That tension, however, is sometimes lost for banal sentences (“This was an artist’s task, he explained, to observe”). And Khong hammers the novel’s theme of who or what constitutes an American so bluntly and so repetitively — “I was as American as they came”; “We may look Chinese, but we have no loyalty to China. We want to be American” — that the writing can feel didactic.

Still, the novel’s ambition is admirable, and it’s easy to get lost in the unspoken truths between Lily, Nick and May as they try to knit themselves into a coherent whole. It appears to matter less, Khong suggests, what our environment or nationality is than the people, both chosen and biological, that we elect to surround ourselves with. “Aren’t we lucky?” she writes. “Our DNA encodes innumerable people, and yet it’s you and I who are here.” Indeed how lucky we readers are to be acquainted with these Americans, imagined and alive.

REAL AMERICANS | By Rachel Khong | Knopf | 399 pp. | $29

Wilson Wong is an editing resident at the Book Review.

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[***The Ghastly vs. the Ghostly***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCF-7CW1-JBG3-606D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 3; MAUREEN DOWD

**Length:** 1322 words

**Byline:** By Maureen Dowd

**Body**

He's being selfish. He's putting himself ahead of the country. He's surrounded by opportunistic enablers. He has created a reality distortion field where we're told not to believe what we've plainly seen. His hubris is infuriating. He says he's doing this for us, but he's really doing it for himself.

I'm not talking about Donald Trump. I'm talking about the other president.

In Washington, people often become what they start out scorning. This has happened to Joe Biden. In his misguided quest for a second term that would end when he's 86, he has succumbed to behavior redolent of Trump. And he is jeopardizing the democracy he says he wants to save.

I got to know Biden in 1987 when he was running for president. He was hailed then as a leading orator of the Democratic Party, even though he could be windy. I knocked him out of that race when I wrote about how he cloaked himself in the life of Neil Kinnock, the British Labour leader who was a soaring speaker, and how he gave speeches that borrowed, probably unwittingly, from Robert F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey.

I ran into Biden in a Senate stairwell on his way to make a speech dropping out. He was alone, studying his script. We looked at each other in silence -- struck by the weight of the moment -- then went our separate ways to the same news conference.

Biden was a buoyant soul who had been told he should be president since he was elected to the Senate at 29. And he wasn't going to let the plagiarism scandal, or his pursuant health problems, stop him. He had two aneurysms in 1988 and later said his doctors told him he wouldn't be alive if his campaign had continued, and he kidded me that I'd saved his life. He also did not let the other tragedies that scarred his life drag him down.

I marveled at the fact that Biden forgave me. He told me that it was better that we stay on good terms. He did not get mad, even when I joked that his new hair plugs looked like a field of okra during the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings. He called to chastise me, with good humor, but I hid under my desk, afraid to take the call.

I was critical of his performance as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee during the nasty, raunchy hearings; in his effort to be fair, he let the Republicans win unfairly, and that led to a very unethical and deceitful right-winger (with a highly partisan wife who years later pushed Trump's coup) being put on the Supreme Court for life.

Yet Biden still didn't cut me off. When he became vice president, he invited me to his St. Patrick's Day breakfasts and Christmas parties. He was so un-vengeful, I doubted he was Irish.

Having elevated Biden to a height many thought he would never reach, the hoity-toity Obama team proceeded to treat their vice president with scarcely veiled disdain. Barack Obama's aides would trash Biden to reporters, a betrayal an angry Hunter told me was like ''friendly fire.''

Biden was a good and loyal vice president, and I thought it was a mistake on Obama's part to pass him over for Hillary in 2016. Hillary was an elitist, status-quo candidate, and the mood of the electorate was anti-elitist and anti-status quo. Biden had his Scranton Joe vibe going for him.

The Obama crew peddled the idea that Biden was too distraught over Beau's death to campaign, but Biden is the one person on earth who could have used his grief to fuel an empathetic candidacy. Biden told people that Beau had wanted him in the White House, not a Clinton restoration.

If Biden had been the nominee, he would have beaten the immoral Alley Cat and he would now be ending his second term, ready for a golden retirement in his plastic beach chair at his beloved Rehoboth Beach.

Instead, he started his presidency too late. He has clearly been declining for the last couple of years -- a dangerous development in a volatile world, with A.I. revolutionizing our country and with a Supreme Court full of religious fanatics reshaping American life.

That's why almost two years ago I wrote a column, ''Hey, Joe, Don't Give It a Go,'' suggesting he take the win for the good things he accomplished and let the younger stars of the party have their shot.

''The timing of your exit can determine your place in the history books,'' I advised.

But, partly because he had been pushed aside by the Ivy League crowd, he got his Irish up; the ***working-class*** chip on his shoulder grew. He was driven to prove he could be a better president than the one who sidelined him.

Jill Biden, lacking the detachment of a Melania and enjoying the role of first lady more, has been pushing -- and shielding -- her husband, beyond a reasonable point. After Thursday's embarrassing debate performance, she exhorted the crowd and played teacher to a prized student: ''You did a great job! You answered every question! You knew all the facts!'' This, to the guy who controls the nuclear codes.

After Democrats -- even the ordinarily fawning MSNBC anchors -- commiserated about the debate in a cloud of gloom, Nancy Pelosi, Jim Clyburn, Bill & Hillary, and Obama pushed back and circled the wagons. CNN's Van Jones said that a Black leader called him and chewed him out for accurately assessing the calamity.

After a reassuring Friday rally in Raleigh, N.C., where the crowd yelled ''Four More Years!'' and ''Lock Him Up!'' the presidential historian Doug Brinkley called Biden ''the Rebound Kid'' on CNN.

The Democratic strategist Paul Begala, who deemed the debate ''a catastrophe,'' explained on CNN: ''The first Democratic politician to call on Biden to step down, it's going to end their career.'' He added: ''None of them are going to say, 'Hey, let me step forward and knife Julius Caesar.' Biden is a beloved man in the Democratic Party.''

It is because Biden is beloved, and because he has real accomplishments as president, that he needs to stop this nerve-racking, maddening tightrope walk to the Oval.

He will have sprightly moments, like Raleigh. But he will also have sepulchral ones, as he did in the debate dubbed ''the Infirm vs. the Unstable'' by CNN's Audie Cornish.

He didn't just have an off night, like Obama had when he acted huffy in his first debate with Mitt Romney. Biden looked ghostly, with that trepidatious gait; he couldn't remember his rehearsed lines or numbers. He has age-related issues, and those go in only one direction. It was heart-wrenching to watch the president's childhood stammer return.

His wife and staff will build their protective wall ever higher and shoo away reporters, pressing on the age spiral, ever more vigorously. But Biden, Jill and Democratic leaders have to face the fact that this is an extraordinarily risky bet, with -- as they drum into us -- democracy on the line.

James Carville, who also said a while back that the president should renounce a second term, told me Biden should call former Presidents Clinton and Obama to the White House and decide on five Democratic stars to address their convention in August.

''You know what the ratings for that would be?'' he asked. ''The whole world would watch and people would go, 'Oh, God, they have real talent!'''

Carville said the president should give a July 4 speech announcing he will let the next generation of Democratic leaders bloom.

The 79-year-old strategist dryly noted that you can't win a contest against aging.

''I do everything I can to try to beat this thing,'' he said. ''It don't work.'' A staircase can ruin his day.

And what if Joe and Jill cling on?

In reply, Carville quoted Herb Stein, a top economist under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford: That which can't continue, won't.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***An Apology Broke the Ice As Vance Courted Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH7-V0P1-DXY4-X3TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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

**Length:** 3437 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman

**Body**

The meeting got off to a bad start.

J.D. Vance walked into Donald J. Trump's office at Mar-a-Lago on a warm winter afternoon in February 2021. The former president had a thick stack of papers on his desk: printouts of Mr. Vance's copious broadsides against Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance's past criticisms had included an essay in one of Mr. Trump's least favorite magazines, The Atlantic, where Mr. Vance described Mr. Trump as ''cultural heroin'' -- a purveyor of false promises to the white ***working class***.

Mr. Trump, using an expletive, bluntly told Mr. Vance: You said some nasty stuff about me. The discussion that followed was described in detail by two people with knowledge of the meeting who insisted on anonymity to talk about a private conversation.

Mr. Vance's next move was crucial. This was the first time he was meeting Mr. Trump, and Mr. Vance needed the former president to like him or at least leave the meeting with an open mind. Mr. Vance -- the author of ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' a best-selling memoir about his troubled upbringing and the struggles and pathologies of the white ***working class*** -- was running for the open U.S. Senate seat in Ohio as a Republican populist, a Never Trumper turned pro-Trumper.

Mr. Vance decided to immediately apologize. He told Mr. Trump that he had bought into what he described as media lies and that he was sorry he got it wrong. Of all people, Mr. Vance told Mr. Trump, Mr. Vance himself should have understood.

Mr. Trump agreed, telling Mr. Vance that he should have understood because Mr. Vance had written the ''Hillbilly Elegy'' book. His implication was that Mr. Vance should have supported him because Mr. Trump's own base of non-college-educated voters angry about globalization, immigration and foreign wars were exactly the people Mr. Vance purported to represent.

At that point, Mr. Trump seemed disarmed, and the meeting went on for almost two hours. They discussed the 2020 election and the Ohio race, but mostly they talked about the difficulties of politics. It had been less than a month since Mr. Trump left the White House a pariah, in the wake of a pro-Trump mob storming the Capitol after the president had spent two months lying about a stolen election.

Mr. Trump closed the conversation by asking Mr. Vance what he wanted. Mr. Trump told him that everyone else had already been down to Mar-a-Lago begging for his endorsement -- a reference to Mr. Vance's potential opponents in the Ohio Senate primary.

Mr. Vance, who along with a spokesman for Mr. Trump declined to comment for this article, told the former president he wasn't going to do that.

Mr. Trump, surprised, asked Mr. Vance if he wanted the endorsement.

Mr. Vance said that of course he wanted it, but that Mr. Trump should let him run his race, and see how he did. Mr. Vance said he would not be the type of candidate who would attack the former president when the media came after him.

Mr. Trump seemed intrigued. All right, Mr. Trump replied, telling Mr. Vance, whom he called J.D., to take care and check in from time to time.

Mr. Trump had relatively little personal contact with Mr. Vance after that first meeting, but he took note as Mr. Vance kicked off his Senate campaign in July 2021, ran circles around his primary opponents in debates and became a frequent presence on ''Tucker Carlson Tonight,'' at the time the top-rated show on cable television.

Mr. Trump was impressed. He told allies he thought Mr. Vance was smart and handsome -- ''those beautiful blue eyes,'' he'd say repeatedly -- great on TV and a killer at the debates. Mr. Trump, who split with allies at the influential conservative group Club for Growth in backing Mr. Vance, felt validated when Mr. Vance won the general election against his Democratic rival, Representative Tim Ryan, and then immediately became one of Mr. Trump's most vocal supporters in the Senate.

When Mr. Trump announced his third campaign for president, in November 2022, at a time when most Republicans wanted nothing to do with him, Mr. Vance distinguished himself by immediately signaling to Mr. Trump's staff that Mr. Vance was all in.

Since then, Mr. Vance has played his cards nearly perfectly, making himself visible at key moments, promoting himself assertively but not too much, publicly backing Mr. Trump during his Manhattan criminal trial and having the right people champion him to the former president at the right time.

That day in early 2021, Mr. Vance was ushered into Mr. Trump's office at Mar-a-Lago by one of the most secretive donors in G.O.P. politics: Peter Thiel, the billionaire founder of PayPal who broke with Silicon Valley to support Mr. Trump for president in 2016. Mr. Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., was at the meeting, too.

Though initially skeptical of Mr. Vance's loyalty, Donald Trump Jr. became close friends with him over the course of the Senate campaign. He became a huge asset when allies of Mr. Vance's rivals for running mate tried desperately to undermine Mr. Vance with a pressure campaign aimed at changing the elder Mr. Trump's mind.

Now, the 39-year-old Mr. Vance has become the party's vice-presidential nominee.

An experienced fighter in the modern culture wars, Mr. Vance is in many ways a different type of running mate from the one Mr. Trump selected in 2016: Mike Pence was a Ronald Reagan conservative and evangelical governor whose penchant for spontaneous prayer unnerved the man under whom he served. In Mr. Vance, Mr. Trump is picking someone whose impulses for fighting against existing institutions and challenging global systems match his own.

Yet the arc of how Mr. Trump made his choices in 2016 and in 2024 had similarities. He had described both Mr. Pence and Mr. Vance as ''out of central casting.'' Then Mr. Trump began to question his options and solicited the opinions of everyone he spoke to, before ultimately returning where he began.

But the lead-up to Mr. Trump's selection of Mr. Vance was even more chaotic than it was with Mr. Pence. It was uncertain down to the final hours, with a frantic lobbying effort until the last possible moment by anti-Vance forces, including Rupert Murdoch and his allies, with some of it playing out in public.

Mr. Trump seemed uncertain right until the end, privately raising some of the negative comments Mr. Vance had made about him in the past. Allies of Mr. Vance, including Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson, ran a counter campaign to reassure Mr. Trump about the selection, with supportive calls to the former president continuing until the moment Mr. Trump finally told Mr. Vance of his decision, on Monday afternoon, less than half an hour before he announced his choice on social media.

The Debate Moment

Six months into his Senate campaign, Mr. Vance was seen by most as the walking dead.

Throughout the fall of 2021, he was savaged in the Ohio Republican Senate primary by television commercials that re-aired his past condemnations of Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance's support fell precipitously in private polling, and even Mr. Trump privately voiced concerns about the impact the ads were having in the race. Many Republican operatives believed Mr. Vance's chances of surviving the onslaught were close to zero.

He began his comeback on a debate stage.

At a March 2022 debate among the crowded Senate Republican field, Mr. Vance's two main rivals -- Josh Mandel, a former Ohio state representative and treasurer, and the businessman Mike Gibbons -- nearly came to blows on the stage.

Mr. Vance seized the moment. He described their fight as ''ridiculous'' and confronted Mr. Mandel for using Mr. Mandel's military service as a ''political football'' earlier in the debate, calling it ''disgraceful,'' setting off a burst of applause in the room. The moment presaged Mr. Vance as a deft performer on his feet, one who would eventually eviscerate his general election rival, Mr. Ryan, on the debate stage.

Mr. Trump relished that primary debate confrontation and felt that it showed Mr. Vance had what it took. Mr. Trump has always paid close attention to debate performances, crediting his own showing in the 2016 debates for his victory over Hillary Clinton. He told allies he liked what he'd seen from Mr. Vance. One month after the debate, Mr. Trump formally endorsed him.

Mr. Vance was helped in that race also by conservative media relationships that would prove not just durable but critical in helping him become Mr. Trump's running mate.

The most important of those relationships have been with Mr. Carlson, the former Fox News host; the reporter Matthew Boyle at Breitbart; and the political activist Charlie Kirk. Their support meant that in the conservative media ecosystem -- the arena that decides the political life span of the average Republican -- Mr. Vance was a made man.

The East Palestine Visit

Mr. Trump announced his own candidacy for president a week after the November 2022 midterms.

His campaign launch was a disaster.

High-profile MAGA candidates endorsed by Mr. Trump had lost midterm races they should have won. Mr. Trump was blamed for the disappointing results, and most Republican elected officials stayed away from his presidential kickoff event at Mar-a-Lago.

Shortly after he announced his campaign, Mr. Trump ignited a string of controversies, including calling for the termination of parts of the Constitution to overturn his 2020 defeat and dining with Kanye West, a rapper whose stream of vitriol against Jews stirred outrage, and Nick Fuentes, a notorious white supremacist.

Mr. Trump found himself abandoned by many in the Republican-leaning media, with Fox News extolling his main presidential primary rival, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, and his favorite newspaper, The New York Post, giving Mr. DeSantis the headline title: ''DeFuture.'' A chorus of prominent conservatives was saying it was time for fresh blood.

Mr. Vance was not among them.

He signaled privately to Mr. Trump's team, shortly after the midterms, that he planned to endorse the former president. He said he wanted to make an intellectual argument for Mr. Trump that would resonate with the donor class and other elites, according to a person briefed on the exchanges. He ended up announcing his endorsement in late January 2023 in an opinion piece in The Wall Street Journal, praising Mr. Trump's foreign policy. The proactive support was reassuring to the Trump team amid so many threatened defections at a time when the campaign seemed rudderless.

The Trump campaign found its direction a month later, in February. It started with a visit to a derailment site of a train that had been carrying hazardous chemicals through East Palestine, Ohio.

President Biden and his advisers had been criticized for days for not visiting the site, and Mr. Vance was among the most vocal critics of the federal response. Mr. Biden's administration blamed policy rollbacks from Mr. Trump's era for the derailment.

Mr. Trump's son Don Jr. soon had a thought: What if his father visited the site? He ran the idea past both Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump's top adviser, Susie Wiles, and a plan was soon in place. Flying aboard his plane, dubbed Trump Force One, from Florida to Ohio for the event, Mr. Trump was watching Fox News. Mr. Vance was on the air. The former president turned to his son and observed that Mr. Vance had been ''incredible, hasn't he?'' -- using an expletive to underscore the point.

When the plane landed, it was clear that Mr. Trump was stepping into a media vacuum created by Mr. Biden's absence. Walking down the movable stairs from his plane on the tarmac, Mr. Trump appeared on the extensive television coverage as if he were still president.

He traveled in a motorcade, distributed red MAGA caps to local residents and delivered water bottles to the community -- all on TV. He bought burgers for first responders at a local McDonald's.

Mr. Vance stood alongside him throughout the day, the two men condemning federal officials they said had left the region behind. It was an early test of what they might be like on a campaign trail together.

The Decision

By the fall of 2023, chatter was growing that Mr. Vance was a top contender to be Mr. Trump's running mate. But while advisers to both men had discussed the possibility informally, it had not become a topic of conversation between Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance.

Mr. Trump plainly liked Mr. Vance, according to people close to the former president. The chemistry between the two -- one of the ingredients in a hire that Mr. Trump values most -- was clear.

Mr. Vance had approached the relationship differently from a number of people who have grown close to Mr. Trump over the years. He valued scarcity. He did not call Mr. Trump constantly, and his list of requests was extremely limited. He sought help from Mr. Trump on only two matters: He asked him to endorse the businessman Bernie Moreno in his run for the Senate in Ohio, and he asked Mr. Trump to support a rail safety bill that Mr. Vance cosponsored with the state's Democratic senator, Sherrod Brown. Mr. Trump did both.

Mr. Vance was slow to believe Mr. Trump would actually pick him as a running mate, people close to him said. His view started to change around the New Hampshire presidential primary in late January, as he campaigned for Mr. Trump in the state and drew a warm response.

He also began to fit the part more visibly. Mr. Trump commented to allies on how good Mr. Vance was looking -- how his beard appeared more groomed, how his suits fit better and how he'd lost weight. Mr. Vance had been working out and going for long runs.

Mr. Trump has also been solicitous of Mr. Vance's wife, Usha. About a month ago, the Vances were at an event with Mr. Trump when he asked Usha how she liked political life. When Ms. Vance gave an anodyne answer, Mr. Trump replied that his wife hated it, too, adding an expletive. Ms. Vance laughed at Mr. Trump's answer, according to a person briefed on the interaction.

Mr. Vance's allies began an aggressive strategy to show he could be successful in two areas that preoccupied Mr. Trump: performing well in adversarial interviews on mainstream news channels, and bringing in new financial supporters.

Mr. Vance's advisers booked him on a slew of shows on CNN, NBC, ABC and CBS, including one appearance that caught Mr. Trump's eye, with the CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer, shortly after Mr. Trump was convicted in his Manhattan criminal trial. Mr. Vance was the first vice-presidential hopeful to show up in court to support Mr. Trump, and he stepped up his aggressive televised defense of Mr. Trump after the conviction.

Mr. Vance helped pave the way for Mr. Trump with some Silicon Valley donors. He spent months working on David Sacks, an entrepreneur whom Mr. Vance has called ''one of his closest confidants in politics,'' to support Mr. Trump. That effort resulted in a $12 million event for the Trump campaign. Mr. Sacks said at the event that it ''would never have happened'' without Mr. Vance's support, according to a person familiar with his remarks.

Mr. Musk, one of the world's richest men and the owner of the website X, has emerged as a quiet ally of Mr. Vance's, according to two people briefed on the relationship. Mr. Musk has viewed Mr. Biden's re-election as an existential crisis for the nation and told Mr. Trump directly that he should choose Mr. Vance as his running mate, describing the Trump-Vance pairing as ''beautiful,'' according to one of the people with knowledge of their relationship. Mr. Musk did not respond to requests for comment.

Yet it was Don Jr. and his allies who pushed Mr. Vance most insistently -- publicly and privately.

For most of the year, Mr. Trump's associates have said that the former president was not especially enamored of any of his V.P. choices, doubtful that any of them would make much of a difference to his chances in November. And yet in recent weeks, he told people that he liked the idea of someone who could carry on his MAGA legacy, something Mr. Trump believed the two other top contenders -- Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota -- were not as well positioned as Mr. Vance to accomplish.

Mr. Trump continued playing Hamlet of sorts, polling nearly everyone he encountered about what they thought he should do.

That was reminiscent of 2016, when Mr. Trump had told everyone for weeks that Mr. Pence was ''out of central casting,'' but still insisted he hadn't made up his mind and was receptive to last-minute pitches from allies of Newt Gingrich and Chris Christie. He ultimately offered the job to Mr. Pence while telling Mr. Christie that he hadn't done so, before finally making the choice public.

Mr. Trump listened to a number of last-minute efforts to block Mr. Vance's selection.

The anti-Vance campaign was intense, widespread and carried right up until the final hours before Mr. Trump announced his choice. Several major Republican donors, including the hedge fund magnate Ken Griffin, as well as the media mogul Rupert Murdoch, tried to persuade Mr. Trump not to choose Mr. Vance. (A Griffin spokesman wouldn't address what he told Mr. Trump, saying only that there were a number of good options and that Mr. Trump and his team had been ''thoughtful.'')

Mr. Murdoch even went so far as to dispatch senior executives and columnists at The New York Post to meet with Mr. Trump and dissuade him from picking Mr. Vance. Kellyanne Conway, Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign manager who is also close to Melania Trump, argued privately that other options, such as Mr. Rubio, were better, according to several people with knowledge of her outreach effort.

The Murdoch crowd lobbied aggressively for Mr. Burgum, in private and in editorials in The New York Post. When the anti-Vance forces made their arguments to Mr. Trump, they focused on Mr. Vance's prior criticisms of the former president and on Mr. Vance's youth and inexperience. But in many cases, these G.O.P. donors were motivated because they loathed Mr. Vance's ideology and policy positions, especially his staunch opposition to U.S. support for Ukraine against Russia.

Old comments made by Mr. Vance about Mr. Trump began to circulate on social media, and were put in front of the former president, who indicated to associates that they had given him pause.

But Mr. Trump was repelled by a Daily Mail article describing Mr. Burgum weeping at various moments -- ''When I see a man cry I view it as a weakness,'' he once said. Allies also brought to Mr. Trump's attention the fact that Mr. Burgum had signed one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country, a point that could become a liability in a general election.

Mr. Trump told associates that he viewed Mr. Rubio as disloyal for having campaigned in 2016 against Mr. Rubio's friend and mentor, Jeb Bush, and wondered whether he could be trusted.

In the final days, all three leading candidates made direct pitches to Mr. Trump.

Mr. Burgum let it be known that he had no interest in serving in another role in the Trump administration, a stance that did not play well with Mr. Trump, who had mused about making him the secretary of energy, according to two people briefed on the matter.

Mr. Vance was flown to Mar-a-Lago late last week aboard the plane of Steve Witkoff, a real estate investor and one of Mr. Trump's few close friends.

When word got back to Tucker Carlson a few weeks ago that Mr. Trump might be wavering on Mr. Vance, he intervened. Mr. Carlson, who was visiting Australia on a speaking tour, phoned Mr. Trump and delivered an apocalyptic warning, according to two people briefed on their conversation. He told Mr. Trump that Mr. Rubio could not be trusted -- that he would work against him and would try to lead America into nuclear war. Mr. Carlson, who declined to comment for this article, told Mr. Trump that Mr. Burgum could not be trusted, either.

Mr. Carlson told Mr. Trump in that June phone call that he believed that if he chose a ''neocon'' as his V.P. -- an abbreviation for Republicans who favor using U.S. power to implant democracy abroad -- then the U.S. intelligence agencies would have every incentive to assassinate Mr. Trump in order to get their preferred president.

He also warned against listening to the advice of allies of Mr. Carlson's former employer, Mr. Murdoch. ''When your enemies are pushing a running mate on you,'' Mr. Carlson told Mr. Trump, referring to the Murdoch empire, ''it's a pretty good sign you should ignore them.''

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting.Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/16/us/politics/trump-vance-vp-decision.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/16/us/politics/trump-vance-vp-decision.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ONLINE: Donald J. Trump with J.D. Vance. Follow Thursday's developments at nytimes.com, including live updates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

EYES ON THE SENATE: When he began his campaign for a vacant Ohio seat, J.D. Vance went to Donald J. Trump to apologize for his earlier criticisms. He won Mr. Trump's endorsement. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

A TURNING POINT: Mr. Trump's early campaigning in 2022 was energized by a visit to East Palestine, Ohio, where a derailment had traumatized the community. Mr. Vance was with him throughout. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12)

Mr. Vance this week. Mr. Trump said he was ''straight out of central casting.'' (A12-A13)

ANOINTED: Despite an intense campaign against Mr. Vance from major Republican donors and the media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Mr. Trump put him on the ticket. Below, in Milwaukee. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

SPECULATION GROWING: The pair in March. By the fall of 2023, chatter swelled that Mr. Vance was a top contender. But Mr. Trump played his cards close, polling nearly everyone he encountered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A12, A13.

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2024

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[***Slovakia Is at a Dangerous Moment; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C24-5G91-DXY4-X041-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** Alena Krempaska

**Highlight:** The shooting of Slovakia’s prime minister comes with a backdrop of growing political polarization.

**Body**

“Fico was shot.” The message arrived in one of my group chats shortly after 3 p.m. on Wednesday. I checked the news and forwarded what I could find out to my friends and family. Information was limited, and headlines like “Robert Fico Was Shot After the Government Meeting in Handlova” seemed absurdly matter-of-fact.

Yes, Mr. Fico, Slovakia’s prime minister, has been a controversial figure. But could he really have been [*shot multiple times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) on a weekday afternoon in May? On Friday he remained hospitalized in serious but stable condition after undergoing surgery.

Slovakian politics are deeply polarized in ways that have tipped into rhetorical and even physical violence. Journalists and activists, particularly women, have received online threats. In 2016 I was [*attacked on the way home from work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html). In 2022 two men were fatally shot outside a gay bar in an [*attack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) that [*might have*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) been politically motivated. Last fall, two former ministers [*brawled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) at a press event.

But in large part, the hateful language — of which there is lots — is confined to the internet, and it has become normalized. Lawmakers, activists and journalists take it to be the price of participating in civic life. We reassure ourselves that those who write threatening messages online are not usually the ones who carry them out.

That’s not to say the atmosphere hasn’t had an impact on politics. Zuzana Caputova, the progressive departing president and a civil rights lawyer, has been open about the fact that death threats against her and her family helped her decide not to run again.

Now someone has shot the prime minister. In retrospect, it seems that the hateful language was gradually, inevitably building to violence, and we are waiting in this dangerous moment to see what comes next. Either the attack will trigger harsh action from the government and make everything worse. Or cooler heads will prevail, and we will pause, pick up the pieces of our fractured country and try to put them back together.

It’s hard to overstate the magnitude of the presence of Mr. Fico in Slovakian politics. A former Communist Party member and a founding member of the Smer party, which, in its early incarnation, was a party of the center-left, he has been prime minister four times since 2006. His relationship with the mainstream media started frosty and [*deteriorated from there*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html). There have been frequent allegations of corruption. Anticorruption demonstrators in 2016 demanded, unsuccessfully, that he and his deputy resign.

But it was the murder of the journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée, who were shot dead in their apartment [*in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) when Mr. Kuciak was in the middle of an investigation into political corruption, that really seemed to split Slovakian politics. Large-scale demonstrations — some with mock gallows and coffins — again demanded his departure. That time they succeeded.

Afterward, the public remained roughly divided in two camps: those for Mr. Fico and those against. People who were pro-Fico skewed ***working class*** and nationalist; those against were mostly members of liberal, wealthier elites.

When Mr. Fico attempted a comeback last fall, he embraced right-wing views, although his party still positions itself as social democrats, and he won handily.

The political atmosphere of the past few months has been particularly febrile. Since Mr. Fico’s return to office, his coalition has embarked on a controversial bid to replace the public broadcaster, and he has dismantled an anticorruption watchdog, despite warnings from the European Union and more protests. In April we had the presidential election — which Ms. Caputova did not run in — and [*Peter Pellegrini*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html), an ally of Mr. Fico’s, won. From there we went almost directly into campaign season for the European Union elections in June.

The division seemed to harden with each election, each political rally, each campaign remark that became less and less about issues and policy and more like a Marvel-esque battle between good and evil. It came from both sides. Last year Mr. Fico’s opponents [*suggested*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) that he would turn the country over to the mafia. And Ms. Caputova sued Mr. Fico after he suggested she was a U.S. puppet and a supporter of George Soros.

But until this week, most of us still thought that this was just how we do politics now.

A few hours after the shooting, video footage emerged, and the online activities and opinions of the man suspected in the attack were quickly scrutinized. Everyone assumed it was political. “He must have been a progressive liberal” was one theory that circulated. The actual motives are still unclear. The interior minister described the attack as “politically motivated” but said the suspect did not belong to a “radicalized group.” He was identified only as Juraj C.

After the shooting, some lawmakers lost their tempers and continued in the usual way. “This is your fault,” the [*vice chairman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) of Smer yelled at opposition lawmakers. Another lawmaker accused journalists of being responsible and declared the beginning of a political war. Thankfully, many other voices appealed for unity and for people to stop fueling the atmosphere of hate. Mr. Pellegrini and others [*urged a pause*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html) in the campaigning for the European Union elections.

We know now that as we talk relentlessly about a fight between good and evil, someone, somewhere, may be taking us at our word.

Alena Krempaska is the program director at the Human Rights Institute, an advocacy organization based in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.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/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/16/world/europe/robert-fico-slovakia-shooting-what-to-know.html).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Denes Erdos/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2024

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[***‘The Strongest Democratic Party That Any of Us Have Ever Seen’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5Y-FJ11-JBG3-600W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 25, 2024 Thursday 16:45 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 408 words

**Byline:** ‘The Ezra Klein Show’

**Highlight:** A Democratic political strategist says things are looking up.

**Body**

If you’re a Democrat, how worried should you be right now? It’s strangely hard to answer that question. On the one hand, polls suggest Democrats should be very worried. President Biden looks weaker than he did as a candidate in 2020, and in matchups with Donald Trump, the election looks like a coin flip. On the other hand, Democrats staved off an expected red wave in the 2022 midterm elections. Biden has a strong record to run on, and Trump has a lot more baggage than he did in 2020.

So, in an effort to put all those pieces together, I had two conversations with two people who have polar opposite perspectives — starting with a more optimistic take for Democrats.

[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://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Amazon Music*](https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/c4a3b1da-5433-49e6-8c14-0e1da53be78c/the-ezra-klein-show), [*Google*](https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS84MkZJMzVQeA%3D%3D) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article).]

Simon Rosenberg is a longtime Democratic political strategist, the author of the newsletter [*Hopium Chronicles*](https://www.hopiumchronicles.com/) and one of the few people who correctly predicted the Democrats’ strong performance in 2022. He argues that the Democratic Party is in a better position now than it has been for generations. In this conversation, we talk about why he isn’t worried about Biden’s polling numbers, how anti-MAGA sentiments have become a motivating force for many voters, what he thinks about the shifts in ***working-class*** support of the Democratic Party, why there’s such a huge gap between Biden’s economic track record and how voters perceive the economy right now, how Biden’s age is affecting the campaign, whether his foreign policy might alienate young voters and more.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” on the [*NYT Audio app*](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/nyt-audio/id1549293936), [*Apple*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Google*](https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS84MkZJMzVQeA%3D%3D) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/ezra-klein-show-book-recs.html).

(A full transcript of the episode is available [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-simon-rosenberg.html).)

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Rollin Hu. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin and Kristin Lin. 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. Special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

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

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

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[***Grunge: A Dull Date, the Sound of Seattle, a ‘Time Capsule’; Times Insider***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRG-V281-DXY4-X10J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday 03:02 EST

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**Section:** INSIDER

**Length:** 648 words

**Byline:** Sarah Diamond Sarah Diamond manages production for narrated articles. She previously worked at National Geographic Studios.

**Highlight:** The New York Times has a long and complicated history with the word grunge. Let’s get down and dingy in it.

**Body**

The New York Times has a long and complicated history with the word grunge. Let’s get down and dingy in it.

In Word Through The Times, we trace how one word or phrase has changed throughout the history of the newspaper.

The New York Times and “grunge” go way back.

“Grunge,” according to the [*Oxford English Dictionary*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use), was originally “a general term of disparagement for someone or something that is repugnant or odious, unpleasant, or dull.” Per the dictionary, the word was first printed in 1965 — via The Times. In an article, a reporter offered definitions of slang words: [*“A difficult date is an ‘octopus,’” the reporter wrote, and “a dull one a ‘grunge*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use).’”

“‘[*Grunge’ is a back-formation of ‘grungy,’”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) Jess Zafarris, an etymologist, said. A back-formation is a word that formed when speakers stopped using a suffix or prefix that had been attached to a longer word. Kory Stamper, a lexicographer at Dictionary.com, said the origin of “grungy” was unknown but that it most likely came into being in the mid-20th century from words like dingy, goo and gunge, British slang for a sticky unknown substance.

Soon, the slang word stuck to subversive music. According to [*Green’s Dictionary of Slang*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use), “grunge” was used in a 1973 New Yorker article to describe the New York Dolls, a rock band. But by the late 1980s, “grunge” defined the sound of [*a city on the other side of the United States: Seattle*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use). Bands like Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and Mudhoney popularized grunge music, a mash of heavy metal and punk rock. And as the grunge sound reverberated across the country, the aligning subculture grew louder, too.

In November 1992, The Times, eager to cover a hip moment, published a [*“lexicon of grunge speak.”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) Megan Jasper, a 25-year-old sales representative at Caroline Records in Seattle, had offered some slang phrases for the article: “Wack slacks,” for example, were old, ripped jeans. “Swingin’ on the flippity-flop” meant hanging out. And “tom-tom club” was code for uncool outsiders. Which, apparently, were some people at The Times: After the article came out, [*it was revealed in The Baffler that Ms. Jasper had fabricated the words*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) to poke fun at the mainstream media’s coverage of culture. [*The story behind the prank was explored in a 2017 article by The Ringer.*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use)

The embarrassment didn’t stop The Times’s interest in grunge. Appearances of the word in the newspaper peaked in 1993.

That may be because in the early 1990s, grunge itself peaked in popularity. So did grunge fashion, modeled by people like Kurt Cobain, the lead singer of Nirvana. Loose fits, flannel shirts, ripped jeans, Converse sneakers and Dr. Martens defined the disheveled style. Soon, grunge marched down the runways: In 1993, Marc Jacobs was a [*“grunge enthusiast,”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) The Times wrote. [*“Gianni Versace did grunge,”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) The Times reported from Milan fashion week, in a “luxury” take “on the scruffy look of downtown Seattle music groups.”

By the late 1990s, grunge had lost its cool. But as is often the case, “grunge” eventually came back into style: In February this year, the reporter Callie Holtermann wrote that fans of Olivia Rodrigo were embracing [*“grunge fashion from the ’90s”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) at concerts.

“Grunge,” Ms. Stamper said, has “become a time capsule.”

That’s certainly true for Steven Kurutz, a Styles reporter. In 2019, he wrote an article about how [*“grunge made blue-collar culture cool.”*](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/grunge_n?tab=meaning_and_use) In the ’90s, Mr. Kurutz went to high school in Pennsylvania, 2,600 miles from Seattle, but felt he could see his community in the grunge subculture. “I could not relate, coming from a ***working-class***, rural background, to so much of pop culture,” he said in an interview. “I think that’s why the music meant even more for me as a teenager, because I was seeing guys on MTV who looked like the people I grew up around. And they were cool!”

For Mr. Kurutz, “grunge” is nostalgic. “I just think about Seattle in 1992.”

BEN MENDELEWICZ

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2024

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[***The Ghastly vs. the Ghostly; Maureen Dowd***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CC7-1SW1-JBG3-60PC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 29, 2024 Saturday 13:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1322 words

**Byline:** Maureen Dowd Maureen Dowd is an Opinion columnist for The Times. She won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary.

**Highlight:** Do the Democrats really want to stop Trump? What are they prepared to do?

**Body**

He’s being selfish. He’s putting himself ahead of the country. He’s surrounded by opportunistic enablers. He has created a reality distortion field where we’re told not to believe what we’ve plainly seen. His hubris is infuriating. He says he’s doing this for us, but he’s really doing it for himself.

I’m not talking about Donald Trump. I’m talking about the other president.

In Washington, people often become what they start out scorning. This has happened to Joe Biden. In his misguided quest for a second term that would end when he’s 86, he has succumbed to behavior redolent of Trump. And he is jeopardizing the democracy he says he wants to save.

I got to know Biden in 1987 when he was running for president. He was hailed then as a leading orator of the Democratic Party, even though he could be windy. I knocked him out of that race when I [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html) about how he cloaked himself in the life of Neil Kinnock, the British Labour leader who was a soaring speaker, and how he gave speeches that [*borrowed*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html), probably unwittingly, from Robert F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey.

I ran into Biden in a Senate stairwell on his way to make a speech dropping out. He was alone, studying his script. We looked at each other in silence — struck by the weight of the moment — then went our separate ways to the same news conference.

Biden was a buoyant soul who had been told he should be president since he was elected to the Senate at 29. And he wasn’t going to let the plagiarism scandal, or his pursuant health problems, stop him. He had two aneurysms in 1988 and later said his doctors told him he wouldn’t be alive if his campaign had continued, and he kidded me that I’d saved his life. He also did not let the other tragedies that scarred his life drag him down.

I marveled at the fact that Biden forgave me. He told me that it was better that we stay on good terms. He did not get mad, even when I joked that his new hair plugs looked like a field of okra during the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill hearings. He called to chastise me, with good humor, but I hid under my desk, afraid to take the call.

I was [*critical*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html) of his performance as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee during the nasty, raunchy hearings; in his effort to be fair, he let the Republicans win unfairly, and that led to a very unethical and deceitful right-winger (with a highly partisan wife who years later pushed Trump’s coup) being put on the Supreme Court for life.

Yet Biden still didn’t cut me off. When he became vice president, he invited me to his St. Patrick’s Day breakfasts and Christmas parties. He was so un-vengeful, I doubted he was Irish.

Having elevated Biden to a height many thought he would never reach, the hoity-toity Obama team proceeded to treat their vice president with scarcely veiled disdain. Barack Obama’s aides would trash Biden to reporters, a betrayal an angry Hunter told me was like “friendly fire.”

Biden was a good and loyal vice president, and I thought it was a mistake on Obama’s part to pass him over for Hillary in 2016. Hillary was an elitist, status-quo candidate, and the mood of the electorate was anti-elitist and anti-status quo. Biden had his Scranton Joe vibe going for him.

The Obama crew peddled the idea that Biden was too distraught over Beau’s death to campaign, but Biden is the one person on earth who could have used his grief to fuel an empathetic candidacy. Biden told people that Beau had [*wanted*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html) him in the White House, not a Clinton restoration.

If Biden had been the nominee, he would have beaten the immoral Alley Cat and he would now be ending his second term, ready for a golden retirement in his plastic beach chair at his beloved Rehoboth Beach.

Instead, he started his presidency too late. He has clearly been declining for the last couple of years — a dangerous development in a volatile world, with A.I. revolutionizing our country and with a Supreme Court full of religious fanatics reshaping American life.

That’s why almost two years ago I wrote a [*column*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html), “Hey, Joe, Don’t Give It a Go,” suggesting he take the win for the good things he accomplished and let the younger stars of the party have their shot.

“The timing of your exit can determine your place in the history books,” I advised.

But, partly because he had been pushed aside by the Ivy League crowd, he got his Irish up; the ***working-class*** chip on his shoulder grew. He was driven to prove he could be a better president than the one who sidelined him.

Jill Biden, lacking the detachment of a Melania and enjoying the role of first lady more, has been pushing — and shielding — her husband, beyond a reasonable point. After Thursday’s embarrassing debate performance, she exhorted the crowd and played teacher to a prized student: “You did a great job! You answered every question! You knew all the facts!” This, to the guy who controls the nuclear codes.

After Democrats — even the ordinarily fawning MSNBC anchors — commiserated about the debate in a cloud of gloom, Nancy Pelosi, Jim Clyburn, Bill &amp; Hillary, and Obama pushed back and circled the wagons. CNN’s Van Jones said that a Black leader called him and chewed him out for accurately assessing the calamity.

After a reassuring Friday rally in Raleigh, N.C., where the crowd yelled “Four More Years!” and “Lock Him Up!” the presidential historian Doug Brinkley called Biden “the Rebound Kid” on CNN.

The Democratic strategist Paul Begala, who deemed the debate “a catastrophe,” explained on CNN: “The first Democratic politician to call on Biden to step down, it’s going to end their career.” He added: “None of them are going to say, ‘Hey, let me step forward and knife Julius Caesar.’ Biden is a beloved man in the Democratic Party.”

It is because Biden is beloved, and because he has real accomplishments as president, that he needs to stop this nerve-racking, maddening tightrope walk to the Oval.

He will have sprightly moments, like Raleigh. But he will also have sepulchral ones, as he did in the debate dubbed “the Infirm vs. the Unstable” by CNN’s Audie Cornish.

He didn’t just have an off night, like Obama had when he acted huffy in his first debate with Mitt Romney. Biden looked ghostly, with that trepidatious gait; he couldn’t remember his rehearsed lines or numbers. He has age-related issues, and those go in only one direction. It was heart-wrenching to watch the president’s childhood stammer return.

His wife and staff will build their protective wall ever higher and shoo away reporters, pressing on the age spiral, ever more vigorously. But Biden, Jill and Democratic leaders have to face the fact that this is an extraordinarily risky bet, with — as they drum into us — democracy on the line.

James Carville, who also said a while back that the president should renounce a second term, told me Biden should call former Presidents Clinton and Obama to the White House and decide on five Democratic stars to address their convention in August.

“You know what the ratings for that would be?” he asked. “The whole world would watch and people would go, ‘Oh, God, they have real talent!’”

Carville said the president should give a July 4 speech announcing he will let the next generation of Democratic leaders bloom.

The 79-year-old strategist dryly noted that you can’t win a contest against aging.

“I do everything I can to try to beat this thing,” he said. “It don’t work.” A staircase can ruin his day.

And what if Joe and Jill cling on?

In reply, Carville quoted Herb Stein, a top economist under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford: That which can’t continue, won’t.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.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/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/09/12/us/biden-s-debate-finale-an-echo-from-abroad.html).

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2024

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[***Saying the Quiet Part Out Loud; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CMP-7111-DXY4-X00W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 3, 2024 Saturday 23:06 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 2067 words

**Byline:** Lauren Hirsch and Sarah Kessler Lauren Hirsch joined The Times from CNBC in 2020, covering deals and the biggest stories on Wall Street. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing.

**Highlight:** Two billionaire Democratic donors have publicly pressured Vice President Kamala Harris to replace the F.T.C. chair, Lina Khan. Wall Street insiders are worried that could backfire.

**Body**

Two billionaire Democratic donors have publicly pressured Vice President Kamala Harris to replace the F.T.C. chair, Lina Khan. Wall Street insiders are worried that could backfire.

Wall Street Democrats have spent the last eight years complaining about their relationship with Washington. They found former President Donald Trump’s presidency unpredictable, and then became estranged from the Democratic Party as President Biden hired the most aggressive antitrust regulators in recent memory. But now that Vice President Kamala Harris is the party’s presumptive presidential nominee, they see a chance to regain influence.

Some have returned to a long tradition of writing checks, scheduling fund-raising dinners and orchestrating subtle campaigns. But others, embracing the public lobbying welcomed by Trump and employed by outspoken C.E.O.s like Elon Musk and Bill Ackman, are openly calling for Harris to oust Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission: “I think she’s a dope,” Barry Diller, the chairman of IAC, told CNBC. (He later apologized for calling her a [*dope*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), but not for critiquing her policies.)

Reid Hoffman, the LinkedIn co-founder, spoke to CNN [*twice*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) about his Khan concerns. “Antitrust is fine,” Hoffman said. “Waging war is not.” (He later [*clarified*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) that he would support Harris regardless of whether she replaced Khan.)

Few on Wall Street would disagree with that stance — Khan has moved to block deals with seemingly [*little concern over losing in court*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app). But behind the scenes, many are irked by this kind of public lobbying, arguing that it exposes a misunderstanding of the way the Washington game is played, and that it could backfire.

Their concerns are echoed by strategists: “I’m not really sure if it’s very effective,” Stuart Stevens, a political consultant who previously worked for Mitt Romney, told DealBook. “I’ve always felt once you make these things public, it makes it harder for politicians to do.”

Critics immediately called the public lobbying self-interested. The F.T.C. has [*reportedly opened multiple investigations that involve subsidiaries of Diller’s IAC*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), according to CNN, and Hoffman has a seat on the board of Microsoft, whose investment in OpenAI is also [*under scrutiny from the F.T.C.*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app)

“We didn’t see this in recent elections, because the Democratic Party was Wall Street-friendly on issues like antitrust and trade,” said Michael Sandel, a professor at Harvard and the author of “Democracy’s Discontent,” speaking about the public lobbying around Khan. “The Biden administration broke with these policies, which is why the donors are complaining.”

Khan’s detractors on Wall Street argue that their frustration is warranted. Deal activity has [*dropped precipitously*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) under the Biden administration as regulators have demonstrated an eagerness to test the law by taking proposed mergers to trial.

But expressing the desire to oust Khan so publicly, some Wall Street insiders say, makes it nearly impossible for Harris to do so without it seeming as if she’s kowtowing to donor interests. It also reinforces Khan’s stature as a [*celebrity in her own right.*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app)

Donor concern extends beyond Khan’s vocation. Not since Teddy Roosevelt has antitrust enforcement been a cornerstone election issue, and it is not clear it will be in 2024, either. But a clumsy approach could complicate Wall Street’s nascent relationship with a potential Harris administration, particularly if she views it as one that threatens her election chances.

Harris needs to win votes in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, where the administration’s antitrust policies and Trump-era tariffs remain popular.

“It seems to me that the last thing Kamala Harris needs is to take direction from plutocrat donors and cryptocurrency fans,” Chris Whipple, author of “The Fight of His Life: Inside Joe Biden’s White House,” told DealBook. “She should be listening instead to ***working-class*** voters in battleground states.”

The pressure campaign comes as Trump redeploys a winning tactic from 2016 by courting the populist vote. He invited Sean O’Brien, the president of the Teamsters union, to speak at the Republican National Convention. His pick for vice president, JD Vance, has applauded Khan’s take on big business.

Executives are increasingly becoming their own lobbyists. Companies typically try to influence antitrust policy behind closed doors. Google executives [*frequented*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) the Obama White House during its antitrust investigation of the internet giant. Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google fortified their Washington presence during Trump’s presidency, [*spending millions*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) on congressional calls, advertising and think-tank funding.

But Trump’s [*more blatantly transactional tenure*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) was followed by a rise in public pleading, as Ackman, Musk and Silicon Valley billionaires have used social media to proclaim their political views on everything from the war in Ukraine to tax policy.

It’s “a continuation of social media where you have a forum that no thought can go unexpressed,” said Stevens. “This is what we used to pay lobbyists to do.”

Washington insiders prefer the art of subtle pressure. DealBook asked donors, lobbyists and insiders how they would pressure the vice president to replace Khan. Their hypothetical strategies involved highlighting economic studies that question Khan’s policies; enlisting support from organizations of smaller companies; and containing the ire that replacing Khan would provoke from progressive politicians like Senator Elizabeth Warren.

The latter is easier said than done, adding to the [*significant political and logistical challenges*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) in replacing Khan.

Those surveyed said a more easily achieved goal might be pushing for appointments in roles that could curb the administration’s antitrust priorities, like the director of the national economic council.

As for the potential political problem created by donors, a longtime Washington policy strategist, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized by his employer to speak publicly, had a recommendation.

“It’s a huge problem for Harris,” he told DealBook of public calls for Khan’s removal. He offered his thoughts on how the vice president should handle them: Reject executives publicly, and then tell donors privately, “Sorry, I had to do that.” — Lauren Hirsch

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A lackluster jobs report sank stocks, and put pressure on the Fed. Employers [*added 114,000 jobs in July*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), well below economists’ forecasts. That, and a revision showing 29,000 fewer hires in May and June, led to more calls for the central bank to lower interest rates at the next policy meeting in September as concerns grow that the U.S. economy is slowing.

Journalist Evan Gershkovich and two other Americans were freed from Russia in an elaborate prisoner swap. Gershkovich, the Wall Street Journal reporter, plus the former Marine Paul Whelan and the radio journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, [*landed in the U.S. late on Thursday*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), following a six-nation deal that President Biden called a triumph of international diplomacy. Republican congressional leaders [*warned*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) though that “the costs of hostage diplomacy will continue to rise” and that the swap would do nothing to dissuade Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, from wrongfully detaining political prisoners.

Kamala Harris won the votes needed to secure the Democratic Party’s nomination, setting Harris up to become the first Black woman and person of South Asian heritage to run for president on a major political ticket. Speculation that she will pick Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania as her running mate gained steam as he [*canceled a fund-raising trip*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), though some pro-Palestinian activists [*oppose his selection*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app).

Katie Ledecky became the most decorated U.S. female Olympian. She reached the milestone after winning her [*13th Olympic medal*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), in the 4x200 freestyle relay. In other Olympic highlights: Simone Biles and the U.S. women’s team each [*won gold*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) in the Olympics gymnastics all-around competitions; the U.S. men’s gymnastics team won its first medal in 16 years; and the U.S. won its first women’s rugby medal.

Big Tech’s big spending

For nearly two years, Wall Street hasn’t blinked when tech C.E.O.s pledged to invest whatever it takes to realize the potential of artificial intelligence. And this week many of the industry’s titans confirmed double-digit percentage increases in capital expenditures, the bulk tied to A.I. spending, over the same time last year.

Shares in [*Alphabet*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), [*Microsoft*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) and [*Amazon*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) all fell after they reported earnings, despite delivering good news about their bottom lines. Only [*Meta*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), which both exceeded expectations and made the case for A.I. helping its core business, and [*Apple*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app), which hasn’t defined the technology as existential to its future, avoided earnings-related stock slumps.

Ticket resellers are sitting out this Olympics

When Andrew covered the 2000 Olympic Games, scalping tickets was as competitive as some of the athletic events, with an army of resellers descending on Sydney from all around the world to [*hustle tickets*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app). The marketplace for the Paris Games couldn’t look more different.

QR codes, distributed via an official Olympics app, have replaced paper tickets. If you want to sell a ticket, your only option is in the app, for face value. Trying your luck with an unsanctioned sales channel could be viewed as a crime, [*the Olympics website warns*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app). The threat seems to be working: The biggest online ticket resellers, including StubHub, Ticketmaster and SeatGeek, have no inventory.

By adopting such a restrictive stance, the Olympics may be circumventing problems that have plagued the events industry, like deceptive pricing (the District of Columbia’s attorney general [*sued StubHub this week*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) over what he calls junk fees); scalpers using bots to monopolize the supply of hot tickets; and speculative resellers who buy tickets only after they’ve sold them at a higher price.

But you’re not likely to see the Paris approach at the next Summer Games in Los Angeles, or trending at venues across the U.S. any time soon. Here’s why.

The U.S. is generally more open to resellers. A handful of states, including Connecticut, Illinois, Virginia, New Jersey and Colorado, make it unlawful to limit or restrict a consumer’s right to resell tickets, says Laura Nemeth, a partner at the law firm Squire Patton Boggs who represents clients in the event ticketing industries. That said, there is no U.S. federal law that spells out consumers’ rights to resell tickets or that prohibits event organizers from restricting them.

In Europe, consumers are generally more skeptical about ticket reselling and regulations that govern it are more restrictive.

Some U.S. professional sports rely on the resale market. “Going to all 81 home baseball games is a challenge, even for the most dedicated fans,” says Russ D’Souza, a co-founder of the ticketing platform SeatGeek. The option to resell tickets makes season tickets more valuable.

Rights holders often pocket from the practice. When events name official reselling partners, they typically get a cut of the sales fee a platform charges. As such, the platform is often integrated into the event’s ticketing system, or gets other preferential positioning.

The Eras Tour has put the spotlight on ticketing. Sky-high prices at Taylor Swift concerts are commonly cited to show how predatory resellers can box out all but those willing to pay well above face value for entry. Some popular U.S. artists, like Billie Eilish, have requested that all tickets be restricted from transfer to “[*give fans, not scalpers, the best chance to buy tickets at face value*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app).”

Paris is facing a different problem. Some of the buzzier events — including the men’s and women’s 100-meter finals this weekend — had [*a stockpile of tickets available*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app) as of Thursday.

Could dynamic pricing on an open resale market have put more fans in the Stade de France?

“What’s so powerful about the secondary market is that it’s a true marketplace,” D’Souza says. “And the price will reflect supply and demand.”

Michael J. de la Merced contributed reporting.

Thanks for reading! We’ll see you Monday.

We’d like your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/30/business/kamala-harris-economy-ceo-donor-business/index.html?cid=ios_app).

Michael J. de la Merced contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission, has come under fire for her aggressive antitrust actions. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMIR HAMJA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B3.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***We Haven't Hit Peak Populism Yet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3H-F1T1-DXY4-X1VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 24, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1101 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

We used to have long debates about American exceptionalism, about whether this country was an outlier among nations, and I always thought the bulk of the evidence suggested that it was. But these days our political attitudes are pretty ordinary. America, far from standing out as the champion of democracy, as a nation that welcomes immigrants, as a perpetually youthful nation energized by its faith in the American dream, is now caught in the same sour, populist mood as pretty much everywhere else.

Earlier this year, for example, the Ipsos research firm issued a report based on interviews with 20,630 adults in 28 countries, including South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil and Germany, last November and December. On question after question the American responses were, well, average.

Our pessimism is average. Roughly 59 percent of Americans said they believed their country is in decline, compared to 58 percent of people across all 28 countries who said that. Sixty percent of Americans agreed with the statement ''the system is broken,'' compared to 61 percent in the worldwide sample who agreed with that.

Our hostility to elites is average. Sixty-nine percent of Americans agreed that the ''political and economic elite don't care about hard-working people,'' compared with 67 percent of respondents among all 28 nations. Sixty-three percent of Americans agreed that ''experts in this country don't understand the lives of people like me,'' compared with 62 percent of respondents worldwide.

Americans' authoritarian tendencies are pretty average. Sixty-six percent of Americans said that the country ''needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful,'' compared with 63 percent of respondents among the 28 nations overall. Forty percent of Americans said they believed we need a strong leader who will ''break the rules,'' which was only a bit below the 49 percent globally who believed that.

Those results reveal a political climate -- in the United States and across the world -- that is extremely favorable for right-wing populists. That matters because this is a year of decision, a year in which at least 64 countries will hold national elections. Populism has emerged as the dominant global movement.

So far this year, populists have thrived in election after election. Incumbent populist regimes were or are about to be re-elected in India, Indonesia and Mexico. Populist parties have done well in Portugal, Slovakia and the Netherlands, where the far-right leader Geert Wilders shocked the world by leading his Party for Freedom to power.

European elites are bracing for the European Parliament elections next month. If the polls are to be believed, the parliament is about to shift sharply to the right, endangering current policies on climate change and Ukraine. Experts project that anti-Europe populist parties are likely to come out on top in the Euro-parliamentary voting in nine member states: France, Italy, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia. Such parties are likely to come in second or third in nine others, including Germany and Spain.

Then, of course, there is Donald Trump's slight but steady lead in the swing states in the United States.

If anything, the evidence suggests that the momentum is still on the populist side. Trump seems to be expanding his lead among ***working-class*** voters. In Europe, populists are making big gains, not just among the old and disillusioned, but among the young. According to one survey, 41 percent of European voters aged 18 to 35 have moved toward the right or far right. In the recent Portuguese elections, young voters surged to the right- wing populist Chega (Enough) party while nearly half the support for the rival Socialist Party came from voters older than 65.

One obvious takeaway is that it's a mistake to analyze our presidential election in America-only terms. President Biden and Trump are being tossed about by global conditions far beyond their control.

The trends also suggest that we could be in one of those magnetic years in world history. There are certain moments in history, like 1848 and 1989, when events in different countries seem to build on one another, when you get sweeping cascades that bring similar changes to different nations, when the global consciousness seems to shift.

Of course, the main difference between those years and 2024 is that during those earlier pivotal moments the world experienced an expansion of freedom, the spread of democracy, the advance of liberal values. This year we're likely to see all those widely in retreat.

Is there a way to fight back against the populist tide? Of course there is, but it begins with the humble recognition that the attitudes that undergird populism emerged over decades and now span the globe. If social trust is to be rebuilt, it probably has to be rebuilt on the ground, from the bottom up. As for what mainstream candidates should do this election year, I can't improve on the advice offered by the Hoover Institution scholar Larry Diamond in The American Interest magazine in 2020:

Don't try to out-polarize the polarizer. If you stridently denounce the populist, you only mobilize his base and make yourself look like part of the hated establishment.

Reach out to the doubting elements of his supporters. Don't question the character of his backers or condescend; appeal to their interests and positive dreams.

Avoid tit-for-tat name calling. You'll be paying his game, and you'll look smaller.

Craft an issue-packed campaign. The Ipsos survey shows that even people who hate the system are eager for programs that create jobs, improve education, health care and public safety. As Diamond puts it, ''Offer substantive, practical, nonideological policy proposals.''

Don't let the populists own patriotism. Offer a liberal version of national pride that gives people a sense of belonging across difference.

Don't be boring. The battle for attention is remorseless. Don't let advisers make their candidates predictable, hidden and safe.

It's looking like this year's elections will be won by whichever side stands for change. Populists promise to tear down systems. Liberals need to make the case for changing them in a comprehensive and constructive way.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/opinion/populism-trump-elections.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/opinion/populism-trump-elections.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A22.

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**End of Document**



[***This Climate Biodome Wants to Save Humanity. Men Need Not Apply.; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T3-NP81-DXY4-X1GX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 5, 2023 Tuesday 01:13 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 789 words

**Byline:** CJ Hauser

**Highlight:** In Gabrielle Korn’s debut novel, “Yours for the Taking,” a feminist cultural icon runs a lifesaving artificial habitat, but a secret, and controversial, agenda guides her project.

**Body**

In Gabrielle Korn’s debut novel, “Yours for the Taking,” a feminist cultural icon runs a lifesaving artificial habitat, but a secret, and controversial, agenda guides her project.

YOURS FOR THE TAKING, by Gabrielle Korn

“Yours for the Taking” follows an ensemble cast in a dystopian, near-future world where climate change and capitalism have rendered Earth toxic. The ultrarich have fled to luxury shuttles in outer space. Back on the planet, an enterprise called the Inside Project is creating sealed habitats on top of cities, designed to shield humanity from the climate’s dangers. Each “Inside” is funded and designed by a different corporate sponsor, but there isn’t enough room for everyone who seeks refuge.

Korn’s novel focuses on the Inside built over New York City, bankrolled by Jacqueline Millender, a white cis woman, feminist, multibillionaire and cultural icon known for creating Instagrammable women’s clubs (reminiscent of [*the Wing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/style/the-wing-shuts-down.html)) and writing books about her rise to power (reminiscent of Sheryl Sandberg’s “[*Lean In*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/16/business/lean-in-five-years-later.html)”). But Millender has a secret agenda for her Inside: Only women will be allowed. And the accepted residents won’t know this until they’ve arrived and been locked in.

What does Millender mean by “women,” though? She’s unconvinced trans women should be allowed in her “women only” Inside. She’s also unsure about trans men and nonbinary folks and, really, anyone who isn’t a cis woman. Millender’s logic for defining “womanhood” will leave the reader queasy, but applauding Korn’s satire of TERF rhetoric. At its core, this novel is an exploration of the violence of white, trans-exclusionary radical feminism.

A plot recalling “Brave New World” props up the book’s commentary. The characters who gain entry to Millender’s Inside discover a steep price for their safety: They are drugged, brainwashed and coerced into carrying and raising a new generation of children, all in service of yet another of Millender’s secret goals. The drama of the novel comes from watching the characters be changed and challenged as they try to survive in Millender’s warped dollhouse.

The action of the book will keep the reader turning the pages, but it does not compensate for the characters’ lack of complexity. Millender is an entertaining parody of white feminism, but she crumples into a one-dimensional villain as the book goes on. The characters orbiting her fare even worse. The book also follows Ava, a queer, upper-middle-class white cis woman who is accepted to the New York Inside; her ex-girlfriend Orchid, a ***working-class*** white cis woman who is rejected for residency; Olympia, a Black, queer cis woman and medical doctor pressured into running Millender’s Inside; Shelby, a white trans woman who becomes Millender’s devoted employee; and Brook and July, Ava’s children, young cis girls of Generation A who were born in Inside.

If these descriptions seem overly concerned with identity signifiers, that’s because the book is deeply concerned with identity. We are meant to see the tension between Millender’s white feminist ideals and the realities of the Black, trans and ***working-class*** lives of the people forced to live in her world. But it is hard to get excited about Korn’s representative efforts when her characterization of those lives doesn’t go deep. The characters of diverse backgrounds are frequently sidelined, ushered offstage by a variety of plot developments, only to return at the 11th hour to facilitate a rainbow coalition denouement. These characters feel hemmed in, allowed to speak only when conveniently performing ideological functions. Despite aiming to critique exclusionary feminism, Korn struggles to extend ample page time and complexity to marginalized identities — to offer them true narrative inclusion.

Is it possible to dismantle white feminism from the inside or “the Inside”? At the action-packed end of this book, the characters make big moves and Korn seems to suggest it is. (The ending sets up a sequel, which is in the works.)

Queer writers and writers of color have long been publishing science fiction that radically reimagines the world and challenges our ideas for living in it. Think of Octavia Butler, Ryka Aoki, Samuel Delany, Rivers Solomon and N.K. Jemisin. “Yours for the Taking” is an effective scale model of the white feminism we already know, and there’s value in this, even if Korn’s world building isn’t as ambitiously radical as that of her literary antecedents. Still, despite its hopeful ending, this novel’s shortcomings remind the reader that we’re not red-pilling our way out of the matrix of exclusionary feminisms anytime soon.

YOURS FOR THE TAKING | By Gabrielle Korn | St. Martin’s | 322 pp. | $29

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR18.

**Load-Date:** December 28, 2023

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[***Vivek Ramaswamy Has a Different Vision for Trumpism From JD Vance; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D97-61B1-DXY4-X0M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2024 Tuesday 13:11 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 15621 words

**Byline:** Ezra KleinEzra Klein joined Opinion in 2021. Previously, he was the founder, editor in chief and then editor at large of Vox; the host of the podcast &amp;#8220;The Ezra Klein Show&amp;#8221;; and the author of &amp;#8220;Why We&amp;#8217;re Polarized.&amp;#8221; Before that, he was a columnist and editor at The Washington Post, where he founded and led the Wonkblog vertical. He is .&amp;#160;

**Highlight:** The former Trump primary challenger discusses the ideological divides he sees within Trumpism.

**Body**

In 2020 very few people had heard the name Vivek Ramaswamy. That was before he ran for president as a not-that-well-known biotech executive and anti-woke crusader, before he was one of the breakout stars of the Republican primaries, a guy who proved to be a lot faster on his feet at a debate and in front of a crowd than a lot of the much more experienced politicians who were competing against him.

Archived clip of Vivek Ramaswamy: I think there’s something deeper going on in the Republican Party here, and I am upset about what happened last night. We’ve become a party of losers, at the end of the day. We’re the cancer of the Republican establishment.

Archived clip of Ramaswamy: So reject this myth that they’ve been selling you, that somebody had a cup of coffee, stint at the U.N. and then makes eight million bucks after has real foreign policy experience.

And then in the summer, when Republicans were riding high, when Donald Trump seemed a pretty good bet to win the presidential election, Ramaswamy went to the National Conservatism Conference, a place where his colleague and sometime frenemy JD Vance was also speaking, and gave a pretty interesting speech arguing that there was a deep divide within the “America First” movement.

Archived clip of Ramaswamy: Thank you for the warm welcome. It’s going to be a different kind of speech tonight. This is not a rah-rah speech. My goal is to actually tonight just illuminate what I view as this growing, healthy but existent rift between what I call the national protectionist direction of the future and a national libertarian direction for the future.

Vance, of course, was then chosen to be Trump’s running mate, elevating the leader of the other side of what Ramaswamy takes as a divide to, possibly, the vice presidency. But Ramaswamy thinks that a future Trump administration — and if Trump loses, certainly a future Republican Party — is still quite shapeable on these issues.

He just published a book making some of these arguments titled “[*Truths: The Future of America First*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433).” And I thought it would be an interesting time to have a moment to talk about these divides.

This is an edited excerpt from our conversation for my podcast. For the full conversation, watch the video above or listen to “The Ezra Klein Show.”

In 2022 you told The New Yorker that you recoil when you’re called a conservative. In your book, the term you like to use for the movement you’re part of is “America First.” What’s the difference between being a conservative and being “America First”?

The reason is I think that the term “conservative” — and I would say everything I’m saying, there’s a parallel version of it for liberal, on the left, but that’s less my concern or what you probably want to hear from me. But I think the term “conservative” itself is ill defined today.

If there’s one thing that unites the conservative movement today, it is its opposition to radical left-wing excess. But if you ask the question, “What does it actually stand for?” that question, I think, is far more unanswered. Even the values or the value systems that conservatives are seeking to conserve have in some ways actually been eroded and disappeared in the country, which requires a kind of creation, which has historically been a progressive project rather than a conservative project.

That gets a little etymological and philosophical, but in a more practical sense, even the modern conservative movement consists of a rather widely disparate group of movements within it. You would have the neoliberal informed, or what you might call neoconservative vision of conservatism, Bush-era Republican conservatism versus a more nationalist “America First” direction that speaks to, certainly, my vision for the future of the country. But if you double-click on that, that itself is comprised of at least two, if not more, different factions within it, as well.

And so anyway, for me, I think a lot of these labels can be confining, because people tend to reason by analogizing you to something rather than analyzing your own views. And that’s one of the reasons I’ve tried to go out of my way, more so than an average politician, to write a larger number of books, articles and to go the distance a little bit to lay out what my views actually are, rather than to have them be analogized to somebody’s pre-existing category of where they try to fit me in.

I’m unafraid of being a little etymological. We’re here on a podcast. I’ve been thinking about George W. Bush recently. And he was understood in his day as a nationalist. This was an era of flag pins. You’re wearing a flag pin right now, like the post-9/11 period.

What I see in the “America First” world is a sense of — what came before was insufficiently nationalist. If I were to say what unites all of you together, it is a sense of renewed nationalism and a sense that nationalism was betrayed not just by a left that you say has excesses but a right that lost the plot. In what way was George W. Bush not nationalist?

The short version of the answer to that question would be interventionist foreign policy and the use of American taxpayer and even life resources to advance goals that didn’t directly advance or even indirectly advance the American interest. That’s the short version of the answer to that question.

But if you want to go longer form, in terms of history here, let’s go even further back to the evolution of modern conservatism and how we got to where we are. I think if you go back to Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, this is a kind of modern original sin in American politics of the creation of a nanny state. I include the entitlement state, which is the state that gives away stuff — welfare, Medicaid, etc. There’s the regulatory state, the rise of three-letter agencies to administer this larger form of government and the regulatory state. And then there’s the foreign nanny state, which is the foreign aid complex and the foreign interventionist complex.

What I think of as classical conservatism in the latter half of the 20th century was a reactionary response to that L.B.J. vision of the Great Society that got watered down through what we would say is the rise of neoconservatism, Bush-era conservatism, that effectively accepted that this sort of larger form of government in some form was here to stay — that we’re not really going to undo the Great Society, that we’re not really going to undo the existence of the regulatory state, but we want to be thoughtful about curbing its overgrowth. While, at the same time, saying that, while we’ve got big government, we might as well use it to spread democracy, using capitalism as a vector to do it. And if we’re not going to use capitalism to do it, we’ll use military force to do it. And that’s a different kind of big government that became accepted in the form of conservative doctrine. Not just accepted but a central feature of it.

And then what I see in the “America First” response right now is a unified response that is against that neoconservative vision. But if you double-click on what that actually stands for, that itself is unanswered, too.

And I think what you see in, broadly, what’s thought of in popular circles as the “America First” movement today — but what I call the protectionist wing of the “America First” movement — is an economic objective, an economic project. You could call it economic populism or economic nationalism. But in some ways, the protectionist strand of this says: OK, well if big government’s going to be here to stay, we don’t just want to curb it. We actually want to use it to advance substantive goals of our own.

Versus the strand that I’m more identified with, what I’ve certainly termed the national libertarian or national liberties trend of “America First” says that actually the whole project — we got to actually keep our eye on the ball — was dismantling the existence of that nanny state in all of its forms: the entitlement state, the regulatory state and the foreign nanny state.

We’ve gotten into the thick of a lot of this quickly.

No, this is great. I’m glad to get into it. Were Medicare and Medicaid mistakes?

I believe they were, with the benefit of retrospect. Particularly Medicaid, particularly the welfare state without work attachments required attached to it.

Medicare and Social Security I put in a different category, which we can get to later, and I think is a little bit orthogonal to the discussion certainly that I’m most interested in having that I think is on the money right now.

Why are they in a different category?

I think that Social Security — my real issue there is if we’d ever actually taken advantage of the surplus that we had, it’s a bit more mechanical issue than if you just allowed for the surplus to be invested at rates of normally normalized returns of the stock market or diversified portfolio. We’d have a far excess surplus that would be sustaining itself — so it was “you pay in, you pay out,” versus having a redistributionist quality to it.

Versus what I think of as the welfare state. My principal issue with it is that it actually — I think the evidence would show, in my opinion — that it has harmed the very people that it was created to actually help through creating incentive distortions that maybe were predictable — we could debate the history of this — and maybe weren’t predictable. But even ex ante — if you had asked a lot of the people who designed it and fast-forwarded — the results as they exist today, they’d be different from the results that even the designers of those policies would’ve envisioned.

But my core focus, actually, even in my presidential campaign, had been less taking aim at that — though I do think that that’s a project we have to come back to — but was to take aim at at least the regulatory state that was a close cousin of that state. And I think basically what happened in the ’60s is we traded off our sovereignty for this stuff.

And I think the problem we’re basically going to run into as a country is eventually that stuff is going to run out in the form of our national debt crisis. And we’re left with neither sovereignty nor stuff. And I think this should be the central focus and concern of the conservative movement, which, it’s not quite today.

That brings me back to this distinction between the national protectionist and the national libertarian camps of the “America First” movement. And the irony is — I’ve made the case for the more national libertarian strain, let’s just say in recent months, in a more pronounced way in particular. One of the criticisms I’ve gotten is that as it relates to sort of trade and immigration policy and my attitudes toward the regulatory state: Is that just a reversion to a kind of neoconservatism or neoliberalism?

And my retort back to that — and this is at the bleeding edge of “America First” debates right now — is that actually the “America First” wing, the protectionist wing’s acceptance of the big state is actually the permanent codification of the neoconservative premise that rejected the classical conservatism that was hostile to the existence of the nanny state in the first place.

How many conservatisms can dance on the head of this particular pin?

Yeah, I was — you want to give etymology and lexicons, and so I feel like we’re using too many terms content, but —

But hold on the terms for a minute. I’ve sat in chairs exactly as far from Paul Ryan as I’m sitting from you. Put aside the foreign policy for a minute.

Which is key.

Which is key. A lot of what you’re saying just feels like Paul Ryan to me.

So here’s why it’s radically different. I am more committed in my rejection of blithe neoliberalism.

What is blithe neoliberalism?

Blithe neoliberalism is liberal internationalism of a variety that says we were somehow going to export Big Mac and Happy Meals and spread democracy to China. That the sole goal of immigration policy was to view the United States as an economic zone and that the goal of all immigration policy was to maximize the size of that economic pie, without regard to national identity. Those are some of the big mistakes of blithe neoliberalism of yesterday.

I think what we’ve learned from that is — here’s a couple, I would say, deep-category errors that were committed, that we still suffer the consequences of today.

One of those is that we now depend on our chief adversary for our own national security. The No. 1 supplier to the U.S. military, directly or indirectly, is China. Forty percent of the semiconductors that power the Department of Defense come from China. Our military industrial base is dependent on China, so much so that Raytheon says that we have to make nice with China.

This makes no sense. Like, even if you’re classical Friedrich A. von Hayek-style libertarian, read “The Road to Serfdom” — he would even admit and even embrace the idea that a nation cannot depend on its adversary for its own national self-defense. It just doesn’t make sense. But that’s, I think, the sin No. 1 of the old blithe neoliberalism.

And No. 2, related to this issue of immigration, that somehow — I don’t care what language you speak, I don’t care what your allegiance to the civic ideals of the United States are — if you know the first thing about it, if you’re going to add some unit of economic efficiency to the U.S. economy, our immigration policy is effectively just a subset of economic policy, which I think has had the effect of eroding our national character and national identity in a way that just wasn’t in the scope of concern of the Paul Ryan-style worldview. So in that sense, I depart, in no uncertain terms, from the blithe neoliberalism of yesterday.

However, there’s a fork in the road then about how one responds to that. If you’re really serious about declaring economic independence from China — which I think is a chief and vital objective for the United States, at least in areas critical to our national security — then, yes, of course, that means onshoring into the U.S. We’re all in favor of that. But it also means, if you’re really serious about it, expanding trade relationships with South Korea, Japan, India. You could debate other countries — Vietnam, Philippines, Australia, etc.

But if your top goal is to protect American manufacturers from the effects of foreign price competition, then you actually want less trade with those countries. But if that’s your objective, then you’re necessarily delaying the time period it takes to declare independence from China. So there’s a choice.

So in this you sound a little bit more, to me, like where the Biden administration is than where Donald Trump is.

I disagree with that.

I’m sure you will. But what you’re describing is what they often talk about as friendshoring. Before that, what you’re describing was actually called the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal: We’re going to encircle China with a series of trade deals. And I’m sure you would’ve designed the trade deal in terms of climate and labor standards differently, but with different deals we make with other players who we will increase our trade with them and, as such, our industrial base will be less dependent on China.

And Trump has not just a set of China tariffs but a 10 or 20 percent — depending on which speech he’s giving — tariff on all imported goods from anybody, be they friend or foe.

You sound to me like you’re interested in this other idea: that our trade with friends should go up in order to make trade with China go down. That strikes me as actually more common cause right now with people on the Democratic side than people on the Republican ticket.

A lot of things to say in response to that. First of all, I could care less right now, for the purpose of this discussion, about what label we overlay on anything. Because I think there’s deep divides in the Democratic Party, as I said at the very start of this conversation, as I think there are in the Republican Party.

Sure, but it’s useful to ground things in actual policies people are proposing.

But then the second point is: Biden has actually kept most of the Trump tariffs intact.

Right. But he is not trying to create a universal tariff.

Well, if he kept all the tariffs that he supposedly would’ve opposed from Donald Trump, he’s effectively blessed it.

No, no. He’s not trying to create a 10 or 20 percent universal tariff. He’s just not.

I think we can get into the essence of what Donald Trump is also trying to do, which I think is a little different than what you characterized.

He’s proposing a 10 or 20 percent universal tariff.

I think he’s using the threat of tariffs to be able to accomplish other goals as a negotiator.

So you don’t think he will do the thing that he’s saying he will do?

I think that Donald Trump is all about, with respect to the international stage, using our leverage to the maximum extent possible.

So we have to sort of assume secret knowledge of what Donald Trump is going to do?

Well, I think that he’s proven himself to be an apt negotiator for the United States in getting other countries to pony up in contexts where they haven’t in the past.

And part of what you’re doing by putting Donald Trump there is we’re not putting this traditional stuffed-suit politician. But you’re effectively putting somebody there who keeps other countries guessing in a way that we’re able to extract leverage from them as a consequence.

So you’re saying he’s running for president on his core economic policy, but we should not evaluate that policy, because in office he’ll do something else when he makes a deal?

I think the way to evaluate Donald Trump is how he performed in his first term. The way Donald Trump performed his first term is: I’m going to do what’s right for America. I’m going to do it situationally. What best advances America’s interests, whatever it is.

I think the T.P.P. was poorly executed. You anticipated correctly some of the things I would say with respect to climate-change-related objectives, etc. But even more so, just to get closer to the meat of it: I think that it’s not really free trade when the other side of that trading relationship isn’t playing by the same terms as us — when it comes to state subsidies, for example.

So a tariff is a tax, but there are varied ways of having indirect tariffs or indirect imbalances in the trading relationship when you have state-related subsidies on one side versus another.

If another country or trading partner is applying a tariff to us, either a direct tariff or an indirect tariff in the imbalance of state-sponsored support, then I think it is totally fair game for the U.S. to say, Well, we’re going to do the same thing in return. Even though I believe the best state of affairs for everybody involved is getting rid of that state sponsorship and the tariffs in the first place.

And I think if you look — in fact, forget rhetoric and everything else — in fact, a lot of what Donald Trump accomplished was either leveling the playing field or using the threat of going further than that to accomplish other objectives. That’s what we got out of the first term. I think that’s fair game.

One thing that is difficult about talking about Donald Trump, both in terms of policies he proposes but also the first term that he inhabited, is that in both cases you have a problem of interpretation.

In the first term, it is not just canon among liberal reporters but canon among Trump staffers that Trump was highly blocked by the bureaucracy that he, in theory, controlled. And a huge amount of the thinking around the “America First” movement is how to make a second Trump term more responsive to at least what people believe is Trump’s interests and desires than the first term was. I don’t agree with this sort of vision of Donald Trump as sitting up late at night, every night, carefully poring through proposed trade deals with different countries bilaterally to decide what’s in the American interest.

He got some things done and didn’t change a whole lot of things. But there are theories beneath these, and what I think is interesting about your book, about some of the speeches you’ve been giving, is a distinction in theory. Donald Trump, as far as I can tell, believes, JD Vance certainly believes, that we have very zero-sum transactional relationships with other countries and that we are getting robbed on deals, but just in general, we should be pushing to bring much, much more onshore.

A lot of trade theorists believe — a lot of people think about trade believe — you can have much more positive-sum relationships. I think that is functionally right now where you are. And my sense is that Trump, the whole theory of those tariffs — which is why I take them seriously, at least as an idea of what Donald Trump believes about the world — is that you would just bring back a lot more industrial base if you made all the imports from the rest of the world more expensive. That is, I think, a natural way to look at that. It is the way JD Vance explains it.

Is your view that Donald Trump does not believe that, at core? He’s not mercantilist in that way?

I think so. Here’s the thing about Donald Trump in the coalition he leads right now versus a part of that coalition that has the ideology that you’re describing: I think Donald Trump at his core is a pragmatist, and I do believe — and I think it would be boring to have an hourlong conversation about different interpretations of Donald Trump’s style, but I’ll give you my perspective on it. I do think that he is somebody who pragmatically is not going to be an ideologue one way or the other on this question but is just going to look at what makes America a better country and how you’re able to exert negotiating leverage in a situation-by-situation basis to get there.

What I think is more interesting, though, is there is the ideological strand that you described, and I would go one step further in what that ideological strand thinks it’s accomplishing, the protectionist strand. It’s not just bringing manufacturing back to the U.S. I think there’s even more to the project than that. I think part of the project is also playing with American wages, bringing the wage of the American worker up by saying that, effectively, you are engaging with slave-labor-style wages. You could debate or not, but I’m articulating the view that it’s like slave-labor wages in another country, and stuff is made cheaply because of that. You’re effectively forcing the American worker to compete at that lower wage if you’re engaging in a truly open, bilateral free trade relationship.

And that’s where this bleeds into immigration policy. So trade policy, immigration policy — to the protectionist camp — I think of as more of a subset of labor policy.

A little bit of industrial policy, but it actually is labor policy at its core. The protectionist view on this is: Look, if an American company could pay an American worker $20 an hour to do a job and they could pay two foreign-born workers — legally or illegally, in this case, sometimes Republicans use the vehemence of our opposition to illegal immigration to confound this much more uncomfortable discussion about legal immigration. But what he would say is, if you could pay an American-born worker $20 an hour, but a foreign born worker, even a legal immigrant would be doing the same job for $10 an hour, the job of U.S. immigration policy should be to keep those two foreign-born workers out so that the domestic-born worker can actually be paid the higher wage. That’s a totally different view from not only classical economic theory but also my own view of the national libertarian worldview, which is that actually the thing we should be caring about. When it relates to immigration policy it’s something else altogether, which is the national character of the United States.

If your vision of immigration policy is one of protecting American workers from wage competition, then you just want less immigration, period. If your goal is to actually preserve the national character and identity of the United States, it’s a different immigration policy, which in theory could be more the same or less. Pragmatically in the near term, it almost certainly means a lot less. But you get there for very different reasons.

I always find the way the “America First” movement doesn’t think about immigration to be interesting because on the one hand, on the trade side, what I see is a description of America as locked in incredible zero-sum competitive relationships with other countries in the world — competitive relationships for where you’re going to put a factory, for who’s going to buy whose exports or imports. It’s a very dog-eat-dog economic view of things. And in some ways it’s true.

And here you have this incredible possible advantage America has over everybody else, which is everybody wants to come here. And you could build an immigration system that is bringing in not just low-wage work but a lot of high-wage talent. And the stories of this — you know, Steve Jobs, the son of a Syrian refugee — are legion.

Elon Musk himself.

The degree to which that does not seem to be a huge part of competition strategies on the right or the “America First” thing is interesting to me. You bring up a point system in the book.

I’m not sure that it is.

Talk to me about how you think about it.

So I drew this distinction earlier, but I want to dwell on it for a second, because I think it’s really important to understand what’s actually going on with our base versus what may appear to people peering on it from the outside versus in.

I do think that most of the prominent voices that wear the mantle of the “America First” right adopt the protectionist view. I don’t think that that is broadly representative of where a much more diverse coalition, even within “America First,” rests. It takes someone like Elon Musk, who’s playing an instrumental role, I think, in guiding, hopefully, success for Donald Trump in this election. I’m where Elon is — and Elon’s where I am on this question — is that we want to be the championship team.

So the three principles I give for immigration policy — to make it really simple for people — is no migration without consent. Consent should only be granted to migrants who benefit America, and those who enter without consent must be removed.

But No. 2 is the most interesting. Consent should only be granted — and should be granted — to migrants who benefit America. Now, I view that benefit more holistically than just the economic benefit, but who benefit America in increasing the civic character that I think we’re missing in our country. And further, part of the subset of that civic character is self-determination, self-reliance and the ability to work hard through a meritocratic system of American capitalism. So I think that that is alive and well, actually, in the bloodstream of “America First” policy.

But I think part of what’s happened is some of the most articulate, thoughtful, intelligent and prominent voices wearing the “America First” mantle on the right, I think, have adopted that more protectionist view that you don’t really see fully embodied in Donald Trump. Donald Trump has facets of each of these elements in his policy vision. But I think that his view that if you were educated at a U.S. university and you’re going to be somebody who’s actually going to be one of the geniuses, like the next Elon Musks of this country, we want them in the United States of America.

I look at “America First” as this strange effort to contest what it is that Donald Trump himself means. And there’s a version that’s JD Vance, which is that the immigration policy here is about protecting American workers from wage competition. Fair enough.

There’s a version that you are trying to advocate and be a leader in, which is that we should be pursuing a certain vision of national identity. And I want to talk about what that means.

And there’s a thing that I actually hear from the guy who has made this popular and who is leading this movement, which is that immigrants are vermin who are polluting the gene pool with bad genes, that they are coming here from insane asylums, they are coming here from prisons, that people themselves are the problem.

Sometimes it feels to me like there’s an effort to sanitize this or to ideologize it, to make it something we can argue about with spreadsheets, to make it something that we can think about in policy.

But I think for Trump himself and the thing that gives this a lot of its power and the way he talks about it over and over and over again, in a very consistent way: It’s not about wages, and it’s not really about identity. It’s a belief that the people who are coming here are bad. They’re not sending their best, and that is the problem. And so we should lock it up because the people who come here should not be coming here.

So let me draw a couple of distinctions. Because I think that — I hate talking about stuff that’s trite. And even among Republicans, I try not to say things that have already been said. What you’re bringing up is the distinction that everybody knows about — and I’m a hawk on this, too — which is illegal immigration.

So the premise here is: If your first act of entering this country breaks the law, by definition, in some base sense of the word, like definitionally, you are a lawbreaker.

No, I’m going to stop here, actually. Because I’m not bringing up illegal immigration.

You’re talking about the vermin. You’re talking about the —

Illegal immigration is part of what I’m saying. But Donald Trump does not make the distinction you are describing here.

Well, if you may let me finish then, because —

Yes, but I don’t move the subject of what I’m talking about.

I’m not moving the subject of it. But you’re asking about who he’s referring to and talking about: criminals. Broadly speaking, denigrating terms, I think, are generally reserved for people who have crossed illegally.

Well, we’ve just been going through the Haitians, and they have not come here illegally.

Versus the same Donald Trump, as a matter of a couple months ago, said that he wants to staple, potentially, H-1B visa to everybody who graduates from a U.S. university. That’s not “They’re criminals” worldview.

I’m here to share with you what my perspectives are. But you’re asking about Donald Trump, and my understanding of where he’s at on this, which I respect, broadly overlaps with the distinction between illegal immigration and legal immigration.

And then there’s one step further in the quasi-legal immigration category. An interesting thing about our current immigration system — and I make this point in the book, as well. You can imagine an immigration system that rewards all kinds of different attributes. It could reward intelligence. It could reward national allegiance. It could reward willingness to work hard or economic contributions or how much money you have when you already come here, so you’re not going to be dependent on the welfare state. Our immigration system rewards none of those qualities.

The No. 1 human attribute that our current immigration system rewards is actually your willingness to lie, actually, which is a sad and unfortunate fact. If you’re somebody coming from another country and you can’t in good conscience say you’re not seeking asylum — because I’m not going to be a threat of imminent bodily harm because of my race or my religion — I just can’t say that to the U.S. government because it’s a lie, you’re not going to get in. If you don’t actually face that but you’re willing to say it, you actually do get in.

So I think against that backdrop, we do have a broken immigration system in both the illegal and even quasi-legal variety where your willingness to lie on Day 1 is the No. 1 human attribute that, sadly, our current immigration system rewards.

So against that backdrop, there’s a lot of frustration in the conservative movement — broadly, I share some of it, Donald Trump clearly shares some of it — to say that that needs to change. But if we’re talking about Trump for a minute before moving on to broader policy views, I think Donald Trump is also the person who has said things like he loves immigrants. He’s married to an immigrant. He praises legal immigrants of different contexts.

And I think that the top policy — doesn’t surprise anybody to know this. Just listen to Donald Trump at one of his rallies. I think correctly, one of the top policies is to seal the border and to stop the illegal immigration crisis in our country. Once we’ve achieved that, I think we’re going to be in a good position to have lasting immigration reform on the legal side.

And I believe there’s two competing visions here, but I come down on the side of prioritizing civic assimilation and civic identity and economic contributions as part of that. As distinct from the economic protectionist vision of saying that somehow our job is to coddle Americans who are already here from being prevented from having to compete in the labor market with the best and brightest whom we might otherwise allow in the country.

This is probably more where I take your earlier view on Donald Trump, where I think that what he did in his first term is illustrative. There were a lot of immigration compromises Donald Trump could have struck that would have been border hardening at a level he never got anywhere near because he couldn’t pass legislation.

Comprehensive immigration reform is now, I think, an idea associated with the Democratic Party. But it could be something that the members of the right propose. There could be a Vance-Trump policy that describes the border hardening and deportation measures they would like to take but also describes what a pro-America immigration system would be.

I think that’s coming, but I think we’ve got to go in order. And I think this is part of where we lack the ability to have this conversation with intellectual clarity without solving the mass illegal migration crisis.

But the order is weird here because the Democrats thought about comprehensive immigration reform. In recognizing they needed Republican votes, they put a bunch of things they weren’t actually that excited about in there to try to get them.

The reason I’d be interested to see Donald Trump and JD Vance put something like this out is that if you wanted to legislate on this, you actually need Democratic votes. So making it comprehensive and not just saying, “My only aim is mass deportation” is actually how you get that.

Two points on this where I have a different point of view. I think it is actually for uniting the American public around where we eventually land. I actually think it’s important to go in two steps and not do it in one step.

Why? I think you’ve got to deal with the illegal immigration crisis first, after which I think you’ve built trust with the American populace that we can actually have an honest, earnest conversation about how we’re solving for legal immigration, as opposed to a system where we’ve really abandoned a lot of the border-security policies that have bred deep mistrust in the American populace — that anything we’re going to do in some type of package hodgepodge deal is actually just a reverse maneuver for accomplishing the same thing that we were accomplishing through mass illegal migration.

So for the purpose of building lasting unity around this and actually solving this problem, I think we need to fix illegal migration first. Once that issue is done, then I think we can have a rational conversation about what legal immigration policy looks like.

The thing I want to get at, though, with immigration — and the point I’m making about Donald Trump — is it actually really matters what is motivating somebody. I think that is actually your core point here. And I think a lot of people following Donald Trump are motivated more by what I would describe as policy objectives than he is. But the thing that has motivated a movement, the thing that makes this whole thing powerful, does have animal spirits in it.

One of the things I sort of appreciate about the distinction you’re drawing between you and what you call the national patronage side of this is that I think what you’re describing is closer to the way you would try to turn the animal spirits into policy than the economic side. I think the economic side is trying to sanitize this, whereas national identity —

I actually agree with you on that.

National identity is closer to the thing that I think Donald Trump feels that people behind him feel that is actually getting debated and that we don’t really have such a good way of talking about. Because national identity isn’t a thing you can measure on a chart. We don’t run studies on how good the national identity is. So it’s actually not always the simplest thing to put into an immigration policy.

So talk to me about how you understand what kind of immigration helps and harms.

This comment, you just made signals to me that I think you really — I don’t mean to sound pompous — but you really get this in a deep way.

I think that’s a little bit of retroactive re-engineering of what’s going on. But what’s really in people’s hearts is this deeper question of identity. And then we can maybe get to this later. I think what’s lurking underneath this entire debate is actually a deeper question of identity, what it means to be an American. But we can come to that in a little bit.

So I think the question here as it relates to immigration policy is closer to identity and American identity. And I would like to translate that to policy through what I consider to be a civic nationalist vision.

So in some sense, the most upstream view that I have is: What it means to be an American is we have an attachment to these civic ideals. And as it relates to immigration policy, how we instantiate that is to say that if you have somebody from another country who has a greater understanding of U.S. history than the average American citizen here, has a greater commitment to the ideals embodied in that history than the average citizen here, is more fluent in the U.S. language or proficient in the U.S. language than the average citizen here — so therefore can communicate and engage with those ideals and is willing to work harder and embody greater contributions to America than the average citizen here — then we should have an immigration policy that selects for that class of immigrant.

Which is different than the view of saying — the blood and soil vision of identity say there are certain people who are vested into a tie to this homeland that deserve to be protected and taken care of by their government. And if there are other people who are going to offer a competitive force in the marketplace for labor, it is the job of “America First” leadership to keep them out.

Two things have always struck me as complicated in this view. One is that national identity is itself malleable. And what different people feel is the nature of attachment to America and the nature of the instantiation of American ideals differs from place to place.

I’m Californian. We are a state with very high immigration, very high immigration of people who don’t come speaking English. I grew up in Orange County and a part of Orange County with very high Asian immigration. A lot of the people I grew up with didn’t speak English. Amazing Americans who work hard. Their children are amazing Americans. They contributed a huge amount, also, to the economy of the country.

And part of being Californian, at least in the way I am, part of my national and state identity has to do with the way America assimilates and mixes in immigrants.

Trying to get at that in a test — one of the things I sometimes find interesting about an argument like yours is: I get where you’re coming from, but there’s this part of you that will in a minute tell me about the government’s incapacity — all the administrative agencies we need to shut down, all the regulators who might be well intentioned and want to make the world a better place — and then you’re going to be, like, “But what we can do is give people a test on paper that is going to tell us what kind of American they’re going to be.”

So let me just start with a basic premise, because it’s a fair point for you to raise. Totally.

What I’ve said is, at the very least, for example, just to people who have not followed my entire campaign but are listening to this conversation, just understand where I’m coming from: I’m looking at these principles not just to the outside but also to the inside.

So one of the controversial positions I adopted during my campaign, which I stand by, is I think every native-born high school senior should have to pass the same civics test that we already require of every legal immigrant who enters this country — which I think every native-born high school senior should be able to pass that, arguably, to even be fully viewed as a capital-C citizen in the United States.

In order to vote.

Well, I think that we could debate the way that you implemented, but at least I think every high school senior — let’s just say the mildest version of this — which I think should be least controversial, most adoptable is: To graduate even from high school, you should be able to know the same thing about our country that every legal immigrant is required to know before they become a full citizen.

So this is a civic nationalist view that goes far beyond just immigration policy.

As it relates to immigration policy. You know, it speaks to me when you talk about your identity as a Californian and the different attributes that compose identity. Identity is such a complicated concept, and there’s a lot of layers of one’s own identity. Religious identity, ethnic identity, what foods you eat, the cultural traditions that make up who you are. And I am not of the view — I hope I haven’t ever represented myself to be, even inadvertently — I’m not of the view that you need to abdicate those other forms of your identity to opt into the American identity. It would be a bizarre thing for me to say, because I am the kid of legal immigrants to this country. And there are many elements to my own identity that go beyond just the civic commitments to the U.S. ideals. But I think that that is a necessary condition of actually being able to opt into those ideals.

So I draw a distinction between your knowledge of the ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, our constitutional system of self-governance, your ability, and — I think this is the most controversial one — your ability to speak English, which I think is a precondition for assimilating into a country of other people who share those same ideals. Versus whether you like to play baseball, soccer or cricket. And I bring that up because I think that is an issue for a certain cultural vision of what identity actually is. Like, do you have to like hot dogs and baseball rather than enchiladas and soccer? I don’t think that that matters to me.

This is actually not even meant to be a hostile question. The question I am getting at is: Within your framework — not even within my framework — what do you believe these tests can really do?

I don’t want to fetishize the test as one attribute. English as a national language, I think, would be high on the list.

I understand that. A minute ago, you said to me that our immigration system — what it prioritizes above all else is a willingness to lie. Because if you come and you’ll claim asylum, in your view, falsely, that gives you — you get brought into the country, at least for a period of time.

It’s not my view, Ezra. Don’t just say, “In your view.” I mean, it is what’s happening today.

No, I’m saying that people can disagree on what is and, in fact, do disagree. You have a whole thing in your book about the rates at which different judges grant asylum claims. So the question of what counts as a credible asylum claim is not just contested but is itself ambiguous.

And in, among other things, the bill that Donald Trump helped kill, we were going to change the levels of asylum claims you need to be able to make in order to claim that successfully.

So I think I’m actually saying the same thing you are. Asylum claims are ambiguous, although I don’t always think that the same people you probably do are falsely claiming it. I think different levels of fear are understood differently by people.

The thing I am saying is: How do you just avoid this being a teaching to the test? Coming to America is great. Being able to say on a form that the Declaration of Independence was about equality for all men is easy.

So now we’re talking about plumbing and implementation, which I don’t want to reject.

Isn’t this how you want to instantiate?

Well, I think a test is just one example. I think proficiency in English is high on the list. I think the different ways of testing for that are also high on the list. Doesn’t mean it’s one multiple-choice, Scantron-style scan form that you fill in.

And I don’t want to dismiss the question about implementation, but what I do want — to just draw the distinction of — is there is a very different competing vision that this is at all the thing that we’re supposed to be concerned about. Versus saying if that person is going to work harder and more hours for a lower wage, that’s a problem. So that’s the basic distinction I’m drawing.

Now, how do you implement it? I’m not trying to just be a philosopher in the clouds here. Those are important questions to get to. But at least you’ve got to know what you’re solving for before you actually even solve for it. And there is a deep-seated divide, even on the right, about what we’re actually solving for.

And I think right now, especially if we’re successful in winning this election — as I’m rooting for and working hard to make happen — I think it’ll actually be really important for us to just see with clarity the why of why we’re advancing each of these different visions of trade and immigration policy and, especially, attitudes toward regulatory reform.

So why don’t we talk about, just at a philosophical level, the difference you see between the way that the national patronage side, as you call it, and your side think about what should be done with the administrative state?

Sure. And I use “national patronage” and “national protectionist” sometimes interchangeably. But I think there’s two competing visions of how we view the administrative state and the regulatory state.

One is that we want to use the levers of power to advance affirmatively pro-American and pro-worker ends. You could even call it, more broadly, conservative ends. I remember it was Bill Clinton — I think it was in the late ’90s that he said something like “The era of big government is over” — which, if a Republican said it during that same period, it would mean nothing. But of course, the fact that he was the Democratic president of the United States carried a lot of weight. And though it hasn’t been articulated in so many words yet, I think there’s a version of the Republican statement right now from the protectionist or patronage camp that says the era of small government is over. Nobody said it in so many words, but effectively, that’s what’s on offer.

The separate vision is to say that we don’t want to replace that left-wing regulatory apparatus and bureaucracy with a conservative or pro-American or pro-worker version of anything. We actually want to get in there and actually dismantle it and shut it down. And my view is that we are likely to repeat the mistakes of the past if we take the short-term approach of empowering the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to cap credit card interest rates and implement a statute that would do so and use a regulatory apparatus to enforce it. Or to empower the Department of Transportation to include a broader set of regulations to make sure something we all want to see not happen. Trains aren’t going off the tracks in East Palestine. None of us want that to happen. But is the right solution more regulation or less regulation to make that happen?

Department of Education — do we want to continue subsidizing four-year college degrees? That hasn’t worked out so well. But is the right answer to then redirect that to subsidize two-year college degrees or vocational programs? Or is the right answer actually to shut it down and send the money back to the states and, respectively, then to the people?

Those are very different competing visions, and my own view is that we cannot claim to reform this administrative state by just incrementally clipping it around the edges. Cutting off one head of an eight-headed hydra is an analogy I sometimes used. It grows right back. We have to be willing to take on the project of actually just gutting the thing. Versus the protectionist or patronage view says: OK, that’s already here to stay. It’s not going anywhere. Conservatives have been talking about this — to give fairness to this view — for 60 years, and it hasn’t happened. We might as well use that machinery to at least achieve positive ends for American workers and manufacturers and pro-American goals. And that’s, I think, a well intentioned but very different view than the one that I hold.

But let me try to inhabit that other view for you, which is — I like the riff you gave at the beginning — which is that, in a way, the promise is the era of small government is over.

I understand JD Vance and Kevin Roberts at Heritage — who’s got a forthcoming book about some of this — as really saying — you could see this as having two axes: big/small has been the traditional argument about government in American life for decades. That was the Paul Ryan-Barack Obama argument, at least in its framework terms. That the distinction that is being made now is theirs/ours. That the era of their government is ending and what’s coming is the era of our government. The “deep state” will be turned to our use — the use of things like Schedule F to fill the administrative state with more political appointees, the set of vetted and personnel-like databases and plans.

Which makes sense. People I talked to in the Trump administration from the first term say — and I think this is a completely credible argument to make — that they were foiled often by bureaucracy they felt they could not control. But the promise being made is not just toward conservative ends — “Oh, we’ll use the administrative state to do some things we like to do” — but that it will actually be a tool of Republican power that’ll be taken over and reoriented.

Ron DeSantis, who I think was sort of similar in this, would often make the argument that what he was going to do was use the power of the state to bring other institutions that had become too woke or too liberal to heel — business, universities, etc. And that has been what has been exciting in it to people in that movement.

One of the lessons of Trump’s first term was: Oh, this has all been taken over by the left. We don’t control the government even when we control the government. And the core promise, I think, of a lot of the — from Project 2025 to other MAGA-oriented policy projects has been: No, no, next time we will control the government.

So I think it is as indeterminate. That’s the case I would make to you, and again I come back to this principle that some of the most prominent, well-spoken voices out there at the top of the intelligentsia have come down on the side of using the levers of power to advance positive goals — or certainly what our movement sees as positive goals.

But I see an interesting trend when I travel the country, which is — this would just be maybe interesting to you because it’s just rooms I’ve been in that maybe you’ve been in, too — but I’ve been in a lot of them for the last year and a half.

You travel more than I do. We can agree on that.

There’s a lot you can just get by the sixth sense of being in a room. And from people that you don’t get from any poll or anything else.

Yeah, I totally agree with that. There are a lot of books in this room, but books leave something out.

Books leave something in, too. But I would say that in this case, if you’re in a room in — and I was a room with a thousand people in Ohio last night and have been in similar rooms like that in places from Iowa to New Hampshire to Nevada to other states across this country over the last couple of years.

There’s a funny thing right now, which is, you could walk into a room of a thousand of those people in a tent in Wisconsin, for example — another example of a place I’ve been. And a leader from the protectionist strand of the “America First” right could say: “We need to bring more jobs back to America. We need to protect American workers. We’re the party of the ***working class***. We need to make more things here. We need to make sure that people aren’t — the government’s not taking advantage of you. Break up the big companies.” And if delivered in the right and compelling way — which isn’t always exactly done, but which is the best version of that — you’re going to get a rousing applause, standing ovation: Yes, we’re in favor of that.

Same room. Replay it. I go in that room and say, “I don’t want to replace the left-wing nanny state with the right-wing nanny state. I want to get in there and dismantle the nanny state. I don’t want to get in there and reform these agencies. I want to get in there and actually shut them down.” Rousing applause to the same thing.

Those are two different competing visions of exactly how you’re going to use the levers of the state to advance or not advance certain policy goals. And what that says and why I think this is important to explicate these differences now is that I think our base, the MAGA base, the “America First” base, what is now effectively the future Republican base and even beyond the Republican base of the country, is, I think, actually very open to which way this movement is actually going to be led.

I will grant that some of the most well-listened-to voices that are most prominent — from a media perspective and otherwise —

Vice-presidential candidates.

— may land on — I mean, I would say the NatCon current for the last several years, I think, has been in this direction. But the reason Yoram Hazony invited me to speak at NatCon this year was to make the case that even in the NatCon New Right movement, there’s this place for the movement in that New Right movement for my strain, which is different than the historical strand of the New Right. So in some sense, I’m proposing a new New Right that I think is quite distinct —

I guess I don’t totally understand: What is different about your strain?

When Rick Perry famously gets up on the stage and is, like, “I’m going to take out three agencies, and it’s Energy, it’s Education” — I can’t remember the third one. But that was a very common sort of thing to say. Famously, Reagan wanted to get rid of the Department of Education.

And one of the theories or certainly one of the arguments has been — what Trump has represented — is an ideological break with that, a sense that people didn’t want it, and one reason they chose him over others in the party is that they just didn’t want that. They didn’t want the Paul Ryan thing, the Ron Paul thing. They’re not libertarians in that way. So tell me what you think is wrong in that interpretation of your own kind.

So first of all, interesting you just bring up that example. Donald Trump actually has called for the abolition of multiple agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education.

Yeah, but given they didn’t do it, I don’t think anybody believes he will. He didn’t even try.

Again, talk about the evolution over the course of that first term.

Rick Perry ended up running an agency he wanted to get rid of, which is one of my favorite little pieces of American political history.

Well, put that to one side. But I think that part of the problem in having the discussion — and I said this earlier, even when you brought up Paul Ryan — is, when you bring up any one person, try to pin the ideology to that, you’re always going to find diverse ranges of actions and perspectives that a person has that don’t map directly onto the ideology.

But in terms of the ideologies, some of that there with Donald Trump, absolutely. We’re talking about Schedule F. The [*first step*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433) was actually firing a lot of those employees. The goal of whether or not you refill those positions is a separate debate that comes afterward. If you look at the efficiency commission that we’re talking about right now, is the goal of that to rehire a bunch of those bureaucrats?

That’s not the character of, certainly, what Elon did at Twitter, and I don’t think it’s going to be the character of what the most important part of that project actually looks like, which is shaving down and thinning down the bureaucracy. Now, it’s not just limited to these esoteric functions in the Department of Education or Commerce or whatever. I think a lot of this gets pretty close to the center of the national security state, gets a lot closer to, even when you think about agencies the Department of Justice interfaces with — regulatory agencies. Those haven’t really been areas where conservatives have taken real aim in the past.

And the irony is the protectionist strand or the patronage strand effectively is accepting the neoconservative concession to say that some of this government is here to stay. All that the Paul Ryans wanted to do is: How do we tame further growth of it? Whereas now we’ve accepted that premise even further and said that we need to just use it in service of our own ends. Where part of what I want to bring back is actually the vision of completing the unfinished work.

What’s your list of what you want to get rid of?

Seventy-five percent, at least, of the head count, I think on Day 1. If you woke up tomorrow and there were 50 percent fewer people working in the federal bureaucracy, not a thing is going to change for the worse. But a lot, I believe, will have changed for the better. You’re going to see a lower rate —

Not a thing? You think that you just sort of —

Well, part of what it achieves is it slows the rate of what I view as unconstitutional lawmaking — which has been, I think, the cardinal sin of the last half century in American life — is that most of the laws that are passed aren’t actually passed by Congress. They’re passed and written by agencies that wrote them by fiat, by employees who were neither elected nor could be elected out of their positions and, according to classical interpretations, couldn’t even be removed by the people who were elected to those positions — which I think is a violation of self-governance. And it’s also the wet blanket on our economy.

And so the way I would see this playing out is: You look at the Supreme Court holdings over the last three years, culminating in the overturning of Chevron deference with the [*Loper Bright case*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433) this year, and you — say, a mass number of those federal regulations, quite possibly a majority of them, quite likely a majority of those federal regulations as they exist on the books — run afoul of the major questions doctrine in West Virginia v. E.P.A.

And for people who aren’t aware, what that case basically says: If it relates to a major question that has a major economic impact on Americans or it relates to a major policy question and they give you the benchmarks of what counts as a major question, it had to be passed through Congress, not by regulation or fiat. And that provides a basis, a road map, for saying: OK, if you have this much of a constraint in the application of the regulatory state, we necessarily have a surplus in the number of employee head count that we need to support that. That supports mass nonspecific but purposefully reductions in force.

See, this feels to me very generalized in a way that it’s not going to hold out specifically. I’ll give an example. I suspect that you are not a huge fan of the raft of environmental laws passed in the early ’70s, right? The National Environmental Policy Act and —

Nixon included, by the way.

I mean, they were almost all passed under Nixon. He was the main progenitor. Part of my work right now — I do a lot of looking into how those laws are playing out and the amount of work that different companies have to engage in working back and forth with agencies trying to see, “Oh, did my environmental impact report work out?” And if you knocked out the head count without changing the legislation, what you’ve just done is unfathomably slow down all of this infrastructure.

It depends case by case on infrastructure.

But you’re not going case by case. You just want do a 50 percent, 75 percent reduction.

Well, we’re head count reductions. On the regulatory case, I think the way to do this is you have a constitutional lawyer embedded in every agency — or some could overlap and double between multiple of them — and you just measure: Here’s the standard in West Virginia v. E.P.A. of what counts as a major question. Are all regulations right now going to fail that test? No. But are a lot of regulations going to fail that test if that regulation on coal miners failed that test — and a lot of other folks who are even more advanced than I in the constitutional sphere of administrative law agree with me — you are talking about thousands upon thousands of federal regulations that also fail that test.

One of the further obstacles —

But those have to be litigated individually.

So if Kamala Harris is president, that’s correct. What I’m offering is a vision of executive humility to say that the executive branch is being told by the Supreme Court that so many of the regulations that have been perpetuated by our executive branch actually go beyond this constitutional scope of what the executive could do.

So the Supreme Court has already put the executive branch of government on notice. And I do think that part of what’s happened — this is my own theory of how we got to where we are — is — I’m going to be a little glib about this, but only a little bit: When you have a bunch of people who show up to work who should have never had that job in the first place, whether it’s a company or a government agency, they start finding things to do, actually.

I think that’s a big part of how we got to a lot of this overgrown regulatory state. It’s a bit of a cycle where you have overhiring and people then find things to do that they shouldn’t have been doing in the first place. And so I think you could look at a lot of these agencies in the history of the agency creep and overgrowth of policy as part of actually just the existence of a bureaucracy, where in some cases — even if you take the Department of Education.

Part of the problem of what happened is the initial problem that it existed to solve — which in the case of the Department of Education was making sure that Southern states weren’t siphoning money away from principally Black school districts to principally white ones. That could have been a task force at the time, on the back of the civil rights statutes. You could debate the policy merits of doing it at all, but if you believe that’s an important policy objective, you could set up a task force to do it. But once that work is done, these agencies don’t fold up and go on and redistribute their employees to the civilian or private sector work force. They go on and find new things to do.

So I think the road map we’ve been given by the current Supreme Court, anyway, gives us a path to correcting this. And then you look at the head count that’s left — it’s far less than is required to do what it’s been doing, which is far more than it was permitted to do in the first place.

If you imagine the national patronage person sitting here and trying to imagine — and there are a lot of policy plans out here trying to imagine this now — of what the government should be doing: All these ends — you were talking about the goals you’re actually trying to achieve — you’re trying to achieve, as I understand it, more economic growth and less unconstitutional lawmaking. Is that a reasonable —

More economic growth and more self-governance.

What’s the other set of goals? How would you describe that piece of it? Do your best JD Vance.

I could give you — which I’m not going to do right now because you’re not asking me — the liberal perspective, which is skeptical of self-governance itself, which is the idea that people can’t be trusted to self-govern: We’d screw it up and, therefore, we need intelligent, educated, trained elites to be able to at least make sure the right decisions are made for the people.

But you are not asking about that. You’re asking about maybe for the conservative end. And I think it’s a parallel argument, which is that we have certain substantive goals that matter to us that we need to achieve by whatever means necessary — to protect the forgotten American worker, to protect the forgotten American manufacturer. To be able to, as a government, actually serve the people — a first world nation that doesn’t look like a first world nation in some places.

So that view would say: We got a lot of damage to correct first. And a lot of that damage has been caused by regulatory capture and capitalist overreach. Capitalist overreach that’s captured that regulatory state. And it’s the job of that apparatus to rectify that damage for the American worker and the American manufacturer who’s been left behind and hollowed out and ignored before we ever get to the project of getting to some type of liberty-based fantasy land of getting rid of the bureaucracy.

That would be my beginnings of a best version of steelmanning what I think that view looks like.

Well, let me try to add some bits of the steel man here, which is that there are goals that simply need to be carried out in protection of the people that the Republican Party now represents.

It’s been one of the unusual alliances where you have people like JD Vance praising Lina Khan’s Federal Trade Commission as doing a lot to break up economic power and that creating more competition and being good for American workers.

And there are speeches at NatCon about how you could use regulators to try to build a more pro-life federal government — a federal government that is using more of its power to protect the unborn. And to me, this is not a way station, as I understand it, on the path to perfect liberty, where we’ve gotten rid of these bureaucracies. It’s a view that the end goal here is not liberty as defined by the absence of government or liberty as defined by self-governance but more families.

So we’re not privatizing virtue, as the language goes.

Right, we’re not privatizing virtue. But we’re also seeing wages go up. I understand the ends of a lot of this movement now is fundamentally saying: If you look at a lot of these Midwestern communities, you see family breakdown, you see people without jobs, you see low wages.

I think that’s right.

And more of all government policy from trade policy to the administrative state needs to be in service of creating the conditions under which you’ll have stronger families, stronger communities and, as such, the conditions under which more of what gets called virtue arises.

Yeah, I think those are good additions, actually. Because I think that that does further and even more robustly represent the case for the use of muscular state power and intervention to achieve positive substantive goals.

And I want to draw an important distinction in my own view here, which is that I advocate my position not because I think that the liberty view is more important than serving American workers or manufacturers. I offer my view because I think that is actually the path to better serve American workers and manufacturers in the long run. I don’t want to see America become some backwater country on the other side of an ocean from a new rising power. We saw what that looked like in 1776. I don’t want America to become the next Great Britain.

I think we are a nation in decline, and I think that the patronage view may attenuate the trajectory of that decline and the experience of that decline for certain people who are alive today over the span of their lifetime. But it does not fundamentally alter that trend of decline.

When I was coming up in journalism — and economic journalism, in particular — the big critique that more liberal people or more lefty people, often me included, would make of the dominant trends in democratic economics was that it didn’t take power seriously, that in your models there was no variable for power.

When you think about how a worker and a firm are going to come to a mutually agreeable contract with each other, the firm’s completely asymmetric power over the worker is not being sufficiently taken into account in your models of mutually beneficial negotiation.

And I see a lot of this argument now being made from the right toward the right — that we, the right, have not taken power seriously into account and we need to start. And that that’s where you end up getting things like more affection for Lina Khan. Or you’ve talked about the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which you would like to eliminate, you’re harshly critical of.

There’s a lot that that organization does. One of the things it does is administer the Truth in Lending Act, which forces credit card companies to disclose a lot more about what the fees and the late fees and the service fees, etc., of what they do are. And the view behind a bill like that is that the power is asymmetric and so the arm of the government needs to reach in and force the credit card companies to tell people things they would not otherwise want to tell them and, in fact, did not tell them beforehand. And that until we do things like that, people do not have the power in the marketplace to make good decisions.

Should they not be doing that? How do you think about this question of power?

So I actually also have a concern about a type of power, but it’s a different type of power, which is state capture. See, state capture to effectuate capitalist goals is not something that is internal to a national libertarian or liberty-oriented perspective, but it is a perversion that is real and exists.

And that is more likely to happen — in fact, it happens all the time — because of the existence of that bureaucracy. In fact, the more vast that bureaucracy is, the more nodes you have for capture.

The market power concern is not high on my list compared to the government capture concern, which is high on my list. Where this really —

So the credit card company disclosure acts that I’ve mentioned — how do you think about that?

I think it increases barriers to entry for smaller credit card companies to have to say what your late fees and interest rates and so on by some sort of bureaucratized measure that involves an army of compliance attorneys at a company. It’s hard to start a new start-up credit card company.

Where this really comes into relief is in the area of tech, right? A lot of the animus you’ve seen toward Big Tech comes from — among other things — the rise of censorship or the perceived censorship-industrial complex. The idea that Big Tech or a small number of companies using their market power can decide what information is or isn’t available to you has led some to say: OK, they’re too big, and they exercise too much market power. Therefore we need to actually break them up.

Well, what we learn is a lot of that censorship was at least indirectly the product of receiving a favorable regulatory environment from the very government actors that cared about those companies, making sure that certain forms of misinformation were suppressed. And so I traced the root cause back to the existence of the government and the related bureaucracy required to administer its vision. That’s the wrongful exercise of power that I’m most concerned about.

And ironically, the more you’re trying to take care of market power concerns, the more of that other problem you end up creating in the process, which was historically an argument vis-à-vis the left but I think right now presents itself as this new argument within the New Right, as well.

So let’s bring in a figure you’ve talked about as a leader on your side of this a few times here, which is Elon Musk. Musk’s current political incarnation is fascinating and depressing to me. Not because we don’t agree, although we don’t agree, but because, to me, Elon Musk is the greatest walking example for grand public-private partnerships that could possibly exist. And now that he has succeeded in that, he is trying to pull the ladder up behind him.

Tesla exists because electric cars could take off because of subsidies upon subsidies upon subsidies upon subsidies to make buying electric cars cheaper at a time when it was necessarily more expensive because of how new the technology was and what they were trying to achieve.

SpaceX, of course, is a — on the one hand, I think you could take it very much as a critique of how bad product development and engineering got at NASA, but it can only be what it is because you actually need the government to do space. And now Musk is out there as a sort of more national libertarian figure saying: We don’t need the subsidies anymore. Get rid of them.

But in order to have truly two world-beating companies in America — and I take Tesla and SpaceX as extraordinary achievements — and the people who want to dismiss what Musk achieved, I think it’s functionally ridiculous.

Yeah, I agree with that.

But you couldn’t have done it without the kinds of bureaucracies and government interventions that not only are you dismissing here but that he’s now dismissing.

I respectfully disagree with that broad characterization, because I think it gets involved —

Well, which part?

So let’s take SpaceX off the table. Because space exploration is not going to happen for all kinds of reasons without — I mean, it was done within the government. Your choices are: Do it within the government or do it through public-private partnership outside government. For space exploration as a category — let’s just take that off the table.

OK. So you’re agreeing that we need the government there.

I think government has two purposes: to provide for long-run security and protect private property rights. And on the first prong of that, space exploration is an important part of it and, I think, is in the national interest of the United States for the long run. So that’s just its own category.

On Tesla, you’re talking about kicking the ladder out from underneath you for whom? Ford and General Motors? So I don’t have some sort of “kicking the ladder out from under you” concern about behemoths like Ford and GM. I’m not sympathetic to that.

I do have this concern. But rather than debate the current state of the auto manufacturing world, what I am saying is that it is undeniable that we have Tesla because the government supported Tesla over and over and over again and also supported and encouraged the electric vehicle development and market in the U.S.

I think we would’ve gotten there anyway.

That’s my question, right? Because in China, who’s the other grand competitor in this — so strong that we are putting gigantic tariffs on their electric vehicles — of course, the state has been a huge incubator of the electric vehicle industry there, too. So in the two great examples we have of world-leading electric vehicle companies, the state has been a profound nurturing and protecting force.

So I think we would’ve gotten to the same place in the development of — let’s just say the category of — but who has said it had to be electric — but innovative next-generation vehicles that leave people living better lives and offering greater consumer choice, I think we would have gotten there either way, with or without that government intervention.

So to say that we wouldn’t have a Tesla vehicle today but for the history of government subsidies, I believe, is a false claim. You can’t have a counterfactual. Because we never had the world or the country without those subsidies.

But we have counterfactuals by way of innovative industries in a diverse range of sectors outside of electric vehicles that prove that without the government intervention, we achieved that same form.

This one is hard because we’d have to go sort of industry by industry and see “Well, where was the important research done? Where were there actually subsidies?” But I guess this is also a disagreement rather than — I mean, we definitely disagree here.

But I feel like this is also actually an interesting disagreement between you and where the national protectionist and also, for that matter, the Biden world has gone, which is there’s been a huge revival of a belief that you need high levels of industrial policy to nurture American industries. Particularly in a world where the reality is you have China, you have the European Union, you have Japan and South Korea and others. Semiconductors are another very good example of this.

Let’s talk about semiconductors.

I love talking about semiconductors.

It’s an important enough subject. So it deserves some airtime, at least. But you know, it’s important enough, of course, because it goes to the future security of our country. It goes to all forms of future innovation powering A.I. and the A.I. revolution, so all kinds of reasons it’s an important subject.

But I bring it up because it was an interesting rejoinder for you to bring up in the context of industrial policy. It hasn’t worked in China.

But it has worked in Taiwan and South Korea.

But just talk about China, which you brought up, though, which is a chief competitor in the grand geopolitical landscape. China now has its telltale corruption investigations, which effectively follow nothing other than failed industrial policy for years, coddling these companies to be able to produce what they actually just consistently failed at.

In the U.S. you look at the rise of Nvidia and to be, at least at certain points in this last year, the largest company by market capitalization on Planet Earth. It wasn’t because of the CHIPS Act. It was because of massive, booming demand for advances in the field of A.I. that demanded more semiconductor inputs that we were otherwise lacking in a supply-demand imbalance. That’s actually what drives the innovation, not the state-sponsored mercantilism of either China or the United States.

Nvidia is great. It’s a remarkable company. My point is that we have lost the capacity to make huge ranges of advanced semiconductors in this country over a long period of time. And we lost it to countries that had made semiconductor manufacturing central to their industrial policy.

I don’t think it was the industrial policy in Taiwan that accounted for it. I think there’s actually deep cultural factors that accounted for it. It wasn’t the money. It wasn’t anything else. It was years of dedicated cultural approach to how you make these things, which is a different kind of innovation, where Taiwan culturally created a work force that really excelled. They’re having trouble even getting American workers, even transplanting some of them to train enough, not because of the lack of money. It’s not because we’re not showering enough money on these semiconductor companies here that we’re not able to get to the same place here as quickly. I think it relates to some of those cultural attributes where our own work force has actually fallen behind.

In the long run, I don’t want to be this declining great power because these short-term so-called protectionist policies are going to leave all of us holding the short end of the stick. See, I think true American exceptionalism is aspiring toward true greatness in America, that we want the championship team right here at home. And that involves all of us stepping up and leveling up.

The same message that I’ve preached to the left, of victory over victimhood, self-reliance and self-determination, I think applies to all of us right now. And we’ve got to eat our own cooking, is my own view, for the long run, because that’s going to be better for the American worker and the manufacturer over time, rather than creating the artificial conditions of shielding ourselves from what eventually is going to be China or somebody else or China and somebody else inevitably otherwise eating our lunch, and what that future looks like. So that’s where I’m coming from.

There was a part of your book that I found moving or sad. And I guess this is well known — I didn’t know it. You’d had this interaction with Ann Coulter, where I guess she says to you: Look, you’re great. You’re really impressive, but I wouldn’t vote for you because you’re “an Indian.”

Archived clip of Anne Coulter: You are so bright and articulate, and I guess I can call you articulate, since you’re not an American Black. Can’t say that about them. That’s derogatory. Oh, and I agreed with many, many things you said during, in fact, probably more than most other candidates, when you were running for president, but I still would not have voted for you, because you’re an Indian.

Before we get into the sort of bigger point you draw out of that, what was just that moment like for you?

My first one was just, like, laughter — like this sort of person who’s this undereducated about what exactly are the qualifications to be a U.S. president was amusing.

But she wasn’t saying it was about qualifications.

Well, I think she was saying it in a literal sense about qualifications. If you listen to what her justification is, it’s: You haven’t been here for enough generations to be truly a natural-born citizen of a kind who could be the U.S. president. And her view embedded in this is that how American you are is a function of how many generations your bloodline is tied to the United States of America.

And I reject that view, actually. I think that a citizen is a citizen of this country, period. And I think if you have been born in this country, you pledge allegiance to this country, those ideals, whether it’s one generation, two generations or 10. There’s not a spectrum of Americanness.

Another way of saying this is: Americanness is not a scalar quality to me. It is a binary quality to me of whether or not you’re an American citizen, and she just fundamentally doesn’t share that view.

Part of what she was doing, though is, I think, also just trying to be provocative to maybe get a little bit more attention than that interview otherwise would have gotten. And I had to play a little bit nicer than I would have if we were in a neutral forum. I had invited her, for God’s sake, on my own podcast to have her air some of the criticisms that she had of me during the presidential campaign. So it gave her a respectful chance to share her view. But I think she’s dead wrong.

I think there are three competing visions of American identity lurking underneath the surface of the “America First” movement. One is the one that I share, which is that there’s a shared set of civic ideals that brought together a divided polyglot group of people 250 years ago, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and operationalized in the U.S. Constitution. That’s what unites America. And your commitment to those ideals is what defines whether or not you’re an American.

I think there are two other competing visions. There’s more of a blood and soil conception of American identity, which is that you vest into how American you are based on how many generations your family and your lineage has been attached to the soil of this nation.

How many people are in your Kentucky cemetery plot, for instance.

You are inextricably linked to this land. On this view, you will, you’ll have the view that people won’t be willing to fight for abstractions or abstract ideals but they will fight for their homeland. I disagree with that.

This is JD Vance’s convention speech.

Well, I think it’s representative of a broader worldview in some segments of the NatCon world. And in my NatCon speech, I rejected that view, because I actually think the American Revolution was fought for a set of abstract ideals, actually. I think Thomas Jefferson, the man who signed the Declaration of Independence, was swearing into existence a nation founded on those civic ideals. And that’s exactly what was the war that led to the formation of this country. And in some cases, even the wars that we fought since, including the Civil War.

That’s different, still, from a third one, which came up even in an event I was at last night, which is one grounded with religious identity, where a guy came up to the microphone and told me to my face: You’re part of a — what was the word he used? — “wicked religion.” And, you know, that’s unrelated to the founding of this country.

But those are three different competing views of American identity. So many people misunderstood Ann Coulter to be in the third category of this, which she’s not.

When JD Vance was on the stage — I had heard this in his NatCon speech, and he did it at the Republican National Convention — he gives this long story about proposing to his wife and saying: Look, I’ve got a bunch of debt, and I’ve got a cemetery plot. And he spins that into this broader point — which I thought was also just a little bit weird because it ends up framing him as more committed to the country than the person he’s proposing to. What he’s saying is that there is something about this being your land and your father’s land and your father’s father’s land that makes you a partisan of it and makes you belong to it in a way.

My father is from Brazil. I’m the first generation of that side of my family to be American. When I look inside myself, I don’t feel less American than people who have a longer relationship here. But when you’re around people who do feel that way — and right there, your movement is rife with them — what do you think they are saying?

And it’s interesting, because you’ve brought up JD a couple of times. He and I, actually, our friendship goes back. We were law school classmates. And I was with him as recently as yesterday. His son shares his name with me, as well. And we have kids about the same age. So Usha and I are also friends, law school classmates. All three of us and my wife, as well, got to know each other really well years ago.

And one of the things I respect about him, unlike so many in American politics, including the Republican Party, is he does have a clear ideological vision that is motivated by his love of this country. And our friendship has been based, even dating back 10 years, long before we each entered politics, on having healthy degrees of discussion and debate and honing one another’s perspectives along the way. And I think we’re going to continue that relationship in the years ahead of us. So on a personal note, I’m not in some sort of at-odds relationship. I agree with 80 percent of his views, and he agrees with 80 percent of mine.

He is framed as the leader — you don’t say his name directly, but JD Vance is very much a leader of this other side —

He’s the most thoughtful American protectionist today. Yes, no doubt about it. And I respect the fact that it’s motivated by a love of this country.

On this question of Americanness and identity — this is the way national identities are normally built. So in some sense, the default presumption has to belong to this other side, the blood and soil vision. That has to be the default. We think about the national identity of Italy or the national identity of Japan — the feedstock, the genetic stock, the lineage, the ancestry. That’s what makes, just as a human being, viscerally, the way we’re wired, tied to a nation. Part of what gives that allegiance to the nation some meat, some substance, some heft, is that genetic bloodline type. That’s just the way it’s always been. So that has to be the default.

Now, I think what made America unique — I would say exceptional — and this goes to the question of American exceptionalism and whether you believe it — and it’s possible is that America wasn’t that, actually, broadly speaking, basically the only major nation in human history that was instead founded as a creedal nation, a nation that was tied to a set of ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. Not even religious ideals but civic ideals that transcended ethnicity and even religion.

So that’s what made America different. I think the blood and soil vision of American identity makes American exceptionalism impossible because Japan’s or Italy’s claim on a strong national identity will always be stronger than ours, because that’s how they’ve been built far longer than we have.

By contrast, I believe American exceptionalism is not only possible; it is real, because we are exceptional as the only nation founded on a set of ideals that brought together an otherwise diverse, divided group of people together. And I believe those ideals still exist. And I believe people will fight and die for those ideals. I think people did fight and die for those ideals. And I think that that’s why this country has survived. So that’s a very different vision of what it means to be an American than one that scales as a function of how many generations you’ve been here. And that, by the way, is the whale lurking underneath the entire policy conversation we’ve had.

Why do you understand this as being contested in the “America First” movement? If you went back a couple of years, if you have George W. Bush and John Kerry debating this, if you have Barack Obama and John McCain debating this, they both sound like you without the talking about woke capital.

I think it’s because they failed. Actually, I think this is a product of them failing. So I hope I don’t sound like them, because my aspiration is to fill a gap that they never did. Which is part of what’s developed in our own country, is a deep loss of what that national identity is in the first place. And so I think when you talk about everything I’ve worked on, even woke capitalism stuff is actually downstream of this deeper hole of purpose and meaning in American life.

And I think we live in a moment — you could debate what postmodernism is, but I think we live in a moment in our national history and, more broadly, the history of the West where people are starved for purpose and meaning and identity. And I think that that was in other books that I’ve written and other work, in a prior phase before I ran for U.S. president — identified as the source of wokeness on the left. But I think that root cause is still the source of clinging on to these other, more innate, native, feral senses of identity that I think you now see emerging on the right, as well.

So I think the beauty of America is that our own civic ideals and our pledging allegiance to those ideals can fill that vacuum, actually. That civic vision of what it means to be a capital-C citizen of this country. That’s what I think we’re missing.

I think John McCain or George Bush went nowhere really near that in any substantive way that mattered, maybe through some prepped speech that they read off a teleprompter in some stilted way. But to give people of this country the real sense of this is what it means to be a capital-C citizen of this country — that’s what I think has been missing in the leadership of the Republican Party since, arguably, Reagan. And I think what it means to be an American, actually, is that you really believe what Thomas Jefferson did — as a deist, by the way: that all men are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness. That’s what made America great the first time. And to me, I think reviving that conception of American identity is an essential part of how we make America great again.

I think that wrap-up is actually a nice place to end. So always our final question: What are three books you recommend to the audience?

I would say “The Constitution of Liberty” by Friedrich Hayek.

And I’d actually, because I’m in the mood today, I’ll recommend the Bhagavad Gita, which is obviously a religious text but has great import.

And while we’re feeling in the mood and the theme of the conversation today, give another careful read of “The Road to Serfdom.” And I think we would do well to remember a lot of those lessons, because I think Hayek is misunderstood or misremembered, as so many scholars are. And sometimes it’s worth going back and just remembering what they actually had to say and on some of these questions relating to pure fantasyland libertarianism versus actually very pragmatic insights that he had in that book about making sure that national security was a separate category from these questions related to economic policy is worth even for a modern libertarian to remind themselves of when we think about the future of our own country.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” [*NYT Audio App*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433), [*Apple*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433), [*Spotify*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433), [*Amazon Music*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433), [*YouTube*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433), [*iHeartRadio*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Truths/Vivek-Ramaswamy/9781668078433).

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[***A Trump-Clinton Analogy That Could Give Biden Comfort***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB0-WYH1-JBG3-60S9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1187 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn Nate Cohn is The Times&amp;#8217;s chief political analyst. He covers elections, public opinion, demographics and polling.

**Highlight:** Democrats who aren’t fans of the president could come home when faced with a Trump presidency, just as Republicans returned to their party in the final days of the 2016 race.

**Body**

Democrats who aren’t fans of the president could come home when faced with a Trump presidency, just as Republicans returned to their party in the final days of the 2016 race.

There’s no precedent for a presidential candidate to face doubts as serious over age and mental acuity as President Biden faces today.

But there is precedent for a candidate to face similarly serious, fundamental doubts about handling the job of president. It’s a precedent that lends itself to a somewhat peculiar but still useful comparison to today.

That precedent is Donald J. Trump in 2016.

The 2016-era concerns about Mr. Trump’s fitness for office, as reflected in polling, suggested that a majority of voters harbored the most basic doubts about his ability to do the job. In Mr. Biden’s case, those doubts have stemmed from his age. For Mr. Trump, it was his lack of experience and unpresidential temperament.

The doubts about Mr. Trump set the stage for a volatile campaign, as a crucial segment of traditional Republican-leaning voters recoiled at their party’s nominee in pre-election polls. At times, Mr. Trump’s percentage of support among Republican-leaning voters was as low as the 70s, and it was in the 80s as the election approached. Today, Mr. Biden finds himself in a somewhat similar position, as [*defections among*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) Black, Hispanic and younger voters have given Mr. Trump a narrow lead in the early polls.

Mr. Trump’s weakness among Republican-leaning voters wasn’t exclusively because they questioned whether he could do the job effectively. Many Republicans were repelled by his [*insults*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) [*against*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) ethnic groups or [*John McCain’s military service*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html), or his treatment of women — including the “[*Access Hollywood”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) tape. Many opposed his views on trade, immigration and foreign policy. Others doubted his commitment to conservative causes, like opposition to abortion rights. Similarly, many traditionally Democratic voters are skeptical of Mr. Biden’s handling of the economy or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But as with Mr. Biden and the issue of age today, Mr. Trump’s inexperience and unpresidential conduct were a major aspect of their misgivings.

With these challenges, Mr. Trump might have lost by a wide margin had his opponent not been Hillary Clinton — a candidate under criminal investigation (later dropped) who polls showed was nearly as disliked as he was. She probably would have been an [*underdog*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) against a more typical Republican, and she was also deeply vulnerable to Mr. Trump’s populist critique of establishment-backed policies on immigration, foreign policy and trade.

Together, her weaknesses and those of Mr. Trump left the race in a strange spot. An unusually high share of voters said they were undecided or would support a minor party candidate, with Gary Johnson, the Libertarian Party candidate, peaking [*near 10 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html). Mr. Trump’s populist pitch yielded huge gains among white voters without a college degree, but she maintained a modest lead by the margin of defections among Republican-leaning voters. As I [*put it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html) on Nov. 2, 2016:

[Mr. Trump] hasn’t been able to capitalize on strength among white ***working-class*** voters in part because of his weakness among Republican-leaning voters in the same states.

It’s a strange position for Mr. Trump. In a way, he’s already done the hard part: He has pulled off what Republicans have long wished for in places like Green Bay, Wis., and Scranton, Pa., but he’s not even approaching traditional Republican benchmarks in the suburbs around Philadelphia and Milwaukee.

This could quickly change if he could do the easy part, consolidating Republican-leaning voters — adding to his strength among white ***working-class*** voters.

In the end, Mr. Trump was able to do the easy part: Republican-leaning voters consolidated around him in the final days of the race. Mr. Trump’s recovery among those voters was not entirely surprising. Mrs. Clinton did try to appeal to Republican-leaning voters, but as a Democrat whom Republicans had opposed for decades, she was poorly suited to the task.

At the same time, there was nothing inevitable about Mr. Trump’s win. These late-deciding voters did not necessarily want to support him. They weren’t “shy” Trump supporters who were guarding a closely held secret. According to polling, they did not like him, did not support him, did not want to vote for him, and in many cases made the choice only when they felt they absolutely had to — in the voting booth. And up until they decided otherwise, they could have just as easily stayed home or voted for Mr. Johnson. Indeed, millions of voters made exactly that choice.

Does every detail of this story match 2024? No, not at all, but there’s a lot that resembles the polling today. As with Mr. Trump in 2016, the polls show that a clear majority of voters do not believe Mr. Biden has what it takes to be an effective president. Partly as a result, he faces those surprising defections from Democratic-leaning constituencies.

Against a typical Republican, Mr. Biden might be a clear underdog. But as luck would have it, Mr. Biden appears to have his Hillary Clinton: Mr. Trump himself, an opponent under criminal investigation (in this case many investigations). Many voters again find themselves upset with the choice at hand, and many appear willing to back minor party candidates in the early polls.

For now, Mr. Trump leads because he’s faring better among young, Black and Hispanic voters than he did four years ago. Just as Mrs. Clinton was not a great fit for the Republican-leaning voters who seemed undecided, Mr. Trump is not the perfect candidate to win these voters. It’s clear they don’t like Mr. Biden, but will they really vote for Mr. Trump or a minor party in the end? If Mr. Trump leads the polling to the end, we might not know until Election Day.

On this point, Mr. Trump’s win in 2016 represents a decent but still mixed precedent for Mr. Biden. On the one hand, being seen as unfit for the presidency in 2016 was not necessarily disqualifying at the ballot box. Voters may have had deep reservations about Mr. Trump, but many Republicans ultimately cast a ballot for him against a detested Democrat like Mrs. Clinton. This time around, Mr. Biden will hope for a similarly intense dislike of his own opponent.

On the other hand, Mr. Trump really did suffer an electoral penalty for his various shortcomings. In the end, he bled significant, if not quite decisive, support among Republican-leaning voters. Minor party candidates like Mr. Johnson and Evan McMullin, a conservative anti-Trump candidate, received an unusually large share of the vote. Longtime Republican suburbs really did lurch toward Democrats. Mr. Trump’s problems were patently clear, and he could have easily lost a very winnable election under slightly different circumstances (in fact, he lost the popular vote).

That’s clearly not what Democrats wanted a Biden-versus-Trump rematch to look like a year ago, even if it might count as a somewhat favorable precedent given the polling today.

PHOTO: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Stephen Crowley/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***We Haven’t Hit Peak Populism Yet; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3D-4001-DXY4-X140-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1100 words

**Byline:** David Brooks, David Brooks is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about political, social and cultural trends.

**Highlight:** Americans have traded their faith in the American dream for pretty much everybody else’s sour, populist mood.

**Body**

We used to have long debates about American exceptionalism, about whether this country was an outlier among nations, and I always thought the bulk of the evidence suggested that it was. But these days our political attitudes are pretty ordinary. America, far from standing out as the champion of democracy, as a nation that welcomes immigrants, as a perpetually youthful nation energized by its faith in the American dream, is now caught in the same sour, populist mood as pretty much everywhere else.

Earlier this year, for example, the Ipsos research firm issued a [*report*](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2024-02/Ipsos%20Populism%20Final%20February%202024.pdf) based on interviews with 20,630 adults in 28 countries, including South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil and Germany, last November and December. On question after question the American responses were, well, average.

Our pessimism is average. Roughly 59 percent of Americans said they believed their country is in decline, compared to 58 percent of people across all 28 countries who said that. Sixty percent of Americans agreed with the statement “the system is broken,” compared to 61 percent in the worldwide sample who agreed with that.

Our hostility to elites is average. Sixty-nine percent of Americans agreed that the “political and economic elite don’t care about hard-working people,” compared with 67 percent of respondents among all 28 nations. Sixty-three percent of Americans agreed that “experts in this country don’t understand the lives of people like me,” compared with 62 percent of respondents worldwide.

Americans’ authoritarian tendencies are pretty average. Sixty-six percent of Americans said that the country “needs a strong leader to take the country back from the rich and powerful,” compared with 63 percent of respondents among the 28 nations overall. Forty percent of Americans said they believed we need a strong leader who will “break the rules,” which was only a bit below the 49 percent globally who believed that.

Those results reveal a political climate — in the United States and across the world — that is extremely favorable for right-wing populists. That matters because this is a year of decision, a year in which at least 64 countries will hold national elections. Populism has emerged as the dominant global movement.

So far this year, populists have thrived in election after election. Incumbent populist regimes were or are about to be re-elected in India, Indonesia and Mexico. Populist parties have done well in Portugal, Slovakia and the Netherlands, where the far-right leader Geert Wilders shocked the world by leading his Party for Freedom to power.

European elites are bracing for the European Parliament elections next month. If the polls are to be believed, the parliament is about to shift sharply to the right, endangering current policies on climate change and Ukraine. Experts project that anti-Europe populist parties are likely to come out on top in the Euro-parliamentary voting in nine member states: France, Italy, Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia. Such parties are likely to come in second or third in nine others, including Germany and Spain.

Then, of course, there is Donald Trump’s slight but steady lead in the swing states in the United States.

If anything, the evidence suggests that the momentum is still on the populist side. Trump seems to be expanding his lead among ***working-class*** voters. In Europe, populists are making big gains, not just among the old and disillusioned, but among the young. According to [*one survey*](https://www.city-journal.org/article/who-are-populist-voters), 41 percent of European voters aged 18 to 35 have moved toward the right or far right. In the recent Portuguese elections, young voters surged to the right-wing populist Chega (Enough) party while nearly half the support for the rival Socialist Party came from voters older than 65.

One obvious takeaway is that it’s a mistake to analyze our presidential election in America-only terms. President Biden and Trump are being tossed about by global conditions far beyond their control.

The trends also suggest that we could be in one of those magnetic years in world history. There are certain moments in history, like 1848 and 1989, when events in different countries seem to build on one another, when you get sweeping cascades that bring similar changes to different nations, when the global consciousness seems to shift.

Of course, the main difference between those years and 2024 is that during those earlier pivotal moments, the world experienced an expansion of freedom, the spread of democracy, the advance of liberal values. This year we’re likely to see all those widely in retreat.

Is there a way to fight back against the populist tide? Of course there is, but it begins with the humble recognition that the attitudes that undergird populism emerged over decades and now span the globe. If social trust is to be rebuilt, it probably has to be rebuilt on the ground, from the bottom up. As for what mainstream candidates should do this election year, I can’t improve on the advice offered by the Hoover Institution scholar Larry Diamond in The American Interest magazine in 2020:

* Don’t try to out-polarize the polarizer. If you stridently denounce the populist, you only mobilize his base and make yourself look like part of the hated establishment.

1. Reach out to the doubting elements of his supporters. Don’t question the character of his backers or condescend; appeal to their interests and positive dreams.
2. Avoid tit-for-tat name calling. You’ll be playing his game, and you’ll look smaller.
3. Craft an issue-packed campaign. The Ipsos survey shows that even people who hate the system are eager for programs that create jobs, improve education, health care and public safety. As Diamond puts it, “Offer substantive, practical, nonideological policy proposals.”
4. Don’t let the populists own patriotism. Offer a liberal version of national pride that gives people a sense of belonging across difference.
5. Don’t be boring. The battle for attention is remorseless. Don’t let advisers make their candidates predictable, hidden and safe.

It’s looking like this year’s elections will be won by whichever side stands for change. Populists promise to tear down systems. Liberals need to make the case for changing them in a comprehensive and constructive way.

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This article appeared in print on page A22.

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[***Why Unions Are Good For America***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6997-67D1-DXY4-X06X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 1, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 3; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 953 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

As the United Automobile Workers strike continues, we're likely to hear grumbling about labor unions.

''They killed the auto industry once, and now they're trying to do it again,'' some will say. Or ''They're corrupt.'' Or ''They're Luddites resisting modernization.''

Sure, there's something to criticisms of unions. Yet the critiques miss a fundamental point: Labor unions are also a powerful force for equality, elevating underpaid workers who otherwise are often treated as doormats.

The central reality is that as unions declined over the past half-century, workers were stiffed. They were paid poorly, they lost health care and retirement benefits, and they lost control over their schedules. They were robbed of dignity and sometimes of wages as well. Deaths of despair from drugs, alcohol and suicide surged among blue-collar workers.

Anne Case and Angus Deaton, the Princeton University economists who pioneered the study of deaths of despair, tell me that one factor in the rise of such deaths has been the decline of unions and the related loss of good ***working-class*** jobs.

Like many educated professionals, I used to regard labor unions warily. They insisted on rigid work rules, impeded technological modernization, suffered corruption scandals (which have dogged the U.A.W.) and sometimes engaged in racial and gender discrimination. They periodically manipulated overtime hours and leveraged the threat of disruption to rake in staggering sums.

In 2019 two Oakland, Calif., police officers ''earned'' more than $600,000 in pay and benefits, through absurd amounts of overtime; meanwhile, full-time dockworkers on the West Coast reportedly earn more, on average, than many lawyers or dentists in America, and dock foremen average more pay than physicians.

Yet executive pay seems even more scandalous, and I shed my disdain for unions as I reported on the crisis in America's ***working class*** over the past 15 years. Having lost too many ***working-class*** friends to substance use and related pathologies and having witnessed the consequent crumbling of families and communities, I've come to believe that unions are good not only for individual workers but also for America itself.

Some of the U.A.W.'s non-wage-related demands seem to me unrealistic, and the overall package might double labor costs for companies that already pay significantly more than their competitors; then again, it's not obvious to me why the Big Three's chief executives merit pay packages of more than $20 million each while some of their autoworkers earn just $16 or $17 an hour, although in fairness, Ford says that, including benefits, the average compensation for union-represented workers is $112,000 a year.

(Anyone who thinks that executive pay is invariably calculated through an arms-length negotiation doesn't understand board behavior. As the economist John Kenneth Galbraith observed, the paycheck ''is frequently in the nature of a warm personal gesture by the individual to himself.'')

The golden age for unions in America was the period from 1945 to 1970, and there were indeed abuses and disruptive strikes then. But that was also a magical period in American economic history, in which the economic pie grew rapidly and was also divided more fairly. Shareholders benefited, but so did workers, including African Americans at the bottom of the economic ladder.

In 1970, unions still represented 29 percent of private-sector workers. Now they represent just 6 percent. Over the decades, blue-collar workers lost a path to the middle class, and pay gaps for Black men yawned as great as ever.

So I've come to think of it this way: Unions are as imperfect as capitalism itself, and just as essential.

A major study by academic economists found that union households earn 10 percent to 20 percent more than nonunion households, controlling for other factors, and researchers have found that higher wages for union members spill over and lift earnings for nonunion members. Those scholars found that about 10 percent of the increase in American inequality since 1968 was a result of falling union membership.

Another study found that lifetime membership in a union resulted in an additional $1.3 million in income over the decades compared with the income of someone in the same industry who was not a union member.

While unions unchecked sometimes behave badly, consider what corporations do unchecked. Millions of Americans are addicted to opioids in this country because pharmaceutical companies found it profitable to get people hooked.

We need checks and balances to rein in overreach by both sides -- and unions are part of that system of watchdogs. Yet in recent decades laws have impeded unions, and a lame National Labor Relations Board essentially allowed union busting because penalties were so pathetic. (That appears to be changing under President Biden.)

Unions have also been powerful advocates of policies like early childhood education, child care, a higher minimum wage and a refundable child tax credit to take on the scandal of American child poverty.

So it's reasonable to worry about the autoworker strike and the impact it might have on today's economy. It's fair to wonder if the U.A.W. is overreaching, particularly in its nonwage demands. Then again, it's also reasonable to worry about what happens when nonunionized blue-collar workers are squeezed and crushed, year after year, decade after decade, and what that does to their children, to their country, to our future.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/30/opinion/uaw-strike-unions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/30/opinion/uaw-strike-unions.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***Why Unions Are Good for America; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6991-0G91-JBG3-631N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 30, 2023 Saturday 11:40 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 952 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** Yes, they overreach at times, but as they weakened, so did our social fabric.

**Body**

As the United Automobile Workers strike continues, we’re likely to hear grumbling about labor unions.

“They killed the auto industry once, and now they’re trying to do it again,” some will say. Or “They’re corrupt.” Or “They’re Luddites resisting modernization.”

Sure, there’s something to criticisms of unions. Yet the critiques miss a fundamental point: Labor unions are also a powerful force for equality, elevating underpaid workers who otherwise are often treated as doormats.

The central reality is that as unions declined over the past half-century, workers were stiffed. They were paid poorly, they lost health care and retirement benefits, and they lost control over their schedules. They were robbed of dignity and sometimes of wages as well. Deaths of despair from drugs, alcohol and suicide surged among blue-collar workers.

Anne Case and Angus Deaton, the Princeton University economists who pioneered the study of deaths of despair, tell me that one factor in the rise of such deaths has been the decline of unions and the related loss of good ***working-class*** jobs.

Like many educated professionals, I used to regard labor unions warily. They insisted on rigid work rules, impeded technological modernization, suffered corruption scandals (which have dogged the U.A.W.) and sometimes engaged in racial and gender discrimination. They periodically manipulated overtime hours and leveraged the threat of disruption to rake in staggering sums.

In 2019 two Oakland, Calif., police officers “earned” more than [*$600,000*](https://blog.transparentcalifornia.com/2020/11/16/oakland-cops-640000-pay-package-highest-ever/) in pay and benefits, through absurd amounts of overtime; meanwhile, full-time dockworkers on the West Coast reportedly earn [*more*](https://www.freightwaves.com/news/west-coast-dockworkers-making-200k-demand-higher-pay), on average, than many lawyers or dentists in America, and dock foremen average more pay than physicians.

Yet executive pay seems even more scandalous, and I shed my disdain for unions as I reported on the crisis in America’s ***working class*** over the past 15 years. Having [*lost too many*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/588999/tightrope-by-nicholas-d-kristof-and-sheryl-wudunn/) ***working-class*** friends to substance use and related pathologies and having witnessed the consequent crumbling of families and communities, I’ve come to believe that unions are good not only for individual workers but also for America itself.

Some of the U.A.W.’s non-wage-related demands seem to me [*unrealistic*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/21/uaw-strike-ev-revolution/), and the overall package might [*double*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/19/uaw-strike-demands-too-high-automakers/?utm) labor costs for companies that already pay significantly more than their competitors; then again, it’s not obvious to me why the Big Three’s chief executives merit pay packages of more than [*$20 million*](https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/cars/2023/09/20/uaw-ceo-salary-levels-strike-issue/70915285007/) each while some of their autoworkers earn just $16 or $17 an hour, although in fairness, Ford [*says*](https://www.at.ford.com/content/dam/atford/microsites/USmanufacturing/facts/) that, including benefits, the average compensation for union-represented workers is $112,000 a year.

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In 1970, unions still represented [*29 percent*](http://www.publicpurpose.com/lm-unn2003.htm) of private-sector workers. Now they represent just 6 percent. Over the decades, blue-collar workers lost a path to the middle class, and pay gaps for Black men yawned as great as ever.

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[***Oakland's Mayor Had Plenty of Troubles. Then the F.B.I. Came Knocking.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CBS-GMP1-JBG3-60S8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 27, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1345 words

**Byline:** By Amy Qin and Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez

**Body**

Sheng Thao was already facing a recall election as residents remain frustrated over crime and homelessness. She said on Monday that she had committed no crimes.

The residents of Oakland, Calif., were already frustrated. Violent crime and burglaries had become enough of a problem that getting an In-N-Out burger and fueling up near the airport was considered a risky endeavor.

The city's last remaining major league sports team announced in April that it would leave town after 57 seasons. And the population, currently 425,000, has been in decline since the coronavirus pandemic.

All of which served to drive signatures for a recall election against Mayor Sheng Thao only 18 months into her tenure -- a rare ouster attempt in a city this large.

Then, two days after the recall qualified for the ballot last week, F.B.I. agents raided the home of Ms. Thao and stayed there for hours.

Before they scoured Ms. Thao's house in the Oakland hills, it was possible, even likely, that she would survive the recall election this fall with the help of the same progressive allies and labor unions who supported her mayoral campaign in 2022, longtime political hands in the Bay Area said. But the raid has now cast a shadow over her future, even as she defiantly vowed on Monday to fight for her political survival.

''Everybody understands that she hasn't been charged with a crime,'' said Brenda Harbin-Forte, a retired Alameda County Superior Court judge who is a main organizer of the recall. ''But our focus is that you can't lead a city and be distracted about whether any day now you're going to get indicted for a federal crime.''

Ms. Thao, a Democrat, has overcome immense personal struggles before. She is the daughter of ***working-class*** refugees and a survivor of domestic violence who once lived out of her car with her son when he was an infant. When she was sworn in, Ms. Thao became the most prominent Hmong American officeholder in the United States.

Few would blame her alone for the city's woes, which were percolating well before she took over at City Hall. Crime was already on the rise, and homeless camps had proliferated since the early days of the pandemic. Two major league sports teams had already fled. The city had lost its glimmer in comparison with the previous decades in which it had attracted residents as a soulful, more affordable alternative to San Francisco.

What Oakland needed from Ms. Thao was a turnaround. The prevailing mood, however, is one of frustration.

The exact targets of the federal investigation remain unclear. The F.B.I. would not comment other than to confirm that agents had searched the home where Ms. Thao and her partner reside, as well as three other properties in Oakland that are associated with the Duong family, which runs California Waste Solutions, a local company that collects recyclables for the city. Renia Webb, Ms. Thao's former chief of staff, said in an interview that F.B.I. agents asked her questions about Ms. Thao last year.

The raid was a political earthquake, and the fallout continued for four days as Ms. Thao disappeared from public view.

Then, on Monday, Ms. Thao came out fighting by giving brief remarks at City Hall, after which she did not take questions. She asserted that federal authorities had not given her an opportunity to cooperate with their investigation before the raid. She raised questions about the close timing of the F.B.I. search and the recall efforts.

''I want to be crystal clear: I have done nothing wrong,'' she said. ''I am confident that I will not be charged with a crime because I am innocent.''

David Duong, the chief executive of California Waste Solutions, said in a statement on Thursday that the company was fully cooperating with the investigation and that it was confident the government would conclude that it was not involved in any unlawful or improper activity.

Since the raid, many of Ms. Thao's supporters who had vowed to fight on her behalf in the recall have been quiet. Those who have spoken out have hardly been enthusiastic.

Keith Brown of the Alameda Labor Council, a union that supported Ms. Thao's campaign in 2022, said in a statement on Sunday that his members were ''awaiting the facts.'' Cat Brooks, a co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project, an organization that seeks to eradicate police violence in communities of color, lamented the ''stench'' that the F.B.I. raid would leave on other progressive politicians and activists in Oakland.

Ms. Thao's critics have pounced. They were quick to point out that the Duong family has been investigated since 2019 by Oakland's public ethics commission for allegedly bypassing campaign limits and giving money to various political candidates through ''straw donors,'' including to Ms. Thao during her campaign for a City Council seat. The family is politically connected and has made contributions to both Democratic and Republican politicians.

The past mayors of Oakland include Jerry Brown, who ran the city for several years between his two stints as governor. Unlike Mr. Brown, Ms. Thao became the mayor of Oakland early last year with little experience in elected office, having served one Council term.

Ms. Thao won the mayor's race by a narrow margin through a ranked-choice vote, which allowed voters to choose candidates in order of priority and used multiple rounds of counting to determine the victor. She saw her win as an inspiration to other children of immigrants who grew up in poverty.

On Monday, she drew upon that same personal history to defend herself.

''What I do know is that this wouldn't have gone down the way it did if I was rich, if I had gone to elite private schools or if I had come from money,'' she said. ''I know that for sure because former elected officials are sitting safely in their houses in the hills right now, with campaign finance violations, piling up mountains of evidence that prove actual wrongdoing.''

Less than two years into her tenure, some supporters credit Ms. Thao with finding creative solutions to close the city's budget gaps without inflicting major cuts. She has promoted the ways her administration has added police patrols and used technology to combat crime.

Her critics concede that Ms. Thao inherited problems as Oakland was struggling to climb out of a pandemic recession. But, they say, there have been obvious missteps.

During her tenure, the city missed out on millions of dollars in state funding to combat organized retail theft because her administration failed to submit an application on time. She fired a popular Black police chief, LeRonne Armstrong, angering many residents in a city where one-fifth of the population is Black.

''Voters are already losing confidence in City Hall because of rampant homelessness, because of shooting after shooting, because we can't even get our roads paved,'' Councilwoman Janani Ramachandran, a Democrat, said.

Ms. Thao is not the only one being blamed for crime in Oakland. In April, a separate effort to recall Pamela Price, a progressive district attorney, also qualified for the ballot. Ms. Price won election in 2022 with a pledge to seek shorter sentences and to prosecute police officers who unlawfully use lethal force.

The top backers of the recall effort against Ms. Thao include Ron Conway, a billionaire tech investor and political fund-raiser who also contributed to the 2022 recall of Chesa Boudin, a Democrat who served as San Francisco's district attorney. But recall organizers said that their campaign was more complicated than the narrative of progressive-versus-moderate, especially in Oakland, where many politicians fall along a narrow spectrum of progressive to more-progressive and the local NAACP chapter has favored a more aggressive law-and-order approach to crime.

''This is not an attack on progressives,'' Ms. Harbin-Forte, the recall organizer, said. ''This has to do with the people in the office who are executing those policies, and whether or not they are making the decisions that are in the best interest of everybody.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/24/us/politics/oakland-mayor-sheng-thao-fbi-raid.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/24/us/politics/oakland-mayor-sheng-thao-fbi-raid.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mayor Sheng Thao of Oakland, Calif., a Democrat, vowed on Monday to remain in office and fight against a recall attempt that qualified for the November ballot last week. On Thursday, F.B.I. agents raided her home and stayed for hours. The exact targets of the investigation remain unclear. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

JESSICA CHRISTIAN/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** June 27, 2024

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[***‘This Is the Pick of a Very Confident Presidential Nominee’: Four Columnists Size Up J.D. Vance; Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Bret Stephens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CGP-D611-DXY4-X0HM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 15, 2024 Monday 20:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3278 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Bret Stephens 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; 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). Michelle Goldberg has been an Opinion columnist since 2017. She is the author of several books about politics, religion and women&amp;#8217;s rights, and was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize for public service in 2018 for reporting on workplace sexual harassment. Bret Stephens is an Opinion columnist for The Times, writing about foreign policy, domestic politics and cultural issues.

**Highlight:** What choosing the Ohio senator as running mate tells us about Trump.

**Body**

Patrick Healy, the deputy Opinion editor, hosted an online conversation with the Times Opinion columnists Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Bret Stephens to discuss Donald Trump’s choice of J.D. Vance as his running mate — why Mr. Trump picked him, how Mr. Vance could help the ticket, what’s surprising and unusual about the vice-presidential nominee, and what if anything worries our columnists about Mr. Vance.

Patrick Healy: The answer to one of the biggest questions of the presidential election has now been revealed: Donald Trump has chosen J.D. Vance as his running mate. What was the first thing that popped into your minds when you heard Trump had picked the first-term senator from Ohio and why?

Bret Stephens: My first thought was a memory: In 2016, on the eve of the election, Vance and I were guests on Fareed Zakaria’s CNN show. At the time, he was still a Never Trumper. Later, we took a walk around Columbus Circle and commiserated about the sad state of the Republican Party with Trump as its leader. Another reminder that what was once a unified anti-Trump conservative movement wound up moving in very different directions.

Ross Douthat: If elected he will be the first vice president of the United States with whom I was friends before he became a politician. That’s quite a strange feeling and one that mostly inspired me to say some prayers for him and for the country.

Michelle Goldberg: God help the people of Ukraine. As Vance told Steve Bannon, “I got to be honest with you, I don’t really care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other.”

David French: I share your concerns about Ukraine, Michelle, and that was my first thought as well. A century from now, historians will be talking about the war in Ukraine. Trump’s choice sends a message to America’s allies, especially Ukraine, that they might find themselves facing Russia largely on their own. To the extent that Vance will have a real voice in the administration (and we should never assume that of any vice president), he’ll be pushing Trump away from Ukraine. He’ll be a China hawk, but that’s cold comfort to the Ukrainian people or to the European alliance.

Healy: My mind went to two things: the Electoral College map and the Republican Party’s future. Presidential politics boils down to getting to 270 Electoral College votes, and Vance could help Trump in the industrial Midwestern states that are those must-win “blue wall” states for President Biden. Trump-Vance will pack a wallop in Michigan, western Pennsylvania, parts of Wisconsin. And Vance strikes me as a vision pick too — offering a more fully formed and, I would argue, ideological vision for the party’s future than Trump. David, are you surprised by the pick?

French: I’m not. From the beginning of the selection process, the real question was whether Trump was going to select someone who could perhaps reach the middle or someone who would help him double down on the MAGA ethos and MAGA ideology. Trump’s obviously chosen to double down. This is the choice of a man who’s confident he’s going to win.

Stephens: I am surprised, though I shouldn’t be. From an electoral standpoint, Vance doesn’t seem to bring a lot to the ticket: Ohio is already in Trump’s corner, and Vance represents the voters who are the Trumpiest part of Trump’s base. Especially after the assassination attempt, Trump had an opportunity to widen his base geographically by choosing someone like Gov. Glenn Youngkin of Virginia, given that Trump is running only a point behind Biden there in the polling average, or culturally by choosing someone like Marco Rubio, helping to make inroads for Republicans among Hispanic voters, or ideologically by reaching out to Nikki Haley, thereby appealing to more centrist-leaning voters who thought of her as the sort of Republican they could get behind. Instead, Trump went with the guy who’ll play well at his rallies and will never cross the boss. Again, why am I surprised?

Goldberg: I’m not surprised only because everything was telegraphing this choice, including the fact that Vance’s friend Don Jr. was slated to introduce him at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday, and that the mayor of East Palestine, Ohio — the site of a toxic train derailment that Republicans accuse Biden of ignoring — is also scheduled to speak there.

Douthat: The choice had been telegraphed, but it is still a striking choice. I agree with David that the pick signals that Trump thinks he’s going to win; Vance might help him in the Rust Belt but it’s much less of a signal of outreach than, say, picking Youngkin would have been, because Vance has a more combative and polarizing persona, and it carries more political risks than picking a cipher like Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota. More important, though, it sends an unusually clear policy signal about Trump’s second term — indicating that on at least a subset of issues, from trade and tariffs and immigration to foreign policy, he intends to govern in a more focused and intentional way than he ever did in his first term, as a populist in full.

Healy: Ross, you recently had [*that fascinating in-depth interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) with Vance where I felt that I was reading a far more coherent vision of conservatism and the future of the G.O.P. than anything Trump has articulated. What stood out to you the most from your conversation with Vance and what he represents for Republicans and conservatives?

Douthat: The interview tried to cover a lot of ground, because I think his personal odyssey is inherently fascinating — from writing [*a best-selling book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) about ***working-class*** dysfunction that made him the toast of the establishment to deciding that the establishment was rotten and aligning with their great enemy, Donald Trump. But for the purposes of a potential vice presidency, the most important parts of our conversation are obviously [*his breaks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) with pre-Trump G.O.P. policy orthodoxy, his anti-libertarianism on economic policy and his vision of an American empire that’s overstretched and needs to rebalance and rebuild its strength, and then his willingness to defend Trump (almost, not unto Sidney Powell territory) all the way on the attempts to challenge the results of the 2020 election.

Goldberg: There’s one point Vance made in that interview that has stuck with me: “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/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) — there’s no law, there’s just power.” I can tell you for a fact that lots of liberals have not in fact read that infamous Nazi jurist, even if, as Jennifer Szalai [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in a great recent piece, he has some currency in the academic left. But it’s telling that Vance imagines that liberals are operating according to Schmittian principles, in which all law derives from the leader, equal justice is a joke, and what matters is the friend/enemy distinction. It’s pure projection.

At a moment when Trump seemed likely to lose, Vance texted a former roommate that Trump would either be “a cynical asshole like Nixon” or “[*America’s Hitler*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html).” But Vance is an ambitious guy, and once Trump was in power, he had good reason to hop on the MAGA train. To justify doing so, he had to convince himself that he was fighting diabolical forces, and that because his enemies betrayed liberal democratic values, he needn’t be bound by them either. It’s an ideology of Caesarism disguising itself — as all authoritarian creeds do — as self-defense.

French: The thing that stood out to me about Ross’s conversation is that Trump has impulses, whereas Vance has an ideology. He’s done more work than just about any politician in America to create something coherent out of MAGA’s concerns and MAGA’s grievances. He doesn’t just want to possess power, he wants to wield it in quite specific ways. To the extent that MAGA has ideological legs after Trump leaves the scene, it will in large part be because of Vance.

Healy: What stands out to you most about Vance — his ideas, ideology, record, history?

French: In many ways, Vance is an avatar for countless Republicans who’ve significantly changed their assessments of Trump since 2016. Trump loves it when his previous critics bend the knee, and few people have bent the knee more deeply than Vance. He’s gone from being vitriolically Never Trump to perhaps his most enthusiastic supporter in the Senate. I’ve personally known a number of Republicans who’ve made the exact same transition.

Stephens: It’s his isolationist instincts that stand out the most, and worry me the most. Vance really is one of those Republicans who think that practically the only foreign policy we need as a country is a secure, militarized southern border — and perhaps a northern one, too. He has been a vociferous critic of our support for Ukraine[*, making a case in the pages of The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) that reminds me of how one of his predecessors in the Senate, Robert Taft of Ohio, made the case before the Pearl Harbor attack against helping Britain defeat the Nazis. A Vance vice presidency is likely to consolidate the G.O.P.’s reversion to that disastrous pre-World War II form.

Douthat: I think Vance has more of an isolationist streak than most recent contenders for high office, but in practice I expect him to be much more of an Asia-first Republican and would-be Nixonian or George H.W. Bushian figure than a Pat Buchanan-style, “Come home, America” paleoconservative. He portrays himself as a foreign policy realist (including in our conversation) and he’s frequently couched his critiques of Biden administration policy in terms of limited U.S. resources and the need to prioritize other threats — meaning China’s threat to Taiwan above Russia’s threat to Ukraine. How that stance actually cashes out will be an open question, but that’s going to be the framing of a Trump-Vance administration foreign policy: try to forge an armistice in Eastern Europe to enable the pivot to Asia that every administration since Barack Obama’s has arguably sought.

Healy: What does Vance do to help Trump win?

French: To the extent the pick matters at all, it’s a net negative for the ticket. In 2022 in Ohio, the Republican governor, Mike DeWine, won by 25 points; Vance won by only six points. Vance underperformed DeWine by almost 400,000 votes. He’s drunk deeply of MAGA grievances and the MAGA ethos. He’s the vice-presidential pick for the base, for the people who want to see revolutionary disruption in the American government. This is the pick of a very confident presidential nominee.

Goldberg: Vance does nothing to help Trump: He is loved by MAGA but no one else. He’s as demagogic as Trump but entirely lacks his dark charisma. I also imagine Vance will energize an opposition that’s in desperate need of a boost. Speaking to Ross, Vance suggested that there was a legitimate path to trying to overturn the 2020 election. He will be in every way a Trump enabler, and if Trump wins, I can’t imagine him certifying a Democratic victory in 2028.

After the assassination attempt against Trump, Vance [*has been trying*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) to intimidate Democrats out of talking about the ex-president’s authoritarian tendencies, pretending that telling the truth about Trump constitutes incitement to violence. But with Vance on the ticket, Democrats are going to have to talk about how democracies devolve into systems of what political scientists call competitive authoritarianism.

French: Michelle, I’m glad you brought up his inflammatory post-assassination rhetoric. We’ve been seeing reports that Trump might be wanting to change the tone after his genuinely terrifying experience last Saturday. But Vance is the attack-dog choice. At the same time, however, he’ll take his cues from Trump, and if Trump wants him to moderate his tone, Vance will obey.

Stephens: Much as I think that Trump made a serious mistake in choosing Vance, it’s worth considering his strengths. He has a compelling life story, which he turned into a best-selling memoir. He’s smart and has had an important range of life experiences: not just his “hillbilly” upbringing, but his time in the Marine Corps, including service in the Iraq war, his Yale Law School degree, his stint in venture capital. He fared well in his Senate debates with Tim Ryan, a capable Democratic opponent, and beat him handily. He speaks for millions of Americans who feel forgotten, disdained, condescended to or despised by the proverbial coastal elites.

And he’s young: He turns 40 next month. It will underscore the idea that the Trump-Vance ticket represents the future, while Biden and Kamala Harris speak for the past.

Douthat: You would assume that Vance could have upside for the Trump ticket with some (not all) persuadable voters in Pennsylvania and Michigan. It’s also possible that Trump himself intends to go further in his own outreach to swing voters: He already dialed back the ideological conservatism in his party platform, he’s promising a more unifying convention speech after the assassination attempt (we’ll see), and you could imagine a world where he spends the next few months promising ideological flexibility and Vance helps him mostly by being more right-wing and reassuring parts of the MAGA world that Trump isn’t going wobbly. (The traditional V.P. role, in a sense — though there are parts of movement conservatism that strongly dislike everything Vance represents, so his reassurance won’t sell everywhere.)

I agree that Vance’s youth and smarts help make a contrast with the Biden-Harris ticket. And there’s even a way in which his having been a prominent Never Trumper could help him sell Trump to others, by saying, “Look, I used to hate him too; here’s what you’re missing.”

Fundamentally, though, I don’t think this is the pick you make if you’re just trying to add votes to your coalition. It’s a pick that sets governing priorities, a pick that probably reflects Trump’s personal preferences and comfort levels, and a pick made by a candidate who felt that his last vice president was foisted on him and this time he’ll have someone he likes and someone who likes him.

Healy: What do you think a Vance-Harris debate might be like?

French: To the extent that Vance can help Trump at all, it will be at the debate. Vance might be extreme, but he’s also a very effective communicator. He makes the policy case for MAGA far more comprehensively than Trump can, and he’ll be ready to answer questions about his Never Trump past.

Stephens: David makes an important point. Vance is sharp, shrewd, quick on his feet. And his debate will count more than most vice-presidential debates do, because many people will think that Harris will eventually be president if she and Biden win.

Goldberg: He’s smart and cutting, so imagine he’ll hold his own. But Kamala Harris — assuming she’s still the V.P. and not the Democratic presidential nominee — will enjoy reminding people, over and over, that Vance [*argued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) against exceptions to abortion bans for rape and incest victims.

Vance has a particularly bitter contempt for women without children; he’s [*railed against*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) “childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they’ve made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable too.” It will be interesting to see if Harris can draw his misogyny out for all to see.

Healy: How is Vance like Trump — and not like Trump? This is a running mate who [*once scorned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) the former president.

French: Don’t underestimate the power of his personal story. Trump was born with an immense amount of power and privilege. Vance was born into an incredibly challenging family situation, and he showed tremendous grit and determination to reach the Senate and now the vice-presidential nomination. People connected to his book, “Hillbilly Elegy,” for good reasons. He’s overcome a lot in his life, and when he highlights his story, a lot of ***working-class*** voters will identify his past and see themselves in him. He’s got a much more relatable story than Trump, he’s younger than Trump, and he’s far more informed about policy than Trump.

Goldberg: They’re similar in that they’re both somewhat ideologically labile, and both seem to simultaneously hate and resent traditional elites and long for their respect. But Vance is clearly more disciplined and methodical.

Stephens: Michelle makes an important point: Vance, like Trump, represents the same reflexive disdain for the allegedly soft and self-satisfied elites typified by people like Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama. In that sense Vance and Trump have more in common with the brooding resentments of Richard Nixon than they do with the sunny optimism of Ronald Reagan or the noblesse oblige instincts of George H.W. Bush.

Douthat: The expectation will be that Vance will win any debate on points, since Harris has her well-earned reputation for “Veep”-like stumbles and he’s very fluent and policy-oriented and, as Michelle says, disciplined. I think the main question will be the mood he brings to the debate: Does he seem too dark and mordant and apocalyptic (a vibe that all bearded conservative populists carry with them), or can he be not just sharper than Harris but come across as an optimist as well?

Healy: One dynamic for any Trump V.P. is, of course, navigating Trump himself. Should he win, Trump will automatically be a lame duck president, and his vice president will be as close to an heir apparent as American politics usually get. What has Vance shown us about his ability to navigate Trump? And do you see any rough waters for him?

Stephens: I’m glad you think Trump would automatically be a lame duck if he wins and won’t set about repealing the 22nd Amendment!

Douthat: Several of us have talked about Vance’s loyalty to Trump. In that sense he’s a lower-risk pick for Trump than someone like Youngkin, who’s never fully committed himself to a MAGA worldview. But Vance also, much more than some of the others who might have received the nomination, has a real identity and persona and celebrity that’s separate from his new boss. There are lots of people on the right who like Vance for being Vance, the young populist who turned his back on the liberal elite, and who are excited for this pick in a way that nobody was going to be excited about, say, Burgum or Elise Stefanik. And that means that as a Trumpian second term wears on, Vance will have a stronger spotlight on him, a bigger cheering section (and more enemies) than another vice president might have had — which could create certain tensions with Trump and within his administration that you wouldn’t have with a different, more fully Trump-dependent pick.

Goldberg: People clash with Trump to the extent that they’re not willing to completely subordinate themselves to his will. Maybe Vance will eventually discover that he has interests separate from Trump. But he could just as easily become a Stephen Miller-type figure, existing wholly in relation to the source of his power.

Stephens: Vance will soon find, if he hasn’t already, that Trump will not only demand complete fealty but also insist on a fealty that involves self-abasement and a willingness to do anything for the boss, including violating his oath of office. Then again, the political prize that awaits Vance if the ticket wins in November might be worth the humiliation. I mean, to borrow the line from “A Man for All Seasons”: “It might profit a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world … but for Wales!”

Goldberg: I have been referring to this quote for eight years, but I think we’ve seen that, when it comes to Trump, a lot of people are willing to give their souls for even less than Wales!

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A24.

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[***Trump Once Promised to Revive Coal. Now, He Rarely Talks About It.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8F-MT11-DXY4-X2YV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In earlier races for the White House, he pledged to get miners back to work. Now, political and economic realities have shifted.

The first time Donald J. Trump ran for president, he slapped on a miner's helmet and told coal workers they would be ''winning, winning, winning'' when he entered the White House.

Now, as Mr. Trump campaigns for another chance at the presidency, he rarely mentions America's coal miners and has stopped making grand promises about their future.

The shift reflects political and economic realities, experts said. Top among them: Mr. Trump oversaw coal's decline, not its salvation. Despite the fact that Mr. Trump gutted climate regulations and appointed a coal lobbyist to lead the country's top environmental agency, 75 coal-fired power plants closed and the industry shed about 13,000 jobs during his presidency.

''Not a single coal miner went back to work or power plant saved,'' said Erin E. Bates, a spokeswoman for the United Mine Workers of America, the labor organization representing coal miners.

''I think he's realizing those promises were not met during his term and they're probably not going to be met now,'' she said. ''Politically, it probably doesn't pay for his campaign to make more broken promises.''

Two decades ago, coal produced about half of all the electricity in the United States. Today, it accounts for just 16 percent of American power generation. The industry employed nearly 180,000 people at its peak in the 1980s, but now that figure is about 44,800, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Coal began its slide around 2005 as the fracking boom started to produce large quantities of cheap natural gas, which proved attractive to utilities. In the last few years, the cost of power generated by wind turbines and solar farms has plunged, replacing natural gas as the cheapest source of electricity. Last year, power generated from onshore wind turbines and solar farms was about one-third of the cost of the electricity produced by coal, on average.

Strict new limits on emissions from coal-fired power plants announced in April by the Environmental Protection Agency are likely to make the country's 200 or so remaining coal plants even more expensive to operate. Coal is the dirtiest of the fossil fuels and, despite its decline, it is responsible for more than half the planet-warming emissions produced by the power sector in the United States.

The only specific new campaign pledge Mr. Trump has made about coal is to unwind the new E.P.A. limits on pollution from the power plants, which industry leaders say are impossible to satisfy.

Rolling back the regulation would help the industry, but would still not restore coal to its glory days. ''The truth is, no candidate is going to be able to do much to save the coal industry when utilities are moving away from coal,'' Ms. Bates said.

Mr. Trump's energy agenda largely consists of aggressively promoting oil and gas, the burning of which is driving climate change. He has suggested he would quickly approve new oil and gas pipelines, expand oil drilling on public land and in federal waters and permit drilling in the Alaskan wilderness. He has promised to end federal support for electric vehicles, and wind power, which he has falsely claimed ''kill all our birds.'' And he would withdraw the country, again, from the 2015 Paris climate accord. (He did so during his term in the White House but President Biden rejoined the global agreement to limit warming.)

''To keep pace with the world economy,'' his campaign website says, ''President Trump will DRILL, BABY, DRILL.''

When Mr. Trump does talk about coal, it's in the context of competition from China and to suggest that the United States is wasting time and money on renewable energy, according to a review of his speeches. ''They're opening up a coal plant every single week while we struggle with wind,'' he said in April.

Since declaring his candidacy for the 2024 presidential race, Mr. Trump has mentioned coal miners only once at his rallies, to say: ''We want clean coal. We want to take care of our miners.''

Thomas J. Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, which supports the fossil fuel industry, noted that Democrats, too, are talking less about coal than they did in 2016, when President Barack Obama's plan to rein in coal plants was the centerpiece of his climate agenda.

When Mr. Biden references coal these days, he speaks about federal funds to create clean energy jobs in former coal communities.

Coal has also dropped from the spotlight because the swing states that both candidates need to win in 2024, like Arizona, Wisconsin and Michigan, are not considered coal states. ''The conversation in the energy and climate space has shifted more toward oil and gas,'' Mr. Pyle said.

Some Republicans also note that Mr. Trump doesn't need to discuss coal as much as he did in the past because he seems to have the locked up the vote in coal communities.

West Virginia, the second-largest coal-producing state, behind Wyoming, was once a Democratic stronghold but has shifted solidly Republican in recent elections. Its senior senator, Joe Manchin III, has left the Democratic Party to register as an independent and is not running for re-election. The man who hopes to succeed Mr. Manchin in the Senate is Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican coal executive and an ally of Mr. Trump's in West Virginia.

''There's really no constituency left for coal in the Democratic Party post-Joe Manchin,'' said Neil Chatterjee, a former chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under Mr. Trump who once served as an aide to Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky.

''Trump's got the coal vote so there's really not an imperative to go for it,'' Mr. Chatterjee said. ''He's still going to rail against E.P.A. regulations and regulatory overreach and the Biden administration energy policies, but he can do all that without specifically focusing on coal because the ***working class***, United Mine Worker voters, they've all come to the Republican Party.''

The United Mine Workers has not endorsed a presidential candidate since 2008, when the union backed Mr. Obama, Ms. Bates said. But she said many coal workers were most likely supporters of Mr. Trump.

Another factor that energy analysts said could be shaping Mr. Trump's energy outlook: Some of coal's biggest boosters are either no longer on the political scene or are playing a smaller role than they once did.

For example, Robert E. Murray, a billionaire who built the country's largest privately held coal mining company before it went bankrupt in 2019, died in 2020. Mr. Murray was a longtime supporter of Mr. Trump, hosted fund-raisers for him as a candidate and donated $300,000 to his inauguration. A few weeks later, Mr. Murray presented Mr. Trump with detailed requests for the new administration aimed at ''getting America's coal miners back to work.'' Mr. Trump fulfilled most of those wishes but it did not revive the industry.

Mr. McConnell, who was once Mr. Trump's most important ally on Capitol Hill and credited their teamwork with ending the Obama administration's ''war on coal,'' has been feuding with the former president since he condemned Mr. Trump following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. That relationship may have started to thaw on Thursday when Mr. Trump met with Mr. McConnell and other Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Still, no one contests that the coal industry has lost its sway.

''I don't see coal having the same political muscle that it had,'' said George David Banks, who served as a White House senior adviser on energy in the Trump administration. ''It's atrophied.''

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting from New York.Taylor Robinson contributed reporting from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/climate/trump-coal-politics.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/climate/trump-coal-politics.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, coal miners supporting Donald J. Trump during a rally at the Charleston Civic Center in West Virginia in 2016. Despite his campaign pledges, Mr. Trump oversaw coal's decline and the closing of 75 coal-fired plants, like the one in Conesville, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TY WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Student Debt Of Millions Goes Unpaid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDG-6N01-JBG3-60NP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Stacy Cowley

**Body**

Millions of people are overdue on their federal loans or still have them paused -- and court rulings keep upending collection efforts.

After an unprecedented three-year timeout on federal student loan payments because of the pandemic, millions of borrowers began repaying their debt when billing resumed late last year. But nearly as many have not.

That reality, along with court decisions that regularly upend the rules, has complicated the government's efforts to restart its system for collecting the $1.6 trillion it is owed.

At the end of March, six months after the hiatus ended, nearly 20 million borrowers were making their payments as scheduled. But almost 19 million were not, leaving their accounts delinquent, in default or still on pause, according to the latest Education Department data.

''The nonpayment rate really is emblematic of a system that's not doing its job,'' said Persis Yu, the managing counsel for the Student Borrower Protection Center, an advocacy group.

Seven million borrowers with federally managed loans were at least 30 days overdue on their payments at the end of 2023. That's the highest delinquency rate since 2016, as far back as the department's public records go. Because of a policy adopted by the Biden administration, those borrowers will face no penalties for their nonpayment until October at the earliest.

Millions more had their accounts frozen through deferment or forbearance (which allows borrowers to temporarily stop making payments), and nearly six million borrowers remain mired in defaults that began before the pandemic.

The reasons borrowers aren't paying are varied. Some say they can't afford it, while others are tangled in bureaucratic snafus. Many people are taking advantage of an ''on-ramp'' period that lasts through September, during which late payments will not be reported to credit bureaus and borrowers will not be placed into default, though interest will continue to accrue.

When President Biden ended the moratorium that began in March 2020 under President Donald J. Trump, he pledged to fix key parts of the long-troubled federal loan program. While the Supreme Court overturned Mr. Biden's most far-reaching policy -- forgiving at least $10,000 in debt for each of millions of borrowers -- his administration resurrected other pathways for eliminating debt.

Mr. Trump's Education Department stymied relief programs for government and nonprofit workers, permanently disabled borrowers, and people defrauded by for-profit schools. Under Mr. Biden, the agency revamped and expanded those and other initiatives and used them to cancel $167 billion owed by nearly five million people.

Mr. Biden also created a new repayment program, SAVE, which slashed many borrowers' payments or reduced them to zero for millions of low-wage workers. Consumer advocates praised those moves as vital to ensuring that borrowers' bills are manageable.

But the plethora of changes to repayment rules, and a barrage of lawsuits from Republican-led states attacking them, have worsened the already challenging task of getting more than 40 million people back on a payment track. The Education Department and its five loan servicers are struggling to adapt their systems and guide borrowers through repayment options that sometimes change overnight.

Last week, federal judges in Kansas and Missouri temporarily blocked elements of the SAVE program, ruling in favor of states that contested the president's authority to impose such generous terms without congressional approval. In the Kansas suit, the states called the president's debt relief maneuvers ''a rushed product to evasively do what the Supreme Court already told defendants they cannot do.''

But on Sunday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit temporarily reversed the Kansas decision, clearing the way for the department to proceed with planned payment reductions this month for millions of borrowers.

Travis Wattles, 39, has had his account in forbearance since the payment pause ended in the fall because his servicer, Aidvantage, has not been able to determine what his monthly bill should be. (Aidvantage declined to comment and referred questions to the Education Department.)

Mr. Wattles, who works in automotive product marketing, spent several years overseas. During that time, his earnings were below the limit for the foreign income exclusion (a tax break that shelters some income), so he had no taxable income and owed nothing for his student loan debt.

But Mr. Wattles, who moved near Nashville in early 2020, now makes a six-figure salary. He enrolled in the SAVE plan in August, and has twice sent paperwork to Aidvantage to have his payment recalculated based on his current earnings.

''They keep putting me back into forbearance because they can't figure it out,'' he said. ''I don't want that. I don't mind making a payment; I understand I took out the loan.''

Karlyn Granger, a 36-year-old graphic designer, received her master's degree in 2019. When the pandemic freed her of the obligation to pay her federal loans, she got married, bought a house in Atlanta and had a baby. The costs of caring for her family consume most of her paycheck and ''feel much more present and dire'' than her loan, she said.

A deluge of emails from Aidvantage has spurred her efforts to figure out which payment plan is best for her. But the choices confuse her: Should she try to keep her monthly bill as low as possible, or prioritize paying more to reduce what she owes in interest?

The shifting legal landscape has amplified her uncertainty. The SAVE plan, for example, waives unpaid interest for those who keep up with their monthly payments and forgives any debt remaining after 20 years. But those benefits may vanish if legal challenges to the plan succeed. And the Internal Revenue Service typically treats forgiven debts as income. Ms. Granger fears making a decision that might eventually stick her with an enormous tax bill.

''I'm just kind of in analysis paralysis, where I don't do anything,'' she said.

The Education Department anticipated that millions of borrowers would need extra time, help and nudging. There's no historical parallel for pausing the entire loan system for years. But when natural disasters have occurred -- which affected borrowers can use as grounds to temporarily suspend their payments -- ''roughly a third of borrowers missed their payments in the first months after payments resumed,'' two senior officials wrote in an April blog post. ''Their rates of payment recovered gradually over a two- to three-year period.''

For loan servicers, alarm bells start going off when a borrower is more than 90 days overdue, said Scott Buchanan, the executive director of the Student Loan Servicing Alliance. That's the point at which they normally file a negative credit report. But through September, the servicers have instead been instructed to place those borrowers into forbearance.

That complicates the data. With so many borrowers being automatically routed into forbearance, it's hard to separate those who can afford to pay but are choosing not to from those who are genuinely struggling.

''For some time, we're going to have this group of borrowers who will see, 'I went delinquent and nothing happened,' so they think, 'Why am I making a payment?''' Mr. Buchanan said. ''That was always the risk of the on-ramp. You want to encourage people to make payments. If you self-cure for them, that doesn't encourage payments.''

Mr. Biden frequently casts his approach to student debt as a signature accomplishment. ''My administration has taken the most significant action to provide student debt relief ever in the history of this country,'' he said in April. ''This relief can be life changing.''

And for millions of people, it has been, despite the rockiness and legal turmoil of the past year.

Clayton Lundgren, 25, earned a master's degree in engineering physics in 2021 -- then moved to Los Angeles to work as a self-employed content creator. Had the Supreme Court allowed Mr. Biden's mass-debt cancellation program to stand, nearly half the $21,000 that Mr. Lundgren owes would have vanished.

But because of the SAVE program, which exempts income of up to 225 percent of the federal poverty line, Mr. Lundgren owes nothing on his monthly loan bill. That helps him afford his rent and other living expenses. ''It gives some breathing room,'' he said.

And because SAVE prevents interest from accruing, Mr. Lundgren's balance isn't growing. That's a sea change from how federal student loans used to operate: Previously, millions of borrowers on income-driven plans made payments every month but saw their tabs keep rising, because their payments weren't enough to cover even the interest on their debts.

Mr. Lundgren said he was grateful for SAVE, but also felt a bit whiplashed by the loan system's gyrations.

''I am just resigned to the fact that there is almost certainly no reality where the socially just thing happens, which would be loan forgiveness and the institution of universally affordable public college,'' he said.

Representative Virginia Foxx of North Carolina, a Republican and the chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, praised the court rulings against the SAVE plan.Mr. Biden ''has opted to give away taxpayer money and illegally rewrite loan contracts,'' she said. ''It's a blatant attempt to buy votes from college graduates on the backs of the ***working class***.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/02/business/student-loan-nonpayment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/02/business/student-loan-nonpayment.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: New changes to student loan repayment rules, and a barrage of lawsuits from Republican-led states attacking them, have worsened the already challenging task of getting more than 40 million people back on a payment track. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Travis Wattles, 39, who hasn't paid on his loan because his servicer can't determine his monthly bill amount. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM DESHAZER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Economy Is Key Issue in Runoff, as Iranians Eat Lentils Instead of Lamb***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDG-6N01-JBG3-60PN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 5, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1475 words

**Byline:** By Alissa J. Rubin

**Body**

In a series of interviews, virtually every resident of Tehran listed Iran's sickly economy as the No. 1 issue for the country's next president.

In the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Tehran surrounding Imam Hussein Square, the side streets and alleys are lined with secondhand stores and small repair shops for refurbishing all manner of household goods. But with little to do, most shopkeepers idle in front of their stores.

A 60-year-old man named Abbas and his son Asgar, 32, lounged in two of the secondhand, faux brocaded armchairs that they sell. Asked about their business, Abbas, who did not want his surname used for fear of drawing the government's attention, looked incredulous.

''Just look down the street,'' he said. ''Business is awful. There are no customers, people are economically weak now, they don't have money.''

After years of crippling U.S. sanctions that generated chronic inflation, made worse by Iran's economic mismanagement and corruption, Iranians increasingly feel trapped in a downward economic spiral.

Virtually every person interviewed during six days of reporting in the Iranian capital described a pervasive sense of losing ground economically, of becoming window shoppers rather than buyers, of patching machinery used in factories because replacements are too expensive, of substituting lentils for lamb.

Even in the upscale Pasdaran neighborhood of Tehran, where chic cafes serve croissants and cappuccino and the avenues are lined with grand, Art Deco apartment buildings, most Iranians, regardless of their political views, have one demand for their next president, who will be chosen in a runoff election on Friday: Fix the economy.

When asked how her business was doing, Roya, a 25-year old woman with a warm smile, who runs a small cosmetics shop in a bazaar in the north of Tehran, had a one-word response: ''Less.''

Yet, with shelves crammed with moisturizers, mascaras, blushes and serums, the shop appears to be flourishing. So what is missing?

''There is less, less of everything: fewer customers, they buy less, and the imported cosmetics come from fewer places,'' she said, after asking that her surname not be used because she feared reprisals from her boss or the government.

The French and German brands prized by sophisticated Iranians have become too costly for all but the very rich, she said.

Also missing on Iran's gridlocked streets is much variety in the cars. Some are the aging products of joint ventures with European and Japanese manufacturers after sanctions were eased, or domestically produced copies of them.

When President Donald J. Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear agreement Iran had negotiated with Western powers and reimposed sanctions on banking and oil sales, much foreign investment went, too.

At the same time, the trappings of wealth are still readily visible. Fancy consumer goods, including iPhones and designer clothes; Italian kitchenware and the latest in German lamps are for sale in North Tehran's malls and boutiques. Building projects are underway in many neighborhoods. And despite relentless sanctions, the government has managed to expand its sophisticated uranium enrichment program.

Iranians' sense of their diminished economic circumstances stems in part from the contrast with the period of the 1990s until 2010, when the middle class could count on seeing their real incomes rise every year.

Since then, outside of a small group of well connected clerical and military people, along with an elite of industrialists, developers and high-ranking professionals, who dominate the heights of the economy, Iranians' incomes and assets have been dragged down by inflation and the weak currency.

While there were about 8,000 Iranian rials to the dollar in 2000, that number is now around 42,000 at the official rate and closer to 60,000 on the street. Inflation has leveled off, but it is still running at about 37 percent annually, according to the International Monetary Fund -- a rate that would be unimaginable in the United States or Europe.

Despite the severe headwinds, the country has managed to eke out economic growth of about 1.7 percent per year since 2010, when the Obama administration stiffened sanctions over Iran's nuclear program. Economists say that growth is attributable to increasing oil production and sales, primarily to a growing market in China, according to the Congressional Research Service.

''Sanctions have cast a long shadow on Iran's economy, but they have not led to an economic collapse,'' said Esfandyar Batmanghelidj, the head of the Bourse and Bazaar Foundation, an economic think tank focused on the Middle East and Central Asia. But achieving slender growth despite the sanctions, he added, is little comfort for Iranians who are painfully aware of ''how much is being left on the table.''

The currency depreciation is so severe that when foreigners exchange, say, $100 for Iranian rials, they are handed multiple thick wads of bills so bulky and heavy that they have to be carried in a briefcase or backpack. The government has begun to introduce a new currency, the toman.

''Only those who have dollars are comfortable,'' said Vahid Arafati, 36, as he sat in a cobbled square outside his small café, drinking espresso and fresh-squeezed carrot juice with friends.

While middle-class people talk about housing costs and how young people postpone marriages because they cannot afford to buy homes, less fortunate Iranians, who live month to month on meager salaries and spend on average 70 percent of their income in rent, face a far worse situation.

During the presidential voting last Friday at Masjid Lorzadeh, a mosque in a less affluent neighborhood in south Tehran, many people spoke angrily about the U.S. sanctions and what they had done to Iran, but also pleaded that the next Iranian president hear their distress.

''I want the president to listen to my problems,'' said Mina, a 62-year old woman who, like most women there, was dressed in a black, head-to-toe chador. ''I live in a basement, I have children, they cannot find work, I need surgery, but I have come to vote anyway,'' she said, wincing as she moved forward toward the ballot box.

There is no limit enforced on how much landlords can increase rents, leaving people like Mina in a constant state of anxiety over whether they will be priced out of their homes.

The woman next to her, Fatima, 48, a homemaker, was bitterly angry, especially at the United States for the sanctions, which she blames for Iran's economic problems. ''These problems, the sanctions they are created by our enemies but they will not be successful,'' she said. ''We will stab our enemies' eyes.''

Abbas, the chair salesman, has a different take on the economy. ''Look, Iran is a rich country, but that wealth doesn't go into the hands of the people'' he said. ''I don't know where it goes, I am not the government, maybe they know where it goes, but every year it gets worse.''

''No president will help,'' he added. ''The last president, when he came to power three years ago, a kilo of meat was 100,000 tomams. Now it is 600,000 tomams.''

A few doors down, in the workshop where the chairs Abbas sells are refurbished, the mood is even bleaker.

In the back, two workers sweated over the cushions they were recovering, working swiftly and wordlessly. They were educated, they said, but after years of declining fortunes, their families were unable to make ends meet, and they had been forced to take any jobs they could find.

A third man, Mohamed Reza Moharan Zahre, 36, said he had finished high school and was ready to go to college, hoping to become a pilot. But his father's carpet store was facing bankruptcy, so he left his studies to help out.

Now he says his only hope is to emigrate to Germany.

''Many of my friends have left the country. Going legally is difficult, but what choice do we have?'' he said. ''I earn by the piece, maybe $220 a month, and $180 goes to rent. I am single, how can I marry? Iran is not a good place for earning money.''

Seddighe Boroumand, 62, a school janitor even though she is barely over four feet tall, was driven close to tears describing how her dwindling ability to afford anything beyond shelter and food has torn into the fabric of her life.

''My daughter died eight months ago because I did not have the money to buy the medicines she needed,'' Ms. Boroumand said. ''She had a lung problem and couldn't breathe, I watched her gasping. And my first son had a heart problem and he died, too. He had a baby, and I pay money to support his baby.''

''My third son was a conscript but he had some physical disability and we take care of him,'' she added, nodding to her husband, who works in the same school as she does.

''We ask the politicians to end the suffering.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/04/world/middleeast/iran-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/04/world/middleeast/iran-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Abbas, who sells refurbished chairs in Tehran, said: ''Iran is a rich country, but that wealth doesn't go into the hands of the people.''

A throng in Tehran's Grand Bazaar in April at a time of rising tensions between Iran and Israel. Watching the final debate of the Iranian presidential campaign this week at a Tehran mosque. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARASH KHAMOOSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Battleground Polling Shows Ticket-Splitting Pattern***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C16-3YR1-DXY4-X03R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 13, 2024 Monday 11:10 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 939 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn Nate Cohn is The Times&amp;#8217;s chief political analyst. He covers elections, public opinion, demographics and polling.

**Highlight:** In four states where Biden trails among likely voters, Democratic Senate candidates are leading.

**Body**

In four states where Biden trails among likely voters, Democratic Senate candidates are leading.

This morning, we have [*a new set of polls for you in the battleground states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html), including New York Times/Siena College polls of Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, Nevada, Arizona and the inaugural Times/Philadelphia Inquirer/Siena poll in Pennsylvania.

The results in the presidential race would have been surprising a year ago, but it’s hard to call them surprising anymore. Donald J. Trump leads in five of the six states among likely voters, with Mr. Biden squeaking out a lead among likely voters in Michigan. (Among registered voters, Mr. Biden leads only in Wisconsin.) Mr. Trump’s strength is largely thanks to gains among young, Black and Hispanic voters.

What’s more surprising is the U.S. Senate results. This is the first time we’ve asked about Senate races this year, and the Democratic candidates led in all four of the states we tested: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona and Nevada.

Not only do Democrats lead, but they also seem to do so in an entirely customary way, with ordinary levels of support from young and nonwhite voters, even as Mr. Biden struggles at the top of the ticket.

Nevada was ground zero for this striking ticket splitting. Mr. Trump led the poll by a staggering 12 points among registered voters, thanks to an eye-popping nine-point lead among Hispanic voters and a 13-point lead among those 18 to 29.

But in the Senate race, everything looks “normal.” The Democratic senator Jacky Rosen led her likeliest Republican challenger by two points among registered voters, including a 46-27 lead among those 18 to 29 and a 46-28 lead among Hispanics.

Remarkably, 28 percent of Mr. Trump’s Hispanic supporters and 26 percent of his young supporters back Ms. Rosen.

This level of crossover voting has been extremely rare in the last few years, but it was pretty common before 2020. In fact, these results remind me a lot of the 2016 presidential election, when Mr. Trump surged in white ***working-class*** areas, Hillary Clinton surged in college-educated areas, and yet the Senate and House results by county still mostly followed the pre-2016 pattern.

With polls showing Mr. Trump making yet another demographic breakthrough, perhaps it shouldn’t be so surprising that ticket splitting is back as well.

You can read our full story on the presidential race [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html), and our story on the Senate [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html).

A few outtakes.

What does ticket splitting mean for Biden?

There’s been understandable debate over whether Mr. Biden could really be doing so poorly among young, Black and Hispanic voters. After all, we’ve never seen anything like it before, and polls are hardly perfect.

But at least to me, the relatively “normal” down-ballot results strengthen the case that Mr. Trump’s breakthrough among young and nonwhite voters is probably real — which is to say, not an artifact of some kind of systemic polling error.

It’s consistent with other indicators (like party registration, or recalled 2020 vote preference) suggesting that the polls are reaching the people who usually vote for Democrats — they just aren’t backing Mr. Biden.

And historically, huge polling errors tend to be systematic. Back in 2016, for instance, the polls missed Ron Johnson’s victory in the Wisconsin Senate race, not just Mr. Trump’s win for president in the state. Similarly, the 2020 polls overstated the prospects of Democratic candidates like Sara Gideon, Gary Peters and Steve Bullock by every bit as much as they overstated those of Mr. Biden.

That said, there may be some good news for Mr. Biden here: These voters haven’t yet abandoned Democrats in full, and they might still be available to return to his side.

What is going on with likely voters in Michigan?

One of the most peculiar findings in the poll is the huge split between registered and likely voters in Michigan.

Overall, Mr. Trump led by seven points among registered voters — the broader group of people who are registered to vote in the state.

But Mr. Biden had a one-point lead among likely voters, the smaller group that represents the likely electorate of actual voters this November.

I find that gap to be more than a little hard to believe. It requires unlikely voters in Michigan to back Mr. Trump by about 30 points, even as Mr. Biden narrowly leads among those who actually show up and vote.

But it’s worth noting that [*the last Times/Siena poll of Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html) also had an unusually large gap between registered and likely voters, with Mr. Trump leading by five points among registered voters while Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump were tied among likely voters.

In this poll, Michigan voters who said they were only “somewhat” likely (or less likely than that) to vote backed Mr. Trump by 26 points, 54 percent to 28 percent.

Those without a record of voting in the 2020 election backed Mr. Trump by 34 points, 62 percent to 28 percent.

Arab and Muslim voters

When we did our last Times/Siena poll of the battleground states, we [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/us/politics/biden-trump-battleground-poll.html) signs of huge defections from Mr. Biden among a small sample of voters who were either Muslim or Arab.

We found it again.

Overall, Mr. Trump led, 57-25, among Middle East, North African or Muslim voters in the poll. Those who say they voted in the 2020 election reported backing Mr. Biden by a similar but opposite margin, 56-35.

When we asked Arab or Muslim voters who didn’t back Mr. Biden about their most important issue in the race, around 70 percent cited foreign policy or the war in Gaza.

PHOTO: President Biden trails in polling in Arizona. Ruben Gallego, right, is leading in a Senate race there. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kenny Holston/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Colorblind Casting Shouldn't Be Used to Sanitize the Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C86-SP71-JBG3-60MR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; JOHN MCWHORTER

**Length:** 1222 words

**Byline:** By John McWhorter

**Body**

The recent announcement that Audra McDonald will be starring as Mama Rose in ''Gypsy'' has thrilled Broadway fans. I'm as delighted as anyone, and eager to catch the show when it opens in December. McDonald is the queen of American musical theater, and ''Gypsy'' is often considered the best musical ever (and if there were no ''Follies,'' it would be!).

But I delight less in a detail that has emerged. In the roles of Mama Rose's two daughters, June and Louise, the show's producers intend to cast actresses who, like McDonald, are Black. Or more specifically, June, whose prospects as a young performer Rose first has the most hopes for, will be cast as biracial, while Louise, who ultimately breaks out as a star in her own right, will be cast as Black. Rose's father will be played by a Black man. In other words, Rose isn't just being played by a Black actress. She is being played, it seems, as a Black character.

This is off, for a few reasons. One is historical. In 1920s America, when the show is set, racism and segregation remained implacable forces in popular culture, and the only stardom a Black Rose would have realistically sought for her kids would have been among Black audiences.

Yes, Black performers of that era, such as Bert Williams and Ethel Waters, did cross over to stardom among white audiences, but it was quite rare. For Rose to think her kids had even a chance at becoming America's sweethearts -- that they could achieve a position akin to the one Shirley Temple occupied -- would be a delusion so quixotic that it would have to be the story's central tragedy.

Maybe this production will be modified to suggest that Rose has her eye on the Black Vaudeville circuit? But Gypsy's music sounds nothing like the blues and proto-jazz that circuit was all about, and the idea that a Black stage mother would be promoting her Black children in the early 1920s with a twee song like ''May We Entertain You'' is, frankly, ludicrous. Black performers in that era promoted themselves mainly with, big surprise, Black music.

The norm, then and afterward, was careers like those of Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge and Nina Mae McKinney -- the last of whom you may not have heard of for a reason -- in which bigotry strictly and unjustifiably corralled what they were allowed to do. And let's not even get into Louise's eventual boffo success as a stripper under the stage name Gypsy Rose Lee. Who were the nationally famous Black strippers of the mid-20th century, and what do we get from pretending there were any?

Colorblind casting has become common, even fashionable, and that's a wonderful thing. It's creating opportunities for actors of color and it's opening the minds of audience members who would once upon a time have been unable even to imagine, say, a blockbuster musical in which the founding fathers are played by Black and Hispanic men. As I have written, the idea that Broadway is a white realm is now blissfully outdated. But colorblind casting doesn't work if it stops halfway, seeming to let Black actors play white parts but then pulling back. A talent as rare as Audra McDonald shouldn't play a Black Rose. She should just play Rose.

Instead, it's become popular to re-racialize characters in older properties. In the recent ''Some Like It Hot'' musical, set in the 1930s, Sugar, best recalled from the film as played by Marilyn Monroe, was played by a Black actress, as was the leader of the band Sugar tours with. So far, so good -- until the bandleader makes a reference to how hard it is being Black on tour in the South. If now she and Sugar are supposed to be Black people, then how could she plot her trajectory to become a mainstream star like Ruth Etting, Helen Morgan or Kate Smith without even mentioning the racism that she would have to overcome to do so?

I get that the new idea is that we don't want to deny the reality of race or racism, and that to cast Black actors as just playing white people can be construed as subtracting something of their essence, as ''centering whiteness,'' as it's put. But recoding characters -- at least, historical characters -- as Black just because Black people are playing them is just another kind of denial of racism. It pretends that in the past (or even the present, for that matter) Black lives and white lives were interchangeable. In the era in which ''Gypsy'' is set, lynching was still common and legal in many states. Black ***working-class*** mothers had a lot to worry about, but winning over mainstream, which is to say white, audiences was not high on the list.

McDonald herself has shown that it's possible for a Black actor to successfully play a white character. In her resplendent breakout performance as Carrie Pipperidge in the 1994 revival of ''Carousel,'' no one was under the impression that the musical, set in 1870s Maine, was really an exploration of interracial marriage. Rather, McDonald was playing a white woman, a prospect that audiences proved themselves to be entirely ready to accept.

Similarly, in 2014, James Earl Jones played the paterfamilias in a revival of the 1936 chestnut ''You Can't Take It With You,'' and beyond the individual interpretation of two towering actors, the character was the same man Lionel Barrymore immortalized in the 1938 film version. It was sweet. Brian Stokes Mitchell's lead performances in ''Kiss Me, Kate'' and ''Man of La Mancha'' worked just as well.

All of this also applies to actors of other ethnicities, as well as to those with (or without) disabilities of various kinds. The guiding principle should be getting past appearances and seeing people for their essence. As pertains to race, the first step is surely to understand and acknowledge that race matters and can be an obstacle. But that shouldn't be the last step. And what better vehicle for pointing the way to a new paradigm than the theater, which is all about teaching us to see the world in new ways?

A question looms, of course: What about white actors playing Black characters? Long ago was the time when that was common. An achingly awful 1930 film musical called ''Golden Dawn,'' which is still available online, offers a glimpse of how casually it was done. Today it would be offensive. In part that's because Black actors still have fewer opportunities than white ones and don't need even more competition to get a toehold onstage; in part it's because wearing dark makeup, as a thousand white Othellos have done, harks back for many to minstrelsy. I, for one, am not itching to see a production of ''A Raisin in the Sun'' or ''Fences'' with white leads.

I do hope, however, for a time when actors of any race can play roles of any race, just as we now accept for age or religion or sexual identity. The Gershwin estate stipulates that ''Porgy and Bess'' must be performed onstage by Black singers, but in 1935 even Gershwin himself allowed Lawrence Tibbett, who was white, to be the first Porgy on a recording. As brilliant as many Black Porgys have been over the years, no one could deny that Tibbett sang the hell out of the role and back. Marston Records has issued a gorgeous new box set of Tibbett's work, including songs from ''Porgy and Bess.'' This set's sterling restoration work alone makes it worth hearing. But if you close your eyes, you might hear something else: possibility.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/13/opinion/audra-mcdonald-gypsy-broadway.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/13/opinion/audra-mcdonald-gypsy-broadway.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MAINZ, AND WARNER BROS., VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2024

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[***Iranians’ Demand for Their Leaders: Fix the Economy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CD7-SWC1-JBG3-601V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 4, 2024 Thursday 10:12 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1528 words

**Byline:** Alissa J. Rubin Alissa J. Rubin covers climate change and conflict in the Middle East. She previously reported for more than a decade from Baghdad and Kabul, Afghanistan, and was the Paris bureau chief.

**Highlight:** In a series of interviews, virtually every resident of Tehran listed Iran’s sickly economy as the No. 1 issue for the country’s next president.

**Body**

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Even in the upscale Pasdaran neighborhood of Tehran, where chic cafes serve croissants and cappuccino and the avenues are lined with grand, Art Deco apartment buildings, most Iranians, regardless of their political views, have one demand for their next president, who will be chosen in a runoff election on Friday: Fix the economy.

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At the same time, the trappings of wealth are still readily visible. Fancy consumer goods, including iPhones and designer clothes; Italian kitchenware and the latest in German lamps are for sale in North Tehran’s malls and boutiques. Building projects are underway in many neighborhoods. And despite relentless sanctions, the government has managed to expand its sophisticated uranium enrichment program.

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Since then, outside of a small group of well connected clerical and military people, along with an elite of industrialists, developers and high-ranking professionals, who dominate the heights of the economy, Iranians’ incomes and assets have been dragged down by inflation and the weak currency.

While there were about 8,000 Iranian rials to the dollar in 2000, that number is now around 42,000 at the official rate and closer to 60,000 on the street. Inflation has leveled off, but it is still running at [*about 37 percent annually*](https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/IRN), according to the International Monetary Fund — a rate that would be unimaginable in the United States or Europe.

Despite the severe headwinds, the country has managed to eke out economic growth of about 1.7 percent per year since 2010, when the Obama administration stiffened sanctions over Iran’s nuclear program. Economists say that growth is attributable to increasing oil production and sales, primarily to [*a growing market*](https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/IRN) in China, according to the Congressional Research Service.

“Sanctions have cast a long shadow on Iran’s economy, but they have not led to an economic collapse,” said Esfandyar Batmanghelidj, the head of the Bourse and Bazaar Foundation, an economic think tank focused on the Middle East and Central Asia. But achieving slender growth despite the sanctions, he added, is little comfort for Iranians who are painfully aware of “how much is being left on the table.”

The currency depreciation is so severe that when foreigners exchange, say, $100 for Iranian rials, they are handed multiple thick wads of bills so bulky and heavy that they have to be carried in a briefcase or backpack. The government has begun to introduce a new currency, the toman.

“Only those who have dollars are comfortable,” said Vahid Arafati, 36, as he sat in a cobbled square outside his small café, drinking espresso and fresh-squeezed carrot juice with friends.

While middle-class people talk about housing costs and how young people postpone marriages because they cannot afford to buy homes, less fortunate Iranians, who live month to month on meager salaries and spend on average 70 percent of their income in rent, face a far worse situation.

During the presidential voting last Friday at Masjid Lorzadeh, a mosque in a less affluent neighborhood in south Tehran, many people spoke angrily about the U.S. sanctions and what they had done to Iran, but also pleaded that the next Iranian president hear their distress.

“I want the president to listen to my problems,” said Mina, a 62-year old woman who, like most women there, was dressed in a black, head-to-toe chador. “I live in a basement, I have children, they cannot find work, I need surgery, but I have come to vote anyway,” she said, wincing as she moved forward toward the ballot box.

There is no limit enforced on how much landlords can increase rents, leaving people like Mina in a constant state of anxiety over whether they will be priced out of their homes.

The woman next to her, Fatima, 48, a homemaker, was bitterly angry, especially at the United States for the sanctions, which she blames for Iran’s economic problems. “These problems, the sanctions they are created by our enemies but they will not be successful,” she said. “We will stab our enemies’ eyes.”

Abbas, the chair salesman, has a different take on the economy. “Look, Iran is a rich country, but that wealth doesn’t go into the hands of the people” he said. “I don’t know where it goes, I am not the government, maybe they know where it goes, but every year it gets worse.”

“No president will help,” he added. “The last president, when he came to power three years ago, a kilo of meat was 100,000 tomams. Now it is 600,000 tomams.”

A few doors down, in the workshop where the chairs Abbas sells are refurbished, the mood is even bleaker.

In the back, two workers sweated over the cushions they were recovering, working swiftly and wordlessly. They were educated, they said, but after years of declining fortunes, their families were unable to make ends meet, and they had been forced to take any jobs they could find.

A third man, Mohamed Reza Moharan Zahre, 36, said he had finished high school and was ready to go to college, hoping to become a pilot. But his father’s carpet store was facing bankruptcy, so he left his studies to help out.

Now he says his only hope is to emigrate to Germany.

“Many of my friends have left the country. Going legally is difficult, but what choice do we have?” he said. “I earn by the piece, maybe $220 a month, and $180 goes to rent. I am single, how can I marry? Iran is not a good place for earning money.”

Seddighe Boroumand, 62, a school janitor even though she is barely over four feet tall, was driven close to tears describing how her dwindling ability to afford anything beyond shelter and food has torn into the fabric of her life.

“My daughter died eight months ago because I did not have the money to buy the medicines she needed,” Ms. Boroumand said. “She had a lung problem and couldn’t breathe, I watched her gasping. And my first son had a heart problem and he died, too. He had a baby, and I pay money to support his baby.”

“My third son was a conscript but he had some physical disability and we take care of him,” she added, nodding to her husband, who works in the same school as she does.

“We ask the politicians to end the suffering.”

PHOTOS: Abbas, who sells refurbished chairs in Tehran, said: “Iran is a rich country, but that wealth doesn’t go into the hands of the people.”; A throng in Tehran’s Grand Bazaar in April at a time of rising tensions between Iran and Israel. Watching the final debate of the Iranian presidential campaign this week at a Tehran mosque. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARASH KHAMOOSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A10.

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Up Close, Bridge Collapse 'Still Shocking Every Time'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP6-YR71-DXY4-X06K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 674 words

**Byline:** By Eduardo Medina and Pete Kiehart

**Body**

From roughly 100 yards away, the site of one of the worst bridge collapses in the country's history is haunting.

Maroon containers larger than a car sat twisted and crushed. Massive beams of steel warped into crooked arches. Pillars of jagged concrete poked out from the water -- a tomb of wreckage that dimly reflected on the gray-toned river.

From roughly 100 yards away, deep into the Patapsco River in Baltimore, the site of one of the worst bridge collapses in the country's history is a haunting scene.

The U.S. Coast Guard allowed The New York Times to ride aboard a response boat on Saturday afternoon to witness up close the destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which was struck by the cargo ship Dali on Tuesday, killing six men, all construction workers who were working on filling potholes on the bridge.

As the 45-foot-long Coast Guard vessel neared the scene of the disaster, a service member who had made several trips to the site braced passengers for the view to come.

''It's still shocking every time.''

The Coast Guard boat initially neared the cargo ship on the rear side, the stern, which was spared from much of the impact of the collapse. Two people could be seen walking along the starboard, though it was unclear if they were investigators or crew members, all of whom are from India and have remained on the ship to keep it operable.

An anchor that the crew members had used in desperation to keep the ship from hitting the bridge was visible, submerged in calm water. A thin and yellow boom floated around the ship to contain spills. It looked similar to crime-scene tape. The gray and red shipping containers were stacked up to nine rows high, partly shielding for a moment the wreckage that lay behind it.

As the Coast Guard boat inched closer toward the cargo ship, the humongous scale of the collapse came into view. Some state officials onboard, who were not authorized to speak to the news media, shook their heads and muttered under their breath.

''Oh, my gosh.''

Warped masses of the bridge sliced the steel deck of the ship, causing pieces of the blue hull to peel outward. On a wide piece of the deck cratered by the bridge's blow, knots of blackened metal morphed into a jumbled, metallic maze.

A large piece of concrete stuck out of the ship. Two people wearing all orange moved through the wreckage on the deck, balancing themselves with their hands and feet, as if it were a mountain. The birds swirling beside the cargo, searching for fish below, made the magnitude of the bridge and the ship even more pronounced.

A boat that appeared to belong to the Army Corps of Engineers moved in between the triangular spaces of the bridge's submerged beams. Other boats with cranes attached cruised nearby. Toward the northern and southern sides of the river, the offramp portions of the bridge stood high, the void between them now transformed into a deadly memorial.

Few distinct sounds emanated from the site. Strong winds moved currents of water against chunks of debris. Faint noises from boat engines whirled in the air.

Mostly, though, there was sheer silence. Passengers aboard the Coast Guard vessel appeared to spend almost as much time glancing down at the water as they did looking up.

The bodies of Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, 35, of Baltimore, and Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera, 26, of Dundalk, Md., were recovered this week.

But down below, perhaps beneath the tangled remnants of a bridge that connected two ***working-class*** neighborhoods in Baltimore, were the remains of four men not yet recovered by divers: Miguel Luna, in his 40s, of El Salvador; Maynor Yasir Suazo Sandoval, in his 30s, of Honduras; Jose López, in his 30s, of Guatemala; and a fourth man who has not been identified by the authorities.

As the Coast Guard ship turned around late Saturday afternoon, its engine roaring louder, heavy clouds hovered overhead. Soon, the scene of the collapse, stretching across the pale waters of the horizon, seemed to fade. The images seared into memory did not.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/30/us/view-ship-key-bridge-baltimore.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/30/us/view-ship-key-bridge-baltimore.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A thin and yellow boom to contain spills floated around the container ship Dali on Saturday. Warped masses of the Francis Scott Key Bridge sliced the steel deck. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE KIEHART FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Kamala Harris Can’t Escape Gaza Any More Than Joe Biden Can; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CKT-V641-JBG3-600Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2041 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie Jamelle Bouie became a New York Times Opinion columnist in 2019. Before that he was the chief political correspondent for Slate magazine. He is based in Charlottesville, Va., and Washington.

**Highlight:** The rapid transformation of the Democratic Party’s attitude toward Israel is forcing a reckoning.

**Body**

The last time Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel spoke to a joint meeting of Congress was in 2015, at the invitation of the House speaker, John Boehner, and the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, when they led the Republican Party in Congress. It was meant, [*explicitly*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained), to undermine the Obama administration’s effort to reach a deal with Iran limiting Tehran’s nuclear program in exchange for relief from American and international sanctions.

Democrats were outraged by the spectacle of congressional Republicans working with a foreign government to subvert the president’s foreign policy. Nearly 60 Democrats, including Vice President Joe Biden, [*skipped the speech*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained). Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader, called it “[*an insult to the intelligence of the United States.*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained)”

Last week, Netanyahu was back before Congress for the first time since then. [*It was a bipartisan invitation*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained), organized by Mike Johnson, the House speaker, a Republican, and agreed to by Chuck Schumer, the Senate majority leader and a Democrat.

“President Biden and I have known each other for over 40 years,” [*the prime m*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained)inister said. “I want to thank him for half a century of friendship to Israel and for being, as he says, a proud Zionist.” Netanyahu called on Congress to fast-track military aid. “Give us the tools faster, and we’ll finish the job faster.”

If you were to look out at the House chamber during the speech, you would have seen that [*around 130 House and Senate Democrats*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) were missing — more than twice as many as who skipped in 2015. And the issue was less partisan than it was moral and ethical: the catastrophic impact of the Gaza war on Palestinian civilians.

Health officials in Gaza say that Israel’s war [*has killed more than 39,000 people*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained), mostly civilians, and driven a large part of the strip’s 2.3 million residents from their homes. Most of the enclave lies in ruins. [*Just this weekend*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained), an Israeli airstrike hit a girls’ school sheltering thousands of displaced people in central Gaza, killing at least 30.

Biden has, from time to time, [*expressed concern*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) about civilian casualties. He has also acknowledged the extent to which American bombs have killed Palestinian civilians. But at no point has Biden publicly reconsidered his practically unconditional support for Israel’s war on Gaza.

He may have [*temporarily halted delivery of 3,500 bombs*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) in an attempt, much-ballyhooed by the White House, to pressure Netanyahu against a ground invasion of the city of Rafah, but this was small potatoes in light of [*the nearly 30,000 bombs and munitions*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) — including 14,000 of the highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs that Biden has decried — that the United States has delivered to Israel since October of last year.

Biden’s “[*ironclad*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained)” support for Israel means that the Democrats who skipped the speech weren’t just boycotting Netanyahu. They were sending a message to the administration as well. It is not too different from the message sent by [*the hundreds of thousands*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) of Democratic voters who marked their ballots “uncommitted” during the presidential primaries.

The signal political story of the moment is the changing of the guard in the Democratic Party after Biden [*declined to continue his bid*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) for a second term over concerns about his age and ability to prevent Donald Trump from returning to the White House. But the Democratic reaction to Netanyahu’s address to Congress is emblematic of an equally important — and potentially more significant — story: the rapid transformation of the Democratic Party’s attitude toward Israel, driven by deep grass-roots sympathy for the Palestinians.

It’s obviously hard to separate the two stories. Although Biden’s popularity among Democrats was [*on the decline*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) before the Hamas-led Oct. 7 attack that killed nearly 1,200 people, Israel’s subsequent military response in Gaza, and his initial refusal to publicly question the Israeli government’s conduct as the war took shape, revealed a major shift within the Democratic coalition. Young voters led the way, although this should not have come as a surprise. In 2022, the Pew Research Center found that the youngest adults [*held the warmest views toward Palestinians*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained). Overall, 61 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds held a favorable view of Palestinians and 55 percent of 30- to 49-year-olds felt the same way.

By December, around half of young Democrats [*disapproved*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) of the Biden administration’s response to the Israel-Hamas war.

Other Democratic constituencies also mobilized in opposition. A coalition of Black clergy members [*ran an advertisement in this newspaper*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) calling for a bilateral cease-fire. Labor unions, under pressure from many of their members, began to make similar calls. After Biden became the first sitting president to speak from the pulpit at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., the national leaders of the African Methodist Episcopal Church [*called on the president*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) to end U.S. financial aid to Israel, condemning the Israeli government’s campaign in Gaza as a “genocide.” In Michigan, Arab American Democrats warned Biden, and the rest of the party, that [*the state was at risk of flipping to Trump*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) in the general election [*if the president didn’t change course*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained).

As protests stepped up, rank-and-file Democrats moved further and further away from the president on this issue. By March, [*75 percent*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) of Democrats disapproved of Israel’s military action in Gaza and [*a plurality of Democrats*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) wanted to provide only humanitarian aid to Israel.

Biden’s stance, as unpopular as it was, [*did not explain the totality of his problems*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) with young Democrats and other voters. But his unyielding support for the Israeli government in the face of a clear humanitarian crisis in Gaza contributed to an atmosphere of profound discontent with his presidency — bad vibes, you could say.

The vibes have changed, obviously. Biden is out and Kamala Harris, the vice president, is the party’s new standard-bearer. She’s backed by [*a wind of enthusiasm*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) from across the Democratic coalition that has helped the party [*recover lost ground*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) in the national presidential race. But she is also implicated in the administration’s policy toward Gaza and will have to deal with the changing politics of Israel within her party.

You can already see that Harris is trying to chart her own course between Biden and the Democratic grass roots. At the same time that she [*condemned*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) protesters who flew Hamas flags and burned an American flag near the Capitol to protest Netanyahu’s address and affirmed her “unwavering commitment” to Israel, [*she also told reporters*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) that “Israel has a right to defend itself and how it does so matters,” adding that “what has happened in Gaza over the last nine months is devastating” and that “we cannot look away in the face of these tragedies. And I will not be silent.”

It is a real break from the president for Harris to voice this forthright concern for the lives of Palestinian civilians. But it is still unclear what the difference in language means for actual policy. Will a President Harris refrain from making additional weapons shipments? Will she attach humanitarian conditions to future military aid? Will she direct her U.N. ambassador to veto Palestinian requests for full membership in the global body? It is difficult to say. [*According to CNN*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained), aides and allies who have talked with Harris say that “substantively there is little daylight between her and the president.”

In three weeks, Democrats will almost certainly nominate Harris for the presidency at their national convention in Chicago. It is tempting, here, to make a direct comparison to the 1968 Democratic National Convention, also in Chicago, where Vice President Hubert Humphrey was nominated after a contentious and chaotic year that began with the Tet offensive and President Lyndon Johnson’s subsequent decision to leave office at the end of his term. In ’68, anti-Vietnam War protests rocked the convention; in ’24, Democrats will face protests against the war in Gaza.

But in our search for analogies and comparisons, we should remember that echoes from the past are still only faint reverberations of sounds once heard. The Vietnam War, largely prosecuted by Johnson, does not occupy the same space in American politics as the Gaza war. We are allies to a combatant, not combatants ourselves. We provide money and munitions, not soldiers. There is no draft, nor is there a steady stream of dead American soldiers and wounded veterans.

In 1968, antiwar Democrats represented a rising tide of youth anger that stood at cross-purposes with establishment Democratic politicians and their constituents among the white ***working class***. Vietnam — among other crises and controversies — produced a deep split within the Democratic coalition, between voters who felt alienated by the movement against the war and activists who felt betrayed by an old guard of sclerotic party elites. All of this came to a head in Chicago, fracturing the Democratic Party for a generation and beyond.

Biden’s support for the Gaza war has alienated and isolated him from the youngest cohorts of the Democratic Party, but it hasn’t split the coalition. Far from standing with the president on this issue, many rank-and-file Democrats are opposed to Israel’s conduct, and many Democratic lawmakers have taken note of the shift in public opinion or helped to lead it. Hence the early pushback, from Senate Democrats, on Biden’s request for additional military aid to Israel in the fall, and the notable absences at Netanyahu’s address, which included two of the most senior Democrats in Congress, Pelosi and James Clyburn, as well as Harris herself.

This clear shift in public opinion is a virtual guarantee Harris will face serious pressure to make a decisive break with Biden on Israel. And even if she doesn’t, there is a strong chance that future Democrats running for president will have to take a meaningfully different tack on Israel than their predecessors.

This is the ultimate upshot of the sea change in attitudes toward Israel, and in support of Palestinians, among Democratic voters. In all likelihood, Joe Biden will be the last Democratic president to express the kind of total and unwavering commitment to the Israeli government that was born of a time when Israel could call itself an underdog in the region. Kamala Harris, if she wins the presidency and intends to run for re-election, will have to keep the views of ordinary Democrats in mind — if she isn’t already aligned with their concerns. And in the next real contest for the Democratic nomination, there will almost certainly be Democrats who take a harder and more critical line toward the Israeli government’s treatment of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

If this is the future of the politics of Israel in the Democratic Party, then while there may not be a strong analogy to make, overall, between 1968 and 2024, there is a decent one to make between Joe Biden and Lyndon Johnson.

Two old Washington hands who reached the pinnacle of their ambitions and then used their considerable political skills to pass major, and in Johnson’s case, epochal, legislation. Two men who, supremely confident of their ability to guide events, then undermined themselves and their presidencies through stubborn commitments to disastrous conflicts abroad.

When we evaluate Johnson, we evaluate him in the context of Vietnam. We evaluate him in the context, that is, of tens of thousands of dead Americans and millions of dead Vietnamese.

When we evaluate Biden, we will rightfully credit him for his legislative accomplishments as well as the display of genuine statesmanship shown in his decision to step aside for the vice president. But we will also need to weigh what’s praiseworthy in the president’s legacy against his ignominious role as chief supplier for a terrible campaign of relentless destruction and incalculable human suffering.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.vox.com/2015/3/2/8130977/netanyahu-speech-explained).

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

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[***Splash Mountain's Bayou Overhaul***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C80-TSN1-DXY4-X1JG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:** By Brooks Barnes and Todd Anderson

**Body**

The ride was closed last year because of its connection to a racist film. Disney overhauled it to focus on Tiana, Disney's first Black princess, drawing praise and backlash.

In the summer of 2020, as a reckoning on racial justice swept the country, Disney said it would rip out Splash Mountain, a wildly popular flume ride with a racist back story.

Some people cheered, saying the move was long overdue: After 31 years at Disneyland in California and 28 at Walt Disney World in Florida, the attraction -- with its animal minstrels from ''Song of the South,'' the radioactive 1946 movie -- had to go.

But Disney also faced blowback. Last year, when Splash Mountain finally closed, someone started a makeshift memorial near its entrance -- the kind that pops up at scenes of horrific crimes. Distraught fans spirited away jars of the water. More than 100,000 fans signed a petition calling on Disney to reverse its ''absurd'' decision.

Now, Disney is rolling out Splash Mountain's replacement, which is based on ''The Princess and the Frog,'' the 2009 animated musical that introduced Disney's first Black princess. The lighthearted new ride, Tiana's Bayou Adventure, will open to the public on June 28 at Disney World, with a similar version expected to arrive at Disneyland by the end of the year.

It's a historic moment for Disney: After 69 years in the theme park business, the company will have a marquee attraction based on a Black character. Disney has spent at least $150 million on the bicoastal project, analysts estimate. (A Disney spokesman declined to comment on the cost.)

''For young Black children, it is, of course, a wonderful and amazing way to show representation,'' Anika Noni Rose, who voices Tiana in the film and recorded new lines for the ride, said when the project was announced. ''For children who don't look like Tiana, it is a way to open their eyes.''

Disney has remade rides before, often to howls from devotees, but this particular overhaul is especially delicate. In recent years, Disney has found itself enmeshed in nationwide debates over diversity and inclusion initiatives, with prominent Republican politicians and conservative media pundits pointing to Disney as an example of corporate political correctness run amok.

The pressure has started to die down, in part because Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida is no longer running for president and attacking ''Woke Disney'' at campaign stops. Robert A. Iger, Disney's chief executive, has also repeatedly said he has moved Disney away from ''agenda-driven'' content.

Tiana's Bayou Adventure could drag Disney back onto the cultural battlefield. Or it could provide more evidence that the debate has moved on.

''Our parks are treasured, and our fans care deeply about how they evolve and change -- just as we do,'' Josh D'Amaro, Disney's theme park chairman, said in an interview. ''One thing fans always tell me is 'If you change it, promise to make it even better.' And I think we've delivered on that promise with Tiana.''

Tiana's Bayou Adventure uses the same ride tracks as Splash Mountain, and riders still travel in vehicles made to look like hollowed-out logs. But everything else has been redesigned. Instead of a suspenseful story involving Br'er Rabbit's getting tossed into a briar patch, the new attraction focuses on a Mardi Gras party: Tiana and her pal Louis, a trumpet-playing alligator, are searching for critters to form a band.

Halfway through, the jolly Mama Odie, a voodoo queen in ''The Princess and the Frog'' and now a ''bayou fairy godmother,'' casts a spell, supposedly shrinking riders to the size of fireflies.

Tiana's Bayou Adventure also has a pointed new catchphrase: ''Everybody's welcome.''

As he rode Tiana's Bayou Adventure with a reporter during a test-opening phase, Ted Robledo, the attraction's executive creative director, pointed out numerous inclusive touches -- decorative items in Spanish and French, reflecting the multicultural history of New Orleans; a diversity of music (jazz, zydeco, blues) playing on the sound system.

''That's a nod to the Indigenous people in the region,'' Mr. Robledo said, referring to a Choctaw stickball racket in a diorama near the ride's entrance.

''We're always looking at ways to cast a wider net,'' Mr. Robledo said. ''With the old property, for a variety of reasons, it wasn't that relevant anymore. It had kind of run its course.''

''The Princess and the Frog,'' about a ***working-class*** woman who becomes royalty, was a box office disappointment. Tiana, however, has become crucial to Disney. In consumer polls conducted by the company, she ranks No. 2 in popularity -- out of Disney's entire character roster -- among Black women. (Characters from ''The Lion King'' are No. 1.)

Disney has high hopes for merchandise tied to the new attraction, which expands the movie's story. (There are two gift shops near its exit.) An animated Tiana series is coming to Disney+ and will continue part of the story set up by the ride.

''Tiana is a modern princess who resonates with everyone,'' Mr. D'Amaro said. ''She wasn't born into royalty, but her story of perseverance and pride is timeless. This enduring quality is crucial for our parks' attractions, as they need to entertain across generations.''

Mr. D'Amaro likened complaints about Splash Mountain's removal to a prior situation at the Disneyland Resort. In 2017, Disney closed the popular Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, a hotel with malfunctioning elevators, and remade it around Marvel's ''Guardians of the Galaxy.'' Fans booed -- until they had a chance to ride the replacement.

''It was a controversial decision at the time, but by introducing a modern story with different emotions, we created an entirely new experience,'' Mr. D'Amaro said, noting that visitor ratings of the remade Tower of Terror soared.

This month, Disney posted a nine-minute video tour of the new Tiana attraction on the internet. As of Monday, it had been viewed 625,000 times, with 10,000 people giving it a thumbs up and 38,000 a thumbs down. The ride ''seems to lack dramatical tension and stakes,'' Jim Shull, a retired Disney parks designer, wrote on X, based on the video. A smattering of Splash Mountain die-hards nicknamed the new ride Tiana's Bayou Blunder.

The reaction has been much more positive from those who have ridden the attraction, which is in a soft-opening period.

''I loved it,'' Victoria Wade, a social media influencer from Baltimore, said on X on Thursday. ''I love how this whole attraction adds more to the continuation of Tiana's story.'' She called the ride's 48 animatronic figures ''absolutely incredible.''

Drew Smith, 21, a self-described Disney ''super fan'' from Windermere, Fla., talked his way onto the ride during a testing phase. ''Splash Mountain was my absolute favorite attraction since I was a little kid, and I'm extremely happy to say that the new ride is just as great,'' he said in an interview. ''Don't believe the haters!''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/11/business/disney-world-splash-mountain-princess-tiana.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/11/business/disney-world-splash-mountain-princess-tiana.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The ride tracks and hollowed-out logs of Splash Mountain remain, at top

the rest has been redesigned to focus on a Mardi Gras party, right, inspired by Disney's 2009 film ''The Princess and the Frog,'' to varying reactions from fans. (B1)

Tiana's Bayou Adventure, based on ''The Princess and the Frog,'' will open to the public at Walt Disney World on June 28

a similar version is expected at Disneyland in California by year's end.

Of Tiana, one Disney executive said, ''Her story of perseverance and pride is timeless.'' Jazz, zydeco and blues music play during the ride.

Out of Disney's entire character roster, Tiana ranks No. 2 in popularity among Black women. One Splash Mountain fan, riding during the soft opening, said the new attraction was ''just as great.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2024

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[***Saluting the Mercedes Of Eastern Europe And a Communist Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5G-2571-JBG3-605G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 2, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1115 words

**Byline:** By Christopher F. Schuetze

**Body**

A festival of classic cars from the communist era brings out some nostalgia in eastern Germany for pre-unification days, although the abuses that occurred behind the Iron Curtain aren't forgotten.

As the beige car bounced up to the former Soviet barracks, the rattling of its half-century-old motor overpowered the din of people setting up for the day's festivities at a temporary fairground.

A man dressed in the dark green uniform of a 1950s traffic cop, replete with an old-fashioned leather cap, blew his whistle sharply and waved the car -- a well-maintained 1980 Wartburg, a classic despite the engine's clatter -- through to the parking lot.

The driver of the little sedan, once considered the Mercedes of Eastern Europe, slipped the clutch, jolting the car forward. The lapse earned a rebuke from a costumed parking attendant.

''You are entering the G.D.R. now,'' he yelled with mock anger, referring to the extinct East German state. ''Leave your Western manners behind!''

For more than a decade, the G.D.R. Museum Pirna has played host to a May Day event in Pirna, just a few miles from the Czech border in Germany's east, where people can celebrate cars emblematic of the communist era.

Built after the war in state-owned factories, the cars are smaller, less powerful and less showy than most Western cars from the same era. But to the excited visitors in Pirna, who often dress in contemporaneous garb to match the vehicles they arrived in, the polished and pampered cars embody a local pride.

The hundreds of motorcycles, buses, trucks, cars and farming vehicles on display exuded the nostalgia that many here feel for a vanished country that -- despite its oppressive dictatorship -- was home for decades.

''As a proud Easterner, I'm happy to help revive this iconic car,'' said Tom Grossmann, standing in front of his lime green 1985 Trabant, best remembered for a chassis made of reinforced cardboard. ''If it means that there are more of these cars on German roads, all the better.''

Born in 1989, the year the Berlin Wall fell, Mr. Grossmann expressed a sentiment typical at the scene in Pirna.

For years, he had been dismissive of the old Eastern-built cars, but in middle age, his view changed. In part, he was drawn by the community that had developed among people who own the cars.

When he bought his sedan five years ago, he paid 3,000 euros, about $3,250, but then spent more than twice that refurbishing his ride, adding a sunroof, wider tires and custom upholstery.

Uwe Röckler, 23, neatly dressed in a G.D.R. police uniform from the 1980s, paraded past the lineup of cars giving out fake parking tickets and posing for photos with passers-by. Mr. Röckler is a stickler for details: The tickets he carefully filled out and pinned under wipers were written on an exact reproduction of the form used by East German police in the 1980s.

''It starts with a belt buckle that you find at a flea market,'' he said. ''And pretty soon, you're wearing a full uniform,'' he added, noting he had several spares hanging in his home closet.

To Mr. Röckler, whose parents toiled under the communist regime, the era holds a fascination. ''Not everything was bad, it was just everyday life,'' he said. Of the East German police, which many see as one of the most obvious manifestations of a repressive state, he said: ''They were actually pretty good criminalists -- in many ways equal to those in West.''

May 1 -- formally known as the ''International Day of Struggle of the ***Working Class*** and the Oppressed Peoples of the World'' -- was one of the most important dates on the socialist calendar. Though it was a public holiday and nobody had to work, attendance at state-organized parades was mandatory, and civilian brigades of factory workers, socialist youth groups and politicians were expected to march with signs celebrating progress and socialism.

Waiting in line to board a carefully maintained bus from 1958 that would take him on a tour of Pirna, Thomas Herzog, 62, remembers the requirements of that era well. ''I'm here because no one is forcing me to be here,'' he said with a laugh.

Among those in Pirna celebrating this May Day, 35 years after East Germans last celebrated it in a functioning communist state, many said the era had been rife with problems, including restrictions on speech and travel, with citizens living under the yoke of one of the most restrictive state security systems behind the Iron Curtain.

But as that time recedes into the past, memories of the communist country have become more attractive for many, especially as discontent with the current system grows.

According to a poll from December, 82 percent of Germans nationwide are at least somewhat unsatisfied with the government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Given that level of discontent, it's unsurprising some people are looking backward.

In eastern Germany, where the disaffection is often more pronounced, many look toward the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, for solutions. In Pirna's state, Saxony, where voters head to the polls in September, the AfD polls at 30 percent, more than any other party on the ballot.

Conny Kaden, 60, the founder of the G.D.R. Museum, said that despite the benefits reunification brought, there were downsides.

The socialist state, he noted, in addition to offering jobs at state-run enterprises, had fostered a sense of community through mandatory meetings in youth, worker and community clubs. ''I'm not saying this is about raising the G.D.R. flag,'' Mr. Kaden said. ''But we lost something, we lost the cohesion.''

Mr. Kaden built his museum dedicated to all things G.D.R. in 2005 and said ticket sales have been trending up.

The May Day car meet has also become more popular. This year, he estimated he had welcomed up to 3,500 visitors and hundreds of cars, likely breaking last year's record.

The meet featured some Western cars, too. Two custom stretch limousine Volvos, used by the East German regime's leaders, were parked in a prominent corner. Over the enormous radio inside of one, a tape of police chatter illegally recorded in 1989 played on a loop.

Mr. Röckler, who played the fake policeman handing out fake tickets, grew up in what had been West Germany, where his family moved after they had lost their jobs following reunification. As an adult, he returned to the former East Germany, in part because he said his hobby of dressing up as a Communist policeman was misunderstood in the West.

He was not sure it would have been completely understood by his late father, either.

Gesturing to his carefully pressed suit, he said, ''I wonder what my dad would say if he could see me wearing this.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/30/world/europe/east-german-cars-pirna-germany.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/30/world/europe/east-german-cars-pirna-germany.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The G.D.R. Museum Pirna hosts an annual May Day event that celebrates cars emblematic of the communist era. Conny Kaden, above left, founded the museum in 2005. Uwe Röckler, above right, wrote a parking ticket for an old East German vehicle. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LENA MUCHA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2024

**End of Document**



[***What to Know About Jamaal Bowman’s Bitter Democratic Primary Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CB5-WW61-DXY4-X07S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 24, 2024 Monday 08:21 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1331 words

**Byline:** Claire FahyClaire Fahy reports on New York City and the surrounding area for The Times.

**Highlight:** Mr. Bowman faces George Latimer in a House primary in New York that will test the party’s views on Israel and the strength of its left-wing faction.

**Body**

Mr. Bowman faces George Latimer in a House primary in New York that will test the party’s views on Israel and the strength of its left-wing faction.

When Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York won a Democratic primary in 2020 as an untested middle-school principal, his upset was heralded as [*evidence of the left’s ascent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html).

Four years later, Mr. Bowman is now the one fighting for his political life, battling to turn back a primary challenge from George Latimer, the Westchester County executive heavily backed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The results of Tuesday’s contest in the 16th Congressional District, which covers parts of Westchester County and the Bronx, may test the durability of the Democratic Party’s progressive faction: If Mr. Bowman was to lose, he would be the first member of the House’s left-wing “squad” to be unseated.

With Mr. Bowman trailing in the polls, some of the left’s biggest luminaries have come to his defense, including Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who joined Mr. Bowman at rallies over the weekend.

But their late-stage support has been countered by a fusillade of political advertising on behalf of Mr. Latimer. In barely a month, an AIPAC-affiliated super PAC has spent $14.5 million — up to $17,000 an hour — on the race.

Here’s what to know.

Who is Jamaal Bowman?

Jamaal Bowman was elected to the House during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, after his primary upset of Eliot L. Engel, a [*16-year incumbent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html) backed by Hillary Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Andrew M. Cuomo, then the governor of New York.

He was born in New York City and grew up in public housing before he eventually founded a Bronx middle school, Cornerstone Academy for Social Action, and served as its principal for 10 years.

Mr. Bowman’s campaign for Congress happened against the backdrop of widespread social justice protests during the summer of 2020, in response to the police killing of George Floyd. Mr. Bowman, who is Black and said he had been [*physically attacked by the police*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html) as a child, used the protests as a centerpiece of his campaign.

His victory, which came two years after Ms. Ocasio-Cortez stunned the Democratic establishment by defeating another powerful incumbent in a primary, was treated as proof that the appeal of her brand of progressive politics was not a one-time thing, but a longer-term trend.

Mr. Bowman has fashioned himself as a different kind of politician, less formal and more relatable to ***working-class*** voters, especially those of color. But at a rally with Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and Mr. Sanders in the Bronx on Saturday, where the focus was to drive young voter participation, his obscenity-laced tirades attracted some scrutiny.

“The level of profanity here is so shocking as to be unbecoming of a member of Congress,” Representative Ritchie Torres [*posted on social media*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html). Mr. Torres, a Democrat who represents a neighboring district in the South Bronx, is a staunch supporter of Israel and has been critical of Mr. Bowman’s stance on the war.

Who is George Latimer?

Mr. Latimer, a former state lawmaker now serving as the Westchester County executive, was recruited by Jewish leaders to run largely in response to Mr. Bowman’s views on Israel.

Before his entry into politics, Mr. Latimer was a marketing executive for more than two decades, [*according to his Westchester County bio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html). He then served in a number of local government roles before his election to the New York State Assembly in 2004; he has also served in the State Senate.

Mr. Latimer, who is white, has run on a “results, not rhetoric” platform, accusing Mr. Bowman of being more about showmanship than substance. He has portrayed himself as a local leader with decades of connections to Westchester communities and has said he supports many of the progressive stances on housing, climate change and transportation that Mr. Bowman has championed.

Mr. Bowman has repeatedly [*accused Mr. Latimer of racism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html), following remarks Mr. Latimer made in debates about Mr. Bowman not caring for all the people in the district and being distracted by outside influence.

On Sunday, Mr. Latimer gave Mr. Bowman more fuel for his argument. In a [*post on Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html), Mr. Latimer incorrectly listed Chance the Rapper as one of the luminaries whom he said Mr. Bowman spent time with last week instead of focusing on the needs of the district. The post has since been corrected to reflect that the musician he was referring to was actually the rapper Cash Cobain.

Mr. Bowman quickly jumped on the gaffe, [*posting on social media*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html) that Mr. Latimer “can’t tell the difference between Black men” and “says I have an ‘ethnic benefit.’”

What are Mr. Bowman’s views on Israel?

Mr. Bowman has consistently been one of the most vocal pro-Palestinian members of Congress since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7. He was one of the country’s first lawmakers to call for a cease-fire in the region and has long characterized Israel’s military actions in Gaza as “genocide.”

Mr. Bowman also cast doubt on the claim that sexual violence by Hamas was a major part of the Oct. 7 attacks, a stance for which he later apologized.

His views on Israel have also lost him at least one key supporter. [*Mondaire Jones*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html), with whom Mr. Bowman made history when they were both elected to Congress in 2020 as young, left-leaning Democrats, has come out in support of Mr. Latimer, criticizing Mr. Bowman for sowing “pain and anxiety” among Jewish New Yorkers.

Mr. Bowman has rejected all accusations of antisemitism, reiterating that rather than being anti-Israel or anti-Jewish, he is simply pro-peace. He has confirmed his belief that Hamas’s attack was a war crime but said it does not justify the Israeli counteroffensive.

What role has AIPAC played in the race?

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying group, had long warned politicians to either moderate their views on the Israel-Hamas war or face a deluge of opposition. It has made good on its promise in the Bowman-Latimer race.

The $14.5 million spent by an AIPAC-affiliated super PAC easily eclipsed what any other political group has ever spent on a House race. The attack ads, mailers and phone calls rarely mention Israel; instead they criticize Mr. Bowman for the times he has broken with President Biden and paint him as a candidate who courts “controversy, chaos and conspiracy.”

It remains to be seen whether AIPAC’s involvement might backfire. At a rally for Mr. Bowman on Friday, Mr. Sanders warned against allowing the race to be bought, and many voters voiced their concerns about a powerful political group’s involvement in their district.

Why else is Mr. Bowman considered vulnerable?

In October, the congressman was charged with a misdemeanor after he [*pulled a fire alarm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html) in a House office building, creating chaos while Democrats attempted to stall a vote on a Republican-written stopgap spending bill designed to avert a government shutdown.

Mr. Bowman was accused of pulling the alarm in an attempt to delay the vote; he has said it was an accident and paid a $1,000 fine after being censured by his colleagues.

His comments on Israel have not been the only ones to stir controversy. Mr. Bowman wrote a number of posts on a blog that was active until 2014 in which he promoted unfounded conspiracy theories relating to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City. The blog posts had been deleted, but were [*discovered and published by The Daily Beast in January*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/17/nyregion/jamaal-bowman-eliot-engel.html). The congressman explained that his website was a place where he processed his personal thoughts “in a personal blog that few people ever read.”

Jesse McKinley and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

Jesse McKinley and Nicholas Fandos contributed reporting.

PHOTOS:Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York, above, has been one of the most vocal pro-Palestinian members of Congress. George Latimer, left, is backed by Jewish leaders. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** December 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Oakland’s Mayor Had Enough Troubles. Then the F.B.I. Came Knocking.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CB9-CFM1-JBG3-606C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1413 words

**Byline:** Amy Qin and Joe Fitzgerald Rodriguez Amy Qin writes about Asian American communities for The Times.

**Highlight:** Sheng Thao was already facing a recall election as residents remain frustrated over crime and homelessness. She said on Monday that she had committed no crimes.

**Body**

Sheng Thao was already facing a recall election as residents remain frustrated over crime and homelessness. She said on Monday that she had committed no crimes.

The residents of Oakland, Calif., were already frustrated. Violent crime and burglaries had become enough of a problem that getting an In-N-Out burger and fueling up near the airport was [*considered a risky endeavor*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php).

The city’s last remaining major league sports team [*announced in April*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) that it would leave town after 57 seasons. And the population, currently 425,000, has been in decline since the coronavirus pandemic.

All of which served to drive signatures for a recall election against Mayor Sheng Thao only 18 months into her tenure — a rare ouster attempt in a city this large.

Then, two days after the recall qualified for the ballot last week, F.B.I. agents raided the home of Ms. Thao and stayed there for hours.

Before they scoured Ms. Thao’s house in the Oakland hills, it was possible, even likely, that she would survive the recall election this fall with the help of the same progressive allies and labor unions who supported her mayoral campaign in 2022, longtime political hands in the Bay Area said. But the raid has now cast a shadow over her future, even as she defiantly vowed on Monday to fight for her political survival.

“Everybody understands that she hasn’t been charged with a crime,” said Brenda Harbin-Forte, a retired Alameda County Superior Court judge who is a main organizer of the recall. “But our focus is that you can’t lead a city and be distracted about whether any day now you’re going to get indicted for a federal crime.”

Ms. Thao, a Democrat, has [*overcome immense personal struggles*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) before. She is the daughter of ***working-class*** refugees and a survivor of domestic violence who once lived out of her car with her son when he was an infant. When she was sworn in, Ms. Thao became the most prominent Hmong American officeholder in the United States.

Few would blame her alone for the city’s woes, which were percolating well before she took over at City Hall. Crime was already on the rise, and homeless camps had proliferated since the early days of the pandemic. Two major league sports teams had [*already*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) [*fled*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php). The city had lost its glimmer in comparison with the previous decades in which it had attracted residents as a soulful, more affordable alternative to San Francisco.

What Oakland needed from Ms. Thao was a turnaround. The prevailing mood, however, is one of frustration.

The exact targets of the federal investigation remain unclear. The F.B.I. would not comment other than to confirm that agents had searched the home where Ms. Thao and her partner reside, as well as three other properties in Oakland that are associated with the Duong family, which runs California Waste Solutions, a local company that collects recyclables for the city. Renia Webb, Ms. Thao’s former chief of staff, said in an interview that F.B.I. agents asked her questions about Ms. Thao last year.

The raid was a political earthquake, and the fallout continued for four days as Ms. Thao disappeared from public view.

Then, on Monday, Ms. Thao came out fighting by giving brief remarks at City Hall, after which she did not take questions. She asserted that federal authorities had not given her an opportunity to cooperate with their investigation before the raid. She raised questions about the close timing of the F.B.I. search and the recall efforts.

“I want to be crystal clear: I have done nothing wrong,” she said. “I am confident that I will not be charged with a crime because I am innocent.”

David Duong, the chief executive of California Waste Solutions, said in a statement on Thursday that the company was fully cooperating with the investigation and that it was confident the government would conclude that it was not involved in any unlawful or improper activity.

Since the raid, many of Ms. Thao’s supporters who had vowed to fight on her behalf in the recall have been quiet. Those who have spoken out have hardly been enthusiastic.

Keith Brown of the Alameda Labor Council, a union that supported Ms. Thao’s campaign in 2022, said in a statement on Sunday that his members were “awaiting the facts.” Cat Brooks, a co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project, an organization that seeks to eradicate police violence in communities of color, lamented the “stench” that the F.B.I. raid would leave on other progressive politicians and activists in Oakland.

Ms. Thao’s critics have pounced. They were quick to point out that the Duong family has been [*investigated*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) since 2019 by Oakland’s public ethics commission for allegedly bypassing campaign limits and giving money to various political candidates through “straw donors,” including to Ms. Thao during her campaign for a City Council seat. The family is politically connected and has made contributions to both Democratic and Republican politicians.

The past mayors of Oakland include Jerry Brown, who ran the city for several years between his two stints as governor. Unlike Mr. Brown, Ms. Thao became the mayor of Oakland early last year with little experience in elected office, having served one Council term.

Ms. Thao won the mayor’s race by a narrow margin through a ranked-choice vote, which allowed voters to choose candidates in order of priority and used multiple rounds of counting to determine the victor. She saw her win as an inspiration to other children of immigrants who grew up in poverty.

On Monday, she drew upon that same personal history to defend herself.

“What I do know is that this wouldn’t have gone down the way it did if I was rich, if I had gone to elite private schools or if I had come from money,” she said. “I know that for sure because former elected officials are sitting safely in their houses in the hills right now, with campaign finance violations, piling up mountains of evidence that prove actual wrongdoing.”

Less than two years into her tenure, some supporters credit Ms. Thao with finding creative solutions to close the city’s budget gaps without inflicting major cuts. She has [*promoted the ways*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) her administration has added police patrols and used technology to combat crime.

Her critics concede that Ms. Thao inherited problems as Oakland was struggling to climb out of a pandemic recession. But, they say, there have been obvious missteps.

During her tenure, the city [*missed out*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) on millions of dollars in state funding to combat organized retail theft because her administration failed to submit an application on time. She fired a popular Black police chief, LeRonne Armstrong, angering many residents in a city where one-fifth of the population is Black.

“Voters are already losing confidence in City Hall because of rampant homelessness, because of shooting after shooting, because we can’t even get our roads paved,” Councilwoman Janani Ramachandran, a Democrat, said.

Ms. Thao is not the only one being blamed for crime in Oakland. In April, a separate effort to recall Pamela Price, a progressive district attorney, also qualified for the ballot. Ms. Price won election in 2022 with a pledge to seek shorter sentences and to prosecute police officers who unlawfully use lethal force.

The top backers of the recall effort against Ms. Thao include Ron Conway, a billionaire tech investor and political fund-raiser who also contributed to the [*2022 recall of Chesa Boudin,*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) a Democrat who served as San Francisco’s district attorney. But recall organizers said that their campaign was more complicated than the narrative of progressive-versus-moderate, especially in Oakland, where many politicians fall along a narrow spectrum of progressive to more-progressive and the [*local NAACP chapter*](https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/in-n-out-oakland-restaurant-closure-18620408.php) has favored a more aggressive law-and-order approach to crime.

“This is not an attack on progressives,” Ms. Harbin-Forte, the recall organizer, said. “This has to do with the people in the office who are executing those policies, and whether or not they are making the decisions that are in the best interest of everybody.”

PHOTOS: Mayor Sheng Thao of Oakland, Calif., a Democrat, vowed on Monday to remain in office and fight against a recall attempt that qualified for the November ballot last week. On Thursday, F.B.I. agents raided her home and stayed for hours. The exact targets of the investigation remain unclear. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSE CARLOS FAJARDO/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; JESSICA CHRISTIAN/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***Extraordinarily Ordinary: Walz's Path to Prominence***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNR-6H51-DXY4-X0M4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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

**Length:** 2198 words

**Byline:** By Ernesto Londoño and Adam Nagourney

**Body**

The governor of Minnesota hasn't spent his life striving for the pinnacle of politics. That is how he got there.

Tim Walz never attended an Ivy League school. He never wrote a political memoir. He once worked at a tanning bed factory in Jonesboro, Ark. And until he was 40, he never showed much interest in a career in politics.

Mr. Walz, the 60-year-old governor of Minnesota chosen by Vice President Kamala Harris as her running mate on Tuesday, had not devoted his life to reaching this pinnacle.

In selecting Mr. Walz, Ms. Harris has picked a one-man rejoinder to the idea that the Democrats are the party of the cultural and coastal elite. His biography and his style are a sharp contrast not only to Ms. Harris, who is from California, but also to former President Donald J. Trump, a New York billionaire, and to some degree to Mr. Trump's running mate, JD Vance, who graduated from Yale Law School (and wrote a best-selling memoir).

Mr. Walz has led a life that stands out in the top echelon of American politics: a tableau filled with scenes of farming, turkey hunting, weekends of National Guard duty, public schools and coaching the local high school football team to a state championship.

Since turning to politics, Mr. Walz has used this biography to his political advantage and it was no small part of what drew Ms. Harris to Mr. Walz, who until weeks ago was virtually unknown to most Democrats. With his broad smile and unpolished style, it was the Minnesota governor -- more than any other Democrat -- who was able to conceive and deliver Democrats' new favorite attack on Mr. Trump and his party: that they are ''creepy'' and ''weird as hell.''

For all his affability, Mr. Walz has displayed, at times, shrewd political instincts. His positions have evolved as his ambitions have broadened. He has capitalized on key moments. After the Democrats won control of both houses of the State Legislature in 2022, he enacted a raft of liberal legislation -- policies that are far more popular in cities and suburbs than in the rural, ***working-class*** communities that raised him.

''He ran on a ticket of 'One Minnesota': Let's pull everybody together and unify everyone,'' said Representative Lisa Demuth, a Republican and the minority leader in the Minnesota House, who represents a largely rural area outside the Twin Cities. ''That is absolutely not what we have seen.''

Still, over the course of his life, much of it spent in conservative corners of Nebraska and Minnesota, Mr. Walz has effectively used his normalcy to connect. Even Republicans who said they would never vote for him, particularly as the running mate of Ms. Harris, described him as self-effacing and familiar.

Although he spent more than a decade in Congress and another five years in the governor's mansion, the reaction among friends and neighbors to the news of his ascent on Tuesday was not knowing expectation, but pleasant surprise.

''He is genuine, he's a ball of energy,'' said Sherri Blasing, who used to live near Mr. Walz in Mankato, Minn.

''It's not every day that your neighbor becomes a vice-presidential candidate,'' she added. ''You can't go two steps down the sidewalk without someone saying, 'Can you believe this?'''

A Nebraska Boyhood

Mr. Walz was born in West Point, Neb. (population: 3,500), and raised in Butte (population: 285), a town planted among the cornfields and the rolling hills of one of the most rural areas of one of the nation's most rural states.

As a teenager, Mr. Walz spent summers working on a family farm, and he has said that his high school graduating class included 25 students, 12 of whom were cousins. That, he would joke years later, made finding someone to date ''kind of a problem.''

He was raised Catholic, by a father who was a school administrator and a mother who was a homemaker. (He became Lutheran after getting married, but does not draw much attention to his faith.)

Mr. Walz grew up hunting -- bringing his rifle to school so he could shoot turkeys with friends after football practice. He enlisted in the National Guard at 17, following in the footsteps of his father, who served in the Army during the Korean War.

His father died of lung cancer when he was 19. In 1989, Mr. Walz earned a bachelor's degree from Chadron State College in Nebraska and went to China for a year to teach English and American history.

He returned home to Nebraska; taught global geography; met his wife, Gwen, a fellow teacher; and began coaching. In September 1995, at 31, Mr. Walz was pulled over by a Nebraska state trooper for driving at 96 miles per hour on a road where the speed limit was 55 m.p.h. Mr. Walz failed a field sobriety test and ultimately pleaded guilty to reckless driving. Mr. Walz told his principal and offered to resign, his lawyer said at the time, but he kept his job and stopped drinking.

The next year, the couple moved to Mankato, a small city surrounded by farming communities in southern Minnesota. Mr. Walz kept teaching and coaching, growing into the sort of coach who started practice by telling preteens, ''You're the greatest seventh-grade basketball team ever!'' said Ben Ingman, who was coached by Mr. Walz.

Mr. Ingman once watched Mr. Walz teach his son, Gus, to ride a bike. ''When Gus finally got it, he exploded, just with his hands over head, yelling, over the moon,'' he said.

Mr. Walz led school trips to China and helped turn around a struggling Mankato West High School football team. He and his wife created the first gay-straight alliance group on campus after a senior, Jacob Reitan, came out as gay in the late 1990s.

Classmates taunted him, Mr. Reitan, 42, recalled in an interview. Someone smashed his car window, and he came home one day to find a slur etched on his driveway with chalk. As scary as coming out was, Mr. Reitan said, ''it was made a hell of a lot easier because of Tim and Gwen Walz,'' he said.

Mr. Walz has said he understood how his support for the club carried weight.

''You have an older, white, straight, married, male football coach who's deeply concerned that these students are treated fairly and that there is no bullying,'' he said in a 2018 campaign ad.

'Who Is This Guy?'

Mr. Walz's career in politics began because of President George W. Bush. In the governor's telling, he had tried to escort a group of high school students to a rally for Mr. Bush in Mankato, in 2004, but they were turned away because one student had a sticker supporting Mr. Bush's opponent, John F. Kerry, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. Walz was incensed. Within days, he said, he signed up to volunteer for the Kerry campaign, finding common cause with a fellow veteran opposed to the war in Iraq.

The tense confrontation at the rally was a ''sad epiphany moment,'' he later said, and it set in motion a long-shot campaign against a six-term Republican incumbent in their largely rural, conservative Minnesota district in 2006.

Mr. Walz's former students at Mankato West High School signed up to knock on doors, even though it seemed nearly inconceivable that this first-time Democratic candidate without a donor base or name recognition could win in a red district against an entrenched incumbent.

''This is farm country, it's very conservative,'' said Nicole Griensewic, 41, who was in Mr. Walz's global geography class and volunteered for the campaign. ''It had been known as a Republican district for so long, so it was like, Who is this guy?''

Mr. Walz was trained in campaigning that year at Camp Wellstone, a weekend workshop named after Paul Wellstone, a onetime senator of Minnesota whose staunch liberal politics and unflashy style are a model for many Democrats in the state.

Mr. Walz arrived wearing bluejeans, a T-shirt and sneakers -- hardly the wardrobe of a polished candidate, said Peggy Flanagan, then a Minneapolis School Board member who was assigned to mentor him that weekend.

''He walked in and was like, 'I'm Tim Walz and I want to run for Congress,' and we were like, 'As a Democrat?''' recalled Ms. Flanagan.

Mr. Walz rode to victory with his army of student volunteers and a strong debate performance, and the widespread dissatisfaction with the Bush administration that year helped Democrats take control of the House of Representatives.

'He Did His Work.'

On Capitol Hill, Mr. Walz, who served 24 years in the National Guard, emerged as a vocal critic of the Iraq war. He became influential on agriculture and veterans issues. But he was by most measures a low-profile member of Congress, a go-along, get-along backbencher who tended to follow the Democratic line in his votes.

''He's never been a show horse,'' said Blois Olson, a Minnesota political analyst. ''He did his work. I think that's how many rank-and-file members are on both sides.''

He supported Obamacare and an increase in the minimum wage, and pushed for expanding education benefits for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He took a particular interest in issues of importance to his district: agriculture and veteran issues. And the former teacher who had supported gay students in Minnesota was among the most vocal supporters of repealing the military policy that barred openly gay people from serving in uniform.

Patrick Murphy, a former Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania, called Mr. Walz ''someone you just want to be around.'' Among those expressing pleasure at Ms. Harris's decision to pick Mr. Walz was Nancy Pelosi, the former House Democratic leader, who served with Mr. Walz in Congress.

After several successful re-election campaigns, warning signs arrived for Mr. Walz. Rural Democrats were an endangered species. In 2016, voters in his district were becoming enamored with Mr. Trump. Mr. Walz squeaked to a sixth term with just 50.4 percent of the vote that year, defeating his Republican opponent, Jim Hagedorn, by less than one point. It was his smallest victory margin in all his runs for Congress.

In March of 2017, Mr. Walz announced he was leaving Congress to run for governor of Minnesota. ''He probably would have lost the seat if had run again in '18 -- which is one of the reasons he ran for governor,'' said Mr. Olson.

'One Minnesota'

In 2018, he was elected as governor with his one-time political mentor, Ms. Flanagan, as his lieutenant governor. They campaigned under the slogan ''One Minnesota,'' presenting themselves as unifying leaders in a polarizing time.

Perhaps the biggest crisis they faced was the mayhem and the violence ignited by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020. A wave of protests, looting and arson spread through Minneapolis in the days that followed, prompting the city's mayor to ask the governor to deploy National Guard soldiers.

Mr. Walz didn't immediately heed that request, which led critics to call him indecisive in a moment of peril. Hundreds of businesses were looted and set on fire that week, resulting in an estimated $500 million worth of damage. The governor, who ultimately sent troops under his command to Minneapolis, has defended his response, arguing that elected officials did their best in the face of monumental challenges.

''I simply believe that we try to do the best we can,'' he said recently at a news conference.

When he campaigned for re-election in 2022, rivals sought to misleadingly tie him to the movement to defund the police and criticized him over his lockdown policies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Walz lost ground with his old constituents between his first and second governor races. In 2018, he won more than 49 percent of the vote in his old congressional district, slightly more than his Republican opponent. When he sought re-election four years later, he lost that congressional district by more than seven percentage points.

But he won -- and Democrats seized full control of the State Legislature, lifted, in no small part, by the strong turnout by liberal voters upset over the Supreme Court's decision that ended the federal right to abortion.

With a one-seat majority in the State Senate, Mr. Walz signed into law bills that codified the right to abortion under state statute, legalized recreational marijuana, funded free meals for all school children, required employers to provide paid medical and family leave and tightened gun restrictions.

Mr. Walz's allies and critics took notice when he began accepting invitations to appear on television news programs this summer, casting himself as a more authentic embodiment of small-town values than Mr. Vance. He argued that Democrats should focus less on talking about the perils of a second Trump term and more on sharing an upbeat vision described in plain terms.

The energy was familiar to his former students, neighbors and constituents watching at home.

''When I hear him talking, his cadence and the way that he presents, and his speech is exactly the same as it was in high school,'' said Ms. Griensewic, his former student.

Emily Cochrane, Reid J. Epstein, Dionne Searcey Tom Lawrence, Job Vigil and Kate Selig contributed reporting.Emily Cochrane, Reid J. Epstein, Dionne Searcey Tom Lawrence, Job Vigil and Kate Selig contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/07/us/politics/tim-walz-kamala-harris-campaign-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/07/us/politics/tim-walz-kamala-harris-campaign-2024.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota has displayed shrewd instincts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Tim Walz with students at Mankato West High School in Minnesota in 2007, shortly after being elected to Congress. Mr. Walz spent the early years of his career as a teacher and football coach. (PHOTOGRAPH BY T.C. WORLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Walz at a Fourth of July parade in Albert Lea, Minn., during his long-shot campaign for Congress in 2006. His opposition to the war in Iraq was a major factor in his decision to go into politics. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBB LONG/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

He was elected governor in 2018 after campaigning under the slogan ''One Minnesota.'' Mr. Walz and Peggy Flanagan, his lieutenant governor, presented themselves as unifiers in a polarizing time. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH FOSLIEN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein on the 2024 Democratic National Convention and Joe Biden’s Legacy; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CSC-8FX1-DXY4-X02N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode on the 2024 Democratic National Convention. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: From New York Times Opinion, this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

It is Tuesday morning, August 20. I am recording this from beautiful sunny Chicago. I’m here covering the 2024 Democratic National Convention. And we’re going to do something a bit different on the show this week. I’m going to be doing a daily audio diary, a daily audio report on what I’m hearing and seeing here in Chicago.

I’m joined today by my producer, Rollin Hu, who is going to help me out on the other side of the microphone here today. Rollin, welcome to the show.

ROLLIN HU: Happy to be here, Ezra. So let’s get started. You’re at the convention now. The party’s already selected a nominee in Kamala Harris. So what’s there left to do?

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, “What are conventions for?” is a wonderful question in the modern era. So conventions used to be where you pick the nominee. That is still true technically most years, but it is not technically true this year. There was a virtual roll call where Kamala Harris was selected. So the part of the convention where officially the nominee gets selected, that has also already happened. So why are so many people here in Chicago?

The way I would think about the modern convention is that it is a place where political parties gather to define themselves. And they do that in a number of ways. They do that through creating their platforms. They do that through choosing who gets speaking slots and when; who is featured and on what night and at what time at political conventions is a party telling you a lot about who the people now in charge of it think that it is and wanted it to be seen as.

And they do that through meeting and talking in the hallways. I mean, there are so many people here from every faction of the Democratic Party, and they’re having delegate breakfasts, and they’re having caucuses, and they’re talking to each other, and they’re making connections. And that, too, is how a party structures itself and builds the interstitial web that allows it to operate in the off years.

So a lot of what I’m trying to do here is try to understand what the Democratic Party is right now, who holds power within it, how it wants to be perceived by the public and also what it learned having just done this remarkable — this genuinely historic collective action of persuading its incumbent president to step aside and then coalescing around Kamala Harris, the vice president. I mean, this is the Democratic Party coming to Chicago to celebrate a party action of a type that there’s no precedent for in the modern era.

ROLLIN HU: Let’s get more specific into that. You’re in those hallways, you’re going to dinners and breakfasts. What are you hearing? How are you seeing the Democratic Party define itself now?

EZRA KLEIN: So, a couple things. And we’re going to see the Democratic Party’s definition emerge and unfold over the course of the week. So I wouldn’t say anything too firm yet. But one thing that was very notable about the first night, to me, was that there were seven union presidents up there. The display of closeness between the Democratic Party and organized labor, which was, I think, emphasized even more this year because Republicans have at least been feinting at making a play to break that.

Although Donald Trump giving an interview with Elon Musk, where he compliments Elon Musk on how good he is at firing striking workers, I think, was probably not helpful for the Republican Party’s efforts on that score. But you really saw the Democratic Party emphasizing its relationship to labor.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Shawn Fain: On behalf of 1 million active and retired members of the UAW, I am honored to support Kamala Harris and Tim Walz to be our next president and vice president. [Applause] And I want to say thank you to Joe Biden for making history by walking the picket line with the UAW.

EZRA KLEIN: Look, I came up in Democratic Party politics, covering Democratic Party politics at a time when — I mean, organized labor has been a Democratic constituency, but it has been treated, I don’t want to say at an arm’s length but not with this ferocious level of embrace. And it speaks to something else you saw up there last night, which is, there’s just a lot more populism in the party right now. There is a sense of the populism of Donald Trump needs to be blunted. But I thought the strongest speech of the night was AOC, and that was a very, very populist speech.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: And I, for one, am tired of hearing about how a two-bit union buster thinks of himself as more of a patriot than the woman who fights every single day to lift working people out from under the boots of greed trampling on our way of life. The truth is, Don, you cannot love this country if you only fight for the wealthy and big business.

EZRA KLEIN: And the way she tried to draw Donald Trump outside the circle. of patriotism was really interesting. I think a lot of politics is about defining who stands in the center of the American story. And the way AOC pushed Donald Trump out of the center of that story was saying that he stands with big business. He stands with greed, not with ordinary Americans.

Patriotism, in her telling, was recast as class, as where you are inside of a class war. You compare how things looked when, you know, Mitt Romney at the Republican convention and it was about makers and takers and Democrats were always being accused of waging class warfare and they were trying to say, no, we don’t wage class warfare. So that felt very different to me.

The other thing that I would just note is there’s a lot of unity. When I saw Gina Raimondo, the former governor of Rhode Island and the current sitting commerce secretary, who’s very much from the party’s moderate wing, up there on the same night as AOC, and Raimondo was attacking corporate monopolies.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Gina Raimondo: She’ll build 3 million new homes for the middle class. And she’s gonna forge an economy with fair competition free from monopolies, monopolies that crush workers and small businesses and startups.

EZRA KLEIN: I mean, you really see a party that has bridged huge divides. At another time, and not long ago, the fundamental fight inside the party was between the factions driven by Bernie Sanders, and then also later somewhat represented by, by AOC. And now you have AOC giving keynote speeches on behalf of Kamala Harris. And you just don’t feel that factional divide anymore.

ROLLIN HU: Let’s stay on this factional divide for a second. Do you see this more as the left wing of the party moving toward the center or the center moving towards the left?

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not sure. I think there are ways in which it is both. On the one hand, I think Joe Biden has had a much more progressive presidency, and he has worked very hard to bring progressives into his presidency. It is notable that when the fight over Biden’s future was happening, the faction of the party that stood most strongly behind Joe Biden was its leftward flank, right?

It was Bernie Sanders who wrote the Op-Ed in The New York Times, reiterating his endorsement and telling people to stop challenging Biden. It was AOC who said the matter is closed and, you know, did an hour-long Instagram story defending Joe Biden and saying that, you know, there wasn’t a really good other alternative.

And so it speaks to a bridge that Biden himself built from what was understood as a faction he led, the moderate faction, to the progressive faction. And if anything, I think Biden is now associated more with the progressive faction, and Harris, to a large degree, also benefits from that. I think there’s a sense of that that relationship can continue because that’s not just a relationship of personal relationships. It’s also a staffing relationship. It’s also about who is actually serving inside the Biden administration, which is also people we would expect to be serving in a Kamala Harris administration.

But that said, there’s also a way in which the left has moved towards the center. If you think back to 2020, what are the big fights in the party? It’s about Medicare for All. Well, nobody thinks Kamala Harris is going to run on abolishing all private health insurance this year. It’s about defunding the police later on in that year. Nobody thinks Kamala Harris is going to run like that.

But more than that, there’s been an embrace of Kamala Harris’s identity and record as a prosecutor. So this sort of big split that existed in 2020, where the left made life really hard for Kamala Harris, saying Kamala Harris is a cop — that was one of the big attacks on her. Now you look at the ads, it’s like, Kamala Harris, a cop. Doesn’t everybody love cops?

So there are just ways in which some of the fights have calmed. And then Donald Trump exerts a unifying pressure on the party. People want to beat him. And so there is a tendency for the party to converge in a quite powerful way to accomplish that goal.

ROLLIN HU: One of the big exceptions we’ve seen to party unity has been over the Biden administration’s role in Israel’s war in Gaza. How are you seeing this point of division play out in the party?

EZRA KLEIN: It doesn’t feel as divisive here on the ground as I think a lot of people feared. The protests have been quite undersubscribed. There was a protest that was predicting 30,000-40,000 people. It got a small fraction of that.

I don’t think, to a lot of Democrats right now, this feels like a genuine split in the party. Because Kamala Harris is known to be quite to Joe Biden’s left on Israel and Gaza. Inside the administration, she has been much more for a ceasefire. She has been for being much tougher on Netanyahu. And she has called now for a ceasefire. The protesters are saying an arms embargo too, which she has not called for.

That said, I’ve heard a lot of Democrats ask in some frustration, why are there these protesters here at Harris when Harris is so much better on Palestinian rights than Donald Trump would be? Why are they disrupting, at all, the Democratic convention when they should be actually allying with Democrats to beat Donald Trump? People who want to see healthcare insurance expanded in this country aren’t protesting Kamala Harris. They are working for her to be elected because they know that Donald Trump will take healthcare away from people. And I actually think that reflects a misunderstanding of where the protesters are.

I just spent time in Israel. I’ve been thinking a lot about the set of questions and what used to be often a question about a peace process is, for many of the protesters, now a question of whether Israel should exist as a Jewish state at all. And from that perspective, the more traditionally liberal two-state perspective that Kamala Harris represents is not actually necessarily friendly. In some ways actually might be less friendly because there are many people who believe that that’s actually a way of papering over — from this again, not my perspective, but from this perspective — the fundamental immorality of the Israeli or the Zionist project.

And one thing I will say, having just been on the ground in the West Bank and Israel — the degree to which the two-state solution feels quite impossible right now, if you were there, I think people have not connected to fully. To me, right now, there’s actually some legitimacy to the view that the Democrats calling for two states — in a world where, in the Israeli Knesset, they just adopted a resolution against a two-state solution and many of Benny Gantz’s allies voted for that — that there is something to the argument that the two-state solution is kind of an illusion.

Now, at the same time, there’s no appetite for a one-state solution, either. People have heard me say before that we are not in a solutionary space here. But the division which exists is sort of different than the division that I think people have thought about in the past. The division that exists, which is a more extreme division, is about the question of Israel at all.

So I think a lot of energy has drained out of the protests because Harris has ended up being on the side of what you might understand as its more moderate demands — a ceasefire — and certainly a skepticism of whether the Israeli war machine at this point is moral or legitimate. And to some degree, what is left are the people who fundamentally believe that Israel is illegitimate, and that is not where Harris is, but that’s also not a deep division inside the Democratic Party.

ROLLIN HU: So we saw at the Republican National Convention that they came in with the impression that they were on the path to victory. The vibes were good then. What are the vibes like at the Democratic National Convention now?

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to be careful in how I answer this, because I got here yesterday, and my reporting is not a representative sample of the entire D.N.C. But I have been a bit surprised by how cautious a lot of the people I am talking to are about the makeup of the election, which is to say that if you’re on social media or something right now and you’re reading the polls, it looks like Kamala Harris has really pulled into the lead here. And that is not the thing people are saying to me. What they’re saying to me, in a way that feels like they actually feel it, is, this is a 50/50 election.

I’ve heard people say here — people I trust and people who are very influential inside the party — that it’s an uphill election for Harris, that they think that if the election is held today, Trump would win it or at least have a very, very good shot of winning it.

And one of the things influencing that is, there are different polls that are treated in different ways in the parties, and a bunch of the polls are public, but they’re not all public. And one of the major super PACs that is very well respected among Democrats is Future Forward. And they have done a bunch of battleground state polling. I don’t have the exact numbers. But this has been reported on. That polling is showing it closer than a lot of the public polling is. It is showing it to be very much a toss-up. It is not showing Harris with a lead in all of the battleground states in which she needs to lead — or at least not a safe lead.

So there’s a real feeling inside the party right now that maybe it’s not as good as it looks, right? Maybe some of the polling bounce is an early bounce for Harris because people are excited. There’s something in polling called response rate bias. When one side becomes more excited, they have a tendency to respond more often to pollsters. So it is possible that the polling is overstating Harris’s strength right now. There’s worry that if you look at the internals of polling that Harris is doing so well with white ***working-class*** voters that it just doesn’t look plausible to people in the Democratic Party that she’s improved that much on where Joe Biden was with white ***working class*** voters or, if she has, that that will probably not sustain until Election Day.

So there is a feeling that this election is very far from won, she might even still be somewhat behind, and that the party still does need to figure out how to win it. There’s also a feeling — and you hear this in the consistent things that the speakers are saying — that it’s very unclear who’s going to win the House and Senate And Democrats are particularly very worried about losing the Senate. They’re going to lose Joe Manchin’s seat. They’re worried about losing Jon Tester’s seat. They’re worried about losing Sherrod Brown’s seat in Ohio. It is not out of a plausible outcome that they could keep the Senate at 50 or 51, but it would also be very easy to see them going down to 49, going down to 48, going down to 47. And that could be true even in a world where Kamala Harris wins.

And if Kamala Harris wins, but Republicans control the Senate — and particularly if she wins and they control the Senate and the House — she’s not getting her agenda through.

ROLLIN HU: You mentioned earlier that people told you that the election’s still looking around even odds, 50/50. One of the arguments for getting Biden to step aside was that the new candidate would have better odds. Do you get a sense that there’s buyer’s remorse now or a sense of regret?

EZRA KLEIN: No, everybody believes Harris has way better odds, including people who were skeptical of the shift. I’ll note that Future Forward polling, they were giving Biden a chance of victory in the single digits. That is how unlikely they thought a Biden win had become. So that was the level of grimness in the party. So going from single-digit shot of winning in the eyes of some of these people polling and modeling out the election to functionally a coin toss, that is a huge, huge difference.

ROLLIN HU: So what are the theories that people have to improve those odds, get it to, I don’t know, 55/45?

EZRA KLEIN: So this is an interesting thing about where the party is right now. Usually by this point, the strategic direction of the party has been decided. Typically when you have a candidate running who is not actually the incumbent, they will have run in a primary. And when they’ve run in a primary, a primary is a contest of a number of things. But one of the things it is a contest of is theories of how to win the election.

You think about 2020, Joe Biden is offering a more moderate theory. You have Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders saying, you’re going to juice enthusiasm by running much more significantly to the left. You have Cory Booker arguing for a candidacy about love and about civic virtues. There’s been nothing like that this year.

And so Harris, who had the benefit of this instant coalescence around her, she didn’t have to articulate one answer inside the Democratic Party. It has been so new. For everybody who is arguing she’s light on policy detail, typically candidates have an entire primary to work through and roll out their policies. It isn’t something you can do overnight. It actually takes time to work with your policy team and work through the numbers and try to figure out what it is you want to do and say, and how you conceptualize a problem and which kind of advice you want to take. So she’s having to do everything at warp speed. That means a lot is not yet done.

She has released a couple of economic policies and functionally nothing else. I frankly, as a policy person, would not want her to come out with an entire policy platform in three weeks. If you’ve come out with an entire policy agenda in three weeks — three weeks when you are also planning a convention, choosing your vice president, figuring out your stump speech and beginning to campaign — then what you have done is rushed your policy agenda.

I’m not giving her a pass here. I’m being realistic about the fact that policy is hard and it takes time. And so there’s a lot of room for people to influence her. And one thing happening at this convention — happening from the speaker’s podium, but also happening behind the scenes — is people making their cases to each other. People making their cases to her advisers. People doing breakfasts where they show polling data supporting the way they see the situation.

So there’s a faction of the party right now that is saying, we need to moderate on key issues, which she’s actually doing some of — moderate on the border. Show that we’re a party of tough border security. We’re losing on immigration. We need to show that we get it.

There’s arguments for moderating on economics, for talking more about deficit reduction, for showing they are better stewards of the public money. For doing this on crime, you know, et cetera.

There are the arguments of the economic populists — you’ve heard a lot of those, but — that you can only blunt Donald Trump’s populism with a stronger, more authentic form of populism — be the real deal of the thing him and JD Vance are only claiming to be.

There are the people who really understand this is attentional and viral, right? And I don’t want to say what they want to do is meme their way to victory, but there is a sense that Harris could build a movement without having to choose between these different theories. It is true that the candidate is already chosen at this convention, but it is less true than it normally is that the shape of that candidacy is already chosen.

Now, because Harris is vice president, some of it reflects the shape of the Biden presidency, but not all of it. So there’s actually more clay that is being molded here and more strategic arguments being debated than at other conventions I’ve attended or covered.

ROLLIN HU: Let’s talk about more of the specifics of what we know about Harris’s economic platform. She gave a speech last Friday outlining quite a few of them. Can you talk a bit more about that?

EZRA KLEIN: Absolutely. So I think the really interesting thing about the set of economic policies Harris released is actually looking at the ordering of them in the fact sheet they put out. Because what comes first? It’s, build the American dream, lowering the cost of renting and owning a home.

I have not seen — ever — a Democratic Party Presidential nominee who puts at the very top of their economic agenda, lowering the cost of housing. Whether her policies will actually do that, I think, is a bit of an open question. Because she’s sort of pushing in two directions at once here. She has, on the one hand, number one, calling for the construction of 3 million new housing units to end the housing supply shortage in the next four years. There’s not that much detail on how they would do that. You have to cut a lot of red tape that exists at the local level and change a lot of process at the local and state level to get there. But it does suggest that the Democratic Party has at least developed a theory of the housing problem that is a housing supply problem. In the past, what housing policy meant among Democrats was you subsidized rent. Here, what it means is that you need to build a bunch more homes.

On the other side of it. She has an idea to give new home buyers 25, 000 in certain conditions. And there’s, I think, reasonable concern about that in a lot of places where what you have is a constraint on how many homes you can build if you just give new homebuyers a credit, that’s just gonna increase prices. Sellers are gonna pocket that. So whether or not she has the policy exactly right here, I think is an open question, and I would need to spend more time reporting that out. But I do think the emphasis is interesting.

To me, the other major policy in here, which reflects something that both the Biden administration actually did, and that Harris was a leader on when she was in the Senate, is proposing a very expanded child tax credit, which would be an up to $6,000 tax credit per child. And that’s just good policy. It would do a huge amount to cut child poverty, and it’s just good to give families with children, particularly poor families with children, help. When you talk about wanting to make it easier to have families, that’s a great way to do it.

So I thought the plan, overall, it reflected the right emphases. If you asked me what I would prioritize right now in economic policy, housing affordability and an expanded child tax credit would be very much the top couple of things on my list too. So I was happy to see it.

ROLLIN HU: You’ve also told me before that Harris is much stronger at campaigning over rights. So can you talk a bit more about that?

EZRA KLEIN: Different candidates in the party and different figures in the party have different kinds of expertise and comfort. If you run a general from the military, which is often something that parties consider doing, although they usually don’t do it, that person is probably going to be very comfortable on foreign policy and national defense and not that comfortable talking about healthcare and the economy.

A lot of candidates come out of more economic background. That’s a very, very normal thing. Maybe they’ve governed in a state. They’re good at talking about the kinds of things governors handle. But they don’t really know how to talk about North Korea, about Israel, about NATO, et cetera.

Harris, her background is much more around law and rights. The work she did in California was as a prosecutor, as an attorney general. She’s very, very comfortable talking about constitutional rights. She’s very, very comfortable talking about law and order, about justice. A lot of her close advisers, if you look at people she’s been talking to for a long time in the party, they’re lawyers, right? They’re people who teach in law schools or people who run legal nonprofits.

But Harris is not associated, in the way a lot of candidates are, with an economic faction within the party. She’s extremely strong on questions of voting rights, on questions of reproductive rights, on questions of criminal justice. But in terms of which side of the party she sides with on the economy and on some other matters of domestic policy, I think you should understand her as a kind of mainstream Democrat. I think you should understand her as not very far from where Joe Biden was. So it’s not that I’m predicting a huge break, at least not at first. But, yeah, she is coming from a different part of the party than a lot of presidents have recently and has just had less experience on running campaigns based on economics than some of the other candidacies we’ve seen.

ROLLIN HU: All right. And to end the conversation, what’d you think of Joe Biden’s speech last night?

EZRA KLEIN: I thought it was quite moving. I thought a couple pieces of it were very moving, in particular, the thing where people kept chanting, “Thank you, Joe”

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ convention crowd cheering: Thank you, Joe! Thank you Joe!

EZRA KLEIN: And he would say, “Thank you, Kamala.”

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Joe Biden: Thank you, Kamala.

EZRA KLEIN: It really spoke to a decency in him. The long applause for him that he was dabbing tears from his eyes as he hugged his daughter when he came out — all of that, it was very moving.

I did not myself find Biden’s speech that effective, I guess. It was a reminder of how grim and existential the tone of his campaign often was, which is not to say it was wrong. But it was actually, in this era of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz and Republicans are weird — the shift back to the tone of the Biden campaign, that dark democracy is on the line tone, it was jarring to go back there, and it felt to me less effective. Like, it really did feel like Democrats have come into a kind of joy in their campaign that, when I saw a primetime speech that lacked it, you’re like, oh, this move has been good for the party.

Biden’s defense of his own record and description of his own record, I thought that was quite strong and true, right? He’s done a tremendous amount. He’s been a very strong president. But in many ways, to me, the real evidence of what Joe Biden has done was the whole night of the convention itself. This is the party that Joe Biden built. These connections between the moderate wings of Joe Biden and Gina Raimondo and Bernie Sanders and AOC, that is Joe Biden’s legacy. He actually did that. No one else did that. He did that.

And the passing of the torch to Kamala Harris, he did that. Yes, there was pressure, but he did that. He chose Kamala Harris. He is the one who signaled to the party, when there was genuine doubt about whether it should do this, that it should unite around her. It is true that before that, people around him had seeded a lot of doubt about her and used views about her weakness to sort of bolster his position. But when he stepped down, he ended that and set a different tone around her. Now it is seen as a remarkable decision.

And Joe Biden could step out on that stage and, in a way people would cheer for, say, the first decision I made on getting the nomination and the best decision I made as president, well, or I think actually said in his political career was to choose Kamala Harris as his vice president.

So we are looking right now, not at the Democratic Party that Kamala Harris built; we’re looking at the Democratic Party that Joe Biden built. And it’s also worth noting that past Democratic presidents have not left the Democratic Party in good shape. The Democratic Party, in terms of its down-ballot strength, was wrecked at the end of not only Obama’s second term — it was in pretty bad shape at the end of Obama’s first term, too.

And Joe Biden — and this is not necessarily all due to him. It had to do with Dobbs and other things. But the 2022 midterm was a much better election for Democrats than the 2010 midterm or the 1994 midterm. There’s been a lot of attention to the Democratic down ballot. They’re doing really well in governor’s mansions, right? They have a lot more state legislatures right now than they’ve had at some points.

So there is a strength in the Democratic Party, a unity in the Democratic Party. The deeply restored connection to unions, the fact that Biden actually marched on a picket line, that is a connection that Joe Biden has rebuilt and put unions back at the center of Democratic identity.

Biden was a party builder, and he built a party. And if Democrats win this year, if they win with his vice president, atop the party coalition he built, that really is his legacy. It’s not just his record as president. It is his record as leader of the party.

And that wasn’t said explicitly last night, but I think if you watched the night, it was really reflected. The whole night was a celebration, in a way, but also a demonstration of the Democratic Party Joe Biden redesigned, and I found that actually quite moving to see.

ROLLIN HU: All right, we’ll leave it at that. Thanks for having me, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: Thank you, Rollin.

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced and hosted 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. 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.

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[***Audra McDonald Is Returning to Broadway! There’s Just One Catch.; John Mcwhorter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7V-VPH1-DXY4-X198-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1228 words

**Byline:** John McWhorter John McWhorter (@JohnHMcWhorter) is an associate professor of linguistics at Columbia University. He is the author of &amp;#8220;Nine Nasty Words: English in the Gutter: Then, Now and Forever&amp;#8221; and, most recently, &amp;#8220;Woke Racism: How a New Religion Has Betrayed Black America.&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** Colorblind casting is wonderful. Don’t use it to sanitize our racist past.

**Body**

The recent [*announcement*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter) that Audra McDonald will be starring as Mama Rose in “Gypsy” has thrilled Broadway fans. I’m as delighted as anyone and eager to catch the show when it opens in December. McDonald is the queen of American musical theater, and “Gypsy” is often considered the best musical ever (and if there were no “Follies,” it would be).

But I delight less in a detail that has emerged. In the roles of Mama Rose’s two daughters, June and Louise, the show’s producers [*intend to cast*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter) actresses who, like McDonald, are Black. Or more specifically, June, whose prospects as a young performer Rose first has the most hopes for, will be cast as biracial, while Louise, who ultimately breaks out as a star in her own right, will be cast as Black. Rose’s father will be played by a Black man. In other words, Rose isn’t just being played by a Black actress. She is being played, it seems, as a Black character.

This is off, for a few reasons. One is historical. In 1920s America, when the show is set, racism and segregation remained implacable forces in popular culture, and the only stardom a Black Rose would have realistically sought for her kids would have been among Black audiences.

Yes, Black performers of that era, such as Bert Williams and Ethel Waters, did cross over to stardom among white audiences, but it was quite rare. For Rose to think her kids had even a chance at becoming America’s sweethearts — that they could achieve a position akin to the one Shirley Temple occupied — would be a delusion so quixotic that it would have to be the story’s central tragedy.

Maybe this production will be modified to suggest that Rose has her eye on the Black Vaudeville circuit? But Gypsy’s music sounds nothing like the blues and proto-jazz that circuit was all about, and the idea that a Black stage mother would be promoting her Black children in the early 1920s with a twee song like “May We Entertain You” is, frankly, ludicrous. Black performers in that era promoted themselves mainly with, big surprise, Black music.

The norm, then and afterward, was careers like those of Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge and [*Nina Mae McKinney*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter) — the last of whom you may not have heard of for a reason — in which bigotry strictly and unjustifiably corralled what they were allowed to do. And let’s not even get into Louise’s eventual boffo success as a stripper under the stage name Gypsy Rose Lee. Who were the nationally famous Black strippers of the mid-20th century, and what do we get from pretending there were any?

Colorblind casting has become common, even fashionable, and that’s a wonderful thing. It’s creating opportunities for actors of color, and it’s opening the minds of audience members who would once upon a time have been unable even to imagine, say, a blockbuster musical in which the founding fathers are played by Black and Hispanic men. As I have [*written*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter), the idea that Broadway is a white realm is now blissfully outdated. But colorblind casting doesn’t work if it stops halfway, seeming to let Black actors play white parts but then pulling back. A talent as rare as Audra McDonald shouldn’t play a Black Rose. She should just play Rose.

Instead, it’s become popular to reracialize characters in older properties. In the recent “Some Like It Hot” musical, set in the 1930s, Sugar, best recalled from the film as played by Marilyn Monroe, was played by a Black actress, as was the leader of the band Sugar tours with. So far, so good — until the bandleader makes a reference to how hard it is being Black on tour in the South. If now she and Sugar are supposed to be Black people, then how could she plot her trajectory to become a mainstream star like Ruth Etting, Helen Morgan or Kate Smith without even mentioning the racism that she would have to overcome to do so?

I get that the new idea is that we don’t want to deny the reality of race or racism and that to cast Black actors as just playing white people can be construed as subtracting something of their essence, as centering whiteness, as it’s put. But recoding characters, at least historical characters, as Black just because Black people are playing them is just another kind of denial of racism. It pretends that in the past (or even the present, for that matter) Black lives and white lives were interchangeable. In the era in which “Gypsy” is set, lynching was still common and legal in many states. Black ***working-class*** mothers had a lot to worry about, but winning over mainstream — which is to say white — audiences was not high on the list.

McDonald has shown that it’s possible for a Black actor to successfully play a white character. In her resplendent breakout performance as Carrie Pipperidge in the 1994 revival of “Carousel,” no one was under the impression that the musical, set in 1870s Maine, was really an exploration of interracial marriage. Rather, McDonald was playing a white woman, a prospect that audiences proved themselves to be entirely ready to accept.

Similarly, in 2014, James Earl Jones played the paterfamilias in a revival of the 1936 chestnut “You Can’t Take It With You,” and beyond the individual interpretation of two towering actors, the character was the same man Lionel Barrymore immortalized in the 1938 film version. It was sweet. Brian Stokes Mitchell’s lead performances in “Kiss Me, Kate” and “Man of La Mancha” worked just as well.

All of this also applies to actors of other ethnicities, as well as to those with (or without) [*disabilities*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter) of various kinds. The guiding principle should be getting past appearances and seeing people for their essence. As pertains to race, the first step is surely to understand and acknowledge that race matters and can be an obstacle. But that shouldn’t be the last step. And what better vehicle for pointing the way to a new paradigm than the theater, which is all about teaching us to see the world in new ways?

A question looms, of course: What about white actors playing Black characters? Long ago was the time when that was common. An achingly awful 1930 film musical called “Golden Dawn,” which is still available online, offers a glimpse of how casually it was done. Today it would be offensive. In part that’s because Black actors still have fewer opportunities than white ones and don’t need even more competition to get a toehold onstage; in part it’s because wearing dark makeup, as a thousand white Othellos have done, harks back for many to minstrelsy. I, for one, am not itching to see a production of “A Raisin in the Sun” or “Fences” with white leads.

I do hope, however, for a time when actors of any race can play roles of any race, just as we now accept for age or religion or sexual identity. The Gershwin estate stipulates that “Porgy and Bess” must be performed onstage by Black singers, but in 1935 even George Gershwin himself allowed Lawrence Tibbett, who was white, to be the first Porgy on a recording. As brilliant as many Black Porgys have been over the years, no one could deny that Tibbett sang the hell out of the role and back. Marston Records has issued a gorgeous new [*box set*](https://twitter.com/JohnHMcWhorter) of Tibbett’s work, including songs from “Porgy and Bess.” This set’s sterling restoration work alone makes it worth hearing. But if you close your eyes, you might hear something else: possibility.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK MAINZ, AND WARNER BROS., VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***What's Next for France After Far-Right's Surge?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCV-8TM1-JBG3-6049-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Aurelien Breeden

**Body**

It was a big day for the far-right National Rally. Just how big will not be clear until after a second round of voting.

A new week of frenetic campaigning started in France on Monday, a day after the far-right National Rally party dominated the first round of legislative elections that attracted an unusually high number of voters and dealt a stinging blow to President Emmanuel Macron.

Voters are being asked to choose their representatives in the 577-seat National Assembly, the country's lower and more prominent house of Parliament. They will return to the polls on Sunday for the second round of voting.

If a new majority of lawmakers opposed to Mr. Macron is ushered in, he will be forced to appoint a political adversary as prime minister, substantially shifting France's domestic policy and muddling its foreign policy. That will be especially so if he is forced to govern alongside Jordan Bardella, the 28-year-old president of the National Rally who the party wants to become prime minister.

If no clear majority emerges, the country could be headed for months of political deadlock or turmoil. Mr. Macron, who has ruled out resigning, cannot call new legislative elections for another year.

Official results published by the Interior Ministry showed that the anti-immigrant National Rally party and its allies won about 33 percent of the vote. The New Popular Front, a broad alliance of left-wing parties, got about 28 percent; Mr. Macron's centrist Renaissance party and its allies garnered about 20 percent; and mainstream conservatives got only about 6.7 percent.

Here are five takeaways from the first round to help make sense of the elections so far.

Voters flocked to the polls in unusually high numbers.

France's legislative elections normally occur just weeks after the presidential race and usually favor the party that has won the presidency. That makes legislative votes less likely to draw in voters, many of whom feel as if the outcome is preordained.

But this vote -- a snap election called unexpectedly by Mr. Macron -- was different. The participation rate on Sunday was nearly 67 percent, far more than the 47.5 percent recorded in the first round of the last parliamentary elections, in 2022.

That jump reflected the intense interest in a high-stakes race and a belief among voters that their ballot could fundamentally alter the course of Mr. Macron's presidency.

Already, the government has announced that it is suspending contentious plans to tighten rules on unemployment benefits.

The final results are especially hard to predict.

For an absolute majority, a party needs 289 seats, and France's main polling institutes have released cautious projections suggesting that the National Rally could win 240 to 310 in the next round of voting.

The New Popular Front alliance, they say, may get 150 to 200 seats, while Mr. Macron's Renaissance party and its allies may win 70 to 120.

But using first-round results to predict the second-round outcome has always been tricky because of the nature of France's electoral system. The legislative elections are, in essence, 577 separate races.

Under certain conditions, a candidate who gets more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round wins outright. On Sunday, 76 candidates were directly elected that way.

But most seats are usually decided only after a second-round runoff between the top vote getters.

The National Rally and its allies made it into a runoff or were directly elected in 485 districts, according to an analysis of the results by Franceinfo. The New Popular Front was headed to a runoff or had been directly elected in 446.

Mr. Macron's centrist coalition was poised to lose many of the seats it had held since 2022, having earned a runoff spot or been directly elected in just 319 of them.

Much can happen between the two rounds.

Complicating matters even further, the runoffs in some districts can feature three or even four candidates if they are able to get at least 12.5 percent of registered voters' votes. Usually, this is rare. But on Sunday, because of the jump in participation, it was not.

In 2022, there were eight three-way races. This time, polling institutes projected that there would be more than 200.

Many parties -- especially on the left -- said they would pull out a third-place candidate to help prevent the far right from winning. But there remained some confusion on Monday.

Some of Mr. Macron's allies, for instance, suggested that his party or its allies should not withdraw a candidate in cases where it would help a candidate from the hard-left France Unbowed party, which has been accused of antisemitism. Others said the far right had to be stopped at all costs.

A far-right government, or gridlock, may be next.

Two outcomes seem most likely.

Only the National Rally appears in a position to secure enough seats for an absolute majority. If it does, Mr. Macron would have no other practical choice than to appoint Mr. Bardella prime minister. He could try to appoint someone else, but it would run counter to the voters' choice and National Rally lawmakers would quickly topple that person in a no-confidence vote.

If Mr. Bardella is named, he would then form a cabinet and control domestic policy.

Presidents have traditionally retained control over foreign policy and defense matters in such scenarios, but the Constitution does not always offer clear guidelines.

That would leave an anti-immigrant, Euroskeptic far-right party governing a country that has been at the heart of the European project. Mr. Bardella could clash with Mr. Macron over issues like France's contribution to the European Union budget or support for Ukraine in its war with Russia.

Several thousand demonstrators, mainly left-wing, gathered in central Paris on Sunday evening to protest the National Rally.

If the National Rally fails to secure an absolute majority -- Mr. Bardella has said he would not govern without one -- Mr. Macron would have limited choices of how to proceed.

The president could try to build a coalition, but France is not accustomed to doing so, unlike Germany. And the three main blocs in the lower house -- the far right, the left-wing alliance, and Mr. Macron's centrist coalition -- have radically different agendas and, in some cases, have expressed extreme animosity toward each other.

It is unclear how France moves forward if no working majority can be cobbled together.

One possibility being discussed by analysts is having a caretaker government that handles the day-to-day business of running the country until there is a political breakthrough, as has happened in Belgium. But this, too, would be a departure from French tradition.

The market appears to be OK with gridlock in Parliament.

Investors have been troubled by the prospect that either the National Rally, with its Euroskeptic outlook, or the New Popular Front, with its heavy tax-and-spend programs, would gain power.

France, which is heavily indebted from spending to support businesses and households during pandemic lockdowns and later in response to surging inflation, faced higher borrowing costs and a slumping stock market after Mr. Macron called for new elections three weeks ago.

On Monday, however, the euro and French bonds rose because of optimism that even though the National Rally won the most votes, it could struggle to gain a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

Investors are betting that the most likely outcome next Sunday is a hung Parliament in which neither the far right nor the united left has a majority, creating legislative gridlock.

But that optimism may be short-lived: France was reprimanded last month by the European Union for breaching rules that require countries to maintain strict budgetary discipline. Economists are warning of the risk of a debt crisis if a paralyzed government cannot rein in France's finances -- or if the National Rally wins and goes on a spending spree to carry out expensive campaign promises.

The far right has made inroads into all segments of the population.

The National Rally's victory was yet another sign that the party's yearslong journey from the fringes of French politics to the gilded halls of France's Republic is all but complete. It nearly doubled its share of the vote from 2022, when it got 18.68 percent of the vote in the first round of the parliamentary elections.

One study released on Sunday made clear how much the party has expanded its voter base.

The study by the Ipsos polling institute, conducted among a representative sample of 10,000 registered voters before the election, found that the National Rally electorate had ''grown and diversified.''

The party still fares the best among the ***working class***, the polling institute said in an analysis, noting that it got 57 percent of the blue-collar vote.

But its electoral base has ''considerably widened,'' Ipsos said, noting that the party had increased its scores by 15 to 20 percentage points among retirees, women, people younger than 35 years old, voters with higher incomes and big-city dwellers.

''In the end, the National Rally vote has spread,'' the polling institute said, ''creating a more homogeneous electorate than before, and one that is quite in tune with the French population as a whole.''

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Hénin-Beaumont, France, and Liz Alderman from Paris.Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Hénin-Beaumont, France, and Liz Alderman from Paris.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/01/world/europe/france-election-takeaways.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/01/world/europe/france-election-takeaways.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Voters in Lyon, France, on Sunday. The second round of voting to choose representatives in the National Assembly will be July 7. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENT CIPRIANI/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Biking through tear gas fired during protests in Paris on Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY FABRIZIO BENSCH/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A5.

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[***In Contested Primary, Bowman Is Embracing The Left's Star Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9Y-F5D1-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Nicholas Fandos and Claire Fahy

**Body**

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders rallied with Jamaal Bowman on Saturday, three days before the primary on Tuesday.

He cracked jokes on ''The Late Show With Stephen Colbert,'' spit verses with the rapper Cash Cobain and spent the weekend rallying with two of the left's biggest names: Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Overpowered on the airwaves and behind in the polls, Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York is leaning heavily on national star power in a last-minute bid to alter the trajectory of one of the nation's most hotly contested Democratic primaries.

The megawatt events drove home the sharp political contrasts between the congressman and his opponent, George Latimer. But they also demonstrated how the candidates are betting on two very different paths to victory, in a district split between wealthy suburbs and ***working-class*** neighborhoods, and among white, Black and Latino voters.

''This is a turnout race, y'all,'' Mr. Bowman boomed at an event with Mr. Sanders on Friday in Hastings-on-Hudson, just north of his hometown, Yonkers. ''This is not about persuasion. We got our people. They got their people.''

Instead of reaching toward Mr. Latimer's supporters at the party's center, Mr. Bowman, 48, embraced the left-leaning positions that helped make him a national figure. He denounced large corporations and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's record spending blitz against him, in hopes of increasing participation by progressives and voters of color.

Mr. Latimer, a middle-of-the-road Democrat and the Westchester County executive, ground toward the primary on Tuesday largely alone, with no tinsel or celebrity surrogates in sight.

He entered the race's final days with enough confidence in his older, suburban base to repeatedly venture into Co-op City in the Bronx and Mr. Bowman's own backyard, offering himself as a drama-free alternative to the two-term incumbent. With pro-Israel political groups pummeling Mr. Bowman with $15 million in negative ads, Mr. Latimer, 70, mostly played it safe.

When he offered a brief musical performance on Thursday to hundreds of seniors at Yonkers's Ukrainian Youth Center, it was his own surprisingly smooth version of ''On the Street Where You Live'' from ''My Fair Lady.''

The tune, evidently, was the message.

''This is everything about the difference between us,'' Mr. Latimer said afterward. ''I am the local guy. It seems counterintuitive if you look at our ages or demographics. But he is much more a person who has cultivated a national image.''

Mr. Latimer jumped into the race late last year, in large part because he was being urged by Jewish leaders to oppose Mr. Bowman's outspoken criticism of Israel's war with Hamas. But he has consistently highlighted local issues, knocking Mr. Bowman for voting against President Biden's major infrastructure bills that promised to help rebuild roads and replace old pipes in the district, and for neglecting parts of the district with large numbers of white residents.

Mr. Bowman, the first Black person to represent the district in Congress, has bristled at the characterization and has lobbed accusations of racism at Mr. Latimer.

In recent days, Mr. Bowman has also sought to mix in levity. He jumped up and down as he rapped onstage at the concert that his campaign aimed at young voters in Port Chester, which is majority Latino. He shot hoops with young boys in the Bronx. Videographers wielding high-tech equipment captured footage for social media.

The rally with Mr. Sanders and Ms. Ocasio-Cortez on Saturday took place in the South Bronx, miles away from Mr. Bowman's district. Groups like Sunrise Movement, the Democratic Socialists of America and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice all sent representatives despite the scorching heat, though relatively few identified themselves as voters in Mr. Bowman's district.

''This election is not about Jamaal versus Mr. Latimer,'' said Mr. Sanders, a Vermont independent. ''This election is about whether the billionaire class and the oligarchs will control the United States government.''

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez defended Mr. Bowman against accusations that his calls for a cease-fire and the end of American military aid to Israel made him anti-Israel or antisemitic.

''We know that the absolute leveling of Gaza is being paid for with the funds that are being kept from our health care, our schools,'' she said. ''We cannot support that anymore. We can't. It's not extreme. It's not fringe. It's not bigoted to want everybody to be protected.''

Mr. Bowman took a more confrontational tone, lashing out at AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby that has spent more money trying to defeat him than any third-party group has ever spent on a House race.

''People ask me why I got a foul mouth,'' he said. ''What am I supposed to do? You coming after me. You coming after my family. You coming after my children. I'm not supposed to fight back?''

He also accused his opponent of supporting what he characterized as a genocide in Gaza.

A spokesman for Mr. Latimer's campaign fired back. ''Jamaal Bowman's divisive and dishonest attacks, combined with his antisemitic dog whistles, are why voters are turning against him in droves,'' he said.

In a sign of how deeply the conflict has fractured the left, Saturday's event attracted dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters angry that Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, Mr. Sanders and Mr. Bowman had endorsed Mr. Biden while his administration continued to stand by Israel.

They beat drums and chanted through the politicians' speeches, repeating ''Say it loud, say it clear, we don't want no sellouts here'' and ''You're a fraud, A.O.C.,'' using Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's initials.

''These are the people who call themselves our allies,'' said Nerdeen Kiswani, a founder of Within Our Lifetime, a pro-Palestinian group that organized the protest. ''We are holding them to the standard that they set -- that they claim to set -- for themselves.''

The district is home to a sizable Jewish population, and there were signs Jewish voters were turning out to vote early in strong numbers, most likely good news for Mr. Latimer.

Teach Coalition, a group that advances the interests of yeshivas and other Jewish schools, spent $1 million over the course of the race to register 2,000 Republicans and independents as Democrats and then get Jewish voters to the polls. It appeared to be paying dividends.

The group estimated on Friday that Jewish voters had most likely accounted for 36 percent of all early votes cast so far, despite making up just 9 percent of the district's total voter pool.

The coalition's leader, Maury Litwack, emphasized that the turnout drive was nonpartisan, but he added, ''Anybody looking at this race would say the overwhelming feeling of the Jewish community leans toward Latimer, versus Bowman.''

Mr. Latimer also seemed to be in good standing among the diverse group of seniors he met in Yonkers, who greeted him with applause. Many said they had followed his career for decades.

''He's a unifier and not divisive,'' said Susan Greenberg, a retired health care administrator from Hastings-on-Hudson. ''It goes way back.''

Kenneth Diaz, a real estate agent in Yonkers and self-described ''Bernie guy'' who was at the luncheon, said the race had been ''hard to watch.'' He supported Mr. Bowman eagerly in the past and thinks he is right about the war in Gaza.

But Mr. Diaz said Mr. Bowman lost standing in his eyes when he pulled a fire alarm in a House office building last fall as he rushed to the Capitol. The false alarm sent Congress into chaos and resulted in a misdemeanor charge, one more embarrassing note for a country Mr. Diaz fears is losing its civility.

''It was a boneheaded thing to do,'' he said. ''I know why it was done, but still, it's not befitting the position.''

Molly Longman contributed reporting.Molly Longman contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/nyregion/bowman-aoc-bernie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Representative Jamaal Bowman is leaning on megawatt events with well-known guests, including a rally on Saturday with Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

George Latimer is largely grinding toward the primary on Tuesday alone with no tinsel in sight. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TED SHAFFREY/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why Are Democrats Losing Ground Among Nonwhite Voters? 5 Theories.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695T-4PK1-JBG3-64SB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 2001 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** There’s no shortage of solid hypotheses, and the best explanation may be a combination of them.

**Body**

There’s no shortage of solid hypotheses, and the best explanation may be a combination of them.

Why is President Biden losing ground among Black, Hispanic, Asian American and other nonwhite voters?

There’s no easy answer for this [*relative weakness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article) that shows up in polling, and there might never be one. After all, we still don’t have a definitive explanation for why Donald J. Trump made big gains among white ***working-class*** voters in 2016 or [*Hispanic voters in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/trump-latino-voters-2020.html), despite the benefit of years of poll questions, final election results and post-election studies.

While the question may be hard, getting the best possible answer matters. Ro Khanna, a Democratic congressman and co-chair of Bernie Sanders’s 2020 presidential campaign, recently [*asked*](https://twitter.com/RoKhanna/status/1699806916690460763?s=20) me on social media whether the Democratic challenge is the absence of a “compelling economic vision.”

If Democrats believe that’s the answer, Mr. Khanna and his colleagues might approach the election differently than if they believe the answer is crime, the migrant crisis or perceptions of a “woke” left. The choice of approach might not only affect who wins, but also the policies and messages promoted on the campaign trail and perhaps ultimately enacted in government.

A definitive answer to our question may be beyond reach, but there’s no shortage of solid hypotheses. The various theories are not mutually exclusive — the best explanation may synthesize all of them.

Theory 1: It’s about the moment — Biden, his age, the economy and abortion

Why do surveys show President Biden [*struggling among all voters*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) nowadays, regardless of race? The biggest reasons typically [*cited*](https://www.cnbc.com/2023/09/04/biden-2024-election-poll-trump-economy-old-age-concerns-inflation.html) are inflation, the economy and his age.

In each case, there’s an argument these issues ought to hurt Mr. Biden more among nonwhite voters, who tend to be younger and poorer than white voters.

Of all the explanations, these would probably be the most promising for Democrats in the long term. In the short term, Mr. Biden could hope to gain ground if inflation continued to lose steam and the economy avoided recession.

For now, he and the Democrats are counting on issues like abortion to compensate for their weaknesses. That might help Democrats among white voters, but it might not help much among nonwhite voters. In New York Times/Siena College polling over the last year, just 64 percent of nonwhite voters say they believe abortion should be mostly or always legal, a tally that falls beneath usual Democratic benchmarks.

On the other hand, 63 percent of white voters say abortion should be at least mostly legal, a tally greatly exceeding the usual Democratic support among white voters.

The economy and abortion are plainly important in making sense of recent shifts, but they’re not the whole story. Mr. Biden was relatively weak among nonwhite voters in 2020, as Hispanic voters swung to the right (by about seven points of major party vote share) and the rise in Black turnout didn’t match those of other groups. Democrats showed similar — if less acute — weaknesses with these voters in 2018 and during most Trump-era special elections.

Mr. Biden’s weaknesses may exacerbate the problem, but this isn’t a new issue.

Theory 2: Democrats are too far to the left

This theory is brought to you by Democratic centrists, and it’s grounded in an important fact: There are many nonwhite Democrats who self-identify as moderate or even conservative. Many hold conservative views on issues, like opposition to same-sex marriage.

These moderate or conservative nonwhite voters consider themselves Democrats because they see the party as representing them and their interests, not because they have party-line views on every issue. If so, Republican gains among nonwhite voters might naturally result from Democrats’ leftward shift over the last few years.

This story is logical, especially when it comes to Mr. Trump’s gains in the last election. But is this really what has hurt President Biden since 2020? Democrats didn’t nominate Mr. Sanders, after all. Democratic socialism; calls to defund the police; and Black Lives Matter seem to be in the rearview mirror in 2023. The backlash against “woke” has faded so much that Republicans [*barely even brought it up*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/23/us/politics/republican-debate-live-tracker.html) in the first presidential debate.

Even in 2020, the evidence that the progressive left was responsible for Democratic losses among Hispanic voters was more based on correlation than clear causal evidence. Today, the connection seems even less clear. Perhaps the best evidence is Democratic struggles among nonwhite voters in California and New York, where progressive excesses might weigh most heavily.

Theory 3: Democrats aren’t delivering a progressive agenda

This theory is brought to you by the progressive left. You might be skeptical after walking through the centrist position, but there’s a credible story here.

To understand it, it’s worth untangling two sentiments that we usually assume go together: a desire for big change and progressivism. They’ve gone hand-in-hand in recent Democratic primaries, with progressive candidates offering fundamental or revolutionary change, while liberal, establishment-backed candidates offer relative moderation, bipartisanship or a return to normalcy.

But being a moderate on a left-right ideological scale is not the same thing as being content with the status quo. Many moderates are deeply dissatisfied and want politicians who promise big changes to American life. They may think politics, the economy and the “system” are all broken, even if they’re not animated by progressive slogans like Democratic socialism, a Green New Deal, Medicare for all, and so on.

Many nonwhite voters fall into this category. In Times/Siena [*polling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/05/upshot/swing-voters-2020-election.html) of the key battleground states in 2019, persuadable nonwhite voters said they wanted a relatively moderate Democrat over a liberal, 69 percent to 29 percent. But they also preferred a Democratic nominee who would bring systemic change to American society over one who would return politics back to normal in Washington, 52-32. This might seem contradictory, but it’s not.

Mr. Biden is not exactly a great fit for these ideologically moderate “change” voters. He does not channel their dissatisfaction with the country, the establishment, politics or the economy. His accomplishments, like the Inflation Reduction Act or the CHIPS Act, do not register on the “fundamental change” spectrum. Perhaps it’s not surprising that voters — including nonwhite voters — don’t seem to think Mr. Biden has accomplished very much.

It seems doubtful that a more ambitious, progressive legislative agenda would have left Mr. Biden in a very different place. He didn’t seem to earn too much support for student debt forgiveness, for instance. But it’s still possible that the mainstream Democratic Party’s relatively conservative, even [*Whig-like*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/14/opinion/the-american-renaissance-is-already-happening.html), form of moderation leaves disaffected, nonwhite ***working-class*** voters feeling cold.

Theory 4: It’s Trump

It’s easy for Democrats to blame themselves for weakness among nonwhite voters. But what if it’s not really Democratic weakness, but Republican strength?

It’s Mr. Trump, not Mr. Biden, who defines American politics nowadays. Voters say they’re voting based on their [*feelings toward the former president*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/10/politics/2024-trump-biden-referendum/index.html), not the current one. With numbers like these, perhaps the default assumption ought to be that Mr. Trump, not Mr. Biden, is the driving force behind recent electoral trends.

If it’s Mr. Trump, it’s not hard to see how or why. He has a distinct brand with demonstrated appeal to white ***working-class*** voters who previously backed Barack Obama and other Democrats. Many elements of his message might have appeal to nonwhite ***working-class*** voters as well. As we’ve established, many persuadable nonwhite voters care about the economy; aren’t liberal; are dissatisfied with the country and mainstream politics; and desire fundamental change. Mr. Trump’s combination of populist economics and anti-establishment outsider politics is potentially a very good match.

What about Mr. Trump’s penchant to alienate Black and Hispanic voters with [*remarks like*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/trump-defends-white-nationalist-protesters-some-very-fine-people-on-both-sides/537012/) “very fine people on both sides” or [*“they’re rapists”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/us/politics/donald-trumps-lousy-week-except-for-the-polling.html)? Today, some of these fights may be distant memories. And while Mr. Trump’s remarks may have hurt him at the time, it is striking that they didn’t do more to provoke a more obvious backlash among nonwhite voters, whether in terms of stronger turnout or greater Democratic support.

Perhaps other elements of his message might have broken through. His views on crime and immigration have considerable appeal to some Black and Hispanic voters, even though these issues are often seen by liberals as nothing more than a racist [*dog whistle*](https://politicaldictionary.com/words/dog-whistle-politics/). And Democrats may bristle at the thought of Mr. Trump as a criminal justice reformer, but he spent [*millions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/04/us/politics/trump-super-bowl-ad.html) on a Super Bowl ad promoting exactly that. Mr. Trump’s economic appeal may also be newly salient with [*continuing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/opinion/economy-inflation-negativity.html) [*perceptions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/15/business/economy/inflation-economy-polling.html) that the economy hasn’t recovered.

Mr. Trump’s unique brand of populist conservatism isn’t the full explanation. In the midterms, Republicans overperformed in places like New York City, Florida and Southern California, even though Mr. Trump wasn’t on the ticket.

But while Mr. Trump isn’t the whole explanation, he’s probably an underrated one. A recent [*CNN/SSRS poll*](https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23940784/cnn-poll.pdf) found him faring much better among nonwhite voters compared with all the other Republican candidates. Mr. Biden led Mr. Trump, 58-34, among nonwhite voters in the poll, compared with a 64-28 result against Ron DeSantis.

Theory 5: It’s about a new generation

Democratic strength among nonwhite voters was forged in an earlier era of politics, when the party vanquished Jim Crow and unequivocally represented the ***working class*** and the poor. Perhaps that’s still how many Black voters see it, given that they continue to back Mr. Biden and Democrats by wide margins in Times/Siena polling.

Younger nonwhite voters might see it differently. At the very least, almost all of Mr. Biden’s losses come among nonwhite voters under 45 in Times/Siena polling.

It’s not hard to see how younger nonwhite voters might have a different perspective. The basis for overwhelming Democratic support among nonwhite voters may have gotten weaker over the last 50 years.

Second- and third-generation Asian American and Hispanic voters are more affluent and assimilated into American society than their parents.

Young Black voters may not be second- or third-generation immigrants, but they are the second or third generation since Black Americans finally achieved equal citizenship. They can’t call up memories of the civil rights movement or Jim Crow. They’re less likely to attend church, which helped tie Black voters to the Democratic Party for decades. The bonds of community and sense of threat that connected voters to the Democrats might be weaker today.

The Black Lives Matter movement mobilized a new generation of activists, but also put Democrats in a challenging position: There are few opportunities for Democrats to solve systemic racism. No bill will do it. The party’s claim to being the party of the ***working class*** is also quite a bit weaker than it was a half century ago, for good measure.

Of all the theories, this one is hardest to tie to a short-term decline in Mr. Biden’s support. But more affluence and integration into mainstream American life might be a prerequisite for today’s Republican gains. And, if true, it would reflect largely positive changes in American society, much as Republican gains among Catholic voters in decades past required their acceptance in the mainstream.

It would be hard for any party to hold 90-plus percent of a voting group forever. And if so, perhaps there’s not much Democrats can do about their decline today. It may be bad news for the Democrats in a certain sense, but if there’s any consolation it’s that perhaps Democrats don’t have to flagellate themselves over it. It’s not all their fault.

PHOTO: Black voters helped put Joe Biden over the top in the South Carolina primary in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Travis Dove for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Tim Walz’s Extraordinarily Ordinary Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNK-7N81-DXY4-X092-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 2323 words

**Byline:** Ernesto Londoño and Adam Nagourney Ernesto Londo&amp;#241;o is a Times reporter based in Minnesota, covering news in the Midwest and drug use and counternarcotics policy. Adam Nagourney is a national political reporter for The Times, covering the 2024 campaign.

**Highlight:** The governor of Minnesota hasn’t spent his life striving for the pinnacle of politics. That is how he got there.

**Body**

The governor of Minnesota hasn’t spent his life striving for the pinnacle of politics. That is how he got there.

Tim Walz never attended an Ivy League school. He never wrote a political memoir. He once worked at [*a tanning bed factory in Jonesboro, Ark*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961). And until he was 40, he never showed much interest in a career in politics.

Mr. Walz, the 60-year-old governor of Minnesota chosen by Vice President Kamala Harris as her running mate on Tuesday, had not devoted his life to reaching this pinnacle.

In selecting Mr. Walz, Ms. Harris has picked a one-man rejoinder to the idea that the Democrats are the party of the cultural and coastal elite. His biography and his style are a sharp contrast not only to Ms. Harris, who is from California, but also to former President Donald J. Trump, a New York billionaire, and to some degree to Mr. Trump’s running mate, JD Vance, who graduated from Yale Law School (and wrote a best-selling memoir).

Mr. Walz has led a life that stands out in the top echelon of American politics: a tableau filled with scenes of farming, turkey hunting, weekends of National Guard duty, public schools and coaching the local high school football team to a state championship.

Since turning to politics, Mr. Walz has used this biography to his political advantage and it was no small part of what drew Ms. Harris to Mr. Walz, who until weeks ago was virtually unknown to most Democrats. With his broad smile and unpolished style, it was the Minnesota governor — more than any other Democrat — who was able to conceive and deliver Democrats’ new favorite attack on Mr. Trump and his party: that they are “creepy” and “weird as hell.”

For all his affability, Mr. Walz has displayed, at times, shrewd political instincts. His positions have evolved as his ambitions have broadened. He has capitalized on key moments. After the Democrats won control of both houses of the State Legislature in 2022, he enacted a raft of liberal legislation — policies that are far more popular in cities and suburbs than in the rural, ***working-class*** communities that raised him.

“He ran on a ticket of ‘One Minnesota’: Let’s pull everybody together and unify everyone,” said Representative Lisa Demuth, a Republican and the minority leader in the Minnesota House, who represents a largely rural area outside the Twin Cities. “That is absolutely not what we have seen.”

Still, over the course of his life, much of it spent in conservative corners of Nebraska and Minnesota, Mr. Walz has effectively used his normalcy to connect. Even Republicans who said they would never vote for him, particularly as the running mate of Ms. Harris, described him as self-effacing and familiar.

Although he spent more than a decade in Congress and another five years in the governor’s mansion, the reaction among friends and neighbors to the news of his ascent on Tuesday was not knowing expectation, but pleasant surprise.

“He is genuine, he’s a ball of energy,” said Sherri Blasing, who used to live near Mr. Walz in Mankato, Minn.

“It’s not every day that your neighbor becomes a vice-presidential candidate,” she added. “You can’t go two steps down the sidewalk without someone saying, ‘Can you believe this?’”

A Nebraska Boyhood

Mr. Walz was born in West Point, Neb. (population: 3,500), and raised in Butte (population: 285), a town planted among the cornfields and the rolling hills of one of the most rural areas of one of the nation’s most rural states.

As a teenager, Mr. Walz spent summers working on a family farm, and he has said that his high school graduating class included 25 students, 12 of whom were cousins. That, he would [*joke years later*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961), made finding someone to date “kind of a problem.”

He was raised Catholic, by a father who was a school administrator and a mother who was a homemaker. (He became Lutheran after getting married, but does not draw much attention to his faith.)

Mr. Walz grew up hunting — bringing his rifle to school so he could shoot turkeys with friends after football practice. He enlisted in the National Guard at 17, following in the footsteps of his father, who served in the Army during the Korean War.

His father died of lung cancer when he was 19. In 1989, Mr. Walz [*earned a bachelor’s degree*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) from Chadron State College in Nebraska and went to China for a year to teach English and American history.

He returned home to Nebraska; [*taught global geography*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961); met his wife, Gwen, a fellow teacher; and began coaching. In September 1995, at 31, Mr. Walz was pulled over by a Nebraska state trooper for driving at 96 miles per hour on a road where the speed limit was 55 m.p.h. Mr. Walz failed a field sobriety test and ultimately pleaded guilty to reckless driving. Mr. Walz told his principal and offered to resign, his lawyer said at the time, but he kept his job and stopped drinking.

The next year, the couple moved to Mankato, a small city surrounded by farming communities in southern Minnesota. Mr. Walz kept teaching and coaching, growing into the sort of coach who started practice by telling preteens, “You’re the greatest seventh-grade basketball team ever!” said Ben Ingman, who was coached by Mr. Walz.

Mr. Ingman once watched Mr. Walz teach his son, Gus, to ride a bike. “When Gus finally got it, he exploded, just with his hands over head, yelling, over the moon,” he said.

Mr. Walz led school trips to China and helped turn around a struggling Mankato West High School football team. He and his wife created the first gay-straight alliance group on campus after a senior, Jacob Reitan, came out as gay in the late 1990s.

Classmates taunted him, Mr. Reitan, 42, recalled in an interview. Someone smashed his car window, and he came home one day to find a slur etched on his driveway with chalk. As scary as coming out was, Mr. Reitan said, “it was made a hell of a lot easier because of Tim and Gwen Walz,” he said.

Mr. Walz has said he understood how his support for the club carried weight.

“You have an older, white, straight, married, male football coach who’s deeply concerned that these students are treated fairly and that there is no bullying,” he said in a 2018 [*campaign ad*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961).

‘Who Is This Guy?’

Mr. Walz’s career in politics began because of President George W. Bush. In the governor’s telling, he had tried to escort a group of high school students to [*a rally for Mr. Bush*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) in Mankato, in 2004, but they were turned away because one student had a sticker supporting Mr. Bush’s opponent, John F. Kerry, the Democratic senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. Walz was incensed. Within days, he said, he signed up to volunteer for the Kerry campaign, finding common cause with a fellow veteran opposed to the war in Iraq.

The tense confrontation at the rally was a “sad epiphany moment,” he later said, and it set in motion a long-shot campaign against a six-term Republican incumbent in their largely rural, conservative Minnesota district in 2006.

Mr. Walz’s former students at Mankato West High School signed up to knock on doors, even though it seemed nearly inconceivable that this first-time Democratic candidate without a donor base or name recognition could win in a red district against an entrenched incumbent.

“This is farm country, it’s very conservative,” said Nicole Griensewic, 41, who was in Mr. Walz’s global geography class and volunteered for the campaign. “It had been known as a Republican district for so long, so it was like, Who is this guy?”

Mr. Walz was trained in campaigning that year at Camp Wellstone, a weekend workshop named after Paul Wellstone, a onetime senator of Minnesota whose staunch liberal politics and unflashy style are a model for many Democrats in the state.

Mr. Walz arrived wearing bluejeans, a T-shirt and sneakers — hardly the wardrobe of a polished candidate, said Peggy Flanagan, then a Minneapolis School Board member who was assigned to mentor him that weekend.

“He walked in and was like, ‘I’m Tim Walz and I want to run for Congress,’ and we were like, ‘As a Democrat?’” recalled Ms. Flanagan.

Mr. Walz rode to victory with his army of student volunteers and a strong [*debate performance*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961), and the widespread dissatisfaction with the Bush administration that year helped Democrats [*take control of the House of Representatives*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961).

‘He Did His Work.’

On Capitol Hill, Mr. Walz, who served 24 years in the National Guard, [*emerged as a*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) vocal critic of the Iraq war. He became influential on agriculture and veterans issues. But he was by most measures a low-profile member of Congress, a go-along, get-along backbencher who tended to follow the Democratic line in his votes.

“He’s never been a show horse,” said Blois Olson, a Minnesota political analyst. “He did his work. I think that’s how many rank-and-file members are on both sides.”

He supported Obamacare and an increase in the minimum wage, and pushed for expanding education benefits for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He took a particular interest in issues of importance to his district: agriculture and veteran issues. And the former teacher who had supported gay students in Minnesota was among the most vocal supporters of repealing the military policy that barred openly gay people from serving in uniform.

Patrick Murphy, a former Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania, called Mr. Walz “someone you just want to be around.” Among those expressing pleasure at Ms. Harris’s decision to pick Mr. Walz was Nancy Pelosi, the former House Democratic leader, who served with Mr. Walz in Congress.

After several successful re-election campaigns, warning signs arrived for Mr. Walz. Rural Democrats were an endangered species. In 2016, voters in his district were becoming enamored with Mr. Trump. Mr. Walz squeaked to a sixth term with just 50.4 percent of the vote that year, defeating his Republican opponent, Jim Hagedorn, by less than one point. It was his smallest victory margin in all his runs for Congress.

In March of 2017, Mr. Walz announced he was leaving Congress to run for governor of Minnesota. “He probably would have lost the seat if had run again in ’18 — which is one of the reasons he ran for governor,” said Mr. Olson.

‘One Minnesota’

In 2018, he was elected as governor with his one-time political mentor, Ms. Flanagan, as his lieutenant governor. They campaigned under the slogan “One Minnesota,” presenting themselves as unifying leaders in a polarizing time.

Perhaps the biggest crisis they faced was the mayhem and the violence ignited by the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020. A wave of protests, looting and arson spread through Minneapolis in the days that followed, prompting the city’s mayor to ask the governor to deploy National Guard soldiers.

Mr. Walz didn’t immediately heed that request, which led critics to call him indecisive in a moment of peril. Hundreds of businesses were looted and set on fire that week, [*resulting in an*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) estimated $500 million worth of damage. The governor, who ultimately sent troops under his command to Minneapolis, [*has defended his response*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961), arguing that elected officials did their best in the face of monumental challenges.

“I simply believe that we try to do the best we can,” he said recently at a news conference.

When he campaigned for re-election in 2022, rivals sought to [*misleadingly tie him*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) to the movement to defund the police and criticized him over his lockdown policies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Walz lost ground with his old constituents between his first and second governor races. In 2018, he won more [*than 49 percent*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) of the vote in his old congressional district, slightly more than his Republican opponent. When he sought re-election four years later, [*he lost*](https://www.startribune.com/tim-walz-s-campaign-for-minnesota-governor-aims-to-bridge-the-great-divide/495297961) that congressional district by more than seven percentage points.

But he won — and Democrats seized full control of the State Legislature, lifted, in no small part, by the strong turnout by liberal voters upset over the Supreme Court’s decision that ended the federal right to abortion.

With a one-seat majority in the State Senate, Mr. Walz signed into law bills that codified the right to abortion under state statute, legalized recreational marijuana, funded free meals for all school children, required employers to provide paid medical and family leave and tightened gun restrictions.

Mr. Walz’s allies and critics took notice when he began accepting invitations to appear on television news programs this summer, casting himself as a more authentic embodiment of small-town values than Mr. Vance. He argued that Democrats should focus less on talking about the perils of a second Trump term and more on sharing an upbeat vision described in plain terms.

The energy was familiar to his former students, neighbors and constituents watching at home.

“When I hear him talking, his cadence and the way that he presents, and his speech is exactly the same as it was in high school,” said Ms. Griensewic, his former student.

Emily Cochrane, Reid J. Epstein, Dionne Searcey Tom Lawrence, Job Vigil and Kate Selig contributed reporting.

Emily Cochrane, Reid J. Epstein, Dionne Searcey Tom Lawrence, Job Vigil and Kate Selig contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota has displayed shrewd instincts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE YANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Tim Walz with students at Mankato West High School in Minnesota in 2007, shortly after being elected to Congress. Mr. Walz spent the early years of his career as a teacher and football coach. (PHOTOGRAPH BY T.C. WORLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Walz at a Fourth of July parade in Albert Lea, Minn., during his long-shot campaign for Congress in 2006. His opposition to the war in Iraq was a major factor in his decision to go into politics. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBB LONG/ASSOCIATED PRESS); He was elected governor in 2018 after campaigning under the slogan “One Minnesota.” Mr. Walz and Peggy Flanagan, his lieutenant governor, presented themselves as unifiers in a polarizing time. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH FOSLIEN/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Many Americans Are Marriage Material?; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698V-1YC1-JBG3-624B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2176 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** The deep pessimism behind the progressive view of marriage.

**Body**

It used to be that an overwhelming majority of Americans married, and an overwhelming majority of American children were raised within two-parent families. Over the past six decades this has changed. Now, [*roughly 40 percent*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarried-childbearing.htm) of children are born outside of wedlock and about a quarter live in single-parent homes. The share of Americans who are married [*has fallen*](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2011/12/14/barely-half-of-u-s-adults-are-married-a-record-low) significantly since 1960, with a further decline portended by the marriage rates [*of the younger generations*](https://ifstudies.org/blog/how-much-of-gen-z-will-be-unmarried-at-40).

But it hasn’t changed for everyone. The rich and well educated still marry — not quite at 1950s rates, but something close. It’s the poor and ***working class*** and (increasingly) middle class who don’t.

The meaning of this class division has been the subject of many cycles of debate, and there’s a reassuring familiarity to the arguments raised by and in response to Melissa Kearney’s new book, “The Two-Parent Privilege,” which rehearses the evidence that being raised by married parents is good for kids and that the decline of marriage among the ***working class*** [*is linked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/17/opinion/single-parent-families-income-inequality-college.html) to economic struggles and stratification.

As usual, you have conservatives arguing for stronger cultural norms encouraging marriage before having kids and discouraging divorce thereafter. As usual, you have centrists and some liberals shying away from anything that smacks too much of stigma or heteronormativity but [*arguing for*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/opinion/single-parent-poverty.html) some sort of milder encouragements for marriage in cultural messaging and economic policy. As usual, you have other liberals and the left arguing against a traditional marital norm, casting it as conservative, confining and potentially cruel, and insisting that the inequalities linked to marriage fundamentally just need to be remedied by money.

Out of all this argumentation, the strongest point made against the focus on marriage that Kearney advocates is just the deep uncertainty about exactly what kind of lever, cultural or economic or political, would suffice to reverse such a broad multigenerational social trend.

I’ll try to write something more about that question in the future. But here I want to talk about some of the difficulties in the progressive case against a focus on marriage, using essays [*by Rebecca Traister*](https://www.thecut.com/article/why-is-everyone-so-eager-for-men-and-women-to-get-married.html) and [*Matt Bruenig*](https://mattbruenig.com/2023/09/20/doing-the-marriage-thing-again/) to tease out what this case requires you to believe.

From a left-wing perspective, the difficulty in dismissing the importance of marriage and married childbearing is precisely the fact that the upper and upper middle classes still marry at high rates, defer childbearing until marriage and divorce less frequently than other social strata. Because when the well-off follow a particular practice so consistently, the normal left-wing assumption is that the choices must serve their class interests in some way.

Why do upper-class people so often send their kids to private schools, for instance, or hire private tutors, or pressure their offspring to attend elite colleges and universities, or seek to protect their family wealth from the taxman? For the sake of the reproduction of privilege, naturally.

And Traister, in her argument against Kearney and other marriage advocates (me included), basically concedes that upper-class marriage does do something similarly privilege-enhancing for people entering it. In addition to being a “rewarding capstone life event,” a late-20s or early-30s celebration of professional-class success, wedlock also “allows the already economically stable to become even more stable by combining their resources.”

Which is, of course, the cold, economistic case for why more mothers and fathers should be married generally, no matter what resources they have to pool. But Traister then argues that this argument doesn’t really apply to people whose lives aren’t stable to begin with:

For those who have money, marriage is likely to help them to have even more of it; for those who find a good match, there are many emotional and societal rewards of partnership. But you need stability first; you need the money, jobs, housing, and health care first. And these are the things that the American government, particularly the American right, does not want to offer its people.

But why, exactly, do you need upper-class levels of stability first? If marriage has the economic benefits that she concedes that it may have — the pooling of resources, the everyday flexibility, the possibility of specialization and economies of scale — why wouldn’t it be at least somewhat beneficial for people who don’t have that much money yet? Yes, financial hardship puts unusual stresses on relationships. But hardship also increases the marginal benefit of any kind of economic stabilization — making marriage more beneficial, in some ways, for ***working-class*** parents than for the rich.

There are some clever theories for why this might not always be the case. As I was writing this newsletter, for instance, a new [*paper*](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.20210614) appeared arguing that liberal divorce laws make marriage less valuable to poorer couples, because the partners who specialize in child rearing or domestic labor have more to lose if their spouses leave them — whereas in the same scenario for rich couples, the spouses have more assets to equitably split up.

But that kind of subtle argument notwithstanding, the basic point stands: If pairing off can even modestly reduce financial stress relative to single parenthood, it seems like a matter of economic self-interest for couples to at least try to make it work before having kids.

Alternatively, if the best and only way to get more ***working-class*** couples to choose marriage is to raise their incomes upfront, then you would expect marriage to gradually revive as Americans get richer. But in fact, marriage rates have steadily declined outside of the upper class over a period of decades in which most Americans — not just the upper class but also the ***working class*** — have enjoyed rising incomes, for men and women both. (And, for that matter, expanded health care coverage: Recall that when the American marriage rate was at its peak, programs like Obamacare and CHIP, as well as Medicaid and Medicare, did not yet exist.)

Yes, there has been [*stagnation and disappointment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/opinion/biden-economy.html) as well as growth, and there are good arguments about how the fixed costs of child rearing make the parental position worse than median income trends alone might suggest; we can certainly do better in supporting families than we do right now.

But the disappearance of marriage is not just an underclass phenomenon; it feels like a social crisis precisely because it’s spread well beyond the very poor. And there’s no way to torture the data to prove that most ***working-class*** and middle-class Americans are actually much poorer today than in the much-more-married past of 1965 or 1985. So if marriage confers benefits on the upper-class couples who enter into it, if it is desired by many people and on paper economically beneficial, and yet it is declining rapidly even as living standards rise, then something besides material deprivation has to be involved.

What that something might be, from the marriage-skeptical perspective, can be seen by turning from Traister to Bruenig. His [*critique*](https://mattbruenig.com/2023/09/20/doing-the-marriage-thing-again/) of Kearney’s book concedes the apparent material benefits of marriage, but then argues that you can’t possibly tell whether those benefits would have actually accrued to nonmarried couples had they been married, because you don’t know if the nonmarried spouses and absent parents would have been any good at being spouses and parents:

The assumption that the missing parents … are average parents who would contribute an average amount of earnings and an average amount of child care is obviously ridiculous. As with any group, the missing parents are a heterogenous bunch, but that population almost certainly skews toward below-average earnings and below-average domestic contribution, with many actually having a net-negative domestic contribution, whether because they are abusive, demanding or otherwise.

This is obviously true for some share of the unmarried population and divorced population. Some subset of kids are better off without a dysfunctional or dangerous parent, some set of spouses are better off separated or divorced.

But what share? Bruenig’s point is that Kearney and other marriage apologists don’t know — fair enough. But if we’re relying on the problem of “net-negative” potential spouses to explain why roughly half of all births to women without four-year college degrees now happen without married fathers, while [*the same figure*](https://www.childtrends.org/publications/dramatic-increase-in-percentage-of-births-outside-marriage-among-whites-hispanics-and-women-with-higher-education-levels) for women with four-year degrees is about 10 percent, then we’re basically assuming that a really big slice of moderately educated Americans — American men, mostly — are presently unmarriageable, unfit and dysfunctional, despite incomes that are higher than those of the almost universally married parents of the Eisenhower-era past.

This is a fairly bleak perspective. Sure, it allows, married child-rearing seems to benefit the professional class, it seems to benefit many of our journalistic friends and colleagues and neighbors, it’s what we expect from those friends and neighbors’ kids when the time comes … but you can’t expect marriage to help women making $35,000 a year because the potential spouses in their socioeconomic bracket aren’t any good at being decent husbands and fathers. So all we can offer to those parents is money, education and the hope that their kids will eventually go to a four-year college, apparently the only place where you can find someone whom it’s safe to marry before you start having kids.

Bleak stuff, but hardly incoherent, if you take a certain kind of feminist analysis seriously. This analysis, which I think Traister would partly endorse, holds that more men were marriageable under pre-sexual-revolution conditions because women usually depended on them for income and were forced to stick with them, no matter what. Then, when women’s incomes rose and nonmarital and divorced parenting became more socially acceptable, those same men’s personal faults were thrown into stark relief, even when they made enough money to be technically economically useful around the house.

But not all men; the men of the professional classes were, in effect, successfully re-educated into a new set of egalitarian and emotionally sensitive norms, making them desirable partners even under conditions of female independence. So the impediment to expanding the present benefits of upper-class marriage to the rest of society is psychological, not just material. More money helps, but you ultimately need less educated men to effectively become different kinds of people, to discard toxic masculinity and embrace enlightened manhood in some form. (Especially since now that women earn more college degrees, they’re often the ones who need to marry down the education ladder, and you can’t expect that to happen if blue-collar men are stuck on patriarchy.)

Just in case it isn’t clear, I have a pretty different view of how marriage declined, what a marital revival might look like after feminism, and [*what kind of responsibility*](https://archive.nytimes.com/douthat.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/29/social-liberalism-as-class-warfare/) the upper class bears to the rest of our society; again, more on this subject in some future newsletter.

But I think the foregoing is the best way to make sense of the data we have while sticking firmly to progressive priors. As with [*other aspects*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/18/opinion/woke-definition.html) of contemporary progressivism, no matter how much talk there is about economics, when you follow the logic it’s clear a kind of therapy comes first.

Breviary

Peter Hitchens on Marshal Pétain [*and the wages of defeat*](https://compactmag.com/article/the-shame-of-collaboration).

Tyler Austin Harper [*on the career*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2023/09/28/ibram-kendi-stamped-center-antiracist-research/) of Ibram X. Kendi.

Noah Millman [*on the necessity of retribution*](https://gideons.substack.com/p/is-retribution-illegitimate).

Patrick T. Brown [*on pro-life struggles*](https://thedispatch.com/article/why-the-pro-life-movement-wasnt-ready-for-a-post-roe-world/).

Charles Fain Lehman [*on Robert Caro’s builders*](https://thecausalfallacy.com/p/the-builders).

Andrew Ferguson [*on Richard Nixon’s marginalia*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/10/nixon-kissinger-marginalia-library/675111/).

Tyler Cowen [*reviews*](https://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2023/09/selective-breeding-and-the-birth-of-philosophy.html) Bronze Age Pervert.

This Week in Decadence

Every five to 10 years, the World Values Survey asks people in dozens of countries where they would place themselves on a scale from the zero-sum belief that “people can only get rich at the expense of others,” to the positive-sum view that “wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone.”

The average response among those in high-income countries has become 20 percent more zero-sum over the last century. Moreover, two distinct rises in the prevalence of zero-sum attitudes have coincided with two slowdowns in gross domestic product growth, one in the 1970s and another in the past two decades.

The same pattern holds within individual countries. Britons and Americans have become significantly more likely to believe that success is a matter of luck rather than effort precisely as income growth has slowed.

To be clear, no one is arguing that this shift in mind-set is not justified. …

The risk is that we have tipped into a negative cycle, with an economic slowdown fostering more suspicious and defensive thinking. That could act as a brake on the sorts of ambitious and utilitarian policies that might boost growth toward previous levels.

John Burn-Murdoch, “[*Are We Destined for a Zero-Sum Future?*](https://www.ft.com/content/980cbbe2-0f5d-4330-872d-c7a9d6a97bf6),” The Financial Times (Sept. 22)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alain Pilon FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***He Turned A Banana Into Art. Next Up: Guns.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWJ-7BW1-JBG3-612P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1837 words

**Byline:** By Laura Rysman

**Body**

From bananas as art to bullet-riddled panels: The Italian artist, in a rare in-person interview, tells why he turned his sardonic gaze on a violence-filled world.

''You should never ask an artist about their art,'' Maurizio Cattelan said, immediately on arrival. ''The best art raises lots and lots of questions,'' he added. ''Not answers.''

One of today's foremost artists, with a reputation that pervades well beyond the art world, Cattelan, 63, has a new bullet-riddled exhibition in New York that is bound to raise even more questions -- and some eyebrows.

He grants vanishingly few in-person interviews, he prefers image-making to explaining his images in words, and he's skittish about journalists mischaracterizing him. Yet he arrived early for our appointed meeting, parking his bicycle by the bench where, on the first hot spring day in Milan, we sat in the shade of a monastery. With his trademark swoosh of silver hair and his feet up on the bench like a schoolchild, he spoke eagerly in Italian about his first major New York exhibition since his pivotal retrospective, ''All,'' at the Guggenheim in 2011, in which nearly his entire oeuvre was suspended like a mobile.

''I hate,'' he declared, ''when they call me a joker.'' The artist, who notoriously created an effigy of a pope toppled by a meteorite, made a fully-functioning solid gold toilet that he named ''America,'' and blew the world's collective mind when he taped a banana to the wall and sold it as art, has continually garnered variations of the joker title -- jester, prankster, trickster -- but his is the cosmic joke, the joke of the Stoic philosophers: death, and our illusions of self-importance before oblivion comes for us, and for him.

If Cattelan's work is no laughing matter, it is undeniably button-pushing, and for his Gagosian show opening April 30, he turns his sardonic gaze on the unsettling subject of gun violence. His new works are pierced by bullets -- steel panels plated in 24-karat gold to a mirrorlike reflection, their ammunition wounds warping the metal surfaces.

''Beauty, luxury, and violence,'' as Cattelan described them -- monuments to murder, though not his first effort. The artist previously collected sacks of detritus from a deadly 1993 Mafia bombing in Milan as a memorial, presented marble statues portraying sheet-covered corpses, and depicted 9/11 with a monolithic tower pierced by a plane, watched over by thousands of taxidermied pigeons haunting the site.

The shot-up panels, 64 in all and entitled ''Sunday,'' weigh about 80 pounds each and stretch almost 54 inches high -- about the size of a 10-year-old child. Cattelan compared the assemblage, mounted together on a single wall, to the execution wall of a firing squad.

''When I read the front page of the newspapers, all they talk about is violence,'' he said. ''I'm completely immersed in violence.''

''We,'' he went on, pointing a finger at himself, at me, at everyone sunning themselves in the monastery's park, ''we, we, we are completely immersed in violence every day, and we've gotten used to it. The repetition has made us accept violence as inevitable.''

Suddenly, a dense flock of pigeons whooshed threateningly close to his head -- retaliation for their taxidermied brethren? -- as Cattelan paused to deflect their path with his hands in the air.

He recounted an impossibly risky work he had long wished to make: a bulletproof glass wall with a gallery audience on one side, and a shooter firing a gun at them from the opposite side -- a bit too terrifying even for an art world familiar with Chris Burden's 1971 performance, in which he had himself shot (non-lethally) in a gallery -- a work Cattelan cited as an influence.

With the ''Sunday'' panels, the audience participates instead in the aftermath of a shooting, seeing their own reflections riddled with bullet holes, with the seductive beauty of gold's glimmer -- and with competing implications of both an indictment and a glorification of violence.

''Gold and guns,'' Cattelan said, ''are the American dream.'' The message: Violence -- not fictional movie violence but the all-too-real barbarity of mass shootings, murders and wars -- is now part of pop culture.

Cattelan has experimented with gunshots before, shooting up American and British flags, or rather, having them shot. The artist, who is based in Milan and New York, maintains no studio, much less a shooting range, and his works are almost always fabricated by others. With ''Sunday,'' Cattelan sought to universalize the symbol of violence, dropping the nationalistic imagery of flags and leaving ''just the shootings.''

He has created what he calls his first abstract works -- with overtones of Lucio Fontana's slashed canvases from the postwar era. The pistols, shotguns and semiautomatic weapons, he said, were ''used like chisels'' to carve through metal. He hired shooters at a New York City range to fire upon the panels with weapons that were easily and legally sourced thanks to America's lax gun restrictions. ''Where else in the world could you do that?'' he asked with a wry laugh. (Milan, by contrast, would not even allow a poster by Cattelan depicting a gun to appear on city streets, saying it violated decency laws.)

At Gagosian, in front of the golden execution wall, Cattelan is installing another work, his first-ever fountain. Carved in marble, it depicts a supine, down-and-out man holding his exposed phallus, which spurts water. ''There's a dialogue between these two works, in their opposition and their proximity,'' the artist said. The figure, modeled on a close friend and collaborator who died, evokes ''the swaths of people who are invisible in society,'' Cattelan added. The man is the type of discarded figure that visitors to the New York show will likely pass, and avoid, on their way to Gagosian.

''They're works that take on a different weight being shown in New York,'' the show's curator, Francesco Bonami, commented by phone. ''Maurizio is a political artist -- not political in the sense that he's presenting a position, but political in that he deals with society's problems and current events, and he always touches a raw nerve.'' He added, ''We'll see how Americans take to this show.''

The opening comes after Tennessee lawmakers passed a bill that would permit some school staff to carry concealed handguns, but as Cattelan commented, ''Every moment seems like the right moment to talk about violence, because every day there's more news about violence in the papers.''

In the monastery park, Cattelan critiqued modern materialism: ''Today, sacrament has been replaced by shopping,'' he said, contending that there's greater happiness to be found in a spartan life. (He rides his bike everywhere, and takes his near-daily swims in a municipal pool.) But he isn't afraid to play both sides. This show represents the first time he's agreed to collaborate with the mega-gallery owned by Larry Gagosian -- the dealer who has referred to art as ''money on the walls,'' and is probably the man most responsible for transforming the art world into the art market. But, as Bonami pointed out, who else could sponsor the production of a colossal wall of gold shootings?

Cattelan, saying the moment had arrived for a collaboration he had long evaded, noted: ''I'm doing a project with Larry Gagosian but I haven't signed anything,'' and ''I'm a free agent.'' His previous New York gallery show, in 2000, was at the influential but less blue-chip Marian Goodman Gallery.

Gagosian gallery declined requests for information about the works' fabrication cost or their selling price, but every piece in the show will be available for purchase. The gallery said prices will be made available upon the show's opening.

Cattelan's work hit its auction high price in May 2016 when ''Him,'' an infamous wax and resin sculpture of Hitler on his knees, sold at Sotheby's for $17.2 million, or about $22 million today.

Gazing at the park's Judas trees and their April magenta blossoms, Cattelan mused about his role in the Vatican pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale, at the Giudecca women's prison, where an outer wall is completely covered by his giant image of cadaverous-looking feet.

His formative childhood in the small northern city of Padua was steeped in Catholicism and provincial ***working-class*** culture, and despite his international acclaim, he still sees himself as the guy who worked as a hospital janitor and a morgue assistant.

''I grew up within ***working-class*** culture, and I'm not ashamed to be a part of it,'' Cattelan said, adding ''although someone pointed out that I may be dissociating from my status today.'' He explained that his instantly recognizable references -- from pigeons to Pinocchio, from toilets to Hitler -- make works intelligible ''to nonexperts as much as to experts.''

''My main audience is not the art world,'' he continued. ''It's people who might not be educated in what art is supposed to be, but who relate to the work.''

Roberta Tenconi, who curated the artist's 2021-22 exhibition at Hangar Bicocca, in Milan, with Vicente Todolí, said that ''the power of Maurizio's work is in layering familiar images to create something that resonates in a multitude of ways.'' She added, ''Nothing is ever singular or simple. And Maurizio loves to make people uncomfortable.''

Cattelan remarked, ''The more you're able to synthesize contrasting elements and to strip away any frills, the closer you get to something that functions like a symbol'' -- to create, essentially, indelible images that offer endless interpretations.

To wit: the banana, titled ''Comedian,'' from 2019, a phenomenon that was featured in seven articles in The New York Times alone, and on the cover of The New York Post. The banana prompted fascination and outrage, post-Duchamp discourse and art-world-gone-mad furor, as well as a head-spinning cycle of memes. At the time, Cattelan told me: ''Try to think about Napoleon without his horse -- it's impossible! Now try to think about pop culture without the banana'' -- the banana of Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground, the banana peel of slapstick, the proverbial banana in your pocket, as he said.

But today he brushes off the craze as ''just a viral moment,'' he said. ''Even if people know the banana, nobody knows who I am as an artist.''

Or so he would like to believe. Only a few minutes later, a ponytailed young man walking through the park interrupted us to request a selfie with him.

''People know you,'' I pointed out. Had he imagined becoming an artist while growing up in Padua? A forlorn headshake. ''The only thing I ever really dreamed of was independence,'' he said, pushing his shirt sleeves to his elbows as he stood up. ''The rest is fuffa'' -- in other words, baloney. And he rode away on his bicycle, leaving me there with a lot more questions.

Maurizio Cattelan: Sunday

Opening April 30 through June 15, Gagosian gallery, 522 West 21st Street, (212) 741 1717; gagosian.com.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/arts/design/cattelan-guns-gagosian-art.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/arts/design/cattelan-guns-gagosian-art.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''Gold and guns are the American dream,'' said Maurizio Cattelan, shown at Gagosian gallery in New York with part of his show titled ''Sunday.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Maurizio Cattelan works, above from left: ''La Nona Ora'' (1999), an effigy of Pope John Paul II struck by a meteorite, largely understood as irreverent dark humor

''Comedian'' (2019), a banana duct-taped to a wall, which sold in three editions starting at $120,000 at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2019

''Blind'' (2021), a resin monolith pierced by an airplane, a reminder of 9/11

a functioning 18-karat gold toilet named ''America'' (2016), later stolen from Blenheim Palace and melted down. Below, clockwise from left: ''Father,'' for the 2024 Venice Biennale

''All'' (2007)

Cattelan with ''Sunday.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAURIZIO CATTELAN AND GAGOSIAN

PHOTO BY ZENO ZOTTI

ANDREA MEROLA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C12) This article appeared in print on page C1, C12.

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[***Track Will Be First Sport to Pay Olympic Gold Medalists***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS6-0211-JBG3-602X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** SPORTS; olympics

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**Byline:** Victor Mather Victor Mather covers sports as well as breaking news for The Times.

**Highlight:** Winners in Paris will get $50,000 each from track and field’s governing body, as Olympic amateurism continues to fade away.

**Body**

Winners in Paris will get $50,000 each from track and field’s governing body, as Olympic amateurism continues to fade away.

Track and field will be the first sport to give direct cash payments for Olympic gold medals, the sport’s federation announced Wednesday.

For decades, the Olympics trumpeted the ideal of amateurism. It took pride in being a competition where elite athletes battled for nothing more than the joy of representing their country.

Amateurism was touted as the best way to keep sports clean, fair and honest. “Professionalism” was looked down on as vulgar and mercenary. But the notion of amateurism at the Olympics has eroded over the last three decades, as professional athletes have been allowed to participate.

Now World Athletics, the global governing body for track and field, will break new ground by making payments to competitors more straightforward: All individual gold medalists in the sport at the Paris Games this summer will receive $50,000. (Winning relay teams will share the money.) The federation said it would begin paying silver and bronze medalists lesser amounts in 2028.

The federation president, Sebastian Coe, a two-time gold medalist in the amateur era, [*called the decision*](https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/world-athletics-introduces-prize-money-for-olympic-gold-medallists) “a pivotal moment for World Athletics and the sport of athletics as a whole, underscoring our commitment to empowering the athletes and recognizing the critical role they play in the success of any Olympic Games.”

Mr. Coe is considered a leading candidate to be the next president of the International Olympic Committee, and could perhaps pave the way for an expansion of the payments to other sports.

Depending on the athlete, the prize money could be a significant reward. “On the surface, $50,000 probably does not seem like a great deal of money for an Olympic champion,” said Kyle Merber, a former elite miler and a contributor to the track and field news website Citius Mag. “But for many of the individuals in non-premier events, who perhaps compete for a smaller country, this money can go a long way.”

The ideal of amateurism, which developed as a concept in the 19th century, was also a convenient way for the Olympics to keep out ***working-class*** athletes who couldn’t afford to skip work to compete against “gentlemen.”

As professional leagues in many sports started popping up around the world in the 20th century, the Olympics drew a hard line, disqualifying any athletes who were tainted by accepting filthy lucre. Most notoriously, the American Jim Thorpe, regarded as the world’s greatest athlete, was stripped of his two gold medals from the 1912 Games when it was discovered he had accepted a few dollars for playing professional baseball some years before. (That decision was not [*fully reversed*](https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/world-athletics-introduces-prize-money-for-olympic-gold-medallists) until 2022.)

Amateurism was taken extremely seriously. A seemingly harmless proposal to allow amateurs and professionals to compete in the same events [*was described as a “radical scheme”*](https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/world-athletics-introduces-prize-money-for-olympic-gold-medallists) in The New York Times in 1913.

Eventually, as the Olympics grew in global popularity, amateurism allowed the International Olympic Committee to benefit from essentially free labor and keep as much of the billions of dollars in TV money it earned as possible.

Amateurism also gave the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries a big edge in international competition after World War II. Since there were nominally no professional athletes in a Communist system, entrants from those countries could compete in the Olympics through their 20s and 30s while earning a living as “coaches” or “teachers.” Western athletes often quit competing in the Games after college to play professionally or get a real job. Opponents of the system denounced it as “shamateurism.”

With the Olympic committee eager to lure the world’s best athletes to the Games, strict amateurism rules started to ease in the 1990s. It worked, most notably with the likes of Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson playing basketball for the United States. But the newly arrived professional athletes still were not directly paid prize money for their medals, although certain national federations often offered cash bonuses.

Amateurism is no longer the watchword of the Olympic movement: [*The word appears nowhere in the 112 pages of the current Olympic Charter*](https://worldathletics.org/news/press-releases/world-athletics-introduces-prize-money-for-olympic-gold-medallists). Much like athletes competing in the nude, as they did at the ancient Greek Games, Olympic amateurism may be slipping into history.

Scott Cacciola contributed reporting.

Scott Cacciola contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Individual track and field champions in Paris will each receive $50,000. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHEL EULER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page B12.

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Bowman, in Fight for His Political Life, Embraces the Left’s Star Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9P-M581-JBG3-600Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders rallied with Jamaal Bowman on Saturday, three days before the primary on Tuesday.

**Body**

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders rallied with Jamaal Bowman on Saturday, three days before the primary on Tuesday.

He cracked jokes on “The Late Show With Stephen Colbert,” spit verses with the rapper Cash Cobain and spent the weekend rallying with two of the left’s biggest names: Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Overpowered on the airwaves and behind in the polls, Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York is leaning heavily on national star power in a last-minute bid to alter the trajectory of one of the nation’s [*most hotly contested Democratic primaries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/nyregion/bowman-latimer-aoc-squad.html).

The megawatt events drove home the sharp political contrasts between the congressman and his opponent, George Latimer. But they also demonstrated how the candidates are betting on two very different paths to victory, in a district split between wealthy suburbs and ***working-class*** neighborhoods, and among white, Black and Latino voters.

“This is a turnout race, y’all,” Mr. Bowman boomed at an event with Mr. Sanders on Friday in Hastings-on-Hudson, just north of his hometown, Yonkers. “This is not about persuasion. We got our people. They got their people.”

Instead of reaching toward Mr. Latimer’s supporters at the party’s center, Mr. Bowman, 48, embraced the left-leaning positions that helped make him a national figure. He denounced large corporations and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s [*record spending blitz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/nyregion/bowman-latimer-aoc-squad.html) against him, in hopes of increasing participation by progressives and voters of color.

Mr. Latimer, a middle-of-the-road Democrat and the Westchester County executive, ground toward the primary on Tuesday largely alone, with no tinsel or celebrity surrogates in sight.

He entered the race’s final days with enough confidence in his older, suburban base to repeatedly venture into Co-op City in the Bronx and Mr. Bowman’s own backyard, offering himself as a drama-free alternative to the two-term incumbent. With pro-Israel political groups pummeling Mr. Bowman with $15 million in negative ads, Mr. Latimer, 70, mostly played it safe.

When he offered a brief musical performance on Thursday to hundreds of seniors at Yonkers’s Ukrainian Youth Center, it was his own surprisingly smooth version of “On the Street Where You Live” from “My Fair Lady.”

The tune, evidently, was the message.

“This is everything about the difference between us,” Mr. Latimer said afterward. “I am the local guy. It seems counterintuitive if you look at our ages or demographics. But he is much more a person who has cultivated a national image.”

Mr. Latimer [*jumped into the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/nyregion/bowman-latimer-aoc-squad.html) late last year, in large part because he was being urged by Jewish leaders to oppose Mr. Bowman’s outspoken criticism of Israel’s war with Hamas. But he has consistently highlighted local issues, knocking Mr. Bowman for voting against President Biden’s major infrastructure bills that promised to help rebuild roads and replace old pipes in the district, and for neglecting parts of the district with large numbers of white residents.

Mr. Bowman, the first Black person to represent the district in Congress, has bristled at the characterization and has lobbed accusations of racism at Mr. Latimer.

In recent days, Mr. Bowman has also sought to mix in levity. He jumped up and down as he rapped onstage at the concert that his campaign aimed at young voters in Port Chester, which is majority Latino. He shot hoops with young boys in the Bronx. Videographers wielding high-tech equipment captured footage for social media.

The rally with Mr. Sanders and Ms. Ocasio-Cortez on Saturday took place in the South Bronx, miles away from Mr. Bowman’s district. Groups like Sunrise Movement, the Democratic Socialists of America and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice all sent representatives despite the scorching heat, though relatively few identified themselves as voters in Mr. Bowman’s district.

“This election is not about Jamaal versus Mr. Latimer,” said Mr. Sanders, a Vermont independent. “This election is about whether the billionaire class and the oligarchs will control the United States government.”

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez defended Mr. Bowman against accusations that his calls for a cease-fire and the end of American military aid to Israel made him anti-Israel or antisemitic.

“We know that the absolute leveling of Gaza is being paid for with the funds that are being kept from our health care, our schools,” she said. “We cannot support that anymore. We can’t. It’s not extreme. It’s not fringe. It’s not bigoted to want everybody to be protected.”

Mr. Bowman took a more confrontational tone, lashing out at AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby that has spent more money trying to defeat him than any third-party group has ever spent on a House race.

“People ask me why I got a foul mouth,” he said. “What am I supposed to do? You coming after me. You coming after my family. You coming after my children. I’m not supposed to fight back?”

He also accused his opponent of supporting what he characterized as a genocide in Gaza.

A spokesman for Mr. Latimer’s campaign fired back. “Jamaal Bowman’s divisive and dishonest attacks, combined with his antisemitic dog whistles, are why voters are turning against him in droves,” he said.

In a sign of how deeply the conflict has fractured the left, Saturday’s event attracted dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters angry that Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, Mr. Sanders and Mr. Bowman had endorsed Mr. Biden while his administration continued to stand by Israel.

They beat drums and chanted through the politicians’ speeches, repeating “Say it loud, say it clear, we don’t want no sellouts here” and “You’re a fraud, A.O.C.,” using Ms. Ocasio-Cortez’s initials.

“These are the people who call themselves our allies,” said Nerdeen Kiswani, a founder of Within Our Lifetime, a pro-Palestinian group that organized the protest. “We are holding them to the standard that they set — that they claim to set — for themselves.”

The district is home to a sizable Jewish population, and there were signs Jewish voters were turning out to vote early in strong numbers, most likely good news for Mr. Latimer.

Teach Coalition, a group that advances the interests of yeshivas and other Jewish schools, spent $1 million over the course of the race to register 2,000 Republicans and independents as Democrats and then get Jewish voters to the polls. It appeared to be paying dividends.

The group estimated on Friday that Jewish voters had most likely accounted for 36 percent of all early votes cast so far, despite making up just 9 percent of the district’s total voter pool.

The coalition’s leader, Maury Litwack, emphasized that the turnout drive was nonpartisan, but he added, “Anybody looking at this race would say the overwhelming feeling of the Jewish community leans toward Latimer, versus Bowman.”

Mr. Latimer also seemed to be in good standing among the diverse group of seniors he met in Yonkers, who greeted him with applause. Many said they had followed his career for decades.

“He’s a unifier and not divisive,” said Susan Greenberg, a retired health care administrator from Hastings-on-Hudson. “It goes way back.”

Kenneth Diaz, a real estate agent in Yonkers and self-described “Bernie guy” who was at the luncheon, said the race had been “hard to watch.” He supported Mr. Bowman eagerly in the past and thinks he is right about the war in Gaza.

But Mr. Diaz said Mr. Bowman lost standing in his eyes when he pulled a fire alarm in a House office building last fall as he rushed to the Capitol. [*The false alarm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/nyregion/bowman-latimer-aoc-squad.html) sent Congress into chaos and resulted in a misdemeanor charge, one more embarrassing note for a country Mr. Diaz fears is losing its civility.

“It was a boneheaded thing to do,” he said. “I know why it was done, but still, it’s not befitting the position.”

Molly Longman contributed reporting.

Molly Longman contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Representative Jamaal Bowman is leaning on megawatt events with well-known guests, including a rally on Saturday with Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); George Latimer is largely grinding toward the primary on Tuesday alone with no tinsel in sight. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TED SHAFFREY/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2024

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[***Using Blonde Ambition, Fabulously, to Conquer the World***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCM-9FG1-JBG3-60PP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 1, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4; THE GLOBAL PROFILE

**Length:** 1410 words

**Byline:** By Jack Nicas and Victor Moriyama

**Body**

São Paulo's main avenue was packed this month with thousands of people draped in the yellow and green of the Brazilian flag and captivated by a commanding figure atop a tractor-trailer rigged with speakers.

From above, the scene could have maybe passed for one of the many political rallies held in the same spot by former President Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazilian far-right leader who has infamously declared that he could never love a gay son.

(Though, to be fair, the enormous rainbow flag would be a giveaway.)

It was, in fact, one of the world's largest Pride parades, and the person atop the sound truck was Phabullo Rodrigues da Silva, 30, the gay son of a ***working-class*** single mother in Brazil's north.

Yet everyone in the crowd knew him as Pabllo Vittar, a 6-foot-2-inch drag queen in a glittering cutoff Brazilian soccer jersey and shredded jean shorts -- one of the biggest pop stars in this nation of 203 million.

''It's so beautiful to see you in yellow and green!'' Pabllo Vittar shouted to those in the crowd, many wearing fishnet and G-strings. She had called on the revelers to wear Brazil's national colors to reclaim the Brazilian flag from Mr. Bolsonaro's right-wing movement. ''Let's dance!''

RuPaul may still be the queen of queens, but the heir to the global crown has arrived.

Over the past seven years, Pabllo Vittar has become, by some measures, the world's most successful drag queen. She has six studio albums (one gold, one platinum and two double platinum), her own fashion release with Adidas, a global ad campaign with Calvin Klein and 1.8 billion streams of her songs.

She has toured the United States and Europe; taken the stage at Lollapalooza and Coachella; performed alongside Madonna at Madonna's biggest concert; and sang at the United Nations for Queen Elizabeth's birthday.

Pabllo Vittar calls RuPaul, 63, the American drag queen pioneer, an inspiration, though they have never met. And RuPaul has shot down any talk of competition. ''I LOVE & SUPPORT @PablloVittar,'' RuPaul wrote on Twitter in 2022. ''Shame on you catty Twitter trolls trying to create a rivalry.''

By the metric of the modern internet, however, it is hard to argue with the idea that Pabllo Vittar has begun to surpass her childhood idol. Across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube, Pabllo Vittar has a combined 36 million followers, three times that of RuPaul.

In the process, Pabllo Vittar has come to represent Brazil's L.G.B.T.Q. paradox.

In addition to being home to a crew of breakout drag stars, Brazil has adopted some of the world's most expansive gay rights. Gay couples can marry and adopt children; transgender people can legally choose their gender; homophobic slurs are a crime; and so-called conversion therapy, which seeks to make gay people straight, is banned.

Yet for years Brazil has also ranked among the deadliest countries for gay and transgender people. Since 2008, more than 1,840 transgender people have been murdered in Brazil, more than double the next deadliest country, Mexico, according to tracking by Transgender Europe, an advocacy group. Brazil has led the rankings every year since tracking began.

''We never know when it will be my friend, when it will be my family, when it will be me,'' Pabllo Vittar said in an interview. ''This is the biggest goal of my career: To make it so younger people don't feel this fear when they go out.''

Pabllo Vittar has emerged as one of Brazil's loudest gay voices against a right-wing movement in the country, led by conservative Christian groups, that has made a heterosexual vision of gender, sex and marriage a central part of its political strategy.

Pabllo Vittar was a harsh critic of Mr. Bolsonaro during the 2022 election, drawing a formal complaint from the former president's campaign after calling for his ouster from the stage at Lollapalooza. When Mr. Bolsonaro lost to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a leftist, Pabllo Vittar headlined Mr. Lula's inauguration concert.

''A drag queen taking the stage is already a political act,'' Pabllo Vittar said. ''I show the child and the mother in the back that they can be where I am, too, to not be afraid, to not give up on who they are.''

To Pabllo Vittar's gay and transgender fans, she has been a powerful inspiration.

''She gives us such a sense of security,'' said João Rabelo, 28, a publicist from the northern Brazilian city where Pabllo Vittar was born. ''Today I can walk in the street with my boyfriend relaxed and not fear death.''

While the public largely sees Pabllo Vittar dressed as a woman, the star lives life as a man. Gender ''is a societal construct,'' Mr. Rodrigues da Silva (the star's real name) said. ''What's most important is how we feel inside. I feel like a boy, and when Pabllo Vittar arrives, it doesn't make me a woman.''

On pronouns, she is indifferent -- when out of drag. ''If I'm in drag, use the feminine, for the love of God,'' she said.

In a way, the lifestyle has created two separate lives: Phabullo, the man, and Pabllo, the drag queen.

Phabullo is a shut-in who lives with his mother, stepfather and sister in a luxury home in a small city in Brazil's equivalent of the Midwest. When working as Pabllo, she stays in a small apartment in São Paulo, Latin America's largest metropolis.

Phabullo is shy and hates taking about himself. Pabllo is the opposite. ''If the blonde was here, she'd be hitting on you,'' the star told me in an interview, not in drag, speaking about his alter ego. ''She's saucy. She's naughty. I'm not.''

And yes, he talks about his drag act in the third person. ''Because she really is a third person,'' he said. ''When I do something as Pabllo Vittar and it spills over into my life, where I'm shy, I hate it. I want to crawl into a hole.''

Mr. Rodrigues da Silva was born in Maranhão, Brazil's poorest state, to a single mother who worked as a nurse technician. By age 5, he was already seeking the stage, starting with the choir at church. ''I just wanted to sing,'' he said, ''and I wanted people to see me sing.''

He said he was mocked by classmates for being effeminate but his mother always supported him. By his teenage years, he was singing on YouTube and in bars. Then, at a Halloween party at a gay club on his 18th birthday, he tried drag.

''I had never experienced such a powerful sensation of freedom -- to be able to express what was going on inside my head,'' he said.

At the same time, a video of him singing a Whitney Houston song was going viral. The club's owner, Yan Hayashi, and a music producer, Rodrigo Gorky, quickly saw the potential and began managing Mr. Rodrigues da Silva as Pabllo Vittar. (The name was in homage to a drag queen Mr. Rodrigues da Silva knew earlier.)

Pabllo Vittar quickly landed a gig fronting a band on a late-night variety show. Then she began releasing music, and by 2017, she had Brazil's No. 1 song.

Pabllo Vittar has since become one of Brazil's most dependable draws, with a high-pitched voice, elaborate dance routines and a high energy show. She has also gained a moderate international following, mostly among the L.G.B.T.Q. community, but is now working on an album that mixes in English and Spanish.

Owen Mallon, a Chicago native who is one of Pabllo Vittar's three managers, is tasked with figuring out how to make a Portuguese-speaking drag queen a bankable international star. Yet he has been consistently impressed with the reaction.

''Even though people don't know the language, they love her and what she represents, and then the show just speaks for itself,'' he said.

Her music ranges from pop to electronic to Brazilian. Her latest album covers popular music from Brazil's north and northeast, where she grew up, including forró, with its accordions, and tecnobrega, with its synthesizers.

After sitting for an interview as Mr. Rodrigues da Silva, she emerged as Pabllo Vittar hours later at a charity concert in her native state of Maranhão. The transformation typically takes three hours. (Like an athlete collecting free sneakers, she has amassed a collection of 200 wigs donated from a London wig maker.)

She wore a tight top that imitated the state flag, a blond wig, white boots, a tiny skirt and a G-string. Waiting to take the stage with her cadre of male dancers in the Brazilian heat, her hair stylist used a fan to cool her butt.

''My favorite place in the world,'' she said. Then she strutted onstage and the crowd erupted.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/americas/pabllo-vittar-drag-queen-brazil.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/americas/pabllo-vittar-drag-queen-brazil.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, above and below, Pabllo Vittar wowing the crowd at a concert in São Luís, Brazil. The drag queen is one of Brazil's biggest stars. Left, Phabullo Rodrigues da Silva out of makeup. ''If the blonde was here, she'd be hitting on you,'' he said of his alter ego. ''She's saucy. She's naughty. I'm not.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTOR MORIYAMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** July 1, 2024

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[***Five Takeaways From France’s Snap Election***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCK-VXX1-JBG3-6017-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1621 words

**Highlight:** It was a big day for the far-right National Rally. Just how big will not be clear until after a second round of voting.

**Body**

It was a big day for the far-right National Rally. Just how big will not be clear until after a second round of voting.

A new week of frenetic campaigning started in France on Monday, a day after the far-right National Rally party [*dominated the first round*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) of legislative elections that attracted an unusually high number of voters and dealt a stinging blow to President Emmanuel Macron.

Voters are being asked to choose their representatives in the 577-seat National Assembly, the country’s lower and more prominent house of Parliament. They will return to the polls on Sunday for the second round of voting.

If a new majority of lawmakers opposed to Mr. Macron is ushered in, he will be forced to appoint a political adversary as prime minister, substantially shifting France’s domestic policy and muddling its foreign policy. That will be especially so if he is forced to govern alongside Jordan Bardella, the 28-year-old president of the National Rally who the party wants to become prime minister.

If no clear majority emerges, the country could be headed for months of political deadlock or turmoil. Mr. Macron, who has ruled out resigning, [*cannot call new legislative elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) for another year.

Official results [*published by the Interior Ministry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) showed that the anti-immigrant [*National Rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) party and its allies won about 33 percent of the vote. The New Popular Front, a broad alliance of left-wing parties, got about 28 percent; Mr. Macron’s centrist Renaissance party and its allies garnered about 20 percent; and mainstream conservatives got only about 6.7 percent.

Here are five takeaways from the first round to help make sense of the elections so far.

Voters flocked to the polls in unusually high numbers.

France’s legislative elections normally occur just weeks after the presidential race and usually favor the party that has won the presidency. That makes legislative votes less likely to draw in voters, many of whom feel as if the outcome is preordained.

But this vote — a snap election [*called unexpectedly by Mr. Macron*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) — was different. The participation rate on Sunday was nearly 67 percent, far more than the 47.5 percent recorded in the first round of the last parliamentary elections, in 2022.

That jump reflected the intense interest in a high-stakes race and a belief among voters that their ballot could fundamentally alter the course of Mr. Macron’s presidency.

Already, the government has announced that it is suspending contentious plans to tighten rules on unemployment benefits.

The final results are especially hard to predict.

For an absolute majority, a party needs 289 seats, and France’s main polling institutes have released cautious projections suggesting that the National Rally could win 240 to 310 in the next round of voting.

The New Popular Front alliance, they say, may get 150 to 200 seats, while Mr. Macron’s Renaissance party and its allies may win 70 to 120.

But using first-round results to predict the second-round outcome has always been tricky because of the nature of France’s electoral system. The legislative elections are, in essence, 577 separate races.

Under certain conditions, a candidate who gets more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round wins outright. On Sunday, 76 candidates were directly elected that way.

But most seats are usually decided only after a second-round runoff between the top vote getters.

The National Rally and its allies made it into a runoff or were directly elected in 485 districts, according to an [*analysis of the results by Franceinfo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html). The New Popular Front was headed to a runoff or had been directly elected in 446.

Mr. Macron’s centrist coalition was poised to lose many of the seats it had held since 2022, having earned a runoff spot or been directly elected in just 319 of them.

Much can happen between the two rounds.

Complicating matters even further, the runoffs in some districts can feature three or even four candidates if they are able to get at least 12.5 percent of registered voters’ votes. Usually, this is rare. But on Sunday, because of the jump in participation, it was not.

In 2022, there were eight three-way races. This time, polling institutes projected that there would be more than 200.

Many parties — especially on the left — said they would pull out a third-place candidate to help prevent the far right from winning. But there remained some confusion on Monday.

Some of Mr. Macron’s allies, for instance, suggested that his party or its allies should not withdraw a candidate in cases where it would help a candidate from the hard-left France Unbowed party, which has been accused of antisemitism. Others said the far right had to be stopped at all costs.

A far-right government, or gridlock, may be next.

Two outcomes seem most likely.

Only the National Rally appears in a position to secure enough seats for an absolute majority. If it does, Mr. Macron would have no other practical choice than to appoint Mr. Bardella prime minister. He could try to appoint someone else, but it would run counter to the voters’ choice and National Rally lawmakers would quickly topple that person in a no-confidence vote.

If Mr. Bardella is named, he would then form a cabinet and control domestic policy.

Presidents have traditionally retained control over foreign policy and defense matters in such scenarios, but the Constitution does not always offer clear guidelines.

That would leave an anti-immigrant, Euroskeptic far-right party governing a country that has been at the heart of the European project. Mr. Bardella could clash with Mr. Macron over issues like France’s contribution to the European Union budget or support for Ukraine in its [*war with Russia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html).

Several thousand demonstrators, mainly left-wing, gathered in central Paris on Sunday evening to protest the National Rally.

If the National Rally fails to secure an absolute majority — Mr. Bardella has said he would not govern without one — Mr. Macron would have limited choices of how to proceed.

The president could try to build a coalition, but France is not accustomed to doing so, unlike [*Germany*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html). And the three main blocs in the lower house — the far right, the left-wing alliance, and Mr. Macron’s centrist coalition — have radically different agendas and, in some cases, have expressed extreme animosity toward each other.

It is unclear how France moves forward if no working majority can be cobbled together.

One possibility being discussed by analysts is having a caretaker government that handles the day-to-day business of running the country until there is a political breakthrough, as has [*happened in Belgium*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html). But this, too, would be a departure from French tradition.

The market appears to be OK with gridlock in Parliament.

Investors have been troubled by the prospect that either the National Rally, with its Euroskeptic outlook, or the New Popular Front, with its heavy tax-and-spend programs, would gain power.

France, which is heavily indebted from spending to support businesses and households during pandemic lockdowns and later in response to surging inflation, faced higher borrowing costs and a slumping stock market after Mr. Macron called for new elections three weeks ago.

On Monday, however, the euro and French bonds rose because of optimism that even though the National Rally won the most votes, it could struggle to gain a majority of seats in the National Assembly.

Investors are betting that the most likely outcome next Sunday is a hung Parliament in which neither the far right nor the united left has a majority, creating legislative gridlock.

But that optimism may be short-lived: [*France was reprimanded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) last month by the European Union for breaching rules that require countries to maintain strict budgetary discipline. Economists are warning of the risk of a debt crisis if a paralyzed government cannot rein in France’s finances — or if the National Rally wins and goes on a spending spree to carry out expensive campaign promises.

The far right has made inroads into all segments of the population.

The National Rally’s victory was yet another sign that [*the party’s yearslong journey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) from the fringes of French politics to the gilded halls of France’s Republic is all but complete. It nearly doubled its share of the vote from 2022, when it got 18.68 percent of the vote in the first round of the parliamentary elections.

One [*study*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html) released on Sunday made clear how much the party has expanded its voter base.

The study by the Ipsos polling institute, conducted among a representative sample of 10,000 registered voters before the election, found that the National Rally electorate had “grown and diversified.”

The party still fares the best among the ***working class***, the polling institute said in [*an analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/30/world/europe/france-elections.html), noting that it got 57 percent of the blue-collar vote.

But its electoral base has “considerably widened,” Ipsos said, noting that the party had increased its scores by 15 to 20 percentage points among retirees, women, people younger than 35 years old, voters with higher incomes and big-city dwellers.

“In the end, the National Rally vote has spread,” the polling institute said, “creating a more homogeneous electorate than before, and one that is quite in tune with the French population as a whole.”

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Hénin-Beaumont, France, and Liz Alderman from Paris.

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting from Hénin-Beaumont, France, and Liz Alderman from Paris.

PHOTOS: Voters in Lyon, France, on Sunday. The second round of voting to choose representatives in the National Assembly will be July 7. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURENT CIPRIANI/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Biking through tear gas fired during protests in Paris on Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY FABRIZIO BENSCH/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A5.

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[***‘Not Everything Was Bad’: Saluting the Mercedes of Eastern Europe and a Communist Past; Germany Dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4T-M101-DXY4-X1MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** Christopher F. Schuetze Christopher F. Schuetze is a reporter for The Times based in Berlin, covering politics, society and culture in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

**Highlight:** A festival of classic cars from the communist era brings out some nostalgia in eastern Germany for pre-unification days, although the abuses that occurred behind the Iron Curtain aren’t forgotten.

**Body**

A festival of classic cars from the communist era brings out some nostalgia in eastern Germany for pre-unification days, although the abuses that occurred behind the Iron Curtain aren’t forgotten.

As the beige car bounced up to the former Soviet barracks, the rattling of its half-century-old motor overpowered the din of people setting up for the day’s festivities at a temporary fairground.

A man dressed in the dark green uniform of a 1950s traffic cop, replete with an old-fashioned leather cap, blew his whistle sharply and waved the car — a well-maintained 1980 Wartburg, a classic despite the engine’s clatter — through to the parking lot.

The driver of the little sedan, once considered the Mercedes of Eastern Europe, slipped the clutch, jolting the car forward. The lapse earned a rebuke from a costumed parking attendant.

“You are entering the G.D.R. now,” he yelled with mock anger, referring to the extinct East German state. “Leave your Western manners behind!”

For more than a decade, [*the G.D.R. Museum Pirna*](https://www.ddr-museum-pirna.de/) has played host to a May Day event in Pirna, just a few miles from the Czech border in Germany’s east, where people can celebrate cars emblematic of the communist era.

Built after the war in state-owned factories, the cars are smaller, less powerful and less showy than most Western cars from the same era. But to the excited visitors in Pirna, who often dress in contemporaneous garb to match the vehicles they arrived in, the polished and pampered cars embody a local pride.

The hundreds of motorcycles, buses, trucks, cars and farming vehicles on display exuded the nostalgia that many here feel for a vanished country that — despite its oppressive dictatorship — was home for decades.

“As a proud Easterner, I’m happy to help revive this iconic car,” said Tom Grossmann, standing in front of his lime green 1985 Trabant, best remembered for a chassis made of a material similar to reinforced cardboard. “If it means that there are more of these cars on German roads, all the better.”

Born in 1989, the year the Berlin Wall fell, Mr. Grossmann expressed a sentiment typical at the scene in Pirna.

For years, he had been dismissive of the old Eastern-built cars, but in middle age, his view changed. In part, he was drawn by the community that had developed among people who own the cars.

When he bought his sedan five years ago, he paid 3,000 euros, about $3,250, but then spent more than twice that refurbishing his ride, adding a sunroof, wider tires and custom upholstery.

Uwe Röckler, 23, neatly dressed in a G.D.R. police uniform from the 1980s, paraded past the lineup of cars giving out fake parking tickets and posing for photos with passers-by. Mr. Röckler is a stickler for details: The tickets he carefully filled out and pinned under wipers were written on an exact reproduction of the form used by East German police in the 1980s.

“It starts with a belt buckle that you find at a flea market,” he said. “And pretty soon, you’re wearing a full uniform,” he added, noting he had several spares hanging in his home closet.

To Mr. Röckler, whose parents toiled under the communist regime, the era holds a fascination. “Not everything was bad, it was just everyday life,” he said. Of the East German police, which many see as one of the most obvious manifestations of a repressive state, he said: “They were actually pretty good criminalists — in many ways equal to those in West.”

May 1 — formally known as the “International Day of Struggle of the ***Working Class*** and the Oppressed Peoples of the World” — was one of the most important dates on the socialist calendar. Though it was a public holiday and nobody had to work, attendance at state-organized parades was mandatory, and civilian brigades of factory workers, socialist youth groups and politicians were expected to march with signs celebrating progress and socialism.

Waiting in line to board a carefully maintained bus from 1958 that would take him on a tour of Pirna, Thomas Herzog, 62, remembers the requirements of that era well. “I’m here because no one is forcing me to be here,” he said with a laugh.

Among those in Pirna celebrating this May Day, 35 years after East Germans last celebrated it in a functioning communist state, many said the era had been rife with problems, including restrictions on speech and travel, with citizens living under the yoke of one of the most restrictive state security systems behind the Iron Curtain.

But as that time recedes into the past, memories of the communist country have become more attractive for many, especially as discontent with the current system grows.

According to a poll from December, 82 percent of Germans nationwide are at least somewhat unsatisfied with the government under Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Given that level of discontent, it’s unsurprising some people are looking backward.

In eastern Germany, where the disaffection is often more pronounced, many look toward the far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, for solutions. In Pirna’s state, Saxony, where voters head to the polls in September, the AfD polls at 30 percent, more than any other party on the ballot.

Conny Kaden, 60, the founder of the G.D.R. Museum, said that despite the benefits reunification brought, there were downsides.

The socialist state, he noted, in addition to offering jobs at state-run enterprises, had fostered a sense of community through mandatory meetings in youth, worker and community clubs. “I’m not saying this is about raising the G.D.R. flag,” Mr. Kaden said. “But we lost something, we lost the cohesion.”

Mr. Kaden built his museum dedicated to all things G.D.R. in 2005 and said ticket sales have been trending up.

The May Day car meet has also become more popular. This year, he estimated he had welcomed up to 3,500 visitors and hundreds of cars, likely breaking last year’s record.

The meet featured some Western cars, too. Two custom stretch limousine Volvos, used by the East German regime’s leaders, were parked in a prominent corner. Over the enormous radio inside of one, a tape of police chatter illegally recorded in 1989 played on a loop.

Mr. Röckler, who played the fake policeman handing out fake tickets, grew up in what had been West Germany, where his family moved after they had lost their jobs following reunification. As an adult, he returned to the former East Germany, in part because he said his hobby of dressing up as a Communist policeman was misunderstood in the West.

He was not sure it would have been completely understood by his late father, either.

Gesturing to his carefully pressed suit, he said, “I wonder what my dad would say if he could see me wearing this.”

PHOTOS: The G.D.R. Museum Pirna hosts an annual May Day event that celebrates cars emblematic of the communist era. Conny Kaden, above left, founded the museum in 2005. Uwe Röckler, above right, wrote a parking ticket for an old East German vehicle. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LENA MUCHA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** June 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Beneath the Barbershop Banter, a Sharpening Political Divide***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB0-PBC1-JBG3-6043-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1759 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina

**Body**

Daniel Trujillo and Paul Madrid took over the Eastside Cutters barbershop more than 20 years ago, just a few miles from the casinos of the Las Vegas Strip, where they both once worked.

Their profits bought them spacious ranch homes in subdivisions near their children's public schools. They tucked away enough money to take their families on the occasional vacation. They survived several boom-and-bust cycles -- a defining feature of Nevada's economy.

The walls of the shop are covered with Mr. Madrid's paintings of Mexican folk heroes, including Emiliano Zapata and Frida Kahlo, a display of an abiding ethnic pride.

A painting on the shop's window advertises another important aspect of their lives. Across the swirl of a barber pole, in ornate cursive, it reads: ''The ***Working Class***.''

''That's who we are, man, and we never forget it,'' Mr. Trujillo, 51, said. ''We want to work. We want money. We want freedom. That's it.''

''Nobody here ever got a great inheritance,'' Mr. Madrid, 54, added.

That identity, a badge of honor for Mr. Madrid and Mr. Trujillo, is a source of intense interest for two other men: Donald J. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. Democrats' support among Latino men, particularly those without a college degree, has eroded in the last several years, as Mr. Trump's G.O.P. has tried to rebrand itself the party of the ***working class***. President Biden's re-election could hinge on his campaign's ability to reverse this trend in several battleground states, including Nevada.

Mr. Madrid and Mr. Trujillo are a study in President Biden's challenge. Although the two share much of the same background -- both grew up in Las Vegas, learned a trade, briefly belonged to a union and make a stable living -- they are now split over who should be president.

Mr. Madrid has remained a loyal Democrat who stands by Mr. Biden, despite misgivings. Mr. Trujillo is an ardent supporter of Mr. Trump, whom he sees as giving voice to people like him.

It's a rift that is often messy and emotional when it cuts through families or social media feeds. But for these two men, friends who spend their days bantering in an aging Las Vegas strip mall, conversations about the divide are more revealing than wrenching.

There is much they agree about: Both have a hard time seeing how government improves their lives. Both worry about whether their children will be able to attain the same kind of economic success they have. Both lament that no president has managed to fix a deeply flawed immigration system.

Still, they part on basic principles: Mr. Madrid is convinced that politicians can, and should, do good. Mr. Trujillo believes the government should stay out of his way -- or maybe even be busted apart.

Nothing has done more to sharpen that split than nearly a decade of politics shaped by Mr. Trump. Politics has become part of the daily chatter in their barbershop, with more and more clients praising the former president, and venting deep frustration with both major parties. Yet the two friends' disagreements rarely spill out in orderly dogmatic debates, but rather in the provocative ribbing and friendly antagonism of men who focus more on their similarities than their differences.

Drawn to the 'Jerry Springer drama'

Mr. Madrid and Mr. Trujillo grew up in parallel: the children of rural New Mexicans who moved to Las Vegas during the boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s. They spoke Spanish with their grandparents, played football and rode around in lowriders.

After graduating from high school, Mr. Madrid joined the U.S. Army and was stationed in Alaska during the Gulf War. His friends' struggles with PTSD made him grateful that he never saw combat. Mr. Trujillo briefly worked as a busboy and in casinos on the Strip. When he tired of the cigarette smoke, he apprenticed with his brother, a barber.

For years, Mr. Madrid was the one far more interested in politics; he considered voting a civic obligation. Mr. Trujillo mostly tuned it all out, except when the news became entertaining fodder for holding court at the shop. (He remembers President Bill Clinton's impeachment fondly.)

''Politics talks to me. I don't talk to it,'' he said.

He remembers voting for Barack Obama once -- maybe in 2012, or maybe in the hype of 2008? Either way, it was Mr. Madrid who sold him on the idea that supporting the first Black president was important, exciting and a chance to be part of a change.

A few years later, when Mr. Trump arrived on the scene, politics found Mr. Trujillo once more. Mr. Trump's burn-the-house-down ethos matched Mr. Trujillo's nagging sense that the country needed to be shaken up. His news conferences made him laugh. Like many other Trump voters, Mr. Trujillo started paying closer attention and voting.

''Trump brought Jerry Springer drama to all of us,'' he said.

Mr. Trujillo was not turned off by Mr. Trump's crass rhetoric. He reveled in it. He still views Mr. Trump's caught-on-tape comment about grabbing women by the genitals as a sort of call to ''grab America'' in the same place. ''I don't mean disrespect,'' he said. ''It's him saying: 'Stop being a sissy.'''

Mr. Madrid smiles and rolls his eyes at the bluster. He rarely argues with Mr. Trujillo or his customers. He finds quiet ways to make his point. Soon after Mr. Biden won in 2020, Mr. Madrid hung a large American flag at the back of the shop, his attempt to show that patriotism did not belong only to one party.

Mr. Madrid regards Mr. Trump as a master manipulator who has taken advantage of Christians, like him, the ***working class*** and anyone who believes the U.S. political system needs fixing. He does not always keep his complaints to himself. A few years ago, at his weekly Bible study meeting, he worried over how Mr. Trump's attacks on immigrants were hurting his community, and a friend implored him to stop talking about politics.

His own optimism waxes and wanes, but he does not share the dim view of government that Mr. Trujillo and many of their customers do. Still, he wishes there were a leader younger than Mr. Biden poised to take over, and he cringes every time the president missteps.

Even small gaffes can take on a life of their own at the shop, where many clients join Mr. Trujillo in mocking the president.

''I'm a compassionate man,'' Mr. Trujillo said. ''I'd hate to see my grandfather up there like that, like all tired. I'd say, 'Come and sit down, abuelito, you know, chill a little. You've done enough.' But he's up there, and he wants to keep going.''

As much as he might wish otherwise, Mr. Madrid has accepted that Mr. Biden will be his party's nominee. He is already looking ahead at the next generation of Democrats.

''I try to just hang on,'' he said, ''and hope someone better comes along fast.''

What's going to affect me?

Ever since the shop reopened after having closed during the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the mood among the largely Latino clientele has been bleak.

Men vent their grievances and ask each other: When will they get ahead? These men -- and they are all men (Mr. Trujillo politely declines any women who wander in looking for a trim) -- describe a vague but persistent sense that they are missing out on advantages others have been handed.

''There's a lot of people out there looking for help from someone else, getting things handed to them,'' Mr. Trujillo said. ''I want my taxes to be fair. I want my gas prices low. I want my interest rates low. If you could give me those three things as an American, that's fine, you're doing your job.''

For Mr. Trujillo, Mr. Trump's image as a successful businessman is as untarnished as the former president's name shimmering in gold on his Las Vegas resort. For months, he fumed as prices for groceries and gas rose, dismissing any analysts talking about the strength of the economy.

But both he and Mr. Madrid are more hopeful than they were two years, or even six months, ago. Some days they see the world as on the precipice of chaos. Other days they are more focused on the relative security of their lives: Mr. Madrid has traveled to Qatar and New York City with his family in the last couple of years. Both of Mr. Trujillo's children recently purchased their first home. The shop is doing brisk business; customers pack the chairs at every hour of the day several days a week.

These days, Mr. Trujillo relishes railing against what he calls ''a very woke world'' that has forced him to watch his words. He does not believe that Mr. Trump's verbal attacks on Mexicans have hurt him, personally. ''People are just looking to get offended,'' he said.

A few chairs away, Mr. Madrid offered his simple approach.

''You know what I care about: What's going to affect me, personally?'' he said one recent morning. ''What's going to affect my barbershop? What's going to affect my house outside of that?''

A shared disappointment

Immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and Colombia make up a large part of the shop's clientele. And for all they disagree about, Mr. Trujillo and Mr. Madrid agree on this: Both parties have taken advantage of undocumented immigrants who have worked and paid taxes for years.

Mr. Madrid winces when he talks about the Democratic Party's record on immigration. He would never describe himself as an activist, but he knocked on doors for the Obama campaign, the first and only time he has done so. And he later handed out water bottles during immigration protests. He sees the failure to overhaul the immigration system -- while still deporting millions of people -- as a stain on President Obama's legacy.

He has been equally disappointed that Biden has not fixed the system either.

''People will say, 'Well, he didn't have enough time or it wasn't a priority,''' Mr. Madrid said, referring to both Democratic presidents. ''When something is not a priority, you've never going to make time for it.''

Mr. Trujillo regards Mr. Madrid with a kind of brotherly respect, even turning to him for occasional political guidance. ''He always is going to know more than I do,'' Mr. Trujillo said, earnestly.

Mr. Madrid still struggles to understand exactly how and why Mr. Trujillo and others have turned to Mr. Trump. Perhaps it is a kind of rebellion, he muses. But he is more flummoxed than worried. He believes that he is part of a silent and solid majority.

As he sees it, Mr. Trujillo and his political allies are like ''big, loud football players, looking for attention.''

''They're the Billy Badasses,'' he said. ''But that doesn't mean they're going to win.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/11/us/politics/democrats-latinos-biden-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/11/us/politics/democrats-latinos-biden-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Daniel Trujillo, left, and Paul Madrid at Eastside Cutters barbershop in Las Vegas. Mr. Madrid, with Vince Saavedra, a customer, is a Democrat, though he has misgivings about President Biden. Mr. Trujillo, below, supports Donald J. Trump. Mr. Trujillo and Mr. Madrid, who are Latino, agree that it's hard to see how government improves their lives. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIDGET BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** February 13, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Black Disney Princess Ride Replaces Splash Mountain and Its Racist History***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7D-C691-DXY4-X3F9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 11, 2024 Tuesday 12:50 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1291 words

**Byline:** Brooks Barnes and Todd Anderson Brooks Barnes covers all things Hollywood. He joined The New York Times in 2007 and previously worked at The Wall Street Journal.

**Highlight:** The ride was closed last year because of its connection to a racist film. Disney overhauled it to focus on Tiana, Disney’s first Black princess, drawing praise and backlash.

**Body**

The ride was closed last year because of its connection to a racist film. Disney overhauled it to focus on Tiana, Disney’s first Black princess, drawing praise and backlash.

In the summer of 2020, as a reckoning on racial justice swept the country, Disney said it would [*rip out Splash Mountain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html), a wildly popular flume ride with a racist back story.

Some people cheered, saying the move was long overdue: After 31 years at Disneyland in California and 28 at Walt Disney World in Florida, the attraction — with its animal minstrels from “Song of the South,” [*the radioactive 1946 movie*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) — had to go.

But Disney also faced blowback. Last year, when Splash Mountain finally closed, someone started a [*makeshift memorial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) near its entrance — the kind that pops up at scenes of horrific crimes. Distraught fans spirited away [*jars of the water*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html). More than 100,000 fans signed a petition calling on Disney to reverse its “absurd” decision.

Now, Disney is rolling out Splash Mountain’s replacement, which is based on “The Princess and the Frog,” the 2009 animated musical that introduced Disney’s first Black princess. The lighthearted new ride, Tiana’s Bayou Adventure, will open to the public on June 28 at Disney World, with a similar version expected to arrive at Disneyland by the end of the year.

It’s a historic moment for Disney: After 69 years in the theme park business, the company will have a marquee attraction based on a Black character. Disney has spent at least $150 million on the bicoastal project, analysts estimate. (A Disney spokesman declined to comment on the cost.)

“For young Black children, it is, of course, a wonderful and amazing way to show representation,” [*Anika Noni Rose*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html), who voices Tiana in the film and recorded new lines for the ride, said when the project was announced. “For children who don’t look like Tiana, it is a way to open their eyes.”

Disney has remade rides before, often to howls from devotees, but this particular overhaul is especially delicate. In recent years, Disney has found itself [*enmeshed in nationwide debates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) over diversity and inclusion initiatives, with prominent Republican politicians and conservative media pundits pointing to Disney as an example of corporate political correctness run amok.

The pressure has started to die down, in part because Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida is no longer running for president and [*attacking “Woke Disney”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) at campaign stops. Robert A. Iger, Disney’s chief executive, has also repeatedly said he has moved Disney away from “agenda-driven” content.

Tiana’s Bayou Adventure could drag Disney back onto the cultural battlefield. Or it could provide more evidence that the debate has moved on.

“Our parks are treasured, and our fans care deeply about how they evolve and change — just as we do,” Josh D’Amaro, Disney’s theme park chairman, said in an interview. “One thing fans always tell me is ‘If you change it, promise to make it even better.’ And I think we’ve delivered on that promise with Tiana.”

Tiana’s Bayou Adventure uses the same ride tracks as Splash Mountain, and riders still travel in vehicles made to look like hollowed-out logs. But everything else has been redesigned. Instead of a suspenseful story involving Br’er Rabbit’s getting tossed into a briar patch, the new attraction focuses on a Mardi Gras party: Tiana and her pal Louis, a trumpet-playing alligator, are searching for critters to form a band.

Halfway through, the jolly Mama Odie, a voodoo queen in “The Princess and the Frog” and now a “bayou fairy godmother,” casts a spell, supposedly shrinking riders to the size of fireflies.

Tiana’s Bayou Adventure also has a pointed new catchphrase: “Everybody’s welcome.”

As he rode Tiana’s Bayou Adventure with a reporter during a test-opening phase, Ted Robledo, the attraction’s executive creative director, pointed out numerous inclusive touches — decorative items in Spanish and French, reflecting the multicultural history of New Orleans; a diversity of music (jazz, zydeco, blues) playing on the sound system.

“That’s a nod to the Indigenous people in the region,” Mr. Robledo said, referring to a Choctaw stickball racket in a diorama near the ride’s entrance.

“We’re always looking at ways to cast a wider net,” Mr. Robledo said. “With the old property, for a variety of reasons, it wasn’t that relevant anymore. It had kind of run its course.”

“The Princess and the Frog,” about a ***working-class*** woman who becomes royalty, was a box office disappointment. Tiana, however, has become crucial to Disney. In consumer polls conducted by the company, she ranks No. 2 in popularity — out of Disney’s entire character roster — among Black women. (Characters from “The Lion King” are No. 1.)

Disney has high hopes for merchandise tied to the new attraction, which expands the movie’s story. (There are [*two gift shops*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) near its exit.) An animated Tiana series is coming to Disney+ and will continue part of the story set up by the ride.

“Tiana is a modern princess who resonates with everyone,” Mr. D’Amaro said. “She wasn’t born into royalty, but her story of perseverance and pride is timeless. This enduring quality is crucial for our parks’ attractions, as they need to entertain across generations.”

Mr. D’Amaro likened complaints about Splash Mountain’s removal to a prior situation at the Disneyland Resort. In 2017, Disney [*closed the popular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, a hotel with malfunctioning elevators, and remade it around Marvel’s “Guardians of the Galaxy.” Fans booed — until they had a chance to ride the replacement.

“It was a controversial decision at the time, but by introducing a modern story with different emotions, we created an entirely new experience,” Mr. D’Amaro said, noting that visitor ratings of the remade Tower of Terror soared.

This month, Disney posted a nine-minute [*video tour*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html) of the new Tiana attraction on the internet. As of Monday, it had been viewed 625,000 times, with 10,000 people giving it a thumbs up and 38,000 a thumbs down. The ride “seems to lack dramatical tension and stakes,” [*Jim Shull*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html), a retired Disney parks designer, wrote on X, based on the video. A smattering of Splash Mountain die-hards nicknamed the new ride Tiana’s Bayou Blunder.

The reaction has been much more positive from those who have ridden the attraction, which is in a soft-opening period.

“I loved it,” [*Victoria Wade*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html), a social media influencer from Baltimore, said on X on Thursday. “I love how this whole attraction adds more to the continuation of Tiana’s story.” She called the ride’s 48 animatronic figures “absolutely incredible.”

[*Drew Smith*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/25/business/media/disney-splash-mountain-princess-frog.html), 21, a self-described Disney “super fan” from Windermere, Fla., talked his way onto the ride during a testing phase. “Splash Mountain was my absolute favorite attraction since I was a little kid, and I’m extremely happy to say that the new ride is just as great,” he said in an interview. “Don’t believe the haters!”

PHOTOS: The ride tracks and hollowed-out logs of Splash Mountain remain, at top; the rest has been redesigned to focus on a Mardi Gras party, right, inspired by Disney’s 2009 film “The Princess and the Frog,” to varying reactions from fans. (B1); Tiana’s Bayou Adventure, based on “The Princess and the Frog,” will open to the public at Walt Disney World on June 28; a similar version is expected at Disneyland in California by year’s end.; Of Tiana, one Disney executive said, “Her story of perseverance and pride is timeless.” Jazz, zydeco and blues music play during the ride.; Out of Disney’s entire character roster, Tiana ranks No. 2 in popularity among Black women. One Splash Mountain fan, riding during the soft opening, said the new attraction was “just as great.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TODD ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2024

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[***The World’s Next Big Drag Queen Is Brazilian; The Global profile***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCD-V3V1-JBG3-600T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; americas

**Length:** 1458 words

**Byline:** Jack Nicas and Victor Moriyama Jack Nicas is the Brazil bureau chief for The Times, based in Rio de Janeiro, where he leads coverage of much of South America.

**Highlight:** Pabllo Vittar has become an A-list pop star and L.G.B.T.Q. activist in Brazil. Can she conquer the world?

**Body**

São Paulo’s main avenue was packed this month with thousands of people draped in the yellow and green of the Brazilian flag and captivated by a commanding figure atop a tractor-trailer rigged with speakers.

From above, the scene could have maybe passed for one of the many political rallies held in the same spot by former President Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazilian far-right leader who has infamously declared that he [*could never love a gay son*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes).

(Though, to be fair, the enormous rainbow flag would be a giveaway.)

It was, in fact, one of the world’s largest Pride parades, and the person atop the sound truck was Phabullo Rodrigues da Silva, 30, the gay son of a ***working-class*** single mother in Brazil’s north.

Yet everyone in the crowd knew him as Pabllo Vittar, a 6-foot-2-inch drag queen in [*a glittering cutoff Brazilian soccer jersey*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) and [*shredded jean shorts*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) — one of the biggest pop stars in this nation of 203 million.

“It’s so beautiful to see you in yellow and green!” Pabllo Vittar shouted to those in the crowd, many wearing fishnet and G-strings. She had called on the revelers to wear Brazil’s national colors to reclaim the Brazilian flag from Mr. Bolsonaro’s right-wing movement. “Let’s dance!”

RuPaul may still be [*the queen of queens*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes), but the heir to the global crown has arrived.

Over the past seven years, Pabllo Vittar has become, by some measures, the world’s most successful drag queen. She has six studio albums (one gold, one platinum and two double platinum), her own fashion release with Adidas, a global ad campaign with Calvin Klein and 1.8 billion streams of her songs.

She has toured the United States and Europe; taken the stage at Lollapalooza and Coachella; performed alongside Madonna at Madonna’s biggest concert; and sang at the United Nations for Queen Elizabeth’s birthday.

Pabllo Vittar calls RuPaul, 63, the American drag queen pioneer, an inspiration, though they have never met. And RuPaul has shot down any talk of competition. “I LOVE &amp; SUPPORT @PablloVittar,” RuPaul [*wrote on Twitter*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) in 2022. “Shame on you catty Twitter trolls trying to create a rivalry.”

By the metric of the modern internet, however, it is hard to argue with the idea that Pabllo Vittar has begun to surpass her childhood idol. Across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube, Pabllo Vittar has a combined 36 million followers, three times that of RuPaul.

In the process, Pabllo Vittar has come to represent Brazil’s L.G.B.T.Q. paradox.

In addition to being home to a [*crew*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) [*of*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) [*breakout*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) [*drag stars*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes), Brazil has adopted some of the world’s [*most expansive gay rights*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes). Gay couples can marry and adopt children; transgender people can legally choose their gender; homophobic slurs are a crime; and so-called conversion therapy, which seeks to make gay people straight, is banned.

Yet for years Brazil has also ranked [*among the deadliest countries*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) for gay and transgender people. Since 2008, more than 1,840 transgender people have been murdered in Brazil, more than double the next deadliest country, Mexico, according to [*tracking by Transgender Europe*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes), an advocacy group. Brazil has [*led the rankings*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) [*every year*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) since tracking began.

“We never know when it will be my friend, when it will be my family, when it will be me,” Pabllo Vittar said in an interview. “This is the biggest goal of my career: To make it so younger people don’t feel this fear when they go out.”

Pabllo Vittar has emerged as one of Brazil’s loudest gay voices against a right-wing movement in the country, led by conservative Christian groups, that has made a heterosexual vision of gender, sex and marriage a central part of its political strategy.

Pabllo Vittar was a harsh critic of Mr. Bolsonaro during the 2022 election, [*drawing a formal complaint*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) from the former president’s campaign after [*calling for his ouster*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) from the stage at Lollapalooza. When [*Mr. Bolsonaro lost*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a leftist, Pabllo Vittar [*headlined Mr. Lula’s inauguration concert*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes).

“A drag queen taking the stage is already a political act,” Pabllo Vittar said. “I show the child and the mother in the back that they can be where I am, too, to not be afraid, to not give up on who they are.”

To Pabllo Vittar’s gay and transgender fans, she has been a powerful inspiration.

“She gives us such a sense of security,” said João Rabelo, 28, a publicist from the northern Brazilian city where Pabllo Vittar was born. “Today I can walk in the street with my boyfriend relaxed and not fear death.”

While the public largely sees Pabllo Vittar dressed as a woman, the star lives life as a man. Gender “is a societal construct,” Mr. Rodrigues da Silva (the star’s real name) said. “What’s most important is how we feel inside. I feel like a boy, and when Pabllo Vittar arrives, it doesn’t make me a woman.”

On pronouns, she is indifferent — when out of drag. “If I’m in drag, use the feminine, for the love of God,” she said.

In a way, the lifestyle has created two separate lives: Phabullo, the man, and Pabllo, the drag queen.

Phabullo is a shut-in who lives with his mother, stepfather and sister in a luxury home in a small city in Brazil’s equivalent of the Midwest. When working as Pabllo, she stays in a small apartment in São Paulo, Latin America’s largest metropolis.

Phabullo is shy and hates taking about himself. Pabllo is the opposite. “If the blonde was here, she’d be hitting on you,” the star told me in an interview, not in drag, speaking about his alter ego. “She’s saucy. She’s naughty. I’m not.”

And yes, he talks about his drag act in the third person. “Because she really is a third person,” he said. “When I do something as Pabllo Vittar and it spills over into my life, where I’m shy, I hate it. I want to crawl into a hole.”

Mr. Rodrigues da Silva was born in Maranhão, Brazil’s poorest state, to a single mother who worked as a nurse technician. By age 5, he was already seeking the stage, starting with the choir at church. “I just wanted to sing,” he said, “and I wanted people to see me sing.”

He said he was mocked by classmates for being effeminate but his mother always supported him. By his teenage years, he was singing on YouTube and in bars. Then, at a Halloween party at a gay club on his 18th birthday, he tried drag.

“I had never experienced such a powerful sensation of freedom — to be able to express what was going on inside my head,” he said.

At the same time, a video of him singing a Whitney Houston song was going viral. The club’s owner, Yan Hayashi, and a music producer, [*Rodrigo Gorky*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes), quickly saw the potential and began managing Mr. Rodrigues da Silva as Pabllo Vittar. (The name was in homage to a drag queen Mr. Rodrigues da Silva knew earlier.)

Pabllo Vittar quickly landed a gig fronting a band on a late-night variety show. Then she began releasing music, and by 2017, she had Brazil’s No. 1 song.

Pabllo Vittar has since become one of Brazil’s most dependable draws, with a high-pitched voice, elaborate dance routines and a high energy show. She has also gained a moderate international following, mostly among the L.G.B.T.Q. community, but is now working on an album that mixes in English and Spanish.

Owen Mallon, a Chicago native who is one of Pabllo Vittar’s three managers, is tasked with figuring out how to make a Portuguese-speaking drag queen a bankable international star. Yet he has been consistently impressed with the reaction.

“Even though people don’t know the language, they love her and what she represents, and then the show just speaks for itself,” he said.

Her music ranges from pop to electronic to Brazilian. Her latest album covers popular music from Brazil’s north and northeast, where she grew up, including forró, with its accordions, and tecnobrega, with its synthesizers.

After sitting for an interview as Mr. Rodrigues da Silva, she emerged as Pabllo Vittar hours later at [*a charity concert*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) in her native state of Maranhão. The transformation typically takes three hours. (Like an athlete collecting free sneakers, she has amassed a collection of 200 wigs donated from [*a London wig maker*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes).)

She wore a tight top that imitated the state flag, a blond wig, white boots, a tiny skirt and a G-string. Waiting to take the stage with her cadre of male dancers in the Brazilian heat, her hair stylist used a fan to cool her butt.

“My favorite place in the world,” she said. Then she [*strutted onstage*](https://www.france24.com/en/20180930-brazil-presidential-candidate-bolsonaros-most-controversial-quotes) and the crowd erupted.

PHOTOS: Top, above and below, Pabllo Vittar wowing the crowd at a concert in São Luís, Brazil. The drag queen is one of Brazil’s biggest stars. Left, Phabullo Rodrigues da Silva out of makeup. “If the blonde was here, she’d be hitting on you,” he said of his alter ego. “She’s saucy. She’s naughty. I’m not.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTOR MORIYAMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

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[***The Meaning of Trump's Fighting Words***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHX-M5K1-DXY4-X2DG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 3; CARLOS LOZADA

**Length:** 1834 words

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**Body**

The words poured out, instinctively, each one punctuated with a pump of Donald Trump's fist and a grimace of his blood-streaked face, an answer to the staccato of rifle shots that had been fired his way barely a minute earlier.

''Fight! Fight! Fight!''

The image of Trump in that moment -- the American flag behind him, the Secret Service around him, the piercing blue sky above him -- has become an indelible piece of our political iconography, on home pages today and in history books forever. But those few words, delivered to the thousands of rally goers in Butler, Pa., and to the millions more who watched the scene looping on their screens, are no less emblematic, no less essential to grasping Trump's meaning and message.

With that terse, defiant refrain, Trump accomplished many things at once. He offered reassurance that he remained both safe and himself; he issued a directive for how supporters should react to those who attack him; and he captured the emotional state of a nation that was on edge well before the horror of an attempted assassination. Trump's social-media posts and interviews since the shooting have stressed the need for national unity, but unity was not his first impulse.

''Fight! Fight! Fight!'' is the sound of Donald Trump returning fire.

In the canon of Trump books and speeches, ''fight'' is a constant byword, but it has meant radically different things in different contexts. In scripted moments meant to convey suitably presidential sensibilities, Trump is fighting for others -- whether the American people or those the nation has forgotten. In moments of political or legal crisis, when Trump feels besieged, his call to ''fight'' becomes personal. It is not a fight for others, but a battle for himself, one in which the people are enlisted in Trump's wars, persuaded that his causes are their own. Eventually, the causes fall away, and the leader becomes all there is to fight for.

''When people treat me badly or unfairly or try to take advantage of me, my general attitude, all my life, has been to fight back very hard,'' Trump writes in ''The Art of the Deal,'' published in 1987 and still the foundational document of Trump studies. He also complains that attorneys are too quick to settle disputes. ''I'd rather fight than fold,'' he says later in the book. Fold once, he argues, and soon you'll be known for it.

Those early fights in ''The Art of the Deal'' focus on winning tax breaks and fending off lawsuits. But in his 2000 book, ''The America We Deserve,'' Trump calls for loftier confrontations. The American dream is dying because of excessive regulation, onerous taxes, racism and discrimination, Trump writes, and while the United States sends troops around the world, it can't seem to look after its own kids at home. ''What about their American dreams?'' he asks. He was considering a run for president, he explains, because ''when you mess with the American dream, you're on the fighting side of Trump.''

The sentiment recurred in 2016 when he accepted the Republican presidential nomination. ''To every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future,'' Trump declared in Cleveland, ''I say these words to you tonight: I'm with you, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you.''

Early in his presidency, however, many of Trump's fights became more overtly self-serving, not about battling for the people but about brawling for himself, often in narrow or petty terms.

After the news emerged in 2017 that Trump had asked the F.B.I. director to drop an investigation into his first national security adviser, the president complained in a commencement address at the Coast Guard Academy that no politician had ever ''been treated worse or more unfairly'' than he had. Sometimes the only answer, Trump said, is to ''put your head down and fight, fight, fight.'' And when the president issued some bizarre Twitter posts criticizing Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough of MSNBC in crudely insulting terms, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, then the White House press secretary, defended Trump's fighting spirit.

''When he gets attacked, he's going to hit back,'' she said. ''I think the American people elected someone who's smart, who's tough, who's a fighter, and that's Donald Trump. And I don't think it's a surprise to anybody that he fights fire with fire.''

And it's no surprise that Trump judges those around him on their ability to fight, too. When Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court was threatened by allegations of sexual misconduct, Trump phoned his nominee. He wanted to know if Kavanaugh was ''prepared to fight,'' Peter Baker and Susan Glasser write in ''The Divider,'' their history of the Trump presidency. ''Absolutely,'' was his reply. Only when the nominee lashed out at the Senate Judiciary Committee with a display of ''raw outrage and Trumpian-style fury,'' the authors write, did Kavanaugh salvage his nomination.

Trump's choice of Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio as his running mate carries a similar rationale. ''He's a fearless MAGA fighter, he fights like crazy,'' Trump said in a 2022 rally for Vance's Senate campaign. Donald Trump Jr., who is close friends with Vance and played a key role in his selection, explained on Monday why the senator made sense for the ticket, despite having been an early Trump critic. ''He's just been an incredible fighter ever since he saw that [Trump] was real,'' Trump Jr. told CBS News.

Vance's Trump-friendly positions on trade, immigration, Ukraine and the culture wars, as well as his skills on television, may make the senator an appealing fighter for the 2024 campaign -- but so does his nonchalance about the former president's efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election. Vance is not just a dedicated warrior for the causes of economic populism and the ***working class***, but a willing one in the interests of Trump himself.

This is how Trump's fights blur together. The battles on behalf of the people and those on behalf of the candidate become a single war, inextricable.

''They are coming after me because I am fighting for you,'' Trump told the crowd gathered at the March for Life in January 2020, as the first impeachment proceedings against him were underway. He reiterated the idea when accepting the party's nomination for president that year. ''From the moment I left my former life behind, and a good life it was, I have done nothing but fight for you,'' Trump said. ''Always remember: They are coming after me, because I am fighting for you.''

It's a notion Trump may revisit once more in his convention speech on Thursday night. His opponents are not just his own; they belong to everyone. When he is attacked, then, everyone must join his fight.

Trump's ''fightingness,'' as Larry Kudlow, a Fox Business host and former economic official in the Trump White House, has called it, is a defining attribute of Trumpism and vital to the former president's appeal. ''Even those that don't know him or like him know he's a fighter,'' Kudlow said in 2023. ''No one has the fightingness that Donald Trump has.''

In contrast, anyone seeking to limit Trump's ambitions or question his fights is derided as weak and insufficiently devoted. When a cadre of conspiracy-minded election deniers proposed in a December 2020 Oval Office meeting that Trump could use the military to recount the vote in key states, Pat Cipollone, the White House counsel, objected that the president lacked the authority for such actions. ''You know, Pat, at least they want to fight for me,'' Trump told him, according to Baker and Glasser. ''You don't even fight for me. You just tell me everything I can't do.''

Here, fighting for Trump means allowing him to do as he pleases, even undermining a central and quite minimal definition of democracy -- respect for the will of the voters.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Trump called on his followers to fight for the same purpose. In his speech that morning just outside the White House, Trump mocked Republicans for ''fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back.'' (That was one of 20 times Trump used some version of the word ''fight'' in his speech, even though it only appeared twice in his prepared remarks, according to the House select committee that investigated the Capitol assault.) And Trump also uttered the words that obliterated any distinction between the fights for his country and those for himself: ''If you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.''

With that, Trump made clear that he is more than a combatant in battles over politics or policy; he offered himself as the sole reason for our fights. If one man alone can channel the people and embody the nation, then without that man in power, the people and the nation are both lost. Why wouldn't his supporters fight like hell?

''Fight for Trump!'' the crowds cheered that morning, as Trump nodded approvingly, before they marched to the Capitol and acted out that imperative. Now, at the convention in Milwaukee, the chant has been truncated into a rhythmic, clenched-fist, pantomime of Trump's response to the violence of Butler, Pa.

''Fight! Fight! Fight!''

I think of Trump crouched on that stage last week, bleeding and weighed down by Secret Service agents, and can imagine the old grievances rushing through his mind. Russia and Mueller. Investigations and impeachments. Trials and convictions. The defeat of 2020, that humiliation he refused to accept. And now this -- an attempt on his life, not just fighting words but a violent deed, at a campaign rally of all places, that most Trumpian of settings, where the bond with his followers should be affirmed, not threatened. With Trump, no other reaction seems possible: Fight!

What are his supporters fighting for when they take up the chant now? Well, what've you got? Is it a fight for an American dream, or the man, or the chance for power once again? A fight against the progressive left or the cultural elite? A fight against a sitting president whose perceived feebleness has only grown starker with his opponent's display of strength?

I'm not sure it matters. In a convention that celebrates the melding of a party and its leader, it's the ultimate tribute to Donald Trump that his call to fight has become more than an impulsive retort to a moment of great national and personal peril. Trump's fighting words are an encompassing worldview, not a means of politics but its end, not the last resort for a party but the default posture of a man and his movement.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE WASHINGTON POST, MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO, GINA FERAZZI, NATHAN HOWARD, ALLEN J. SCHABEN AND SOPA IMAGES, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***The Misfit Wisdom of Harry, Barry and Larry; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHX-3GS1-DXY4-X29C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1748 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner Dwight Garner has been a book critic for The Times since 2008, and before that was an editor at the Book Review for a decade.

**Highlight:** Harry Crews, Barry Hannah and Larry Brown were part of a Southern writers’ movement that centered dissidents and outsiders. They’re still worth reading.

**Body**

Harry Crews, Barry Hannah and Larry Brown were part of a Southern writers’ movement that centered dissidents and outsiders. They’re still worth reading.

In and around Oxford, Miss., about three decades ago, it wasn’t uncommon to drive along a rural route and pass a car with a bumper sticker that said, “I’d rather be reading Airships.” The people in those cars tended to have their windows rolled down, and they looked awfully happy. These were the kind of free and literate souls, with their muddy boots and eyeglasses, that a bar-stool sociologist might call liberal rednecks. Someone slapped a copy of that bumper sticker on William Faulkner’s grave in Oxford. No one thought it vandalism.

Do you remember “Airships”? Published in 1978, it’s a collection of 20 short stories by Barry Hannah that slowly became a classic of a then-new style of Southern literature. Hannah was from Mississippi. His writing was anarchic and wonderfully funny. He sounded like what you’d get if you stirred three heaping teaspoons of Thomas Pynchon and Terry Southern into a jar of Eudora Welty.

I was 13 when “Airships” came out; it took me two decades to catch up with it. When I did, yikes, I was troubled by the rebarbative flecks of its racial content. “Airships” was the wrong book to hang a movement on. But let’s hold that thought for a moment. Because in retrospect “Airships” was a small, misshapen and early part of an era that would come to mean a lot to me and to many other readers I know, an era that should not be left to pass without comment.

This was a movement for which I’m tempted to use a shorthand drawn from three of its best writers: Harry, Barry and Larry. I am talking about [*Harry Crews*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html) (1935-2012), [*Barry Hannah*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html) (1942-2010) and [*Larry Brown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html) (1951-2004). They were at the vanguard of a genre sometimes referred to as Grit Lit, or Rough South.

The “sensitive guy at the dogfight” — that’s what Tom Franklin, a Rough South novelist himself, said these writers sounded like. The genre’s heyday was during the 1980s and ’90s. It wasn’t entirely a boys’ club: Bobbie Ann Mason and Dorothy Allison were paid-up members, and Jayne Anne Phillips was a brilliant and moody adjunct from West Virginia, where I spent the first eight years of my life.

I’ve never loved the phrase “Rough South.” It’s too coarse. (The term “Americana,” for the more literate variety of country music, has an artsy-craftsy Betsy Ross vibe that’s even worse.) The Harry, Barry and Larry crowd and their progeny have mostly dwindled away, perhaps for good reason. But I sometimes stare at their age-speckled paperbacks on my shelves, and I wonder: What was that all about?

They were very different writers. Crews’s stuff is intensely masculine and often violent. Like Flannery O’Connor, he has an affinity for grotesques, and for shame in its umpteen varieties. Herman Mack, the protagonist of his pulverizing novel “[*Car*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html),” commences to eat an entire Ford Maverick on a stage. Crews had a commanding hold on what Philip Roth called the “American berserk.” His memoir, “[*A Childhood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html),” about his impoverished upbringing near Georgia’s Okefenokee Swamp, is as powerful an American story as I know.

We’ve talked about Hannah. Digression piles on digression in his stories and his novels, which include “[*Geronimo Rex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html),” “Ray” and “[*Yonder Stands Your Orphan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html).” Hannah snorted the chalky line between seriousness and playfulness. A typical sweet and funky declaration of love in his work is, “I want to sleep in her uterus with my foot hanging out.”

Finally, there’s Brown. His prose has a more placid surface, but he has a deep feeling for blue-collar life and the gentle humor in his work rises to the surface like a trout after a fly. His novel “[*Joe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html)” was made into a Nicolas Cage movie, but his work lives most fully in his come-as-you-are short stories, collected in a book called “[*Tiny Love*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html),” and a near-perfect memoir, “[*On Fire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html),” about working for the Oxford Fire Department.

I owe an enormous debt to the irreverent and well-read English teachers in my public high school in Florida. They noticed how happy the frazzled humor in Welty’s work made me, and they turned me onto these younger Southern writers. They sent me home with Randy Newman, John Prine and Lucinda Williams records, too. They guessed, correctly, that I’d take to these like a pup going for a walk.

My teachers’ blended recommendations for books and music, in retrospect, make sense. No literary genre has been so closely tied to a musical one as has Rough South to Americana. (Williams’s father was the poet [*Miller Williams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html), and she grew up chasing the peacocks in Flannery O’Connor’s yard.) If you spent time around Oxford in the 1990s, it was possible to envision an alternative America in which Rosanne Cash was president, Chuck Berry was secretary of transportation, Newman ran the Navy and Bobby Bland oversaw keeping the lights down low in nightclubs.

If Partisan Review was the house organ of the New York Intellectuals, the keeper of the Rough South’s flame was The [*Oxford American*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html), a quarterly that debuted in 1992. The movement’s high church, clubhouse and psychiatric headquarters was a bookstore: Square Books, in downtown Oxford, not far from Faulkner’s home. It remains one of the best bookstores in the English-speaking world.

Over time, my sets of Harry’s, Barry’s and Larry’s oeuvres became dusty. I grew out of their work, or I told myself that I did. Crews and Hannah began to resemble literary character actors; their talents were sharp but narrow. Often, they strained for effect. Brown never strained for anything. But he, too, has his limitations, especially a certain tonal repetitiveness. Once I’d discovered Iris Murdoch, Ralph Ellison, Mary Gaitskill, Martin Amis and John Updike, to name but a few titanic sensibilities, my attention drifted from the Rough South in the way that your attention will drift, for years or even decades, from bands that mattered to you. Not that I didn’t return for visits.

Some of their work has aged poorly. If the Rough South crowd was not exclusively a boys’ club, it was a white one. I wish a few of these writers had done certain things differently. For the most part they skittered around the subject of race and around what the critic Louis Rubin called the “impossible load of the past.” But Hannah throws the N-word around too freely in “Airships,” usually but not always in the voice of an addled narrator steeped in the prejudices of an earlier time.

To his credit, Hannah grew out of this predilection, and his best stories — collected in a euphoric career retrospective titled “[*Long, Last, Happy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html)” — are not marred by it. The sexism in some of Crews’s work is ripe, but it generally bleeds over into obvious parody. (Kim Gordon, Lydia Lunch and Sadie Mae once formed a thrash supergroup called Harry Crews.) If Norman Mailer had handled snakes and was into muddy, open-wheeled auto sports, he might have sounded a bit like Crews.

Here’s the thing I came to say, though. I feel lucky to have found Harry, Barry and Larry when I did. They provided me, in a way more highbrow writers might not have, with core literary values. Among them: Dry is better than wet. Funny beats somber. Liberal (in the small “l” sense) is better than conservative. Writing about ordinary lives is, nine times out of 10, more valuable and more interesting than reading about cosseted or artistic ones.

There is more. Like the filmmaker Mike Leigh, Harry, Barry and Larry refused to condescend to ***working-class*** people. (One character in “Airships” announces, to no one in particular, that he went to junior college, “which is to say, I can read and feel fine things and count.”) Crews and Brown knew what it was to chop cotton; Brown worked factory jobs. They were in absolute sync with the world’s misfits, dissidents and jokers. All three had a mistrust of authority. Few writers have better lived up to Charlotte Brontë’s epic declaration in “Jane Eyre”: “I would always rather be happy than dignified.”

These writers barely existed in publications such as The New York Review of Books. (No Crews book was reviewed there. One of Brown’s was, in a group review. Three of Hannah’s were, also in group notices, the steerage of arts criticism.) I sensed early that if I took too many cues from that austere publication, my reading life would be as cold and stunted as a pebble in a middling Bergman movie.

It’s best to enter the literate world like a cat burglar, I’ve long suspected — through a window, that is, rather than through the front door. Kids, you must find these windows on your own. Then you drift down the stairs and kick open the main entrance.

Were the Rough South’s books aimed solely at readers of the honky persuasion? I don’t think so. The most fun I’ve had in literary conversation in the past few years was driving around rural Virginia with the crime writer S.A. Cosby, who has an encyclopedic knowledge of Crews’s work, as well as that of other Rough South writers. We geeked out together. (Cosby wrote the introduction to a new edition of Crews’s 1988 novel “[*The Knockout Artist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html).”)

I’ve been grateful that Harry, Barry and Larry gave me the eyes to see Black novelists such as [*Charles Wright*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html), [*Fran Ross*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html) and [*Paul Beatty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html), the ones who blend the pain with the funny, the ones who do battle with tedium in every paragraph. It’s a pleasure to note that the powerful and earthy Mississippi writer [*Jesmyn Ward*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/30/books/harry-crews-writer-of-dark-fiction-is-dead-at-76.html) was a writer in residence at Ole Miss — a title Hannah held for more than 25 years. If the new Southern literature has an avatar, it’s surely Ward.

Larry Brown used to hand out a business card that had the words “Human Being” under his name. I’m lucky to have one of them. His work, like Crews’s and Hannah’s, had a humane and deep-souled quality that declared, at bottom: You can decide to believe in yourself.

There is a perfect moment in Ted Geltner’s 2017 biography of Crews, “Blood, Bone and Marrow,” in which Crews informs his mother that he’s sold his first novel. She is incredulous. “You mean, you made it all up, and they taken it and give you real money for it?” she asks.

“Yes, Ma,” he replies. “Yes, they have.”

PHOTOS: Harry Crews (PHOTOGRAPH BY THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION-USA TODAY NETWORK); Larry Brown (PHOTOGRAPH BY NANCY R. SCHIFF/GETTY IMAGES); Barry Hannah (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROLLIN RIGGS) (BR16); PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) Popular titles by the trio of writers. Top right: Larry Brown’s business card. (BR17) This article appeared in print on page BR16, BR17.

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[***Robert Menendez’s Corruption Trial Opens: 5 Takeaways***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1P-9D41-DXY4-X003-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

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**Byline:** Nicholas FandosNicholas Fandos is a Times reporter covering New York politics and government.

**Highlight:** Senator Robert Menendez faces a dizzying array of bribery and corruption charges. The heart of his defense: Do not confuse the senator for his wife.

**Body**

Senator Robert Menendez faces a dizzying array of bribery and corruption charges. The heart of his defense: Do not confuse the senator for his wife.

Follow live updates of closing arguments in the [*Menendez trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial).

The corruption trial of [*Senator Robert Menendez*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial), a powerful New Jersey Democrat, spun into motion in Manhattan on Wednesday, with combative opening statements and an extraordinary claim by the defense.

Speaking directly to the jury, a U.S. prosecutor asserted that Mr. Menendez “put his power up for sale,” trading favors involving Egypt and New Jersey businessmen for gold bars, cash and a Mercedes-Benz convertible. But it was a lawyer for Mr. Menendez who shook the courtroom awake, piling blame on the senator’s wife, Nadine Menendez.

Mr. Menendez, 70, betrayed little emotion as he watched the opening statements from the courtroom, where he is facing some of the gravest charges ever leveled against a sitting U.S. senator. He has pleaded not guilty.

He is being tried alongside two of the businessmen, Fred Daibes and Wael Hana. Prosecutors have also charged Ms. Menendez, but her trial was [*delayed until July*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial) for health reasons.

Here are five takeaways from the senator’s third day on trial:

The prosecution tried to keep it simple.

Prosecutors have spun a dizzying set of accusations against Mr. Menendez, filing four rounds of charges that involve a halal meat monopoly, a Qatari sheikh and the inner workings of the U.S. government. All of it could easily confuse jurors.

So laying out a road map for their case, they offered the panel a far simpler view: “This case is about a public official who put greed first,” said Lara Pomerantz, an assistant U.S. attorney. “A public official who put his own interests above the duty of the people, who put his power up for sale.”

What the jury needed to understand, she insisted, was that favors were granted by Mr. Menendez, including a letter ghost written to help Egypt and calls to pressure important government officials. In exchange, the couple amassed hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, bars of gold and much more, with Ms. Menendez as a “go-between.”

The defense: A tale of two Menendezes.

Mr. Menendez’s lawyer, Avi Weitzman, used his first words to the jury to flatly deny that arrangement. But the heart of his defense was a head-turning proposition: Do not confuse the senator with his wife.

Mr. Menendez, his lawyer said, was “an American patriot,” the son of ***working-class*** immigrants who made it to Congress. All those instances of Mr. Menendez purportedly abusing his office to help a foreign power or New Jersey businessmen? They showed a senator “doing his job,” Mr. Weitzman said, asserting that the government had found no record of Mr. Menendez negotiating bribes.

He did not say the same of Ms. Menendez, who had come late into the senator’s life and concealed her financial burdens and communications from him, according to the lawyer. Mr. Weitzman did not outright say that Ms. Menendez accepted bribes. But if she did, he wanted to make it clear that his client did not know “what she was asking others to give her” — especially all that gold.

The gold was hidden in a closet.

To make his point, Mr. Weitzman displayed photographs of a closet that he said belonged to Ms. Menendez. It was there, in her private quarters, he disclosed, that the F.B.I. found the gold bars and cash with Mr. Daibes’ fingerprints.

The senator did know that his wife had some gold, but assumed it was from her wealthy family of Persian rug dealers, the lawyer said. When Mr. Menendez repeatedly searched for the price of gold on Google, the lawyer said, he was looking to see how much money Ms. Menendez could generate from that family gift — not to cash out a bribe.

“He did not know of the gold bars that existed in that closet,” he said.

Likewise, Mr. Weitzman said Mr. Menendez had been in the dark about how Ms. Menendez got the funds to purchase a $60,000 Mercedes-Benz convertible. In a guilty plea, another New Jersey businessman admitted that he gave Ms. Menendez the car “in return for influencing a United States senator to stop a criminal investigation.”

The high stakes trial is being overshadowed. Blame Trump.

The case against Mr. Menendez could hardly be more serious. It has already made history: Mr. Menendez is the first senator to be indicted in more than one bribery case. (The first [*ended in a mistrial*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial) in 2017.)

But as his trial opened this week in Lower Manhattan, it was hard to escape the conclusion that it was being overshadowed by the state courthouse just a few hundred yards away. That is where, thanks to a quirk of timing, former President Donald J. Trump is in the midst of [*his hush-money trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial).

The first ever trial of a former president has inspired wall-to-wall cable news coverage. Unlike the Menendez case, it includes nationally known witnesses, like Stormy Daniels and Michael Cohen. And it has attracted a parade of high-profile visitors to buck up Mr. Trump, including the speaker of the House.

All of it is probably good news for Mr. Menendez and his party, which is vulnerable to political attacks after allowing him to continue serving in the Senate under indictment.

Expect a long trial. That’s not good for Senate Democrats.

The case has proceeded unusually quickly since the government [*first brought charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/08/nyregion/menendez-trial) in September 2023. As for the trial, do not expect a verdict anytime soon.

Prosecutors have said they may take as many as six weeks to lay out the tangled web of corruption they say surrounded Mr. Menendez. When Judge Sidney H. Stein read a list of dozens of potential witnesses (including several sitting senators), he informed jurors they would be likely to hear testimony in Spanish and Arabic.

The defense has indicated it will then take another one to two weeks, setting up a verdict sometime around July 4. Except for odd days off, Mr. Menendez will be stuck in the courtroom the whole time, depriving Democrats of a key vote in the Senate, where they control a spare 51-to-49 majority.

Maria Cramer and Maia Coleman contributed reporting.

Maria Cramer and Maia Coleman contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Senator Robert Menendez, seen leaving Federal District Court on Wednesday, was accused by prosecutors of putting his power “up for sale,” trading favors involving Egypt and New Jersey businessmen for gold bars, cash and a Mercedes-Benz convertible. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***A Conversation With JD Vance; The Interview***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6D5K-R2D1-DXY4-X4H5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

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**Byline:** Lulu Garcia-Navarro, Lulu Garcia-Navarro is a writer and co-host of The Interview, a series focused on interviewing the world&amp;#8217;s most fascinating people.

**Highlight:** The Republican vice-presidential candidate rejects the idea that he’s changed, defends his rhetoric and still won’t say if Trump lost in 2020.

**Body**

From the moment JD Vance came onto the national stage, he was inextricably linked to Donald Trump. As the author of the best-selling book “Hillbilly Elegy,” Vance was initially the Trump whisperer, explaining the Trump phenomenon and 2016 win to shocked liberals. Back then, Vance didn’t like Trump. He called him an “idiot,” condemned what he saw as Trump’s dangerous rhetoric and wondered in a private message whether Trump could become “America’s Hitler.”

Then Vance went through a political conversion, transforming from skeptical Trump explainer to full-throated Trump supporter. In 2021, he began his campaign for Senate in Ohio. He courted, and received, Trump’s endorsement and won that race. Two years later, here we are: Vance is not only Trump’s vice-presidential running mate but also considered by many to be the heir apparent to MAGA because of his deft defense of Trumpism.

Vance has always been comfortable in the public eye, starting with his job dealing with the media as a public-affairs officer in the Marines. As an author, commentator and candidate, he has left a long record — in blog posts, opinion columns and podcast appearances — of his evolving views, not just on Trump but also on issues like immigration and his vision for the country. In a 2021 podcast, for example, he said that Trump, if elected again, should “seize the institutions of the left,” “fire every single midlevel bureaucrat” in the U.S. government, “replace them with our people” and defy the Supreme Court if it tried to stop him.

That is what Vance sounds like when he’s talking to his base. But a very different Vance appeared recently on the debate stage, where, when speaking to a national audience, he was much less divisive and much more willing to engage in a civil discussion with a political opponent — in this case, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, the Democratic nominee for vice president.

With the election a few weeks away, and the race so tight, Vance may very well be the next vice president of the United States, and the second in command to someone who could be the oldest-ever commander in chief. So, which Vance can Americans expect if he’s elected? I asked him.

One of the things that many people said to me in advance of this interview is “Which JD Vance is going to show up?” And I think that speaks to this persistent question that people have about you, which is they saw you on the debate stage, and you seemed more empathetic, more moderate. And then there’s the JD Vance we’ve seen on the campaign trail, the JD Vance we’ve heard on right-wing podcasts, who can sound more aggrieved, more angry. How would you explain that contrast? Well, isn’t that how most people are? Sometimes they’re frustrated with what’s going on in the country, sometimes a little bit more optimistic. Sometimes it’s both, right? You’re maybe optimistic about the country, about its people, about its resources, about its beauty, but also frustrated by its leadership. And I think the nature of being an American in 2024, at least in my political persuasion, is that you have some deep and abiding love for this nation. At least I have a certain optimism and hope rooted in my trust and faith in its people, but I’m very frustrated by what’s going on with our leadership and some of our public policies. All these things are true at once. And I think that’s sort of how most people are.

So you weren’t frustrated at the debate? Well, sometimes I got frustrated, right? I criticized Kamala Harris’s immigration policies. I got a little frustrated at what I thought was the artificial fact-check there. But again, that frustration coexists with a lot of other feelings too, and I try to show that to everybody. I think that if you watched a 45-minute JD Vance rally, you would not have been surprised by the debate performance. I think what happens is that, if you take a clip out of context from four years, and that’s the only way you’ve ever been introduced to me, then sure, the debate performance might’ve been surprising, but I don’t think most people were surprised by it.

Your own campaign, though, said that you were doing “Minnesota nice” to throw off Tim Walz, who was expecting perhaps a more combative version of you. So it was a tactic. Well, I mean, look: That’s a distinction to me without a difference. Again, sometimes you’re going to try to discuss the issues of the day. Sometimes you’re going to be pushing back a little bit more aggressively. I think what was interesting about how we did the debate is I tried to be conversational with Tim Walz because, I mean, to be honest, I don’t know Tim Walz that well. I don’t have a strong view of him. I mean, there’s a lot of disagreements I have policywise, but my real disagreement is with Kamala Harris, with the way that she’s led the country, with some of her views and some of her opinions. And so in some ways I was — I don’t know that combative is the right word, but I was certainly disagreeable vis-à-vis Kamala Harris’s policies. But I didn’t feel this need to go in and light into Tim Walz — that’s just not how I feel about him.

Why do you think so many people have that thought about you, that they don’t know which version of you they’re going to get? There have been think pieces about this, podcasts about this — people who are trying to understand who you are. I mean, who knows? But my best guess on this is that if you’re a New York Times reader or you’re broadly center left, most of what you’ve read about me has come from some version of something that was planted by a political opponent. Let’s say I do a two-hour podcast interview, and you see the 45 seconds where I say the most contentious thing. But I think if you watch the entire two-hour interview, you wouldn’t be surprised with what I’ve said on the debate stage, with what I’ve said at my rallies, with what I’ve said during my press conferences and so forth. The nature of political media in 2024 is, because you can sort of take a clip and make it go viral on social media, you can write a news story about that viral clip, we’re just not digesting the long-form conversation that I think most people, again, if you were to ask the normal middle-class American whether they agree with me or disagree with me, a two-hour conversation about politics, and you went through a dozen different issues, I think that you’d see, well, sometimes they’d be pissed off about something. Sometimes they’d be pleased with something. Sometimes they’d agree or they’d disagree. But I just think that the way that we do political media is really built around sound bites. Maybe that’s always been true, but it’s certainly true in 2024.

Yeah. I mean, I do think that there’s something else going on though, which is: You have obviously shifted some of your viewpoints. You’ve acknowledged that. Look, there’s certainly the — I was anti-Trump and now obviously I’m running as Donald Trump’s running mate. But it’s something that, again, if you watch the two-hour podcast interview, you wouldn’t be surprised about, because I talk about it. And I know that’s part of what we’re doing today.

It is. Just to remind people, you called Trump “America’s Hitler.” I’m sure you possibly don’t like that quoted back at you at every single moment. And I read a really fascinating interview that you gave to The American Conservative in 2016 where you said: Donald Trump, “he has dragged down our entire political conversation,” he “spent way too much time appealing to people’s fears.” Why do you feel more comfortable with his approach today? Well, I think there are a few reasons. One is, I was pretty optimistic right after Trump’s election. To sort of go back a little bit, the book really took off right before he was elected.

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“Hillbilly Elegy.” Yeah, “Hillbilly Elegy.” And it had this second wind that was somehow even bigger than the first wind. And I remember I was doing all of these interviews the night of the election. I think it was ABC where I spent most of that night. I was talking to people privately, but then of course I was going on TV. The biggest takeaway that I had from that moment is that it was genuinely a shock to the senses for most of America’s political and media class. They really were certain that he was going to lose. To be fair, I didn’t think he was going to win. I thought he had a better chance than most people. But in the immediate aftermath, there was this sort of sense of: OK, well, we misunderstood something. We got something wrong. Maybe we should try to understand where this underlying frustration and sense of grievance is in the population writ large. And that lasted for all of about a month. And then very quickly, it was the academic studies, that [expletive] that said, well, Donald Trump’s voters were not motivated by any sort of legitimate concern, they were only motivated by racism. And then of course the media kind of laundered that into the mainstream discourse. And then there was the Russia, Russia, Russia cycle where it was, well, the only reason Donald Trump won is because he was collaborating with Vladimir Putin, which, even when I was anti-Trump, I thought that narrative was absurd. And I guess that what I slowly learned is that if you believe the American political culture is fundamentally healthy but maybe biased toward the left, then Donald Trump is not the right solution to that problem. If, as I slowly developed a viewpoint that the American political culture was deeply diseased and the American media conversation had become so deranged that it couldn’t even process the frustrations of a large share, maybe even close to a majority of the country — then when you say, well, I don’t like Donald Trump’s language? Well, Donald Trump’s language actually maybe makes a whole lot more sense if you assume that the institutions are much more corrupt than they were before. So the point that I got to was if Donald Trump didn’t talk like this, and if Donald Trump wasn’t going directly at the institutions, then he wouldn’t be able to get anything done. And most importantly, he wouldn’t be able to illustrate how broken the American political and media culture is right now. And so what I saw in 2016 as a fault of Donald Trump’s, by 2018, 2019, I very much saw as an advantage.

That’s interesting. So what I’m hearing you say is that in 2016, you felt that the divisiveness and the language was a symptom of perhaps a problem with Donald Trump, and by 2018, you saw it as the solution to the problem? I’d put it slightly differently. I think that in 2016, I saw the divisiveness in American politics as at least partly Donald Trump’s fault. And by 2018, 2019, I saw that divisiveness as the fault of an American political and media culture that couldn’t even pay attention to its own citizens. And Donald Trump was not driving the divisiveness, he was merely responding to it and giving voice to a group of people who had been completely ignored. And he was doing it in a way that really did poke his eye at that diseased media culture. I’ll put it this way: I don’t know that anybody else in 2016 possibly could have done what Trump did. And I think his rhetoric actually was a necessary part of it.

One of the reasons I am focusing on this initially — which sort of JD Vance comes out — is because earlier this year, The Times [*published*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/27/us/politics/jd-vance-friend-transgender.html) a series of email and text exchanges from 2014 to 2017 between you and your Yale Law School friend, Sofia Nelson, who is transgender. And that friendship eventually ended, in her telling, because of your support for a ban on gender-affirming care for minors in Arkansas. Yep.

The tone of that early correspondence was respectful, it was affectionate, even though you didn’t always agree with her. Were you more open to differences at that time in your life? No, I don’t think so. I’d like to think we’re having a respectful conversation. But you know, when I disagree with people, sometimes I’m a little sarcastic, but that was true 10 years ago, right? Sometimes I like to make fun of the political and media environment that we’re in. But that was true 10 years ago, too. Again, all of these things exist at the same time. Most people are complicated. They’re not just like happy-go-lucky or really engaged in dialogue, right? Sometimes they’re making jokes. Sometimes they’re more serious. I just think that’s how I am. I think it’s how most people are too. But look, I’m not going to sit here and criticize Sofia. I love Sofia. I am very sad about what happened between me and Sofia. Going back to 2013, 2014, she’s my friend, she’s transgender. I didn’t fully understand it, I just thought: I love this person, and I care about her, and I don’t have to sort of agree with every medical decision that she makes or even understand it to say, well, I love you, I care about you. I’m still going to hang out with you, we’re still going to talk about football and be friends. And we had this conversation — can’t remember when it was, maybe around the time of my Senate campaign, maybe before. But I had children at that point, and we were talking about gender-affirming care for minors. I think a more honest way to say it is not “gender-affirming care” but “chemical experimentation on minors.” And my affection for her didn’t mean that I thought this was a reasonable thing to do to 11-year-old children who are confused. Sometimes confused by social media, sometimes confused because it’s really hard to be an 11-year-old, certainly in today’s media environment. And yeah, we had a very strong disagreement about whether the proper response to that was humility. I would say it’s humility. Don’t give life-altering care to these kids, potentially life-destroying care to these kids. And she disagreed with me. She thought it was sort of an affront to transgender rights. Now, what I would have done normally in that situation is to say, you know, we can agree to disagree. I mean, Sofie and I disagreed about a whole host of issues over our long friendship, and sometimes we would do it aggressively, but ultimately, we’re going to be friends, despite that. To be clear, I mean, yeah, she leaked my emails, and I think that’s a violation of trust, and I’m frustrated by that, but I would still be Sofia’s friend today even though I feel very strongly that she’s not just wrong, but very dangerously wrong about chemical experimentation on minors.

I guess what I’m asking is: You came to see Donald Trump’s approach as a necessary means to an end. Did you come to see that as a necessary approach for yourself? I mean, you talked about “Hillbilly Elegy” and the power of persuasion through empathy, but you also bring a much different approach to many of the things that you do now. Again, I think it was very jarring for people to see those emails and see a JD Vance that, frankly, hasn’t been on display. Well, they say it’s jarring to see the emails, but they say it’s jarring to see some of my rally performances and then it’s jarring to see my debate. Maybe the problem isn’t that I’m, you know —

But do you see it as necessary now to be more abrasive? So, I’m going to answer that question, but maybe the thing that they’re actually noticing is that if you see somebody in all their complexity, they don’t fit the caricature. But it’s not some big change that I’ve made. And yes, I’ve changed my views. I’ll be honest about that on certain things, but there’s not some, like, major change. It’s just that they’re forced to see the noncaricature version of me. But no. I mean, President Trump’s approach is President Trump’s approach. His style is his style. Do I think that his style and his approach is a necessary corrective to what’s broken about American society? Yes, I do. That doesn’t mean I’m going to try to be Donald Trump because one, nobody can be Donald Trump. I think he’s a uniquely interesting and charismatic figure, but it’s just not who I am. Fundamentally, he and I are going to have different styles, but I think if you were to, say, take Donald Trump’s style and the way that he criticizes the media and the way that I’m criticizing the media to you right now, I think those criticisms are actually pointing at the exact same direction. We’re just putting it in slightly different ways in our own sort of distinctive perspectives. But I’ve never felt like I need to somehow copy somebody else’s style.

It wasn’t just the tone of those exchanges, though. You did express some beliefs that are different than the ones you hold today. Like, what do you mean?

“I hate the police.” Well, OK.

Why did you write that? What had happened to make you feel that way? First of all, have you ever said something in a private conversation that out of context wouldn’t necessarily translate to a public conversation? I think 100 percent of people would say yes. I don’t exactly remember when I sent that email, but I strongly suspect that what happened is, Usha and I lived in San Francisco for a couple of years, and when we first moved — I get frustrated even thinking about it right now — there was a break-in, in the car that I had. And it was stupid. I shouldn’t have left her suitcase in the car to begin with, but I did. And it had a ton of like completely priceless things. I’m not talking about priceless, as in we paid a lot of money, but the necklace her grandmother gave her that she bought in India that she gave her on the morning of our wedding — things like that were stolen. And I went to the police in San Francisco, and — have you ever seen the movie “The Big Lebowski”?

Of course. So I love “The Big Lebowski,” and the Dude has his car stolen. He says, Hey, are you like investigating it? And the cop kind of chuckles and says, Yeah, we got a couple detectives down at the crime lab. That was kind of the response that I got to, are you guys gonna try to recover this stuff? I was frustrated at the police, I fired off a frustrated email to a friend and, again, this is why I think it’s a violation of trust. Do I think it was representative of my views of the police writ large in 2016 or 2014 or whenever I sent that email? No, of course not. You send something to a friend: Hey, I’m pissed off about this. I think it’s very ridiculous for the media to say, well, JD used to be a “defund the police” guy because in a private email, I expressed some frustration about a distinctive police officer. Come on. [When Vance wrote “I hate the police” to Sofia in 2014, they were having a conversation about police body cameras in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown by a police officer.]

So, just to be clear, Senator Vance, the reason we ask about this is because it is a window into your evolving views, and that is important for people to know whom they’re going to be voting for. Oh, I think it’s totally reasonable for you to ask about it. I’m saying certain political members who have said, oh, this reveals like somehow JD didn’t support police officers 10 years ago. I just think it’s a preposterous argument.

After you left Yale, you went to Silicon Valley, the world of venture capital, you worked for and became close with Peter Thiel in 2016, 2017. He had an enormous influence on you. Yeah. A dear friend.

By 2021, you were running for Senate as a supporter of Trump. And right in between that, in 2019, you converted to Catholicism. I’m a fellow Catholic. I find this very interesting, and I would love for you to describe what appealed to you about the Catholic faith. So, before I answer that question, I just offer a caveat out there: What I really hate, and I’ve seen this with some converts, is they come to the faith, they act like they know everything. They speak for all Catholics. I’m never going to do that. I never want to do that. Look, I think there were a couple of things that really appealed about it to me. First of all, generally Christianity. I was thinking about the big questions. 2017 to 2019, when I was thinking about re-engaging with my faith, I became a father during that period. I was very successful professionally. So, thinking about the ***working-class*** family that I’d grown up in, I had a lot more money than I ever thought I would have. I had my own venture-capital firm, and there was this weird way where I felt like I had succeeded at climbing the ladder of meritocracy, but I had also found the values of the meritocracy, frankly, deeply wanting and deeply lacking. And when I started to think about the big things, like, what do I actually care about in my life? I really want to be a good husband. I really want to be a good father. I really want to be a good member of the community. I wanted to be a virtuous human being, in other words. That was sort of the thing that I kept on coming back to was how to be virtuous. And I thought the Christianity that I had discarded as a young man answered the questions about being a virtuous person better than the logic of the American meritocracy. And then that sort of led me on a journey of, OK, well, I’m gonna be a Christian again. What church do I actually want to raise my children in? What church do I want to be a participant of? And I just kept coming back for very personal reasons — friends of mine who I thought were just good people, a lot of them were Catholics, and I talked to them about their faith and about what appealed to them about their faith. And that eventually led me to getting baptized in 2019. And the other thing I’ll say about it is, Usha was raised in a Hindu household, but not an especially religious household. And she was, like, really into it. Meaning, she thought that thinking about the question of converting and getting baptized and becoming a Christian, she thought that they were good for me, in sort of a good-for-your-soul kind of way. And I don’t think I would have ever done it without her support, because I felt kind of bad about it, right? Like, you didn’t sign up for a weekly churchgoer. I feel terrible for my wife because we go to church almost every Sunday, unless we’re on the road.

Does she go with you? She does.

Has she converted? No she hasn’t. That’s why I feel bad about it. She’s got three kids. Obviously I help with the kids, but because I’m kind of the one going to church, she feels more responsibility to keep the kids quiet in the church. And I just felt kind of bad. Like, oh, you didn’t sign up to marry a weekly churchgoer. Are you OK with this? And she was more than OK with it, and that was a big part of the confirmation that this was the right thing for me.

You wrote a lot in “Hillbilly Elegy” about the chaos of your family life as a child. Your mother was an alcoholic and a drug addict. She’s been sober for nearly 10 years now. You talk about being raised by your grandmother and your older sister and having a rotating cast of untrustworthy parental figures, specifically men in your life. How much of your draw to Catholicism do you think is related to the appeal of the strong family values, of the focus on the nuclear family? That’s a big part of it, especially the stability of it. I’m not just talking about the stability of the nuclear family, but the stability of an institution that has endured over 2,000 years, right? I mean, I’m like most people: very aware of my mortality. And I kind of like the idea of being part of something that’s existed over many generations and hopefully will endure for many, many generations to come. But yeah, when I talk about being a good husband, being a good father, the way I’ve often put it is the American dream to me was never making a lot of money, buying a big house, driving a fast car. It was having what me and Usha have right now, right?

It’s strange that you went into venture capital, then, but go on. No, sure. I mean, look, I wanted to make money — I’m not saying I’m anti-making money. But when I thought about what I really wanted out of my life, what I really wanted was what Usha and I have right now. And I wanted to raise our kids in stability. Something that really bothered me when I was a kid was: People would ask me my address, and I would give them my address, not knowing if they wrote me a letter a month from then whether I would still have that same address. I hated the fact that I had these different addresses — it was just something that really bothered me as a kid. And I think it was sort of reflective of the broader instability in my life. Our kids have had — my son Ewan I guess has had a couple, but the other two have only had their Cincinnati address their entire lives. And that’s, like, a very, very important and good thing for me. And yeah, that’s certainly part of the appeal of the Catholic faith.

Your position on those family values have gotten a lot of scrutiny lately. You’ve talked about childless cat ladies. You’ve called childless people sociopathic, psychotic, deranged. And I know that you’ve said that those comments were sarcastic. But it’s hard to hear those words entirely as a joke. What do you actually think of childless women in society? Well, as I said when I made those comments — and look, they were dumb comments. I think most people probably have said something dumb, have said something that they wish they had put differently.

You said it in several different venues. In a very, very short period of time. It was sort of a thing that I picked up on. I said it a couple of times in a couple of interviews, and look, I certainly wish that I had said it differently. What I was trying to get at is that — I’m not talking about people who it just didn’t work out for, for medical reasons, for social reasons, like set that to the side, we’re not talking about folks like that. What I was definitely trying to illustrate ultimately in a very inarticulate way is that I do think that our country has become almost pathologically anti-child. I put this in a couple of different ways, right? So, there’s one, it was actually when I was in law school — I was on a train between New York and New Haven, I think I was doing, like, law-firm interviews or something. And obviously I didn’t have kids then. And there’s this young girl who gets on the train. She’s probably 21 or 22. She’s a young Black female. I could tell by the way she was dressed, she didn’t have a whole lot of money; she had a couple of kids with her, and I remember just watching her and thinking, This is a really unbelievably patient mother. The reason I noticed her is because her kids, like a lot of kids that age, are complete disasters, especially on public transportation, they turn it up to 11. But she was being so patient. But then everybody around her was also noticing the kids being misbehaved, and they were so angry, and they were sighing and staring every time her 2-year-old made a noise. And that was a moment that stuck with me, and of course I’ve had similar experiences riding with my own kids on various modes of public transportation, and again it just sort of hit me like, OK, this is really, really bad. I do think that there’s this pathological frustration with children that just is a new thing in American society. I think it’s very dark. I think you see it sometimes in the political conversation, people saying, well, maybe we shouldn’t have kids because of climate change. You know, when I’ve used this word sociopathic? Like, that, I think, is a very deranged idea: the idea that you shouldn’t have a family because of concerns over climate change. Doesn’t mean you can’t worry about climate change, but in the focus on childless cat ladies, we missed the substance of what I said.

Sorry, I just want to clarify something. So women who don’t have children because they’re worried about climate change, that’s sociopathic? I think that is a bizarre way of thinking about the future. Not to have kids because of concerns over climate change? I think the more bizarre thing is our leadership, who encourages young women, and frankly young men, to think about it that way. Bringing life into the world has totally transformed the way that I think about myself, the way that I think about my wife. I mean, watch your grandparents interact with grandchildren — it is, like, a transformatively positive and good thing for there to be children in the world. And if your political philosophy is saying, don’t do that because of concerns over climate change? Yeah, I think that’s a really, really crazy way to think about the world.

We don’t know why Kamala Harris did not have children, but do you include Kamala Harris in the category of women that you’re talking about? No. Everything that I know about Kamala Harris, that I’ve learned about Kamala Harris, is that she’s got a stepfamily, she’s got an extended family, she’s a very good stepmother to her stepchildren. I would never accuse Kamala Harris along these lines. What I would say is that sometimes Kamala Harris, she hasn’t quite jumped over the “You shouldn’t have kids because of climate change.” But I think in some of her interviews, she’s suggested there’s a reasonableness to that perspective. But again, I don’t think that’s a reasonable perspective. I think that if your political ideas motivate you to not have children, then that is a bizarre way of looking at the world. Now, again, sometimes it doesn’t work out. Sometimes people choose not to have children. I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about the political sensibility that’s very anti-child. And again, what really bothers me about the childless-cat-lady comment, aside from the fact that of course it offended a lot of people, and I understand that, but it actually distracted — my wife made this point — distracted from the core point of what I was making, which is that there is something very anti-family and very anti-child that has crept into American society. And you see it, I think, if you take your kid on an airplane. You see it if you take your kid to a restaurant and people huff and puff at you. You see it in some of our political policies. I mean, go back to 2020. And I don’t talk about this much, because most Americans don’t care about it, but when those of us who had children were really reacting to what I would call the Covid tyranny — 3-year-olds being forced to wear masks and not even asking ourselves: Well, OK, the main way that 3-year-olds pick up on language development is they see the nonverbal expression that comes along with it. Are we completely obliterating the language and social development of children? A lot of parents were thinking that. A lot of our elected leaders were not taking that parental perspective, and I think because of it, we responded to it in a disastrous way for our kids, our education system, pretty much everybody will tell you that our public schools in particular, our kids fell behind in reading. They fell behind in mathematics. Our toddlers fell behind when it comes to language development. We have become anti-family in this country. I believe that. I think the data is very clear about that. And yeah, I should have put this in a better way. But the point still remains.

I want to talk about another big issue when it comes to women and families. It has been hard to figure out what you and former President Trump would do when it comes to reproductive rights. Trump has said he believes abortion laws should be left up to the states. He sometimes supported a six-week ban. Sometimes he’s not supported a six-week ban. He supports exceptions for rape and incest. You have previously come out in favor of federal restrictions in your campaign for the Senate with no exceptions except to save the life of the mother. You said Trump wouldn’t sign a national abortion ban. But then he said that you don’t really know what he’ll do. And, in the debate, you did try to appear somewhat more moderate on the issue. It is all painting a very confusing picture. Well, I don’t think it should paint a confusing picture. President Trump’s view is, leave it to the states. His view is, he wants any state to have the three exceptions. He cares very, very much about that. And national policy should focus, as I said in the debate, on expanding the optionality. Because again, I knew a lot of young women who had abortions — almost always, it was motivated by this view that that was the only choice really available to them. That if they had had the baby, it would have destroyed their relationships, their family, their education, their career. And I think that we want to be pro-family in the fullest sense of the word. We want to promote more people choosing life. But I think that there has to be a balance here. A balance between states that are making their own abortion policies. Of course, California is going to have a different policy from Georgia, as we’ve already seen. And then at the federal government, promoting and increasing the optionality, the choices available, which is going to make it easier for women to choose life in the first place. And you talk about being confused. I never came out for a national abortion ban, no restrictions. What I did, to be clear, in my Senate campaign, is I endorsed the Lindsey Graham bill that had exceptions, and that would have, after a threshold, I think it was 15 weeks with reasonable exceptions, that’s a reasonable place to kind of draw the line.

You said in a podcast, and I’m going to quote here, that you’d “like abortion to be illegal nationally.” That was on the podcast Very Fine People in 2022, and you discussed the fact that people might be able to get abortions in other states, and you said you would need some federal response to prevent that from happening. “I’m pretty sympathetic to that, actually.” Well, what Trump has said, and what we’ve said on this campaign, is states are gonna make these choices. Yes, what I said in a podcast — I don’t have the podcast in front of me, but I’m sure that I said what you said I said — but that’s just reflective of my view expressed in 2022, that I want to protect as much vulnerable life as possible. But we’re in a different world than we were in 2022. No. 1, of course, we now have this decision primarily, thanks to the Supreme Court, left to the states. I think that’s where Donald Trump and I think it should be. But also, look, I’ve learned a little bit about this, and I talked about this in the debate. When the Supreme Court threw this back primarily to the states, what all Republicans should have learned is when you see people voting, sometimes even people who describe themselves as pro-life, voting for increased access to abortion, the conclusion that we should take from that is we’ve lost the trust of the American people. In 2023, we had a big referendum in the state of Ohio. I campaigned on one side; the people of Ohio — not, like, a super right-wing state by any means but, you know, a center, center-right state certainly — the state of Ohio voted 60-40 to go in the other direction. And to implement, I think, a much more liberal abortion regime than certainly the people on the other side were campaigning for. Well, what do you take from that? You can take the lesson that we just didn’t campaign hard enough, we didn’t make the case hard enough. I don’t think that’s right. I think the proper thing to take from that is we have lost the trust of the American people. When we went out there and campaigned for our position, they instinctively mistrusted us, and we need to get trust back.

What does that mean, though? I’ve heard you say that, but I don’t understand what that means. I think it’s by pursuing these pro-family policies. I think it’s by making it easier —

So it’s not by moderating your position on abortion? No. Rather than trying to say that we’re going to take options away from women, we want to make it easier for young women to choose life. But I think the way that you’re going to do that in 2024 in the United States of America is to let the states determine their own abortion policy. Now, again, part of that is protecting the ability of the states to make these decisions. Kamala Harris wants to re-nationalize the abortion conversation — go in the exact opposite direction. President Trump and I are saying, yes, sometimes these issues are messy. Sometimes, it’s going to be a little unusual for, say, California to have a different abortion policy than Alabama. But democracy is sometimes messy. We want to preserve the right of the states to make these decisions.

So you are OK with women traveling to another state to get an abortion? That is something that you would like to see preserved in this country? [Laughs.] OK. …

Yes or no? It’s a pretty — Lulu, I’m saying I’m OK with the states making these decisions. Now, you talk about what I’m OK with. Do I think that the voters of California are going to enact a more liberal policy than I might like to see? Yes. In fact, I accept that as the reality of the state level, state-focused regime that President Trump and I are encouraging people to take. Am I OK with it? I don’t think that’s the right way to look at it. I’m OK with the states making these decisions, even if they make decisions that JD Vance or Donald Trump might not make.

I want to move on to immigration. It’s another place where you have had a bit of a conversion. You wrote a piece in 2012 while you were still at Yale criticizing the G.O.P.’s immigration positions. And in it, you said: “Think about it. We conservatives rightly mistrust the government to efficiently administer business loans and regulate our food supply, yet we allegedly believe that it can deport millions of unregistered aliens — the notion fails to pass the laugh test.” What changed? Well, three and a half years of Kamala Harris didn’t help, right? You have 25 million people illegally in the country. I think when I wrote that piece, we were probably —

We don’t know the number. We were at six or seven million. [The Department of Homeland Security estimated there were 11.4 million undocumented immigrants in the United States in 2012.] Yeah, I mean, look, it’s an estimate, right? I think D.H.S. has said it’s probably 20 million. I think they’re undercounting it for a whole host of reasons. But whatever it is, it’s a hell of a lot higher than it was 12 years ago. [D.H.S. says there were 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in 2022, which is the most recent official estimate. There was an increase of illegal migration after 2022, but there are no official numbers yet.] And I think that what we’ve learned is that unless you’re serious about deportations, you are never going to meaningfully enforce the border. It’s just too easy to come here, right? So you need two things, fundamentally. You need — whether it’s physical or technological, ideally both — you need some sort of physical barrier, a wall, to make it harder for people to come here illegally in the first place. And you need to be willing to deport people, I think, pretty substantially, when you have numbers that are as high as they are today.

How long do you think it would take to deport 20 million people? Because President Trump has promised to deport as many undocumented people in this country as there are. So what does that timeline look like for you? Well, I don’t think you’re going to have to deport every single one of them, because a lot of them will actually leave the country willingly if you make it harder for them to work, right? So I think that you have to combine — and again, President Trump and I really think this is necessary — you have to deport a large number of people. There are way too many illegal aliens in this country. You have to re-establish some deterrence and law enforcement for people coming here illegally. I think it’s certainly reasonable to deport around a million people per year. Now, of course, we have 25 million. So that would take a long time — 25 years, if my math is correct. But again, I don’t think that you have to deport everybody, because if you re-establish some semblance of a reasonable border policy, a lot of those people are going to go home willingly. If you make it harder for American companies to undercut the wages of American workers by hiring illegal labor, a lot of those folks are going to go home. I’ve introduced legislation to tax remittances, because a lot of what goes on is that people come into the country, they make money, they send a lot of it home to whatever country they came from. If you tax the remittances, then people aren’t going to come here to sort of try to work under the table to begin with. So, again, I think the focus here is somewhat off, because people talk about the logistical difficulty of making this happen. Well, we have had large-scale deportation efforts in the United States. I mean, look, Barack Obama, to his great credit, deported a hell of a lot more people than Kamala Harris has. So you can deport people in this country who are here illegally. You just have to have the political willpower to do it. But if you don’t do this, Lulu, I mean, you’re basically saying the United States doesn’t have meaningful border policy. The Mexican drug cartels have become the wealthiest criminal organization maybe in the entire world because of what Kamala Harris has done at the border. Not to mention, I’m a big believer in the social contract in this country. I benefited sometimes from a generous United States government, meaning a generous United States taxpayer, that made it possible for us to afford things that we wouldn’t have always been able to afford. So when you bring in millions upon millions of people, you degrade and destroy the social trust that’s necessary to support any kind of a modern support for poor people, food assistance, housing assistance, you are not going to have that stuff if you allow millions upon millions of people into this country illegally, and then they get to take advantage of it.

Let’s say you were successful in carrying out those mass deportations. One thing that everyone agrees on is that more housing is necessary in this country, right? The reason that there is a housing crisis is that not enough houses have been built. And that we have 25 million people who shouldn’t be here. I think it’s both.

I know you do. I don’t think that many people who look into this agree with you. But about a third of the construction work force in this country is Hispanic. Of those, a large proportion are undocumented. So how do you propose to build all the housing necessary that we need in this country by removing all the people who are working in construction? Well, I think it’s a fair question because we know that back in the 1960s, when we had very low levels of illegal immigration, Americans didn’t build houses. But, of course they did. And I’m being sarcastic in service of a point, Lulu: the assumption that because a large number of homebuilders now are using undocumented labor, that that’s the only way to build homes, I think again betrays a fundamental —

The country is much bigger. The need is much bigger. I’m not arguing in favor of illegal immigration. I’m asking how you would deal with the knock-on effect of your proposal to remove millions of people who work in a critical part of the economy. Well, I think that what you would do is you would take, let’s say for example, the seven million prime-age men who have dropped out of the labor force, and you have a smaller number of women, but still millions of women, prime age, who have dropped out of the labor force. You absolutely could re-engage folks into the American labor market.

To work in construction? Of course you could, so long as —

I mean, the unemployment rate is 4.1 percent. But the unemployment rate, Lulu, this is important, unemployment —

Most people who don’t work can’t work in the regular economy. They’re in the military, they’re parents, they’re sick, they’re old. They might not want to work in construction. The unemployment rate does not count labor-force participation dropouts. And again, this is one of the really deranged things that I think illegal immigration does to our society is it gets us in a mind-set of saying we can only build houses with illegal immigrants, when we have seven million — just men, not even women, just men — who have completely dropped out of the labor force. People say, well, Americans won’t do those jobs. Americans won’t do those jobs for below-the-table wages. They won’t do those jobs for non-living wages. But people will do those jobs, they will just do those jobs at certain wages. Think about the perspective of an American company. I want them to go searching in their own country for their own citizens, sometimes people who may be struggling with addiction or trauma, get them re-engaged in American society. We cannot have an entire American business community that is giving up on American workers and then importing millions of illegal laborers. That is what we have thanks to Kamala Harris’s border policies. I think it’s one of the biggest drivers of inequality. It’s one of the biggest reasons why we have millions of people who’ve dropped out of the labor force. Why try to re-engage an American citizen in a good job if you can just import somebody from Central America who’s going to work under the table for poverty wages? It is a disgrace, and it has led to the evisceration of the American middle class.

So this brings us to another point, because the way that you discuss immigrants has gotten a lot of scrutiny. The Springfield situation in particular, where you talked about the Haitian immigrant community, which we should say: They are legally here and allowed to work. And you spread a rumor, or helped spread a rumor, that they were eating pets, which turned out to be completely false. Off the back of that, there has been an enormous amount of hate, turmoil in that community. Bomb threats, kids not being able to go to school. Was the trade-off worth it to you? Well, there’s a lot there that I want to respond to, but I want to pick up on the overall attitude. I think we’ve had a nice, respectful conversation here, but you know, sometimes you can feel happy about the direction of this country, happy about its people, and very frustrated with American leaders. This issue more than any other makes me extraordinarily frustrated at American leaders. Because American leaders who are talking about Haitian immigrants who have no right to be in this country — and we’ll get to that in a second — they talk with such compassion about what’s happened to the schools, about what people have been unable to do. Where is their compassion for American citizens in Springfield, Ohio, who now, a community of 60,000 people, there are 1,000 children in Springfield schools who do not speak English. For years, I have heard from the American citizens of Springfield, Ohio, that their lives have gotten worse. Have we talked about the fact that many of them have been evicted from their homes, and then Haitian migrants are moved in, four families to a home, massively violating zoning laws?

They’re not moved in. They have been attracted there because they’re working — They’ve been attracted there to violate zoning laws, Lulu. They’re subsidized by the local authorities, by the federal authorities, by your tax dollars. So now four families are living in a home. [We asked the Vance campaign for credible evidence of these zoning-violation claims, but it has not provided any.]

It’s a Republican-run city and a Republican-run state. Your state. I’m talking about federal authorities, federal housing right now. Four families are living in a home. They are paying way more for rent than an American citizen in Springfield can pay. So the American citizens have been evicted from their homes. They are finding housing unaffordable. They are waiting longer at hospitals. Their children are going to schools that are stressed because there are too many kids there who don’t even speak the native language. I am so much more concerned by the American citizens of Springfield, Ohio. And I think that it is disgraceful that American leaders pretend that they care about these migrants. More than they care about the people that they took an oath of office to actually look after. And when you say that these Haitian migrants in Springfield are legal, what you’re doing is, I think, making an intentional bait-and-switch. Because what most people think when they say legal resident, they think about somebody who comes to America, they get a green card, they come through the proper channels.

There are many ways to come to America. But what happened, it’s not just T.P.S. [temporary protected status]. It’s mass parole, which, by the way, has been challenged in court and is likely illegal. Kamala Harris has facilitated a massive amount of migration into American communities. And it is my job, as a United States senator, and hopefully as the next vice president, to look after the people who are affected. When you flood their community with millions — the national community, I’m talking about — with millions upon millions of people who shouldn’t be here, that is our responsibility. And I really don’t understand the perspective of an American leadership class that seems to have so much compassion —

And those are Republicans too. I mean, Mike DeWine came out and [*criticized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/20/opinion/springfield-haitian-migrants-ohio.html) you, the governor of your home state. I’m not talking about Mike DeWine right now. By the way, he endorsed us. But I’m talking about, OK, you’ve got 20,000 Haitian migrants. A lot of them, I’d say most of them, are probably very, very good people, but my compassion and my focus and my efforts as a political leader in this country, it is not for people, however good they might be, who don’t have the legal right to be in this country. [The Haitian immigrants are in Springfield legally.] It’s for American citizens.

Last few questions. In the debate, you were asked to clarify if you believe Trump lost the 2020 election. Do you believe he lost the 2020 election? I think that Donald Trump and I have both raised a number of issues with the 2020 election, but we’re focused on the future. I think there’s an obsession here with focusing on 2020. I’m much more worried about what happened after 2020, which is a wide-open border, groceries that are unaffordable. And look, Lulu —

Senator, yes or no. Did Donald Trump lose the 2020 election? Let me ask you a question. Is it OK that big technology companies censored the Hunter Biden laptop story, which independent analysis have said cost Donald Trump millions of votes?

Senator Vance, I’m going to ask you again. Did Donald Trump lose the 2020 election? Did big technology companies censor a story that independent studies have suggested would have cost Trump millions of votes? I think that’s the question.

Senator Vance, I’m going to ask you again. Did Donald Trump lose the 2020 election? And I’ve answered your question with another question. You answer my question and I’ll answer yours.

I have asked this question repeatedly. It is something that is very important for the American people to know. There is no proof, legal or otherwise, that Donald Trump did not lose the 2020 election. But you’re repeating a slogan rather than engaging with what I’m saying, which is that when our own technology firms engage in industrial-scale censorship — by the way, backed up by the federal government — in a way that independent studies suggest affect the votes. I’m worried about Americans who feel like there were problems in 2020. I’m not worried about this slogan that people throw: Well, every court case went this way. I’m talking about something very discrete, a problem of censorship in this country that I do think affected things in 2020. And more importantly, that led to Kamala Harris’s governance, which has screwed this country up in a big way.

Senator, would you have certified the election in 2020? Yes or no? I’ve said that I would have voted against certification because of the concern that I just raised. I think that when you have technology companies —

The answer is no. When you have technology companies censoring Americans at a mass scale in a way that, again, independent studies have suggested affect the vote. I think that it’s right to protest against that, to criticize that, and that’s a totally reasonable thing.

So the answer is no. And the last question, will you support the election results this time and commit to a peaceful transfer of power? Well, first of all, of course we commit to a peaceful transfer of power. We are going to have a peaceful transfer of power. I of course believe that a peaceful transfer of power is going to make Donald Trump the next president of the United States. But if there are problems, of course, in the same way that Democrats protested in 2004 and Donald Trump raised issues in 2020, we’re going to make sure that this election counts, that every legal ballot is counted. We’ve filed almost 100 lawsuits at the R.N.C. to try to ensure that every legal ballot has counted. I think you would maybe criticize that. We see that as an important effort to ensure election integrity. But certainly we’re going to respect the results in 2024, and I feel very confident they’re going to make Donald Trump the next president.

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[***How J.D. Vance Won Over Donald Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CGV-7PD1-JBG3-600B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jonathan Swan and Maggie Haberman Jonathan Swan is a political reporter covering the 2024 presidential election and Donald Trump&amp;#8217;s campaign. 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:** It started with a meeting at Mar-a-Lago more than three years ago. Later, Tucker Carlson, Elon Musk and other key allies made direct appeals on his behalf.

**Body**

The meeting got off to a bad start.

J.D. Vance walked into Donald J. Trump’s office at Mar-a-Lago on a warm winter afternoon in February 2021. The former president had a thick stack of papers on his desk: printouts of Mr. Vance’s copious broadsides against Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance’s past criticisms had included an [*essay*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/) in one of Mr. Trump’s least favorite magazines, The Atlantic, where Mr. Vance described Mr. Trump as “cultural heroin” — a purveyor of false promises to the white ***working class***.

Mr. Trump, using an expletive, bluntly told Mr. Vance: You said some nasty stuff about me. The discussion that followed was described in detail by two people with knowledge of the meeting who insisted on anonymity to talk about a private conversation.

Mr. Vance’s next move was crucial. This was the first time he was meeting Mr. Trump, and Mr. Vance needed the former president to like him or at least leave the meeting with an open mind. Mr. Vance — the author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” a best-selling memoir about his troubled upbringing and the struggles and pathologies of the white ***working class*** — was running for the open U.S. Senate seat in Ohio as a Republican populist, a Never Trumper turned pro-Trumper.

Mr. Vance decided to immediately apologize. He told Mr. Trump that he had bought into what he described as media lies and that he was sorry he got it wrong. Of all people, Mr. Vance told Mr. Trump, Mr. Vance himself should have understood.

Mr. Trump agreed, telling Mr. Vance that he should have understood because Mr. Vance had written the “Hillbilly Elegy” book. His implication was that Mr. Vance should have supported him because Mr. Trump’s own base of non-college-educated voters angry about globalization, immigration and foreign wars were exactly the people Mr. Vance purported to represent.

At that point, Mr. Trump seemed disarmed, and the meeting went on for almost two hours. They discussed the 2020 election and the Ohio race, but mostly they talked about the difficulties of politics. It had been less than a month since Mr. Trump left the White House a pariah, in the wake of a pro-Trump mob storming the Capitol after the president had spent two months lying about a stolen election.

Mr. Trump closed the conversation by asking Mr. Vance what he wanted. Mr. Trump told him that everyone else had already been down to Mar-a-Lago begging for his endorsement — a reference to Mr. Vance’s potential opponents in the Ohio Senate primary.

Mr. Vance, who along with a spokesman for Mr. Trump declined to comment for this article, told the former president he wasn’t going to do that.

Mr. Trump, surprised, asked Mr. Vance if he wanted the endorsement.

Mr. Vance said that of course he wanted it, but that Mr. Trump should let him run his race, and see how he did. Mr. Vance said he would not be the type of candidate who would attack the former president when the media came after him.

Mr. Trump seemed intrigued. All right, Mr. Trump replied, telling Mr. Vance, whom he called J.D., to take care and check in from time to time.

Mr. Trump had relatively little personal contact with Mr. Vance after that first meeting, but he took note as Mr. Vance kicked off his Senate campaign in July 2021, ran circles around his primary opponents in debates and became a frequent presence on “Tucker Carlson Tonight,” at the time the top-rated show on cable television.

Mr. Trump was impressed. He told allies he thought Mr. Vance was smart and handsome — “those beautiful blue eyes,” he’d say repeatedly — great on TV and a killer at the debates. Mr. Trump, who split with allies at the influential conservative group Club for Growth in backing Mr. Vance, felt validated when Mr. Vance won the general election against his Democratic rival, Representative Tim Ryan, and then immediately became one of Mr. Trump’s most vocal supporters in the Senate.

When Mr. Trump announced his third campaign for president, in November 2022, at a time when most Republicans wanted nothing to do with him, Mr. Vance distinguished himself by immediately signaling to Mr. Trump’s staff that Mr. Vance was all in.

Since then, Mr. Vance has played his cards nearly perfectly, making himself visible at key moments, promoting himself assertively but not too much, publicly backing Mr. Trump during his Manhattan criminal trial and having the right people champion him to the former president at the right time.

That day in early 2021, Mr. Vance was ushered into Mr. Trump’s office at Mar-a-Lago by one of the most secretive donors in G.O.P. politics: Peter Thiel, the billionaire founder of PayPal who broke with Silicon Valley to support Mr. Trump for president in 2016. Mr. Trump’s eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., was at the meeting, too.

Though initially skeptical of Mr. Vance’s loyalty, Donald Trump Jr. became close friends with him over the course of the Senate campaign. He became a huge asset when allies of Mr. Vance’s rivals for running mate tried desperately to undermine Mr. Vance with a pressure campaign aimed at changing the elder Mr. Trump’s mind.

Now, the 39-year-old Mr. Vance has become the party’s vice-presidential nominee.

An experienced fighter in the modern culture wars, Mr. Vance is in many ways a different type of running mate from the one Mr. Trump selected in 2016: Mike Pence was a Ronald Reagan conservative and evangelical governor whose penchant for spontaneous prayer unnerved the man under whom he served. In Mr. Vance, Mr. Trump is picking someone whose impulses for fighting against existing institutions and challenging global systems match his own.

Yet the arc of how Mr. Trump made his choices in 2016 and in 2024 had similarities. He had described both Mr. Pence and Mr. Vance as “out of central casting.” Then Mr. Trump began to question his options and solicited the opinions of everyone he spoke to, before ultimately returning where he began.

But the lead-up to Mr. Trump’s selection of Mr. Vance was even more chaotic than it was with Mr. Pence. It was uncertain down to the final hours, with a frantic lobbying effort until the last possible moment by anti-Vance forces, including Rupert Murdoch and his allies, with some of it playing out in public.

Mr. Trump seemed uncertain right until the end, privately raising some of the negative comments Mr. Vance had made about him in the past. Allies of Mr. Vance, including Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson, ran a counter campaign to reassure Mr. Trump about the selection, with supportive calls to the former president continuing until the moment Mr. Trump finally told Mr. Vance of his decision, on Monday afternoon, less than half an hour before he announced his choice on social media.

The Debate Moment

Six months into his Senate campaign, Mr. Vance was seen by most as the walking dead.

Throughout the fall of 2021, he was savaged in the Ohio Republican Senate primary by television commercials that re-aired his past condemnations of Mr. Trump. Mr. Vance’s support fell [*precipitously*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/) in private polling, and even Mr. Trump privately voiced concerns about the impact the ads were having in the race. Many Republican operatives believed Mr. Vance’s chances of surviving the onslaught were close to zero.

He began his comeback on a debate stage.

At a March 2022 debate among the crowded Senate Republican field, Mr. Vance’s two main rivals — Josh Mandel, a former Ohio state representative and treasurer, and the businessman Mike Gibbons — nearly came to blows on the stage.

Mr. Vance seized the moment. He described their fight as “ridiculous” and confronted Mr. Mandel for using Mr. Mandel’s military service as a “political football” earlier in the debate, calling it “disgraceful,” setting off a burst of applause in the room. The moment presaged Mr. Vance as a deft performer on his feet, one who would eventually eviscerate his general election rival, Mr. Ryan, on the debate stage.

Mr. Trump relished that primary debate confrontation and felt that it showed Mr. Vance had what it took. Mr. Trump has always paid close attention to debate performances, crediting his own showing in the 2016 debates for his victory over Hillary Clinton. He told allies he liked what he’d seen from Mr. Vance. One month after the debate, Mr. Trump formally endorsed him.

Mr. Vance was helped in that race also by conservative media relationships that would prove not just durable but critical in helping him become Mr. Trump’s running mate.

The most important of those relationships have been with Mr. Carlson, the former Fox News host; the reporter Matthew Boyle at Breitbart; and the political activist Charlie Kirk. Their support meant that in the conservative media ecosystem — the arena that decides the political life span of the average Republican — Mr. Vance was a made man.

The East Palestine Visit

Mr. Trump announced his own candidacy for president a week after the November 2022 midterms.

His campaign launch was a disaster.

High-profile MAGA candidates endorsed by Mr. Trump had lost midterm races they should have won. Mr. Trump was blamed for the disappointing results, and most Republican elected officials stayed away from his presidential kickoff event at Mar-a-Lago.

Shortly after he announced his campaign, Mr. Trump ignited a string of controversies, including calling for the termination of parts of the Constitution to overturn his 2020 defeat and dining with Kanye West, a rapper whose stream of vitriol against Jews stirred outrage, and Nick Fuentes, a notorious white supremacist.

Mr. Trump found himself abandoned by many in the Republican-leaning media, with Fox News extolling his main presidential primary rival, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, and his favorite newspaper, The New York Post, giving Mr. DeSantis the headline title: “[*DeFuture*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/).” A chorus of prominent conservatives was saying it was time for fresh blood.

Mr. Vance was not among them.

He signaled privately to Mr. Trump’s team, shortly after the midterms, that he planned to endorse the former president. He said he wanted to make an intellectual argument for Mr. Trump that would resonate with the donor class and other elites, according to a person briefed on the exchanges. He ended up announcing his endorsement in late January 2023 in an [*opinion piece in The Wall Street Journal*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/), praising Mr. Trump’s foreign policy. The proactive support was reassuring to the Trump team amid so many threatened defections at a time when the campaign seemed rudderless.

The Trump campaign found its direction a month later, in February. It started with a visit to a derailment site of a train that had been carrying hazardous chemicals through East Palestine, Ohio.

President Biden and his advisers had been criticized for days for not visiting the site, and Mr. Vance was among the most vocal critics of the federal response. Mr. Biden’s administration blamed policy rollbacks from Mr. Trump’s era for the derailment.

Mr. Trump’s son Don Jr. soon had a thought: What if his father visited the site? He ran the idea past both Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump’s top adviser, Susie Wiles, and a plan was soon in place. Flying aboard his plane, dubbed Trump Force One, from Florida to Ohio for the event, Mr. Trump was watching Fox News. Mr. Vance was on the air. The former president turned to his son and observed that Mr. Vance had been “incredible, hasn’t he?” — using an expletive to underscore the point.

When the plane landed, it was clear that Mr. Trump was stepping into a media vacuum created by Mr. Biden’s absence. Walking down the movable stairs from his plane on the tarmac, Mr. Trump appeared on the extensive television coverage as if he were still president.

He traveled in a motorcade, distributed red MAGA caps to local residents and delivered water bottles to the community — all on TV. He bought burgers for first responders at a local McDonald’s.

Mr. Vance stood alongside him throughout the day, the two men condemning federal officials they said had left the region behind. It was an early test of what they might be like on a campaign trail together.

The Decision

By the fall of 2023, chatter was growing that Mr. Vance was a top contender to be Mr. Trump’s running mate. But while advisers to both men had discussed the possibility informally, it had not become a topic of conversation between Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance.

Mr. Trump plainly liked Mr. Vance, according to people close to the former president. The chemistry between the two — one of the ingredients in a hire that Mr. Trump values most — was clear.

Mr. Vance had approached the relationship differently from a number of people who have grown close to Mr. Trump over the years. He valued scarcity. He did not call Mr. Trump constantly, and his list of requests was extremely limited. He sought help from Mr. Trump on only two matters: He asked him to endorse the businessman Bernie Moreno in his run for the Senate in Ohio, and he asked Mr. Trump to support a rail safety bill that Mr. Vance cosponsored with the state’s Democratic senator, Sherrod Brown. Mr. Trump did both.

Mr. Vance was slow to believe Mr. Trump would actually pick him as a running mate, people close to him said. His view started to change around the New Hampshire presidential primary in late January, as he campaigned for Mr. Trump in the state and drew a warm response.

He also began to fit the part more visibly. Mr. Trump commented to allies on how good Mr. Vance was looking — how his beard appeared more groomed, how his suits fit better and how he’d lost weight. Mr. Vance had been working out and going for long runs.

Mr. Trump has also been solicitous of Mr. Vance’s wife, Usha. About a month ago, the Vances were at an event with Mr. Trump when he asked Usha how she liked political life. When Ms. Vance gave an anodyne answer, Mr. Trump replied that his wife hated it, too, adding an expletive. Ms. Vance laughed at Mr. Trump’s answer, according to a person briefed on the interaction.

Mr. Vance’s allies began an aggressive strategy to show he could be successful in two areas that preoccupied Mr. Trump: performing well in adversarial interviews on mainstream news channels, and bringing in new financial supporters.

Mr. Vance’s advisers booked him on a slew of shows on CNN, NBC, ABC and CBS, including one appearance that caught Mr. Trump’s eye, with the CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer, shortly after Mr. Trump was convicted in his Manhattan criminal trial. Mr. Vance was the first vice-presidential hopeful to show up in court to support Mr. Trump, and he stepped up his aggressive televised defense of Mr. Trump after the conviction.

Mr. Vance helped pave the way for Mr. Trump with some Silicon Valley donors. He spent months working on David Sacks, an entrepreneur whom Mr. Vance has called “one of his closest confidants in politics,” to support Mr. Trump. That effort resulted in a $12 million event for the Trump campaign. Mr. Sacks said at the event that it “would never have happened” without Mr. Vance’s support, according to a person familiar with his remarks.

Mr. Musk, one of the world’s richest men and the owner of the website X, has emerged as a quiet ally of Mr. Vance’s, according to two people briefed on the relationship. Mr. Musk has viewed Mr. Biden’s re-election as an existential crisis for the nation and told Mr. Trump directly that he should choose Mr. Vance as his running mate, describing the Trump-Vance pairing as “beautiful,” according to one of the people with knowledge of their relationship. Mr. Musk did not respond to requests for comment.

Yet it was Don Jr. and his allies who pushed Mr. Vance most insistently — publicly and privately.

For most of the year, Mr. Trump’s associates have said that the former president was not especially enamored of any of his V.P. choices, doubtful that any of them would make much of a difference to his chances in November. And yet in recent weeks, he told people that he liked the idea of someone who could carry on his MAGA legacy, something Mr. Trump believed the two other top contenders — Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota — were not as well positioned as Mr. Vance to accomplish.

Mr. Trump continued playing Hamlet of sorts, polling nearly everyone he encountered about what they thought he should do.

That was reminiscent of 2016, when Mr. Trump had told everyone for weeks that Mr. Pence was “out of central casting,” but still insisted he hadn’t made up his mind and was receptive to last-minute pitches from allies of Newt Gingrich and Chris Christie. He ultimately offered the job to Mr. Pence while telling Mr. Christie that he hadn’t done so, before finally making the choice public.

Mr. Trump listened to a number of last-minute efforts to block Mr. Vance’s selection.

The anti-Vance campaign was intense, widespread and carried right up until the final hours before Mr. Trump announced his choice. Several major Republican donors, including the hedge fund magnate Ken Griffin, as well as the media mogul Rupert Murdoch, tried to persuade Mr. Trump not to choose Mr. Vance. (A Griffin spokesman wouldn’t address what he told Mr. Trump, saying only that there were a number of good options and that Mr. Trump and his team had been “thoughtful.”)

Mr. Murdoch even went so far as to dispatch senior executives and columnists at The New York Post to meet with Mr. Trump and dissuade him from picking Mr. Vance. Kellyanne Conway, Mr. Trump’s 2016 campaign manager who is also close to Melania Trump, argued privately that other options, such as Mr. Rubio, were better, according to several people with knowledge of her outreach effort.

The Murdoch crowd lobbied aggressively for Mr. Burgum, in private and in editorials in The New York Post. When the anti-Vance forces made their arguments to Mr. Trump, they focused on Mr. Vance’s prior criticisms of the former president and on Mr. Vance’s youth and inexperience. But in many cases, these G.O.P. donors were motivated because they loathed Mr. Vance’s ideology and policy positions, especially his staunch opposition to U.S. support for Ukraine against Russia.

Old comments made by Mr. Vance about Mr. Trump began to circulate on social media, and were put in front of the former president, who indicated to associates that they had given him pause.

But Mr. Trump was repelled by a Daily Mail article [*describing*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/) Mr. Burgum weeping at various moments — “When I see a man cry I view it as a weakness,” he once said. Allies also brought to [*Mr. Trump’s attention*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/) the fact that Mr. Burgum had signed one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country, a point that could become a liability in a general election.

Mr. Trump told associates that he viewed Mr. Rubio as disloyal for having campaigned in 2016 against Mr. Rubio’s friend and mentor, Jeb Bush, and wondered whether he could be trusted.

In the final days, all three leading candidates made direct pitches to Mr. Trump.

Mr. Burgum let it be known that he had no interest in serving in another role in the Trump administration, a stance that did not play well with Mr. Trump, who had mused about making him the secretary of energy, according to two people briefed on the matter.

Mr. Vance was flown to Mar-a-Lago late last week aboard the plane of Steve Witkoff, a real estate investor and one of Mr. Trump’s few close friends.

When word got back to Tucker Carlson a few weeks ago that Mr. Trump might be wavering on Mr. Vance, he intervened. Mr. Carlson, who was visiting Australia on a speaking tour, phoned Mr. Trump and delivered an apocalyptic warning, according to two people briefed on their conversation. He told Mr. Trump that Mr. Rubio could not be trusted — that he would work against him and would try to lead America into nuclear war. Mr. Carlson, who declined to comment for this article, told Mr. Trump that Mr. Burgum could not be trusted, either.

Mr. Carlson told Mr. Trump in that June phone call that he believed that if he chose a “neocon” as his V.P. — an abbreviation for Republicans who favor using U.S. power to implant democracy abroad — then the U.S. intelligence agencies would have every incentive to assassinate Mr. Trump in order to get their preferred president.

He also warned against listening to the advice of allies of Mr. Carlson’s former employer, Mr. Murdoch. “When your enemies are pushing a running mate on you,” Mr. Carlson told Mr. Trump, referring to the Murdoch empire, “it’s a pretty good sign you should ignore them.”

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting.

Theodore Schleifer contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: ONLINE: Donald J. Trump with J.D. Vance. Follow Thursday’s developments at nytimes.com, including live updates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); EYES ON THE SENATE: When he began his campaign for a vacant Ohio seat, J.D. Vance went to Donald J. Trump to apologize for his earlier criticisms. He won Mr. Trump’s endorsement. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS); A TURNING POINT: Mr. Trump’s early campaigning in 2022 was energized by a visit to East Palestine, Ohio, where a derailment had traumatized the community. Mr. Vance was with him throughout. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12); Mr. Vance this week. Mr. Trump said he was “straight out of central casting.” (A12-A13); ANOINTED: Despite an intense campaign against Mr. Vance from major Republican donors and the media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Mr. Trump put him on the ticket. Below, in Milwaukee. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); SPECULATION GROWING: The pair in March. By the fall of 2023, chatter swelled that Mr. Vance was a top contender. But Mr. Trump played his cards close, polling nearly everyone he encountered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A12, A13.

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[***The Making of The Morning Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJY-K5T1-DXY4-X1NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 26, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 2106 words

**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

We're answering reader questions about this newsletter, and the news in general.

We recently asked you -- the readers of The Morning -- to submit questions to us about this newsletter, recent news or anything else on your minds. We're devoting today's edition to some of your questions and our answers.

We have room for only a small selection in today's email, but we've posted a longer selection online, including answers from Times journalists who cover a range of subjects, whether it's Moscow or personal fitness. We enjoyed this project so much that I expect we'll do it again soon.

About The Morning

I love The Morning. Every morning when I get up, I make a cup of coffee and open the newsletter. I have one wish: Please resist using the awful phrases ''modern history'' or ''recent history.'' They are too vague to mean anything. Be precise! -- Mark Matassa

David: Thank you. And noted! We try to avoid vague language, and we will think twice before using these phrases now. I grew up surrounded by discussion of language -- my mom was a copy editor, my dad a high school French teacher -- and I appreciate it when readers write to us with grammar and usage critiques. Keep 'em coming.

I would like to see key business/finance news included each morning. -- John W. Morris III

David: My colleagues and I agree that the newsletter has probably been too light on business news recently. We will aim to change that. Thank you for the nudge, John.

I enjoy the mix of information you provide in The Morning. Wondering as an addition if you could add a ''Good News'' section. -- Genie MontBlanc

David: I, too, worry that we journalists suffer from bad-news bias. I don't think The Morning will add a section devoted to good news, but we make a concerted effort to cover both good news and bad news.

A couple examples: My colleague German Lopez has written about both rising crime and falling crime. During the Covid pandemic, I argued that the vaccines were a marvel of science whose effectiveness was sometimes underestimated.

I should note that good-news stories can lead to criticism. Some readers worry that reporting a positive trend reduces the urgency to address larger problems. But I promise you that we will continue to do our best to report all kinds of news.

I would love to know why the sports section is primarily men's sports. -- Kathryn

David: It's almost as if you've been listening to our daily meeting, Kathryn. We have recently included more stories about women's sports. Still, we are nowhere near parity. Some of that reflects the major U.S. sports leagues, which are mostly male. But this is a personal priority for me, partly because I spend many hours watching women's basketball. We can do better.

How do you deal with and guard against criticism that your coverage favors one party or ideology over another? -- Thomas K. Moore

David: Independence is a core value of The Times. We don't always get the balance right, but we try hard. I recommend reading this essay on journalistic independence by our publisher, A.G. Sulzberger.

President Biden's age is a relevant case study. Earlier this year, some Democrats criticized The Times for covering his aging and voters' deep concerns about it. In retrospect, it's pretty hard to argue that coverage was a mistake.

Politics and more

Will The Morning do a letter discussing national debt ahead of the election? -- Lia Robinson

David: My colleague German has written a newsletter on precisely this topic. I'd note that the two presidential candidates are quite different on this issue: Donald Trump's proposed policies would significantly increase the deficit, while Biden's proposals would reduce it somewhat.

Power is never given away freely; it must be taken. Is the browning of America causing more fanatical behavior by Trump and his supporters? -- Mark Shoenfield

David: Thanks for the sharp question, Mark. The short answer is yes. Trump has used the language of white nationalists, and he has won a large share of the white vote. But I think Trump's critics are wrong when they suggest his appeal is entirely racial.

Since Trump entered politics, voters of color -- Asian, Black and Latino -- have also shifted toward the Republican Party. If the Democratic Party wants to win back some of those voters (and some white voters, too), it probably needs to be more introspective about why it has become an increasingly affluent party that turns off many ***working-class*** people. Too often, Democrats suggest that anyone who doesn't vote for them is being irrational or ignorant.

How do we make people care about the state of our environment? It seems like no one cares, and I often feel frustrated that no one does. -- Julia Adams

David: I do think many people care, Julia. But you're right that the environment isn't a major issue for some voters, including many lower-income voters. One reason, I think, is that the economic and social trends have been pretty disappointing for them over the past few decades. If you're struggling to get by, it can be difficult to focus on a long-term threat.

For more

How does The Morning staff make this newsletter every day? How did the WordleBot create its word list? What coffee does Wirecutter recommend? Get the answers to those questions -- and insights from Times writers on electric vehicles, Amazon's labor union, Modi's India, the changing English language and more -- by clicking here.

(Note: We edited some questions for brevity.)

THE LATEST NEWS

2024 Election

As Biden weighs whether to drop out of the race, another question follows: Should he endorse Kamala Harris, or open the door for a wider contest?

Donald Trump's campaign is preparing to run against Harris if Biden steps aside, conducting polls to find her weaknesses and creating ads about her record.

At his first rally since he was shot, Trump seemed to abandon his pivot to a more unifying message. He insulted his opponents repeatedly, calling Biden stupid and Harris crazy.

The Secret Service acknowledged that it had turned down requests for more resources from Trump's security detail in the two years before his shooting.

Other Big Stories

Israeli fighter jets bombed a port in Yemen controlled by the Houthi militia in retaliation for a drone attack in Tel Aviv. The airstrikes hit a power station, as well as gas and oil depots.

A celebration of a Catholic ritual drew more than 50,000 people to Indianapolis. Leaders hope the gathering -- the first of its kind since the 1940s -- will revive excitement around the church.

Texas' governor has bused more than 119,000 migrants to Democrat-led cities over the past two years. These maps show where they went.

A fire destroyed the sanctuary of First Baptist Dallas Church, a landmark in the city's downtown.

In basketball, Team WNBA defeated Team USA in the women's All-Star Game, thanks to a record-setting 34 points from Arike Ogunbowale.

THE SUNDAY DEBATE

Did Trump's speech at the Republican convention convey unity?

No. While Trump did show some humility, his speech was self-absorbed and frequently attacked Democrats. ''His party's advocacy around unity was built entirely -- and cynically -- on sand,'' Timothy L. O'Brien of Bloomberg writes.

Yes. The assassination attempt clearly tempered Trump's boisterous tone and unified the Republican Party. ''They said it would be a different Donald Trump, and it was,'' Mark Davis writes for The Fort Worth Star-Telegram.

FROM OPINION

Trump tells Americans they are in constant danger. Biden tells Americans everything is fine. Both are creating an environment where conspiracy theories thrive, M. Gessen writes.

Republicans are split between those who want Trump to lead a revolution, and those who want a calmer Trump presidency, David French writes.

Go on a journey this summer: Learn a new language, Mark Vanhoenacker writes.

Here are columns by Lydia Polgreen on J.D. Vance as a D.E.I. candidate, and Ross Douthat on Trump's speech.

MORNING READS

On the loose: When two cows -- Hornee and Blackee -- strayed from their pasture, they set off a chaotic chain of events involving death threats, chicken rustlers and Joaquin Phoenix.

Wartime writing: A manuscript buried under a cherry tree helped prompt a flourishing interest in Ukrainian literature.

Vows: They met through a ''Sex and the City'' Instagram account. And just like that, they felt a spark.

Lives Lived: Thomas Neff, an M.I.T. physicist, had an idea: What if the Soviets, in need of cash, sold their unused nuclear warheads to the U.S. to use for energy? His proposal went on to convert some 20,000 nuclear arms into electricity. Neff died at 80.

THE INTERVIEW

This week's subject for The Interview is the N.B.A. superstar Joel Embiid. A citizen of Cameroon, France, and the U.S., Embiid explained his decision to play for Team USA at the Paris Olympics.

A lot of people thought you were going to play for the French team. You ultimately decided to play for the American team. Can you tell me how you wound up making that decision?

It was tough. Obviously, I got my home country, Cameroon, which I love, and the U.S., where I've been for 14 years now, and then France, where I have a lot of family. I wanted to take as much time as possible, and it didn't help that France had put an ultimatum on when the decision had to be made.

What was the timeline?

I didn't know. I saw it on Twitter, and I was like, 'Whoa, where did this come from?' But one thing that was always known was that Cameroon is the first choice, and if they qualify I'm playing for my home country. I had the opportunity to talk to the French president [Emmanuel Macron] about what was going on, and I told him one thing that was kind of bothering me a lot was the relationship between France and Cameroon and the African continent in general.

Historically, you mean?

Yeah, and even right now. There's a lot of pushback as far as basically kicking out the French because it's been so many years of oppression. So that was my mind-set. I still got my family living in Cameroon, and I don't want to put them through any of that stuff.

Given the tension between you and French basketball officials, what reaction do you expect from French fans in Paris?

I expect a lot of boos. But I actually love it. It's not going to be anything I haven't seen.

Read more of the interview here.

BOOKS

''Hillbilly Elegy'': Trump's running mate was a best-selling author before he was a senator. A.O. Scott, our critic, looks at how Vance's views of America have changed.

Relationship drama: Miss the Showtime series ''Couples Therapy''? These 11 books let you peer into others' love lives.

By the Book: Suzanne Nossel, head of PEN America, says ''Roctogenarians'' by Mo Rocca and Jonathan Greenberg was the last book that made her laugh.

Our editors' picks: There are six new books recommended this week, including ''Cue the Sun!,'' a history of reality TV.

Times best sellers: ''True Gretch,'' a memoir by Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan's governor, is new this week on the hardcover nonfiction best-seller list.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS ...

Test your focus: Can you spend 10 minutes with this one painting?

Dip into the stream of local life -- grocery stores, swimming pools, barbershops -- on your next vacation.

Watch a stand-up comedy special that resembles a solo version of ''The Wire.''

Stream five horror movies from around the world.

THE WEEK AHEAD

What to Watch For

The Tour de France concludes today.

The director of the Secret Service testifies tomorrow on Capitol Hill.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is scheduled to address Congress on Wednesday.

The Olympic Games begin Wednesday with men's soccer and rugby. Women's soccer begins Thursday.

The Olympics' opening ceremony is Friday.

Meal Plan

Emily Weinstein loves the Yiddish word ''schmaltzy,'' whether it's being used in the literal sense (slicked with poultry fat) or conveying an over-the-top, showbiz quality. That's why a recipe for skillet chicken thighs with schmaltzy tomatoes tops her list this week. She also recommends a basil-butter pasta and grilled shrimp with spicy slaw. Get the recipes.

NOW TIME TO PLAY

Here is today's Spelling Bee. Yesterday's pangrams were chariot, haricot and thoracic.

Can you put eight historical events -- including Alexander the Great's conquests, the construction of the Sydney Opera House and the naming of the color orange -- in chronological order? Take this week's Flashback quiz.

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

Thanks for spending part of your weekend with The Times.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/21/briefing/the-morning-reader-questions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/21/briefing/the-morning-reader-questions.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A2.

**Load-Date:** July 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why Biden’s Weakness Among Young Voters Should Be Taken Seriously***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RC-5KR1-JBG3-601H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 27, 2023 Monday 11:25 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1219 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** Almost all the polling shows the same pattern. Could the coming campaign restore Democrats’ usual advantage?

**Body**

Almost all the polling shows the same pattern. Could the coming campaign restore Democrats’ usual advantage?

Could President Biden and Donald J. Trump really be locked in a close race among young voters — a group Democrats typically carry by double digits — as the recent Times/Siena polls suggest?

To many of our readers and others, it’s a little hard to believe — so hard to believe that it seems to them the polls are flat-out wrong.

Of course, it’s always possible that the polls are wrong. I’ve thought our own polling might be wrong before, and I would be very apprehensive if it were just our poll out on a limb. But this isn’t about one Times/Siena poll: [*Virtually every poll*](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meetthepressblog/number-public-polls-show-young-voters-turning-biden-rcna125794) shows a close race between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump among young voters.

When dozens of polls all say the same thing, it’s worth taking the polling seriously. It’s easy to remember that the polling can be wrong, but it can be easy to forget that the polling is usually in the ballpark. It’s a losing game to dismiss all polling simply because it doesn’t comport with expectations.

Now, that doesn’t mean I don’t sympathize with those who question whether the final election results will look like recent polls. Personally, I’m skeptical the final results will look quite like these polls. But even if you think the final results will be very different, it does not mean that the polls are “wrong” today.

In fact, the belief that Mr. Biden will ultimately win young voters handily next year does nothing to distinguish two very different explanations for what we see in the polling:

* The polls are mostly wrong. They’re biased. For whatever reason, they fail to reach the Democratic-leaning young voters who propelled Mr. Biden to victory in 2020.

1. The polls are mostly right. They’re reaching the young voters who backed Mr. Biden. But for now, these voters don’t support him. Over the next year, things could change.

When it comes to the Times/Siena poll, we’ve put forward a lot of evidence consistent with the theory that the polling is mostly right, but that things might change.

By the measures at our disposal, the voters 18 to 29 in our survey “look” right. They say they backed Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump in the last presidential election by a wide margin, 57-35, right in line with our expectations. They “look” right by other measures of partisanship as well. In the states with party registration, for instance, the Times/Siena young voters were registered Democrats by a 13-point margin, 35 percent to 22 percent. That’s almost exactly in line with their actual 13-point registration advantage, 36 percent to 23 percent.

It’s important to emphasize that just because the polls “look” right doesn’t mean they are right. Our polls looked “right” by these kind of indicators in 2020. They were [*still wrong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/10/upshot/polls-what-went-wrong.html) in important ways (though they [*were right*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/upshot/texas-polls-biden-trump.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article) about plenty as well, including [*racial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/28/us/elections/the-elections-big-twist-the-racial-gap-between-republicans-and-democrats-is-shrinking.html) and generational depolarization). But these data points nonetheless raise the burden on those who assert that the issue is partisan nonresponse bias, in which young Democrats simply aren’t answering their cellphones (99.8 percent of our young respondents were reached by cellphone).

We see no evidence of that. In our polling, the problem for Mr. Biden isn’t too few young Democrats. It’s that many young Democrats don’t like him. Mr. Biden has just a 76-20 lead among young voters either registered as Democrats or who have previously voted in a Democratic primary. It’s just a 69-24 lead among young nonwhite Democrats. The dissent exists among self-identified Democrats, Democratic-leaners, Biden ’20 voters, and so on.

This kind of intraparty dissent is rare but not without precedent in our polling. I’ve seen it in our [*congressional polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/upshot/elections-poll-ks03-3.html) of highly educated suburbs full of Romney-Clinton voters. And I’ve seen it once before in a statewide presidential race: our [*final*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/30/upshot/florida-poll.html) [*polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/08/upshot/trump-and-clinton-tied-in-final-upshot-poll-of-north-carolina.html) in 2016, when Mr. Trump suddenly surged to obtain 30 percent of white ***working-class*** registered Democrats. It was hard to believe, but it was fairly easy to [*explain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/30/upshot/how-trumps-campaign-could-redraw-voter-allegiances.html) and it raised the serious [*possibility*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/07/upshot/why-the-election-is-close-and-what-trump-and-obama-have-in-common.html) of a Trump win.

Similarly, I think it’s fairly straightforward to explain Mr. Biden’s weakness among young voters today, much as it was easy to explain Mrs. Clinton’s among white ***working-class*** voters in 2016. Young voters are by far the likeliest to say he’s just too old to be an effective president. Many are upset about his handling of the Israel-Hamas war. And all of this is against the backdrop of Mr. Biden’s longstanding weakness among young voters, who weren’t enthusiastic about him in 2020, and Mr. Trump’s [*gains among nonwhite voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/upshot/democrats-biden-hispanic-black-voters.html), who are disproportionately young.

But even if you don’t buy these explanations, that’s mostly just a reason to believe the numbers will shift over the next year, not a reason to dismiss the polling.

After all, these polls do not depict the usual, stable basis for vote choice that we’ve become accustomed to in our polarized country. This is not an election where almost all voters like their own party’s candidate while disliking the opposing party’s candidate and disagreeing with them on the issues. Instead, we have an unstable arrangement: Millions of voters dislike both candidates, entertain minor-party candidates and when pressed often say they would vote for someone from the other major political party whom they disagree with on many important issues. These are the textbook conditions for volatility, and it’s entirely reasonable to doubt whether the arrangement will last once the campaign gets underway.

We tried to illustrate the abstract possibility that “things can change” more concretely [*through an article in which we called back the Kamala-not-Joe voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/upshot/kamala-harris-biden-voters-polls.html) — the young voters who back Vice President Kamala Harris over Mr. Trump but not Mr. Biden over Mr. Trump. It’s worth noting that these are the kinds of voters we would expect to find in the data if Mr. Biden really were performing this badly among an otherwise typical sample of young voters — much as the 2016 polling featured plenty of white ***working-class*** Trump voters who approved of Barack Obama and who said they voted for him in 2012.

There’s one other way the results might end up “normal,” even with today’s polling: a low youth turnout. Almost all of the polls nowadays are among registered voters, not likely voters, and [*most of Mr. Biden’s weakness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/upshot/biden-voters-midterms-2024.html) is among disengaged voters on the periphery of the electorate. In the latest Times/Siena polling, Mr. Biden leads by 15 points among young voters who turned out in the midterms, while he trails by three points among young voters who didn’t turn out. If these irregular, disaffected voters simply choose not to vote, Mr. Biden will most likely have a healthy lead with young voters.

There are countless other reasons the polls today may not ultimately align with the final result. For one, Mr. Trump could be convicted of federal crimes in six months. But just because the polls aren’t necessarily “predictive” of the final outcome does not mean they’re wrong. It doesn’t mean they’re not worth taking seriously, either. For the campaigns, taking the numbers seriously today may wind up being exactly what changes the numbers tomorrow.

PHOTO: A solid youth vote edge could be in doubt for Democrats in 2024. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Gabriella Angotti-Jones for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Heady Weeks When America Met the Beatles***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9K-G6S1-JBG3-606B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 11, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1872 words

**Byline:** By Lucie Young

**Body**

Sixty years after the Beatles appeared live on ''Ed Sullivan,'' McCartney reflects on his photos capturing those halcyon days. The Brooklyn Museum will exhibit them, and some will be for sale later.

They are now a collector's trove -- Paul McCartney's own photos, shot 60 years ago, when the Beatles took Europe and America by storm: images of screaming fans (one carrying a live monkey); a girl in a yellow bikini; airport workers playing air guitar, and unguarded moments grabbed from trains, planes and automobiles.

McCartney, now 81, doesn't like to sit still and reminisce about the past, so he chatted while driving home from his recording studio in Sussex, England. ''My American friends call these small, one-way lanes 'gun barrels,''' he said, warning his interviewer that at any moment the signal might die (it did). In the end, it took two days to complete a coherent conversation about the breakthrough period when the Beatles went viral, captured in the traveling exhibition ''Paul McCartney Photographs 1963-1964: Eyes of the Storm,'' which features 250 of his shots. Currently it's at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Va., and comes to the Brooklyn Museum May 3-August 18. (Don't be surprised if the artist shows up for the opening.)

It was McCartney's archivist, Sarah Brown, who found 1,000 photographs the musician had taken over 12 weeks -- from Dec. 7, 1963, to Feb. 21, 1964 -- in the artist's library.

''I thought the photos were lost,'' he said. ''In the '60s it was pretty easy. Often doors were left open. We'd invite fans in.'' Even the recording studio wasn't a safe space. ''I was taking my daughter Mary to the British Library to show her where to research for her exams, and in one display case I saw the lyric sheet for 'Yesterday,''' he said. A sticky-fingered biographer had swiped the original from their studio.

Rosie Broadley, a senior curator at the National Portrait Gallery in London, where the show was inaugurated, said, ''His photographs show us what it was like to look through his eyes while the Beatles conquered the world.''

McCartney won an art prize at school and practiced photography with his brother, Mike (who later became a professional photographer). He graduated to a 35 mm SLR Pentax camera when the Beatles hit it big.

''It was the most sophisticated hand-held camera of the era. It would be like having the latest iPhone today,'' Darius Himes, Christie's international head of photography, said, adding: ''We were all quite surprised by Paul's sophisticated eye, and his awareness of trends in the visual arts. The yellow bikini shot is like a striking mix of Stephen Shore, William Eggleston and William Klein.''

The Beatles traveled with a flock of cameramen and were not shy about gleaning tips. McCartney admitted some of his earliest shots in the exhibition are a little fuzzily focused. ''I console myself that one of my favorite photographers, Julia Margaret Cameron, also liked soft focus,'' he said.

''His photos get better as he practices,'' Broadley noted. The exhibition, and its accompanying book, take visitors on a whirlwind trip through six cities beginning in Liverpool and London, and ending in Miami. The images from the British leg are exhibited in small ''austerity'' walnut frames, to indicate Britain was still in throes of a postwar recession. The Fab Four might look nervous in these photos, but they had already reached stardom on their home turf, having bagged three No. 1 singles.

After a brief stint performing at the Olympia in Paris, alongside Sylvie Vartan, they heard that ''I Want to Hold Your Hand'' was No. 1 on the American charts and sped to New York. The crowning moment in America was their live television debut on the ''The Ed Sullivan Show'' on Feb. 9, 1964, singing five propulsive pop hits -- an event watched by 73 million people.

In Miami, McCartney's photos burst into Kodachrome color and the newly minted celebrities seem to bloom in glamorous new surroundings: lounging poolside, sipping scotch and riding around in motorboats. By April, the Beatles' songs held the top five spots on the U.S. Billboard charts.

Musing on the images, he said, ''There is an innocence to them,'' adding, ''I think it was a lot more fun than it was. We worked probably 360 days out of the year.'' It was an all too brief halcyon period. Two and a half years later, the Beatles stopped touring. The logistics, the screams, the armored cars, had become a nightmare.

Like most successful artists thriving past retirement age, McCartney has projectitis. He's working on a new album with the producer Andrew Watt (''Hackney Diamonds''), and just released the 50th anniversary remaster of the Paul McCartney & Wings classic ''Band on the Run.'' ''His live shows continue to be of such high voltage one half expects him to burst into flames,'' the Irish poet Paul Muldoon wrote in McCartney's recent book, ''The Lyrics: 1956 to the Present.''

His next project is organizing a gallery sale of some of his photographs. ''It's a process I like,'' he said, describing the joy of curating. ''I've done it a few times with Linda's work'' [a reference to his first wife, the photographer, Linda Eastman]. His current homes, shared with his wife Nancy Shevell, are adorned with images by Linda and Mary, though, curiously, none of his own. But that may change. ''The sale,'' he said, ''will probably encourage me to get some for myself.''

Here are edited excerpts from our conversation, in which he reflected on popular images in the exhibition.

John Lennon. London, January, 1964

My favorite photos are of John and George. There's a huge sentimental aspect to them. No one else could have taken this pic. John was a great character. A very different kind of guy to the other boys I knew. We met at the village fete. He was playing with his band. He was a year and a half older than me [and] my first friend who wore glasses. He was always taking them off and polishing them. I found it fascinating. He'd take them off in public, which rendered him half blind. Onstage, he just stood there and gazed out into the blackness. Maybe it helped him focus on playing.

John, George and Ringo backstage in their dressing room. London, 1963.

We began by playing in really crummy little clubs and bars in Liverpool and Hamburg. In Germany, we slept in a little room, with a Union Jack flag for a blanket. Back in England, it started to get a little better. We played in ballrooms, got radio work and then TV work. It was like a staircase ascent for us. What nobody realized is, by this time [seven months after the Beatles' first No. 1 hit on the U.K. charts], we were really fully formed beasts. We'd come from the postwar years into a Britain that was now experiencing joy for the first time in decades, and we ate it up.

Self-portraits. Paris, 1964.

Our Pentax cameras were probably a gift. There was a lot of artistic black and white photography emerging at that time. We admired David Bailey [who had a Pentax camera], Don McCullin, a stunning war photographer, and Norman Parkinson. When he took our picture, he'd say 'give me big eyes' and we'd all play along. I like to shoot through the mirror because things look good in a mirror. We all smoked. Smoking gave us a suave, grown-up feel. We were pretty young. I was just 21.

Ringo Starr. Paris, 1964.

Our aim was always to have fun. I think that communicates itself and became part of the reason we were so popular. It is just a characteristic of Liverpool people to have a laugh. [Paul snapped this shot of Ringo during a staged photo shoot with Dezo Hoffmann, one of their court photographers.] Dezo was a very nice guy. He would give us hints as to the aperture and all the various things needed to make a good photograph.

Fans welcoming the Beatles at Central Park. New York, February 1964.

Here's a pic of Beatles fans acting like they should. ... Going crazy! We didn't know what we were gonna get in America; if anyone would turn out to meet us. On the plane over, the pilot radioed ahead and was told there were gangs of fans waiting. [Over 4,000 screaming girls held back by 200 policemen.] Manhattan was big, tall, loud and brash. There were stories of fans breaking into our room at the Plaza Hotel. Those were more stories than reality. We probably wished it would happen.

Ringo Starr setting up his drum kit during rehearsals for ''The Ed Sullivan Show.'' New York, February 1964.

We had done television in England, so we were used to it; the cameras and the lights and all that. What we didn't really know was how important Ed Sullivan was. He was the BIG ONE. There were two stagehands waiting to draw back the curtains for us to go on and one said: 'You nervous?' I said, 'I dunno. Not really.' He says: 'You should be. There's 73 million people watching.' Then I got nervous. But if you watch that performance, I can't believe how confident we look. The weird thing about the stage set is Ringo's [precarious] drum rostrum. I can't work out how he got up there.

Photographers in Central Park. New York, February 1964.

New York journalists thought they were pretty smart and I'm sure they were used to handling dumb pop stars. We had a lot of fun with them, especially at the news conference at J.F.K. [Airport]. We gave as good as we got. It became a game of who could come up with the smartest answer. Often it was the truth. Someone asked George, 'Do you ever get your hair cut?' He said, 'Yeah, yesterday.' And he'd been to the barber's the day before.

Unknown man. Taken from the window of train from New York to Washington, D.C., February 1964.

We loved music and performing. It beat working in a factory. A few years before these pictures, we'd all been fully immersed in ***working class*** life in Liverpool. I have a fascination with ***working class*** people like this man [a railroad worker caught from a train en route to Washington, D.C.]. ***Working class*** people are the smartest people I've ever met. My cousin Bert [Danher] was an insurance salesman, but he also compiled crosswords for The Guardian and The Times. The photography I admire is spontaneous, like the work of the great [Henri] Cartier-Bresson. It was good to just grab shots on the run. We didn't have time to think.

Unknown girl. Washington, February 1964.

Some of my favorite photos are of fans. I really like this one of a young girl with a headscarf looking in a Zen-like manner into my camera. I took it and never looked at it again until I did a print [for the National Portrait Gallery exhibition]. When we started blowing up the images, we got to see all the individual characters. In one photo, at Miami airport, there's a woman holding up a monkey. You wouldn't get that past health and safety these days.

George Harrison. Miami Beach, February 1964.

This is George living the life in Miami. [McCartney switched to Kodachrome to record the group's antics in Florida.] Miami felt like wonderland. These pictures were taken at a time when we were all young and beautiful. I mean these are good looking boys, you know! From this perspective, I feel very blessed to have not only known these guys, but to have worked with them and done such great things with them. I feel very blessed.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL McCARTNEY) (AR14-AR15) This article appeared in print on page AR14, AR15.

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[***The Country Club***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HW-7041-DXY4-X1F8-00000-00&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:** 331 words

**Byline:** By Calum Marsh

**Body**

The sisters Fiona and Sophia Robert wrote and star in this broad, pastel-colored golf comedy.

It's hard to make a golf comedy without evoking ''Caddyshack,'' the ribald 1980 classic starring Chevy Chase and Bill Murray, and with its crude humor, farcical innuendo and posh eponymous setting, ''The Country Club'' certainly warrants the comparison. But the influence the movie more obviously courts is early Wes Anderson, especially his sophomore feature ''Rushmore'': The director Fiona Robert (who also co-wrote the film with her sister, Sophia Robert, both of whom star) leans heavily on Anderson's unmistakable, easily imitated style, using rigidly symmetrical compositions, sudden zooms and a heightened pastel color palette. As if to underscore the similarities, the movie even opens with a handcrafted, pleasantly fastidious title sequence with credits inscribed on tees and golf balls that fairly exudes twee Andersonia.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

These visual flourishes, while derivative, are charming and well-realized. The writing, however, has none of Anderson's wit, tending instead toward a kind of broad and fatuous slapstick that's closer to ''2 Broke Girls'' than ''The Royal Tenenbaums.''

This story of a pair of ***working-class*** teenage interlopers crashing an upper-crust golf tournament has a predictable sitcom rhythm, and features expository monologues of astonishing clumsiness, such as this dud, from the ***working-class*** hero Elsa (Sophia Robert) to her sister, Tina (Fiona Robert): ''I guess I'm just upset about dad getting laid off. College is so far out of reach now!'' The jokes are scarcely better. There is a long, long, unfunny sequence involving flatulence. According to the credits, those noise effects were provided by the comedian Steve Higgins. They were not worth crediting.

The Country ClubNot rated. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. Rent or buy on most major platforms.Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. Rent or buy on most major platforms.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/movies/the-country-club-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/22/movies/the-country-club-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘The Country Club’ Review: Who’s Your Caddy?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HP-JC91-DXY4-X0WJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 22, 2023 Thursday 17:06 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 335 words

**Byline:** Calum Marsh

**Highlight:** The sisters Fiona and Sophia Robert wrote and star in this broad, pastel-colored golf comedy.

**Body**

The sisters Fiona and Sophia Robert wrote and star in this broad, pastel-colored golf comedy.

It’s hard to make a golf comedy without evoking [*“Caddyshack,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1980/07/25/archives/caddyshack-animal-house-spinoff.html) the ribald 1980 classic starring Chevy Chase and Bill Murray, and with its crude humor, farcical innuendo and posh eponymous setting, “The Country Club” certainly warrants the comparison. But the influence the movie more obviously courts is early Wes Anderson, especially his sophomore feature [*“Rushmore”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/09/movies/film-festival-review-most-likely-to-succeed-or-annoy.html): The director Fiona Robert (who also co-wrote the film with her sister, Sophia Robert, both of whom star) leans heavily on Anderson’s unmistakable, easily imitated style, using rigidly symmetrical compositions, sudden zooms and a heightened pastel color palette. As if to underscore the similarities, the movie even opens with a handcrafted, pleasantly fastidious title sequence with credits inscribed on tees and golf balls that fairly exudes twee Andersonia.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/GK6NZM6-Sts)]

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The Country Club

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. [*Rent or buy on most major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/)

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 30 minutes. Rent or buy on most major platforms.

This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***These 5 Black Ballerinas Blazed Their Own Trail; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWS-K4M1-DXY4-X0MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 27, 2024 Saturday 04:49 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 894 words

**Byline:** Danyel Smith

**Highlight:** The birth of a pioneering Black dance company comes alive in Karen Valby’s “The Swans of Harlem.”

**Body**

THE SWANS OF HARLEM: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History, by Karen Valby

The sense of loss in “The Swans of Harlem: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History” is strong. No matter how painstaking the detail or how sparkly its jubilee energy, these women — Lydia Abarca, Gayle McKinney-Griffith, Sheila Rohan, Marcia Sells and Karlya Shelton — were robbed of laurels upon which they might now be resting. Abarca’s family was so concerned by her erasure from dance history (and her apparent attendant depression) that they instigated the telling of this story. If it were just a quest for cultural redress, the result might have been a dusty scroll of the Swans’ ballet bona fides. It’s by getting personal that it leaps high.

This is not to say that the book, which dances between narrative storytelling and as-told-tos, doesn’t give ballet’s broad strokes. The author, Karen Valby, skillfully maps the ugliness of a [*segregated art form*](https://academic.oup.com/book/33603/chapter-abstract/288092967?redirectedFrom=fulltext) in which too recently, [*blackface was still defended*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/23/arts/dance/blackface-ballet-bolshoi-misty-copeland.html). And there are long looks at the idiosyncrasies of Dance Theater of Harlem’s co-founders, the charismatic ballet legends [*Karel Shook*](https://www.nytimes.com/1985/07/27/arts/karel-shook-dancer-is-dead-co-founder-harlem-troupe.html) and [*Arthur Mitchell*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/19/obituaries/arthur-mitchell-dead.html). The company was so influential that just two years after its [*1969*](https://www.dancetheatreofharlem.org/our-history/#:~:text=In%201969%2C%20at%20the%20height,most%20impactful%20art%20is%20born.) founding, George Balanchine invited his former protégé, Mitchell, to share the stage with City Ballet at Lincoln Center. After that historic performance, members of the Bolshoi would dip into rehearsals to see, as one founding board member recalled, “dancers with athleticism and technique and exuberance and freshness and something to prove.” This was the Swans’ milieu.

All of this is absorbing. Yet it’s the odd details that shine brightest: Sells recalls painfully losing whole toenails while learning to dance on pointe — and eventually pirouetting with such speed that she could “feel the actual physics of it all.” At age 7, Rohan contracted polio, “a bird of a child with legs suddenly caged in thick braces.” Shelton recounts a fairy-tale first date during a stint in Paris, riding the Ferris wheel at Jardin des Tuileries. And what is most remembered about a performance to Tchaikovsky’s “Serenade for Strings” is “the transcendent scene of 17 women onstage, swathed in the palest and pearliest of blues.” Precisely because there’s so much meaning and humanity in this kind of minutiae, it has been methodically clipped from stories of Black women’s lives. It’s unsurprising that early news reports about the Swans and their cohort described them as “black slum youngsters.”

If asked about their homes, in fact, the Swans could have cited just as three examples: Staten Island’s tight-knit West Indian enclave, Connecticut’s green exurbs and the aspirational Black ***working class*** of Denver. If asked about their families, it might be on the record that Sheila’s softball-playing sister, Delores, loved watching her sibling at the barre. (“She let me be in my imagination for a bit.”) By their teens, these Swans’ lives were already being pruned for presentation to a hostile ballet universe. It’s a demonstration of radical vulnerability for them now to share, say, how they painted on and rinsed off chemical hair relaxers in backstage bathrooms.

Black women’s lives are too often told in summary, or rushed through in well-intentioned biopics that, in a more equitably greenlit world, would be 10-episode documentary series. Promising books flatten quickly to literary curriculum vitae, complete with palatable headshots and the centering of “firsts”: first Black woman this; first Black woman that. These five ballerinas claim their share of what we so benignly call “breaking barriers,” but the slothful pace of “change” that weights so many of those firsts can tarnish a trophy before it’s home.

The Swans are more than banners to be unrolled for Black History Month. But many of us minimize our own depth and fullness of character. It’s a soul-crushing habit we picked up hundreds of years ago. “For most of my career, I didn’t put my performing background on my résumé,” says Sells, who went on to become a dean of students at Harvard Law School and is currently the chief diversity officer at the Metropolitan Opera. “I thought it might make me sound unserious, to be frank. I thought people might think it was silly. But then when people did find out, they’d be like, Oh my God, you were an actual ballerina!”

Actual ballerinas: Abarca, McKinney-Griffith, Rohan, Sells and Shelton. Recognition delayed is recognition denied. And the process of reclamation is not only painful, like a dancer’s training, it is never quite complete. This expectation of being under-credited, and worse, the fear of being only superficially known, is why many Black ballerinas — many Black women — layer on mental Kevlar the way others do T-shirts and hoodies. It’s heavy. The moral of this important and tear-stained book is actually a reminder: Bare oneself, fly into the grandest of jetés and live free.

THE SWANS OF HARLEM: Five Black Ballerinas, Fifty Years of Sisterhood, and Their Reclamation of a Groundbreaking History | By Karen Valby | Pantheon | 304 pp. | $29

PHOTO: A Dance Theater of Harlem performance of Balanchine’s “Serenade” in 1979. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONT ROW PHOTOS) This article appeared in print on page BR17.

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[***Campaigns for Senate Worth Watching in '24***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP1-WMC1-JBG3-604S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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

**Length:** 1682 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

With Democrats holding a one-seat majority and defending seats from Maryland to Arizona, control of the Senate could easily flip to the G.O.P.

The fight for Senate control is playing out almost entirely in Democratically held seats this year as President Biden's party defends a slim 51-49 seat majority.

The retirement of Senator Joe Manchin III, a Democrat, in deep-red West Virginia has all but ceded one seat to the Republicans, who are targeting a number of vulnerable Democratic incumbents in red or swing states. And if former President Donald J. Trump wins the White House, one seat is all the G.O.P. needs to flip the chamber. Should the Senate come down to a 50-50 split, the vice president plays tiebreaker.

For Democrats to hold the Senate, the party would most likely need all their incumbents to win; for their candidates to prevail in open seats in Arizona, Michigan and Maryland; and for Mr. Biden to be re-elected so Vice President Kamala Harris would play the tiebreaker in an evenly split chamber. The party is targeting two Republican-held seats, but those are considered more difficult terrain.

Here are the Senate races to watch in 2024.

Montana: Farmer vs. former Navy SEAL

Senator Jon Tester, the flat-topped farmer from Big Sandy, Mont., has defied the odds before in his increasingly Republican state, but his Senate victories in 2006, 2012 and 2018 all came in strong Democratic years nationally. His fight for a fourth term will be considerably tougher with Mr. Biden at the top of the ticket in a state that Mr. Trump won by 16 percentage points in 2020. And Mr. Tester will most likely be battling the Republican Party's selected candidate, Tim Sheehy, a decorated former Navy SEAL and businessman with the wealth to self-finance his campaign, as well as Mr. Trump's backing.

Mr. Tester has the power of incumbency, and the authenticity of a third-generation Montanan. In 2012, President Barack Obama received 41.7 percent of the vote. Mr. Tester earned 48.6 percent. He may need even more ticket-splitters -- people who will vote for Mr. Trump for president and him for Senate -- this November.

Cook Political Report rating: A toss-up

Ohio: Sherrod Brown faces the fight of his political life

Besides Mr. Tester, Senator Sherrod Brown is the only other Democrat defending a seat in a solidly Republican state. He too has had the advantage of winning in strong Democratic years -- 2006, 2012 and 2018 -- and like Mr. Tester, he has established an image as a stalwart supporter of the ***working-class*** voters who will decide the election. As a powerful member of the Senate -- he is the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee -- Mr. Brown has amassed a considerable war chest for his re-election campaign.

Unlike Mr. Tester, he will be running against a Republican who was not the Ohio G.O.P. establishment's choice. Bernie Moreno, instead, was the candidate of Mr. Trump. The Republican's sizable fortune will seed fund-raising and undergird his campaign against the incumbent, but Democrats boosted Mr. Moreno's candidacy during the primary because they believe his business background will make him vulnerable to attack.

Cook Political Report rating: A toss-up

Arizona: Kari Lake, a prominent election denier, tries again

The retirement of Senator Kyrsten Sinema, the Democrat-turned-independent iconoclast, has set up a stark Senate race between Representative Ruben Gallego, a progressive, and Kari Lake, a former television news anchor and a favorite of Mr. Trump's Make America Great Again movement who lost her race for governor in 2022. The primary in Arizona is July 30, but Mr. Gallego and Ms. Lake have established themselves as the odds-on favorites to represent their parties in the open Senate contest.

President Biden narrowly won Arizona in 2020, and unlike Ohio and Montana, the state promises to be a presidential battleground, potentially warping the Senate race. Ms. Lake made a name for herself by falsely claiming that Democrats stole the Arizona election for Mr. Biden in 2020, then falsely claiming that her Democratic opponent in the governor's race, Katie Hobbs, stole her election. Mr. Gallego is less well-known outside of his Phoenix House district, but as a Latino with a Harvard pedigree and combat experience in Iraq with the Marine Corps, he has a compelling biography.

Cook Political Report rating: A toss-up

Michigan: Trump looms large

The full range of Republican Party factions will fight it out for the right to contend for the Senate seat of Senator Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat who is retiring. There's Peter Meijer, who voted to impeach Mr. Trump just after being sworn into the House, then lost in the 2022 Republican primary to a Trump-backed challenger. Mr. Meijer has now said he will vote for Mr. Trump in November. There's Justin Amash, the libertarian-minded former congressman who denounced Mr. Trump, faced a fierce backlash that chased him from his party, tried to run for his House seat as an independent, lost and is now running for the Senate again as an anti-Trump Republican. Then there's Mike Rogers, the mainstream Republican who said the party needed to move on from Mr. Trump, then wooed and won Mr. Trump's endorsement for Senate and embraced him.

Mr. Rogers has to be considered the favorite in the Aug. 6 primary, but past and present views of the former president will loom over this race all summer. The primary winner will almost certainly face Representative Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat who has used her national security credentials to win over swing voters in Central Michigan since 2018. Her trick will be to keep those centrist voters and energize more liberal voters in and around Detroit. And looming above it all is the presidential contest.

Cook Political Report rating: Leaning toward Democrats

Nevada: Low-key incumbent vs. political newcomer

In recent years, Nevada Democrats have profited off Republican voters' penchant for nominating candidates from the G.O.P.'s extremes, but this year, party leaders are rallying around Sam Brown, a political neophyte with an extraordinary story. The West Point graduate nearly died in Kandahar, Afghanistan, when a roadside bomb burned him badly and left him permanently scarred. His thin political résumé could be a plus, since it will make him difficult to label.

Senator Jacky Rosen, the incumbent Democrat, isn't flashy, but the power of incumbency matters, unless Mr. Biden's support in the state craters.

Cook Political Report rating: Leaning toward Democrats

Wisconsin: A wealthy Republican candidate faces questions over his ties to the state

Senator Tammy Baldwin, a Democrat, has been a low-key fixture in Wisconsin politics since her election to the State Assembly in 1992. With her comes little drama, but Wisconsin, a state that just re-elected its famously quiet governor, Tony Evers, in 2022, seems to like Democrats who speak softly.

Republicans have recruited Eric Hovde, a banker and businessman who, if nothing else, can finance his own campaign. But his connections to Southern California in a state full of Badger pride have helped keep this race leaning toward the incumbent.

Cook Political Report rating: Leaning toward Democrats

Pennsylvania: David McCormick tries again

The Keystone State may be a key battleground in the presidential election this year, but Senator Bob Casey, the Democratic incumbent, is an institution. His expected Republican opponent is David McCormick, the former chief executive of Bridgewater Associates, one of the largest hedge funds in the world. Mr. McCormick lost the Republican Senate primary in 2022 to Mehmet Oz, and the lines of attack honed two years ago on his wealth and his mansion in Connecticut are sure to be recycled.

Cook Political Report rating: Leaning toward Democrats

Maryland: Larry Hogan makes things interesting

Reliably blue Maryland should not be in play, but Larry Hogan, the moderate former Republican governor, has decided to run for the Senate seat of Ben Cardin, the retiring Democrat, making the race one to watch.

Democrats had figured they could count on the three-term Representative David Trone, the wealthy founder of Total Wine & More, a large retailer of wine and spirits. Then Mr. Trone used a racial slur at a House hearing, for which he has apologized and said was inadvertent. But several Black Democrats endorsed Angela Alsobrooks, the Prince George's County executive, ahead of the May 14 primary, as did Representative Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the powerful House Oversight Committee.

Cook Political Report rating: Likely Democratic

Texas and Florida: Democrats try to flip seats in reliably red states

Democrats have only two races to play offense in: Senator Ted Cruz's campaign in Texas and Senator Rick Scott's in Florida. Both men have never been personally popular in their states, but those states have been reliably Republican of late. Democrats like their candidates, Representative Colin Allred in Texas and former Representative Debbie Mucarsel-Powell in Florida, but it would most likely take severe erosion of Mr. Trump's support to put those Senate seats in play.

Cook Political Report ratings: Likely Republican

Bonus races to watch: Long shots

Utah is nobody's idea of a swing state, and the retirement of Senator Mitt Romney at the end of his term has drawn in nearly a dozen Republicans ahead of the June 25 primary, including Representative John Curtis; Brent Orrin Hatch, the son of Senator Orrin G. Hatch; and Brad Wilson, the former speaker of the State House. But one Democrat made waves with a unique announcement video: Caroline Gleich, a professional ski mountaineer.

Nebraska is almost as red as Utah, with an incumbent Republican, Deb Fischer, running for re-election. Her main opponent is not a Democrat but an independent, Dan Osborn, who led a strike at the Kellogg's plant in Omaha in 2021 and is testing whether his pro-labor, ***working-class*** message can resonate at a time when the union movement is resurgent.

Cook Political Report ratings: Solidly Republican

[*https://www.nytimes.com/article/senate-races-2024-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/senate-races-2024-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator Jon Tester, a Montana Democrat, is facing a tough fight for a fourth term in a state that has turned reliably Republican. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Tim Sheehy, the Republican Party's selected candidate to challenge Mr. Tester, has the wealth to self-finance his campaign. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL LEATHE/BOZEMAN DAILY CHRONICLE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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[***What Trump Means When He Tells Us to ‘Fight’; Carlos Lozada***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH8-6351-JBG3-6013-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1842 words

**Highlight:** In the canon of Trump books and speeches, “fight” is a constant byword.

**Body**

The words poured out, instinctively, each one punctuated with a pump of Donald Trump’s fist and a grimace of his blood-streaked face, an answer to the staccato of rifle shots that had been fired his way barely a minute earlier.

“Fight! Fight! Fight!”

The image of Trump in that moment — the American flag behind him, the Secret Service around him, the piercing blue sky above him — has become an [*indelible piece*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) of our political iconography, on home pages today and in history books forever. But those few words, delivered to the thousands of rally goers in Butler, Pa., and to the millions more who watched the scene looping on their screens, are no less emblematic, no less essential to grasping Trump’s meaning and message.

With that terse, defiant refrain, Trump accomplished many things at once. He offered reassurance that he remained both safe and himself; he issued a directive for how supporters should react to those who attack him; and he captured the emotional state of a nation that was on edge well before the horror of an attempted assassination. Trump’s social-media [*posts*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) and [*interviews*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) since the shooting have stressed the need for national unity, but unity was not his first impulse.

“Fight! Fight! Fight!” is the sound of Donald Trump returning fire.

In the canon of Trump books and speeches, “fight” is a constant byword, but it has meant radically different things in different contexts. In scripted moments meant to convey suitably presidential sensibilities, Trump is fighting for others — whether the American people or those the nation has forgotten. In moments of political or legal crisis, when Trump feels besieged, his call to “fight” becomes personal. It is not a fight for others, but a battle for himself, one in which the people are enlisted in Trump’s wars, persuaded that his causes are their own. Eventually, the causes fall away, and the leader becomes all there is to fight for.

“When people treat me badly or unfairly or try to take advantage of me, my general attitude, all my life, has been to fight back very hard,” Trump writes in “The Art of the Deal,” published in 1987 and still the foundational document of Trump studies. He also complains that attorneys are too quick to settle disputes. “I’d rather fight than fold,” he says later in the book. Fold once, he argues, and soon you’ll be known for it.

Those early fights in “The Art of the Deal” focus on winning tax breaks and fending off lawsuits. But in his 2000 book, “The America We Deserve,” Trump calls for loftier confrontations. The American dream is dying because of excessive regulation, onerous taxes, racism and discrimination, Trump writes, and while the United States sends troops around the world, it can’t seem to look after its own kids at home. “What about their American dreams?” he asks. He was considering a run for president, he explains, because “when you mess with the American dream, you’re on the fighting side of Trump.”

The sentiment recurred in 2016 when he accepted the Republican presidential nomination. “To every parent who dreams for their child, and every child who dreams for their future,” Trump declared in Cleveland, “I say these words to you tonight: I’m with you, and I will fight for you, and I will win for you.”

Early in his presidency, however, many of Trump’s fights became more overtly self-serving, not about battling for the people but about brawling for himself, often in narrow or petty terms.

After the news [*emerged*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) in 2017 that Trump had asked the F.B.I. director to drop an investigation into his first national security adviser, the president [*complained*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) in a commencement address at the Coast Guard Academy that no politician had ever “been treated worse or more unfairly” than he had. Sometimes the only answer, Trump said, is to “put your head down and fight, fight, fight.” And when the president issued some bizarre Twitter posts [*criticizing*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough of MSNBC in crudely insulting terms, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, then the White House press secretary, defended Trump’s fighting spirit.

“When he gets attacked, he’s going to hit back,” she said. “I think the American people elected someone who’s smart, who’s tough, who’s a fighter, and that’s Donald Trump. And I don’t think it’s a surprise to anybody that he fights fire with fire.”

And it’s no surprise that Trump judges those around him on their ability to fight, too. When Brett Kavanaugh’s nomination to the Supreme Court was threatened by allegations of sexual misconduct, Trump phoned his nominee. He wanted to know if Kavanaugh was “prepared to fight,” Peter Baker and Susan Glasser write in “The Divider,” their history of the Trump presidency. “Absolutely,” was his reply. Only when the nominee lashed out at the Senate Judiciary Committee with a display of “raw outrage and Trumpian-style fury,” the authors write, did Kavanaugh salvage his nomination.

Trump’s choice of Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio as his running mate carries a similar rationale. “He’s a fearless MAGA fighter, he fights like crazy,” Trump said in a 2022 rally for Vance’s Senate campaign. Donald Trump Jr., who is close friends with Vance and played a key role in his selection, [*explained*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) on Monday why the senator made sense for the ticket, despite having been an early Trump critic. “He’s just been an incredible fighter ever since he saw that [Trump] was real,” Trump Jr. told CBS News.

Vance’s [*Trump-friendly positions*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) on trade, immigration, Ukraine and the culture wars, as well as his skills on television, may make the senator an appealing fighter for the 2024 campaign — but so does his [*nonchalance*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) about the former president’s efforts to overturn the 2020 presidential election. Vance is not just a dedicated warrior for the causes of economic populism and the ***working class***, but a willing one in the interests of Trump himself.

This is how Trump’s fights blur together. The battles on behalf of the people and those on behalf of the candidate become a single war, inextricable.

“They are coming after me because I am fighting for you,” Trump told the crowd gathered at the March for Life in January 2020, as the first impeachment proceedings against him were underway. He reiterated the idea when accepting the party’s nomination for president that year. “From the moment I left my former life behind, and a good life it was, I have done nothing but fight for you,” Trump said. “Always remember: They are coming after me, because I am fighting for you.”

It’s a notion Trump may revisit once more in his convention speech on Thursday night. His opponents are not just his own; they belong to everyone. When he is attacked, then, everyone must join his fight.

Trump’s “fightingness,” as Larry Kudlow, a Fox Business host and former economic official in the Trump White House, has called it, is a defining attribute of Trumpism and vital to the former president’s appeal. “Even those that don’t know him or like him know he’s a fighter,” Kudlow [*said*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) in 2023. “No one has the fightingness that Donald Trump has.”

In contrast, anyone seeking to limit Trump’s ambitions or question his fights is derided as weak and insufficiently devoted. When a cadre of conspiracy-minded election deniers proposed in a December 2020 Oval Office meeting that Trump could use the military to recount the vote in key states, Pat Cipollone, the White House counsel, objected that the president lacked the authority for such actions. “You know, Pat, at least they want to fight for me,” Trump told him, according to Baker and Glasser. “You don’t even fight for me. You just tell me everything I can’t do.”

Here, fighting for Trump means allowing him to do as he pleases, even undermining a central and quite minimal definition of democracy — respect for the will of the voters.

On Jan. 6, 2021, Trump called on his followers to fight for the same purpose. In his [*speech*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) that morning just outside the White House, Trump mocked Republicans for “fighting like a boxer with his hands tied behind his back.” (That was one of 20 times Trump used some version of the word “fight” in his speech, even though it only appeared twice in his prepared remarks, according to the House select committee that investigated the Capitol assault.) And Trump also uttered the words that obliterated any distinction between the fights for his country and those for himself: “If you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore.”

With that, Trump made clear that he is more than a combatant in battles over politics or policy; he offered himself as the sole reason for our fights. If one man alone can channel the people and embody the nation, then without that man in power, the people and the nation are both lost. Why wouldn’t his supporters fight like hell?

“Fight for Trump!” the crowds [*cheered*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) that morning, as Trump nodded approvingly, before they marched to the Capitol and acted out that imperative. Now, at the convention in Milwaukee, the chant has been truncated into a rhythmic, clenched-fist, pantomime of Trump’s response to the violence of Butler, Pa.

“Fight! Fight! Fight!”

I think of Trump crouched on that stage last week, bleeding and weighed down by Secret Service agents, and can imagine the old grievances rushing through his mind. Russia and Mueller. Investigations and impeachments. Trials and convictions. The defeat of 2020, that humiliation he refused to accept. And now this — an attempt on his life, not just fighting words but a violent deed, at a campaign rally of all places, that most Trumpian of settings, where the bond with his followers should be affirmed, not threatened. With Trump, no other reaction seems possible: Fight!

What are his supporters fighting for when they take up the chant now? Well, what’ve you got? Is it a fight for an American dream, or the man, or the chance for power once again? A fight against the progressive left or the cultural elite? A fight against a sitting president whose perceived feebleness has only grown starker with his opponent’s display of strength?

I’m not sure it matters. In a convention that celebrates the melding of a party and its leader, it’s the ultimate tribute to Donald Trump that his call to fight has become more than an impulsive retort to a moment of great national and personal peril. Trump’s fighting words are an encompassing worldview, not a means of politics but its end, not the last resort for a party but the default posture of a man and his movement.

Source images by Pool, The Washington Post, Michael M. Santiago, Gina Ferazzi, Nathan Howard, Allen J. Schaben, SOPA Images via Getty Images.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/2024/07/14/trump-photograph-shooting/).

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE WASHINGTON POST, MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO, GINA FERAZZI, NATHAN HOWARD, ALLEN J. SCHABEN AND SOPA IMAGES, VIA GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***The Myth of Migrant Crime***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH8-CRW1-DXY4-X4FF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Republicans suggest that immigrants are especially likely to be criminals. The data shows the opposite.

**Body**

Republicans suggest that immigrants are especially likely to be criminals. The data shows the opposite.

Throughout the first three days of the Republican National Convention, officials have highlighted a surge in what they call “migrant crime.” President Biden “has welcomed into our country rapists, murderers, even terrorists, and the price that we have paid has been deadly,” Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas claimed last night. The day before, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas said, “Every day, Americans are dying” in crimes committed by migrants. Donald Trump has made similar remarks on the campaign trail.

But there is no migrant crime surge.

In fact, U.S. rates of crime and immigration have moved in opposite directions in recent years. After illegal immigration plummeted in 2020, the murder rate rose. And after illegal immigration spiked in 2021 and 2022, murders plateaued and then fell.

Over a longer period, there is no relationship between immigration and crime trends. The number of foreign-born Americans has increased for decades, while the murder rate has gone up and down at different times, as these charts by my colleague Ashley Wu show:

Yes, some migrants have committed violent crimes. There are more than 45 million immigrants in the U.S., and invariably some of them — just like people of any other group — will do bad things. Similarly, thousands of native-born Americans commit violent crimes in any given week.

Trump and other Republicans have suggested that immigrants are especially likely to be criminals. They point to a few anecdotes. But the data shows the opposite: Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes. There are genuine issues with the border and illegal immigration, but more crime is not one of them.

More migrants, less crime

If more immigration led to more crime, you would expect that crime rates would spike along with immigration flows, locally and nationally. The statistics would show that migrants were disproportionately likely to commit criminal or violent acts. Instead, the opposite is true.

New York, Chicago and Denver have had an influx of immigrants in the past couple years. Over that same period, murder rates in those cities have fallen. Similarly, border counties in Texas have lower violent crime rates than the state and country overall, [*the crime analyst Jeff Asher has found*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

The individual crimes committed by migrants that Trump and his allies highlight simply do not add up to a bigger trend.

In reality, immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than people born in the U.S. Immigrants have had lower incarceration rates — a measure for crime — than native-born Americans for at least 150 years, [*a recent study concluded*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Undocumented immigrants have lower felony arrest rates than legal immigrants or native-born Americans, [*another study found*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Why? Consider migrants’ motives. Many risk their lives by [*crossing dangerous jungles, rivers and deserts*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) through Latin America to reach the U.S. so they can find better jobs that offer higher pay. In many cases, they are fleeing crime and violence back home. If they came here illegally, they have an incentive to avoid trouble with the law so they do not get caught by the authorities and deported.

The bottom line

People have legitimate reasons to be frustrated with illegal immigration and to worry about what happens at the border. Liberal mayors have learned as much in the past few years; the surge of illegal immigrants to their cities has drained public resources, particularly housing. A porous border also contributes to security concerns, such as the flow of fentanyl and the risk of terrorism. When an undocumented immigrant does commit a crime, it can lead to a sense of lawlessness and chaos.

But more immigration has not caused more crime. The myth that crime is up can perpetuate stereotypes and racism. Immigrants who arrived in New York recently told The Times that local residents were often hostile. They make rude comments under their breath or move away in subway cars. One Venezuelan lamented that people now saw all migrants in the same way: “violent.”

Related: The brother of a woman killed on a scenic trail — a crime in which an undocumented immigrant has been arrested — [*spoke at the Republican convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More from the Republican convention

* Accepting the vice-presidential nomination, Senator J.D. Vance [*recounted growing up poor in a* ***working-class*** *Ohio town*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that he said had been “cast aside” by Biden and other politicians. “I will be a vice president who never forgets where he came from,” he said.

1. Vance also sounded economically populist notes, criticizing big corporations and praising “the working man, union and nonunion alike.” Here are [*more takeaways from Night 3*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. The speech didn’t mention abortion. Vance [*has supported a national ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and opposed exceptions for rape and incest.
3. Usha Vance, his wife, spoke about meeting him in law school, poked fun at his beard and described him as a “meat and potatoes kind of guy” who nevertheless [*learned to cook Indian food for her mother*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
4. Donald Trump Jr., who spoke before Vance, aggressively criticized Biden. He has become a major figure in the party, building what he calls a “[*MAGA bench for the future*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).”
5. [*Antisemitism was another theme of the night*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). A Harvard graduate endorsed Trump’s call to deport foreign students who harass Jewish students. The parents of a Hamas-held American-Israeli hostage chanted “bring them home.”
6. How well do you know Milwaukee, the city hosting the convention? [*Take our quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
7. The late night hosts joked about Vance and Nikki Haley [*backing away from their opposition to Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE LATEST NEWS

President Biden

* Biden [*tested positive for Covid*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) while campaigning in Nevada and has mild symptoms. “Doing well,” he said after flying back to Delaware.

1. Biden has become more open to [*hearing arguments about why he should leave the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), after Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries, the Democratic congressional leaders, privately expressed lawmakers’ concerns.
2. In an interview, Biden said he’d [*consider stepping aside*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) if his doctors told him he had a medical condition.
3. The Democratic National Committee delayed an expedited plan to nominate Biden. Representative Adam Schiff [*said Biden should drop out*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
4. Nearly [*two-thirds of Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) say Biden should step aside, according to a new poll.
5. Jeffrey Katzenberg, a co-chairman of Biden’s campaign, told the president that donors had stopped giving. Some are calling lawmakers [*to persuade Biden to drop out*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
6. The Trump campaign declined to agree to a date for a vice-presidential debate, saying that doing so before the Democratic convention would be unfair to “whoever Kamala Harris picks as her running mate.”

The Trump Shooting

* The gunman who tried to assassinate Trump searched for the dates of [*Trump events and the Democratic National Convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), the F.B.I. told Congress.

1. The F.B.I. has found no evidence that the shooter held strong partisan views. A former classmate said he disdained politicians in both parties.
2. Local police at Trump’s rally saw the gunman acting suspiciously and circulated a photo of him, though they did not know he had a weapon. The [*Secret Service let Trump go onstage*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) despite the threat.
3. A Times investigation, constructed from videos and photos taken at the rally, shows how law enforcement [*failed to stop the shooting*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

International

* The mayor of Paris [*swam in the Seine*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), to prove that the river was clean enough to host Olympic events.

1. Milan’s main airport is now [*named after Silvio Berlusconi*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), the scandal-prone former prime minister. Left-leaning lawmakers are protesting.
2. Officials in Spain hoped an algorithm could predict how much danger victims of domestic violence were in. Some women they [*sent home on its recommendation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) were killed.

Other Big Stories

* [*Four tornadoes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)swept through upstate New York, destroying buildings and killing at least one person.
* Vaccines significantly reduce the risk of long Covid, researchers reported. Here’s [*what you need to know*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Two Canadians died, and 10 others fell sick, from listeria in plant-based milk substitutes. The authorities [*recalled products from two brands*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Silk and Great Value.
2. The police arrested a Brooklyn councilwoman who they said had [*bitten a police chief*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) during a protest.
3. The Navy posthumously [*exonerated hundreds of Black sailors*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) who were punished in the 1940s because they objected to unsafe conditions after a port explosion.
4. A spade-toothed whale washed ashore dead in New Zealand. It’s the [*world’s rarest whale species*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing): Scientists have never seen one alive.

Opinions

As Americans consider electing Trump to a second term, Times Opinion created a [*timeline of his first four years*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) — an era of lies, violence and chaos.

The Olympics should reverse its decision to welcome Afghanistan, whose [*female athletes live in exile*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Friba Rezayee writes.

In the 1990s, tabloids tore apart Shannen Doherty. In hindsight, she wasn’t volatile or difficult; she was [*just a young woman enjoying fame*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Jennifer Weiner writes.

Here are columns by Carlos Lozada on [*Trump’s call to “Fight!”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and Nicholas Kristof on [*Biden loyalists*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Matter of taste: In an era of viral hybrid pastries, the plain croissant is still [*the best croissant*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Swirls of color: Scientists scanned the brains of people on psychedelic drugs. [*The results were trippy.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

City with a female face: A community in Vienna was designed [*specifically to benefit women*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Lives Lived: Renauld White walked the runways for Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein and Donna Karan and was the first Black American model to appear on a GQ cover. He [*died at 80*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

W.N.B.A.: Caitlin Clark [*set a league record*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) with 19 assists against the Dallas Wings.

Soccer: Philadelphia Union’s Cavan Sullivan, 14, became the [*youngest player to appear in an M.L.S. game*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Golf: The Open Championship teed off this morning at Royal Troon, Scotland. All eyes are on Rory McIlroy, whose recent collapse at the U.S. Open was crushing for fans — [*especially those in his hometown*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Two FX series topped this year’s Emmy nominations. “Shogun,” a period drama set in Japan, received 25 nods, while the tense restaurant workplace comedy “The Bear” had 23. Some other highlights:

* The 23 nominations for “The Bear” are the most ever for a comedy, beating a record that “30 Rock” set in 2009.

1. HBO trailed Netflix and FX in total nominations. It hasn’t been third since 1996, before “The Sopranos” or “Sex and the City” had premiered.

See the [*full list of nominees*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), and the shows that [*our critic felt got snubbed*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on culture

* Sotheby’s sold an unusually complete stegosaurus fossil [*for $44.6 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) — 10 times the estimated price.

1. A new album from Childish Gambino, Donald Glover’s rap project, comes out tomorrow. It will be [*his last under that name*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. The armorer on the film “Rust,” sentenced to 18 months over a fatal shooting on the set, is [*requesting a new trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) after the collapse of the case against Alec Baldwin.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Combine a few pantry staples for a satisfying [*angel hair pasta*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Celebrate “[*summerween*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing),” an excuse to get spooky in July.

Pack for a three-day trip [*with one small bag*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Grow a lush garden using [*these steel tubs*](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 uninvited.

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. —German

PHOTO: Migrants waiting to be taken to a shelter in Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jamie Kelter Davis for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Are the Elite the 'Bad Guys'?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68XS-M581-JBG3-60Y5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 13, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 11; LETTERS

**Length:** 1417 words

**Body**

Readers react to David Brooks's suggestion that the elite are partly to blame for Trumpism.

To the Editor:

Re ''What if We're the Bad Guys Here?,'' by David Brooks (column, Aug. 4):

I am sick and tired of people like Mr. Brooks telling me that I am the problem or the ''bad guy'' because I am educated (and no, I was not educated at an Ivy League school, and neither of my parents finished high school) to justify the fact that 35 percent of the population are fervent supporters of Donald Trump, no matter what he says or does.

Moreover, Mr. Trump is also part of the elite, but his supporters simply ignore this. This is not because he identifies with them in any way (as a golden-haired billionaire living in a mansion), but because Fox, Newsmax, and other right-wing TV and radio media outlets, right-wing militias and Trump puppet politicians in Congress essentially brainwashed them with their daily dose of propaganda about how the ''left wing socialists and communists,'' ''elites,'' the ''woke,'' etc., are all conspiring to take their country and only Donald Trump can stop them.

In my opinion, this is the biggest problem, Mr. Brooks, not educated Americans who as you correctly state are ''are earnest, kind and public spirited.''

So, let's not beat ourselves up because the other side has been completely brainwashed, does not accept facts, scientific and otherwise, is obsessed with conspiracies and lives in a right-wing echo chamber.

Michael HadjiargyrouCenterport, N.Y.

To the Editor:

While I grew up in a small Midwestern town in a middle-class family, education has offered me a satisfying life with a secure retirement. Many of my classmates who chose a more blue-collar life path have endured more struggles, starting with military service in Vietnam. I am quite confident that many of them today support Donald Trump, at least partly for the reasons that David Brooks suggests.

Mr. Brooks's column was a brilliant, moving description of the unspoken arrogance of many of us who are left-leaning. I believe that some sincere humility and understanding with regard to the concerns of many who feel left behind would go a long way to healing some of our divisions. Thanks to Mr. Brooks for his insight.

David MahanSebring, Fla.

To the Editor:

Fine: I'll accept David Brooks's plea that we not blame the logic-defying viability of Donald Trump on the wrongheadedness of tens of millions of Americans. I get the class resentment. I share the rage against excessive political correctness and the feeling that immigration is unchecked and overwhelming. I see his point that the elite stoke these resentments by voicing our support for the nonelite while spending most of our energy and resources protecting our own class privilege.

But let's not gloss over the main factor here: Mr. Trump is the latest version of a leader who is little more than a self-obsessed expert at exploiting and inflaming the fear and resentments of the masses to benefit his own power and ego. Such a leader cares nothing about those who harbor these resentments, and certainly does not share the same fears.

On a more practical note, those who resent wokeism are shooting themselves in the foot by supporting someone who so many Americans, elite and otherwise, would vote for over their proverbial dead bodies.

Brian SmithDayton, Ohio

To the Editor:

The irony behind the case that David Brooks makes for Donald Trump's support is that this support is based entirely on words (primarily offensive) and not actions. What did Mr. Trump do as president to help his supporters and make their lives better?

His major accomplishment was the tax reform enacted in 2017, which heavily favored the rich and elites (including himself). His supporters love the way he attacks his ''enemies'' and anyone who disagrees with him and feel he speaks for them. The lack of actual benefits they have enjoyed seems not to matter.

Ellen S. HirschNew York

To the Editor:

Donald Trump, as loathsome as he is, has done one significant service for this country. He has made clear the great social divide that David Brooks describes in his excellent column. Now, how to fix it?

As a former naval officer and Vietnam veteran, I would suggest universal national service, with almost no exemptions. Being forced to live with, eat with, work with people from all over the country would teach all of us to be more tolerant. This would not just be military service; it would include working in national parks, teaching in underserved schools, and many other forms of service to the nation.

The only thing standing in the way is a timid Congress. Is there anyone in Congress brave enough to take this on?

Jeffrey CallahanCleveland

To the Editor:

David Brooks makes a familiar and not unreasonable argument about how the fear, resentment and sense of alienation that fuel the cult of Trumpism proceed from economic and cultural realities for which liberal elites are, in large part, responsible.

When Mr. Brooks asks, however, whether anti-Trumpers should consider whether they are the ''bad guys,'' he embarks on an analysis that completely excludes millions of people like me who find Donald Trump and Trumpism appalling, without being ''elite'' at all.

I was raised in a row home in northeast Philly by a single mom who was a cop. My dad was a union construction worker. I've been a musician and a bartender for most of my adult life. In short, I'm hardly part of the elite class that Mr. Brooks seems to equate with the anti-Trump movement, and yet I'm passionately anti-Trump!

Maybe this particular piece simply wasn't aimed at people like me, and that's fine. But all too often I see this oversimplified, false duality that leaves out all the decent ***working-class*** people who have themselves been hurt by neoliberal policies and narratives, and yet would never channel their frustration into an odious movement like Trumpism. When we condemn Mr. Trump and his followers, we do so with a clean conscience.

James A. LeponeTelford, Pa.

To the Editor:

David Brooks identifies the privileges enjoyed by the highly educated class and the resentment of the less educated class that might cause them to be ardent supporters of Donald Trump. Mr. Brooks concludes with a warning that history is the graveyard of classes with preferred caste privileges.

What he fails to consider is that in the United States his identified ''upper'' class encourages, both by words and action, members of the ''lower'' class to join it. Nothing would make those with college or graduate degrees happier than if every capable child joined their class. This differs very much from any true caste system.

Jack SternSetauket, N.Y.

To the Editor:

David Brooks's column gave me a new perspective regarding why people support this obvious con man named Donald Trump. Although Mr. Brooks makes excellent points regarding the anger that people feel, is it not the Democrats who advocate and pass legislation regarding the minimum wage, infrastructure, child care, education, the environment, middle-class tax relief, financial assistance with community colleges and technical schools, etc., all for the benefit of working- and middle-class Americans?

Mr. Trump and the current crop of Republicans have done nothing to help these people. In light of this, isn't propaganda from Mr. Trump and his followers, as well as the cynical right-wing media, also to blame for this misplaced anger and anti-democratic sentiment?

We're not the bad guys. Donald Trump and Rupert Murdoch are.

Phillip L. RosenVenice Beach, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks does an excellent job of setting up a straw man to bring down. Most liberals aren't part of the ''elite,'' no matter how many right-wingers parrot that lie.

Exit polls from 2020 found that Joe Biden outpaced Donald Trump significantly among voters making less than $100,000 a year, while Mr. Trump did better among those making $100,000 or more. Mr. Trump is no friend to the ***working class***, and polls like these give me confidence that a majority of the ***working class*** recognizes this. And any member of the ***working class*** who supports him or today's extreme-right Republican Party is going against their own best interests.

It's liberals and Democrats (usually but not always the same) who support policies to empower workers and reduce economic inequality, and the other side doesn't give a damn. Liberals are not the elite and are not the enemy of the ***working class***.

Trudy RingBend, Ore.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/12/opinion/elite-anti-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/12/opinion/elite-anti-trump.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

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[***Trump Distorts His Record On Race at Black Church***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8M-PW71-DXY4-X3RR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1350 words

**Byline:** By Michael Gold

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump met with voters at a Black church in the critical battleground state, seeking to make a contrast with President Biden on the economy.

Former President Donald J. Trump, courting Black voters at a church on the west side of Detroit on Saturday, sought to harness animus toward migrants crossing the border, sanitized his track record on race and sold himself as the best president for Black Americans since Abraham Lincoln.

As he spoke to roughly 200 people, Mr. Trump largely ignored his history of racist statements and his decades of calls for tougher policing that have fueled his three presidential campaigns.

Instead, during short remarks before a panel with Black residents of Detroit at the city's 180 Church, Mr. Trump tried to cast Mr. Biden as anti-Black, focusing intently on the president's role in shepherding the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, a sweeping bill that criminal justice experts have said laid the groundwork for mass incarceration that disproportionately hurt America's Black communities.

Mr. Trump, at one point, seemed determined to ensure that Mr. Biden's role in the crime bill would be the event's main takeaway. He falsely accused Mr. Biden of coining the term ''super predators'' and then insisted that those in the audience should not forget Mr. Biden's role, as a U.S. senator, in championing the bill and helping pass it.

''He was the one with the super predators,'' Mr. Trump said of Mr. Biden. ''So just please remember that if you're going to vote Democrat -- because you shouldn't vote Democrat.''

Mr. Trump's visit was part of a larger effort by his campaign to chip away at Democrats' traditional support among Black voters as he seeks to reverse his 2020 loss to Mr. Biden.

Though Black voters have overwhelmingly favored Democrats since the civil rights era, recent polls have shown the party losing some of their support. A New York Times/Siena College poll of battleground states in May showed 23 percent of Black voters supporting Mr. Trump, a record level. Mr. Trump won just 8 percent of Black voters nationally in 2020.

As he tries to appeal to Black voters, Mr. Trump often cites his record as president, but the reality is more complicated than what he often presents.

In Detroit, Mr. Trump highlighted the funding bill that he signed for Black higher education institutions, which Congress passed. And he celebrated his role in the First Step Act of 2018, his signature criminal justice reform bill.

But critics have said that Mr. Trump's frequent pro-police rhetoric while president often undercut his work on criminal justice reform. And while he often takes credit for a low Black unemployment rate during his presidency, he frequently overstates his role in it and ignores other economic indicators.

Saturday's round table in Detroit brought out a more diverse crowd, and a larger share of Black attendees, than is typical of a Trump campaign event, even as a significant number of the roughly 200 people in the crowd were white.

Angelo Brown, 61, a Black independent voter, said he had come to the event because he was still unsure which candidate he would vote for. And, he added, ''the chances of an independent getting in there, you know, are almost zero.''

Though he did not support Mr. Trump in the previous two elections, Mr. Brown, who is retired, said he was open to a candidate who would help improve the economy and would bring about an end to the war in Ukraine.

At the church, Mr. Trump stuck to the themes that have animated his outreach to Black voters. He again tried to seize on pessimism over the economy by blaming Mr. Biden for inflation and high rents.

Mr. Trump also sought to stoke resentment toward immigrants, arguing that Mr. Biden had enabled the surge of migrants crossing into the United States, which he said had hurt the economic prospects of Black Americans. And he falsely claimed that ''100 percent'' of the job growth under the Biden administration had gone to illegal immigrants.

''They're coming into your community, and they're taking your jobs,'' Mr. Trump said, repurposing an idea that successfully motivated his base of white ***working-class*** voters in 2016.

Mr. Trump's appeals to Black voters in recent months have been aggressive and direct -- but sometimes clumsy.

Shortly before Mr. Trump arrived at the church, his campaign started a renewed outreach effort for Black Americans, ''Black Americans for Trump,'' which included endorsements from Black politicians, former professional athletes and entertainment figures like the model and singer Amber Rose and the rapper Kodak Black, whom Mr. Trump pardoned.

This year, Mr. Trump has hawked gold sneakers to young men of color and suggested that Black people related to him more after his mug shot was taken in Atlanta last year. He told a group of Black Republicans that Black people like him because he, too, had been unfairly targeted by the criminal justice system. And he has frequently accused Black prosecutors investigating him of ''reverse racism.''

After the church event, Mr. Trump spoke at a convention hosted by Turning Point Action, an arm of Turning Point USA, an increasingly influential conservative group that courts young voters. Turning Point's founder, Charlie Kirk, has been criticized for statements and social media posts with anti-immigrant or racist views.

The juxtaposition of the two events reflects the extent to which the Trump campaign is trying to knit together a mixed -- and at times conflicting -- coalition that expands beyond his conservative base as he looks to pick up battleground states he lost in 2020, including Michigan.

''It's an honor to be here,'' Mr. Trump said at the church after he took the stage. ''It's a very important area for us.''

Such a sentiment was markedly different from the years in which Mr. Trump has denigrated Detroit, a majority Black city, which he previously referred to as one of America's ''most corrupt political places'' while making broad and unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud in the 2020 election.

And during his 2020 campaign, as Mr. Trump was frequently trying to stoke suburban fears around violence and crime in cities, he said in an interview that living in Detroit and other cities was ''like living in Hell.''

Jasmine Harris, Mr. Biden's Black media director, criticized Mr. Trump for sanitizing both his past comments ''denigrating and disrespecting Black Americans'' and his record while in office.

''We haven't forgotten that Black unemployment and uninsured rates skyrocketed when Trump was in the White House,'' Ms. Harris said in a statement. ''And we sure haven't forgotten Trump repeatedly cozying up to white supremacists and demonizing Black communities to his political benefit -- because that's exactly what he'll do if he wins a second term.''

Mr. Trump's speech at the Turning Point event, in front of thousands of people, took place in the same convention center where his supporters had tried to interfere with the counting of absentee ballots in the 2020 election.

During his remarks, Mr. Trump repeated his blatantly false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him, and he again sowed doubt about the integrity of the upcoming election.

As has become standard. Mr. Trump, who turned 78 on Friday, attacked Mr. Biden's cognitive abilities. But as he argued that he is more mentally fit to be president, he referred to his White House doctor, Ronny Jackson, as ''Ronny Johnson.''

Building on his comments about the economy at the church, Mr. Trump accused Mr. Biden of an ''inflation-causing spending spree.'' He then seemed to attack Mr. Biden's commitment to Ukraine with an aside about Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

''I think Zelensky is maybe the greatest salesman of any politician that's ever lived,'' said Mr. Trump, who this year tried to block efforts to provide more aid to Ukraine. ''Every time he comes to our country, he walks away with $60 billion.''

Simon J. Levien contributed reporting.Simon J. Levien contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/us/politics/trump-michigan-black-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/us/politics/trump-michigan-black-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: On Saturday, former President Donald J. Trump described himself as the best president for Black Americans since Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Trump falsely claimed that ''100 percent'' of the job growth under the Biden administration had gone to illegal immigrants. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Voters Swing to Labour in English Local Elections: Key Takeaways***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY3-S0G1-JBG3-601R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Megan Specia Megan Specia reports on Britain, Ireland and the Ukraine war for The Times. She is based in London.

**Highlight:** While the ballots were still being counted on Friday, big losses for the Conservative Party could signal a difficult general election later this year.

**Body**

While the ballots were still being counted on Friday, big losses for the Conservative Party could signal a difficult general election later this year.

While the votes in local elections in England and Wales were still being counted on Friday, a picture has begun to emerge of significant losses for the governing Conservative Party.

The voting on Thursday to elect councilors, mayors and police commissioners in local elections, seen as a last test of public opinion before a general election expected later this year, portends a difficult road ahead for the party.

Here are four takeaways.

The Conservatives could be in serious trouble.

Leading up to the local elections, the question was not whether the Conservatives would suffer, but [*just how bad the blow*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) might be. The party has trailed Labour, the main opposition party, in opinion polls for some time, after [*a series of scandals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html), the [*implosion of Boris Johnson’s administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) and the embarrassment of the [*45-day prime ministership*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) of Liz Truss, leading many Britons to look elsewhere for leadership.

By midday on Friday, the early results suggested that the party might have fared even more poorly than its leaders had feared. When all is said and done, some analysts think the Conservatives could lose as many as 500 council seats, a signal of serious trouble ahead for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s beleaguered Conservative Party.

Around one-third of England’s council seats were contested, along with 11 mayoral seats in major English metro areas. While these elections were about local leadership, the results of Thursday’s vote serve as an important barometer of overall public opinion, and ultimately a test of whether the Conservative Party can retain power in a general election expected this fall.

Labour won control of a number of key councils, including Hartlepool, Thurrock, Rushmoor, and Redditch, all of which were seen as battleground races that could gauge broader public sentiment.

However, the Conservatives had some notable wins to cling to, including [*the Tees Valley mayoral race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html), where Ben Houchen, the incumbent, received the majority of the vote, albeit with a much smaller percentage than in his last election.

Labour’s ‘red wall’ is returning to the fold.

The election made clear that the opposition Labour Party was succeeding in winning back its longtime supporters in the ***working-class*** areas of northern England — often called the “red wall” for their entrenched support for Labour, whose party color is red — who had defected over Brexit and immigration.

After Labour won control of the council in Hartlepool, a party representative said, “Making gains here shows that the party is on track to win a general election and is firmly back in the service of working people.”

In Blackpool South, [*a deprived seaside district*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html), the Labour Party easily took a parliamentary by-election held Thursday after a Conservative lawmaker [*stepped down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html). The seat had long been held by Labour, but it was won by the Conservatives in 2019.

Keir Starmer, the Labour Party leader, said the win was a message sent directly by the public to Mr. Sunak “to say we’re fed up with your decline, your chaos, your division, and we want change.”

But Labour also faced some pushback, possibly as an effect of [*its staunch support for Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) in the war in Gaza and a delay in calling for a cease-fire, that could dampen the party’s gains in some northern places, [*a senior Labour figure, Pat McFadden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html), acknowledged to Sky News. Notably, the party lost control of the Oldham Council, where a large Muslim population seemed to shift its votes to independent candidates, he added.

The election showed how Reform UK may siphon votes from the Conservatives.

Reform UK, a right-wing party founded by the Brexit campaigner Nigel Farage, ran relatively few candidates in the elections. But their performance in some key races suggested that they could have a major effect on the general election.

In the Blackpool South election, which was overwhelmingly won by the Labour candidate, Chris Webb, Reform UK received nearly as many votes as the Conservatives, with a margin of just 117 votes between the two (3,218 to 3,101.)

The results seemingly confirmed opinion polls that put the party third behind Labour and the Tories, underscoring the threat it could pose to the Conservatives in the upcoming general election.

New voting regulations went well. (Just not for Mr. Johnson.)

Thursday’s vote was the first test of new voting regulations stemming from the Elections Act of 2022, and election monitors said the process went smoothly, with some notable exceptions.

The vote marked the first time in England that every voter needed to show photo identification, and Mr. Johnson, the former prime minister, was reportedly turned away from his polling place after arriving without it, [*according to Sky News*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html). He later returned with the necessary identification and voted.

Some veterans complained that they were unable to use [*veteran’s identification cards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) to vote, as they were not an approved form of photo identification. Johnny Mercer, the minister of veterans’ affairs, said [*in a post on the social media platform X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) that he was sorry it had become an issue. He vowed that the cards would be accepted in the next election.

But Britain’s Electoral Commission, the independent body that oversees the election, [*said in a statement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/world/europe/uk-local-elections-conservatives.html) that “most voters who wanted to vote were able to do so,” and that it would “identify any potential obstacles to participation.”

PHOTO: Ballots being sorted in Blackpool, England, where Labour reclaimed a seat it had long held but lost to the Conservatives in the landslide 2019 election. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Oli Scarff/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***No Start Quality, But He's Favored***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CD8-72F1-JBG3-603F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 4, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1582 words

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

**Body**

The Labour leader still struggles with the ''performative side'' of British politics, even as he has pulled his party to the center.

Keir Starmer, the leader of Britain's Labour Party, nodded sympathetically as a young mother recalled, in harrowing terms, how she had watched closed-circuit television footage of the fatal stabbing of her 21-year-old son, whose heart was pierced with a single blow.

''Thank you for that,'' a somber Mr. Starmer said to the woman and other relatives of victims of knife attacks, as they stood around a wooden table last week, discussing ways to combat violent crime. ''It's really, really powerful.''

It was not the most feel-good campaign event for a candidate the week before an election that his opposition party is widely expected to win. But it was entirely in character for Mr. Starmer, a 61-year-old former human rights lawyer who still behaves less like a politician than a prosecutor bringing a case.

Earnest, intense, practical and not brimming with charisma, Mr. Starmer finds himself on the cusp of a potential landslide victory without the star quality that marked previous British leaders on the doorstep of power, whether Margaret Thatcher, the 1980s free-market champion, or Tony Blair, the avatar of ''Cool Britannia.''

And yet Mr. Starmer has managed an arguably comparable political feat: Less than a decade after entering Parliament, and fewer than five years after his party suffered its worst election defeat since the 1930s, he has remade Labour with ruthless efficiency into an electable party, pulling it to the center on key policies while capitalizing on the failings of three Conservative prime ministers.

''Don't forget what they have done,'' Mr. Starmer told a rally in London on Saturday, pacing the stage in a pressed white shirt with sleeves rolled up. ''Don't forget party-gate, don't forget the Covid contract, don't forget the lies, don't forget the kickbacks.''

In listing this parade of Conservative scandals and crises, he brought the crowd of 350 to its feet. But it was a rare moment of fire, which captures the conundrum of Mr. Starmer.

The polls that predict his party will win a lopsided majority in Parliament on Thursday also suggest that he is unloved by British voters. They struggle to warm to a man who seems less at ease in the political arena than in the courtroom where he excelled.

''He doesn't do the performative side of politics,'' said Tom Baldwin, a former Labour Party adviser who has published a biography of Mr. Starmer. While other politicians aspire to soaring rhetoric, Mr. Starmer talks earnestly about practical problem-solving and placing building blocks on each other.

''No one's going to watch that,'' Mr. Baldwin said. ''It's boring. But at the end of it, you might find he's built a house.''

Jill Rutter, a former senior civil servant who is a research fellow at the London research group U.K. in a Changing Europe, said: ''He has been ferociously -- some would say tediously -- boring in his discipline. He's not going to set hearts racing, but he does look relatively prime-ministerial.''

Raised in a ***working-class*** family in Surrey, outside London, Mr. Starmer did not have an easy childhood. His relationship with his father, a toolmaker, was distant. His mother, a nurse, suffered a debilitating illness that took her in and out of the hospital. Mr. Starmer became the first college graduate in his family, studying first at Leeds University, and then law at Oxford.

His was a left-wing household. Mr. Starmer was named after Keir Hardie, the Scottish trade unionist and Labour's first leader. He later recalled wishing as a teenager that he had been called Dave or Pete instead.

As a young lawyer, Mr. Starmer represented protesters accused of libel by the fast-food chain McDonald's, rose to become Britain's chief prosecutor and was awarded a knighthood. Even then, he used his legal brain to convince judges rather than courtroom theatrics to sway juries, a plain-vanilla reputation that followed him into politics.

Boris Johnson, the former prime minister, who debated him in Parliament, once labeled him ''Captain Crasheroonie Snoozefest.''

Mr. Starmer may lack his rival's glib one-liners, but he turned his forensic skills on the scandal-scarred Mr. Johnson, helping to expose untruths he told about Downing Street parties held during Covid lockdowns.

When Conservatives questioned whether Mr. Starmer, too, had violated lockdown rules by having a beer and an Indian takeout dinner with colleagues in April 2021, he vowed to step down if the police found he had been in the wrong. He was cleared -- an episode that allies said showcased his rigorous adherence to the rules and offered a stark contrast to the leaders of the Conservative Party.

But Mr. Starmer's political compromises have raised questions about his approach. He served the left-wing former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, taking charge of Brexit policy at a time when many of the party's moderates refused to join his team.

When Mr. Corbyn stepped down after losing in 2019, Mr. Starmer positioned himself as his successor, winning on a platform that included enough of Mr. Corbyn's policies to placate the party's then-powerful left-wing.

Once elected, however, Mr. Starmer seized control of the party machinery and executed a remarkable pivot to the political center. He dropped Mr. Corbyn's proposal to nationalize Britain's energy industry, promised not to raise taxes on working families and committed to supporting Britain's military, hoping to banish an anti-patriotic label that clung to Labour during the Corbyn era.

Mr. Starmer also rooted out the antisemitism that had contaminated the party's ranks under Mr. Corbyn. Though he has not drawn a link between that and his personal life, his wife, Victoria Starmer, comes from a Jewish family in London.

Ms. Starmer, who works as an occupational health specialist for the National Health Service, is an occasional presence on the campaign trail. The couple have two teenage children, whose privacy they guard fiercely. In keeping with his wife's heritage, the family sometimes observes Jewish traditions at home.

In exiling Mr. Corbyn, Mr. Starmer displayed a ruthless side. He even blocked Mr. Corbyn from running for his seat as a Labour candidate, although he is campaigning as an independent. Mr. Starmer's aides have tightly controlled the list of those allowed to run for Parliament, weeding out other candidates seen as too left wing.

Allies of Mr. Starmer say he is aware of his limits and works hard to address his weaknesses. While he is not a natural orator, his speeches have improved since his early days in Parliament, when one critic likened his performance to ''watching the audience at a literary festival listen to a reading of T.S. Eliot.''

And, yet, the reputation for dullness lingers.

''How does Keir Starmer energize a room?'' Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, asked recently before delivering her punchline: ''He leaves it.''

The criticism rankles. ''He doesn't like the boring tag,'' Mr. Baldwin said. ''No one likes being called boring; he really doesn't like it.''

Mr. Starmer's friends describe a man with a sense of humor, a healthy home life and genuine passions outside politics. Despite knee surgery, he still plays soccer regularly and competitively (often reserving the playing field and selecting the team). He is an ardent fan of Arsenal, the soccer club that plays not far from his North London home.

In some ways, Mr. Starmer has been helped by his relatively recent arrival in Parliament. He was not caught up in the internecine feuds of previous Labour governments or tainted by allegiances to former leaders like Gordon Brown and Mr. Blair. Now, though, Mr. Blair and Mr. Starmer have a blossoming relationship.

There are disadvantages, too. There are relatively few Starmer loyalists who are willing to fight in a foxhole with him. The same lack of passion extends to many voters. They may find Labour less objectionable than it was under Mr. Corbyn, but that does not mean they are casting their votes with excitement.

''Keir Starmer's objective was to stop giving people reasons to vote against Labour, and he has been very successful at it,'' said Steven Fielding, an emeritus professor of political history at the University of Nottingham in England. ''He has been less good at giving people reasons to vote for Labour.''

The same sense of incompleteness hangs over even those who admire Mr. Starmer. Despite the many hours Mr. Baldwin spent with him researching his biography, he said there was ''something slightly unreachable'' about the Labour leader. ''He's a very tightly bound person who doesn't trust easily,'' Mr. Baldwin said. ''He's not emotionally diarrhetic.''

While Mr. Starmer has begun talking more about his personal story, his frequent references to being ''the son of a toolmaker'' growing up in a ''pebble-dash semi'' -- his modest semidetached family home -- can come off as perfunctory, even robotic.

''He doesn't see why he needs to put him and all his inner workings on public display,'' said Mr. Baldwin, who said he sometimes struggled to get more than monosyllabic answers from Mr. Starmer on personal questions. Once, he recalled asking him to elaborate on his feelings about an incident that had anguished him.

The response was concise, direct and of little help. ''I was,'' Mr. Starmer said, according to his biographer, ''very upset.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/02/world/europe/keir-starmer-uk-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/02/world/europe/keir-starmer-uk-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Keir Starmer, center, the leader of Britain's Labour Party, with the actor Idris Elba at a campaign event in London last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

In 2014, Prince Charles knighted Keir Starmer for his service as director of public prosecutions. In January 2016, Mr. Starmer visited the Dunkirk refugee camp as shadow immigration minister. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ALAMY

JEREMY SELWYN/EVENING STANDARD, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Mr. Starmer, right, in 2019 with Jeremy Corbyn, whose leftist pull on the party he has fought. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A8) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8.

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In ‘West Side Story,’ My Mother Saw a Latina Who Could Dance Her Way Out of Any Script; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0S-GVY1-JBG3-6003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2024 Saturday 12:05 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 955 words

**Byline:** Deborah Paredez

**Highlight:** The film is easy to criticize. But we watched it again and again for Moreno and her “movidas.”

**Body**

Some Latina mothers teach their daughters how to spoon masa or plátano onto a corn husk or banana leaf when making tamales or pasteles.

My Latina mother taught me to love musicals.

Or, more precisely, how to worship the diva at the center of a musical, the woman pulling at the seams of its tidy romance plot, unraveling in her wake a trail of delight and mayhem. Some days it was Barbra Streisand as Fanny Brice in her mink hat and muff insisting that no one rain on her parade. Or Diana Ross easing on down the road. But most times it was Rita Moreno as Anita dancing her way beyond the borders of “Ameríca” in “West Side Story.”

In the decades since its opening night on Broadway in 1957, “West Side Story” has been the story, the persistent white fantasy of “Latinness,” that Latinas like my mom and I have had to reckon with. And yet my mom and I kept watching. Perhaps it’s because, like all musicals, “West Side Story” is a complex form of representation that revels in both its messiness and its marvelousness. My mother taught me to see in “West Side Story” not just the problems of brown-face makeup, but also the choreography of another Latina who could dance her way out of any script that sought to confine her or relegate her to a supporting role. My mother was showing me a diva who could move across these imposed limits. And who did it in a fabulous dress and heels.

It is not without a measure of sheepishness that I admit this now, long after the [*public*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/) and private conversations Latinos have engaged in about our vexed relationship to “West Side Story.” No doubt, it presents damaging stereotypes of “Latin” culture in America. Many of us have cataloged and condemned the musical’s depictions of criminal youth and blatantly sexual women all speaking in exaggerated accents.

Musical divas like Ms. Moreno helped my mother and me forge our bond as we made our own way in America from our ***working-class*** neighborhood in San Antonio, Texas, a city that has long had a Latino majority. “West Side Story” endures as a paradoxical — and often pleasurable — cultural text by which many Latinos have come to know ourselves and one another. Artists and thinkers like [*Lin-Manuel Miranda*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/), Justice [*Sonia Sotomayor*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/) of the Supreme Court and [*Jennifer Lopez*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/), to name a few, have turned to the musical as a means of understanding themselves or as a jumping-off point into a new narrative.

According to my mom, the first time we watched the 1961 film adaptation of “West Side Story” together was when [*NBC aired it*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/) over two successive nights in March 1972. I was a little more than a year old. In those days, she and I were sharing a bed in the front room of my grandparents’ house on San Antonio’s south side. My father was fighting in Vietnam. I spent countless nights in the years that followed curled up in bed with my mother singing along to “West Side Story.”

We learned every line, every lyric. We scoffed at the brown-cake makeup. Rolled our eyes at the accents. We believed that, yes, a boy like that could kill your brother. We cried every time Bernardo died. We cursed. We crooned. We held our breaths when Anita’s purple petticoat flared, her leg kicked up and stretching to forever, to the smattering of stars above, to some beyond somewhere far from here.

In “West Side Story,” Rita Moreno doesn’t just master the notoriously exacting rigors of Jerome Robbins’s choreography. She expresses undisciplined delight in her body’s movement beyond it. In Ms. Moreno’s mauve-blurred movements as Anita there is both a sense of well-rehearsed control and improvisatory curve, a sense of what my mother would call “movidas,” of finding a way when there seems to be no way, of creating space where none is ceded. Movidas are not just ways of making do but making do with Latina flair, of hustling so smoothly it becomes dancing.

Rita-as-Anita refuses to move in a straight line — and why should she when the playing field is so full of obstacles? Latinos know there are few straightforward paths toward securing a place for ourselves; the only constant is the well-rehearsed control and improvisatory curve and sartorial flair and audacious joy we perform in our movidas. We recognize in Anita’s movements the choreographies of our own refusals and striving for self-possession.

Again and again I saw in the film how Anita tends fiercely to Maria, the teenager left in her charge. Just as I joined my mother in bed to watch and cry and sing along, Anita joins Maria on her bed to sing the duet “A Boy Like That/I Have a Love.” It’s a pivotal moment when Anita, despite her own reservations, romantic attachments and aspirations, sacrifices herself to help Maria try to achieve what she wants. Anita and Maria are the only couple central to the narrative who survive.

My mother taught me to memorize the steps and the songs in a musical diva’s repertoire. Together, we studied the ways Rita-as-Anita moves across the battered gymnasium floor, across the rooftop, across the boundaries of turf and tribe. She showed me how to follow the diva who shows Latinas how to move and move and keep on moving, how to move until the skirts of our dresses achieve liftoff, how to move past the violence done to our bodies and our boyfriends, how to move closer to one another across the borders that seek to keep us apart.

Deborah Paredez is the chair of the writing program at Columbia and the author of the forthcoming critical memoir “American Diva.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/12/09/puerto-rican-filmmaker-west-side-story-its-hard-think-that-this-is-still-what-were-talking-about/).

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**Load-Date:** May 13, 2024

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[***The Field: The Battle for Pennsylvania’s White Working Class***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:611D-GCY1-DXY4-X11X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 9, 2020 Friday 19:00 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS; the-daily

**Length:** 430 words

**Highlight:** Formerly Democratic counties in the state swung decisively toward Donald Trump in 2016. Can Joe Biden claw back some of the ***working-class*** white vote?

**Body**

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This episode contains strong language.

Over the summer, Dave Mitchko started a makeshift pro-Trump sign operation from his garage. By his estimate he has handed out around 26,000 signs, put together with the help of his family.

Mr. Mitchko, a former factory worker, might seem like the kind of voter Joseph R. [*Biden*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2) Jr. wants to peel away from the Republicans in November. He had always been a Democrat — he voted for [*Barack Obama*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2) twice — but opted for Donald Trump in 2016.

“It’s like they want nothing to do with the people right now,” he said of the Democratic Party. “So me and my wife left the party. We went down and joined the Republican side and that’s it.”

Today, we speak to voters and politicians on the ground in northeastern [*Pennsylvania*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2), exploring the factors that swung former Democratic strongholds toward Mr. Trump and asking whether Mr. Biden can win them back.

INSIDE ‘THE DAILY’ For an exclusive look at how the biggest stories on our show come together, [*subscribe to our newsletter*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2). Read the latest edition [*here*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2).

On today’s episode

* [*Shane Goldmacher*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2), a national political reporter for The New York Times.

1. Andy Mills and Alix Spiegel, producers for The Times.

Background reading

* After the turbulent first presidential debate, Mr. Biden [*embarked on an old-fashioned train tour*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2) to cities where the president won over ***working-class*** white voters four years ag

There are a lot of ways to listen to ‘The Daily.’ [*Here’s how.*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-daily/id1200361736?mt=2)

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Shane Goldmacher contributed reporting.

“The Daily” is made by Theo Balcomb, Andy Mills, Lisa Tobin, Rachel Quester, Lynsea Garrison, Annie Brown, Clare Toeniskoetter, Paige Cowett, Michael Simon Johnson, Brad Fisher, Larissa Anderson, Wendy Dorr, Chris Wood, Jessica Cheung, Stella Tan, Alexandra Leigh Young, Lisa Chow, Eric Krupke, Marc Georges, Luke Vander Ploeg, Kelly Prime, Julia Longoria, Sindhu Gnanasambandan, M.J. Davis Lin, Austin Mitchell, Neena Pathak, Dan Powell, Dave Shaw, Sydney Harper, Daniel Guillemette, Hans Buetow, Robert Jimison, Mike Benoist, Bianca Giaever, Liz O. Baylen, Asthaa Chaturvedi and Rachelle Bonja. Our theme music is by Jim Brunberg and Ben Landsverk of Wonderly. Special thanks to Sam Dolnick, Mikayla Bouchard, Lauren Jackson, Julia Simon, Mahima Chablani, Nora Keller, Sofia Milan and Desiree Ibekwe.

**Load-Date:** February 4, 2021

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[***Are the Elite Anti-Trumpers the ‘Bad Guys’?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68XJ-FJ71-DXY4-X3YJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 12, 2023 Saturday 10:20 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1405 words

**Highlight:** Readers react to David Brooks’s suggestion that the elite are partly to blame for Trumpism.

**Body**

Readers react to David Brooks’s suggestion that the elite are partly to blame for Trumpism.

To the Editor:

Re “[*What if We’re the Bad Guys Here?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/02/opinion/trump-meritocracy-educated.html),” by David Brooks (column, Aug. 4):

I am sick and tired of people like Mr. Brooks telling me that I am the problem or the “bad guy” because I am educated (and no, I was not educated at an Ivy League school, and neither of my parents finished high school) to justify the fact that 35 percent of the population are fervent supporters of Donald Trump, no matter what he says or does.

Moreover, Mr. Trump is also part of the elite, but his supporters simply ignore this. This is not because he identifies with them in any way (as a golden-haired [*billionaire*](https://www.forbes.com/sites/danalexander/article/the-definitive-networth-of-donaldtrump/?sh=3b60122d2a8e) living in a mansion), but because Fox, Newsmax, and other right-wing TV and radio media outlets, right-wing militias and Trump puppet politicians in Congress essentially brainwashed them with their daily dose of propaganda about how the “left wing socialists and communists,” “elites,” the “woke,” etc., are all conspiring to take their country and only Donald Trump can stop them.

In my opinion, this is the biggest problem, Mr. Brooks, not educated Americans who as you correctly state are “are earnest, kind and public spirited.”

So, let’s not beat ourselves up because the other side has been completely brainwashed, does not accept facts, scientific and otherwise, is obsessed with conspiracies and lives in a right-wing echo chamber.

Michael Hadjiargyrou

Centerport, N.Y.

To the Editor:

While I grew up in a small Midwestern town in a middle-class family, education has offered me a satisfying life with a secure retirement. Many of my classmates who chose a more blue-collar life path have endured more struggles, starting with military service in Vietnam. I am quite confident that many of them today support Donald Trump, at least partly for the reasons that David Brooks suggests.

Mr. Brooks’s column was a brilliant, moving description of the unspoken arrogance of many of us who are left-leaning. I believe that some sincere humility and understanding with regard to the concerns of many who feel left behind would go a long way to healing some of our divisions. Thanks to Mr. Brooks for his insight.

David Mahan

Sebring, Fla.

To the Editor:

Fine: I’ll accept David Brooks’s plea that we not blame the logic-defying viability of Donald Trump on the wrongheadedness of tens of millions of Americans. I get the class resentment. I share the rage against excessive political correctness and the feeling that immigration is unchecked and overwhelming. I see his point that the elite stoke these resentments by voicing our support for the nonelite while spending most of our energy and resources protecting our own class privilege.

But let’s not gloss over the main factor here: Mr. Trump is the latest version of a leader who is little more than a self-obsessed expert at exploiting and inflaming the fear and resentments of the masses to benefit his own power and ego. Such a leader cares nothing about those who harbor these resentments, and certainly does not share the same fears.

On a more practical note, those who resent wokeism are shooting themselves in the foot by supporting someone who so many Americans, elite and otherwise, would vote for over their proverbial dead bodies.

Brian Smith

Dayton, Ohio

To the Editor:

The irony behind the case that David Brooks makes for Donald Trump’s support is that this support is based entirely on words (primarily offensive) and not actions. What did Mr. Trump do as president to help his supporters and make their lives better?

His major accomplishment was the tax reform enacted in 2017, which heavily favored the rich and elites (including himself). His supporters love the way he attacks his “enemies” and anyone who disagrees with him and feel he speaks for them. The lack of actual benefits they have enjoyed seems not to matter.

Ellen S. Hirsch

New York

To the Editor:

Donald Trump, as loathsome as he is, has done one significant service for this country. He has made clear the great social divide that David Brooks describes in his excellent column. Now, how to fix it?

As a former naval officer and Vietnam veteran, I would suggest universal national service, with almost no exemptions. Being forced to live with, eat with, work with people from all over the country would teach all of us to be more tolerant. This would not just be military service; it would include working in national parks, teaching in underserved schools, and many other forms of service to the nation.

The only thing standing in the way is a timid Congress. Is there anyone in Congress brave enough to take this on?

Jeffrey Callahan

Cleveland

To the Editor:

David Brooks makes a familiar and not unreasonable argument about how the fear, resentment and sense of alienation that fuel the cult of Trumpism proceed from economic and cultural realities for which liberal elites are, in large part, responsible.

When Mr. Brooks asks, however, whether anti-Trumpers should consider whether they are the “bad guys,” he embarks on an analysis that completely excludes millions of people like me who find Donald Trump and Trumpism appalling, without being “elite” at all.

I was raised in a row home in northeast Philly by a single mom who was a cop. My dad was a union construction worker. I’ve been a musician and a bartender for most of my adult life. In short, I’m hardly part of the elite class that Mr. Brooks seems to equate with the anti-Trump movement, and yet I’m passionately anti-Trump!

Maybe this particular piece simply wasn’t aimed at people like me, and that’s fine. But all too often I see this oversimplified, false duality that leaves out all the decent ***working-class*** people who have themselves been hurt by neoliberal policies and narratives, and yet would never channel their frustration into an odious movement like Trumpism. When we condemn Mr. Trump and his followers, we do so with a clean conscience.

James A. Lepone

Telford, Pa.

To the Editor:

David Brooks identifies the privileges enjoyed by the highly educated class and the resentment of the less educated class that might cause them to be ardent supporters of Donald Trump. Mr. Brooks concludes with a warning that history is the graveyard of classes with preferred caste privileges.

What he fails to consider is that in the United States his identified “upper” class encourages, both by words and action, members of the “lower” class to join it. Nothing would make those with college or graduate degrees happier than if every capable child joined their class. This differs very much from any true caste system.

Jack Stern

Setauket, N.Y.

To the Editor:

David Brooks’s column gave me a new perspective regarding why people support this obvious con man named Donald Trump. Although Mr. Brooks makes excellent points regarding the anger that people feel, is it not the Democrats who advocate and pass legislation regarding the minimum wage, infrastructure, child care, education, the environment, middle-class tax relief, financial assistance with community colleges and technical schools, etc., all for the benefit of working- and middle-class Americans?

Mr. Trump and the current crop of Republicans have done nothing to help these people. In light of this, isn’t propaganda from Mr. Trump and his followers, as well as the cynical right-wing media, also to blame for this misplaced anger and anti-democratic sentiment?

We’re not the bad guys. Donald Trump and Rupert Murdoch are.

Phillip L. Rosen

Venice Beach, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks does an excellent job of setting up a straw man to bring down. Most liberals aren’t part of the “elite,” no matter how many right-wingers parrot that lie.

[*Exit polls from 2020*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results) found that Joe Biden outpaced Donald Trump significantly among voters making less than $100,000 a year, while Mr. Trump did better among those making $100,000 or more. Mr. Trump is no friend to the ***working class***, and polls like these give me confidence that a majority of the ***working class*** recognizes this. And any member of the ***working class*** who supports him or today’s extreme-right Republican Party is going against their own best interests.

It’s liberals and Democrats (usually but not always the same) who support policies to empower workers and reduce economic inequality, and the other side doesn’t give a damn. Liberals are not the elite and are not the enemy of the ***working class***.

Trudy Ring

Bend, Ore.

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Banks Sue Regulators Over Anti-Redlining Rule***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8F-FS71-JBG3-600B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2024 Monday 19:01 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 568 words

**Highlight:** A new lawsuit says federal agencies overstepped their authority in a rule forcing banks to do business in underserved communities.

**Body**

A new lawsuit says federal agencies overstepped their authority in a rule forcing banks to do business in underserved communities.

Some of the banking industry’s most powerful trade groups sued the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency on Monday, claiming that the regulators overstepped their authority in updating a law meant to reverse the effects of redlining.

In October, the regulators imposed new frameworks for assessing whether banks are abiding by the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act, which requires banks to do business in neighborhoods made up largely of racial minorities or low-income households that they typically shunned.

The lawsuit said the rule was “a complicated and burdensome regime” and might “ultimately result in reduced lending to the very populations that the C.R.A. was designed to benefit.”

The suit was filed by the American Bankers Association, the Independent Community Bankers of America and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, trade groups that represent virtually all U.S. banks. Several Texas groups joined as plaintiffs, allowing the Washington-based groups to sue in federal court in that state, where they have already won favorable rulings against the regulators.

In a statement, the president of the Independent Community Bankers of America, Rebeca Romero Rainey, said that the group had “clearly laid out our position and concerns” during the comment period required before regulators adopt new rules, but that its warnings appeared to have had little effect on the final version of the rule.

Banks said they did not oppose the anti-redlining law itself, just its latest iteration. The 1977 law does not specifically state what banks need to do to ensure lending to underserved communities, leaving regulators with a lot of leeway to determine what is required to comply.

The lawsuit claimed that regulators exceeded their authority by requiring banks’ activities to be scrutinized even if they were far away from a physical branch. It also said the new rule let regulators examine whether banks were providing services that didn’t relate to lending — like checking and savings products, which are outside the 1977 law’s scope.

Monday’s suit is part of a broad conflict that has brewed in recent years between banks and their regulators, which banking groups say are [*unwilling to make compromise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/business/bank-lobbyists-regulators-cfpb.html)s. The groups have filed two other suits against regulators in Texas, one to stop a new rule [*requiring banks to share data*](https://www.lockelord.com/newsandevents/publications/2023/06/quickstudycfpd) on their small-business lending practices and one over a [*new initiative*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/28/business/cfpb-suit-american-bankers-association.html) to examine banks for potential discrimination.

Jesse Van Tol, president of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, which works with banks to help them meet their Community Reinvestment Act requirements, said in an email that he was “saddened and angered” by the lawsuit.

“The banking industry is showing its true colors,” he said. “Nobody should believe them when they say they care about lending to ***working-class*** people and people of color.”

Representatives of the Fed, the F.D.I.C. and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency declined to comment.

PHOTO: A construction barrier outside the Federal Reserve building last spring. The Fed, the F.D.I.C. and the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency were sued by banking groups on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang /The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***With Biden’s Endorsement of Harris, What’s Next?; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CJ4-KNC1-DXY4-X39J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 22, 2024 Monday 11:24 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 2044 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch, Ephrat Livni and Vanessa Friedman Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder of DealBook, the flagship business and policy newsletter at The Times and an annual conference. Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch joined The Times from CNBC in 2020, covering deals and the biggest stories on Wall Street. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington. Vanessa Friedman has been the fashion director and chief fashion critic for The Times since 2014.

**Highlight:** Many Democrats endorsed the vice president as their party’s standard-bearer, but some donors questioned whether more competition for the role was needed.

**Body**

Many Democrats endorsed the vice president as their party’s standard-bearer, but some donors questioned whether more competition for the role was needed.

Follow the money

The shock waves from President Biden [*ending his re-election bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), after [*weeks of pressure*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to step aside, are still reverberating around the world.

Many [*Democratic officials*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and [*financial backers*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) have followed his lead and endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris as his successor in the race. But the conspicuous silence of some senior party leaders and warnings from prominent donors suggest that the party’s ticket isn’t a done deal.

The latest: Biden’s withdrawal opened a [*flood of Democratic donations*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), with more than $50 million pouring in on Sunday, in what one strategist said might be “the [*greatest fund-raising moment*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in Democratic Party history.”

[*Wall Street*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and [*Hollywood*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) donors came back in force, while stalwart Biden backers, including the tech billionaire [*Reid Hoffman*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and the hedge fund scion [*Alex Soros*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), pledged their support to Harris.

Not all senior Democrats crowned Harris as their preferred candidate. Some, including Senator Chuck Schumer, the majority leader, and Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the minority leader, didn’t endorse anyone. Neither did Representative Nancy Pelosi, the influential former Speaker, who previously indicated that she wants an [*open nomination process*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Barack Obama didn’t either, though The Times reported that he was [*simply staying neutral*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) and didn’t have an alternative candidate in mind.

And many outspoken donors were withholding their endorsements:

* [*Reed Hastings*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)of Netflix: “Dem delegates need to pick a swing state winner.”

1. [*Vinod Khosla*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the venture capitalist: “I want an open process at the convention and not a coronation.”
2. [*Mike Novogratz*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the crypto investor: “The donor community I speak to doesn’t think she’s the best to win, but everybody thinks she deserves a fair chance.”

Is money really a roadblock for potential challengers? The common consensus is that Harris has a huge financial edge, given her existing base of donors and her being the only candidate who could easily [*take over Biden’s campaign apparatus*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), including the $96 million in its coffers. Others would effectively start from zero.

DealBook hears that not everyone is convinced this is necessarily an insurmountable hurdle for would-be rivals. Some Democratic supporters believe that, were someone else to win the nomination, they could simply take the Biden money and fight it out in court, a process that could take years to play out. A handful of Republicans plan to challenge Harris’s taking over the Biden money in any case.

[*Less-radical workarounds*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) could include Biden transferring his campaign’s funds to the Democratic National Committee — an approach used in 2020 by Mike Bloomberg that the Federal Elections Committee has since approved — or picking a billionaire candidate like Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois, who could self-fund a presidential run.

For now, Harris remains the favorite to lead the Democratic ticket. [*The online gambling site Betfair*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) showed she has the highest chances of getting the nomination. (Many would-be rivals have either [*endorsed Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) or don’t plan to challenge her.)

That said, the odds on Betfair and [*recent polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) suggest that Harris trails Trump (though she is outperforming Biden versus Trump among some voter groups), giving skeptics hope that Democrats won’t crown the vice president as its standard-bearer just yet.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

Travel disruption from the global I.T. outage persists. Delta alone [*canceled more than 500 flights*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) on Monday, after Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg had singled out the airline for customer service issues in the wake of Friday’s widespread software outage. Government agencies around the world [*warned about scams*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) tied to the incident.

China cuts key lending rates to boost sluggish economy. The country’s central bank surprised investors by [*lowering borrowing costs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for the first time since last August. The decision was announced days after top Chinese officials held a twice-a-decade [*economic policy meeting*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that centered on ways to kick-start China’s economic growth.

Earnings and economic reports are in focus this week. Companies including Alphabet, Coca-Cola, Tesla and Spotify will disclose their latest quarterly results, providing fresh insight into the state of the consumer, advertising and more. And the Commerce Department is set to publish G.D.P. data for the second quarter on Thursday.

How would Harris govern?

Supporters and opponents alike are examining what Vice President Kamala Harris would mean for business if she is elected in November. DealBook dug into her background and talked to insiders to understand how she might govern.

Harris is inextricably tied to much of President Biden’s agenda. Insiders on Wall Street and in Washington said that there isn’t much daylight between her and the president on policy priorities. Her focuses when she was California’s attorney general and then senator included affordable housing and consumer protection, issues the Biden administration also embraced.

Among her recent moves have been touting investments made via the [*CHIPS and Science Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to increase domestic semiconductor research and manufacturing, and being one of the administration’s point people on how to [*regulate artificial intelligence*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

Her record suggests she might be more progressive, The Times’s Alan Rappeport [*writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). As a presidential candidate in 2020, she pushed for policies including universal health care and funding bigger tax breaks for ***working-class*** Americans with higher taxes on businesses. She called for raising the corporate tax rate to 35 percent from the 21 percent of the Trump years. The Biden administration increased it to 28 percent.

Harris’s relationship with the business community has improved, executives told DealBook. She faced skepticism at the start of her vice presidency, but reached out behind the scenes to business leaders via lunches and dinners. That has included events organized by the Democratic megadonor and investment banker Blair Effron, two people familiar with the matter told DealBook.

Many business moguls hope that Harris as president would be more receptive to their suggestions than Biden, and that she would be more willing to give key administration roles to those with corporate backgrounds.

Harris counts some Wall Street V.I.P.s among her backers. They include Ray McGuire, Lazard’s president and one of the top Black leaders in finance, who introduced her to prominent New York figures at his house in 2018. (His wife, Crystal McCrary McGuire, held a gathering of female Harris supporters at their home in May, DealBook hears.)

Others who would likely back her include Peter Orszag, the C.E.O. of Lazard, and Roger Altman, the senior chairman of Evercore.

“I’ve heard from more than 200 people just today since the announcement, saying that they want to host events and make donations,” Jon Henes, a corporate adviser who served as Harris’s campaign finance chair during her 2020 run, told DealBook.

Harris also has close relationships with Silicon Valley. Over the years, [*heavyweight tech donors*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) have supported her, including John Doerr, the venture capitalist; Sheryl Sandberg, the former C.O.O. of Meta; Jony Ive, the onetime Apple design chief; and Ron Conway, the start-up investor. (Also of note: Her brother-in-law, Tony West, is Uber’s chief legal officer.)

One thing donors are watching: her pick of running mate. Many are hoping she will choose a moderate governor from a battleground state, such as Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania or Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan. (A frequently mentioned candidate in political circles is Roy Cooper, the outgoing governor of North Carolina.)

Less obvious names being tossed about, include Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, who is [*close with the Business Roundtable*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), and Liz Cheney, the former Republican lawmaker from Wyoming.

Arnault’s Olympics

Bernard Arnault’s LVMH, the world’s biggest luxury group, reports quarterly earnings tomorrow, but the main event on the company’s calendar begins on Friday: The Olympics open in Paris, and the company is [*involved in almost every aspect*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of the two-and-a-half week competition.

DealBook spoke to Vanessa Friedman, The Times’s fashion director, about why this is Arnault’s Olympics and what it could reveal about a big question: Which of his children could take over from the 75-year-old leader?

How is LVMH central to this Olympics?

LVMH spent €150 million, about $163 million, to be one of the top-line sponsors — the first luxury group to play that role in any Olympics. LVMH is a “creative partner,” which means it isn’t just putting its branding on the stadium sides, but is making its products central to the games themselves.

How does this manifest itself?

The Olympics will be a quasi-LVMH ad (not the least for the group as a benign force in France, rather than a vampire squid), with its brands on display everywhere. Chaumet, the fine jewelry brand, made the medals, which will be presented in Louis Vuitton-branded trays, by Louis Vuitton-dressed officials. Drinks from Moët Hennessy will be served in hospitality suites. Berluti, the men’s wear brand, is dressing the French delegation for the opening ceremony, and Dior, the couture brand, is rumored to have a role in the performance on the night.

What does LVMH’s role tell us about Arnault’s relationship to the French state?

It suggests they are synonymous and this is effectively an argument for luxury as a defining representation of Frenchness.

LVMH has been making this pitch for a while, usually by [*reminding everyone*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) how much tax it pays (€8.1 billion in 2023 in France alone), how much it contributes to the French economy (the group shipped €23.5 billion worth of goods abroad last year, or 4 percent of total exports), and how many people it employs (almost 40,000 in France).

Will the Olympics tell us anything about [*succession at LVMH*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)

All of Arnault’s five children have senior roles in the company: Antoine is head of image and the environment at LVMH and is overseeing the Olympic partnership; Delphine is C.E.O. of Dior; Frédéric heads the entire watch division and is managing director of the family’s holding company; Alexandre is a senior executive charged with reinventing Tiffany; and Jean is head of watches at Louis Vuitton. They seem to get along, and [*Arnault has repeatedly said*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) it is not a given that any of them will get his job. But that hasn’t stopped the questions.

A lot of eyes are Antoine this week. Last fall, he stepped back from his role as C.E.O. of Berluti to focus on the Games, which is LVMH’s largest-ever marketing investment. If the Olympics is a roaring success, it could up his odds; if it doesn’t, well …

Antoine says the Games are a big “risk” for the group, but they are also a risk for him. When I asked what he was going to do after the Olympics, he politely declined to answer.

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* How the [*financier Mark Patricof*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) became the investing partner of choice to dozens of pro athletes, including Jason Kelce and Dwyane Wade. (NYT)

1. Vivendi, the French media giant, will [*list its Canal+ TV business*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in London as part of a plan to break up the conglomerate. (FT)

Elections, politics and policy

* FGS Global, the communications and consulting firm, has hired Josh Tzuker, who was most recently the chief of staff and senior counsel at the Justice Department’s antitrust division, as its global head of antitrust and competition, DealBook is first to report.

1. Nippon Steel has hired [*Mike Pompeo*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), Donald Trump’s former secretary of state, as an adviser to help win political approval for its deal to buy U.S. Steel. (Bloomberg)

Best of the rest

* Some on Wall Street have increasing doubts about the [*future of Fanatics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the sports merchandising giant. (Air Mail)

1. [*Faiza Saeed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the presiding partner of the law firm Cravath, Swaine &amp; Moore, opens up on her decades as one of Wall Street’s top corporate advisers. (FT)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: President Biden endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to replace him on the ticket but a number of senior Democrats and donors haven’t. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Yuri Gripas for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 23, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Student Loan Borrowers Owe $1.6 Trillion. Nearly Half Aren’t Paying.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCW-S3X1-DXY4-X03X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2024 Tuesday 22:58 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1649 words

**Byline:** Stacy Cowley Stacy Cowley is a business reporter who writes about a broad array of topics related to consumer finance, including student debt, the banking industry and small business.

**Highlight:** Millions of people are overdue on their federal loans or still have them paused — and court rulings keep upending collection efforts.

**Body**

Millions of people are overdue on their federal loans or still have them paused — and court rulings keep upending collection efforts.

After an unprecedented three-year timeout on federal student loan payments because of the pandemic, millions of borrowers began repaying their debt when billing resumed late last year. But nearly as many have not.

That reality, along with court decisions that regularly upend the rules, has complicated the government’s efforts to restart its system for collecting the $1.6 trillion it is owed.

At the end of March, six months after the hiatus ended, nearly 20 million borrowers were making their payments as scheduled. But almost 19 million were not, leaving their accounts delinquent, in default or still on pause, according to [*the latest Education Department data*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio).

“The nonpayment rate really is emblematic of a system that’s not doing its job,” said Persis Yu, the managing counsel for the Student Borrower Protection Center, an advocacy group.

Seven million borrowers with federally managed loans were at least 30 days overdue on their payments at the end of 2023. That’s the highest delinquency rate since 2016, as far back as the department’s public records go. Because of a policy adopted by the Biden administration, those borrowers will face no penalties for their nonpayment until October at the earliest.

Millions more had their accounts frozen through deferment or forbearance (which allows borrowers to temporarily stop making payments), and nearly six million borrowers [*remain mired in defaults*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) that began before the pandemic.

The reasons borrowers aren’t paying are varied. Some say they can’t afford it, while others are tangled in bureaucratic snafus. Many people are taking advantage of an [*“on-ramp” period*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) that lasts through September, during which late payments will not be reported to credit bureaus and borrowers will not be placed into default, though interest will continue to accrue.

When President Biden ended the moratorium that began in March 2020 under President Donald J. Trump, he pledged to fix key parts of the long-troubled federal loan program. While [*the Supreme Court overturned*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) Mr. Biden’s most far-reaching policy — forgiving at least $10,000 in debt for each of millions of borrowers — his administration resurrected other pathways for eliminating debt.

Mr. Trump’s Education Department [*stymied*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) relief programs for government and nonprofit workers, permanently disabled borrowers, and people defrauded by for-profit schools. Under Mr. Biden, the agency [*revamped and expanded those and other initiatives*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) and used them to cancel $167 billion owed by nearly five million people.

Mr. Biden also created a new repayment program, SAVE, which slashed many borrowers’ payments or reduced them to zero for millions of low-wage workers. Consumer advocates praised those moves as vital to ensuring that borrowers’ bills are manageable.

But the plethora of changes to repayment rules, and a barrage of lawsuits from Republican-led states attacking them, have worsened the already challenging task of getting more than 40 million people back on a payment track. The Education Department and its five loan servicers are struggling to adapt their systems and guide borrowers through repayment options that sometimes change overnight.

Last week, federal judges in Kansas and Missouri temporarily [*blocked elements of the SAVE program*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio), ruling in favor of states that contested the president’s authority to impose such generous terms without congressional approval. In the Kansas suit, the states called the president’s debt relief maneuvers “a rushed product to evasively do what the Supreme Court already told defendants they cannot do.”

But on Sunday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit [*temporarily reversed*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) the Kansas decision, clearing the way for the department to proceed with planned payment reductions this month for millions of borrowers.

Travis Wattles, 39, has had his account in forbearance since the payment pause ended in the fall because his servicer, Aidvantage, has not been able to determine what his monthly bill should be. (Aidvantage declined to comment and referred questions to the Education Department.)

Mr. Wattles, who works in automotive product marketing, spent several years overseas. During that time, his earnings were below the limit for the [*foreign income exclusion*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio) (a tax break that shelters some income), so he had no taxable income and owed nothing for his student loan debt.

But Mr. Wattles, who moved near Nashville in early 2020, now makes a six-figure salary. He enrolled in the SAVE plan in August, and has twice sent paperwork to Aidvantage to have his payment recalculated based on his current earnings.

“They keep putting me back into forbearance because they can’t figure it out,” he said. “I don’t want that. I don’t mind making a payment; I understand I took out the loan.”

Karlyn Granger, a 36-year-old graphic designer, received her master’s degree in 2019. When the pandemic freed her of the obligation to pay her federal loans, she got married, bought a house in Atlanta and had a baby. The costs of caring for her family consume most of her paycheck and “feel much more present and dire” than her loan, she said.

A deluge of emails from Aidvantage has spurred her efforts to figure out which payment plan is best for her. But the choices confuse her: Should she try to keep her monthly bill as low as possible, or prioritize paying more to reduce what she owes in interest?

The shifting legal landscape has amplified her uncertainty. The SAVE plan, for example, waives unpaid interest for those who keep up with their monthly payments and forgives any debt remaining after 20 years. But those benefits may vanish if legal challenges to the plan succeed. And the Internal Revenue Service typically treats forgiven debts as income. Ms. Granger fears making a decision that might eventually stick her with an enormous tax bill.

“I’m just kind of in analysis paralysis, where I don’t do anything,” she said.

The Education Department anticipated that millions of borrowers would need extra time, help and nudging. There’s no historical parallel for pausing the entire loan system for years. But when natural disasters have occurred — which affected borrowers can use as grounds to temporarily suspend their payments — “roughly a third of borrowers missed their payments in the first months after payments resumed,” two senior officials wrote in [*an April blog post*](https://studentaid.gov/data-center/student/portfolio). “Their rates of payment recovered gradually over a two- to three-year period.”

For loan servicers, alarm bells start going off when a borrower is more than 90 days overdue, said Scott Buchanan, the executive director of the Student Loan Servicing Alliance. That’s the point at which they normally file a negative credit report. But through September, the servicers have instead been instructed to place those borrowers into forbearance.

That complicates the data. With so many borrowers being automatically routed into forbearance, it’s hard to separate those who can afford to pay but are choosing not to from those who are genuinely struggling.

“For some time, we’re going to have this group of borrowers who will see, ‘I went delinquent and nothing happened,’ so they think, ‘Why am I making a payment?’” Mr. Buchanan said. “That was always the risk of the on-ramp. You want to encourage people to make payments. If you self-cure for them, that doesn’t encourage payments.”

Mr. Biden frequently casts his approach to student debt as a signature accomplishment. “My administration has taken the most significant action to provide student debt relief ever in the history of this country,” he said in April. “This relief can be life changing.”

And for millions of people, it has been, despite the rockiness and legal turmoil of the past year.

Clayton Lundgren, 25, earned a master’s degree in engineering physics in 2021 — then moved to Los Angeles to work as a self-employed content creator. Had the Supreme Court allowed Mr. Biden’s mass-debt cancellation program to stand, nearly half the $21,000 that Mr. Lundgren owes would have vanished.

But because of the SAVE program, which exempts income of up to 225 percent of the federal poverty line, Mr. Lundgren owes nothing on his monthly loan bill. That helps him afford his rent and other living expenses. “It gives some breathing room,” he said.

And because SAVE prevents interest from accruing, Mr. Lundgren’s balance isn’t growing. That’s a sea change from how federal student loans used to operate: Previously, millions of borrowers on income-driven plans made payments every month but saw their tabs keep rising, because their payments weren’t enough to cover even the interest on their debts.

Mr. Lundgren said he was grateful for SAVE, but also felt a bit whiplashed by the loan system’s gyrations.

“I am just resigned to the fact that there is almost certainly no reality where the socially just thing happens, which would be loan forgiveness and the institution of universally affordable public college,” he said.

Representative Virginia Foxx of North Carolina, a Republican and the chairwoman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, praised the court rulings against the SAVE plan.

Mr. Biden “has opted to give away taxpayer money and illegally rewrite loan contracts,” she said. “It’s a blatant attempt to buy votes from college graduates on the backs of the ***working class***.”

PHOTOS: New changes to student loan repayment rules, and a barrage of lawsuits from Republican-led states attacking them, have worsened the already challenging task of getting more than 40 million people back on a payment track. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Travis Wattles, 39, who hasn’t paid on his loan because his servicer can&#39;t determine his monthly bill amount. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM DESHAZER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Chicago Is Tired of Waiting for Trains, and Thinks It Knows Who's to Blame***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C39-FHD1-JBG3-64RF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 23, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1154 words

**Byline:** By Julie Bosman

**Body**

The Chicago City Council is seeking the public transit chief's ouster as the system wrestles with financial woes, sluggish service and crime complaints since the pandemic.

Until recently, Dorval R. Carter Jr. was another relatively unknown bureaucrat, a man who had quietly worked under three mayors as the president of the Chicago Transit Authority.

These days, in the eyes of his many critics, he is the face of all that is wrong with the city's public transportation system.

''Yes, C.T.A. chief Carter needs to go,'' Crain's Chicago Business wrote in an editorial last month, saying that his agency was in a ''shambolic state.'' Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Democrat of Illinois, said recently that there ''needs to be an evolution of leadership in order for us to get where we need to go with the C.T.A.'' Since the coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Carter has drawn the ire of public transportation advocates, who have called him out for failing to fix the system's financial problems, sluggish service and thefts and assaults on L trains and buses.

On Wednesday, the Chicago City Council introduced a resolution calling for Mr. Carter's ouster -- with a majority of council members in support of what is essentially a vote of no confidence. The resolution was stalled by an opposing member, who sent it to committee.

The fury directed at Mr. Carter and his agency is emblematic of the struggles that cities like Chicago are now facing. With the pandemic largely in the past, travel and tourism on the rise and concerts, festivals and entertainment in full swing, city residents expect most aspects of public services to be restored to their prepandemic state.

But across the country, getting public transit to flourish again has been complicated, a logistical and financial puzzle with no solution in sight.

''Chicago's recovery has lagged, and people are endlessly frustrated,'' said Joseph Schwieterman, a transportation professor at DePaul University in Chicago. ''Everyone's pointing fingers, and, in some cases, wanting change for change's sake. I've been watching transit my whole life, and I've never seen issues becoming this personal.''

In an interview at C.T.A. headquarters on Monday, Mr. Carter, 66, said that he had taken the disapproval to heart -- but that he was not ready to leave his job.

''I wouldn't be here if I didn't care about the city,'' said Mr. Carter, who wore subway token cuff links and was surrounded by train memorabilia on his office shelves. ''When you face this level of criticism in a very public way, it can't help but make you feel hurt.''

Mr. Carter, who grew up riding city buses in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago and now commands a $376,000-a-year salary, pointed to signs that the agency was making progress: Transit crime is down 6 percent so far in 2024 over the same period last year, and ridership is increasing, with a post-pandemic record of more than one million rides in a single weekday on May 8. (In 2019, 1.47 million rides were typical for a weekday, the C.T.A. reported.)

That is not enough, said transportation advocates, who argue that New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., have made more progress restoring public transit than has Chicago, the nation's third-largest city.

''The reality is that he has had over four years to bring back the system already,'' said Kyle Lucas, a co-founder of Better Streets Chicago, a group that presses for improved streets and public transit. ''C.T.A.'s problems are not just a funding problem. There's a lack of public accountability within the agency and a culture that is dismissive of public concern.''

Mayors of Chicago appoint a majority of members on the C.T.A.'s board, the body that could remove the president at the behest of Mayor Brandon Johnson, a Democrat who took office last year.Ronnie Reese, a spokesman for Mr. Johnson, said that the mayor did not comment on personnel matters.

Mr. Carter's supporters as well as his critics say that he has been instrumental in securing federal funding for C.T.A. projects. Phil Washington, the chief executive of the Denver International Airport who is a former transit leader in Los Angeles, said he had worked with Mr. Carter on transportation issues and believed he had the expertise for this difficult moment in the industry.

''When I look around the country, almost every other big transit agency is going through the same things,'' he said.

Critics and advocates agree that hiring and retaining employees -- particularly train operators -- has been the crux of the problem in Chicago.

During the pandemic, the C.T.A. rapidly lost employees, with many leaving for jobs that had higher salaries or more favorable working conditions. Hiring has gone slowly since, and a long training process to become a train operator has deterred applicants.

According to the C.T.A., at its lowest employee head count, in July 2022, the agency had 9,644 employees; at the end of March 2024, that number had ticked up to 10,606, still below 2019 numbers. Without enough train operators, the agency has struggled to ramp up service.

At the same time, the agency is facing a severe budget gap in the coming years. Federal relief funding that helped transit agencies in many cities survive the pandemic is drying up, leaving the three transit agencies serving the Chicago region with a $730 million fiscal cliff looming in the coming years.

Transportation experts said that the failure to keep up Chicago's transit system was a missed opportunity.

Before the pandemic, the C.T.A. had attracted national praise for modernizing its system, tapping federal funding for improvements and rebuilding stations with sleek, modern exteriors.

And Chicago remains one of the few American cities where it is easily possible to live without a car -- one of Chicago's strengths in attracting younger people, who often want a car-free lifestyle.

"We have a lot of ***working-class*** folks who don't own a car because they can't afford it, and a lot of people who choose not to own a car,'' said Fabio Göttlicher, a software engineer who helped create the group Commuters Take Action to challenge Mr. Carter's leadership. ''You cannot have a city of 2.7 million without a well-working transit service.''

On Monday morning, commuters on an L platform downtown said that the system had improved since the days of the pandemic, when trains arrived inconsistently and the dearth of riders gave the experience a dangerous, eerie feel.

Esteban Sanchez, 43, was waiting for a Green Line train, heading to an interview for a janitorial job.

Mr. Sanchez, a resident of the Pilsen neighborhood on the West Side, said that in the last couple of years riding the L had not been the same as before Covid-19.

''It's gotten worse,'' he said. ''A lot more crime, especially people smoking weed. You have to be vigilant. I feel like it's been a long time since the pandemic. It should be better by now.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/us/chicago-cta-dorval-carter.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/us/chicago-cta-dorval-carter.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Dorval R. Carter Jr. is the president of the Chicago Transit Authority. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AKILAH TOWNSEND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Tense Time for Parks, Libraries and the Arts; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CB5-WW61-DXY4-X039-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 24, 2024 Monday 05:01 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1496 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:** As the city budget deadline looms, the targets of Mayor Eric Adams’s cuts are rallying their bases.

**Body**

As the city budget deadline looms, the targets of Mayor Eric Adams’s cuts are rallying their bases.

Good morning. It’s Monday. The clock is ticking on the city’s budget negotiations. We’ll examine what’s at stake. We’ll also look at how Representative Jamaal Bowman turned to national star power going into the Democratic primary on Tuesday.

By law, the city must have a budget by July 1 — a week from today. Negotiations between City Hall and the City Council are centering on reversing Mayor Eric Adams’s proposed cuts, and the haggling appeared to go slowly last week.

So once again, with the clock ticking and the give-and-take continuing, the last days of June will be tense as supporters of agencies or programs rally their bases.

The mayor acknowledged as much last week when he said that “we should just hold on to old reels of these same conversations.” Switching metaphors, he said that “we’re going to land the plane,” meaning that a budget deal would be reached.

This budget is particularly significant for Adams, a Democrat whose first term will be over at the end of 2025. His first round of budget negotiations in 2022 was less acrimonious, but some City Council members were frustrated over cuts to school budgets and later pushed to restore them. Last year, the negotiations were unusually strained. Adrienne Adams, a Democrat who is the City Council speaker, called the agreement that restored funding for some but not all Council priorities “bittersweet.”

This time around, the Council has made early childhood education a priority. But other targets of cuts have sought to rally support. Arts institutions, from big to small, are worried. The City Council has asked for an additional $53 million; $35 million would come from City Council funds, and Adams’s administration would commit $18 million — roughly the price of a police helicopter, as Ginia Bellafante, The Times’s Big City columnist, [*pointed out*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Parks advocates also worry about shortchanging the city’s green spaces and the people who work in them. “Post-Covid, more people than ever are using the parks,” said Joseph Puleo, a former urban park ranger who is a vice president of DC 37, the huge public employees’ union that represents 1,800 parks department workers. “Maintenance can barely keep up.”

His point was echoed by Adam Ganser of the advocacy group New Yorkers for Parks, who noted that Adams often talked about public safety and cleanliness.

“Our parks occupy 14 percent of the city’s land,” Ganser told me last week. Without the workers to make them clean and safe, he said, the city suffers. He sees the budget negotiations as being about quality of life as much as they are about money.

Ganser has said that philanthropic money keeps “marquee parks” like Central Park, Prospect Park and the High Line in “fantastic condition.” The 1,700 other parks are entirely dependent on the city budget.

Libraries have also rallied supporters in an effort to fend off belt-tightening — including cuts of $25.5 million for the New York Public Library and its 92 branches and $32.8 million for the city’s other two library systems, the Brooklyn Public Library and the Queens Public Library. That effort reached far beyond New York last week when Whoopi Goldberg, a host of the morning talk show “The View,” talked about the consequences of closing libraries.

“It has never been more important to keep public libraries wide open and thriving,” she said. “If you close off libraries, you close off people’s ability to not just go and have access to books but to be able to get the internet, to be able to do all kinds of things a lot of us in the world take for granted.”

Anthony Marx, the president of the New York Public Library, said that if the proposed cuts were not reversed, “it would mean moving many of our branches to five-day service, which is just unthinkable.”

He said there were other options, none of them good — such as buying fewer books or deferring maintenance. “Right now we’re facing a summer that looks like it’s going to have record heat,” he told me. “We are the places people come to cool down. We’re going to have air-conditioners breaking down. We’re going to have to close branches because of that.”

City Hall expects the negotiations to be wrapped up by the deadline.

It will be a mostly sunny day with temperatures in the mid-80s as slightly cooler and less humid air arrives. The evening will be mostly cloudy, with temperatures dropping to the 70s.

In effect until July 4 (Independence Day).

The latest New York news

* New York Democratic primaries: If there was any illusion that Democrats in New York would play nice until the all-important general election in November, [*these contests for State Assembly suggest otherwise*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings). Election Day is Tuesday.

1. Suspected drownings: Authorities suspended their search for two teenagers who were reported missing in the waters off Jacob Riis Park, [*where the shoreline is notorious for rip currents that prove deadly year after year*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

* A new Hamptons attraction: A wild American flamingo has [*drawn hundreds of spectators in recent weeks*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

1. ‘One of the great characters of downtown New York’: Silvano Marchetto, an Italian-born restaurateur whose Greenwich Village trattoria became a hangout for celebrities like Madonna and Yoko Ono, died. [*He was 77.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

Bowman hitches his hopes to star power

Representative Jamaal Bowman, a two-term congressman in a fight for his political life, turned to star power over the weekend [*in an 11th-hour effort to reorient a hotly contested Democratic primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Megawatt events with two of the left’s biggest names, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Bernie Sanders, were intended to boost Bowman, who is behind in the polls and has been outspent in advertising. Bowman’s opponent in the primary on Tuesday — George Latimer, a middle-of-the-road Democrat who is the Westchester County executive — took a lower-key approach, slogging through the weekend with no celebrity surrogates.

As my colleagues Nicholas Fandos and Claire Fahy point out, their different weekends reflected the different paths to victory that they see [*in a district that is mostly in Westchester County*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) but includes a chunk of the Bronx. The district is split between wealthy suburbs and ***working-class*** neighborhoods, and among white, Black and Latino voters.

Bowman said the outcome of the primary would depend on turnout. “This is not about persuasion,” he said at one event with Sanders. “We got our people. They got their people.”

With pro-Israel political groups pummeling Bowman with $15 million in negative ads, Latimer mostly played it safe, calling himself “the local guy”— in contrast to Bowman, who he said was “much more a person who has cultivated a national image.” Latimer [*jumped into the race*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) late last year, in large part because pro-Israel groups were urging him to oppose Bowman’s outspoken criticism of Israel’s military campaign in Gaza.

Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez were both on hand for a rally on Saturday that took place in the South Bronx, miles from Bowman’s district. Ocasio-Cortez defended Bowman against accusations that his calls for a cease-fire and the end of American military aid to Israel made him anti-Israel or antisemitic.

Food cart find

Dear Diary:

I found a cellphone face down in the street at 57th and Lexington. I grabbed it so it wouldn’t get run over, but there was no good place to leave it.

A traffic officer I asked to hold onto it was too busy and suggested I find a police officer. There was no police officer around, so I did the next best thing: I walked over to a food cart that is always at the intersection.

I asked the vendor if he could hold on to the phone. I live in Queens and didn’t want to take the phone too far from where it had been dropped.

The vendor declined, but then the phone rang. I set it on speaker, and the vendor and I tried to tell the caller where we were, but language barriers made it difficult.

Finally, the vendor grabbed the phone.

“57th and Lexington!” he shouted. “Come get your phone and shish kebab! Shish kebab!”

Then we heard a second voice on the phone, saying he was heading over, then a third voice asking where we were. Across the street we saw one man wearing a yellow jacket and waving his arms and another man walking in our direction. He turned out to be the phone’s owner.

I handed him his phone, the vendor offered him shish kebab and then we all went on our way.

— Levi Fishman

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 tomorrow. — 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).

Emma G. Fitzsimmons, Melissa Guerrero and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

PHOTO: Councilman Yusef Salaam, a Democrat, at a rally against budget cuts at City Hall on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***One Building Solves Two Civic Needs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CB4-H3X1-DXY4-X006-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 24, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1478 words

**Byline:** By Michael Kimmelman

**Body**

An uplifting new library in Manhattan comes with 12 floors of subsidized apartments. It's a clever way to find community support for housing.

Why can't we do more of this more easily?

A handsome new library branch in Inwood, at the northern tip of Manhattan, had its soft opening Thursday. It's the second library in town during the past year or so to try something clever and innovative: partnering with a 100 percent affordable housing development. New subsidized apartments occupy a 12-floor tower above the library.

These days, NIMBYs are always fighting affordable housing projects. Communities are increasingly desperate for libraries. One obvious solution is the twofer -- building housing and a library together -- because there's strength in numbers.

A few years ago I wrote about several of these library/housing combos in Chicago (''co-location'' is the lingo developers use), some of them designed by top-flight architects there like John Ronan and Brian Lee. Boston is trying this out. New York is just the latest to road-test what seems like a no-brainer.

The financial logic is simple. Libraries pairing with housing developers can trim construction costs. Developers can leverage city-owned property to finesse both the not-in-my-backyard types and the byzantine economics of affordable development.

But getting these projects built is a slog.

That earlier branch I mentioned belongs to the Brooklyn Public Library. With a fine, sunny, three-story design by Carol Loewenson, a partner at Mitchell Giurgola Architects, it opened late last year in Sunset Park beneath 49 affordable units on six upper floors. Inwood is bigger: 174 new subsidized apartments.

But that's only half the Inwood project. In addition to the library and apartment tower, which has its own entrance and name, The Eliza, the development also includes a pre-K, a STEM study center, a teaching kitchen and community spaces.

Andrew Berman, a gifted veteran of New York public architecture and its crazy bureaucracy, is the library architect. Chris Fogarty of Fogarty/Finger is the lead architect for the whole development. Fogarty clads The Eliza in beige bricks and fluted terra-cotta panels, and manages a number of other civic-minded upgrades, like adding a terrace to the pre-K and bringing light into some of the big underground community rooms, which are still under construction.

He and Berman also synced the layouts so that the upstairs apartments accommodate the concrete columns and beams that support the library's open plan reading room, guaranteeing that the library's architecture, which serves the widest public, remained a priority.

Alas, both Inwood and Sunset Park took longer than they should have because they had to run the usual gantlets of public reviews and community protests.

What was there to complain about?

In Inwood's case, community outreach efforts by library officials and the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development began seven years ago. Local objections weren't to features of the project like the pre-K or STEM center, which responded to community asks. They resulted from a larger issue.

The development relied on an upzoning of the neighborhood that was first proposed more than a decade ago by the de Blasio Administration. Upzoning meant that taller buildings could be built than Inwood had previously permitted, to encourage the addition of more, and in particular affordable, housing. As part of the rezoning, City Hall committed to adding some 1,600 subsidized homes on public sites, ''expanding Inwood's affordable housing stock for the first time in decades,'' according to a study released by the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

Inwood certainly could use more affordable apartments. A 2023 study by the Furman Center at New York University counted fewer than 160 affordable apartments built in Inwood and neighboring Washington Heights during the previous decade. It is home to a smaller share of public housing than most city neighborhoods.

For years, tenant advocates there fought the upzoning, arguing that taller buildings would not just destroy the area's historic midrise character but also bring in a flood of market-rate development, accelerating gentrification.

The Eliza is 14 stories. Many older apartment buildings around it are six stories. Inwood is hilly, so buildings appear taller on the skyline from some angles, lower from others. The tallest new buildings that are going up in Inwood because of the rezoning include both subsidized developments and mixed-income apartment towers, several of them more than 20 stories high, mostly nearer the Hudson and Harlem rivers, where the island declines.

I leave it to residents to decide whether 14 stories along a commercial stretch of upper Broadway, in the middle of the island, is egregious. Broadway is a wide street. The Eliza isn't a tall building by Manhattan standards.

Of course it was really fear of market-rate development and displacement that energized much of the opposition to the rezoning. Even a single new market-rate apartment posed ''an existential threat to our homes and our community,'' protesters argued back in 2015 when one developer proposed a 15-story building just a few blocks south of the new library on the site of a long-derelict garage. It would have included 355 rental apartments, half of them subsidized.

Aside from a satellite swath of Columbia University's campus, Inwood remains largely a middle- and ***working-class*** enclave with a significant Dominican population. One-fifth of children in the district live below the poverty line. So fears of displacement are real.

But does every development these days have to turn into the Battle of the Somme?

In the middle of the last century, New Yorkers had had enough of politicians and power brokers tearing down Penn Station and bulldozing the South Bronx. Community groups began demanding more seats at the decision-making table. They opened top-down government to bottom-up perspectives around environmental, social justice and other concerns.

Since then, however, more laws and regulations passed to enshrine community feedback, preserve landmarks and compel environmental review have increasingly been weaponized by NIMBYs of all stripes. An alliance has emerged between well-connected, well-to-do NIMBYs and tenant advocates in neighborhoods like Inwood, both of whom, for very different reasons, see nearly every change as a threat.

They are now frequently the loudest voices, if not a majority. Even projects like Brooklyn Bridge Park, one of the most transformative public-private urban renewal efforts in generations, salvaging a declining swath of industrial waterfront, faced decades of reviews, cutbacks and protests, with opponents predicting financial calamity.

When such projects work out, there is little accounting for the public costs of this process, notwithstanding that accountability was the original, driving argument behind expanding the regulatory system and participatory rules.

Maybe it's wishful thinking, but I detect a growing public frustration, across the political spectrum, with regulations and processes that thwart efforts to keep pace with ''existential'' emergencies like climate change and the housing crisis.

Something has to give.

I suggest looking at the modest but uplifting 20,000-square-foot Inwood library, if only to be reminded of what we can accomplish with excellent architecture at a neighborhood scale.

Berman is a refined modernist with a discreet feel for simple materials, an understanding of classic forms and a deep love of the city. He knows that good design, attuned to place, conveys respect and becomes a source of pride and distinction in a neighborhood. He has designed branch libraries in Staten Island, the Bronx and elsewhere. They are all different and wonderful.

With Inwood, there is a monumentality to the reading room that can remind you of an earlier era in New York's civic architecture. You might not register at first some of the architectural decisions that make the library uplifting, but you feel it: a low entrance to the side that sets up the turn into the tall reading room as a drama of compression and release; a ceiling of striated, white oak strips that warm cold surfaces and unify a snaking layout.

And loads of light. A lighted screen at one end of the reading room contains a staircase to a mezzanine where sun filters through a skylight that is the architecture's signature feature. Light pours, as well, through IMAX-sized windows along Broadway.

The view out those windows from the mezzanine takes in a slice of Fort Tryon Park, a storefront orthodontist and several midcentury apartment blocks. It's classic, neighborhood New York, and a reminder.

The city can be impossible sometimes.

But it can still do great things, when we let it.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The new library branch at The Eliza, which also has 174 subsidized apartments, a pre-K, a STEM study center, a teaching kitchen and community spaces. (C1)

Left, the children's section of the library within The Eliza, right. Andrew Berman was the library architect, and Chris Fogarty of Fogarty/Finger was the lead architect for the whole development.

Center, Berman added classical overtones to the main reading room. Above left, a combination of refined materials and loads of light elevate the space. Above right, the development was part of a controversial rezoning that allowed taller buildings along a stretch of Broadway in Upper Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5) This article appeared in print on page C1, C5.

**Load-Date:** June 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***You Ask, We Answer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHX-FV01-DXY4-X29Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 21, 2024 Sunday 22:22 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 2076 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. He is the author of &amp;#8220;Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream."

**Highlight:** We’re answering reader questions about this newsletter, and the news in general.

**Body**

We’re answering reader questions about this newsletter, and the news in general.

We recently asked you — the readers of The Morning — to submit questions to us about this newsletter, recent news or anything else on your minds. We’re devoting today’s edition to some of your questions and our answers.

We have room for only a small selection in today’s email, but we’ve posted [*a longer selection online*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), including answers from Times journalists who cover a range of subjects, whether it’s Moscow or personal fitness. We enjoyed this project so much that I expect we’ll do it again soon.

About The Morning

I love The Morning. Every morning when I get up, I make a cup of coffee and open the newsletter. I have one wish: Please resist using the awful phrases “modern history” or “recent history.” They are too vague to mean anything. Be precise! — Mark Matassa

David: Thank you. And noted! We try to avoid vague language, and we will think twice before using these phrases now. I grew up surrounded by discussion of language — my mom was a copy editor, my dad a high school French teacher — and I appreciate it when readers write to us with grammar and usage critiques. Keep ’em coming.

I would like to see key business/finance news included each morning. — John W. Morris III

David: My colleagues and I agree that the newsletter has probably been too light on business news recently. We will aim to change that. Thank you for the nudge, John.

I enjoy the mix of information you provide in The Morning. Wondering as an addition if you could add a “Good News” section. — Genie MontBlanc

David: I, too, worry that we journalists [*suffer from bad-news bias*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). I don’t think The Morning will add a section devoted to good news, but we make a concerted effort to cover both good news and bad news.

A couple examples: My colleague German Lopez has written about both [*rising crime*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*falling crime*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). During the Covid pandemic, I argued that the vaccines were a marvel of science whose effectiveness was sometimes underestimated.

I should note that good-news stories can lead to criticism. Some readers worry that reporting a positive trend reduces the urgency to address larger problems. But I promise you that we will continue to do our best to report all kinds of news.

I would love to know why the sports section is primarily men’s sports. — Kathryn

David: It’s almost as if you’ve been listening to our daily meeting, Kathryn. We have recently included more stories about women’s sports. Still, we are nowhere near parity. Some of that reflects the major U.S. sports leagues, which are mostly male. But this is a personal priority for me, partly because I spend many hours watching women’s basketball. We can do better.

How do you deal with and guard against criticism that your coverage favors one party or ideology over another? — Thomas K. Moore

David: Independence is a core value of The Times. We don’t always get the balance right, but we try hard. I recommend reading [*this essay on journalistic independence*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) by our publisher, A.G. Sulzberger.

President Biden’s age is a relevant case study. Earlier this year, some Democrats criticized The Times for covering [*his aging*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and [*voters’ deep concerns about it*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). In retrospect, it’s pretty hard to argue that coverage was a mistake.

Politics and more

Will The Morning do a letter discussing national debt ahead of the election? — Lia Robinson

David: My colleague German has written a newsletter [*on precisely this topic*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). I’d note that the two presidential candidates are quite different on this issue: Donald Trump’s proposed policies would significantly increase the deficit, while Biden’s proposals would reduce it somewhat.

Power is never given away freely; it must be taken. Is the browning of America causing more fanatical behavior by Trump and his supporters? — Mark Shoenfield

David: Thanks for the sharp question, Mark. The short answer is yes. Trump has used the language of white nationalists, and he has won a large share of the white vote. But I think Trump’s critics are wrong when they suggest his appeal is entirely racial.

Since Trump entered politics, voters of color — Asian, Black and Latino — have also shifted toward the Republican Party. If the Democratic Party wants to win back some of those voters (and some white voters, too), it probably needs to be more introspective about why it has become an increasingly affluent party that turns off many ***working-class*** people. Too often, Democrats suggest that anyone who doesn’t vote for them is being irrational or ignorant.

How do we make people care about the state of our environment? It seems like no one cares, and I often feel frustrated that no one does. — Julia Adams

David: I do think many people care, Julia. But you’re right that the environment isn’t a major issue for some voters, including many lower-income voters. One reason, I think, is that the economic and social trends have been pretty disappointing for them over the past few decades. If you’re struggling to get by, it can be difficult to focus on a long-term threat.

For more

How does The Morning staff make this newsletter every day? How did the WordleBot create its word list? What coffee does Wirecutter recommend? Get the answers to those questions — and insights from Times writers on electric vehicles, Amazon’s labor union, Modi’s India, the changing English language and more — [*by clicking here*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

(Note: We edited some questions for brevity.)

THE LATEST NEWS

2024 Election

* As Biden weighs whether to drop out of the race, another question follows: [*Should he endorse Kamala Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), or open the door for a wider contest?

1. Donald Trump’s campaign is [*preparing to run against Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) if Biden steps aside, conducting polls to find her weaknesses and creating ads about her record.
2. At his first rally since he was shot, Trump seemed to abandon his pivot to a more unifying message. He [*insulted his opponents repeatedly*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), calling Biden stupid and Harris crazy.
3. The Secret Service acknowledged that it had [*turned down requests*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for more resources from Trump’s security detail in the two years before his shooting.

Other Big Stories

* Israeli fighter jets [*bombed a port in Yemen*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) controlled by the Houthi militia in retaliation for a drone attack in Tel Aviv. The airstrikes hit a power station, as well as gas and oil depots.
* A celebration of a Catholic ritual [*drew more than 50,000 people*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to Indianapolis. Leaders hope the gathering — the first of its kind since the 1940s — will revive excitement around the church.

1. Texas’ governor has bused more than 119,000 migrants to Democrat-led cities over the past two years. These [*maps show where they went*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. A fire [*destroyed the sanctuary*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) of First Baptist Dallas Church, a landmark in the city’s downtown.
3. In basketball, [*Team WNBA defeated Team USA*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the women’s All-Star Game, thanks to a record-setting 34 points from Arike Ogunbowale.

THE SUNDAY DEBATE

Did Trump’s speech at the Republican convention convey unity?

No. While Trump did show some humility, his speech was self-absorbed and frequently attacked Democrats. “His party’s advocacy around unity was built entirely — and cynically — on sand,” [*Timothy L. O’Brien of Bloomberg writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Yes. The assassination attempt clearly tempered Trump’s boisterous tone and unified the Republican Party. “They said it would be a different Donald Trump, and it was,” [*Mark Davis writes for The Fort Worth Star-Telegram*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

FROM OPINION

Trump tells Americans they are in constant danger. Biden tells Americans everything is fine. Both are creating an environment where [*conspiracy theories thrive*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), M. Gessen writes.

[*Republicans are split*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) between those who want Trump to lead a revolution, and those who want a calmer Trump presidency, David French writes.

Go on a journey this summer: [*Learn a new language*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Mark Vanhoenacker writes.

Here are columns by Lydia Polgreen on [*J.D. Vance as a D.E.I. candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), and Ross Douthat on [*Trump’s speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

On the loose: When two cows — Hornee and Blackee — strayed from their pasture, they set off a chaotic chain of events involving [*death threats, chicken rustlers and Joaquin Phoenix*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Wartime writing: A manuscript [*buried under a cherry tree*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) helped prompt a flourishing interest in Ukrainian literature.

Vows: They met through a [*“Sex and the City” Instagram account*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). And just like that, they felt a spark.

Lives Lived: Thomas Neff, an M.I.T. physicist, had an idea: What if the Soviets, in need of cash, sold their unused nuclear warheads to the U.S. to use for energy? His proposal went on to convert some 20,000 nuclear arms into electricity. [*Neff died at 80.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

THE INTERVIEW

This week’s subject for The Interview is the N.B.A. superstar Joel Embiid. A citizen of Cameroon, France, and the U.S., Embiid explained his decision to play for Team USA at the Paris Olympics.

A lot of people thought you were going to play for the French team. You ultimately decided to play for the American team. Can you tell me how you wound up making that decision?

It was tough. Obviously, I got my home country, Cameroon, which I love, and the U.S., where I’ve been for 14 years now, and then France, where I have a lot of family. I wanted to take as much time as possible, and it didn’t help that France had put an ultimatum on when the decision had to be made.

What was the timeline?

I didn’t know. I saw it on Twitter, and I was like, ‘Whoa, where did this come from?’ But one thing that was always known was that Cameroon is the first choice, and if they qualify I’m playing for my home country. I had the opportunity to talk to the French president [Emmanuel Macron] about what was going on, and I told him one thing that was kind of bothering me a lot was the relationship between France and Cameroon and the African continent in general.

Historically, you mean?

Yeah, and even right now. There’s a lot of pushback as far as basically kicking out the French because it’s been so many years of oppression. So that was my mind-set. I still got my family living in Cameroon, and I don’t want to put them through any of that stuff.

Given the tension between you and French basketball officials, what reaction do you expect from French fans in Paris?

I expect a lot of boos. But I actually love it. It’s not going to be anything I haven’t seen.

Read [*more of the interview here*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

BOOKS

“Hillbilly Elegy”: Trump’s running mate was a best-selling author before he was a senator. A.O. Scott, our critic, looks at [*how Vance’s views of America have changed*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Relationship drama: Miss the Showtime series “Couples Therapy”? [*These 11 books let you peer into others’ love lives*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

By the Book: Suzanne Nossel, head of PEN America, says “Roctogenarians” by Mo Rocca and Jonathan Greenberg was [*the last book that made her laugh*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Our editors’ picks: There are [*six new books recommended this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), including “Cue the Sun!,” a history of reality TV.

Times best sellers: “True Gretch,” a memoir by Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan’s governor, is new this week on the [*hardcover nonfiction best-seller list*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Test your focus: Can you [*spend 10 minutes with this one painting*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

Dip into [*the stream of local life*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) — grocery stores, swimming pools, barbershops — on your next vacation.

Watch a stand-up comedy special that resembles a [*solo version of “The Wire.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

Stream [*five horror movies*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from around the world.

THE WEEK AHEAD

What to Watch For

* The Tour de France concludes today.

1. The director of the Secret Service testifies tomorrow on Capitol Hill.
2. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is scheduled to address Congress on Wednesday.
3. The Olympic Games begin Wednesday with men’s soccer and rugby. Women’s soccer begins Thursday.
4. The Olympics’ opening ceremony is Friday.

Meal Plan

Emily Weinstein loves the Yiddish word “schmaltzy,” whether it’s being used in the literal sense (slicked with poultry fat) or conveying an over-the-top, showbiz quality. That’s why a recipe for skillet chicken thighs with schmaltzy tomatoes tops her list this week. She also recommends a basil-butter pasta and grilled shrimp with spicy slaw. [*Get the recipes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

NOW TIME TO PLAY

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Yesterday’s pangrams were chariot, haricot and thoracic.

Can you put eight historical events — including Alexander the Great’s conquests, the construction of the Sydney Opera House and the naming of the color orange — in chronological order? [*Take this week’s Flashback quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

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 weekend with The Times.

This article appeared in print on page A2.

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[***Trump Once Promised to Revive Coal. Now, He Rarely Mentions It.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C82-8SJ1-JBG3-6007-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** CLIMATE

**Length:** 1351 words

**Byline:** Lisa Friedman Lisa Friedman is a Times reporter who writes about how governments are addressing climate change and the effects of those policies on communities.

**Highlight:** In earlier races for the White House, he pledged to get miners back to work. Now, political and economic realities have shifted.

**Body**

In earlier races for the White House, he pledged to get miners back to work. Now, political and economic realities have shifted.

The first time Donald J. Trump ran for president, he slapped on a miner’s helmet and told coal workers they would be “winning, winning, winning” when he entered the White House.

Now, as Mr. Trump campaigns for another chance at the presidency, he rarely mentions America’s coal miners and has stopped making grand promises about their future.

The shift reflects political and economic realities, experts said. Top among them: Mr. Trump oversaw coal’s decline, not its salvation. Despite the fact that Mr. Trump [*gutted climate regulations*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) and [*appointed a coal lobbyist*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) to lead the country’s top environmental agency, 75 coal-fired power plants closed and the industry shed about 13,000 jobs during his presidency.

“Not a single coal miner went back to work or power plant saved,” said Erin E. Bates, a spokeswoman for the United Mine Workers of America, the labor organization representing coal miners.

“I think he’s realizing those promises were not met during his term and they’re probably not going to be met now,” she said. “Politically, it probably doesn’t pay for his campaign to make more broken promises.”

Two decades ago, coal produced about half of all the electricity in the United States. Today, it accounts for just [*16 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) of American power generation. The industry employed nearly 180,000 people at its peak in the 1980s, but now that figure is about 44,800, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Coal began its slide around 2005 as the fracking boom started to produce large quantities of cheap natural gas, which proved attractive to utilities. In the last few years, the cost of power generated by wind turbines and solar farms has plunged, replacing natural gas as the cheapest source of electricity. Last year, power generated from onshore wind turbines and solar farms was about [*one-third of the cost*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) of the electricity produced by coal, on average.

Strict new [*limits on emissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) from coal-fired power plants announced in April by the Environmental Protection Agency are likely to make the country’s 200 or so remaining coal plants even more expensive to operate. Coal is the dirtiest of the fossil fuels and, despite its decline, it is responsible for more than half the [*planet-warming emissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) produced by the power sector in the United States.

The only specific new campaign pledge Mr. Trump has made about coal is to unwind the new E.P.A. limits on pollution from the power plants, which industry leaders say are impossible to satisfy.

Rolling back the regulation would help the industry, but would still not restore coal to its glory days. “The truth is, no candidate is going to be able to do much to save the coal industry when utilities are moving away from coal,” Ms. Bates said.

Mr. Trump’s energy [*agenda largely consists of aggressively promoting oil and gas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html), the burning of which is driving climate change. He has suggested he would quickly approve new oil and gas pipelines, expand oil drilling on public land and in federal waters and permit drilling in the Alaskan wilderness. He has promised to end federal support for electric vehicles, and wind power, which he has falsely claimed “kill all our birds.” And he would withdraw the country, again, from the 2015 Paris climate accord. (He did so during his term in the White House but President Biden rejoined the global agreement to limit warming.)

“To keep pace with the world economy,” his campaign website says, “President Trump will DRILL, BABY, DRILL.”

When Mr. Trump does talk about coal, it’s in the context of competition from China and to suggest that the United States is wasting time and money on renewable energy, according to a review of his speeches. “They’re opening up a coal plant every single week while we struggle with wind,” he said in April.

Since declaring his candidacy for the 2024 presidential race, Mr. Trump has mentioned coal miners only once at his rallies, to say: “We want clean coal. We want to take care of our miners.”

Thomas J. Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, which supports the fossil fuel industry, noted that Democrats, too, are talking less about coal than they did in 2016, when President Barack Obama’s plan to rein in coal plants was the centerpiece of his climate agenda.

When Mr. Biden references coal these days, he speaks about federal funds to create clean energy jobs in former coal communities.

Coal has also dropped from the spotlight because the swing states that both candidates need to win in 2024, like Arizona, Wisconsin and Michigan, are not considered coal states. “The conversation in the energy and climate space has shifted more toward oil and gas,” Mr. Pyle said.

Some Republicans also note that Mr. Trump doesn’t need to discuss coal as much as he did in the past because he seems to have the locked up the vote in coal communities.

West Virginia, the second-largest coal-producing state, behind Wyoming, was once a Democratic stronghold but has shifted solidly Republican in recent elections. Its senior senator, Joe Manchin III, has left the Democratic Party to register as an independent and is not running for re-election. The man who hopes to succeed Mr. Manchin in the Senate is Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican coal executive and an ally of Mr. Trump’s in West Virginia.

“There’s really no constituency left for coal in the Democratic Party post-Joe Manchin,” said Neil Chatterjee, a former chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under Mr. Trump who once served as an aide to Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky.

“Trump’s got the coal vote so there’s really not an imperative to go for it,” Mr. Chatterjee said. “He’s still going to rail against E.P.A. regulations and regulatory overreach and the Biden administration energy policies, but he can do all that without specifically focusing on coal because the ***working class***, United Mine Worker voters, they’ve all come to the Republican Party.”

The United Mine Workers has not endorsed a presidential candidate since 2008, when the union backed Mr. Obama, Ms. Bates said. But she said many coal workers were most likely supporters of Mr. Trump.

Another factor that energy analysts said could be shaping Mr. Trump’s energy outlook: Some of coal’s biggest boosters are either no longer on the political scene or are playing a smaller role than they once did.

For example, Robert E. Murray, a billionaire who built the country’s largest privately held coal mining company before it went bankrupt in 2019, died in 2020. Mr. Murray was a longtime supporter of Mr. Trump, hosted fund-raisers for him as a candidate and [*donated $300,000 to his inauguration*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html). A few weeks later, Mr. Murray presented Mr. Trump with detailed [*requests*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) for the new administration aimed at “getting America’s coal miners back to work.” Mr. Trump fulfilled most of those wishes but it did not revive the industry.

Mr. McConnell, who was once Mr. Trump’s most important ally on Capitol Hill and [*credited their teamwork*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) with ending the Obama administration’s “war on coal,” has been feuding with the former president since he condemned Mr. Trump following the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. That relationship [*may have started to thaw*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) on Thursday when Mr. Trump met with Mr. McConnell and other Republicans on Capitol Hill.

Still, no one contests that the coal industry has lost its sway.

“I don’t see coal having the same political muscle that it had,” said George David Banks, who served as a White House senior adviser on energy in the Trump administration. “It’s atrophied.”

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting from New York.

Taylor Robinson contributed reporting from New York.

PHOTOS: Above, coal miners supporting Donald J. Trump during a rally at the Charleston Civic Center in West Virginia in 2016. Despite his campaign pledges, Mr. Trump oversaw coal’s decline and the closing of 75 coal-fired plants, like the one in Conesville, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TY WRIGHT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Chicago Is Tired of Waiting for Trains, and Thinks It Knows Who’s to Blame***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C33-VKM1-JBG3-646H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US

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**Byline:** Julie Bosman Julie Bosman is the Chicago bureau chief for The Times, writing and reporting stories from around the Midwest.

**Highlight:** The Chicago City Council is seeking the public transit chief’s ouster as the system wrestles with financial woes, sluggish service and crime complaints since the pandemic.

**Body**

The Chicago City Council is seeking the public transit chief’s ouster as the system wrestles with financial woes, sluggish service and crime complaints since the pandemic.

Until recently, Dorval R. Carter Jr. was another relatively unknown bureaucrat, a man who had quietly worked under three mayors as the president of the Chicago Transit Authority.

These days, in the eyes of his many critics, he is the face of all that is wrong with the city’s public transportation system.

“Yes, C.T.A. chief Carter needs to go,” Crain’s Chicago Business [*wrote*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) in an editorial last month, saying that his agency was in a “shambolic state.” Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Democrat of Illinois, [*said*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) recently that there “needs to be an evolution of leadership in order for us to get where we need to go with the C.T.A.” Since the coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Carter has drawn the ire of public transportation advocates, who have called him out for failing to fix the system’s financial problems, sluggish service and thefts and assaults on L trains and buses.

On Wednesday, the Chicago City Council introduced a resolution calling for Mr. Carter’s ouster — with a majority of council members in support of what is essentially a vote of no confidence. The resolution was stalled by an opposing member, who sent it to committee.

The fury directed at Mr. Carter and his agency is emblematic of the struggles that cities like Chicago are now facing. With the pandemic largely in the past, travel and tourism on the rise and concerts, festivals and entertainment in full swing, city residents expect most aspects of public services to be restored to their prepandemic state.

But across the country, getting public transit to flourish again has been complicated, a logistical and financial puzzle with no solution in sight.

“Chicago’s recovery has lagged, and people are endlessly frustrated,” said Joseph Schwieterman, a transportation professor at DePaul University in Chicago. “Everyone’s pointing fingers, and, in some cases, wanting change for change’s sake. I’ve been watching transit my whole life, and I’ve never seen issues becoming this personal.”

In an interview at C.T.A. headquarters on Monday, Mr. Carter, 66, said that he had taken the disapproval to heart — but that he was not ready to leave his job.

“I wouldn’t be here if I didn’t care about the city,” said Mr. Carter, who wore subway token cuff links and was surrounded by train memorabilia on his office shelves. “When you face this level of criticism in a very public way, it can’t help but make you feel hurt.”

Mr. Carter, who grew up riding city buses in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago and now commands a $376,000-a-year salary, pointed to signs that the agency was making progress: Transit crime is down 6 percent so far in 2024 over the same period last year, and ridership is increasing, with a post-pandemic record of more than one million rides in a single weekday on May 8. (In 2019, 1.47 million rides were typical for a weekday, the C.T.A. reported.)

That is not enough, said transportation advocates, who argue that New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., have made more progress restoring public transit than has Chicago, the nation’s third-largest city.

“The reality is that he has had over four years to bring back the system already,” said Kyle Lucas, a co-founder of Better Streets Chicago, a group that presses for improved streets and public transit. “C.T.A.’s problems are not just a funding problem. There’s a lack of public accountability within the agency and a culture that is dismissive of public concern.”

Mayors of Chicago appoint a majority of members on the C.T.A.’s board, the body that could remove the president at the behest of Mayor Brandon Johnson, a Democrat who took office last year.Ronnie Reese, a spokesman for Mr. Johnson, said that the mayor did not comment on personnel matters.

Mr. Carter’s supporters as well as his critics say that he has been instrumental in securing federal funding for C.T.A. projects. Phil Washington, the chief executive of the Denver International Airport who is a former transit leader in Los Angeles, said he had worked with Mr. Carter on transportation issues and believed he had the expertise for this difficult moment in the industry.

“When I look around the country, almost every other big transit agency is going through the same things,” he said.

Critics and advocates agree that hiring and retaining employees — particularly train operators — has been the crux of the problem in Chicago.

During the pandemic, the C.T.A. rapidly lost employees, with many leaving for jobs that had higher salaries or more favorable working conditions. Hiring has gone slowly since, and a long training process to become a train operator has deterred applicants.

According to the C.T.A., at its lowest employee head count, in July 2022, the agency had 9,644 employees; at the end of March 2024, that number had ticked up to 10,606, still below 2019 numbers. Without enough train operators, the agency has struggled to ramp up service.

At the same time, the agency is facing a severe budget gap in the coming years. Federal relief funding that helped transit agencies in many cities survive the pandemic is drying up, leaving the three transit agencies serving the Chicago region with a $730 million fiscal cliff [*looming*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) in the coming years.

Transportation experts said that the failure to keep up Chicago’s transit system was a missed opportunity.

Before the pandemic, the C.T.A. had attracted national [*praise*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) for modernizing its system, tapping federal funding for improvements and rebuilding stations with sleek, modern exteriors.

And Chicago remains one of the few American cities where it is easily possible to live without a car — one of Chicago’s strengths in attracting younger people, who often want a car-free lifestyle.

"We have a lot of ***working-class*** folks who don’t own a car because they can’t afford it, and a lot of people who choose not to own a car,” said Fabio Göttlicher, a software engineer who helped create the [*group*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) [*Commuters Take Action*](https://www.chicagobusiness.com/opinion/cta-chief-dorval-carter-must-go-and-transit-must-be-revamped-editorial) to challenge Mr. Carter’s leadership. “You cannot have a city of 2.7 million without a well-working transit service.”

On Monday morning, commuters on an L platform downtown said that the system had improved since the days of the pandemic, when trains arrived inconsistently and the dearth of riders gave the experience a dangerous, eerie feel.

Esteban Sanchez, 43, was waiting for a Green Line train, heading to an interview for a janitorial job.

Mr. Sanchez, a resident of the Pilsen neighborhood on the West Side, said that in the last couple of years riding the L had not been the same as before Covid-19.

“It’s gotten worse,” he said. “A lot more crime, especially people smoking weed. You have to be vigilant. I feel like it’s been a long time since the pandemic. It should be better by now.”

PHOTO: Dorval R. Carter Jr. is the president of the Chicago Transit Authority. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AKILAH TOWNSEND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A’s Will Finally Turn Out the Lights on Pro Sports in Oakland***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N7-FT01-DXY4-X12V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday 16:40 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1311 words

**Byline:** Billy Witz

**Highlight:** With baseball owners approving the Athletics’ move to Las Vegas, some see the departure as the death of the ***working-class*** sports fan.

**Body**

With baseball owners approving the Athletics’ move to Las Vegas, some see the departure as the death of the ***working-class*** sports fan.

One by one, they have left Oakland.

First, the [*Warriors headed back across the bay*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/sports/basketball/warriors-oakland-san-francisco.html) to San Francisco in 2019, a return for a basketball franchise whose recent championship reign has been defined more by glitz than grit. Then, a year later, it was the itinerant [*Raiders heading to Las Vegas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/13/sports/football/oakland-raiders-las-vegas-stadium.html), the eye patch on their gridiron bandit logo obscuring an apparently wandering eye.

On Thursday, the final departure became all but official: Major League Baseball owners [*unanimously approved*](https://theathletic.com/5068638/2023/11/16/oakland-athletics-relocation-las-vegas-mlb/) a move to Las Vegas by the Athletics, who not long ago used the marketing catch phrase “rooted in Oakland.”

There is still much for the ball club to sort out. The Athletics have another year on their lease in Oakland and their [*new stadium*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/20/sports/baseball/oakland-athletics-stadium-las-vegas.html) — a $1.5 billion, 30,000-seat ballpark with a retractable roof for which the [*Nevada Legislature approved public financing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/14/sports/baseball/oakland-las-vegas-athletics.html) — won’t be ready until 2028. Where they will play in between is an open question. The Nevada teacher’s union is angling to put the subsidy on the ballot for voters.

But the A’s impending move, as inevitable as it has seemed, landed in Oakland like a fastball to the ribs.

“I don’t want this to sound hyperbolic, but for me it’s not only the death of the A’s, and of professional sports in the East Bay,” said Jim Zelinski, who more than a decade ago co-founded Save Oakland Sports, one of several groups that sprouted up over the years to keep teams from leaving the East Bay. “What this vote symbolizes for me is, this is really the death of the common, everyday fan.”

The working man has long been a central figure in American sports, attracted to the games as a diversion from the 9-to-5 grind and viewing them as a more level playing field than other societal arenas, the workplace among them.

As professional sports began to expand west in the late 1950s, Oakland — anchored by ship building, automobile manufacturing and its port — became an obvious landing spot.

Within little more than a decade, Oakland became home to the Raiders of the upstart American Football League, the Athletics, the Warriors and, briefly, the California Golden Seals of the National Hockey League, who for a time played in unfashionable white skates.

All the teams played at a complex centered on a vast asphalt lot, flanked by a major freeway and a rail line.

Soon, the lot will be vacant. This is not because Oakland has changed; it has largely retained a ***working-class*** ethos, albeit with California rents. Rather, the business calculus for teams has evolved.

Franchise revenue is now driven more by television deals and sponsorships than ticket sales, though those prices have skyrocketed. The transformation of sports into media products has relegated cities to backdrops and fans to props — a point that was driven home during the coronavirus pandemic when the games went on in vacant or mostly empty stadiums.

If it is baffling why the Athletics are leaving the Bay Area, which is the [*10th biggest market*](https://www.sportsmediawatch.com/nba-market-size-nfl-mlb-nhl-nielsen-ratings/), according to the Nielsen Company, for Las Vegas, which is the 40th largest market, there is another factor at play, according to Roger Noll, a Stanford sports economist emeritus.

Sports gambling.

As regional sports networks, a cash cow for sports teams, have begun to teeter — and in some cases collapse — Mr. Noll says sports gambling via streaming broadcasts is “the next golden goose” for sports franchises.

While Nevada has predictably welcomed internet gambling, [*California has not*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/18/sports/sports-betting-california.html): Two measures, one of which was backed by M.L.B., were trounced last year in what was the country’s most expensive ballot campaign, with more than $450 million raised by both sides.

“If this is the next big thing, California sports teams are disadvantaged,” Mr. Noll said. “The old big-market, small-market dynamic is no longer going to favor the Bay Area and Los Angeles teams if a primary source of new revenue is unavailable to them.”

The Athletics have sought a new stadium for decades, under at least three different owners. They have tried to build a new ballpark south in Fremont and San Jose, downtown at Laney College or by the water at Howard Terminal, as well as at their current site.

Building new stadiums in California is its own contact sport, given the high cost of labor, stringent environmental standards and taxpayers’ aversion to subsidies for sports franchises. But it’s not impossible, as the Clippers’ new arena, scheduled to open next year in Inglewood, is the latest to demonstrate.

In Oakland, now may have been the most challenging time, thanks to a record $360 million budget deficit — and long memories of when the city lured the Raiders owner Al Davis back from Los Angeles in 1995 with a sweetheart loan deal that turned into a boondoggle for the city. Also, a towering bank of suites — christened Mount Davis — were built in the outfield, opening a revenue stream for the Raiders but closing off superb views of the Oakland Hills.

Over the years, the [*old Coliseum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/02/sports/baseball/oakland-coliseum.html) showed its age.

It had the concrete charm of a Soviet-era housing block, its plumbing regularly backed up — prompting a tweaking of the Raiders’ mantra to “Commitment to Excrement” — and the arrival of food trucks were a culinary life raft for fans who no longer had to settle for concession offerings that tasted distinctly like cardboard.

Still, the Athletics continued to be competitive, reinventing themselves by shrewdly using data to assess undervalued skills, a process that became known as “Moneyball,” after the best-selling book. The A’s have not reached the World Series since 1990, but they’ve been in the playoffs 11 times since 2000 — more than the Mets and the San Francisco Giants, and just as often as the Boston Red Sox.

Attendance had lingered in the lower third, though [*drum-pounding fans in right field*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rn7Jq1fubDE) causing a nightly ruckus added a degree of atmosphere. But when the team began its latest tear down, trading away its best players for prospects rather than paying their accelerating salaries, fans finally had enough of John Fisher, the owner, who before last season had raised ticket prices in what many sensed was a ploy to suppress attendance as a pretext for moving.

The A’s averaged 10,276 fans last season, [*the fewest in baseball*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/15/sports/baseball/oakland-athletics-attendance.html). They finished 50-112, threatening for a while the record for futility set by the expansion Mets in 1962.

Fans who did turn up at the Coliseum often wore T-shirts or carried banners urging Mr. Fisher to sell the team.

Those who miss the Athletics most might be people like Matthias Haas.

He grew up a few miles from the Coliseum, steeped in the city’s rich baseball history that traces from Frank Robinson to Rickey Henderson to Dave Stewart to Jimmy Rollins, all of whom matriculated from Oakland sandlots to stardom in the big leagues. He learned the game’s finer points on the diamonds down the street at 66th and International in leagues that the Athletics helped bankroll. He has an enduring memory of sitting in the stands during the [*2012 playoffs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/03/sports/baseball/athletics-trying-to-build-for-future-land-in-the-playoffs.html) when the old mausoleum was rocking.

“There’s a certain pride in being an Oakland Athletics fan,” said Mr. Haas, who played baseball last season at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, plucking the adjectives “gritty” and “tough” to define his tribe. “People from Oakland say that they are from Oakland, not the Bay Area. That’s how it felt to be an A’s fan.”

PHOTOS: The Athletics are leaving for Las Vegas, and a new stadium. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUNGHO KIM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); The A’s averaged 10,276 fans last season, the fewest in baseball. Above, fans in April protested the proposed move. Below, a World Series victory parade in downtown Oakland in 1973. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUNGHO KIM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A21) This article appeared in print on page A1, A21.

**Load-Date:** November 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Maurizio Cattelan Turned a Banana Into Art. Next Up: Guns***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWB-MJR1-JBG3-60T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 25, 2024 Thursday 09:12 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1971 words

**Byline:** Laura Rysman Laura Rysman is a Florence-based contributor to The Times. She also writes for Monocle and Konfekt. A longtime resident of Italy, she reports on fashion, art, and travel in the country.

**Highlight:** As his bullet-riddled panels go up at Gagosian, the artist, in a rare in-person interview, tells why he turned his sardonic gaze on a violence-filled world.

**Body**

As his bullet-riddled panels go up at Gagosian, the artist, in a rare in-person interview, tells why he turned his sardonic gaze on a violence-filled world.

“You should never ask an artist about their art,” Maurizio Cattelan said, immediately on arrival. “The best art raises lots and lots of questions,” he added. “Not answers.”

One of today’s foremost artists, with a reputation that pervades well beyond the art world, Cattelan, 63, has a new bullet-riddled exhibition in New York that is bound to raise even more questions — and some eyebrows.

He grants vanishingly few in-person interviews, he prefers image-making to explaining his images in words, and he’s skittish about journalists mischaracterizing him. Yet he arrived early for our appointed meeting, parking his bicycle by the bench where, on the first hot spring day in Milan, we sat in the shade of a monastery. With his trademark swoosh of silver hair and his feet up on the bench like a schoolchild, he spoke eagerly in Italian about his first major New York exhibition since his pivotal retrospective, [*“All,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) at the Guggenheim in 2011, in which nearly his entire oeuvre was suspended like a mobile.

“I hate,” he declared, “when they call me a joker.” The artist, who notoriously created an [*effigy of a pope toppled by a meteorite,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) made a [*fully-functioning solid gold toilet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) that he named “America,” and blew the world’s collective mind when he [*taped a banana to the wall and sold it as art,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) has continually garnered variations of the joker title — jester, prankster, trickster — but his is the cosmic joke, the joke of the Stoic philosophers: death, and our illusions of self-importance before oblivion comes for us, and for him.

If Cattelan’s work is no laughing matter, it is undeniably button-pushing, and for his Gagosian show opening April 30, he turns his sardonic gaze on the unsettling subject of gun violence. His new works are pierced by bullets — steel panels plated in 24-karat gold to a mirrorlike reflection, their ammunition wounds warping the metal surfaces.

“Beauty, luxury, and violence,” as Cattelan described them — monuments to murder, though not his first effort. The artist previously collected sacks of detritus from a deadly 1993 Mafia bombing in Milan as a memorial, presented marble statues portraying sheet-covered corpses, and depicted 9/11 with a monolithic tower pierced by a plane, watched over by thousands of taxidermied pigeons haunting the site.

The shot-up panels, 64 in all and entitled “Sunday,” weigh about 80 pounds each and stretch almost 54 inches high — about the size of a 10-year-old child. Cattelan compared the assemblage, mounted together on a single wall, to the execution wall of a firing squad.

“When I read the front page of the newspapers, all they talk about is violence,” he said. “I’m completely immersed in violence.”

“We,” he went on, pointing a finger at himself, at me, at everyone sunning themselves in the monastery’s park, “we, we, we are completely immersed in violence every day, and we’ve gotten used to it. The repetition has made us accept violence as inevitable.”

Suddenly, a dense flock of pigeons whooshed threateningly close to his head — retaliation for their taxidermied brethren? — as Cattelan paused to deflect their path with his hands in the air.

He recounted an impossibly risky work he had long wished to make: a bulletproof glass wall with a gallery audience on one side, and a shooter firing a gun at them from the opposite side — a bit too terrifying even for an art world familiar with Chris Burden’s 1971 performance, in which he had himself shot (non-lethally) in a gallery — a work Cattelan cited as an influence.

With the “Sunday” panels, the audience participates instead in the aftermath of a shooting, seeing their own reflections riddled with bullet holes, with the seductive beauty of gold’s glimmer — and with competing implications of both an indictment and a glorification of violence.

“Gold and guns,” Cattelan said, “are the American dream.” The message: Violence — not fictional movie violence but the all-too-real barbarity of mass shootings, murders and wars — is now part of pop culture.

Cattelan has experimented with gunshots before, shooting up American and British flags, or rather, having them shot. The artist, who is based in Milan and New York, maintains no studio, much less a shooting range, and his works are almost always fabricated by others. With “Sunday,” Cattelan sought to universalize the symbol of violence, dropping the nationalistic imagery of flags and leaving “just the shootings.”

He has created what he calls his first abstract works — with overtones of [*Lucio Fontana’s slashed canvases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) from the postwar era. The pistols, shotguns and semiautomatic weapons, he said, were “used like chisels” to carve through metal. He hired shooters at a New York City range to fire upon the panels with weapons that were easily and legally sourced thanks to America’s lax gun restrictions. “Where else in the world could you do that?” he asked with a wry laugh. (Milan, by contrast, would not even allow a poster by Cattelan depicting a gun to appear on city streets, saying it violated decency laws.)

At Gagosian, in front of the golden execution wall, Cattelan is installing another work, his first-ever fountain. Carved in marble, it depicts a supine, down-and-out man holding his exposed phallus, which spurts water. “There’s a dialogue between these two works, in their opposition and their proximity,” the artist said. The figure, modeled on a close friend and collaborator who died, evokes “the swaths of people who are invisible in society,” Cattelan added. The man is the type of discarded figure that visitors to the New York show will likely pass, and avoid, on their way to Gagosian.

“They’re works that take on a different weight being shown in New York,” the show’s curator, Francesco Bonami, commented by phone. “Maurizio is a political artist — not political in the sense that he’s presenting a position, but political in that he deals with society’s problems and current events, and he always touches a raw nerve.” He added, “We’ll see how Americans take to this show.”

The opening comes after Tennessee lawmakers passed a bill that would permit some school staff to [*carry concealed handguns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html), but as Cattelan commented, “Every moment seems like the right moment to talk about violence, because every day there’s more news about violence in the papers.”

In the monastery park, Cattelan critiqued modern materialism: “Today, sacrament has been replaced by shopping,” he said, contending that there’s greater happiness to be found in a spartan life. (He rides his bike everywhere, and takes his near-daily swims in a municipal pool.) But he isn’t afraid to play both sides. This show represents the first time he’s agreed to collaborate with the mega-gallery owned by Larry Gagosian — the dealer who has referred to art as “money on the walls,” and is probably the man most responsible for transforming the art world into the art market. But, as Bonami pointed out, who else could sponsor the production of a colossal wall of gold shootings?

Cattelan, saying the moment had arrived for a collaboration he had long evaded, noted: “I’m doing a project with Larry Gagosian but I haven’t signed anything,” and “I’m a free agent.” His previous New York gallery show, in 2000, was at the influential but less blue-chip Marian Goodman Gallery.

Gagosian gallery declined requests for information about the works’ fabrication cost or their selling price, but every piece in the show will be available for purchase. The gallery said prices will be made available upon the show’s opening.

Cattelan’s work hit its auction high price in May 2016 when “Him,” an infamous wax and resin sculpture of Hitler on his knees, sold at Sotheby’s for $17.2 million, or about $22 million today.

Gazing at the park’s Judas trees and their April magenta blossoms, Cattelan mused about his role in the [*Vatican pavilion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html) at the 2024 Venice Biennale, at the Giudecca women’s prison, where an outer wall is completely covered by his giant image of cadaverous-looking feet.

His formative childhood in the small northern city of Padua was steeped in Catholicism and provincial ***working-class*** culture, and despite his international acclaim, he still sees himself as the guy who worked as a hospital janitor and a morgue assistant.

“I grew up within ***working-class*** culture, and I’m not ashamed to be a part of it,” Cattelan said, adding “although someone pointed out that I may be dissociating from my status today.” He explained that his instantly recognizable references — from pigeons to Pinocchio, from toilets to Hitler — make works intelligible “to nonexperts as much as to experts.”

“My main audience is not the art world,” he continued. “It’s people who might not be educated in what art is supposed to be, but who relate to the work.”

Roberta Tenconi, who curated the artist’s 2021-22 exhibition at [*Hangar Bicocca*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html), in Milan, with Vicente Todolí, said that “the power of Maurizio’s work is in layering familiar images to create something that resonates in a multitude of ways.” She added, “Nothing is ever singular or simple. And Maurizio loves to make people uncomfortable.”

Cattelan remarked, “The more you’re able to synthesize contrasting elements and to strip away any frills, the closer you get to something that functions like a symbol” — to create, essentially, indelible images that offer endless interpretations.

To wit: the banana, titled “Comedian,” from 2019, a phenomenon that was featured in seven articles in The New York Times alone, and on the cover of The New York Post. The banana prompted fascination and outrage, post-Duchamp discourse and art-world-gone-mad furor, as well as a head-spinning cycle of memes. At the time, Cattelan told me: “Try to think about Napoleon without his horse — it’s impossible! Now try to think about pop culture without the banana” — the banana of Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground, the banana peel of slapstick, the proverbial banana in your pocket, as he said.

But today he brushes off the craze as “just a viral moment,” he said. “Even if people know the banana, nobody knows who I am as an artist.”

Or so he would like to believe. Only a few minutes later, a ponytailed young man walking through the park interrupted us to request a selfie with him.

“People know you,” I pointed out. Had he imagined becoming an artist while growing up in Padua? A forlorn headshake. “The only thing I ever really dreamed of was independence,” he said, pushing his shirt sleeves to his elbows as he stood up. “The rest is fuffa” — in other words, baloney. And he rode away on his bicycle, leaving me there with a lot more questions.

Maurizio Cattelan: Sunday

Opening April 30 through June 15, Gagosian gallery, 522 West 21st Street, (212) 741 1717; [*gagosian.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/04/arts/design/maurizio-cattelan-at-the-guggenheim-review.html).

PHOTOS: “Gold and guns are the American dream,” said Maurizio Cattelan, shown at Gagosian gallery in New York with part of his show titled “Sunday.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Maurizio Cattelan works, above from left: “La Nona Ora” (1999), an effigy of Pope John Paul II struck by a meteorite, largely understood as irreverent dark humor; “Comedian” (2019), a banana duct-taped to a wall, which sold in three editions starting at $120,000 at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2019; “Blind” (2021), a resin monolith pierced by an airplane, a reminder of 9/11; a functioning 18-karat gold toilet named “America” (2016), later stolen from Blenheim Palace and melted down. Below, clockwise from left: “Father,” for the 2024 Venice Biennale; “All” (2007); Cattelan with “Sunday.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAURIZIO CATTELAN AND GAGOSIAN; PHOTO BY ZENO ZOTTI; ANDREA MEROLA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C12) This article appeared in print on page C1, C12.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***An ‘Angel’ for Homeless Students and the Revolt of the College-Educated Working Class: The Week in Narrated Articles***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BB-1S41-DXY4-X0GS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 29, 2022 Friday 06:30 EST

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 882 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 narrated articles from around The New York Times, read aloud by the reporters who wrote them.

[*A One-Woman Rescue Squad for Homeless Students*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/us/politics/homeless-students-texas.html)

Written and narrated by [*Jason DeParle*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/jason-deparle)

For hundreds of poor families in Bastrop, Texas, a rural district outside Austin, Norma Mercado is a one-woman rescue squad — a source of food, clothes, transportation and counsel — with a gift for keeping homeless students in school. She is also a reminder of the scale and complexity of student homelessness and an exemplar of a little-known federal program that is suddenly awash in funds to help disadvantaged students succeed.

Under a 1987 law now known as the McKinney-Vento Act, every school district must appoint a “liaison” like Ms. Mercado to protect homeless students’ rights. But until now only about one district in four received money for the work. With school closures from the pandemic harming poor students, Congress last year approved $800 million in new grants, more than tripling the funding for three years and auguring an era of innovation in services for homeless children.

“It’s like winning the lottery,” Ms. Mercado said.

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[*A Daring Dream and a Lifelong Love, Dashed in a Moment of Violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/19/nyregion/anti-asian-attacks-nyc.html)

Written and narrated by [*Corina Knoll*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/corina-knoll)

Their plans were bold, with no room for devastation.

They would leave their hometown and journey 6,500 miles to New York City together and take jobs, any kind, that allowed them to send money back to family. Eventually, they would return to enjoy grandchildren whose college funds they had helped provide, whose futures would burn bright.

GuiYing Ma and her husband, Zhanxin Gao, had ventured out of their city of Fushun, in northeastern China, only a handful of times. But in 2017, the couple, at 56 years old, decided to apply for visas in hopes of making the kind of money that was out of their reach in China.

They went on to build a modest life of service in New York — until a shocking attack tore them apart.

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[*A Look Inside the Textbooks That Florida Rejected*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/22/us/florida-rejected-textbooks.html)

Written by [*Dana Goldstein*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/dana-goldstein) and [*Stephanie Saul*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/stephanie-saul) | Narrated by Dana Goldstein

After the Florida Department of Education recently rejected dozens of math textbooks, the big question was: Why?

The department said some of the books “contained prohibited topics” from social-emotional learning or critical race theory — but it has released only four specific textbook pages showing content to which it objects.

Using online sample materials provided by publishers to Florida school districts, The New York Times was able to review 21 of the rejected books and see what may have led the state to reject them.

In most of the books, there was little that touched on race, never mind an academic framework like critical race theory. But many of the textbooks included social-emotional learning content, a practice with roots in psychological research that tries to help students develop mind-sets that can support academic success.

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[*Cities Want to Return to Prepandemic Life. One Obstacle: Transit Crime.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/25/us/public-transit-crime.html)

Written by [*Julie Bosman*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/julie-bosman), [*Sophie Kasakove*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/sophie-kasakove), [*Jill Cowan*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/jill-cowan) and [*Richard Fausset*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/richard-fausset) | Narrated by Julie Bosman

Just as a number of major cities are trying to lure people back to formerly bustling downtowns, leaders are confronting transit crime rates that have risen over prepandemic levels in New York City, the San Francisco Bay Area, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. Earlier this month, a shooting on a subway train in Brooklyn injured 23 people. In other cities, stories of violent assaults, muggings and stabbings on buses and trains dominate the evening news and worried conversations in neighborhood apps.

Low ridership has left many passengers saying they feel more vulnerable than before.

The crisis on public transit systems threatens the nation’s recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

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[*The Revolt of the College-Educated* ***Working Class***](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/business/college-workers-starbucks-amazon-unions.html)

Written and narrated by [*Noam Scheiber*](https://www.nytimes.com/by/noam-scheiber)

Over the past decade and a half, many young, college-educated workers have faced a disturbing reality: It was harder for them to reach the middle class than for previous generations.

Members of this college-educated ***working class*** typically earn less money than they envisioned when they went off to school. In many cases, they have endured bouts of unemployment. And they complain of being trapped in jobs that don’t make good use of their skills.

The change has had profound effects, driving shifts in the country’s politics and mobilizing employees to demand fairer treatment at work. It may also be prompting a once-in-a-century revival of the labor movement.

Want to hear more narrated articles from publications like The New York Times? [*Download Audm for iPhone and Android*](https://audm.com/?utm_source=nyt&amp;utm_medium=narrated_roundup&amp;utm_campaign=20220429_footer).

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, Elisheba Ittoop, Emma Kehlbeck, Marion Lozano, Tanya Pérez, Krish Seenivasan, Margaret H. Willison, Kate Winslett, John Woo and Tiana Young. Special thanks to Sam Dolnick, Ryan Wegner, Julia Simon and Desiree Ibekwe.

PHOTO: Norma Mercado is using an influx of federal money to expand her work with homeless students. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tamir Kalifa for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[***A Close-Up View of the Baltimore Bridge Collapse***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP0-4GV1-DXY4-X001-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 30, 2024 Saturday 15:34 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 712 words

**Byline:** Eduardo Medina and Pete Kiehart Eduardo Medina is a Times reporter covering the South. An Alabama native, he is now based in Durham, N.C.

**Highlight:** From roughly 100 yards away, the site of one of the worst bridge collapses in the country’s history is haunting.

**Body**

From roughly 100 yards away, the site of one of the worst bridge collapses in the country’s history is haunting.

Maroon containers larger than a car sat twisted and crushed. Massive beams of steel warped into crooked arches. Pillars of jagged concrete poked out from the water — a tomb of wreckage that dimly reflected on the gray-toned river.

From roughly 100 yards away, deep into the Patapsco River in Baltimore, the site of one of the worst bridge collapses in the country’s history is a haunting scene.

The U.S. Coast Guard allowed The New York Times to ride aboard a response boat on Saturday afternoon to witness up close the destruction of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which was struck by the cargo ship Dali on Tuesday, killing six men, all construction workers who were working on filling potholes on the bridge.

As the 45-foot-long Coast Guard vessel neared the scene of the disaster, a service member who had made several trips to the site braced passengers for the view to come.

“It’s still shocking every time.”

The Coast Guard boat initially neared the cargo ship on the rear side, the stern, which was spared from much of the impact of the collapse. Two people could be seen walking along the starboard, though it was unclear if they were investigators or crew members, all of whom are from India and have remained on the ship to keep it operable.

An anchor that the crew members had used in desperation to keep the ship from hitting the bridge was visible, submerged in calm water. A thin and yellow boom floated around the ship to contain spills. It looked similar to crime-scene tape. The gray and red shipping containers were stacked up to nine rows high, partly shielding for a moment the wreckage that lay behind it.

As the Coast Guard boat inched closer toward the cargo ship, the humongous scale of the collapse came into view. Some state officials onboard, who were not authorized to speak to the news media, shook their heads and muttered under their breath.

“Oh, my gosh.”

Warped masses of the bridge sliced the steel deck of the ship, causing pieces of the blue hull to peel outward. On a wide piece of the deck cratered by the bridge’s blow, knots of blackened metal morphed into a jumbled, metallic maze.

A large piece of concrete stuck out of the ship. Two people wearing all orange moved through the wreckage on the deck, balancing themselves with their hands and feet, as if it were a mountain. The birds swirling beside the cargo, searching for fish below, made the magnitude of the bridge and the ship even more pronounced.

A boat that appeared to belong to the Army Corps of Engineers moved in between the triangular spaces of the bridge’s submerged beams. Other boats with cranes attached cruised nearby. Toward the northern and southern sides of the river, the offramp portions of the bridge stood high, the void between them now transformed into a deadly memorial.

Few distinct sounds emanated from the site. Strong winds moved currents of water against chunks of debris. Faint noises from boat engines whirled in the air.

Mostly, though, there was sheer silence. Passengers aboard the Coast Guard vessel appeared to spend almost as much time glancing down at the water as they did looking up.

The bodies of Alejandro Hernandez Fuentes, 35, of Baltimore, and Dorlian Ronial Castillo Cabrera, 26, of Dundalk, Md., were recovered this week.

But down below, perhaps beneath the tangled remnants of a bridge that connected two ***working-class*** neighborhoods in Baltimore, were the remains of four men not yet recovered by divers: Miguel Luna, in his 40s, of El Salvador; Maynor Yasir Suazo Sandoval, in his 30s, of Honduras; Jose López, in his 30s, of Guatemala; and a fourth man who has not been identified by the authorities.

As the Coast Guard ship turned around late Saturday afternoon, its engine roaring louder, heavy clouds hovered overhead. Soon, the scene of the collapse, stretching across the pale waters of the horizon, seemed to fade. The images seared into memory did not.

PHOTO: A thin and yellow boom to contain spills floated around the container ship Dali on Saturday. Warped masses of the Francis Scott Key Bridge sliced the steel deck. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE KIEHART FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Counting the Costs of a Global IT Outage; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CHG-P2R1-DXY4-X11N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 19, 2024 Friday 12:29 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1971 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch, Ephrat Livni and Austyn Gaffney Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder of DealBook, the flagship business and policy newsletter at The Times and an annual conference. Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch joined The Times from CNBC in 2020, covering deals and the biggest stories on Wall Street. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington. Austyn Gaffney is a reporter covering climate and a member of the 2024-25 Times Fellowship class, a program for journalists early in their careers.

**Highlight:** A “historic” tech failure alarmed investors, after a security update caused problems for Microsoft devices and services, and took down businesses worldwide.

**Body**

A “historic” tech failure alarmed investors, after a security update caused problems for Microsoft devices and services, and took down businesses worldwide.

The glitch felt around the world

Grounded flights, emergency services unreachable, payment systems not functioning — the world is assessing the damage caused by a [*cascade of IT outages*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that is spooking investors and grinding many businesses and government services to a halt.

“This outage is historic in scale,” Mikko Hypponen, a research specialist at the software company WithSecure and a cybercrime adviser to Europol, told DealBook.

The problem is being attributed to a tech upgrade gone wrong. All eyes are on CrowdStrike, the cybersecurity company. It issued a software update that is causing Microsoft systems, including its Azure cloud service, to crash or not function properly. [*George Kurtz*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the C.E.O. of CrowdStrike, said on X that a fix is being deployed, adding it’s “not a security incident or cyberattack.”

Here’s the latest:

* American, United and Delta had grounded flights, according to the F.A.A. Airlines in Europe and Asia, including Air France-KLM and Japan Airlines, also had reported delays or cancellations. Some had reported a partial return to service.

1. [*Long queues*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)of airline passengers could be seen at airports around the world, with some resorting to manual check-in.
2. [*In France*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the television networks TF1 and Canal+ told the public on X that they could not go on the air on Friday morning. Comcast’s Sky News in the U.K. also [*went dark*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for a spell.

The incident points to how reliant the global economy is on a handful of major tech companies to run vital infrastructure. CrowdStrike, a major cybersecurity vendor, is taking the brunt of the hit. Its stock was down nearly 12 percent in premarket trading. Microsoft was down about 1.4 percent, and also said a resolution was forthcoming.

Security has become a big focus in the cloud wars. Google is trying to bolster its cloud operations with an eye on cybersecurity. The company is in [*talks to buy Wiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a New York-based cybersecurity firm, in what would be its biggest acquisition ever, and an effort to take market share from Microsoft.

Expect tough questions about the business world’s computing systems. Financial regulators in the U.K. have already begun speaking with financial services companies to learn the extent of the damage on banks and payment companies, [*The Financial Times reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

* In other IT news: A U.S. judge dismissed most claims against SolarWinds, an IT security company, and its chief information security officer; the S.E.C. had [*sued the company*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) after it was hacked by Russian agents in 2020.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

OpenAI is reportedly in talks with Broadcom about creating A.I. chips. The parent company of ChatGPT has been discussing how to create semiconductors that would [*potentially compete with Nvidia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the market leader and a key OpenAI supplier, according to The Information. Such efforts underscore the scope of OpenAI’s ambitions, and add to the tech industry’s efforts to stop being so reliant on Nvidia.

Netflix adds eight million subscribers. That growth, which takes the streaming giant’s customer base to 278 million, helped [*drive strong profit and revenue growth*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in the company’s second quarter. Netflix predicts revenue will grow as much as 15 percent this year, but it cautioned that its advertising business — something investors are closely watching — won’t be a major source of new revenues for some time.

Meta is in talks to invest in Ray-Ban’s parent company. The tech giant may buy a stake of as much as [*5 percent of EssilorLuxottica*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the eyewear conglomerate that makes its smart glasses. A deal would underscore Meta’s commitment to the so-called metaverse, immersive technology that includes virtual reality headsets and other wearable devices. The talks were first reported by the Financial Times.

Trump lays out his economic agenda

In accepting the Republican Party’s presidential nomination, Donald Trump delivered a more than 90-minute [*speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) that veered from unifying and solemn to aggressive and somewhat rambling.

On the economy and business, Trump [*doubled down on his “America first”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) protectionist agenda, promising to slash taxes and revive trade wars.

Trump railed against President Biden’s economic management. He blamed Biden for an “inflation crisis” that’s hitting working families hard. That’s even as inflation edges closer to the Fed’s 2 percent target, furthering bets among investors that the central bank will cut interest rates in September.

Tariffs are again key to Trump’s vision. Trump complained that other countries, including allies, had taken advantage of the U.S., reiterating a theme from his presidency. “We lose jobs and revenue, they gain everything and wipe out our businesses,” he said. That’s despite the U.S. outperforming other advanced economies on a range of measures.

Trump promised to help the car industry. He said he would use tariffs and other incentives to boost the sector.

Trump weighed in on electric vehicles, in ways that are notable given his growing ties with [*Elon Musk*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). Trump vowed to end policies intended to accelerate adoption of E.V.s. Musk has come out against such subsidies. Trump also called for [*Shawn Fain*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), head of the United Auto Workers, to be fired after the union boss endorsed Biden. The U.A.W. has Tesla in its sights as it looks to try to widen a unionization drive at American auto plants.

The rhetoric mirrored the tough talk of J.D. Vance. Trump’s pick for running mate hit out at [*“Wall Street barons”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in his speech on Wednesday, saying they had “crashed the economy” in an apparent reference to the financial crisis.

Will the tough words lead to action? Trump has dialed up his protectionist impulses on the campaign trail, and his speech was short on detail for how he’d lower inflation and boost growth.

Is Biden running out of options?

After weeks of applying pressure, some of the Democratic Party’s biggest power-brokers and top donors may be succeeding in changing President Biden’s mind about running for re-election.

Biden has begun to accept that he may not be able to win, according to The Times, after insisting that he remained the best person to take on Donald Trump. (That said, one person close to him said he hadn’t yet made up his mind.)

A focus now is the best timing if he decides to withdraw, though that is complicated in part because the president is isolating after being diagnosed with Covid.

Eroding support from top allies has been weighing on Biden. An important factor is growing [*pushback from Representative Nancy Pelosi*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the former House speaker and one of the president’s most loyal supporters. She has been increasingly pessimistic and told Biden that polls show he couldn’t win.

[*Then there’s Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), who has told allies in recent days that Biden needs to seriously consider whether his candidacy remains viable, according to The Washington Post. The former president remains the most popular figure in Democratic politics nationally, and his concerns carry great weight among party officials.

Two more lawmakers publicly aired their doubts about Biden’s chances on Thursday: [*Senator Jon Tester*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of Montana, who’s in a tough re-election fight, and [*Representative Jamie Raskin*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of Maryland, an outspoken Trump critic.

Donors are asserting themselves as well. Fund-raising from wealthy backers in July is expected to come in at [*less than $25 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), half of what was expected, according to The Times. That would be exceedingly low for a midsummer fund-raising haul, and suggests donors are [*making good on promises*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to stop giving unless Biden withdraws.

Some backers are already looking ahead to Vice President Kamala Harris stepping in, [*mobilizing potential financial support*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) if she becomes the nominee, Politico reports. Harris enjoys some major advantages, including being able to [*assume Biden’s existing campaign fund*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)s more easily, but may still face competition for the nomination if the president decides not to run.

Vance as venture capitalist

J.D. Vance often talks up his business experience and, when Donald Trump picked the senator from Ohio as his running mate, he pointed to Vance’s career in technology and finance.

DealBook spoke to Austyn Gaffney, a reporter at The Times who has investigated a company that Vance backed when he ran [*Narya Capital Management*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a venture capital firm he co-founded. AppHarvest was a high-tech, indoor-farming business that promised good quality blue-collar jobs in Kentucky. But three years after Vance’s investment, AppHarvest went bankrupt, and its leaders were accused of securities fraud.

AppHarvest, based in Kentucky, was pitched as the future of farming. The hydroponic company, which uses robotics, promised that workers would be given a living wage and health insurance in some of the most economically distressed regions in the country. It would replace vegetables and fruit from Mexico with homegrown produce.

That chimed with Vance’s views on how to reorient the economy and business. Vance is part of a new wave of Republicans turning from postwar globalization to economic nationalism. He says that’s needed to help ***working-class*** Americans who have been overlooked for decades — the type of voters who back Trump and his “Make America Great Again” movement.

The company raised millions. AppHarvest pulled in more than $700 million, including [*$28 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) from Narya. Vance helped arrange investments by the Rise of the Rest Seed Fund, a V.C. fund founded by Steve Case, the AOL co-founder, to invest in start-ups outside of big urban hubs like San Francisco, Boston and New York. Martha Stewart, the media mogul, and Jeffrey Ubben, the activist investor, joined AppHarvest’s board.

The company went public in 2021 via a Special Purpose Acquisition Company and its market value soon soared to $3.7 billion.

But AppHarvest filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last year. Its top executives have been charged with securities fraud for lying to investors. AppHarvest has [*denied*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) the accusations. It cited “employee training, turnover, and poor work ethic” as the causes for its downturn but some workers accused the company of [*not providing the working environment*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) it had promised.

In any case, Vance had jumped ship before AppHarvest went bust. He left in 2021, and said it was because he was [*eyeing a run for the Senate*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). He isn’t accused of wrongdoing but experts say the move was unusual.

“If you’re all in, and you think this is a good investment, I don’t know why you would bail at that particular point,” Eric Stein, executive director of the Center of Excellence for Indoor Agriculture, told DealBook.

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* The Teacher Retirement System of Texas, the state’s largest public pension fund with $202 billion in assets, is withdrawing nearly $10 billion [*from private equity investments*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) amid concerns over declining returns. (Bloomberg)

1. [*Goldman Sachs appointed*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)new leaders for key European businesses, including Carsten Woehrn and Nimesh Khiroya as co-heads of M.&amp;A. for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. (Reuters)

Elections, politics and policy

* A federal appeals court temporarily blocked the Biden administration’s [*new student loan repayment plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), which has enrolled eight million borrowers. (NYT)

1. “[*No Taxes on Tips?*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) A Trump Idea Gains Ground.” (NYT)

Best of the rest

* “Why the Era of China’s Soaring Carbon Emissions [*Might Be Ending*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)” (NYT)

1. [*Lou Dobbs*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the former CNN and Fox Business host who later promoted conspiracy theories and became a prominent supporter of Donald Trump, has died. He was 78. (NYT)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: A major IT outage involving Microsoft and CrowdStrike has caused major delays at airports around the world. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Clemens Bilan/EPA, via Shutterstock FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Neighbors Fight Affordable Housing, but Need Libraries. Can’t We Make a Deal?; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9G-XWG1-JBG3-61V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 21, 2024 Friday 13:24 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1592 words

**Byline:** Michael Kimmelman Michael Kimmelman is The Times&amp;#8217;s architecture critic and the founder and editor-at-large of Headway, a team of journalists focused on large global challenges and paths to progress. He has reported from more than 40 countries and was previously chief art critic.

**Highlight:** An uplifting new library in Manhattan comes with 12 floors of subsidized apartments. It’s a clever way to find community support for housing.

**Body**

An uplifting new library in Manhattan comes with 12 floors of subsidized apartments. It’s a clever way to find community support for housing.

Why can’t we do more of this more easily?

A handsome new library branch in Inwood, at the northern tip of Manhattan, had its soft opening Thursday. It’s the second library in town during the past year or so to try something clever and innovative: partnering with a 100 percent affordable housing development. New subsidized apartments occupy a 12-floor tower above the library.

These days, NIMBYs are always fighting affordable housing projects. Communities are increasingly desperate for libraries. One obvious solution is the twofer — building housing and a library together — because there’s strength in numbers.

A few years ago I wrote about [*several of these library/housing combos*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) in Chicago (“co-location” is the lingo developers use), some of them designed by top-flight architects there like John Ronan and Brian Lee. Boston is trying this out. New York is just the latest to road-test what seems like a no-brainer.

The financial logic is simple. Libraries pairing with housing developers can trim construction costs. Developers can leverage city-owned property to finesse both the not-in-my-backyard types and the byzantine economics of affordable development.

But getting these projects built is a slog.

That earlier [*branch*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) I mentioned belongs to the Brooklyn Public Library. With a fine, sunny, three-story design by Carol Loewenson, a partner at Mitchell Giurgola Architects, it opened late last year in Sunset Park beneath 49 affordable units on six upper floors. Inwood is bigger: 174 new subsidized apartments.

But that’s only half the Inwood project. In addition to the library and apartment tower, which has its own entrance and name, [*The Eliza*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway), the development also includes a pre-K, a STEM study center, a teaching kitchen and community spaces.

Andrew Berman, a gifted veteran of New York public architecture and its crazy bureaucracy, is the library architect. Chris Fogarty of Fogarty/Finger is the lead architect for the whole development. Fogarty clads The Eliza in beige bricks and fluted terra-cotta panels, and manages a number of other civic-minded upgrades, like adding a terrace to the pre-K and bringing light into some of the big underground community rooms, which are still under construction.

He and Berman also synced the layouts so that the upstairs apartments accommodate the concrete columns and beams that support the library’s open plan reading room, guaranteeing that the library’s architecture, which serves the widest public, remained a priority.

Alas, both Inwood and Sunset Park took longer than they should have because they had to run the usual gantlets of public reviews and community protests.

What was there to complain about?

In Inwood’s case, community outreach efforts by library officials and the city’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development began seven years ago. Local objections weren’t to features of the project like the pre-K or STEM center, which responded to community asks. They resulted from a [*larger issue*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway).

The development relied on an [*upzoning*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) of the neighborhood that was first proposed more than a decade ago by the de Blasio Administration. Upzoning meant that taller buildings could be built than Inwood had previously permitted, to encourage the addition of more, and in particular affordable, housing. As part of the rezoning, City Hall committed to adding some [*1,600 subsidized homes on public sites*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway), “expanding Inwood’s affordable housing stock for the first time in decades,” according to a study released by the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

Inwood certainly could use more affordable apartments. A 2023 [*study*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) by the Furman Center at New York University counted fewer than 160 affordable apartments built in Inwood and neighboring Washington Heights during the previous decade. It is home to a smaller [*share*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) of public housing than most city neighborhoods.

For years, tenant advocates there fought the upzoning, arguing that taller buildings would not just destroy the area’s historic midrise character but also bring in a flood of market-rate development, accelerating gentrification.

The Eliza is 14 stories. Many older apartment buildings around it are six stories. Inwood is hilly, so buildings appear taller on the skyline from some angles, lower from others. The tallest new buildings that are going up in Inwood because of the rezoning include both [*subsidized*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) developments and mixed-income apartment towers, several of them more than 20 stories high, mostly nearer the Hudson and Harlem rivers, where the island declines.

I leave it to residents to decide whether 14 stories along a commercial stretch of upper Broadway, in the middle of the island, is egregious. Broadway is a wide street. The Eliza isn’t a tall building by Manhattan standards.

Of course it was really fear of market-rate development and displacement that energized much of the opposition to the rezoning. Even a single new market-rate apartment posed “an existential threat to our homes and our community,” protesters argued back in 2015 when one developer proposed a [*15-story building*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) just a few blocks south of the new library on the site of a long-derelict garage. It would have included 355 rental apartments, half of them subsidized.

Aside from a satellite swath of Columbia University’s campus, Inwood remains largely a middle- and ***working-class*** enclave with a significant Dominican population. One-fifth of children in the district live below the poverty line. So fears of displacement are real.

But does every development these days have to turn into the Battle of the Somme?

In the middle of the last century, New Yorkers had had enough of politicians and power brokers tearing down Penn Station and bulldozing the South Bronx. Community groups began demanding more seats at the decision-making table. They opened top-down government to bottom-up perspectives around environmental, social justice and other concerns.

Since then, however, more laws and regulations passed to enshrine community feedback, preserve landmarks and compel environmental review have increasingly been weaponized by NIMBYs of all stripes. An alliance has emerged between well-connected, well-to-do NIMBYs and tenant advocates in neighborhoods like Inwood, both of whom, for very different reasons, see nearly every change as a threat.

They are now frequently the loudest voices, if not a majority. Even projects like [*Brooklyn Bridge Park*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway), one of the most transformative public-private urban renewal efforts in generations, salvaging a declining [*swath*](https://www.nytimes.com/section/headway) of industrial waterfront, faced decades of reviews, cutbacks and protests, with opponents predicting financial calamity.

When such projects work out, there is little accounting for the public costs of this process, notwithstanding that accountability was the original, driving argument behind expanding the regulatory system and participatory rules.

Maybe it’s wishful thinking, but I detect a growing public frustration, across the political spectrum, with regulations and processes that thwart efforts to keep pace with “existential” emergencies like climate change and the housing crisis.

Something has to give.

I suggest looking at the modest but uplifting 20,000-square-foot Inwood library, if only to be reminded of what we can accomplish with excellent architecture at a neighborhood scale.

Berman is a refined modernist with a discreet feel for simple materials, an understanding of classic forms and a deep love of the city. He knows that good design, attuned to place, conveys respect and becomes a source of pride and distinction in a neighborhood. He has designed branch libraries in Staten Island, the Bronx and elsewhere. They are all different and wonderful.

With Inwood, there is a monumentality to the reading room that can remind you of an earlier era in New York’s civic architecture. You might not register at first some of the architectural decisions that make the library uplifting, but you feel it: a low entrance to the side that sets up the turn into the tall reading room as a drama of compression and release; a ceiling of striated, white oak strips that warm cold surfaces and unify a snaking layout.

And loads of light. A lighted screen at one end of the reading room contains a staircase to a mezzanine where sun filters through a skylight that is the architecture’s signature feature. Light pours, as well, through IMAX-sized windows along Broadway.

The view out those windows from the mezzanine takes in a slice of Fort Tryon Park, a storefront orthodontist and several midcentury apartment blocks. It’s classic, neighborhood New York, and a reminder.

The city can be impossible sometimes.

But it can still do great things, when we let it.

PHOTOS: The new library branch at The Eliza, which also has 174 subsidized apartments, a pre-K, a STEM study center, a teaching kitchen and community spaces. (C1); Left, the children’s section of the library within The Eliza, right. Andrew Berman was the library architect, and Chris Fogarty of Fogarty/Finger was the lead architect for the whole development.; Center, Berman added classical overtones to the main reading room. Above left, a combination of refined materials and loads of light elevate the space. Above right, the development was part of a controversial rezoning that allowed taller buildings along a stretch of Broadway in Upper Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMIR HAMJA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C5) This article appeared in print on page C1, C5.

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[***The Leaderless Left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRW-TG11-DXY4-X078-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Ross Barkan

**Body**

An aging Democratic president who rose to prominence in the Senate announces his withdrawal from the race. The party is rived by ideological clashes and an anguishing war overseas. A notorious Republican rides a reactionary swell to threaten a Democratic winning streak. And a Chicago convention, scheduled for August, promises to be a staging ground for both hope and rancor.

The parallels between 1968 and 2024 are uncanny. Joe Biden has become the first president since Lyndon B. Johnson to forgo seeking another term -- and Kamala Harris, like Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey, has been elevated without having won any mandate in party primaries. There will be protests in Chicago, just as there were in '68: Instead of Vietnam, this year's will center on Israel's war in Gaza, which the left blames on Biden's support for the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There are, of course, vast differences. Democrats are far more united behind Harris than they were around Humphrey; there will be no contested convention this year, no war for delegates. And Richard M. Nixon, a darkly introspective child of the ***working class***, was not Donald Trump.

And there is another overlooked divergence: Today's left does not have leaders to dominate the discourse -- or even its own movements.

In 1968, the protest movements that challenged Humphrey had names, faces, figureheads. Today there are no Tom Haydens, Abbie Hoffmans or Jerry Rubins headed to Chicago. There are no activists gaining fame via organizing, the way DeRay Mckesson did during Black Lives Matter demonstrations or Tamika Mallory and Linda Sarsour did before the 2017 Women's March. The two most celebrated political leaders of the progressive left, Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, fully supported Biden; they did not, as Eugene McCarthy did in 1968, try to wage a primary challenge. Dissent will come in Chicago, but it is challenging to find a single widely known figure, inside the convention or out in the streets, who will be leading any protests.

The new left is largely leaderless. This is not to say that it is bereft of organizational talent or influential ideas -- just that it has no one of any great fame or notoriety speaking directly for it, or to it. And for that alone, this is a singular moment in American history.

There was a day in the fall of 2011 that indicated where the American left was heading. That October, John Lewis, the congressman and civil rights icon, arrived at Woodruff Park in downtown Atlanta, hoping to address a large crowd at the city's Occupy encampment. The movement had catalyzed a fresh rage over income inequality, and Lewis had a simple message for the protesters: I stand with you. I support you. He hadn't arranged to speak at the encampment, but when a famous politician visits a fledgling protest, the reaction is usually straightforward: He is cheered, or at least beckoned forward.

This is not what happened with Lewis. Instead, a debate erupted at the group's ''general assembly'' over whether the congressman could make an unscheduled interruption to the agenda. Ultimately, Lewis was told he could speak only at the end of the day's business. Lewis left, and publicly at least, he did not take offense. ''It's OK,'' he told one reporter. ''They didn't really deny me.''

Still, an internet firestorm raged, with discussion eventually turning to the nature of Occupy itself. The movement had seized imaginations with its broad vision but also drawn condemnation for its lack of coherent policy demands. Crucial to this was the fraught, consensus-driven decision-making model of the encampments, where horizontal democracy was so prized that even sympathetic politicians of great renown could not intrude.

Here was what I have come to think of as the leaderless left.

What is it, exactly? One challenge to defining the leaderless left is its sheer amorphousness. Another is that few would actively identify with the term. (Many activists prefer to call their movements ''decentralized.'') Broadly defined, though, the leaderless left might be said to have a deep-rooted suspicion of leaders and personalities. It does not seek to anoint activists or politicians to guide it and cares little for electoral incrementalism. It houses an overriding feeling, especially among its youngest members, that those in power -- Democrats and Republicans alike -- are irreparably disconnected from their struggles. For them, this is an age without heroes.

Back when Lewis ambled up to Occupy Atlanta, this faction was marginal, and it would lie dormant through much of the decade to come. But it would never vanish. It has served as an undercurrent to leftist organizing, pushing against many of the figures who might once have fronted movements. Its habits were at least partly evident in almost all the leftist upsurges of the past 15 years. Black Lives Matter, and the subsequent call to ''defund the police,'' briefly elevated certain activists and academics but never coalesced around any particular personality for long. The groundswell of #MeToo was hesitant to keep specific women in its spotlight. The 2017 Women's March was embroiled in leadership disputes; minimum-wage organizing like the ''Fight for $15'' rarely produced durable figureheads. From all these came influential ideas -- but not individuals with long-term influence, power or authority.

At moments, when Bernie Sanders was campaigning for the presidency, the leaderless had a leader. But there was no great yearning for what might come after the aging Vermont senator exited the scene. Instead, the 2020 Democratic primary offered the greatest of all comedowns for young progressives: Rather than the democratic socialist Sanders, it was Biden, seemingly the embodiment of establishment moderation, who captured the nomination. That Biden has governed, on economic matters, to the left of his recent Democratic predecessors suggests that progressive ideas hold plenty of appeal for the party. The individuals, though, go only so far.

Yet the leaderless left currently feels more visible than ever, in large part because of a single issue. On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas killed 1,200 people in Israel and took hundreds of hostages; the Israeli government retaliated with a war that has driven the Gazan death toll into the tens of thousands. Biden's inability to stem that carnage has alienated many young voters, and among many leftist activists and organizations, the Palestinian plight is now an overriding concern. Pro-Palestinian activists tagged Biden ''Genocide Joe'' and argued that there was little difference between his victory and Trump's; one told me, not long ago, that the election would offer a brutal choice between genocide and fascism.

On this ''Palestine Left'' in particular, the concept of the leader has melted away almost entirely. There is no specific figure who stands at the vanguard of this multifarious and unabashedly radical movement, which now stretches from critics of the civilian death toll and insufficient humanitarian aid to factions calling for the dissolution of Israel as a Jewish state. Few celebrities have raised their profiles speaking at the new marches or pro-Palestinian encampments. Sanders and ''the Squad'' of progressive House members have defended the protesters but are not propelling them forward. Ocasio-Cortez was actually targeted by activists for her initial reluctance to deem Israel's war a genocide, and even Rashida Tlaib, the press-shy Palestinian-American congresswoman, is perhaps ancillary to what's happening in this year's marches and encampments.

This is a genuine shift from the past. Occupy, for all its hostility to political personalities, nevertheless helped to mint several, including a Harvard law professor seeking a Senate seat in Massachusetts. (''I created much of the intellectual foundation for what they do,'' Elizabeth Warren proudly proclaimed in 2011.) The civil rights era produced numerous leaders and personalities: the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X and Rosa Parks, of course, but also figures like Bayard Rustin and Ralph Abernathy. Black Panthers like Bobby Seale were household names. Students for a Democratic Society elevated Hayden; the Free Speech movement had Mario Savio; the feminist movement boasted headliners like Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and the pioneering congresswoman Bella Abzug. Out of that same era came Michael Harrington, the political theorist who, as the left retreated, helped found Democratic Socialists of America in 1982.

''The 20th-century left always had someone who embodied the movement,'' says Maurice Isserman, a professor of history at Hamilton College and the author of a new book about the rise and fall of American Communism. ''In the past, you could say, 'I'm a Michael Harrington socialist,' and that meant something. Or, 'I'm a Eugene Debs socialist.' It gave you a political identity. It was a shorthand for the whole idea.'' But according to Donna Murch, an associate professor of history at Rutgers and an expert on the Black Power movement of the 1960s, today's activists are learning a lesson from the 20th century: Elevating swaggering personalities to speak for a movement can backfire. ''The corporate media did a lot of damage to the social movements in the '60s,'' Murch says. Eldridge Cleaver, she notes, ''became the face of the Black Panther party,'' despite his direct involvement with it being short-lived -- and his beliefs often cast the group in a poor light.

There are some singular reputational risks that might make people wary of leading pro-Palestinian activism. Neither party is receptive to it, and belligerent and powerful Israel supporters like the billionaire Bill Ackman have made dogged efforts to publicly identify protesters, especially at colleges, in a bid to effectively blacklist them from future employment. But even among recent movements with much greater public support, leftists have seen, again and again, the problem Murch identifies, and the danger in investing political capital into fallible individuals. Black Lives Matter, for instance, did not benefit from its founders' being celebrated in magazines like Glamour. The anti-Trump Women's March eventually devolved into scandal, with accusations of antisemitism lodged against (and denied by) two star organizers.

In the 1960s and '70s, even as notions of bottom-up organizing thrived, leading activists were far more enthusiastic about parading through the media's glare -- and the media itself was ''more committed to the idea of political celebrity, trying to identify and promote people as leading voices,'' says Jeremy Varon, a historian at the New School who has studied postwar American social movements. Today, though, ''there's a kind of paucity of public figures now who lend their name and reputation to a cause.'' The thinking has shifted: ''Leadership is intrinsically bad, hierarchy is bad and everyone loves viral, self-reproducing protest.''

We may be sliding into a new age -- one of ''personality exhaustion,'' in the words of the culture writer Mo Diggs. For much of the 2010s, online life was defined by parasocial bonds with individuals. These were boom times for megalithic influencers, from political candidates to social media personalities. Many liberals seemed personality-obsessed, enamored of assorted pundits and Trump nemeses like Robert Mueller, James Comey and Alexander Vindman. Mainstream Democrats still flock to cable television and prestige media that, in the 2020s, still revolve around such figures, with Jen Psaki cultivating a large fan base on MSNBC; even online, anti-Trump social media heavyweights like Ron Filipkowski and BrooklynDad\_Defiant have racked up significant followings. But elsewhere, algorithms have come to change that.

Some pro-Israel commentators have blamed TikTok for fomenting anti-Zionism on its platform, but the platform's real upheaval was to upend this parasocial arrangement: Its algorithmic ''For You'' page shifted attention away from memorable, followable individuals and into a sea of short videos and memes. As the culture writer Kyle Raymond Fitzpatrick observed last year, TikTok is increasingly a platform of free-floating ideas and images, not personalities. And this year, on TikTok and especially on TikTok Live, brutal images from Gaza have streamed night and day, unmediated; arguments about rocket attacks and genocide have supplanted the specific people making them. When individuals were featured, they were often Gazans themselves, documenting what was happening around them. It seemed not to matter who was uttering any sort of soaring rhetoric. Speechifying itself, so fame-making in the 1960s, was growing irrelevant.

This sort of bottom-up change in sentiment can have mainstream impact. During the leaderless George Floyd protests of 2020, celebrities released statements, corporations promised new diversity initiatives and the N.F.L. emblazoned ''Black Lives Matter'' on its helmets. But pro-Palestinian activists, whether furiously anti-Israel or not, have found no such easy sympathy. One of the rare House members to pull close to them -- Jamaal Bowman of New York, who publicly gestured at cultural boycotts of Israel and who told me in an interview that he was open to the concept of a shared nation for Jews and Palestinians -- was challenged in a primary this year and, between his own political missteps and heavy spending by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, lost handily. For the pro-Palestinian youths, distrust in all mainstream personalities and institutions is inordinately high. They see no one they might look to. So why bother having spokespeople?

And yet it's notable that when frustrations boiled over so significantly that the Palestine Left wanted to challenge Biden's campaign, there was no candidate to run, no McCarthy to the party's Johnson and Humphrey. The war in Gaza began only a few months before the primary season -- too little time for a contender to assemble a viable campaign -- but still: A placeholder, some activist in possession of some visible clout, could have emerged. None did. Instead, a movement urged voters to choose ''uncommitted or uninstructed'' on their ballots or to leave them blank. Organizers celebrated the roughly 30 delegates this movement won as heartening, but it felt striking that unlike in 2016 or 2020, there was no actual challenger, no literal person, to carry the cause.

Those ''uncommitted'' delegates represent less than 1 percent of those who will go to the convention in Chicago. (Sanders, in 2016, brought nearly 2,000.) Activists on the Palestine Left seem unconcerned. ''The fact that people were voting for an idea, and not an inherently flawed individual, as a candidate contributed to how we had such a strong showing in Michigan,'' Abbas Alawieh, a strategist for the Uncommitted National Movement, told me. ''That's one of the real sources of power of this movement: We convinced people to vote for the idea that our Democratic Party should be antiwar.''

As long as the left eschews defined leadership, it is difficult to imagine it increasing its influence in the party, even when it focuses on ideas popular with the Democratic base. Sanders has receded. Ocasio-Cortez, still just 34, is gradually accumulating seniority. Many in the more centrist wing of the party seem to view the left as either marginal or actively destructive, like the late-1960s radicals who were willing to torpedo Humphrey's candidacy even if it meant that Nixon was elected president.

It is true that leftist organizations like the Democratic Socialists of America, the Working Families Party and Justice Democrats are still winning some down-ballot elections. It is true that Biden, as president, has partnered with progressive policy minds on infrastructure, green-energy legislation and health care; his Federal Trade Commission, skeptical of corporate consolidations, carries Warren's imprint. But it is also true that the left has played no particular role in Biden's departure or in Harris's rise.

It has taken heart from Harris's selection of the Minnesota governor Tim Walz as her running mate, instead of Josh Shapiro, the Pennsylvania governor, who is staunchly supportive of Israel. (When he was in Congress, Walz spoke at an AIPAC policy conference, but earlier this year he was receptive to the Uncommitted National Movement in Minnesota, saying that ''they are asking to be heard.'') What this ultimately means for foreign policy is unclear. But on the domestic front, Obama alumni more tolerant of corporate power, like David Plouffe and Eric Holder, are gravitating to Harris's campaign, and well-heeled donors appear thrilled for what's to come. The Uncommitted National Movement carries too few delegates to win any meaningful floor flights and has no candidate to hold sway at the convention. Dissent and protest will be confined to the streets of Chicago, far away from Harris's coronation.

Even when the incumbent candidate was widely viewed as too old and inept to govern, no segment of the left could position itself to take advantage of the teetering standard-bearer. At the time, Sanders was out stumping for Biden, urging his base to give the president one more chance. When I asked him, upon his arrival in New York to support the doomed Bowman candidacy, if he had any opinions on the growing Israel skepticism on the left, Sanders didn't want to engage at all: ''It's not an issue I hear a whole lot,'' he said. ''What I hear, overwhelmingly, with maybe very, very few exceptions, is that Hamas is a terrorist organization pledged to destroy Israel and committed an atrocious war crime on Oct. 7.'' He added that ''Netanyahu's right-wing, racist, extremist government has gone to war against the Palestinian people.''

A lack of leadership does not just make it difficult to exert influence on the party. It also makes it challenging to establish message discipline and sustain momentum around a cause. Here, too, the Palestine Left offers a vivid illustration. (It has, for instance, few spokespeople well positioned to argue that the small number of leftists urging solidarity with Hamas do not in fact speak for the broader movement.) And Sanders, absent disciples with any significant power, cannot guarantee that his issues outlast him. Consider his Medicare for All proposal, which was never seriously entertained when Democrats controlled both chambers of Congress a couple of years ago. In the Senate, Harris was a sponsor of the sweeping legislation; now she doesn't speak of it. Universal health care, once a lodestar issue for the progressive left, has faded from view.

Enduring organizations and defined, well-regarded leaders -- these things may be more necessary than leftists hope. Protest itself, so easily staged and replicated, can be intoxicating. But street protests ebb, and public attention is fickle. The Uncommitted National Movement is demanding that Democrats allow a pediatric-intensive-care physician serving in Gaza to speak at the Chicago convention -- to let her explain, to a national audience, how much Palestinians have suffered. The Democratic National Committee hasn't said no or yes. A leaderless left can move it only so much.

Ross Barkan is the author of two novels and a nonfiction account of Covid's impact on New York City. Lauren Peters-Collaer is a graphic designer and an associate art director at Penguin Random House.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/magazine/new-left-leadership.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/13/magazine/new-left-leadership.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN PETERS-COLLAER) (MM28-MM29)

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GETTY IMAGES) (MM31) This article appeared in print on page MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33.

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[***‘It’s Not Pandering When You Tell the Truth’: Five Columnists Game Out the Debate; Jamelle Bouie, Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Tressie McMillan Cottom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CXR-YKG1-JBG3-64P1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 4304 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie, Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Tressie McMillan Cottom Jamelle Bouie became a New York Times Opinion columnist in 2019. Before that he was the chief political correspondent for Slate magazine. He is based in Charlottesville, Va., and Washington. 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; 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). Michelle Goldberg has been an Opinion columnist since 2017. She is the author of several books about politics, religion and women&amp;#8217;s rights, and was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize for public service in 2018 for reporting on workplace sexual harassment.

**Highlight:** What does success or failure look like for Donald Trump and Kamala Harris in Tuesday’s debate?

**Body**

Patrick Healy, the deputy Opinion editor, hosted an online conversation with the Times Opinion columnists Jamelle Bouie, Ross Douthat, David French, Michelle Goldberg and Tressie McMillan Cottom about Tuesday’s debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump.

Patrick Healy: Heading into tonight’s debate, what do you want to hear or learn from the candidates?

Michelle Goldberg: Honestly this question kind of infuriates me, because it assumes that what matters about tonight is some contest of policy positions, which is absurd. The media, I realize, has collectively decided that we’re going to treat Trump like a normal political candidate, and while that might be the right call in terms of preserving our journalistic institutions — though I’m genuinely unsure — it obscures the stakes. In this debate, the only thing that matters is whether Harris wins. It’s a cliché to say it, but she’s all that’s standing between us and autocracy.

Ross Douthat: For Harris, at least, I think there’s a clear upside to acting like the debate is a contest of policy positions, however the media covers it. Her campaign has been signaling — perhaps sincerely or perhaps as misdirection — that she wants to challenge Trump, to interrupt and pick fights and fact-check him.

But since this is only Harris’s second appearance in a challenging high-profile format since she locked up the nomination, I think she might benefit more from a kind of reintroduction of her candidacy, with more policy detail than her convention speech (her campaign finally debuted its issues page on Sunday). The much-discussed [*Times/Siena poll this past weekend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) found that a number of undecided voters want to hear more about who Harris is and what she stands for. That seems like it might be a better use of her time than trying to bait Trump, who has survived plenty of bad-seeming debate performances.

Jamelle Bouie: It would be a waste of time for Harris to try to bait Trump or get him to overreact. Instead, she should use the time to, as Ross said, reintroduce herself to the public, present her policies, contrast them with those of the former president, and demonstrate that she has the clear capacity to serve as chief executive. With that said, I do hope that at some point Harris makes clear that Trump’s policy of “mass deportation” would be a social, economic and moral catastrophe of the highest order.

Tressie McMillan Cottom: Harris has usurped some of Trump’s strengths on national security and patriotism. Her campaign is doing a better job than Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden of caricaturing Trump as unserious and incoherent. Trump has to find a way to hit back because he controls news cycles by demoralizing political opponents. Can Trump take a punch from Harris? Trump’s acolytes want more of what they got in his first campaign — a sarcastic, prowling authoritarian who intimidates his debate rivals. If he cannot deliver, it could look like weakness with a voter base that values strength above all else.

Healy: Tressie, how might Harris’s positioning on national security and patriotism help her in the debate?

McMillan Cottom: I am not the audience for Harris’s new Make America Diverse and Great message. Still, I can appreciate how many Democratic voters love it. They want to feel good about being an American. The 2016 election demoralized them. Years of social movements made them feel guilty. Harris rebooted herself as a neoconservative national security hawk during the Democratic convention delivering lines like, “will never waver in defense of America’s security and ideals,” with a natural aplomb. That scares the party’s progressive wing, but it inspired some centrist suburban stalwarts.

Can Harris deliver a sequel to her neocon rebrand with Trump standing next to her? She cannot let him get any visuals like the one of him stalking Hillary Clinton across the debate stage. Trump has managed to smooth over his most egregious behaviors during these nationally televised events. If Harris scores on style and substance, she could force Trump to act out.

David French: If there is one thing we know from previous debates, it’s that Trump will unleash a fire hose of lies. It’s impossible to refute everything, or Harris’s entire debate will be derailed into responding to Trump. It will be vital for her to pick her spots, to highlight the most glaring falsehoods and — above all — reach for reason more than virality in her responses.

It’s always tempting to try to trigger some kind of Trump meltdown, but the truth is his greatest enemy. Harris needs to calmly but clearly rebut the foundational lies of his campaign — that he was robbed of the 2020 election, that American crime is out of control and that the American economy is failing. You can’t really argue people out of their subjective feelings about crime and the economy, but you can make the case that Trump’s policies will make their problems worse.

Healy: Let’s zero in on each candidate. First, Donald Trump. I would argue that in his six previous general election presidential debates, Trump has never won a debate. I think Biden lost the last debate, in June, more than Trump won it. Tonight, he needs to keep the focus on Harris and hope that enough voters find her performance wanting or concerning. But he’s botched the job in debates before. What do you think success or failure looks like for Trump tonight?

Douthat: Success in conventional terms means tying Harris tightly to the Biden administration’s unpopular record and her own left-wing positions from the far-off days of 2019 and 2020. Success in Trumpian terms probably means matching the level of normalcy he achieved in parts of his June debate with Biden (though only in parts), restraining his impulse to wander off into paranoia and personal grievance, and avoiding any sort of a shouting, bullying performance.

French: Harris’s greatest vulnerability is her first race for president, in 2019 — not because she lost, but because she signaled either interest in or sympathy for a series of far-left policy positions that were politically unworkable then and even more so now. I agree with Ross that success for Trump will mean highlighting those policies. If Trump’s smart, he’ll do it policy by policy throughout the debate — from the Green New Deal, to defund the police, to single-payer health care, to fracking bans.

To think of what failure for Trump could look like, I remember one of the few primary debates in 2016 where his opponents directly and aggressively challenged him with facts about his many falsehoods and failures. He was so rattled that Corey Lewandowski [*broke the debate rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) by huddling with Trump onstage. When he’s defensive, he can lose control, and putting him on the defensive is Harris’s most important task.

Bouie: Let’s rewind the tape back to the June debate. The focus on President Biden’s inability to defend his administration obscured the extent to which Trump was barely intelligible for most of the debate, ranting and raving with little apparent grasp on reality. If it did not immediately read as such, it was because he did so with vigor. Yes, we can certainly say what Trump needs to do to win, and it is easy to imagine the particular strategies — hitting Harris on alleged flip-flops and trying to tie her to left-wing views — that might be effective. But none of us were born yesterday! We all know that Trump will manage, at most, about 15 minutes of something that looks like discipline before he descends into incoherence, taunting and general nonsense.

He has neither the ability nor cognitive capacity to win. The question is whether Harris will lose.

McMillan Cottom: Trump is a known entity. He does not have to “win” the debate, certainly not on the merits of policy or temperament. He has to win the media cycle. His biggest risk is being ineffectual at commanding attention.

Healy: Now let’s turn to Harris. I’ve heard from some Democrats, as well as independent and undecided voters, who won’t vote for Trump but aren’t sure they will vote for her. They want her to “close the deal” with them, to convince them to vote for her on her own merits. What does success or failure look like for Harris tonight?

Goldberg: Success for Harris will lie in appearing fluent and unflappable, and in rattling Trump, especially on abortion. When it comes to abortion, my hope is that she can do two contradictory things simultaneously. Her first priority should be showing the public why Trump is a threat to reproductive rights, even as he tries to wriggle out of his responsibility for abortion bans. But it would be great if she could also get Trump to say things that will further demoralize some of his hard-core anti-abortion supporters by baiting him into trying to prove he’s not beholden to them.

Douthat: Along with some sort of policy reintroduction, I would say that fluency and terseness are key, by which I mean avoiding the sort of “Veep”-style word-salad answers that help create her “Veep”-esque reputation in the first place. To the extent that she goes hard after Trump, I think she needs to focus not just on abortion but also on the economic issues where Trump has the polling advantage now — hitting his tariffs as a middle-class tax hike, trying to tie him to the most unpopular Republican economic proposals, reminding voters that his administration tried to repeal Obamacare.

Trump often becomes more unpopular the more he appears as a generic Republican on economic policy rather than a sui generis populist, and the Harris campaign needs voters who remember the Trump economy fondly to have a little more anxiety about the economic policies that Trump 2.0 might usher in.

Goldberg: Ross, I agree with this. And Trump has been giving her plenty of material by telling billionaires on the campaign trail how much he’s planning to do for them!

French: Harris is going to have to have an effective answer for her policy shifts, and she is going to need to show that there is a significant gap between herself and Trump in both policy and poise. The committed Harris voters fully understand Trump’s threats to the rule of law. Uncommitted voters, by contrast, tend to be more concerned about the price of groceries, or by chaos on the southern border.

Even though it is tempting to make the case that this is no ordinary election, millions upon millions of voters do, in fact, treat this like an ordinary election. She needs to meet those voters where they are. “Are you concerned about inflation? Trump’s tariffs will make it worse. Are you concerned about the border? Trump was responsible for torpedoing the toughest border bill in a generation. Are you concerned about chaos abroad? Imagine the catastrophe if Russia conquers Ukraine.”

The rule of law is at stake, yes, but so are consumer prices. Make both cases at once.

Goldberg: David, isn’t that another way of saying she should pander? It’s true that Trump’s tariffs would raise prices, but there’s also not a great deal the president can do to lower them.

French: It’s not pandering when you tell the truth. Trump’s tariffs would be terrible for inflation. Trump’s foreign policy would create more chaos and danger, not less. He did torpedo a tough border bill. All of those arguments aren’t just fair, they’re necessary to make to blunt Trump’s case. Trump wants to use his power in ways that will directly and negatively impact consumers. She should make sure voters know.

McMillan Cottom: Everyone laughed as if it is unserious policy, but consumer-friendly policies are popular. People understand shrinkflation in a way that they do not understand progressive taxation. These are also economic policies that disproportionately impact female and minority consumers. If “balancing a checkbook” is a middle-class economic device, then the cost of tampons and school lunches are female economic devices. I would link those to other gender-based policies where Harris has been strong, e.g., motherhood mortality, abortion and reproductive justice.

Goldberg: Tressie, I agree with you about emphasizing consumer-friendly policies, especially since they’ve been an often unacknowledged strength of the Biden administration. Lina Khan, who Biden put in charge of the F.T.C., is [*doing so much to address the way*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) ordinary people feel abused by the market.

Healy: Ross referred earlier to the new Times/Siena College poll that shows Trump with an edge against Harris nationally among likely voters. That result is still within the margin of error, but it was [*a bit surprising to our colleague Nate Cohn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), in part because of the great six weeks that Harris had. I’m curious why you think Trump has an edge right now, and do you think Harris is in trouble?

Goldberg: Because we live in a broken world.

Bouie: Just to announce my priors, I think the extent to which people in our profession obsess over singular polls ends up obscuring more about the political situation than it can explain to readers. The most recent Times/Siena poll shows Trump up one point over Harris among likely voters with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.8 points. A recent Emerson College poll, conducted within the same period, shows Harris up two among likely voters, with a similar margin of error. These are the same results. Both are consistent with either a slight Harris national lead or a slight Trump national lead. Both tell us that this is a close election that will be decided on the margins. That’s all the information we have, and everything else is narrative.

Now, if I had to choose which campaign I’d rather be going into the debate, it is the Harris campaign. She clearly has a higher ceiling than Trump, who has been stuck at essentially the same share of the two-party vote for nearly a decade. If she can perform well, Harris might be able to break the stalemate.

French: I’m with Jamelle. While the Times/Siena poll is the gold standard, there is still a margin for error, and we need see more gold-standard polling (especially after the debate) to know where we stand as we begin the final push before Election Day.

This race was always going to be close, and Harris’s great first six weeks weren’t going to change that reality. Plus, there are ways in which Trump is just more formidable as a challenger than as an incumbent. His ironclad hold over the G.O.P. gives him a very high floor of support, and then if he can just grab a few more votes from voters who are dissatisfied with the status quo, he’s within striking distance of victory.

After the disastrous Afghan withdrawal and the inflation surges of 2021 and 2022, a “Morning in America” style landslide was off the table for Democrats. If Trump weren’t the nominee, the Republican challenger would likely be the clear favorite, especially after the deception and confusion surrounding Biden’s fitness. Harris had to come from behind. That’s always hard, and no one should be surprised that her momentum might have stalled, at least for the moment.

McMillan Cottom: If this was Biden or any other traditional political candidate, Harris’s polling after six strong weeks might indicate “trouble.” But Kamala Harris is not a typical candidate. It is good politics for her campaign to play this down, but it is critical for political observers not to do the same. Harris is a unique candidate. She does not have a legislative record. She has not had a typical campaign cycle. She is a woman. She is not white. Given all of that, it is remarkable that she is polling competitively with likely voters.

Having said that, her best path to winning is through historic turnout and enthusiasm. Can she excite new voters without turning off her base or the progressive and left wings of her party? Thumping Trump without scaring white voters could go a long way toward exciting voters who are just beginning to tune into the election.

Douthat: I already thought Trump had the advantage before the Times/Siena poll, and wrote as much [*in my newsletter last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) — with my bottom line being that even with a unified party and extraordinarily favorable press, Harris still has to get over the combined hurdle of being an unpopular president’s V.P. and having the record (or at least past positioning) of a doctrinaire progressive.

And sure enough, in the Times/Siena data you see that voters think she’s very liberal and that Trump is [*more moderate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). The Harris campaign has tried to deal with that issue by floating away from her old positions, and it’s been somewhat successful — the race is clearly very close! — but I don’t think anyone should be surprised if it turns out that Trump still has the edge.

Healy: Harris’s strategy of not saying much beyond her stump speech at rallies and encounters with friendly voters seems to be leaving a huge opening for Trump to fill in the gaps.

Goldberg: I wish she’d do a lot more media; I fear her team is dangerously risk-averse. I don’t even mean more interviews with journalists who will ask her to respond to right-wing talking points, though I wish she’d do more of those as well. But she should be flooding the zone on podcasts and talk shows and letting voters develop a parasocial relationship with her. It’s a joke on social media that she should do “Hot Ones,” a YouTube show in which celebrities are interviewed while eating progressively spicier chicken wings. But she should do “Hot Ones”! She should do “Call Her Daddy,” which is one of the most popular podcasts among young women. She should make herself much more ubiquitous for people who don’t follow political news.

Bouie: I agree with Michelle that it would serve the Harris campaign well to do far more media. I think she should go on “Hot Ones.” I think she would do well and reach the kind of broad audience that you would not get with traditional media. I think she should also do “Club Shay Shay," the in-depth interview podcast with the N.F.L. legend Shannon Sharpe. And it goes without saying that I would happily take an interview with either Harris or Walz.

French: I couldn’t agree more with Michelle and Jamelle. But I will say that I’ve done the “Hot Ones” challenge, and those last spices are formidable. It’s one thing to weep on camera, but gagging and spitting might be a bridge too far!

McMillan Cottom: I don’t think Harris has to do more traditional media. We would like her to for obvious reasons. In fact, I remain available to interview her or Walz! But, this is a messaging war being fought in the populist trenches. She is better served in a short campaign cycle by going on Hot 97, tapping into the D.L. Hughley media universe, dominating on social media (especially TikTok) and doubling down on highly segmented affinity-based messaging. I have a lot of Harris media in my inbox, by the way. She is in everything from my sorority newsletter to my AARP for Gen X social feeds.

Healy: A provocation for the group: I think if tonight’s debate is a draw for Harris, she’s in trouble. She needs to be the decisive winner to firm up shaky Democrats and make more gains with undecided voters, young voters, Latinos, and narrow the gender gap with men. Do you think a draw is enough? Is there a new/better strategy that Harris could pursue to build her support with more voters?

Douthat: Since I think Trump has an advantage, yes, a draw seems like a victory for him. Also, since as you say, Patrick, he has arguably lost every single presidential debate except the Biden debacle, a draw would be spun as a win for him even if he weren’t already possibly ahead.

I think the “new strategy” Harris needs is simple in theory: She needs to seem more substantively moderate and less connected to the Biden White House. But that’s easier to describe than to execute. And if she doesn’t execute at this debate, Trump will have every reason to avoid any further debates, and her opportunities to execute any strategy will narrow.

French: I don’t think a draw changes the dynamics of the race one way or the other. I don’t think anything other than a rout (in either direction) will move the needle meaningfully, especially given that there will inevitably be multiple dramatic news cycles between the debate and November. The debate is a risk at the edges and an opportunity at the edges. The most likely outcome is more of the status quo — a razor-close race that is virtually impossible to predict.

McMillan Cottom: Harris does not have to convince Americans to like her, which is itself significant given she is a woman of color. Instead, she has to convince Americans who are afraid of Trump’s G.O.P. that she can win. How she chooses to make that case would give clues to her team’s internal polling. Her message has to convince a terrified but risk-averse centrist voter, of either party, to take a chance. Is that message abortion rights, or national security? Will she speak to ***working-class*** or middle-class values? If she has a viable path to winning, Tuesday night we should expect a message aimed at those voters.

Healy: Trump is one of the most unpopular politicians in American history. His electoral success has always come down to destroying opponents — making them even less acceptable with more voters than he is. But does he need to do things differently against Harris, in this debate or in the rest of the campaign, to win in November? In other words, can Trump win in this debate and in this election with the same old playbook, or does he need to do something more or different?

Douthat: A key feature of this race is that Trump is less unpopular than in the past. In the Times/Siena poll, for instance, his favorability rating is [*46 percent, versus 52 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) unfavorable — that’s not good, obviously, but in a polarized country it’s in the normal range, not the extraordinarily unpopular range. Which in turn suggests that yes, he can win as himself — and honestly that’s the only self we’re likely to see at the debate, since every effort to imagine or create a new Trump always ends with the old one coming back.

French: Like Ross, I’ve been intrigued by the polling that seems to show that Trump’s favorability has risen, and I’m starting to wonder if his favorability really is that high or if pollsters have finally figured out how to properly measure Trump’s level of support. After all, 46 percent is roughly his share of the presidential vote in the last two elections — 45.9 percent in 2016 and 46.8 percent in 2020.

Goldberg: Ross, you’re right that Trump is less unpopular than in the past, which fills me with unutterable despair for this country. Conservatives have often argued that American democracy only works with a virtuous populace, and I’m ready to concede that they are correct. If Americans like Trump more rather than less after Jan. 6, this whole experiment might be nearing its end.

That said, enthusiasm for Trump has actually declined. I recently asked Don Levy, the director of the Siena College Research Institute — the New York Times’s pollster — how the excitement of Trump voters compares over the last three cycles. He told me that, scored on a scale of 1 to 100, the enthusiasm of Trump voters was at a 90 in 2016, 88 in 2020 and 81.6 now, compared with 82.7 for Kamala Harris. It’s the first time in three cycles that the enthusiasm score for the Democrat is higher than for the Republican.

Most people are assuming that polls undercount Trump support as they have in the past, and that may well be true. But it’s not a given.

Bouie: Trump has not changed at all since 2015, except only to decline. I think the question to ask is whether the American public has a long-enough memory to remember this fact and act accordingly.

Douthat: It’s interesting, I assumed at one point that the assassination attempt would create off-the-charts enthusiasm for Trump. But that was so long ago, I guess, in the kind of political time we live in now.

McMillan Cottom: Trump’s inability to spin that assassination attempt into media domination is the best evidence yet that we could be at the beginning of the Trump bubble bursting.

The big story of Trump’s win in 2016 was that voters were angry and experts missed it. Donald Trump has exploited that better than anyone. The story in this election is that voters are still angry and we may still be missing it. I spent time talking to female voters in nail salons, hair salons and waxing salons. Why there isn’t a story from every nail salon in America remains a mystery to me. The women I talked to in those female spaces are angry and afraid. As one low-information voter told me, she wants someone to look like a fighter. My sense is that Harris does not have to win this debate in the traditional sense. She has to sell a better story to those scared, angry voters. If she even hints at a better story during this debate, it bodes well for the final leg of this campaign. I will be worried if it looks like they are still message-testing during this debate.

Trump has to not only write a different playbook for Harris — he also has to demonstrate that he is able to rewrite his playbook. He has never before demonstrated that adaptability. His voters have interpreted that intractability as strength. But having one authoritarian, illiberal hammer for every nail could turn off some voters. And the Harris campaign looks nimble. That can look like confidence. This will come down to how voters read their economic fundamentals. If they feel like those are sound, nimble confidence could resonate more than brute strength.

Source photographs by Joseph Prezioso and Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

Tressie McMillan Cottom (@[*tressiemcphd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html)) became a New York Times Opinion columnist in 2022. She 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.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Something's Missing From the Banksy Museum***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C51-6TG1-JBG3-62XD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 31, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1216 words

**Byline:** By Max Lakin

**Body**

Work by the anonymous street artist is hard to find. At a museum devoted to him, it's even harder.

To enter the Banksy Museum, which opened this month above a Bank of America on the lower lip of SoHo, a visitor must wade through the thicket of vendors crowding Canal Street with bootleg Apple products and almost-convincing Prada handbags splayed out on blankets.

It's a fitting approach. The Banksy Museum does not own or display any actual Banksys but rather 167 decent-enough reproductions of them, life-size murals and paintings on panels treated to look like exterior walls that stretch through an exhibition space, designed to resemble the street.

That these replicas of Banksy's oeuvre since the late 1990s are more or less faithful to their source material has less to do with the competence of the anonymous artists who executed them than it does with the simplicity of Banksy's aesthetic: photo-derived stencil work, more about social commentary than technical proficiency.

A Banksy work does not astound with technique or formal innovation, nor is it meant to. Designed to be quickly made and quicker understood, they rely on easy visual gags that don't always amount to much, all punchline and no windup (a man walking a Keith Haring dog; riot police and protesters having a pillow fight; a boy catching snow on his tongue that's actually ash from a dumpster fire). His early political satire, like Winston Churchill with a mohawk and teddy bears lobbing Molotov cocktails, had all the profundity of a dorm room poster, a shallow populism that explains his trajectory -- populism being a sure route toward cultural phenomenon.

The world's most famous anonymous street artist, Banksy has traveled that route since the mid-2000s, inspiring a singular devotion. The appearance of a new work is heralded as a cultural event, its removal often met with protests. Few other artists are treated as prophet and savior, and fewer still who insist on a complete allergy to public life.

The Banksy Museum embodies these contradictions, probably inadvertently: unauthorized, it's an act of both admiration and exploitation. It's also an interesting thought experiment: Can you have a museum with only reproductions? Does street art still function when removed from the street? Can an artist be anti-establishment while still fetching millions of dollars at auction?

The Banksy Museum seems to not share these potential hypocrisies. It presents an unequivocal hagiography of Banksy as an art world Robin Hood, unimpeachable in his worldview and incorruptible in his manner of expression. The Banksy Museum is of course not a museum in the strict sense of the word, or even the loose one (it employs no curatorial staff, nor does it conserve or collect any artwork).

It is a museum more in the way the Museum of Ice Cream uses the concept: a ticketed, immersive experience where the experience in which you are being immersed is vague. This experience costs $30 for adult entry (children's tickets are $21), in line with what the Met charges non-New Yorkers, but at least at the Met the Matisses are real.

There is something perverse in paying to experience an ersatz street to look at artificial graffiti, as if the real version wasn't available outside for free. Between the piped-in soundtrack of police sirens and the hazard markings cordoning each work as if they were crime scenes, the space has the flavor of the life-size warehouse replica in Charlie Kaufman's ''Synecdoche, New York'' by way of a laser tag arena in a suburban strip mall.

Does New York need a Banksy Museum? The artist has little to do with the city's rich history of graffiti and style writing. He made a well-publicized visit here in 2013 when he created a few dozen pieces that alluded limply to the city (a rat wearing a Yankees cap; the line ''This is my New York accent'' rendered in a hazy wildstyle approximation) and again in 2018, and then seemed to stop thinking about the place. (One of the only known remaining artworks from the 2013 visit is near Zabar's, protected by plexiglass.) And for the most part, New York graffitists don't seem to think about Banksy much either, outside an amusing and certainly one-sided campaign by the tagger Hektad, who has been spraying and pasting forms of ''Hektad vs Banksy'' around the city for the last 10 years.

In fact, the Banksy Museum is simply the latest of many such Banksy Museums that the Belgian film director and producer Hazis Vardar has opened around the world since his first effort in Paris, in 2019; four are currently open. And Vardar's museums are just a part of the Banksy cottage-industry. Other unauthorized exhibitions operate around the world; street vendors can reliably be found hawking small imitations.

Banksy's own philosophy invites such entrepreneurship. ''Copyright is for losers,'' the artist has mused. And more than lax copyright restrictions, these exhibitions take advantage of a slavering cult of personality, the kind that Banksy himself seems to counsel against, fed by the careful control of his persona and mystique.

The museum devotes a sizable section to Banksy's ostensible disdain for the art world. ''Commercial success is a mark of failure for a graffiti artist,'' he told The Village Voice in a rare 2013 interview. It's a position complicated by his production of sellable objects and multimillion dollar auction prices, the most famous of which is the 2018 spectacle at Sotheby's, when ''Girl With Balloon'' partly self-destructed after selling for $1.4 million, a stunt meant to satirize the market's frothing speculative behavior but paradoxically only juiced its value. Sotheby's resold it in 2021 for $25.4 million. It's hard to have it both ways.

Banksy's ideas are utterly correct. His anti-establishment paranoid worldview has mostly been borne out: Politicians are largely craven and the wealthy often get away with fleecing the ***working class***, and the art world is largely divorced from reality. But his righteousness is reductive -- Children: good. Adults: bad. Government: evil. Money: stupid.

In many ways this endeavor proves his point: Art has become inseparable from commerce. But the Banksy Museum ultimately fails not because of the tourist admission pricing but because any power Bansky's art possesses derives from the street. ''The Banksy Museum'' is the kind of thing Banksy himself might produce to mock the market's fetishization of street art: a simulacrum of the street that sanitizes its life and danger and potential -- a totally unnatural, airless tomb. Its most interesting effect may be the way in which it illustrates the limits of control.

Banksy's 2010 film, ''Exit Through the Gift Shop,'' purports to tell the story of Thierry Guetta's rise from vintage clothier in Los Angeles to the inane street art impresario Mr. Brainwash, possibly a Banksy invention, or his own nightmare. It's a cautionary tale, a criticism of the commodification of street art, once outside the mainstream and now wholly a part of it. Naturally, of course, the Banksy Museum spits you out through a gift shop, the words ''exit through the gift shop'' stenciled on the floor as a wayfinding gag, winking as it misses the joke.

The Banksy Museum

277 Canal Street, Lower Manhattan; museumbanksy.com.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/30/arts/design/banksy-museum-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/30/arts/design/banksy-museum-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: At the Banksy Museum in SoHo, top, from left: a reproduction of the artist's 2019 pop-up installation ''Venice in Oil''

the Canal Street entrance

''There Is Always Hope (Girl With Balloon),'' at left, and ''We're All in the Same Boat,'' center. Above, from left: reproductions of ''Migrant Child,'' ''Child With Vulture,'' ''Raft of the Medusa'' and ''Steve Jobs -- The Son of a Migrant From Syria.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C9.

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2024

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[***This 'Hamlet' Is Short On Slings and Arrows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBD-M6B1-JBG3-607P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 562 words

**Byline:** By Jason Zinoman

**Body**

Eddie Izzard is a wildly witty ad-libber, but a play straitjackets this gift -- especially in this new staging that is short of ideas.

To laugh, or not to laugh? That is the question.

Or at least one you may consider early in Eddie Izzard's ''Hamlet,'' in which the comic portrays all the roles herself.

Something is certainly a little silly about dramatizing Hamlet fighting with his mother by having a left hand wrestle with the arm of the right, evoking Peter Sellers's scientist who struggles to restrain himself from raising his arm in Nazi salute in ''Dr. Strangelove.'' And solo sword fights have possibilities that a brilliant comedian like Izzard might exploit.

Yet, as Izzard darts around the stage, from role to role, hopscotching in and out of the audience declaiming speeches, what becomes clear is this frenetic staging is earnest, surprisingly traditional and deadly serious. A wildly witty ad-libber, Izzard can make two-hour monologues feel like a stream-of-conscious eruption. A play straitjackets this gift. Except for a few flourishes, this staging, directed by Selina Cadell, is short of ideas. (Imagine sock puppets without the socks and you get an idea of her Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.)

Inside a modern, minimalist set (designed by Tom Piper) with no props, Izzard, who mounted a solo theatrical adaptation of ''Great Expectations'' last year, sometimes represents changing characters by spinning, other times by just moving a few feet. If there is method here, I did not detect it. If you don't know ''Hamlet,'' there is no chance you are going to follow the play within a play. If you do, you might wonder why Izzard doesn't spend more time playing the characters watching, not talking.

Among the occasionally overlooked qualities of the Danish prince is that he can be very funny, especially when mean. But you wouldn't know it in this production, adapted by Izzard's brother, Mark. Izzard is an even-keeled Hamlet. She doesn't elongate vowels or spit out consonants, rarely yells or expresses contempt. She appears to be pacing herself throughout. Despite wearing dark vinyl pants, this is a very tweedy performance. The best Hamlets (like that of Andrew Scott, who, in a sign of a trend or maybe a growing need for inexpensive casts, recently performed a one-man ''Uncle Vanya'') dramatize the act of thinking, but that interiority is lacking here.

Instead of taking Hamlet's famous acting advice to not ''saw the air'' too much, Izzard favors gesticulating and thrusting her hips to indicate something sexual has been said. She adopts a ***working-class*** voice for the gravedigger scene, but otherwise doesn't try dramatic shifts in accents, voice or physicality.

Izzard has famously picked up marathon running over the years, and even completed 32 in a month. It's a remarkable feat, but this one might be tougher -- and it shows. (On the night I attended, she flubbed several lines and appeared to be breathing hard during this endurance test of a play.) One comes away with the sense that Eddie Izzard didn't perform ''Hamlet'' so much as become defeated by it.

Izzard Hamlet New YorkThrough March 16 at Greenwich House Theater, Manhattan; eddieizzardhamlet.com. Running time: 2 hours 25 minutes.Izzard Hamlet New York Through March 16 at Greenwich House Theater in Manhattan; eddieizzardhamlet.com. Running time: 2 hours 25 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/theater/izzard-hamlet-new-york-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/13/theater/izzard-hamlet-new-york-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Eddie Izzard plays all of the roles in a frenetic take on ''Hamlet.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** February 15, 2024

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[***'Rich Men' Song Debuts At Top of U.S. Charts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6913-D701-DXY4-X1RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 480 words

**Byline:** By Ben Sisario

**Body**

Oliver Anthony Music's song expressing frustration over ***working-class*** struggles shot to the top of the Billboard chart after a wave of support from conservative commentators.

''Rich Men North of Richmond,'' an independently released track by the little-known performer billed as Oliver Anthony Music, became the surprise No. 1 song in the United States this week, topping hits by superstars like Taylor Swift, Morgan Wallen and Olivia Rodrigo.

The song, which was uploaded to YouTube just two weeks ago, caught fire with conservative commentators including Matt Walsh and Laura Ingraham, who described it as an authentic expression of ***working-class*** struggle, though some critics winced at anti-welfare sentiments that seemed to hark back to the Reagan era: ''If you're 5-foot-3 and you're 300 pounds/Taxes ought not to pay for your bags of fudge rounds,'' sings Anthony, whose real name is Christopher Anthony Lunsford.

''Rich Men'' shoots to the top of Billboard's Hot 100 singles chart with 17.5 million streams and 147,000 downloads, according to the tracking service Luminate. After Jason Aldean's ''Try That in a Small Town,'' it is the second country song in less than a month to reach No. 1 after stirring political controversy and sparking download sales -- a very small part of the contemporary music business, but one that can have an outsize impact on the charts, thanks to the weighting formulas that Billboard and Luminate use to reconcile streams and sales.

According to Billboard, it is the first time that an artist has made a debut at No. 1 on the Hot 100 without any prior chart history ''in any form.''

Whether ''Rich Man'' can hold the top spot for long is yet to be seen. When Aldean, a Nashville hitmaker for years, rode a wave of culture-war controversy for ''Try That in a Small Town'' after its music video was criticized as a coded call to vigilantism, the song spent a single week at No. 1; it dropped 20 spots after streams and downloads plunged.

On the album chart, Travis Scott's ''Utopia'' holds No. 1 for a third week, thanks in part to a flash sale on the rapper's website that priced the double vinyl version at $5. Scott sold 99,000 copies of his album, 93,000 of which were on vinyl; he also had 124 million streams. Altogether, ''Utopia'' was credited with the equivalent of 185,000 sales in the United States, according to Luminate.

The neon-haired Colombian pop star Karol G debuts at No. 3 with her latest release, ''Mañana Será Bonito (Bichota Season),'' which had the equivalent of 67,000 sales, including 68 million streams. The mixtape is a companion collection to Karol G's last studio album, the similarly titled ''Mañana Será Bonito,'' which opened at No. 1 in March.

Also this week, Wallen's ''One Thing at a Time'' holds at No. 2, the ''Barbie'' soundtrack is No. 4 and Swift's ''Speak Now (Taylor's Version)'' is in fifth place.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/arts/music/rich-men-north-of-richmond-billboard-chart.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/arts/music/rich-men-north-of-richmond-billboard-chart.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Oliver Anthony Music independently released his song ''Rich Men North of Richmond.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY @RADIOWV, VIA YOUTUBE) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Are Big Music Tours Really in Trouble?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C74-XJV1-JBG3-60M5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2024 Monday

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**Length:** 1355 words

**Byline:** By Ben Sisario and Joe Coscarelli

**Body**

High-profile cancellations from Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys have armchair analysts talking. But industry insiders say live music is still thriving.

For the concert business, 2023 was a champagne-popping year. The worst of the pandemic comfortably in the rearview, shows big and small were selling out, with mega-tours by Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Drake and Bruce Springsteen pushing the industry to record ticket sales.

This year, as with much of the economy, success on the road seems more fragile. A string of high-profile cancellations, and slow sales for some major events, have raised questions about an overcrowded market and whether ticket prices have simply gotten too expensive.

Most conspicuously, Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys have canceled entire arena tours. In the case of the Black Keys -- a standby of rock radio and a popular touring draw for nearly two decades -- the fallout has been severe enough that the band has parted ways with its two managers, the industry giant Irving Azoff and Steve Moir. Through a representative, Azoff and Moir said they had ''amicably parted'' with the band.

At Coachella, usually so buzzy that it sells out well before any performers are announced, tickets for the second of the California festival's two weekends were still available by the time it opened in April.

Those issues have stoked headlines about a concert business that may be in trouble. But the reality, many insiders say, is more complex, with no simple explanation for problems on a range of tours, and a business that may be leveling out after a couple of extraordinary years when fans rushed to shows after Covid-19 shutdowns.

''I think it's normalized back to the pre-Covid era,'' said Rich Schaefer, the president of global touring at AEG, the company behind tours by Swift and the Rolling Stones. ''Hot acts are going to sell tickets. Middle acts are going to sell, but take longer. And acts that don't have a lot of heat on them are going to struggle.''

In a statement, Live Nation said that so far this year, sales are up from the same point in 2023, with over 100 million tickets sold. ''Every year,'' the company said, ''some events naturally fall off for various reasons, and in 2024 across all venue types we've seen a 4 percent cancellation rate -- which is flat to last year.''

In addition to Swift's Eras Tour, which continues to be a phenomenon in Europe, hot events this year include tours by Olivia Rodrigo, Coldplay, Morgan Wallen and Zach Bryan. Other festivals, like Lollapalooza in Chicago, have had notably strong sales.

Still, prominent cancellations of high-priced shows is another possible P.R. headache for Live Nation, the owner of Ticketmaster, which last month was sued by the Justice Department over accusations that it operates an illegal monopoly that stifles competition and results in high prices and fees. Live Nation has denied those allegations.

The key worry throughout the business is that ticket prices, which have been rising steadily for years, may now be so high that they are deterring fans from all but their once-in-a-lifetime, bucket-list shows. Tickets, even for many major tours, no longer vanish instantly.

When Billie Eilish put her latest arena tour on sale in April, for example, upper-deck seats at some venues were going for over $200, and took weeks to sell.

A joint tour by the rapper Future and the producer Metro Boomin, who shared a pair of No. 1 albums and a chart-topping hit single earlier this year, has also lagged. Even with tickets as low as $44.50, the opening-night concert in Kansas City, Mo., in July, still has thousands of seats for sale at all levels. To the chagrin of underperforming acts, the strength or weakness of sales is now evident in real time on Ticketmaster, which displays blue dots for every unsold seat (and pink dots for ones being offered for resale).

Last year, the average ticket price for one of the top 100 tours around the world was $131, up 23 percent from the year before, according to Pollstar, a trade publication that tracks concert tickets.

Steve Martin of Paladin Artists, a booking agent for classic rock acts like David Gilmour of Pink Floyd, said that below the level of pop superstars like Swift, artists have become acutely aware of the economic pressures facing their fans.

''The meat of the business is made up of things like classic rock packages,'' Martin said. ''Those people are much more price sensitive. ***Working-class*** people are concerned about groceries and the price of gas.''

No single explanation can cover the range of problems in the live market this year. Some tours, like the Black Keys', may simply be a matter of the band overestimating demand.

In 2021, the Black Keys left their longtime manager for a new partnership with Azoff and Moir, who also work with John Mayer and the Grateful Dead spinoff Dead & Co., and the band later praised Azoff's ''focus on touring and selling our tickets.'' But even after a new album -- the band's 12th -- was released in April, concert sales lagged, leading to the cancellations and a housecleaning behind the scenes.

In a social media post after the tour was abandoned, the group said it would ''make some changes'' to its touring plan to offer a more ''intimate experience.'' A representative for the band's label did not respond to a request for comment on the management changes.

Nostalgia alone may not be enough to easily pack venues across the country. Lopez, though still a movie star and a tabloid feature, has not had a hit song in a decade. Tickets to see the ongoing arena tour from Justin Timberlake have been available on both the primary and secondary markets, with prices on StubHub sometimes falling well below face value.

Fans outside of high-demand markets like New York and Los Angeles do not always need to rush the digital queue the moment tickets go on sale. Some genres, like hip-hop, tend to move tickets more slowly than others, but can still sell out before showtime. The latest leg of Nicki Minaj's tour, for example, is a sea of blue dots.

Many factors go into the price of the ticket, from the costs of gas and crew salaries -- which have risen since the pandemic -- to bigger-picture economics amortized over the course of an entire tour. Global promoters like Live Nation and AEG often offer artists a guaranteed payment covering all their shows; a bigger guarantee means that prices must be higher to recoup that investment.

Dan Wall, Live Nation's executive vice president of corporate and regulatory affairs, said that while promoters may suggest pricing based on a deal guarantee, ''it's the artist's team that ultimately decides ticket prices.''

Armchair analysis of ticket sales has become yet another element of modern fandom to be memed and weaponized, upping the stakes. As industry watchers on social media race to demonstrate the dominance of their favorites, screen grabs of available seats for upcoming concerts have gone viral, leading to media coverage.

''I feel like people online just sort of realized that you can look at seat maps and see how shows are doing,'' said Sam Hunt, an executive at the touring agency Wasserman Music. ''So I think part of it is that maybe not a ton has changed in the touring business -- not every swing is a home run -- but people are paying more attention to it and having a typically internet-y response.''

Still, the perception among some music fans is that large-scale concerts are more of a luxury than they once were.

Cliff Russell, 39, said in an interview that his two teenage daughters were interested in seeing blockbuster tours this year from acts like Rodrigo, Drake, Eilish and Swift.

But after the family, living outside Toronto, spent big for tickets to see Swift's Eras Tour in November -- with costs totaling near $3,000 for four tickets, ''not counting transportation, parking, souvenirs'' -- spending another $300 per ticket for upper-deck seats to see another pop star just wasn't in the cards.

''What was once a holy grail ticket price is now the average,'' Russell said. ''You've got to be really picky and choosy.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/arts/music/tours-jlo-black-keys.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/06/arts/music/tours-jlo-black-keys.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: After announcing a North American arena tour, the Black Keys called it off. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BURAK CINGI/REDFERNS, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (C7)

Jennifer Lopez canceled a career-spanning summer arena tour. (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***What’s a Banksy Museum Without Banksy?; Art Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4T-M101-DXY4-X1NK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 30, 2024 Thursday 18:18 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1288 words

**Byline:** Max Lakin

**Highlight:** Work by the anonymous street artist is hard to find. At a museum devoted to him, it’s even harder.

**Body**

Work by the anonymous street artist is hard to find. At a museum devoted to him, it’s even harder.

To enter the [*Banksy Museum,*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) which opened this month above a Bank of America on the lower lip of SoHo, a visitor must wade through the thicket of vendors crowding Canal Street with bootleg Apple products and almost-convincing Prada handbags splayed out on blankets.

It’s a fitting approach. The Banksy Museum does not own or display any actual Banksys but rather 167 decent-enough reproductions of them, life-size murals and paintings on panels treated to look like exterior walls that stretch through an exhibition space, designed to resemble the street.

That these replicas of Banksy’s oeuvre since the late 1990s are more or less faithful to their source material has less to do with the competence of the anonymous artists who executed them than it does with the simplicity of Banksy’s aesthetic: photo-derived stencil work, more about social commentary than technical proficiency.

A Banksy work does not astound with technique or formal innovation, nor is it meant to. Designed to be quickly made and quicker understood, they rely on easy visual gags that don’t always amount to much, all punchline and no windup (a man walking a Keith Haring dog; riot police and protesters having a pillow fight; a boy catching snow on his tongue that’s actually ash from a dumpster fire). His early political satire, like Winston Churchill with a mohawk and teddy bears lobbing Molotov cocktails, had all the profundity of a dorm room poster, a shallow populism that explains his trajectory — populism being a sure route toward cultural phenomenon.

The world’s most famous anonymous street artist, Banksy has traveled that route since the mid-2000s, inspiring a singular devotion. The appearance of a new work is heralded as a cultural event, [*its removal often met with protests*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE). Few other artists are treated as prophet and savior, and fewer still who insist on a complete allergy to public life.

The Banksy Museum embodies these contradictions, probably inadvertently: unauthorized, it’s an act of both admiration and exploitation. It’s also an interesting thought experiment: Can you have a museum with only reproductions? Does street art still function when removed from the street? Can an artist be anti-establishment while still fetching [*millions of dollars at auction*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE)

The Banksy Museum seems to not share these potential hypocrisies. It presents an unequivocal hagiography of Banksy as an art world Robin Hood, unimpeachable in his worldview and incorruptible in his manner of expression. The Banksy Museum is of course not a museum in the strict sense of the word, or even the loose one (it employs no curatorial staff, nor does it conserve or collect any artwork).

It is a museum more in the way the [*Museum of Ice Cream*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) uses the concept: a ticketed, immersive experience where the experience in which you are being immersed is vague. This experience costs $30 for adult entry (children’s tickets are $21), in line with what the Met charges non-New Yorkers, but at least at the Met the Matisses are real.

There is something perverse in paying to experience an ersatz street to look at artificial graffiti, as if the real version wasn’t available outside for free. Between the piped-in soundtrack of police sirens and the hazard markings cordoning each work as if they were crime scenes, the space has the flavor of the life-size warehouse replica in Charlie Kaufman’s [*“Synecdoche, New York”*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) by way of a laser tag arena in a suburban strip mall.

Does New York need a Banksy Museum? The artist has little to do with the city’s rich history of graffiti and style writing. He made a well-publicized visit here in 2013 when he created a few dozen pieces that alluded limply to the city (a rat wearing a Yankees cap; [*the line “This is my New York accent”*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) rendered in a hazy wildstyle approximation) and again in 2018, and then seemed to stop thinking about the place. (One of the only known remaining artworks from the 2013 visit is near Zabar’s, protected by plexiglass.) And for the most part, New York graffitists don’t seem to think about Banksy much either, outside an amusing and certainly one-sided campaign by the tagger Hektad, who has been spraying and pasting forms of “Hektad vs Banksy” around the city for the last 10 years.

In fact, the Banksy Museum is simply the latest of many such Banksy Museums that the Belgian film director and producer Hazis Vardar has opened around the world since his first effort in Paris, in 2019; four are currently open. And Vardar’s museums are just a part of the Banksy cottage-industry. Other unauthorized exhibitions operate around the world; street vendors can reliably be found hawking small imitations.

Banksy’s own philosophy invites such entrepreneurship. “Copyright is for losers,” the artist has mused. And more than lax copyright restrictions, these exhibitions take advantage of a slavering cult of personality, the kind that Banksy himself seems to counsel against, fed by the careful control of his persona and mystique.

The museum devotes a sizable section to Banksy’s ostensible disdain for the art world. “Commercial success is a mark of failure for a graffiti artist,” he told The Village Voice in a rare 2013 interview. It’s a position complicated by his production of sellable objects and multimillion dollar auction prices, the most famous of which is the 2018 spectacle at Sotheby’s, when “Girl With Balloon” [*partly self-destructed*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) after selling for $1.4 million, a stunt meant to satirize the market’s frothing speculative behavior but paradoxically only juiced its value. Sotheby’s [*resold*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) it in 2021 for $25.4 million. It’s hard to have it both ways.

Banksy’s ideas are utterly correct. His anti-establishment paranoid worldview has mostly been borne out: Politicians are largely craven and the wealthy often get away with fleecing the ***working class***, and the art world is largely divorced from reality. But his righteousness is reductive — Children: good. Adults: bad. Government: evil. Money: stupid.

In many ways this endeavor proves his point: Art has become inseparable from commerce. But the Banksy Museum ultimately fails not because of the tourist admission pricing but because any power Bansky’s art possesses derives from the street. “The Banksy Museum” is the kind of thing Banksy himself might produce to mock the market’s fetishization of street art: a simulacrum of the street that sanitizes its life and danger and potential — a totally unnatural, airless tomb. Its most interesting effect may be the way in which it illustrates the limits of control.

Banksy’s 2010 film, [*“Exit Through the Gift Shop,”*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE) purports to tell the story of Thierry Guetta’s rise from vintage clothier in Los Angeles to the inane street art impresario Mr. Brainwash, possibly a Banksy invention, or his own nightmare. It’s a cautionary tale, a criticism of the commodification of street art, once outside the mainstream and now wholly a part of it. Naturally, of course, the Banksy Museum spits you out through a gift shop, the words “exit through the gift shop” stenciled on the floor as a wayfinding gag, winking as it misses the joke.

The Banksy Museum

277 Canal Street, Lower Manhattan; [*museumbanksy.com*](https://museumbanksy.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=sc&amp;utm_campaign=166660_nyc&amp;utm_content=698072427733&amp;utm_term=the%20banksy%20museum%20in%20new%20york%20city_p&amp;gad_source=1&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwgdayBhBQEiwAXhMxtu3pNCpsrhvsVkT_vlROag4AkGfv0d31l3KA_Bn4HJ1H7CKA2tGICRoCvAEQAvD_BwE).

PHOTOS: At the Banksy Museum in SoHo, top, from left: a reproduction of the artist’s 2019 pop-up installation “Venice in Oil”; the Canal Street entrance; “There Is Always Hope (Girl With Balloon),” at left, and “We’re All in the Same Boat,” center. Above, from left: reproductions of “Migrant Child,” “Child With Vulture,” “Raft of the Medusa” and “Steve Jobs — The Son of a Migrant From Syria.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C9.

**Load-Date:** May 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Hopeful Yet Cautious, Biden’s Team Aims to Exploit Trump’s Conviction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C50-59M1-DXY4-X256-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 30, 2024 Thursday 11:29 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1203 words

**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein and Nicholas Nehamas Reid J. Epstein covers campaigns and elections from Washington. Before joining The Times in 2019, he worked at The Wall Street Journal, Politico, Newsday and The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Nicholas Nehamas is a Times political reporter covering the re-election campaign of President Biden.

**Highlight:** The verdict in Manhattan gave the president and his allies a new way to frame the race: a choice between someone who is a felon and someone who is not.

**Body**

The verdict in Manhattan gave the president and his allies a new way to frame the race: a choice between someone who is a felon and someone who is not.

For more than a year, President Biden has sought to cast the 2024 election not as a referendum on his four years in office but on whether voters want to return Donald J. Trump to office after a first term in which he undermined abortion rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Now, Mr. Trump’s [*guilty verdict on all 34 counts in his hush-money trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/30/nyregion/trump-hush-money-verdict.html) on Thursday has given Mr. Biden’s campaign a fresh way to frame the race: a stark choice between someone who is a convicted felon and someone who is not.

Mr. Trump’s conviction could well shake up U.S. politics, serving as a convening moment that cuts through [*a fragmented news media ecosystem*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/30/nyregion/trump-hush-money-verdict.html) even if it does not change pessimism about inflation and the cost of living. Mr. Trump has led many polls, with voters holding dim views of Mr. Biden’s stewardship of the economy, the southern border and foreign wars.

The Manhattan jury’s verdict is likely to focus attention on Mr. Trump in a way that Mr. Biden’s supporters have long hoped it would. Even if Mr. Biden does not directly affix the title “felon” to his rival, scores of his allies are planning to do so in their communications about Mr. Trump through the end of the campaign.

“Donald Trump is a racist, a homophobe, a grifter and a threat to this country,” said Gov. J.B. Pritzker of Illinois, a top Biden surrogate and an influential billionaire donor for Democratic causes. “He can now add one more title to his list — a felon.”

Mr. Biden has to this point said virtually nothing about the New York case against Mr. Trump or any of the other three criminal indictments he faces, trying to stay above the fray as his rival baselessly claims that Mr. Biden orchestrated the charges. And the White House demurred after the verdict: “We respect the rule of law, and have no additional comment,” said Ian Sams, a spokesman for the White House Counsel’s Office.

The Biden campaign was less circumspect. Its aides tried to tie the verdict to the choice voters will face in November.

“Donald Trump has always mistakenly believed he would never face consequences for breaking the law for his own personal gain,” said Michael Tyler, the campaign’s communications director. “Convicted felon or not, Trump will be the Republican nominee for president.”

Mr. Biden, who spent Thursday in Delaware with his family honoring the anniversary of his son Beau’s death, posted a fund-raising appeal on X that read, “There’s only one way to keep Donald Trump out of the Oval Office: At the ballot box.”

But there were signs that the Biden campaign was seeking to restrain fellow Democrats’ jubilation, signaling to surrogates that they should not be overly partisan in their responses to the conviction. Many of the campaign’s usual cadre of top supporters — including Govs. Gavin Newsom of California, Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania, Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Tim Walz of Minnesota and Wes Moore of Maryland — said nothing immediately in public and declined to comment about the verdict early Thursday evening.

Jim Messina, the campaign manager for President Barack Obama’s 2012 campaign, urged caution about the impact of the trial’s outcome.

“Even though he’s a convicted felon, Trump can still win,” Mr. Messina said.

Other allies of the president said Democrats should hammer home the message that Mr. Trump was found guilty of committing crimes to cover up a sex scandal that could have derailed his 2016 campaign.

“All Democrats should be calling this a finding of guilt on election interference,” said Representative Ro Khanna of California.

The president’s campaign expected a fund-raising boost in the immediate hours after the verdict, though officials also expected Mr. Trump to raise significant sums. MoveOn, the progressive advocacy group, took orders for 10,000 free “Trump is a felon” stickers in the first two hours after his conviction. The Republican fund-raising platform WinRed was not working after Mr. Trump’s conviction.

Within minutes of the verdict, Democratic groups began publishing pre-written statements and social media posts. Many referred to Mr. Trump as a “convicted criminal” or “convicted felon,” previewing how outside allies of Mr. Biden intended to use the verdict politically.

Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York, who led two Trump impeachment efforts in the House, called the former president “unfit to serve in any elected office.” Representative Robert Garcia of California, a member of the Biden campaign’s advisory board, said Mr. Trump was “a con man and a criminal.” And Representative Nikema Williams of Georgia said the verdict would make Mr. Trump “an unhinged and even more dangerous candidate.”

Yet the political fallout is uncertain. For weeks, Democratic operatives have debated the utility of polling that suggested a conviction would hurt Mr. Trump among some voters. The former president’s allies are hoping for a prolonged surge of Republican anger that will juice turnout in November.

David Axelrod, an architect of the Obama campaigns, called Mr. Trump’s conviction “uncharted waters” and said the political ramifications were unknowable.

“The question isn’t just how voters react but how Trump himself reacts,” Mr. Axelrod said. “If it causes him to retreat further into rage and self-pity, obsessing over his own grievances rather than addressing the concerns of voters, it may make the difference for people on the bubble.”

How much the verdict breaks through will depend in part on how successful the campaign is at focusing attention on the stakes of the election. Mr. Biden and his campaign have for months sought to make their case on abortion and democracy. In the hours after the conviction, surrogates began working out how to include Mr. Trump’s conviction in their talking points.

“I think this makes the choice even clearer: Do you want a president like Joe Biden, who delivers for ***working-class*** people?” Lt. Gov. Austin Davis of Pennsylvania said in an interview. “Or do you want a president who’s, quite frankly, a convicted felon who’s willing to break the law, who believes he’s above the law?”

And Representative Jasmine Crockett, a Texas Democrat who on Wednesday traveled with Mr. Biden to Philadelphia [*for a campaign event focused on Black voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/05/30/nyregion/trump-hush-money-verdict.html), said she hoped the conviction would be a “rallying cry for the left,” at a time when the president has lost support from some progressives over the war in Gaza.

Speaking from the perspective of a hypothetical progressive voter, Ms. Crockett said: “We’ve got to show up because what will we look like in this world if the president of the United States is a doggone 34-count convicted felon?”

She continued, “We may not love Joe Biden, but we know that Joe Biden is absolutely on a whole other top-tier shelf level than Trump.”

Zolan Kanno-Youngs contributed reporting from Rehoboth Beach, Del.

Zolan Kanno-Youngs contributed reporting from Rehoboth Beach, Del.

PHOTO: President Biden faces stubbornly low approval ratings and has trailed in many polls to former President Donald J. Trump. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael A. McCoy for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[***See the Beatles’ First Tour Through Paul McCartney’s Lens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B95-17X1-JBG3-600G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 9, 2024 Friday 17:46 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1870 words

**Byline:** Lucie Young

**Highlight:** Sixty years after the Beatles appeared live on “Ed Sullivan,” McCartney reflects on his photos capturing those halcyon days. The Brooklyn Museum will exhibit them, and some will be for sale later.

**Body**

Sixty years after the Beatles appeared live on “Ed Sullivan,” McCartney reflects on his photos capturing those halcyon days. The Brooklyn Museum will exhibit them, and some will be for sale later.

They are now a collector’s trove — Paul McCartney’s own photos, shot 60 years ago, when the Beatles took Europe and America by storm: images of screaming fans (one carrying a live monkey); a girl in a yellow bikini; airport workers playing air guitar, and unguarded moments grabbed from trains, planes and automobiles.

McCartney, now 81, doesn’t like to sit still and reminisce about the past, so he chatted while driving home from his recording studio in Sussex, England. “My American friends call these small, one-way lanes ‘gun barrels,’” he said, warning his interviewer that at any moment the signal might die (it did). In the end, it took two days to complete a coherent conversation about the breakthrough period when the Beatles went viral, captured in the traveling exhibition “Paul McCartney Photographs 1963-1964: Eyes of the Storm,” which features 250 of his shots. Currently it’s at [*the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Va.*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/), and comes to the [*Brooklyn Museum*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) May 3-August 18. (Don’t be surprised if the artist shows up for the opening.)

It was McCartney’s archivist, Sarah Brown, who found 1,000 photographs the musician had taken over 12 weeks — from Dec. 7, 1963, to Feb. 21, 1964 — in the artist’s library.

“I thought the photos were lost,” he said. ‘‘In the ’60s it was pretty easy. Often doors were left open. We’d invite fans in.” Even the recording studio wasn’t a safe space. “I was taking my daughter Mary to the British Library to show her where to research for her exams, and in one display case I saw the lyric sheet for ‘Yesterday,’” he said. A sticky-fingered biographer had swiped the original from their studio.

Rosie Broadley, a senior curator at the National Portrait Gallery in London, where the show was inaugurated, said, “His photographs show us what it was like to look through his eyes while the Beatles conquered the world.”

McCartney won an art prize at school and practiced photography with his brother, Mike (who later became a professional photographer). He graduated to a 35 mm SLR Pentax camera when the Beatles hit it big.

“It was the most sophisticated hand-held camera of the era. It would be like having the latest iPhone today,” Darius Himes, Christie’s international head of photography, said, adding: “We were all quite surprised by Paul’s sophisticated eye, and his awareness of trends in the visual arts. The yellow bikini shot is like a striking mix of Stephen Shore, William Eggleston and William Klein.”

The Beatles traveled with a flock of cameramen and were not shy about gleaning tips. McCartney admitted some of his earliest shots in the exhibition are a little fuzzily focused. “I console myself that one of my favorite photographers, [*Julia Margaret Cameron*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/), also liked soft focus,” he said.

“His photos get better as he practices,” Broadley noted. The exhibition, and its accompanying book, take visitors on a whirlwind trip through six cities beginning in Liverpool and London, and ending in Miami. The images from the British leg are exhibited in small ‘‘austerity’’ walnut frames, to indicate Britain was still in throes of a postwar recession. The Fab Four might look nervous in these photos, but they had already reached stardom on their home turf, having bagged three No. 1 singles.

After a brief stint performing at the Olympia in Paris, alongside Sylvie Vartan, they heard that “I Want to Hold Your Hand” was No. 1 on the American charts and sped to New York. The crowning moment in America was their live television debut on the “The Ed Sullivan Show” on Feb. 9, 1964, singing five propulsive pop hits — an event watched by 73 million people.

In Miami, McCartney’s photos burst into Kodachrome color and the newly minted celebrities seem to bloom in glamorous new surroundings: lounging poolside, sipping scotch and riding around in motorboats. By April, the Beatles’ songs held the top five spots on the U.S. Billboard charts.

Musing on the images, he said, “There is an innocence to them,” adding, “I think it was a lot more fun than it was. We worked probably 360 days out of the year.” It was an all too brief halcyon period. Two and a half years later, the Beatles stopped touring. The logistics, the screams, the armored cars, had become a nightmare.

Like most successful artists thriving past retirement age, McCartney has projectitis. He’s working on a new album with the producer [*Andrew Watt*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) (“Hackney Diamonds”), and just released the [*50th anniversary remaster*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) of the Paul McCartney &amp; Wings classic “Band on the Run.” “His live shows continue to be of such high voltage one half expects him to burst into flames,” the Irish poet [*Paul Muldoon*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) wrote in McCartney’s recent book, [*“The Lyrics: 1956 to the Present.”*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/)

His next project is organizing a gallery sale of some of his photographs. “It’s a process I like,” he said, describing the joy of curating. “I’ve done it a few times with Linda’s work” [a reference to his first wife, the photographer, Linda Eastman]. His current homes, shared with his wife [*Nancy Shevell*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/), are adorned with images by Linda and Mary, though, curiously, none of his own. But that may change. ‘‘The sale,” he said, “will probably encourage me to get some for myself.”

Here are edited excerpts from our conversation, in which he reflected on popular images in the exhibition.

John Lennon. London, January, 1964

My favorite photos are of John and George. There’s a huge sentimental aspect to them. No one else could have taken this pic. John was a great character. A very different kind of guy to the other boys I knew. We met at the village fete. He was playing with his band. He was a year and a half older than me [and] my first friend who wore glasses. He was always taking them off and polishing them. I found it fascinating. He’d take them off in public, which rendered him half blind. Onstage, he just stood there and gazed out into the blackness. Maybe it helped him focus on playing.

John, George and Ringo backstage in their dressing room. London, 1963.

We began by playing in really crummy little clubs and bars in Liverpool and Hamburg. In Germany, we slept in a little room, with a Union Jack flag for a blanket. Back in England, it started to get a little better. We played in ballrooms, got radio work and then TV work. It was like a staircase ascent for us. What nobody realized is, by this time [seven months after the Beatles’ first No. 1 hit on the U.K. charts], we were really fully formed beasts. We’d come from the postwar years into a Britain that was now experiencing joy for the first time in decades, and we ate it up.

Self-portraits. Paris, 1964.

Our Pentax cameras were probably a gift. There was a lot of artistic black and white photography emerging at that time. We admired [*David Bailey*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) [who had a Pentax camera], [*Don McCullin*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/), a stunning war photographer, and [*Norman Parkinson*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/). When he took our picture, he’d say ‘give me big eyes’ and we’d all play along. I like to shoot through the mirror because things look good in a mirror. We all smoked. Smoking gave us a suave, grown-up feel. We were pretty young. I was just 21.

Ringo Starr. Paris, 1964.

Our aim was always to have fun. I think that communicates itself and became part of the reason we were so popular. It is just a characteristic of Liverpool people to have a laugh. [Paul snapped this shot of Ringo during a staged photo shoot with [*Dezo Hoffmann,*](https://chrysler.org/exhibition/paul-mccartney-photographs/) one of their court photographers.] Dezo was a very nice guy. He would give us hints as to the aperture and all the various things needed to make a good photograph.

Fans welcoming the Beatles at Central Park. New York, February 1964.

Here’s a pic of Beatles fans acting like they should. … Going crazy! We didn’t know what we were gonna get in America; if anyone would turn out to meet us. On the plane over, the pilot radioed ahead and was told there were gangs of fans waiting. [Over 4,000 screaming girls held back by 200 policemen.] Manhattan was big, tall, loud and brash. There were stories of fans breaking into our room at the Plaza Hotel. Those were more stories than reality. We probably wished it would happen.

Ringo Starr setting up his drum kit during rehearsals for “The Ed Sullivan Show.” New York, February 1964.

We had done television in England, so we were used to it; the cameras and the lights and all that. What we didn’t really know was how important Ed Sullivan was. He was the BIG ONE. There were two stagehands waiting to draw back the curtains for us to go on and one said: ‘You nervous?’ I said, ‘I dunno. Not really.’ He says: ‘You should be. There’s 73 million people watching.’ Then I got nervous. But if you watch that performance, I can’t believe how confident we look. The weird thing about the stage set is Ringo’s [precarious] drum rostrum. I can’t work out how he got up there.

Photographers in Central Park. New York, February 1964.

New York journalists thought they were pretty smart and I’m sure they were used to handling dumb pop stars. We had a lot of fun with them, especially at the news conference at J.F.K. [Airport]. We gave as good as we got. It became a game of who could come up with the smartest answer. Often it was the truth. Someone asked George, ‘Do you ever get your hair cut?’ He said, ‘Yeah, yesterday.’ And he’d been to the barber’s the day before.

Unknown man. Taken from the window of train from New York to Washington, D.C., February 1964.

We loved music and performing. It beat working in a factory. A few years before these pictures, we’d all been fully immersed in ***working class*** life in Liverpool. I have a fascination with ***working class*** people like this man [a railroad worker caught from a train en route to Washington, D.C.]. ***Working class*** people are the smartest people I’ve ever met. My cousin Bert [Danher] was an insurance salesman, but he also compiled crosswords for The Guardian and The Times. The photography I admire is spontaneous, like the work of the great [Henri] Cartier-Bresson. It was good to just grab shots on the run. We didn’t have time to think.

Unknown girl. Washington, February 1964.

Some of my favorite photos are of fans. I really like this one of a young girl with a headscarf looking in a Zen-like manner into my camera. I took it and never looked at it again until I did a print [for the National Portrait Gallery exhibition]. When we started blowing up the images, we got to see all the individual characters. In one photo, at Miami airport, there’s a woman holding up a monkey. You wouldn’t get that past health and safety these days.

George Harrison. Miami Beach, February 1964.

This is George living the life in Miami. [McCartney switched to Kodachrome to record the group’s antics in Florida.] Miami felt like wonderland. These pictures were taken at a time when we were all young and beautiful. I mean these are good looking boys, you know! From this perspective, I feel very blessed to have not only known these guys, but to have worked with them and done such great things with them. I feel very blessed.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL McCARTNEY) (AR14-AR15) This article appeared in print on page AR14, AR15.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2024

**End of Document**



[***36 Hours***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69WD-CP61-JBG3-61K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 16, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Travel Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 402 words

**Body**

Key stops

Wien Museum, which traces 2,000 years of the Austrian capital's history through objects, including relics of ***working-class*** Viennese life and fine art.

Palais Freiluft, in a Baroque palace and its garden, is the Christmas market of choice for those who want a little luxury.

Kikko Ba is an izakaya that combines Japanese influences with Austrian ingredients.

Badeschiff Wien, a boat floating on the canal that cuts through Vienna's center, has several curling rinks on its decks, and a menu of hot winter cocktails.

Where to Eat

Rhiz is a music lounge and bar where D.J.s spin experimental electronic tunes.

Venster 99 is a grungy yet welcoming punk bar that hosts concerts and has a pay-as-you-wish policy.

Öfferl, a bakery with a minimalist look, has a wide selection of breads and an all-day breakfast menu at two of its locations.

Monte Ofelio, a bar and cafe, takes Italian aperitivo culture seriously, with cheeses and meats imported from Italy, and a perfect Negroni Sbagliato.

Skopik & Lohn offers Austrian classics like Wiener schnitzel, along with Italian dishes beloved by Austrians, like gnocchi and vitello tonnato.

Das Werk is a hardcore techno club where the party doesn't start until at least 11 p.m.

Café Rüdigerhof, established in 1902, offers a quintessential Viennese cafe experience, with simple breakfasts and Austrian coffee drinks.

Where to stay

Rosewood Vienna is a luxury hotel in a renovated 19th-century neo-Classical building, where the rooms have been beautifully restored with design references to Viennese history. The bar upstairs offers delightful views over the historic center. Rooms from 525 euros, or about $565, a night.

Hotel Indigo Vienna -- Naschmarkt is a chic and cozy four-star hotel that is an easy subway ride to the First District, and walkable to the boutiques, bars and restaurants of the city's trendier districts. Rooms from ?149.

Hotel Babula am Augarten offers low prices without compromising on space. Rooms are airy, with high ceilings and large windows. Don't expect to find a TV or a mini-fridge in your room, although the hotel's restaurant, Pizza Randale, is just downstairs. Rooms from ?62.

For short-term rentals, consider the Second District for its green areas and plentiful restaurants, as well as its easy access to other neighborhoods, or the Seventh District for its many boutiques, brunch spots and adorable courtyards.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/travel/16hours-vienna-box.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/travel/16hours-vienna-box.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** December 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Trump’s Fate Is Now in the Hands of the Jury***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4N-RC51-JBG3-610D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 29, 2024 Wednesday 20:50 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1285 words

**Byline:** Matthew Cullen

**Highlight:** Also, home insurance rates are clobbering consumers. Here’s the latest at the end of Wednesday.

**Body**

Also, home insurance rates are clobbering consumers. Here’s the latest at the end of Wednesday.

For more than five weeks, a jury of 12 New Yorkers, seven men and five women, sat quietly and listened to arguments from lawyers and testimony from witnesses in the first criminal trial of an American president. Now, [*a decision is in their hands*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Deliberations began today after the judge overseeing Donald Trump’s trial in New York, Juan Merchan, delivered an array of legal instructions to guide the jury. Merchan reminded the jurors to set aside any biases and consider the defendant a peer. The jurors then retreated behind closed doors with the task of reaching a verdict that could either vindicate Trump or sully him as a felon as he seeks to regain the presidency.

They deliberated for more than four hours before Merchan dismissed them for the day. During that time, they sent a couple of notes to the judge, including a request to hear his instructions again. Merchan said that the requests would be addressed tomorrow, when the jury returns for a second day of deliberations.

While the jury could reach a verdict as soon as tomorrow, it also could take several more weeks, or they could fail to reach a verdict at all. Trump has been charged with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records on the eve of the 2016 election, and the jurors’ verdict on each count must be unanimous. If convicted, Trump would face a sentence ranging from probation to four years in prison — although he would be certain to appeal, a process that could take years.

In a separate criminal case, Judge Aileen Cannon has allowed proceedings in Trump’s documents case [*to become bogged down*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Blinken hinted that the U.S. could back strikes in Russia

Secretary of State Antony Blinken suggested today that the Biden administration could be open to tolerating strikes by the Ukrainian military inside Russia [*using American-made weapons.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) He said that the U.S., which has so far opposed such attacks, would “adapt and adjust” its stance based on battlefield conditions.

In recent days, President Biden has come under intense pressure to reverse his position from Ukrainians, Western leaders and even his own advisers. Jens Stoltenberg, the usually cautious NATO secretary general, recently said that cross-border strikes were the only way that Ukraine could counter Russia’s advance in the northeast.

In related news, the Pentagon plans to almost double production of artillery shells by [*opening a new factory in Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) that will keep Ukraine’s artillery crews supplied.

South Africans voted in a crucial election

The African National Congress, or A.N.C., has governed South Africa since the end of apartheid 30 years ago. But for today’s election, polls predicted that the party will [*lose its outright majority*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) for the first time.

Staggering unemployment, poverty, crime and a lack of basic services have left many South Africans fed up with the government. While the A.N.C. receives most of its support from poor and ***working-class*** communities, a growing cohort of Black professionals [*have soured on the party*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Home insurance rates are clobbering consumers

A confluence of frequent storms, labor shortages and inflation caused the average American insurance rates for a home to [*increase last year by more than 11 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money). The biggest jumps occurred in Texas, Arizona and Utah.

Yet the higher insurance costs are not meaningfully raising the nation’s official inflation data, which could help to explain part of the disconnect between how people feel about the economy and how it looks on paper.

More top news

* Middle East: Israel’s national security adviser said that he expected military operations in Gaza to [*continue through the end of the year*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

1. India: New Delhi recorded its highest temperature ever measured today: [*126 degrees Fahrenheit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).
2. Business: ConocoPhillips agreed to [*acquire Marathon Oil for $22.5 billion*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money), the latest in a surge in deal-making that has reshaped the oil industry.
3. Education: Yale chose Maurie McInnis, a cultural historian, to be [*the first woman to serve*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) as the school’s permanent president.
4. Russia: A former deputy sheriff in Florida is now [*a key player in Moscow’s disinformation*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) operations against the West.
5. Judge: Justice Samuel Alito refused calls for his recusal over displays of provocative flags at his homes. [*“My wife is fond of flying flags,” he wrote. “I am not.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money)
6. Mississippi: A group chat provides a record of the day-to-day conversations of a patrol unit that called itself the Goon Squad and [*terrorized residents*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).
7. Pandas: Bao Li and Qing Bao, two furry, adorable diplomats from China, will [*soon be flown to the Smithsonian’s National Zoo*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

TIME TO UNWIND

City Ballet’s once-in-a-generation talent

Mira Nadon, a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, is just 23. But her versatility, artistry and jaw-dropping abandon have made her seem like a ballerina superhero. Last month, she opened the spring season with a commanding solo in George Balanchine’s “Errante.” This week, she stars in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

Our dance critic Gia Kourlas described Nadon as a “once-in-a-generation kind of dancer” with [*a rare ability to be both understated and wild*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Baseball rewrote its record books

The most renowned players in baseball history have sat atop the record books for nearly a century with career averages long considered unbreakable. Ty Cobb was the sport’s leading hitter, and Babe Ruth its leading slugger. Now, Josh Gibson, who played in the ’30s and ’40s for the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Homestead Grays, holds both of those records.

That’s because today, more than 77 years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball’s color barrier, Major League Baseball officially integrated Negro League statistics into its ledgers. My colleague Tyler Kepner [*explained why baseball executives decided to make the change*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money), and just how much of an impact it has on the record books.

Dinner table topics

* Fine specimen: The [*largest stegosaurus fossil*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) ever found, nicknamed Apex, is heading for auction.

1. Awards watch: A few movies shown at the Cannes Film Festival [*could be Oscar contenders*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).
2. Manhattan penthouse: Judge Judy listed her New York City duplex for $9.5 million. [*Take a peek inside*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).
3. Ask our Well desk: Should you [*delay your morning caffeine*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money)

WHAT TO DO TONIGHT

Cook: This beautifully simple [*steak recipe*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) is the one you need to start off summer.

Watch: The documentary “[*MoviePass, MovieCrash*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money)” tells the story of the ill-fated subscription service.

Read: In “[*A Walk in the Park*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money),” the trek of a lifetime becomes a nightmare.

Listen: Check out a few songs from [*African guitar heroes*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Style: Our fashion critic has tips for [*anyone hesitant to wear bright colors*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Write: Calligraphy is having a revival among young people who [*say it offers a meditative escape*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Exercise: Try these [*six water workouts*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

Play: Here are today’s [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money) and [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money). Find [*all of our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

ONE LAST THING

Please do eat the dandelions

A bright and delicious salad can be harvested from your backyard garden without any yearly replanting. Just ask John Forti, who has been tending to the edible perennials growing around his Maine home for more than two decades.

From his garden, Forti harvests sorrel, rhubarb and [*even vibrant flowers like the Scarlet beebalm*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money). He uses them to make soup, snacks and tea. But it’s not just about food; Forti sees the perennials as “a living history,” reminding him of the stories of the people whose plants he inherited.

Have a lush evening.

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back tomorrow. — Matthew

We welcome your feedback. Write to us at [*evening@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/29/nyregion/trump-trial-hush-money).

PHOTO: Donald Trump at the New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan today. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Did New Hampshire Shift to Blue-ish?; Jane Coaston***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B59-HX81-JBG3-6036-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 22, 2024 Monday 12:53 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2469 words

**Highlight:** Why is New Hampshire actually competitive? How has Donald Trump changed politics there? Jane Coaston interviews Dante Scala about what matters this week.

**Body**

Donald Trump won Iowa and wants to win New Hampshire and seal up the nomination. Nikki Haley wants to come from behind, win New Hampshire, and gain some momentum before heading to her home state of South Carolina.

What matters to people in New Hampshire? How has the state’s Republican Party, which gets a major say in the politics of the rest of the country, changed over the last decade with Mr. Trump in the mix? New Hampshire is a very different state from Iowa: In New England, they’re less interested in abortion, and more interested in the kinds of ***working-class*** populism once espoused by a figure like Pat Buchanan and now personified (if not exemplified) by Donald Trump. So I spoke with Dante Scala, a professor of political science at the University of New Hampshire and an expert in presidential primaries and New Hampshire politics.

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: We spoke just before the Iowa caucus and you said that you believed that Nikki Haley was in a strong second place in New Hampshire after Chris Christie’s exit from the race. What did you make of the Iowa results?

Dante Scala: Haley will have to improve her performance markedly among New Hampshire conservatives in order to succeed here. The [*split*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/01/15/iowa-exit-polls-2024/) between moderates and conservatives out in Iowa regarding Haley was eye-popping.

[Before the caucuses, Mr. Scala also mentioned that if Ron DeSantis and Vivek Ramaswamy also dropped out before the New Hampshire primary, as has since happened, it could be a problem for Ms. Haley in New Hampshire.]

Coaston: What separates New Hampshire Republicans from Iowa Republicans in terms of their outlook, their interests, their backgrounds?

Scala: Two main things, I think. Haley said how New Hampshire corrects Iowa and so forth, and that wasn’t the most politic thing to say, but there is some truth to it. It’s one reason why Iowa winners typically don’t gain momentum in New Hampshire. It’s not as if New Hampshire voters haven’t heard of them, but they know what they stand for and they tend to reject it. And what Iowa winners tend to stand for is religious conservatism, evangelicalism, social conservatism, and all of those things are lacking in New Hampshire. We are a very unchurched state as a whole, right?

Very few people go to church here or any kind of religious services regularly, and coincidentally, we tend to be — and this includes Republicans — rather socially moderate on issues like abortion and gay marriage. A typical New Hampshire Republican, I would say, wishes that the abortion issue would just go away. ‘Do we really have to talk about it so much?’ A lot of them are in that rather ambivalent, mushy middle of the country when it comes to abortion politics. But what’s more, they don’t want that to be the issue. That’s one reason why 2022 was such a nightmare for New Hampshire Republicans, aside from some of the candidates they actually nominated. It was that abortion was on the front burner, and the burner was turned up as high as it could be.

There are social conservatives, don’t get me wrong, but they do find themselves on the short end of the stick here. There’s also — you hear it especially with Ron DeSantis — there’s big state versus little state or small state conservatism, and DeSantis with some of his actions in Florida taking on corporations like Disney. He tends to want to use the power of the state in conflicts over culture and so forth. Chris Sununu on the other hand has kind of taken pains to separate himself from DeSantis-style conservatism. On education, he would say: Leave it to the localities, leave it to the towns and municipalities to figure that out. So there’s that as well in New Hampshire, this kind of big state versus small state conservatism.

Coaston: How has Trump changed the Republican Party over the last eight years? And more specifically, how has he changed the kinds of things that voters want from political leadership?

Scala: On the one hand, elites love to tell the story of the primary as this kind of one grand town hall meeting where the townspeople go and ask ever-so-well-prepared questions of the candidate. And the voters deliberate long and hard, see several candidates multiple times, and engage in this exercise in deliberative democracy. That’s how elites like to tell it.

But another history of the New Hampshire primary is much more raw and it’s much more populist, and it’s much more of a ***working-class*** image. You can date it back to Pat Buchanan in the 1990s. I think you can really draw a line from Buchanan in ’92 and ’96 to Donald Trump, circa 2016, except of course Trump was more successful, and it’s that ***working-class*** populism. That’s always been here in New Hampshire politics. One of the real divides among New Hampshire Republicans is along lines of social class and educational attainment.

Polarization by education plays a real role. It has for a long time, and it does today because of Trump. In some ways Trump is a good fit for New Hampshire Republicans because … I mean, Trump never came across as especially religious in 2016, just like a lot of New Hampshire Republicans. A lot of New Hampshire Republicans might mispronounce 2 Corinthians the same way Trump did. Typically the traditional view of the New Hampshire Republican is someone who’s fiscally conservative — someone who’s all about taxes and budgets. But Trump’s style of populism really put that style of New Hampshire conservatism on the back foot.

Coaston: How did Chris Christie’s exit impact the race?

Scala: I saw a [*mailer*](https://twitter.com/Timodc/status/1746187247970402613) that came from Trump’s super PAC on one side was Chris Christie, and it described Chris Christie as the only anti-Trump Republican in the race. The true anti-Trump Republican. And on the other side of the mailer was Nikki Haley, and it described Nikki Haley as a MAGA Republican. And now of course, that mailer came a little bit late. But what’s the psychology of the Chris Christie voter who’s been left at the altar, so to speak, right?

I mean, you were 12 days away from voting for Christie, and now your vote is up for grabs and your candidate deserted you. What’s their willingness to settle? And if they settle, I suspect they’re going to be settling for Nikki Haley because they can live with her. But are they going to cast a vote for someone who is not as anti-Trump as they would like because it’s the only chance they have to beat Trump?

That goes for moderate Republicans, but Democratic-leaning independent, or undeclared voters as we call them here — what are they going to do? Do they see Haley as a bridge too far because in a lot of ways she’s a rather conventional Republican, or do they desire so much to take it to Trump? Do they desire so much to cause him pain at the ballot box that they’re willing to cross party lines and cast a vote for Haley? Basically, I think Haley’s the only game in town for those Christie voters, but as Christie himself [*said*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/chris-christie-tears-into-nikki-haley-for-being-too-nice-to-donald-trump) numerous times, you definitely are settling for something less than you would’ve wished. But it’s a quadrennial event; people get caught up in the excitement. If it really does come down to one or the other, Haley or Trump, that could be hard to resist because what we’ve seen play out in New Hampshire generally speaking during the Trump years is, it’s rocket fuel for the opposition.

Coaston: In September you [*wrote*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/09/01/chris-christie-new-hampshire-2024-00113718), “It’s exceedingly difficult to find a campaign here trying to build something that connects with citizens, that makes its presence known in communities.” Does that end up being the case in New Hampshire? How has the primary system changed over the past few decades? I know those are two questions, but just kind of wanted your take about that.

Scala: I would say, OK, since I wrote that of the campaigns out there, I think Haley was trying to make the most strides in building local organization. I did see a couple of Trump canvassers this week. I guess the difference between Haley and, say, campaigns of bygone years is building that local organization would’ve started months earlier than it did this time around.

But how much of that was a party thing? How much of that is that campaigns no longer buy into physical organizational infrastructure the way they did with the advent of social media and so forth? How much of it was simply that in the shadow of Trump it was difficult to grow anything?

I do think that’s one clear difference we see now versus then, is in bygone years I would hear is you start building a campaign with house parties, and then you gradually build so that your campaign can fill bigger and bigger rooms until you’re filling, let’s say middle school auditoriums with several hundred people the week before the primary.

I think a lot of that is gone now, in part because, and this is true for Democrats as well as Republicans, you have the nationalization of the nomination process where campaigns need to become very big very quickly, and to build a national ID very quickly. So like a Pete Buttigieg, for example, perhaps back in the day, he would’ve been one of those who built slowly, slowly, slowly. But I’d say for the last 20 years, it’s more kind of go big or go home.

Coaston: What are New Hampshire voters looking for?

Scala: Well, among Republicans, probably a pretty close to a majority were never looking for anyone else but the person they knew so well, Donald Trump. To me, this whole past year makes a lot more sense if you think about Donald Trump as the Ronald Reagan of his day. Now, obviously there are limits to that parallel, Reagan stood for different things and all that’s true, but in terms of being a dominant figure. I mean, I got here to New Hampshire for the 2000 cycle so I’ve been here for several now, and I remember before Trump it always seemed to be like Ronald Reagan was always the lodestar that candidates would reference or recall.

It was always about Reaganism, but all along the way, Reaganism was becoming increasingly stale as time passed. But there wasn’t a replacement for Reagan. There was McCain and so forth, but there was never really McCainism, there was the candidate, That changed with Trump. As some of my colleagues have written, he kind of defines ideological labels now. You’re kind of defined ideologically by what you think about Trump.

For others, they’re in a bit of a quandary. You scratch the surface, what was Christie for? We know what he’s against, but what is he for? It was this same old warmed-over Reagan-Bushism, right? There’s some nostalgia that’s present among New Hampshire Republicans, but in some ways the nostalgia is a bit, again, it fills a vacuum because the party has changed with Trump in a way that a coherent counter alternative has not yet solidified. Maybe Haley will find a way to do it, but I think even Haley or DeSantis, they’re going to incorporate parts of Trumpism into their profile.

I remember several years ago seeing the former editor and publisher of the Union Leader, Joe McQuaid and Judd Gregg, former senator, and they were on a panel, and it was fascinating because they both once upon a time represented that ***working class*** versus New England upper class split that, as I mentioned, kind of defined a New Hampshire Republican Party for so long. But then these two were on a panel and they both were kind of anti-Trump.

And it was fascinating to see them both on the same side of something, but I think finding that alternative to Trumpism and kind of awakening to the realities of the party. There are lots of college-educated Republicans who looked around and said to themselves in 2016, who are all these people supporting Trump? It’s the old Pauline Kael joke, right? Now, maybe they do know some of those people, but they don’t know how to beat him yet.

[The film critic Pauline Kael [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/1972/12/28/archives/2-critics-here-focus-on-films-as-language-conference-opens.html), “I live in a rather special world. I only know one person who voted for Nixon. Where they are I don’t know. They’re outside my ken. But sometimes when I’m in a theater I can feel them.”]

Coaston: Do New Hampshire voters see Trump as conservative? And what does the conservative label mean today in New Hampshire? Is it a political identity or kind of a yardstick of an ideology that’s less relevant today?

Scala: What’s interesting to me, and we see this nationally as well, is that back in 2016 Trump was rather nonideological. He came to the table with some very heterodox, unorthodox ideas like protecting spending on entitlements, for instance. That was anything but conservative, at least as traditionally defined, but it’s a testament to Trump’s power that nowadays we look nationally where do very conservative Republicans place themselves? Firmly behind Trump.

Coaston: So my last question, it sounds simple, but I don’t think it is. Why wouldn’t Trump win the New Hampshire primary pretty handily?

Scala: Why wouldn’t he? He wouldn’t win the New Hampshire primary because the electorate turned out to be bigger and more moderate than was expected, both by most pollsters perhaps, and by the Trump campaign itself. I think that in a nutshell is the reason why he would not win, because the electorate, because an awful lot of people jump into the pool, so to speak, including from that body of independent or undeclared voters who are here as free agents who can participate in either party’s primary here in New Hampshire. I mean, on the Democratic side, the Democratic primary if polling’s any indication, and there are other indications as well, Dean Phillips isn’t catching fire.

A lot of people are going to write in Biden. The action is on the Republican side, and Christie’s departure only adds to that. The Trump canvassers handed me [*a card*](https://twitter.com/Graniteprof/status/1744839006586540105/photo/1) when they came to the door, and on the card it said something along the lines of liberals are invading our primary and we have to stop them. That speaks, I think, to the conventional wisdom that Trump’s campaign is much more sophisticated than it was eight years ago. And those two mail pieces confirmed that to me, and they also confirmed that they’re concerned that it is competitive.

They’re running a campaign that will win according to a set of parameters, including turnout. Even the best laid campaign, the best operated campaign can lose control of the parameters of a New Hampshire primary. That’s why they might lose.

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[***Bureaucracy Run Amok?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X047-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 11; LETTERS

**Length:** 1372 words

**Body**

Readers discuss a column by David Brooks decrying expensive and annoying bureaucracy.

To the Editor:

Re ''Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts,'' by David Brooks (column, Jan. 19):

I understand why Mr. Brooks is frustrated by regulations, and by the administrators charged with overseeing them. Clearly, not having such administrators involved could both lower costs and make (some) people's lives easier.

What he doesn't take into account is why those regulations were enacted in the first place, and why administrators are needed to oversee them. Left to their own devices, employers would probably still be hiring people who looked like them. It has taken regulation, and oversight, for women and people of color to have a fair shot in the workplace.

Similarly, absent regulation -- and oversight -- conditions in the workplace would arguably be less safe for those working there.

I know that Mr. Brooks prefers carrots to sticks, and there is a lot to be said for that. Hopefully another column will describe the carrots he recommends putting in place to achieve the social goals that regulations have sought to address.

Lauri SteelLos Altos, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks identifies a clear and growing burden on our society: the bureaucratization of American life. We need to identify why the bureaucratic state has arisen before setting off to fix it; otherwise we are likely to run into resistance to change.

I see three causes. The first is a belief that many who receive government aid are undeserving. Think ''welfare queens.'' The solution was first to root out the ''cheaters'' and then to throw up enough barriers to screen out all but the most determined.

The second is the rise of litigation to right personal injustices, setting off a counteroffensive of action ''theater'' to show courts that governments and corporations were sufficiently considerate.

And the third is a growing recognition that what was once considered ''merit'' is mostly luck. The solution has been yet more theater such as diversity, equity and inclusion (D.E.I.) pledges.

These have not led to truly effective solutions, which has in turn led to rising frustration.

Richard McCannDavis, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks is right on with ''Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts''! If only a fraction of unnecessary bureaucrats were diverted to actually answering telephones (instead of machines that tell us to ''listen carefully, as our menu options have changed''), then we might find more questions answered, more situations resolved and far less public frustration.

Frank WinklerMiddlebury, Vt.

To the Editor:

As a longtime college educator I have witnessed the administrative bloat described by David Brooks. The proliferation of extracurricular programs and initiatives; training procedures for public safety, mental health awareness and information privacy; course website technologies and the army of techs needed to sustain them; increasingly elaborate performance assessments; and byzantine hierarchies of assistant deans and advisers and directors have nearly tripled the university's staff while adding little to (and in many cases diminishing) the faculty. It is no wonder that college tuition has skyrocketed.

As Mr. Brooks rightly says, administrators create systems that require more administrators. They are draining to work with and wasteful of students' money. It is time we pulled the plug on managerial overreach and got back to the basics of learning.

David SouthwardMilwaukee

To the Editor:

I was nodding in agreement while reading this article, from David Brooks's experience with an airline to the part about dealing with his health insurer. I would like to add another huge time- and soul-draining task for physicians: something called maintenance of certification.

This requires physicians to jump through the most ridiculous and costly hoops even after years of treating patients. After 30 years of practicing medicine, I am now required to take an online test quarterly and fulfill compliance requirements that have nothing to do with the way I practice.

This just adds to the many reasons doctors are quitting -- as if dealing with insurance companies was not enough.

Jeannette Greer-BrumbaughSan Marcos, Texas

To the Editor:

I found myself in violent agreement with this column until I got to the last paragraph.

David Brooks writes: ''Trump 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.''

If this is so, please explain why Trump populism embraces elaborate and detailed regulation of women's control of their bodies, micromanagement of libraries to protect ''parental choice'' and control of speech on college campuses.

Unfortunately, both the far left and the far right want an increased bureaucracy as long as it answers to them.

David SilverstoneWest Hartford, Conn.

To the Editor:

David Brooks enunciates the frustration that has fueled public dissatisfaction with government and, to some degree, has fueled the MAGA movement.

My nurse spends the majority of her day trying to obtain benefits for our patients, interfacing primarily with Medicare and pharmacy benefit programs. If we persist long enough, we can usually get approval. But the hope of these administrators seems to be that the height of the hurdles and the time it takes to clear them will discourage us so we give up.

This is why conservatives are so interested in the case before the Supreme Court that could overturn or limit the Chevron doctrine, which says courts should defer to government agencies. The fourth branch of government -- bureaucracy -- is strangling us. Hopefully, we will get some relief.

Timothy J. StoryCarmel, Ind.The writer is an internist.

To the Editor:

David Brooks makes some good points about creeping bureaucracy in our everyday lives, citing, for example, the immense amount of administrative staff making rules in the health care industry.

But I also think Mr. Brooks has done a great job of cherry-picking his examples of unnecessary and burdensome regulation, while not mentioning many areas of everyday life that are screaming for more regulation.

For example, Mr. Brooks does not mention the need for better gun regulation that would help prevent the slaughter of tens of thousands of our citizens every year. And how about reinstating the more than 100 environmental rules that the Trump administration reversed, including those that pertain to carbon dioxide emission limits, drilling and toxic substances? I hope Mr. Brooks might agree that lifesaving rules such as these would not be too odious.

Finally, Mr. Brooks suggests that Donald Trump's populism is, in part, about ''***working-class*** people rebelling against administrators'' in pursuit of their freedom. But freedom comes with some costs and responsibility.

Eric MurchisonVienna, Va.

To the Editor:

David Brooks may be right about the spread of bureaucracy in America, but citing M.I.T. as part of the problem shows a misunderstanding of how our institution works, and, more important, who does that work.

Mr. Brooks said the ratio of faculty to nonfaculty staff is 1 to 8, a slice of the data that is narrowly correct but broadly misleading. At M.I.T., the research and education enterprise requires far more to thrive than our outstanding faculty alone. When you add to the faculty the specialized scientists and instructors who help teach our students and conduct research in our labs -- and graduate students whom we pay to serve as teaching and research assistants -- the ratio of academic to other staff on our campus is nearly 1 to 1.

And those ''nonacademic'' staff are largely dedicated to supporting classrooms and labs as well -- keeping sophisticated research machinery running, keeping the spaces clean, ensuring safety and security, and more. This is not bureaucracy in the way Mr. Brooks decries; these are the essentials of running a top-flight research organization where breakthrough discoveries and innovations provide continuous service to the nation.

Alfred IronsideCambridge, Mass.The writer is vice president for communications at M.I.T.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/opinion/bureaucracy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/opinion/bureaucracy.html)

**Graphic**

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[***New Centrism Is on the Rise In U.S. Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2G-FKB1-DXY4-X0MX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

It may be the most discussed fact about American politics today: The country is deeply polarized. The Republican Party has moved to the right by many measures, and the Democratic Party has moved to the left. Each party sees the other as an existential threat. One consequence of this polarization, politicians and pundits often say, is gridlock in Washington.

But in a country that is supposed to have a gridlocked federal government, the past four years are hard to explain. These years have been arguably the most productive period of Washington bipartisanship in decades.

During the Covid pandemic, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to pass emergency responses. Under President Biden, bipartisan majorities have passed major laws on infrastructure and semiconductor chips, as well as laws on veterans' health, gun violence, the Postal Service, the aviation system, same-sex marriage, anti-Asian hate crimes and the electoral process. On trade, the Biden administration has kept some of the Trump administration's signature policies and even expanded them.

The trend has continued over the past month, first with the passage of a bipartisan bill to aid Ukraine and other allies and to force a sale of TikTok by its Chinese owner. After the bill's passage, far-right House Republicans tried to oust Speaker Mike Johnson because he did not block it -- and House Democrats voted to save Johnson's job. There is no precedent for House members of one party to rescue a speaker from the other. Last week, the House advanced another bipartisan bill, on disaster relief, using a rare procedural technique to get around party-line votes.

This flurry of bipartisanship may be surprising, but it is not an accident. It has depended on the emergence of a new form of American centrism.

The very notion of centrism is anathema to many progressives and conservatives, conjuring a mushy moderation. But the new centrism is not always so moderate. Forcing the sale of a popular social app is not exactly timid, nor is confronting China and Russia. The bills to rebuild American infrastructure and strengthen the domestic semiconductor industry are ambitious economic policies.

A defining quality of the new centrism is how much it differs from the centrism that guided Washington in the roughly quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, starting in the 1990s. That centrism -- alternately called the Washington Consensus or neoliberalism -- was based on the idea that market economics had triumphed. By lowering trade barriers and ending the era of big government, the United States would both create prosperity for its own people and shape the world in its image, spreading democracy to China, Russia and elsewhere.

That hasn't worked out. In the U.S., incomes and wealth have grown slowly, except for the affluent, while life expectancy is lower today than in any other high-income country. Although China, along with other once-poor countries, has become richer, it is less free -- and increasingly assertive.

The new centrism is a response to these developments. It is a recognition that neoliberalism failed to deliver. The notion that the old approach would bring prosperity, as Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, has said, ''was a promise made but not kept.'' In its place has risen a new worldview. Call it neopopulism.

Both Democrats and Republicans have grown skeptical of free trade; on Tuesday, Biden announced increased tariffs on several Chinese-made goods, in response to Beijing's subsidies. Democrats and a slice of Republicans have also come to support industrial policy, in which the government tries to address the market's shortcomings. The infrastructure and semiconductor laws are examples. These policies feel more consistent with the presidencies of Dwight Eisenhower or Franklin Roosevelt than those of Ronald Reagan or Bill Clinton.

The term neopopulism is apt partly because polls show these new policies to be more popular than the planks of the Washington Consensus ever were. Decades ago, politicians of both parties pushed for liberalizing global trade despite public skepticism. In retrospect, many politicians and even some economists believe that Americans were right to be skeptical.

''There is a sense on both the left and right, and among many independents, that the economy hasn't been working in many places,'' Ro Khanna, a progressive House Democrat whose district includes Silicon Valley, told me. Daniel DiSalvo, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, said that more Republicans ''have woken up to the fact that neoliberal policies didn't work out so well for a large coalition of working people.''

As was the case during the 20th century, another important factor is an international rivalry. Then, it was the Cold War. Now, it is the battle against an emerging autocratic alliance that is led by China and includes Russia, North Korea, Iran and groups like Hamas and the Houthis.

''China is a unifying force, absolutely,'' Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, told me. Senator John Fetterman, a Pennsylvania Democrat, compared the rise of artificial intelligence to the Soviet Union's launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, which led to bipartisan legislation on education and scientific research. Anxiety about A.I., Fetterman added, made possible the passage of the semiconductor-chips bill. ''We are most able to come together when we acknowledge the risks we have to the American way of life,'' Fetterman said. ''Whose side are you on -- democracy or Putin, Hamas and China?''

There are certainly limits to the new centrism. The Republican Party has a large isolationist wing, and some progressives question whether American power is a good thing. The Supreme Court, dominated by Republican appointees, largely supports laissez-faire economics. On some divisive social issues like abortion, the prospect of bipartisan federal legislation is scant.

Then there is Donald Trump. He is in some ways part of the new consensus, but he is also hostile to basic democratic traditions, including an independent judiciary and the peaceful transfer of power. If he becomes president again, his promised agenda is sufficiently extreme that it may chill bipartisan cooperation.

Still, the forces that have created neopopulism are unlikely to disappear. They reflect enduring economic and international trends, as well as public opinion.

''I don't mean to suggest everything is fine, because it clearly isn't,'' said Collins, a longtime advocate for bipartisanship. ''But I do think the pendulum is starting to swing back.''

The decline of Reaganism

The rise of partisan polarization occurred over decades, and it had many underlying causes. The two major political parties of the mid-20th century were ideologically inchoate, with conservative Southern Democrats and liberal Northern Republicans. Once the parties sorted themselves more rationally, bipartisanship was destined to become harder.

Personalities played a role, too. Republicans say that the Senate's rejection of Robert Bork's Supreme Court nomination in 1987, despite his legal qualifications, changed Washington. Democrats blame Newt Gingrich, the House speaker in the 1990s, for making Congress a less collegial place.

The apotheosis of the partisan era arguably took place in 2009, shortly after Barack Obama's election as president. Obama had risen to prominence as a champion of compromise and hoped to pass bipartisan bills on health care and clean energy. But Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, believed that allowing Obama to sign such bills would strengthen him, and McConnell persuaded other Republicans to oppose Obama on almost every big policy. ''It's either bipartisan or it isn't,'' McConnell said at the time.

McConnell and his allies also had principled objections to the Democratic agenda. They were laissez-faire Republicans who tended to oppose government intervention in the economy, which meant that they and Obama often struggled to find common ground on policy.

The ascent of Trump changed this dynamic. He won the Republican nomination in 2016 while discarding key parts of Reaganism. It can be difficult to think of Trump as a centrist because of his outlandish comments and far-right views on some subjects. Yet he did move his party toward the middle on several big economic issues. Unlike the Reaganites, Trump criticized free trade and praised government programs like Medicare. He once described himself as ''a popularist.''

To the shock of other Republicans, his rejection of free-market economics did not hurt him politically. It helped him win the nomination, and in the general election he won ***working-class*** voters who had previously backed Obama. Trump's victory made both parties recognize that the Washington Consensus was less popular than they had thought. ''Donald Trump has widened the aperture for policy discussions in the United States,'' Neera Tanden, then the president of the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, and now Biden's domestic policy adviser, said in 2018.

Trump himself remains inconsistent on many policy questions. Even as he talked like a populist president, he installed pro-deregulation cabinet secretaries, and his signature domestic legislation was a nearly $2 trillion tax cut skewed toward the wealthy. If re-elected, he has promised to extend it. He recently reversed his support for a forced sale of TikTok shortly after speaking with a Republican campaign donor whose firm owns a stake in TikTok's parent company.

Nonetheless, Trump's heresy on trade and government intervention has made it easier for other Republicans to moderate their own positions. Daniel Schlozman, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University, notes that Trump's Republican Party demands loyalty on some topics, such as his false claims of election fraud. But the party is less homogenous on other issues than it used to be.

''That is the very weird paradox of this,'' said Schlozman, co-author of ''The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics,'' published this month. ''There is more wiggle room to do ordinary policies like chips and infrastructure even as the party has moved right on the core democracy, will-we-count-the-votes-type questions.''

Biden's bipartisan instincts

The final development that has made possible neopopulist bipartisanship is Biden's presidency.

He has long styled himself as more blue collar than many other Democratic politicians. He has also made it a priority to stay close to the ideological center of his party, and he became the party's leader in 2020, when many policy experts had soured on neoliberalism. And Biden has maintained an almost theological belief in bipartisanship, stemming from a Senate career that began in 1973 -- another era. When he entered the White House vowing to pass bipartisan legislation, many political analysts scoffed. The country, they said, was too polarized.

But Biden persisted, often working in the background. A bill's chance of passage was higher, he believed, if he could avoid becoming the face of the bill. ''He has been patient and helpful in either stepping back when he needs to or stepping in when he needs to,'' Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, said. Whatever Biden's weaknesses as president, his record of signing bipartisan legislation exceeds that of any recent predecessor. On infrastructure, for example, 19 of the Senate's 50 Republicans voted for the bill, including McConnell.

As that breakdown highlights, most congressional Republicans have still not signed onto the neopopulist agenda. The bipartisan majorities have tended to include nearly all Democrats and a minority of Republicans. ''Until they're ready to say no on $2 trillion of tax cuts, I don't see them as economic populists,'' Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts told me, referring to Trump's original tax cut. ''But it is true that there are now some Republicans who are willing to question the deregulated markets that have ripped off consumers for decades.''

Warren herself has worked with Senator Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, on legislation that would force airlines to reimburse passengers for canceled flights and with Senator Roger Marshall, a Kansas Republican, on a bill to regulate cryptocurrency.

Another neopopulist moment occurred in February when Senator J.D. Vance, an Ohio Republican, praised Lina Khan, the antimonopoly crusader whom Biden appointed to run the Federal Trade Commission, for ''doing a pretty good job.'' Vance is a right-wing Republican whom Trump is considering as his 2024 running mate, while Khan is among the progressive stalwarts of the Biden administration. Yet Vance chose Khan as the one member of the administration he was willing to praise.

In part, this fusing of right and left is a sign that politicians are reacting rationally to voters' views. Many political elites -- including campaign donors, think-tank experts and national journalists -- have long misread public opinion. The center of it does not revolve around the socially liberal, fiscally conservative views that many elites hold. It tends to be the opposite.

Americans lean left on economic policy. Polls show that they support restrictions on trade, higher taxes on the wealthy and a strong safety net. Most Americans are not socialists, but they do favor policies to hold down the cost of living and create good-paying jobs. These views help explain why ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage and expand Medicaid have passed even in red states. They also explain why some parts of Biden's agenda that Republicans uniformly opposed, such as a law reducing medical costs, are extremely popular. ''This is where the center of gravity in the country is,'' Steve Ricchetti, a top White House official, told me.

The story is different on social and cultural issues. Americans lean right on many of those issues, polls show (albeit not as far right as the Republican Party has moved on abortion).

The clearest example in the Biden era is immigration. A core tenet of neoliberalism, once supported by both parties, is high immigration. Along with the freer movement of goods and capital, neoliberalism calls for the freer movement of people.

Most voters, especially ***working-class*** voters, feel differently. The soaring level of immigration during Biden's presidency, much of it illegal, has become a political liability, and it nearly led to another piece of neopopulist legislation this year. Senate Democrats and Republicans put together a plan to strengthen border security. It was the mirror image of Republicans' agreeing to support the semiconductor and infrastructure bills: This time, some Democrats abandoned a policy stance that was out of step with public opinion.

The immigration proposal never became law because Trump viewed it as politically helpful to Biden and persuaded congressional Republicans to kill it. But in 2025 or beyond, whether Biden or Trump is president, a version of the bill may come up again. Polls show that the plan's policies remain very popular.

A more responsive politics

What other neopopulist policies might lie ahead? More legislation to address China's rise and more industrial policy are possible. A bill to ensure that the United States has access to critical minerals like lithium and copper would qualify as both.

Policies to help young families are plausible, too, predicted Oren Cass, who runs American Compass, a conservative think tank that is critical of laissez-faire economics. In January, a large bipartisan House majority passed an expanded child tax credit, although it has not passed the Senate.

There are elements of populism that make many people uncomfortable, of course. Populism can veer into authoritarianism, as Trump often demonstrates. If he returns to the White House, his second term may be so chaotic and radical that it will halt the bipartisan productivity of the past few years. But Trump is not the only threat to the American political system.

For decades, Washington pursued a set of policies that many voters disliked and that did not come close to delivering their promised results. Many citizens have understandably become frustrated. That frustration has led to the stirrings of a neopopulism that seeks to reinvigorate the American economy and compete with the country's global rivals. As polarized as the country is, its two political parties are at least trying to respond to that reality, and they have found an unexpected amount of common ground.

Ian Prasad Philbrick contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/19/briefing/a-new-centrism-is-rising-in-washington.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/19/briefing/a-new-centrism-is-rising-in-washington.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A1, A20.

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[***A New Centrism Is Rising in Washington***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2F-KS61-DXY4-X0D0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 19, 2024 Sunday 10:13 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 2767 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:** Call it neopopulism: a bipartisan attitude that mistrusts the free-market ethos instead of embracing it.

**Body**

It may be the most discussed fact about American politics today: The country is deeply polarized. The Republican Party has moved to the right by many measures, and the Democratic Party has moved to the left. Each party sees the other as an existential threat. One consequence of this polarization, politicians and pundits often say, is gridlock in Washington.

But in a country that is supposed to have a gridlocked federal government, the past four years are hard to explain. These years have been arguably the most productive period of [*Washington bipartisanship*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in decades.

During the Covid pandemic, Democrats and Republicans in Congress came together to pass emergency responses. Under President Biden, bipartisan majorities have passed major laws on infrastructure and semiconductor chips, as well as laws on veterans’ health, gun violence, the Postal Service, the aviation system, same-sex marriage, anti-Asian hate crimes and the electoral process. On trade, the Biden administration has kept some of the Trump administration’s signature policies and even expanded them.

The trend has continued over the past month, first with the passage of a bipartisan bill to aid Ukraine and other allies and to force a sale of TikTok by its Chinese owner. After the bill’s passage, far-right House Republicans tried to oust Speaker Mike Johnson because he did not block it — and House Democrats voted to save Johnson’s job. There is no precedent for House members of one party [*to rescue a speaker*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) from the other. Last week, the House advanced [*another bipartisan bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), on disaster relief, using a rare procedural technique to get around party-line votes.

This flurry of bipartisanship may be surprising, but it is not an accident. It has depended on the emergence of a new form of American centrism.

The very notion of centrism is anathema to many progressives and conservatives, conjuring a mushy moderation. But the new centrism is not always so moderate. Forcing the sale of a popular social app is not exactly timid, nor is confronting China and Russia. The bills to rebuild American infrastructure and strengthen the domestic semiconductor industry are ambitious economic policies.

A defining quality of the new centrism is how much it differs from the centrism that guided Washington in the roughly quarter-century after the end of the Cold War, starting in the 1990s. That centrism — alternately called the Washington Consensus or neoliberalism — was based on the idea that market economics had triumphed. By lowering trade barriers and ending the era of big government, the United States would both create prosperity for its own people and shape the world in its image, spreading democracy to China, Russia and elsewhere.

That hasn’t worked out. In the U.S., incomes and wealth have grown slowly, except for the affluent, while life expectancy is lower today [*than in any other high-income country*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Although China, along with other once-poor countries, has become richer, it is less free — and increasingly assertive.

The new centrism is a response to these developments. It is a recognition that neoliberalism failed to deliver. The notion that the old approach would bring prosperity, as Jake Sullivan, Biden’s national security adviser, [*has said*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), “was a promise made but not kept.” In its place has risen a new worldview. Call it neopopulism.

Both Democrats and Republicans have grown skeptical of free trade; on Tuesday, Biden [*announced*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) increased tariffs on several Chinese-made goods, in response to Beijing’s subsidies. Democrats and a slice of Republicans have also come to support industrial policy, in which the government tries to address the market’s shortcomings. The infrastructure and semiconductor laws are examples. These policies feel more consistent with the presidencies of Dwight Eisenhower or Franklin Roosevelt than those of Ronald Reagan or Bill Clinton.

The term neopopulism is apt partly because polls show these new policies to be more popular than the planks of the Washington Consensus ever were. Decades ago, politicians of both parties pushed for liberalizing global trade despite public skepticism. In retrospect, many politicians and even some economists believe that Americans were right to be skeptical.

“There is a sense on both the left and right, and among many independents, that the economy hasn’t been working in many places,” Ro Khanna, a progressive House Democrat whose district includes Silicon Valley, told me. Daniel DiSalvo, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, said that more Republicans “have woken up to the fact that neoliberal policies didn’t work out so well for a large coalition of working people.”

As was the case during the 20th century, another important factor is an international rivalry. Then, it was the Cold War. Now, it is the battle against an emerging autocratic alliance that is led by China and includes Russia, North Korea, Iran and groups like Hamas and the Houthis.

“China is a unifying force, absolutely,” Senator Susan Collins, a Maine Republican, told me. Senator John Fetterman, a Pennsylvania Democrat, compared the rise of artificial intelligence to the Soviet Union’s launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, which led to bipartisan legislation on education and scientific research. Anxiety about A.I., Fetterman added, made possible the passage of the semiconductor-chips bill. “We are most able to come together when we acknowledge the risks we have to the American way of life,” Fetterman said. “Whose side are you on — democracy or Putin, Hamas and China?”

There are certainly limits to the new centrism. The Republican Party has a large isolationist wing, and some progressives question whether American power is a good thing. The Supreme Court, dominated by Republican appointees, largely supports laissez-faire economics. On some divisive social issues like abortion, the prospect of bipartisan federal legislation is scant.

Then there is Donald Trump. He is in some ways part of the new consensus, but he is also hostile to basic democratic traditions, including an independent judiciary and the peaceful transfer of power. If he becomes president again, [*his promised agenda*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) is sufficiently extreme that it may chill bipartisan cooperation.

Still, the forces that have created neopopulism are unlikely to disappear. They reflect enduring economic and international trends, as well as public opinion.

“I don’t mean to suggest everything is fine, because it clearly isn’t,” said Collins, a longtime advocate for bipartisanship. “But I do think the pendulum is starting to swing back.”

The decline of Reaganism

The rise of partisan polarization occurred over decades, and it had many underlying causes. The two major political parties of the mid-20th century were ideologically inchoate, with conservative Southern Democrats and liberal Northern Republicans. Once the parties sorted themselves more rationally, bipartisanship was destined to become harder.

Personalities played a role, too. Republicans say that the Senate’s rejection of Robert Bork’s Supreme Court nomination in 1987, despite his legal qualifications, changed Washington. Democrats blame Newt Gingrich, the House speaker in the 1990s, for making Congress a less collegial place.

The apotheosis of the partisan era arguably took place in 2009, shortly after Barack Obama’s election as president. Obama had risen to prominence as a champion of compromise and hoped to pass bipartisan bills on health care and clean energy. But Mitch McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, believed that allowing Obama to sign such bills would strengthen him, and McConnell persuaded other Republicans to oppose Obama on almost every big policy. “It’s either bipartisan or it isn’t,” [*McConnell said at the time*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

McConnell and his allies also had principled objections to the Democratic agenda. They were laissez-faire Republicans who tended to oppose government intervention in the economy, which meant that they and Obama often struggled to find common ground on policy.

The ascent of Trump changed this dynamic. He won the Republican nomination in 2016 while discarding key parts of Reaganism. It can be difficult to think of Trump as a centrist because of his outlandish comments and far-right views on some subjects. Yet he did move his party toward the middle on several big economic issues. Unlike the Reaganites, Trump criticized free trade and praised government programs like Medicare. He once described himself as “[*a popularist*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).”

To the shock of other Republicans, his rejection of free-market economics did not hurt him politically. It helped him win the nomination, and in the general election he won ***working-class*** voters who had previously backed Obama. Trump’s victory made both parties recognize that the Washington Consensus was less popular than they had thought. “Donald Trump has widened the aperture for policy discussions in the United States,” Neera Tanden, then the president of the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, and now Biden’s domestic policy adviser, said in 2018.

Trump himself remains inconsistent on many policy questions. Even as he talked like a populist president, he installed pro-deregulation cabinet secretaries, and his signature domestic legislation was a nearly $2 trillion tax cut skewed toward the wealthy. If re-elected, he has promised to extend it. He recently [*reversed his support*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for a forced sale of TikTok shortly after speaking with a Republican campaign donor whose firm owns a stake in TikTok’s parent company.

Nonetheless, Trump’s heresy on trade and government intervention has made it easier for other Republicans to moderate their own positions. Daniel Schlozman, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University, notes that Trump’s Republican Party demands loyalty on some topics, such as his false claims of election fraud. But the party is less homogenous on other issues than it used to be.

“That is the very weird paradox of this,” said Schlozman, co-author of “The Hollow Parties: The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics,” [*published this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). “There is more wiggle room to do ordinary policies like chips and infrastructure even as the party has moved right on the core democracy, will-we-count-the-votes-type questions.”

Biden’s bipartisan instincts

The final development that has made possible neopopulist bipartisanship is Biden’s presidency.

He has long styled himself as [*more blue collar*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) than many other Democratic politicians. He has also made it a priority to stay close to the ideological center of his party, and he became the party’s leader in 2020, when many policy experts had [*soured on neoliberalism*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). And Biden has maintained an almost theological belief in bipartisanship, stemming from a Senate career that began in 1973 — another era. When he entered the White House vowing to pass bipartisan legislation, many political analysts scoffed. The country, they said, was too polarized.

But Biden persisted, often working in the background. A bill’s chance of passage was higher, he believed, if he could avoid becoming the face of the bill. “He has been patient and helpful in either stepping back when he needs to or stepping in when he needs to,” Senator Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, said. Whatever Biden’s weaknesses as president, [*his record of signing bipartisan legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) exceeds that of any recent predecessor. On infrastructure, for example, 19 of the Senate’s 50 Republicans voted for the bill, including McConnell.

As that breakdown highlights, most congressional Republicans have still not signed onto the neopopulist agenda. The bipartisan majorities have tended to include nearly all Democrats and a minority of Republicans. “Until they’re ready to say no on $2 trillion of tax cuts, I don’t see them as economic populists,” Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts told me, referring to Trump’s original tax cut. “But it is true that there are now some Republicans who are willing to question the deregulated markets that have ripped off consumers for decades.”

Warren herself has worked with Senator Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, on legislation that would force airlines to [*reimburse passengers*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) for canceled flights and with Senator Roger Marshall, a Kansas Republican, on a bill to regulate cryptocurrency.

Another neopopulist moment occurred in February when Senator J.D. Vance, an Ohio Republican, praised Lina Khan, the antimonopoly crusader whom Biden appointed to run the Federal Trade Commission, for [*“doing a pretty good job.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) Vance is a right-wing Republican whom Trump is considering as his 2024 running mate, while Khan is among the progressive stalwarts of the Biden administration. Yet Vance chose Khan as the one member of the administration he was willing to praise.

In part, this fusing of right and left is a sign that politicians are reacting rationally to voters’ views. Many political elites — including campaign donors, think-tank experts and national journalists — have long misread public opinion. The center of it does not revolve around the socially liberal, fiscally conservative views that many elites hold. It tends to be the opposite.

Americans [*lean left*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) on economic policy. Polls show that they support restrictions on trade, higher taxes on the wealthy and a strong safety net. Most Americans are not socialists, but they do favor policies to hold down the cost of living and create good-paying jobs. These views help explain why ballot initiatives to raise the minimum wage and expand Medicaid have passed even in red states. They also explain why some parts of Biden’s agenda that Republicans uniformly opposed, such as a law reducing medical costs, [*are extremely popular*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). “This is where the center of gravity in the country is,” Steve Ricchetti, a top White House official, told me.

The story is different on social and cultural issues. Americans [*lean right*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) on many of those issues, polls show (albeit not as far right as the Republican Party has moved on abortion).

The clearest example in the Biden era is immigration. A core tenet of neoliberalism, once supported by both parties, is high immigration. Along with the freer movement of goods and capital, neoliberalism calls for the freer movement of people.

Most voters, especially ***working-class*** voters, feel differently. The soaring level of immigration during Biden’s presidency, much of it illegal, has become [*a political liability*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), and it nearly led to another piece of neopopulist legislation this year. Senate Democrats and Republicans put together a plan to strengthen border security. It was the mirror image of Republicans’ agreeing to support the semiconductor and infrastructure bills: This time, some Democrats abandoned a policy stance that was out of step with public opinion.

The immigration proposal never became law because Trump viewed it as politically helpful to Biden and persuaded congressional Republicans [*to kill it*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). But in 2025 or beyond, whether Biden or Trump is president, a version of the bill may come up again. Polls show that the plan’s policies remain very popular.

A more responsive politics

What other neopopulist policies might lie ahead? More legislation to address China’s rise and more industrial policy are possible. A bill to ensure that the United States has access to critical minerals like lithium and copper would qualify as both.

Policies to help young families are plausible, too, predicted Oren Cass, who runs American Compass, a conservative think tank that is critical of laissez-faire economics. In January, a large bipartisan House majority passed [*an expanded child tax credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), although it has not passed the Senate.

There are elements of populism that make many people uncomfortable, of course. Populism can veer into authoritarianism, as Trump often demonstrates. If he returns to the White House, his second term may be so chaotic and radical that it will halt the bipartisan productivity of the past few years. But Trump is not the only threat to the American political system.

For decades, Washington pursued a set of policies that many voters disliked and that [*did not come close*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to delivering their promised results. Many citizens have understandably become frustrated. That frustration has led to the stirrings of a neopopulism that seeks to reinvigorate the American economy and compete with the country’s global rivals. As polarized as the country is, its two political parties are at least trying to respond to that reality, and they have found an unexpected amount of common ground.

Ian Prasad Philbrick contributed reporting.

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[***Bureaucracy Run Amok in America?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7W-H8M1-JBG3-600M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 3, 2024 Saturday 08:54 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1358 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss a column by David Brooks decrying expensive and annoying bureaucracy.

**Body**

Readers discuss a column by David Brooks decrying expensive and annoying bureaucracy.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/18/opinion/american-life-bureaucracy.html),” by David Brooks (column, Jan. 19):

I understand why Mr. Brooks is frustrated by regulations, and by the administrators charged with overseeing them. Clearly, not having such administrators involved could both lower costs and make (some) people’s lives easier.

What he doesn’t take into account is why those regulations were enacted in the first place, and why administrators are needed to oversee them. Left to their own devices, employers would probably still be hiring people who looked like them. It has taken regulation, and oversight, for women and people of color to have a fair shot in the workplace.

Similarly, absent regulation — and oversight — conditions in the workplace would arguably be less safe for those working there.

I know that Mr. Brooks prefers carrots to sticks, and there is a lot to be said for that. Hopefully another column will describe the carrots he recommends putting in place to achieve the social goals that regulations have sought to address.

Lauri Steel

Los Altos, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks identifies a clear and growing burden on our society: the bureaucratization of American life. We need to identify why the bureaucratic state has arisen before setting off to fix it; otherwise we are likely to run into resistance to change.

I see three causes. The first is a belief that many who receive government aid are undeserving. Think “welfare queens.” The solution was first to root out the “cheaters” and then to throw up enough barriers to screen out all but the most determined.

The second is the rise of litigation to right personal injustices, setting off a counteroffensive of action “theater” to show courts that governments and corporations were sufficiently considerate.

And the third is a growing recognition that what was once considered “merit” is mostly luck. The solution has been yet more theater such as diversity, equity and inclusion (D.E.I.) pledges.

These have not led to truly effective solutions, which has in turn led to rising frustration.

Richard McCann

Davis, Calif.

To the Editor:

David Brooks is right on with “Death by a Thousand Paper Cuts”! If only a fraction of unnecessary bureaucrats were diverted to actually answering telephones (instead of machines that tell us to “listen carefully, as our menu options have changed”), then we might find more questions answered, more situations resolved and far less public frustration.

Frank Winkler

Middlebury, Vt.

To the Editor:

As a longtime college educator I have witnessed the administrative bloat described by David Brooks. The proliferation of extracurricular programs and initiatives; training procedures for public safety, mental health awareness and information privacy; course website technologies and the army of techs needed to sustain them; increasingly elaborate performance assessments; and byzantine hierarchies of assistant deans and advisers and directors have nearly tripled the university’s staff while adding little to (and in many cases diminishing) the faculty. It is no wonder that college tuition has skyrocketed.

As Mr. Brooks rightly says, administrators create systems that require more administrators. They are draining to work with and wasteful of students’ money. It is time we pulled the plug on managerial overreach and got back to the basics of learning.

David Southward

Milwaukee

To the Editor:

I was nodding in agreement while reading this article, from David Brooks’s experience with an airline to the part about dealing with his health insurer. I would like to add another huge time- and soul-draining task for physicians: something called maintenance of certification.

This requires physicians to jump through the most ridiculous and costly hoops even after years of treating patients. After 30 years of practicing medicine, I am now required to take an online test quarterly and fulfill compliance requirements that have nothing to do with the way I practice.

This just adds to the many reasons doctors are quitting — as if dealing with insurance companies was not enough.

Jeannette Greer-Brumbaugh

San Marcos, Texas

To the Editor:

I found myself in violent agreement with this column until I got to the last paragraph.

David Brooks writes: “Trump 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.”

If this is so, please explain why Trump populism embraces elaborate and detailed regulation of women’s control of their bodies, micromanagement of libraries to protect “parental choice” and control of speech on college campuses.

Unfortunately, both the far left and the far right want an increased bureaucracy as long as it answers to them.

David Silverstone

West Hartford, Conn.

To the Editor:

David Brooks enunciates the frustration that has fueled public dissatisfaction with government and, to some degree, has fueled the MAGA movement.

My nurse spends the majority of her day trying to obtain benefits for our patients, interfacing primarily with Medicare and pharmacy benefit programs. If we persist long enough, we can usually get approval. But the hope of these administrators seems to be that the height of the hurdles and the time it takes to clear them will discourage us so we give up.

This is why conservatives are so interested in the case before the Supreme Court that could overturn or limit the Chevron doctrine, which says courts should defer to government agencies. The fourth branch of government — bureaucracy — is strangling us. Hopefully, we will get some relief.

Timothy J. Story

Carmel, Ind.

The writer is an internist.

To the Editor:

David Brooks makes some good points about creeping bureaucracy in our everyday lives, citing, for example, the immense amount of administrative staff making rules in the health care industry.

But I also think Mr. Brooks has done a great job of cherry-picking his examples of unnecessary and burdensome regulation, while not mentioning many areas of everyday life that are screaming for more regulation.

For example, Mr. Brooks does not mention the need for better gun regulation that would help prevent the slaughter of tens of thousands of our citizens every year. And how about reinstating the [*more than 100 environmental rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/climate/trump-environment-rollbacks-list.html) that the Trump administration reversed, including those that pertain to carbon dioxide emission limits, drilling and toxic substances? I hope Mr. Brooks might agree that lifesaving rules such as these would not be too odious.

Finally, Mr. Brooks suggests that Donald Trump’s populism is, in part, about “***working-class*** people rebelling against administrators” in pursuit of their freedom. But freedom comes with some costs and responsibility.

Eric Murchison

Vienna, Va.

To the Editor:

David Brooks may be right about the spread of bureaucracy in America, but citing M.I.T. as part of the problem shows a misunderstanding of how our institution works, and, more important, who does that work.

Mr. Brooks said the ratio of faculty to nonfaculty staff is 1 to 8, a slice of the data that is narrowly correct but broadly misleading. At M.I.T., the research and education enterprise requires far more to thrive than our outstanding faculty alone. When you add to the faculty the specialized scientists and instructors who help teach our students and conduct research in our labs — and graduate students whom we pay to serve as teaching and research assistants — the ratio of academic to other staff on our campus is nearly 1 to 1.

And those “nonacademic” staff are largely dedicated to supporting classrooms and labs as well — keeping sophisticated research machinery running, keeping the spaces clean, ensuring safety and security, and more. This is not bureaucracy in the way Mr. Brooks decries; these are the essentials of running a top-flight research organization where breakthrough discoveries and innovations provide continuous service to the nation.

Alfred Ironside

Cambridge, Mass.

The writer is vice president for communications at M.I.T.

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

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[***From Courtroom to Downing Street: Keir Starmer Is on the Cusp of Power***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CCT-VGH1-JBG3-6013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2024 Tuesday 15:48 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1687 words

**Byline:** Stephen Castle and Mark Landler Stephen Castle is a London correspondent of The Times, writing widely about Britain, its politics and the country&amp;#8217;s relationship with Europe. 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:** The Labour leader still struggles with the “performative side” of British politics, even as he has pulled his party to the center.

**Body**

The Labour leader still struggles with the “performative side” of British politics, even as he has pulled his party to the center.

Follow our [*live updates on the U.K. election*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/04/world/uk-election-results).

Keir Starmer, the leader of [*Britain’s Labour Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/04/world/uk-election-results), nodded sympathetically as a young mother recalled, in harrowing terms, how she had watched closed-circuit television footage of the fatal stabbing of her 21-year-old son, whose heart was pierced with a single blow.

“Thank you for that,” a somber Mr. Starmer said to the woman and other relatives of victims of knife attacks, as they stood around a wooden table last week, discussing ways to combat violent crime. “It’s really, really powerful.”

It was not the most feel-good campaign event for [*a candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/04/world/uk-election-results) the week before an election that his opposition party is widely expected to win. But it was entirely in character for Mr. Starmer, a 61-year-old former human rights lawyer who still behaves less like a politician than a prosecutor bringing a case.

Earnest, intense, practical and not brimming with charisma, Mr. Starmer finds himself on the cusp of a potential landslide victory without the star quality that marked previous British leaders on the doorstep of power, whether Margaret Thatcher, the 1980s free-market champion, or Tony Blair, the avatar of “Cool Britannia.”

And yet Mr. Starmer has managed an arguably comparable political feat: Less than a decade after entering Parliament, and fewer than five years after his party suffered its worst election defeat since the 1930s, he has remade Labour with ruthless efficiency into an electable party, pulling it to the center on key policies while capitalizing on the failings of three Conservative prime ministers.

“Don’t forget what they have done,” Mr. Starmer told a rally in London on Saturday, pacing the stage in a pressed white shirt with sleeves rolled up. “Don’t forget party-gate, don’t forget the Covid contract, don’t forget the lies, don’t forget the kickbacks.”

In listing this parade of Conservative scandals and crises, he brought the crowd of 350 to its feet. But it was a rare moment of fire, which captures the conundrum of Mr. Starmer.

The polls that predict his party will win a lopsided majority in Parliament on Thursday also suggest that he is unloved by British voters. They struggle to warm to a man who seems less at ease in the political arena than in the courtroom where he excelled.

“He doesn’t do the performative side of politics,” said Tom Baldwin, a former Labour Party adviser who has published a biography of Mr. Starmer. While other politicians aspire to soaring rhetoric, Mr. Starmer talks earnestly about practical problem-solving and placing building blocks on each other.

“No one’s going to watch that,” Mr. Baldwin said. “It’s boring. But at the end of it, you might find he’s built a house.”

Jill Rutter, a former senior civil servant who is a research fellow at the London research group U.K. in a Changing Europe, said: “He has been ferociously — some would say tediously — boring in his discipline. He’s not going to set hearts racing, but he does look relatively prime-ministerial.”

Raised in a ***working-class*** family in Surrey, outside London, Mr. Starmer did not have an easy childhood. His relationship with his father, a toolmaker, was distant. His mother, a nurse, suffered a debilitating illness that took her in and out of the hospital. Mr. Starmer became the first college graduate in his family, studying first at Leeds University, and then law at Oxford.

His was a left-wing household. Mr. Starmer was named after Keir Hardie, the Scottish trade unionist and Labour’s first leader. He later recalled wishing as a teenager that he had been called Dave or Pete instead.

As a young lawyer, Mr. Starmer represented protesters accused of libel by the fast-food chain McDonald’s, rose to become Britain’s chief prosecutor and was awarded a knighthood. Even then, he used his legal brain to convince judges rather than courtroom theatrics to sway juries, a plain-vanilla reputation that followed him into politics.

Boris Johnson, the former prime minister, who debated him in Parliament, once labeled him “Captain Crasheroonie Snoozefest.”

Mr. Starmer may lack his rival’s glib one-liners, but he turned his forensic skills on the scandal-scarred Mr. Johnson, helping to expose untruths he told about Downing Street parties held during Covid lockdowns.

When Conservatives questioned whether Mr. Starmer, too, had violated lockdown rules by having a beer and an Indian takeout dinner with colleagues in April 2021, he vowed to step down if the police found he had been in the wrong. He was cleared — an episode that allies said showcased his rigorous adherence to the rules and offered a stark contrast to the leaders of the Conservative Party.

But Mr. Starmer’s political compromises have raised questions about his approach. He served the left-wing former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, taking charge of Brexit policy at a time when many of the party’s moderates refused to join his team.

When Mr. Corbyn stepped down after losing in 2019, Mr. Starmer positioned himself as his successor, winning on a platform that included enough of Mr. Corbyn’s policies to placate the party’s then-powerful left-wing.

Once elected, however, Mr. Starmer seized control of the party machinery and executed a remarkable pivot to the political center. He dropped Mr. Corbyn’s proposal to nationalize Britain’s energy industry, promised not to raise taxes on working families and committed to supporting Britain’s military, hoping to banish an anti-patriotic label that clung to Labour during the Corbyn era.

Mr. Starmer also rooted out the antisemitism that had contaminated the party’s ranks under Mr. Corbyn. Though he has not drawn a link between that and his personal life, his wife, Victoria Starmer, comes from a Jewish family in London.

Ms. Starmer, who works as an occupational health specialist for the National Health Service, is an occasional presence on the campaign trail. The couple have two teenage children, whose privacy they guard fiercely. In keeping with his wife’s heritage, the family sometimes observes Jewish traditions at home.

In exiling Mr. Corbyn, Mr. Starmer displayed a ruthless side. He even blocked Mr. Corbyn from running for his seat as a Labour candidate, although he is campaigning as an independent. Mr. Starmer’s aides have tightly controlled the list of those allowed to run for Parliament, weeding out other candidates seen as too left wing.

Allies of Mr. Starmer say he is aware of his limits and works hard to address his weaknesses. While he is not a natural orator, his speeches have improved since his early days in Parliament, when one critic likened his performance to “watching the audience at a literary festival listen to a reading of T.S. Eliot.”

And, yet, the reputation for dullness lingers.

“How does Keir Starmer energize a room?” Gillian Keegan, the education secretary, asked recently before delivering her punchline: “He leaves it.”

The criticism rankles. “He doesn’t like the boring tag,” Mr. Baldwin said. “No one likes being called boring; he really doesn’t like it.”

Mr. Starmer’s friends describe a man with a sense of humor, a healthy home life and genuine passions outside politics. Despite knee surgery, he still plays soccer regularly and competitively (often reserving the playing field and selecting the team). He is an ardent fan of Arsenal, the soccer club that plays not far from his North London home.

In some ways, Mr. Starmer has been helped by his relatively recent arrival in Parliament. He was not caught up in the internecine feuds of previous Labour governments or tainted by allegiances to former leaders like Gordon Brown and Mr. Blair. Now, though, [*Mr. Blair and Mr. Starmer have a blossoming relationship*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/07/04/world/uk-election-results).

There are disadvantages, too. There are relatively few Starmer loyalists who are willing to fight in a foxhole with him. The same lack of passion extends to many voters. They may find Labour less objectionable than it was under Mr. Corbyn, but that does not mean they are casting their votes with excitement.

“Keir Starmer’s objective was to stop giving people reasons to vote against Labour, and he has been very successful at it,” said Steven Fielding, an emeritus professor of political history at the University of Nottingham in England. “He has been less good at giving people reasons to vote for Labour.”

The same sense of incompleteness hangs over even those who admire Mr. Starmer. Despite the many hours Mr. Baldwin spent with him researching his biography, he said there was “something slightly unreachable” about the Labour leader. “He’s a very tightly bound person who doesn’t trust easily,” Mr. Baldwin said. “He’s not emotionally diarrhetic.”

While Mr. Starmer has begun talking more about his personal story, his frequent references to being “the son of a toolmaker” growing up in a “pebble-dash semi” — his modest semidetached family home — can come off as perfunctory, even robotic.

“He doesn’t see why he needs to put him and all his inner workings on public display,” said Mr. Baldwin, who said he sometimes struggled to get more than monosyllabic answers from Mr. Starmer on personal questions. Once, he recalled asking him to elaborate on his feelings about an incident that had anguished him.

The response was concise, direct and of little help. “I was,” Mr. Starmer said, according to his biographer, “very upset.”

PHOTOS: Keir Starmer, center, the leader of Britain’s Labour Party, with the actor Idris Elba at a campaign event in London last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); In 2014, Prince Charles knighted Keir Starmer for his service as director of public prosecutions. In January 2016, Mr. Starmer visited the Dunkirk refugee camp as shadow immigration minister. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ALAMY; JEREMY SELWYN/EVENING STANDARD, VIA GETTY IMAGES); Mr. Starmer, right, in 2019 with Jeremy Corbyn, whose leftist pull on the party he has fought. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A8) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8.

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Giving 'Doctor Who' a Dose of Emotion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8F-MT11-DXY4-X329-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 16, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1483 words

**Byline:** By Roslyn Sulcas

**Body**

''Give-ING! That dress is giving!'' said Ncuti Gatwa with a burst of unbridled laughter. The newest Doctor Who had been shooting the same scene for several hours in Cardiff, Wales, where hangar-like spaces were teeming with crew and filled with sets and equipment for the show. (Yes, Whovians, the TARDIS was parked nearby.) Now, at the director's request, the new Doctor was improvising.

Gatwa (whose first name is pronounced ''Shoo-ti'') laughs a lot, often at himself. ''Why do I keep moving this footstool?'' he asked a few minutes later as he tried to get into position for yet another take. ''Because the art department isn't here to do it for you,'' teased Varada Sethu, who joins the Doctor and his current companion Ruby Sunday (Millie Gibson) for some adventures in Gatwa's second season. ''I have to do everything myself!'' cried Gatwa in a mock-tragic tone, before another eruption of mirth.

Born in Rwanda and raised in Scotland, Gatwa, 31, made his name playing the effervescent Eric in Netflix's ''Sex Education.'' But the lead role in ''Doctor Who,'' a British institution about a time-traveling alien and his human companion that has been a BBC stalwart for 60 years, has taken him to another level of fame.

(Conveniently, the doctor periodically dies and is regenerated in a different physical form; Gatwa is the 15th Doctor, following Matt Smith, David Tennant and Jodie Whittaker.)

The show -- which first ran between 1963 and 1989 -- was revived in 2005 and today has an exceptionally diverse, intergenerational fan base. But the current season, which ends on June 21, has ushered in a new era for the show, with Disney+ now a co-producer alongside the BBC and Gatwa the show's first Black lead actor, with a distinctly fabulous vibe.

The pressures and expectations surrounding these firsts aren't lost on Gatwa, who grew up in a ***working class*** home in Dunfermline, Scotland. '''Doctor Who,''' he said, ''is something I remember as almost over our heads, something we knew was important culturally, like the royals.'' His audition ''was lovely, but I didn't think I was going to get it,'' he said. ''British casting has taken a long time to diversify -- why would it be now, and why me?''

The anxiety he felt about ''getting it right, living up to the amazing people who have done this role,'' lasted through filming the first season, Gatwa said. ''Gradually, it became clear to me that there isn't a mold you need to step into to portray the Doctor,'' he said. ''It can come out of you naturally.''

Russell T Davies, who is back as the ''Doctor Who'' showrunner after masterminding the 2005 reboot, said that although the increased production budget had allowed for more special effects, ''it's still me sitting with a script, making good dialogue for actors,'' he said.

In the past, he added, the Doctor ''has been marvelously inexpressive and enigmatic and alien, and great actors have done that very well.'' But in 2024, ''I want a young audience watching, and they talk about their emotions, express their emotions in a healthy way.'' Then, ''along came Ncuti, who is one of those actors who pour with feeling,'' Davies said. ''When he is sad, tears pour from his eyes; when he is happy, that smile lights up the universe.''

Viewers who have watched Gatwa's Doctor battle the Maestro (Jinkx Monsoon), perform a song and dance number, stand on a land mine for an entire episode and suit up in Regency attire for a ''Bridgerton''-themed episode, are likely to agree. He ''truly feels like a Doctor Who for the 21st century,'' wrote Maya Phillips in The New York Times. He is ''stylish and liberated,'' she added, ''with a vibe that is sensual and unbuttoned; he's a Doctor who seems much more at home than the others in his body.''

The companion's role is usually ''to have the human qualities the doctor lacks,'' Gibson said, but the relationship between this Doctor and the companion she plays feels different. ''Ruby's youth allows him to let out his inner child,'' she said. ''You see that Ruby and the Doctor really care for one another; the way they communicate and laugh is very loving.'' Gatwa ''is a force of nature, just magic,'' she added. ''He has this aura about him that everything can feed off.''

On a busy day in April, Gatwa, dressed in a flower-embossed red shirt, was demonstrating Gibson's force-of-nature theory in an interview, gesticulating, laughing uproariously and attempting to eat avocado toast while talking about his past and his career. Even an interruption by an assistant bearing forgotten contact lenses was greeted with incommensurate joy: ''Yay! Oh, my God, yessss! Hallelujah, aahhhh, great!''

''You need glasses,'' she told him. ''I know, but I'm so vain,'' he said plaintively. More laughter.

Born in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, Gatwa was 2 when his parents -- a journalist and a bank manager -- moved to Scotland with their three children to escape the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Largely raised by his mother, he took drama in high school and had an aha moment playing Commander Khashoggi in his school production of ''We Will Rock You.''

He roared with laughter. ''I must have been SOOOO bad! But at that point, I was like, thisssss is what I want to do.''

Gatwa said that his family ''were one of three Black families we knew in, like, all of Scotland, which I both noticed and didn't notice.'' But he didn't doubt, he said, that there would be a path for him in the theater: ''I always saw a Black actor working.''

He spent three years at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (''I LOVED LOVED LOVED it''), and then a post-graduation year with the Dundee Repertory Theater (''Greek drama to Agatha Christie''). Jobs followed playing Mercutio in ''Romeo and Juliet'' at the Home theater in Manchester, England, (''where I saw a ghost -- I swear''), and then roles in ''Shakespeare in Love'' in the West End and in Emma Rice's ''946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips.''

Gatwa ''is obviously one of the most beautiful, charismatic people you will ever meet,'' Rice said in a video conversation. ''But he also has phenomenal emotional depth he brought to every rehearsal and every performance, an incredible work ethic and an amazing ability to talk to the audience.''

After ''946,'' Gatwa was suddenly out of work and broke, temping at Harrods, a department store, to make ends meet. He was in his eighth month of sleeping at his best friend's apartment when he got the part of Captain Jack Absolute in a production of Richard B. Sheridan's ''The Rivals.'' Then came the call to audition for ''Sex Education.''

When he got the job, he said, his primary thought was that he could pay his overdue bills. He had hardly done any screen work before, but discovered that the show, with its ensemble cast, didn't feel too different from a theater group.

''I had never really met someone like him before, so full of life and experience and so buoyant,'' said Emma Mackey, one of his co-stars. ''He took up that space offered and grew into it; we were an alliance, but Ncuti really lead us in that frame of mind.''

Ben Taylor, the lead director for Season 1, said that at the first table read, ''there was a sigh of relief and also confidence around the table, because Ncuti knew the show possibly before the show knew itself.''

Gatwa said that playing Eric, a lovable gay teenager from a religious British-Nigerian family, over four seasons taught him to be braver. ''Eric was so dedicated to his authenticity, living his truth. That has permeated into my life,'' he said.

After ''Sex Education'' ended, Gatwa played supporting roles in ''Masters of the Air'' and ''Barbie,'' and one day texted his agent, saying he would ''love to play Willy Wonka or Doctor Who.'' She replied that the ''Doctor Who'' casting director, Andy Pryor, had just asked him to audition.

''It sounds like a showbiz story, but the last person we saw was Ncuti -- and bang!'' Davies said. ''I knew then and there that was the man.''

Gatwa said that he and Davies didn't have many discussions about his portrayal of the Doctor. ''This is a character that is constantly born again, with fresh eyes,'' he said. ''There is an element of innocence within the Doctor. For me, that's where his curiosity comes from, the confidence to explore the unknown in the way kids do.''

Asked whether he consciously incorporated more L.G.B.T.Q. elements into Gatwa's first season, Davies pointed out that he has been putting gay characters onscreen for around 30 years. ''We never had a sexuality meeting,'' he said with a laugh. ''And the Doctor is an alien, of course -- he's not Ncuti Gatwa, and I think human labels barely apply to him. He loves Ruby with all his heart. He doesn't care what gender people are.''

Gatwa had another take. ''I feel like 'Doctor Who' has always been a bit camp,'' he said. ''I mean, it's a time-traveling alien in a British police box!''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/15/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ncuti Gatwa, above, stars in ''Doctor Who,'' now on Disney+. Gatwa, at left in the show, is the 15th Doctor and the first Black actor in that role. ''I didn't think I was going to get it,'' he said. ''British casting has taken a long time to diversify. Why would it be now, and why me?'' Gatwa made his name in ''Sex Education,'' below with Asa Butterfield. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEMKA AJOKU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

BAD WOLF/BBC STUDIOS

JON HALL/NETFLIX) This article appeared in print on page AR12.

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2024

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[***Navigating a Virtual Australia in Postapocalyptic Ruins***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BSS-MDD1-JBG3-6009-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 13, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 883 words

**Byline:** By Darryn King

**Body**

The role-playing game Broken Roads takes its environment seriously. The Aussie slang, the reddish outback soil, even the ruffling of emu feathers provide authenticity.

The language barrier is just one of the obstacles that players will face in Broken Roads, a postapocalyptic role-playing game filled with thorny moral choices. With a distinctive nasal twang, the locals pepper their conversations with ''crikey,'' ''sprog,'' ''yobbo,'' ''tinny,'' ''chunder,'' ''togs'' and ''hard yakka.'' Early in the game, a cocky mercenary is called ''a legend in his own lunchbox.''

Some of the terms are defined with an in-game glossary feature, but others need to be puzzled out via context. In other words: Have a go, yer mug.

Broken Roads, which was inspired by the ''Mad Max'' films as well as the dystopian Fallout games, follows an arduous journey from Brookton to Kalgoorlie in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. Yes, you can stop off at the pub on the way.

The team at Drop Bear Bytes worked hard to ensure that every aspect of the game conveys an authentic vision of the country, whether it was duplicating the distinctive reddish hue of outback soil or developing specialized technology that makes the ruffling of emu feathers feel true to life.

In Broken Roads, which releases on Wednesday for the PC and the PlayStation and Xbox consoles, the player leads a motley crew through a richly detailed, morally complex world. Through dialogue and action, the player is frequently forced to make choices -- labeled humanist, utilitarian, Machiavellian or nihilist -- that profoundly alter the way the story unfolds.

The game takes place about 150 years into the future, in the wasted ruins of a nuclear war. Some have joked that its vision of postapocalyptic Australia -- a strange, forbidding landscape filled with bizarre-looking creatures and vegetation -- bears an uncanny resemblance to parts of actual modern-day Australia.

''It's this arid, inhospitable place that people still manage to live in,'' Leanne Taylor-Giles, the game's narrative lead, said of the Wheatbelt region, a vast tract of agricultural land that partly surrounds Perth. ''And it's extraordinarily beautiful.''

A 2022 research trip through the Wheatbelt allowed a few members of the team to observe aspects of the Australian persona -- a ***working-class*** hardiness and humor -- that Taylor-Giles sought to bring out in the characters in the game.

''I tried to capture the spirit of the people who live in those towns,'' said Taylor-Giles, who lives in Queensland in eastern Australia. She added, ''That sense of making do with the things they have, of coming together to make it against all odds, is something that I really love.''

While driving the route eventually replicated in Broken Roads, the Drop Bear Bytes team took thousands of reference photographs -- many in-game locations are eerily faithful recreations of real places -- and recorded some of the ambient audio that made it into the game's soundscape.

''When you're standing in Wave Rock'' in Broken Roads, ''you are literally hearing all the wildlife ambience and wind of Wave Rock,'' said Tim Sunderland, the audio lead who also composed the didgeridoo-infused score.

Some aspects of the game verge on self-lampoonery, a very Aussie tendency. A cricket bat, festooned with saw blades, is wielded as a weapon; specially concocted craft beers work like magic potions.

Serious thought and care, though, went into the treatment and representation of Indigenous Australians. Since the game takes place on land traditionally owned by the Noongar people, the team worked with Karla Hart, a Noongar writer who signed on as a consultant.

Hart advised on parts of the game that allow the player to learn about Noongar culture and customs, including traditional foods and medicine.

''One of the Noongar characters works with fire,'' Taylor-Giles said. ''After some discussion with Karla, it turned out that the Noongar idea of fire is as a warming, benevolent presence, equated with safety, or home -- very different from my own relationship with fire.''

The player will also encounter authentic Indigenous artwork, commissioned specially for the game. And in keeping with the linguistic element of Broken Roads, there are many Noongar words to learn. In this case, the words need to be heard a number of times before the game provides a definition.

''I hope gamers go away with a small experience of who we are as a people or something that they can identify with,'' Hart said.

In addition to its Australian team, Drop Bear Bytes also has members in the United States, Britain, Spain and South Africa.

''You can call us honorary Aussies,'' said Bianca Roux, a 3-D modeler, sculptor and texture artist based in Cape Town. When not sculpting the game's kangaroos, wallabies and koalas, she has been bingeing episodes of the reality series ''Outback Opal Hunters.''

Taylor-Giles is excited about sharing the Broken Roads vision of Australia with the rest of the world, but she is just as keen for Australian gamers to become acquainted with a less familiar part of their own country.

''We may come to appreciate what's exceptional about ourselves,'' she said. ''The things that easily fade into the background when we live them, day in and day out.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/arts/broken-roads-australia.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/10/arts/broken-roads-australia.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Broken Roads, inspired by the ''Mad Max'' films and the dystopian Fallout games, follows a journey in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DROP BEAR BYTES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2024

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[***Democrats See Map In Fetterman's Gains With Rural Red Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66VR-TV51-JBG3-64C4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 14, 2022 Monday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 333 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

Did John Fetterman just show Democrats how to solve their white-***working-class*** problem?

Mr. Fetterman's decisive victory in Pennsylvania's Senate race -- arguably Democrats' biggest win of the midterms, flipping a Republican-held seat -- was achieved in no small part because he did significantly better in counties dominated by white ***working-class*** voters compared with Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2020.

These voters for years have been thought to be all but lost to Democrats, ever since Donald J. Trump turned out explosively high numbers of white voters in rural and exurban counties, especially in Pennsylvania and the northern Midwest. Mr. Biden recaptured Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin two years ago largely by drumming up support in the suburbs, while ***working-class*** white voters stuck with Mr. Trump.

But Mr. Fetterman, with his tattoos and Carhartt wardrobe, and priorities like marijuana legalization, appears to have regained ground with the white ***working class*** -- though whether he persuaded many Trump voters to back him, or whether he improved on Mr. Biden with the demographic in other ways, awaits more detailed data.

Mr. Fetterman's 4.4-percentage-point victory over Mehmet Oz, his Republican opponent, outpaced Mr. Biden's 1.2-point win in Pennsylvania in 2020. Mr. Fetterman, Pennsylvania's lieutenant governor, who posed for his official portrait in an open-collar gray work shirt, won a larger share of votes than Mr. Biden did in almost every county.

In suburban counties, where the Oz campaign tried to undermine Mr. Fetterman with college-educated voters by painting him as an extremist and soft on crime, Mr. Fetterman largely held onto Democratic gains of recent years, winning about 1 percentage point more of the votes than Mr. Biden did in 2020.

Mr. Fetterman's biggest gains were in deep-red counties dominated by white ***working-class*** voters. He didn't win these places outright, but he drove up the margins for a Democrat by 3, 4 or 5 points compared with Mr. Biden.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/pageoneplus/democrats-see-a-blueprint-in-fettermans-victory-in-pennsylvania.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/pageoneplus/democrats-see-a-blueprint-in-fettermans-victory-in-pennsylvania.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: John Fetterman's 4.4-percentage-point Senate victory over Mehmet Oz outpaced Mr. Biden's 1.2-point win in Pennsylvania in 2020.

Above, Mr. Fetterman's supporters. Top, Jeffrey Astle, a steelworker, voted for Donald J. Trump but sat out this election. He was ''not enthusiastic'' about Dr. Oz and thought Mr. Fetterman inauthentic. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Food for Thought***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHJ-GR61-DXY4-X06W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 10, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 11; FICTION

**Length:** 666 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Weiner

**Body**

''Piglet,'' by Lottie Hazell, is a tantalizing layer cake of horror, romance (sort of) and timely questions about the power of appetite.

PIGLET, by Lottie Hazell

Pity the bookseller who's got to figure out where to shelve Lottie Hazell's debut novel, ''Piglet.'' Its plot -- woman learns devastating truth about her fiancé and starts binge-eating as she decides whether to marry him -- carries the whiff of a rom-com, the faint pink tinge of ''women's fiction,'' the kind of book that gets dismissed as frivolous and small, even though it deals with the topics that loom largest in real life. So is ''Piglet'' a frothy, fun, forgettable confection, or is it heftier, meatier, the kind of ''serious'' book that might win prizes, or even male readers?

If I owned a bookstore, I'd hand-sell ''Piglet'' to everyone. And I'd make a case for shelving it with the horror stories, especially for the scene that unfolds when Piglet's mom, dad, sister and, eventually, her sister's boyfriend are enlisted to cram her into her wedding dress, the one wedding expense her ***working-class*** father has covered. '''What's happened here, Pig?' her father said, lifting his head in the mirror, not meeting her eyes.'' Hazell goes on:

Piglet felt her father's hand push against her flank, his knuckles hard and swollen with effort.''You couldn't have waited, could you?'' he said, closing his eyes. ''You couldn't just control yourself, for once?'' He shook his head. ''You -- this dress -- greed,'' he said, his words failing him in his displeasure. ''What is it about you and more, more, more?''

There's a lot Hazell doesn't tell us about Piglet. We don't know her age or her size, her eye color or hair color, or how long she's been a cookbook editor. We don't learn her real name until the book's final pages, and we aren't told the precise nature of her fiancé's betrayal at all, which gives the book the feel of an allegory or a fable: Once upon a time, there lived an orphan. A princess. A bride. Or, as Piglet describes herself, ''a tall woman with broad shoulders wearing a dress that was designed to make her look smaller than she was.''

Hazell's prose is as tart and icy as lemon sorbet; her sentences are whipcord taut, drum tight. The only time she indulges in description is when Piglet's cooking or eating. Then, the writing becomes lush and lavish, with mouthwatering descriptions of ''new potatoes, boiled and dotted with a bright salsa verde. Bread and two types of butter: confit garlic and Parmesan and black pepper.'' There are also ''katoris filled with daal, as thick and silky as rice pudding but yellowed with turmeric, finished with cream'' and ''prawns, pink and black and glistening, scattered with coriander, sitting spikily in their dish.''

It's impossible to read ''Piglet'' outside the current moment, and the new, uber-popular class of weight-loss drugs. Scientists don't know how the drugs work, but do know what they do: Quiet the so-called food noise. Turn down the volume on dieters' appetites. What goes without saying -- it seems that it hardly needs to be said -- is that hunger is the enemy, and a woman's job is to repel it, control it, fight it off, push it down.

But what happens when women ignore their appetites? What happens when women stop being hungry, when they don't want ''more, more, more'' -- or anything at all?

Ira Levin offered one answer in ''The Stepford Wives,'' and Hazell offers another, in a book where the ''will she or won't she'' isn't just about the man and the wedding. It's about whether Piglet ends up embracing a big life, full of richness and variety and good things to eat, or if she lets herself be crammed into that too-small dress: constricted, reduced, turned into a pretty morsel, a thing to be consumed. Eat the world, or let it eat you?

No spoilers here. Except I'll tell you that I devoured this book, and finished it hungry.

PIGLET | By Lottie Hazell | Holt | 320 pp. | $27.99Jennifer Weiner's latest novel is ''The Breakaway.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/books/review/piglet-lottie-hazell.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/22/books/review/piglet-lottie-hazell.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR11.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2024

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[***Trophy Quest***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDK-2TM1-DXY4-X02J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 25, 2024 Sunday

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**Length:** 699 words

**Byline:** By Ainslie Hogarth

**Body**

In Isabel Waidner's new novel, ''Corey Fah Does Social Mobility,'' a struggling writer gets pulled into a surreal, multidimensional quest for a coveted literary prize.

COREY FAH DOES SOCIAL MOBILITY, by Isabel Waidner

In the first few pages of Isabel Waidner's new novel ''Corey Fah Does Social Mobility,'' our titular character learns that they've won ''The Award for the Fictionalization of Social Evils,'' a literary prize that comes with a substantial cash purse (which Corey, a ***working-class*** writer who lives in a social housing estate, desperately needs) and enormous prestige (which, according to the prize committee, is even more valuable than money). To secure these bounties, all Corey has to do is collect the award trophy. But the trophy doesn't look like a trophy -- it's a ''neon beige'' U.F.O. And to make matters worse, it's disappeared, possibly into a wormhole.

The prize committee is less than helpful when Corey asks for assistance. ''The assumption had been that a winner would know how to collect. That prize culture etiquette, its unwritten rules and regulations, would be second nature to them,'' Corey reflects. But Corey doesn't know how to collect, and the unwritten rules and regulations aren't second nature to them. ''I'd not won an award before, and neither had anybody I knew.'' This is the paradox that drives ''Corey Fah Does Social Mobility'': A person needs to already have social and financial capital in order to get social and financial capital.

We follow Corey; their loving partner, Drew; and their mutant charge, Bambi Pavok (an arachnoid creature with deer-like qualities who crawled out of another dimension and sometimes stays with Corey and Drew), in furious pursuit of this confounding trophy. They dive into wormholes, explore alternate universes and timelines, even appear on (and eventually host) a popular wormhole-focused reality show, all in the hopes of catching the coveted prize ''before the judges change their minds.'' It feels, in the best way, like a spirited romp through someone else's stress dream.

Sometimes surreal satires can be inaccessible, too clinically strange to connect with, but Waidner anchors the reader with familiar emotion: the discomfort Corey feels in the warmth of Drew's unconditional love; the way Corey handles Bambi Pavok with a tenderness that neither the arachnoid creature nor Corey has ever experienced before. In a world full of wormholes and neon beige U.F.O. trophies, these relationships seem heartbreakingly real.

Waidner's humor is similarly accessible -- playful and unpretentious; and their prose, despite being peppered with foreign phrases and grammatical oddities, is disarmingly smooth. But working hard just beneath the surface of this feisty, funny, easily digestible insanity are bigger ideas, about who deserves to be rescued from tough circumstances, and why. What happens if the person in need of assistance doesn't match the image of a model recipient?

Though ''Corey Fah'' is a critique of the literary world, it's easy to apply the novel's commentary to other, higher-stakes systems. Corey's attempts to make sense of the literary fun house they've been thrust into will remind some readers of, for instance, the challenges low-income students face when they are granted admission to Ivy League schools but are not given the support they need to successfully navigate those rarefied spaces.

The novel is an allegory that argues, effectively, that admission is not the same thing as access. Even though Corey has managed to hustle and, in the end, earn recognition from a lofty literary organization, the award, and all the money and prestige that come with it, still evades them. Which is to say: Corey has bent and contorted themself in ways big and small, but it's still not enough. And as the narrative comes to its wild end, Waidner conveys, quite poignantly, that a person has no other choice in this life but to be true to themself.

COREY FAH DOES SOCIAL MOBILITY | By Isabel Waidner | Graywolf Press | 147 pp. | Paperback, $16Ainslie Hogarth is the author of ''Motherthing,'' ''The Boy Meets Girl Massacre (Annotated),'' ''The Lonely'' and, most recently, ''Normal Women.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/04/books/review/corey-fah-does-social-mobility-isabel-waidner.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/04/books/review/corey-fah-does-social-mobility-isabel-waidner.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR16.

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**End of Document**



[***Are Big Music Tours Really in Trouble?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6C-RSG1-DXY4-X04K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1382 words

**Byline:** Ben Sisario and Joe Coscarelli Ben Sisario covers the music industry. He has been writing for The Times since 1998. Joe Coscarelli is a culture reporter for The Times who focuses on popular music and a co-host of the Times podcast &amp;#8220;Popcast (Deluxe).&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** High-profile cancellations from Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys have armchair analysts talking. But industry insiders say live music is still thriving.

**Body**

High-profile cancellations from Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys have armchair analysts talking. But industry insiders say live music is still thriving.

For the concert business, 2023 was a champagne-popping year. The worst of the pandemic comfortably in the rearview, shows big and small were selling out, with mega-tours by Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Drake and Bruce Springsteen pushing the industry to record ticket sales.

This year, as with much of the economy, success on the road seems more fragile. A string of high-profile cancellations, and slow sales for some major events, have raised questions about an overcrowded market and whether ticket prices have simply gotten too expensive.

Most conspicuously, Jennifer Lopez and the Black Keys have canceled entire arena tours. In the case of the Black Keys — a standby of rock radio and a popular touring draw for nearly two decades — the fallout has been severe enough that the band has parted ways with its two managers, the industry giant Irving Azoff and Steve Moir. Through a representative, Azoff and Moir said they had “amicably parted” with the band.

At Coachella, usually so buzzy that it sells out well before any performers are announced, tickets for the second of the California festival’s two weekends were [*still available*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast) by the time it opened in April.

Those issues have stoked headlines about a concert business that may be in trouble. But the reality, many insiders say, is more complex, with no simple explanation for problems on a range of tours, and a business that may be leveling out after a couple of extraordinary years when fans rushed to shows after Covid-19 shutdowns.

“I think it’s normalized back to the pre-Covid era,” said Rich Schaefer, the president of global touring at AEG, the company behind tours by Swift and the Rolling Stones. “Hot acts are going to sell tickets. Middle acts are going to sell, but take longer. And acts that don’t have a lot of heat on them are going to struggle.”

In a statement, Live Nation said that so far this year, sales are up from the same point in 2023, with over 100 million tickets sold. “Every year,” the company said, “some events naturally fall off for various reasons, and in 2024 across all venue types we’ve seen a 4 percent cancellation rate — which is flat to last year.”

In addition to Swift’s Eras Tour, which continues to be a phenomenon in Europe, hot events this year include tours by Olivia Rodrigo, Coldplay, Morgan Wallen and Zach Bryan. Other festivals, like Lollapalooza in Chicago, have had notably strong sales.

Still, prominent cancellations of high-priced shows is another possible P.R. headache for Live Nation, the owner of Ticketmaster, which last month was [*sued by the Justice Department*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast) over accusations that it operates an illegal monopoly that stifles competition and results in high prices and fees. Live Nation has denied those allegations.

The key worry throughout the business is that ticket prices, which have been [*rising steadily for years*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast), may now be so high that they are deterring fans from all but their once-in-a-lifetime, bucket-list shows. Tickets, even for many major tours, no longer vanish instantly.

When Billie Eilish put her latest arena tour on sale in April, for example, upper-deck seats at some venues were going for over $200, and took weeks to sell.

A joint tour by the rapper Future and the producer Metro Boomin, who shared a pair of No. 1 albums and a chart-topping hit single earlier this year, has also lagged. Even with tickets as low as $44.50, the opening-night concert in Kansas City, Mo., in July, still has thousands of seats for sale at all levels. To the chagrin of underperforming acts, the strength or weakness of sales is now evident in real time on Ticketmaster, which displays blue dots for every unsold seat (and pink dots for ones being offered for resale).

Last year, the average ticket price for one of the top 100 tours around the world was $131, up 23 percent from the year before, according to Pollstar, a trade publication that tracks concert tickets.

Steve Martin of Paladin Artists, a booking agent for classic rock acts like David Gilmour of Pink Floyd, said that below the level of pop superstars like Swift, artists have become acutely aware of the economic pressures facing their fans.

“The meat of the business is made up of things like classic rock packages,” Martin said. “Those people are much more price sensitive. ***Working-class*** people are concerned about groceries and the price of gas.”

No single explanation can cover the range of problems in the live market this year. Some tours, like the Black Keys’, may simply be a matter of the band overestimating demand.

In 2021, the Black Keys left their longtime manager for a new partnership with [*Azoff and Moir*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast), who also work with John Mayer and the Grateful Dead spinoff Dead &amp; Co., and the band later [*praised*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast) Azoff’s “focus on touring and selling our tickets.” But even after a new album — the band’s 12th — was released in April, concert sales lagged, leading to the cancellations and a housecleaning behind the scenes.

In a [*social media post*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast) after the tour was abandoned, the group said it would “make some changes” to its touring plan to offer a more “intimate experience.” A representative for the band’s label did not respond to a request for comment on the management changes.

Nostalgia alone may not be enough to easily pack venues across the country. Lopez, though still a movie star and a tabloid feature, has not had a hit song in a [*decade*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/popcast-pop-music-podcast). Tickets to see the ongoing arena tour from Justin Timberlake have been available on both the primary and secondary markets, with prices on StubHub sometimes falling well below face value.

Fans outside of high-demand markets like New York and Los Angeles do not always need to rush the digital queue the moment tickets go on sale. Some genres, like hip-hop, tend to move tickets more slowly than others, but can still sell out before showtime. The latest leg of Nicki Minaj’s tour, for example, is a sea of blue dots.

Many factors go into the price of the ticket, from the costs of gas and crew salaries — which have risen since the pandemic — to bigger-picture economics amortized over the course of an entire tour. Global promoters like Live Nation and AEG often offer artists a guaranteed payment covering all their shows; a bigger guarantee means that prices must be higher to recoup that investment.

Dan Wall, Live Nation’s executive vice president of corporate and regulatory affairs, said that while promoters may suggest pricing based on a deal guarantee, “it’s the artist’s team that ultimately decides ticket prices.”

Armchair analysis of ticket sales has become yet another element of modern fandom to be memed and weaponized, upping the stakes. As industry watchers on social media race to demonstrate the dominance of their favorites, screen grabs of available seats for upcoming concerts have gone viral, leading to media coverage.

“I feel like people online just sort of realized that you can look at seat maps and see how shows are doing,” said Sam Hunt, an executive at the touring agency Wasserman Music. “So I think part of it is that maybe not a ton has changed in the touring business — not every swing is a home run — but people are paying more attention to it and having a typically internet-y response.”

Still, the perception among some music fans is that large-scale concerts are more of a luxury than they once were.

Cliff Russell, 39, said in an interview that his two teenage daughters were interested in seeing blockbuster tours this year from acts like Rodrigo, Drake, Eilish and Swift.

But after the family, living outside Toronto, spent big for tickets to see Swift’s Eras Tour in November — with costs totaling near $3,000 for four tickets, “not counting transportation, parking, souvenirs” — spending another $300 per ticket for upper-deck seats to see another pop star just wasn’t in the cards.

“What was once a holy grail ticket price is now the average,” Russell said. “You’ve got to be really picky and choosy.”

PHOTOS: After announcing a North American arena tour, the Black Keys called it off. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BURAK CINGI/REDFERNS, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (C7); Jennifer Lopez canceled a career-spanning summer arena tour. (C7) This article appeared in print on page C1, C7.

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2024

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[***Hochul Suspends Congestion Toll In Late Reversal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C69-1YW1-DXY4-X028-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1396 words

**Byline:** By Grace Ashford

**Body**

Weeks before New York was to charge motorists to enter Manhattan's business district, Gov. Kathy Hochul postponed the program, citing economic concerns.

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York announced on Wednesday that she was shelving the long-awaited tolling plan known as congestion pricing, just weeks before it was to go into effect.

''After careful consideration I have come to the difficult decision that implementing the planned congestion pricing system risks too many unintended consequences,'' Ms. Hochul said, adding: ''I have directed the M.T.A. to indefinitely pause the program.''

The move angered environmentalists, transit advocates and economists, with some accusing the governor of abandoning a plan that was decades in the making for political reasons in a critical election year.

The decision, Ms. Hochul acknowledged, was not an easy one, but she said it was nonetheless crucial in light of the lingering effects of the coronavirus pandemic on working families and New York City's economy.

The congestion pricing plan, the first of its kind in the nation, was slated to start June 30. Drivers using E-ZPass would have paid as much as $15 to enter Manhattan south of 60th Street.

The governor said she feared that instituting a toll to drive into the borough would ''create another obstacle to our economic recovery.''

''Let's be real: A $15 charge may not seem like a lot to someone who has the means, but it can break the budget of a hard-working middle-class household,'' Ms. Hochul said.

In the days before her announcement, the governor notified the White House and the top House Democrat, Hakeem Jeffries, of her plans, according to two people familiar with the conversations.

They disputed reports that Mr. Jeffries had directed Ms. Hochul to delay the plan, saying that he had remained neutral on the issue.

''To the extent immediate implementation of congestion pricing is being reconsidered, Leader Jeffries supports a temporary pause of limited duration to better understand the financial impact on ***working-class*** New Yorkers,'' said Andy Eichar, a spokesman for Mr. Jeffries.

Word of the governor's last-minute misgivings began to circulate in Albany on Tuesday night, and quickly sent shock waves through the New York State Capitol by Wednesday morning, the penultimate day of the legislative session.

Few lawmakers could say they loved congestion pricing and the optics of taxing constituents. But the proposal was championed by economists and environmentalists alike as the solution not only to the financial woes of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the state agency that runs New York's subways and buses, but also the city's infamous gridlock.

The program was also being contested in court by eight separate lawsuits, with plaintiffs including the Trucking Association of New York and Gov. Philip D. Murphy of New Jersey.

Mr. Murphy's case in particular, which is being argued in Federal District Court in Newark, was regarded as the most serious challenge to congestion pricing. State officials are seeking a more comprehensive environmental study of the program.

But in New York, most Democrats had made a grudging peace with the plan after decades of debate, hearings, studies and planning -- none more publicly than Ms. Hochul, who had defended it as a necessary step toward rebuilding New York's economy.

Just two weeks ago, the governor told attendees at the Global Economic Summit in Ireland that implementing congestion pricing was critical to ''making cities more livable.''

Many key players in New York politics, from Albany to New York City, expressed dismay at the reversal, which cast the transportation authority's finances into uncertainty.

''I'm very upset that suddenly, out of the blue, this would pop up,'' State Senator Liz Krueger, a Manhattan Democrat, said on Wednesday, adding: ''If we stop congestion pricing now we're never going to get it.''

Kate Slevin of the Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit urban research and advocacy group that has championed the tolling program, called the move ''a total betrayal of New Yorkers and our climate.''

The president of the Partnership for New York City, Kathryn Wylde, said the governor's decision was a disappointment and that she hoped the pause would be temporary.

Yet an undercurrent of support for Ms. Hochul's move was also evident among lawmakers, particularly those representing swing districts.

''Many see it as welcome news,'' said James Skoufis, a Democrat who represents Orange County in the State Senate, adding that despite the plan's approval five years earlier, opposition had been growing in the Legislature. ''Some of it is outspoken, some of it is quieter, but it is widespread.''

Shortly after Ms. Hochul's announcement, U.S. Representative Pat Ryan, a Democrat facing a tough re-election race in the northern exurbs of New York City, sent out a statement taking partial credit for defeating the plan.

''Since Day 1, I've fought alongside countless Hudson Valley families against this unfair, uninformed and unacceptable congestion pricing plan,'' Mr. Ryan said. ''Today, I'm proud to say we've stopped congestion pricing in its tracks.''

Indeed, the plan has been largely unpopular in suburban areas of the Hudson Valley and Long Island where Democrats are desperate to make gains this cycle.

A Siena poll from April found that 72 percent of New York suburbs opposed congestion pricing. Statewide, the number is lower, but still a majority -- including 54 percent of Democrats.

Transit experts say that such opposition is common among communities acclimating to tolling plans, but not always lasting.

''We know from the experiences of other cities that have implemented congestion pricing that public support is at its nadir right before implementation,'' said Nicholas Klein, an assistant professor of city and regional planning at Cornell University. ''That is when the public, media and politicians panic. But time and again, we see that the sky does not fall.''

In her address, Ms. Hochul stressed her commitment to public transit, and ensuring that the transportation authority had the funding it needed to complete long overdue capital projects. But she said that the city's outlook had changed since the plan was approved in 2019.

''Workers were in the office five days a week, crime was at record lows and tourism was at record highs,'' she said. ''Circumstances have changed and we must respond to the facts on the ground.''

The decision has the awkward effect of bringing Ms. Hochul, a centrist Democrat who has at times served as a surrogate for President Biden, into alignment with former President Donald J. Trump, who has derided the plan, as well as her predecessor, Andrew M. Cuomo, who championed the concept as governor but now questions its timing.

To halt implementation of the plan, Ms. Hochul needs only the approval of the authority's board, which she controls. But without the projected $1 billion a year for the city's buses and subways, the transit system could quickly fall into crisis.

Ms. Hochul could fill that gap, at least temporarily, with money from the state's reserves. But she is also said to be looking at a more durable revenue source, possibly in the form of a tax on city businesses, which would require the approval of the State Legislature.

The transportation agency has already invested heavily in infrastructure to implement the pricing plan, including $507 million it paid to a Nashville company.

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams endorsed Ms. Hochul's move. ''I think that if she's looking at analyzing what other ways we can do it and how we do it correctly, I'm all for it,'' Mr. Adams said Wednesday at an unrelated news conference on Staten Island.

Mr. Adams, who has not been a strong proponent of congestion pricing, said he was worried that charging vehicles to enter Lower Manhattan would be an undue burden for ''everyday New Yorkers'' and potentially affect the city's economic recovery from the pandemic.

''We have to get it right,'' the mayor said, noting that he had been communicating with the governor over the last few days. ''This is a major shift in our city and it must be done correctly.''

Reporting was contributed by Nicholas Fandos, Jeffery C. Mays and Claire Fahy.Reporting was contributed by Nicholas Fandos, Jeffery C. Mays and Claire Fahy.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-pause-hochul.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-pause-hochul.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The move by Gov. Kathy Hochul, a centrist New York Democrat, brings her into alignment with Donald J. Trump on the issue. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINDY SCHULTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A23) This article appeared in print on page A1, A23.

**Load-Date:** June 6, 2024

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[***Full Transcript of Kamala Harris’s Democratic Convention Speech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CSX-G8V1-DXY4-X114-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 23, 2024 Friday 12:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 3379 words

**Byline:** The New York Times

**Highlight:** The vice president’s remarks lasted roughly 35 minutes on the final night of the convention in Chicago.

**Body**

The vice president’s remarks lasted roughly 35 minutes on the final night of the convention in Chicago.

This is a transcript of Vice President Kamala Harris’s speech on Thursday night in which she formally accepted the Democratic Party’s nomination for the presidency.

OK, let’s get to business. Let’s get to business. All right.

So, let me start by thanking my most incredible husband, Doug. For being an incredible partner to me, an incredible father to Cole and Ella, and happy anniversary, Dougie. I love you so very much.

To our president, Joe Biden. When I think about the path that we have traveled together, Joe, I am filled with gratitude. Your record is extraordinary, as history will show, and your character is inspiring. And Doug and I love you and Jill, and are forever thankful to you both.

And to Coach Tim Walz. You are going to be an incredible vice president. And to the delegates and everyone who has put your faith in our campaign, your support is humbling.

So, America, the path that led me here in recent weeks was, no doubt, unexpected. But I’m no stranger to unlikely journeys. So, my mother, our mother, Shyamala Harris, had one of her own. And I miss her every day, and especially right now. And I know she’s looking down smiling. I know that.

So, my mother was 19 when she crossed the world alone, traveling from India to California with an unshakable dream to be the scientist who would cure breast cancer.

When she finished school, she was supposed to return home to a traditional arranged marriage. But as fate would have it, she met my father, Donald Harris, a student from Jamaica. They fell in love and got married, and that act of self-determination made my sister, Maya, and me.

Growing up, we moved a lot. I will always remember that big Mayflower truck, packed with all our belongings, ready to go — to Illinois, to Wisconsin, and wherever our parents’ jobs took us.

My early memories of our parents together are very joyful ones. A home filled with laughter and music: Aretha, Coltrane and Miles. At the park, my mother would say, “Stay close.” But my father would say, as he smiled, “Run, Kamala, run. Don’t be afraid. Don’t let anything stop you.” From my earliest years, he taught me to be fearless.

But the harmony between my parents did not last. When I was in elementary school, they split up, and it was mostly my mother who raised us. Before she could finally afford to buy a home, she rented a small apartment in the East Bay.

In the Bay — in the Bay — you either live in the hills or the flatlands. We lived in the flats. A beautiful, ***working-class*** neighborhood of firefighters, nurses and construction workers. All who tended their lawns with pride.

My mother, she worked long hours. And like many working parents, she leaned on a trusted circle to help raise us. Mrs. Shelton, who ran the day care below us and became a second mother. Uncle Sherman, Aunt Mary, Uncle Freddie, Auntie Chris — none of them family by blood, and all of them family by love.

Family who taught us how to make gumbo, how to play chess — and sometimes even let us win. Family who loved us, believed in us, and told us we could be anything and do anything.

They instilled in us the values they personified — community, faith and the importance of treating others as you would want to be treated. With kindness, respect and compassion. My mother was a brilliant, five-foot-tall brown woman with an accent. And as the eldest child — as the eldest child — I saw how the world would sometimes treat her.

But my mother never lost her cool. She was tough, courageous, a trailblazer in the fight for women’s health, and she taught Maya and me a lesson that Michelle mentioned the other night. She taught us to never complain about injustice, but do something about it. Do something about it.

That was my mother. And she taught us — and she always — she also taught us, and she also taught us — and never do anything half-assed. And that is a direct quote. A direct quote.

I grew up immersed in the ideals of the civil rights movement. My parents had met at a civil rights gathering and they made sure that we learned about civil rights leaders, including the lawyers like Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley, those who battled in the courtroom to make real the promise of America.

So, at a young age, I decided I wanted to do that work. I wanted to be a lawyer. And when it came time to choose the type of law I would pursue, I reflected on a pivotal moment in my life.

You see, when I was in high school, I started to notice something about my best friend, Wanda. She was sad at school, and there were times she didn’t want to go home. So one day I asked if everything was all right, and she confided in me that she was being sexually abused by her stepfather. And I immediately told her she had to come stay with us, and she did.

This is one of the reasons I became a prosecutor: to protect people like Wanda, because I believe everyone has a right to safety, to dignity and to justice.

As a prosecutor, when I had a case, I charged it not in the name of the victim, but in the name of the people, for a simple reason. In our system of justice, a harm against any one of us is a harm against all of us. And I would often explain this to console survivors of crime, to remind them: No one should be made to fight alone. We are all in this together.

And every day, in the courtroom, I stood proudly before a judge and I said five words: Kamala Harris, for the people. And to be clear — and to be clear, my entire career, I’ve only had one client: the people.

And, so, on behalf of the people, on behalf of every American, regardless of party, race, gender or the language your grandmother speaks. On behalf of my mother, and everyone who has ever set out on their own unlikely journey. On behalf of Americans like the people I grew up with — people who work hard, chase their dreams and look out for one another. On behalf of everyone whose story could only be written in the greatest nation on Earth, I accept your nomination to be president of the United States of America.

And with this election, and — and with this election, our nation — our nation, with this election, has a precious, fleeting opportunity to move past the bitterness, cynicism and divisive battles of the past, a chance to chart a new way forward. Not as members of any one party or faction, but as Americans.

And let me say, I know there are people of various political views watching tonight. And I want you to know, I promise to be a president for all Americans. You can always trust me to put country above party and self. To hold sacred America’s fundamental principles, from the rule of law, to free and fair elections, to the peaceful transfer of power.

I will be a president who unites us around our highest aspirations. A president who leads and listens; who is realistic, practical and has common sense; and always fights for the American people. From the courthouse to the White House, that has been my life’s work.

As a young courtroom prosecutor in Oakland, Calif., I stood up for women and children against predators who abused them. As attorney general of California, I took on the big banks, delivered $20 billion for middle-class families who faced foreclosure and helped pass a homeowner bill of rights, one of the first of its kind in the nation.

I stood up for veterans and students being scammed by big, for-profit colleges. For workers who were being cheated out of their wages, the wages they were due. For seniors facing elder abuse.

I fought against the cartels who traffic in guns and drugs and human beings. Who threaten the security of our border and the safety of our communities. And I will tell you, these fights were not easy, and neither were the elections that put me in those offices. We were underestimated at practically every turn.

But we never gave up. Because the future is always worth fighting for. And that’s the fight we are in right now — a fight for America’s future.

Fellow Americans, this election is not only the most important of our lives, it is one of the most important in the life of our nation. In many ways, Donald Trump is an unserious man. But the consequences — but the consequences of putting Donald Trump back in the White House are extremely serious.

Consider — consider not only the chaos and calamity when he was in office, but also the gravity of what has happened since he lost the last election. Donald Trump tried to throw away your votes. When he failed, he sent an armed mob to the U.S. Capitol, where they assaulted law enforcement officers. When politicians in his own party begged him to call off the mob and send help, he did the opposite — he fanned the flames. And now, for an entirely different set of crimes, he was found guilty of fraud by a jury of everyday Americans, and separately — and separately found liable for committing sexual abuse. And consider, consider what he intends to do if we give him power again. Consider his explicit intent to set free violent extremists who assaulted those law enforcement officers at the Capitol.

His explicit intent to jail journalists, political opponents and anyone he sees as the enemy. His explicit intent to deploy our active duty military against our own citizens. Consider, consider the power he will have, especially after the U.S. Supreme Court just ruled that he would be immune from criminal prosecution. Just imagine Donald Trump with no guardrails, and how he would use the immense powers of the presidency of the United States. Not to improve your life, not to strengthen our national security, but to serve the only client he has ever had: himself.

And we know, and we know what a second Trump term would look like. It’s all laid out in Project 2025, written by his closest advisers. And its sum total is to pull our country back to the past. But America, we are not going back. We are not going back. We are not going back.

We are not going back to when Donald Trump tried to cut Social Security and Medicare. We are not going back to when he tried to get rid of the Affordable Care Act, when insurance companies could deny people with pre-existing conditions. We are not going to let him eliminate the Department of Education that funds our public schools.

We are not going to let him end programs like Head Start that provide preschool and child care for our children. America, we are not going back.

And we are charting — and we are charting a new way forward. Forward to a future with a strong and growing middle class because we know a strong middle class has always been critical to America’s success, and building that middle class will be a defining goal of my presidency.

And I’ll tell you, this is personal for me. The middle class is where I come from. My mother kept a strict budget. We lived within our means. Yet, we wanted for little and she expected us to make the most of the opportunities that were available to us, and to be grateful for them. Because, as she taught us, opportunity is not available to everyone. That’s why we will create what I call an opportunity economy, an opportunity economy where everyone has the chance to compete and a chance to succeed. Whether you live in a rural area, small town, or big city. And as president, I will bring together labor and workers and small-business owners and entrepreneurs and American companies to create jobs, to grow our economy and to lower the cost of everyday needs like health care and housing and groceries.

We will provide access to capital for small-business owners and entrepreneurs and founders. And we will end America’s housing shortage, and protect Social Security and Medicare.

Now compare that to Donald Trump. Because I think everyone here knows, he doesn’t actually fight for the middle class. Not — he doesn’t actually fight for the middle class. Instead, he fights for himself and his billionaire friends. And he will give them another round of tax breaks that will add up to $5 trillion to the national debt.

And all the while, he intends to enact what, in effect, is a national sales tax, call it a Trump tax, that would raise prices on middle-class families by almost $4,000 a year. Well, instead of a Trump tax hike, we will pass a middle-class tax cut that will benefit more than 100 million Americans.

Friends, I believe America cannot truly be prosperous unless Americans are fully able to make their own decisions about their own lives, especially on matters of heart and home.

But tonight, in America, too many women are not able to make those decisions. And let’s be clear about how we got here: Donald Trump handpicked members of the U.S. Supreme Court to take away reproductive freedom. And now, he brags about it.

In his words, “I did it, and I’m proud to have done it.”

Well, I will tell you, over the past two years, I’ve traveled across our country, and women have told me their stories. Husbands and fathers have shared theirs. Stories of women miscarrying in a parking lot, developing sepsis, losing the ability to ever again have children, all because doctors are afraid they may go to jail for caring for their patients. Couples just trying to grow their family, cut off in the middle of I.V.F. treatments.

Children who have survived sexual assault, potentially being forced to carry a pregnancy to term. This is what’s happening in our country because of Donald Trump. And understand, he is not done. As a part of his agenda, he and his allies would limit access to birth control, ban medication abortion and enact a nationwide abortion ban, with or without Congress.

And get this. Get this. He plans to create a national anti-abortion coordinator, and force states to report on women’s miscarriages and abortions. Simply put, they are out of their minds. And one must ask — one must ask, why exactly is it that they don’t trust women? Well, we trust women. We trust women.

And when Congress passes a bill to restore reproductive freedom, as president of the United States, I will proudly sign it into law.

In this election, many other fundamental freedoms are at stake. The freedom to live safe from gun violence in our schools, communities and places of worship. The freedom to love who you love openly and with pride.

The freedom to breathe clean air, and drink clean water and live free from the pollution that fuels the climate crisis. And the freedom that unlocks all the others: the freedom to vote. With this election, we finally have the opportunity to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and the Freedom to Vote Act.

And let me be clear — and let me be clear, after decades in law enforcement, I know the importance of safety and security, especially at our border. Last year, Joe and I brought together Democrats and conservative Republicans to write the strongest border bill in decades. The border patrol endorsed it. But Donald Trump believes a border deal would hurt his campaign, so he ordered his allies in Congress to kill the deal.

Well, I refuse to play politics with our security, and here is my pledge to you. As president, I will bring back the bipartisan border security bill that he killed, and I will sign it into law. I know — I know we can live up to our proud heritage as a nation of immigrants and reform our broken immigration system. We can create an earned pathway to citizenship and secure our border.

And America, we must also be steadfast in advancing our security and values abroad. As vice president, I have confronted threats to our security, negotiated with foreign leaders, strengthened our alliances and engaged with our brave troops overseas. As commander in chief, I will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world. And I will fulfill our sacred obligation to care for our troops and their families, and I will always honor and never disparage their service and their sacrifice.

I will make sure that we lead the world into the future on space and artificial intelligence. That America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century and that we strengthen, not abdicate, our global leadership. Trump, on the other hand, threatened to abandon NATO. He encouraged Putin to invade our allies. Said Russia could “do whatever the hell they want.”

Five days before Russia attacked Ukraine, I met with President Zelensky to warn him about Russia’s plan to invade. I helped mobilize a global response — over 50 countries — to defend against Putin’s aggression. And as president, I will stand strong with Ukraine and our NATO allies.

With respect to the war in Gaza, President Biden and I are working around the clock, because now is the time to get a hostage deal and a cease-fire deal done.

And let me be clear. And let me be clear. I will always stand up for Israel’s right to defend itself, and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself, because the people of Israel must never again face the horror that a terrorist organization called Hamas caused on Oct. 7, including unspeakable sexual violence and the massacre of young people at a music festival.

At the same time, what has happened in Gaza over the past 10 months is devastating. So many innocent lives lost. Desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety, over and over again. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking.

President Biden and I are working to end this war, such that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom and self-determination.

And know this: I will never hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to defend our forces and our interests against Iran and Iran-backed terrorists. I will not cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim Jong-un, who are rooting for Trump. Who are rooting for Trump.

Because, you know, they know — they know he is easy to manipulate with flattery and favors. They know Trump won’t hold autocrats accountable because he wants to be an autocrat himself.

And as president, I will never waver in defense of America’s security and ideals, because in the enduring struggle between democracy and tyranny, I know where I stand and I know where the United States belongs.

So, fellow Americans. Fellow Americans. I — I love our country with all my heart. Everywhere I go — everywhere I go, in everyone I meet, I see a nation that is ready to move forward. Ready for the next step in the incredible journey that is America.

I see an America where we hold fast to the fearless belief that built our nation and inspired the world. That here, in this country, anything is possible. That nothing is out of reach. An America where we care for one another, look out for one another and recognize that we have so much more in common than what separates us. That none of us — none of us has to fail for all of us to succeed.

And that in unity, there is strength. You know, our opponents in this race are out there every day denigrating America, talking about how terrible everything is. Well, my mother had another lesson she used to teach: Never let anyone tell you who you are. You show them who you are.

America, let us show each other and the world who we are and what we stand for: Freedom, opportunity, compassion, dignity, fairness and endless possibilities.

We are the heirs to the greatest democracy in the history of the world. And on behalf of our children and our grandchildren and all those who sacrificed so dearly for our freedom and liberty, we must be worthy of this moment.

It is now our turn to do what generations before us have done, guided by optimism and faith, to fight for this country we love, to fight for the ideals we cherish and to uphold the awesome responsibility that comes with the greatest privilege on Earth: the privilege and pride of being an American. So let’s get out there, let’s fight for it. Let’s get out there, let’s vote for it, and together, let us write the next great chapter in the most extraordinary story ever told.

Thank you. God bless you, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

PHOTO: Vice President Kamala Harris accepted the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party during a speech before a packed United Center on Thursday in Chicago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***In New York City, Change Is Constant but Obstacles to It Are Many***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C86-SP71-JBG3-60P2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Dana Rubinstein and Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Body**

Congestion pricing was the latest ambitious proposal that couldn't navigate New York's rocky political terrain. It's a tall order to achieve substantial change in the city.

With New York on the verge of becoming the first city in the nation to adopt congestion pricing, a sudden, familiar chill fell over the city last week, as another ambitious project was shelved.

This time, it was Gov. Kathy Hochul who consigned a big initiative to the dustbin, where it will molder alongside other abandoned and delayed big-ticket projects like a subway to Staten Island, an AirTrain to La Guardia Airport, a new Port Authority Bus Terminal, a new Pennsylvania Station, a reconstructed Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and a cross-Hudson River rail tunnel canceled by Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey.

In the adjoining garbage bin lie other big development projects like a football stadium on Manhattan's West Side and smaller initiatives with potentially outsize impact, like all-door bus boarding.

For a place where change is the rule and unbridled ambition the guiding light, New York can be a remarkably hard place to get things done.

''We're the most change-oriented place in America on one level, and we're also the most traditionalist on another level,'' said Bill de Blasio, the former mayor, in an interview on Monday. ''It's a very weird mix.''

New York City is nothing if not constantly in flux. Bodegas become illegal smoke shops. Neighborhoods identified with one group of immigrants become home to another. Disney supplants pornography in Times Square. ***Working-class*** outposts become havens for 20-somethings with trust funds.

And significant change does happen. The Bloomberg administration delivered bike lanes, pedestrian plazas and a new neighborhood at Hudson Yards. The de Blasio administration developed a citywide ferry system and created universal prekindergarten for 4-year-olds. Former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo turned a Midtown post office into a train cathedral and helped transform one of the country's worst airports into one of its best.

But even to make those happen, elected leaders had to overcome significant resistance.

New Yorkers who cling to the ''not in my backyard'' stance are often a major obstacle, as well as a car culture that encourages the view that street parking is sacrosanct, and a political culture that often defers to motorists. The city also has some of the highest construction costs in the world, leading to ballooning estimates for infrastructure projects.

To actually move the needle requires four elements, according to Dan Doctoroff, the former deputy mayor under Michael R. Bloomberg who counts the redevelopment of Hudson Yards and the creation of Brooklyn Bridge Park as among his accomplishments. First, there must be a catalyst, which could be strong leadership or cataclysmic events, like the Sept. 11 attacks. There must also be a governing philosophy, a strategy and firm execution.

''Everything is hard,'' Mr. Doctoroff said. ''But that's true in government generally. If you have those four elements and you drive it hard, things can get done.''

Janette Sadik-Khan, who overcame heated opposition as transportation commissioner under Mr. Bloomberg to build a network of bike lanes and pedestrian plazas -- including one in the middle of Times Square -- said speed of delivery is also key, followed by ample time for New Yorkers to come around.

''If congestion pricing is given a chance to work and show the benefits for the millions of people who use the subway and Metro-North Railroad and New Jersey commuters whose commutes would improve with less traffic and more investments, we would get there,'' Ms. Sadik-Khan said.

Data from cities that have implemented congestion pricing seems to bear out the argument that commuters get used to paying the charge and appreciate the ensuing benefits.

Congestion pricing, after all, was not merely meant to produce revenue. It was supposed to slash traffic, fund the subway and cut air pollution. The idea had been successful in other cities around the world including London and Stockholm, and supporters hoped that its embrace in New York City would prompt other American cities to follow suit.

But Ms. Hochul astonished New Yorkers last week by abruptly reversing course and halting congestion pricing ''indefinitely.'' She cited concerns about the still fragile state of New York's post-pandemic economy and the struggles of working families.

''Let's be real: A $15 charge may not seem like a lot to someone who has the means, but it can break the budget of a hard-working middle-class household,'' Ms. Hochul said.

Ms. Hochul was also clearly worried about the politics ahead of the November election. About 64 percent of New York City residents opposed congestion pricing, according to a poll by Siena College in April.

Kathryn Wylde, president of the Partnership for New York City, an influential business group that supports congestion pricing, said that its demise showed ''the triumph of politics over substance.'' She said that elected officials should look past the next election to do what is best for the city, even if there is no immediate political payoff.

Steven Cohen, whose many titles in the Cuomo administration included secretary to the governor and vice chair of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said that in a city overlaid with competing jurisdictional authorities, successful projects require empowered shepherds.

''It is much easier to get a large project done, like building an airport or building a bridge, when the governor says not just, 'I want to get it done,' but, 'I'm taking the lead,''' he said.

Richard R. Buery Jr., who with Mr. Doctoroff chaired a prominent panel focused on the city's future and spearheaded Mr. de Blasio's prekindergarten initiative, said that the city could do more big things, like building more affordable housing, if it enacted ''common-sense reforms,'' such as eliminating the City Council tradition of deferring to local members on development projects in their districts.

''We are seeing more and more leaders step up and say we need more affordable housing, and it needs to happen everywhere, including in your community,'' he said.

Mr. de Blasio, who took office in 2014, said that it was also important for politicians to tackle big plans early in their tenures, or following a serious crisis, when they have sufficient political capital.

''It's a reminder to me that if you want to get anything done, you sort of have those golden moments,'' he said, noting Franklin D. Roosevelt's famously effective use of his first 100 days in office to enact major change. ''We got pre-K for All done in 2014. I'm not sure we could have gotten this done in 2015.''

For Democratic governors, suburban votes in swing districts often overshadow reliably Democratic votes in big cities.

Arpit Gupta, a finance professor at New York University and a member of the city's Rent Guidelines Board appointed by Mayor Eric Adams, said that he hoped someone would challenge Ms. Hochul in the Democratic primary on an ''urbanist plank'' focused on housing, congestion pricing and transit.

''I'm not sure if it's a majority winning coalition, but I'd like to see someone try,'' he said, adding that elected officials needed to do a better job of communicating how congestion pricing would also improve drivers' lives with fewer traffic jams.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his third year in office, supports several bold proposals that face an uncertain path, including new rules to build more homes to counter the housing shortage and efforts to move curbside trash into shared containers. But critics have also seized on his reluctance to build more bus and bike lanes and his scaling back of a popular outdoor dining program, disliked by some drivers because it curtails parking.

Mr. Adams has been lukewarm on congestion pricing, even though half a dozen top officials in his administration and mayoral appointees to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board voiced strong support, including his climate chief, health commissioner and the city's first public realm officer. His top political adviser, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, does not ride the subway and said the program's demise was as if ''God answered my prayers.''

The plan would have required drivers to accept change. And amid the unceasing dynamism of New York City, New Yorkers can hold fast to the old standbys.

''We really value continuity where we can get it,'' Mr. de Blasio said.

But he added, ''The truth is, if congestion pricing were implemented tomorrow, life would go on. Some people would really change their habits, a lot of people wouldn't. They would deal with it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/nyregion/congestion-pricing-failure-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/14/nyregion/congestion-pricing-failure-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gov. Kathy Hochul shelved a plan meant to curb traffic congestion by charging motorists entering Manhattan south of 60th Street.

Dan Doctoroff, a former New York City deputy mayor, counts the creation of Brooklyn Bridge Park among his achievements. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mayor Eric Adams has been lukewarm on congestion pricing, though several officials in his administration strongly support it. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINDY SCHULTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***The Activist Left Doesn’t Want a Hero. But Does It Need One?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CPT-DSW1-DXY4-X1WC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

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**Byline:** Ross Barkan

**Highlight:** For years, America’s left has been wary of charismatic figureheads. But a movement without leaders has its limits.

**Body**

An aging Democratic president who rose to prominence in the Senate announces his withdrawal from the race. The party is rived by ideological clashes and an anguishing war overseas. A notorious Republican rides a reactionary swell to threaten a Democratic winning streak. And a Chicago convention, scheduled for August, promises to be a staging ground for both hope and rancor.

The parallels between 1968 and 2024 are uncanny. Joe Biden has become the first president since Lyndon B. Johnson to forgo seeking another term — and Kamala Harris, like Johnson’s vice president, Hubert Humphrey, has been elevated without having won any mandate in party primaries. There will be protests in Chicago, just as there were in ’68: Instead of Vietnam, this year’s will center on Israel’s war in Gaza, which the left blames on Biden’s support for the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

There are, of course, vast differences. Democrats are far more united behind Harris than they were around Humphrey; there will be no contested convention this year, no war for delegates. And Richard M. Nixon, a darkly introspective child of the ***working class***, was not Donald Trump.

And there is another overlooked divergence: Today’s left does not have leaders to dominate the discourse — or even its own movements.

In 1968, the protest movements that challenged Humphrey had names, faces, figureheads. Today there are no Tom Haydens, Abbie Hoffmans or Jerry Rubins headed to Chicago. There are no activists gaining fame via organizing, the way DeRay Mckesson did during Black Lives Matter demonstrations or Tamika Mallory and Linda Sarsour did before the 2017 Women’s March. The two most celebrated political leaders of the progressive left, Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, fully supported Biden; they did not, as Eugene McCarthy did in 1968, try to wage a primary challenge. Dissent will come in Chicago, but it is challenging to find a single widely known figure, inside the convention or out in the streets, who will be leading any protests.

The new left is largely leaderless. This is not to say that it is bereft of organizational talent or influential ideas — just that it has no one of any great fame or notoriety speaking directly for it, or to it. And for that alone, this is a singular moment in American history.

There was a day in the fall of 2011 that indicated where the American left was heading. That October, John Lewis, the congressman and civil rights icon, arrived at Woodruff Park in downtown Atlanta, hoping to address a large crowd at the city’s Occupy encampment. The movement had catalyzed a fresh rage over income inequality, and Lewis had a simple message for the protesters: I stand with you. I support you. He hadn’t arranged to speak at the encampment, but when a famous politician visits a fledgling protest, the reaction is usually straightforward: He is cheered, or at least beckoned forward.

This is not what happened with Lewis. Instead, a debate erupted at the group’s “general assembly” over whether the congressman could make an unscheduled interruption to the agenda. Ultimately, [*Lewis was told he could speak only at the end*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) of the day’s business. Lewis left, and publicly at least, he did not take offense. “It’s OK,” he told one reporter. “They didn’t really deny me.”

Still, an internet firestorm raged, with discussion eventually turning to the nature of Occupy itself. The movement had seized imaginations with its broad vision but also drawn condemnation for its lack of coherent policy demands. Crucial to this was the fraught, consensus-driven decision-making model of the encampments, where horizontal democracy was so prized that even sympathetic politicians of great renown could not intrude.

Here was what I have come to think of as the leaderless left.

What is it, exactly? One challenge to defining the leaderless left is its sheer amorphousness. Another is that few would actively identify with the term. (Many activists prefer to call their movements “decentralized.”) Broadly defined, though, the leaderless left might be said to have a deep-rooted suspicion of leaders and personalities. It does not seek to anoint activists or politicians to guide it and cares little for electoral incrementalism. It houses an overriding feeling, especially among its youngest members, that those in power — Democrats and Republicans alike — are irreparably disconnected from their struggles. For them, this is an age without heroes.

Back when Lewis ambled up to Occupy Atlanta, this faction was marginal, and it would lie dormant through much of the decade to come. But it would never vanish. It has served as an undercurrent to leftist organizing, pushing against many of the figures who might once have fronted movements. Its habits were at least partly evident in almost all the leftist upsurges of the past 15 years. Black Lives Matter, and the subsequent call to “defund the police,” briefly elevated certain activists and academics but never coalesced around any particular personality for long. The groundswell of #MeToo was hesitant to keep specific women in its spotlight. The 2017 Women’s March was embroiled in leadership disputes; minimum-wage organizing like the “Fight for $15” rarely produced durable figureheads. From all these came influential ideas — but not individuals with long-term influence, power or authority.

At moments, when Bernie Sanders was campaigning for the presidency, the leaderless had a leader. But there was no great yearning for what might come after the aging Vermont senator exited the scene. Instead, the 2020 Democratic primary offered the greatest of all comedowns for young progressives: Rather than the democratic socialist Sanders, it was Biden, seemingly the embodiment of establishment moderation, who captured the nomination. That Biden has governed, on economic matters, to the left of his recent Democratic predecessors suggests that progressive ideas hold plenty of appeal for the party. The individuals, though, go only so far.

Yet the leaderless left currently feels more visible than ever, in large part because of a single issue. On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas killed 1,200 people in Israel and took hundreds of hostages; the Israeli government retaliated with a war that has driven the Gazan death toll into the tens of thousands. Biden’s inability to stem that carnage has alienated many young voters, and among many leftist activists and organizations, the Palestinian plight is now an overriding concern. Pro-Palestinian activists tagged Biden “Genocide Joe” and argued that there was little difference between his victory and Trump’s; one told me, not long ago, that the election would offer a brutal choice between genocide and fascism.

On this “Palestine Left” in particular, the concept of the leader has melted away almost entirely. There is no specific figure who stands at the vanguard of this multifarious and unabashedly radical movement, which now stretches from critics of the civilian death toll and insufficient humanitarian aid to factions calling for the dissolution of Israel as a Jewish state. Few celebrities have raised their profiles speaking at the new marches or pro-Palestinian encampments. Sanders and “the Squad” of progressive House members have defended the protesters but are not propelling them forward. Ocasio-Cortez was actually targeted by activists for her initial reluctance to deem Israel’s war a genocide, and even Rashida Tlaib, the press-shy Palestinian-American congresswoman, is perhaps ancillary to what’s happening in this year’s marches and encampments.

This is a genuine shift from the past. Occupy, for all its hostility to political personalities, nevertheless helped to mint several, including a Harvard law professor seeking a Senate seat in Massachusetts. (“I created much of the intellectual foundation for what they do,” [*Elizabeth Warren proudly proclaimed in 2011.*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true)) The civil rights era produced numerous leaders and personalities: the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X and Rosa Parks, of course, but also figures like Bayard Rustin and Ralph Abernathy. Black Panthers like Bobby Seale were household names. Students for a Democratic Society elevated Hayden; the Free Speech movement had Mario Savio; the feminist movement boasted headliners like Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and the pioneering congresswoman Bella Abzug. Out of that same era came Michael Harrington, the political theorist who, as the left retreated, helped found Democratic Socialists of America in 1982.

“The 20th-century left always had someone who embodied the movement,” says Maurice Isserman, a professor of history at Hamilton College and the author of a new book about the rise and fall of [*American Communism.*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) “In the past, you could say, ‘I’m a Michael Harrington socialist,’ and that meant something. Or, ‘I’m a Eugene Debs socialist.’ It gave you a political identity. It was a shorthand for the whole idea.” But according to Donna Murch, an associate professor of history at Rutgers and an expert on the Black Power movement of the 1960s, today’s activists are learning a lesson from the 20th century: Elevating swaggering personalities to speak for a movement can backfire. “The corporate media did a lot of damage to the social movements in the ’60s,” Murch says. Eldridge Cleaver, she notes, “became the face of the Black Panther party,” despite his direct involvement with it being short-lived — and his beliefs often cast the group in a poor light.

There are some singular reputational risks that might make people wary of leading pro-Palestinian activism. Neither party is receptive to it, and belligerent and powerful Israel supporters like the billionaire Bill Ackman have made dogged efforts to publicly identify protesters, especially at colleges, in a bid to effectively blacklist them from future employment. But even among recent movements with much greater public support, leftists have seen, again and again, the problem Murch identifies, and the danger in investing political capital into fallible individuals. Black Lives Matter, for instance, did not benefit from its founders’ being celebrated in magazines like Glamour. The anti-Trump Women’s March eventually devolved into scandal, with accusations of antisemitism lodged against (and denied by) two star organizers.

In the 1960s and ’70s, even as notions of bottom-up organizing thrived, leading activists were far more enthusiastic about parading through the media’s glare — and the media itself was “more committed to the idea of political celebrity, trying to identify and promote people as leading voices,” says Jeremy Varon, a historian at the New School who has studied postwar American social movements. Today, though, “there’s a kind of paucity of public figures now who lend their name and reputation to a cause.” The thinking has shifted: “Leadership is intrinsically bad, hierarchy is bad and everyone loves viral, self-reproducing protest.”

We may be sliding into a new age — one of “personality exhaustion,” in the [*words*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) of the culture writer Mo Diggs. For much of the 2010s, online life was [*defined*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) by parasocial bonds with individuals. These were boom times for megalithic influencers, from political candidates to social media personalities. Many liberals seemed personality-obsessed, enamored of assorted pundits and Trump nemeses like Robert Mueller, James Comey and Alexander Vindman. Mainstream Democrats still flock to cable television and prestige media that, in the 2020s, still revolve around such figures, with Jen Psaki cultivating a large fan base on MSNBC; even online, anti-Trump social media heavyweights like Ron Filipkowski and BrooklynDad\_Defiant have racked up significant followings. But elsewhere, algorithms have come to change that.

Some pro-Israel commentators have blamed TikTok for fomenting anti-Zionism on its platform, but the platform’s real upheaval was to upend this parasocial arrangement: Its algorithmic “For You” page shifted attention away from memorable, followable individuals and into a sea of short videos and memes. As the culture writer Kyle Raymond Fitzpatrick observed last year, [*TikTok is increasingly a platform of free-floating ideas and images,*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) not personalities. And this year, on TikTok and especially on TikTok Live, brutal images from Gaza have streamed night and day, unmediated; arguments about rocket attacks and genocide have supplanted the specific people making them. When individuals were featured, they were often Gazans themselves, documenting what was happening around them. It seemed not to matter who was uttering any sort of soaring rhetoric. Speechifying itself, so fame-making in the 1960s, was growing irrelevant.

This sort of bottom-up change in sentiment can have mainstream impact. During the leaderless George Floyd protests of 2020, celebrities released statements, corporations promised new diversity initiatives and the N.F.L. emblazoned “Black Lives Matter” on its helmets. But pro-Palestinian activists, whether furiously anti-Israel or not, have found no such easy sympathy. One of the rare House members to pull close to them — Jamaal Bowman of New York, who publicly gestured at cultural boycotts of Israel and who told me in an interview that he was open to the concept of a shared nation for Jews and Palestinians — was challenged in a primary this year and, between his own political missteps and heavy spending by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, lost handily. For the pro-Palestinian youths, distrust in all mainstream personalities and institutions is inordinately high. They see no one they might look to. So why bother having spokespeople?

And yet it’s notable that when frustrations boiled over so significantly that the Palestine Left wanted to challenge Biden’s campaign, there was no candidate to run, no McCarthy to the party’s Johnson and Humphrey. The war in Gaza began only a few months before the primary season — too little time for a contender to assemble a viable campaign — but still: A placeholder, some activist in possession of some visible clout, could have emerged. None did. Instead, a movement urged voters to choose “uncommitted or uninstructed” on their ballots or to leave them blank. Organizers celebrated the roughly 30 delegates this movement won as heartening, but it felt striking that unlike in 2016 or 2020, there was no actual challenger, no literal person, to carry the cause.

Those “uncommitted” delegates represent less than 1 percent of those who will go to the convention in Chicago. (Sanders, in 2016, brought nearly 2,000.) Activists on the Palestine Left seem unconcerned. “The fact that people were voting for an idea, and not an inherently flawed individual, as a candidate contributed to how we had such a strong showing in Michigan,” Abbas Alawieh, a strategist for the Uncommitted National Movement, told me. “That’s one of the real sources of power of this movement: We convinced people to vote for the idea that our Democratic Party should be antiwar.”

As long as the left eschews defined leadership, it is difficult to imagine it increasing its influence in the party, even when it focuses on ideas popular with the Democratic base. Sanders has receded. Ocasio-Cortez, still just 34, is gradually accumulating seniority. Many in the more centrist wing of the party seem to view the left as either marginal or actively destructive, like the late-1960s radicals who were willing to torpedo Humphrey’s candidacy even if it meant that Nixon was elected president.

It is true that leftist organizations like the Democratic Socialists of America, the Working Families Party and Justice Democrats are still winning some down-ballot elections. It is true that Biden, as president, has partnered with progressive policy minds on infrastructure, green-energy legislation and health care; his Federal Trade Commission, skeptical of corporate consolidations, carries Warren’s imprint. But it is also true that the left has played no particular role in Biden’s departure or in Harris’s rise.

It has taken heart from Harris’s selection of the Minnesota governor Tim Walz as her running mate, instead of Josh Shapiro, the Pennsylvania governor, who is staunchly supportive of Israel. (When he was in Congress, Walz spoke at an AIPAC policy conference, but earlier this year he was receptive to the Uncommitted National Movement in Minnesota, saying that “they are asking to be heard.”) What this ultimately means for foreign policy is unclear. But on the domestic front, Obama alumni more tolerant of corporate power, like David Plouffe and Eric Holder, are gravitating to Harris’s campaign, and well-heeled donors appear thrilled for what’s to come. The Uncommitted National Movement carries too few delegates to win any meaningful floor flights and has no candidate to hold sway at the convention. Dissent and protest will be confined to the streets of Chicago, far away from Harris’s coronation.

Even when the incumbent candidate was widely viewed as too old and inept to govern, no segment of the left could position itself to take advantage of the teetering standard-bearer. At the time, Sanders was out stumping for Biden, urging his base to give the president one more chance. When I asked him, upon his arrival in New York to support the doomed Bowman candidacy, if he had any opinions on the growing Israel skepticism on the left, Sanders didn’t want to engage at all: “It’s not an issue I hear a whole lot,” he said. “What I hear, overwhelmingly, with maybe very, very few exceptions, is that Hamas is a terrorist organization pledged to destroy Israel and committed an atrocious war crime on Oct. 7.” He added that “Netanyahu’s right-wing, racist, extremist government has gone to war against the Palestinian people.”

A lack of leadership does not just make it difficult to exert influence on the party. It also makes it challenging to establish message discipline and sustain momentum around a cause. Here, too, the Palestine Left offers a vivid illustration. (It has, for instance, few spokespeople well positioned to argue that the small number of leftists urging [*solidarity*](https://www.nydailynews.com/2011/10/10/occupy-atlanta-offshoot-of-wall-street-protest-denies-rep-john-lewis-chance-to-speak-at-gathering/?newUser=true) with Hamas do not in fact speak for the broader movement.) And Sanders, absent disciples with any significant power, cannot guarantee that his issues outlast him. Consider his Medicare for All proposal, which was never seriously entertained when Democrats controlled both chambers of Congress a couple of years ago. In the Senate, Harris was a sponsor of the sweeping legislation; now she doesn’t speak of it. Universal health care, once a lodestar issue for the progressive left, has faded from view.

Enduring organizations and defined, well-regarded leaders — these things may be more necessary than leftists hope. Protest itself, so easily staged and replicated, can be intoxicating. But street protests ebb, and public attention is fickle. The Uncommitted National Movement is demanding that Democrats allow a pediatric-intensive-care physician serving in Gaza to speak at the Chicago convention — to let her explain, to a national audience, how much Palestinians have suffered. The Democratic National Committee hasn’t said no or yes. A leaderless left can move it only so much.

Ross Barkan is the author of two novels and a nonfiction account of Covid’s impact on New York City. Lauren Peters-Collaer is a graphic designer and an associate art director at Penguin Random House.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAUREN PETERS-COLLAER) (MM28-MM29); PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAUREN PETERS-COLLAER; GETTY IMAGES) (MM31) This article appeared in print on page MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33.

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[***Hochul Halts Congestion Pricing in a Stunning 11th-Hour Shift***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C64-MH31-JBG3-603C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

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**Byline:** Grace Ashford Grace Ashford covers New York government and politics for The Times.

**Highlight:** Weeks before New York was to charge motorists to enter Manhattan’s business district, Gov. Kathy Hochul postponed the program, citing economic concerns.

**Body**

Weeks before New York was to charge motorists to enter Manhattan’s business district, Gov. Kathy Hochul postponed the program, citing economic concerns.

Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York announced on Wednesday that she was shelving the long-awaited tolling plan known as congestion pricing, just weeks before it was to go into effect.

“After careful consideration I have come to the difficult decision that implementing the planned congestion pricing system risks too many unintended consequences,” Ms. Hochul said, adding: “I have directed the M.T.A. to indefinitely pause the program.”

The move [*angered environmentalists, transit advocates and economists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html), with some accusing the governor of abandoning a plan that was decades in the making for political reasons in a critical election year.

The decision, Ms. Hochul acknowledged, was not an easy one, but she said it was nonetheless crucial in light of the lingering effects of the coronavirus pandemic on working families and New York City’s economy.

The [*congestion pricing plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html), the first of its kind in the nation, was slated to start [*June 30*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html). Drivers using E-ZPass would have paid as much as $15 to enter Manhattan south of 60th Street.

The governor said she feared that instituting a toll to drive into the borough would “create another obstacle to our economic recovery.”

“Let’s be real: A $15 charge may not seem like a lot to someone who has the means, but it can break the budget of a hard-working middle-class household,” Ms. Hochul said.

In the days before her announcement, the governor notified the White House and the top House Democrat, Hakeem Jeffries, of her plans, according to two people familiar with the conversations.

They disputed reports that Mr. Jeffries had directed Ms. Hochul to delay the plan, saying that he had remained neutral on the issue.

“To the extent immediate implementation of congestion pricing is being reconsidered, Leader Jeffries supports a temporary pause of limited duration to better understand the financial impact on ***working-class*** New Yorkers,” said Andy Eichar, a spokesman for Mr. Jeffries.

Word of the governor’s [*last-minute misgivings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html) began to circulate in Albany on Tuesday night, and quickly sent shock waves through the New York State Capitol by Wednesday morning, the penultimate day of the legislative session.

Few lawmakers could say they loved congestion pricing and the optics of taxing constituents. But the proposal was championed by economists and environmentalists alike as the solution not only to the financial woes of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the state agency that runs New York’s subways and buses, but also the city’s infamous gridlock.

The program was also being contested in court by eight separate lawsuits, with plaintiffs including the [*Trucking Association of New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html) and [*Gov. Philip D. Murphy of New Jersey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html).

Mr. Murphy’s case in particular, which is being argued in Federal District Court in Newark, was regarded as the most serious challenge to congestion pricing. State officials are seeking a more comprehensive environmental study of the program.

But in New York, most Democrats had made a grudging peace with the plan after decades of debate, hearings, studies and planning — none more publicly than Ms. Hochul, who had defended it as a necessary step toward rebuilding New York’s economy.

Just two weeks ago, the governor told attendees at the Global Economic Summit in Ireland that implementing congestion pricing was critical to “making cities more livable.”

Many key players in New York politics, from Albany to New York City, expressed dismay at the reversal, which cast the transportation authority’s finances into uncertainty.

“I’m very upset that suddenly, out of the blue, this would pop up,” State Senator Liz Krueger, a Manhattan Democrat, said on Wednesday, adding: “If we stop congestion pricing now we’re never going to get it.”

Kate Slevin of the Regional Plan Association, a nonprofit urban research and advocacy group that has championed the tolling program, called the move “a total betrayal of New Yorkers and our climate.”

The president of the Partnership for New York City, Kathryn Wylde, said the governor’s decision was a disappointment and that she hoped the pause would be temporary.

Yet an undercurrent of support for Ms. Hochul’s move was also evident among lawmakers, particularly those representing swing districts.

“Many see it as welcome news,” said James Skoufis, a Democrat who represents Orange County in the State Senate, adding that despite the plan’s approval five years earlier, opposition had been growing in the Legislature. “Some of it is outspoken, some of it is quieter, but it is widespread.”

Shortly after Ms. Hochul’s announcement, U.S. Representative Pat Ryan, a Democrat facing a tough re-election race in the northern exurbs of New York City, sent out a statement taking partial credit for defeating the plan.

“Since Day 1, I’ve fought alongside countless Hudson Valley families against this unfair, uninformed and unacceptable congestion pricing plan,” Mr. Ryan said. “Today, I’m proud to say we’ve stopped congestion pricing in its tracks.”

Indeed, the plan has been largely unpopular in suburban areas of the Hudson Valley and Long Island where Democrats are desperate to make gains this cycle.

A Siena poll from April found that 72 percent of New York suburbs opposed congestion pricing. Statewide, the number is lower, but still a majority — including 54 percent of Democrats.

Transit experts say that such opposition is common among communities acclimating to tolling plans, but not always lasting.

“We know from the experiences of other cities that have implemented congestion pricing that public support is at its nadir right before implementation,” said Nicholas Klein, an assistant professor of city and regional planning at Cornell University. “That is when the public, media and politicians panic. But time and again, we see that the sky does not fall.”

In her address, Ms. Hochul stressed her commitment to public transit, and ensuring that the transportation authority had the funding it needed to complete long overdue capital projects. But she said that the city’s outlook had changed since the plan was approved in 2019.

“Workers were in the office five days a week, crime was at record lows and tourism was at record highs,” she said. “Circumstances have changed and we must respond to the facts on the ground.”

The decision has the awkward effect of bringing Ms. Hochul, a centrist Democrat who has at times served as a surrogate for President Biden, into alignment with former President [*Donald J. Trump, who has derided the plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/05/nyregion/congestion-pricing-supporters.html), as well as her predecessor, Andrew M. Cuomo, who championed the concept as governor but now questions its timing.

To halt implementation of the plan, Ms. Hochul needs only the approval of the authority’s board, which she controls. But without the projected $1 billion a year for the city’s buses and subways, the transit system could quickly fall into crisis.

Ms. Hochul could fill that gap, at least temporarily, with money from the state’s reserves. But she is also said to be looking at a more durable revenue source, possibly in the form of a tax on city businesses, which would require the approval of the State Legislature.

The transportation agency has already invested heavily in infrastructure to implement the pricing plan, including $507 million it paid to a Nashville company.

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams endorsed Ms. Hochul’s move. “I think that if she’s looking at analyzing what other ways we can do it and how we do it correctly, I’m all for it,” Mr. Adams said Wednesday at an unrelated news conference on Staten Island.

Mr. Adams, who has not been a strong proponent of congestion pricing, said he was worried that charging vehicles to enter Lower Manhattan would be an undue burden for “everyday New Yorkers” and potentially affect the city’s economic recovery from the pandemic.

“We have to get it right,” the mayor said, noting that he had been communicating with the governor over the last few days. “This is a major shift in our city and it must be done correctly.”

Reporting was contributed by Nicholas Fandos, Jeffery C. Mays and Claire Fahy.

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PHOTO: The move by Gov. Kathy Hochul, a centrist New York Democrat, brings her into alignment with Donald J. Trump on the issue. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINDY SCHULTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A23) This article appeared in print on page A1, A23.

**Load-Date:** June 6, 2024

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[***It’s Tough to Get Things Done in New York. Here’s Why.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C80-VNF1-JBG3-60MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1525 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein and Emma G. Fitzsimmons Dana Rubinstein covers New York City politics and government for The Times. Emma G. Fitzsimmons is the City Hall Bureau Chief for The Times, covering Mayor Eric Adams and his administration.

**Highlight:** Congestion pricing was the latest ambitious proposal that couldn’t navigate New York’s rocky political terrain. It’s a tall order to achieve substantial change in the city.

**Body**

Congestion pricing was the latest ambitious proposal that couldn’t navigate New York’s rocky political terrain. It’s a tall order to achieve substantial change in the city.

With New York on the verge of becoming the first city in the nation to adopt congestion pricing, a sudden, familiar chill fell over the city last week, as another ambitious project was [*shelved*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html).

This time, it was Gov. Kathy Hochul who consigned a big initiative to the dustbin, where it will molder alongside other abandoned and delayed big-ticket projects like a [*subway to Staten Island*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), an [*AirTrain to La Guardia Airport*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), a new [*Port Authority Bus Terminal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), a new [*Pennsylvania Station*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), a [*reconstructed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and a cross-Hudson River rail tunnel [*canceled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) by Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey.

In the adjoining garbage bin lie other big development projects like a [*football stadium on Manhattan’s West Side*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) and smaller initiatives with potentially outsize impact, like [*all-door bus boarding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html).

For a place where change is the rule and unbridled ambition the guiding light, New York can be a remarkably hard place to get things done.

“We’re the most change-oriented place in America on one level, and we’re also the most traditionalist on another level,” said Bill de Blasio, the former mayor, in an interview on Monday. “It’s a very weird mix.”

New York City is nothing if not constantly in flux. Bodegas become illegal smoke shops. Neighborhoods identified with one group of immigrants become home to another. Disney supplants pornography in Times Square. ***Working-class*** outposts become havens for 20-somethings with trust funds.

And significant change does happen. The Bloomberg administration delivered bike lanes, pedestrian plazas and a new neighborhood at Hudson Yards. The de Blasio administration developed a citywide ferry system and created [*universal prekindergarten*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) for 4-year-olds. Former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo turned a Midtown post office into a train cathedral and helped transform one of the country’s worst airports into one of its best.

But even to make those happen, elected leaders had to overcome significant resistance.

New Yorkers who cling to the “not in my backyard” stance are often a major obstacle, as well as a car culture that encourages the view that street parking is sacrosanct, and a political culture that often defers to motorists. The city also has some of the [*highest construction costs in the world*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), leading to ballooning estimates for infrastructure projects.

To actually move the needle requires four elements, according to Dan Doctoroff, the former deputy mayor under Michael R. Bloomberg who counts the redevelopment of Hudson Yards and the creation of Brooklyn Bridge Park as among his accomplishments. First, there must be a catalyst, which could be strong leadership or cataclysmic events, like the Sept. 11 attacks. There must also be a governing philosophy, a strategy and firm execution.

“Everything is hard,” Mr. Doctoroff said. “But that’s true in government generally. If you have those four elements and you drive it hard, things can get done.”

Janette Sadik-Khan, who overcame heated opposition as transportation commissioner under Mr. Bloomberg to build a network of bike lanes and pedestrian plazas — including one in the middle of Times Square — said speed of delivery is also key, followed by ample time for New Yorkers [*to come around*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html).

“If congestion pricing is given a chance to work and show the benefits for the millions of people who use the subway and Metro-North Railroad and New Jersey commuters whose commutes would improve with less traffic and more investments, we would get there,” Ms. Sadik-Khan said.

Data from cities that have implemented congestion pricing seems to bear out the argument that commuters get used to paying the charge and appreciate the ensuing benefits.

Congestion pricing, after all, was not merely meant to produce revenue. It was supposed to slash traffic, fund the subway and cut air pollution. The idea had been successful in other cities around the world including London and Stockholm, and supporters hoped that its embrace in New York City would prompt other American cities to follow suit.

But Ms. Hochul astonished New Yorkers last week by abruptly reversing course and halting congestion pricing “indefinitely.” She cited concerns about the still fragile state of New York’s post-pandemic economy and the struggles of working families.

“Let’s be real: A $15 charge may not seem like a lot to someone who has the means, but it can break the budget of a hard-working middle-class household,” Ms. Hochul said.

Ms. Hochul was also clearly worried about the politics ahead of the November election. About 64 percent of New York City residents opposed congestion pricing, according to a [*poll by Siena College in April*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html).

Kathryn Wylde, president of the Partnership for New York City, an influential business group that supports congestion pricing, said that its demise showed “the triumph of politics over substance.” She said that elected officials should look past the next election to do what is best for the city, even if there is no immediate political payoff.

Steven Cohen, whose many titles in the Cuomo administration included secretary to the governor and vice chair of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, said that in a city overlaid with competing jurisdictional authorities, successful projects require empowered shepherds.

“It is much easier to get a large project done, like building an airport or building a bridge, when the governor says not just, ‘I want to get it done,’ but, ‘I’m taking the lead,’” he said.

Richard R. Buery Jr., who with Mr. Doctoroff [*chaired a prominent panel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) focused on the city’s future and spearheaded Mr. de Blasio’s prekindergarten initiative, said that the city could do more big things, like building more affordable housing, if it enacted “common-sense reforms,” such as eliminating the City Council tradition of deferring to local members on development projects in their districts.

“We are seeing more and more leaders step up and say we need more affordable housing, and it needs to happen everywhere, including in your community,” he said.

Mr. de Blasio, who took office in 2014, said that it was also important for politicians to tackle big plans early in their tenures, or following a serious crisis, when they have sufficient political capital.

“It’s a reminder to me that if you want to get anything done, you sort of have those golden moments,” he said, noting Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famously effective use of his [*first 100 days*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html) in office to enact major change. “We got pre-K for All done in 2014. I’m not sure we could have gotten this done in 2015.”

For Democratic governors, suburban votes in swing districts often overshadow reliably Democratic votes in big cities.

Arpit Gupta, a finance professor at New York University and a member of the city’s Rent Guidelines Board appointed by Mayor Eric Adams, said that he hoped someone would challenge Ms. Hochul in the Democratic primary on an “urbanist plank” focused on housing, congestion pricing and transit.

“I’m not sure if it’s a majority winning coalition, but I’d like to see someone try,” he said, adding that elected officials needed to do a better job of communicating how congestion pricing would also improve drivers’ lives with fewer traffic jams.

Mr. Adams, a Democrat in his third year in office, supports several bold proposals that face an uncertain path, including new rules to build more homes to counter the housing shortage and efforts to move curbside trash into shared containers. But critics have also seized on his reluctance to build more bus and bike lanes and his scaling back of a popular outdoor dining program, disliked by some drivers because it curtails parking.

Mr. Adams has been lukewarm on congestion pricing, even though half a dozen top officials in his administration and mayoral appointees to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority board voiced strong support, including his [*climate chief*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html), health commissioner and the city’s first [*public realm officer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html). His top political adviser, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, does not ride the subway and said the program’s [*demise was as if “God answered my prayers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/04/nyregion/congestion-pricing-hochul-delayed.html).”

The plan would have required drivers to accept change. And amid the unceasing dynamism of New York City, New Yorkers can hold fast to the old standbys.

“We really value continuity where we can get it,” Mr. de Blasio said.

But he added, “The truth is, if congestion pricing were implemented tomorrow, life would go on. Some people would really change their habits, a lot of people wouldn’t. They would deal with it.”

PHOTOS: Gov. Kathy Hochul shelved a plan meant to curb traffic congestion by charging motorists entering Manhattan south of 60th Street.; Dan Doctoroff, a former New York City deputy mayor, counts the creation of Brooklyn Bridge Park among his achievements. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mayor Eric Adams has been lukewarm on congestion pricing, though several officials in his administration strongly support it. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINDY SCHULTZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***Navigating a Virtual Australia in Postapocalyptic Ruins***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BS5-X141-JBG3-601P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ARTS

**Length:** 905 words

**Byline:** Darryn King

**Highlight:** The role-playing game Broken Roads takes its environment seriously. The Aussie slang, the reddish outback soil, even the ruffling of emu feathers provide authenticity.

**Body**

The role-playing game Broken Roads takes its environment seriously. The Aussie slang, the reddish outback soil, even the ruffling of emu feathers provide authenticity.

The language barrier is just one of the obstacles that players will face in Broken Roads, a postapocalyptic role-playing game filled with thorny moral choices. With a distinctive nasal twang, the locals pepper their conversations with “crikey,” “sprog,” “yobbo,” “tinny,” “chunder,” “togs” and “hard yakka.” Early in the game, a cocky mercenary is called “a legend in his own lunchbox.”

Some of the terms are defined with an in-game glossary feature, but others need to be puzzled out via context. In other words: Have a go, yer mug.

Broken Roads, which was inspired by the “Mad Max” films as well as the dystopian Fallout games, follows an arduous journey from Brookton to Kalgoorlie in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. Yes, you can stop off at the pub on the way.

The team at Drop Bear Bytes worked hard to ensure that every aspect of the game conveys an authentic vision of the country, whether it was duplicating the distinctive reddish hue of outback soil or developing specialized technology that makes the ruffling of emu feathers feel true to life.

In Broken Roads, which releases on Wednesday for the PC and the PlayStation and Xbox consoles, the player leads a motley crew through a richly detailed, morally complex world. Through dialogue and action, the player is frequently forced to make choices — labeled humanist, utilitarian, Machiavellian or nihilist — that profoundly alter the way the story unfolds.

The game takes place about 150 years into the future, in the wasted ruins of a nuclear war. Some have joked that its vision of postapocalyptic Australia — a strange, forbidding landscape filled with bizarre-looking creatures and vegetation — bears an uncanny resemblance to parts of actual modern-day Australia.

“It’s this arid, inhospitable place that people still manage to live in,” Leanne Taylor-Giles, the game’s narrative lead, said of the Wheatbelt region, a vast tract of agricultural land that partly surrounds Perth. “And it’s extraordinarily beautiful.”

A 2022 research trip through the Wheatbelt allowed a few members of the team to observe aspects of the Australian persona — a ***working-class*** hardiness and humor — that Taylor-Giles sought to bring out in the characters in the game.

“I tried to capture the spirit of the people who live in those towns,” said Taylor-Giles, who lives in Queensland in eastern Australia. She added, “That sense of making do with the things they have, of coming together to make it against all odds, is something that I really love.”

While driving the route eventually replicated in Broken Roads, the Drop Bear Bytes team took thousands of reference photographs — many in-game locations are eerily faithful recreations of real places — and recorded some of the ambient audio that made it into the game’s soundscape.

“When you’re standing in Wave Rock” in Broken Roads, “you are literally hearing all the wildlife ambience and wind of Wave Rock,” said Tim Sunderland, the audio lead who also composed the didgeridoo-infused score.

Some aspects of the game verge on self-lampoonery, a very Aussie tendency. A cricket bat, festooned with saw blades, is wielded as a weapon; specially concocted craft beers work like magic potions.

Serious thought and care, though, went into the treatment and representation of Indigenous Australians. Since the game takes place on land traditionally owned by the Noongar people, the team worked with Karla Hart, a Noongar writer who signed on as a consultant.

Hart advised on parts of the game that allow the player to learn about Noongar culture and customs, including traditional foods and medicine.

“One of the Noongar characters works with fire,” Taylor-Giles said. “After some discussion with Karla, it turned out that the Noongar idea of fire is as a warming, benevolent presence, equated with safety, or home — very different from my own relationship with fire.”

The player will also encounter authentic Indigenous artwork, commissioned specially for the game. And in keeping with the linguistic element of Broken Roads, there are many Noongar words to learn. In this case, the words need to be heard a number of times before the game provides a definition.

“I hope gamers go away with a small experience of who we are as a people or something that they can identify with,” Hart said.

In addition to its Australian team, Drop Bear Bytes also has members in the United States, Britain, Spain and South Africa.

“You can call us honorary Aussies,” said Bianca Roux, a 3-D modeler, sculptor and texture artist based in Cape Town. When not sculpting the game’s kangaroos, wallabies and koalas, she has been bingeing episodes of the reality series “Outback Opal Hunters.”

Taylor-Giles is excited about sharing the Broken Roads vision of Australia with the rest of the world, but she is just as keen for Australian gamers to become acquainted with a less familiar part of their own country.

“We may come to appreciate what’s exceptional about ourselves,” she said. “The things that easily fade into the background when we live them, day in and day out.”

PHOTOS: Broken Roads, inspired by the “Mad Max” films and the dystopian Fallout games, follows a journey in the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DROP BEAR BYTES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

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[***‘The Seeds Had Been Planted. Trump Didn’t Do It Himself.’; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1M-28H1-JBG3-601G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2930 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. EdsallThomas 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:** Authoritarianism has moved from the periphery to the center, even the core, of global politics.

**Body**

Over the past 30 years, authoritarianism has moved from the periphery to the center, even the core, of global politics, shaping not only the divide between left and right in the United States but also the conflict between the American-led alliance of democratic nations and the loose coalition of autocratic states including Russia, China, Iran and North Korea.

[*Marc Hetherington*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), a political scientist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and a co-author of “[*Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/),” has tracked the partisanship of white voters in this country who are in the top 15 percent on measures of support for dictatorial rule.

Replying by email to my inquiry, Hetherington wrote:

In 1992, those whites scoring at the top of the authoritarianism scale split their two-party vote almost evenly between Bush and Clinton (51 to 49). In 2000 and 2004, the difference becomes statistically significant but still pretty small.

By 2012, those high-authoritarianism white voters went 68 to 32 for Romney over Obama. In both Trump elections it was 80 to 20 among those voters.

So from 50 Republican-50 Democrat to 80 Republican-20 Democrat in the space of 24 years.

The parallel pattern of conflicting values and priorities that has emerged between nations is the focus of a paper published last month, “[*Worldwide Divergence of Values*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/)” by [*Joshua Conrad Jackson*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) and [*Dan Medvedev*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), both at the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business. The two authors analyzed data from seven studies conducted by the [*World Values Survey*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) in 76 countries between 1981 and 2022.

Jackson and Medvedev found that over those years, “Values emphasizing tolerance and self-expression have diverged most sharply, especially between high-income Western countries and the rest of the world” and characterized this split as a clash between “emancipatory” values and values of “obedience.”

I asked Medvedev whether authoritarianism represents the antithesis of a regime based on emancipatory principles, and he wrote back, “It certainly does seem that authoritarian regimes tend to reject values that we categorize as emancipative.”

He said he would prefer to use the word “traditional” but “that’s just my preference — I don’t think it’s incorrect to use ‘authoritarian.’”

Jackson and Medvedev found that “the rate of value divergence” could be determined using seven questions producing “the highest divergence scores.” Those were:

(1) justifiability of homosexuality, (2) justifiability of euthanasia, (3) importance of obedience of children, (4) justifiability of divorce, (5) justifiability of prostitution, (6) justifiability of suicide and (7) justifiability of abortion.

I wrote Jackson and Medvedev, asking about this divergence:

There has been a lot of speculation lately about new global divide pitting democracies led by the United States against a coalition including China, Russia, Iran and North Korea. Does this divide show up in your data on values differences between countries? Are there [*values differences*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) between democratic countries and autocratic countries?

“The short answer is yes,” Jackson and Medvedev wrote back and provided a detailed analysis in support of their reply.

Their data shows that the citizens in authoritarian countries tend to “believe that homosexuality and divorce are not justifiable” while those living in the United States, Japan, Germany and Canada “tend to believe that homosexuality and divorce are justifiable and disagree that obedience is an important value to teach their children.”

More important, Jackson and Medvedev found that over those years, Russia, China and Iran have moved in an increasingly authoritarian direction while the democratic countries have moved in an emancipatory direction.

“These cultural differences were not always so stark; they have emerged over time,” Jackson and Medvedev wrote. “These two groups of countries are sorting in their emancipative values over time. For example, Russia and the United States used to be quite similar in their values, but now the United States is closer to Germany in its values, and Russia is closer to Iran.”

There is a debate among scholars of politics over the level of centrality that authoritarianism warrants and the forces that have elevated its salience, especially in American politics, where high levels of authoritarianism are increasingly linked to allegiance to the Republican Party.

What is clear is that authoritarianism has become an entrenched factor in partisan divisions, in global conflicts between nations and in the politics of diversity and race.

[*Rachel Kleinfeld*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment, wrote that the embedded character of authoritarianism in America “is like a barnacle attached to our affective polarization, a side effect of a political realignment being run through the uniquely polarizing effects of our first-past-the-post, winner-take-all system and primary structure.”

In an email, Kleinfeld argued that the Great Recession played a pivotal role in stressing the importance of authoritarianism in American politics:

In 2008, the financial crisis created a great deal of anger and a desire for more government intervention. At the same time, an identity revolution was taking place in which group identity gained increased salience, especially in America.

Together these movements opened space for a political realignment: a long-dissatisfied group of voters who were pro-economic redistribution, but only to their “deserving” group, found political voice. These “more for me, less for thee” voters who hold left-wing redistributive economic ideas and socially conservative views formed Trump’s primary base in 2016, and moved firmly into the Republican camp in 2020.

The two-party system in the United States, Kleinfeld contended, strengthens authoritarianism by failing to provide a vehicle specifically dedicated to the agenda of the disgruntled electorate. As a result, these voters turned en masse in 2016 to an autocratic leader, Donald Trump, who, in his own words, became their “[*retribution*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/).”

This newly mobilized, angry electorate, Kleinfeld continued, is “not choosing the antidemocratic behavior — they are choosing their tribe, and the behavior comes with it. Authoritarian behavior is happening in America, not in Europe, because of our political structures.”

In support of her argument, Kleinfeld cited a January report issued by the Democracy Fund, “[*Democracy Hypocrisy*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/): Examining America’s Fragile Democratic Convictions,” that shows how Americans can endorse democratic principles and simultaneously support autocratic behavior by fellow partisans.

Among the report’s conclusions:

* While a vast majority of Americans claimed to support democracy (more than 80 percent said democracy is a fairly or very good political system in surveys from 2017 to 2022), fewer than half consistently and uniformly supported democratic norms across multiple surveys.

1. Support for democratic norms softened considerably when they conflicted with partisanship. For example, a solid majority of Trump and Biden supporters who rejected the idea of a “strong leader who doesn’t have to bother with Congress and elections” nonetheless said their preferred U.S. president would be justified in taking unilateral action without explicit constitutional authority under several different scenarios.
2. About 27 percent of Americans consistently and uniformly supported democratic norms in a battery of questions across multiple survey waves, including 45 percent of Democrats, 13 percent of Republicans and 18 percent of independents.
3. In contrast to an overwhelming and consistent rejection of political violence across four survey waves, the violent events of Jan. 6, 2021, were viewed favorably by many Republicans. Almost half of Republicans (46 percent) described these events as acts of patriotism, and 72 percent disapproved of the House select committee that was formed to investigate them.

While much of the focus on authoritarianism in the United States has been on Republican voters, it is also a powerful force in the Democratic electorate.

In their 2018 paper “[*A Tale of Two Democrats*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/): How Authoritarianism Divides the Democratic Party,” five political scientists — [*Julie Wronski*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), [*Alexa Bankert*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), [*Karyn Amira*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), [*April A. Johnson*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) and [*Lindsey C. Levitan*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) — found that in 2016 “authoritarianism consistently predicts differences in primary voting among Democrats, particularly support for Hillary Clinton over Bernie Sanders.” More specifically, “as a Democrat in the [*Cooperative Election Study*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) survey sample moves from the minimum value on the authoritarianism scale to the maximum value, the probability of voting for Clinton increases from 0.33 to 0.76.”

Wronski and her colleagues determined that “Republicans are significantly more authoritarian than Democrats” but “the variation in authoritarianism is significantly higher among Democrats than Republicans.” Put another way: The level of authoritarianism among the top half of Democrats is almost the same as it is among Republicans; the bottom half of Democrats demonstrates lower levels of authoritarianism than all Republicans.

One of the more intriguing discoveries is that growing racial diversity activates authoritarianism.

In their 2017 article “[*Racial Diversity and the Dynamics of Authoritarianism*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/),” [*Yamil Ricardo Velez*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) and [*Howard Lavine*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), political scientists at Yale and the University of Minnesota, determined that racial diversity “magnifies the political impact of individual differences in the psychological disposition of authoritarianism.”

“In white areas with minimal diversity, authoritarianism had no impact on racial prejudice, political intolerance and attitudes toward immigration,” they wrote. “As diversity rises, however, authoritarianism plays an increasingly dominant role in political judgment. In diverse environments, authoritarians become more racially, ethnically and politically intolerant and nonauthoritarians less so.”

Velez and Lavine defined authoritarianism as

a stable propensity concerned with minimizing difference and maximizing the “oneness and sameness” of people, ideas and behaviors or, more simply, as a preference for social conformity over individual autonomy. The worldview of authoritarians stresses conformity and obedience, as well as the belief that too much individual autonomy — and diversity in general — will result in social rebellion and instability of the status quo.

Authoritarians, Velez and Lavine wrote, “find diversity threatening, and they react to it with increasing racial resentment, anti-immigration beliefs and political intolerance. By contrast, nonauthoritarians react to diversity by becoming more politically tolerant and by embracing African Americans and immigrants.”

As issues “related to race and ethnicity, crime, law and order, religion and gender” have gained centrality, according to Velez and Lavine, “two fundamental changes have occurred in the nature of partisanship.”

The first is the creation of “an alignment between political identity and authoritarianism, such that high authoritarians have moved into the Republican Party and low authoritarians have moved into the Democratic Party.”

The second is that “the notion of partisan identities as social identities — defining what Democrats and Republicans are stereotypically like as people — has intensified, leading the two partisan groups to hold increasingly negative feelings about each other.”

As a result, the authors argued:

given that authoritarianism is (a) strongly linked to partisanship and (b) activated by ethnoracial diversity, it is likely that some of the “affective polarization” in contemporary American politics can be traced to authoritarianism. That is, perceptions of “us” and “them” have been magnified by the increasing alignment between party identification and authoritarianism.

[*Ariel Malka*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), a political scientist at Yeshiva University, contended in an email that there are further complications. “Public attitudes in Western democracies,” Malka wrote, “vary on [*a*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) sociocultural [*dimension*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), encompassing matters like traditional versus progressive views on sexual morality, gender, immigration, cultural diversity and so on.”

Recently, however, Malka continued:

[*some*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) [*evidence*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) has emerged that the anti-immigrant and nativist parts of this attitude package are becoming somewhat detached from the parts having to do with gender and sexuality, especially among younger citizens. Indeed, there is a meaningful contingent of [*far-right voters*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) who combine liberal attitudes on gender and sexuality with nativist and anti-immigrant stances.

What do these trends suggest politically? According to Malka:

As for how this relates to democratic preferences, citizens who hold traditional cultural stances on a range of matters tend, on average, to be more open [*to*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) [*authoritarian*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) [*governance*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) and to violations of democratic norms. So there is some basis for concern that antidemocratic appeals will meet a relatively receptive audience on the right at a time of inflamed sociocultural divisions.

I asked [*Pippa Norris*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/), a political scientist at Harvard, about the rising salience of authoritarianism, and she provided a summary of her forthcoming book, “[*The Cultural Roots of Democratic Backsliding*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/).” In a description of the book on her website, Norris wrote:

Historical and journalistic accounts often blame the actions of specific strongman leaders and their enablers for democratic backsliding — Trump for the Jan. 6 insurrection in America, Modi for the erosion of minority rights in India, Netanyahu for weakening the powers of the Supreme Court in Israel and so on. But contingent narratives remain unsatisfactory to explain a general phenomenon, they fail to explain why ordinary citizens in longstanding democracies voted these leaders into power in the first place, and the direction of causality in this relationship remains unresolved.

Her answer, in two steps.

First:

Deep-rooted and profound cultural changes have provoked a backlash among traditional social conservatives in the electorate. A wide range of conventional moral values and beliefs, once hegemonic, are under threat today in many modern societies. Value shifts are exemplified by secularization eroding the importance of religious practices and teachings, declining respect for the institutions of marriage and the family and more fluid rather than fixed notions of social identities based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, community ties and national citizenship. An extensive literature has demonstrated that the “silent revolution” of the 1960s and 1970s has gradually led to growing social liberalism, recognizing the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality, including support for issues such as equality for women and men in the home and work force, recognition of L.G.B.T.Q. rights and the importance of strengthening minority rights.

These trends, in turn, have “gradually undermined the majority status of traditional social conservatives in society and threatened conventional moral beliefs.”

Second:

Authoritarian populist forces further stoke fears and exploit grievances among social conservatives. If these political parties manage to gain elected office through becoming the largest party in government or if their leaders win the presidency, they gain the capacity to dismantle constitutional checks and balances, like rule of law, through processes of piecemeal or wholesale executive aggrandizement.

For a detailed examination of the rise of authoritarianism, I return to Hetherington, the political scientist I cited at the start of this column. In his email, Hetherington wrote:

The tilt toward the Republicans among more authoritarian voters began in the early 2000s because the issue agenda began to change. Keep in mind, so-called authoritarians aren’t people who are thirsting to do away with democratic norms. Rather they view the world as full of dangers. Order and strength are what, in their view, provide an antidote to those dangers. Order comes in the form of old traditions and conventions as well. When they find a party or a candidate who provides it, they support it. When a party or candidate wants to break from those traditions and conventions, they’ll oppose them.

Until the 2000s, the main line of debate had to do with how big government ought to be. Maintaining order and tradition isn’t very strongly related to how big people think the government ought to be. The dividing line in party conflict started to evolve late in the 20th century. Cultural and moral issues took center stage. As that happened, authoritarian-minded voters, looking for order, security and tradition, moved to the Republicans in droves. When people talk about the Republicans attracting ***working-class*** whites, these are the specific ***working-class*** whites that the G.O.P.’s agenda attracted.

As such, the movement of these voters to the G.O.P. long predated Trump. His rhetoric has made this line of conflict between the parties even sharper than before. So that percentage of high-scoring authoritarian voters for Trump is higher than it was for Bush, McCain and Romney. But that group was moving that way long before 2016. The seeds had been planted. Trump didn’t do it himself.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/). And here&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://politicalscience.unc.edu/staff/marc-hetherington/).

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**Body**

On an unseasonably warm day in late April in Louisville, Ky., the drone of low-flying helicopters overtook the usual sounds of spring as the wealthy descended on the Kentucky Derby. Less than five miles away in a historically Black neighborhood, Donna Goldsmith, 62, addressed a room of 15 people gathered around a scarred folding table. They are part of Louisville's burgeoning tenants union, which mobilizes the residents of low-income apartment complexes, rural trailer parks and gentrifying neighborhoods to challenge the corporate landlords that they say have devastated affordable housing. This meeting, like most of their gatherings, started with testimonials.

Goldsmith initially organized her senior-living community to demand better maintenance, and now attends rallies across the city to encourage others to see themselves as leaders. Her most successful organizing strategy: ''I cuss out landlords.'' She had one message for this room of people mostly young enough to be her grandchildren. ''I want to win before I die so that you all know that you can win,'' she declared.

Midsize cities like Louisville contain many of the fault lines that created America's housing crisis: gentrification, federal development schemes and redlining. But Louisville also has a distinctly Southern history of racist segregation, predatory investors and political divides that has made it difficult to produce the high-quality affordable housing its residents desperately need. If this country's affordable housing crisis can be solved here, it could establish a template for helping the nation's poor and marginalized find stability.

Josh Poe, 47, and Jessica Bellamy, 36, founded the Louisville Tenants Union in 2022 because they believe that organizing is the answer to the nation's housing woes. ''Tenant organizing,'' Poe told me with pastoral conviction, ''will be to the 21st century what labor organizing was to the 20th century.''

In a labor union, workers collectively bargain with management for better pay and benefits. A tenants union typically organizes renters to bargain with private and corporate landlords for ownership, fair rent and better living conditions. Renters have been organizing for decades, but the city's divisions across race, class and geography mean that the Louisville Tenants Union has its work cut out for it.

Poe and Bellamy's partnership embodies the South's many contradictions. Poe is a self-described hillbilly from Eastern Kentucky who said he ''started out as a child laborer organizing in tobacco fields.'' Bellamy is a Black woman who grew up in Smoketown, the only remaining post-Civil War Black settlement in Louisville, and left home for college and a job in a neurodevelopmental science lab. While Poe casually speaks the shorthand for academic concepts like feudalism, neoliberalism and racial capitalism, Bellamy, a strategic organizer, seems to know the names of almost every longtime resident in the neighborhood. Watching their dance, you get a sense that if anyone can build a multiracial union in and around Donald Trump country, it will be these two.

Still, starting a new kind of union in a polarized America is bold. For their part, Poe and Bellamy are optimistic that their tenants union will bring people together to agitate for their common interests in a way a labor union could not. As Poe said, ''Everyone doesn't have a job, but everyone needs a house.''

I spent several days in April with the union's members as they knocked on doors and navigated Southern resistance to class solidarity. I also attended meetings in which people from different walks of life shared their painful experiences of eviction, landlord abuse and isolation. Their testimonies spoke as much to the tenants' need for community and connection as it did to the housing crisis.

Building a room where young and old, across all races and genders share their traumas and their hopes is an important part of how the Louisville Tenants Union aims to do the near impossible: organize the South to bring affordable housing to all.

Kentucky is a state fond of expensive hobbies like racehorses and bourbon and embarrassed by the crushing white poverty in the coal-mining Appalachian Mountains in its east. That dichotomy of riches and race was tangible as I recently drove across the state. In Louisville, that contrast is neighborhood by neighborhood.

Louisville looks like dozens of midsize cities that have been considered the jewels of urban revival. Nondescript small metropolitan areas invest heavily in ''place making'' to target neighborhoods for redevelopment. The formula: Attract companies in high-paying industries with tax breaks, cheap labor and a branded, downtown-like area. Louisville's version is NuLu, a busy strip of trendy retail and pricey apartments. Sidewalk seating. Cafes. And a lot of fit young people who look whiter and wealthier than the city's median demographics.

I met Poe and Bellamy in Smoketown, one of Louisville's historically Black areas whose residents would either have to find a way to move up as the area is redeveloped or be moved out for urban revival. There are soul food restaurants and church billboards with their upcoming programs listed in English and Spanish. Blue-collar workers of all races congregate at a gas station that sells hot lunches.

There is also the blight that is the structural mark of any city's racial history. Waves of white flight, gentrification and dislocation in the housing stock and retail businesses are visible, block by block. Half-vacant strip malls abut houses whose residents haven't had the money for maintenance.

Communities like Smoketown are culturally rich. You see it in the children playing as residents laugh on front stoops. They are also resource-deprived. You see that in the broken sidewalks and condemned houses.

Kentucky's conservative politicians and Democratic boosters agree on one thing. Both want more NuLus and fewer culturally rich but resource-poor neighborhoods. To get there, the state is following the formula that helped create the nation's affordable housing crisis. Louisville rents have increased more than 30 percent since 2019. A recent study by the Kentucky Housing Corporation found that the city, which has 625,000 people, needs about 40,000 new units to meet demand and the need is greatest for residents who earn less than the area's median wage.

Smoketown is a five-minute drive to downtown and its high-paying jobs. The arterial streets are wide, walkable and nestled in pockets of green space. The neighborhood has mostly single-family homes, grand two-story structures of brick and stone mixed with Craftsman bungalows. It is clear why investors are hungry to redevelop here. It isn't hard to imagine how a few coffee shops and a ''good'' elementary school could turn this into a hot neighborhood for transplants fleeing big cities.

During a walking tour of the neighborhood, Bellamy paused in front of a large, abandoned two-story house.

''I grew up in this house. I always wanted to be able to come back and live in it,'' she said. It was the kind of multigenerational home that built Black communities in Jim Crow America. Bellamy lived here with her grandmother, mother, brother and three aunts; her grandmother handed it over to her in 2018. The house sits near a squat brick building where her grandmother opened a cafe.

The cafe is still in business but the family home is in disrepair. First, taxes went up. Then, construction costs went up. Bellamy realized that she could not afford to renovate the house. She went to work tackling the problem not just for herself but for the neighborhood.

We walked to the tenants union's office, where Bellamy talked through investors' takeover of Smoketown, which she says started in 2012. This was a lecture she gives at church halls and community centers. Her message is that the government uses people's tax dollars against their interests. She used plain language to outline a complex web of capital and policy that leaves low-income owners at the mercy of aggressive code violation enforcement and real estate investors. Across the city, low-income renters and homeowners can't afford to stay, can't afford to leave and have nowhere to go.

A whiteboard sat in front of a table where Bellamy had assembled over 50 personal family photos taken in Smoketown. She connected every data point she mentioned to a photo and told its story. ''We didn't just lose housing,'' she said in a soft but powerful voice. ''We lost our community center.''

New investors aren't keen to build social spaces and new neighbors don't always mix well with existing neighbors. ''When my grandmother started her restaurant,'' Bellamy said, ''what she really wanted to do was lift up the Black contribution to the Kentucky Derby, to all of Louisville.'' This is the story Bellamy tells to help her neighbors understand that their private struggles to keep their homes is not their fault. It's a consequence of political decisions. And it isn't just about one family, one household.

When a community like Smoketown loses affordable housing, it also loses social cohesion and political power. Bellamy's voice started to crescendo: ''Public money is putting us out of our homes. That's our money.'' The small group of faithful volunteers nodded in agreement.

Whereas Bellamy blends into Smoketown, Poe stands out. He is spry, in constant motion, a habit born of physical labor.

''My whole life has really been, in a lot of ways, trying to escape manual labor,'' Poe told me as we sat in the lobby of a NuLu boutique hotel. The midcentury-modern décor in saturated earth tones was a long way from his sharecropping roots. Poe grew up going to school only half the year; the other half he picked tobacco with his grandfather.

''I did not even realize I had been a child laborer,'' he said, ''until I learned about Black and Mexican child laborers in college.''

He was the first in his family to graduate from college, which taught him why his family worked hard for generations but had little to show for it. The coal and tobacco industries developed a system of labor across Appalachia that cleaved Kentucky's ***working class*** into two camps: manual labor and the mobile middle class. Profits, Poe says, don't stay in Appalachia, which remains one of the poorest regions in the nation. He came to understand that his fight was one to convince poor white people that their fates are linked with Black people's.

''Poor white people are hard to organize; I think they're the most psychologically screwed-up people in the history of the world,'' he said. The history of labor unions in the South is steeped in racism and sexism. Pitting Black, white and immigrant workers against one another helps to lower labor costs. Those racial divisions make it harder to build labor unions in the areas where workers would benefit the most.

Organizing around housing has the same problem. Racist housing policies helped create our housing crisis. White communities can command higher rents and sale prices than nonwhite communities. The poorest Americans are more likely to be minority and female. Corporate landlords, in particular, target these communities for high-cost, low-quality housing because those renters have few choices. As a result, tenants unions cannot afford to be race-neutral.

Poe describes the Louisville Tenants Union's primary strategy for organizing across the color line as ''I have to keep white liberals from disorganizing us.'' Sometimes well-meaning white volunteers assume that they should be in charge. ''They need to learn to listen to older Black women,'' he said. These women are the life force of their organization, he added: ''They lived through the civil rights movement and know how to organize.''

While he is careful to monitor white liberals, he does not shy away from targeting white tenants. ''I'll organize a white guy -- or a Black guy; there are a lot of them -- that love Trump,'' Poe said. ''That love says their gut knows something is wrong.'' White tenants have the right instincts but the wrong analysis. Analysis, Poe says, is a luxury that people with urgent financial needs don't enjoy. He may not turn them into critical theorists. He may not even keep them on as members of the tenants union (''too distracting'').

But, if organizers can assure the guy in the trailer park that his economic fears are real, ''if the K.K.K. comes and knocks on his door, he is inoculated.'' It is exposure therapy. ''Everything a white guy in the trailer park knows about Black people comes from the news,'' he said. That white guy thinks that renters of urban apartments, which are ''coded for Black,'' live in a different world.

When a trailer park guy organizes a majority-Black apartment block in the city, he discovers how much they have in common. Most of the tenants union members I spoke with describe their ''actions'' -- meetings and canvassing -- as social events. Lonely after Covid-19 ravaged their families, isolated because they are struggling financially, and in many cases battling health issues -- tenants who organize are doing something together. Young white men, in particular, are vulnerable to white nationalist recruitment when they are lonely.

Does the tenants union actually see the K.K.K. in the trailer park?

''They have fliers too,'' Poe said. ''They're actually the only other people organizing.''

I joined the Louisville Tenants Union for canvassing in a public apartment complex. Despite the heat, 13 people showed up to knock on strangers' doors.

Most of the residents in the complex are Black women, many with children. Almost half of the volunteers are white. We met young mothers and senior citizens who had unmet maintenance requests. They wanted unsafe conditions in the children's play area addressed. A young mother worried that the month's worth of food she had stored in her broken refrigerator might spoil.

Tenants union leaders are very clear that they do not solve maintenance problems. They do invite the residents to a meeting to learn how they can collectively bargain with their landlords. Transportation, food and child care are provided. No promises are made but one: ''You will learn how powerful you are.''

Beyond knocking on doors, inspiring downtrodden mothers and convincing angry senior citizens like Goldsmith to cast their fortunes with white trailer park owners, what is this tenants union's goal? Bellamy, the Louisville Tenants Union's strategist and storyteller, outlined their plan.

First, the organization will organize a racially diverse coalition in the South, where, she said, labor unions ''abandoned us.'' Next, it has to organize that coalition around the idea that ''this country is one big real estate company.'' Above all, tenants unions believe that corporate landlords are the problem; their members often say that housing is not an investment but a right.

Rights require political power. The Louisville Tenants Union runs candidates for City Council and pressures local politicians to support tenants' rights. Its strongest political strategy at the moment is pushing for local ordinances that give community members the authority to assess new housing developments that use city resources to determine whether they would displace residents or reduce a neighborhood's affordability.

After it does all that across the state, it just has to join tenants unions in other states to, Poe explained, ''hold a national rent strike, crash the system and dictate our demands and build the country that we want on top of that.''

Tara Raghuveer laughed when I told her this summary. She is the leader of a tenants union in Kansas City, Mo. Louisville's union is part of the same national network as hers. Their network is pursuing a strategy to pressure the federal government and the private and corporate landlords who control publicly financed housing.

Raghuveer knows that crashing systems and building a new country sound utopian. But if a national movement for fair housing is going to be built, Raghuveer said, Louisville will be at the center of building it. The challenges are immense. There is no federal recognition of tenants unions as there is for labor unions. There isn't yet a good method for collecting dues or even creating a membership roll. A national network of tenants unions needs political recognition and processes.

On a more practical level, most people don't have a clear idea of what a tenants union is or why they should join one. They also have to identify what a privately owned apartment building in Birmingham, Ala., has in common with a public housing block in Stamford, Conn. Some cities are more renter-friendly than others. Others, like those in North Carolina, are notoriously pro-landlord.

Tenants unions also have to convince their own membership that a national strategy is worth their limited local resources. Why should a single mother being evicted in St. Louis support an elderly man struggling to pay rent for his mobile home near Bozeman, Mont.?

If they manage to overcome these obstacles, tenants unions could recalibrate the balance of power in the housing market. ''We're serious about contesting all that we're up against,'' Raghuveer assured me.

They will also need a lot of homeowners. Years of banks and governments selling Americans on homeownership has made owning a home a financial and civic achievement. Homeownership means respectability for people who don't have many other ways to achieve it. But homeowners aren't immune from fast-rising housing costs. At Louisville Tenants Union meetings, homeowners are called ''bank tenants.'' If you have a mortgage, then you still have a landlord. That can be a hard pill for Black homeowners to swallow until ''they realize their housing costs are going up but their income isn't,'' Bellamy said.

Raghuveer believes that Louisville will refine the tenants unions' pitch for the South. By facing racial tensions, economic anxiety and distrust pragmatically, organizers are proving that people don't have to love one another to win together. Raghuveer says there is no other choice. She believes this nation's housing crisis is at a tipping point. ''Once places like Louisville get too expensive, where does everybody go next?'' Raghuveer asked. I don't have an answer.

What I did have was a sit-down soul food lunch with four Louisville Tenants Union elders, two newcomers and three staff members in the final hours of my trip. The food was from Bellamy's family cafe. The conversation was ribald and vulnerable. It struck me that what the members of the union have found here is a tonic to the loneliness of everything -- the pandemic, the hustle economy and political disillusionment. They took turns sharing stories of police brutality, gun violence, depression and illness. For each of the people in that room, housing insecurity had been just one crisis too many. Their stories made me feel helpless. I muttered this to no one in particular.

Bellamy leaned over and said: ''No, this is power. This union is an invitation to your power.''

Tressie McMillan Cottom (@tressiemcphd) became a New York Times Opinion columnist in 2022. She is an associate professor at the school of information and library science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the author of ''Thick: And Other Essays'' and was a 2020 MacArthur fellow.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR12.

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[***Biden Rallies Black Voters Ahead of Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6K-WPR1-DXY4-X04V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 28, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1293 words

**Byline:** By Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Body**

President Biden sought to energize his base in the state that propelled him to the White House, but some local leaders said he needed to do more to highlight his achievements.

Hoping to revitalize the momentum that propelled him to the White House, President Biden told a largely Black audience on Saturday night that ''you're the reason Donald Trump is a defeated former president,'' in what was effectively his first appearance related to the Democratic primaries.

Mr. Biden made clear in his remarks at a South Carolina Democratic Party dinner in Columbia, S.C., that he viewed the forthcoming week as not just a contest but a pivotal moment to energize a frustrated base of Black voters across the nation. And in the run-up to the state's Feb. 3 Democratic presidential primary, which the party's national committee selected last year to be the first in the nation, Democrats believe they have entered an opportune time.

With former President Donald J. Trump having won both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary for the Republican nomination, Mr. Biden's allies plan to emphasize not just the president's record but also the urgency of the moment: The general election effectively starts now, they say.

''He has made it known what he's going to do if he gets back into office,'' Representative James E. Clyburn, Democrat of South Carolina, said of Mr. Trump in an interview. ''And to see that blooming as a possibility and see him running as well as he is in the polls, I'm concerned about it.''

''Do what you did before,'' Mr. Clyburn said in an appeal to the Black electorate. ''Turn that election around and save this democracy.''

The sense of urgency is rooted in rising concerns over polls showing Mr. Biden underperforming among Black voters in battleground states, particularly among men. Some Democrats are also concerned that the high death toll in Gaza resulting from Israel's offensive against Hamas will fuel frustration among younger voters. Twice during Saturday's event, protesters shouting criticism of the civilian casualties in Gaza were removed, as attendees chanted over them, ''Four more years!''

Mr. Biden, who early in his presidency seldom called out the former president by name, grew animated at times while speaking about Mr. Trump, recalling how he had insulted veterans. Mr. Biden, whose age of 81 has prompted concerns among voters, also attempted to flip the script on the 77-year-old Mr. Trump. ''Have you noticed he's a little confused these days?'' Mr. Biden asked, noting that Mr. Trump had recently mixed up former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, another candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California.

''You're the reason Donald Trump is a loser,'' Mr. Biden told the audience. ''And you're the reason we're going to win and beat him again.''

For some local leaders, Mr. Biden needs to do more than just contrast himself with Mr. Trump. The president needs to communicate his slate of policy achievements to voters who had raised their expectations for substantial change when Mr. Biden was elected, those leaders say.

The Democratic primary in South Carolina is not expected to be competitive. Even so, the Biden campaign has homed in on the state for weeks, dispatching a flurry of high-level Democrats and organizers there and focusing an advertising blitz on policies that Democrats say have helped Black voters.

Clay Middleton, a senior adviser to the campaign in South Carolina, said that while Mr. Biden should not have ''any problem'' winning the state's primary, this week presented an opportunity to send a message to the Black electorate in other battleground states. ''The message is, we're up next,'' he said.

Fletcher N. Smith Jr., a former state representative in South Carolina who worked as a surrogate for the Biden campaign in 2007 and 2020, said that portraying the election as a choice between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump would not be enough to sway Black voters.

''There's no excitement for his campaign,'' Mr. Smith said. He is supporting Mr. Biden again this year but said that the president's team needs to do a better job of communicating with local officials throughout the state. ''All Biden and his team want to do in South Carolina is have a monologue and not a dialogue,'' Mr. Smith said.

''Your problem is, you don't know how to talk to Black people,'' he added.

Just before attending the Democratic Party dinner, Mr. Biden, along with Mr. Clyburn -- who had helped resurrect Mr. Biden's 2020 campaign -- visited the Regal Lounge barbershop to speak directly with members of the community.

His allies say that the president must describe policies he has passed for Black Americans, including investing roughly $7 billion in historically Black colleges and universities, driving down Black unemployment and inflation and capping insulin prices. Mr. Clyburn elicited loud applause at the South Carolina Fairgrounds when he said that Mr. Biden had passed a bipartisan infrastructure package that would help overhaul an interchange of highways in the state known as ''Malfunction Junction.''

But Brandon Brown, a former congressional candidate in South Carolina who had won Mr. Biden's endorsement, said he was concerned that those policies would not satisfy voters who were looking for the administration to do more amid high housing prices and restrictions on abortion and voting rights.

''One of the challenges that particularly we face in South Carolina is, it's a messaging issue,'' Mr. Brown said. ''You'll hear more about what Donald Trump is talking about and focusing on than you'll about what the president is doing.''

Mr. Biden did address some of those concerns on Saturday night. ''Trump and his MAGA friends are determined to take away your freedoms,'' he said, describing restrictions on voting and abortion. ''I won't let that happen.''

Many voters, Mr. Brown said, are also paying less attention to what Mr. Biden has done and more to what he proposed, including his plan to wipe out $400 billion in student debt. After that plan was blocked by the Supreme Court, however, the White House moved forward with a more targeted plan to forgive student debt.

''When you tell me that you got this basic program ready to go, and then you've got millions of people signing up, and then all of a sudden it's taken out from under you,'' voters become skeptical, Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Biden has so far forgiven more than $136 billion in student loans for nearly 3.7 million Americans, and he increased maximum Pell grants, a move that largely affected Black undergraduates. On Saturday Mr. Clyburn read a letter from an American who had been paying off debt for 25 years, before having the rest forgiven last fall.

''He's kept his promise,'' Mr. Clyburn said of Mr. Biden.

Representative Ro Khanna, Democrat of California, told reporters before Mr. Biden's remarks that by emphasizing those economic measures, as well as by stressing that the alternative choice would be Mr. Trump, the Biden campaign could turn the tide with Black voters.

''When voters see the clear contrast, they'll recognize that President Biden is for the ***working class***,'' Mr. Khanna said.

Krista Greene, a native of Columbia now teaching high school in the city, has yet to be convinced. She still feels that Mr. Biden has not done enough to increase salaries for the ***working class***, or to prevent civilian deaths in Gaza.

Ms. Greene, a registered Democrat, received a call recently from her friend who said it was time to rally behind Mr. Biden, given Mr. Trump's recent wins in New Hampshire and Iowa. ''I'm not there yet,'' Ms. Greene said.

''I just wish we had better options,'' she said in an interview. ''This is crazy.''

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Supporters of President Biden at a campaign speech in Columbia, South Carolina, on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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[***Modeling a Way to Move Forward***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CD8-72F1-JBG3-604T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 4, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1833 words

**Byline:** By Jessica Iredale

**Body**

When Cindy Crawford walked into a lounge in the Santa Monica Proper Hotel on a morning in early June, her vibe was immediate: comfortable, professional, direct. No artifice. No entourage. Just her longtime publicist Annett Wolf, who made a brief introduction and disappeared, leaving Ms. Crawford at the head of a table set with a display of the products from her Meaningful Beauty line of skin and hair care, a $400 million brand she introduced 20 years ago.

''Where do you want to start?'' Ms. Crawford asked. ''What feels the most organic?''

It's tempting to describe Ms. Crawford, 58, as casual, but that's not quite it. Dressed in a Celine corduroy jean jacket, a camisole, Nili Lotan bootleg jeans and a Foundrae charm necklace symbolizing resilience, her beauty is radiant without being the least bit overwhelming. A resident of Malibu, where she lives with her husband of 27 years, the nightlife and tequila maestro Rande Gerber, she exuded California unfussiness. She is a familiar face, literally, having been photographed and filmed thousands of times over the course of her 35-plus-year career as one of the world's most successful models.

What felt most organic was to start with the business of Cindy. More than the mole above her lip, more than her brown eyes and va-va-voom hair and her healthy physique, Ms. Crawford's interest in transcending modeling to become a brand -- decades before personal branding was a career path -- is what has distinguished her from her peers.

''I always say, 'I modeled,''' Ms. Crawford said. ''It's not, 'I am a model.' It's a verb to me. It's not an identity.''

An entrepreneurial role model among aspiring supermodels, Ms. Crawford invented the modern playbook by which the current generation of professionally beautiful people, including Gigi and Bella Hadid, Hailey Bieber, Ms. Crawford's own daughter, Kaia Gerber, and most of the Kardashian-Jenner family, abide. Brand partnerships, brand ownership, products, campaigns, deals across various forms of media.

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''Cindy, Inc. Not just your basic $7-million-a-year supermodel.'' That was the cover line of a 1994 Vanity Fair profile that tried to put a finger on Ms. Crawford's newfangled golden touch as a model who could command markets, demographics and products that ranged from Vogue to Playboy to MTV to Kay Jewelers. At the time, Ms. Crawford was 28, married to Richard Gere (they filed for divorce the following year) and a perfect specimen of youth and exceptional beauty.

Two of the profile's themes were Ms. Crawford's happiness and the question of whether she would find the ''engine'' to power her ambitions. Much was made of her obvious physical appeal, but the article also addressed the fact that Ms. Crawford possessed something else -- a pragmatism, a lack of pretension and snobbery, a sense of humor and self-awareness -- that positioned her for greatness.

''She was born knowing what she was doing,'' the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, one of Ms. Crawford's contemporaries, said in a recent interview. ''This is her 15th life or something.''

Thirty years later, Ms. Crawford turned out to be the driver of her own career, a rare example of longevity in an industry famous for discarding women once a whiff of middle age enters the picture.

Ms. Crawford has been the face of many brands, perhaps most famously Pepsi. Her blockbuster 1992 Super Bowl ad is advertising legend. She has been with Omega watches for 29 years. She had a 15-year mega-contract with Revlon that ended when she was 35, at which point she started developing Meaningful Beauty. It is Ms. Crawford's biggest business, the first ownership stake of her career, a 50-50 partnership with Guthy-Renker, the direct-to-consumer subscription marketing firm known for brands like Proactiv, JLo Beauty, IT Cosmetics and Tony Robbins Personal Power.

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Mr. Mizrahi recalled a shoot he did with Ms. Crawford in Big Sur, Calif., in the '90s. ''The crew and everybody, they just assumed that she was not smart,'' Mr. Mizrahi said. ''I knew her extremely well, and I was, like, 'What are they talking about? Wait until she opens her mouth.'''

In the late 1980s, before the words ''super'' and ''model'' were merged to form a new noun to identify the band of models that included Ms. Crawford, Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista and a handful of others, Ms. Crawford was known as the small-town Midwestern girl who was co-valedictorian of her high school class and attended Northwestern on scholarship before dropping out to pursue modeling.

She was willing to break the fourth wall and be heard and not just seen -- anathema to the modeling world. As the inaugural host of MTV's ''House of Style,'' the beloved behind-the scenes fashion news program that aired in 1989, Ms. Crawford had zero broadcast experience. She was no Elsa Klensch, but she made it look easier than it was.

Ms. Turlington recalled that when Ms. Crawford walked away from ''House of Style,'' Ms. Evangelista auditioned to host. ''Linda came in like, 'I'm a high-fashion model. I'll really show you what it's like,''' she said. ''It didn't have the sense of humor, and it didn't have the lightness.''

Last year Ms. Crawford, Ms. Turlington, Ms. Evangelista and Ms. Campbell were all on camera together for the first time in years for the Apple TV+ series ''The Super Models.'' It was a four-episode trip down memory lane through the headiest of supermodel times -- the ups, the downs, the underestimation, the aging. Ms. Campbell and Ms. Crawford were the instigators behind getting the foursome together for the series, which was in the works for eight years.

''There is so much obsession with the '90s,'' Ms. Crawford said. ''We're, like, someone is going to do this documentary. Let's own our own narrative.'' All four women received executive producer credits. None had final cut.

Ms. Crawford was mostly happy with the finished product. Her first present-day on-screen moment captures her on a plane, jockeying for a photo that will fetch the highest bid at a charity auction. ''I think we all came off as exactly who we are,'' she said.

The cover shoot by Rafael Pavarotti featuring Ms. Crawford, Ms. Turlington, Ms. Campbell and Ms. Evangelista that ran in the September issue of Vogue received a fair amount of backlash for gratuitous retouching.

''Do I think it's my best Vogue cover ever? No,'' Ms. Crawford said. ''We don't have say on how much they retouch us with Vogue. We don't even have final approval of the picture. I hated my eyebrows -- they way overdrew them. But no one is asking me.''

After making a living on her physique for this long, she's used to the world dissecting her looks.

''I was not interested in changing my face,'' she said.

There is upkeep. She has done Botox, but less as she gets older because she wants her forehead to match the rest of her face. Radio frequency, microneedling, infrared sauna, cold plunge, a red light mask. She does dry brushing and lymphatic drainage on herself every morning, followed by gua sha with a Meaningful Beauty oil.

''I'll do those kinds of things,'' she said. ''But in the end, I truly haven't seen anything that's made such a huge difference that I like on anyone.''

''I'm 58,'' she said. ''Part of me would want to not be doing magazines or photo shoots. If you want to scroll through your comments, you will find really mean things. But they're not meaner than you've thought about yourself.'' ''But at the same time, am I being complicit in this message to women that we need to hang it up at a certain age?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/03/style/cindy-crawford-model-meaningful-beauty.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/03/style/cindy-crawford-model-meaningful-beauty.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Cindy Crawford's Meaningful Beauty line of products is a $400 million brand. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMY HARRITY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D1)

Top, Cindy Crawford, showing she still knows how to put on a pose. Above from left: hosting ''House of Style'' on MTV

some of Meaningful Beauty's products. Left, from left, Linda Evangelista, Ms. Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington in 1991. Below, the same four in a 2023 documentary. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY HARRITY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MEANINGFUL BEAUTY

MTV NETWORKS, VIA EVERETT COLLECTION

PAUL MASSEY/SHUTTERSTOCK

APPLE TV+) (D6) This article appeared in print on page D1, D6.

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Cindy Crawford Is Here to Stay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CD8-KFV1-JBG3-6004-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 4, 2024 Thursday 08:54 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1910 words

**Byline:** Jessica Iredale

**Highlight:** Three decades ago she invented the modern playbook by which the current generation of professionally beautiful people flourish.

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“My mom recognized quality when she had it,” Ms. Crawford said. “It was an ‘aha’ moment that was about access and knowledge.”

Mr. Mizrahi recalled a shoot he did with Ms. Crawford in Big Sur, Calif., in the ’90s. “The crew and everybody, they just assumed that she was not smart,” Mr. Mizrahi said. “I knew her extremely well, and I was, like, ‘What are they talking about? Wait until she opens her mouth.’”

In the late 1980s, before the words “super” and “model” were merged to form a new noun to identify the band of models that included Ms. Crawford, Christy Turlington, Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista and a handful of others, Ms. Crawford was known as the small-town Midwestern girl who was co-valedictorian of her high school class and attended Northwestern on scholarship before dropping out to pursue modeling.

She was willing to break the fourth wall and be heard and not just seen — anathema to the modeling world. As the inaugural host of MTV’s “House of Style,” the beloved behind-the scenes fashion news program that aired in 1989, Ms. Crawford had zero broadcast experience. She was no Elsa Klensch, but she made it look easier than it was.

Ms. Turlington recalled that when Ms. Crawford walked away from “House of Style,” Ms. Evangelista auditioned to host. “Linda came in like, ‘I’m a high-fashion model. I’ll really show you what it’s like,’” she said. “It didn’t have the sense of humor, and it didn’t have the lightness.”

Last year Ms. Crawford, Ms. Turlington, Ms. Evangelista and Ms. Campbell were all on camera together for the first time in years for the Apple TV+ series “The Super Models.” It was a four-episode trip down memory lane through the headiest of supermodel times — the ups, the downs, the underestimation, the aging. Ms. Campbell and Ms. Crawford were the instigators behind getting the foursome together for the series, which was in the works for eight years.

“There is so much obsession with the ’90s,” Ms. Crawford said. “We’re, like, someone is going to do this documentary. Let’s own our own narrative.” All four women received executive producer credits. None had final cut.

Ms. Crawford was mostly happy with the finished product. Her first present-day on-screen moment captures her on a plane, jockeying for a photo that will fetch the highest bid at a charity auction. “I think we all came off as exactly who we are,” she said.

The cover shoot by Rafael Pavarotti featuring Ms. Crawford, Ms. Turlington, Ms. Campbell and Ms. Evangelista that ran in the September issue of Vogue received a fair amount of backlash for gratuitous retouching.

“Do I think it’s my best Vogue cover ever? No,” Ms. Crawford said. “We don’t have say on how much they retouch us with Vogue. We don’t even have final approval of the picture. I hated my eyebrows — they way overdrew them. But no one is asking me.”

After making a living on her physique for this long, she’s used to the world dissecting her looks.

“I was not interested in changing my face,” she said.

There is upkeep. She has done Botox, but less as she gets older because she wants her forehead to match the rest of her face. Radio frequency, microneedling, infrared sauna, cold plunge, a red light mask. She does dry brushing and lymphatic drainage on herself every morning, followed by gua sha with a Meaningful Beauty oil.

“I’ll do those kinds of things,” she said. “But in the end, I truly haven’t seen anything that’s made such a huge difference that I like on anyone.”

“I’m 58,” she said. “Part of me would want to not be doing magazines or photo shoots. If you want to scroll through your comments, you will find really mean things. But they’re not meaner than you’ve thought about yourself.” “But at the same time, am I being complicit in this message to women that we need to hang it up at a certain age?”

PHOTOS: Cindy Crawford’s Meaningful Beauty line of products is a $400 million brand. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AMY HARRITY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (D1); Top, Cindy Crawford, showing she still knows how to put on a pose. Above from left: hosting “House of Style” on MTV; some of Meaningful Beauty’s products. Left, from left, Linda Evangelista, Ms. Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Christy Turlington in 1991. Below, the same four in a 2023 documentary. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY HARRITY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MEANINGFUL BEAUTY; MTV NETWORKS, VIA EVERETT COLLECTION; PAUL MASSEY/SHUTTERSTOCK; APPLE TV+) (D6) This article appeared in print on page D1, D6.

**Load-Date:** July 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Biden to Call for Tripling Tariffs on Chinese Steel Products***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTM-W541-JBG3-60PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2024 Wednesday 17:20 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 887 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley and Nicholas Nehamas Jim Tankersley writes about economic policy at the White House and how it affects the country and the world. He has covered the topic for more than a dozen years in Washington, with a focus on the middle class. Nicholas Nehamas is a Times political reporter covering the re-election campaign of President Biden.

**Highlight:** In a speech to union steelworkers in Pittsburgh, the president will announce several new measures meant to raise new barriers against floods of Chinese imports.

**Body**

In a speech to union steelworkers in Pittsburgh, the president will announce several new measures meant to raise new barriers against floods of Chinese imports.

President Biden on Wednesday will call on his trade representative to more than triple some tariffs on steel and aluminum products from China, as part of a series of moves meant to help cushion American manufacturers from a surge of low-cost imports.

Speaking to the United Steelworkers Union in Pittsburgh, Mr. Biden will ask the U.S. trade representative, Katherine Tai, to increase tariffs to 25 percent on certain Chinese products that currently face tariffs of 7.5 percent — or no tariffs at all — U.S. officials said.

Mr. Biden will also announce a new trade representative investigation into China’s aggressive support for shipbuilders and other related industries, in response to a union complaint. And he will announce new initiatives to work with Mexican officials to block China from evading American steel tariffs by routing its exports through Mexico.

The moves represent an escalating effort by Mr. Biden and his aides to [*stop a flood of low-cost Chinese exports*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) from undermining made-in-America products — and jeopardizing a central focus of Mr. Biden’s economic agenda.

Those exports, which often enjoy heavy subsidies from Beijing and low-cost labor, propelled the Chinese economy to [*higher-than-expected growth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) in the opening months of the year. But they have raised alarms in the United States and other nations that trade heavily with China, with leaders of those countries accusing Chinese officials of flouting international trade law and disrupting their own domestic manufacturing.

“China is simply too big to play by its own rules,” Lael Brainard, who heads Mr. Biden’s National Economic Council, told reporters.

U.S. officials have increasingly complained about China’s manufacturing overcapacity, contending that its subsidies of clean energy products and other factory goods are giving Chinese factories an unfair advantage and distorting global markets.

“With these subsidies, the amount of capacity exceeds global demand and what it’s likely to be even over the next decade,” Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen said on Tuesday, [*in remarks accusing the International Monetary Fund*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) of insufficient focus on the issue.

“When the markets weaken, prices fall and it’s our firms who go out of business, and those that are our allied countries,” she said. “Chinese firms continue to receive support so that they remain.”

The Biden administration has balanced those critiques with diplomatic outreach — and pressure. Ms. Yellen [*traveled to China last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) for several days of meetings with leaders there. On Tuesday, according to news reports, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III talked with his Chinese counterpart for the first time in more than a year.

Late last week, Mr. Biden [*convened a White House security summit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) with the leaders of Japan and the Philippines, which was intended as a show of unity against China’s military actions in the South China Sea.

Countering China has also become a central issue in Mr. Biden’s presidential rematch with former President Donald J. Trump. Both men are pitching tariffs and other trade restrictions to factory workers, labor groups and other key voting blocs in the industrial Midwest.

“When a country just rips us off like China, then what I did is that the tariffs, and the tariffs were forcing companies back to the United States,” Mr. Trump told CNBC in March.

The tariffs Mr. Biden will propose raising on Wednesday were initially imposed by Mr. Trump when he was president. Mr. Biden’s trade representative is conducting a four-year review of those tariffs. U.S. officials have said for months that the review is nearing completion, a position they reaffirmed in a call with reporters on Tuesday.

Mr. Biden’s stop in Pittsburgh is part of a three-day swing through Pennsylvania, a crucial battleground state that he narrowly won in 2020 and has visited more than any other. The president’s campaign is hoping to mobilize support from organized labor, a traditionally Democratic constituency from which Mr. Trump has pulled some support.

On Tuesday, Mr. Biden spoke at the local union of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners in Scranton, Pa., his hometown.

He also delivered a [*flurry of attacks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/15/business/economy/china-electric-cars-chips-solar.html) against Mr. Trump during a campaign address on taxes earlier in the day, asserting that the former president was a pawn of billionaires, not a friend of the ***working class***, and citing his roots in Scranton.

“Donald Trump looks at the world differently than you and me,” Mr. Biden said in a speech that signaled his campaign’s intention to make the 2024 election a referendum on Mr. Trump. “He wakes up in the morning at Mar-a-Lago thinking about himself — how he can help his billionaire friends gain power and control, and force their extreme agenda on the rest of us.”

Alan Rappeport and Michael D. Shear contributed reporting.

Alan Rappeport and Michael D. Shear contributed reporting.

PHOTO: President Biden will travel on Wednesday to Pittsburgh, where he will ask the U.S. trade representative to increase tariffs to 25 percent on certain Chinese products that currently face tariffs of 7.5 percent — or no tariffs at all. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Al Drago for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2024

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[***Colin Allred Wins Democratic Contest to Take On Senator Ted Cruz in Texas***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGN-BP21-JBG3-64X1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2024 Tuesday 08:18 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 655 words

**Byline:** J. David Goodman J. David Goodman is the Houston bureau chief for The Times, reporting on Texas and Oklahoma.

**Highlight:** The Dallas-area congressman presented himself as an across-the-aisle politician who could appeal to a wide range of voters.

**Body**

The Dallas-area congressman presented himself as an across-the-aisle politician who could appeal to a wide range of voters.

Representative Colin Allred, a Dallas-area Democrat who defeated an incumbent Republican in 2018 to gain his congressional seat, won the Democratic primary race for the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, according to The Associated Press, emerging on top of a crowded field seeking to challenge Senator Ted Cruz.

“I can’t tell you how much it means to me to be your nominee to be the next senator from the great state of Texas,” Mr. Allred, a civil rights lawyer and former N.F.L. linebacker, told his supporters Tuesday night.

State Senator Roland Gutierrez, who had been trailing by a wide margin in early returns, conceded the race mid-evening on Tuesday and thanked his supporters, many of whom were families of those killed in a mass shooting at a school in the small city of Uvalde in 2022.

Mr. Allred, 40, presented himself during the campaign as an across-the-aisle politician with a ***working-class*** upbringing who could appeal to a wide range of voters. But he faces steep odds in the general election: No Democrat has won a statewide office in Texas since the 1990s.

Democrats have believed for years that Mr. Cruz represented one of their best targets to finally break that streak. They nearly did so in 2018, when Mr. Cruz first ran for re-election and Beto O’Rourke, then a little-known representative from El Paso, came within about 2.5 percentage points of unseating him, an unusually narrow margin for a statewide race.

Mr. Allred gained his seat in the House that year, riding the same wave of Democratic enthusiasm that nearly ousted Mr. Cruz. Mr. Allred’s district has since been redrawn to be more favorable to Democrats.

Mr. Allred has mostly ignored his Democratic opponents in the Senate primary race this year, focusing his campaign instead on Mr. Cruz. In a video introducing his campaign, he said the senator had “embarrassed” Texans and had “cheered on the mob” at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Mr. Allred has been able to attract interest from donors inside Texas and around the country, far out-raising Mr. Gutierrez, his closest opponent in the race. By mid February, Mr. Allred had raised more than $18.4 million, compared with about $1.3 million for Mr. Gutierrez.

Mr. Gutierrez gained statewide attention for his aggressive advocacy on behalf of the adults and children who were killed in the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, and their families. He has taken forceful stances in favor of gun control and staked out positions on other issues, like health care, that are to the left of Mr. Allred, calculating that a combative and partisan approach would provide a better path to beating Mr. Cruz than Mr. Allred’s across-the-aisle approach.

In a [*televised debate*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOk-cYhMkK8), Mr. Gutierrez attacked Mr. Allred for trying to appeal to all sides, particularly when it came to business, and for signing onto a congressional resolution with Republicans that [*criticized President Biden’s handling of immigration and the border*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOk-cYhMkK8).

Mr. Allred defended his position, saying that the way to win tough races was to build coalitions and that his vote on the resolution had been about “whether or not we stood for the status quo.”

“When it comes to immigration reform, it’s going to have to be bipartisan,” Mr. Allred said.

In the end, Democrats favored Mr. Allred, seeing him as the better choice in what is likely to be a hard-fought and expensive general election.

Though Mr. Cruz is highly unpopular among Texas Democrats, he retains support among Republicans, who are likely to turn out to vote in force in a presidential election year, especially with Donald J. Trump at the top of their ticket, as seems likely.

PHOTO: Representative Colin Allred, at an election night event in Dallas, won the Democratic primary race for the U.S. Senate on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Desiree Rios for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In South Carolina, Biden Tries to Persuade Black Voters to Reject Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6J-6TF1-DXY4-X009-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 27, 2024 Saturday 12:20 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1311 words

**Highlight:** President Biden sought to energize his base in the state that propelled him to the White House, but some local leaders said he needed to do more to highlight his achievements.

**Body**

President Biden sought to energize his base in the state that propelled him to the White House, but some local leaders said he needed to do more to highlight his achievements.

Hoping to revitalize the momentum that propelled him to the White House, President Biden told a largely Black audience on Saturday night that “you’re the reason Donald Trump is a defeated former president,” in what was effectively his first appearance related to the Democratic primaries.

Mr. Biden made clear in his remarks at a South Carolina Democratic Party dinner in Columbia, S.C., that he viewed the forthcoming week as not just a contest but a pivotal moment to energize a frustrated base of Black voters across the nation. And in the run-up to the state’s Feb. 3 Democratic presidential primary, which the party’s national committee selected last year to be [*the first in the nation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/politics/democrats-south-carolina-primary-2024.html#:~:text=DNC%20Panel%20Supports%20Biden's%20Plan,2024%20%2D%20The%20New%20York%20Times), Democrats believe they have entered an opportune time.

With former President Donald J. Trump having won both the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary for the Republican nomination, Mr. Biden’s allies plan to emphasize not just the president’s record but also the urgency of the moment: The general election effectively starts now, they say.

“He has made it known what he’s going to do if he gets back into office,” Representative James E. Clyburn, Democrat of South Carolina, said of Mr. Trump in an interview. “And to see that blooming as a possibility and see him running as well as he is in the polls, I’m concerned about it.”

“Do what you did before,” Mr. Clyburn said in an appeal to the Black electorate. “Turn that election around and save this democracy.”

The sense of urgency is rooted in rising concerns [*over polls showing Mr. Biden underperforming*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/us/politics/biden-trump-black-voters-poll-democrats.html) among Black voters in battleground states, particularly among men. Some Democrats are also concerned that the high death toll in Gaza resulting from Israel’s offensive against Hamas will fuel frustration among younger voters. Twice during Saturday’s event, protesters shouting criticism of the civilian casualties in Gaza were removed, as attendees chanted over them, “Four more years!”

Mr. Biden, who early in his presidency [*seldom called out the former president*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/06/us/politics/biden-trump-jan-6.html) by name, grew animated at times while speaking about Mr. Trump, recalling how he had insulted veterans. Mr. Biden, whose age of 81 has [*prompted concerns among voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/04/us/politics/biden-president-age-2024.html), also attempted to flip the script on the 77-year-old Mr. Trump. “Have you noticed he’s a little confused these days?” Mr. Biden asked, noting that Mr. Trump had recently [*mixed up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/us/politics/trump-haley-pelosi-jan-6.html) former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, another candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, and former Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California.

“You’re the reason Donald Trump is a loser,” Mr. Biden told the audience. “And you’re the reason we’re going to win and beat him again.”

For some local leaders, Mr. Biden needs to do more than just contrast himself with Mr. Trump. The president needs [*to communicate his slate of policy achievements to voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/us/politics/biden-black-voters.html) who had raised their expectations for substantial change when Mr. Biden was elected, those leaders say.

The Democratic primary in South Carolina is not expected to be competitive. Even so, [*the Biden campaign has homed in on the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/22/us/politics/biden-south-carolina-black-voters.html) for weeks, dispatching a flurry of high-level Democrats and organizers there and focusing an advertising blitz on policies that Democrats say have helped Black voters.

Clay Middleton, a senior adviser to the campaign in South Carolina, said that while Mr. Biden should not have “any problem” winning the state’s primary, this week presented an opportunity to send a message to the Black electorate in other battleground states. “The message is, we’re up next,” he said.

Fletcher N. Smith Jr., a former state representative in South Carolina who worked as a surrogate for the Biden campaign in 2007 and 2020, said that portraying the election as a choice between Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump would not be enough to sway Black voters.

“There’s no excitement for his campaign,” Mr. Smith said. He is supporting Mr. Biden again this year but said that the president’s team needs to do a better job of communicating with local officials throughout the state. “All Biden and his team want to do in South Carolina is have a monologue and not a dialogue,” Mr. Smith said.

“Your problem is, you don’t know how to talk to Black people,” he added.

Just before attending the Democratic Party dinner, Mr. Biden, along with Mr. Clyburn — who had helped resurrect Mr. Biden’s 2020 campaign — visited the Regal Lounge barbershop to speak directly with members of the community.

His allies say that the president must describe policies he has passed for Black Americans, including investing roughly $7 billion in historically Black colleges and universities, driving down Black unemployment and inflation and capping insulin prices. Mr. Clyburn elicited loud applause at the South Carolina Fairgrounds when he said that Mr. Biden had passed a bipartisan infrastructure package that would help overhaul an interchange of highways in the state known as “Malfunction Junction.”

But Brandon Brown, a former congressional candidate in South Carolina who had won Mr. Biden’s endorsement, said he was concerned that those policies would not satisfy voters who were looking for the administration to do more amid high housing prices and restrictions on abortion and voting rights.

“One of the challenges that particularly we face in South Carolina is, it’s a messaging issue,” Mr. Brown said. “You’ll hear more about what Donald Trump is talking about and focusing on than you’ll about what the president is doing.”

Mr. Biden did address some of those concerns on Saturday night. “Trump and his MAGA friends are determined to take away your freedoms,” he said, describing restrictions on voting and abortion. “I won’t let that happen.”

Many voters, Mr. Brown said, are also paying less attention to what Mr. Biden has done and more to what he proposed, including his plan to wipe out $400 billion in student debt. After that plan was blocked by the Supreme Court, however, the White House moved forward with a more targeted plan to forgive student debt.

“When you tell me that you got this basic program ready to go, and then you’ve got millions of people signing up, and then all of a sudden it’s taken out from under you,” voters become skeptical, Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Biden has so far forgiven [*more than $136 billion in student loans for nearly 3.7 million Americans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html), and he increased maximum Pell grants, a move that largely affected Black undergraduates. On Saturday Mr. Clyburn read a letter from an American who had been paying off debt for 25 years, before having the rest forgiven last fall.

“He’s kept his promise,” Mr. Clyburn said of Mr. Biden.

Representative Ro Khanna, Democrat of California, told reporters before Mr. Biden’s remarks that by emphasizing those economic measures, as well as by stressing that the alternative choice would be Mr. Trump, the Biden campaign could turn the tide with Black voters.

“When voters see the clear contrast, they’ll recognize that President Biden is for the ***working class***,” Mr. Khanna said.

Krista Greene, a native of Columbia now teaching high school in the city, has yet to be convinced. She still feels that Mr. Biden has not done enough to increase salaries for the ***working class***, or to prevent civilian deaths in Gaza.

Ms. Greene, a registered Democrat, received a call recently from her friend who said it was time to rally behind Mr. Biden, given Mr. Trump’s recent wins in New Hampshire and Iowa. “I’m not there yet,” Ms. Greene said.

“I just wish we had better options,” she said in an interview. “This is crazy.”

PHOTO: Supporters of President Biden at a campaign speech in Columbia, South Carolina, on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** January 28, 2024

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[***Player One***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5G-2571-JBG3-6048-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 2, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 26; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1387 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner

**Body**

The professor and social commentator Glenn Loury opens up about his vices in a candid new memoir.

LATE ADMISSIONS: Confessions of a Black Conservative, by Glenn Loury

Glenn C. Loury's new book, ''Late Admissions,'' is unlike any economist's memoir I have ever read. Most don't mention picking up streetwalkers. Or smoking crack in a faculty office at Harvard's Kennedy School -- or in an airplane at 30,000 feet. Or stealing a car. Or having sex on a beach in Israel with a mistress and attracting the attention of the Israel Defense Forces. Or later being arrested and charged with assaulting her. Or cuckolding a best friend.

Or abandoning children born out of wedlock. Or becoming estranged from the children that weren't. Or writing computer code to win at blackjack. Or having a porn addiction. Or keeping a bachelor pleasure dome decorated with a bearskin rug, a brass four-poster bed and a fat marijuana plant. Or sidling around in a paisley smoking jacket with a matching ascot because it ''radiated suave sophistication and Hefneresque cool.'' Or sneaking into dorm rooms as a professor to suck face with much younger women. Or entering detox clinics, finding God when it was convenient, appearing on ''The 700 Club,'' then ditching God.

I'm surely missing a few things. My note-taking pen ran out of ink, shortly after I scribbled something about how all this would make for a monster screenplay if only there were a conservative Spike Lee to direct it.

Loury, 75, is a theoretical economist who has taught at Harvard and Brown, among other elite colleges and universities, though he is probably best known as a conservative Black (he prefers a lowercase ''b'') commentator on social issues. The economist and the opinion-maker in him comprise one half of his person.

There is a second Glenn C. Loury, he proposes. This Loury needs people to know he is ''a black Harvard professor who can hang on the corner.'' He is a ''Player,'' a seducer, a ***working-class*** product of Chicago's South Side, a pool shark and a ''Master of the Universe'' on multiple and interlocking levels. One of Loury's uncles once told him that getting laid was all that mattered in life, and he took his uncle at his word.

''Late Admissions'' passes the Orwell Test. ''An autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful,'' Orwell wrote. ''A man who gives a good account of himself is probably lying, since any life when viewed from the inside is simply a series of defeats.'' The annihilating level of detail in Loury's book convinces you that he is aiming for straight talk, even if candor and honesty aren't quite the same thing.

It's among this book's drawbacks that the two Glenn Lourys aren't persuasively synthesized. ''Late Admissions'' is also about 100 pages too long. The writing can be haphazard, especially in the second half, when the clichés start to come two to a sentence. (''I wasn't blazing any new trails in terms of technical economics down there in the basement, but I was getting my sea legs back.'')

He does not place himself on the continuum of Black conservative thought. Zora Neale Hurston and Albert Murray are just two of the names who come to mind when reading Loury, though they are unmentioned here. This book is a vat of grapes that does not transmogrify into wine. But being in the thick of America's culture wars, as a Black intellectual on the political right, has yielded a vivid bounty. Screw the wine. Come for the grapes.

Loury grew up with his mother and his sister in Chicago; his father was absent. He was a loudmouth prodigy who entered high school at 12. He dropped out of college after getting his girlfriend pregnant. She was 15 and he was 17, working at a Burger King. They married.

Loury didn't abandon his academic ambitions. In 1970, he was admitted to Northwestern University, where he was recognized as a major mathematics talent. He received his graduate degree from M.I.T. Along the way he benefited from the affirmative-action programs he would later criticize. His career was quickly airborne.

He first sensed his innate conservatism during the Vietnam War. It had a lot to do with social class. While still in school he was employed at a printing company in Chicago, and he felt in sync with the blue-collar men he worked beside. They had no time for protest. They were busy providing for their families. Loury felt an ''uncrossable divide'' between himself and draft-card burners.

At Northwestern, he bristled at wealthy Black students who, he felt, played at radicalism. ''The thought that someday they'll all sit around in their well-appointed living rooms and reminisce about their time in 'the struggle' makes me ill,'' he writes. ''This brother wouldn't know struggle if it pinned him down and sat on his head. I know something about struggle.''

When he taught at the University of Michigan in the early 1980s, he frequently went into nearby Detroit, sometimes with his wife and sometimes, in ''Player'' mode, without her. The city was roiling with accusations of police brutality. In Washington, a House Judiciary subcommittee was holding hearings about it. Loury felt, conversely, that poverty and violent crime, not the police, were tearing the city apart.

Well, I think, what about the people whose rights are being violated by muggers, thieves and murderers? What about those little girls dodging rapists on their morning walks to school? Where is their House subcommittee?

Loury began writing about these issues for magazines including The New Republic, where he argued that, among other things, ''the bottom stratum of the black community has compelling problems which can no longer be blamed solely on white racism, and which force us to confront fundamental failures in black society.'' Why, he asks in this book, is he betraying his people because he thinks they need to get their act together?

He infuriated the left. He was called, among other things, the ''pathetic black mascot of the right.'' He was embraced by conservatives. Ronald Reagan's education secretary, William Bennett, was on the verge of making Loury the department's second in command when the F.B.I. discovered an apartment he kept for a secret girlfriend. Shortly after that, Loury was arrested at Harvard when this 23-year-old girlfriend accused him of assault. The charges, which he disputes, were dropped, but the story was national news.

At his lowest moments, he would double down on his addictions to drugs and women, because they were the only things that made him feel good about himself. He was married to his second wife, Linda Datcher Loury, for more than 25 years. Poignantly, after her death from cancer he found the heavily underlined self-help book that helped her get through his serial infidelities.

It hurt Loury that he was seldom embraced by what he called the ''Negro Cognoscenti.'' He did have a period, in the late 1990s, when he became a leading prison reform advocate and found himself in the left's good graces. At the invitation of Henry Louis Gates, he gave the 2000 W.E.B. Du Bois Lectures at Harvard.

His instincts pulled him rightward again. He had an intuitive dislike for Barack Obama, whom he calls ''little more than a political operator.'' He asks, ''What struggle did he have to overcome to get where he was?'' When Donald J. Trump appeared, Loury watched his rallies with a grin on his face.

''I got visceral pleasure out of watching Trump standing onstage and hurling insults at smug, self-satisfied liberals and conservatives who had lost touch with the people whose support they relied upon.'' He was dismayed by the events of Jan. 6, however, and says he was ''wrong to grant Donald J. Trump the benefit of the doubt.''

Loury has left a lot of injured people in his wake. Miss Manners would need 15 mops to clean up his messes. His has been a smash-and-grab life. You don't finish ''Late Admissions'' particularly liking Loury, or admiring him. He's sorry about a lot of the things he's done. But it's to his credit that he doesn't gin up a false catharsis, a ready-made ''Today Show'' moment of abiding contrition. He says it early on: ''There are Players and there are suckers. I know which one I want to be.''

LATE ADMISSIONS: Confessions of a Black Conservative | By Glenn Loury | Norton | 428 pp. | $32.50

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/books/review/glenn-loury-late-admissions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/13/books/review/glenn-loury-late-admissions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Glenn Loury in 2023. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BEA OYSTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR26.

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2024

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[***College Graduates, In Working Class, Fuel Union Gains***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B9-FG51-JBG3-60GS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 29, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1985 words

**Byline:** By Noam Scheiber

**Body**

Since the Great Recession, the college-educated have taken more frontline jobs at companies like Starbucks and Amazon. Now they're helping to unionize them.

To hear more audio stories from publications like The New York Times, download Audm for iPhone or Android.

Over the past decade and a half, many young, college-educated workers have faced a disturbing reality: that it was harder for them to reach the middle class than for previous generations. The change has had profound effects -- driving shifts in the country's politics and mobilizing employees to demand fairer treatment at work. It may also be giving the labor movement its biggest lift in decades.

Members of this college-educated ***working class*** typically earn less money than they envisioned when they went off to school. ''It's not like anyone is expecting to make six figures,'' said Tyler Mulholland, who earns about $23 an hour as a sales lead at REI, the outdoor equipment retailer, and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in education. ''But when it's snow storming at 11:30 at night, I don't want to have to think, 'Is the Uber home going to make a difference in my weekly budget?'''

In many cases, the workers have endured bouts of unemployment. After Clint Shiflett, who holds an associate degree in computer science, lost his job installing satellite dishes in early 2020, he found a cheaper place to live and survived on unemployment insurance for months. He was eventually hired at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama, where he initially made about $17.50 an hour working the overnight shift.

And they complain of being trapped in jobs that don't make good use of their skills. Liz Alanna, who holds a bachelor's in music education and a master's in opera performance, began working at Starbucks while auditioning for music productions in the early 2010s. She stayed with the company to preserve her health insurance after getting married and having children.

''I don't think I should have to have a certain job just so I can have health care,'' Ms. Alanna said. ''I could be doing other types of jobs that might fall better in my wheelhouse.''

These experiences, which economic research shows became more common after the Great Recession, appear to have united many young college-educated workers around two core beliefs: They have a sense that the economic grand bargain available to their parents -- go to college, work hard, enjoy a comfortable lifestyle -- has broken down. And they see unionizing as a way to resurrect it.

Support for labor unions among college graduates has increased from 55 percent in the late 1990s to around 70 percent in the last few years, and is even higher among younger college graduates, according to data provided by Gallup. ''I think a union was really kind of my only option to make this a viable choice for myself and other people,'' said Mr. Mulholland, 32, who helped lead the campaign to unionize his Manhattan REI store in March. Mr. Shiflett and Ms. Alanna have also been active in the campaigns to unionize their workplaces.

And those efforts, in turn, may help explain an upsurge for organized labor, with filings for union elections up more than 50 percent over a similar period one year ago.

Though a minority at most nonprofessional workplaces, college-educated workers are playing a key role in propelling them toward unionization, experts say, because the college-educated often feel empowered in ways that others don't. ''There's a class confidence, I would call it,'' said Ruth Milkman, a sociologist of labor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. ''A broader worldview that encompasses more than getting through the day.''

While other workers at companies like Starbucks and Amazon are also supportive of unions and sometimes take the initiative in forming them, the presence of the college-educated in these jobs means there is a ''layer of people who particularly have their antennae up,'' Ms. Milkman added. ''There is an additional layer of leadership.''

That workers who attended college would be attracted to nonprofessional jobs at REI, Starbucks and Amazon is not entirely surprising. Over the past decade, the companies' appetite for workers has grown substantially. Starbucks increased its global work force to nearly 385,000 last year from about 135,000 in 2010. Amazon's work force swelled to 1.6 million from 35,000 during that period.

The companies appeal to affluent and well-educated consumers. And they offer solid wages and benefits for their industries -- even, for that matter, compared with some other industries that employ the college-educated.

More than three years after he earned a political science degree from Siena College in 2017, Brian Murray was making about $14 an hour as a youth counselor at a group home for middle-school-age children.

He quit in late 2020 and was hired a few months later at a Starbucks in the Buffalo area, where his wage increased to $15.50 an hour. ''The starting wage was higher than anything I'd ever made,'' said Mr. Murray, who has helped organize Starbucks workers in the city.

Such examples appear to reflect broader economic forces. Data from the past 30 years collected by the economists Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York showed that unemployment for recent college graduates shot up to over 7 percent in 2009 and was above 5.3 percent -- the highest previously recorded -- as late as 2015.

Jesse Rothstein, a former chief economist of the U.S. Labor Department, found in a 2021 paper that the job prospects for recent college graduates began to weaken around 2005, then suffered a significant blow during the Great Recession and had not fully recovered a decade later.

The recession depressed their employment rates ''above what is consistent with normal recession effects,'' wrote Mr. Rothstein, now a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. ''Moreover, this change has persisted into the most recent entrants, who were in middle school during the Great Recession.''

While there is no simple explanation for the trend, many economists contend that automation and outsourcing reduced the need for certain ''middle skilled'' jobs that college-educated workers performed. Consolidation in industries that employ the college-educated also appears to have softened demand for those workers, said Lawrence Katz, a labor economist at Harvard, though he emphasized that those with a college degree still typically earned far more than those without one.

Whatever the case, the gap between the expectations of college graduates and their employability has led to years of political ferment. A study of participants in the Occupy Wall Street movement, which highlighted income inequality and grew out of the 2011 occupation of Zuccotti Park in Manhattan, found that more than three-quarters were college graduates, versus about 30 percent of adults at the time. Many had been laid off during the previous five years and ''were carrying substantial debt,'' the report noted.

In the decade that followed, members of this same demographic group helped lead other activist campaigns, like the Black Lives Matter movement, and supported the presidential campaigns of Bernie Sanders. At least one member -- Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who had worked as a waitress and a bartender during her postcollege years -- successfully ran for Congress.

The college-educated began flexing their muscle at work, too. Employees at digital media outlets like Gawker and Buzzfeed unionized in the 2010s, complaining of low pay and unclear paths to promotion, as did employees of think tanks and other nonprofit groups.

Public school teachers across the country walked off the job in 2018 to protest low pay and dwindling resources, while union campaigns proliferated at private colleges among graduate students and nontenure-track faculty.

Ms. Milkman pointed to several reasons that college-educated workers had succeeded at organizing even in the face of employer opposition: They often know their rights under labor law, and feel entitled to change their workplace. They believe there is another gig out there if they lose their current one.

''More education does two things -- it inoculates you to some extent against employer scare tactics,'' Ms. Milkman said. ''And it's not that big a deal to get fired. You know, 'Who cares? I can get some other crummy job.'''

The pandemic reinforced the trend, disrupting the labor market just as it finally appeared to be stabilizing for recent college graduates. It made service sector jobs dangerous in addition to modestly compensated. Amid labor shortages, workers grew bolder in challenging their bosses.

No less important, the college-educated were mobilizing a larger range of workers. When their awakening was confined to white-collar workplaces and hipster coffee shops, said Barry Eidlin, a sociologist who studies labor at McGill University in Montreal, its reach was limited. But at a bigger company like Starbucks, the activism of such workers ''has the potential to have much greater reverberations,'' he said. ''It bleeds into this broader palette of the ***working class***.''

College-educated union supporters began forming alliances with those who did not attend college, some of whom were also budding leaders.

RJ Rebmann, who has not attended college, was hired at a Starbucks store near Buffalo last summer, but soon had trouble getting scheduled. Union supporters, including one studying biotechnology at a local community college, went to a meeting the company was holding and urged company officials to address the situation.

''The union partners were sticking up for me,'' said Mx. Rebmann, who uses gender-neutral pronouns and courtesy titles and was already leaning toward supporting the union. ''That was a tipping point for me in deciding how I'm going to vote.'' More than 25 Starbucks stores have voted to unionize since then.

A similar diversity of workers carried the union to an 88-to-14 win at the REI store in Manhattan. ''We have a lot of students, we have a lot of folks who have had previous careers and changed it up,'' said Claire Chang, a union supporter who graduated from college in 2014.

And then there's the victory at Amazon, where union supporters say their multiracial coalition was a source of strength, as was a diversity of political views. ''We had straight-up Communists and hard-line Trump supporters,'' said Cassio Mendoza, a worker involved in the organizing. ''It was really important to us.''

But the mix of educational backgrounds also played a role. Christian Smalls and Derrick Palmer, the two friends who helped found the union, had attended community college. Connor Spence, its vice president of membership, studied aviation while earning an associate degree. He had read popular labor studies books and helped oversee the union's strategy for undermining the consultants Amazon hired to fight unionization.

Other workers at the warehouse had even more extensive credentials, like Brima Sylla, originally from Liberia, who holds a Ph.D. in public policy. Dr. Sylla speaks several languages and translated the union's text messages into French and Arabic.

Asked how the union had brought together so many people across the lines of class and education, Mr. Spence said it was simple: Most Amazon workers struggle with pay, safety concerns and productivity targets, and few get promoted, regardless of education. (The company said that about two-thirds of its 30,000 noncorporate promotions last year involved hourly employees, and that it had made extensive investments in safety.)

''Amazon doesn't allow people of differing education levels to become separated,'' Mr. Spence said. ''It was the way we were able to unite people -- the idea that we're all getting screwed.''

Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/business/college-workers-starbucks-amazon-unions.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/business/college-workers-starbucks-amazon-unions.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Brian Murray, who has helped organize Starbucks workers in the Buffalo area, has a degree from Siena College. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSTAFA HUSSAIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Claire Chang, a leader of the effort to unionize the REI store in Manhattan, graduated from college in 2014. (B1)

Christian Smalls, center, a workplace organizer and a founder of the Amazon Labor Union, went to community college. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESEAN MCCLINTON-HOLLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5)

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2022

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[***Test for Pennsylvania G.O.P.: Getting Its Voters to Trust Early Balloting***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C33-G6N1-JBG3-63KW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1335 words

**Byline:** By Michael Wines

**Body**

Republicans are now trying to sell voters on voting methods that the party has demonized for years. It won't be easy.

When voters turned out in February to fill a vacant seat in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the stakes were nothing less than control of the chamber, which Democrats held by a single seat.

Candace Cabanas, the 45-year-old Republican candidate who was running as a ***working-class*** mom, faced an uphill battle, though not a hopeless one in a competitive district that has long favored Democrats.

But as Election Day dawned, a nor'easter dumped several inches of snow, stranding would-be voters at home. Bad luck dogged others: One woman backing Ms. Cabanas skipped the polls after she fell ill and was rushed to the hospital.

Ms. Cabanas's Democratic opponent faced similar hurdles but had one advantage: More than 3,300 of his voters had mailed in their ballots early. Ms. Cabanas could count only 532.

Guess who won?

February's lesson is not lost on Republican leaders in Pennsylvania, who have pledged to spend millions of dollars this year to promote voting by mail despite claiming for years -- without evidence -- that mailed votes are riddled with fraud. The national party is also pressing a pro-mail publicity campaign called ''Bank Your Vote,'' apparently after concluding that staking its candidates' fates on a hefty Election Day turnout was not an optimal strategy.

They may have their work cut out for them. ''Persuading Republican voters to use them is really difficult. They don't trust the system,'' Ms. Cabanas said of mail ballots.

Take George E. Bierman, an investment executive and registered Republican in Williamsport, a deeply red city about 170 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Mr. Bierman said he might consider casting a mail ballot ''if I thought it would do any good.'' But did he believe others would?

''Honestly, no, I don't,'' he said. ''With everything that has transpired, I don't trust the government in any way, shape or form.''

For Republicans, such wariness is a self-inflicted wound, particularly in key swing states like Pennsylvania.

Barely a year before the 2020 election, the Pennsylvania legislature, then under Republican control, overwhelmingly approved a law allowing no-excuse voting by mail. But on the campaign trail the next year, President Donald J. Trump denounced mail voting at every turn, calling it ''an effort to rig the presidential election.'' The conservative group Project Veritas later released a widely publicized video falsely claiming that postal officials in Erie, Pa., had tampered with mail ballots.

After Mr. Trump's defeat, Republican lawmakers turned against mail ballots, trying to repeal the law they had enacted, and then seeking to overturn it in court. Both attempts failed, but voters got the message: In a Muhlenberg College poll of about 500 Pennsylvanians that was conducted in December 2021, seven in 10 Republican respondents said they were ''very'' or ''somewhat'' confident there was widespread fraud in the 2020 election, and almost a third said mail ballots were the greatest threat to the 2022 midterms.

In those midterms, roughly 75 percent of the state's one million requests for mail ballots came from voters registered as Democrats -- even though registered Democrats make up only about 45 percent of all voters.

Now Pennsylvania Republicans want to reverse course again. The state's party leaders and prominent supporters pledged last year to raise $8 million to drum up early and mailed votes in 2024. A pro-Republican group called the Citizens Alliance of Pennsylvania has claimed that it will raise another $2 million.

''Sometimes you get a late start, but better late than never,'' said Jim Worthington, a Trump supporter and the owner of an athletic club in the Bucks County borough of Newtown, who is part of the $8 million effort. ''We have nowhere to go but up.''

One goal, of course, is to boost Republican turnout, perhaps by giving less dedicated G.O.P. supporters a voting option more convenient than driving to the polls in the middle of a workweek.

But political strategists say the real value of mail ballots to the parties is their certainty -- a guarantee that those voters will not stay home on Election Day because of a sick child, snowstorm or flat tire, freeing campaigns to pursue voters who haven't made a choice.

That could make a difference in a closely divided state like Pennsylvania. Still, the upside for the G.O.P. could be limited. Pennsylvania Republicans already vote more faithfully than do Democrats. Even with near-record participation across the board, G.O.P. voter turnout in each of the last two elections was seven percentage points greater than Democratic turnout.

Atop that, Republican strategists still must overcome a drumbeat of attacks on the integrity of mailed ballots from the political right -- including by Republican leaders themselves.

Although Mr. Trump has issued a recorded call for voters to cast mail ballots as part of the national party's ''Bank Your Vote'' effort, he has criticized mail voting as ''dishonest'' and ''totally corrupt'' this year, and has said that states that allow it will ''automatically have fraud.''

In fact, evidence of organized fraud in mail-in voting is vanishingly rare. But Mr. Trump's claims have landed as lawyers for both the national and state Republican parties continue to file lawsuits aiming to make mail balloting harder, not easier.

In Philadelphia, for example, the Republican National Committee is asking a federal appeals court to throw out mail-in ballots that voters inadvertently mark with the wrong date, thousands of which are cast in every major election. In Harrisburg, the state capital, two Republican state legislators are suing to prohibit the use of drop boxes for mail ballots anywhere in the state.

Lisa Arp, a South Williamsport elementary-school teacher, said many smaller-town conservatives had little trust in a system they saw as skewed to favor liberal big cities. Their mistrust of mail balloting is part of that worldview.

''You want it to be as fair as possible,'' she said of the voting process. ''You want them to check your ID. You want them to check your name. You can't do that through a mail ballot.''

In Bucks County, Chris Sofield, who said he had missed voting in only one election since 1979, said that to win, ''we as Republicans know we have to use the system, no matter how corrupt it is.''

That will be the day, said Mike Mikus, whose firm, Chartiers Group, is one of the state's top Democratic political strategy shops. He said that trying to persuade Republican voters to use mail ballots would prove ''one of the biggest wastes of money in campaign history.''

''Donald Trump has done so much damage to the party by demonizing the use of mail ballots that there is no way, especially in this upcoming election, that Republican voters are going to decide to vote by mail en masse,'' he said.

Republican officials nevertheless say they are upbeat. In Bucks County, 16,000 of the 40,000 most recent applications for mail ballots came from registered Republicans, said Patricia Poprik, the chairwoman of the Bucks County Republican Committee and one of the 20 Pennsylvania Republican electors who cast what they called a ''provisional vote'' for Mr. Trump after his 2020 loss to Mr. Biden.

(Unlike the document signed by so-called fake electors favoring Mr. Trump in most other states, the one signed by the Pennsylvania electors said that it was contingent on a court overturning the results in the state. There was no such ruling.)

The 16,000 Republican applications in the county are a decided change from the 3-to-1 advantage that Democrats have enjoyed in the past.

''It will take our elections more time to become more comfortable with it,'' Ms. Poprik said of mail-in voting. ''The problem we have is that Republican voters don't trust that system.''

Kirsten Noyes contributed research.Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/21/us/republicans-mail-voting-pennsylvania.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/21/us/republicans-mail-voting-pennsylvania.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The Republican Party has undertaken a national campaign to increase voting by mail. But Donald J. Trump and others in the party have denounced the practice, stoking distrust among its members. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT SLOCUM/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2024

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[***What Happens When a Happening Place Becomes Too Hot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C09-VRK1-DXY4-X05K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Foreign Desk

**Length:** 1266 words

**Byline:** By Elisabetta Povoledo and Alessandro Grassani

**Body**

City officials worked to make Milan attractive to visitors, but now that some neighborhoods are overwhelmed by rowdy crowds and noise, they're trying to scale back.

Packed bars with carousing revelers spilling onto clogged streets. Takeaway booze swigged by drunken tourists and students. Earsplitting volumes in once quiet residential neighborhoods long after midnight.

When Milan's authorities embarked years ago on plans to promote the city as a buzzy destination by building on its reputation as Italy's hip fashion and design capital, the resulting noise and rowdy overcrowding were perhaps not quite what they had in mind.

Now, after years of complaints and a series of lawsuits, the city has passed an ordinance to strictly limit the sale of takeaway food and beverages after midnight -- and not much later on weekends -- in ''movida'' areas, a Spanish term that Italians have adopted to describe outdoor nightlife. It will go into effect next week and be in force until Nov. 11.

Outdoor seating for restaurants and bars will also end at 12:30 a.m. on weekdays, and an hour later on weekends, so that people who want to party longer will have to do so indoors.

The businesses that have profited from Milan's success in promoting itself as a happening city are grumbling.

One trade association complained that the ordinance was so strict that Italians would no longer be able to take a late-night stroll with a gelato in hand.

Marco Granelli, the Milan council member who is responsible for public security, said those fears were overblown. Eating gelato on the fly would not be a problem, he said.

The ordinance, he said, was aimed at dealing with ''behavior that impacts on residential neighborhoods'' and with takeaway alcoholic drinks, which are seen as the main reason late-night revelers linger on certain streets and squares. ''It's clear that ice cream, pizza or brioches don't create overcrowding,'' he said.

Marco Barbieri, secretary general for the Milan branch of the Italian retailers' association Confcommercio, said his group would fight the ordinance, which he estimated would affect about 30 percent of the city's 10,000 restaurants and bars. The new rules, he said, would penalize retailers for the bad behavior of their customers.

But residents have been complaining about Milan nightlife for a while.

''It's a nightmare,'' said Gabriella Valassina of the Navigli Committee, one of several citizen's groups formed to address the increasing numbers of people -- and decibel levels -- in Milan's historic neighborhoods.

She outlined a list of complaints: noise pollution (peaks of 87 decibels, well over the allowed 55, according to municipal limits); streets so packed with revelers that it is hard to walk or even reach one's front door; an exodus of fed-up locals that is changing the character of picturesque neighborhoods.

With the new rules, the city has allocated 170,000 euros, a little over $180,000, to help bar owners hire private security services to stop revelers from loitering on the streets outside their establishments. And it is working with police unions to modify contracts to allow more officers to work night shifts to enforce the new rules.

The city may have been motivated to act more forcefully after decisions by local and national courts in Italy have sided with residents who sued city administrations for not reining in nighttime chaos.

Elena Montafia, a spokeswoman for the Milano Degrado, a neighborhood association, is one of 34 residents of the Porta Venezia neighborhood suing the municipal government and asking for damages on the grounds that inaction to their complaints had put their health at risk.

''Living in Milan has become really difficult,'' she said, adding that it was only after a decade of pleading with unresponsive local administrators that she and the other residents had decided to go down the legal route.

Still, she and others doubted that the new ordinance would change much, and that enforcement would be a problem.

''When you have so many people around, there isn't a law that is going to make them go home; it's impossible,'' especially because the crowds normally far outnumber police officers, said Fabrizio Ferretti, the manager of Funky, a bar in Navigli, one of the affected neighborhoods. He acknowledged he was persona non grata with the owners of the apartments above his bar.

The predicament that Milan finds itself in today comes after years of efforts by leaders to broaden the city's image from Italy's financial and industrial capital to a more service-oriented, tourist-friendly one.

A succession of municipal governments has also encouraged the development of the city's less central neighborhoods, said Alessandro Balducci, who teaches planning and urban policies at the Politecnico di Milano.

One of the inspirations was the Fuorisalone, the sprawling network of events related to Milan Design Week, the design world's largest annual global event, that ''gave new life to neighborhoods that were in the shadows,'' he said. ''Even for the Milanese, it was a rediscovery of their city.''

There had been an increase, too, in the number of universities in the city -- eight now -- as well as design and fashion programs run by private institutes. Milanese universities are also increasingly offering courses in English to broaden their international appeal.

Today, students have replaced many of the laborers who once worked in now-closed factories -- for automobiles, chemicals and heavy machinery -- that had made Milan an industrial powerhouse, Mr. Balducci said.

The University of Milano-Bicocca, for example, opened some 25 years ago on the site of an abandoned Pirelli factory.

That surge in students is clearly evident in terms of how the nightlife has evolved, he said.

On top of that, he added, after the coronavirus pandemic, bars and restaurants replaced shops in many neighborhoods, accelerating the changing faces of those areas.

Last year, about 8.5 million visitors came to Milan -- not counting those who didn't stay overnight, according to YesMilano, the city's tourism site. That was well over the 3.2 million visitors who slept in Milan in 2004 and the five million who did in 2016, according to Istat, the national statistics agency.

The Navigli neighborhood -- a former ***working-class*** area built around two of Milan's most scenic remaining canals -- has experienced some of the most profound transformation in the city, evolving from a charmingly run-down district crossed by picturesque bridges into a hip quarter full of restaurants and bars.

Shops that catered to residents closed down, in part because rising rents and the general mayhem forced out many, including artists and artisans, residents say.

''The soul of the neighborhood is very different now,'' said Ms. Valassina, of the Navigli Committee. ''City administrations favored the idea of gentrification, thinking it was a positive objective. Instead, they altered the DNA of the neighborhood.''

On a recent evening, throngs of tourists, students and locals strolled along a canal, past sign after sign offering takeaway beer, wine or cocktails. Bars quickly filled, and the spillover crowds moved to the adjacent street, forcing passers-by to slalom through the crowds.

Some young revelers said they had doubts about the effectiveness of the new law.

''Young people are going to do what they do anyway; they'll find different ways to get around it,'' said Albassa Wane, 24, who is originally from Dakar, Senegal, and is an intern at a fashion label who has lived in Milan for five years.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/09/world/europe/milan-nightlife-crowd-control.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/09/world/europe/milan-nightlife-crowd-control.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alessandro Grassani for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2024

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[***School for the Grifted***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRH-P291-DXY4-X06H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 8; FICTION

**Length:** 894 words

**Byline:** By Mateo Askaripour

**Body**

In Andrew Boryga's debut novel, a young writer creates a career for himself by exaggerating, or sometimes completely manufacturing, stories of tragedy.

VICTIM, by Andrew Boryga

There's real value in being a victim. Serious profit in pity, but only so long as you don't become too ambitious, too greedy or too arrogant. Veer too far, and you run the risk of becoming dependent on disaster. That's when real trouble ensues.

And that's exactly what happens to Javier ''Javi'' Perez, the hustling Icarus at the center of Andrew Boryga's energetic and deeply satisfying debut novel, ''Victim.''

The story, which is presented as a memoir written by Javi himself, is at once an act of redemption and condemnation. As Javi explains in the first sentence, ''I wasn't trying to play the victim until the world taught me what a powerful grift it is.''

Boryga's novel opens with Javi's youth. He was born in the Bronx to ***working-class***, Puerto Rican parents. To outside eyes, his background is rough, but, from his own perspective, it's not hell. Misfortune does eventually manifest for Javi when, at 12, he witnesses his father's fatal shooting. Surprisingly, he's only shaken, because, as Javi explains, he was ''losing a person who was only kind of there.'' However, Javi soon learns that within tragedy lies opportunity. Assuming he's traumatized, his teachers give him a free pass to go to the nurse whenever he wants, which he frequently uses to cut class. It's his ''first taste of the high that comes from being a victim.''

Javi's main goal in life is to ''become a famous writer who makes bank,'' but before that: college. He assumes he'll just go somewhere local, but his guidance counselor, Mr. Martin, urges him to consider ''more prestigious'' institutions, like Donlon University, which offers full-ride scholarships for ''poor, underserved minority students.'' The key to these scholarships is to write an essay stuffed with tragedy and trauma -- basically catnip for the admissions committee.

''I had never thought about my life in that way,'' Javi muses. In his eyes, he's not a victim; he's not ''poor. But poorish.'' Still, Javi writes the essay and it works: He gains entrance to Donlon. It's a critical lesson that teaches our inner-city Icarus how to fly -- Javi realizes that his personal history and his skin color can be a gold mine and that, ''with people like Mr. Martin, I was rich.''

His ascent continues at Donlon, where he becomes the first Latino columnist of the school newspaper in its 100-year existence. But instead of writing his truth, he constantly stretches it, lying about various instances of victimization. And just as they did with his college essay, people eat it up. His editors place his first column ''prominently on the front page,'' and his ''exaggerated and outright manufactured'' writing brings Javi more and more success, earning him first attention, then freelance pieces in a famous magazine, then a job as a staff writer at the storied publication. But like Icarus with his wings of wax, Javi learns that counterfeit fabrications eventually fall apart.

In ''Victim,'' Boryga skillfully conveys that ''victim'' is often an external label slapped onto us (''It was in one of my very first classes,'' Javi hilariously recounts, ''that I learned something profound: I am a victim of systemic oppression''), but whether we rock it proudly or reject it loudly is up to us. Regardless, every choice comes with a consequence.

It's a thorny and nuanced conversation, but Boryga handles it judiciously. His prose is animated and active; his character writing is a crowning achievement. The people who populate the book are, at first glance, so familiar that they could devolve into caricature, but with Boryga's empathetic prose and startling self-awareness, they come to life with beating hearts and distinct personalities without sacrificing veracity. The sum of this is a story that reads like an enthralling account told by a friend rather than some stuffy, moralistic cautionary tale. Boryga is having fun, and he's inviting us to join in.

But let's be clear: Though Boryga is playing, he's not playing around. Through Javi's story, Boryga humorously and scathingly calls out the gluttonous consumption of stories of victimhood. Javi's scam is possible only because he understands that people will all too willingly, and uncritically, embrace tales of woe in order to reinforce their own sense of self and morals -- especially in public. The perils of this, the novel suggests, are twofold: It strips victims of their personhood, reducing them to faces on T-shirts and pixels on a screen, while also cultivating a society fertile for fraud. Yes, Boryga's critiques are uncomfortable, and entirely necessary. His debut signals the arrival of a writer courageous enough to dive into the difficult head-on.

A thrilling work that requires a sense of openness and surrender, not only does this novel place the onus on us to decide whether Javi is a victim, a victimizer or both, it also forces us to interrogate our own complicity in the commodification of being a casualty. Because, as Javi says: Life ain't neat. ''No one among us is righteous.''

VICTIM | By Andrew Boryga | Doubleday | 276 pp. | $27Mateo Askaripour's debut novel is ''Black Buck.'' His second novel, ''This Great Hemisphere,'' will be published in July.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/09/books/review/victim-andrew-boryga.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/09/books/review/victim-andrew-boryga.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Revolt of the College-Educated Working Class***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B3-TPX1-JBG3-63V0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 2024 words

**Byline:** Noam Scheiber

**Highlight:** Since the Great Recession, the college-educated have taken more frontline jobs at companies like Starbucks and Amazon. Now they’re helping to unionize them.

**Body**

Since the Great Recession, the college-educated have taken more frontline jobs at companies like Starbucks and Amazon. Now they’re helping to unionize them.

Over the past decade and a half, many young, college-educated workers have faced a disturbing reality: that it was harder for them to reach the middle class than for previous generations. The change has had profound effects — driving shifts in the country’s politics and mobilizing employees to demand fairer treatment at work. It may also be giving the labor movement its biggest lift in decades.

Members of this college-educated ***working class*** typically earn less money than they envisioned when they went off to school. “It’s not like anyone is expecting to make six figures,” said Tyler Mulholland, who earns about $23 an hour as a sales lead at REI, the outdoor equipment retailer, and holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education. “But when it’s snow storming at 11:30 at night, I don’t want to have to think, ‘Is the Uber home going to make a difference in my weekly budget?’”

In many cases, the workers have endured bouts of unemployment. After Clint Shiflett, who holds an associate degree in computer science, lost his job installing satellite dishes in early 2020, he found a cheaper place to live and survived on unemployment insurance for months. He was eventually hired at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama, where he initially made about $17.50 an hour working the overnight shift.

And they complain of being trapped in jobs that don’t make good use of their skills. Liz Alanna, who holds a bachelor’s in music education and a master’s in opera performance, began working at Starbucks while auditioning for music productions in the early 2010s. She stayed with the company to preserve her health insurance after getting married and having children.

“I don’t think I should have to have a certain job just so I can have health care,” Ms. Alanna said. “I could be doing other types of jobs that might fall better in my wheelhouse.”

These experiences, which [*economic research*](https://eml.berkeley.edu/~jrothst/publications/rothstein_lostgeneration_apr2021.pdf) [*shows*](https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market/college-labor-market_underemployment_jobtypes.html) became more common after the Great Recession, appear to have united many young college-educated workers around two core beliefs: They have a sense that the economic grand bargain available to their parents — go to college, work hard, enjoy a comfortable lifestyle — has [*broken down*](https://www.gallup.com/education/272228/half-consider-college-education-important.aspx). And they see unionizing as a way to resurrect it.

Support for labor unions among college graduates has increased from 55 percent in the late 1990s to around 70 percent in the last few years, and is even higher among younger college graduates, according to data provided by Gallup. “I think a union was really kind of my only option to make this a viable choice for myself and other people,” said Mr. Mulholland, 32, who helped lead the campaign to unionize his Manhattan REI store in March. Mr. Shiflett and Ms. Alanna have also been active in the campaigns to unionize their workplaces.

And those efforts, in turn, may help explain an upsurge for organized labor, with filings for union elections [*up more than 50 percent*](https://www.nlrb.gov/news-outreach/news-story/union-election-petitions-increase-57-in-first-half-of-fiscal-year-2022) over a similar period one year ago.

Though a minority at most nonprofessional workplaces, college-educated workers are playing a key role in propelling them toward unionization, experts say, because the college-educated often feel empowered in ways that others don’t. “There’s a class confidence, I would call it,” said Ruth Milkman, a sociologist of labor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. “A broader worldview that encompasses more than getting through the day.”

While other workers at companies like Starbucks and Amazon are also supportive of unions and sometimes take the initiative in forming them, the presence of the college-educated in these jobs means there is a “layer of people who particularly have their antennae up,” Ms. Milkman added. “There is an additional layer of leadership.”

That workers who attended college would be attracted to nonprofessional jobs at REI, Starbucks and Amazon is not entirely surprising. Over the past decade, the companies’ appetite for workers has grown substantially. Starbucks increased its global work force to nearly 385,000 last year from about 135,000 in 2010. Amazon’s work force swelled to 1.6 million from 35,000 during that period.

The companies appeal to affluent and well-educated consumers. And they offer solid wages and benefits for their industries — even, for that matter, compared with some other industries that employ the college-educated.

More than three years after he earned a political science degree from Siena College in 2017, Brian Murray was making about $14 an hour as a youth counselor at a group home for middle-school-age children.

He quit in late 2020 and was hired a few months later at a Starbucks in the Buffalo area, where his wage increased to $15.50 an hour. “The starting wage was higher than anything I’d ever made,” said Mr. Murray, who has helped organize Starbucks workers in the city.

Such examples appear to reflect broader economic forces. Data from the past 30 years collected by the economists Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York showed that [*unemployment for recent college graduates*](https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/college-labor-market/index#/unemployment) shot up to over 7 percent in 2009 and was above 5.3 percent — the highest previously recorded — as late as 2015.

Jesse Rothstein, a former chief economist of the U.S. Labor Department, found in a [*2021 paper*](https://eml.berkeley.edu/~jrothst/publications/rothstein_lostgeneration_apr2021.pdf) that the job prospects for recent college graduates began to weaken around 2005, then suffered a significant blow during the Great Recession and had not fully recovered a decade later.

The recession depressed their employment rates “above what is consistent with normal recession effects,” wrote Mr. Rothstein, now a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. “Moreover, this change has persisted into the most recent entrants, who were in middle school during the Great Recession.”

While there is no simple explanation for the trend, many economists contend that automation and outsourcing [*reduced the need*](https://www.frbsf.org/economic-research/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/wp2016-17.pdf) for certain “middle skilled” jobs that college-educated workers performed. [*Consolidation*](https://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/merger-consolidation-wages-effect) in industries that employ the college-educated also appears to have softened demand for those workers, said Lawrence Katz, a labor economist at Harvard, though he emphasized that those with a college degree still typically earned far more than those without one.

Whatever the case, the gap between the expectations of college graduates and their employability has led to years of political ferment. A [*study of participants*](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268126261_Changing_The_Subject_Occupy_Wall_Street%27s_Achievements_and_Prospects_In_Comparative_Perspective) in the Occupy Wall Street movement, which highlighted income inequality and grew out of the 2011 occupation of Zuccotti Park in Manhattan, found that more than three-quarters were college graduates, versus about [*30 percent of adults*](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/educational-attainment.html#:~:text=the%20Hispanic%20population.-,From%202011%20to%202021%2C%20the%20percentage%20of%20adults%20age%2025,20.6%25%20for%20the%20Hispanic%20population) at the time. Many had been laid off during the previous five years and “were carrying substantial debt,” the report noted.

In the decade that followed, members of this same demographic group helped lead [*other activist campaigns*](https://www.ruthmilkman.info/_files/ugd/90d188_8e76f3799c4e4b8bb882bae9c7287079.pdf), like the Black Lives Matter movement, and supported the [*presidential campaigns of*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/260801/biden-sanders-best-images-among-democrats.aspx) [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/documents/monmouthpoll_us_021120.pdf/). At least one member — Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who had [*worked as a waitress and a bartender*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/aoc-biography-book-excerpt.html) during her postcollege years — successfully ran for Congress.

The college-educated began flexing their muscle at work, too. Employees at digital media outlets like [*Gawker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/05/business/gawker-media-employees-vote-to-form-a-union-and-the-bosses-approve.html) and [*Buzzfeed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/18/business/media/buzzfeed-news-union-walkout.html) unionized in the 2010s, complaining of low pay and unclear paths to promotion, as did employees of [*think tanks and other nonprofit groups*](https://npeu.org/news/2018/5/14/what-having-a-staff-union-has-done-for-the-center-for-american-progress).

Public school teachers across the country [*walked off the job*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/03/us/teacher-walkouts-strikes.html) in 2018 to protest low pay and dwindling resources, while union campaigns [*proliferated*](https://webedit2.hunter.cuny.edu/ncscbhep/assets/files/SupplementalDirectory-2020-FINAL.pdf) at private colleges among graduate students and nontenure-track faculty.

Ms. Milkman pointed to several reasons that college-educated workers had succeeded at organizing even in the face of employer opposition: They often know their rights under labor law, and feel entitled to change their workplace. They believe there is another gig out there if they lose their current one.

“More education does two things — it inoculates you to some extent against employer scare tactics,” Ms. Milkman said. “And it’s not that big a deal to get fired. You know, ‘Who cares? I can get some other crummy job.’”

The pandemic reinforced the trend, disrupting the labor market just as it finally appeared to be stabilizing for recent college graduates. It made service sector jobs dangerous in addition to modestly compensated. Amid labor shortages, workers grew bolder in challenging their bosses.

No less important, the college-educated were mobilizing a larger range of workers. When their awakening was confined to white-collar workplaces and [*hipster coffee shops*](https://www.baristamagazine.com/spot-coffee-workers-make-union-history/), said Barry Eidlin, a sociologist who studies labor at McGill University in Montreal, its reach was limited. But at a bigger company like Starbucks, the activism of such workers “has the potential to have much greater reverberations,” he said. “It bleeds into this broader palette of the ***working class***.”

College-educated union supporters began forming alliances with those who did not attend college, some of whom were also budding leaders.

RJ Rebmann, who has not attended college, was hired at a Starbucks store near Buffalo last summer, but soon had trouble getting scheduled. Union supporters, including one studying biotechnology at a local community college, went to a meeting the company was holding and urged company officials to address the situation.

“The union partners were sticking up for me,” said Mx. Rebmann, who uses gender-neutral pronouns and courtesy titles and was already leaning toward supporting the union. “That was a tipping point for me in deciding how I’m going to vote.” More than 25 Starbucks stores have voted to unionize since then.

A similar diversity of workers carried the union to an [*88-to-14 win*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/02/business/rei-union-new-york.html) at the REI store in Manhattan. “We have a lot of students, we have a lot of folks who have had previous careers and changed it up,” said Claire Chang, a union supporter who graduated from college in 2014.

And then there’s the victory at Amazon, where union supporters say their multiracial coalition was a source of strength, as was a diversity of political views. “We had straight-up Communists and hard-line Trump supporters,” said Cassio Mendoza, a worker involved in the organizing. “It was really important to us.”

But the mix of educational backgrounds also played a role. Christian Smalls and Derrick Palmer, the [*two friends*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/business/amazon-union-christian-smalls.html) who helped found the union, had attended community college. Connor Spence, its vice president of membership, studied aviation while earning an associate degree. He had read popular labor studies books and helped oversee the [*union’s strategy*](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-amazon-workers-beat-the-union-busters-at-their-own-game_n_624b0385e4b0e44de9c52704) for undermining the consultants Amazon hired to fight unionization.

Other workers at the warehouse had even more extensive credentials, like [*Brima Sylla*](https://jacobinmag.com/2022/04/amazon-warehouse-alu-staten-island-immigrant-workers), originally from Liberia, who holds a Ph.D. in public policy. Dr. Sylla speaks several languages and translated the union’s text messages into French and Arabic.

Asked how the union had brought together so many people across the lines of class and education, Mr. Spence said it was simple: Most Amazon workers struggle with pay, safety concerns and productivity targets, and few get promoted, regardless of education. (The company said that about two-thirds of its 30,000 noncorporate promotions last year involved hourly employees, and that it had made [*extensive investments in safety*](https://sustainability.aboutamazon.com/people/employees/health-safety).)

“Amazon doesn’t allow people of differing education levels to become separated,” Mr. Spence said. “It was the way we were able to unite people — the idea that we’re all getting screwed.”

Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

Audio produced by Parin Behrooz.

PHOTOS: Brian Murray, who has helped organize Starbucks workers in the Buffalo area, has a degree from Siena College. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUSTAFA HUSSAIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Claire Chang, a leader of the effort to unionize the REI store in Manhattan, graduated from college in 2014. (B1); Christian Smalls, center, a workplace organizer and a founder of the Amazon Labor Union, went to community college. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESEAN MCCLINTON-HOLLAND FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5)

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The U.S. Increased Its Pressure on Israel to Reach a Truce***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C06-BJK1-DXY4-X018-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 8, 2024 Wednesday 17:56 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1196 words

**Byline:** Matthew Cullen

**Highlight:** Also, Biden and Harris hit the campaign trail. Here’s the latest at the end of Wednesday.

**Body**

Also, Biden and Harris hit the campaign trail. Here’s the latest at the end of Wednesday.

The Biden administration dispatched the head of the C.I.A. to meet today with the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in a push by the U.S. to clinch a deal for a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages. The visit came only hours after the White House confirmed that it was withholding some military aid from Israel.

Together, the moves are among President Biden’s most significant attempts to limit Israel’s military operation in the Gazan city of Rafah and ratchet down the Israel-Hamas war. The hold on weapons is limited to a few thousand massive bombs, but it is the first time since the start of the war that Biden has used his power over aid to influence Israel’s approach.

[*Here’s the latest*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

The U.S. defense secretary publicly linked the withheld shipment to Israel’s long-threatened ground invasion of Rafah, which American officials worry could lead to a humanitarian disaster. Israel has insisted that it needs to invade Rafah in order to dismantle Hamas, and this week Israeli tanks entered the city and took control of its border crossing with Egypt.

Israeli officials have downplayed the disagreement and said they are continuing to negotiate on a potential cease-fire. But experts suggested that the hold was a warning from Biden that he was willing to use U.S. aid as leverage if the Israeli military presses farther into Rafah.

For more: We have new [*satellite imagery of Rafah*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah), showing widespread damage.

It’s Wednesday, so Biden and Harris are campaigning

President Biden spent his afternoon in Racine, Wis., where he announced that Microsoft planned to build a [*major artificial intelligence data center there*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah). The project in the battleground state is expected to create thousands of jobs, Biden said, and deliver on his promise to boost domestic manufacturing. The president also held a campaign event nearby targeting Black voters.

Vice President Kamala Harris was on the move as well: She spoke in the Philadelphia suburbs about abortion access.

The flurry of activity has become a Wednesday standard, as [*my colleague Reid Epstein reported*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah). It’s the off day for Donald Trump’s Manhattan trial, so the White House and the Biden campaign have sought to cut off his chances of driving the news by sending the president and Harris to get voters’ attention.

School leaders rejected charges of ignoring antisemitism

House Republicans questioned public school leaders from liberal pockets of the country, accusing them of “turning a blind eye” to an alarming rise in antisemitism since Oct. 7. But unlike last year, when a similar hearing with college leaders prompted months of upheaval, the school chiefs [*forcefully defended their actions*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

The latest: Police [*broke up an encampment*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah) at George Washington University; U.S.C. scrambled to [*preserve its graduation*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah); and Chicago officials urged everyone to [*stop the comparisons to 1968*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

France left migrant workers off its Olympic toll

The Olympic flame [*arrived today in Marseille*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah), where it will begin a 79-day relay across France, culminating in Paris with the start of the Games in July. President Emmanuel Macron said that the infrastructure for the Olympics was built without the hazards that tarnished the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

But the Olympics sites have been [*more dangerous than organizers have let on*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah). Some fatal accidents were omitted because of narrow definitions for what is Games-related; other cases involving undocumented immigrants were handled off the books.

More top news

* Congress: Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene moved to oust Speaker Mike Johnson. [*The vote is likely to fail.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah)

1. Trump: A Georgia court will hear an appeal of the ruling that kept Fani Willis as the prosecutor in the former president’s election-interference case, [*most likely delaying the case*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).
2. Politics: Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said that doctors [*found a dead worm in his brain*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).
3. Ukraine: Russia hit several power plants across the country, [*further straining its electrical grid*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).
4. Cars: General Motors said it would [*stop making the Chevrolet Malibu*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah), and focus more on EVs and S.U.V.s.
5. Weather: One person died when strong [*storms hit the Eastern U.S. today*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah). Here’s how to get [*Times notifications on extreme weather*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).
6. Florida: State lawmakers voted to [*outlaw intentionally letting go of balloons*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).
7. Lives lived: Steve Albini, a musician who helped develop the alternative rock sound of the ’80s and ’90s, [*died at 61*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

TIME TO UNWIND

‘Planet of the Apes’ continues to deliver

More than half a century ago, filmmakers presented audiences with a goofy premise: What if talking apes overthrew humanity? Now “Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes,” the 10th installment of what has become an uncommonly thoughtful franchise, is arriving in theaters.

Our critic Alissa Wilkinson found it to be a worthy new chapter. Through the apes, the new movie probes the way idealisms can be co-opted and converted into dogmas. [*Check out Alissa’s review*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

LaToya Ruby Frazier heads to MoMA

LaToya Ruby Frazier is now perhaps America’s foremost social documentary photographer. She first made her mark with photos of her family and her industrial hometown, Braddock, Pa., before widening her field to the challenges of ***working-class*** Americans across the country.

This weekend, an exhibition of Frazier’s work will open at the Museum of Modern Art. We [*talked to her about what inspires her*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Dinner table topics

* A serene oasis: Aaron Dessner’s Long Pond recording studio breaks a lot of design rules. [*That’s why musicians love it*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

1. For retirement: Was the 401(k) a mistake? We [*tried to find out*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

* Big new canvas: Six midsize galleries pooled their money to [*buy a sprawling, abandoned school*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah) in upstate New York, where they will exhibit their art.

1. A reader asked: Why do feet smell, and [*can anything be done about it*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah)

WHAT TO DO TONIGHT

Cook: These [*French onion sliders*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah) make for a comforting meal.

Sip: [*Tiny drinks*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah) are on the rise.

Watch: Here are the movies and shows [*arriving on streaming services this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Listen: Our pop music editor made a playlist from [*Madonna’s Celebration Tour*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Book: Some online A.I. tools can actually [*help with your summer planning*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Style: Wirecutter tested dozens of mascaras. [*These are the best options*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Play: Here are today’s [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah) and [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah). Find [*all of our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

ONE LAST THING

New York is awash in blue and orange

The New York Knicks — once the laughingstock of the city’s sports world — are now real contenders in the N.B.A. playoffs. They have a legitimate star in Jalen Brunson, who along with a collection of fun and unassuming players are [*transfixing the city*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

Their success has attracted a crush of celebrities and converted many once-uninterested New Yorkers into fans. Maria Luisa Rocca, for example, spent her more than 90 years caring little about basketball. Now, she refuses to miss a Knicks game. “I love this team,” she said.

Have an enthusiastic evening.

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back tomorrow. — Matthew

We welcome your feedback. Write to us at [*evening@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/05/08/world/israel-gaza-war-hamas-rafah).

PHOTO: Palestinians inspecting the site of an Israeli strike in Rafah on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Hatem Khaled/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Patrick Stewart Made the Jump to Warp Speed; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699M-M2H1-JBG3-652P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Ben Brantley

**Highlight:** In his fond memoir “Making It So,” the actor traces the path from the ***working class*** to the Shakespearean stage to “Star Trek” superstardom.

**Body**

In his fond memoir “Making It So,” the actor traces the path from the ***working class*** to the Shakespearean stage to “Star Trek” superstardom.

MAKING IT SO: A Memoir, by Patrick Stewart

A ruddy blush of modesty colors “Making It So,” Patrick Stewart’s engaging self-portrait of life on the British stage and the starship U.S.S. Enterprise. Humility is not, of course, the trait that first comes to mind with big-name actors, for whom a strapping ego would seem to be a job requirement.

And with his booming voice and clenched-fist persona, Stewart has usually registered as a take-charge, cross-me-at-your-peril kind of guy. He became internationally famous portraying the autocratic space captain Jean-Luc Picard on the [*long-running sci-fi series “Star Trek: The Next Generation,”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB4JYtsD1ms) a man given to terse dictums like the one from which this book takes its title: “Make it so.”

A [*veteran of some 60 productions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/27/theater/27lyal.html?searchResultPosition=1) with Britain’s Royal Shakespeare Company, Stewart has also brought the chill of brute will to some of the canon’s most commanding heroes, on Broadway and in the West End. Yet what gave these interpretations their distinctive force was Stewart’s gift for conveying the doubt within the bluster. The dichotomies always read with acute clarity, whether he’s the magisterial Prospero in [*“The Tempest”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/12/theater/theater-review-enough-wrath-and-fear-to-thrust-philosophy-offstage.html) (we see him thinking simultaneously, “I revel in my power! Power has corrupted me!”); the ambitious [*Macbeth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/09/theater/reviews/09macb.html?searchResultPosition=5) (“I must be king! My thoughts really scare me!”); or Cleopatra’s Antony (“I love her! She’s ruining my life!”).

Those grace notes of insecurity would seem to come naturally to [*Stewart,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/books/review/patrick-stewart-interview.html) now 83, whose autobiography is suffused with an air of dumbfounded surprise at his own successes. This is partly because serious celebrity came late to him. He was well into his 40s when he began playing Picard and pushing 60 when he took on the other role for which he is best known, the mutant Professor X in the [*“X-Men”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/02/movies/film-review-good-vs-evil-with-marvelous-muscles.html) series of films. His major above-the-title theater performances came only after his late-blooming fame onscreen.

But Stewart also belongs to a breed that has become increasingly rare in his home country: the ***working-class*** youth who stumbles almost by chance into theater, then pays his dues for decades. Stewart grew up in northern England in the town of Mirfield (population 9,000). His father was an army sergeant who unhappily became “an itinerant laborer,” his mother, a textile mill worker. With his older brother, they shared a claustrophobically small house with no bathroom.

Stewart’s father had been a charismatic leader in the military. (A fellow soldier said of him, “When he walked onto the parade ground, the birds in the trees stopped singing.”) He never adjusted to civilian life and would beat his wife when he drank. Stewart writes that only through “decades of analysis” would he begin to grasp “the impact of the violence, fear, shame and guilt I experienced as a child,” and that elements of his father’s irrational rage would creep into his later portrayals of Shakespeare’s tyrants.

As a boy, Stewart says, his “outrageous dream was to be a long-distance lorry driver.” Yet there were those who saw something special in a lad who always looked older than his years. He was nonplused when a church secretary asked him, “Are you aware that you have an aura?” An English teacher, Cecil Dormand, one of the book’s dedicatees, introduced him to Shakespeare and urged his pupil to participate in local theater programs. The boy discovered that being onstage was the place that he felt safest.

It helped that Stewart grew up in an age when theater was considered a part of everyday cultural life, even in tiny Mirfield, which had “at least seven active drama societies,” and that the country supported a wide and fecund network of repertory companies. When Stewart was completing his school years at 15, he was asked by Dormand if he had thought of becoming an actor. “That job is not for people like me,” Stewart responded.

But Dormand pointed out that young men with economic backgrounds like Stewart’s, such as Albert Finney and Richard Harris, were generating a new excitement in the British theater. After brief stints as a local newspaper reporter and a furniture salesman, Stewart was accepted at the Bristol Old Vic Theater School.

And so began an apprenticeship in repertory that led him to a place at the Stratford-based Royal Shakespeare Company in his mid-20s. The big, juicy roles were elusive, however, and Stewart lingers over the rejections like someone massaging a toothache with his tongue. He recalls more than once leaving the theater after performing a small role in “Hamlet,” starring a much-acclaimed David Warner, and being asked, “Are you anybody?”

By the current metrics of fame, it took Stewart two more decades to become “anybody,” when he was unexpectedly tapped for the role of Picard.

Trekkies should know that this pivotal moment occurs about 300 pages into “Making It So.” Stewart is generous with insiderly details about his experience on “Star Trek” (like his insisting on more comfortable spacesuits). But the book starts to feel more like a standard showbiz biography from this point — so many credits, so many life changes, so little time — as growing fame takes its toll on the personal life of Stewart, who would marry three times.

As a lover of theater lore, I was happiest learning about Stewart’s stage-centered life, even when he wasn’t center stage. He offers fascinating glimpses into the unorthodox working methods of great classic actors like [*John Wood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/11/theater/john-wood-actor-known-for-nimbleness-dies-at-81.html) and Ian Holm (who had a breakdown while performing “The Iceman Cometh”) and the directors [*Peter Brook,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/03/obituaries/peter-brook-dead.html?searchResultPosition=3) Trevor Nunn and Peter Hall.

I would love to have read more about Stewart’s enduring personal and professional relationship with Ian McKellen, with whom he appeared memorably in Beckett’s “Waiting for Godot,” [*paired in rotation on Broadway*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/25/theater/reviews/no-mans-land-and-waiting-for-godot-at-the-cort.html) with Pinter’s “No Man’s Land” in 2013. It was McKellen who thrillingly advised Stewart, when he was playing Macbeth, that the key to the character can be found in the conjunction “and” in the soliloquy that begins, “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. …”

Still, I’m not about to begrudge Stewart his blissed-out descriptions of the confidence-stoking benefits of the feast of popular success after years of famine. When it was decided that his signature television character would be resurrected for a new series, “Star Trek: Picard,” Stewart [*announced its arrival at a 2018 Trekkie convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/04/arts/star-trek-patrick-stewart-picard.html) in Las Vegas.

He recalls basking in the crowd’s thunderous response with a refreshing lack of ambivalence: “No more sheepishness, no more embarrassment — I like being liked.”

MAKING IT SO: A Memoir | By Patrick Stewart | Illustrated | 480 pp. | Gallery Books | $35

PHOTO: Patrick Stewart in the role that took his career to a whole new level: Jean-Luc Picard in “Star Trek: The Next Generation.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY CBS via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Marjorie Taylor Greene Doesn't Control the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYN-Y6G1-DXY4-X018-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1204 words

**Byline:** By David French

**Body**

In an interview last week, NewsNation's Blake Burman asked Speaker Mike Johnson about Marjorie Taylor Greene, and before Burman could finish his question, Johnson responded with classic Southern scorn. ''Bless her heart,'' he said, and then he told Burman that Greene wasn't proving to be a serious lawmaker and that he didn't spend a lot of time thinking about her.

Strangely enough, Johnson's dismissal of Greene -- on the eve of her potential effort to oust him from the office he won in October -- spoke as loudly as his decision to put a vote for Ukraine aid on the floor in the first place. In spite of the Republican Party's narrow majority in the House and the constant threat of a motion to vacate the chair, he will not let MAGA's most extreme lawmaker run the place.

To understand the significance of this moment, it's necessary to understand the changing culture of the MAGAfied Republican Party. After eight years of Donald Trump's dominance, we know the fate of any Republican politician who directly challenges him -- the confrontation typically ends his or her political career in the most miserable way possible, with dissenters chased out of office amid a hail of threats and insults. Jeff Flake, Bob Corker, Adam Kinzinger and Liz Cheney are but a few of the many Republicans who dared to defy Trump and paid a high political price.

But there's an open question: Does the MAGA movement have the same control over the Republican Party when Trump isn't directly in the fray? Can it use the same tactics to impose party discipline and end political careers? If the likes of Greene or Steve Bannon or Matt Gaetz or Charlie Kirk can wield the same power, then the transformation of the party will be complete. It won't be simply in thrall to Trump; it will be in thrall to his imitators and heirs and perhaps lost to the reactionary right for a generation or more.

I don't want to overstate the case, but Johnson's stand -- together with the Democrats' response -- gives me hope. Consider the chain of events. On April 12, Johnson appeared at Mar-a-Lago and received enough of a blessing from Trump to make it clear that Trump didn't want him removed. Days before a vote on Ukraine aid that directly defied the MAGA movement, Trump said Johnson was doing a ''very good job.''

Days later, Johnson got aid to Ukraine passed with more Democratic votes than Republican -- a violation of the so-called Hastert Rule, an informal practice that says the speaker shouldn't bring a vote unless the measure is supported by a majority within his own party. Greene and the rest of MAGA exploded, especially when Democratic lawmakers waved Ukrainian flags on the House floor. Greene vowed to force a vote on her motion to end Johnson's speakership. She filed the motion in March as a ''warning'' to Johnson, and now she's following through -- directly testing her ability to transform the House.

But what happened after the Ukraine vote was truly fascinating. First, Republicans who voted for Ukraine aid found their actual constituents were generally fine with the vote. Many supported Ukraine. There was little to no backlash back home.

Second, Democrats came to Johnson's aid. Last Tuesday, the top three Democrats in the House -- Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar -- issued a statement supporting Johnson and opposing Greene's motion to vacate. ''If she invokes the motion,'' they said, ''it will not succeed.''

Next, the Republican Party's human weather vane, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, blasted Greene in an interview with RealClearPolitics's Phil Wegmann, telling him that ''what's she's doing is really unhelpful to the country.'' Of course, Cruz will pivot on a dime if Trump turns on Johnson, but at the moment the power dynamic is clear, and MAGA without Trump is much more bark than bite.

In fact, if you take a step back and look at Biden's term so far, one can see the outlines of healthy government -- at least so long as Trump stays out of the fray. There is a rough governing consensus on a number of fronts. In 2021, for example, Congress passed a bipartisan infrastructure bill. In December 2022, it passed the Respect for Marriage Act, a bipartisan compromise bill that protects both gay marriage and religious liberty, and that same month it passed bipartisan reforms to the Electoral Count Act that will make it much more difficult for a losing candidate to sow chaos after a presidential election.

Combine those measures with the immensely important foreign aid package passed last month, and you can see the outlines of a functioning Congress, one in which compromise and persuasion are still tools of the trade.

But that infuriates MAGA, which scorns compromise and persuasion as weakness. It derides bipartisan legislation as a product of a corrupt Washington ''uniparty.'' And so Greene is pushing ahead with her motion to vacate. If Johnson survives the vote with Democratic support, she'll label him the ''Democrat speaker'' and continue her relentless political guerrilla war.

It has been nine years since Trump came down the escalator, and since that time MAGA has become a movement that hopes to outlive Trump himself. It's systematically dismantling the old G.O.P. and attempting to recreate the party in its own image. But it has never been clear to me that MAGA can survive without Trump, and Johnson's battle with Greene tells us why.

To paraphrase Senator Lloyd Bentsen's devastating takedown of Dan Quayle in the 1988 vice-presidential debate, we know Donald Trump. He's been a megawatt celebrity for more than four decades. He built an entire brand around the false notion that he was one of the world's greatest businessmen. He has an uncanny ability to reach his core audience. And you, Representative Greene, are no Donald Trump.

Neither is the rest of MAGA. The clown car collection of MAGA personalities who orbit Trump is often both profoundly weird and remarkably inept. They suffered a collective humiliation in the 2022 midterm elections. Mainstream Republicans coasted to victory in key elections in Georgia, Ohio and Florida, while the election-denying MAGA conspiracy theorists suffered a string of losses in battleground states.

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.

And if the mismatch between Speaker Johnson and Greene is any indication, I would not presume that MAGA will win the day.

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**Graphic**

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[***Which Economic Message Will Sway Nevada?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8X-NPD1-DXY4-X02T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1492 words

**Byline:** By Kellen Browning

**Body**

Democrats say the state's economy is getting better, while Republicans argue it's getting worse. Which message resonates more could decide the pivotal battleground state this fall.

Nevada has the worst unemployment rate in the country, gas and grocery prices are still among the nation's highest, and the cost of housing here has soared. President Biden's policies are squarely to blame, Republicans argue, and former President Donald J. Trump will fix it if voters return him to the White House.

Nevada's unemployment rate has been cut in half since Mr. Biden took office, gas prices have dropped by nearly $2 a gallon since mid-2022, and more than 200,000 jobs have already been created as the state is receiving $3.3 billion in infrastructure investments. Democrats here say that the economy is finally on the upswing after Mr. Trump and the coronavirus pandemic drove it into the ground, and that re-electing Mr. Biden is critical to keeping it that way.

Which of these disparate economic pictures resonates most strongly with voters could make a difference come November in the critical battleground state. Even though Nevada's presidential nominating contests this week are largely anti-climactic -- in part because Mr. Trump and his remaining Republican primary rival, Nikki Haley, are on separate ballots -- Mr. Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Mr. Trump all recently made stops in Las Vegas, setting the stakes for the likely general election matchup.

The messaging war heating up mirrors a larger political fight playing out nationwide over which perception of the economy -- the optimistic one pushed by Democrats or the dreary one described by Republicans -- hits home for voters. Traditional metrics indicate that the economy is, indeed, strong, and Americans are spending like it is, according to a New York Times analysis, but consumer confidence remains low.

Republicans believe they have a particularly potent economic argument to make in Nevada, which relies heavily on tourism and hospitality, and was hit harder during the pandemic than most of the country and recovered more sluggishly.

''Certainly, Republicans will make hay about that: the cost of living, groceries, some of those issues,'' said David Damore, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Democrats, he said, could make the case that they were improving the local economy through job growth and climate investments. But that argument is ''a little more abstract than going to the grocery store and seeing your prices,'' he added, so Democrats will most likely also try to focus voters on other issues, like abortion rights and prescription drug prices.

Republicans have not won Nevada in a presidential election since 2004. The state's Democrats are famously well prepared, with the political operation of former Senator Harry Reid combining with the organizational heft of the Culinary Workers Union, in particular, to turn out Democratic voters and independents reliably. Still, recent statewide elections have been won by razor-thin margins, and Republicans flipped the governor's mansion in 2022. Last fall, a poll conducted by The New York Times and Siena College found Mr. Biden trailing Mr. Trump by 10 percentage points in Nevada.

In the Las Vegas metro area, where the population has swelled by more than 300,000 in the past decade, according to population estimates, and housing prices have climbed 6 percent in just the past year, people are feeling particularly squeezed.

''What made Vegas attractive for ***working-class*** people was you could come here, work in construction, work on the Strip, make white-collar wages doing blue-collar jobs. And that's because the cost of living here was much less expensive than, say, Southern California,'' Mr. Damore said. ''Well, that's evaporated.''

Republican groups here are hammering Mr. Biden. They argue that his signature pieces of legislation, including the $1.9 trillion pandemic aid package and the $740 billion clean energy, tax and health care law, are to blame for the higher prices -- something experts say is part of the picture but not the full story. (As president, Mr. Trump signed a $900 billion Covid relief bill.)

Americans for Prosperity, a conservative advocacy group whose super PAC is backing Ms. Haley, has held a series of events in the state as part of a national campaign called ''The True Cost of Washington,'' aimed at highlighting inflation and rising costs. The group has partnered with gas stations in Nevada to offer drivers gas at just over $2 per gallon -- its price when Mr. Biden took office -- to drive home how much more expensive things are now. (Americans for Prosperity pays the difference.)

It has held similar events at grocery stores, offering gift cards to make up the difference in food prices.

''The issues real Nevadans care about economically are not being addressed, and I think that's caused a lack of enthusiasm for voting or believing Joe Biden can get us out of this economic crisis,'' said Ronnie Najarro, the Nevada state director for Americans for Prosperity.

How voters perceive life in Nevada may ultimately fall somewhere in between the pictures painted by the opposing political parties. The state's governor, Joe Lombardo, a Republican who has endorsed Mr. Trump, tried to thread the needle, suggesting that he was responsible for the state's positive numbers while blaming Mr. Biden for the bad ones.

''Governor Lombardo's policies have positioned Nevada to lead the nation in annual job growth and new economic development,'' Elizabeth Ray, a spokeswoman for Mr. Lombardo, said in a statement. ''Despite the generation of $5 billion in new private sector economic investment and the creation of thousands of new jobs, Nevadans still suffer from high gas, grocery and energy prices due to Joe Biden's failed national policies.''

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said Democrats' economic arguments amounted to ''gaslighting.''

''Americans are sick and tired of the last four years of destructive policies that have brought nothing but pain and misery,'' he said in a statement.

Democrats, meanwhile, have stressed signs of improvement. Nationally, inflation continued to slow late last year, price increases have tailed off in Nevada, and the state leads the nation in job growth. Apartment rental prices in Las Vegas have dipped after a decade of increases. Mr. Biden's campaign has argued that the president inherited a struggling Covid-era economy from Mr. Trump and has slowly but surely turned it around. The campaign says local jobs created by infrastructure and green energy projects, and the 7,000 Nevadans who had their student debt canceled, are proof that Mr. Biden is tangibly helping the state.

The president's campaign also noted that a majority of the state's voters agree with Mr. Biden's priorities on abortion. The issue of abortion access could be on the Nevada ballot alongside Mr. Biden this November.

Shelby Wiltz, the president's Nevada campaign manager, said in a statement that Mr. Trump ''left the heart of our economy reeling with sky-high unemployment,'' while Mr. Biden ''immediately got to work creating tens of thousands of good-paying Nevada jobs'' and lowered prescription drug prices.

''We're happy to contrast those records any day of the week,'' she added.

Compared with what it was during the pandemic, ''the economy's back now, and it's back in a big way,'' said Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of the state's Culinary Workers Union, which met with Mr. Biden on Monday. The union represents 60,000 casino and food service workers and is part of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., which has endorsed Mr. Biden.

Mr. Pappageorge acknowledged that high prices continued to bedevil residents, especially in Las Vegas. But he said voters should lay the blame at the feet of corporate entities like oil companies and Wall Street landlords, not the president.

''It's all about price gouging and these massive companies taking advantage,'' he said.

Mr. Pappageorge and other state Democrats argued that economic indicators, even if they pointed downward, would not push voters away from the Democratic Party, because Democrats have ''produced'' for ***working-class*** and union voters.

Still, many voters headed to the polls in Tuesday's primary election said the state's economy was a concern. Fred Parvin, a 73-year-old Democrat, voted for Mr. Biden in the primary, but he said he was struggling to pay his steeper utility bills and has started growing vegetables in his yard to save on groceries.

''I don't have tons of money for retirement,'' Mr. Parvin said.

Frank Li, a 65-year-old Trump supporter, said he had also faced rising utility bills. He added that he had seen more people who appeared to be living on the street -- which aligns with an apparent uptick in an annual homelessness count.

Mr. Trump, he said, ''could possibly get it turned around.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/nevada-economy-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/07/us/politics/nevada-economy-2024.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A Trump campaign rally in Las Vegas. President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have also appeared in the city recently. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Windows Onto a Revitalized Detroit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C8F-MT11-DXY4-X2X0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Allan Lengel

**Body**

The automaker paid $90 million for the ravaged Michigan Central Station in 2018, and will spend millions more to create a hub of businesses focused on transportation.

When he was growing up in Southwest Detroit, Cristian Rubio was never all that curious about the shuttered train station that loomed over his neighborhood. The building, a couple of miles west of downtown, was among the city's most visible symbols of urban decay and a go-to for photographers who wanted to capture its decline.

Mr. Rubio's interest intensified in high school, after he watched the 2009 music video ''Beautiful,'' which showed the hometown rapper Eminem walking through the ravaged Beaux-Arts building with its vaulted ceilings and tall columns, broken windows, rainbow graffiti and smashed fixtures.

Ever since, ''I wanted to go in whether it was abandoned or not,'' said Mr. Rubio, 29, the manager of a Mexican restaurant, who moved to Southwest Detroit from Jalisco, in west central Mexico, 20 years ago. ''Now we have a chance to do it.''

The Ford Motor Company bought Michigan Central Station in 2018 from the wealthy Moroun family for $90 million and has since spent hundreds of millions of dollars to restore it to its original beauty. Ford's plan is to create a hub of collaboration and innovation with its workers and independent startups and businesses involved in mobility and transportation issues. Additionally, it hopes to make the station a community gathering place with retail shops, a destination restaurant, an event space, a hotel and possibly Amtrak service nearby in the future.

On June 6, Mr. Rubio intends to be among the 15,000 people attending an outdoor concert, with Eminem and others appearing, to celebrate the official reopening.

The station, which was completed in 1913, saw more than 4,000 passengers daily at its peak in the 1940s. It closed in 1988, eventually becoming a magnet for scrappers, vandals, graffiti artists, urban explorers and the homeless.

William Ford, the executive chairman of Ford Motor Company, now runs the company his great-grandfather started in 1903. ''Our industry is about to change radically, and that change ought to be invented here,'' Mr. Ford said. ''It clicked for me that was the perfect purpose for Michigan Central Station.''

He added: ''We want Detroit to once again be a destination where the future is invented, and preserve its title as the Motor City for generations to come.''

In all, Ford will spend nearly $1 billion to create a 30-acre campus, ultimately with thousands of workers, with the station as the centerpiece -- along with other buildings the company owns, including Newlab, a former book depository next door that opened last year and currently houses 97 startups and about 600 workers.

The company hopes the station, in its vibrant urban setting, will lure top-notch talent at a perplexing time for the fiercely competitive auto industry, as it sorts out its future with autonomous, electric and hybrid vehicles. The company expects most of the campus to come online in three to five years, with the first tenants moving into the station in June and some Ford workers moving in this fall.

But amid the excitement about the renovation and opening, and the opportunities for businesses and investors, longtime residents like Mr. Rubio are concerned about how this will affect the surrounding neighborhoods.

''A lot of people are worried about gentrification,'' he said, particularly with property values, taxes and rents rising since Ford bought the station, and outsiders trying to buy properties. Some residents complain that they have been approached repeatedly by real estate agents and investors looking for houses to buy, prompting at least one, on nearby St. Anne Street, to post a ''Not for Sale'' sign on his property.

The station is in Corktown, an old but now trendy area, at the border of Mexicantown, a more ***working-class*** neighborhood that some refer to as Southwest.

Corktown was once home to Tiger Stadium and a number of Irish pubs. In recent years, it has become a spot for new restaurants and bars, while it holds onto traditions like the St. Patrick's Day parade and remains home to the Gaelic League of Detroit, an Irish-American social club. New, modern apartments have added to the housing stock of mostly older single-family homes and duplexes.

Mexicantown, just behind the station, maintains a strong Latino presence with ethnic restaurants, tortilla factories, taco and burrito food trucks, bakeries and murals, and the annual Cinco de Mayo parade. Over time, people of various ethnic and racial backgrounds have moved into the community, resulting in a more eclectic population.

Susana Villarreal-Garza, 63, a second-generation owner of Tamaleria Nuevo León, a tamale shop in the shadow of the station, echoes sentiments similar to those of Mr. Rubio, the restaurant manager.

''What I worry about is that people who live here, who have been here 30, 40, 50 years, they're not going to be able to afford that hike in taxes, and they're going to get pushed out,'' Ms. Villarreal-Garza said. After Ford bought the station, ''that first two weeks,'' she said, ''I was getting calls left and right from Realtors.'' They were all interested in listing her home.

She has also received calls from people in Florida and New Jersey interested in buying her restaurant. ''They came at least seven times in one week, knocking,'' she said. One offered $800,000.

''I said, 'No.' They said, 'What's your price?' I said, 'I don't have a price, I'm not for sale.'''

Real estate agents have told her they could get $300,000 for her home, which was worth about $35,000 a decade ago.

Robert Warfield, 75, who has lived in a townhouse near the station since 2005, sees it differently. He welcomes Ford's renovation and the resulting increase in property values. He said the deteriorating station depressed home values.

''It looked so decrepit, it was depressing,'' said Mr. Warfield, the chief operating officer of the Bing Youth Institute. ''It was like an elephant in the room: Sitting in the middle of the community was this monstrosity of nothing.''

Mr. Warfield doesn't expect a mass exodus of residents selling at escalated prices. ''These people are grounded in this community,'' he said. ''And I think they appreciate the fact that the value of the community is now being recognized.''

Richard Gonzalez, 53, a truck mechanic who grew up in Mexicantown and posted the ''Not for Sale'' sign, also welcomes the change, including the new residents who have moved in since Ford's announcement. ''I love it,'' he said. ''They're trying to take care of their property. That's what I like.''

Joshua Sirefman, the chief executive officer of Michigan Central, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ford, said the company is sensitive to the community's needs and is regularly engaged in dialogue and collaboration with residents and organizations: ''We're extremely aware of the needs, that our growth needs to fuel everybody's growth.''

As for Detroit's mayor, Mike Duggan, he acknowledged that change ''makes people anxious in general,'' but added: ''I would say most people would think the fact that their property values are rising is a good problem.''

He continued: ''Over the last decade, no area of the city has grown faster in property values than Southwest Detroit. The price of houses has tripled, and it's built a huge amount of wealth for the residents. That, to me, is your best protection of the neighborhood changing.''

Renters haven't been so fortunate, Mr. Duggan said, with some rents in the area rising sharply.

He said the city received a $30 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to build 550 affordable rental units in the area, and there are other projects with affordable units in the works.

Bob Roberts, the owner of McShane's Irish Pub and the president of the Corktown Business Association, said he has spoken to more than half a dozen customers who have moved out of Corktown in the past two years because of rising rents. And while he hails the train station renovation, he said his own rent jumped 30 percent this year. He worries it may keep going up.

Other developments have followed since Ford's announcement. A boutique hotel and higher-end apartment buildings have been built nearby. And in May, the city's pro soccer team, Detroit City FC, announced it was building a stadium in Corktown, where it would be moving from its current home in Hamtramck.

For Mr. Ford, the station is a proud accomplishment, and one likely to become part of his family legacy in Detroit.

''I remember coming to this station as a young man and thinking this was the grandest building I had ever seen. Over time, it became a symbol of Detroit's decline,'' he said. ''Every day, I would drive by the station and have a 'what if' discussion with myself and say, 'What if I could find a way to bring it back to life in a relevant way?'''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/03/realestate/ford-detroit-michigan-central-station.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/03/realestate/ford-detroit-michigan-central-station.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, the Michigan Central Station restoration in the Corktown neighborhood of Detroit included replacing or refurbishing 102,000 square feet of windows. Below, from left, are: Cristian Rubio, who grew up near the station

the outside of the station in 2010

the interior before renovations began. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JACOB LEWKOW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

RENA LAVERTY/EPA-EFE/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK)

Above top, a clock was restored, and the chandeliers on the main floor were recreated. Above left, from top, are new lights, reconstructed ceiling details and ornate fixtures at an old ticket counter. Above right, Susana Villarreal-Garza, top, a second-generation restaurant owner, and Bob Roberts, a pub owner, worry about the Corktown area's gentrification. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ABOVE AND BELOW, JACOB LEWKOW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 16, 2024

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[***A New West Side Story***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9Y-F5D1-DXY4-X01M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 23, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1592 words

**Byline:** By Mia Jackson

**Body**

The formidable arts institution has hired a design team to reconsider its relationship with its West Side neighborhood.

You probably know Lincoln Center from this view -- its distinctive Revson Fountain is a touchstone for many New Yorkers and the star of many memorable film and TV scenes. But you might not be familiar with the other side where there is a wall facing the Amsterdam Houses, a public housing complex, and the Phipps Houses, one of the last remnants of San Juan Hill.

San Juan Hill was a ***working-class*** neighborhood.

And a thriving arts hub. The pianist and composer James P. Johnson was inspired by transplants from Charleston, S.C., when he was playing at the Jungles, a happening spot inside a dance school. ''The Charleston'' was born.

''You had to get a special license to have a dance hall. But it was virtually impossible for African Americans to get a license to run a dance hall so they had a dance school and in it was the Jungles,'' said Julia Foulkes, a professor of history at the New School.

The jazz pianist Thelonious Monk grew up there and perfected the keys.

And ''Shuffle Along,'' the first play written, staged, and performed entirely by Black Americans, had its debut at the 63rd Street Music Hall there.

In the 1950s, the San Juan Hill arts hub disappeared.

It was dug out.

Paved over.

And replaced by the sprawling Lincoln Center.

''It's like the history got buried,'' said Leonette Joseph, 70, a lifelong resident of the community and retired special education teacher and creative arts therapist.

Last year, Lincoln Center announced that it would redesign the center's western edge, which faces the vestiges of San Juan Hill.

This spring, Lincoln Center unveiled the team picked for the revamp: Hood Design Studio as the landscape designer; Weiss/Manfredi as the design architect; and Moody Nolan, as the architect of record. The center of the redesign plan is Damrosch Park, a 2.4-acre park and outdoor performance space on the southwest corner of the Lincoln Center which opened in 1969. The design team will focus on practical aspects like shading and seating, as well as integrating the feedback from the over 3,400 New Yorkers who have already provided their input on how to enhance the institution's appeal to locals and visitors alike while honoring the artistic contributions of San Juan Hill.

''The history of jazz would be very different if it had not been for San Juan Hill. How to make places of performance that resonate with this musical tradition is something that we are really interested in,'' said Michael Manfredi, co-founder of Weiss/Manfredi studio.

''But the other thing that was erased was a sense of neighborhood. We want to make places that are intimate, not grand,'' he said. ''Intimate so that sense of neighborhood can start to spill from the west to the east.''

The design team needs to start by reimagining Lincoln Center as a full square. Currently, three sides of Lincoln Center welcome the public with the fountain, a landscaped plaza, picturesque views of performance spaces and seating for respite. On the fourth, the concrete wall that went up in the 1960s separates what was left from what came to be. From that direction, Lincoln Center's campus is largely inaccessible to foot traffic, including to residents of the Amsterdam Houses, the public housing complex across the street. The Phipps Houses, still standing, are now more conventional apartment buildings.

''There are three open sides. Then one that says don't come in,'' Ms. Joseph said.

The wall will likely come down, said Leah C. Johnson, executive vice president of communications at Lincoln Center and whose grandmother was born in San Juan Hill. ''We want to focus on how we can open up access along Amsterdam Avenue.''

The Real West Side Story

The general public is familiar with the image of the razed San Juan Hill, though they may not realize that's what they are looking at.

The 1961 film ''West Side Story'' begins with a flyover of its blocks of rubble -- 17,000 residents and 800 businesses were displaced. The Sharks and Jets break out in the elaborate, Jerome Robbins-choreographed dance number on the construction site.

Before the rise of Harlem, San Juan Hill was one of the largest Black neighborhoods in Manhattan.

In the late 19th century, Black Americans started moving into the community from Little Africa, present-day Greenwich Village, because of a rising Black unemployment rate, displacement as Italian Americans moved in and the widening of Sixth Avenue. Puerto Rican and Afro-Caribbean immigrants followed, all initially drawn to low rents and jobs at the ports off the Hudson River. The landscape of the neighborhood was largely warehouses and industrial lots stitched between rows of tenements and brownstones. The tenements tended to be racially homogenous. Tenement basement clubs sprouted and offered cheap alcohol and with a range of musical styles to entertain the influx of residents to the community.

Lincoln Arcade, located on the site of the Juilliard School and within steps of Lincoln Center, was a commercial and residential building near Lincoln Square built in 1903. Two of the residents included artists George Bellows and Robert Henri, members of the Ashcan School, an artistic movement that encouraged artists to depict the happenings of everyday residents in the city in their work, particularly immigrants and the poor.

Residentially, Henry Phipps Jr., a successful entrepreneur and real estate investor, donated $1 million to build model tenements to replace overcrowded apartment buildings. Phipps set out to prove that investing in low-income housing could benefit tenants and developers. The 63rd Street housing in the neighborhood, which began construction in 1906, was his second affordable housing project in the city, following his first on East 31st street.

Monk moved to the Phipps Houses on 63rd Street when he was 4 and stayed in the neighborhood for most of his life. ''Thelonious was one of the stars of the neighborhood long before I was born and long before he was famous,'' said T.S. Monk, 74, a former jazz drummer and the son of Thelonious Monk. ''He ran community centers, music programs, and played a lot of basketball in the community.''

Mr. Monk, who currently resides in West Orange, N.J., remembers his father's fondness for the community, its people, and its vibrancy. He also remembers the destruction of the community. ''When I was going to P.S. 191, we had book covers that they gave us and the book covers I remember being green and black. And [the book covers] were diagrams of this thing that was coming called Lincoln Center,'' Mr. Monk recalled. ''And that's when they started changing the neighborhood and started gentrifying the neighborhood and people started moving out and they started the demolition of the community.''

Mr. Monk summed it up with a common refrain: ''They called it urban renewal and we called it urban removal.''

'Restitution'

Through the redesign, there is a sort of reckoning.

''Anywhere you walk, you have a sense that you're walking some place where many people have lived and where many histories have happened and again where many of these histories are erased, but are always recoverable,'' said Elizabeth Alexander, the president of the Mellon Foundation and a board member of Lincoln Center. ''I'm excited that this project is doing a kind of restitution that is actually tied to and enhancing the mission of the organization.''

The initial mission, like that of other performing arts venues established after World War II, was to showcase American dominance in the arts. ''It is a combination of putting the city on a new pedestal in terms of world attention and that the performing arts become a really key way to display that,'' said Professor Foulkes of the New School.

But that mission should not have come at the expense of blocking out the next generation of local talent right at its doorsteps with the wall and an invisible line, leadership now says.

Over the past few years, the center has instituted a choose-what-you-pay program, diversified its performances, and hopes to further its outreach to local public schools. To celebrate the reopening of David Geffen Hall in 2022, the center commissioned a piece by the composer Etienne Charles entitled ''San Juan Hill: A New York Story,'' a multimedia work that included music and first-person accounts of individuals who once lived in San Juan Hill.

Also in 2022, the artist Nina Chanel Abney created a piece of figures, words, shapes and symbols on the north side of the campus that pays tribute to San Juan Hill and the musician Etienne Charles commissioned a mural along the wall on Amsterdam Avenue highlighting the history of San Juan Hill. In 2023 a comprehensive digital hub that encompasses interviews, archival photography and audio, interactive maps, and scholarly essays about the San Juan Hill community was launched.

''For Lincoln Center, like any great institution, the challenge is to reimagine, and to think about how you can expand and extend your service. For all the many successes of Lincoln Center over the decades, we certainly have a lot of work to do to broaden out the appeal of the work we do and to make more people feel welcome at Lincoln Center,'' said Henry Timms, the chief executive of Lincoln Center. ''We are very aware of the fact that we need to consistently think about how we engage with our history and honor it, and how we inherit it in interesting ways.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/18/realestate/lincoln-center-san-juan-hill.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/18/realestate/lincoln-center-san-juan-hill.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, the Revson Fountain in front of the Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center. Left, the Amsterdam Houses, left, and the back of Lincoln Center, right, seen from Amsterdam Avenue. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRAVELVIEW/SHUTTERSTOCK

KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE1)

From far left: the Amsterdam Houses, left, and the back of Lincoln Center, right

Amsterdam Avenue behind Lincoln Center, which has three open sides, but not on this street. One of the goals in redesigning part of the center is to open up access along Amsterdam Avenue. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Clockwise, from near right: 224 West 64th Street in San Juan Hill before Lincoln Center

in 1962, where San Juan Hill once stood, and where Lincoln Center would stand

an aerial view in 1969 of Lincoln Center, which was still under construction

''West Side Story'' (1961)

these buildings in the San Juan Hill neighborhood were torn down to build the institution. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VIA NYC MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LEE SIEVAN/MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

THA/SHUTTERSTOCK

CHARLES ROTKIN/CORBIS/VCG, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

Clockwise, from below left: a facilitator speaking to Amsterdam Houses + Addition residents at a planning process workshop at Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center last year

a planning process pop-up event held last year

in 2022, the artist Nina Chanel Abney created this piece made up of figures, words, shapes and symbols that pays tribute to San Juan Hill for David Geffen Hall

Etienne Charles's ''San Juan Hill: A New York Story'' being performed at Geffen Hall in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAWRENCE SUMULONG/LINCOLN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

NINA WESTERVELT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CAITLIN OCHS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE6) This article appeared in print on page RE1, RE6.

**Load-Date:** June 23, 2024

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[***Nevada’s Struggling Economy Could Hold a Key to 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B8S-WBK1-DXY4-X030-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1513 words

**Highlight:** Democrats say the state’s economy is getting better, while Republicans argue it’s getting worse. Which message resonates more could decide the pivotal battleground state this fall.

**Body**

Democrats say the state’s economy is getting better, while Republicans argue it’s getting worse. Which message resonates more could decide the pivotal battleground state this fall.

Nevada has the worst unemployment rate in the country, gas and grocery prices are still among the nation’s highest, and the cost of housing here has soared. President Biden’s policies are squarely to blame, Republicans argue, and former President Donald J. Trump will fix it if voters return him to the White House.

Nevada’s unemployment rate has been cut in half since Mr. Biden took office, gas prices have dropped by nearly $2 a gallon since mid-2022, and more than 200,000 jobs have already been created as the state is receiving $3.3 billion in infrastructure investments. Democrats here say that the economy is finally on the upswing after Mr. Trump and the coronavirus pandemic drove it into the ground, and that re-electing Mr. Biden is critical to keeping it that way.

Which of these disparate economic pictures resonates most strongly with voters could make a difference come November in the critical battleground state. Even though Nevada’s presidential nominating contests this week are largely anti-climactic — in part because Mr. Trump and his remaining Republican primary rival, Nikki Haley, are on separate ballots — Mr. Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Mr. Trump all recently made stops in Las Vegas, setting the stakes for the likely general election matchup.

The messaging war heating up mirrors a larger political fight playing out nationwide over which perception of the economy — the optimistic one pushed by Democrats or the dreary one described by Republicans — hits home for voters. Traditional metrics indicate that the economy is, indeed, strong, and Americans are spending like it is, [*according to a New York Times analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/20/upshot/economy-voters-poll.html), but consumer confidence remains low.

Republicans believe they have a particularly potent economic argument to make in Nevada, which relies heavily on tourism and hospitality, and was hit harder during the pandemic than most of the country [*and recovered more sluggishly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/business/economy/nevada-economy-primary-election.html).

“Certainly, Republicans will make hay about that: the cost of living, groceries, some of those issues,” said David Damore, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Democrats, he said, could make the case that they were improving the local economy through job growth and climate investments. But that argument is “a little more abstract than going to the grocery store and seeing your prices,” he added, so Democrats will most likely also try to focus voters on other issues, like abortion rights and prescription drug prices.

Republicans have not won Nevada in a presidential election since 2004. The state’s Democrats are famously well prepared, with the political operation of former Senator Harry Reid combining with the organizational heft of the Culinary Workers Union, in particular, to turn out Democratic voters and independents reliably. Still, recent statewide elections have been won by razor-thin margins, and Republicans flipped the governor’s mansion in 2022. Last fall, [*a poll conducted by The New York Times and Siena College*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) found Mr. Biden trailing Mr. Trump by 10 percentage points in Nevada.

In the Las Vegas metro area, where the population has swelled by more than 300,000 in the past decade, according to population estimates, and housing prices have climbed 6 percent in [*just the past year*](https://www.lasvegasrealtor.com/housing-market-statistics), people are feeling particularly squeezed.

“What made Vegas attractive for ***working-class*** people was you could come here, work in construction, work on the Strip, make white-collar wages doing blue-collar jobs. And that’s because the cost of living here was much less expensive than, say, Southern California,” Mr. Damore said. “Well, that’s evaporated.”

Republican groups here are hammering Mr. Biden. They argue that his signature pieces of legislation, including the [*$1.9 trillion pandemic aid package*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/10/us/politics/whats-in-covid-bill.html) and the [*$740 billion clean energy, tax and health care law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/business/biden-climate-tax-inflation-reduction.html), are to blame for the higher prices — something [*experts say is part of the picture but not the full story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/27/business/economy/what-causes-inflation.html). (As president, Mr. Trump signed a [*$900 billion Covid relief bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/27/us/politics/trump-signs-a-pandemic-relief-bill.html).)

Americans for Prosperity, a conservative advocacy group whose super PAC is backing Ms. Haley, has held a series of events in the state as part of a national campaign called “[*The True Cost of Washington*](https://americansforprosperity.org/afp-launches-true-cost-of-washington-campaign/),” aimed at highlighting inflation and rising costs. The group has [*partnered with gas stations*](https://time.com/6202898/charles-koch-nevada-gas-prices-midterms/) in Nevada to offer drivers gas at just over $2 per gallon — its price when Mr. Biden took office — to drive home how much more expensive things are now. (Americans for Prosperity pays the difference.)

It has held similar events at grocery stores, offering gift cards to make up the difference in food prices.

“The issues real Nevadans care about economically are not being addressed, and I think that’s caused a lack of enthusiasm for voting or believing Joe Biden can get us out of this economic crisis,” said Ronnie Najarro, the Nevada state director for Americans for Prosperity.

How voters perceive life in Nevada may ultimately fall somewhere in between the pictures painted by the opposing political parties. The state’s governor, Joe Lombardo, a Republican who has endorsed Mr. Trump, tried to thread the needle, suggesting that he was responsible for the state’s positive numbers while blaming Mr. Biden for the bad ones.

“Governor Lombardo’s policies have positioned Nevada to lead the nation in annual job growth and new economic development,” Elizabeth Ray, a spokeswoman for Mr. Lombardo, said in a statement. “Despite the generation of $5 billion in new private sector economic investment and the creation of thousands of new jobs, Nevadans still suffer from high gas, grocery and energy prices due to Joe Biden’s failed national policies.”

Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said Democrats’ economic arguments amounted to “gaslighting.”

“Americans are sick and tired of the last four years of destructive policies that have brought nothing but pain and misery,” he said in a statement.

Democrats, meanwhile, have stressed signs of improvement. Nationally, [*inflation continued to slow late last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/business/inflation-cpi-report.html), price increases have [*tailed off*](https://cber.unlv.edu/) in Nevada, and the state leads the nation in job growth. Apartment rental prices in Las Vegas have [*dipped after a decade of increases*](https://www.costar.com/article/261891871/las-vegas-apartment-rents-suffer-further-declines-in-third-quarter). Mr. Biden’s campaign has argued that the president inherited a struggling Covid-era economy from Mr. Trump and has slowly but surely turned it around. The campaign says local jobs created by infrastructure and green energy projects, and the 7,000 Nevadans who had their student debt canceled, are proof that Mr. Biden is tangibly helping the state.

The president’s campaign also noted that [*a majority of the state’s voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/times-siena-nevada.html) agree with Mr. Biden’s priorities on abortion. The issue of abortion access [*could be on the Nevada ballot*](https://apnews.com/article/nevada-abortion-access-ballot-471e9036864c030cc5296e7c78da8dad) alongside Mr. Biden this November.

Shelby Wiltz, the president’s Nevada campaign manager, said in a statement that Mr. Trump “left the heart of our economy reeling with sky-high unemployment,” while Mr. Biden “immediately got to work creating tens of thousands of good-paying Nevada jobs” and lowered prescription drug prices.

“We’re happy to contrast those records any day of the week,” she added.

Compared with what it was during the pandemic, “the economy’s back now, and it’s back in a big way,” said Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of the state’s Culinary Workers Union, which [*met with Mr. Biden on Monday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/05/us/politics/biden-union-workers-nevada-primary.html). The union represents 60,000 casino and food service workers and is part of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., which has endorsed Mr. Biden.

Mr. Pappageorge acknowledged that high prices continued to bedevil residents, especially in Las Vegas. But he said voters should lay the blame at the feet of corporate entities like oil companies and Wall Street landlords, not the president.

“It’s all about price gouging and these massive companies taking advantage,” he said.

Mr. Pappageorge and other state Democrats argued that economic indicators, even if they pointed downward, would not push voters away from the Democratic Party, because Democrats have “produced” for ***working-class*** and union voters.

Still, many voters headed to the polls in Tuesday’s primary election said the state’s economy was a concern. Fred Parvin, a 73-year-old Democrat, voted for Mr. Biden in the primary, but he said he was struggling to pay his steeper utility bills and has started growing vegetables in his yard to save on groceries.

“I don’t have tons of money for retirement,” Mr. Parvin said.

Frank Li, a 65-year-old Trump supporter, said he had also faced rising utility bills. He added that he had seen more people who appeared to be living on the street — which aligns with an apparent [*uptick in an annual homelessness count*](https://nevadahomelessalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Help-Hope-Home-2023-PIT-Results.pdf).

Mr. Trump, he said, “could possibly get it turned around.”

PHOTO: A Trump campaign rally in Las Vegas. President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have also appeared in the city recently. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JORDAN GALE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** February 8, 2024

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[***Literary Destinations / Read Your Way Through Lima***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-601G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:** By Augusto Higa Oshiro and translated by Jennifer Shyue

**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 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,'' 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.

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.''

Which stories provide a glimpse into modern Lima's complexity?

The rural Indigenista wave 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 (1936--) is a standout. I will limit myself to discussing his novel ''Conversation in the Cathedral,'' 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'' -- 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,'' 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,'' 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 were our daily bread.

Finally, we have Daniel Alarcón (1977--), whose books ''Lost City Radio'' and ''War by Candlelight'' 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 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

''Peruvian Traditions,'' Ricardo Palma, translated by Helen Lane

''Human Poems,'' César Vallejo, translated by Clayton Eshleman

''Conversation in the Cathedral,'' Mario Vargas Llosa, translated by Gregory Rabassa

''The Word of the Speechless,'' Julio Ramón Ribeyro, translated by Katherine Silver

''A World for Julius,'' Alfredo Bryce Echenique, translated by Dick Gerdes

''Red April,'' Santiago Roncagliolo, translated by Edith Grossman

''Lost City Radio'' and ''War by Candlelight,'' Daniel Alarcón

Augusto Higa Oshiro's ''The Enlightenment of Katzuo Nakamatsu,'' published in May 2023 by Archipelago Books, was translated by Jennifer Shyue. He died in Lima in April 2023.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/books/books-lima-peru.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/books/books-lima-peru.html)

**Graphic**

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.

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[***The 15th Doctor Will See You Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C87-5171-JBG3-600B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1534 words

**Byline:** Roslyn Sulcas

**Highlight:** In his first season leading “Doctor Who,” Ncuti Gatwa has brought charisma, emotion and even more camp to the long-running sci-fi show.

**Body**

“Give-ING! That dress is giving!” said Ncuti Gatwa with a burst of unbridled laughter. [*The newest Doctor Who*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7) had been shooting the same scene for several hours in Cardiff, Wales, where hangar-like spaces were teeming with crew and filled with sets and equipment for the show. (Yes, Whovians, the TARDIS was parked nearby.) Now, at the director’s request, the new Doctor was improvising.

Gatwa (whose first name is pronounced “Shoo-ti”) laughs a lot, often at himself. “Why do I keep moving this footstool?” he asked a few minutes later as he tried to get into position for yet another take. “Because the art department isn’t here to do it for you,” teased Varada Sethu, who [*joins the Doctor and his current companion Ruby Sunday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7) (Millie Gibson) for some adventures in Gatwa’s second season. “I have to do everything myself!” cried Gatwa in a mock-tragic tone, before another eruption of mirth.

Born in Rwanda and raised in Scotland, Gatwa, 31, made his name playing the effervescent Eric in Netflix’s “[*Sex Education*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7).” But the lead role in “Doctor Who,” a British institution about a time-traveling alien and his human companion that has been a BBC stalwart for 60 years, has taken him to another level of fame.

(Conveniently, the doctor periodically dies and is regenerated in a different physical form; Gatwa is the 15th Doctor, following [*Matt Smith, David Tennant and Jodie Whittaker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7).)

The show — which first ran between 1963 and 1989 — was revived in 2005 and today has an exceptionally [*diverse, intergenerational fan base*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7). But the current season, which ends on June 21, has ushered in a new era for the show, with Disney+ now a co-producer alongside the BBC and Gatwa the show’s first Black lead actor, with a distinctly fabulous vibe.

The pressures and expectations surrounding these firsts aren’t lost on Gatwa, who grew up in a ***working class*** home in Dunfermline, Scotland. “‘Doctor Who,’” he said, “is something I remember as almost over our heads, something we knew was important culturally, like the royals.” His audition “was lovely, but I didn’t think I was going to get it,” he said. “British casting has taken a long time to diversify — why would it be now, and why me?”

The anxiety he felt about “getting it right, living up to the amazing people who have done this role,” lasted through filming the first season, Gatwa said. “Gradually, it became clear to me that there isn’t a mold you need to step into to portray the Doctor,” he said. “It can come out of you naturally.”

Russell T Davies, who is back as the “Doctor Who” showrunner after masterminding the 2005 reboot, said that although the increased production budget had allowed for more special effects, “it’s still me sitting with a script, making good dialogue for actors,” he said.

In the past, he added, the Doctor “has been marvelously inexpressive and enigmatic and alien, and great actors have done that very well.” But in 2024, “I want a young audience watching, and they talk about their emotions, express their emotions in a healthy way.” Then, “along came Ncuti, who is one of those actors who pour with feeling,” Davies said. “When he is sad, tears pour from his eyes; when he is happy, that smile lights up the universe.”

Viewers who have watched Gatwa’s Doctor battle the Maestro [*(Jinkx Monsoon)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7), perform a song and dance number, stand on a land mine for an entire episode and suit up in Regency attire for a “Bridgerton”-themed episode, are likely to agree. He “truly feels like a Doctor Who for the 21st century,” wrote [*Maya Phillips in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7) The New York Times. He is “stylish and liberated,” she added, “with a vibe that is sensual and unbuttoned; he’s a Doctor who seems much more at home than the others in his body.”

The companion’s role is usually “to have the human qualities the doctor lacks,” Gibson said, but the relationship between this Doctor and the companion she plays feels different. “Ruby’s youth allows him to let out his inner child,” she said. “You see that Ruby and the Doctor really care for one another; the way they communicate and laugh is very loving.” Gatwa “is a force of nature, just magic,” she added. “He has this aura about him that everything can feed off.”

On a busy day in April, Gatwa, dressed in a flower-embossed red shirt, was demonstrating Gibson’s force-of-nature theory in an interview, gesticulating, laughing uproariously and attempting to eat avocado toast while talking about his past and his career. Even an interruption by an assistant bearing forgotten contact lenses was greeted with incommensurate joy: “Yay! Oh, my God, yessss! Hallelujah, aahhhh, great!”

“You need glasses,” she told him. “I know, but I’m so vain,” he said plaintively. More laughter.

Born in Kigali, Rwanda’s capital, Gatwa was 2 when his parents — a journalist and a bank manager — moved to Scotland with their three children to escape the 1994 [*Rwandan genocide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7). Largely raised by his mother, he took drama in high school and had an aha moment playing Commander Khashoggi in his school production of “We Will Rock You.”

He roared with laughter. “I must have been SOOOO bad! But at that point, I was like, thisssss is what I want to do.”

Gatwa said that his family “were one of three Black families we knew in, like, all of Scotland, which I both noticed and didn’t notice.” But he didn’t doubt, he said, that there would be a path for him in the theater: “I always saw a Black actor working.”

He spent three years at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (“I LOVED LOVED LOVED it”), and then a post-graduation year with the Dundee Repertory Theater (“Greek drama to Agatha Christie”). [*Jobs followed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7) playing Mercutio in “Romeo and Juliet” at the Home theater in Manchester, England, (“where I saw a ghost — I swear”), and then roles in “Shakespeare in Love” in the West End and in Emma Rice’s “[*946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7).”

Gatwa “is obviously one of the most beautiful, charismatic people you will ever meet,” Rice said in a video conversation. “But he also has phenomenal emotional depth he brought to every rehearsal and every performance, an incredible work ethic and an amazing ability to talk to the audience.”

After “946,” Gatwa was suddenly out of work and broke, temping at Harrods, a department store, to make ends meet. He was in his eighth month of sleeping at his best friend’s apartment when he got the part of Captain Jack Absolute in a production of Richard B. Sheridan’s “The Rivals.” Then came the call to audition for “Sex Education.”

When he got the job, he said, his primary thought was that he could pay his overdue bills. He had hardly done any screen work before, but discovered that the show, with its ensemble cast, didn’t feel too different from a theater group.

“I had never really met someone like him before, so full of life and experience and so buoyant,” said Emma Mackey, one of his co-stars. “He took up that space offered and grew into it; we were an alliance, but Ncuti really led us in that frame of mind.”

Ben Taylor, the lead director for Season 1, said that at the first table read, “there was a sigh of relief and also confidence around the table, because Ncuti knew the show possibly before the show knew itself.”

Gatwa said that playing Eric, a lovable gay teenager from a religious British-Nigerian family, over four seasons taught him to be braver. “Eric was so dedicated to his authenticity, living his truth. That has permeated into my life,” he said.

After “Sex Education” ended, Gatwa played supporting roles in “[*Masters of the Air*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7)” and “[*Barbie*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7),” and one day texted his agent, saying he would “love to play Willy Wonka or Doctor Who.” She replied that the “Doctor Who” casting director, Andy Pryor, had just asked him to audition.

“It sounds like a showbiz story, but the last person we saw was Ncuti — and bang!” Davies said. “I knew then and there that was the man.”

Gatwa said that he and Davies didn’t have many discussions about his portrayal of the Doctor. “This is a character that is constantly born again, with fresh eyes,” he said. “There is an element of innocence within the Doctor. For me, that’s where his curiosity comes from, the confidence to explore the unknown in the way kids do.”

Asked whether he consciously incorporated more L.G.B.T.Q. elements into Gatwa’s first season, Davies pointed out that he has been [*putting gay characters onscreen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/08/arts/television/ncuti-gatwa-doctor-who.html?searchResultPosition=7) for around 30 years. “We never had a sexuality meeting,” he said with a laugh. “And the Doctor is an alien, of course — he’s not Ncuti Gatwa, and I think human labels barely apply to him. He loves Ruby with all his heart. He doesn’t care what gender people are.”

Gatwa had another take. “I feel like ‘Doctor Who’ has always been a bit camp,” he said. “I mean, it’s a time-traveling alien in a British police box!”

PHOTOS: Ncuti Gatwa, above, stars in “Doctor Who,” now on Disney+. Gatwa, at left in the show, is the 15th Doctor and the first Black actor in that role. “I didn’t think I was going to get it,” he said. “British casting has taken a long time to diversify. Why would it be now, and why me?” Gatwa made his name in “Sex Education,” below with Asa Butterfield. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEMKA AJOKU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; BAD WOLF/BBC STUDIOS; JON HALL/NETFLIX) This article appeared in print on page AR12.

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[***What’s Happening in Louisville Could Solve a Housing Crisis; Tressie McMillan Cottom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CN9-MPT1-JBG3-60S0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3278 words

**Byline:** Tressie McMillan Cottom

**Highlight:** An organizing effort could set a template for helping the nation’s poorest and marginalized Americans find stability.

**Body**

On an unseasonably warm day in late April in Louisville, Ky., the drone of low-flying helicopters overtook the usual sounds of spring as the wealthy descended on the Kentucky Derby. Less than five miles away in a historically Black neighborhood, Donna Goldsmith, 62, addressed a room of 15 people gathered around a scarred folding table. They are part of Louisville’s burgeoning tenants union, which mobilizes the residents of low-income apartment complexes, rural trailer parks and gentrifying neighborhoods to challenge the corporate landlords that they say have devastated affordable housing. This meeting, like most of their gatherings, started with testimonials.

Goldsmith initially organized her senior-living community to demand better maintenance, and now attends rallies across the city to encourage others to see themselves as leaders. Her most successful organizing strategy: “I cuss out landlords.” She had one message for this room of people mostly young enough to be her grandchildren. “I want to win before I die so that you all know that you can win,” she declared.

Midsize cities like Louisville contain many of the fault lines that created America’s housing crisis: gentrification, federal development schemes and [*redlining*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html). But Louisville also has a distinctly Southern history of racist segregation, predatory investors and political divides that has made it difficult to produce the high-quality affordable housing its residents desperately need. If this country’s affordable housing crisis can be solved here, it could establish a template for helping the nation’s poor and marginalized find stability.

Josh Poe, 47, and Jessica Bellamy, 36, founded the Louisville Tenants Union in 2022 because they believe that organizing is the answer to the nation’s housing woes. “Tenant organizing,” Poe told me with pastoral conviction, “will be to the 21st century what labor organizing was to the 20th century.”

In a labor union, workers collectively bargain with management for better pay and benefits. A tenants union typically organizes renters to bargain with private and corporate landlords for ownership, fair rent and better living conditions. Renters have been organizing for decades, but the city’s divisions across race, class and geography mean that the Louisville Tenants Union has its work cut out for it.

Poe and Bellamy’s partnership embodies the South’s many contradictions. Poe is a self-described hillbilly from Eastern Kentucky who said he “started out as a child laborer organizing in tobacco fields.” Bellamy is a Black woman who grew up in Smoketown, the only remaining post-Civil War Black settlement in Louisville, and left home for college and a job in a neurodevelopmental science lab. While Poe casually speaks the shorthand for academic concepts like feudalism, neoliberalism and racial capitalism, Bellamy, a strategic organizer, seems to know the names of almost every longtime resident in the neighborhood. Watching their dance, you get a sense that if anyone can build a multiracial union in and around Donald Trump country, it will be these two.

Still, starting a new kind of union in a polarized America is bold. For their part, Poe and Bellamy are optimistic that their tenants union will bring people together to agitate for their common interests in a way a labor union could not. As Poe said, “Everyone doesn’t have a job, but everyone needs a house.”

I spent several days in April with the union’s members as they knocked on doors and navigated Southern resistance to class solidarity. I also attended meetings in which people from different walks of life shared their painful experiences of eviction, landlord abuse and isolation. Their testimonies spoke as much to the tenants’ need for community and connection as it did to the housing crisis.

Building a room where young and old, across all races and genders share their traumas and their hopes is an important part of how the Louisville Tenants Union aims to do the near impossible: organize the South to bring affordable housing to all.

Kentucky is a state fond of expensive hobbies like racehorses and bourbon and embarrassed by the crushing white poverty in the coal-mining Appalachian Mountains in its east. That dichotomy of riches and race was tangible as I recently drove across the state. In Louisville, that contrast is neighborhood by neighborhood.

Louisville looks like dozens of midsize cities that have been considered the [*jewels of urban revival*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html). Nondescript small metropolitan areas invest heavily in “place making” to target neighborhoods for redevelopment. The formula: Attract companies in high-paying industries with tax breaks, cheap labor and a branded, downtown-like area. Louisville’s version is NuLu, a busy strip of trendy retail and pricey apartments. Sidewalk seating. Cafes. And a lot of fit young people who look whiter and wealthier than the city’s median demographics.

I met Poe and Bellamy in Smoketown, one of Louisville’s historically Black areas whose residents would either have to find a way to move up as the area is redeveloped or be moved out for urban revival. There are soul food restaurants and church billboards with their upcoming programs listed in English and Spanish. Blue-collar workers of all races congregate at a gas station that sells hot lunches.

There is also the blight that is the structural mark of any city’s racial history. Waves of white flight, gentrification and dislocation in the housing stock and retail businesses are visible, block by block. Half-vacant strip malls abut houses whose residents haven’t had the money for maintenance.

Communities like Smoketown are culturally rich. You see it in the children playing as residents laugh on front stoops. They are also resource-deprived. You see that in the broken sidewalks and condemned houses.

Kentucky’s conservative politicians and Democratic boosters agree on one thing. Both want more NuLus and fewer culturally rich but resource-poor neighborhoods. To get there, the state is following the formula that helped create the nation’s affordable housing crisis. Louisville rents have increased [*more than 30 percent since 2019*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html). A recent study by the Kentucky Housing Corporation [*found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html) that the city, which has 625,000 people, needs about [*40,000 new units*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html) to meet demand and the need is greatest for residents who earn less than the area’s median wage.

Smoketown is a five-minute drive to downtown and its high-paying jobs. The arterial streets are wide, walkable and nestled in pockets of green space. The neighborhood has mostly single-family homes, grand two-story structures of brick and stone mixed with Craftsman bungalows. It is clear why investors are hungry to redevelop here. It isn’t hard to imagine how a few coffee shops and a “good” elementary school could turn this into a hot neighborhood for transplants fleeing big cities.

During a walking tour of the neighborhood, Bellamy paused in front of a large, abandoned two-story house.

“I grew up in this house. I always wanted to be able to come back and live in it,” she said. It was the kind of multigenerational home that built Black communities in Jim Crow America. Bellamy lived here with her grandmother, mother, brother and three aunts; her grandmother handed it over to her in 2018. The house sits near a squat brick building where her grandmother opened a cafe.

The cafe is still in business but the family home is in disrepair. First, taxes went up. Then, construction costs went up. Bellamy realized that she could not afford to renovate the house. She went to work tackling the problem not just for herself but for the neighborhood.

We walked to the tenants union’s office, where Bellamy talked through investors’ takeover of Smoketown, which she says started in 2012. This was a lecture she gives at church halls and community centers. Her message is that the government uses people’s tax dollars against their interests. She used plain language to outline a complex web of capital and policy that leaves low-income owners at the mercy of aggressive code violation enforcement and real estate investors. Across the city, low-income renters and homeowners can’t afford to stay, can’t afford to leave and have nowhere to go.

A whiteboard sat in front of a table where Bellamy had assembled over 50 personal family photos taken in Smoketown. She connected every data point she mentioned to a photo and told its story. “We didn’t just lose housing,” she said in a soft but powerful voice. “We lost our community center.”

New investors aren’t keen to build social spaces and new neighbors don’t always mix well with existing neighbors. “When my grandmother started her restaurant,” Bellamy said, “what she really wanted to do was lift up the Black contribution to the Kentucky Derby, to all of Louisville.” This is the story Bellamy tells to help her neighbors understand that their private struggles to keep their homes is not their fault. It’s a consequence of political decisions. And it isn’t just about one family, one household.

When a community like Smoketown loses affordable housing, it also loses social cohesion and political power. Bellamy’s voice started to crescendo: “Public money is putting us out of our homes. That’s our money.” The small group of faithful volunteers nodded in agreement.

Whereas Bellamy blends into Smoketown, Poe stands out. He is spry, in constant motion, a habit born of physical labor.

“My whole life has really been, in a lot of ways, trying to escape manual labor,” Poe told me as we sat in the lobby of a NuLu boutique hotel. The midcentury-modern décor in saturated earth tones was a long way from his sharecropping roots. Poe grew up going to school only half the year; the other half he picked tobacco with his grandfather.

“I did not even realize I had been a child laborer,” he said, “until I learned about Black and Mexican child laborers in college.”

He was the first in his family to graduate from college, which taught him why his family worked hard for generations but had little to show for it. The coal and tobacco industries developed a system of labor across Appalachia that cleaved Kentucky’s ***working class*** into two camps: manual labor and the mobile middle class. Profits, Poe says, don’t stay in Appalachia, which remains one of the poorest regions in the nation. He came to understand that his fight was one to convince poor white people that their fates are linked with Black people’s.

“Poor white people are hard to organize; I think they’re the most psychologically screwed-up people in the history of the world,” he said. The history of labor unions in the South is steeped in racism and sexism. Pitting Black, white and immigrant workers against one another helps to lower labor costs. Those racial divisions make it harder to build labor unions in the areas where workers would benefit the most.

Organizing around housing has the same problem. Racist housing policies helped create our housing crisis. White communities can command higher rents and sale prices than nonwhite communities. The poorest Americans are more likely to be minority and female. Corporate landlords, in particular, target these communities for high-cost, low-quality housing because those renters have few choices. As a result, tenants unions cannot afford to be race-neutral.

Poe describes the Louisville Tenants Union’s primary strategy for organizing across the color line as “I have to keep white liberals from disorganizing us.” Sometimes well-meaning white volunteers assume that they should be in charge. “They need to learn to listen to older Black women,” he said. These women are the life force of their organization, he added: “They lived through the civil rights movement and know how to organize.”

While he is careful to monitor white liberals, he does not shy away from targeting white tenants. “I’ll organize a white guy — or a Black guy; there are a lot of them — that love Trump,” Poe said. “That love says their gut knows something is wrong.” White tenants have the right instincts but the wrong analysis. Analysis, Poe says, is a luxury that people with urgent financial needs don’t enjoy. He may not turn them into critical theorists. He may not even keep them on as members of the tenants union (“too distracting”).

But, if organizers can assure the guy in the trailer park that his economic fears are real, “if the K.K.K. comes and knocks on his door, he is inoculated.” It is exposure therapy. “Everything a white guy in the trailer park knows about Black people comes from the news,” he said. That white guy thinks that renters of urban apartments, which are “coded for Black,” live in a different world.

When a trailer park guy organizes a majority-Black apartment block in the city, he discovers how much they have in common. Most of the tenants union members I spoke with describe their “actions” — meetings and canvassing — as social events. Lonely after Covid-19 ravaged their families, isolated because they are struggling financially, and in many cases battling health issues — tenants who organize are doing something together. Young white men, in particular, are vulnerable to white nationalist recruitment when they are lonely.

Does the tenants union actually see the K.K.K. in the trailer park?

“They have fliers too,” Poe said. “They’re actually the only other people organizing.”

I joined the Louisville Tenants Union for canvassing in a public apartment complex. Despite the heat, 13 people showed up to knock on strangers’ doors.

Most of the residents in the complex are Black women, many with children. Almost half of the volunteers are white. We met young mothers and senior citizens who had unmet maintenance requests. They wanted unsafe conditions in the children’s play area addressed. A young mother worried that the month’s worth of food she had stored in her broken refrigerator might spoil.

Tenants union leaders are very clear that they do not solve maintenance problems. They do invite the residents to a meeting to learn how they can collectively bargain with their landlords. Transportation, food and child care are provided. No promises are made but one: “You will learn how powerful you are.”

Beyond knocking on doors, inspiring downtrodden mothers and convincing angry senior citizens like Goldsmith to cast their fortunes with white trailer park owners, what is this tenants union’s goal? Bellamy, the Louisville Tenants Union’s strategist and storyteller, outlined their plan.

First, the organization will organize a racially diverse coalition in the South, where, she said, labor unions “abandoned us.” Next, it has to organize that coalition around the idea that “this country is one big real estate company.” Above all, tenants unions believe that corporate landlords are the problem; their members often say that housing is not an investment but a right.

Rights require political power. The Louisville Tenants Union runs candidates for City Council and pressures local politicians to support tenants’ rights. Its strongest political strategy at the moment is pushing for [*local ordinances*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html) that give community members the authority to assess new housing developments that use city resources to determine whether they would displace residents or reduce a neighborhood’s affordability.

After it does all that across the state, it just has to join tenants unions in other states to, Poe explained, “hold a national rent strike, crash the system and dictate our demands and build the country that we want on top of that.”

Tara Raghuveer laughed when I told her this summary. She is the leader of a tenants union in Kansas City, Mo. Louisville’s union is part of the same national network as hers. Their network is pursuing a strategy to pressure the federal government and the private and corporate landlords who control publicly financed housing.

Raghuveer knows that crashing systems and building a new country sound utopian. But if a national movement for fair housing is going to be built, Raghuveer said, Louisville will be at the center of building it. The challenges are immense. There is no federal recognition of tenants unions as there is for labor unions. There isn’t yet a good method for collecting dues or even creating a membership roll. A national network of tenants unions needs political recognition and processes.

On a more practical level, most people don’t have a clear idea of what a tenants union is or why they should join one. They also have to identify what a privately owned apartment building in Birmingham, Ala., has in common with a public housing block in Stamford, Conn. Some cities are more renter-friendly than others. Others, like those in North Carolina, are notoriously pro-landlord.

Tenants unions also have to convince their own membership that a national strategy is worth their limited local resources. Why should a single mother being evicted in St. Louis support an elderly man struggling to pay rent for his mobile home near Bozeman, Mont.?

If they manage to overcome these obstacles, tenants unions could recalibrate the balance of power in the housing market. “We’re serious about contesting all that we’re up against,” Raghuveer assured me.

They will also need a lot of homeowners. Years of banks and governments selling Americans on homeownership has made owning a home a financial and civic achievement. Homeownership means respectability for people who don’t have many other ways to achieve it. But homeowners aren’t immune [*from fast-rising housing costs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html). At Louisville Tenants Union meetings, homeowners are called “bank tenants.” If you have a mortgage, then you still have a landlord. That can be a hard pill for Black homeowners to swallow until “they realize their housing costs are going up but their income isn’t,” Bellamy said.

Raghuveer believes that Louisville will refine the tenants unions’ pitch for the South. By facing racial tensions, economic anxiety and distrust pragmatically, organizers are proving that people don’t have to love one another to win together. Raghuveer says there is no other choice. She believes this nation’s housing crisis is at a tipping point. “Once places like Louisville get too expensive, where does everybody go next?” Raghuveer asked. I don’t have an answer.

What I did have was a sit-down soul food lunch with four Louisville Tenants Union elders, two newcomers and three staff members in the final hours of my trip. The food was from Bellamy’s family cafe. The conversation was ribald and vulnerable. It struck me that what the members of the union have found here is a tonic to the loneliness of everything — the pandemic, the hustle economy and political disillusionment. They took turns sharing stories of police brutality, gun violence, depression and illness. For each of the people in that room, housing insecurity had been just one crisis too many. Their stories made me feel helpless. I muttered this to no one in particular.

Bellamy leaned over and said: “No, this is power. This union is an invitation to your power.”

Tressie McMillan Cottom (@[*tressiemcphd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html)) became a New York Times Opinion columnist in 2022. She is an associate professor at the school of information and library science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the author of “Thick: And Other Essays” and was a 2020 MacArthur fellow.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.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/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html).

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html), [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html), [*WhatsApp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html), [*X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html) and [*Threads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/17/realestate/what-is-redlining.html).

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MORGAN HORNSBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR12.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Branded as 'Hidden Tax,' Plan Would Increase New York City Water Bills***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY8-0S51-DXY4-X08H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 4, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1131 words

**Byline:** By Dana Rubinstein

**Body**

Mayor Eric Adams is resurrecting a budget gimmick and charging rent to the city's Water Board, which will pass on the costs to ratepayers.

It is a problem bedeviling local governments nationwide: How can they pay for city services at a time of limited funds and rising costs?

In New York City, Mayor Eric Adams has found an answer: resurrect a funding mechanism that has been called a hidden tax on New Yorkers.

The city plans to charge its own Water Board more than $1.4 billion in rent over four years to lease its water and sewer systems from the city, according to budget documents reviewed by Rahul Jain, a New York State deputy comptroller.

The city's Department of Environmental Protection, in turn, is now proposing that the Water Board raise its rates for homeowners and landlords by 8.5 percent in July, according to a proposal released Friday by the board.

The proposed rate increase -- which, if approved, would be double last year's rate hike and the highest in 14 years -- would only pay for a portion of the rent charges. Some of the rest are likely to come from funds that typically finance capital upgrades to the water and sewer system, potentially leaving the city more vulnerable to critical breakdowns.

The funding gimmick had been used by New York City for decades, but was discarded in 2017 (only to make a temporary, partial reappearance during Covid before it disappeared again). The mayor at the time, Bill de Blasio, said the city was ''righting a wrong'' -- which would suggest that Mr. Adams is now attempting to wrong a right.

''It's all legal, but legal doesn't make it right,'' said James Gennaro, the city councilman who leads the Committee on Environmental Protection. He described it as a ''hidden tax'' -- a way to extract money from New Yorkers without raising property or sales taxes.

Indeed, Mr. Adams continues to boast that his budget for this year contains no tax increases, even though pandemic aid has evaporated and costs continue to mount because of the arrival of thousands of migrants to New York City.

''We have not increased our taxes, in spite of what we have gone through,'' the mayor said on Tuesday.

Liz Garcia, a spokeswoman for the mayor, defended the plan on Thursday, saying the city ''continues to lead the nation in keeping water rates low, with New Yorkers paying less than the average American living in a large city for exceptional water quality and delivery.'' She insisted that New Yorkers would not notice the Water Board's likely reduction in financing long-term repairs.

''We are investing billions of dollars in large-scale capital improvements over the next decade to enhance our water and sewage systems and make drainage upgrades, all while making sure that ***working-class*** New Yorkers -- particularly low-income and senior residents -- pay affordable rates,'' she said. ''We will continue our commitment to delivering low costs for high-quality water to New Yorkers while making critical upgrades to our city's infrastructure.''

Experts noted that water payments are a regressive tax, in that they are assessed on homeowners regardless of income, while renters see the payments passed down to them in the form of rent hikes.

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''We still have an astronomical amount of needs,'' Mr. Richards said. ''We don't sleep in this office when we know there's going to be a torrential rain.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/nyregion/water-bills-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/nyregion/water-bills-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why the Belmont Stakes Will Be at Saratoga on Saturday; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C69-DD91-JBG3-615N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 6, 2024 Thursday 05:03 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1470 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:** The famous racetrack in Nassau County is being demolished, and a new structure will take its place.

**Body**

The famous racetrack in Nassau County is being demolished, and a new structure will take its place.

Good morning. It’s Thursday. Today we’ll find out why the Belmont Stakes, the third leg of racing’s Triple Crown, won’t be run at Belmont Park on Saturday. We’ll also get details on Gov. Kathy Hochul’s unexpected 11th-hour decision to halt congestion pricing.

Belmont Park is a demolition site.

That’s why the Belmont Stakes will not take place there on Saturday. The race was moved to Saratoga, while Belmont gets a $455 million makeover.

But first the old Belmont had to go. “It’s a relic of racing’s heyday,” my colleague Melissa Hoppert told me, “when people would pack the stands” day after day, not just on the day of the Belmont Stakes. The grandstand was huge, longer than the Empire State Building is tall.

The crowds have since thinned out, except during the Belmont Stakes. “If you go to Belmont on any other race day,” she said, “there are 20 handicappers huddled around the rail.” The jockeys, trainers and horsemen outnumber the fans, or seem to.

The less crowded stands reflect changes in racing and betting in the last 10 years or so. People can still go to the track on big race days to take in the parade of gravity-defying hats and eye-catching outfits. But to bet on regular racing, they can just use their cellphones. The New York Racing Association, which runs Belmont Park, still makes money that way, so it doesn’t matter that the stands are not packed.

NYRA wants the new Belmont to be smaller, with a new building replacing the grandstand and the clubhouse and taking up less than a quarter of the square footage of the old structure. NYRA says that fans will get more open space for fans and more green space in a stretch of Nassau County that needs it. Or, as Patrick McKenna, a NYRA vice president, put it, “NYRA is looking to put the park back in Belmont Park.”

The demolition began in April and is expected to continue into the fall. On Wednesday an orange excavation machine was digging out debris on what used to be Big Sandy, the longest track in horse racing in the United States. The mess on Big Sandy piled there as beams came out, walls came down and concrete was ripped up.

NYRA wants a modern grandstand with restaurants and amenities like those at other tracks and stadiums, especially if the Breeders Cup is to be run at Belmont again. NYRA blames Belmont’s 1960s infrastructure and its lack of “winterized hospitality options” — heated dining areas and private suites — for the Breeders Cup’s disappearance from Belmont after the 2005 race.

The drawings of the new Belmont did not go over well with some traditionalists whose immediate reaction was: It looks like an airport terminal with too much glass. NYRA says the look was “an intentional departure from the current Belmont style.”

Some fans were also concerned that a Belmont icon — a Japanese white pine in the paddock — was nowhere to be seen in the first set of drawings. That tree was the inspiration for the Belmont Park logo. NYRA says the tree will be “surveyed and protected to the greatest extent possible,” as the old Belmont is demolished and the new one is built.

On Saturday a field of 10 horses, including the Kentucky Derby winner Mystik Dan and the Preakness Stakes winner Seize the Grey, will face off in a 1¼-mile race at Saratoga, a quarter-mile shorter than when the race was run at Belmont Park.

There may not be a race at Belmont Park on Saturday, but there will be a “watch party” in the Belmont backyard, adjacent to UBS Arena. It will begin at 1 p.m., more than five hours before the 6:40 p.m. post time for the Belmont Stakes, but there are 14 races on the card for Saturday. Attendees can bring folding chairs. They can buy Belmont’s signature drink, the Belmont jewel — bourbon, lemonade and pomegranate juice served over ice.

Prepare for showers and thunderstorms persisting through the evening, with temperatures in the low 80s dropping to the high 60s at night.

In effect until June 12 (Shavuot).

The latest New York news

* Lobbyist cashes in, with help from New York officials: Michael Balboni made over $300,000 during the pandemic as a consultant and lobbyist [*for an app to display a user’s vaccination status*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

1. Columbia Law Review website taken down: The website was taken off-line by the journal’s board of directors, which said that an article by a Palestinian human rights lawyer [*had not been subject to sufficient review*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

Arts &amp; Culture

* An arts reboot at Little Island: Zack Winokur, an ambitious dancer-turned-director, now has a New York stage to call his own as [*Little Island’s artistic leader*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

1. A party in the garden: The Museum of Modern Art hosted its annual garden party. It raised more than $5.5 million to [*go toward museum operations*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).
2. A stoop sale, “Real Housewives” style: Jenna Lyons, the former J. Crew president and reality television star, did what many New Yorkers would do when they run out of space: [*host a stoop sale*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

An indefinite halt for congestion pricing

Just weeks before New York was to begin charging motorists to drive into Midtown Manhattan, [*Gov. Kathy Hochul said she was putting the plan on hold indefinitely*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

“I have come to the difficult decision that implementing the planned congestion pricing system risks too many unintended consequences,” she said. The plan was to have taken effect at the end of the month and would have charged drivers with E-ZPasses as much as $15 to drive into Manhattan south of 60th Street.

The decision was a stunning reversal that undercut years of planning. It was also a major setback for the M.T.A., which stood to collect the $1 billion that congestion pricing was expected to raise.

[*The agency already had plans for spending the money*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings) — projects that my colleague Winnie Hu called “unglamorous but essential work” that is usually unseen by passengers, like modernizing signals that date to the 1930s.

But Hochul said that instituting a toll to drive into Midtown Manhattan would “create another economic obstacle to our economy recovery.”

“Let’s be real,” she said. “A $15 charge may not seem like a lot to someone who has the means, but it can break the budget of a hard-working middle-class household.”

Hochul had notified the White House and the top House Democrat, Representative Hakeem Jeffries of Brooklyn, before announcing the move. According to my colleagues’ reporting, two people familiar with the conversations disputed reports that he had directed her to hold up the plan. A spokesman for Jeffries said that he “supports a temporary pause of limited duration to better understand the financial impact on ***working-class*** New Yorkers.”

What Happens Now

[*To make the pause official*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings), Hochul will need the approval of the M.T.A. board, which she controls. The next regularly scheduled board meeting is to take place on June 24, six days before the plan was to have become a reality.

It is also not clear what the M.T.A. will do about a roughly $500 million contract it had already signed for things like the equipment to read the E-ZPasses or license plates of vehicles going in and out of the congestion pricing zone.

Another open question is what will happen to the equipment itself, which was put in place months ago.

The giant bunny

Dear Diary:

I was leaving my apartment for a walk on a lazy Sunday. When the elevator arrived, the door opened like a portal to another galaxy.

Standing inside was a small woman dressed in black. She was carrying an enormous black bunny that seemed almost invisible until I noticed its blinking eyes.

“Get in,” the woman said, motioning me toward her.

Not knowing whether the giant bunny was friendly with strangers, I hesitated. Some bunnies can be combative.

The door began to close, and I hit the “open” button instinctively.

“Get in!” the woman shouted.

I stood there at a safe distance between myself and the giant bunny.

“What was the bunny doing outside?” I asked.

“She went out for a walk,” the woman said. “She loves interacting with humans. Are you coming in or not?”

I continued to hesitate.

“Come on,” she said. “You know who she is.”

“I do?”

The woman nodded, clutching the giant bunny, which by now was falling out of her arms.

“What is her name?” I asked.

The galactic portal began to close again. This time, I did not try to stop it. I got a last glimpse of the bunny. It was staring at me intensely.

“Gemma,” I heard the woman say.

— H.S. Go

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 tomorrow. — 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).

Lauren Hard, Melissa Guerrero and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox.*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/ny-today-daily-briefings)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Christine Kozak FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 6, 2024

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[***‘Izzard Hamlet New York’ Review: A Solo Show That’s More Noble Than Wise***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BB2-K4B1-JBG3-6013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 13, 2024 Tuesday 11:10 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 584 words

**Byline:** Jason Zinoman Jason Zinoman is a critic at large for The Times. As the paper&amp;#8217;s first comedy critic, he has written the On Comedy column since 2011.

**Highlight:** Eddie Izzard is a wildly witty ad-libber, but a play straitjackets this gift — especially in this new staging that is short of ideas.

**Body**

Eddie Izzard is a wildly witty ad-libber, but a play straitjackets this gift — especially in this new staging that is short of ideas.

To laugh, or not to laugh? That is the question.

Or at least one you may consider early in Eddie Izzard’s “Hamlet,” in which the comic portrays all the roles herself.

Something is certainly a little silly about dramatizing Hamlet fighting with his mother by having a left hand wrestle with the arm of the right, evoking Peter Sellers’s scientist who [*struggles to restrain himself from raising his arm*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/on-comedy) in Nazi salute in “Dr. Strangelove.” And solo sword fights have possibilities that a brilliant comedian like Izzard might exploit.

Yet, as Izzard darts around the stage, from role to role, hopscotching in and out of the audience declaiming speeches, what becomes clear is this frenetic staging is earnest, surprisingly traditional and deadly serious. A wildly witty ad-libber, Izzard can make two-hour monologues feel like a stream-of-conscious eruption. A play straitjackets this gift. Except for a few flourishes, this staging, directed by Selina Cadell, is short of ideas. (Imagine sock puppets without the socks and you get an idea of her Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.)

Inside a modern, minimalist set (designed by Tom Piper) with no props, Izzard, who mounted a solo theatrical adaptation of “Great Expectations” last year, sometimes represents changing characters by spinning, other times by just moving a few feet. If there is method here, I did not detect it. If you don’t know “Hamlet,” there is no chance you are going to follow the play within a play. If you do, you might wonder why Izzard doesn’t spend more time playing the characters watching, not talking.

Among the occasionally overlooked qualities of the Danish prince is that he can be very funny, especially when mean. But you wouldn’t know it in this production, adapted by Izzard’s brother, Mark. Izzard is an even-keeled Hamlet. She doesn’t elongate vowels or spit out consonants, rarely yells or expresses contempt. She appears to be pacing herself throughout. Despite wearing dark vinyl pants, this is a very tweedy performance. The best Hamlets (like that of Andrew Scott, who, in a sign of a trend or maybe a growing need for inexpensive casts, recently performed a one-man “Uncle Vanya”) dramatize the act of thinking, but that interiority is lacking here.

Instead of taking Hamlet’s famous acting advice to not “saw the air” too much, Izzard favors gesticulating and thrusting her hips to indicate something sexual has been said. She adopts a ***working-class*** voice for the gravedigger scene, but otherwise doesn’t try dramatic shifts in accents, voice or physicality.

Izzard has famously picked up marathon running over the years, and even completed 32 in a month. It’s a remarkable feat, but this one might be tougher — and it shows. (On the night I attended, she flubbed several lines and appeared to be breathing hard during this endurance test of a play.) One comes away with the sense that Eddie Izzard didn’t perform “Hamlet” so much as become defeated by it.

Izzard Hamlet New York

Through March 16 at Greenwich House Theater, Manhattan; [*eddieizzardhamlet.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/on-comedy). Running time: 2 hours 25 minutes.

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PHOTO: Eddie Izzard plays all of the roles in a frenetic take on “Hamlet.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How a ‘Hidden’ $1.4 Billion Tax Will Make N.Y.C. Water Bills Rise***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY2-2X51-DXY4-X4TV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2024 Friday 16:00 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1121 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein Dana Rubinstein covers New York City politics and government for The Times.

**Highlight:** Mayor Eric Adams is resurrecting a budget gimmick and charging rent to the city’s Water Board, which will pass on the costs to ratepayers.

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This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2024

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[***Crosstown Rivals Publicly Criticized Over Campus Protests; California Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY3-2KG1-JBG3-654W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2024 Friday 09:00 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1224 words

**Byline:** Shawn Hubler Shawn Hubler is based in Sacramento and covers California news, policy trends and personalities. She has been a journalist for more than four decades.

**Highlight:** As U.S.C. and U.C.L.A. pick up the pieces, the two universities present dueling case studies in crisis management.

**Body**

As U.S.C. and U.C.L.A. pick up the pieces, the two universities present dueling case studies in crisis management.

They are crosstown rivals and civic landmarks. One is public, one private. One is surrounded by some of the priciest real estate in the nation; the other’s neighborhood is decidedly more ***working-class***.

Over the past couple of weeks, though, the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles, have had one thing in common: being publicly slammed for mishandling campus protests.

After anger over a canceled valedictory speech culminated in an uprising at U.S.C. last week that led to 93 arrests on campus, the university’s president faced criticism that she had [*called in the Los Angeles police too quickly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html). This week, U.C.L.A.’s chancellor is fielding accusations that the university’s call for police backup [*took too long.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html)

U.C.L.A. had taken a relatively [*tolerant approach*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) to protests, adhering to a University of California-wide [*policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) of avoiding calling in outside law enforcement unless “absolutely necessary to protect the physical safety” of the public campus. But on Tuesday, the school declared that an encampment of pro-Palestinian demonstrators at U.C.L.A. was an “unlawful assembly.”

Some observers wondered whether the shift had come because of escalating violence. Or maybe it was because the chancellor, Gene Block, was [*summoned Tuesday to testify*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) later this month in front of a Republican-led congressional committee that has grilled other university presidents on how their campuses have handled pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

That night, as a pro-Palestinian group resisted orders to disperse, counterprotesters descended violently on their encampment. Several students were injured before the Los Angeles police — who did not have the primary jurisdiction necessary to respond without an invitation — were finally called in.

The next night, the situation was much different. Amid charges by city officials that the university police had not only been too slow to respond, but also ineffective, officers from three law enforcement agencies were called to campus Wednesday. Early Thursday, they moved in. They arrested more than 200 people and dismantled the pro-Palestinian camp.

Now, as both universities pick up the pieces, the two episodes present dueling case studies. For defenders of the two administrations, the takeaway is simple: In the current political climate, university presidents are in a no-win situation.

For critics, the lesson is about foresight.

Why, they ask, did U.C.L.A. not see the peril in allowing pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian protesters to demonstrate within 20 feet of each other? Why were ground rules not established in advance at both schools, with consequences for epithets, vandalism and trespassing in campus buildings? And why was more not done to stop “outside agitators” from inciting violence?

Only 51 of the 93 people arrested at U.S.C. were students, and 36 were not affiliated with the university, Andrew Guzman, the provost, [*told the Academic Senate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) this week. Block, the U.C.L.A. chancellor, [*cited “instigators”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) as the cause of the melee on Tuesday; on social media, pro-Palestinian groups flagged some of their attackers as past participants in right-wing demonstrations against transgender rights and immigration.

“It’s remarkable to me how flat-footed the presidents have been at almost every step,” William G. Tierney, a professor emeritus of higher education at U.S.C. who has written about the national administrative response to the campus protests, said Thursday by email. “We could have stood out as a forum to have passionate/civil conversation and instead we have mayhem. Yuck.”

Carol Folt, the president of U.S.C., told the faculty that she made the decisions she did to prevent an explosion of violence like the one on the U.C.L.A. campus. Still, if she had it to do over, she said, she might have talked more to students, face-to-face, in the protest’s early stages. So far, she said, the university has not taken disciplinary action against students who were arrested. Only faculty members and students are now being admitted to campus. A scaled down commencement is scheduled for May 10.

U.C.L.A.’s chancellor has promised to investigate the university’s response, urged students to avoid the site of the protest and pivoted to remote instruction at least through the next few days. Classes are not scheduled to end for another month.

And as the academic calendar winds down, Los Angeles’s biggest institutions of higher education are confronting strikingly similar landscapes: mass arrests, widespread frustration and a pall over the end of the school year.

If you read one story, make it this

Led by a former Trump administration envoy to combat antisemitism, the pro-Israel group that clashed violently at U.C.L.A. this week with pro-Palestinian demonstrators [*has promised more counterprotests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html).

The rest of the news

* As part of President Biden’s [*plan to conserve the nation’s land and waters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html), he is enlarging the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

1. Researchers at U.C. Berkeley argue in a new study that policymakers should adopt a [*new definition of affordability*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) in housing that looks beyond the income level of people who already live in a community, KQED reports.

Southern California

* Police officers dismantled a pro-Palestinian encampment at U.C.L.A. Wednesday night and [*made 132 arrests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html).

1. The European Court of Human Rights upheld Italy’s right to [*confiscate a contested ancient Greek statue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html) on display in the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.
2. Jerry Boylan, the captain of a scuba diving boat, was sentenced to four years in prison for criminal negligence in the deaths of [*34 people in a fire aboard the vessel nearly five years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html).

Central California

* An anonymous $15 million donation to Valley Children’s Hospital will be used to [*create child cancer treatment programs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html), The Fresno Bee reports.

Northern California

* A fire on a residential section of Jackson Street near Leavenworth Street in San Francisco [*delayed Muni cable cars in both directions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html), The San Francisco Chronicle reports.

And before you go, some good news

Jacqueline Norvell, also known as the Brown Bag Lady, has handed out food and supplies to homeless people on Skid Row in Los Angeles [*since 2014*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html), Upworthy reported in 2022. Norvell and her team do this every Sunday, including during the Covid-19 pandemic, when Norvell and her team went out in hazmat suits.

Her nonprofit organization, Brown Bag Lady, has helped to feed more than 75,000 people. Each brown bag the group distributes also includes an inspirational quotation, to maintain a personal touch.

Norvell’s aspiration is to own a building with a commercial kitchen to prepare weekly meals.

Thanks for reading. We’ll be back tomorrow.

P.S. Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html).

Halina Bennet 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/2024/04/25/us/usc-southern-california-protest.html).

Halina Bennet and Briana Scalia contributed to California Today. You can reach the team at [*CAtoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:CAtoday@nytimes.com)

PHOTO: U.C.L.A. initially tolerated a protest encampment, but then declared it unlawful on Tuesday. About 200 people were arrested early Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Carlin Stiehl/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2024

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[***Paperback Row***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69R5-R421-DXY4-X05F-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. 24

**Length:** 410 words

**Byline:** By Shreya Chattopadhyay

**Body**

Ghost Music, by An Yu. (Grove, 240 pp., $17.) Strange things keep happening to Song Yan, the piano teacher and alienated wife at the center of Yu's dreamlike speculative novel. The ghost of a long-dead pianist invites her to his home. A giant mushroom entreats her not to forget it. The effect, our reviewer wrote, is ''a visceral in-betweenness where the worlds of matter and spirit meet in a shared, suspended space.''

Requiem for the Massacre: A Black History on the Conflict, Hope, and Fallout of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, by RJ Young. (Counterpoint, 336 pp., $18.95.) In 1921, a white mob stormed Tulsa's prosperous Black sector. The fires they set destroyed the Greenwood district, killed hundreds and left thousands homeless. Young weaves this history with his own, on life as a Black man in America.

Boys Alive, by Pier Paolo Pasolini. Translated by Tim Parks. (New York Review Books, 224 pp., $16.95.) The anti-establishment Italian author and filmmaker's best-known novel, first published in 1955, follows ***working-class*** boys in Rome through a fiery adolescence never far from violence. ''Possessing nothing, his young characters fight to survive and to live,'' Parks writes in the introduction to this new translation. ''At all costs they must have fun; boredom is death.''

Against the Wind: Edward Kennedy and the Rise of Conservatism, 1976-2009, by Neal Gabler. (Crown, 1,264 pp., $24.) At the height of his power in 1976, Ted Kennedy didn't run for president -- ushering in three decades of the liberal senator ''sailing against a stiff conservative wind,'' Gabler writes in the second volume of his two-part biography.

Hollywood: The Oral History, by Jeanine Basinger and Sam Wasson. (Harper, 768 pp., $24.99.) Basinger and Wasson delve deep into the archives of L.A.'s American Film Institute, where 3,000 industry workers -- from actors and directors to makeup artists and writers -- have filmed interviews since 1969. The result is a book with ''something for every showbiz-nerd taste,'' our reviewer wrote.

Moonrise Over New Jessup, by Jamila Minnicks. (Algonquin, 352 pp., $18.99.) New Jessup, Ala., is an all-Black town that has rejected integration. Alice Young, fleeing a violent white landlord in 1957, decides to build her life there. But as she falls in love and her husband's underground organizing threatens the security of the town, Minnicks's acclaimed debut novel scrutinizes the meaning of freedom and the price of change.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/books/review/new-paperbacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/books/review/new-paperbacks.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR24.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

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[***Their Recipe for Love: Fish Stew and Black Fettuccine***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP1-WMC1-JBG3-603K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 31, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Society Desk; Pg. 13; MINI-VOWS

**Length:** 810 words

**Byline:** By Sadiba Hasan

**Body**

Maxwell Da Silva, who is from Brazil, and Jane Satsuk, who is from Russia, immediately connected over their ''very humble beginnings.'' But it was Mr. Da Silva's cooking that won her heart.

It was Sept. 1, 2020, and Maxwell Dayvson Da Silva and Evgenia Satsuk were wearing masks during their first date at Leuca, an Italian restaurant in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. He freaked her out just a bit when he asked her to lower her mask and kissed her.

''All right, now I'm going to die,'' she recalled thinking. ''He probably kisses every woman during the pandemic.'' He had actually quarantined in his apartment for 90 days because he had been terrified of going out during the Covid-19 pandemic. But at the time, she didn't know that.

The kiss didn't scare her away, though, because of their animated conversation over dinner and drinks. They had met on the dating app Tinder a week before, and they connected about life in New York and life in their homelands. Mr. Da Silva is from Recife, Brazil, and Ms. Satsuk from Khabarovsk, Russia.

Mr. Da Silva, 40, was born and raised in a favela, a ***working-class*** neighborhood. At 14, he taught himself how to code, and when he was 15, he started working as a software engineer at a media company. In 2012, he got a job offer as a software engineer at The New York Times and moved to Brooklyn. ''It's honestly a miracle,'' said Mr. Da Silva, as he reflected on his childhood days carrying buckets of water to his home, which didn't have running water most days.

Ms. Satsuk, 38, grew up in a housing project in Eastern Russia. She graduated from Khabarovsk State University of Economics and Law with a bachelor's degree in international business and became an account manager at a retail company. She moved to Brooklyn in 2011.

''Even though we were separated by oceans and different continents,'' Mr. Da Silva said, ''we had a very similar story growing up with very humble beginnings.''

For their second date, they met at Sweetwater, another restaurant in Williamsburg. And on the dates that followed, Mr. Da Silva invited her over to his apartment in Williamsburg and won her heart with his cooking.

On their third date, he prepared moqueca, a seafood stew. On the fourth date, he made a mashed potato dish with crab and shrimp. It was so good, she said, that she took some home. And on the fifth date, he cooked black fettuccine with a vodka sauce and lobster, a dish that he now makes for the couple every year on Valentine's Day.

In January 2021, Ms. Satsuk and Mr. Da Silva booked a one-way ticket to Hawaii. At the time, Mr. Da Silva was working at Lyft as a senior director of engineering, and he was also in the midst of completing a master's degree in interactive telecommunications at N.Y.U. He is currently the vice president of engineering at Shopify.

Their time in Oahu was a big stress reliever, Mr. Da Silva said. At 5 p.m. every day, he wrapped up at work and went to Waikiki Beach with Ms. Satsuk. Sometimes they had ice cream. They watched the waves and waited for the sunset. They ended up staying in Hawaii for five months.

[Click here to binge read this week's featured couples.]

On Nov. 25, 2022, during a friendsgiving dinner in their home in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, Mr. Da Silva proposed. While everyone's glasses were filled with champagne, he made a toast, Ms. Satsuk recalled: ''I'm so grateful for all of you guys, but I'm most grateful for this Russian princess I met.''

In February 2024, the couple hosted a three-day Russian and Brazilian celebration with 75 guests in Pipa, a beach town in northeastern Brazil, close to Mr. Da Silva's hometown.

On the first night, they had a pool party. Colorful dune buggies escorted guests from their hotels to the party, where they took a samba class.

The next day, a wedding celebration took place on a full moon at Filha da Lua Eco Lodge, a resort hotel. A D.J. played Brazilian, Russian and American music. At the end of the celebration, everyone jumped into a pool, including Ms. Satsuk in her wedding dress.

And on the third day, guest were treated to a Russian-themed Sunday brunch.

''I felt so loved,'' Ms. Satsuk said. Her family flew in from Russia, taking four planes on a 48-hour trip. She saw her father for the first time in five years.

''I never had a dream of having a wedding dress, and having a wedding day,'' added Ms. Satsuk. ''But what happened was just a dream come true -- a dream I didn't know I had.''

The celebration had an altruistic component. The owners of the hotel they stayed at had opened a school for children in the neighborhood, but the library had only had a few books. The couple asked each guest to bring a handful of books to donate to the school's library.

On March 28, the couple were legally wed at the Brooklyn Marriage Bureau. Huiling Zheng, a staff member of the city clerk's office, officiated.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/style/maxwell-da-silva-jane-satsuk-wedding.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/style/maxwell-da-silva-jane-satsuk-wedding.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Jane Satsuk, Maxwell Da Silva (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMILLA BANDEIRA) This article appeared in print on page ST13.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2024

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[***Joe From Scranton Didn't Win Back the Working Class***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FT-C2G1-DXY4-X05G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 6, 2020 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 21; ON POLITICS WITH LISA LERER

**Length:** 1257 words

**Byline:** By Lisa Lerer

**Body**

An economic analysis of the counties that Joe Biden won and lost shows how the two parties are continuing to realign.

Sign up here to get On Politics in your inbox every weekday.

For years, Democrats have preached the gospel of changing demographics.

As the country grew more diverse, they argued, the electorate would inevitably tilt in their favor and give their party an unbeatable edge.

Well, the country is more racially diverse than ever before. But exit polls suggest that Joe Biden lost ground among Latino, Black and Asian-American voters in 2020 compared with Hillary Clinton's performance in 2016.

Demographics, it turns out, are not political destiny. But diplomas just might be.

The clearest way to understand the results of the 2020 election -- and, perhaps, the shifting state of our politics -- is through the education voting gap. Voters with college degrees flocked to Mr. Biden, emerging as the crucial voting bloc in the suburbs. Those without them continued their flight from the Democratic Party.

''The big-picture problem is that the Democratic Party is increasingly reflecting the cultural values and political preferences of educated white people,'' said David Shor, a data scientist who advises Democratic campaigns and organizations. ''Culturally, ***working-class*** nonwhite people have more in common with ***working-class*** white people.''

The shifts were at the margins: Voters of color still overwhelmingly backed Mr. Biden, sticking with the Democratic candidate as they had for decades. But these small swings hint at the possibility of a broader realignment in American politics. Political parties, after all, are dynamic. Coalitions can and do change.

Think about how Democrats have won over the past four years. In 2018, they flipped affluent, diversifying inner-ring suburbs and ran up their margins in cities to gain control of the House of Representatives. Mr. Biden followed that same path to the presidency: A New York Times analysis found that he improved on Mrs. Clinton's performance in suburban counties by an average of about five percentage points.

What else do these areas have in common? They are more likely to be dominated by highly educated voters.

One way to examine this trend county by county is to look at the number of voters who have white- or blue-collar jobs. (I know, your buddy never graduated from college and now makes a killing as a real estate broker. It's not a perfect metric but a pretty good proxy for education, given the economic data available.)

The results were striking. Of the 265 counties most dominated by blue-collar workers -- areas where at least 40 percent of employed adults have jobs in construction, the service industry or other nonprofessional fields -- Mr. Biden won just 15, according to data from researchers at the Economic Innovation Group, a bipartisan policy research group.

On average, the work force in counties won by Mr. Biden was about 23 percent blue collar. In counties won by President Trump, blue-collar workers made up an average of 31 percent of the work force.

This isn't a new trend. For decades, Democrats have been trading the support of union members for broader backing from the professional classes. And the G.O.P., once the party of white college-educated voters, has increasingly found support among white ***working-class*** voters.

Many Democratic primary voters saw Mr. Biden as uniquely positioned to cut into the Republican advantage with the ***working class***. For decades, he's built his political brand on being a scrappy kid from Scranton, Pa., who became just another guy riding the train to work. The rallying cry of his campaign in the final weeks was: ''This election is Scranton versus Park Avenue.''

But Mr. Biden fared worse than Mrs. Clinton in 2016 and Barack Obama in 2012 and 2008 in counties dominated by blue-collar workers.

That outcome should scare Democratic strategists about their party's future, Mr. Shor said, because of structural dynamics like the Electoral College that give rural areas political influence far beyond the size of their population.

If Democrats can't win blue-collar workers in less-populated areas -- or at least cut some of their losses -- winning control of the Senate or the White House will become very difficult. And with Republicans maintaining their hold on state legislatures, Democrats may find themselves cut out of some of those friendlier suburban House seats when districts are redrawn after the census.

''It's very hard for us to imagine us taking the Senate between now and the end of the decade,'' Mr. Shor said. ''And it would be very hard just to win the presidency. Our institutions are very biased specifically against this coalition we are putting together.''

What is happening with Georgia Republicans?

Georgia is on my mind this week. (Yes, I know, low-hanging cliché.)

With control of the Senate hinging on the two runoff elections there, the political world is pouring money and resources into the state. But as we reported this week, things are getting a little ... complicated.

Unsurprisingly, the cause of the political chaos is President Trump. As he continues to push baseless allegations about the presidential election results in Georgia -- a state he lost -- Republicans are getting nervous that his attacks could depress their turnout in the Jan. 5 runoffs.

Some Trump allies in the state have urged conservatives to boycott the election or write in Mr. Trump's name -- an option that's not even provided on the runoff ballot. Though Mr. Trump and his campaign have tried to distance themselves from that effort, they've continued their drumbeat of attacks on Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, and other G.O.P. election officials. Some Republican strategists were worried that rhetoric could further alienate suburban voters, who helped deal Mr. Trump his loss in Georgia but might be more receptive to the Republican runoff candidates, the incumbent Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue.

Mr. Trump is scheduled to campaign with them in Valdosta, Ga., on Saturday. Republicans are uncertain whether his remarks could do more harm than help, particularly if he remains unable to put aside some of his personal pique about his own loss.

The situation offers a preview of the kind of political dynamics that Republicans could face even after Mr. Trump leaves office as they try to navigate his continuing ambitions. With the president considering another run for the White House in 2024, his political aspirations may not align with Republicans' goals in a divided Washington.

By the numbers: $908 billion

... That's the new starting point in negotiations for another pandemic relief bill.

With coronavirus cases spiking and the economy showing signs of weakening, Democrats made a big concession -- they had been demanding at least $2 trillion -- to prod Republicans and the Trump administration into compromise legislation.

Along with ending a monthslong congressional stalemate, passage of stimulus legislation could help the new Biden administration enter office on slightly stronger economic footing.

... Seriously

I did not think anything could outdo Rudy Giuliani's dripping face.

I was wrong.

Were you forwarded this newsletter? Sign up here to get it delivered to your inbox.

Thanks for reading. On Politics is your guide to the political news cycle, delivering clarity from the chaos.

Is there anything you think we're missing? Anything you want to see more of? We'd love to hear from you. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](mailto:onpolitics@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/05/us/politics/biden-blue-collar-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/05/us/politics/biden-blue-collar-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** December 6, 2020

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[***President Outlines His Tax Plan and Calls Trump a Pawn of Billionaires***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTM-GN51-JBG3-6042-00000-00&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. 18

**Length:** 1056 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Nehamas

**Body**

Speaking in Scranton, Pa., his hometown, the president used a speech about economic fairness as a new avenue of attack against his Republican rival, who was in a courtroom two hours away.

President Biden delivered a flurry of attacks on former President Donald J. Trump during a Tuesday speech in Pennsylvania about taxes and economic policy, painting his Republican rival as a puppet of plutocrats who had ignored the ***working class***.

Visiting his hometown, Scranton, in a top battleground state that he has visited more often than any other, Mr. Biden laid out his vision for a fairer tax code, including raising rates on the wealthy and corporations and using the money to expand the economy and help working families.

But in a speech that signaled the Biden campaign's intention to make the 2024 election a referendum on his polarizing Republican opponent, the president returned again and again to Mr. Trump. His jabs at his predecessor took aim at the former president's wealthy upbringing, his friendships with billionaires and his 2017 tax cuts that disproportionately benefited America's upper crust.

''Donald Trump looks at the world differently than you and me,'' Mr. Biden told a crowd of more than a hundred supporters at a cultural center in Scranton. ''He wakes up in the morning at Mar-a-Lago thinking about himself. How he can help his billionaire friends gain power and control, and force their extreme agenda on the rest of us.''

Aiming for a clear contrast, Mr. Biden laid out his proposals: Expanding the child tax credit. Providing a $10,000 tax credit for first-time home buyers. Raising the minimum tax rate for billionaires and corporations.

''We know the best way to build an economy is from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down,'' Mr. Biden said. ''Because when you do that, the poor have a ladder up and the middle class does well and the wealthy still do very well. We all do well.''

Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, disputed that Mr. Biden's plan would benefit Americans.

''President Trump proudly passed the largest tax CUTS in history,'' she said in a statement. ''Joe Biden is proposing the largest tax HIKE ever.''

Throughout his speech, Mr. Biden wove in criticism of Mr. Trump -- including a needling joke about the falling shares in the former president's social media company.

''If Trump's stock in Truth Social -- his company -- drops any lower, he might do better under my tax plan than his,'' Mr. Biden said.

The president's speech kicked off a three-day swing through Pennsylvania, with appearances scheduled in Pittsburgh on Wednesday and Philadelphia on Thursday. The trip came as Mr. Trump appeared in court in Manhattan for the second straight day as his first criminal trial begins -- a striking split screen welcomed by the Biden campaign.

Since Mr. Biden delivered his State of the Union address last month, his campaign has shifted into general election mode, after a far quieter start to the year. In recent weeks, he has visited every major battleground state. His campaign has opened more than 100 field offices around the nation in coordination with state Democratic parties, spent $30 million in an advertising blitz and built a significant fund-raising advantage over Mr. Trump. An Arizona court decision that upheld a near-total abortion ban dating to 1864 has also energized Democrats.

As those efforts have taken place, Mr. Biden's depressed poll numbers have improved, with a survey this month by The New York Times and Siena College finding that he had nearly erased Mr. Trump's lead nationwide. The president had trailed Mr. Trump by five percentage points in the previous survey. Much of Mr. Biden's recovery came from his improved standing among traditional Democratic voters, a signal that his campaign's messaging efforts may be having an effect.

Still, Mr. Biden faces an uphill battle in convincing Americans that he is a better steward of the nation's economy than Mr. Trump. In the latest Times/Siena poll, 64 percent of voters said they approved of how Mr. Trump had handled the economy while in office. Only 34 percent said the same of Mr. Biden, the poll found.

The tax cuts that Mr. Trump signed into law in 2017 have proved unpopular with voters. And while they increased investment in the U.S. economy and delivered a modest pay bump for workers, they fell short of Republican promises and are adding greatly to the national debt, one academic study found. Many parts of those tax cuts are set to expire next year.

Mr. Biden pledged in his speech that under his plan, nobody earning less than $400,000 would see their taxes go up.

''I hope you're able to make $400,000,'' he told the crowd. ''I never did.''

As Mr. Biden spoke, Mr. Trump was seated in a Manhattan courtroom roughly two hours away, watching the selection of the first jurors in his trial. Mr. Biden has generally refrained from mentioning the charges Mr. Trump faces in four criminal cases, but his campaign did troll the former president on social media for appearing to fall asleep during proceedings on Monday.

Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, did not answer when asked if Mr. Biden was watching the Trump trial or being briefed on it.

''His focus is on the American people,'' she said during a briefing with reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Scranton.

But even in his hometown, Mr. Biden could not avoid the anger that many Democrats feel over his support for Israel during its war in Gaza. As Mr. Biden walked up the steps of his childhood home, a crowd of protesters down the block waved Palestinian flags and chanted ''Genocide Joe has got to go'' through a loudspeaker.

Mr. Biden is set to speak on Wednesday at the headquarters of the United Steelworkers union in Pittsburgh before visiting Philadelphia on Thursday. He narrowly defeated Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania in 2020, and winning the state is crucial to his re-election strategy.

Democratic allies of Mr. Biden said they thought his message on economic fairness would resonate in Pennsylvania.

''Scranton versus Fifth Avenue was one of the most successful frames from the 2020 campaign,'' said Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania, referring to the location of Trump Tower in Manhattan. ''You're going to see more of it in this campaign.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/us/politics/biden-trump-tax-scranton-pa.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/16/us/politics/biden-trump-tax-scranton-pa.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: During his speech in Scranton, Pa., President Biden called for raising taxes on the wealthy and expanding the child tax credit. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Why Power Eludes the French Left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHJ-GR61-DXY4-X05Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The signs that a protest is happening in Paris are nearly always the same: the quiet of blocked-off streets; the neat rows of police vans containing the gendarmerie stretching down the boulevard; the sound of drumbeats and whistles and the neon red flares that spit smoke into the sky. For six months last year, those signs were constant and ubiquitous, as furious, sometimes violent marches and general strikes protesting President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms brought Paris to a standstill. Students and activists, public-transit operators, custodial staff, medics, mechanics, teachers, oil-rig workers, writers and celebrities all gathered to rail against Macron's plan to raise the national retirement age by two years, to 64.

As transit walkouts snarled traffic and sanitation strikes caused trash to pile up in the streets, the protests were ridiculed abroad. Why must the French, among the best-protected workers in the Western world, make such a racket over two years of work? But for the demonstrators, this missed the point: It is because French workers put up a fight that they are protected. ''We actually have laws on our side,'' Samira Alaoui, a union representative at Teleperformance, a digital business services company, told me. ''We are a model for the world. If we don't do anything, who will?''

In 2023, France seemed less the exception than the rule. There was a surge in labor activity around the world last year -- strikes and victories -- as much as or more than any year in decades. This was true in the United States, where the Writers Guild of America, the United Auto Workers and the UPS Teamsters all won significant concessions from executives. In Britain, nurses went on strike to protest staffing shortages and patient backlogs at the National Health Service. Still, it was perhaps in France that labor's rise was most visible -- most combustive and most telling. France has always been a vanguard of leftist politics. Today it is one of the few Western democracies where a far left has managed to survive and even thrive, as it works to invent a new leftist politics that can succeed in a moment of right-wing ascendancy. How it fares says much about where the left may be headed and the headwinds it faces, not just in France but throughout the West.

While once-robust labor unions have seen their numbers decline more drastically in France than in other European countries -- around 8 percent of French workers belong to labor unions, compared with 35 percent in Italy or 18 percent in Germany -- French unions remain strong. In part this is because recent labor activism has been buoyed by a newly resurgent leftist movement, La France Insoumise (L.F.I.), or ''France Unbowed.'' At the final pension-reform march in Paris last summer -- a defanged one, to be sure, as the measure had already been made law -- the area cordoned off for protesters gathering to march down the Boulevard des Invalides was draped with banners for L.F.I. ''A different reform is possible, 60!'' one proclaimed. Another demanded the founding of a new republic. One protester carried a giant marionette of Macron peeking out of a bright green garbage bin, an allusion to the scandal that followed the arrest of a woman at her home for an online post in which she called Macron ''trash.'' (The charges were later dropped.)

L.F.I. was founded in 2016 by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, 72, an unruly populist in the vein of Bernie Sanders with an even more strident rhetorical style, who is widely credited with sustaining leftism in France and with its strong showing in the last two presidential elections. Mélenchon came in third in the 2022 presidential election, with 21.95 percent of the vote, about a point behind Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally (formerly the National Front), who advanced to the final runoff against Macron. By contrast, the progressive left in the United States represents only about 7 percent of registered voters, according to Pew, and though center-left parties are common throughout Western Europe, it is unusual for the far left to capture this much of the vote and come so close to the presidency.

Because of Mélenchon's performance in the general elections, he was able to form a coalition with other left-leaning parties -- the P.C.F. (or French Communist Party), the Socialists and the Greens -- each of which garnered only a fraction of the vote. The coalition, known as NUPES, largely adopted L.F.I.'s platform: to tame the chaos of the free market by instituting large tax hikes on the wealthy, increase the minimum wage, renationalize formerly public companies, and fight climate change and racial and gender inequality. This week a bill to enshrine abortion rights in the French Constitution, introduced and promoted by the L.F.I. and the Green Party, became law. The L.F.I. now leads the largest opposition bloc in Parliament, which has some 26 percent of the seats, enough to block Macron from having a controlling majority.

Yet L.F.I. has so far failed to translate its electoral plurality into the kind of consensus and broad-based support that could eventually lead to running the country. Though 62 percent of the French approved of the protests against Macron, polls later showed L.F.I. to be not much stronger than before. By contrast, Marine Le Pen, who offered hardly any public commentary on the pension reforms at all, received a boost in the polls. On many economic matters, ''public opinion is largely with the left,'' Rémi Lefebvre, a political scientist at the University of Lille, told me. ''The French believe that the problems the left wants to address are important, but they don't believe in their solutions.''

For the French left, as for center-left parties across Western democracies, the path to power is commonly seen to lie in recapturing the (white) ***working class*** outside large urban centers, who in recent years have been drawn toward the far right. But if the left has struggled to attract these voters -- and to keep them -- it is not just for reasons of policy. Profound economic, social and cultural changes -- deindustrialization, the loss of secure jobs, the breakdown of unions and party structures -- have so remade politics that even policies that should appeal to such voters cannot persuade them on merit alone. While in France, as elsewhere, the left and the far right are often viewed as vying for power over the political center, this narrative glosses over some critical distinctions. ''The condition for winning is not at all the same for the extreme right and the left,'' says Samuel Hayat, a political scientist specializing in the history of French political thought at the French National Center for Scientific Research.

Ongoing tensions over immigration and asylum policies, a spate of lethal terrorist attacks and the explosive emotions stoked by the Israel-Hamas war (France has both the largest Jewish and the largest Muslim populations in Europe) create a climate favorable to the far right on social issues. ''Immigration is a topic that is difficult for the left to address,'' Lefebvre says, not only because many of its constituents are themselves immigrants or the descendants of immigrants but also because leftist ideology, which embraces equality for all, is in many ways antithetical to the harsh enforcement of border laws. This difficulty has been exacerbated by the ''droitisation'' of French media, or the ubiquity of extreme right figures. Marine Le Pen ''doesn't even need to speak,'' Lefebvre says. ''The debate has become so right-wing. The other forces do the job for her.''

If the far right has succeeded in ''being hegemonic in the way that the media interprets certain questions, such as the question of Islam, the question of immigration,'' Hayat says, the left is in the unenviable position of having to offer concrete proposals and persuade people it can implement them. ''They have to go and conquer every place, they have to do politics,'' he says. ''They have to appear as a real force of opposition that will truly change the lives of people if they arrive in power.''

Like many recently birthed political movements, L.F.I. has fashioned itself in and for the era of social media. While its policy platform is largely out of the left-wing playbook, its tactics are aimed at the attention economy. From its inception, L.F.I. has excelled at the optics of protest -- what Mélenchon's opponents call ''the decibel left'' -- theatrical disruptions of power that attack the establishment, especially the media and within Parliament. During the anti-pension-reform marches last spring, its deputies became well known for shouting down Macron's ministers. In one notorious incident, an L.F.I. representative plastered an effigy of the labor minister's head onto a soccer ball and posed for a photo with his foot on top of it.

These kinds of actions are not mere provocations. They are seen by L.F.I. as a way to mobilize a new kind of grass-roots populism by engaging voters who have long ceased to participate in politics. Like Chantal Mouffe, a theorist of leftist populism and a friend of Mélenchon's, Mélenchon believes that voters have become demoralized by a technocratic neoliberal consensus: the primacy of markets and social values that favor individualism over the collective good. The expression of anger is meant to make room for changing course, by solidifying support among the ***working class*** and luring voters who might otherwise be tempted by the far right.

In France, as in many Western democracies today, the ***working class*** is now in large part nonwhite. The 10th Arrondissement of Paris, where the L.F.I. has its headquarters in an old uniform distribution center, is a mix of immigrant workers (and their descendants) and the bobos, as the French refer to yuppies, who have gentrified the area -- the very urban voters who have become Mélenchon's strongest bloc. His constituency also comprises the academic and activist left, who dominate social-media-driven messaging and give voice to this demographic coupling.

Last summer, I found Mélenchon in his office behind a sunny glassed-in antechamber staffed by older millennials. Warm and extroverted, with a well-deserved reputation as an intellectual, he relayed anecdotes and reflections in an erudite yet idiomatic French that was a notch or two above my nonnative proficiency. On his desk I saw a copy of ''The Communist Manifesto,'' which I assumed that Mélenchon, a French sovereigntist with a fierce anti-American streak, might have left out as a mild provocation.

Mélenchon was a member of the center-left French Socialist Party until 2008, when he quit to form a separate party because he thought the Socialists had, like their counterparts across Europe and the United States, fallen under the thrall of neoliberalism. ''We currently live in a country, France, the seventh economy in the world, with nine million poor people, six million who can't feed their children,'' Mélenchon told me. ''This was never France.''

Mélenchon has advocated the founding of a new republic that would change the Constitution to shift power away from the president and toward the people. He described himself to me as ''a tribune of the people,'' even as he acknowledged that ''the people'' of the 21st century is not the same as the people of the 20th century or the 19th century. He is nonetheless clearly inspired by the rabble-rousing leftist politics of previous eras. ''The tribune was always someone whose body was engaged,'' Mélenchon said, as he twisted around in his seat and waved at a photo of Jean Jaurès, one of the founders of the Socialist Party, a diminutive man in a bowler hat, hanging by one hand from a flagpole, the other hand raised toward a sea of people below him. ''Conflictuality,'' he said, referring to his politics of disruption, ''profoundly shocks the mores of the ruling elite.''

Mélenchon never misses an opportunity to apply his rhetorical gifts to challenging those in power. It was to this end that they were deployed last summer when riots exploded across the country after a police officer killed 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk in the driver's seat of his car. (Merzouk was shot during a traffic stop.) As protesters across the Parisian suburbs, known as banlieues, looted stores and set fire to cars, schools, town halls and other state property, leading to thousands of arrests, Mélenchon took to Twitter to call for justice. While leaders in the banlieues praised him for acknowledging the lived experience of their constituents, elsewhere the backlash was vicious. Critics from the center and the right railed that, even as the country burned, Mélenchon hadn't called for calm.

The same defiant impulse was on display this fall. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel, French politicians organized a march against antisemitism. Nearly all major political figures in France, including Marine Le Pen, attended. Mélenchon did not. (He later said this was because of the presence of the far right.) Once Israel's bombing of the Gaza Strip began, Mélenchon joined marches calling for a cease-fire, from which he posted pictures. Then he tweeted that the speaker of Parliament, Yaël Braun-Pivet, who is Jewish and was in Israel on a fact-finding visit, was ''camping out'' in Tel Aviv to ''encourage a massacre.'' The press, including left-leaning outlets, jumped on Mélenchon's remarks, calling them antisemitic -- one magazine decried them as ''vile misjudgments'' -- while newscasters on centrist or mainstream channels praised Le Pen's response, creating a media environment in which the left was portrayed as potentially more dangerous to the country than the far right. (Mélenchon later said his remarks were not antisemitic because what he objected to was the unconditional nature of Braun-Pivet's support for Israel.)

Mélenchon's critics, including some of L.F.I.'s more mainstream coalition partners, cite such tactics as the reason they think he has hit a ceiling with voters. ''There's an L.F.I. discourse on social networks, saying, Oh, we don't care, we have to be honest and true, and the way to do it is to be the same in the streets and in Parliament,''' says Vincent Martigny, a political scientist at the University of Nice, Côte d'Azur. ''But we can see that this strategy of L.F.I. to be very violent in Parliament at this point doesn't work at all. The middle class might be angry, but it doesn't want angry people to be at the Élysée Palace.''

In the past, unions and party organizations worked together to do both -- they mobilized their members to demonstrate and to vote for their candidates. With unions in decline, and with many of the traditional left party structures in France now nonexistent, radical actions, even those that have strong participation across age groups and that enjoy union support, don't necessarily lead to greater voter turnout. As has been repeatedly demonstrated by social movements over the last decade -- Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, the Yellow Vests in France and Gezi Park in Turkey -- impassioned social-media-driven engagement in the streets does not necessarily translate into the kind of engagement required to acquire and sustain power.

An electoral map of France from the 2022 presidential election shows that the L.F.I. won in the immigrant suburbs of northeastern Paris and its environs and did well in many pockets in the south of France and in other major cities. The west of France, once a stronghold of the Socialist Party, went to Macron. The south, which has long been far-right territory, went to Marine Le Pen, as did large swaths of the postindustrial northeast, a region that was once the breeding ground of the French Communist Party. Amid the sea of National Rally victories in northeast France, the left managed to win only a handful of districts.

Historically, the French left operated as a coalition of the French Socialist Party and the P.C.F. Beginning in the 1930s and then again after World War II, that coalition helped establish what many leftists think of when they think of the social welfare state. The P.C.F., which played a paramount role in the French resistance during World War II, operated effectively through already well-established underground networks. It emerged from World War II with a new legitimacy, especially in what had been occupied northern and eastern France. That was also the country's industrial base; there, wartime destruction created ample opportunity to champion the workers who would rebuild the nation.

As part of coalition governments in the mid-1940s, the P.C.F. fought for and helped put in place the social security system and the pension system -- the major pillars of the French welfare state. Though national leaders of the P.C.F. continued to defend Stalin, and Stalinism, even into the 1970s, at the local level, P.C.F. chapters carried out the more practical functions of organizing, representing and offering services to workers. In short, the P.C.F. was part of a historically grounded communal identity. ''We built the social model, and we're proud of that history,'' Fabien Roussel, the current head of the P.C.F., told me.

Roussel, an energetic 54-year-old, took over the French Communist Party in 2018. Over Bastille Day last July, I tailed him through St.-Amand-les-Eaux, a quaint spa town named for its healing waters near the Belgian border, in what was once French coal country, as he made his holiday rounds. Roussel greeted constituents at a rock concert, joined a crowd gathered to watch the fireworks, dropped in on a house party and finally, the following morning, marched in a Bastille Day parade in the neighboring town Fresnes-sur-Escaut. There, local officials had assembled in front of an old union hall dedicated to the Martel brothers, ''martyrs to the resistance,'' according to a plaque on the building: Henri, executed in 1942 at age 22, and Germinal, executed in 1943 at 21.

Today the climate for the P.C.F. is very different than it was in the postwar years. In the '80s, the P.C.F. began to lose ground, as the industries that fueled the economy (coal, metallurgy, textiles) moved out; the idea of communism, always tainted by its association with the excesses of the Soviet Union, became increasingly untouchable. As industrial jobs vanished and workers ceased to be represented by unions, they became unmoored from the party structures that once granted them political representation and power -- not just the formal ones, like unions, but the social clubs and community leisure activities organized by workers who spent their days together. People ceased to think of themselves as part of a ''proletariat,'' and the idea of collective organizing began to fade.

At the same time, many workers began to experience what is known as déclassement: a halt, or reversal, of improvements to the standard of living. The economic consequences bred social ones. With less to do, people spent more time inside their homes watching TV, where right-wing pundits and ideologues thrived. Soon political protest against the status quo began to shift from an embrace of the far left into support for Jean-Marie Le Pen (Marine's father) and his National Front. By the 1990s, the National Front was using the language of protectionism to pander to discontented workers.

As a result, voters became increasingly unpredictable. ''When you had mass political parties, you could have stability in their vote, because the party was an organization that defined important parts of your life,'' Hayat, the political scientist, says, ''and not just what you voted for every five years.'' Now that politics ''has been reduced to what ballot you put in the ballot box, well, of course, people can sometimes vote for the left, sometimes not,'' he says. Even those who broadly identify with the left do not join parties, Hayat says. This is largely because political identities are now formed and expressed on social media, outside party structures.

This organizational conundrum does not fall on all parties equally. ''If you want to create stability in the voting, you need organizations,'' Hayat says. That is, a structured, consistent and beneficial presence in communities. In France, the left no longer has this kind of presence. The same is true of Italy, which once had one of the strongest Communist Parties in Europe and which now has a far-right government. And it is also true in the United States, where, until the 1970s and '80s, New Deal politics kept white ***working-class*** voters close to the Democratic Party. In the absence of such structures, Hayat continues, you ''need to be the only party that appeals to a certain emotion that is very strong in the electorate, for example, fear.'' That, of course, is the strength of the far right.

''They take my exact words,'' Roussel said of Marine Le Pen's party. ''Without paying for rights, naturally.'' But behind it all, Roussel said, their platform is still neoliberal. ''The far-right may talk about raising salaries, but they would also get rid of the employer contributions that help fund the social security system,'' he said. ''I often say to the workers that I meet: Be wary of the National Rally. It's like a candy that is very sweet when you put it in your mouth. But when you bite into it, it's very bitter. And it can make you sick.''

The unemployment rate in St.-Amand now stands, by some calculations, at 23.5 percent. When Roussel took over the P.C.F. five years ago, the party had just won about 1 percent of the vote in the second round of parliamentary elections. He managed to double that figure during the presidential elections in 2022 -- to 2.3 percent in the first round. Some 53 percent of those who turned out to vote in St.-Amand voted for Le Pen in the second round of the presidential elections. But they also voted for Roussel against his far-right opponent in the parliamentary elections; Roussel won his seat by nine points. This may be a testament less to the particulars of his policies than to his multigenerational roots in the region -- his father was a journalist for a P.C.F. publication -- and to his persona and his presence in the community. ''Marine Le Pen is against Macron, and I'm against Macron,'' Roussel told me. ''In the national elections, people are fed up with both left and right, it's always the same thing, so they vote far right. In local elections, they vote for people they know, whom they like and who treat them well.''

As the traditional party system in France has broken down, and as political figures skirt it to succeed, ''there is a cannibalization of politics by personality,'' says Martigny, the University of Nice professor. In that sense, the left has mirrored the populist style of the far right, in which personality trumps the traditional party machine.

Many French leftists dislike Roussel precisely for this reason, arguing that his politics are more a matter of making friends than of fighting for left-wing ideas. Even when it comes to Mélenchon, it is difficult to determine how many people voted for him because they believe in his politics and how many voted in favor of a big personality, with enough charisma and fame to beat out the others in a multicandidate election -- what the French call the ''vote utile.''

Some politicians on the left have taken this to mean that they should each cultivate their own followings, campaign for the presidency in the next elections, then rally their followers behind whoever makes it to the runoff, in the hope that, at that point, there will be enough votes to form a leftist majority. Vitriolic debates that revolve around questions of what in France is known as le wokisme have become fertile ground for such self-positioning.

As a matter of policy, there is little disagreement within the French left about the importance of feminism, antiracism and other matters of social justice. Even Roussel, who more than anyone on the left might be said to represent the kind of cultural conservatism inherent in the old ''white ***working-class*** guy'' style of politics, largely subscribes to these principles. When I visited him at his office at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, I spotted a poster on his wall that enumerated in Ch'ti, the regional language of northern France, the historic ''Droits de l'Homme,'' the Rights of Man, the document adopted during the French Revolution that was foundational to democracy. Below it was a poster that enumerated, also in Ch'ti, the Rights of Woman.

What disagreement there is centers on the public messaging around such issues. Roussel has become one of the most popular figures in French politics, in part because of his sometimes unwitting adventures in the culture wars. His main sparring partner is Sandrine Rousseau, an economist and a Green Party member of Parliament who was a leader of the French #MeToo movement. In 2022, Roussel tweeted that he wished every French citizen could enjoy ''a good steak, a good wine, a good piece of cheese -- that's la gastronomie française!'' In response, Rousseau tweeted a link to an article noting that, in fact, couscous, a North African dish, was most popular among the French. This exchange kicked off a debate as to whether it was still permissible to define French cuisine as wine and cheese. To the delight of many, Roussel insisted that it was.

Rousseau, a petite 52-year-old woman with a gray pixie cut, represents a southern district of Paris, which includes most of the bobo 13th Arrondissement. Visitors to her office at the Assemblée Nationale are greeted by a poster that reads: ''Replace Capitalism With a Good Nap!'' Her policies often carry a whiff of the ridiculous but are typically based on solid research and are highly effective on social media. She has a knack for combining ecological policies with feminist ones. Last year, in response to the heat waves and fires France endured, she started a campaign to reduce meat consumption, which contributes to climate change. She said that to get men, who consume more meat than women, to eat less of it, we must ''de-virilize'' barbecuing. This idea generated a lively round of ''le buzz.''

Rousseau insisted that, in addition to the attention the barbecue controversy brought, it was part of a messaging strategy to stem the growth of the far right. ''Right now, they control the terms of debate,'' she said. ''That's why it's important that we impose our own themes. We have to counter that. It's not easy.''

According to Lefebvre, the political scientist at the University of Lille, the wokisme debates don't really speak to most French. ''What interests them are questions about work, economics,'' he says. In recent years, France has been hit by such a severe housing crisis that a rising number of university students have begun living at campsites. The number of homeless people in France has doubled in the last decade. ''Middle- and ***working-class*** left-wing voters, they want to pay their taxes, they're thinking about how to pay their bills, they want to educate, raise their children,'' Martigny says. ''Of course, if their child is gay that's fine, and they're worried about climate change, and they think fighting racism is important. But in reality, their daily life is about socioeconomic issues.''

When I was with Roussel in St.-Amand, we stopped at a butcher shop to buy provisions for a holiday dinner he was hosting. As we waited for the cashier, I asked Roussel whether he was interested in de-masculinizing meat. He seemed unamused. He nodded at the butcher behind the counter and said, ''He won't even understand the question.''

Even as debates about social issues create fissures in the leftist coalition, the populist theatrics at which it excels have never been its sole province. They can be -- and often have been -- co-opted by the right. This winter there were weeks of protests by farmers, who drove their tractors into Paris and blocked roadways to signal anger at low incomes, unfair trade deals and regulatory burdens. Although the left largely sides with the farmers -- during the 2017 election, Mélenchon advocated that France consider leaving the E.U. -- so does the far right. And because rural areas are its base, the National Rally quickly made a show of supporting the strikers.

The left's politics of outrage can further erode public support and confidence in its ability to govern. The Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel brought perhaps the most direct challenge to L.F.I. After Mélenchon's remarks about Yaël Braun-Pivet's ''camping out'' in Tel Aviv to ''encourage the massacre,'' the left coalition seemed to reach a breaking point. The Socialist Party voted to withdraw from it. Even a prominent member of L.F.I. said publicly that it was time for the group to move beyond Mélenchon's scorched-earth politics.

Some have put their hopes in François Ruffin, a popular and respected muckraking journalist and member of Parliament. A more polished if less intellectual supporter of Mélenchon's, Ruffin became known in France as a leader of Nuit Debout -- or Night, Standing Up -- an Occupy Wall Street-style movement. In 2017, his film ''Thanks, Boss!'' an exposé in the vein of Michael Moore about the outsourcing of jobs in his region of northern France by LVMH, won him a César Award (sometimes known as the French Oscar). That same year, he was elected to Parliament, joining L.F.I.'s parliamentary group. Ruffin happily participates in some of the disruptive antics of L.F.I., but he is also a native of the northern French industrial belt and has an intuitive feel for the cultural conservatism of his voters, at times playing down the salience of, for example, gender issues. Last summer he expressed skepticism about a Spanish law enshrining the right to change gender identity and was attacked for it by leftist activists; he subsequently apologized.

There has been some chatter that Ruffin, who represents a portion of Picardy, a region near Roussel's district, will take over from Mélenchon and run for president in 2027. For Ruffin, the discords within the left are not impediments to electoral success. ''The history of the labor movement is a history of overcoming contradictions,'' Ruffin told me. It is about winning fair wages, maternity leave, paid vacation and pensions but also about standing for the dignity and importance of work. He believes that bringing together the lower and middle classes -- ''the France that works'' -- will be key to re-establishing the left as a party with mass popular support. Though the left performs well among the highest and the lowest income levels in the country, Ruffin says, everywhere in between ''Marine Le Pen is completely dominating us.''

Over the spring, Ruffin supported the mostly female employees who were on strike at a fulfillment center of Vertbaudet, the children's clothing company. After two months, the company reached an agreement on a new contract for the strikers and two other unions. He also attended a forum on the challenges of organizing in modern warehouses and other growing industries, like home health care, in which workers are poorly compensated, even though they provide crucial services. ''How can the left be identified as the party of postindustrial workers?'' Ruffin said. ''We need to name them, talk about their lives.''

When it comes to divisive social issues like the Israel-Hamas war, Ruffin often assumes the line that French leaders have always taken -- the tradition of Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand, straddling parties and politics, appealing to the sense of grandeur that is broadly shared in France. The French tradition was to ''express ourselves independently, without aligning ourselves,'' Ruffin told Le Monde in October, referring to the war in Gaza. He pointed out that France is the only nuclear power in the E.U. and the only E.U. power with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. In following the lead of the United States, he argued, France was doing the world -- and the Israelis and Palestinians -- a disservice. ''Our leverage is the word that is listened to, that carries, that drives. When France decides to speak out loud and clear, its voice is heard. But it has chosen to be mute.''

In the same way, building a winning majority in France, Ruffin told me, has always required speaking to its sense of grandeur. For the left, that may mean invoking one of its defining contributions to the invention of democracy: the sans-culottes, who gave us the notion of ''the people.'' ''It's the educated petite bourgeoisie who represent the Third Estate in the Assemblée Nationale,'' Ruffin said, ''but it's the people of Paris who take the Bastille. It's all of that together that makes the French Revolution.''

Elisabeth Zerofsky is a contributing writer for the magazine who has reported across Europe and the United States. Her last feature was on Poland's response to the war in Ukraine. Antoine d'Agata is a French photographer, film director and member of Magnum Photos. His most recent book of photography is ''Psychodémie.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/06/magazine/french-left-politics-melenchon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/06/magazine/french-left-politics-melenchon.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY GUILLAUME SOUVANT/AFP, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM36)

Fabien Roussel, head of the French Communist Party, in St.-Amand-les-Eaux, in France's industrial northeast. The region was once a bastion of the left and now leans far-right. Opening page: Jean-Luc Mélenchon, founder of La France Insoumise, who is widely credited with the left's strong showing in the last two presidential elections. (MM39)

François Ruffin, a leftist journalist turned member of France's Assemblée Nationale, says that uniting France's lower and middle classes will be key to re-establishing the left's mass support. (MM40)

Sandrine Rousseau, a Green Party member of the Assemblée Nationale, has a knack for forging policy proposals that marry feminist and ecological principles and play well on social media. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTOINE D'AGATA/MAGNUM, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM41) This article appeared in print on page MM36, MM37, MM38, MM39, MM40, MM41, MM42, MM43.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Fish Stew and Black Fettuccine, an Unexpected Recipe for Love; Mini-Vows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNJ-KP41-DXY4-X3BD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 29, 2024 Friday 21:14 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 819 words

**Byline:** Sadiba Hasan Sadiba Hasan reports on love and culture for the Styles section of The Times.

**Highlight:** Maxwell Da Silva, who is from Brazil, and Jane Satsuk, who is from Russia, immediately connected over their “very humble beginnings.” But it was Mr. Da Silva’s cooking that won her heart.

**Body**

Maxwell Da Silva, who is from Brazil, and Jane Satsuk, who is from Russia, immediately connected over their “very humble beginnings.” But it was Mr. Da Silva’s cooking that won her heart.

It was Sept. 1, 2020, and Maxwell Dayvson Da Silva and Evgenia Satsuk were wearing masks during their first date at Leuca, an Italian restaurant in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. He freaked her out just a bit when he asked her to lower her mask and kissed her.

“All right, now I’m going to die,” she recalled thinking. “He probably kisses every woman during the pandemic.” He had actually quarantined in his apartment for 90 days because he had been terrified of going out during the Covid-19 pandemic. But at the time, she didn’t know that.

The kiss didn’t scare her away, though, because of their animated conversation over dinner and drinks. They had met on the dating app Tinder a week before, and they connected about life in New York and life in their homelands. Mr. Da Silva is from Recife, Brazil, and Ms. Satsuk from Khabarovsk, Russia.

Mr. Da Silva, 40, was born and raised in a favela, a ***working-class*** neighborhood. At 14, he taught himself how to code, and when he was 15, he started working as a software engineer at a media company. In 2012, he got a job offer as a software engineer at The New York Times and moved to Brooklyn. “It’s honestly a miracle,” said Mr. Da Silva, as he reflected on his childhood days carrying buckets of water to his home, which didn’t have running water most days.

Ms. Satsuk, 38, grew up in a housing project in Eastern Russia. She graduated from Khabarovsk State University of Economics and Law with a bachelor’s degree in international business and became an account manager at a retail company. She moved to Brooklyn in 2011.

“Even though we were separated by oceans and different continents,” Mr. Da Silva said, “we had a very similar story growing up with very humble beginnings.”

For their second date, they met at Sweetwater, another restaurant in Williamsburg. And on the dates that followed, Mr. Da Silva invited her over to his apartment in Williamsburg and won her heart with his cooking.

On their third date, he prepared [*moqueca*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022015-moqueca-brazilian-seafood-stew), a seafood stew. On the fourth date, he made a mashed potato dish with crab and shrimp. It was so good, she said, that she took some home. And on the fifth date, he cooked black fettuccine with a vodka sauce and lobster, a dish that he now makes for the couple every year on Valentine’s Day.

In January 2021, Ms. Satsuk and Mr. Da Silva booked a one-way ticket to Hawaii. At the time, Mr. Da Silva was working at Lyft as a senior director of engineering, and he was also in the midst of completing a master’s degree in interactive telecommunications at N.Y.U. He is currently the vice president of engineering at Shopify.

Their time in Oahu was a big stress reliever, Mr. Da Silva said. At 5 p.m. every day, he wrapped up at work and went to Waikiki Beach with Ms. Satsuk. Sometimes they had ice cream. They watched the waves and waited for the sunset. They ended up staying in Hawaii for five months.

[*[Click here to binge read this week’s featured couples.]*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022015-moqueca-brazilian-seafood-stew)

On Nov. 25, 2022, during a friendsgiving dinner in their home in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, Mr. Da Silva proposed. While everyone’s glasses were filled with champagne, he made a toast, Ms. Satsuk recalled: “I’m so grateful for all of you guys, but I’m most grateful for this Russian princess I met.”

In February 2024, the couple hosted a three-day Russian and Brazilian celebration with 75 guests in Pipa, a beach town in northeastern Brazil, close to Mr. Da Silva’s hometown.

On the first night, they had a pool party. Colorful dune buggies escorted guests from their hotels to the party, where they took a samba class.

The next day, a wedding celebration took place on a full moon at Filha da Lua Eco Lodge, a resort hotel. A D.J. played Brazilian, Russian and American music. At the end of the celebration, everyone jumped into a pool, including Ms. Satsuk in her wedding dress.

And on the third day, guest were treated to a Russian-themed Sunday brunch.

“I felt so loved,” Ms. Satsuk said. Her family flew in from Russia, taking four planes on a 48-hour trip. She saw her father for the first time in five years.

“I never had a dream of having a wedding dress, and having a wedding day,” added Ms. Satsuk. “But what happened was just a dream come true — a dream I didn’t know I had.”

The celebration had an altruistic component. The owners of the hotel they stayed at had opened a school for children in the neighborhood, but the library had only had a few books. The couple asked each guest to bring a handful of books to donate to the school’s library.

On March 28, the couple were legally wed at the Brooklyn Marriage Bureau. Huiling Zheng, a staff member of the city clerk’s office, officiated.

PHOTO: Jane Satsuk, Maxwell Da Silva (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAMILLA BANDEIRA) This article appeared in print on page ST13.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Day the White Working Class Turned Republican; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6083-7B81-DXY4-X28D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 16, 2020 Thursday 22:42 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1281 words

**Byline:** Clyde Haberman

**Highlight:** David Paul Kuhn’s “The Hardhat Riot” recounts a little-remembered event and traces its significance to the politics of the present day.

**Body**

THE HARDHAT RIOT

Nixon, New York City, and the Dawn of the White ***Working-Class*** Revolution

By David Paul Kuhn

The nation, we keep hearing on television and in social media blather, is politically divided as never before. Nonsense. The ostensibly united states have been disunited many, many times, and “The Hardhat Riot,” by [*David Paul Kuhn,*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com)vividly evokes an especially ugly moment half a century ago, when the misbegotten Vietnam War and a malformed notion of patriotism combined volatilely. They produced a blue-collar rampage whose effects still ripple, not the least of them being Donald Trump’s improbable ascension to the presidency.

Let’s remember what the United States was like in 1970: a country torn apart after years of political assassination, unpopular war, economic dislocation, race rioting and class disharmony. The last thing it needed in 1970 was more open fighting in the streets. But that’s what it got on May 8, days after President Richard Nixon had expanded America’s Southeast Asia misadventure into Cambodia and Ohio National Guardsmen shot dead four students during antiwar protests at Kent State University.

Kuhn, who has written before about white ***working-class*** Americans, builds his book on long-ago police records and witness statements to recreate in painful detail a May day of rage, menace and blood. Antiwar demonstrators had massed at Federal Hall and other Lower Manhattan locations, only to be set upon brutally, and cravenly, by hundreds of steamfitters, ironworkers, plumbers and other laborers from nearby construction sites like the nascent World Trade Center. Many of those men had served in past wars and viscerally despised the protesters as a bunch of pampered, longhaired, draft-dodging, flag-desecrating snotnoses.

It was a clash of irreconcilable tribes and battle cries: “We don’t want your war” versus “America, love it or leave it.” And it was bewildering to millions of other Americans, including my younger self, newly back home after a two-year Army stretch, most of it in West Germany. My sympathies were with the demonstrators. But I also understood the working stiffs and why they felt held in contempt by the youngsters and popular culture.

New social policies like affirmative action and school busing affected white blue-collar families far more than they did the more privileged classes that spawned many antiwar activists. For Hollywood, the workingman seemed barely a step above a Neanderthal, as in the 1970 movies “Joe,” about a brutish factory worker, and “Five Easy Pieces,” in which a diner waitress is set up to be the target of audience scorn. (Come 1971, we also had “All in the Family” and television’s avatar of ***working-class*** bigotry, Archie Bunker.)

It was, too, an era when New York was changing fast and not for the better. Corporations decamped for the suburbs and warm-weather states. Kuhn notes how between 1967 and 1974 the number of Fortune 500 headquarters in the city fell to 98 from 139. Whites moved out in droves. Crime rose, and if you proposed getting tough on felons you risked being labeled a racist. Roughly one in three city residents was on public assistance. Municipal finances were in tatters. In short, 1970 New York was a caldron of misery, one rare bright spot being its [*basketball team, the Knicks*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com), neatly integrated and en route to its first championship.

Kuhn quotes the estimable [*Pete Hamill*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com) as observing back then that the workingman “feels trapped and, even worse, in a society that purports to be democratic, ignored.” One could go further. Many blue-collar workers felt scorned — by the wealthy, by the college-educated, by the lucky ones with draft deferments, by every group that qualified as elite. They sneered back, especially at the patrician New York mayor. The way many of them referred to [*Lindsay*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com), you’d have thought his first name was not John but, rather, an all-too-familiar obscenity.

Understanding hard-hat resentment, however, does not translate into excusing the violence that hundreds of them inflicted that May 8, the 25th anniversary of the Allied victory over Germany in World War II. Self-styled paragons of law and order, they became a mob, pounding and kicking any antiwar youngster they could grab, doing the same to bystanders who tried to stop the mayhem and justifying it in the name of America. Kuhn ably and amply documents the cowardly beating of women, the gratuitous cold-cocking of men and the storming of a shakily protected City Hall, where the mayor’s people, to the hard hats’ rage, had lowered the flag in honor of the Kent State dead.

“A tribal tension had infused downtown,” Kuhn observes. Among the tribes were the police, who were anything but New York’s finest that day. Mostly, they stood aside while the hard hats ran amok; examples of their nonfeasance abound. Some of them even egged on the thuggery. When a group of hard hats moved menacingly toward a Wall Street plaza, a patrolman shouted: “Give ’em hell, boys. Give ’em one for me!” Yet the police were never held accountable for failing to stop the marauding, and “few hard hats owned up to the extent of their violence.”

Kuhn favors straightforward journalistic prose, with few grand flourishes. In setting scenes, he tends toward a staccato, some of it overdone: One speaker “exuded Establishment. The jacket and tie. A WASP face with a Roman nose. The side-swept hair, straight and trim with delicate bangs, a tidy mustache, pinkish skin.” Hardly every antiwar protester merits his go-to characterization of them as potty-mouthed hippies.

But over all, this is a compelling narrative about a horrific day. In their fury, the hard hats left more than 100 wounded, the typical victim being a 22-year-old white male collegian, though one in four was a woman; seven police officers were also hurt. Kuhn concludes that while the workers plainly came loaded for bear, their tantrum was essentially spontaneous and not, as some believed, part of a grand conspiracy.

That said, they were just what some conservative strategists were looking for. Patrick Buchanan, then a Nixon aide, said of blue-collar Americans in a memo to the boss, “These, quite candidly, are our people now.” He wasn’t wrong. Republicans have since catered as ever to the rich but they have also curried favor with ***working-class*** whites, while Democrats seem more focused on others: racial minorities, gays, immigrants. Thanks in good measure to white blue-collar disaffection, Trump in 2016 narrowly won Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, a hat trick he may yet pull off again in November.

In a way, Vietnam continues to cast its shadow. A short walk from those 1970 streets of chaos, there is a [*memorial to the 1,741 New Yorkers*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com) who died in the war. Its dominant feature is a wall of thick glass etched with reflections on combat, including part of a haunting letter sent home from Vietnam in 1968. “One thing worries me — will people believe me?” The Navy lieutenant Richard W. Strandberg wrote. “Will they want to hear about it, or will they want to forget the whole thing ever happened?”

Indeed, most Americans forgot about Vietnam long ago. The same has been true about the shameful hard-hat riot of 1970. Until now.

Clyde Haberman, United States Army 1968-70, is the former “NYC” columnist for The Times. THE HARDHAT RIOT Nixon, New York City, and the Dawn of the White ***Working-Class*** Revolution By David Paul Kuhn Illustrated. 416 pp. Oxford University Press. $29.95.

PHOTO: New York construction workers, May 8, 1970. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NEAL BOENZI/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Related Articles**

* [*Sorry, Liberals. Bigotry Didn’t Elect Donald Trump.*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com)

1. [*The ‘Hard Hat Riot’ Was a Preview of Today’s Political Divisions*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com)
2. [*You Can Fight City Hall*](https://davidpaulkuhn.com)

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2020

**End of Document**



[***In New York City, Trump Runs for President Pothole***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3H-F1T1-DXY4-X1X2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 24, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1299 words

**Byline:** By Michael Gold

**Body**

Before and after appearing in a Manhattan courthouse, where he is on criminal trial, former President Donald J. Trump has been campaigning for president in unfriendly political territory.

Former President Donald J. Trump is accustomed to crisscrossing the country on his private jet, headlining rallies at big venues where he is met by roaring masses chanting his name. But often over the last month, his presidential campaign has ventured into politically hostile territory: New York City.

He stopped in to chat with the owner of a tiny Harlem bodega. He made an early-morning visit to a construction site in Midtown Manhattan, shaking hands with union members wearing hard hats and safety goggles. He delivered pizzas to and posed for snapshots with emergency workers at a firehouse just minutes away from Trump Tower.

You might be forgiven for wondering if Mr. Trump were actually running for mayor.

Since the start of his criminal trial in Manhattan on April 15, which requires he be in court for much of the week, Mr. Trump has held just three campaign rallies, only two of which took place in battleground states expected to determine the outcome of the election. He has made just as many modest stops in New York in front of smaller crowds.

The small-scale politicking, which New Yorkers are more accustomed to seeing from local politicians trying to gin up support, has been a study in contrasts to the raucous rallies that have defined his political brand since his 2016 campaign. And they have offered a markedly different atmosphere still from court, where Mr. Trump is bound by rules of conduct that keep him largely still and silent even as prosecutors accuse him of wrongdoing.

''It does feel like a local race,'' said George Arzt, a longtime political consultant in New York City who once served as press secretary to Mayor Edward I. Koch. ''It does feel like he's almost going out there door to door.''

Mr. Trump, a born-and-bred New Yorker who moved to Florida in 2019, has repeatedly suggested these stops are part of a push to win his home state, which has overwhelmingly rejected him twice. But New York has not voted for a Republican president since 1984, and Democratic candidates defeated him by more than 20 percentage points in the last two elections. New York City itself is deeply Democratic.

Political observers and Trump aides have said that Mr. Trump's campaign stops in New York City are as much about the message they are sending to a national audience as they are to New Yorkers. On Thursday, Mr. Trump is expected to return more to form, with a planned speech at a park in the Bronx that his campaign said it expected thousands to attend.

Brian Hughes, a campaign spokesman, suggested that the event, in Crotona Park, in a borough with large Black and Hispanic populations, would allow Mr. Trump to highlight to a national audience his strength among ''voting blocs that you might argue are not traditional Republican voting blocs.''

Mr. Trump last month vowed that he would hold a rally at Madison Square Garden, the city's marquee venue in Manhattan, meant for ''honoring the police and honoring the firemen and everybody, honoring a lot of people.'' Mr. Trump, who has been indicted in four cases, has repeatedly tried to showcase his support among emergency responders this year, including with his visit this month to a Manhattan firehouse.

Still, so far, Mr. Trump's campaign visits in New York have largely been limited to small stops, ones that his advisers have said are borne somewhat out of necessity given the court schedule, which has generally allowed Wednesdays and weekends off.

On one Wednesday, Mr. Trump held rallies in Michigan and Wisconsin, two important swing states. He spent a Saturday at a rally at the Jersey Shore that attracted visitors from neighboring Pennsylvania, another key battleground. Yet even as Mr. Trump has lamented that the trial limits his ability to campaign, he has attended fund-raisers on some days when court was not in session, while on others, he has had no scheduled events.

Working within the trial schedule, Mr. Trump's aides have also looked to use its constraints to their advantage. Advisers have argued that New York City, a diverse metropolis of more than eight million, offers an ideal backdrop for Mr. Trump to highlight issues he has made central to his platform, such as immigration, the economy and public safety.

''These same issues that are plaguing New York City are also plaguing all of the battleground states,'' Jason Miller, a senior Trump adviser, said in an interview.

The Biden campaign has sought to capitalize on and draw attention to Mr. Trump's scheduling limits. President Biden has been campaigning more often on Wednesdays, and he made light of the trial calendar in a video challenging Mr. Trump to debate. The campaign also began selling shirts with the slogan ''Free on Wednesdays.''

Mr. Trump's first campaign stop during the trial, just two days into the proceedings, was to a bodega in a heavily Hispanic area of Harlem that had been the site of a stabbing years earlier. The former president used the visit to highlight a set of overlapping issues and to build on his efforts to win over Latino voters.

After chatting with the store's owner, Mr. Trump stood in front of cameras outside and criticized Mr. Biden's economic policies as detrimental to small businesses. And fresh from appearing as a criminal defendant, Mr. Trump railed against the district attorney prosecuting him and Democrats in general for being overly lax on crime.

The visit drew more significant crowds than Mr. Trump's other stops in the city. The blocks surrounding the bodega were lined with people standing behind police barricades hoping to catch a glimpse, some of them supporters and others merely curious.

That level of attention distinguishes the former president's stops in the city from those made by most other politicians in and around New York.

Mr. Trump and his campaign have cited the onlookers as proof that he is politically popular in the city, particularly among Hispanics. Mr. Miller noted that the bodega's neighborhood was an example of ''communities that don't normally have national political figures come and visit them.''

Other political observers have argued that the crowds in Harlem were more reflective of Mr. Trump's celebrity status rather than agreement with his views.

''He is a celebrity first, and people are interested in him, even if they don't agree with him,'' said Bill de Blasio, a Democratic former mayor who ran a short-lived presidential bid for the 2020 nomination.

Still, Mr. de Blasio, a frequent Trump critic, acknowledged that the former president's New York stops would help him broadcast his political message. And he noted that such retail politicking would energize any candidate -- particularly one spending the day facing austere court proceedings.

Last month, Mr. Trump preceded his day in court with a visit to a construction site, where he shook hands with dozens of invited guests. Many were union workers. As he worked the line, people inside the construction site clambered on top of scaffolding and equipment to take photos and videos.

Hank Sheinkopf, a longtime New York political strategist who watched Mr. Trump evolve from tabloid fixture to celebrity to politician, said that such a stop was consistent with Mr. Trump's decades-long effort to represent himself as the champion of ***working-class*** people.

''He is a guy who took tremendous pride in being able to be accepted by average working people,'' Mr. Sheinkopf said. ''He wants to make sure he doesn't lose that touch. His appeal comes from being an elite who is not an elite.''

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/us/politics/trump-campaign-2024-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/us/politics/trump-campaign-2024-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Former President Donald J. Trump's first campaign stop during his criminal trial in Manhattan was to a bodega in a heavily Hispanic area of Harlem. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA WATTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Mr. Trump posing for photos at a Midtown Manhattan fire station, top, where he delivered pizzas, center. Union workers at a construction site in Manhattan, bottom, gathered for his early-morning visit last month. Mr. Trump's trial schedule has detoured his campaign to hostile turf: his own hometown. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** May 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Her Monuments Are Made With a Camera***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3H-F1T1-DXY4-X1WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 24, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 9; ART REVIEW

**Length:** 1387 words

**Byline:** By Holland Cotter

**Body**

The documentary photographer honors those who turn their energies to a social good. And our critic says this artist does the same.

On an August night in 2017, a mob of neo-Nazi thugs under the banner ''Unite the Right'' gathered in a park in Charlottesville, Va., to protest the removal of a bronze statue of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee. Although Donald J. Trump, then the president, found no fault with the race-baiting demonstrators, other people did. A counterprotest ensued; the results were explosive.

And suddenly, public monuments commemorating historical figures became prime symbols of the country's split into violently opposing ideological camps.

That split feels wider than ever now. And although a campaign to reassess the values embedded in monuments followed, spurred in large part by Black Lives Matter, controversies around historical commemoration linger and thinking about new models continues. What forms should they take? What subjects are worthy of honoring? Is frozen-in-time material permanence necessary, or even desirable?

Such questions are posed and resolutely tested in ''LaToya Ruby Frazier: Monuments of Solidarity'' at the Museum of Modern Art, a two-decade midcareer survey of an American photographer and social activist who takes race, class and gender, viewed through the intimate lens of family and community, as her focus, and addresses them in photographic series presented as variably effective sculptural installations.

Frazier came to photography young. Born in 1982 in the industrial town of Braddock, Pa., a short distance from Pittsburgh and the site of Andrew Carnegie's first steel mill, she picked up a camera in her teens. By that point Braddock's days of promise and prosperity were long past, with a predominantly African American remnant population left stranded. Jobs were scarce; pay, low. Schools were foundering. The only hospital was on its way to being shuttered, a catastrophe in a town plagued by the effects of unregulated, health-ruining industrial pollution.

From a few outdoor shots in the show's opening galleries we get a clear sense of the environmental wreckage Frasier moved through growing up. And from interior shots we understand how a commandingly observant young person survived and thrived, thanks to the protective company of two women, her grandmother, Ruby, and her mother, Cynthia.

Her grandmother, who raised her, was herself an inventive, if undeclared, artist, judging by the altar-like assemblages of dolls and figurines that appear in Frazier's pictures. And her mother, employed as a nurse's aide and bartender, actively collaborated in Frazier's earliest photographic and video work, forming the first in a line of female creative partnerships the artist would forge over the years.

Frazier's pictures of both women are among the most unguardedly personal she has made: shots of her grandmother at the end of her life, and of her debris-strewn living room after her death, have a reliquary tenderness impossible to forget.

These early autobiographical photos, several of which appeared in the 2012 Whitney Biennial, launched Frazier's career and defined her trajectory as a justice-minded documentarian of Black ***working-class*** life. Opportunities for further projects soon followed.

In 2015 she traveled on an assignment by Elle magazine to Flint, Mich., another impoverished Black city, this one a victim of environmental poisoning through what amounted to a government-mandated polluting of its water supply. There Frazier initiated a second collaborative partnership, with two women, Shea C. Cobb and Amber N. Hasan, both local workers and artist-activists, around whom she built a powerful photo essay titled ''Flint Is Family in Three Acts.''

Its narrative, which unfolds over four years, opens with a video, set to rap-style poem written and performed by Cobb, documenting the water crisis in Flint, and the protests in response to it. Frazier then tracks Cobb's brief retreat to the safety of a family farm in Mississippi. (Hasan made a similar short-term move, to Puerto Rico.) And the story concludes on an upbeat note -- here the photography changes from black-and-white to color -- when the two women join forces with other community members to bring to the city a generator that produced clean water almost literally from thin air.

Frazier then photographed Flint residents in front of the hulking machine, some triumphantly smiling, others patiently posed with water jugs at the ready. In a format she would thereafter regularly use, the portraits are accompanied by printed interviews, with pictures and texts displayed atop steel stands arranged in free-standing V-for-victory formation.

Frazier pushes a sculptural dimension further in two installations she calls ''Monuments to Workers.'' One is a shout-out to a group of community health care professionals who stayed on the job in Baltimore during the mortal siege that was the Covid pandemic: Their words and portraits, printed on panels attached to IV poles, seem to be floating in place.

The second worker piece emerged from Frazier's documentation of the forced closing of a General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, that produced the now discontinued Chevrolet Cruze. Here too she photographed and interviewed on-the-ground personnel, dozens of United Auto Workers union members -- Black, Latino, white -- who were fighting to keep the plant, so central to their lives, open. And at MoMA she gives their images and words a symbolically resonant display: in a long, shed-like steel structure evoking both an assembly-line frame and a buttressed church nave.

And the show -- organized by Roxana Marcoci, senior curator and acting chief curator in the department of photography, with Caitlin Ryan, an assistant curator, and Antoinette D. Roberts, a former curatorial assistant -- has two small shrines. A dimly lighted oval space midway through is a walk-in homage to the artist, writer and educator Sandra Gould Ford who, while employed for years in a Pittsburgh steel mill, photographed and archived half-buried documents, including employee grievance reports and records of work-related fatalities.

The exhibition's final gallery functions as a pilgrimage chapel dedicated to the Chicana activist Dolores Huerta, a founder with Cesar Chavez of what became United Farm Workers. In 2023, Frasier visited Huerta, now 94, photographing her at sites related to the California labor movement and in the company of her large extended family. Photographs of the visit are here, surrounding a life-size portrait of Huerta that dominates the space like a devotional icon.

All these installations from the past decade, with their sculptural and architectural features, are commemorative monuments, but monuments to the living, to social and political realities in progress. They're far less about what once was than they are about the present and future: what is, and what will and should be. As such they are dynamic: provisional, revisable, correctable. And without exception, they're dedicated to people who, in ways modest or epic, have turned their energies toward a common social good, as, in Frazier's view, artists should be doing.

The recent work has some problems. Accessibility is one. The printed texts that have become an intrinsic part of Frazier's format are, for reasons of length, difficult to take in. It's likely that even the most conscientious viewer will only sample them.

Nor are all the photographs equally eye-catching. Compare Frazier's shots of her family in the Braddock series with her recent ones of the Huerta family and you instantly see a difference in intensity. In the early images the artist is a fully embedded emotional participant; in the later ones she's a documenting tourist.

But these are minor flaws, of the kind that any serious monument-builder working on the tough joint tasks of truth-telling and healing, must tackle and resolve, again and again. Frazier is such a builder and, in our present thug-threatened moment, a needed one.

LaToya Ruby Frazier: Monuments of Solidarity

Through Sept. 7. Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org.LaToya Ruby Frazier: Monuments of SolidarityThrough Sept. 7 at the Museum of Modern Art in Manhattan; 212-708-9400, moma.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/arts/design/latoya-ruby-frazier-moma-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/arts/design/latoya-ruby-frazier-moma-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left, ''Momme'' (2008). Top right, ''Grandma Ruby and Me,'' from ''The Notion of Family'' (2005). Above, ''Momme Silhouettes'' (2010) from the same series. Below left, ''Mary A. Williams, Tuklor's Mother, Holding the Water Hose at the Atmospheric Water Generator on North Saginaw Street,'' from ''Flint Is Family in Three Acts'' (2019-20). Below right, a view of ''The Last Cruze.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LaTOYA RUBY FRAZIER AND GLADSTONE GALLERY

LAILA STEVENS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C9.

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[***The Interrupted Presidency***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CT4-JWH1-JBG3-60CC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Shortly after the 11 minutes were over and President Joseph R. Biden Jr. arose from behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office on the evening of July 24, he and his family filed out to the Rose Garden.

A throng of White House staff members were waiting outside, under a slight drizzle, with a faint rainbow emerging overhead. Most of them spent the preceding hour nervously eating pizza in the East Room of the White House before growing hushed to listen to their 81-year-old boss speak to the nation. Several of them had been crying earlier in the day. But midway into his speech, Biden began to enumerate his administration's considerable legislative achievements -- among them, ''And we finally beat Big Pharma,'' a line he had fatefully mangled in the debate with Donald J. Trump less than a month earlier, abruptly dropping the hammer on his political future. As he proceeded through these shared highlights, the tenor in the East Room seemed to change, and a few of the staff members proudly shook hands and hugged one another.

Now Biden spoke only to them, through a microphone someone handed him (according to a video of the event that I obtained). ''My name is Joe Biden, and I'm Jill Biden's husband,'' he began, grinning broadly at his familiar joke, as his wife stood beside him, noticeably more subdued, working through her own emotions. ''Look,'' he told his aides, ''the only reason that we've had the progress that we've had is because of you. And that's not hyperbole.'' He added, in a raspy but otherwise even voice: ''I'm so damned proud to be a part of you. I really mean that.''

Sounding anything but deflated, Biden exhorted his staff members to think about the work there was left to do over their final six months. He wanted to extend prescription-drug benefits. He wanted to force billionaires to pay their fair share in taxes. ''We can start to help lay the groundwork for Kamala,'' Biden said of his vice president and now heir apparent, who was already out on the campaign trail.

He wrapped up his three minutes of remarks with a stage-whispered call to arms, as if it were a secret plan: ''Let's elect Kamala!'' After their ovation, the president urged his staff to get to work on the ice cream stationed behind them. Biden cracked a few other jokes but didn't stay for dessert. Instead, the 46th president of the United States retreated with his wife down the walkway to the residence.

Tomorrow would be different. He would still be president, but in a manner that no predecessor had been previously subjected to, he would now serve as his party's leader in ceremonial terms only, having been forcibly thrust to the margins of the national frame by other party leaders as all attention turned to the Democratic nominee that Biden believed should have been him. But at least for this moment, he seemed to speak and move with a younger man's ease, somehow lighter than before, as if no longer burdened by his father's admonition, Get back up! Biden had risen as high as any American could go, had fallen back to earth, had gotten back up one more time and now had relinquished the pursuit that had animated his entire political career.

It was as if the Joe Biden of the previous month -- pugnacious, defensive, all but stricken blind by his own ambitions -- had suddenly given way to an entirely different human being, one defined by selfless accommodation. But those two sides of the same man have always been present, and at times in conflict, throughout Biden's 52 years in national political life, and the presidency brought out both sides of him: his best and, later, his worst. He reached the office by challenging Donald Trump in a campaign that he would come to call a fight for the soul of the nation; in doing so, he created for himself a kind of self-mythology in which his own fate was entwined with that of the country's.

Everyone who becomes president has had a long personal relationship with the idea of the presidency. No one who gets there has not yearned for it for years, and it means something different for each. A Biden presidency, in his imagination, would let him transcend the humble origins he always proudly wore on his sleeve and then make good on his own redemption by widening that American dream to include others who had been left out of it. He would pass through unimaginable personal tragedies -- the deaths of his first wife, Neilia, and his daughter Naomi just after he was elected to the Senate and then, when he was the vice president, the death of his oldest son, Beau -- that would shape his public life.

But Biden, as the oldest chief executive to take office, took on the job having spent more time dreaming of it than any previous president. He reached the presidency with more governing expertise than any of his predecessors, but also well behind his own schedule, in a sense already running out of time. The flurry of activity that marked his administration was that of a man who had tried for literal decades to get there, accumulating plans and experiences along the way. He made his mistakes, especially in the chaotic troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and in failing to secure the Southern border, but even as Republicans denounced him as terminally enfeebled, he ushered in a wave of projects and reforms like no Democrat before him in more than a half-century.

And yet before it was even over, he had been deemed too old to win a second term and too old to finish it if he did win: the nation's first too-old-to-be-president president. His decision to quit the race ended one of the most remarkable chapters in American political history and started one that may yet define his legacy. After all, that last chapter will not be written until after the election in November. Would Biden be the hero he always wanted to see himself as, the man who had, with grace and humility, stepped aside so Harris could seize the moment? Or would he become the spoiler who refused to face the stark reality of his own decline and held the Democratic Party hostage to his own ambitions -- even as he insisted nothing less than democracy was at stake?

As he takes the stage on the first night of the Democratic National Convention, both outcomes remain possible. His legacy -- once that of a skilled legislator who then became the able No. 2 man to the nation's first Black president -- is now tied to that of Kamala Harris, his vice president and understudy who has taken center stage. Should Harris win in November, becoming the first female president, Biden may best be remembered as a president who did not so much make history as facilitate it, twice over, and who also helped deny Trump's two quests for a second term, first by beating him and then by stepping back so that a more able Democratic candidate could do the job. That Joe Biden could end up being, as he once put it, a human ''bridge'' to history marks a final plot twist in my reporting for this article, which began weeks before Biden's career-ending debate and includes interviews with more than two dozen current and former Biden advisers, legislators and other Democratic allies. (The White House declined to make the president available to be interviewed.)

In the short weeks since what could be called Biden's abdication, amid the swelling energy and excitement for his vice president -- the rapturous rallies, the explosion of new voter registrations and the rising tide of polls and donations, even a ''White Dudes for Harris'' Zoom call -- there had to be a sting for Biden, still the sitting president but now watching from the sidelines as she enjoyed an outpouring he never had. When Harris introduced Tim Walz as her running mate on Aug. 6 at a thunderous event in Philadelphia, neither of them mentioned Biden at all.

A self-described 'Senate man'

Seemingly from the start of his Senate career, Biden's sense of self was bedeviled by the specter of the presidency. He would always be, in his phrasing, ''a Biden,'' a desired elevation of his ***working-class*** family to nobility as another aspect of that self-mythology, but that Kennedyesque tableau needed the office to complete the picture. Though his natural habitat was arguably the Capitol, where Biden spent more than half his adult life, he never stopped seeing himself as a scrapper from Scranton, Pa., whom the elites looked down upon. Even after becoming one of the youngest candidates ever to be elected to the U.S. Senate, he bristled at the slightest insinuation that his calling might be seen as lowbrow, telling one crowd in May 1973: ''Those of you who are doctors and lawyers and Indian chiefs in the audience, how can any of you possibly do as much good if you're very good at what you do as I can do if I'm very good at what I can do? You can't.''

In that same 1973 speech, Biden described his recent election as ''achieving a life's ambition to seek the highest elective office, with one exception, in the land.'' That one exception always seemed just out of his reach. He was the chairman of Jimmy Carter's campaign steering committee in 1976; he received mention as a potential running mate for Walter Mondale in 1984, the same year that a Times reporter wrote, ''Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware makes little secret of his higher ambitions.'' He declared his candidacy in June 1987, only to withdraw three months later amid revelations that he had plagiarized portions of his stump speech. He briefly considered running again in 2004; then he did so in 2008 and lost resoundingly in the primaries. He saw another chance eight years later from his perch as vice president but was discouraged from taking it by the party's leader, President Barack Obama; he finally succeeded in 2020, though by now as a grandfatherly eminence rather than the Achilles-like protagonist he had once been seen as by the Washington elite.

''He is a person who in his personal and professional life has experienced both great highs and great lows,'' Ron Klain, Biden's former chief of staff and adviser for over 30 years, told me. ''That kind of seasoning gave him a sort of levelheadedness that not many others could bring to the presidency. And his many years in the Senate taught him patience. We went through a phase in 2022 with the Inflation Reduction Act when talks were stalled, and we were said to be idiots because things were taking so long. And he said: 'You know, this is the way the Senate works. It takes as long as it takes.' ''

His long journey to the White House coincided with, and would ultimately challenge, the widely held axiom in contemporary American politics that governors are best suited to be presidents. Biden, by contrast, was a self-described ''Senate man.'' Sixteen presidents before him had served in the Senate, none for more than 12 years. Biden had represented Delaware in the upper legislative chamber for 36 years. He worked with seven presidents and dozens of foreign leaders.

He first achieved national distinction as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he oversaw two of the most notorious Supreme Court confirmation hearings in recent memory. First, in 1987, he led the successful fight to defeat the nomination of Judge Robert H. Bork, a Reagan appointee whose views were deemed too extreme by Biden and others. Four years later, he presided over the hearings for Clarence Thomas's embattled nomination to the Supreme Court, when Anita Hill accused the judge of sexual harassment. Biden's willingness to indulge Republicans on the committee who sought to turn the hearing into a referendum of Hill's character, and his decision not to call as witnesses more women who were ready to testify with claims similar to Hill's, were widely criticized. At the start of his 2020 presidential campaign, knowing this painful history would be exhumed, Biden called Hill to express regret. She then publicly declined to call his words an apology and said she remained unconvinced he had taken responsibility.

In his leadership of the Foreign Relations Committee, he was on less contentious ground, with an understanding of geopolitics so expansive that early in 2004 he laid out in detail to Romania's minister of foreign affairs, Mircea Geoana, how to make the case for why Americans should see strategic value in that country being admitted to NATO, which ultimately came to pass that year. He crossed paths with hundreds of fellow legislators, learning along the way to collaborate with those in Congress who did not share his state's concerns. As his longtime friend and former Senate chief of staff Ted Kaufman put it to me, ''All those committee hearings, all those relationships he'd developed in the Senate, are why he came into the White House with more knowledge than any other president in our history.''

According to those close to him, Biden believed he had become president in no small measure because of his senatorial impulse to build a winning coalition -- in this case, with the progressive wing of his party that had felt disrespected by the Hillary Clinton campaign four years earlier. ''When he became president, he felt compelled to govern with them being a part of it,'' said Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut who would become Biden's point man in the Senate on gun legislation. ''And Joe Biden's a loyal guy.''

Murphy went on to say: ''I also think Biden went through this metamorphosis. He went from being a neoliberal to being an economic nationalist. He came to the conclusion that the markets were fundamentally broken, that power was too concentrated and workers were disempowered. I don't know when that happened, because he didn't campaign that way.''

Later, I asked Kaufman, who had been with Biden since serving on his first Senate campaign in 1972 as an unpaid staff member, if his old friend had undergone some kind of political transformation in the White House. Kaufman politely replied that this was a crock. Senator Biden, he reminded me, had represented corporate-friendly Delaware, not Vermont. He hadn't rolled up his double-digit electoral majorities every six years by waving a pitchfork. Rather, Biden had been mindful of all his constituents -- not just unions and minorities, but also creditors who opposed bankruptcy reform and middle-class white voters who wanted more cops on the street. ''That's what he learned in the Senate, listening to what everyone's got to say,'' Kaufman told me. ''It's not ideological.''

That being said, Kaufman added, his friend felt an almost genetic connection to those who were disadvantaged and otherwise underestimated. Biden himself said as much during his first debate with Trump, in September 2020, when the subject turned to prejudice: People like Trump, he said (with a slight mangling of syntax), ''look down their nose on people like Irish Catholics, like me, and grew up in Scranton.''

Bidens against the world

When I first met Biden in the fall of 2005, while on assignment to write a GQ magazine profile about him, he had already been a U.S. senator for 32 years, had been a presidential candidate once and was positioning himself for a second run. I imagined him as the quintessence of Washington establishment, a man on top of the world. It surprised me, then, when one day our conversation turned to the sitting president, George W. Bush. Biden proceeded to deconstruct Bush's native privilege in a way that I, a biographer of the president, hadn't considered: ''And all you've got to do is look from the road in Kennebunkport at the estate, and you'll understand. It's not even that it's nice. There's nicer places. But it is a rock. It is a peninsula. It's old money. Power. Establishment. There's an understatement to it. But there's an awesome rooted power to it.''

Biden made clear to me that he didn't dislike the president. Still, he didn't care much for the way Bush had blithely C-minused his way through Ivy League schools that many of lesser means would have killed to be able to attend. He didn't like the way the president assigned pet names to those around him, telling me: ''There's a bullying aspect to that. If I give you a nickname, I've become your coach.'' His critique of Bush struck me as acutely personal. Here was one of the most powerful politicians in America, devoting inordinate thought to what someone else had that he (and yes, others) didn't. To my discredit, it didn't seem terribly significant at the time.

As I would later realize, Biden was all but drawing me a diagram of his own deeply internalized class-consciousness. Without any prompting by me during our three months together in 2005, Biden would describe the indignities suffered by his father, Joe Sr., an elegantly dressed and soft-spoken man who never managed to make his mark in the world but who instilled in his progeny an abhorrence of self-pity. One such story he told me, which he later memorialized in his book ''Promises to Keep,'' recounted his father quitting his job at an auto dealership after a company Christmas party, when the owner showed his appreciation for his workers by pouring a bucketful of silver dollars onto the dance floor and watching with amusement as they scrambled to pick up the coins.

''That's an abuse of power,'' Biden told me back then. It was hard to disagree with him. Still, what did that mean to Joe Biden the legislator and aspiring president?

It meant, in his smaller moments, a jut-jawed and insular Bidens-against-the-world combativeness. It meant, in 1987, lashing out at a voter who seemed skeptical of his educational standing by saying, ''I think I have a much higher I.Q. than you, I suspect.'' It meant feeling the need to enumerate and embellish his achievements -- ''I'm the guy that did more for the Palestinian community than anybody,'' he informed the podcaster Speedy Morman last month -- or at times to invent distinctions altogether, as when he claimed that he had been the first in his family to go to college, and also to have once been arrested in South Africa while trying to meet with the anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela.

It meant trusting only the very loyal, his family above all, who had helped run his first campaigns and ever since had joined him in all manner of suffering. The self-mythology he had long engaged in, an attempt for the Bidens to have standing and meaning like that of other American dynastic political clans, would blind him to his brother and son's own attempts to trade on that name. It meant abiding his son Hunter's and his brother Jim's questionable business practices, while continually saying that he was ''proud'' of his son even as Hunter falsely denied having a child out of wedlock and was found guilty of federal gun charges. Hunter took a well-paying seat on the board of Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company, during Biden's vice presidency; recent reporting revealed that he requested State Department assistance with a potential business deal for the firm in Italy, though there is no evidence that his father was aware of his attempts. That the family had shared so much hardship seemed, in Biden's eyes, to immunize them from charges of misconduct.

But the memory of being dispossessed would also inspire in Biden genuine moments of empathy that not only provided comfort to others but also shaped federal policy. He entered the Senate having just lost his wife and daughter to an automobile accident, and he left the vice presidency having just lost his son to cancer. His entire political life, including his presidency, would reflect a dual recognition of, but also a dual reaction to, opportunity and misfortune.

Tethering his destiny to Obama's

I went to visit Biden in the White House one day in September 2012, on assignment to write an article about the man he then served as vice president. When the two men first came to know each other in 2005, Obama was one of the junior-most members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Biden was the ranking member. Undeterred by the star power of Obama and two other Democrats, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards, Biden announced his presidential candidacy in January 2007, banking on his superior experience. I spoke briefly to him on the phone a year later, just before the Iowa caucus. When I asked him how he felt about his chances, he exclaimed, ''Good, actually!'' Then he came in fifth, with less than 1 percent of the vote, and dropped out that night.

The Obama campaign saw Biden as the white ***working-class*** answer to questions that swing voters in the Midwest might have about the young, inexperienced Black senator whose father was Kenyan. Biden was wary of the offer to be Obama's running mate. He had been a Senate committee chairman for most of the previous two decades -- the man with the gavel, not an underling dispatched to attend the funerals of foreign leaders, as had been the lot of previous vice presidents.

He accepted it only after making clear to the nominee that he wanted the same deal that Walter Mondale told Biden he had gotten from Jimmy Carter: not a narrow portfolio but rather an imprint on all major issues, and being the last person the president would talk to about a policy decision before making it. Upon taking the job, Biden dispatched Ted Kaufman to meet with scholars of the vice presidency so as to understand the office's potential.

Being a heartbeat away from the presidency amounted to a hinge moment in Biden's career -- a critical next step, but also a fraught one that played to his native insecurities. As one of his top aides would later tell me, Biden immediately grasped a Beltway verity, which was that there was no such thing as a successful vice president in an unsuccessful presidency. Biden's destiny was now tethered to Obama's. He brought with him a highly professional staff, many of whom would later be elevated to Obama's own senior White House team.

Obama and Biden entered office in the midst of a severe recession that threatened to metastasize into something far worse. It amounted to a daunting test for a new president of limited experience -- and by extension, a test of Biden's ability to assist Obama. For the new administration's first initiative, the federal stimulus plan that was intended to stave off the recessionary effects of the market meltdown in 2008, the vice president helped secure the crucial three Republican votes from Senators Arlen Specter, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins. ''He was willing to do something Obama wasn't always eager to do -- which was to go to the Hill, work the members, have the dinners,'' recalled Jim Messina, who served as the White House deputy chief of staff and later ran the 2012 campaign.

Whenever Obama was leaning toward making foreign-policy decisions against his vice president's recommendation, Biden -- who had gone 36 years without a boss -- would buttonhole an Obama longtimer to ask: ''Tell me why he's doing this. Tell me what he's thinking.'' So determined was Biden to understand the president that within a few years, the White House would be dispatching the vice president to explain Obama's thinking to reporters as a ''source familiar.'' That was why I was visiting the White House in September 2012.

What I feel comfortable saying about this encounter, given that it was not on the record, was that it was not materially different from the Joe Biden whom others came to know on Capitol Hill or on the Sunday talk shows -- or even in his books. That Joe Biden could not resist reminding people of his proximity to the president and his influence over administration policy -- or, in cases where he failed to persuade, emphasizing how he was ultimately on the right side of things. (At other times he pushed the president further than he wanted to go, as when Biden supported gay marriage in a 2012 interview, leading Obama to say that ''he probably got out a little bit over his skis.'') I didn't interpret his performance as an attempt to undermine Obama. Rather, it was in keeping with the long-held view in Washington of Joe Biden as an affable, skilled and knowledgeable yet notably self-conscious man forever seeking to convince people that he absolutely belonged in the upper climes of federal policymaking. His ''I'm the guy who ... '' verbal tic had become the most memorable protestation in town.

What was remarkable, then, was that the president would come to view Biden as his guy: the essential sausage-maker in the lofty Obama movement, wading into bureaucratic minutiae and mixing it up with legislators so that Obama didn't have to; not to mention a man of heightened intuition, one who (according to one White House adviser) frequently urged the more deliberative Obama to ''go with your gut.''

The vice president displayed those skills in what seemed at the time to be a losing cause: producing gun-safety legislation in the wake of the horrific mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School at the end of 2012. The bill's Democratic co-sponsor, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, was a folksy centrist who did not get along with the urbane, cerebral Obama and found in Biden his only real friend in the White House. The president had empowered Biden to lead the White House's efforts on this issue, given his previous work in the Senate on the Brady Bill and the assault-weapons ban. But even before Manchin and his Republican co-sponsor, Pat Toomey, introduced their legislation, which would extend background checks to include gun-show and internet purchases, Biden recognized that the bill was doomed to fail in the Republican-controlled House. So the vice president and his staff drafted 23 executive actions, ranging from improving background-check data-sharing to enhancing gun-tracing efforts, that went into effect less than five weeks after the shooting.

But his more significant work would prove to be the relationship he formed with some of the grief-stricken parents of the 20 children who were slaughtered at the school. Days after the shooting, Biden called Mark and Jackie Barden, whose 7-year-old son Daniel was one of those killed. They talked for over an hour and a half. Early in the spring of 2013, when the Bardens and other Sandy Hook parents arrived on Capitol Hill for the first time to lobby Republican senators to vote for the bill, Biden cleared his calendar. Sitting with them for at least three hours, he did not mention legislative tactics. Instead, recalled Mark Barden, ''He said: 'Here's what I'm telling you. Go home. You don't have to do this. I've been down this road. I wanted to push through automobile safety. And in retrospect, I probably should have just been taking care of myself.'''

'A way to defy the fates'

By Obama's second term, he and Biden had become more than partners: They were friends. When the vice president confided to Obama that his eldest child, Beau, had been diagnosed with brain cancer and was struggling to pay for his treatment, the president offered to loan the Bidens money. A year later, in June 2015, the president gave the eulogy at Beau Biden's funeral. Pledging to always be there for the grieving family, Obama then added what by then had become one of the more familiar signature lines in Washington: ''My word as a Biden.''

Biden would memorialize these tender gestures in his 2017 book about his son, ''Promise Me, Dad.'' But the book also devoted considerable space to describing how Obama aggressively discouraged him from pursuing a 2016 presidential candidacy against Hillary Clinton, noting as well that certain Obama confederates ''were putting a finger on the scale for Clinton.'' As the president's No. 2 -- the one next in line to the Oval Office -- Biden had reason to expect different treatment.

Since the very beginning of Obama's second term in January 2013, the vice president had been discussing a candidacy with his team, according to one of them. Those discussions continued even after his son's death. After watching an appearance on ''The Late Show With Stephen Colbert'' in September 2015 in which Biden acknowledged that he hadn't given up on the idea of running, the actor George Clooney promptly called the adviser Steve Ricchetti and pledged to support Biden if he entered the race.

Two senior Obama administration officials would later insist to me that the president's paramount concern in discouraging Biden's candidacy was the emotional well-being of his devastated friend. But writing in his 2017 book, Biden didn't seem to believe this. Obama, he could see, worried that a contentious primary battle between his vice president and his former secretary of state ''would split the party and leave the Democratic nominee vulnerable in the general election.'' Biden wrote, ''This was about Barack's legacy.'' But the president seemed not to understand what a candidacy would mean to Biden and his family -- and how devastating Obama's discouraging words to his vice president were. As Biden wrote, ''The mere possibility of a presidential campaign, which Beau wanted, gave us purpose and hope -- a way to defy the fates.''

On Oct. 21, 2015, Biden stood in the Rose Garden, flanked by Obama and Jill Biden, and announced that he would not be running for president. A former aide would recall how the grieving vice president spent his last year in office seemingly drained of purpose, almost ghostlike.

Seven months after vacating the White House and becoming a private citizen for the first time in 46 years, Joe Biden watched TV footage of the white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., and subsequently spoke on the phone to the mother of the young woman who was killed by one of the rally participants. Up to that point, the former vice president was laying the groundwork for serving on foundations and in university positions (including the Penn Biden Center) designed to maintain his relevance in both domestic and foreign affairs. Biden was ''engaged'' -- his preferred euphemism, after Beau's death, for keeping his political future in play. Charlottesville represented for Biden the threat to America brought on by the Trump presidency.

''And that's when I decided that I, I, I, I, I've got to run,'' Biden would say, according to the transcript of his October 2023 interview with Robert Hur, the special counsel who had been assigned by Attorney General Merrick Garland to investigate whether Biden broke federal laws by retaining classified documents from his time as vice president. That same interview, Hur would later assert in a bombshell report, revealed a president who came across as ''a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory.''

But Biden's recollection of why and when he decided to run for president in 2017 remained indelible. So was his memory of 2015, when, he told Hur, in a moment that exposed the lasting hurt, ''a lot of people'' encouraged him to run for the Democratic nomination -- ''except the president.''

A leftward tilt

Four short years after leaving the White House, Biden returned to it, with the country in a state of upheaval. A pandemic had killed some 400,000 Americans. The month he took office, the national unemployment rate was 6.3 percent. Rioters at the U.S. Capitol had tried to overturn the 2020 election. Under President Trump, much of Obama's legacy was eviscerated: the individual mandate that was the bedrock of the Affordable Care Act was removed, environmental regulations were rolled back, the federal judiciary (including the Supreme Court) was flooded with conservatives and the nuclear pact with Iran was discarded. Thirteen months into Biden's presidency, Russia invaded Ukraine, a U.S. ally.

And yet the new president appeared to reintroduce himself to America as a living relic from a less troubled era, a 78-year-old anachronism not entirely aware of how much the country had changed: mentioning the word ''unity'' eight times in his Inaugural Address, continuing to embrace former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's 30-year-old characterization of America as ''the indispensable nation'' for which (as he said in his speech before Congress three months after taking office) ''there is not a single thing, nothing, nothing beyond our capacity.''

His experiences with Republicans over the previous decade had been limited to high-level negotiations with leaders like Eric Cantor and Mitch McConnell, and before then, overseas trips with collegial senators like John McCain, Chuck Hagel and Lindsey Graham. He had no interlocutor inside the MAGA movement. His former legislative-affairs director, Louisa Terrell, said: ''He knew the world had changed, and Biden showed a lot of interest in learning about his new colleagues on the Hill. He wanted data points about the new team that was in play, guys like Patrick McHenry and Garret Graves'' -- referring to two Republican House leaders who were hardly fans of the new president but were not seen as acolytes of the previous one.

So much did Biden prize bipartisanship that he announced a ''unity agenda'' in his first State of the Union address, consisting of seemingly unobjectionable items like cancer research, suicide prevention and mental-health programs for veterans. (Some Republicans objected anyway.) Preaching unity was, however, a matter of political necessity: Biden had only the barest congressional majority to work with in 2021. As it would turn out, many of Biden's signature legislative accomplishments -- infrastructure, gun safety, semiconductor manufacturing, aid to veterans exposed to burn pits and federal protections for same-sex couples -- became law with bipartisan support.

''There was a presumption that the system was broken,'' Biden's White House counselor Steve Ricchetti told me. ''And he demonstrated that it was wrong.'' But this rosy assessment elides the fact that Republicans refused to engage on many key items of the Biden agenda even when those items hardly constituted an affront to conservative sensibilities, beyond the fact that it was a Democratic president who proposed them.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 provided clean-energy investments that would overwhelmingly benefit so-called energy communities -- meaning bastions of fossil-fuel production in places like Texas as well as former coal-mining sites and industrial brownfields in Republican strongholds.

Republican legislators unanimously opposed the I.R.A., as they had done with its antecedent, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was intended to invigorate the pandemic-stricken economy. Its $1.9 trillion price tag fed into Republicans' claims that Biden was promoting a ''socialist agenda.'' But much of the money would be delegated to states to spend according to their individual needs. ''Early on, President Biden told me, 'You know, a lot of these investments are going to go to red states, because a lot of those people are hurting,''' said Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, a Democrat. In that spirit, Cooper told me, he directed $18 million in ARPA funding to revive an abandoned NASCAR racetrack in the town of Wilkesboro, situated in an economically struggling county that Trump carried in 2020 with 78 percent of the vote. That investment led to the North Wilkesboro Speedway hosting the 2023 NASCAR All Star Race, which in turn generated nearly $29 million in visitor spending benefiting Wilkes County.

Still, Republicans were not wrong in pointing out the strikingly leftward tilt of Biden's agenda. His administration accomplished objectives that progressives had been pining for years to see realized, from forgiving student loans to expanding Title IX protections to include gender identity. He appointed more Black judges to the federal bench, 59, than any other single-term president in history and advanced the first Black woman to the Supreme Court.

Some of Biden's progressive initiatives represented a continuation of longstanding policy preoccupations. But others seem to suggest a liberalized evolution in his thinking. The president pardoned minor marijuana offenders and others convicted of nonviolent drug offenses. Biden also announced his intentions to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug. ''These things aren't in his comfort zone, obviously,'' said Earl Blumenauer, a longtime proponent of cannabis decriminalization who was first elected to Congress in 1996, two years after Biden helped steer the crime bill (which included features like stiffer prison sentences that would later be seen as draconian) to passage. ''But in my world, they're huge.''

''For an older white man who most people would call a moderate, I certainly didn't think he was going to be a progressive,'' said Pramila Jayapal, the chairwoman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Jayapal, who would become a key figure in shaping Biden administration policy, told me that she had been advised early on by the liberal icon Bernie Sanders that ''Biden is a very relationship-oriented person, and I think it would be good for you to get to know him.''

Sanders himself remembered how he and his wife, Jane, were warmly welcomed by the Bidens when he first got to the Senate in 2007, following 16 forgettable years as a disgruntled backbencher in the House. It was a case of Biden paying forward the kindnesses he himself received from elder senators who offered camaraderie when he first took office in 1973, weeks after the car accident that killed his wife and daughter.

Later, as a rival for the Democratic nomination in 2020, Sanders repaid the favor: He insisted that his campaign staff members treat Biden with civility. Biden came to see Sanders as the standard-bearer of a movement that would be necessary for his own success as a president. When Sanders visited the White House in early 2021, he told Biden that he would like to see a munificently funded social-spending bill -- somewhere in the neighborhood of $5 trillion to $6 trillion. ''Bernie,'' he replied, ''I want to go as big as we can possibly get.''

Ultimately, the multitrillion-dollar Build Back Better bill was downsized over a year to the $433 billion Inflation Reduction Act. That eventual triumph came to pass in no small measure because Biden understood the Senate's meandering cadences better than a lesser-versed politician might have. But other feats of his presidency suggested a memory that stretched further back than his days in the Senate.

In December 2021, Biden flew on Air Force One to an event in Kansas City, where he would celebrate the recent passage of the infrastructure bill. With him on the plane was the representative of that district, Emanuel Cleaver. During their discussion, Cleaver said that he also hoped a portion of the money from the new legislation would deliver help to minority communities that had been damaged by past infrastructure projects. Biden replied that he knew exactly what Cleaver was talking about. Back in 1963, when Biden was a student at the University of Delaware, the Delaware Turnpike opened with great fanfare. ''You know, when we built the freeway, we destroyed certain parts of the city and divided Black neighborhoods,'' Cleaver recalled Biden saying. ''We've got to start thinking about undoing that.''

In March 2024, a little over two years after their conversation, Cleaver received a notification from the Biden White House. The administration would be providing $3.3 billion ''to reconnect communities that have been left behind and divided by transportation infrastructure.''

What then occurred to Cleaver said a lot to him about Joe Biden -- including, he would tell me, why the president was so resistant to leaving office after only one term: ''He's had all these ideas over his career. And they've been piling up in his head, waiting for the opportunity. And then the opportunity finally hit, and he did not hesitate, and he wanted to keep going.''

Politics is in many ways a feat of memory: an unceasing recognition of where you come from, whom you answer to, what works, who can help, what is expected in return, why you ran for office to begin with. Notwithstanding the public lapses that would ultimately cause fellow Democrats to question his mental acuity and deny him a second term, the prodigious legislative skills derived from 52 years of accumulated knowledge continued to reside in America's oldest-ever president.

Hours before Biden released his statement on the afternoon of Sunday, July 21, that he had decided not to seek a second term -- having been effectively ''pushed out'' by Democratic leaders and donors, as his former chief of staff Ron Klain bitterly put it on social media -- the president called the cellphone of his current chief of staff, Jeff Zients. As Zients would later tell me, Biden spent the first minute informing Zients of his decision. Then he told his chief of staff that their usual planning in 100-day blocks of time would now be reconfigured into a final 180-day flurry of activity.

''We have six months left,'' Zients recalled Biden telling him. ''And I want this six months to be as productive as every other six-month increment we've had.'' That would involve concrete action, such as canceling more student debts and announcing price reductions that had been negotiated for 10 new prescription drugs. Biden also ticked off several goals, from reforming the Supreme Court to reinforcing the right to vote, that might not be attainable by the time he left office but that, as Zients put it to me, ''would plant stakes in very important terrain.'' Those stakes would help guide a Harris presidency and, in turn, shape Biden's legacy.

A game of chicken with his own party

Almost from its inception, the Biden presidency unfolded in a kind of split-screen. One side of the screen featured an experienced legislator who knew how to get things done. The other side displayed the nation's oldest president ever, aging before our very eyes. Biden entered office a few months older than the oldest to leave it, Ronald Reagan. In an increasingly visual era, with 90 percent of American adults owning a smartphone and 95 percent of them online, the president could not readily conceal his frailties from the public the way Franklin D. Roosevelt or John F. Kennedy once could. It might well have proved impossible for the White House to prepare the public for the optical experience of elder statesmanship. It might have been a tough sell to suggest that this version of Biden was superior to the younger, brasher candidate Biden circa 1987 -- and to assert that a man who no longer walked or talked as he did even as a candidate in 2020 could still do his job, albeit as a man of diminished stamina.

In any event, the White House didn't try. From the outset, Biden drastically limited his interactions with the media compared with previous presidents, while his 47-year-old press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, implausibly said of her boss in 2022, ''I can't even keep up with him.'' A once-voluble ubiquity was receding from the media in inverse proportion to his advancing years, his ''interviews'' often limited to outlets that were unlikely to ask tough questions, including two conversations booked on Black radio stations following the debate in which the Biden campaign provided the hosts with suggested questions to choose from.

Even amid his administration's string of legislative successes, Democrats privately shared their worries. Two Democratic legislators involved in the 2021 Build Back Better negotiations in the White House later told me that the president seemed at times to lose the conversational thread and at other times would lecture them like a cranky uncle, saying, ''You were still in high school when I was doing this stuff in the Senate.'' By the end of 2023, members of the diplomatic corps were privately sharing concerns with one former member of Congress with whom I spoke that the president's memory appeared to be slipping in meetings with foreign leaders. Even without such information, 69 percent of Democrats polled last August believed that Biden was too old to serve a second term.

But the man who had assured supporters in 2020 that he would be a ''bridge'' or ''transition'' president now seemed unmoved by these concerns. One of his top advisers told me that he was unaware of any serious consideration given by Biden to forgo a second term. The president's deeply loyal and deeply trusted inner circle, in the White House and on his campaign, recognized that a rematch with Trump would most likely be a photo finish at best but was now faced with the sobering reality that the incumbent could not campaign with the vigor he might easily have mustered in previous years. As his gait became less steady and his speech more halting and slurred, as the evidence mounted of his publicly confusing the names of world leaders and losing his train of thought, Republican adversaries escalated their attacks on the octogenarian president as being weak: weak in handling the porous border, weak in curbing inflation, weak in managing America's response to conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

With the president's approval ratings mired in the 30s, his supporters had one date to look forward to: June 27, the CNN debate against Trump, which offered the chance to showcase Biden's mastery of details and overall humanity against a human fire hose of insults and untruths. He had done so in the past -- even to heroic effect in 2012, when Vice President Biden's performance against Mitt Romney's running mate, Paul Ryan, effectively stopped the bleeding after Obama's poor showing the week earlier. ''All the panic on the Hill and among the grass roots went away once Biden left the debate stage,'' Jim Messina told me, recalling that moment.

''If political campaigning is a decathlon, then debating is a sport that's always been one of his strengths,'' said David Plouffe, the Obama campaign guru and now the senior adviser of Harris's campaign, who helped Biden prepare for his 2008 debate against Sarah Palin and his 2012 match against Paul Ryan.

Plouffe was among the allies who were stunned by Biden's dismal performance -- his inability to deliver boilerplate talking points and attack lines, his senior moment when he gasped out the non sequitur, ''We finally beat Medicare'' -- all the more so because the campaign team had been confidently predicting victory to him and other Democrats all the way up to the day of the debate. We spoke five days after the debate, at which point the strategist likened the campaign's state of play as the fourth quarter of a football game: ''You've got to throw the ball on every play. Bus tours, 48 hours straight on the road, tons of interviews. It's a comeback strategy -- and by the way, it still might not work.''

But that sort of Hail Mary strategy could not happen now for the same reason it hadn't happened before. Even as Biden was assuring his supporters that he had all the inner resources necessary to stage an improbable comeback, he was also complaining to them that his staff had overscheduled him, seeming to suggest that the key to victory was for him to work even fewer hours. If that seemed an untenable proposition to Democrats, Biden and his campaign were in essence saying: Too bad. The man known above all for his vast reservoir of empathy was now staging a game of chicken with his own party, daring them to either skitter out of his way or face a head-on collision at the Democratic convention. ''I'm not going anywhere!'' Biden now declared on the stump. And at his news conference following the NATO summit in early July, he responded to a question about calls for him to step aside by saying, ''I think I'm the most qualified person to run for president'' -- a curious protestation by a president three years into his job, preceded seconds earlier by his misidentifying Harris as ''Vice President Trump'' (which the White House later corrected in its official transcript of the event).

On the morning of July 8, the president appeared on a Zoom conference call with hundreds of donors. Biden insisted that it was one bad night, that he'd been tired and ill, that things were going to be fine. The concerned viewers could clearly see him looking down throughout his monologue, as if reading from a script. A queue of questioners was growing. According to one listener, the first few questions selected by a Biden staff member were conspicuously softball, along the lines of ''How can we help?'' After the call, several donors complained to Biden allies that it had been a waste of their time.

Later that evening, Biden placed a call to the Congressional Black Caucus, who were among his most loyal supporters. The president listed his accomplishments and told them he intended to stay in the race. ''I need you,'' he told them. He did not take any questions.

To some, Biden's refusal to step down was an all-too-familiar Washington story, one of power clung to at the risk of one's own legacy, rationalized at the time by the belief in one's own indispensability. Biden had seen more than his share of examples, from Supreme Court justices like William O. Douglas and Ruth Bader Ginsburg to former Senate colleagues like Strom Thurmond and Dianne Feinstein. ''It's a human story that repeats itself,'' the Democratic political strategist James Carville told me. ''Hell, the day after Bill Clinton got elected and everyone knew I wasn't going into government with him, the phone just stopped ringing. I used to literally get the shakes, thinking nobody gave a crap about me anymore. That's why the only way people leave Washington is in a pine box or in handcuffs. This power stuff is addictive.''

Some of Biden's most ardent supporters began to express a new concern to me. The president seemed unlikely to beat Trump -- that was bad enough. But to them, the genial, attentive man they knew now seemed beset by something worse than denial. He called in to ''Morning Joe'' on MSNBC to condemn ''the elites in the party'' for urging him to step down. He mocked the media for discounting him. He said the polls were wrong. To George Stephanopoulos of ABC, he protested, ''How many people draw crowds like I did today?'' He was angry at the world, and seemed to be shape-shifting into the man he had pledged to defeat.

But there was another key to understanding Biden's intransigence, according to someone who has been close to him for decades. Here was a man whose son's death had left him all but drowning in sorrow -- a man whose book about his son contains the word ''purpose'' 25 times, including the subtitle (''A Year of Hope, Hardship and Purpose''). Leading the country was the purpose Beau Biden in his dying days implored his father to pursue; having done so, it was perhaps the one thing that kept Joe Biden from succumbing to grief's riptide.

Parting paths with Harris

Watching as his own political future dwindled before his eyes, Biden at last shut the door on it -- an act of humility, brought on by public humiliation. On Sunday, July 21, he made an unprecedented public statement, saying that he was standing down from his campaign. In doing so, he was admitting defeat, bowing to increasing public and private pressure after insisting for weeks that he would not give in.

But if the air was freighted with lament that day at Biden's weekend retreat at Rehoboth Beach, Del., there was also something entirely different in the wind, unknown to all but a few. An hour and a half before posting his statement on social media, the president spoke on the phone with Prime Minister Robert Golob of Slovenia. For months, the Biden administration had been secretly working with seven countries on an elaborate prisoner swap that would result in the freedom of three Americans and one permanent U.S. resident who had been wrongfully detained in Russia for over a year.

According to a national-security source with extensive knowledge of the negotiations, Biden had been deeply involved with efforts to free the American prisoners. He had spoken with their families a total of seven times. He had taken numerous briefings, engaging himself on the subject across months of turbulence in which he also oversaw the American response to the Hamas attack on Israel and Israel's crushing retaliation in Gaza, the continued effort to supply weapons to Ukraine, the conviction of his son on federal gun charges and the vicissitudes of his own political future.

One of the detainees, the Wall Street Journal correspondent Evan Gershkovich, had been sentenced in a Russian court on false charges of espionage to 16 years in prison two days before Biden's call to Slovenia's prime minister. What the public did not know was that the sentence was essentially a ruse: Two days before that, after extended negotiations, Russia had agreed to swap Gershkovich and the others for several imprisoned Russians, including two spies who were being held in Slovenia.

This was the reason for Biden's call to Golob. Slovenia required that their prisoners being released in this international exchange first be issued a pardon by the Slovenian government. That fact had apparently not been conveyed to the proper authorities in that country, and the window to consummate the deal was rapidly closing. When the White House national-security adviser, Jake Sullivan, learned about this, he spoke with a Slovenian official, who agreed that a phone call from the American president to the Slovenian prime minister might instantly end the impasse. Biden's call to Golob proved to be the final key that locked the prisoner-swap deal in place.

Over the next 10 days, the president would be briefed on the complicated logistics of Russia, Slovenia, Germany, Norway and Poland all preparing to transfer their prisoners to the exchange point in Turkey. Then came the late evening of Aug. 1, when the plane carrying the three Americans landed at Joint Base Andrews. Awaiting their arrival on the tarmac were their families, along with Biden and Harris. After Paul Whelan, who had been held for nearly six years, disembarked to cheers, it was Gershkovich's turn. The first to embrace him at the bottom of the stairs was Harris, now the Democratic nominee.

Biden extended his hand. Gershkovich took it before throwing his arm around the president. Then the president pointed a finger to direct the reporter's attention to his awaiting family, as if to acknowledge what mattered most. It was a moment for Biden to savor, a moment at the height of the presidency, of what he most believed it was for and could do: to bring to bear all the friendships and alliances across the globe in order to right a wrong. He had brought Harris inside those negotiations alongside him. And now, late at night, they parted paths. She went forward onto the campaign trail. And he went home.

Source photograph for artwork above by Kelia Anne MacCluskey.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/18/magazine/joe-biden-president-legacy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/18/magazine/joe-biden-president-legacy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN COULSON) (MM26-MM27)

Left: President Biden gave an 11-minute speech from the Oval Office after dropping out of the presidential race. Below: Biden announcing his first bid for the Democratic nomination alongside his family in 1987. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVAN VUCCI/REUTERS

CYNTHIA JOHNSON/GETTY IMAGES) (MM28-MM29)

Right: With Barack Obama on the campaign trail in 2008. Below: In the Rose Garden after the Senate failed to pass gun-safety legislation in 2013. (PHOTOGRPAHS BY DOUG MILLLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM30-MM31)

Left: Biden at the funeral of his son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015. Below: With Vice President Kamala Harris welcoming home Americans freed in a prisoner exchange with Russia in July. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK SEMANSKY/ASSOCIATED PRESS. BOTTOM: ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM32-MM33)

Above: At the debate with Donald Trump in Atlanta in June. Right: Boarding the flight back to Washington. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM34-MM35) This article appeared in print on page MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33, MM34, MM35, MM42, MM43.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2024

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[***A Dark, Clever Novel Asks, What Happens When Women Ignore Their Appetites?; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCX-MJC1-DXY4-X014-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 22, 2024 Thursday 10:21 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 663 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Weiner

**Highlight:** “Piglet,” by Lottie Hazell, is a tantalizing layer cake of horror, romance (sort of) and timely questions about the power of appetite.

**Body**

“Piglet,” by Lottie Hazell, is a tantalizing layer cake of horror, romance (sort of) and timely questions about the power of appetite.

PIGLET, by Lottie Hazell

Pity the bookseller who’s got to figure out where to shelve Lottie Hazell’s debut novel, “Piglet.” Its plot — woman learns devastating truth about her fiancé and starts binge-eating as she decides whether to marry him — carries the whiff of a rom-com, the faint pink tinge of “women’s fiction,” the kind of book that gets dismissed as frivolous and small, even though it deals with the topics that loom largest in real life. So is “Piglet” a frothy, fun, forgettable confection, or is it heftier, meatier, the kind of “serious” book that might win prizes, or even male readers?

If I owned a bookstore, I’d hand-sell “Piglet” to everyone. And I’d make a case for shelving it with the horror stories, especially for the scene that unfolds when Piglet’s mom, dad, sister and, eventually, her sister’s boyfriend are enlisted to cram her into her wedding dress, the one wedding expense her ***working-class*** father has covered. “‘What’s happened here, Pig?’ her father said, lifting his head in the mirror, not meeting her eyes.” Hazell goes on:

Piglet felt her father’s hand push against her flank, his knuckles hard and swollen with effort.

“You couldn’t have waited, could you?” he said, closing his eyes. “You couldn’t just control yourself, for once?” He shook his head. “You — this dress — greed,” he said, his words failing him in his displeasure. “What is it about you and more, more, more?”

There’s a lot Hazell doesn’t tell us about Piglet. We don’t know her age or her size, her eye color or hair color, or how long she’s been a cookbook editor. We don’t learn her real name until the book’s final pages, and we aren’t told the precise nature of her fiancé’s betrayal at all, which gives the book the feel of an allegory or a fable: Once upon a time, there lived an orphan. A princess. A bride. Or, as Piglet describes herself, “a tall woman with broad shoulders wearing a dress that was designed to make her look smaller than she was.”

Hazell’s prose is as tart and icy as lemon sorbet; her sentences are whipcord taut, drum tight. The only time she indulges in description is when Piglet’s cooking or eating. Then, the writing becomes lush and lavish, with mouthwatering descriptions of “new potatoes, boiled and dotted with a bright salsa verde. Bread and two types of butter: confit garlic and Parmesan and black pepper.” There are also “katoris filled with daal, as thick and silky as rice pudding but yellowed with turmeric, finished with cream” and “prawns, pink and black and glistening, scattered with coriander, sitting spikily in their dish.”

It’s impossible to read “Piglet” outside the current moment, and the new, uber-popular class of weight-loss drugs. Scientists [*don’t know how the drugs work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/health/weight-loss-drugs-obesity-ozempic-wegovy.html), but do know what they do: Quiet the so-called food noise. Turn down the volume on dieters’ appetites. What goes without saying — it seems that it hardly needs to be said — is that hunger is the enemy, and a woman’s job is to repel it, control it, fight it off, push it down.

But what happens when women ignore their appetites? What happens when women stop being hungry, when they don’t want “more, more, more” — or anything at all?

Ira Levin offered one answer in “[*The Stepford Wives,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/health/weight-loss-drugs-obesity-ozempic-wegovy.html)” and Hazell offers another, in a book where the “will she or won’t she” isn’t just about the man and the wedding. It’s about whether Piglet ends up embracing a big life, full of richness and variety and good things to eat, or if she lets herself be crammed into that too-small dress: constricted, reduced, turned into a pretty morsel, a thing to be consumed. Eat the world, or let it eat you?

No spoilers here. Except I’ll tell you that I devoured this book, and finished it hungry.

PIGLET | By Lottie Hazell | Holt | 320 pp. | $27.99

Jennifer Weiner’s latest novel is “The Breakaway.”

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR11.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2024

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[***Pizza Deliveries and Bodega Stops: Trump’s Big Apple Campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C3B-MR31-JBG3-605H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1388 words

**Byline:** Michael Gold Michael Gold is a political correspondent for The Times covering the campaigns of Donald J. Trump and other candidates in the 2024 presidential elections.

**Highlight:** Before and after appearing in a Manhattan courthouse, where he is on criminal trial, former President Donald J. Trump has been campaigning for president in unfriendly political territory.

**Body**

Before and after appearing in a Manhattan courthouse, where he is on criminal trial, former President Donald J. Trump has been campaigning for president in unfriendly political territory.

Former President Donald J. Trump is accustomed to crisscrossing the country on his private jet, headlining rallies at big venues where he is met by roaring masses chanting his name. But often over the last month, his presidential campaign has ventured into politically hostile territory: New York City.

He stopped in to chat with the owner of a tiny Harlem bodega. He made an early-morning visit to a construction site in Midtown Manhattan, shaking hands with union members wearing hard hats and safety goggles. He delivered pizzas to and posed for snapshots with emergency workers at a firehouse just minutes away from Trump Tower.

You might be forgiven for wondering if Mr. Trump were actually running for mayor.

Since the start of his criminal trial in Manhattan on April 15, which requires he be in court for much of the week, Mr. Trump has held just three campaign rallies, only two of which took place in battleground states expected to determine the outcome of the election. He has made just as many modest stops in New York in front of smaller crowds.

The small-scale politicking, which New Yorkers are more accustomed to seeing from local politicians trying to gin up support, has been a study in contrasts to the raucous rallies that have defined his political brand since his 2016 campaign. And they have offered a markedly different atmosphere still from court, where Mr. Trump is bound by rules of conduct that keep him largely still and silent even as prosecutors accuse him of wrongdoing.

“It does feel like a local race,” said George Arzt, a longtime political consultant in New York City who once served as press secretary to [*Mayor Edward I. Koch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/02/nyregion/edward-i-koch-ex-mayor-of-new-york-dies.html). “It does feel like he’s almost going out there door to door.”

Mr. Trump, a born-and-bred New Yorker who moved to Florida in 2019, has repeatedly suggested these stops are part of a push to win his home state, which has overwhelmingly rejected him twice. But New York has not voted for a Republican president since 1984, and Democratic candidates defeated him by more than 20 percentage points in the last two elections. New York City itself is deeply Democratic.

Political observers and Trump aides have said that Mr. Trump’s campaign stops in New York City are as much about the message they are sending to a national audience as they are to New Yorkers. On Thursday, Mr. Trump is expected to return more to form, with a planned speech at a park in the Bronx that his campaign said it expected thousands to attend.

Brian Hughes, a campaign spokesman, suggested that the event, in Crotona Park, in a borough with large Black and Hispanic populations, would allow Mr. Trump to highlight to a national audience his strength among “voting blocs that you might argue are not traditional Republican voting blocs.”

Mr. Trump last month vowed that he would hold a rally at Madison Square Garden, the city’s marquee venue in Manhattan, meant for “honoring the police and honoring the firemen and everybody, honoring a lot of people.” Mr. Trump, who has been indicted in four cases, has repeatedly tried to showcase his support among emergency responders this year, including with his visit this month to a Manhattan firehouse.

Still, so far, Mr. Trump’s campaign visits in New York have largely been limited to small stops, ones that his advisers have said are borne somewhat out of necessity given the court schedule, which has generally allowed Wednesdays and weekends off.

On one Wednesday, Mr. Trump held rallies in Michigan and Wisconsin, two important swing states. He spent a Saturday at a rally at the Jersey Shore that attracted visitors from neighboring Pennsylvania, another key battleground. Yet even as Mr. Trump has lamented that the trial limits his ability to campaign, he has attended fund-raisers on some days when court was not in session, while on others, he has had no scheduled events.

Working within the trial schedule, Mr. Trump’s aides have also looked to use its constraints to their advantage. Advisers have argued that New York City, a diverse metropolis of more than eight million, offers an ideal backdrop for Mr. Trump to highlight issues he has made central to his platform, such as immigration, the economy and public safety.

“These same issues that are plaguing New York City are also plaguing all of the battleground states,” Jason Miller, a senior Trump adviser, said in an interview.

The Biden campaign has sought to capitalize on and draw attention to Mr. Trump’s scheduling limits. President Biden has been [*campaigning more often on Wednesdays*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/02/nyregion/edward-i-koch-ex-mayor-of-new-york-dies.html), and he made light of the trial calendar in a video [*challenging Mr. Trump to debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/02/nyregion/edward-i-koch-ex-mayor-of-new-york-dies.html). The campaign also began selling shirts with the slogan “Free on Wednesdays.”

Mr. Trump’s first campaign stop during the trial, just two days into the proceedings, was to a bodega in a heavily Hispanic area of Harlem that had been the site of a stabbing years earlier. The former president used the visit to highlight a set of overlapping issues and to build on his efforts to win over Latino voters.

After chatting with the store’s owner, Mr. Trump stood in front of cameras outside and criticized Mr. Biden’s economic policies as detrimental to small businesses. And fresh from appearing as a criminal defendant, Mr. Trump railed against the district attorney prosecuting him and Democrats in general for being overly lax on crime.

The visit drew more significant crowds than Mr. Trump’s other stops in the city. The blocks surrounding the bodega were lined with people standing behind police barricades hoping to catch a glimpse, some of them supporters and others merely curious.

That level of attention distinguishes the former president’s stops in the city from those made by most other politicians in and around New York.

Mr. Trump and his campaign have cited the onlookers as proof that he is politically popular in the city, particularly among Hispanics. Mr. Miller noted that the bodega’s neighborhood was an example of “communities that don’t normally have national political figures come and visit them.”

Other political observers have argued that the crowds in Harlem were more reflective of Mr. Trump’s celebrity status rather than agreement with his views.

“He is a celebrity first, and people are interested in him, even if they don’t agree with him,” said Bill de Blasio, a Democratic former mayor who ran a short-lived presidential bid for the 2020 nomination.

Still, Mr. de Blasio, a frequent Trump critic, acknowledged that the former president’s New York stops would help him broadcast his political message. And he noted that such retail politicking would energize any candidate — particularly one spending the day facing austere court proceedings.

Last month, Mr. Trump preceded his day in court with a visit to a construction site, where he shook hands with dozens of invited guests. Many were union workers. As he worked the line, people inside the construction site clambered on top of scaffolding and equipment to take photos and videos.

Hank Sheinkopf, a longtime New York political strategist who watched Mr. Trump evolve from tabloid fixture to celebrity to politician, said that such a stop was consistent with Mr. Trump’s decades-long effort to represent himself as the champion of ***working-class*** people.

“He is a guy who took tremendous pride in being able to be accepted by average working people,” Mr. Sheinkopf said. “He wants to make sure he doesn’t lose that touch. His appeal comes from being an elite who is not an elite.”

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

Nicholas Nehamas contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Former President Donald J. Trump’s first campaign stop during his criminal trial in Manhattan was to a bodega in a heavily Hispanic area of Harlem. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA WATTS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Mr. Trump posing for photos at a Midtown Manhattan fire station, top, where he delivered pizzas, center. Union workers at a construction site in Manhattan, bottom, gathered for his early-morning visit last month. Mr. Trump’s trial schedule has detoured his campaign to hostile turf: his own hometown. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

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[***In Surprise, Sunak Calls for U.K. Vote on July 4***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C39-FHD1-JBG3-64S1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1423 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler

**Body**

The opposition Labour Party has been ahead in most polls by double digits in recent months.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of Britain on Wednesday called a snap general election for July 4, throwing the fate of his embattled Conservative Party to a restless British public that appears eager for change after 14 years of Conservative government.

Mr. Sunak's surprise announcement, from a rain-spattered lectern in front of 10 Downing Street, was the starting gun for six weeks of campaigning that will render a verdict on a party that has led Britain since Barack Obama was America's president. But the Tories have discarded four prime ministers in eight years, lurching through the serial chaos of Brexit, the coronavirus pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis.

With the opposition Labour Party ahead in most polls by double digits for the last 18 months, a Conservative defeat has come to assume an air of inevitability. For all that, Mr. Sunak is calculating that Britain has had just enough good news in recent days -- including glimmers of fresh economic growth and the lowest inflation rate in three years -- that his party might be able to cling to power.

''Now is the moment for Britain to choose its future,'' Mr. Sunak said as pelting rain drenched his suit jacket. The choice for voters, he said, was to ''build on the future you've made or risk going back to square one.''

Political analysts, opposition leaders and members of Mr. Sunak's own party agree that the electoral mountain he must climb is Himalayan. Burdened by a weak economy, a calamitous foray into trickle-down tax policies, and successive scandals, the Tories have seemed exhausted and adrift, split by internal feuds and fatalistic about their future. They face a threat on the right from the anti-immigrant Reform U.K. party.

''The Conservatives are facing a kind of extinction-level event,'' said Matthew Goodwin, a professor of politics at the University of Kent who has advised Boris Johnson and other party leaders. ''They look like they're going to suffer an even bigger defeat than they did to Tony Blair in 1997.''

Other political analysts were more cautious: Some pointed out that in 1992, the Conservative government of Prime Minister John Major overcame a polling deficit to eke out a narrow victory and stay in power.

Still, since the party won by a landslide in the 2019 elections on the slogan ''Get Brexit done,'' the Tories have bled support among young people, traditional Conservative voters in England's south and southwest and, crucially, ***working-class*** voters in the industrial Midlands and north of England, whose backing in 2019 was key to then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson's landmark victory.

Many are disillusioned by the scandals of Mr. Johnson's tenure, including Downing Street social gatherings that breached Covid lockdown rules, and even more so by the fiasco of his successor, Liz Truss, who was toppled after just 44 days, following proposed tax cuts that rattled financial markets, caused the pound to torpedo and fractured the party's reputation for economic competence.

While Mr. Sunak, 44, steadied the markets and has run a more stable government than his predecessors, critics say he never developed a convincing strategy to recharge the country's growth. Nor did he fulfill two other promises: to cut waiting times in Britain's National Health Service and to stop the stream of small boats carrying asylum seekers across the English Channel.

Many voters in the ''red wall'' districts -- so called because of Labour's campaigning color -- appear ready to return to their roots in the party. Under the competent, if uncharismatic, leadership of Keir Starmer, Labour has shaken off the shadow of his left-wing predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr. Starmer, a former government prosecutor, has methodically overhauled Labour, purging allies of Mr. Corbyn, uprooting a legacy of anti-Semitism in the party's ranks and pulling its economic policies more to the center.

''We've changed the Labour Party, returned it once more to the service of working people,'' Mr. Starmer said in remarks after Mr. Sunak. ''Together we can stop the chaos, turn the page, start to rebuild Britain and change our country.''

Under British law, Mr. Sunak was obliged to hold an election by January 2025. Political analysts had expected him to wait until the fall to allow more time for the economy to recover. But in the wake of an announcement on Wednesday that inflation had fallen to an annual rate of 2.3 percent -- just above the Bank of England's target of 2 percent -- he may have gambled that the news was as good as it is going to get.

Mr. Sunak may also be calculating that the government can put a first flight carrying asylum seekers to Rwanda in the air before the vote. That would allow him to claim progress on another of his priorities.

The Rwanda policy, which involves deporting asylum seekers to the African nation without first hearing their cases, has been condemned by rights campaigners, the courts and opposition leaders -- and it has drawn a raft of legal challenges. But Mr. Sunak has made it a centerpiece of his agenda, because it is popular with the Conservative Party's political base.

In his remarks, Mr. Sunak tried to paint Labour as lacking an agenda. ''I don't know what they offer -- and in truth, I don't think you do either,'' he said. But his message was occasionally drowned out by the sound of Labour's 1997 campaign anthem, ''Things Can Only Get Better,'' which blared from a demonstrator's loudspeaker in a nearby street.

For Mr. Sunak, the son of parents of Indian heritage who emigrated from British colonial East Africa six decades ago, the decision to go to the voters earlier than expected is not completely out of character. In July 2022, he broke with Mr. Johnson by resigning as chancellor of the Exchequer, triggering the loss of cabinet support that ultimately forced Mr. Johnson out of power.

Mr. Sunak then mounted a spirited bid for party leader, losing out to Ms. Truss in a vote of the party's 170,000 or so members. After Ms. Truss's economic policies backfired and she was forced to resign, Mr. Sunak re-emerged to win the next contest, this time held only among members of Parliament from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Sunak inherited a forbidding set of problems: double-digit inflation, a stagnant economy and rising interest rates, which stung people in the form of higher rates on their home mortgages. Waiting times at the National Health Service, which is depleted after years of fiscal austerity, stretched into months.

Mr. Sunak had some early successes, including an agreement with the European Union that largely defused a trade impasse over Northern Ireland. He exceeded his goal of halving the inflation rate, which was 11.1 percent when he took over in October 2022. And there are signs that the economy is starting to turn.

Britain had an unexpectedly strong exit from a shallow recession at the start of this year, with the economy growing 0.6 percent. The International Monetary Fund upgraded its growth forecast for the country this year, while praising the actions of the government and the central bank.

But the good news could be fleeting. Inflation is expected to bounce back up again in the second half of this year, and April's number was not as low as economists expected. That has led investors to rethink how soon the Bank of England might cut rates, almost ruling out that they will be lowered next month. Even expectations that rates will come down in August have diminished.

At the same time, the scope for further tax cuts before the election has narrowed. Data published on Wednesday showed that public borrowing was up. And the I.M.F. warned the government against tax cuts, arguing that Britain had huge demands for more public spending to improve its public services, including the N.H.S., while also needing to stabilize its public debt.

Ultimately, analysts said, it was these bottom-line realities that drove Mr. Sunak's decision to go to the voters now, and it is the economy, rather than anything else, that will decide his, and his party's, fate.

''You can talk about Partygate and Truss,'' said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, referring to Mr. Johnson's lockdown-breaching social gatherings. ''But in the end, the factors that are going to decide this election are anemic growth and a state that is collapsing before our eyes.''

Eshe Nelson contributed reporting.Eshe Nelson contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/europe/uk-election-sunak-politics.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/world/europe/uk-election-sunak-politics.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announcing the election date on Wednesday. At left, Labour Party leader Keir Starmer last week. Bottom left, a May 8 protest over Britain's immigration policy. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

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BENJAMIN CREMEL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

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**Highlight:** France has often been the vanguard of leftist politics — but support in the streets doesn’t always translate to votes at the ballot box.

**Body**

The signs that a protest is happening in Paris are nearly always the same: the quiet of blocked-off streets; the neat rows of police vans containing the gendarmerie stretching down the boulevard; the sound of drumbeats and whistles and the neon red flares that spit smoke into the sky. For six months last year, those signs were constant and ubiquitous, as furious, sometimes violent marches and general [*strikes protesting President Emmanuel Macron’s pension reforms*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) brought Paris to a standstill. Students and activists, public-transit operators, custodial staff, medics, mechanics, teachers, oil-rig workers, writers and celebrities all gathered to rail against Macron’s plan to raise the national retirement age by two years, to 64.

As transit walkouts snarled traffic and sanitation strikes caused trash to pile up in the streets, the protests were ridiculed abroad. Why must the French, among the best-protected workers in the Western world, make such a racket over two years of work? But for the demonstrators, this missed the point: It is because French workers put up a fight that they are protected. “We actually have laws on our side,” Samira Alaoui, a union representative at Teleperformance, a digital business services company, told me. “We are a model for the world. If we don’t do anything, who will?”

In 2023, France seemed less the exception than the rule. There was a surge in labor activity around the world last year — strikes and victories — as much as or more than any year in decades. This was true in the United States, where [*the Writers Guild of America,*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) [*the United Auto Workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) and the [*UPS Teamsters*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) all won significant concessions from executives. In [*Britain, nurses went on strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) to protest staffing shortages and patient backlogs at the National Health Service. Still, it was perhaps in France that labor’s rise was most visible — most combustive and most telling. France has always been a vanguard of leftist politics. Today it is one of the few Western democracies where a far left has managed to survive and even thrive, as it works to invent a new leftist politics that can succeed in a moment of right-wing ascendancy. How it fares says much about where the left may be headed and the headwinds it faces, not just in France but throughout the West.

While once-robust labor unions have seen their numbers decline more drastically in France than in other European countries — around 8 percent of French workers belong to labor unions, compared with 35 percent in Italy or 18 percent in Germany — French unions remain strong. In part this is because recent labor activism has been buoyed by a newly resurgent leftist movement, La France Insoumise (L.F.I.), or “France Unbowed.” At the final pension-reform march in Paris last summer — a defanged one, to be sure, as the measure had already been made law — the area cordoned off for protesters gathering to march down the Boulevard des Invalides was draped with banners for L.F.I. “A different reform is possible, 60!” one proclaimed. Another demanded the founding of a new republic. One protester carried a giant marionette of Macron peeking out of a bright green garbage bin, an allusion to the scandal that followed the arrest of a woman at her home for an online post in which she called Macron “trash.” (The charges were later dropped.)

L.F.I. was founded in 2016 by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, 72, an unruly populist in the vein of Bernie Sanders with an even more strident rhetorical style, who is widely credited with sustaining leftism in France and with its strong showing in the last two presidential elections. Mélenchon came in third in the [*2022 presidential election*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html), with 21.95 percent of the vote, about a point behind Marine Le Pen, the leader of the [*far-right National Rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/france-pension-strikes-macron-explainer.html) (formerly the National Front), who advanced to the final runoff against Macron. By contrast, the progressive left in the United States represents only about 7 percent of registered voters, according to Pew, and though center-left parties are common throughout Western Europe, it is unusual for the far left to capture this much of the vote and come so close to the presidency.

Because of Mélenchon’s performance in the general elections, he was able to form a coalition with other left-leaning parties — the P.C.F. (or French Communist Party), the Socialists and the Greens — each of which garnered only a fraction of the vote. The coalition, known as NUPES, largely adopted L.F.I.’s platform: to tame the chaos of the free market by instituting large tax hikes on the wealthy, increase the minimum wage, renationalize formerly public companies, and fight climate change and racial and gender inequality. This week a bill to enshrine abortion rights in the French Constitution, introduced and promoted by the L.F.I. and the Green Party, became law. The L.F.I. now leads the largest opposition bloc in Parliament, which has some 26 percent of the seats, enough to block Macron from having a controlling majority.

Yet L.F.I. has so far failed to translate its electoral plurality into the kind of consensus and broad-based support that could eventually lead to running the country. Though 62 percent of the French approved of the protests against Macron, polls later showed L.F.I. to be not much stronger than before. By contrast, Marine Le Pen, who offered hardly any public commentary on the pension reforms at all, received a boost in the polls. On many economic matters, “public opinion is largely with the left,” Rémi Lefebvre, a political scientist at the University of Lille, told me. “The French believe that the problems the left wants to address are important, but they don’t believe in their solutions.”

For the French left, as for center-left parties across Western democracies, the path to power is commonly seen to lie in recapturing the (white) ***working class*** outside large urban centers, who in recent years have been drawn toward the far right. But if the left has struggled to attract these voters — and to keep them — it is not just for reasons of policy. Profound economic, social and cultural changes — deindustrialization, the loss of secure jobs, the breakdown of unions and party structures — have so remade politics that even policies that should appeal to such voters cannot persuade them on merit alone. While in France, as elsewhere, the left and the far right are often viewed as vying for power over the political center, this narrative glosses over some critical distinctions. “The condition for winning is not at all the same for the extreme right and the left,” says Samuel Hayat, a political scientist specializing in the history of French political thought at the French National Center for Scientific Research.

Ongoing tensions over immigration and asylum policies, a spate of lethal terrorist attacks and the explosive emotions stoked by the Israel-Hamas war (France has both the largest Jewish and the largest Muslim populations in Europe) create a climate favorable to the far right on social issues. “Immigration is a topic that is difficult for the left to address,” Lefebvre says, not only because many of its constituents are themselves immigrants or the descendants of immigrants but also because leftist ideology, which embraces equality for all, is in many ways antithetical to the harsh enforcement of border laws. This difficulty has been exacerbated by the “droitisation” of French media, or the ubiquity of extreme right figures. Marine Le Pen “doesn’t even need to speak,” Lefebvre says. “The debate has become so right-wing. The other forces do the job for her.”

If the far right has succeeded in “being hegemonic in the way that the media interprets certain questions, such as the question of Islam, the question of immigration,” Hayat says, the left is in the unenviable position of having to offer concrete proposals and persuade people it can implement them. “They have to go and conquer every place, they have to do politics,” he says. “They have to appear as a real force of opposition that will truly change the lives of people if they arrive in power.”

Like many recently birthed political movements, L.F.I. has fashioned itself in and for the era of social media. While its policy platform is largely out of the left-wing playbook, its tactics are aimed at the attention economy. From its inception, L.F.I. has excelled at the optics of protest — what Mélenchon’s opponents call “the decibel left” — theatrical disruptions of power that attack the establishment, especially the media and within Parliament. During the anti-pension-reform marches last spring, its deputies became well known for shouting down Macron’s ministers. In one notorious incident, an L.F.I. representative plastered an effigy of the labor minister’s head onto a soccer ball and posed for a photo with his foot on top of it.

These kinds of actions are not mere provocations. They are seen by L.F.I. as a way to mobilize a new kind of grass-roots populism by engaging voters who have long ceased to participate in politics. Like Chantal Mouffe, a theorist of leftist populism and a friend of Mélenchon’s, Mélenchon believes that voters have become demoralized by a technocratic neoliberal consensus: the primacy of markets and social values that favor individualism over the collective good. The expression of anger is meant to make room for changing course, by solidifying support among the ***working class*** and luring voters who might otherwise be tempted by the far right.

In France, as in many Western democracies today, the ***working class*** is now in large part nonwhite. The 10th Arrondissement of Paris, where the L.F.I. has its headquarters in an old uniform distribution center, is a mix of immigrant workers (and their descendants) and the bobos, as the French refer to yuppies, who have gentrified the area — the very urban voters who have become Mélenchon’s strongest bloc. His constituency also comprises the academic and activist left, who dominate social-media-driven messaging and give voice to this demographic coupling.

Last summer, I found Mélenchon in his office behind a sunny glassed-in antechamber staffed by older millennials. Warm and extroverted, with a well-deserved reputation as an intellectual, he relayed anecdotes and reflections in an erudite yet idiomatic French that was a notch or two above my nonnative proficiency. On his desk I saw a copy of “The Communist Manifesto,” which I assumed that Mélenchon, a French sovereigntist with a fierce anti-American streak, might have left out as a mild provocation.

Mélenchon was a member of the center-left French Socialist Party until 2008, when he quit to form a separate party because he thought the Socialists had, like their counterparts across Europe and the United States, fallen under the thrall of neoliberalism. “We currently live in a country, France, the seventh economy in the world, with nine million poor people, six million who can’t feed their children,” Mélenchon told me. “This was never France.”

Mélenchon has advocated the founding of a new republic that would change the Constitution to shift power away from the president and toward the people. He described himself to me as “a tribune of the people,” even as he acknowledged that “the people” of the 21st century is not the same as the people of the 20th century or the 19th century. He is nonetheless clearly inspired by the rabble-rousing leftist politics of previous eras. “The tribune was always someone whose body was engaged,” Mélenchon said, as he twisted around in his seat and waved at a photo of Jean Jaurès, one of the founders of the Socialist Party, a diminutive man in a bowler hat, hanging by one hand from a flagpole, the other hand raised toward a sea of people below him. “Conflictuality,” he said, referring to his politics of disruption, “profoundly shocks the mores of the ruling elite.”

Mélenchon never misses an opportunity to apply his rhetorical gifts to challenging those in power. It was to this end that they were deployed last summer when riots exploded across the country after a police officer killed 17-year-old Nahel Merzouk in the driver’s seat of his car. (Merzouk was shot during a traffic stop.) As protesters across the Parisian suburbs, known as banlieues, looted stores and set fire to cars, schools, town halls and other state property, leading to thousands of arrests, Mélenchon took to Twitter to call for justice. While leaders in the banlieues praised him for acknowledging the lived experience of their constituents, elsewhere the backlash was vicious. Critics from the center and the right railed that, even as the country burned, Mélenchon hadn’t called for calm.

The same defiant impulse was on display this fall. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel, French politicians organized a march against antisemitism. Nearly all major political figures in France, including Marine Le Pen, attended. Mélenchon did not. (He later said this was because of the presence of the far right.) Once Israel’s bombing of the Gaza Strip began, Mélenchon joined marches calling for a cease-fire, from which he posted pictures. Then he tweeted that the speaker of Parliament, Yaël Braun-Pivet, who is Jewish and was in Israel on a fact-finding visit, was “camping out” in Tel Aviv to “encourage a massacre.” The press, including left-leaning outlets, jumped on Mélenchon’s remarks, calling them antisemitic — one magazine decried them as “vile misjudgments” — while newscasters on centrist or mainstream channels praised Le Pen’s response, creating a media environment in which the left was portrayed as potentially more dangerous to the country than the far right. (Mélenchon later said his remarks were not antisemitic because what he objected to was the unconditional nature of Braun-Pivet’s support for Israel.)

Mélenchon’s critics, including some of L.F.I.’s more mainstream coalition partners, cite such tactics as the reason they think he has hit a ceiling with voters. “There’s an L.F.I. discourse on social networks, saying, Oh, we don’t care, we have to be honest and true, and the way to do it is to be the same in the streets and in Parliament,”’ says Vincent Martigny, a political scientist at the University of Nice, Côte d’Azur. “But we can see that this strategy of L.F.I. to be very violent in Parliament at this point doesn’t work at all. The middle class might be angry, but it doesn’t want angry people to be at the Élysée Palace.”

In the past, unions and party organizations worked together to do both — they mobilized their members to demonstrate and to vote for their candidates. With unions in decline, and with many of the traditional left party structures in France now nonexistent, radical actions, even those that have strong participation across age groups and that enjoy union support, don’t necessarily lead to greater voter turnout. As has been repeatedly demonstrated by social movements over the last decade — Occupy Wall Street, the Arab Spring, the Yellow Vests in France and Gezi Park in Turkey — impassioned social-media-driven engagement in the streets does not necessarily translate into the kind of engagement required to acquire and sustain power.

An electoral map of France from the 2022 presidential election shows that the L.F.I. won in the immigrant suburbs of northeastern Paris and its environs and did well in many pockets in the south of France and in other major cities. The west of France, once a stronghold of the Socialist Party, went to Macron. The south, which has long been far-right territory, went to Marine Le Pen, as did large swaths of the postindustrial northeast, a region that was once the breeding ground of the French Communist Party. Amid the sea of National Rally victories in northeast France, the left managed to win only a handful of districts.

Historically, the French left operated as a coalition of the French Socialist Party and the P.C.F. Beginning in the 1930s and then again after World War II, that coalition helped establish what many leftists think of when they think of the social welfare state. The P.C.F., which played a paramount role in the French resistance during World War II, operated effectively through already well-established underground networks. It emerged from World War II with a new legitimacy, especially in what had been occupied northern and eastern France. That was also the country’s industrial base; there, wartime destruction created ample opportunity to champion the workers who would rebuild the nation.

As part of coalition governments in the mid-1940s, the P.C.F. fought for and helped put in place the social security system and the pension system — the major pillars of the French welfare state. Though national leaders of the P.C.F. continued to defend Stalin, and Stalinism, even into the 1970s, at the local level, P.C.F. chapters carried out the more practical functions of organizing, representing and offering services to workers. In short, the P.C.F. was part of a historically grounded communal identity. “We built the social model, and we’re proud of that history,” Fabien Roussel, the current head of the P.C.F., told me.

Roussel, an energetic 54-year-old, took over the French Communist Party in 2018. Over Bastille Day last July, I tailed him through St.-Amand-les-Eaux, a quaint spa town named for its healing waters near the Belgian border, in what was once French coal country, as he made his holiday rounds. Roussel greeted constituents at a rock concert, joined a crowd gathered to watch the fireworks, dropped in on a house party and finally, the following morning, marched in a Bastille Day parade in the neighboring town Fresnes-sur-Escaut. There, local officials had assembled in front of an old union hall dedicated to the Martel brothers, “martyrs to the resistance,” according to a plaque on the building: Henri, executed in 1942 at age 22, and Germinal, executed in 1943 at 21.

Today the climate for the P.C.F. is very different than it was in the postwar years. In the ’80s, the P.C.F. began to lose ground, as the industries that fueled the economy (coal, metallurgy, textiles) moved out; the idea of communism, always tainted by its association with the excesses of the Soviet Union, became increasingly untouchable. As industrial jobs vanished and workers ceased to be represented by unions, they became unmoored from the party structures that once granted them political representation and power — not just the formal ones, like unions, but the social clubs and community leisure activities organized by workers who spent their days together. People ceased to think of themselves as part of a “proletariat,” and the idea of collective organizing began to fade.

At the same time, many workers began to experience what is known as déclassement: a halt, or reversal, of improvements to the standard of living. The economic consequences bred social ones. With less to do, people spent more time inside their homes watching TV, where right-wing pundits and ideologues thrived. Soon political protest against the status quo began to shift from an embrace of the far left into support for Jean-Marie Le Pen (Marine’s father) and his National Front. By the 1990s, the National Front was using the language of protectionism to pander to discontented workers.

As a result, voters became increasingly unpredictable. “When you had mass political parties, you could have stability in their vote, because the party was an organization that defined important parts of your life,” Hayat, the political scientist, says, “and not just what you voted for every five years.” Now that politics “has been reduced to what ballot you put in the ballot box, well, of course, people can sometimes vote for the left, sometimes not,” he says. Even those who broadly identify with the left do not join parties, Hayat says. This is largely because political identities are now formed and expressed on social media, outside party structures.

This organizational conundrum does not fall on all parties equally. “If you want to create stability in the voting, you need organizations,” Hayat says. That is, a structured, consistent and beneficial presence in communities. In France, the left no longer has this kind of presence. The same is true of Italy, which once had one of the strongest Communist Parties in Europe and which now has a far-right government. And it is also true in the United States, where, until the 1970s and ’80s, New Deal politics kept white ***working-class*** voters close to the Democratic Party. In the absence of such structures, Hayat continues, you “need to be the only party that appeals to a certain emotion that is very strong in the electorate, for example, fear.” That, of course, is the strength of the far right.

“They take my exact words,” Roussel said of Marine Le Pen’s party. “Without paying for rights, naturally.” But behind it all, Roussel said, their platform is still neoliberal. “The far-right may talk about raising salaries, but they would also get rid of the employer contributions that help fund the social security system,” he said. “I often say to the workers that I meet: Be wary of the National Rally. It’s like a candy that is very sweet when you put it in your mouth. But when you bite into it, it’s very bitter. And it can make you sick.”

The unemployment rate in St.-Amand now stands, by some calculations, at 23.5 percent. When Roussel took over the P.C.F. five years ago, the party had just won about 1 percent of the vote in the second round of parliamentary elections. He managed to double that figure during the presidential elections in 2022 — to 2.3 percent in the first round. Some 53 percent of those who turned out to vote in St.-Amand voted for Le Pen in the second round of the presidential elections. But they also voted for Roussel against his far-right opponent in the parliamentary elections; Roussel won his seat by nine points. This may be a testament less to the particulars of his policies than to his multigenerational roots in the region — his father was a journalist for a P.C.F. publication — and to his persona and his presence in the community. “Marine Le Pen is against Macron, and I’m against Macron,” Roussel told me. “In the national elections, people are fed up with both left and right, it’s always the same thing, so they vote far right. In local elections, they vote for people they know, whom they like and who treat them well.”

As the traditional party system in France has broken down, and as political figures skirt it to succeed, “there is a cannibalization of politics by personality,” says Martigny, the University of Nice professor. In that sense, the left has mirrored the populist style of the far right, in which personality trumps the traditional party machine.

Many French leftists dislike Roussel precisely for this reason, arguing that his politics are more a matter of making friends than of fighting for left-wing ideas. Even when it comes to Mélenchon, it is difficult to determine how many people voted for him because they believe in his politics and how many voted in favor of a big personality, with enough charisma and fame to beat out the others in a multicandidate election — what the French call the “vote utile.”

Some politicians on the left have taken this to mean that they should each cultivate their own followings, campaign for the presidency in the next elections, then rally their followers behind whoever makes it to the runoff, in the hope that, at that point, there will be enough votes to form a leftist majority. Vitriolic debates that revolve around questions of what in France is known as le wokisme have become fertile ground for such self-positioning.

As a matter of policy, there is little disagreement within the French left about the importance of feminism, antiracism and other matters of social justice. Even Roussel, who more than anyone on the left might be said to represent the kind of cultural conservatism inherent in the old “white ***working-class*** guy” style of politics, largely subscribes to these principles. When I visited him at his office at the Assemblée Nationale in Paris, I spotted a poster on his wall that enumerated in Ch’ti, the regional language of northern France, the historic “Droits de l’Homme,” the Rights of Man, the document adopted during the French Revolution that was foundational to democracy. Below it was a poster that enumerated, also in Ch’ti, the Rights of Woman.

What disagreement there is centers on the public messaging around such issues. Roussel has become one of the most popular figures in French politics, in part because of his sometimes unwitting adventures in the culture wars. His main sparring partner is Sandrine Rousseau, an economist and a Green Party member of Parliament who was a leader of the French #MeToo movement. In 2022, Roussel tweeted that he wished every French citizen could enjoy “a good steak, a good wine, a good piece of cheese — that’s la gastronomie française!” In response, Rousseau tweeted a link to an article noting that, in fact, couscous, a North African dish, was most popular among the French. This exchange kicked off a debate as to whether it was still permissible to define French cuisine as wine and cheese. To the delight of many, Roussel insisted that it was.

Rousseau, a petite 52-year-old woman with a gray pixie cut, represents a southern district of Paris, which includes most of the bobo 13th Arrondissement. Visitors to her office at the Assemblée Nationale are greeted by a poster that reads: “Replace Capitalism With a Good Nap!” Her policies often carry a whiff of the ridiculous but are typically based on solid research and are highly effective on social media. She has a knack for combining ecological policies with feminist ones. Last year, in response to the heat waves and fires France endured, she started a campaign to reduce meat consumption, which contributes to climate change. She said that to get men, who consume more meat than women, to eat less of it, we must “de-virilize” barbecuing. This idea generated a lively round of “le buzz.”

Rousseau insisted that, in addition to the attention the barbecue controversy brought, it was part of a messaging strategy to stem the growth of the far right. “Right now, they control the terms of debate,” she said. “That’s why it’s important that we impose our own themes. We have to counter that. It’s not easy.”

According to Lefebvre, the political scientist at the University of Lille, the wokisme debates don’t really speak to most French. “What interests them are questions about work, economics,” he says. In recent years, France has been hit by such a severe housing crisis that a rising number of university students have begun living at campsites. The number of homeless people in France has doubled in the last decade. “Middle- and ***working-class*** left-wing voters, they want to pay their taxes, they’re thinking about how to pay their bills, they want to educate, raise their children,” Martigny says. “Of course, if their child is gay that’s fine, and they’re worried about climate change, and they think fighting racism is important. But in reality, their daily life is about socioeconomic issues.”

When I was with Roussel in St.-Amand, we stopped at a butcher shop to buy provisions for a holiday dinner he was hosting. As we waited for the cashier, I asked Roussel whether he was interested in de-masculinizing meat. He seemed unamused. He nodded at the butcher behind the counter and said, “He won’t even understand the question.”

Even as debates about social issues create fissures in the leftist coalition, the populist theatrics at which it excels have never been its sole province. They can be — and often have been — co-opted by the right. This winter there were weeks of protests by farmers, who drove their tractors into Paris and blocked roadways to signal anger at low incomes, unfair trade deals and regulatory burdens. Although the left largely sides with the farmers — during the 2017 election, Mélenchon advocated that France consider leaving the E.U. — so does the far right. And because rural areas are its base, the National Rally quickly made a show of supporting the strikers.

The left’s politics of outrage can further erode public support and confidence in its ability to govern. The Oct. 7 Hamas attacks in Israel brought perhaps the most direct challenge to L.F.I. After Mélenchon’s remarks about Yaël Braun-Pivet’s “camping out” in Tel Aviv to “encourage the massacre,” the left coalition seemed to reach a breaking point. The Socialist Party voted to withdraw from it. Even a prominent member of L.F.I. said publicly that it was time for the group to move beyond Mélenchon’s scorched-earth politics.

Some have put their hopes in François Ruffin, a popular and respected muckraking journalist and member of Parliament. A more polished if less intellectual supporter of Mélenchon’s, Ruffin became known in France as a leader of Nuit Debout — or Night, Standing Up — an Occupy Wall Street-style movement. In 2017, his film “Thanks, Boss!” an exposé in the vein of Michael Moore about the outsourcing of jobs in his region of northern France by LVMH, won him a César Award (sometimes known as the French Oscar). That same year, he was elected to Parliament, joining L.F.I.’s parliamentary group. Ruffin happily participates in some of the disruptive antics of L.F.I., but he is also a native of the northern French industrial belt and has an intuitive feel for the cultural conservatism of his voters, at times playing down the salience of, for example, gender issues. Last summer he expressed skepticism about a Spanish law enshrining the right to change gender identity and was attacked for it by leftist activists; he subsequently apologized.

There has been some chatter that Ruffin, who represents a portion of Picardy, a region near Roussel’s district, will take over from Mélenchon and run for president in 2027. For Ruffin, the discords within the left are not impediments to electoral success. “The history of the labor movement is a history of overcoming contradictions,” Ruffin told me. It is about winning fair wages, maternity leave, paid vacation and pensions but also about standing for the dignity and importance of work. He believes that bringing together the lower and middle classes — “the France that works” — will be key to re-​establishing the left as a party with mass popular support. Though the left performs well among the highest and the lowest income levels in the country, Ruffin says, everywhere in between “Marine Le Pen is completely dominating us.”

Over the spring, Ruffin supported the mostly female employees who were on strike at a fulfillment center of Vertbaudet, the children’s clothing company. After two months, the company reached an agreement on a new contract for the strikers and two other unions. He also attended a forum on the challenges of organizing in modern warehouses and other growing industries, like home health care, in which workers are poorly compensated, even though they provide crucial services. “How can the left be identified as the party of postindustrial workers?” Ruffin said. “We need to name them, talk about their lives.”

When it comes to divisive social issues like the Israel-Hamas war, Ruffin often assumes the line that French leaders have always taken — the tradition of Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand, straddling parties and politics, appealing to the sense of grandeur that is broadly shared in France. The French tradition was to “express ourselves independently, without aligning ourselves,” Ruffin told Le Monde in October, referring to the war in Gaza. He pointed out that France is the only nuclear power in the E.U. and the only E.U. power with a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. In following the lead of the United States, he argued, France was doing the world — and the Israelis and Palestinians — a disservice. “Our leverage is the word that is listened to, that carries, that drives. When France decides to speak out loud and clear, its voice is heard. But it has chosen to be mute.”

In the same way, building a winning majority in France, Ruffin told me, has always required speaking to its sense of grandeur. For the left, that may mean invoking one of its defining contributions to the invention of democracy: the sans-culottes, who gave us the notion of “the people.” “It’s the educated petite bourgeoisie who represent the Third Estate in the Assemblée Nationale,” Ruffin said, “but it’s the people of Paris who take the Bastille. It’s all of that together that makes the French Revolution.”

Elisabeth Zerofsky is a contributing writer for the magazine who has reported across Europe and the United States. Her last feature was on Poland’s response to the war in Ukraine. Antoine d’Agata is a French photographer, film director and member of Magnum Photos. His most recent book of photography is “Psychodémie.”

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY GUILLAUME SOUVANT/AFP, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (MM36); Fabien Roussel, head of the French Communist Party, in St.-Amand-les-Eaux, in France’s industrial northeast. The region was once a bastion of the left and now leans far-right. Opening page: Jean-Luc Mélenchon, founder of La France Insoumise, who is widely credited with the left’s strong showing in the last two presidential elections. (MM39); François Ruffin, a leftist journalist turned member of France’s Assemblée Nationale, says that uniting France’s lower and middle classes will be key to re-establishing the left’s mass support. (MM40); Sandrine Rousseau, a Green Party member of the Assemblée Nationale, has a knack for forging policy proposals that marry feminist and ecological principles and play well on social media. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTOINE D’AGATA/MAGNUM, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM41) This article appeared in print on page MM36, MM37, MM38, MM39, MM40, MM41, MM42, MM43.

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[***A Young Political Star Is Raising the Prospects of France's Far Right***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6Y-VDN1-JBG3-605G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Charismatic and clean cut, shorn of the Le Pen name, the young National Rally leader seems poised to take his party to its best showing ever in European elections on Sunday.

France has a taste for revolutions, and in the 28-year-old Jordan Bardella, it has found a mild-mannered, impeccably dressed insurgent who vows to upend the politics of the country in order to save it from ''disappearance.''

Mr. Bardella, the president of the National Rally, is the cherished disciple of Marine Le Pen, 55, the perennial far-right presidential candidate. She once called him the ''lion cub''; now she calls him ''the lion.'' A clean-cut, strong-jawed TikTok star, known for his love of candy, he has certainly shown a sure hand in the French political jungle.

As European Parliament elections approach on Sunday, Mr. Bardella, who led his party's campaign, seems poised for a victory that could reshape French politics. An Ipsos poll published this past week gave the National Rally some 33 percent of the vote, more than double the 16 percent of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Renaissance party.

Even if the effective power of the European Union's only directly elected body is limited, this would be a stark repudiation of the French leader. As elsewhere in Europe, the normalization of the far right has proceeded apace.

It is as if a fractured France, weary of politics as usual and anxious about its future, has abruptly discovered a more acceptable version of the xenophobic politics that long cast the National Rally as a direct threat to French democracy. It has helped that Mr. Bardella is young, possesses a reassuring showmanship and does not bear the name Le Pen.

Indeed, his success has been such that a leadership battle looms. For now, Ms. Le Pen and her prodigal son are a hugging and seemingly harmonious duo (Mr. Bardella dates Ms. Le Pen's niece Nolwenn Olivier). But Mr. Bardella's popularity is such that there is a possibility the wunderkind will eclipse his maker.

Ms. Le Pen retains the stubborn hope of becoming president in 2027, when Mr. Macron's term ends. She has said she would make Mr. Bardella her prime minister if she became president.

''The moderate conservative right is dead in France, and, for the first time, it is possible that the National Rally will come to power,'' said Jean-Yves Camus, a political scientist who studies nationalist movements in Europe.

Raised by his mother, an Italian immigrant, in the projects north of Paris, Mr. Bardella marks a break from the cookie-cutter technocrats formed in elite schools who have dominated French politics. He has recast -- some would say sugarcoated -- the angry message of the nationalist right so effectively that there is talk of ''Bardellamania.''

''Our civilization can die,'' Mr. Bardella told a crowd of more than 5,000 flag-waving supporters this past week, as chants of ''Jordan! Jordan!'' reverberated around a vast arena in Paris. ''It can die because it will be submerged in migrants who will have changed our customs, culture and way of life irreversibly.''

Mr. Bardella's campaign director, Alexandre Loubet, said that in the event of a clear victory for the National Rally, the party ''would demand the dissolution of the National Assembly'' and new elections. ''If Mr. Macron has a minimum of respect for the will of the French people,'' Mr. Loubet said, ''he would do so.''

Mr. Macron, who is term-limited and has three more years in office, is unlikely to do any such thing, no matter the outcome.

In Mr. Bardella's telling, always delivered in a level tone, Mr. Macron has brought France to the abyss through rampant immigration, a lax approach to lawlessness and violence, the loss of French identity, and ''punitive'' ecological change that makes life unaffordable.

''Everything is going from bad to worse,'' said Alain Foy, a concierge who attended Mr. Bardella's rally in Paris. ''Sometimes I can't believe what is happening, whether on immigration, purchasing power, insecurity, everything.'' His sister, Marie Foy, added, ''France is falling apart.''

Mr. Foy said that in the past, anyone disagreeing with the National Rally would quickly label Ms. Le Pen a racist or a fascist. ''But with Bardella,'' he said, ''the good thing is that he thinks the same, but they can't call him a racist because he's an immigrant child of Italian parents.''

The exact nature of Mr. Bardella's upbringing in the Seine-Saint-Denis suburb is unclear. He has portrayed it as a childhood of unrelenting hardship in projects afflicted by drug dealing and violence, where you could be killed for refusing someone a cigarette, and where his mother, who separated from his father when he was 1, struggled to make ends meet.

However, Mr. Bardella attended a private school, the Lycée Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle, where the fees were paid by his father, who had a small business renting coffee and vending machines, said Pascal Humeau, who was close to Mr. Bardella for many years.

Mr. Bardella proved to be a good student with strong political convictions, and in 2012, at age 16, he enrolled in the party he now leads, which was then called the National Front. He had interned for a week with the local police precinct, an experience that appears to have contributed to his political orientation.

''It was not a ***working-class*** upbringing, that's clear, but nor was it privileged in any way,'' Mr. Camus said. Although he had graduated with distinction from high school, Mr. Bardella dropped out of college to focus on politics, essentially the only work he has done.

With his deliberate manner and his charismatic good looks, he was quickly identified in Ms. Le Pen's entourage as an ideal representative of a reinvented National Rally, stripped of the anti-Semitic invective of its founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who called the Holocaust a ''detail'' of history.

Ms. Le Pen, intent on bringing her party into the mainstream, pushed him forward. Mr. Humeau, a former journalist, became Mr. Bardella's media trainer in 2018. In him, he discovered a ''rather sad young man, repeating Ms. Le Pen's formulas, an empty shell, very controlled, but knowing little of what was happening in France or the world.''

Mr. Bardella was, however, a quick study. He learned to smile and appear more relaxed, retaining an air of ''consensual humility'' before eventually becoming what Mr. Humeau called ''the media beast of today who scares his opponents.''

To what end, I asked? ''He has had one objective since the age of 17 -- to become prime minister and president,'' Mr. Humeau said, ''and I don't think anyone can derail him.''

If Mr. Bardella has contrived to present a softer face of the National Rally, then there is little or no evidence that his own views or the party's have moderated.

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 in the European election, polls show, along with the struggles of French families to make ends meet as the war in Ukraine has driven up energy and food prices.

In this context, the National Rally has successfully portrayed itself as the home of French patriotism, the party of people reasonably concerned that immigration is out of control.

With his Italian background, Mr. Bardella has been able to argue that the issue is not immigration itself, but the refusal of many migrants to assimilate. On the left, the very word patriotism in France tends to be viewed skeptically, a first step to nationalism and even war.

The benefits that immigrants can bring to societies with shrinking labor forces and tax bases are generally overlooked. Instead, the focus of the right is on migrants, particularly North African Muslims, benefiting from handouts and changing the looks, habits and cultures of urban neighborhoods.

''We have the courage and lucidity to say that if France becomes the country of everyone, it will no longer be the nation of anyone,'' Mr. Bardella said this past week. ''With the deregulation of migration, totalitarian Islamism does not only give its fanatics an order to separate themselves from the French Republic, but also to conquer it, in order to impose its laws and morals.''

Mr. Bardella has accused Mr. Macron of wanting to expand the 27-member European Union to 37 members, including the Turkey ''of the Islamist'' President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and of intending to give up France's veto over E.U. foreign policy decisions.

Turkish E.U. accession talks have in fact long been frozen, and Mr. Macron's attachment to French sovereignty is fierce. The mildness of Mr. Bardella's tone can mask a readiness to bend the truth.

He has tried, with vague evasions, to play down his party's longtime closeness to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, a policy now revised, despite the repeated pro-Russian votes of his party in the European Parliament. It voted in 2021 against a resolution in support of Ukraine's ''independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity,'' for example.

If Mr. Bardella has been campaigning by raising the specter of the ''death'' of France, Mr. Macron has also been speaking in apocalyptical terms of late, warning of the ''death'' of Europe if it does not achieve ''strategic autonomy.''

The difference is that Mr. Bardella believes salvation lies in less Europe, not more. The European elections will also be a bellwether of the European idea itself.

''I worry that people won't vote for Ms. Le Pen because of her name, with her father and all,'' said Jacky Laquay, a retired factory worker who recently attended a Bardella rally in the north of France. ''Bardella embodies the future of France.''

Certainly, Mr. Bardella appears unlikely to disappear from the political scene soon. ''At 28, he has 40 years of political life in front of him,'' Mr. Camus said. ''That's not nothing.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/08/world/europe/jordan-bardella-france-eu-elections.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/08/world/europe/jordan-bardella-france-eu-elections.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Jordan Bardella, top, the 28-year-old president of the far-right National Rally, has used his reassuring brand of showmanship to help his party rise in the polls and portray itself as the political home of people reasonably concerned that immigration is out of control. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIEN BOZON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

JEFF PACHOUD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

FRANCOIS LO PRESTI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2024

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[***How Democrats Got Here With Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CC6-X3C1-JBG3-60P6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 2012 words

**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon, Caitlin O’Keefe and Sophia Lanman Astead W. Herndon is a national politics reporter and the host of the politics podcast &amp;#8220;The Run-Up.&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** What Kamala Harris, Jaime Harrison, Ron Klain and other party leaders have said about the liabilities of their candidate’s age.

**Body**

What Kamala Harris, Jaime Harrison, Ron Klain and other party leaders have said about the liabilities of their candidate’s age.

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As you may have heard, Thursday night was the first debate between President Biden and former president Donald J. Trump. In short, it was not a great night for Mr. Biden.

The president’s debate performance triggered significant panic among top Democrats, who for months have been dismissing concerns about Mr. Biden’s age.

So, how is this happening? Despite all the concerns polls showed about age, how has the Democratic Party arrived at this moment?

That’s a line of inquiry The Run-Up has been putting to senior Democratic leaders for the past 18 months. And we wanted to revisit some of those conversations now in a special episode.

They include our interviews with [*Vice President Harris*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/election-run-up-podcast), former Housing and Urban Development Secretary [*Julián Castro*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/election-run-up-podcast), Democratic National Committee chair [*Jaime Harrison*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/election-run-up-podcast) and [*Ron Klain*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/election-run-up-podcast), Mr. Biden’s former White House chief of staff.

An edited excerpt from Astead Herndon’s conversation with Ron Klain in March is below.

Astead Herndon: Part of our premise in our episode is to answer a really central question that we get from a lot of voters and our listeners. And I know it’s a basic one in political kind of world because President Biden’s obviously the incumbent president. For most of history, incumbent presidents have always run for re-election. But I guess I wanted to ask more broadly, why is Joe Biden running for re-election, particularly given that most of Americans, including some Democrats, consistently say that in our reporting and in national polling, that they thought he was too old to run again?

Ron Klain: Well, I would say this. A lot of people have run against Donald Trump. Only one has ever beaten him, and that’s Joe Biden. So, I think he is running in part because he’s succeeded in defeating Donald Trump. And I he’s our best option to defeat Donald Trump in 2024. Protect our democracy.

I also think he’s done a good job as president. He ran on a very aggressive agenda for president to have the country recover from the pandemic to address four crises he saw, a crisis of the economy in the wake of the pandemic, a crisis of climate change, crisis of racism, and obviously, then, the health care crisis coming out of the pandemic.

And so we set to work on day one to try to address all four crises. And I feel like we made good progress on all four of them, although there’s a big unfinished agenda, and he’s running to finish that agenda. I think he has a track record that merits re-election and an agenda that will drive a second term and the proven track record of taking on and defeating Donald Trump.

Astead Herndon: I want to dig deeper there and partly go back to 2020 to do that. Because you mentioned the first one about he’s the person to beat Donald Trump, and he has the proven track record there. I remember President Biden’s age kind of being an open discussion back in 2020, even some folks thinking he should take a pledge to serve only one term. Can you take me inside the campaign at the time? You were a senior adviser. Was there any discussion of his advanced age at that point? And how did you all go about trying to respond to the pressure of those concerns?

Ron Klain: Well, obviously, it was an issue in 2020. People raised it. But I think he defeated it by campaigning, by putting his agenda before the country. He had, I think, a bold agenda that I think helped reject the idea that he was too old because he was very forward-looking on issues like climate change and race and other issues like that.

And I think that agenda and his energy in the campaign, his success in debating Donald Trump in the fall, I think all overcame those objections. Age was an issue in 2020. It’s an issue in 2024. But it’s an issue, and there are other issues, too. And I think the sum of the issues favored Biden in 2020. I think they will again in 2024.

Astead Herndon: Recently, my colleague, Ezra Klein, made a kind of explicit case, saying that the people Biden listens to, Barack Obama, Chuck Schumer — he named some other folks, including you — need to get him to see that Biden might not be best positioned. I wanted you to respond to that sense of argument that has certainly been in the air. And I guess, I actually had a broader question, which is like, is that even the thing that’s appropriate or people even do in your position? Or is it just Joe Biden’s decision?

Ron Klain: Well, I think ultimately, it is his decision and the decision of the Democratic primary voters who are voting for him in overwhelming numbers to be our nominee. So, I’ll leave it at that. Look, if I thought he wasn’t the right candidate to beat Donald Trump, I wouldn’t be for him running. But I think he is the right candidate.

And I think that people like Ezra, who haven’t really been in this business, underestimate how difficult it is to beat Trump and have a view that just any generic Democrat could beat Trump. And I’ll say it’s much more complicated than that. And I think you need someone with the right candidate profile and the right skills. I think that is Joe Biden. And I think he defeated Trump once, I think he’ll do it again.

Astead Herndon: I wonder the specifics on candidate profile. What is it about Joe Biden that makes you think he’s harder to caricature?

Ron Klain: Well, I think he has a ***working class*** background that resonates with voters, the man from Scranton. I think the fact that he’s had a very pro-union record as president and really connects with working people, I think that ultimately makes it harder for Trump to make him into something exotic.

He wasn’t born with a silver spoon. He didn’t come from privilege. He came from the industrial heartland of the country. And he’s proven that he can go toe to toe with Trump on the debate stage and hold his own. And so, I think that, to me, performance is a good indicator, and he performed in 2020. I think he’ll perform again in 2024.

Astead Herndon: Four years ago, I remember folks making this argument in Biden’s favor, and it really bore out, both in the primary and in the general. And I hear that, and I respect the consistency of which Biden has proven that argument in tangible votes. But I also feel like one thing that’s changed in the last couple of years is that Biden, at least in the public, has become age-caricatured, right, even if it’s outside of the actual personal qualities, even if it’s not the person and president that you see every day. How do you combat against that caricature, even if his bio and his personhood is still understood by the American public?

Ron Klain: I think we have to sell his — as I said, his age is an asset with the wisdom it brings, the experience it brings. And look, I think some voters will vote against him for that reason. But I think some voters will vote for him for that reason. And I think he’s also overperforming with voters over 65. And that changes the map quite a bit because of older populations in places like Michigan and Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

Look, I think age is an issue, but it’s just an issue. There are other issues. Abortion is an issue. And the economy is an issue. And so, I think when voters go into the polls, they’ll have a balance in their minds, and there’ll be some negative things on Biden’s side, more negative things on Trump’s side, some positive things for Biden, some positive things for Trump. I think in that balance, Biden will come out ahead.

Astead Herndon: You know, what both sides agree on this election is the stakes, or at least, the size of them, right? And I know that for the next six months, I’m going to hear arguments from national Democrats in the party saying to people who might be upset with Biden or might prefer someone younger or might not prefer a certain policy here or there, that they should put those things aside because the stakes are so large. But I do think there is some kind of missing acknowledgment that, like, isn’t it also a risky thing for the party to do to nominate the 81-year-old incumbent who a majority of Americans perceive as too old in the first place? Like, isn’t that a big risk, too?

Ron Klain: To me, the risky thing would be when you have someone who’s beaten Trump going with an unproven national candidate to try to defeat someone who has run for president twice before and is now running a third time in Donald Trump. So I mean, there’s risks on both sides here. And every candidate has risks. And what the president derisks is inexperience on the national stage, inexperience in dealing with Trump. And he has those things. And those are assets, I think, in the race that some of these public criticisms are undercounting or undervaluing.

Astead Herndon: I hear that. I guess my last question is, OK, we get the state of play. We get kind of where we are. I’ve posed all the age questions to you. The Biden campaign has made the similar argument that you have made here, that the stakes will eventually bear them out. So, is that just going to be like a “stay the course till Election Day and that the day after the election, we’ll see,” type of thing, or is there something about the evidence we have seen sometimes, or some of the polling we have seen, or some of the critiques we have heard, that is going to require the Biden campaign to change a strategy before then? Like, what do we think might shift? Because some of the arguments I hear from you all are things that have to change. It’s just going to be like a, “we’ll tell you the day after, and we’ll be proven correct.”

Ron Klain: Well, I think what has to change about the Biden campaign is we have to have a campaign. So, there’s going to be an election. The president will go out. He’ll campaign. People will hear his argument. I think they’ll be persuaded by it. I think the more they see him out there on the stump, the more they’ll be assuaged about his age. When they see him debating Donald Trump, going toe to toe with Trump, I think, again, they’ll be reassured about his age. And their doubts about Trump will be reinforced.

But the thing that has to change about the campaign is, we need to have a campaign. And that will come. And again, four years ago at this time, there were a lot of doubts about Joe Biden, doubts about whether or not he would ever become the nominee. And he overcame those doubts. And you could have said to me then, well, what’s going to change? And what’s going to change is, we’ll start voting, and we’ll see him win. And that’s what it took. So, let the campaign unfold.

About ‘The Run-Up’

“The Run-Up” is your guide to understanding the 2024 election. Through on-the-ground reporting and conversations with colleagues from The New York Times, newsmakers and voters across the country, our host, Astead W. Herndon, takes us beyond the horse race to explore how we came to this moment in American politics. New episodes on Thursdays.

Credits

“The Run-Up” is hosted by Astead W. Herndon and produced by Elisa Gutierrez, Caitlin O’Keefe and Anna Foley. The show is edited by Rachel Dry and Lisa Tobin. Engineering by Sophia Lanman and original music by Dan Powell, Marion Lozano, Pat McCusker, Sophia Lanman, Diane Wong and Elisheba Ittoop. Fact-checking by Caitlin Love.

Special thanks to Paula Szuchman, Sam Dolnick, Larissa Anderson, David Halbfinger, Mahima Chablani, Jeffrey Miranda and Maddy Masiello.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by The New York Times; Photo: Kenny Holston/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 4, 2024

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[***Can Republicans Embrace Voting by Mail? Pennsylvania Offers a Test.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2Y-1K91-JBG3-6371-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 21, 2024 Tuesday 22:46 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1365 words

**Byline:** Michael Wines Michael Wines is a national correspondent, writing about voting and election issues. He is based in Washington, D.C.

**Highlight:** Republicans are now trying to sell voters on voting methods that the party has demonized for years. It won’t be easy.

**Body**

Republicans are now trying to sell voters on voting methods that the party has demonized for years. It won’t be easy.

When voters turned out in February to fill a vacant seat in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the stakes were nothing less than control of the chamber, which Democrats held by a single seat.

Candace Cabanas, the 45-year-old Republican candidate who was running as a ***working-class*** mom, faced an uphill battle, though not a hopeless one in a competitive district that has long favored Democrats.

But as Election Day dawned, a nor’easter dumped [*several inches of snow*](https://levittownnow.com/2024/02/13/see-snow-totals-for-levittown-area/), stranding would-be voters at home. Bad luck dogged others: One woman backing Ms. Cabanas skipped the polls after she fell ill and was rushed to the hospital.

[*Ms. Cabanas’s Democratic opponent*](https://levittownnow.com/2024/02/13/see-snow-totals-for-levittown-area/) faced similar hurdles but had one advantage: More than 3,300 of his voters had mailed in their ballots early. Ms. Cabanas could count only 532.

Guess who won?

February’s lesson is not lost on Republican leaders in Pennsylvania, who have pledged to spend millions of dollars this year to promote voting by mail despite claiming for years — without evidence — that mailed votes are riddled with fraud. The national party is also pressing a pro-mail publicity campaign called “Bank Your Vote,” apparently after concluding that staking its candidates’ fates on a hefty Election Day turnout was not an optimal strategy.

They may have their work cut out for them. “Persuading Republican voters to use them is really difficult. They don’t trust the system,” Ms. Cabanas said of mail ballots.

Take George E. Bierman, an investment executive and registered Republican in Williamsport, a deeply red city about 170 miles northwest of Philadelphia. Mr. Bierman said he might consider casting a mail ballot “if I thought it would do any good.” But did he believe others would?

“Honestly, no, I don’t,” he said. “With everything that has transpired, I don’t trust the government in any way, shape or form.”

For Republicans, such wariness is a self-inflicted wound, particularly in key swing states like Pennsylvania.

Barely a year before the 2020 election, the Pennsylvania legislature, then under Republican control, overwhelmingly approved a law allowing no-excuse voting by mail. But on the campaign trail the next year, President Donald J. Trump denounced mail voting at every turn, calling it “an effort to rig the presidential election.” The conservative group Project Veritas later released a widely publicized video [*falsely claiming*](https://levittownnow.com/2024/02/13/see-snow-totals-for-levittown-area/) that postal officials in Erie, Pa., had tampered with mail ballots.

After Mr. Trump’s defeat, Republican lawmakers turned against mail ballots, trying to repeal the law they had enacted, and then seeking to overturn it in court. Both attempts failed, but voters got the message: [*In a Muhlenberg College poll of about 500 Pennsylvanians*](https://levittownnow.com/2024/02/13/see-snow-totals-for-levittown-area/) that was conducted in December 2021, seven in 10 Republican respondents said they were “very” or “somewhat” confident there was widespread fraud in the 2020 election, and almost a third said mail ballots were the greatest threat to the 2022 midterms.

In those midterms, roughly 75 percent of the state’s one million requests for mail ballots came from voters registered as Democrats — even though registered Democrats make up only about 45 percent of all voters.

Now Pennsylvania Republicans want to reverse course again. The state’s party leaders and prominent supporters pledged last year to raise $8 million to drum up early and mailed votes in 2024. A pro-Republican group called the Citizens Alliance of Pennsylvania has claimed that it will raise another $2 million.

“Sometimes you get a late start, but better late than never,” said Jim Worthington, a Trump supporter and the owner of an athletic club in the Bucks County borough of Newtown, who is part of the $8 million effort. “We have nowhere to go but up.”

One goal, of course, is to boost Republican turnout, perhaps by giving less dedicated G.O.P. supporters a voting option more convenient than driving to the polls in the middle of a workweek.

But political strategists say the real value of mail ballots to the parties is their certainty — a guarantee that those voters will not stay home on Election Day because of a sick child, snowstorm or flat tire, freeing campaigns to pursue voters who haven’t made a choice.

That could make a difference in a closely divided state like Pennsylvania. Still, the upside for the G.O.P. could be limited. Pennsylvania Republicans already vote more faithfully than do Democrats. Even with near-record participation across the board, G.O.P. voter turnout in each of the last two elections was seven percentage points greater than Democratic turnout.

Atop that, Republican strategists still must overcome a drumbeat of attacks on the integrity of mailed ballots from the political right — including by Republican leaders themselves.

Although Mr. Trump has issued a recorded call for voters to cast mail ballots as part of the national party’s “Bank Your Vote” effort, he has criticized mail voting as “dishonest” and “totally corrupt” this year, and has said that states that allow it will “automatically have fraud.”

In fact, evidence of organized fraud in mail-in voting is vanishingly rare. But Mr. Trump’s claims have landed as lawyers for both the national and state Republican parties continue to file lawsuits aiming to make mail balloting harder, not easier.

In Philadelphia, for example, the Republican National Committee is asking a federal appeals court to throw out mail-in ballots that voters inadvertently mark with the wrong date, thousands of which are cast in every major election. In Harrisburg, the state capital, two Republican state legislators are suing to prohibit the use of drop boxes for mail ballots anywhere in the state.

Lisa Arp, a South Williamsport elementary-school teacher, said many smaller-town conservatives had little trust in a system they saw as skewed to favor liberal big cities. Their mistrust of mail balloting is part of that worldview.

“You want it to be as fair as possible,” she said of the voting process. “You want them to check your ID. You want them to check your name. You can’t do that through a mail ballot.”

In Bucks County, Chris Sofield, who said he had missed voting in only one election since 1979, said that to win, “we as Republicans know we have to use the system, no matter how corrupt it is.”

That will be the day, said Mike Mikus, whose firm, Chartiers Group, is one of the state’s top Democratic political strategy shops. He said that trying to persuade Republican voters to use mail ballots would prove “one of the biggest wastes of money in campaign history.”

“Donald Trump has done so much damage to the party by demonizing the use of mail ballots that there is no way, especially in this upcoming election, that Republican voters are going to decide to vote by mail en masse,” he said.

Republican officials nevertheless say they are upbeat. In Bucks County, 16,000 of the 40,000 most recent applications for mail ballots came from registered Republicans, said Patricia Poprik, the chairwoman of the Bucks County Republican Committee and one of the 20 Pennsylvania Republican electors who cast what they called a “provisional vote” for Mr. Trump after his 2020 loss to Mr. Biden.

(Unlike the document signed by so-called fake electors favoring Mr. Trump in most other states, the one signed by the Pennsylvania electors said that it was contingent on a court overturning the results in the state. There was no such ruling.)

The 16,000 Republican applications in the county are a decided change from the 3-to-1 advantage that Democrats have enjoyed in the past.

“It will take our elections more time to become more comfortable with it,” Ms. Poprik said of mail-in voting. “The problem we have is that Republican voters don’t trust that system.”

Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

PHOTO: The Republican Party has undertaken a national campaign to increase voting by mail. But Donald J. Trump and others in the party have denounced the practice, stoking distrust among its members. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT SLOCUM/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Milan Cracks Down After Its Nightlife Campaign Works a Little Too Well***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0H-V2J1-JBG3-60PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 10, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1266 words

**Byline:** By Elisabetta Povoledo and Alessandro Grassani

**Body**

City officials worked to make Milan attractive to visitors, but now that some neighborhoods are overwhelmed by rowdy crowds and noise, they're trying to scale back.

Packed bars with carousing revelers spilling onto clogged streets. Takeaway booze swigged by drunken tourists and students. Earsplitting volumes in once quiet residential neighborhoods long after midnight.

When Milan's authorities embarked years ago on plans to promote the city as a buzzy destination by building on its reputation as Italy's hip fashion and design capital, the resulting noise and rowdy overcrowding were perhaps not quite what they had in mind.

Now, after years of complaints and a series of lawsuits, the city has passed an ordinance to strictly limit the sale of takeaway food and beverages after midnight -- and not much later on weekends -- in ''movida'' areas, a Spanish term that Italians have adopted to describe outdoor nightlife. It will go into effect next week and be in force until Nov. 11.

Outdoor seating for restaurants and bars will also end at 12:30 a.m. on weekdays, and an hour later on weekends, so that people who want to party longer will have to do so indoors.

The businesses that have profited from Milan's success in promoting itself as a happening city are grumbling.

One trade association complained that the ordinance was so strict that Italians would no longer be able to take a late-night stroll with a gelato in hand.

Marco Granelli, the Milan council member who is responsible for public security, said those fears were overblown. Eating gelato on the fly would not be a problem, he said.

The ordinance, he said, was aimed at dealing with ''behavior that impacts on residential neighborhoods'' and with takeaway alcoholic drinks, which are seen as the main reason late-night revelers linger on certain streets and squares. ''It's clear that ice cream, pizza or brioches don't create overcrowding,'' he said.

Marco Barbieri, secretary general for the Milan branch of the Italian retailers' association Confcommercio, said his group would fight the ordinance, which he estimated would affect about 30 percent of the city's 10,000 restaurants and bars. The new rules, he said, would penalize retailers for the bad behavior of their customers.

But residents have been complaining about Milan nightlife for a while.

''It's a nightmare,'' said Gabriella Valassina of the Navigli Committee, one of several citizen's groups formed to address the increasing numbers of people -- and decibel levels -- in Milan's historic neighborhoods.

She outlined a list of complaints: noise pollution (peaks of 87 decibels, well over the allowed 55, according to municipal limits); streets so packed with revelers that it is hard to walk or even reach one's front door; an exodus of fed-up locals that is changing the character of picturesque neighborhoods.

With the new rules, the city has allocated 170,000 euros, a little over $180,000, to help bar owners hire private security services to stop revelers from loitering on the streets outside their establishments. And it is working with police unions to modify contracts to allow more officers to work night shifts to enforce the new rules.

The city may have been motivated to act more forcefully after decisions by local and national courts in Italy have sided with residents who sued city administrations for not reining in nighttime chaos.

Elena Montafia, a spokeswoman for the Milano Degrado, a neighborhood association, is one of 34 residents of the Porta Venezia neighborhood suing the municipal government and asking for damages on the grounds that inaction to their complaints had put their health at risk.

''Living in Milan has become really difficult,'' she said, adding that it was only after a decade of pleading with unresponsive local administrators that she and the other residents had decided to go down the legal route.

Still, she and others doubted that the new ordinance would change much, and that enforcement would be a problem.

''When you have so many people around, there isn't a law that is going to make them go home; it's impossible,'' especially because the crowds normally far outnumber police officers, said Fabrizio Ferretti, the manager of Funky, a bar in Navigli, one of the affected neighborhoods. He acknowledged he was persona non grata with the owners of the apartments above his bar.

The predicament that Milan finds itself in today comes after years of efforts by leaders to broaden the city's image from Italy's financial and industrial capital to a more service-oriented, tourist-friendly one.

A succession of municipal governments has also encouraged the development of the city's less central neighborhoods, said Alessandro Balducci, who teaches planning and urban policies at the Politecnico di Milano.

One of the inspirations was the Fuorisalone, the sprawling network of events related to Milan Design Week, the design world's largest annual global event, that ''gave new life to neighborhoods that were in the shadows,'' he said. ''Even for the Milanese, it was a rediscovery of their city.''

There had been an increase, too, in the number of universities in the city -- eight now -- as well as design and fashion programs run by private institutes. Milanese universities are also increasingly offering courses in English to broaden their international appeal.

Today, students have replaced many of the laborers who once worked in now-closed factories -- for automobiles, chemicals and heavy machinery -- that had made Milan an industrial powerhouse, Mr. Balducci said.

The University of Milano-Bicocca, for example, opened some 25 years ago on the site of an abandoned Pirelli factory.

That surge in students is clearly evident in terms of how the nightlife has evolved, he said.

On top of that, he added, after the coronavirus pandemic, bars and restaurants replaced shops in many neighborhoods, accelerating the changing faces of those areas.

Last year, about 8.5 million visitors came to Milan -- not counting those who didn't stay overnight, according to YesMilano, the city's tourism site. That was well over the 3.2 million visitors who slept in Milan in 2004 and the five million who did in 2016, according to Istat, the national statistics agency.

The Navigli neighborhood -- a former ***working-class*** area built around two of Milan's most scenic remaining canals -- has experienced some of the most profound transformation in the city, evolving from a charmingly run-down district crossed by picturesque bridges into a hip quarter full of restaurants and bars.

Shops that catered to residents closed down, in part because rising rents and the general mayhem forced out many, including artists and artisans, residents say.

''The soul of the neighborhood is very different now,'' said Ms. Valassina, of the Navigli Committee. ''City administrations favored the idea of gentrification, thinking it was a positive objective. Instead, they altered the DNA of the neighborhood.''

On a recent evening, throngs of tourists, students and locals strolled along a canal, past sign after sign offering takeaway beer, wine or cocktails. Bars quickly filled, and the spillover crowds moved to the adjacent street, forcing passers-by to slalom through the crowds.

Some young revelers said they had doubts about the effectiveness of the new law.

''Young people are going to do what they do anyway; they'll find different ways to get around it,'' said Albassa Wane, 24, who is originally from Dakar, Senegal, and is an intern at a fashion label who has lived in Milan for five years.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/09/world/europe/milan-nightlife-crowd-control.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/09/world/europe/milan-nightlife-crowd-control.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''It's a nightmare,'' said Gabriella Valassina, left, of the Navigli Committee, one of a few groups formed to address the overcrowding.

Nighttime dining in the Navigli area of Milan. A new city ordinance about to take effect aims to scale back the revelry after hours.

At the Naviglio Grande. Elena Montafia, right, is one of 34 residents suing on the grounds that inaction had put their health at risk. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALESSANDRO GRASSANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Returning to Paris, and Taking the Stage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPM-XHX1-DXY4-X0S0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 3, 2024 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 983 words

**Byline:** By Roslyn Sulcas

**Body**

Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly's evening of minimally accessorized dance and contemporary music feels right at home at the Philharmonie in Paris.

The choreographer Benjamin Millepied is a protean figure. The founder of the L.A. Dance Project, he has been a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, the director of the Paris Opera Ballet, a filmmaker and a perennially well-connected catalyst for adventurous collaborations with figures from the worlds of fashion, movies, music and dance.

Recently relocated to Paris from Los Angeles, Millepied has not -- heaven forfend -- been idle. He has, with Solenne du HayÌˆs MascreÌ, started the Paris Dance Project, not a company, but an umbrella for choreographic and educational initiatives; he continues to run the L.A. Dance Project; and he hasn't stopped choreographing.

His new work, ''Me. You. We. They'' -- in which he made a surprise appearance as a dancer -- is the seventh that he has created with the composer Nico Muhly, and it was the concluding piece on the program ''Benjamin Millepied & Nico Muhly,'' performed by L.A. Dance Project, which opened on Friday at the Philharmonie de Paris.

Millepied's first theatrical offering since returning to France, the program is a clever choice for the Philharmonie. The concert hall, designed by Jean Nouvel, opened in 2015 in a traditionally ***working-class*** neighborhood amid heated debate about its location -- Would classical music attendees go to the outskirts of Paris? Would a new audience come? -- as well as cost overruns and Nouvel's very public unhappiness with the finished building.

But the Philharmonie is generally considered a success, partly because it has tried to appeal to a diverse public with offerings beyond the classical music sphere. The Muhly-Millepied program fits perfectly: Muhly writes serious contemporary music, accessible and youthful, and it doesn't hurt that Millepied is a big name in his native France. (The large hall, with 2,400 seats, was almost sold out for the four-show run, which ended on Sunday.)

The hall's acoustics are fabulous for the Muhly scores, stirringly played by the ensemble Le Balcon and sensitively conducted by Maxime Pascal. The surprise is how well the space works for dance despite no proscenium to hang lights from, or wings for the dancers to disappear into.

At least it works for this kind of minimally accessorized dance, an aspect Millepied emphasized by keeping the performers in the same eclectically casual costumes (by Camille Assaf) across the three pieces on the program: ''Triade'' (2008), ''Moving Parts'' (2012) and the new work. The costuming lends a unity to the evening, but also a sameness, particularly since ''Triade'' and ''Moving Parts'' both have a loose-limbed playfulness and brief encounter interactions.

''Triade,'' made for the Paris Opera Ballet, was commissioned as part of a homage to Jerome Robbins, a strong influence during Millepied's ballet career. It's full of deliberate references: the four dancers (Naomi Van Brunt, Lorrin Brubaker, Daphne Fernberger and David Adrian Freeland Jr.) enter casually, like the walking crowd in ''Glass Pieces,'' brush up against one another with the playful, teasing quality of ''Interplay'' or ''Fancy Free,'' and part after exchanging partners, as in ''In the Night.''

But the work has its own inner world, even if the dramatic intensity I remember at the Opera has modulated into a more neutral suggestion of stories and possibilities as the dancers leap, turn and skid to the floor, feinting around one another, testing each other's limits.

''Moving Parts,'' performed by six dancers in front of and between movable panels with bold calligraphic flourishes by the artist Christopher Wool, has some choreographic and compositional high points (notably Muhly's use of the organ, played here by Alexis Grizard). But it rambles in between the standout opening solo of high-speed turns and sudden slowings for the quicksilver Shu Kinouchi, and a tender male duet toward the end.

Millepied feels like a freer, more exploratory choreographer in ''Me. You.,'' which features 10 dancers and a musical ensemble of 15 performing Muhly's new ''One Speed, Many Shapes,'' a pulse-driven array of soundscapes.

The choreographic DNA remains consistent. There are lots of high, swooping, circling legs as dancers revolve around one another, along with loose, flung-away limbs, nimble footwork and complex, reflexive interactions between fast-moving bodies. (Millepied's movement is way more difficult than these terrific dancers make it look.) Fast movement is often set against slow music, and vice versa.

But in the new piece, essentially a series of solos, duos and trios, the often-gestural, fresh quality of the dancing feels more personal to the dancers than the vocabulary of the first two works, and less packed with movement. Here, bodies curve around one another with a magnetic pull in an opening duo; a man and woman slowly reach into space; a virtuosic male trio carves shapes into the air.

Millepied's duet with Eva Galmel, set to low chimes and flute, is lovely, all quick reactive alertness, limbs flicking between close-knit dartings, testing equilibrium and momentum, entwining and pushing away.

The personal, idiosyncratic quality of the movement doesn't always work; a brief ensemble section midway through just looks incoherent. But ''Me. You.'' is mostly compelling both musically and choreographically, with a marvelous final sequence that has individual dancers standing still in turn as the others move with sweeping intensity to the propulsive music. The final moment echoes the start of the piece: A lone dancer faces the audience, while the others face the musicians -- a fitting image for partners in sound and space.

''Benjamin Millepied & Nico Muhly''

Performed through March 31 at the Philharmonie de Paris, philharmoniedeparis.fr.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/01/arts/dance/review-benjamin-millepied-nico-muhly-philharmonie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/01/arts/dance/review-benjamin-millepied-nico-muhly-philharmonie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, the L.A. Dance Project in Paris performing Benjamin Millepied's 2012 work ''Moving Parts.'' Above, his new work, ''Me. You. We. They.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTOINE BENOIT-GODET) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Jordan Bardella, the New Face of France’s Surging Right***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C6P-HVM1-JBG3-6022-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 8, 2024 Saturday 10:01 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1680 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:** Charismatic and clean cut, shorn of the Le Pen name, the young National Rally leader took his party to its blockbuster showing in European elections on Sunday.

**Body**

Charismatic and clean cut, shorn of the Le Pen name, the young National Rally leader took his party to its blockbuster showing in European elections on Sunday.

France has a taste for revolutions, and in the 28-year-old Jordan Bardella, it has found a mild-mannered, impeccably dressed insurgent who vows to upend the politics of the country in order to save it from “disappearance.”

Mr. Bardella, the president of the National Rally, is the cherished disciple of Marine Le Pen, 55, the perennial far-right presidential candidate. She once called him the “lion cub”; now she calls him “the lion.” A clean-cut, strong-jawed TikTok star, known for his love of candy, he has certainly shown a sure hand in the French political jungle.

Mr. Bardella led his party to a victory this past weekend that could reshape French politics, with the National Rally capturing twice the support of President Emmanuel Macron’s centrist Renaissance party.

Even though the effective power of the European Union’s only directly elected body is limited, the vote was a stark repudiation of the French leader. As elsewhere in Europe, the normalization of the far right has proceeded apace.

It is as if a fractured France, weary of politics as usual and anxious about its future, has abruptly discovered a more acceptable version of the xenophobic politics that long cast the National Rally as a direct threat to French democracy. It has helped that Mr. Bardella is young, possesses a reassuring showmanship and does not bear the name Le Pen.

Indeed, his success has been such that a leadership battle looms. For now, Ms. Le Pen and her prodigal son are a hugging and seemingly harmonious duo (Mr. Bardella dates Ms. Le Pen’s niece Nolwenn Olivier). But Mr. Bardella’s popularity is such that there is a possibility the wunderkind will eclipse his maker.

Ms. Le Pen retains the stubborn hope of becoming president in 2027, when Mr. Macron’s term ends. She has said she would make Mr. Bardella her prime minister if she became president.

“The moderate conservative right is dead in France, and, for the first time, it is possible that the National Rally will come to power,” said Jean-Yves Camus, a political scientist who studies nationalist movements in Europe.

Raised by his mother, an Italian immigrant, in the projects north of Paris, Mr. Bardella marks a break from the cookie-cutter technocrats formed in elite schools who have dominated French politics. He has recast — some would say sugarcoated — the angry message of the nationalist right so effectively that there is talk of “Bardellamania.”

“Our civilization can die,” Mr. Bardella told a crowd of more than 5,000 flag-waving supporters this past week, as chants of “Jordan! Jordan!” reverberated around a vast arena in Paris. “It can die because it will be submerged in migrants who will have changed our customs, culture and way of life irreversibly.”

Mr. Bardella’s campaign director, Alexandre Loubet, said before the vote that a clear victory for the National Rally would let the party “demand the dissolution of the National Assembly” and call for new elections. And on Sunday, Mr. Macron dissolved the lower house of Parliament and called for legislative elections beginning on June 30.

In Mr. Bardella’s telling, always delivered in a level tone, Mr. Macron has brought France to the abyss through rampant immigration, a lax approach to lawlessness and violence, the loss of French identity, and “punitive” ecological change that makes life unaffordable.

“Everything is going from bad to worse,” said Alain Foy, a concierge who attended Mr. Bardella’s rally in Paris. “Sometimes I can’t believe what is happening, whether on immigration, purchasing power, insecurity, everything.” His sister, Marie Foy, added, “France is falling apart.”

Mr. Foy said that in the past, anyone disagreeing with the National Rally would quickly label Ms. Le Pen a racist or a fascist. “But with Bardella,” he said, “the good thing is that he thinks the same, but they can’t call him a racist because he’s an immigrant child of Italian parents.”

The exact nature of Mr. Bardella’s upbringing in the Seine-Saint-Denis suburb is unclear. He has portrayed it as a childhood of unrelenting hardship in projects afflicted by drug dealing and violence, where you could be killed for refusing someone a cigarette, and where his mother, who separated from his father when he was 1, struggled to make ends meet.

However, Mr. Bardella attended a private school, the Lycée Saint-Jean-Baptiste-de-la-Salle, where the fees were paid by his father, who had a small business renting coffee and vending machines, said Pascal Humeau, who was close to Mr. Bardella for many years.

Mr. Bardella proved to be a good student with strong political convictions, and in 2012, at age 16, he enrolled in the party he now leads, which was then called the National Front. He had interned for a week with the local police precinct, an experience that appears to have contributed to his political orientation.

“It was not a ***working-class*** upbringing, that’s clear, but nor was it privileged in any way,” Mr. Camus said. Although he had graduated with distinction from high school, Mr. Bardella dropped out of college to focus on politics, essentially the only work he has done.

With his deliberate manner and his charismatic good looks, he was quickly identified in Ms. Le Pen’s entourage as an ideal representative of a reinvented National Rally, stripped of the anti-Semitic invective of its founder, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who called the Holocaust a “detail” of history.

Ms. Le Pen, intent on bringing her party into the mainstream, pushed him forward. Mr. Humeau, a former journalist, became Mr. Bardella’s media trainer in 2018. In him, he discovered a “rather sad young man, repeating Ms. Le Pen’s formulas, an empty shell, very controlled, but knowing little of what was happening in France or the world.”

Mr. Bardella was, however, a quick study. He learned to smile and appear more relaxed, retaining an air of “consensual humility” before eventually becoming what Mr. Humeau called “the media beast of today who scares his opponents.”

To what end, I asked? “He has had one objective since the age of 17 — to become prime minister and president,” Mr. Humeau said, “and I don’t think anyone can derail him.”

If Mr. Bardella has contrived to present a softer face of the National Rally, then there is little or no evidence that his own views or the party’s have moderated.

Mass immigration — some [*5.1 million immigrants entered the European Union in 2022*](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20240327-1#:~:text=In%202022%2C%205.1%20million%20people,estimated%202.4%20million%20in%202021.), more than double the number the previous year — was the core issue in the European election, polls showed, along with the struggles of French families to make ends meet as the war in Ukraine has driven up energy and food prices.

In this context, the National Rally has successfully portrayed itself as the home of French patriotism, the party of people reasonably concerned that immigration is out of control.

With his Italian background, Mr. Bardella has been able to argue that the issue is not immigration itself, but the refusal of many migrants to assimilate. On the left, the very word patriotism in France tends to be viewed skeptically, a first step to nationalism and even war.

The benefits that immigrants can bring to societies with shrinking labor forces and tax bases are generally overlooked. Instead, the focus of the right is on migrants, particularly North African Muslims, benefiting from handouts and changing the looks, habits and cultures of urban neighborhoods.

“We have the courage and lucidity to say that if France becomes the country of everyone, it will no longer be the nation of anyone,” Mr. Bardella said this past week. “With the deregulation of migration, totalitarian Islamism does not only give its fanatics an order to separate themselves from the French Republic, but also to conquer it, in order to impose its laws and morals.”

Mr. Bardella has accused Mr. Macron of wanting to expand the 27-member European Union to 37 members, including the Turkey “of the Islamist” President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and of intending to give up France’s veto over E.U. foreign policy decisions.

Turkish E.U. accession talks have in fact long been frozen, and Mr. Macron’s attachment to French sovereignty is fierce. The mildness of Mr. Bardella’s tone can mask a readiness to bend the truth.

He has tried, with vague evasions, to play down his party’s longtime closeness to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, a policy now revised, despite the repeated pro-Russian votes of his party in the European Parliament. It voted in 2021 against a resolution in support of Ukraine’s “independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity,” for example.

If Mr. Bardella has been campaigning by raising the specter of the “death” of France, Mr. Macron has also been speaking in apocalyptical terms of late, warning of the “death” of Europe if it does not achieve “strategic autonomy.”

The difference is that Mr. Bardella believes salvation lies in less Europe, not more. The European elections will also be a bellwether of the European idea itself.

“I worry that people won’t vote for Ms. Le Pen because of her name, with her father and all,” said Jacky Laquay, a retired factory worker who recently attended a Bardella rally in the north of France. “Bardella embodies the future of France.”

Certainly, Mr. Bardella appears unlikely to disappear from the political scene soon. “At 28, he has 40 years of political life in front of him,” Mr. Camus said. “That’s not nothing.”

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting.

Ségolène Le Stradic contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Jordan Bardella, top, the 28-year-old president of the far-right National Rally, has used his reassuring brand of showmanship to help his party rise in the polls and portray itself as the political home of people reasonably concerned that immigration is out of control. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIEN BOZON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; JEFF PACHOUD/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; FRANCOIS LO PRESTI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2024

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[***Morgan Parker***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMJ-39W1-DXY4-X072-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 24, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 8; BY THE BOOK

**Length:** 823 words

**Body**

What books are on your night stand?

The craft anthology ''How We Do It,'' edited by the great Jericho Brown, and Shayla Lawson's astounding ''How to Live Free in a Dangerous World.''

Describe your ideal reading experience (when, where, what, how).

Probably on the smoking patio of a wine bar at happy hour on a sunny day, with a pencil in my hand and Dorothy Ashby or Ambrose Akinmusire playing through noise-canceling headphones. Or just a quiet morning on my couch with coffee, so engrossed I forget to flip the record.

What's the last book you read that made you laugh?

''Erasure,'' by Percival Everett. I picked up a used copy at Shakespeare & Company recently -- after seeing Cord Jefferson's brilliant adaptation, ''American Fiction'' -- and even on a reread, it made me laugh out loud from the first page.

The last book that made you cry?

Weird or obnoxious if I say my own? Before that, it was probably Y.A.

Do you count any books as guilty pleasures?

That category's filled to the brim and beyond by reality TV.

How do you organize your books?

Loosely or not at all. This is much to the horror of my Virgo pals, and while I used to take pride in navigating my shelves on familiarity alone, it's something I've vowed to work on. Still, I doubt I'll ever be an alphabetical type, and clearly I find genre segregation constricting. I do group things thematically, or even interpersonally -- music biographies, Black Panthers, Harlem Renaissance; Jessica Hopper is next to John Giorno, and Chase Berggrun's ''R E D'' is next to ''Dracula''; Julie Buntin's ''Marlena'' is beside her husband Gabe Habash's ''Stephen Florida''; Alison C. Rollins is next to her partner Nate Marshall is next to his bestie José Olivarez. At some point Hilton Als's ''White Girls'' ended up next to ''Male Fantasies,'' and I don't think I'll ever separate them.

Which genres do you avoid?

There's an essay in ''You Get What You Pay For'' where I mention reading a self-help book (as recommended by my now-former psychiatrist). I'd never read one before and have not since.

How does your poetry relate to your essay writing?

The truth is that poetry is under everything. It's the lyric and sensory backbone. It's what drives the sound, pace and imagery. (Everyone knows the best prose writers write and read poetry.) But while a poem strives for precision of language, the essay strives for precision of thought, even argument. In a poem, you can build (or approximate) an argument by plopping two images next to each other. It persuades by pointing. Writing these essays felt like pulling apart a long piece of taffy -- I found myself reiterating a lot of what I've already expressed in poems, so it almost became a project of stretching out each poetic line, breaking down each concept to its root. The process is about asking, pondering, searching -- and letting language take part in the answering.

You have a knack for terrific book titles. How did you name your new collection?

Thank you! I love a good title, but I also acknowledge the high bar I have set for myself. With this one, I struggled a bit, I think because it took me a while to understand the book myself, let alone how to introduce it to the world. The essays encompass a lot of seemingly disparate themes and even tonal registers, so framing the overall collection was daunting. I'd been tossing around a couple of options, including ''Cheaper Than Therapy,'' which appears as an essay title, when Jay-Z made the choice for me. I was in Italy at a residency, grieving the recent loss of my aunt and watching the ''Big Pimpin''' video over and over as I worked on an essay about it for the book. I'd left my heavily tabbed copy of ''Decoded'' at home in Los Angeles, but was scrolling a PDF for details about the video shoot when I came across the line: ''If the price is life, then you better get what you paid for.''

You describe yourself as foolish for believing ''words could be the pathway to empathy and writing an active resistance against hate.'' Might publishing this book change your mind?

Honestly? It's my only hope.

What's the last book you recommended to a member of your family?

''Heavy,'' by Kiese Laymon, to my mom; Blair LM Kelley's ''Black Folk: The Roots of the Black ***Working Class***,'' to my dad; and ''A Is for Activist,'' to my 8-month-old cousin.

What do you plan to read next?

Phillip B. Williams's ''Ours'' was just published, and I've been excited about it for literally years. Vinson Cunningham's ''Great Expectations'' came out the same day as my book, so I plan to make that my tour read.

You're organizing a literary dinner party. Which three writers, dead or alive, do you invite?

June Jordan, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin -- but I'd be lying if I said I wouldn't get just as much fun and fulfillment from a night with Angel Nafis, Danez Smith and Saeed Jones.An expanded version of this interview is available at nytimes.com/books.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/books/review/morgan-parker-you-get-what-you-pay-for.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/books/review/morgan-parker-you-get-what-you-pay-for.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2024

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[***Tracy Chapman Returns to the Grammy Stage for ‘Fast Car’ Duet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B87-RDX1-DXY4-X0VP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday 10:46 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 619 words

**Byline:** Marc Hogan

**Highlight:** Her duet with Luke Combs was one of her few public performances in recent years.

**Body**

In a major coup for the Grammys, an influential artist who walked away from the spotlight made a grand return to the awards stage on Sunday night: Tracy Chapman.

Chapman, 59, released eight albums between 1988 and 2008, starting with her blockbuster debut — the self-titled album that featured “Talkin’ ’Bout a Revolution,” “Baby Can I Hold You” and what is perhaps her signature song, “Fast Car.” She won the Grammy for best new artist in 1989, and “Fast Car” was nominated for both record and song of the year.

While the song has had notable staying power — it’s [*inspired dance covers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/16/arts/music/dancing-away-from-the-bleak-life-with-fast-car.html), was sampled by Nicki Minaj and has been strummed in dorm rooms for decades — the country star Luke Combs’s faithful cover, which became a hit last year, has helped bring it a kind of renaissance.

On Sunday night in Los Angeles, Chapman and Combs shared the steering wheel at the Grammys with their first-ever duet performance of the track. Chapman opened the performance playing the song’s signature riff on an acoustic guitar, as she and Combs exchanged verses before joining together on the chorus. Many in the audience could be seen standing and singing along throughout, including Taylor Swift. Combs bowed to her at the conclusion of the song as they received a standing ovation from those in the arena.

Combs’s “Fast Car” — which reached No. 2 on the Billboard Hot 100 as a single from his 2023 album, “Gettin’ Old” — was [*up for a Grammy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/arts/music/grammy-awards-nominees.html) for best country solo performance (and [*lost*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/04/arts/music/grammys-winners-list.html) to Chris Stapleton’s “White Horse”). Surprising many in the industry, however, “Fast Car” missed out on a nomination for record of the year. (The cover was not eligible for song of the year, an award that goes to songwriters, because it was already nominated in that category in 1989.)

Chapman has made few public appearances since her most recent tour ended in 2009, mostly taking the stage on late-night shows. In 2015, she covered “Stand by Me” as David Letterman prepared to retire from the “Late Show,” and in the lead-up to the 2020 election, she performed “Talkin’ ’Bout a Revolution” on “Late Night With Seth Meyers.”

Combs’s meticulously faithful take on Chapman’s ***working-class*** anthem, delivered with unassuming earnestness, has crossed eras like a time-traveling DeLorean. In November, thanks to the cover, Chapman [*won song of the year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/arts/music/tracy-chapman-cma-awards-fast-car.html) at the Country Music Awards for “Fast Car,” becoming the first Black songwriter to clinch the honor.

In a statement at the time, Chapman apologized for not attending the country awards ceremony in Nashville. “It’s truly an honor for my song to be newly recognized after 35 years of its debut,” she said in the statement.

Combs described “Fast Car” as “one of the best songs of all time,” in his own C.M.A.s acceptance speech for single of the year. “I just recorded it because I love this song so much,” he added. “It’s meant so much to me throughout my entire life.”

The original “Fast Car” hit No. 6 on the Hot 100 in 1988 and earned three Grammy nominations. Chapman won for best female pop vocalist at the 1989 Grammy ceremony. There, too, she [*performed*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG79CHK1oFQ) “Fast Car.”

“Fast Car” was a fan-favorite staple of Combs’s live shows long before he recorded it in the studio. Asked in July about the potential to duet on the song with Chapman, Combs’s manager, Chris Kappy, told Billboard, “We would be more than excited if the opportunity arose for Tracy and Luke to perform the song together.”

At the same time, Chapman told Billboard that she was “happy for Luke and his success and grateful that new fans have found and embraced ‘Fast Car.’”

PHOTO: Tracy Chapman and Luke Combs performed “Fast Car” at the Grammys on Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Chris Pizzello/Invision, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***As Latinas Shift on Abortion, Democrats See an Opportunity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C09-VRK1-DXY4-X04W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday

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

**Length:** 1271 words

**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa

**Body**

Hispanic views on the issue vary widely, and Democrats face hurdles, but opportunities, too. As one House candidate said: ''I go to Mass, but I also support a woman's right to choose.''

Hours before Arizona state legislators voted to repeal an 1864 abortion ban last month, a group of mostly Latina Democrats huddled at a nearby Mexican restaurant for a strategy session on galvanizing Latina voters over abortion rights.

''I am 23 -- why do I have less rights than my abuelita in Mexico?'' Melissa Herrera, a Democratic campaign staffer, asked the cluster of women at the restaurant, referring to her grandmother.

The question crystallized what Democrats hope will be a decisive electoral factor in their favor this year, one that upends conventional political wisdom: A majority of Latino voters now support abortion rights, according to polls, a reversal from two decades ago. Polling trends, interviews with strategists and election results in Ohio and Virginia, where abortion rights played a central role, suggest Democrats' optimism regarding Latinas -- once considered too religious or too socially conservative to support abortion rights -- could bear out.

Since the Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade in 2022, stringent curbs have been taking effect in Republican-dominated states. In Arizona, for one, the May 2 repeal of the blanket ban from 1864 still leaves abortions governed by a two-year-old law prohibiting the procedure after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with no exception for rape or incest.

As of April 2023, according to the Pew Research Center, 62 percent of Latinos believed abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Twenty years earlier, most Hispanics told Pew that they opposed abortion rights by a nearly two-to-one margin. (The most recent polling has been conducted online, instead of over the phone, but the surveys show an overall gradual shift in opinions.)

Latino majorities came out in favor of reproductive rights in 2023 elections in Ohio and Virginia, according to other surveys, and women played a major role in stalling the shift of Hispanic voters toward the Republican Party in 2022, when many voted for Democrats, citing abortion and reproductive health as the most important issue.

''Abortion is going to be an essential issue this cycle,'' said Victoria McGroary, the executive director of BOLD PAC, the campaign arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. ''We are going to see what I think is going to be crystal-clear evidence that reproductive freedom matters to Latino voters.''

Surveys show the diversity of the Latino voting population still poses some obstacles for Democrats, with support for abortion rights varying based on factors including age, geography and party affiliation. Latino voters in South Texas and South Florida remain more culturally conservative, and a majority of Latino evangelicals, a growing segment of the population, still says abortion should be illegal.

Within that culturally conservative world, many remain unmoved.

Leaving a shopping plaza in Phoenix, Daisy Ochoa, 31, a paralegal, said she was planning to vote for Republicans in November because their stances on the issue are in line with her Christian faith.

''I believe that if there is life, there is life,'' she said. ''I don't think anybody should take life, unless there's some threat to the mom.''

But outside a grocery store near downtown, Gina Fernandez, 52, a Democrat and an administrative assistant, offered signs that Democrats had struck a nerve. She said she had been raised in a Mexican American and Roman Catholic household but had considered her right to abortion a foregone conclusion until the Supreme Court overturned Roe. That jolted her and her 19-year-old daughter. She used to vote for the best candidate regardless of party affiliation, Ms. Fernandez said.

''This cycle, I'm voting for all Democrats,'' she said.

Democratic officials and activists in Arizona point to lingering uncertainty over abortion access in the state, since the repeal will not take effect until 90 days after the Legislature adjourns for the summer. That, they say, is fueling support for a November ballot initiative that would enshrine the right to abortion in the state's Constitution -- and could lift Democrats up and down the ballot.

''It is still not over,'' said Mary Rose Wilcox, a former city councilwoman and elected county official who owns El Portal, the restaurant that has served as a center of Latino political activity in Phoenix and hosted the April strategy session. ''We need a straight law that safeguards protections.''

The women also said they needed to counter what they called misconceptions about Latino voters' conservatism.

''I always say I'm a pro-choice Catholic,'' Raquel Terán, a Democratic House candidate who convened the round-table meeting, said in an interview. ''I go to Mass, but I also support a woman's right to choose.''

Rosie Villegas-Smith, a Mexican immigrant who founded Voces Unidas por la Vida, an anti-abortion organization in Phoenix, said she believed Hispanic support for abortion rights in recent polling was overblown. She accused Democrats of fear-mongering and misleading voters on the issue.

''They speak in euphemisms and say abortion is health care but abortion is not health care,'' she said. ''Once Latinos learn what abortion truly is, they are against it.''

Republicans at the national level argue that abortion is not going to matter more to Latinos than crime, border security or the economy, particularly among ***working-class*** families worried about the cost of gas and groceries.

''You have seen Republicans making up ground with Latino voters because of a message on those issues,'' said Jack Pandol, a spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, the campaign arm of House Republicans. ''They have a better message on improving quality of life, on bringing costs down, on making communities safe.''

A crop of Latina Democratic candidates is nonetheless running on abortion rights in districts with large or fast-growing Hispanic populations. In interviews, some said the fall of Roe had made the issue more urgent for their constituencies -- and made voters more receptive to their message that abortion access was crucial to personal freedom and health care, even if the voters themselves were against the procedure.

In Oregon, Representative Andrea Salinas, who in 2022 became one of the first two Hispanic candidates elected to Congress from the state, said she cast the issue of abortion rights as a matter of ''empowering women to make their own personal choices with their doctor.''

''I didn't have as much as my competitors to put out glossy mailers or fancy television ads, but what I did have I used to lean into reproductive rights,'' said Ms. Salinas, adding that the issue helped fuel her victory in a northeastern district home to the most Latinos in the state.

Ms. Terán, who is running to become the first Latina to represent Arizona in Congress, recalled that Democratic operatives cautioned her not to talk about her past work experience with Planned Parenthood, an abortion rights group, when she first ran for a state legislative seat in 2018 because it was a Latino-heavy district. She disregarded that advice and won.

She went on to make abortion rights central to her platform in the Arizona House. In 2019, she and other state lawmakers visited El Salvador to study the impact of the nation's abortion ban, and they met with women who had been imprisoned for having the procedure done. She later co-wrote the measure that repealed Arizona's 1864 abortion law.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/us/politics/abortion-bans-latina-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/us/politics/abortion-bans-latina-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Latina Democrats gathered last month at El Portal, a longtime center of Latino political activity in Phoenix, to discuss abortion rights.

''I go to Mass, but I also support a woman's right to choose,'' said Raquel Terán, a House candidate running to represent Arizona.

Rosie Villegas-Smith, who runs an anti-abortion organization in Phoenix, said that Democrats are misleading voters on the issue. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL RATJE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Second Intraparty Rival Plans to Run Against Adams for Mayoralty***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C09-VRK1-DXY4-X04F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1272 words

**Byline:** By Jeffery C. Mays and Emma G. Fitzsimmons

**Body**

Zellnor Myrie, a left-leaning state senator from Brooklyn, is moving to run against Mayor Eric Adams in the Democratic primary next June.

Zellnor Myrie, an Afro-Latino state senator from Brooklyn known for backing progressive causes, announced on Wednesday that he is moving to challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year's Democratic primary in New York City.

Mr. Myrie's announcement is further indication that Mr. Adams's path to re-election is expected to be more challenging than is typical for Democratic mayors in New York. Mr. Adams, who faces record low poll numbers and a federal investigation into his campaign fund-raising, now must contend with at least two challenges from his own party.

In an interview, Mr. Myrie said that the mayor had shown a ''failure of competence'' and that his administration did not have a ''full grasp of the nuts and bolts of how city government should work.'' He also criticized the mayor's cuts to libraries, parks and schools, arguing that they were driving families out of the city.

''For too many New Yorkers that I speak to, they're tired of the showmanship,'' he said. ''What people want to see are results. They want to see their government working relentlessly to make this city affordable, to make this city safe, to make it livable.''

Mr. Myrie, 37, who is often called ''Z,'' opened an exploratory committee on Wednesday to begin raising money for his campaign.

He is part of a new generation of leaders who ousted moderate Democratic incumbents in Albany in 2018. His Senate district is the same one Mr. Adams once represented, but the men have different political stances.

Mr. Myrie pointed to his record in the State Senate of building coalitions to pass laws, including the Clean Slate Act, which sealed many criminal records to help formerly incarcerated people access jobs and housing.

But one of his greatest challenges is a lack of name recognition outside his district in Crown Heights and Park Slope. When Mr. Myrie visited Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem in March -- an important stop for any politician of color seeking citywide office -- the minister introduced Mr. Myrie as ''Zenor Marhee.''

His colleagues in Albany were quick to offer praise, even as they were reluctant to handicap his chances. John Liu, a state senator from Queens, called his entrance into the race ''exciting'' and said that ''Z has made the most impressive first impression that I've ever had.'' Brad Hoylman-Sigal, a state senator from Manhattan, called him ''one of the most serious and thoughtful people in the State Legislature.''

Liz Krueger, a state senator from Manhattan, shared her admiration for Mr. Myrie, and unlike her colleagues, she made it clear whom she didn't want to win the race.

''I want a different mayor for New York City -- desperately,'' she said. ''One who has competence and actually understands the job.''

Other Democratic candidates have been eyeing the mayoral race, including Scott Stringer, the former city comptroller who formed his own exploratory committee in January; Jessica Ramos, a progressive state senator from Queens; and former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who appears eager to make a political comeback.

But Mr. Adams has some key advantages, including a huge campaign war chest and strong support from key unions and power brokers.

Mr. Adams, a former police officer who won a close race in 2021 in part by embracing a tough-on-crime message, has increasingly been in campaign mode, with many of his public appearances highlighting a campaign-like mantra, ''Crime is down, jobs are up.''

''The mayor's laser focus on public safety is the reason that crime is down and jobs are up,'' said Frank Carone, a former chief of staff to Mr. Adams who now serves as the de facto head of his campaign. ''We look forward to being able to keep showing that to New Yorkers.''

Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn, a Brooklyn Democratic leader and ally of the mayor, said that the Black unemployment rate had lowered under Mr. Adams and test scores had risen, and that ***working-class*** New Yorkers in particular ''will be behind him for mayor.''

But there are signs that Mr. Adams's base is fraying. In a Quinnipiac University poll from December, the mayor scored the lowest rating since the poll began surveying the city in 1996. He also lost support among Black and Latino voters: 38 percent of Black voters disapproved of the mayor's job performance, an increase from 29 percent last February; 65 percent of Latino voters disapproved of the mayor's handling of his job, the highest among all racial and ethnic groups.

The dissatisfaction over Mr. Adams's performance, as well as his more conservative stances on criminal justice issues, has prompted left-leaning Democrats to search for a candidate who might be best positioned to defeat the mayor in the June primary.

Mr. Myrie might check some boxes for left-leaning voters. While Mr. Adams has received criticism over his cuts to prekindergarten, Mr. Myrie has embraced ''universal after-school'' as a signature issue. His plan calls for offering free after-school programs to all families, starting with the poorest school district in each borough.

Mr. Myrie said that he was less interested in running as a progressive candidate and more focused on how he could improve upon the mayor's management of the city. He said that when Mr. Adams proposed cuts to the budget, some of which were eventually restored, he created a sense of ''instability'' among the voters he's spoken with. He also criticized the mayor's ''mismanagement'' of the city's response to the influx of more than 190,000 asylum seekers, which led him to issue some of his own recommendations.

At his appearance at Abyssinian Baptist Church, Mr. Myrie spoke about how his mother, an immigrant from Costa Rica, took him to vote for the first time for Barack Obama in 2008, using the anecdote in stirring remarks about voter suppression.

''Sometimes we think voter suppression is a relic of the South, that it just happens elsewhere,'' Mr. Myrie said to nods of approval. ''Church, let me tell you, right here in New York, they purge voter rolls for people that look like us.''

Mr. Myrie's advisers took the positive response from congregants at the church (the mispronunciation of his name notwithstanding) as a positive sign that his appeal would stretch beyond Brooklyn and into the neighborhoods where he would need to dig into Mr. Adams's base of Black and Latino working- and middle-class voters.

Mr. Myrie, a lawyer and a longtime advocate for affordable housing and gun control, has made headlines recently for trying to prevent SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn from closing; appearing at a rally with the Rev. Al Sharpton in February; and for his support of criminal justice reforms, including bail reform efforts that Mr. Adams has opposed.

Last year, Mr. Myrie married Diana Richardson, a former state assemblywoman. The pair sued the Police Department in 2021 after they were beaten with bicycles and pepper-sprayed by the police during a Black Lives Matter protest in Brooklyn.

The couple are renters, Mr. Myrie said, and they are worried that they might not be able to afford to buy a home. He said he wanted the next generation of New Yorkers to live in a more affordable and climate-resilient city with the ''best subway system in the world.''

''That is the heart to me of why we are running -- to provide opportunities for families for safety and for flourishing and I hope to bring that as the next mayor,'' he said.

Claire Fahy reported from Albany, N.Y.Claire Fahy reported from Albany, N.Y.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/nyregion/zellnor-myrie-nyc-mayor-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/08/nyregion/zellnor-myrie-nyc-mayor-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: New York State Senator Zellnor Myrie, a first-term Democrat from Brooklyn, above, has opened an exploratory committee for a potential run against Mayor Eric Adams, left, in next year's primary. Scott Stringer, the former city comptroller, did so in January. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID DEE DELGADO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2024

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[***What Happens When a Happening Place Becomes Too Hot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C09-D7D1-DXY4-X00P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2024 Thursday 09:18 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1335 words

**Byline:** Elisabetta Povoledo and Alessandro Grassani Elisabetta Povoledo is a reporter based in Rome, covering Italy, the Vatican and the culture of the region. She has been a journalist for 35 years.

**Highlight:** City officials worked to make Milan attractive to visitors, but now that some neighborhoods are overwhelmed by rowdy crowds and noise, they’re trying to scale back.

**Body**

City officials worked to make Milan attractive to visitors, but now that some neighborhoods are overwhelmed by rowdy crowds and noise, they’re trying to scale back.

Packed bars with carousing revelers spilling onto clogged streets. Takeaway booze swigged by drunken tourists and students. Earsplitting volumes in once quiet residential neighborhoods long after midnight.

When Milan’s authorities embarked years ago on plans to promote the city as a buzzy destination by building on its reputation as Italy’s hip fashion and design capital, the resulting noise and rowdy overcrowding were perhaps not quite what they had in mind.

Now, after years of complaints and a series of lawsuits, the city has passed an ordinance to strictly limit the sale of takeaway food and beverages after midnight — and not much later on weekends — in “movida” areas, a Spanish term that Italians have adopted to describe outdoor nightlife. It will go into effect next week and be in force until Nov. 11.

Outdoor seating for restaurants and bars will also end at 12:30 a.m. on weekdays, and an hour later on weekends, so that people who want to party longer will have to do so indoors.

The businesses that have profited from Milan’s success in promoting itself as a happening city are grumbling.

One trade association complained that the ordinance was so strict that Italians would no longer be able to take a late-night stroll with a gelato in hand.

Marco Granelli, the Milan council member who is responsible for public security, said those fears were overblown. Eating gelato on the fly would not be a problem, he said.

The ordinance, he said, was aimed at dealing with “behavior that impacts on residential neighborhoods” and with takeaway alcoholic drinks, which are seen as the main reason late-night revelers linger on certain streets and squares. “It’s clear that ice cream, pizza or brioches don’t create overcrowding,” he said.

Marco Barbieri, secretary general for the Milan branch of the Italian retailers’ association Confcommercio, said his group would fight the ordinance, which he estimated would affect about 30 percent of the city’s 10,000 restaurants and bars. The new rules, he said, would penalize retailers for the bad behavior of their customers.

But residents have been complaining about Milan nightlife for a while.

“It’s a nightmare,” said Gabriella Valassina of the Navigli Committee, one of several citizen’s groups formed to address the increasing numbers of people — and decibel levels — in Milan’s historic neighborhoods.

She outlined a list of complaints: noise pollution (peaks of 87 decibels, well over the allowed 55, according to [*municipal limits*](https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/456796737/All_sub4+Norme+Tecniche+di+Attuazione.pdf/d67edf43-0ea8-b1ac-2906-080d7ef3757d?t=1665120915908)); streets so packed with revelers that it is hard to walk or even reach one’s front door; an exodus of fed-up locals that is changing the character of picturesque neighborhoods.

With the new rules, the city has allocated 170,000 euros, a little over $180,000, to help bar owners hire private security services to stop revelers from loitering on the streets outside their establishments. And it is working with police unions to modify contracts to allow more officers to work night shifts to enforce the new rules.

The city may have been motivated to act more forcefully after decisions by [*local*](https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/456796737/All_sub4+Norme+Tecniche+di+Attuazione.pdf/d67edf43-0ea8-b1ac-2906-080d7ef3757d?t=1665120915908) and [*national courts*](https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/456796737/All_sub4+Norme+Tecniche+di+Attuazione.pdf/d67edf43-0ea8-b1ac-2906-080d7ef3757d?t=1665120915908) in Italy have sided with residents who sued city administrations for not reining in nighttime chaos.

Elena Montafia, a spokeswoman for the Milano Degrado, a neighborhood association, is one of 34 residents of the Porta Venezia neighborhood suing the municipal government and asking for damages on the grounds that inaction to their complaints had put their health at risk.

“Living in Milan has become really difficult,” she said, adding that it was only after a decade of pleading with unresponsive local administrators that she and the other residents had decided to go down the legal route.

Still, she and others doubted that the new ordinance would change much, and that enforcement would be a problem.

“When you have so many people around, there isn’t a law that is going to make them go home; it’s impossible,” especially because the crowds normally far outnumber police officers, said Fabrizio Ferretti, the manager of Funky, a bar in Navigli, one of the affected neighborhoods. He acknowledged he was persona non grata with the owners of the apartments above his bar.

The predicament that Milan finds itself in today comes after years of efforts by leaders to broaden the city’s image from Italy’s financial and industrial capital to a more service-oriented, tourist-friendly one.

A succession of municipal governments has also encouraged the development of the city’s less central neighborhoods, said Alessandro Balducci, who teaches planning and urban policies at the Politecnico di Milano.

One of the inspirations was the Fuorisalone, the sprawling network of events related to Milan Design Week, the design world’s largest annual global event, that “gave new life to neighborhoods that were in the shadows,” he said. “Even for the Milanese, it was a rediscovery of their city.”

There had been an increase, too, in the number of universities in the city — eight now — as well as design and fashion programs run by private institutes. Milanese universities are also increasingly offering courses in English to broaden their international appeal.

Today, students have replaced many of the laborers who once worked in now-closed factories — for automobiles, chemicals and heavy machinery — that had made Milan an industrial powerhouse, Mr. Balducci said.

The [*University of Milano-Bicocca*](https://www.comune.milano.it/documents/20126/456796737/All_sub4+Norme+Tecniche+di+Attuazione.pdf/d67edf43-0ea8-b1ac-2906-080d7ef3757d?t=1665120915908), for example, opened some 25 years ago on the site of an abandoned Pirelli factory.

That surge in students is clearly evident in terms of how the nightlife has evolved, he said.

On top of that, he added, after the coronavirus pandemic, bars and restaurants replaced shops in many neighborhoods, accelerating the changing faces of those areas.

Last year, about 8.5 million visitors came to Milan — not counting those who didn’t stay overnight, according to YesMilano, the city’s tourism site. That was well over the 3.2 million visitors who slept in Milan in 2004 and the five million who did in 2016, according to Istat, the national statistics agency.

The Navigli neighborhood — a former ***working-class*** area built around two of Milan’s most scenic remaining canals — has experienced some of the most profound transformation in the city, evolving from a charmingly run-down district crossed by picturesque bridges into a hip quarter full of restaurants and bars.

Shops that catered to residents closed down, in part because rising rents and the general mayhem forced out many, including artists and artisans, residents say.

“The soul of the neighborhood is very different now,” said Ms. Valassina, of the Navigli Committee. “City administrations favored the idea of gentrification, thinking it was a positive objective. Instead, they altered the DNA of the neighborhood.”

On a recent evening, throngs of tourists, students and locals strolled along a canal, past sign after sign offering takeaway beer, wine or cocktails. Bars quickly filled, and the spillover crowds moved to the adjacent street, forcing passers-by to slalom through the crowds.

Some young revelers said they had doubts about the effectiveness of the new law.

“Young people are going to do what they do anyway; they’ll find different ways to get around it,” said Albassa Wane, 24, who is originally from Dakar, Senegal, and is an intern at a fashion label who has lived in Milan for five years.

PHOTOS: “It’s a nightmare,” said Gabriella Valassina, left, of the Navigli Committee, one of a few groups formed to address the overcrowding.; Nighttime dining in the Navigli area of Milan. A new city ordinance about to take effect aims to scale back the revelry after hours.; At the Naviglio Grande. Elena Montafia, right, is one of 34 residents suing on the grounds that inaction had put their health at risk. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALESSANDRO GRASSANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2024

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[***Splendid Visions Overshadow Moral Undertones***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWJ-7BW1-JBG3-613D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 26, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1100 words

**Byline:** By Laura Collins-Hughes

**Body**

This musical adaptation, now on Broadway, is a lot of Jazz Age fun. But it forgot that Fitzgerald's 1925 novel endures because it is a tragedy.

Jay Gatsby -- self-made enigma, party host extraordinaire and talk of the summer season in West Egg, Long Island -- doesn't carry his insecurities lightly. The facade of his wealth-drenched life is a grand and precarious creation, and propping it up requires constant vigilance.

His is new money, so he has to prove his worth to the snobberati. Thus his pathetic habit of showing that photo of himself in his Oxford days to people he has barely met. Or, more endearingly, his over-the-top insistence on glamming up the humble cottage of his neighbor, Nick Carraway, when the lost love of Gatsby's life, the fabled Daisy Fay Buchanan, is coming over for tea.

In the new musical ''The Great Gatsby,'' which opened on Thursday night at the Broadway Theater, the grass outside the cottage is groomed, flowers are everywhere, and a fleet of servants is ferrying food. And Jeremy Jordan's Gatsby is an adorably panicked basket case, second-guessing in charming comic song his plan to ambush Eva Noblezada's Daisy with a reunion.

''She is late, so I'm off to go scream in a jar,'' he sings, but Daisy arrives before he can flee. Unsuavely, he topples into some greenery.

It's a perfectly winsome scene, and a highlight of this ultimately underwhelming new adaptation, which has a book by Kait Kerrigan (making her Broadway debut), music by Jason Howland (''Paradise Square'') and lyrics by Nathan Tysen (also ''Paradise Square''). Comedy and romance are strong suits of this production by Marc Bruni (''Beautiful: The Carole King Musical''), which ran in the fall at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey.

There are plenty of big dance numbers, too (by Dominique Kelley), with some standout tap. The 1920s costumes (by Linda Cho) are fun to look at, Daisy's in particular: all those handkerchief hemlines, wafting on air. Gatsby's yellow Rolls-Royce and Tom's blue coupe drive onstage, extravagantly. And while the fireworks we see in the distance are projections, other sparkling pyrotechnics are delightfully real.

The darker elements of ''The Great Gatsby'' prove more elusive, which blunts the impact overall. So does the show's anodyne Broadway sound, which is poppy and pleasant without being memorable. It summons neither the Jazz Age, like the soundtrack to Jack Clayton's 1974 movie adaptation did, nor a spirit of wild abandon, like the soundtrack to Baz Luhrmann's 2013 take. The score to this ''Great Gatsby'' is missing a vital urgency.

This is not, by the way, the other high-profile musical adaptation you may have heard about since F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel entered the public domain in 2021. Next month, the Tony Award winner Rachel Chavkin directs ''Gatsby,'' with a book by the Pulitzer Prize winner Martyna Majok and a score by Florence Welch and Thomas Bartlett, in Cambridge, Mass.

Bruni's Broadway production has the tremendous asset of a terrific core cast, including Noah J. Ricketts as the decent, disillusioned narrator, Nick, who, in this telling, is for some unnecessary reason Gatsby's tenant; Samantha Pauly as Jordan Baker, a famous golfer and anti-marriage New Woman who enjoys a screwball romance with Nick; and John Zdrojeski as Tom Buchanan, Daisy's pampered, polo-playing bully of a husband.

She should of course be rid of him. Still, they are a handsome pair; their clothes, screaming silently of luxury, hang elegantly on them both. Their infant daughter, Pammy, wears less flattering clouds of lace. When Jordan objects to such little-girl outfits on principle, Daisy replies with absolute nonchalance: ''But there's nothing to be done about that. It's how babies dress.''

Noblezada and Pauly are easy with humor, and Kerrigan has taken care to deepen Daisy and Jordan, who, with their talk of the limitations of life for women, sound practically ''Suffs''-adjacent. Noblezada gives Daisy steel at her center that further ensures she isn't a manic pixie dream girl, even if the incurably dreamy Gatsby perceives her through gauze.

As for theatrical illusion, it, too, is precarious; at Saturday's matinee, technical glitches shattered it repeatedly in Act I. Projections, integral to Paul Tate dePoo III's set design, would blink out and disappear, leaving vast expanses of matte black screen where a vision of splendor had been.

And so it was for Gatsby's and Daisy's reunion. There they stood in front of the cottage, laying eyes on each other for the first time in years, when much of the little house and its surrounding copse -- the parts that aren't three-dimensional scenery -- abruptly vanished, along with the ambience. A bit on the nose for a show with mirages as a theme, and more than a bit distracting.

Even with flawless tech, the projections have a hyper-vividness reminiscent of video games. If that's a deliberate attempt to question the solidity of all the sumptuousness -- like the sozzled party guest in Fitzgerald's novel who, wandering into Gatsby's library, is astonished to find that the books are real -- the aesthetic is nonetheless jarring, particularly for a show set a century ago.

The musical's truly unbalancing trouble, though, is its rendering of Tom's affair with the ***working-class*** Myrtle Wilson (Sara Chase), the one character the show doesn't take seriously or treat with dignity. Even when tragedy befalls her, there's a laugh line in the immediate aftermath. We know more about Myrtle's husband, George (Paul Whitty), the gas station owner, than we do about her. And what we do know is so one-note tawdry that it's difficult to believe Tom would set up an entire down-low life with her.

The implosion of the summer hinges not only on Daisy and Tom's notorious, soul-corrupted carelessness, but also on the Wilsons. No matter how much this adaptation wants to riff on other elements, it needs to set up their part of the story so that the wider devastation lands.

But this ''Great Gatsby,'' which is not terribly bothered, either, with the moral shadings of its title character's rise and fall, is principally interested in a good time. When Nick utters the novel's sober final line, about ''boats against the current,'' the words have no heft. An ensemble of dancers is upstaging him anyway, wanting to give the audience one last moment at the party.

The Great Gatsby

At the Broadway Theater, Manhattan; broadwaygatsby.com. Running time: 2 hours 30 minutes.The Great GatsbyAt the Broadway Theater in Manhattan; broadwaygatsby.com. Running time: 2 hours 30 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/theater/the-great-gatsby-review-noblezada-jordan.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/25/theater/the-great-gatsby-review-noblezada-jordan.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Jeremy Jordan, foreground left, with Eva Noblezada in the musical ''The Great Gatsby.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2024

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[***A Right-Winger Calls for Social Democracy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690N-GNW1-DXY4-X46C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 22, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; MICHELLE GOLDBERG

**Length:** 1006 words

**Byline:** By Michelle Goldberg

**Body**

For the New York City launch of his new book last Friday, Sohrab Ahmari, best known as a pugilistic voice of the Trumpist new right, held a dialogue with Bhaskar Sunkara, founder of the socialist journal Jacobin and president of the left-wing magazine The Nation. The talk took place at a packed, sweltering event space on the Lower East Side, before an audience heavy on Twitter (now X) personalities and writers for small magazines. Introducing the discussion, Sunkara said that when Ahmari invited him to participate, he was skeptical. But then he read Ahmari's book, ''Tyranny, Inc.: How Private Power Crushed American Liberty -- and What to Do About It,'' and found, as he explained, ''surprisingly very little to criticize.''

The book surprised me as well. It was only a few years ago that Ahmari, in an attack on my Times colleague David French, called on conservatives to ''fight the culture war with the aim of defeating the enemy and enjoying the spoils in the form of a public square reordered to the common good and ultimately the Highest Good.'' I'd therefore expected ''Tyranny, Inc.'' to be yet another broadside against what the right often calls ''woke capitalism.'' Instead, it's a scathing critique of capitalism more broadly, at least in its contemporary, market-fundamentalist form.

Summarizing his thesis, Ahmari writes that the ''general tendency of Tyranny, Inc., is the domination of working- and middle-class people by the owners of capital, the asset-less by the asset-rich.'' He examines such topics as coercive arbitration agreements that prevent exploited workers from pressing their claims in court, the ruinous privatization of emergency services and the role of hedge funds in destroying local newspapers. He celebrates ''the achievements of social democracy,'' which ''remind us that there once was an alternative -- and that there could be one again.''

If you squint, you can still see the conservative influence on ''Tyranny, Inc.'' Ahmari's litany of neoliberal sins includes, for example, ''the leasing of wombs via commercial surrogacy.'' But much of the book's analysis feels decidedly leftist. As Sunkara pointed out, the word ''woke'' appears only a handful of times, in most cases in reference to the blind spots of the anti-woke right. Reading ''Tyranny, Inc.,'' I kept wondering how Ahmari had gone from conservative cultural crusader to genuine economic populist and, more important, whether any other social traditionalists could make the same leap.

When I met with Ahmari to discuss his political evolution, he bristled at accusations of ideological dilettantism, insisting his current views stem from a longstanding and fundamentally conservative concern with social harmony and stability. ''I think my opponents exaggerate the degree to which, you know, 'He's had every worldview,''' he told me. Nevertheless, his intellectual journey has been peripatetic.

The son of a secular, bohemian family in Tehran, he came to the United States as a teenager -- the beneficiary, he's acknowledged, of chain migration. In college, he was a Trotskyite, before becoming a neoconservative and an editor at The Wall Street Journal. Ahmari was initially so anti-Trump that he voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016, the same year he converted to Catholicism. But he was soon won over by Donald Trump and what he saw as the potential for a post-liberal conservatism rooted in the ***working class***.

Last year, Ahmari co-founded the online magazine Compact along with Matthew Schmitz, a fellow conservative Catholic, and Edwin Aponte, a self-described Marxist, with the idea of bringing together critics of economic and cultural liberalism from the left and right. At the time, this idea struck me as absurd and a little sinister; as the writer John Ganz joked, ''We have a spicy little new idea for you, it's a mixture of nationalism ... and get this ... socialism.'' And Compact is indeed mostly a reactionary publication with a strong authoritarian streak. In 2022 Ahmari and Schmitz wrote a florid endorsement of Trump titled ''He's Still the One.''

Yet, from the start, Compact took material conditions seriously, including an early piece Ahmari wrote about the political war on unions. And the more Ahmari focused on economics, the more he seemed to move to the left. After the 2020 election, in which Trump made inroads with ***working-class*** men of color, Ahmari had planned to write a manifesto for a new pro-labor conservatism. But as he writes in the acknowledgments in ''Tyranny, Inc.,'' his reporting gradually made clear to him the hollowness of the G.O.P.'s pro-worker positioning. Last week, he wrote a Newsweek column titled ''I Was Wrong: The G.O.P. Will Never Be the Party of the ***Working Class***.''

Ahmari remains on the right because of his social conservatism; he's having his Washington book launch with Marco Rubio, and he's heartened by J.D. Vance's work with Elizabeth Warren to try to claw back compensation from the executives of failed banks. But as he's grown convinced that Republican economic policies underlie much of the social atomization he abhors, his connection to the G.O.P. has become tenuous. When I asked him whom he'd vote for in 2024 if the election is a rematch between Trump and Joe Biden, he responded that he'd have to give it serious thought.

The next day, he sent me an email clarifying that in fact he's highly unlikely to vote for Biden, given the president's position on issues such as abortion and ''the liberty of the Church.'' For now, Ahmari wrote, ''I seem fated to political homelessness, with my role being to push my own side to embrace economic sanity.'' Given how little most of the right wants to move, I wonder whether it will be his side for long.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/opinion/columnists/sohrab-ahmari-social-democracy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/opinion/columnists/sohrab-ahmari-social-democracy.html)

**Graphic**

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[***The Right-Winger Calling for Social Democracy; Michelle Goldberg***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690J-5DS1-DXY4-X3C5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 21, 2023 Monday 09:56 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; columnists

**Length:** 1002 words

**Byline:** Michelle Goldberg

**Highlight:** How Sohrab Ahmari got serious about economic populism.

**Body**

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[***Democrats, Sensing Shift on Abortion Rights Among Latinas, Push for More Gains***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C04-83H1-JBG3-60XJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 8, 2024 Wednesday 23:52 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1339 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa Jazmine Ulloa is a national politics reporter for The Times, covering the 2024 presidential campaign. She is based in Washington.

**Highlight:** Hispanic views on the issue vary widely, and Democrats face hurdles, but opportunities, too. As one House candidate said: “I go to Mass, but I also support a woman’s right to choose.”

**Body**

Hispanic views on the issue vary widely, and Democrats face hurdles, but opportunities, too. As one House candidate said: “I go to Mass, but I also support a woman’s right to choose.”

Hours before Arizona state legislators [*voted to repeal an 1864*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) abortion ban last month, a group of mostly Latina Democrats huddled at a nearby Mexican restaurant for a strategy session on galvanizing Latina voters over abortion rights.

“I am 23 — why do I have less rights than my abuelita in Mexico?” Melissa Herrera, a Democratic campaign staffer, asked the cluster of women at the restaurant, referring to her grandmother.

The question crystallized what Democrats hope will be a decisive electoral factor in their favor this year, one that upends conventional political wisdom: A majority of Latino voters now support abortion rights, according to polls, a reversal from two decades ago. Polling trends, interviews with strategists and election results in Ohio and Virginia, where abortion rights played a central role, suggest [*Democrats’ optimism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) regarding Latinas — once considered too religious or too socially conservative to support abortion rights — could bear out.

Since the Supreme Court struck down Roe v. Wade in 2022, stringent curbs have been taking effect in Republican-dominated states. In Arizona, for one, [*the May 2 repeal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) of the blanket ban from 1864 still leaves abortions governed by a two-year-old law prohibiting the procedure after 15 weeks of pregnancy, with no exception for rape or incest.

As of April 2023, according to [*the Pew Research Center*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html), 62 percent of Latinos believed abortion should be legal in all or most cases. Twenty years earlier, most Hispanics told Pew that they opposed abortion rights by a nearly two-to-one margin. (The most recent polling has been conducted online, instead of over the phone, but the surveys show an overall gradual shift in opinions.)

Latino majorities came out in favor of reproductive rights in 2023 elections in Ohio and Virginia, according to other surveys, and women played a major role in stalling the shift of Hispanic voters toward the Republican Party in 2022, when many voted for Democrats, citing abortion and reproductive health as the most important issue.

“Abortion is going to be an essential issue this cycle,” said Victoria McGroary, the executive director of BOLD PAC, the campaign arm of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. “We are going to see what I think is going to be crystal-clear evidence that reproductive freedom matters to Latino voters.”

[*Surveys show*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) the diversity of the Latino voting population still poses some obstacles for Democrats, with support for abortion rights varying based on factors including age, geography and party affiliation. Latino voters in [*South Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) and [*South Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) remain more culturally conservative, and a majority of [*Latino evangelicals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html), a growing segment of the population, still says abortion should be illegal.

Within that culturally conservative world, many remain unmoved.

Leaving a shopping plaza in Phoenix, Daisy Ochoa, 31, a paralegal, said she was planning to vote for Republicans in November because their stances on the issue are in line with her Christian faith.

“I believe that if there is life, there is life,” she said. “I don’t think anybody should take life, unless there’s some threat to the mom.”

But outside a grocery store near downtown, Gina Fernandez, 52, a Democrat and an administrative assistant, offered signs that Democrats had struck a nerve. She said she had been raised in a Mexican American and Roman Catholic household but had considered her right to abortion a foregone conclusion until the Supreme Court overturned Roe. That jolted her and her 19-year-old daughter. She used to vote for the best candidate regardless of party affiliation, Ms. Fernandez said.

“This cycle, I’m voting for all Democrats,” she said.

Democratic officials and activists in Arizona point to lingering [*uncertainty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) over abortion access in the state, since the repeal will not take effect until 90 days after the Legislature adjourns for the summer. That, they say, is fueling support for a November ballot initiative that would enshrine the right to abortion in the state’s Constitution — and could lift Democrats up and down the ballot.

“It is still not over,” said Mary Rose Wilcox, a former city councilwoman and elected county official who owns El Portal, the restaurant that has served as a center of Latino political activity in Phoenix and hosted the April strategy session. “We need a straight law that safeguards protections.”

The women also said they needed to counter what they called misconceptions about Latino voters’ conservatism.

“I always say I’m a pro-choice Catholic,” Raquel Terán, a Democratic House candidate who convened the round-table meeting, said in an interview. “I go to Mass, but I also support a woman’s right to choose.”

Rosie Villegas-Smith, a Mexican immigrant who founded Voces Unidas por la Vida, an anti-abortion organization in Phoenix, said she believed Hispanic support for abortion rights in recent polling was overblown. She accused Democrats of fear-mongering and misleading voters on the issue.

“They speak in euphemisms and say abortion is health care but abortion is not health care,” she said. “Once Latinos learn what abortion truly is, they are against it.”

Republicans at the national level argue that abortion is [*not going to matter more to Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) than crime, border security or the economy, particularly among ***working-class*** families worried about the cost of gas and groceries.

“You have seen Republicans making up ground with Latino voters because of a message on those issues,” said Jack Pandol, a spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee, the campaign arm of House Republicans. “They have a better message on improving quality of life, on bringing costs down, on making communities safe.”

A crop of Latina Democratic candidates is nonetheless running on abortion rights in districts with large or fast-growing Hispanic populations. In interviews, some said the fall of Roe had made the issue more urgent for their constituencies — and made voters more receptive to their message that abortion access was crucial to personal freedom and health care, even if the voters themselves were against the procedure.

In Oregon, Representative Andrea Salinas, who in 2022 became one of the first two Hispanic candidates [*elected to Congress*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) from the state, said she cast the issue of abortion rights as a matter of “empowering women to make their own personal choices with their doctor.”

“I didn’t have as much as my competitors to put out glossy mailers or fancy television ads, but what I did have I used to lean into reproductive rights,” said Ms. Salinas, adding that the issue helped fuel her victory in a northeastern district home to the most Latinos in the state.

Ms. Terán, who is running to become the first Latina to represent Arizona in Congress, recalled that Democratic operatives cautioned her not to talk about her past work experience with Planned Parenthood, an abortion rights group, when she first ran for a state legislative seat in 2018 because it was a Latino-heavy district. She disregarded that advice and won.

She went on to make abortion rights central to her platform in the Arizona House. [*In 2019, she and other state lawmakers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/24/us/abortion-ban-arizona.html) visited El Salvador to study the impact of the nation’s abortion ban, and they met with women who had been imprisoned for having the procedure done. She later co-wrote the measure that repealed Arizona’s 1864 abortion law.

PHOTOS: Latina Democrats gathered last month at El Portal, a longtime center of Latino political activity in Phoenix, to discuss abortion rights.; “I go to Mass, but I also support a woman’s right to choose,” said Raquel Terán, a House candidate running to represent Arizona.; Rosie Villegas-Smith, who runs an anti-abortion organization in Phoenix, said that Democrats are misleading voters on the issue. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL RATJE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Review: Millepied and Muhly, Partners in Space and Sound; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP8-XWM1-DXY4-X027-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2024 Monday 23:23 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; dance

**Length:** 1010 words

**Byline:** Roslyn Sulcas

**Highlight:** Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly’s evening of minimally accessorized dance and contemporary music feels right at home at the Philharmonie in Paris.

**Body**

Benjamin Millepied and Nico Muhly’s evening of minimally accessorized dance and contemporary music feels right at home at the Philharmonie in Paris.

The choreographer Benjamin Millepied is a protean figure. The founder of the L.A. Dance Project, he has been a principal dancer with New York City Ballet, the [*director of the Paris Opera Ballet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia), a [*filmmaker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia) and a perennially well-connected catalyst for [*adventurous collaborations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia) with figures from the worlds of fashion, movies, music and dance.

Recently relocated to Paris from Los Angeles, Millepied has not — heaven forfend — been idle. He has, with Solenne du Haÿs Mascré, started the Paris Dance Project, not a company, but an umbrella for choreographic and educational initiatives; he continues [*to run the L.A. Dance Project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia); and he hasn’t stopped choreographing.

His new work, “Me. You. We. They” — in which he made a surprise appearance as a dancer — is the seventh that [*he has created with the composer Nico Muhly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia), and it was the concluding piece on the program [*“Benjamin Millepied &amp; Nico Muhly,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia) performed by L.A. Dance Project, which opened on Friday at the Philharmonie de Paris.

Millepied’s first theatrical offering since returning to France, the program is a clever choice for the Philharmonie. The concert hall, designed by Jean Nouvel, opened in 2015 in a traditionally ***working-class*** neighborhood [*amid heated debate about its location*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia) — Would classical music attendees go to the outskirts of Paris? Would a new audience come? — as well as cost overruns and Nouvel’s very public unhappiness with the finished building.

But the Philharmonie is generally considered a success, partly because it has tried to appeal to a diverse public with offerings beyond the classical music sphere. The Muhly-Millepied program fits perfectly: Muhly writes serious contemporary music, accessible and youthful, and it doesn’t hurt that Millepied is a big name in his native France. (The large hall, with 2,400 seats, was almost sold out for the four-show run, which ended on Sunday.)

The hall’s acoustics are fabulous for the Muhly scores, stirringly played by the ensemble Le Balcon and sensitively conducted by Maxime Pascal. The surprise is how well the space works for dance despite no proscenium to hang lights from, or wings for the dancers to disappear into.

At least it works for this kind of minimally accessorized dance, an aspect Millepied emphasized by keeping the performers in the same eclectically casual costumes (by Camille Assaf) across the three pieces on the program: “Triade” (2008), “Moving Parts” (2012) and the new work. The costuming lends a unity to the evening, but also a sameness, particularly since “Triade” and “Moving Parts” both have a loose-limbed playfulness and brief encounter interactions.

“Triade,” made for the Paris Opera Ballet, was commissioned as part of [*a homage to Jerome Robbins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia), a strong influence during Millepied’s ballet career. It’s full of deliberate references: the four dancers (Naomi Van Brunt, Lorrin Brubaker, Daphne Fernberger and David Adrian Freeland Jr.) enter casually, like the walking crowd in “Glass Pieces,” brush up against one another with the playful, teasing quality of “Interplay” or “Fancy Free,” and part after exchanging partners, as in “In the Night.”

But the work has its own inner world, even if the dramatic intensity I remember at the Opera has modulated into a more neutral suggestion of stories and possibilities as the dancers leap, turn and skid to the floor, feinting around one another, testing each other’s limits.

“Moving Parts,” performed by six dancers in front of and between movable panels with bold calligraphic flourishes by [*the artist Christopher Wool*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia), has some choreographic and compositional high points (notably Muhly’s use of the organ, played here by Alexis Grizard). But it rambles in between the standout opening solo of high-speed turns and sudden slowings for the quicksilver Shu Kinouchi, and a tender male duet toward the end.

Millepied feels like a freer, more exploratory choreographer in “Me. You.,” which features 10 dancers and a musical ensemble of 15 performing Muhly’s new “One Speed, Many Shapes,” a pulse-driven array of soundscapes.

The choreographic DNA remains consistent. There are lots of high, swooping, circling legs as dancers revolve around one another, along with loose, flung-away limbs, nimble footwork and complex, reflexive interactions between fast-moving bodies. (Millepied’s movement is way more difficult than these terrific dancers make it look.) Fast movement is often set against slow music, and vice versa.

But in the new piece, essentially a series of solos, duos and trios, the often-gestural, fresh quality of the dancing feels more personal to the dancers than the vocabulary of the first two works, and less packed with movement. Here, bodies curve around one another with a magnetic pull in an opening duo; a man and woman slowly reach into space; a virtuosic male trio carves shapes into the air.

Millepied’s duet with Eva Galmel, set to low chimes and flute, is lovely, all quick reactive alertness, limbs flicking between close-knit dartings, testing equilibrium and momentum, entwining and pushing away.

The personal, idiosyncratic quality of the movement doesn’t always work; a brief ensemble section midway through just looks incoherent. But “Me. You.” is mostly compelling both musically and choreographically, with a marvelous final sequence that has individual dancers standing still in turn as the others move with sweeping intensity to the propulsive music. The final moment echoes the start of the piece: A lone dancer faces the audience, while the others face the musicians — a fitting image for partners in sound and space.

“Benjamin Millepied &amp; Nico Muhly”

Performed through March 31 at the Philharmonie de Paris, [*philharmoniedeparis.fr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/05/arts/dance/benjamin-millepied-paris-opera.html?action=click&amp;contentCollection=Arts&amp;region=Footer&amp;module=WhatsNext&amp;version=WhatsNext&amp;contentID=WhatsNext&amp;moduleDetail=undefined&amp;pgtype=Multimedia)

PHOTOS: Top, the L.A. Dance Project in Paris performing Benjamin Millepied’s 2012 work “Moving Parts.” Above, his new work, “Me. You. We. They.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTOINE BENOIT-GODET) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Review: A New ‘Great Gatsby’ Leads With Comedy and Romance***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWH-FKV1-JBG3-60BM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1120 words

**Byline:** Laura Collins-Hughes

**Highlight:** This musical adaptation, now on Broadway, is a lot of Jazz Age fun. But it forgot that Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel endures because it is a tragedy.

**Body**

This musical adaptation, now on Broadway, is a lot of Jazz Age fun. But it forgot that Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel endures because it is a tragedy.

Jay Gatsby — self-made enigma, party host extraordinaire and talk of the summer season in West Egg, Long Island — doesn’t carry his insecurities lightly. The facade of his wealth-drenched life is a grand and precarious creation, and propping it up requires constant vigilance.

His is new money, so he has to prove his worth to the snobberati. Thus his pathetic habit of showing that photo of himself in his Oxford days to people he has barely met. Or, more endearingly, his over-the-top insistence on glamming up the humble cottage of his neighbor, Nick Carraway, when the lost love of Gatsby’s life, the fabled Daisy Fay Buchanan, is coming over for tea.

In the new musical “[*The Great Gatsby*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/),” which opened on Thursday night at the Broadway Theater, the grass outside the cottage is groomed, flowers are everywhere, and a fleet of servants is ferrying food. And Jeremy Jordan’s Gatsby is an adorably panicked basket case, second-guessing in charming comic song his plan to ambush Eva Noblezada’s Daisy with a reunion.

“She is late, so I’m off to go scream in a jar,” he sings, but Daisy arrives before he can flee. Unsuavely, he topples into some greenery.

It’s a perfectly winsome scene, and a highlight of this ultimately underwhelming new adaptation, which has a book by Kait Kerrigan (making her Broadway debut), music by Jason Howland (“Paradise Square”) and lyrics by Nathan Tysen (also “Paradise Square”). Comedy and romance are strong suits of this production by Marc Bruni (“Beautiful: The Carole King Musical”), which [*ran in the fall*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/) at the Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey.

There are plenty of big dance numbers, too (by Dominique Kelley), with some standout tap. The 1920s costumes (by Linda Cho) are fun to look at, Daisy’s in particular: all those handkerchief hemlines, wafting on air. Gatsby’s yellow Rolls-Royce and Tom’s blue coupe drive onstage, extravagantly. And while the fireworks we see in the distance are projections, other sparkling pyrotechnics are delightfully real.

The darker elements of “The Great Gatsby” prove more elusive, which blunts the impact overall. So does the show’s anodyne Broadway sound, which is poppy and pleasant without being memorable. It summons neither the Jazz Age, like the soundtrack to Jack Clayton’s 1974 movie adaptation did, nor a spirit of wild abandon, like the soundtrack to Baz Luhrmann’s 2013 take. The score to this “Great Gatsby” is missing a vital urgency.

This is not, by the way, the other high-profile musical adaptation you may have heard about since F. Scott Fitzgerald’s 1925 novel [*entered the public domain*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/) in 2021. Next month, the Tony Award winner Rachel Chavkin directs “[*Gatsby*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/),” with a book by the Pulitzer Prize winner Martyna Majok and a score by Florence Welch and Thomas Bartlett, in Cambridge, Mass.

Bruni’s Broadway production has the tremendous asset of a terrific core cast, including Noah J. Ricketts as the decent, disillusioned narrator, Nick, who, in this telling, is for some unnecessary reason Gatsby’s tenant; Samantha Pauly as Jordan Baker, a famous golfer and anti-marriage New Woman who enjoys a screwball romance with Nick; and John Zdrojeski as Tom Buchanan, Daisy’s pampered, polo-playing bully of a husband.

She should of course be rid of him. Still, they are a handsome pair; their clothes, screaming silently of luxury, hang elegantly on them both. Their infant daughter, Pammy, wears less flattering clouds of lace. When Jordan objects to such little-girl outfits on principle, Daisy replies with absolute nonchalance: “But there’s nothing to be done about that. It’s how babies dress.”

Noblezada and Pauly are easy with humor, and Kerrigan has taken care to deepen Daisy and Jordan, who, with their talk of the limitations of life for women, sound practically “[*Suffs*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/)”-adjacent. Noblezada gives Daisy steel at her center that further ensures she isn’t a manic pixie dream girl, even if the incurably dreamy Gatsby perceives her through gauze.

As for theatrical illusion, it, too, is precarious; at Saturday’s matinee, technical glitches shattered it repeatedly in Act I. Projections, integral to Paul Tate dePoo III’s set design, would blink out and disappear, leaving vast expanses of matte black screen where a vision of splendor had been.

And so it was for Gatsby’s and Daisy’s reunion. There they stood in front of the cottage, laying eyes on each other for the first time in years, when much of the little house and its surrounding copse — the parts that aren’t three-dimensional scenery — abruptly vanished, along with the ambience. A bit on the nose for a show with mirages as a theme, and more than a bit distracting.

Even with flawless tech, the projections have a hyper-vividness reminiscent of video games. If that’s a deliberate attempt to question the solidity of all the sumptuousness — like the sozzled party guest in Fitzgerald’s novel who, wandering into Gatsby’s library, is astonished to find that the books are real — the aesthetic is nonetheless jarring, particularly for a show set a century ago.

The musical’s truly unbalancing trouble, though, is its rendering of Tom’s affair with the ***working-class*** Myrtle Wilson (Sara Chase), the one character the show doesn’t take seriously or treat with dignity. Even when tragedy befalls her, there’s a laugh line in the immediate aftermath. We know more about Myrtle’s husband, George (Paul Whitty), the gas station owner, than we do about her. And what we do know is so one-note tawdry that it’s difficult to believe Tom would set up an entire down-low life with her.

The implosion of the summer hinges not only on Daisy and Tom’s notorious, soul-corrupted carelessness, but also on the Wilsons. No matter how much this adaptation wants to riff on other elements, it needs to set up their part of the story so that the wider devastation lands.

But this “Great Gatsby,” which is not terribly bothered, either, with the moral shadings of its title character’s rise and fall, is principally interested in a good time. When Nick utters the novel’s sober final line, about “boats against the current,” the words have no heft. An ensemble of dancers is upstaging him anyway, wanting to give the audience one last moment at the party.

The Great Gatsby

At the Broadway Theater, Manhattan; [*broadwaygatsby.com*](https://broadwaygatsby.com/). Running time: 2 hours 30 minutes.

The Great Gatsby At the Broadway Theater in Manhattan; broadwaygatsby.com. Running time: 2 hours 30 minutes.

PHOTO: Jeremy Jordan, foreground left, with Eva Noblezada in the musical “The Great Gatsby.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Neighbors Raise Roof, So Maybe You Can't***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BW4-95N1-JBG3-6023-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1171 words

**Byline:** By Heather Knight

**Body**

Neighbors have multiple opportunities to raise objections, and some disputes can only be resolved by the city's top governing body.

San Francisco's top governing body spent time on Tuesday discussing what most residents surely would not consider a major priority for the city: whether Julie Park and Tom McDonald can raise the roof of their $2.1 million Victorian home by 7 feet and 3 inches.

The project complies with city codes, and the San Francisco Planning Commission gave unanimous approval months ago; in many cities that would have been good enough for the remodel to move forward. But in San Francisco, neighbors wield unusual power over next-door renovations and modest improvements and can appeal even the replacement of rotted front steps.

So on Tuesday, 11 members of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors served as judges in home construction, hearing from Ms. Park, a lawyer representing her neighbors and Planning Department experts.

The feud between wealthy neighbors is emblematic of the city's languor when it comes to building anything. San Francisco has already drawn the ire of state housing officials, who have demanded that the city add 82,000 units in the next seven years, a goal that seems out of reach when many projects draw multiple rounds of challenges and years of delays.

''This isn't to say that other California cities don't have similar planning battles royale, but historically speaking, San Francisco has distinguished itself as the leader of the pack,'' Dan Sider, chief of staff for the San Francisco Planning Department, said.

Ms. Park, a 40-year-old consultant for start-ups and small businesses, began her quest during the pandemic when she and Mr. McDonald, a 38-year-old climate researcher, bought their three-story home on Harper Street on the edge of Noe Valley in 2020. The neighborhood is popular with families and close to hilltop hikes that provide stunning views.

The four-bedroom, one-bath home was built in 1905 and still had its original foundation and old plumbing. The couple's idea was to turn the ground level into a separate living unit for Mr. McDonald's parents and the middle level into the family's living space and kitchen.

The plan was to raise the upper level's gabled roof to make way for two bathrooms and three bedrooms for the couple and hoped-for children.

As required by city law, Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald notified their neighbors in February 2023 and quickly learned that several of them worried that a taller building would affect their views of the city, cast shadows and allow the couple to peer into their homes.

In a city full of tech workers, the squabble led one neighbor to post signs with a QR code and the words ''SAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD'' on utility poles. The QR code led to a website, whatupsf.com, which encouraged people to sign a petition opposing the renovation, to attend Tuesday's meeting and to fight the ''monster home.''

''This whole thing has become a legal and financial nightmare,'' Ms. Park said in an interview, adding that she had already spent $250,000 on architecture fees, the permit application and a lawyer.

Building new projects in San Francisco can be famously expensive and time-consuming. A new public toilet was slated to cost $1.7 million and take up to three years until a donor gave the city a free one. Constructing 1.7 miles for the new Central Subway line took 12 years and went hundreds of millions of dollars over budget.

The state and city have recently enacted laws to rubber-stamp some housing projects without the say of neighbors, but getting approval for changes to single-family homes can still be excruciating.

The Planning Department approved Ms. Park's plans in October, but a month later four neighbors filed an appeal, which went to the Planning Commission for review. The commission unanimously approved the project, calling it ''modest'' and ''lovely'' and applauding it for adding another housing unit to the city.

The neighbors, however, said that the Planning Department erred by exempting the project from the California Environmental Quality Act and that the Harper home must account for various impacts.

The neighbors wanted the city's top leaders to consider on Tuesday, among other things, that it should be preserved intact because of ''the property's history as a post-Civil War era home for ***working class*** San Franciscans.''

Ryan Patterson, an attorney for the neighbors fighting the project, declined to comment before the hearing and said that the neighbors should speak for themselves. Just one of them did.

David Garofoli owns a home next door. He doubled the size of the home, which was built in 1908, with a big remodel eight years ago but said that he did a better job of preserving the historic facade. Mr. Garofoli, a former developer who is now a business coach, said that he had since moved to Boston and was renting out his house.

But he remains invested in his old neighborhood. He paid for a light expert to study shadows that would be cast by Ms. Park's raised roof; an architect to study whether her house was historic; and lawyers to work on the appeals.

''I care about the neighborhood, and I care about the historic nature of our homes,'' he said.

Scott Wiener, a state senator from San Francisco, used to represent the neighborhood on the Board of Supervisors and said he had spent a lot of time mediating disputes among neighbors. He said that most California cities automatically approve projects that abide by city code.

''Good government means setting clear rules ahead of time, and if you comply with the rules, you get your permit,'' Mr. Wiener said. ''In San Francisco, we've chosen to make everything political instead of predictable. It creates a lot of bad blood.''

Aaron Peskin, president of the Board of Supervisors and a candidate for mayor, largely supports the current system. He said that project reviews do not take up too much of the supervisors' time and do recognize the due process rights of residents.

''There are people who file frivolous lawsuits, but they get their day in court, and the judge can tell them to pound sand,'' he said. ''This has not been a distraction.''

The neighborhood has had similar disputes before. Several years ago, behind the home owned by Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald, property owners wanted to tear down an 875-square-foot cottage from the early 1900s and turn it into a 5,100-square-foot home with an elevator, two outdoor kitchens and walls of glass. Neighbors intensely fought that project but lost.

The home was built and dubbed the ''Noe Looking Glass'' before it was sold for $7.4 million in 2018.

Its current owners, who did not respond to a request for comment, were among those disputing Ms. Park's and Mr. McDonald's project.

On Tuesday, none of the neighbors personally addressed the board, letting a lawyer speak on their behalf instead. But he was unsuccessful. After one supervisor asked why they were discussing the matter at all, the board sided unanimously with the couple.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/23/us/san-francisco-home-renovation.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/23/us/san-francisco-home-renovation.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Julie Park and her husband, Tom McDonald, are trying to renovate their home, but the project has been stalled by objections.

Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald want to raise the roof of their home by 7 feet 3 inches. Some neighbors worry it would block their view. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Graduate School, Without Those Pesky Grades***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69R5-R421-DXY4-X02W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 26, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1070 words

**Byline:** By Cat Zhang

**Body**

The Brooklyn Institute for Social Research offers adult learners an education opportunity at a fraction of the time and price of graduate school.

Say you're bored by your 9-to-5. You're intellectually understimulated and you want a challenge beyond your book club, which, it turns out, is just you and your friends gossiping around a lukewarm charcuterie board.

What are your options? You could apply to graduate school, if you have the ambition, money and time. Or you could start smaller and enroll in a class at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research (BISR).

The Brooklyn Institute is a nonprofit education center that offers evening and weekend courses for adults, catering to those who want the rigor of a liberal arts seminar but at a more modest commitment. The unaccredited classes are held for three hours each week for a month and are led by lecturers with advanced degrees. Though adult learners can enroll in massive open online courses or extension school programs, the institute differentiates itself with more niche and left-field topics: the novels of Clarice Lispector, the history of trauma and transgender Marxism.

And the best part? No grades.

Andres Begue, 32, discovered the organization earlier this year after casually searching for continuing education opportunities online. ''It's nice to be able to go into something that I have no context for and learn something new,'' said Mr. Begue, who works in technology support at a software company. He was intrigued by a course about the 20th-century Austrian playwright and novelist Thomas Bernhard.

On an evening in October, Mr. Begue joined 17 other students around a long wooden table at BISR's white-brick office space in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Dumbo. The group read texts like ''Woodcutters'' and ''Heldenplatz,'' while snacking on corn chips and sipping boxed wine. Lauren K. Wolfe, an associate faculty member who specializes in Austrian and German literature, guided discussions of the writer's hectoring prose and disdain for Austrian culture as the group engaged with larger questions about literary critique, political memory and translation.

''At our core is the conviction that the idea that people are anti-intellectual is false,'' Ajay Singh Chaudhary, the institute's executive director, said. ''The idea that people don't want to critically engage, that they just want five-minute sound bites, is false.''

Founded in 2012, the Brooklyn Institute began modestly, with a dozen or so people discussing Plato's ''Republic'' over cheap pints at a bistro in the brownstone-filled neighborhood of Boerum Hill. Mr. Chaudhary, then a graduate student at Columbia University, had dreamed of an alternative to traditional academia while preparing to teach Columbia's Core curriculum. He was at a local bar and noticed interest from nearby patrons.

''People have always been like, 'Oh, what's that? I always wish I got a chance to study, you know, Aristotle or Plato,''' Mr. Chaudhary said.

The institute now has about 60 faculty members, five of them full-time, and offers around 20 courses a month, both virtually and in person. Instructors earn approximately 70 percent of revenue from what they teach, or about $3,500 per course -- often a better deal than what they would make as adjunct professors.

''There is a structural problem in higher education,'' said Nara Roberta Silva, a Brazilian sociologist who previously lectured at Lehman College. In addition to teaching courses on social movements and postcolonial theory, she heads the institute's ''praxis program,'' which provides workshops to labor unions, nonprofits and other public-interest organizations. ''I feel I'm a much better scholar because of this stability,'' she said.

Particularly devoted learners can sign up for more bespoke services at a higher premium. Last year, the institute created a certificate program that's essentially a yearlong master's degree and also established yearlong intensive language courses in ancient Greek and Sanskrit (Arabic, Hebrew and Latin classes are in development for 2024).

Having hosted courses in London, Philadelphia and the Midwest, the institute expanded this month to Chicago, offering an introductory seminar on the Frankfurt School, a cohort of 20th-century German Marxist intellectuals associated with the organization's namesake, the Institute for Social Research.

Hank Vandenburgh, 78, used to travel four to five hours from Palatine Bridge, N.Y., to attend classes on subjects like sadomasochism and the philosophy and politics of love.

''Because of the unusual specific topics the Brooklyn Institute has, I don't think I'd be able to get those at a university around here,'' said Mr. Vandenburgh, a retired professor. Since the institute introduced digital instruction in 2020, Mr. Vandenburgh has taken courses remotely, including one starting this week on the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

Though the change has diversified the institute's pool, bringing in students and instructors from countries as far as China and Mozambique, the clientele skews white-collar and college-educated.

BISR, whose classes cost $335, provides a limited amount of pay-what-you-want scholarships. But even at a discount, some students may find it more cost effective to join more casual reading groups elsewhere in New York City: Wendy's Subway, a nonprofit library, which accepts sliding-scale payments, or Woodbine, a volunteer-run experimental hub, which is free.

Swathi Manchikanti, 35, who took two urban design courses -- one on 19th- and 20th-century architectural experiments and the other on the New York City subway -- said it could benefit the institute to advertise more widely.

''We're reading all of these papers from all of these philosophers or architects who are talking about what the ***working class*** deserved, but I felt like we'd never really had a representative voice of a ***working class*** member,'' she said.

Still, Ms. Manchikanti appreciated how these courses opened up her thinking as a climate-adaptation and health expert at a United Nations agency.

''We don't necessarily talk about how air pollution is determined sometimes by which side of a highway we live on. We don't necessarily think in terms of physicality,'' she said. ''I think BISR courses have helped round out those theoretical points.''

When asked whether she would take another class, she replied: ''Oh, definitely.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/23/style/brooklyn-institute-for-social-research-adult-education.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/23/style/brooklyn-institute-for-social-research-adult-education.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Students in Brooklyn at a class taught by Nara Roberta Silva. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONIQUE JAQUES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST12-ST13) This article appeared in print on page ST12, ST13.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Morgan Parker Says ‘Poetry Is Under Everything’ She Writes; By the BOOK***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-N4J1-JBG3-60PF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 21, 2024 Thursday 21:08 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 815 words

**Highlight:** Crafting the arguments in “You Get What You Pay For,” her first essay collection, “felt like pulling apart a long piece of taffy,” says the author of “Magical Negro.”

**Body**

What books are on your night stand?

The craft anthology “How We Do It,” edited by the great [*Jericho Brown,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) and Shayla Lawson’s astounding [*“How to Live Free in a Dangerous World.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html)

Describe your ideal reading experience (when, where, what, how).

Probably on the smoking patio of a wine bar at happy hour on a sunny day, with a pencil in my hand and Dorothy Ashby or [*Ambrose Akinmusire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) playing through noise-canceling headphones. Or just a quiet morning on my couch with coffee, so engrossed I forget to flip the record.

What’s the last book you read that made you laugh?

[*“Erasure,” by Percival Everett*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html). I picked up a used copy at Shakespeare &amp; Company recently — after seeing [*Cord Jefferson’s brilliant adaptation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html), “American Fiction” — and even on a reread, it made me laugh out loud from the first page.

The last book that made you cry?

Weird or obnoxious if I say my own? Before that, it was probably Y.A.

Do you count any books as guilty pleasures?

That category’s filled to the brim and beyond by reality TV.

How do you organize your books?

Loosely or not at all. This is much to the horror of my Virgo pals, and while I used to take pride in navigating my shelves on familiarity alone, it’s something I’ve vowed to work on. Still, I doubt I’ll ever be an alphabetical type, and clearly I find genre segregation constricting. I do group things thematically, or even interpersonally — music biographies, Black Panthers, Harlem Renaissance; Jessica Hopper is next to John Giorno, and Chase Berggrun’s “R E D” is next to “Dracula”; Julie Buntin’s [*“Marlena”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) is beside her husband Gabe Habash’s “Stephen Florida”; Alison C. Rollins is next to her partner Nate Marshall is next to his bestie José Olivarez. At some point Hilton Als’s “White Girls” ended up next to “Male Fantasies,” and I don’t think I’ll ever separate them.

Which genres do you avoid?

There’s an essay in “You Get What You Pay For” where I mention reading a self-help book (as recommended by my now-former psychiatrist). I’d never read one before and have not since.

How does your poetry relate to your essay writing?

The truth is that poetry is under everything. It’s the lyric and sensory backbone. It’s what drives the sound, pace and imagery. (Everyone knows the best prose writers write and read poetry.) But while a poem strives for precision of language, the essay strives for precision of thought, even argument. In a poem, you can build (or approximate) an argument by plopping two images next to each other. It persuades by pointing. Writing these essays felt like pulling apart a long piece of taffy — I found myself reiterating a lot of what I’ve already expressed in poems, so it almost became a project of stretching out each poetic line, breaking down each concept to its root. The process is about asking, pondering, searching — and letting language take part in the answering.

You have a knack for terrific book titles. How did you name your new collection?

Thank you! I love a good title, but I also acknowledge the high bar I have set for myself. With this one, I struggled a bit, I think because it took me a while to understand the book myself, let alone how to introduce it to the world. The essays encompass a lot of seemingly disparate themes and even tonal registers, so framing the overall collection was daunting. I’d been tossing around a couple of options, including “Cheaper Than Therapy,” which appears as an essay title, when Jay-Z made the choice for me. I was in Italy at a residency, grieving the recent loss of my aunt and watching the [*“Big Pimpin’” video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) over and over as I worked on an essay about it for the book. I’d left my heavily tabbed copy of [*“Decoded”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) at home in Los Angeles, but was scrolling a PDF for details about the video shoot when I came across the line: “If the price is life, then you better get what you paid for.”

You describe yourself as foolish for believing “words could be the pathway to empathy and writing an active resistance against hate.” Might publishing this book change your mind?

Honestly? It’s my only hope.

What’s the last book you recommended to a member of your family?

[*“Heavy,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) by Kiese Laymon, to my mom; Blair LM Kelley’s “[*Black Folk: The Roots of the Black* ***Working Class****,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) to my dad; and “A Is for Activist,” to my 8-month-old cousin.

What do you plan to read next?

Phillip B. Williams’s “Ours” was just published, and I’ve been excited about it for literally years. Vinson Cunningham’s [*“Great Expectations”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/20/magazine/inaugural-an-original-poem.html) came out the same day as my book, so I plan to make that my tour read.

You’re organizing a literary dinner party. Which three writers, dead or alive, do you invite?

June Jordan, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin — but I’d be lying if I said I wouldn’t get just as much fun and fulfillment from a night with Angel Nafis, Danez Smith and Saeed Jones.

An expanded version of this interview is available at nytimes.com/books.

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2024

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[***Paperback Row***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X03D-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. 28

**Length:** 402 words

**Byline:** By

**Body**

THE RAINBOW, by Yasunari Kawabata. Translated by Haydn Trowell. (Vintage, $17.) Kawabata, considered one of Japan's greatest writers, was awarded the 1968 Nobel Prize in Literature. He is best known here for novels like ''Snow Country'' and ''Thousand Cranes''; this slender tale -- the story of two half sisters in postwar Japan who decide to search for another half sister they have never met -- is appearing for the first time in English.

DIRTBAG, MASSACHUSETTS: A Confessional, by Isaac Fitzgerald. (Bloomsbury, $17.99.) Our reviewer, Michael Ian Black, loved this raffish, charming coming-of-age memoir, calling it ''an endearing and tattered catalog of one man's transgressions and the ways in which it is our sins, far more than our virtues, that make us who we are.''

SAM, by Allegra Goodman. (Dial Press, $17.99.) Goodman's luminous, tenderhearted novel, which follows a girl who seems destined to fall through the cracks, is ''an exquisite slice of life bigger than its heroine alone,'' our reviewer Mary Pols wrote, ''reminiscent of 'Boyhood,' Richard Linklater's 2014 cinematic portrait of a boy from childhood to early adulthood.''

THE HOMEWOOD TRILOGY, by John Edgar Wideman. (Scribner, $20.) This volume collects three works from the 1980s by Wideman that are all set in Homewood, the ***working-class*** Black neighborhood in Pittsburgh where he grew up: two novels, ''Hiding Place'' and ''Sent for You Yesterday,'' and a story collection, ''Damballah,'' which our reviewer Mel Watkins called a ''poetic portrait of the lives of ordinary Black people,'' comparing it to Jean Toomer's ''Cane.''

THE ALLURE OF CHANEL, by Paul Morand. Translated by Euan Cameron. (Pushkin Press Classics, $19.95.) Morand conducted these interviews with Coco Chanel in the winter of 1946 for a memoir that never materialized. Years later, he discovered them in a drawer, and instantly recalled ''that voice that gushed forward from her mouth like lava, those words that crackled like dried vines, her rejoinders, simultaneously crisp and snappy.''

MAGNIFICENT REBELS: The First Romantics and the Invention of the Self, by Andrea Wulf. (Vintage, $20.) This is a vivid portrait of the German Romantics who lived in and around the university town of Jena at the end of the 18th century, brilliant intellectuals and poets, like August Wilhelm Schlegel and Friedrich Schiller, who could be petty, thin-skinned and self-involved.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/new-paperbacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/new-paperbacks.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR28.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

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[***Marco Rubio Wants to Be a Working-Class Hero. There’s Just One Problem.; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64R8-8SF1-JBG3-635S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 8, 2022 Tuesday 10:31 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1041 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie

**Highlight:** Without power to act, what does it matter that someone is permitted to watch and listen?

**Body**

However much Republican politicians denounce “[*woke capital*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/09/opinion/republicans-fake-war-against-woke-capital.html)” or emphasize their [*growing number of* ***working-class*** *supporters*](https://thehill.com/homenews/campaign/551318-exclusive-cruz-rubio-ramp-up-criticisms-of-big-business?rl=1), the fact remains that the Republican Party’s economic agenda — of tax cuts for the wealthy and impunity for employers — is organized for the benefit of capital, from wealthy shareholders and Wall Street asset managers to the billionaire owners of glorified family firms.

This is true even when Republicans try to turn their rhetorical concern for the interests of workers into something like public policy. Last week, for example, Senator Marco Rubio of Florida and Representative Jim Banks of Indiana introduced the [*Teamwork for Employees and Managers Act*](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/591354c6-0c7a-48ef-abe8-937f4dab7efc/056A3394CF69E429D244A33A121BB954.team-act-sec.-by-sec.---2.3.22-final.pdf), which would permit the creation of voluntary organizations “comprised of an employer and a group of their employees for the purpose of discussing matters of mutual interest, such as quality of work, productivity, efficiency, compensation, benefits (including education and training), and accommodation of religious beliefs and practices.”

Crucially, these “employee involvement organizations” are not unions and “cannot enter into collective bargaining agreements.” They serve, instead, as an “alternative to employee unionization” and are “dissolvable by the employer.” Additionally, the Team Act would give employee organizations within large corporations the right to elect a single, nonvoting representative who could then observe corporate board meetings.

Conservative commentators have hailed this as a serious effort to make good on the populist conservatism of the Trump-era Republican Party. “The Republican Party was once the party of the worker and the boss,” [*Henry Olsen wrote in The Washington Post*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/04/rubio-bill-would-give-workers-alternative-to-unions/). “It can be again if it understands that the two prosper together. Rubio and Banks get that, and their Team Act is a good starting point on the G.O.P.’s road to a new majority.”

The big, glaring problem here is that there’s nothing particularly new, or pro-worker, about this sort of narrowly focused, nonconfrontational association with no ability to bargain or negotiate. If anything, these “employee involvement organizations” are a close cousin to “company unions,” which, well, already exist. Explicitly intended to undermine traditional unions, company unions were deployed in the first decades of the 20th century to defang and co-opt labor militancy.

When, in 1933, the federal government first recognized the right of workers to bargain collectively — under Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act — employers responded with a significant expansion of company unionism. According to a 1937 survey of nearly 600 company unions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, cited by the historian Irving Bernstein in “[*The Turbulent Years: A History of the American Worker, 1933-1941*](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Turbulent_Years/aaHaroUImGIC?hl=en&amp;gbpv=1&amp;dq=turbulent+years&amp;printsec=frontcover),” “The great majority were set up entirely by management. Management conceived the idea, developed the plan, and initiated the organization.” Of the 96 cases for which information was available on the employer’s motives, Bernstein notes, “50 were in response to the N.I.R.A., 13 to a strike, and 2 to a desire to improve personnel relations.”

Widespread hostility to company unions among labor supporters in and out of Congress — who argued, correctly, that company unions impeded the ability of workers to organize across an entire industry — produced Section 8(a)(2) of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, which states, “It shall be an unfair labor practice” for an employer to “dominate or interfere with the formation or administration of any labor organization or contribute financial or other support to it.”

After the N.L.R.B. [*ruled against*](https://www.peoplespolicyproject.org/2022/02/07/whats-the-point-of-the-rubio-company-union-bill/) one company’s “action committees” but made it clear that employee organizations were still legal, Republicans in Congress passed the Teamwork for Employees and Managers Act of 1995 in an attempt to sidestep Section 8(a)(2). The Rubio and Banks bill is, in its essence, a version of the one that President Bill Clinton [*vetoed*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1996/07/31/bill-on-employee-teamwork-vetoed/cdf506fe-fb5b-40c0-9f59-8536a4bfcde9/) in 1996. And, like its predecessor, the new bill reflects the Republican Party’s deep-seated opposition to organized labor.

If an “employee involvement organization” cannot bargain and cannot negotiate and can be dissolved at any point by the employer, then what purpose does it serve other than to subvert union organizers and channel worker unrest into a front organization for management? The same goes for the nonvoting board representative. Without power to act, what does it matter that someone is permitted to watch and listen?

The real question about the Team Act of 2022 is “Why now?” It may have something to do with the fact that the economy [*is one of the best in recent memory*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/02/economy-biden-jobs-good-inflation/621496/) for ordinary workers, even with inflation the way it is. Extraordinarily high demand for labor has given millions of Americans the leverage they need to demand better conditions and higher wages, as well as push for collective representation.

When asked [*in a recent Gallup survey*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/354455/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx) if they approved of labor unions, 68 percent of Americans said yes — the highest approval rating since 1965. After decades of attacks on unions — including [*a half-century of laws, rulings and decisions*](https://www.epi.org/unequalpower/publications/private-sector-unions-corporate-legal-erosion/) that have eroded the ability of workers to organize, win elections for union recognition and bargain collectively — there’s at least some reason to be hopeful for the future of labor.

In that environment, the party whose most recent president was a rapacious, exploitative boss might have some interest in trying to discipline a newly confident ***working class***.

The rhetoric of harmony in employer-employee relations — the celebration of “input” and “a voice at the table” as ends in themselves — is a none-too-clever attempt to obscure the truth, which is that the Team Act is yet another attempt to undermine the right of labor to organize and fight for its own interests. Union busting with a friendly face is still union busting.

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&#39;s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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**Load-Date:** February 8, 2022

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[***Why the Working Class Votes Against Its Economic Interests; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60GH-NK71-JBG3-62J7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 31, 2020 Friday 03:07 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1566 words

**Byline:** Jeff Madrick

**Highlight:** Two new books, Robert B. Reich’s “The System” and Zephyr Teachout’s “Break ’Em Up,” examine the impact of economic inequality in America.

**Body**

THE SYSTEM

Who Rigged It, How We Fix It

By Robert B. Reich

BREAK ’EM UP

Recovering Our Freedom From Big Ag, Big Tech, and Big Money

By Zephyr Teachout

One of the mysteries in politics for decades now has been why white ***working-class*** Americans began to vote Republican in large numbers in the 1960s and 1970s. After all, it was Democrats who supported labor unions, higher minimum wages, expanded unemployment insurance, Medicare and generous Social Security, helping to lift workers into the middle class.

Of course, an alternative economic view, led by [*economists like Milton Friedman*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html), was that this turn toward the Republican Party was rational and served workers’ interests. He emphasized free markets, entrepreneurialism and the maximization of profit. These, Friedman argued, would raise wages for many and even most Americans.

But wages did not rise. And yet many in the ***working class*** kept voting Republican, still seemingly angered by Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, which was dedicated to helping the poor and assuring equal rights for people of color. In the 1980s, under Ronald Reagan, income inequality began to rise sharply; wages for typical Americans stagnated and poverty and homelessness increased. Capital investment remained relatively weak despite deep tax cuts (as it does today under Donald Trump). At the same time, antitrust regulation was severely wounded, and giant corporations began to monopolize industry after industry.

In 2004, [*Thomas Frank’s book “What’s the Matter With Kansas?”*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html) tried to explain why a once Democratic state had turned resolutely Republican. His eloquent review of the rhetoric of the age was instructive.

But the presidential election of 2016 sent the sharpest message yet. ***Working-class*** voters in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin opted for Trump, and apparently against their economic interests. Trump had succeeded in appealing to their anger and the Democrats were caught flat-footed.

Two new books, “The System,” by the former labor secretary [*Robert B. Reich*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html), and “Break ’Em Up,” by the lawyer and activist [*Zephyr Teachout*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html), a onetime candidate for New York State attorney general, are among the latest examples of an evolving set of explanations that try to make sense of the 2016 results.

A powerful money-fueled oligarchy has emerged in America that is an enemy of democracy, Reich writes. The self-interested power of the nation’s wealthy often goes unnoticed by voters, and is partly misdirected by right-wing rhetoric about issues like immigration. But it leads to lower wages, less product choice and abusive labor practices. Trump has harnessed the frustration of the ***working class***, Reich says, but he was a “smokescreen” for the oligarchy. Reich has an almost unmatched ability to make insightful observations about the nation’s inequities, and in “The System,” he observes that the question is no longer Democrat versus Republican or left versus right, but “democracy versus oligarchy.”

To Teachout, what’s behind our rigged system is the close cousin of oligarchy: corporate monopoly. Teachout lists her culprits, among them familiar names: Amazon, Google, Facebook, Monsanto, AT&amp;T, Verizon, Walmart, Pfizer, Comcast, Apple and CVS. These companies “represent a new political phenomenon,” she says, “a 21st-century form of centralized, authoritarian government.”

Two dramatic related facts underscore the claims of both Reich and Teachout. The much discussed rise of wealth among the top 0.1 percent, which now has 20 percent of the nation’s wealth compared with only 10 percent 40 years ago, has been brought to light in recent years by the innovative economists [*Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html). The flip side is that wages for the large majority of American workers have stagnated more or less over this same period.

According to Reich, the “anti-establishment fury” that is the result of such inequity supersedes racial prejudice as the cause of Trump’s success. In 2001, more than three out of four workers were satisfied that they could get ahead by working hard. In 2014, only slightly more than one out of two thought so. Voters wanted badly to blame it all on the swamp Trump promised to clean up.

For Reich, the big oligarchical companies have the lobbying and campaign-financing muscle to mold the rules in their own favor. They can win enormous tax cuts, suppress financial and environmental regulations, acquire new patents and subsidies, fight for free trade — it is a long list. For years, they successfully battled against higher minimum wages and labor laws that restricted their union-busting efforts.

Teachout, a dogged scholar, lays out a comprehensive list of damage done to American consumers by monopolized industries like Big Pharma, fossil fuels, Silicon Valley, health insurance, banking and communications giants from Verizon to Facebook and Google. She provides example after example of how these companies limit consumer choice and suppress regulation. Google and Facebook may make access to some news easier, but they also undermine the profitability of the print news organizations, putting many of them out of business. Big Pharma is protected from competition by questionable patents and by ever lighter regulations. The nation’s private health care system, dominated by a relative handful of insurance companies, keeps costs much higher in the United States than in the rest of the rich world. For Teachout, the solution follows as night follows day. Break up the big companies and reintroduce competition. (Surprisingly, this is straightforward mainstream economic theory.)

But both Reich and especially Teachout should temper their anticorporate zeal, at least to a degree. Big companies have often done good while also doing bad. In the 1800s, the A.&amp;P. grocery chain provided a wide range of products, though it put countless mom and pop stores out of business. Ford built a cheap functional car in the 1920s, and Apple an affordable personal computer in recent years. Some balance is required.

Still, they are mostly right. Here is Teachout’s general recommendation: “Instead of protesting Pfizer on Tuesday for hiking drug prices, Comcast on Wednesday for suppressing union voices and Amazon on Thursday for getting billions in subsidies, we should unite behind a coherent agenda, demanding that antitrust authorities break up Pfizer and Comcast, Amazon and Facebook, Monsanto and Tyson.”

Both authors say that Ronald Reagan led the way to the swift undoing of traditional antitrust regulation in the 1980s. But Reich is almost as harsh on the Clinton and Obama administrations. Even when the Democrats controlled both houses of Congress, he writes, they allowed antitrust enforcement to “ossify,” let companies hammer away at trade unions and went easy on Wall Street. They were also soft on the issue of campaign contributions, failing to advocate for public financing of elections.

Why? Reich argues that the Democrats chose to turn their backs on the ***working class*** and pursue suburban swing voters. He knows, he tells us. He was there. And he reports that the Democrats “drank from the same campaign funding trough as the Republicans — big corporations, Wall Street and the very wealthy.”

Reich makes an example of [*Jamie Dimon*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html), the chairman of JPMorgan Chase. For Reich, he is representative of the C.E.O. class that talks about corporate social responsibility but rarely practices it. A lifetime Democrat, Dimon was a major supporter of the Trump tax cut and does not support an increase in the minimum wage.

Teachout by and large shares Reich’s anger and may even exceed it. Yet both find reasons for optimism in new laws and grass-roots movements. America achieved marriage equality for gays and lesbians, elected a Black man president and made the Affordable Care Act law. Reich insists democracy will ultimately prevail over oligarchy. And Teachout sees America embarking on a new antimonopoly moment.

These are valuable books, and the anger they will generate may prove politically energizing. But Reich’s claim that democracy will somehow prevail underestimates the dangers we face. As for Teachout, more competition may help alleviate some problems, but it is in fact an idealized version of free market thinking.

Meanwhile, the current president is moving in exactly the opposite direction. He is promising cuts in social policies that may well increase middle-income and ***working-class*** frustration. He wants to rewrite the official definition of poverty to claim that there are fewer poor. He undermines the rule of law on a regular basis. The Supreme Court has been stacked with extreme conservatives. Voter suppression is common.

Is it any wonder that many fear democracy in America may not prevail?

Jeff Madrick, the author, most recently, of “Invisible Americans: The Tragic Cost of Child Poverty,” is the director of the Bernard Schwartz Rediscovering Government Initiative at the Century Foundation. THE SYSTEM Who Rigged It, How We Fix It By Robert B. Reich 224 pp. Alfred A. Knopf. $24. BREAK ’EM UP Recovering Our Freedom From Big Ag, Big Tech, and Big Money By Zephyr Teachout 320 pp. All Points Books. $28.99.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Aaron Lowell Denton FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Related Articles**

* [*When Bosses Shared Their Profits*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html)

1. [*Robert Reich’s ‘Saving Capitalism’*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html)
2. [*The Upheaval in the American Workplace*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html)
3. [*The New York Times Endorses Zephyr Teachout for Attorney General in Thursday’s Primary*](https://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/bios/Friedman.html)

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2020

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[***Add Cancer Warning Labels to Alcohol?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVP-BJT1-JBG3-602P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 22, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; LETTERS

**Length:** 1224 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''A Debate Over Cancer Warning Labels on Alcohol'' (Science Times, April 9):

This article does an admirable job of spotlighting efforts around the world to require cancer warnings on alcohol. In fact, similar efforts to improve alcohol labeling are gaining traction in the U.S.

Just last month, U.S. regulators held listening sessions about including ingredients, nutritional information and allergen labeling on alcoholic beverages. And in 2020, a coalition of seven health advocacy groups petitioned the U.S. government to adopt a cancer warning label.

U.S. law directs regulators to consult with the surgeon general and ''promptly'' report to Congress when the need for an amendment to alcohol warnings arises. But more than seven years have passed since the surgeon general proclaimed a link between alcohol and cancer with no action from the Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, which regulates most alcohol products.

It's great news that governments are taking steps so that residents of Ireland, Thailand and Canada will finally get the truth about alcohol, and it's long past time for the U.S. to follow suit.

Christina LiPumaBurlington, Vt.The writer is a policy associate at the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

To the Editor:

We object to how your article portrays the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States' perspective with regard to labeling alcohol beverages to warn consumers about possible health concerns. DISCUS supports appropriate labeling, which has been required in the United States since 1988.

Unlike U.S. labels, which address a broad scope of health concerns in a clear manner, Ireland's proposed labels suggest that any amount of consumption leads to liver disease or a fatal cancer. As DISCUS commented formally to the Irish government, the labels fail to differentiate between moderate and excessive alcohol consumption and contradict Ireland's own low-risk guidelines on the responsible consumption of alcohol.

Consumers would be best served by a health warning label that is consistent throughout the European Union and accurately reflects scientific data on alcohol and health.

DISCUS is committed to and fully supports the public health objective of combating the harmful use of alcohol in all forms. For adults who choose to drink, we encourage moderate consumption; some people should not consume alcohol at all, and we support that decision. We encourage everyone to talk to their health care providers about alcohol to determine what is best for them based on individual factors and family history.

Amanda BergerWashingtonThe writer is vice president, science and health, for the Distilled Spirits Council.

To the Editor:

As a public health student, I find it fascinating that the need for clear warning labels on alcoholic beverages is up for debate. In my epidemiology class, the cancers we studied all had alcohol consumption as a risk factor. Thus, public health awareness about the link between alcohol and cancer must be prioritized.

Ireland's decision to boldly label alcohol as a carcinogen is a step in the right direction. Sure, a label is no replacement for a detailed explanation of all the science behind why alcohol causes cancer, but it can serve as a bright red flag for those consuming it. Besides, warning labels on carcinogens are not a new concept, with cigarettes getting the warning treatment since the 1960s.

Warning labels do not mean that people are restricted from drinking. Rather, it is about giving consumers the facts they need to make informed decisions. So, let's give credit where it's due. Ireland's proposal isn't about demonizing alcohol; it's about empowering consumers to make healthier choices. After all, who wouldn't want to know if their favorite drink could be harming them?

Cheers to Ireland for leading the charge. Let's raise a toast to transparency and good health everywhere.

Sinchana SrinivasBerkeley, Calif.

Reducing the Risk of Travel-Related Illnesses

To the Editor:

Re ''Dengue Fever Took Me by Surprise,'' by Deborah Heaney (Opinion guest essay, April 7):

We are doctors with extensive experience in public health and the prevention of infections and other health problems that can arise during travel. Dr. Heaney's experience underscores the health risks associated with international travel and the challenges of getting evaluated for infections that are not endemic in the U.S.

We advise travelers to take steps to reduce the chance of becoming sick or receiving inappropriate or delayed care for a travel-related illness.

First, before your trip, learn about the specific risks at your destination with sources such as the C.D.C.'s Travelers' Health website. For many travelers, visiting a clinic that specializes in travel medicine can also be important to get risk assessments based on the destination and individual health profiles. These clinics can also provide travel vaccinations, prophylactic medications for malaria (when needed), and preventive advice on food and water hygiene, insect bites and other travel health risks.

Second, in case you become ill during or after travel, seek timely evaluation. No matter where you seek care it is critical to inform your provider about recent travel so they consider the possibility of a travel-related illness.

Henry M. WuRichard A. GoodmanAtlantaThe writers are on the faculty of Emory University's School of Medicine and formerly worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To the Editor:

My experience with dengue and the medical community was very similar to Deborah Heaney's. I was stricken with dengue during my second veterinary-related trip to Haiti in 2004.

My primary care doctor as well as a foreign disease specialist failed to recommend more than anti-inflammatories. I even had all the classic symptoms: fever, skin rash, severe joint pain and photophobia.

It was only after being seen at a hospital E.R. and receiving a spinal tap, fluids and chest radiographs that a definitive diagnosis was achieved -- and then only because my wife did a basic internet search and suggested that they also draw blood for a dengue titer.

It is disturbing to hear that 20 years later, things have not changed.

Daniel HaskinsStanwood, Wash.

Affordable Housing for Immigrants

To the Editor:

Re ''As Maine Ages, Immigrants Pick Up Labor Slack'' (front page, April 13):

I live on Mount Desert Island in Maine. Seasonal workers from abroad and immigrants make vital contributions to our community.

During the Trump administration this was complicated by politically motivated visa restrictions and later by pandemic necessities. While these problems have been mitigated, one problem is only getting worse: the lack of affordable housing.

As in New York City, our island's limited space is dominated by private and commercial wealth. This affects all of us, including essential workers new to the U.S. and the businesses that rely on them.

When I was growing up in Brooklyn, rent stabilization helped my second-generation ***working-class*** family -- and the city. On Mount Desert Island, towns are exploring legislation to support work force housing.

It is not enough to open doors and arms; people also need a roof over their heads. And government has a role.

Annlinn KrugerBar Harbor, Maine

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/opinion/alcohol-labels-cancer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/opinion/alcohol-labels-cancer.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** April 22, 2024

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[***Marjorie Taylor Greene Is Not as Powerful as She Thinks She Is; David French***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYG-GYG1-DXY4-X130-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 5, 2024 Sunday 09:25 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1201 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:** The uproars that don’t seem to touch Trump at all can still bring down other Republicans.

**Body**

In an [*interview last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), NewsNation’s Blake Burman asked Speaker Mike Johnson about Marjorie Taylor Greene, and before Burman could finish his question, Johnson responded with classic Southern scorn. “Bless her heart,” he said, and then he told Burman that Greene wasn’t proving to be a serious lawmaker and that he didn’t spend a lot of time thinking about her.

Strangely enough, Johnson’s dismissal of Greene — on the eve of her potential effort to oust him from the office he won in October — spoke as loudly as his decision to put a vote for Ukraine aid on the floor in the first place. In spite of the Republican Party’s narrow majority in the House and the constant threat of a motion to vacate the chair, he will not let MAGA’s most extreme lawmaker run the place.

To understand the significance of this moment, it’s necessary to understand the changing culture of the MAGAfied Republican Party. After eight years of Donald Trump’s dominance, we know the fate of any Republican politician who directly challenges him — the confrontation typically ends his or her political career in the most miserable way possible, with dissenters chased out of office amid a hail of threats and insults. Jeff Flake, Bob Corker, Adam Kinzinger and Liz Cheney are but a few of the many Republicans who dared to defy Trump and paid a high political price.

But there’s an open question: Does the MAGA movement have the same control over the Republican Party when Trump isn’t directly in the fray? Can it use the same tactics to impose party discipline and end political careers? If the likes of Greene or Steve Bannon or Matt Gaetz or Charlie Kirk can wield the same power, then the transformation of the party will be complete. It won’t be simply in thrall to Trump; it will be in thrall to his imitators and heirs and perhaps lost to the reactionary right for a generation or more.

I don’t want to overstate the case, but Johnson’s stand — together with the Democrats’ response — gives me hope. Consider the chain of events. On April 12, Johnson [*appeared at Mar-a-Lago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) and received enough of a blessing from Trump to make it clear that Trump didn’t want him removed. Days before a vote on Ukraine aid that directly defied the MAGA movement, Trump said Johnson was doing a “very good job.”

Days later, Johnson got aid to Ukraine passed with [*more Democratic votes than Republican*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) — a violation of the so-called [*Hastert Rule*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), an informal practice that says the speaker shouldn’t bring a vote unless the measure is supported by a majority within his own party. Greene and the rest of MAGA exploded, especially when Democratic lawmakers [*waved Ukrainian flags*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) on the House floor. Greene vowed to force a vote on her motion to end Johnson’s speakership. [*She filed the motion in March*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) as a “warning” to Johnson, and now she’s following through — directly testing her ability to transform the House.

But what happened after the Ukraine vote was truly fascinating. First, Republicans who voted for Ukraine aid found their [*actual constituents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) were generally fine with the vote. Many supported Ukraine. There was little to no backlash back home.

Second, [*Democrats came to Johnson’s aid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). Last Tuesday, the top three Democrats in the House — Hakeem Jeffries, Katherine Clark and Pete Aguilar — issued a statement supporting Johnson and opposing Greene’s motion to vacate. “If she invokes the motion,” they said, “it will not succeed.”

Next, the Republican Party’s human weather vane, Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, [*blasted Greene*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in an interview with RealClearPolitics’s Phil Wegmann, telling him that “what’s she’s doing is really unhelpful to the country.” Of course, Cruz will pivot on a dime if Trump turns on Johnson, but at the moment the power dynamic is clear, and MAGA without Trump is much more bark than bite.

In fact, if you take a step back and look at Biden’s term so far, one can see the outlines of healthy government — at least so long as Trump stays out of the fray. There is a rough governing consensus on a number of fronts. In 2021, for example, Congress passed a [*bipartisan infrastructure bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html). In December 2022, it passed the [*Respect for Marriage Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), a bipartisan compromise bill that protects both gay marriage and religious liberty, and that same month it passed bipartisan reforms to the [*Electoral Count Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) that will make it much more difficult for a losing candidate to sow chaos after a presidential election.

Combine those measures with the [*immensely important foreign aid package*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) passed last month, and you can see the outlines of a functioning Congress, one in which compromise and persuasion are still tools of the trade.

But that infuriates MAGA, which scorns compromise and persuasion as weakness. It derides bipartisan legislation as a product of a corrupt Washington “uniparty.” And so Greene is pushing ahead with her motion to vacate. If Johnson survives the vote with Democratic support, she’ll label him the “Democrat speaker” and continue her relentless political guerrilla war.

It has been nine years since Trump [*came down the escalator*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), and since that time MAGA has become a movement that hopes to outlive Trump himself. It’s systematically dismantling the old G.O.P. and attempting to recreate the party in its own image. But it has never been clear to me that MAGA can survive without Trump, and Johnson’s battle with Greene tells us why.

To paraphrase Senator Lloyd Bentsen’s devastating takedown of Dan Quayle in the 1988 vice-presidential debate, we know Donald Trump. He’s been a megawatt celebrity for more than four decades. He built an entire brand around the false notion that he was one of the world’s greatest businessmen. He has an uncanny ability to reach his core audience. And you, Representative Greene, are no Donald Trump.

Neither is the rest of MAGA. The clown car collection of MAGA personalities who orbit Trump is often both [*profoundly weird*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) and remarkably inept. They suffered a collective humiliation in the 2022 midterm elections. Mainstream Republicans coasted to victory in key elections in [*Georgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), [*Ohio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) and [*Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html), while the election-denying MAGA conspiracy theorists [*suffered a string of losses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/books/review/divided-we-fall-david-french.html) in battleground states.

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.

And if the mismatch between Speaker Johnson and Greene is any indication, I would not presume that MAGA will win the day.

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).

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This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2024

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[***Singapore's Riches Grew Under Its Longtime Leader, but So Did Discontent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1T-N571-DXY4-X02P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 16, 2024 Thursday

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

**Length:** 1341 words

**Byline:** By Sui-Lee Wee

**Body**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who is stepping down after nearly 20 years, oversaw astounding successes, but some Singaporeans want a different kind of politics.

Singapore was once known as an affluent and strait-laced city-state. Today, it's a glitzy international destination. It has hosted Taylor Swift concerts and Formula One night races. And it is substantially richer, per capita, than the United States.

That transformation happened under Lee Hsien Loong, the Southeast Asian country's third prime minister. He made Singapore even more prosperous by largely following the semi-authoritarian and free-market model pioneered by his father, Lee Kuan Yew, the country's first leader.

On Wednesday, Singapore gets a new leader for the first time in nearly 20 years. Mr. Lee, 72, is handing the office to his deputy, Lawrence Wong, 51. Their People's Action Party has governed Singapore continuously for over six decades, and has had astounding successes. But there are concerns that the vaunted ''Singapore model'' is failing more and more people.

Singapore is one of the most expensive cities in the world, but it does not have a minimum wage. Housing prices have surged, and many Singaporeans say social mobility has dropped considerably. Others complain that freedom of expression is still tightly controlled, if less so than before. The strains are exacerbated by the need for overseas workers; about 40 percent of Singapore's nearly six million people are not citizens.

Compared to his famously strict father, Mr. Lee showed flexibility and responsiveness to the public's demands, but the P.A.P.'s popularity took a significant hit during his tenure. Nonetheless it remains, for now, firmly ensconced in power.

Mr. Wong has tried to project an everyman image: He was raised in public housing, did not attend the same elite schools as his predecessors, and loves playing the guitar. Mr. Lee will stay on as ''senior minister,'' as his father did after stepping down in 1990. Mr. Lee has said that his children are not interested in entering politics.

Earlier this month, Mr. Lee gave his last major address to the nation at an icon of the new Singapore, the Marina Bay Sands casino resort.

''When I was sworn in as P.M., I promised to build a more inclusive Singapore: one where it is not every man for himself, but everyone working together to make things better for all of us,'' he said.

A few hours later, a scene unfolded nearby that would have been unimaginable a few decades earlier. Hundreds had gathered for a rally at Speakers' Corner, the one place in the city-state where Singaporeans can protest without a permit. Among them were delivery workers, bus drivers and health care workers, and many wore fluorescent yellow safety vests, evoking a French anti-government movement.

Addressing the crowd, Kokila Annamalai, an activist, said the P.A.P.-led government had built systems that ''have always protected the wealthy, not the ***working class***.'' Singapore, she added, is ''a playground for the rich while the poor are squeezed into tiny rental flats.''

The P.A.P. is one of the world's most dominant political parties. Its ministers are paid high salaries, which the party says prevents corruption. It transformed Singapore from a backwater swamp into a first-world nation and a key cog in global maritime trade. Gross domestic product is about $83,000 per capita, compared with roughly $76,000 in the United States. The city-state, a major financial hub, deftly managed the coronavirus pandemic and rising tensions between the United States and China.

But discontent has been growing. In the 2020 election, the P.A.P.'s share of the popular vote reached a near-record low of 61 percent, and the opposition won a record 10 seats in Parliament, out of 93 that were up for grabs.

Choo Yi Hung, 30, has never voted for Mr. Lee's party. Two years after graduating from college with a degree in English language and linguistics, he delivers food and tutors students, making about $2,400 per month. He still lives with his parents; he would like his own apartment, but that is out of reach. He can't buy a public housing flat from the government until he gets married or turns 35. Not that he can afford one.

Mr. Choo contrasts his predicament with that of his grandmother, who raised five children in the 1960s as an uneducated widow. Her descendants now have lifestyles that he described as ''comfortably middle class,'' with some owning condominiums and cars.

''I guess a lot of people will say: 'Yeah, you grew up in a more developed country, a wealthier country,''' Mr. Choo said. ''But I would argue that the opportunities for social mobility are far, far less.''

Mr. Lee once said that a two-party political system was ''not workable'' in Singapore. But in 2020, he formally established the position of opposition leader in Parliament and made concessions that allowed the opposition bloc to control 12 seats, more than the 10 it had won.

''He knew that if he wanted to maintain P.A.P.'s dominance -- which I think he has largely done -- he had to manage the pace of change,'' said Eugene Tan, an associate professor of law at Singapore Management University.

On the social front, perhaps the most sweeping change that Mr. Lee made was repealing a colonial-era law that banned consensual sex between men.

''At least there's a sense of 'We can do this now,' and that ultimately we are not criminals anymore,'' said Leow Yangfa, the executive director of Oogachaga, an L.G.B.T.Q. rights group.

But Mr. Lee also moved to cement the definition of marriage as a heterosexual concept. Public discussion of race and religion remains tightly controlled, and rights groups say the government is still combative with its critics. In 2021, Singapore's High Court ordered a blogger to pay Mr. Lee about $100,000 for defamation. (The New York Times Company apologized and paid fines in 2010 and in the mid-1990s to settle libel claims brought by Singaporean officials over opinion articles.)

Critics say the government has weaponized a law it says was designed to combat fake news.

''You never know when or what you're going to say is going to run afoul of the authorities,'' said Joel Tan, a playwright and podcaster.

In a statement, the Singapore government said it had increased engagement with the public. It also laid out its philosophy on free speech.

''Freedom of expression is an important part of Singapore's constitution, but it does not confer on Singaporeans an unqualified right,'' the statement said. ''In situations where it affects the safety and security of people in Singapore, and the peace and harmony that Singapore enjoys, the government does and will intervene.''

For some, Mr. Wong's appointment is encouraging.

''We don't have a Lee anymore, but we also have a nontraditional type of leader,'' said Sudhir Thomas Vadaketh, the editor in chief of Jom, an independent online magazine about Singapore. ''I do like that.''

In recent years, Mr. Lee had to contend with a public feud with his siblings and a series of scandals within the P.A.P. that sullied the squeaky-clean image the party projects. But he leaves office as a popular leader.

Zoe Tan recalled seeing Mr. Lee mingling with residents in Teck Ghee, a district in northern Singapore. ''He'll walk the market and is very humble,'' Ms. Tan said. ''He will take pictures with us.''

On two separate occasions, Ms. Tan said, she emailed the prime minister to ask for a grace period for housing payments. Both times, his office made quick arrangements to help her.

''I feel very sad Lee Hsien Loong is going to retire, I thought he was going to continue forever,'' said Ms. Tan, who now works for Singapore's Community Development Council.

In his speech at Marina Bay Sands, Mr. Lee suggested that political change could threaten Singapore's prosperity.

''The system does not have to fail outright for Singapore to get into trouble,'' he said. ''If our politics becomes like other countries, we will end up worse than other countries.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/world/asia/singapore-lee-prime-minister-retire.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/14/world/asia/singapore-lee-prime-minister-retire.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Lee Hsien Loong, right, Singapore's ex-prime minister, congratulated Lawrence Wong, his successor. (POOL PHOTO BY EDGAR SU/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Middleman Companies Face Increased Scrutiny***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CB4-H3X1-DXY4-X00K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 24, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 4; DEALBOOK NEWSLETTER

**Length:** 2070 words

**Byline:** By Lauren Hirsch and Sarah Kessler

**Body**

Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter, the Justice Department's top antitrust official, talked with DealBook about the agency's focus on middlemen companies and the challenge of A.I.

With the presidential election approaching, many chief executives have been glued to the shot clock counting down to Election Day, wondering which companies and industries the Biden-appointed regulatory apparatus -- perhaps the most aggressive in a generation -- may try to target before it goes to zero.

Business leaders have been combing through comments and transcripts to try to understand the pending priorities of regulators like Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission, and Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter, the head of the Justice Department's antitrust division.

They've zeroed in on what may sound like a nerdy legal theory, but one that could have huge implications: the tyranny of the intermediary, middleman companies that abuse their role by squeezing out competition or creating artificially expensive moats. The Justice Department has already made one high-profile strike along these lines, suing to break up Ticketmaster and Live Nation.

It is reportedly investigating at least two others. One is RealPage, a property management company that uses artificial intelligence to suggest prices and has already been sued by renters accusing it of facilitating a new type of collusion. The second is UnitedHealth Group, the health care conglomerate that owns a cobweb of businesses that include an insurer and another unit that employs about 10,000 physicians in the United States.

RealPage said in a statement this week it was ''proud of the role our customers play in providing safe and affordable housing to millions of people.'' It has also launched a website about its software.

Guessing what other names could be on the list has become something of a parlor game for dealmakers. A travel booking service that jacks up fees? A brokerage firm that an apartment building requires its renters to use? Shareholder advisory firms that can determine whether a deal goes through? Marketplaces that take a cut every time an NFT changes hands?

In search of more hints on what cases may be in the pipeline, DealBook's Lauren Hirsch spoke with Kanter about cracking down on middlemen, the challenges of regulating artificial intelligence and what to do about corporate melting ice cubes.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

The Times recently investigated pharmacy benefit managers, the middlemen in health care, finding they drive up drug costs. The biggest P.B.M.s are owned by conglomerates: Optum, for example, is owned by UnitedHealth Group. CVS Caremark is owned by CVS Health.

How do you think about middlemen in health care?

Intermediaries are now commonplace in our health care economy, whether it's an insurance company or a payer, whether it's a P.B.M. or any other part of the health care stack where there are these often faceless intermediaries who are not only consuming a lot of money -- or taking a lot of money out of the system -- but making decisions about the course of care.

I'm sure they would argue it's more efficient if it's all in-house. P.B.M.s say their size is essential to counteract the companies that make brand-name drugs.

We've heard a lot over the last number of decades about what I sometimes call the ''benevolent monopolist.'' But the fact of the matter is our system is premised on the notion that competition yields better outcomes.

The D.O.J. is reportedly looking into the property management software company RealPage, which uses algorithmic pricing. Do you look at an A.I. tool communicating about pricing the same way you would humans colluding?

The facts matter. But I often say that if your dog bites somebody, you're responsible for your dog biting somebody. If your A.I. fixes prices, you're just as responsible.

If anything, the use of A.I. or algorithmic-based technologies should concern us more because it's much easier to price-fix when you're outsourcing it to an algorithm versus when you're sharing manila envelopes in a smoke-filled room.

Is it easier or harder to prove collusion in the A.I. era, when there's no manila envelope?

We've experienced these kinds of evolutions. This is another one, it's a significant step forward, and it changes the game. I think it's our job to keep pace with those technological developments.

What about dynamic pricing, which Wendy's recently said it plans to test. Could that be a point of concern?

Companies are getting better at figuring out how to maximize profits. The more information they have about who you are and what you're willing to pay, the more they can charge you. I think the ability to do that on a personalized level leads to greater extraction of monopoly power than probably ever seen in history.

Speaking of A.I., the F.T.C. is looking into Microsoft's investment in OpenAI. Do you think OpenAI's changing its corporate structure to a for-profit would impact how antitrust enforcers approached it?

Sometimes corporate form matters. But for the most part, the law looks at market realities. So if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's not a chicken.

Some advisers say companies are being hurt because aggressive antitrust enforcement has killed their ability to do deals. They're melting ice cubes, but they don't quite fit the failing-firm defense.

The failing-firm defense has very strict criteria for a reason. One of the most significant and important of them involves answering the question: Is this the least anticompetitive purchaser? And many deals fail that test. Just because it might be a slow-melting ice cube doesn't mean you should sell to the largest competitor on the market.

What if the alternate buyer is a private equity firm, which was an issue during the regional bank crisis?

If it's private equity, it's relevant to the extent that they have portfolio companies in the industry. It's certainly relevant whether they will continue to operate the assets and compete in a full-throated way.

We're in an election year. Should media outlets be able to coordinate on suppressing misinformation? In the past, we saw some platforms like the Apple and Google app stores and Amazon's web services drop Parler.

This is a thorny issue. We stand for the proposition that competition is good for our democracy and the free flow of information. There are no legal prohibitions, under the right instances, under the right circumstances, of efforts to improve safety. But it doesn't need to come at the expense of competition.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Apple won't release its artificial intelligence tech in the European Union over regulatory worries. The company said it would not introduce Apple Intelligence and other features in the bloc this year, saying the bloc's Digital Markets Act would weaken the security of its products. The European Commission said it welcomed Big Tech in Europe, provided that the companies comply with the rules.

The Washington Post's new editor withdraws his application. Will Lewis, the embattled chief executive and publisher of The Post, told staff that Robert Winnett would no longer take up the role that he was expected to assume after the November election. Lewis and Winnett have come under scrutiny for their journalistic record in their native Britain, including accusations that they employed unethical practices to obtain stories.

Donald Trump closed the fund-raising gap with President Biden. Donors have filled the war chest of the presumptive Republican nominee since he was convicted of 34 felony counts in New York last month. Biden has had a huge lead for months and is still raising, getting a big donation from Michael Bloomberg as well as an endorsement from Melinda French Gates -- the first time she has publicly backed a presidential candidate.

Taxes on tips, by the numbers

Donald Trump's proposal to eliminate taxes on tips is meant to appeal to the country's massive service sector work force, as he and President Biden pitch for ***working-class*** and younger voters in crucial swing states. But the plan would add up to $250 billion to the federal deficit over 10 years, according to a report that the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget released this week. Here's the story by the numbers.

22 percent: The portion of the work force employed in the hospitality industry in Nevada, the election battleground state where Trump first promoted the policy.

At least two: How many bills that would eliminate taxes on tips and have been introduced in Congress this month. While some Republicans have applauded the policy for reducing taxes, others have questioned why tipped workers but not low-wage workers, who don't get tips, should be singled out for a tax break. Some have also criticized the potential cost of the policy.

$225 billion to $375 billion over 10 years: How much the policy could cost the federal government if employers and workers change their behavior so they can reclassify 50 percent more of their income as tips to avoid taxes, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget report.

$23 billion: About how much tip income went unreported to the Internal Revenue Service in 2006, according to an estimate by the agency cited in a 2018 report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

91 percent: Growth in tips reported to the I.R.S. between 2008 to 2018. One reason for the explosion of gratuity? Tablet payment systems that prompt customers to tip more often and at higher percentages.

40 percent: Portion of Americans who oppose suggestions from businesses about how much to tip, according to a 2023 Pew Research Center survey.

A hot office debate: Shorts at work

Nearly 100 million people spent part of this week under a heat advisory as sweltering temperatures shattered records from the Midwest to New England. In many offices, the hot start to summer reignited a perennial debate: Is it OK to wear shorts to work?

The case against has long been the conventional wisdom: ''Shorts tend to have a sporty, youthful feel to them,'' said Ellie-Jean Royden, the author of an upcoming book, ''How to Dress Your Best.'' For that reason alone, she suggested, they are a no-no.

But office fashion has evolved since the pandemic, which introduced many former suit wearers to the comfort of working from home in sweatpants, and some stylists are making the case that shorts are now acceptable.

Jessica Sockel, who dresses clients at the personal styling service Stitch Fix, said she had noticed ''more flexibility when it comes to incorporating styles -- like shorts -- that may have previously been considered off limits for the office.''

All of the personal styling experts polled by DealBook agreed that if you're going to brave shorts at the office, there are some rules:

Pick the right shorts. ''Longer, loose shorts that mimic the look and feel of trousers will read as more professional,'' said Shelby Goldfaden, the director of merchandising at the women's clothing brand M.M.LaFleur. ''Typically, they will have a pleat for volume and added interest.'' Bermuda shorts, linen shorts and chino shorts are all good bets.

Dress them up. For women, Sockel suggests pairing shorts with a classic long-sleeve button-down, a blazer or a top that matches their color and fabric. For men, she recommends a crisp button-down, sport coat or knit polo. ''A leather belt makes any bottom look sharper,'' Goldfaden noted.

Read the room. ''If you're on the fence, the safest way to gauge whether or not shorts feel acceptable is to assess how your peers are dressed in the office,'' Sockel said.

Is baring your knees worth it? Dawnn Karen, an assistant professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology and a self-described ''fashion psychologist,'' told DealBook that being the only person in the office wearing shorts could lead others to see you as less competent. But if you can still produce high-quality work, she said, ''you actually can break people's perceptions and stereotypes.''

And in that case, she added, ''maybe everyone will start wearing shorts in the office.''

DealBook wants to hear from you: Are shorts acceptable office-wear? Let us know here.

Thanks for reading! We'll see you Monday.

We'd like your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/business/dealbook/going-after-the-middleman.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/22/business/dealbook/going-after-the-middleman.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page B4.

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Where Can You Go to Grad School Without Going to Grad School?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PH-8W31-DXY4-X005-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 23, 2023 Thursday 10:03 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1089 words

**Byline:** Cat Zhang

**Highlight:** The Brooklyn Institute for Social Research offers adult learners an education opportunity at a fraction of the time and price of graduate school.

**Body**

The Brooklyn Institute for Social Research offers adult learners an education opportunity at a fraction of the time and price of graduate school.

Say you’re bored by your 9-to-5. You’re intellectually understimulated and you want a challenge beyond your book club, which, it turns out, is just you and your friends gossiping around a lukewarm charcuterie board.

What are your options? You could apply to graduate school, if you have the ambition, money and time. Or you could start smaller and enroll in a class at the [*Brooklyn Institute for Social Research*](https://thebrooklyninstitute.com/) (BISR).

The Brooklyn Institute is a nonprofit education center that offers evening and weekend courses for adults, catering to those who want the rigor of a liberal arts seminar but at a more modest commitment. The unaccredited classes are held for three hours each week for a month and are led by lecturers with advanced degrees. Though adult learners can enroll in massive open online courses or extension school programs, the institute differentiates itself with more niche and left-field topics: the novels of Clarice Lispector, the history of trauma and transgender Marxism.

And the best part? No grades.

Andres Begue, 32, discovered the organization earlier this year after casually searching for continuing education opportunities online. “It’s nice to be able to go into something that I have no context for and learn something new,” said Mr. Begue, who works in technology support at a software company. He was intrigued by a course about the 20th-century Austrian playwright and novelist Thomas Bernhard.

On an evening in October, Mr. Begue joined 17 other students around a long wooden table at BISR’s white-brick office space in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Dumbo. The group read texts like “Woodcutters” and “Heldenplatz,” while snacking on corn chips and sipping boxed wine. Lauren K. Wolfe, an associate faculty member who specializes in Austrian and German literature, guided discussions of the writer’s hectoring prose and disdain for Austrian culture as the group engaged with larger questions about literary critique, political memory and translation.

“At our core is the conviction that the idea that people are anti-intellectual is false,” Ajay Singh Chaudhary, the institute’s executive director, said. “The idea that people don’t want to critically engage, that they just want five-minute sound bites, is false.”

Founded in 2012, the Brooklyn Institute began modestly, with a dozen or so people discussing Plato’s “Republic” over cheap pints at a bistro in the brownstone-filled neighborhood of Boerum Hill. Mr. Chaudhary, then a graduate student at Columbia University, had dreamed of an alternative to traditional academia while preparing to teach Columbia’s Core curriculum. He was at a local bar and noticed interest from nearby patrons.

“People have always been like, ‘Oh, what’s that? I always wish I got a chance to study, you know, Aristotle or Plato,’” Mr. Chaudhary said.

The institute now has about 60 faculty members, five of them full-time, and offers around 20 courses a month, both virtually and in person. Instructors earn approximately 70 percent of revenue from what they teach, or about $3,500 per course — often a [*better deal*](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/20/new-report-says-many-adjuncts-make-less-3500-course-and-25000-year) than what they would make as adjunct professors.

“There is a structural problem in higher education,” said Nara Roberta Silva, a Brazilian sociologist who previously lectured at Lehman College. In addition to teaching courses on social movements and postcolonial theory, she heads the institute’s “praxis program,” which provides workshops to labor unions, nonprofits and other public-interest organizations. “I feel I’m a much better scholar because of this stability,” she said.

Particularly devoted learners can sign up for more bespoke services at a higher premium. Last year, the institute created a certificate program that’s essentially a yearlong master’s degree and also established yearlong intensive language courses in ancient Greek and Sanskrit (Arabic, Hebrew and Latin classes are in development for 2024).

Having hosted courses in London, Philadelphia and the Midwest, the institute expanded this month to Chicago, offering an introductory seminar on the Frankfurt School, a cohort of 20th-century German Marxist intellectuals associated with the organization’s namesake, the Institute for Social Research.

Hank Vandenburgh, 78, used to travel four to five hours from Palatine Bridge, N.Y., to attend classes on subjects like sadomasochism and the philosophy and politics of love.

“Because of the unusual specific topics the Brooklyn Institute has, I don’t think I’d be able to get those at a university around here,” said Mr. Vandenburgh, a retired professor. Since the institute introduced digital instruction in 2020, Mr. Vandenburgh has taken courses remotely, including one starting this week on the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

Though the change has diversified the institute’s pool, bringing in students and instructors from countries as far as China and Mozambique, the clientele skews white-collar and college-educated.

BISR, whose classes cost $335, provides a limited amount of pay-what-you-want scholarships. But even at a discount, some students may find it more cost effective to join more casual reading groups elsewhere in New York City: [*Wendy’s Subway*](https://www.wendyssubway.com/), a nonprofit library, which accepts sliding-scale payments, or [*Woodbine*](https://www.woodbine.nyc/), a volunteer-run experimental hub, which is free.

Swathi Manchikanti, 35, who took two urban design courses — one on 19th- and 20th-century architectural experiments and the other on the New York City subway — said it could benefit the institute to advertise more widely.

“We’re reading all of these papers from all of these philosophers or architects who are talking about what the ***working class*** deserved, but I felt like we’d never really had a representative voice of a ***working class*** member,” she said.

Still, Ms. Manchikanti appreciated how these courses opened up her thinking as a climate-adaptation and health expert at a United Nations agency.

“We don’t necessarily talk about how air pollution is determined sometimes by which side of a highway we live on. We don’t necessarily think in terms of physicality,” she said. “I think BISR courses have helped round out those theoretical points.”

When asked whether she would take another class, she replied: “Oh, definitely.”

PHOTOS: Students in Brooklyn at a class taught by Nara Roberta Silva. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONIQUE JAQUES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (ST12-ST13) This article appeared in print on page ST12, ST13.

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Ford Rescues a Detroit Train Station as It Plots Its Own Future***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C5N-GTF1-DXY4-X19T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 3, 2024 Monday 23:17 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1631 words

**Byline:** Allan Lengel

**Highlight:** The automaker paid $90 million for the ravaged Michigan Central Station in 2018, and will spend millions more to create a hub of businesses focused on transportation.

**Body**

The automaker paid $90 million for the ravaged Michigan Central Station in 2018, and will spend millions more to create a hub of businesses focused on transportation.

When he was growing up in Southwest Detroit, Cristian Rubio was never all that curious about the shuttered train station that loomed over his neighborhood. The building, a couple of miles west of downtown, was among the city’s most visible symbols of urban decay and a go-to for photographers who wanted to capture its decline.

Mr. Rubio’s interest intensified in high school, after he watched the 2009 music video “Beautiful,” which showed the hometown rapper Eminem walking through the ravaged Beaux-Arts building with its vaulted ceilings and tall columns, broken windows, rainbow graffiti and smashed fixtures.

Ever since, “I wanted to go in whether it was abandoned or not,” said Mr. Rubio, 29, the manager of a Mexican restaurant, who moved to Southwest Detroit from Jalisco, in west central Mexico, 20 years ago. “Now we have a chance to do it.”

The Ford Motor Company bought Michigan Central Station in 2018 from the wealthy Moroun family for $90 million and has since spent hundreds of millions of dollars to restore it to its original beauty. Ford’s plan is to create a hub of collaboration and innovation with its workers and independent startups and businesses involved in mobility and transportation issues. Additionally, it hopes to make the station a community gathering place with retail shops, a destination restaurant, an event space, a hotel and possibly Amtrak service nearby in the future.

On June 6, Mr. Rubio intends to be among the 15,000 people attending an outdoor concert, with Eminem and others appearing, to celebrate the official reopening.

The station, which was completed in 1913, saw more than 4,000 passengers daily at its peak in the 1940s. It closed in 1988, eventually becoming a magnet for scrappers, vandals, graffiti artists, urban explorers and the homeless.

William Ford, the executive chairman of Ford Motor Company, now runs the company his great-grandfather started in 1903. “Our industry is about to change radically, and that change ought to be invented here,” Mr. Ford said. “It clicked for me that was the perfect purpose for Michigan Central Station.”

He added: “We want Detroit to once again be a destination where the future is invented, and preserve its title as the Motor City for generations to come.”

In all, Ford will spend nearly $1 billion to create a 30-acre campus, ultimately with thousands of workers, with the station as the centerpiece — along with other buildings the company owns, including Newlab, a former book depository next door that opened last year and currently houses 97 startups and about 600 workers.

The company hopes the station, in its vibrant urban setting, will lure top-notch talent at a perplexing time for the fiercely competitive auto industry, as it sorts out its future with autonomous, electric and hybrid vehicles. The company expects most of the campus to come online in three to five years, with the first tenants moving into the station in June and some Ford workers moving in this fall.

But amid the excitement about the renovation and opening, and the opportunities for businesses and investors, longtime residents like Mr. Rubio are concerned about how this will affect the surrounding neighborhoods.

“A lot of people are worried about gentrification,” he said, particularly with property values, taxes and rents rising since Ford bought the station, and outsiders trying to buy properties. Some residents complain that they have been approached repeatedly by real estate agents and investors looking for houses to buy, prompting at least one, on nearby St. Anne Street, to post a “Not for Sale” sign on his property.

The station is in Corktown, an old but now trendy area, at the border of Mexicantown, a more ***working-class*** neighborhood that some refer to as Southwest.

Corktown was once home to Tiger Stadium and a number of Irish pubs. In recent years, it has become a spot for new restaurants and bars, while it holds onto traditions like the St. Patrick’s Day parade and remains home to the Gaelic League of Detroit, an Irish-American social club. New, modern apartments have added to the housing stock of mostly older single-family homes and duplexes.

Mexicantown, just behind the station, maintains a strong Latino presence with ethnic restaurants, tortilla factories, taco and burrito food trucks, bakeries and murals, and the annual Cinco de Mayo parade. Over time, people of various ethnic and racial backgrounds have moved into the community, resulting in a more eclectic population.

Susana Villarreal-Garza, 63, a second-generation owner of Tamaleria Nuevo León, a tamale shop in the shadow of the station, echoes sentiments similar to those of Mr. Rubio, the restaurant manager.

“What I worry about is that people who live here, who have been here 30, 40, 50 years, they’re not going to be able to afford that hike in taxes, and they’re going to get pushed out,” Ms. Villarreal-Garza said. After Ford bought the station, “that first two weeks,” she said, “I was getting calls left and right from Realtors.” They were all interested in listing her home.

She has also received calls from people in Florida and New Jersey interested in buying her restaurant. “They came at least seven times in one week, knocking,” she said. One offered $800,000.

“I said, ‘No.’ They said, ‘What’s your price?’ I said, ‘I don’t have a price, I’m not for sale.’”

Real estate agents have told her they could get $300,000 for her home, which was worth about $35,000 a decade ago.

Robert Warfield, 75, who has lived in a townhouse near the station since 2005, sees it differently. He welcomes Ford’s renovation and the resulting increase in property values. He said the deteriorating station depressed home values.

“It looked so decrepit, it was depressing,” said Mr. Warfield, the chief operating officer of the Bing Youth Institute. “It was like an elephant in the room: Sitting in the middle of the community was this monstrosity of nothing.”

Mr. Warfield doesn’t expect a mass exodus of residents selling at escalated prices. “These people are grounded in this community,” he said. “And I think they appreciate the fact that the value of the community is now being recognized.”

Richard Gonzalez, 53, a truck mechanic who grew up in Mexicantown and posted the “Not for Sale” sign, also welcomes the change, including the new residents who have moved in since Ford’s announcement. “I love it,” he said. “They’re trying to take care of their property. That’s what I like.”

Joshua Sirefman, the chief executive officer of Michigan Central, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ford, said the company is sensitive to the community’s needs and is regularly engaged in dialogue and collaboration with residents and organizations: “We’re extremely aware of the needs, that our growth needs to fuel everybody’s growth.”

As for Detroit’s mayor, Mike Duggan, he acknowledged that change “makes people anxious in general,” but added: “I would say most people would think the fact that their property values are rising is a good problem.”

He continued: “Over the last decade, no area of the city has grown faster in property values than Southwest Detroit. The price of houses has tripled, and it’s built a huge amount of wealth for the residents. That, to me, is your best protection of the neighborhood changing.”

Renters haven’t been so fortunate, Mr. Duggan said, with some rents in the area rising sharply.

He said the city received a $30 million grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to build 550 affordable rental units in the area, and there are other projects with affordable units in the works.

Bob Roberts, the owner of McShane’s Irish Pub and the president of the Corktown Business Association, said he has spoken to more than half a dozen customers who have moved out of Corktown in the past two years because of rising rents. And while he hails the train station renovation, he said his own rent jumped 30 percent this year. He worries it may keep going up.

Other developments have followed since Ford’s announcement. A boutique hotel and higher-end apartment buildings have been built nearby. And in May, the city’s pro soccer team, Detroit City FC, announced it was building a stadium in Corktown, where it would be moving from its current home in Hamtramck.

For Mr. Ford, the station is a proud accomplishment, and one likely to become part of his family legacy in Detroit.

“I remember coming to this station as a young man and thinking this was the grandest building I had ever seen. Over time, it became a symbol of Detroit’s decline,” he said. “Every day, I would drive by the station and have a ‘what if’ discussion with myself and say, ‘What if I could find a way to bring it back to life in a relevant way?’”

PHOTOS: Above, the Michigan Central Station restoration in the Corktown neighborhood of Detroit included replacing or refurbishing 102,000 square feet of windows. Below, from left, are: Cristian Rubio, who grew up near the station; the outside of the station in 2010; the interior before renovations began. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JACOB LEWKOW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS; RENA LAVERTY/EPA-EFE/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK); Above top, a clock was restored, and the chandeliers on the main floor were recreated. Above left, from top, are new lights, reconstructed ceiling details and ornate fixtures at an old ticket counter. Above right, Susana Villarreal-Garza, top, a second-generation restaurant owner, and Bob Roberts, a pub owner, worry about the Corktown area’s gentrification. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SYLVIA JARRUS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ABOVE AND BELOW, JACOB LEWKOW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Should Alcohol Labels Warn of Cancer Risks?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVH-RBV1-JBG3-600B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2024 Sunday 23:43 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1216 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss whether the U.S. should follow the lead of Ireland and other countries. Also: Travel-related illnesses; affordable housing for immigrants.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*A Debate Over Cancer Warning Labels on Alcohol*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html)” (Science Times, April 9):

This article does an admirable job of spotlighting efforts around the world to require cancer warnings on alcohol. In fact, similar efforts to improve alcohol labeling are gaining traction in the U.S.

Just last month, U.S. regulators held [*listening sessions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html) about including ingredients, nutritional information and allergen labeling on alcoholic beverages. And in 2020, a coalition of seven health advocacy groups [*petitioned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html) the U.S. government to adopt a cancer warning label.

[*U.S. law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html) directs regulators to consult with the surgeon general and “promptly” report to Congress when the need for an amendment to alcohol warnings arises. But more than seven years have passed since the surgeon general [*proclaimed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html) a link between alcohol and cancer with no action from the Treasury Department’s Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, which regulates most alcohol products.

It’s great news that governments are taking steps so that residents of Ireland, Thailand and Canada will finally get the truth about alcohol, and it’s long past time for the U.S. to follow suit.

Christina LiPuma

Burlington, Vt.

The writer is a policy associate at the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

To the Editor:

We object to how your article portrays the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States’ perspective with regard to labeling alcohol beverages to warn consumers about possible health concerns. DISCUS supports appropriate labeling, which has been required in the United States since 1988.

Unlike U.S. labels, which address a broad scope of health concerns in a clear manner, Ireland’s proposed labels suggest that any amount of consumption leads to liver disease or a fatal cancer. As DISCUS commented formally to the Irish government, the labels fail to differentiate between moderate and excessive alcohol consumption and contradict Ireland’s own low-risk guidelines on the responsible consumption of alcohol.

Consumers would be best served by a health warning label that is consistent throughout the European Union and accurately reflects scientific data on alcohol and health.

DISCUS is committed to and fully supports the public health objective of combating the harmful use of alcohol in all forms. For adults who choose to drink, we encourage moderate consumption; some people should not consume alcohol at all, and we support that decision. We encourage everyone to talk to their health care providers about alcohol to determine what is best for them based on individual factors and family history.

Amanda Berger

Washington

The writer is vice president, science and health, for the Distilled Spirits Council.

To the Editor:

As a public health student, I find it fascinating that the need for clear warning labels on alcoholic beverages is up for debate. In my epidemiology class, the cancers we studied all had alcohol consumption as a risk factor. Thus, public health awareness about the link between alcohol and cancer must be prioritized.

Ireland’s decision to boldly label alcohol as a carcinogen is a step in the right direction. Sure, a label is no replacement for a detailed explanation of all the science behind why alcohol causes cancer, but it can serve as a bright red flag for those consuming it. Besides, warning labels on carcinogens are not a new concept, with cigarettes getting the warning treatment since the 1960s.

Warning labels do not mean that people are restricted from drinking. Rather, it is about giving consumers the facts they need to make informed decisions. So, let’s give credit where it’s due. Ireland’s proposal isn’t about demonizing alcohol; it’s about empowering consumers to make healthier choices. After all, who wouldn’t want to know if their favorite drink could be harming them?

Cheers to Ireland for leading the charge. Let’s raise a toast to transparency and good health everywhere.

Sinchana Srinivas

Berkeley, Calif.

Reducing the Risk of Travel-Related Illnesses

To the Editor:

Re “[*Dengue Fever Took Me by Surprise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html),” by Deborah Heaney (Opinion guest essay, April 7):

We are doctors with extensive experience in public health and the prevention of infections and other health problems that can arise during travel. Dr. Heaney’s experience underscores the health risks associated with international travel and the challenges of getting evaluated for infections that are not endemic in the U.S.

We advise travelers to take steps to reduce the chance of becoming sick or receiving inappropriate or delayed care for a travel-related illness.

First, before your trip, learn about the specific risks at your destination with sources such as the [*C.D.C.’s Travelers’ Health website*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html). For many travelers, visiting a clinic that specializes in travel medicine can also be important to get risk assessments based on the destination and individual health profiles. These clinics can also provide travel vaccinations, prophylactic medications for malaria (when needed), and preventive advice on food and water hygiene, insect bites and other travel health risks.

Second, in case you become ill during or after travel, seek timely evaluation. No matter where you seek care it is critical to inform your provider about recent travel so they consider the possibility of a travel-related illness.

Henry M. Wu

Richard A. Goodman

Atlanta

The writers are on the faculty of Emory University’s School of Medicine and formerly worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To the Editor:

My experience with dengue and the medical community was very similar to Deborah Heaney’s. I was stricken with dengue during my second veterinary-related trip to Haiti in 2004.

My primary care doctor as well as a foreign disease specialist failed to recommend more than anti-inflammatories. I even had all the classic symptoms: fever, skin rash, severe joint pain and photophobia.

It was only after being seen at a hospital E.R. and receiving a spinal tap, fluids and chest radiographs that a definitive diagnosis was achieved — and then only because my wife did a basic internet search and suggested that they also draw blood for a dengue titer.

It is disturbing to hear that 20 years later, things have not changed.

Daniel Haskins

Stanwood, Wash.

Affordable Housing for Immigrants

To the Editor:

Re “[*As Maine Ages, Immigrants Pick Up Labor Slack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/09/health/alcohol-cancer-warning.html)” (front page, April 13):

I live on Mount Desert Island in Maine. Seasonal workers from abroad and immigrants make vital contributions to our community.

During the Trump administration this was complicated by politically motivated visa restrictions and later by pandemic necessities. While these problems have been mitigated, one problem is only getting worse: the lack of affordable housing.

As in New York City, our island’s limited space is dominated by private and commercial wealth. This affects all of us, including essential workers new to the U.S. and the businesses that rely on them.

When I was growing up in Brooklyn, rent stabilization helped my second-generation ***working-class*** family — and the city. On Mount Desert Island, towns are exploring legislation to support work force housing.

It is not enough to open doors and arms; people also need a roof over their heads. And government has a role.

Annlinn Kruger

Bar Harbor, Maine

This article appeared in print on page A23.

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**End of Document**



[***In the Red But Unafraid To Take Risks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFV-1251-JBG3-61SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1672 words

**Byline:** By Zachary Small

**Body**

Commonwealth and Council started in a one-bedroom apartment. Now their artists are heading to the Whitney Biennial, Venice Biennale and museums during Frieze.

It's not that Young Chung and Kibum Kim dislike traditional paintings, but as the owners of the gallery Commonwealth and Council in Los Angeles, they prefer artworks that can spin your head sideways. Their roster of 39 artists are known for eccentric practices that sometimes involve welding spacecrafts, transforming into a human disco ball and studying tree bark.

''I don't think our clients would even know what to do if we started representing traditional painters,'' Kim said, explaining that Commonwealth has supported artists who consider figurative art as a flawed approach to the thorny complexities of identity politics. Instead, the gallery has nurtured a new generation of West Coast conceptualists who apply the philosophical rigor and satirical swagger of the 1960s and '70s to contemporary issues like marginalization and decolonization.

Chung, a longtime L.A. resident, and Kim, who is from South Korea, laid that groundwork over the last decade while running on the tight margins of the art business. Survival was never guaranteed -- and still isn't.

The gallery nearly closed in 2020 and its owners have been reluctant to increase overhead costs during the fizzy market of recent years. But the two dealers have persisted in taking risks on what they call ''unsellable'' artists who, for example, transform their bodies into cyborgian low riders (Rafa Esparza); feature electric netting and dried blood in their works (P. Staff); and hire men off Craigslist to gyrate like horseback-riding cowboys on film (Kenneth Tam).

Over the years, they built a cult following of influential curators and museum directors. And in 2022, the gallery opened a second location in Mexico City. But creating a market for great experimentalists is always challenging. Most works at their L.A. gallery -- a modest spot near a liquor store and a Korean BBQ restaurant -- cost $20,000 to $50,000.

''We are in the red,'' Chung said. ''We are always trying to catch up.''

Kim suggested it was part of being in the art market. ''If you drew up a business plan for a gallery and went to a bank, it would be a reckless banker who gives that loan,'' he explained. ''I think the model is meant to be precarious, because we should all make programming decisions to champion the art that we believe in.''

If the gallery lacks financial security, it compensates with influence. The dealers represent seven artists who will be included in the Whitney Biennial in March and the Venice Biennale in April. In the meantime, employees are preparing for Frieze Los Angeles, starting Feb. 29, when seven additional artists will be featured in museum exhibits across the city, including a solo show for Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

''There are less and less galleries that have identities,'' said Johanna Burton, the museum's director. ''And I really admire that Commonwealth has an actual program that is locally rooted but globally relevant.''

Burton was referring to changes in the market over the last five years, when mega-galleries have aggressively courted artists from smaller competitors. And rising costs have strained the traditional business model for galleries wanting a tightly curated program of artists working toward a common goal. That model helped define the last 40 years, when a gallery like Metro Pictures, which closed in 2021, could establish an era like the Pictures Generation by showing artists like Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo and Sherrie Levine.

Burton viewed Commonwealth as reviving the programmatic model through its representation of artists whose biographies weave through the West Coast and reflect the region's economic and racial diversity. Nearly three-quarters of the roster identify as persons of color and half the artists are queer; many said they were raised in ***working-class*** families.

''There is a ***working-class*** aesthetic that is particular to Los Angeles,'' observed Meg Onli, one of the curators behind this year's edition of the Whitney Biennial. She said that artists from the gallery -- Clarissa Tossin, Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, Lotus L. Kang, Nikita Gale and P. Staff -- were early additions to her shortlist for the influential show because of their interest in class and identity.

''People always say nobody is from Los Angeles,'' Onli said. ''But Los Angeles has been a hub of art-making forever. I have been really interested in it as a site of creative production, particularly for people of color.''

Kim said the gallery often chooses artists who represent marginalized communities. ''When identity is addressed more directly, it is often with a critical edge, like the work of American Artist,'' whose media include sculpture, software and video, he said. American Artist, who is a lecturer at Yale School of Art, ''interrogates traces of systemic racism in digital technology, a supposedly neutral arena but which often does not recognize darker faces,'' Kim added.

Chung originally hosted the gallery in his one-bedroom apartment in Historic Filipinotown, staging a 2010 exhibition with Gala Porras-Kim, whose projects often involve deep research and institutional critiques.

''When we met, she was a PDF artist. The studio visit was on a laptop. But her ideas were remarkable,'' Chung said.

Chung was an artist himself, who had a day job doing clerical work at a psychoanalyst's office. But during the evenings, he would take Porras-Kim around the neighborhood.

''I made a map based on his life,'' Porras-Kim said. ''We went up and down the streets of Koreatown. He showed me where his dad used to take him to get rice cakes.''

The exhibition was a success as a proof of concept, though not financially. And so the gallery slowly professionalized as Chung expanded the circle of friends he exhibited. In 2011, he moved the gallery into a second-floor space about a mile away from his apartment and acquired a business license in 2014.

Three years later, artists staged an intervention, asking Chung to create an official roster by turning his artist-run operation into a real gallery.

Around the same time, Kibum Kim joined the gallery to focus on the financial side, allowing Chung to make the artistic program his priority. The duo have gained a cult following with collectors looking to buy from dealers who really know L.A.

''My gut feeling is that they represent the city better than anyone else in town,'' said Jarl Mohn, a venture capitalist and former chief executive of National Public Radio until 2019. He counted at least 13 works in his collection from Commonwealth artists, including photographs by Guadalupe Rosales and Beatriz Cortez, who has a sculpture that will be in the Venice Biennale -- a project that Mohn is financially supporting.

''This is not a casual affair,'' Mohn said, laughing.

Commonwealth has also taken the unusual step of asking collectors and museums to donate the industry-standard 10 percent discounts they get on purchases toward a flexible fund that benefits artists. The idea came from a group effort between the gallery and its artists, when the gallery raised over $100,000 for health-care emergencies during the pandemic.

''I decided to participate because not all artist boats rise and fall at the same time,'' said Miyoung Lee, a collector who is a vice chair of the Whitney Museum of American Art. ''I hadn't heard of this at other places. At some big galleries, artists don't even meet, let alone support each other.''

Lee said that Commonwealth belonged to a crop of small galleries that really support emerging artists -- the West Coast equivalent to 47 Canal, a gallery on New York's Lower East Side founded in 2011 by the artist Margaret Lee and the dealer Oliver Newton that became popular by representing artists like Josh Kline, Anicka Yi and Elle Pérez.

Collectors cited the dedication to difficult work. In her New York apartment, Lee has a 2022 installation by P. Staff called ''Love Life,'' which features a holographic fan that projects poetry as its blades twirl in circles.

''It is not the easiest work to live with,'' Lee admitted, ''But the gallery is not going after the pretty things that sell. They are looking at the quality of the artist.''

Kim has made frequent trips to South Korea, the wellspring of a budding market for international collectors. The gallery co-represents the artist Suki Seokyeong Kang, who lives in Seoul. Her minimal and modular works include the 2018 sculpture, ''Grandmother Tower -- tow,'' a haphazard column of dish racks mimicking her grandmother's aging back.

The last time Kim lived with his parents in South Korea was 1993, whereupon he moved to the United States with his grandmother to seek a better life.

''Which is why I was very invested in traditional success in my younger years,'' Kim said, referencing careers as a banker, lawyer and even a New York Times contributor. ''Through the gallery, I have a more holistically rich life.''

And a life of unexpected challenges. The gallery could become a victim of its own success, as the price of participating in art fairs and museum exhibitions continues to rise.

''We would love the luxury of time,'' Kim said. ''For artists today, the whole run of their career toward a big show can happen in three to four years. Ideally, we would have a bit longer so they can hone their art-making, experiment and make some mistakes.''

And even as its roster expands and its core artists become famous, the gallery is holding onto its hippy-dippy California charm. The dealership's website is still organized under sections like ''now,'' ''tomorrow,'' ''together'' and ''trust.'' The gallerists are reachable via email addresses that start with ''we'' and ''ours.''

But as Lee, the collector, said, ''Scale is always an issue. How many artists can you add without losing the magic? The challenge will be how they stay special, viable.''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Young Chung, left, and Kibum Kim, owners of the Commonwealth and Council gallery in Los Angeles, with works by Carmen Argote and Jesse Chun. Artists they represent will take part in the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale. (PHOTOGRAHP BY ALEX WELSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1)

Top, ''Corpo RanfLA: Terra Cruiser,'' a performance by the artist Rafa Esparza, who is represented by the Los Angeles gallery Commonwealth and Council. Above, the artists championed by the gallery's owners reflect the region's economic and racial diversity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MYLEEN HOLLERO

RUBEN DIAZ)

Below, from left: works by Gala Porras-Kim that were included in the 2019 Whitney Biennial

and a detail of ''In Ekstase,'' 2023, by P. Staff. Both artists work with Commonwealth and Council, which aims to nurture and promote a new generation of West Coast conceptualists. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON AMSTUTZ

P. STAFF AND KUNSTHALLE BASEL

PHOTO BY PHILIPP HÄNGE) (C2) This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Joe Biden’s Interrupted Presidency***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRW-8MM1-DXY4-X00J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 9260 words

**Highlight:** He sought the office nearly all his life. When he finally got there, it brought out his best — and eventually his worst.

**Body**

Shortly after the 11 minutes were over and President Joseph R. Biden Jr. arose from behind the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office on the evening of July 24, he and his family filed out to the Rose Garden.

A throng of White House staff members were waiting outside, under a slight drizzle, with a faint rainbow emerging overhead. Most of them spent the preceding hour nervously eating pizza in the East Room of the White House before growing hushed to listen to their 81-year-old boss speak to the nation. Several of them had been crying earlier in the day. But midway into his speech, Biden began to enumerate his administration’s considerable legislative achievements — among them, “And we finally beat Big Pharma,” a line he had fatefully mangled in the debate with Donald J. Trump less than a month earlier, abruptly dropping the hammer on his political future. As he proceeded through these shared highlights, the tenor in the East Room seemed to change, and a few of the staff members proudly shook hands and hugged one another.

Now Biden spoke only to them, through a microphone someone handed him (according to a video of the event that I obtained). “My name is Joe Biden, and I’m Jill Biden’s husband,” he began, grinning broadly at his familiar joke, as his wife stood beside him, noticeably more subdued, working through her own emotions. “Look,” he told his aides, “the only reason that we’ve had the progress that we’ve had is because of you. And that’s not hyperbole.” He added, in a raspy but otherwise even voice: “I’m so damned proud to be a part of you. I really mean that.”

Sounding anything but deflated, Biden exhorted his staff members to think about the work there was left to do over their final six months. He wanted to extend prescription-drug benefits. He wanted to force billionaires to pay their fair share in taxes. “We can start to help lay the groundwork for Kamala,” Biden said of his vice president and now heir apparent, who was already out on the campaign trail.

He wrapped up his three minutes of remarks with a stage-whispered call to arms, as if it were a secret plan: “Let’s elect Kamala!” After their ovation, the president urged his staff to get to work on the ice cream stationed behind them. Biden cracked a few other jokes but didn’t stay for dessert. Instead, the 46th president of the United States retreated with his wife down the walkway to the residence.

Tomorrow would be different. He would still be president, but in a manner that no predecessor had been previously subjected to, he would now serve as his party’s leader in ceremonial terms only, having been forcibly thrust to the margins of the national frame by other party leaders as all attention turned to the Democratic nominee that Biden believed should have been him. But at least for this moment, he seemed to speak and move with a younger man’s ease, somehow lighter than before, as if no longer burdened by his father’s admonition, Get back up! Biden had risen as high as any American could go, had fallen back to earth, had gotten back up one more time and now had relinquished the pursuit that had animated his entire political career.

It was as if the Joe Biden of the previous month — pugnacious, defensive, all but stricken blind by his own ambitions — had suddenly given way to an entirely different human being, one defined by selfless accommodation. But those two sides of the same man have always been present, and at times in conflict, throughout Biden’s 52 years in national political life, and the presidency brought out both sides of him: his best and, later, his worst. He reached the office by challenging Donald Trump in a campaign that he would come to call a fight for the soul of the nation; in doing so, he created for himself a kind of self-mythology in which his own fate was entwined with that of the country’s.

Everyone who becomes president has had a long personal relationship with the idea of the presidency. No one who gets there has not yearned for it for years, and it means something different for each. A Biden presidency, in his imagination, would let him transcend the humble origins he always proudly wore on his sleeve and then make good on his own redemption by widening that American dream to include others who had been left out of it. He would pass through unimaginable personal tragedies — the deaths of his first wife, Neilia, and his daughter Naomi just after he was elected to the Senate and then, when he was the vice president, the death of his oldest son, Beau — that would shape his public life.

But Biden, as the oldest chief executive to take office, took on the job having spent more time dreaming of it than any previous president. He reached the presidency with more governing expertise than any of his predecessors, but also well behind his own schedule, in a sense already running out of time. The flurry of activity that marked his administration was that of a man who had tried for literal decades to get there, accumulating plans and experiences along the way. He made his mistakes, especially in the chaotic troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and in failing to secure the Southern border, but even as Republicans denounced him as terminally enfeebled, he ushered in a wave of projects and reforms like no Democrat before him in more than a half-century.

And yet before it was even over, he had been deemed too old to win a second term and too old to finish it if he did win: the nation’s first too-old-to-be-president president. His decision to quit the race ended one of the most remarkable chapters in American political history and started one that may yet define his legacy. After all, that last chapter will not be written until after the election in November. Would Biden be the hero he always wanted to see himself as, the man who had, with grace and humility, stepped aside so Harris could seize the moment? Or would he become the spoiler who refused to face the stark reality of his own decline and held the Democratic Party hostage to his own ambitions — even as he insisted nothing less than democracy was at stake?

As he takes the stage on the first night of the Democratic National Convention, both outcomes remain possible. His legacy — once that of a skilled legislator who then became the able No. 2 man to the nation’s first Black president — is now tied to that of Kamala Harris, his vice president and understudy who has taken center stage. Should Harris win in November, becoming the first female president, Biden may best be remembered as a president who did not so much make history as facilitate it, twice over, and who also helped deny Trump’s two quests for a second term, first by beating him and then by stepping back so that a more able Democratic candidate could do the job. That Joe Biden could end up being, as he once put it, a human “bridge” to history marks a final plot twist in my reporting for this article, which began weeks before Biden’s career-ending debate and includes interviews with more than two dozen current and former Biden advisers, legislators and other Democratic allies. (The White House declined to make the president available to be interviewed.)

In the short weeks since what could be called Biden’s abdication, amid the swelling energy and excitement for his vice president — the rapturous rallies, the explosion of new voter registrations and the rising tide of polls and donations, even a “White Dudes for Harris” Zoom call — there had to be a sting for Biden, still the sitting president but now watching from the sidelines as she enjoyed an outpouring he never had. When Harris introduced Tim Walz as her running mate on Aug. 6 at a thunderous event in Philadelphia, neither of them mentioned Biden at all.

A self-described ‘Senate man’

Seemingly from the start of his Senate career, Biden’s sense of self was bedeviled by the specter of the presidency. He would always be, in his phrasing, “a Biden,” a desired elevation of his ***working-class*** family to nobility as another aspect of that self-mythology, but that Kennedyesque tableau needed the office to complete the picture. Though his natural habitat was arguably the Capitol, where Biden spent more than half his adult life, he never stopped seeing himself as a scrapper from Scranton, Pa., whom the elites looked down upon. Even after [*becoming one of the youngest candidates*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) ever to be elected to the U.S. Senate, he bristled at the slightest insinuation that his calling might be seen as lowbrow, [*telling one crowd*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in May 1973: “Those of you who are doctors and lawyers and Indian chiefs in the audience, how can any of you possibly do as much good if you’re very good at what you do as I can do if I’m very good at what I can do? You can’t.”

In that same 1973 speech, Biden described his recent election as “achieving a life’s ambition to seek the highest elective office, with one exception, in the land.” That one exception always seemed just out of his reach. He was [*the chairman of Jimmy Carter’s campaign steering committee*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in 1976; he [*received mention as a potential running mate*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) for Walter Mondale in 1984, the same year that [*a Times*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/)  [*reporter wrote*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/), “Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware makes little secret of his higher ambitions.” He [*declared his candidacy*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in June 1987, only to [*withdraw three months later*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) amid revelations that he had plagiarized portions of his stump speech. He briefly [*considered running again*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in 2004; then he did so in 2008 and lost resoundingly in the primaries. He saw another chance eight years later from his perch as vice president but was discouraged from taking it by the party’s leader, President Barack Obama; he finally succeeded in 2020, though by now as a grandfatherly eminence rather than the Achilles-like protagonist he had once been seen as by the Washington elite.

“He is a person who in his personal and professional life has experienced both great highs and great lows,” Ron Klain, Biden’s former chief of staff and adviser for over 30 years, told me. “That kind of seasoning gave him a sort of levelheadedness that not many others could bring to the presidency. And his many years in the Senate taught him patience. We went through a phase in 2022 with the Inflation Reduction Act when talks were stalled, and we were said to be idiots because things were taking so long. And he said: ‘You know, this is the way the Senate works. It takes as long as it takes.’ ”

His long journey to the White House coincided with, and would ultimately challenge, the widely held axiom in contemporary American politics that governors are best suited to be presidents. Biden, by contrast, was a self-described “[*Senate man*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/).” [*Sixteen presidents*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) before him had served in the Senate, none for more than 12 years. Biden had represented Delaware in the upper legislative chamber for 36 years. He worked with seven presidents and dozens of foreign leaders.

He first achieved national distinction as the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he oversaw two of the most notorious Supreme Court confirmation hearings in recent memory. First, in 1987, he led the successful fight to defeat the nomination of Judge Robert H. Bork, a Reagan appointee whose views were deemed too extreme by Biden and others. Four years later, he presided over the hearings for Clarence Thomas’s embattled nomination to the Supreme Court, when Anita Hill accused the judge of sexual harassment. Biden’s willingness to indulge Republicans on the committee who sought to turn the hearing into a referendum of Hill’s character, and his decision not to call as witnesses more women who were ready to testify with claims similar to Hill’s, were widely criticized. At the start of his 2020 presidential campaign, knowing this painful history would be exhumed, Biden called Hill to express regret. She then publicly declined to call his words an [*apology*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) and said she remained unconvinced he had taken responsibility.

In his leadership of the Foreign Relations Committee, he was on less contentious ground, with an understanding of geopolitics so expansive that early in 2004 he laid out in detail to Romania’s minister of foreign affairs, Mircea Geoana, how to make the case for why Americans should see strategic value in that country being admitted to NATO, which ultimately came to pass that year. He crossed paths with hundreds of fellow legislators, learning along the way to collaborate with those in Congress who did not share his state’s concerns. As his longtime friend and former Senate chief of staff Ted Kaufman put it to me, “All those committee hearings, all those relationships he’d developed in the Senate, are why he came into the White House with more knowledge than any other president in our history.”

According to those close to him, Biden believed he had become president in no small measure because of his senatorial impulse to build a winning coalition — in this case, with the progressive wing of his party that had felt disrespected by the Hillary Clinton campaign four years earlier. “When he became president, he felt compelled to govern with them being a part of it,” said Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut who would become Biden’s point man in the Senate on gun legislation. “And Joe Biden’s a loyal guy.”

Murphy went on to say: “I also think Biden went through this metamorphosis. He went from being a neoliberal to being an economic nationalist. He came to the conclusion that the markets were fundamentally broken, that power was too concentrated and workers were disempowered. I don’t know when that happened, because he didn’t campaign that way.”

Later, I asked Kaufman, who had been with Biden since serving on his first Senate campaign in 1972 as an unpaid staff member, if his old friend had undergone some kind of political transformation in the White House. Kaufman politely replied that this was a crock. Senator Biden, he reminded me, had represented corporate-friendly Delaware, not Vermont. He hadn’t rolled up his double-digit electoral majorities every six years by waving a pitchfork. Rather, Biden had been mindful of all his constituents — not just unions and minorities, but also creditors who opposed bankruptcy reform and middle-class white voters who wanted more cops on the street. “That’s what he learned in the Senate, listening to what everyone’s got to say,” Kaufman told me. “It’s not ideological.”

That being said, Kaufman added, his friend felt an almost genetic connection to those who were disadvantaged and otherwise underestimated. Biden himself [*said as much*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) during his first debate with Trump, in September 2020, when the subject turned to prejudice: People like Trump, he said (with a slight mangling of syntax), “look down their nose on people like Irish Catholics, like me, and grew up in Scranton.”

Bidens against the world

When I first met Biden in the fall of 2005, while on assignment to write a GQ magazine [*profile*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) about him, he had already been a U.S. senator for 32 years, had been a presidential candidate once and was positioning himself for a second run. I imagined him as the quintessence of Washington establishment, a man on top of the world. It surprised me, then, when one day our conversation turned to the sitting president, George W. Bush. Biden proceeded to deconstruct Bush’s native privilege in a way that I, a biographer of the president, hadn’t considered: “And all you’ve got to do is look from the road in Kennebunkport at the estate, and you’ll understand. It’s not even that it’s nice. There’s nicer places. But it is a rock. It is a peninsula. It’s old money. Power. Establishment. There’s an understatement to it. But there’s an awesome rooted power to it.”

Biden made clear to me that he didn’t dislike the president. Still, he didn’t care much for the way Bush had blithely C-minused his way through Ivy League schools that many of lesser means would have killed to be able to attend. He didn’t like the way the president assigned pet names to those around him, telling me: “There’s a bullying aspect to that. If I give you a nickname, I’ve become your coach.” His critique of Bush struck me as acutely personal. Here was one of the most powerful politicians in America, devoting inordinate thought to what someone else had that he (and yes, others) didn’t. To my discredit, it didn’t seem terribly significant at the time.

As I would later realize, Biden was all but drawing me a diagram of his own deeply internalized class-consciousness. Without any prompting by me during our three months together in 2005, Biden would describe the indignities suffered by his father, Joe Sr., an elegantly dressed and soft-spoken man who never managed to make his mark in the world but who instilled in his progeny an abhorrence of self-pity. One such story he told me, which he later memorialized in his book “Promises to Keep,” recounted his father quitting his job at an auto dealership after a company Christmas party, when the owner showed his appreciation for his workers by pouring a bucketful of silver dollars onto the dance floor and watching with amusement as they scrambled to pick up the coins.

“That’s an abuse of power,” Biden told me back then. It was hard to disagree with him. Still, what did that mean to Joe Biden the legislator and aspiring president?

It meant, in his smaller moments, a jut-jawed and insular Bidens-against-the-world combativeness. It meant, in 1987, lashing out at a voter who seemed skeptical of his educational standing [*by saying,*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) “I think I have a much higher I.Q. than you, I suspect.” It meant feeling the need to enumerate and embellish his achievements — “I’m the guy that did more for the Palestinian community than anybody,” [*he informed*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) the podcaster Speedy Morman last month — or at times to invent distinctions altogether, as when [*he claimed*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) that he had been the first in his family to go to college, and also to have once been arrested in South Africa while trying to meet with the anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela.

It meant trusting only the very loyal, his family above all, who had helped run his first campaigns and ever since had joined him in all manner of suffering. The self-mythology he had long engaged in, an attempt for the Bidens to have standing and meaning like that of other American dynastic political clans, would blind him to his brother and son’s own attempts to trade on that name. It meant abiding his son Hunter’s and [*his brother Jim’s*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) questionable business practices, while continually saying that he was “proud” of his son even as Hunter falsely denied having a child out of wedlock and was found guilty of federal gun charges. Hunter took a well-paying seat on the board of Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company, during Biden’s vice presidency; recent reporting revealed that he requested State Department assistance with a potential business deal for the firm in Italy, though there is no evidence that his father was aware of his attempts. That the family had shared so much hardship seemed, in Biden’s eyes, to immunize them from charges of misconduct.

But the memory of being dispossessed would also inspire in Biden genuine moments of empathy that not only provided comfort to others but also shaped federal policy. He entered the Senate having just lost his wife and daughter to an automobile accident, and he left the vice presidency having just lost his son to cancer. His entire political life, including his presidency, would reflect a dual recognition of, but also a dual reaction to, opportunity and misfortune.

Tethering his destiny to Obama’s

I went to visit Biden in the White House one day in September 2012, on assignment to write an article about the man he then served as vice president. When the two men first came to know each other in 2005, Obama was one of the junior-most members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Biden was the ranking member. Undeterred by the star power of Obama and two other Democrats, Hillary Clinton and John Edwards, Biden announced his presidential candidacy in January 2007, banking on his superior experience. I spoke briefly to him on the phone a year later, just before the Iowa caucus. When I asked him how he felt about his chances, he exclaimed, “Good, actually!” Then he came in fifth, with less than 1 percent of the vote, and dropped out that night.

The Obama campaign saw Biden as the white ***working-class*** answer to questions that swing voters in the Midwest might have about the young, inexperienced Black senator whose father was Kenyan. Biden was wary of the offer to be Obama’s running mate. He had been a Senate committee chairman for most of the previous two decades — the man with the gavel, not an underling dispatched to attend the funerals of foreign leaders, as had been the lot of previous vice presidents.

He accepted it only after making clear to the nominee that he wanted the same deal that Walter Mondale told Biden he had gotten from Jimmy Carter: not a narrow portfolio but rather an imprint on all major issues, and being the last person the president would talk to about a policy decision before making it. Upon taking the job, Biden dispatched Ted Kaufman to meet with scholars of the vice presidency so as to understand the office’s potential.

Being a heartbeat away from the presidency amounted to a hinge moment in Biden’s career — a critical next step, but also a fraught one that played to his native insecurities. As one of his top aides would later tell me, Biden immediately grasped a Beltway verity, which was that there was no such thing as a successful vice president in an unsuccessful presidency. Biden’s destiny was now tethered to Obama’s. He brought with him a highly professional staff, many of whom would later be elevated to Obama’s own senior White House team.

Obama and Biden entered office in the midst of a severe recession that threatened to metastasize into something far worse. It amounted to a daunting test for a new president of limited experience — and by extension, a test of Biden’s ability to assist Obama. For the new administration’s first initiative, the federal stimulus plan that was intended to stave off the recessionary effects of the market meltdown in 2008, the vice president helped secure the crucial three Republican votes from Senators Arlen Specter, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins. “He was willing to do something Obama wasn’t always eager to do — which was to go to the Hill, work the members, have the dinners,” recalled Jim Messina, who served as the White House deputy chief of staff and later ran the 2012 campaign.

Whenever Obama was leaning toward making foreign-policy decisions against his vice president’s recommendation, Biden — who had gone 36 years without a boss — would buttonhole an Obama longtimer to ask: “Tell me why he’s doing this. Tell me what he’s thinking.” So determined was Biden to understand the president that within a few years, the White House would be dispatching the vice president to explain Obama’s thinking to reporters as a “source familiar.” That was why I was visiting the White House in September 2012.

What I feel comfortable saying about this encounter, given that it was not on the record, was that it was not materially different from the Joe Biden whom others came to know on Capitol Hill or on the Sunday talk shows — or even in his books. That Joe Biden could not resist reminding people of his proximity to the president and his influence over administration policy — or, in cases where he failed to persuade, emphasizing how he was ultimately on the right side of things. (At other times he pushed the president further than he wanted to go, as when Biden supported gay marriage in a 2012 interview, leading Obama to say that “he probably got out a little bit over his skis.”) I didn’t interpret his performance as an attempt to undermine Obama. Rather, it was in keeping with the long-held view in Washington of Joe Biden as an affable, skilled and knowledgeable yet notably self-conscious man forever seeking to convince people that he absolutely belonged in the upper climes of federal policymaking. His “I’m the guy who … ” verbal tic had become the most memorable protestation in town.

What was remarkable, then, was that the president would come to view Biden as his guy: the essential sausage-maker in the lofty Obama movement, wading into bureaucratic minutiae and mixing it up with legislators so that Obama didn’t have to; not to mention a man of heightened intuition, one who (according to one White House adviser) frequently urged the more deliberative Obama to “go with your gut.”

The vice president displayed those skills in what seemed at the time to be a losing cause: producing gun-safety legislation in the wake of the horrific mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School at the end of 2012. The bill’s Democratic co-sponsor, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, was a folksy centrist who did not get along with the urbane, cerebral Obama and found in Biden his only real friend in the White House. The president had empowered Biden to lead the White House’s efforts on this issue, given his previous work in the Senate on the Brady Bill and the assault-weapons ban. But even before Manchin and his Republican co-sponsor, Pat Toomey, introduced their legislation, which would extend background checks to include gun-show and internet purchases, Biden recognized that the bill was doomed to fail in the Republican-controlled House. So the vice president and his staff drafted 23 executive actions, ranging from improving background-check data-sharing to enhancing gun-tracing efforts, that went into effect less than five weeks after the shooting.

But his more significant work would prove to be the relationship he formed with some of the grief-stricken parents of the 20 children who were slaughtered at the school. Days after the shooting, Biden called Mark and Jackie Barden, whose 7-year-old son Daniel was one of those killed. They talked for over an hour and a half. Early in the spring of 2013, when the Bardens and other Sandy Hook parents arrived on Capitol Hill for the first time to lobby Republican senators to vote for the bill, Biden cleared his calendar. Sitting with them for at least three hours, he did not mention legislative tactics. Instead, recalled Mark Barden, “He said: ‘Here’s what I’m telling you. Go home. You don’t have to do this. I’ve been down this road. I wanted to push through automobile safety. And in retrospect, I probably should have just been taking care of myself.’”

‘A way to defy the fates’

By Obama’s second term, he and Biden had become more than partners: They were friends. When the vice president confided to Obama that his eldest child, Beau, had been diagnosed with brain cancer and was struggling to pay for his treatment, the president offered to loan the Bidens money. A year later, in June 2015, the president [*gave the eulogy*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) at Beau Biden’s funeral. Pledging to always be there for the grieving family, Obama then added what by then had become one of the more familiar signature lines in Washington: “My word as a Biden.”

Biden would memorialize these tender gestures in his 2017 book about his son, “Promise Me, Dad.” But the book also devoted considerable space to describing how Obama aggressively discouraged him from pursuing a 2016 presidential candidacy against Hillary Clinton, noting as well that certain Obama confederates “were putting a finger on the scale for Clinton.” As the president’s No. 2 — the one next in line to the Oval Office — Biden had reason to expect different treatment.

Since the very beginning of Obama’s second term in January 2013, the vice president had been discussing a candidacy with his team, according to one of them. Those discussions continued even after his son’s death. After watching an appearance on “The Late Show With Stephen Colbert” in September 2015 in which [*Biden acknowledged*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) that he hadn’t given up on the idea of running, the actor George Clooney promptly called the adviser Steve Ricchetti and pledged to support Biden if he entered the race.

Two senior Obama administration officials would later insist to me that the president’s paramount concern in discouraging Biden’s candidacy was the emotional well-being of his devastated friend. But writing in his 2017 book, Biden didn’t seem to believe this. Obama, he could see, worried that a contentious primary battle between his vice president and his former secretary of state “would split the party and leave the Democratic nominee vulnerable in the general election.” Biden wrote, “This was about Barack’s legacy.” But the president seemed not to understand what a candidacy would mean to Biden and his family — and how devastating Obama’s discouraging words to his vice president were. As Biden wrote, “The mere possibility of a presidential campaign, which Beau wanted, gave us purpose and hope — a way to defy the fates.”

On Oct. 21, 2015, Biden stood in the Rose Garden, flanked by Obama and Jill Biden, and [*announced*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) that he would not be running for president. A former aide would recall how the grieving vice president spent his last year in office seemingly drained of purpose, almost ghostlike.

Seven months after vacating the White House and becoming a private citizen for the first time in 46 years, Joe Biden watched TV footage of the white-supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Va., and subsequently spoke on the phone to the mother of the young woman who was killed by one of the rally participants. Up to that point, the former vice president was laying the groundwork for serving on foundations and in university positions (including the Penn Biden Center) designed to maintain his relevance in both domestic and foreign affairs. Biden was “engaged” — his preferred euphemism, after Beau’s death, for keeping his political future in play. Charlottesville represented for Biden the threat to America brought on by the Trump presidency.

“And that’s when I decided that I, I, I, I, I’ve got to run,” Biden would say, according to the transcript of his October 2023 interview with Robert Hur, the special counsel who had been assigned by Attorney General Merrick Garland to investigate whether Biden broke federal laws by retaining classified documents from his time as vice president. That same interview, Hur would later assert in a bombshell report, revealed a president who came across as “a sympathetic, well-meaning elderly man with a poor memory.”

But Biden’s recollection of why and when he decided to run for president in 2017 remained indelible. So was his memory of 2015, when, he told Hur, in a moment that exposed the lasting hurt, “a lot of people” encouraged him to run for the Democratic nomination — “except the president.”

A leftward tilt

Four short years after leaving the White House, Biden returned to it, with the country in a state of upheaval. A pandemic had killed [*some 400,000*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) Americans. The month he took office, the national unemployment rate was 6.3 percent. Rioters at the U.S. Capitol had tried to overturn the 2020 election. Under President Trump, much of Obama’s legacy was eviscerated: the individual mandate that was the bedrock of the Affordable Care Act was removed, environmental regulations were rolled back, the federal judiciary (including the Supreme Court) was flooded with conservatives and the nuclear pact with Iran was discarded. Thirteen months into Biden’s presidency, Russia invaded Ukraine, a U.S. ally.

And yet the new president appeared to reintroduce himself to America as a living relic from a less troubled era, a 78-year-old anachronism not entirely aware of how much the country had changed: [*mentioning the word “unity”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) eight times in his Inaugural Address, [*continuing to embrace*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s 30-year-old characterization of America as “the indispensable nation” for which (as he said in [*his speech before Congress*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) three months after taking office) “there is not a single thing, nothing, nothing beyond our capacity.”

His experiences with Republicans over the previous decade had been limited to high-level negotiations with leaders like Eric Cantor and Mitch McConnell, and before then, overseas trips with collegial senators like John McCain, Chuck Hagel and Lindsey Graham. He had no interlocutor inside the MAGA movement. His former legislative-affairs director, Louisa Terrell, said: “He knew the world had changed, and Biden showed a lot of interest in learning about his new colleagues on the Hill. He wanted data points about the new team that was in play, guys like Patrick McHenry and Garret Graves” — referring to two Republican House leaders who were hardly fans of the new president but were not seen as acolytes of the previous one.

So much did Biden prize bipartisanship that [*he announced a “unity agenda”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in his first State of the Union address, consisting of seemingly unobjectionable items like cancer research, suicide prevention and mental-health programs for veterans. ([*Some Republicans objected anyway.*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/)) Preaching unity was, however, a matter of political necessity: Biden had only the barest congressional majority to work with in 2021. As it would turn out, many of Biden’s signature legislative accomplishments — infrastructure, gun safety, semiconductor manufacturing, [*aid to veterans exposed to burn pits*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) and [*federal protections for same-sex couples*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) — became law with bipartisan support.

“There was a presumption that the system was broken,” Biden’s White House counselor Steve Ricchetti told me. “And he demonstrated that it was wrong.” But this rosy assessment elides the fact that Republicans refused to engage on many key items of the Biden agenda even when those items hardly constituted an affront to conservative sensibilities, beyond the fact that it was a Democratic president who proposed them.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 provided clean-energy investments that would overwhelmingly benefit so-called [*energy communities*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) — meaning bastions of fossil-fuel production in places like Texas as well as former coal-mining sites and industrial brownfields in Republican strongholds.

Republican legislators unanimously opposed the I.R.A., as they had done with its antecedent, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was intended to invigorate the pandemic-stricken economy. Its $1.9 trillion price tag fed into Republicans’ claims that Biden was [*promoting a “socialist agenda.”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) But much of the money would be delegated to states to spend according to their individual needs. “Early on, President Biden told me, ‘You know, a lot of these investments are going to go to red states, because a lot of those people are hurting,’” said Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, a Democrat. In that spirit, Cooper told me, he directed $18 million in ARPA funding to revive an abandoned NASCAR racetrack in the town of Wilkesboro, situated in an economically struggling county that [*Trump carried in 2020*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) with 78 percent of the vote. That investment led to the North Wilkesboro Speedway [*hosting*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) the 2023 NASCAR All Star Race, which in turn generated nearly $29 million in visitor spending benefiting Wilkes County.

Still, Republicans were not wrong in pointing out the strikingly leftward tilt of Biden’s agenda. His administration accomplished objectives that progressives had been pining for years to see realized, from forgiving student loans to expanding Title IX protections to include gender identity. He [*appointed more Black judges*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) to the federal bench, 59, than any other single-term president in history and advanced the first Black woman to the Supreme Court.

Some of Biden’s progressive initiatives represented a continuation of longstanding policy preoccupations. But others seem to suggest a liberalized evolution in his thinking. The president [*pardoned minor marijuana offenders*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) and [*others convicted of nonviolent drug offenses*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/). Biden also announced his intentions to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug. “These things aren’t in his comfort zone, obviously,” said Earl Blumenauer, a longtime proponent of cannabis decriminalization who was first elected to Congress in 1996, two years after Biden helped steer the crime bill (which included features like stiffer prison sentences that would later be seen as draconian) to passage. “But in my world, they’re huge.”

“For an older white man who most people would call a moderate, I certainly didn’t think he was going to be a progressive,” said Pramila Jayapal, the chairwoman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. Jayapal, who would become a key figure in shaping Biden administration policy, told me that she had been advised early on by the liberal icon Bernie Sanders that “Biden is a very relationship-oriented person, and I think it would be good for you to get to know him.”

Sanders himself remembered how he and his wife, Jane, were warmly welcomed by the Bidens when he first got to the Senate in 2007, following 16 forgettable years as a disgruntled backbencher in the House. It was a case of Biden paying forward the kindnesses he himself received from elder senators who offered camaraderie when he first took office in 1973, weeks after the car accident that killed his wife and daughter.

Later, as a rival for the Democratic nomination in 2020, Sanders repaid the favor: He insisted that his campaign staff members treat Biden with civility. Biden came to see Sanders as the standard-bearer of a movement that would be necessary for his own success as a president. When Sanders visited the White House in early 2021, he told Biden that he would like to see a munificently funded social-spending bill — somewhere in the neighborhood of $5 trillion to $6 trillion. “Bernie,” he replied, “I want to go as big as we can possibly get.”

Ultimately, the multitrillion-dollar Build Back Better bill was downsized over a year to the $433 billion Inflation Reduction Act. That eventual triumph came to pass in no small measure because Biden understood the Senate’s meandering cadences better than a lesser-versed politician might have. But other feats of his presidency suggested a memory that stretched further back than his days in the Senate.

In December 2021, Biden flew on Air Force One to an event in Kansas City, where he would celebrate the recent passage of the infrastructure bill. With him on the plane was the representative of that district, Emanuel Cleaver. During their discussion, Cleaver said that he also hoped a portion of the money from the new legislation would deliver help to minority communities that had been damaged by past infrastructure projects. Biden replied that he knew exactly what Cleaver was talking about. Back in 1963, when Biden was a student at the University of Delaware, [*the Delaware Turnpike opened*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) with great fanfare. “You know, when we built the freeway, we destroyed certain parts of the city and divided Black neighborhoods,” Cleaver recalled Biden saying. “We’ve got to start thinking about undoing that.”

In March 2024, a little over two years after their conversation, Cleaver [*received a notification*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) from the Biden White House. The administration would be providing $3.3 billion “to reconnect communities that have been left behind and divided by transportation infrastructure.”

What then occurred to Cleaver said a lot to him about Joe Biden — including, he would tell me, why the president was so resistant to leaving office after only one term: “He’s had all these ideas over his career. And they’ve been piling up in his head, waiting for the opportunity. And then the opportunity finally hit, and he did not hesitate, and he wanted to keep going.”

Politics is in many ways a feat of memory: an unceasing recognition of where you come from, whom you answer to, what works, who can help, what is expected in return, why you ran for office to begin with. Notwithstanding the public lapses that would ultimately cause fellow Democrats to question his mental acuity and deny him a second term, the prodigious legislative skills derived from 52 years of accumulated knowledge continued to reside in America’s oldest-ever president.

Hours before Biden released his statement on the afternoon of Sunday, July 21, that he had decided not to seek a second term — having been effectively “pushed out” by Democratic leaders and donors, as his former chief of staff Ron Klain [*bitterly put it on social media*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) — the president called the cellphone of his current chief of staff, Jeff Zients. As Zients would later tell me, Biden spent the first minute informing Zients of his decision. Then he told his chief of staff that their usual planning in 100-day blocks of time would now be reconfigured into a final 180-day flurry of activity.

“We have six months left,” Zients recalled Biden telling him. “And I want this six months to be as productive as every other six-month increment we’ve had.” That would involve concrete action, such as canceling more student debts and announcing price reductions that had been negotiated for 10 new prescription drugs. Biden also ticked off several goals, from reforming the Supreme Court to reinforcing the right to vote, that might not be attainable by the time he left office but that, as Zients put it to me, “would plant stakes in very important terrain.” Those stakes would help guide a Harris presidency and, in turn, shape Biden’s legacy.

A game of chicken with his own party

Almost from its inception, the Biden presidency unfolded in a kind of split-screen. One side of the screen featured an experienced legislator who knew how to get things done. The other side displayed the nation’s oldest president ever, aging before our very eyes. Biden entered office a few months older than the oldest to leave it, Ronald Reagan. In an increasingly visual era, with [*90 percent of American adults*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) owning a smartphone and 95 percent of them online, the president could not readily conceal his frailties from the public the way Franklin D. Roosevelt or John F. Kennedy once could. It might well have proved impossible for the White House to prepare the public for the optical experience of elder statesmanship. It might have been a tough sell to suggest that this version of Biden was superior to the younger, brasher candidate Biden circa 1987 — and to assert that a man who no longer walked or talked as he did even as a candidate in 2020 could still do his job, albeit as a man of diminished stamina.

In any event, the White House didn’t try. From the outset, Biden drastically limited his interactions with the media [*compared with previous presidents*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/), while his 47-year-old press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, implausibly [*said of her boss*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) in 2022, “I can’t even keep up with him.” A once-voluble ubiquity was receding from the media in inverse proportion to his advancing years, his “interviews” often limited to outlets that were unlikely to ask tough questions, including two conversations booked on Black radio stations following the debate in which the Biden campaign provided the hosts with suggested questions to choose from.

Even amid his administration’s string of legislative successes, Democrats privately shared their worries. Two Democratic legislators involved in the 2021 Build Back Better negotiations in the White House later told me that the president seemed at times to lose the conversational thread and at other times would lecture them like a cranky uncle, saying, “You were still in high school when I was doing this stuff in the Senate.” By the end of 2023, members of the diplomatic corps were privately sharing concerns with one former member of Congress with whom I spoke that the president’s memory appeared to be slipping in meetings with foreign leaders. Even without such information, [*69 percent of Democrats*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) polled last August believed that Biden was too old to serve a second term.

But the man who had assured supporters in 2020 that he would be a “[*bridge*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/)” or “[*transition*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/)” president now seemed unmoved by these concerns. One of his top advisers told me that he was unaware of any serious consideration given by Biden to forgo a second term. The president’s deeply loyal and deeply trusted inner circle, in the White House and on his campaign, recognized that a rematch with Trump would most likely be a photo finish at best but was now faced with the sobering reality that the incumbent could not campaign with the vigor he might easily have mustered in previous years. As his gait became less steady and his speech more halting and slurred, as the evidence mounted of his publicly confusing the names of world leaders and losing his train of thought, Republican adversaries escalated their attacks on the octogenarian president as being weak: weak in handling the porous border, weak in curbing inflation, weak in managing America’s response to conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

With the president’s approval ratings mired in the 30s, his supporters had one date to look forward to: June 27, the CNN debate against Trump, which offered the chance to showcase Biden’s mastery of details and overall humanity against a human fire hose of insults and untruths. He had done so in the past — even to heroic effect in 2012, when Vice President Biden’s performance against Mitt Romney’s running mate, Paul Ryan, effectively stopped the bleeding after Obama’s poor showing the week earlier. “All the panic on the Hill and among the grass roots went away once Biden left the debate stage,” Jim Messina told me, recalling that moment.

“If political campaigning is a decathlon, then debating is a sport that’s always been one of his strengths,” said David Plouffe, the Obama campaign guru and now the senior adviser of Harris’s campaign, who helped Biden prepare for his 2008 debate against Sarah Palin and his 2012 match against Paul Ryan.

Plouffe was among the allies who were stunned by Biden’s dismal performance — his inability to deliver boilerplate talking points and attack lines, his senior moment when he gasped out the non sequitur, “We finally beat Medicare” — all the more so because the campaign team had been confidently predicting victory to him and other Democrats all the way up to the day of the debate. We spoke five days after the debate, at which point the strategist likened the campaign’s state of play as the fourth quarter of a football game: “You’ve got to throw the ball on every play. Bus tours, 48 hours straight on the road, tons of interviews. It’s a comeback strategy — and by the way, it still might not work.”

But that sort of Hail Mary strategy could not happen now for the same reason it hadn’t happened before. Even as Biden was assuring his supporters that he had all the inner resources necessary to stage an improbable comeback, he was also complaining to them that his staff had overscheduled him, seeming to suggest that the key to victory was for him to work even fewer hours. If that seemed an untenable proposition to Democrats, Biden and his campaign were in essence saying: Too bad. The man known above all for his vast reservoir of empathy was now staging a game of chicken with his own party, daring them to either skitter out of his way or face a head-on collision at the Democratic convention. “I’m not going anywhere!” Biden now declared on the stump. And at his news conference following the NATO summit in early July, he responded to a question about calls for him to step aside by saying, “I think I’m the most qualified person to run for president” — a curious protestation by a president three years into his job, preceded seconds earlier by his misidentifying Harris as “Vice President Trump” (which the White House later corrected in its official transcript of the event).

On the morning of July 8, the president appeared on a Zoom conference call with hundreds of donors. Biden insisted that it was one bad night, that he’d been tired and ill, that things were going to be fine. The concerned viewers could clearly see him looking down throughout his monologue, as if reading from a script. A queue of questioners was growing. According to one listener, the first few questions selected by a Biden staff member were conspicuously softball, along the lines of “How can we help?” After the call, several donors complained to Biden allies that it had been a waste of their time.

Later that evening, Biden placed a call to the Congressional Black Caucus, who were among his most loyal supporters. The president listed his accomplishments and told them he intended to stay in the race. “I need you,” he told them. He did not take any questions.

To some, Biden’s refusal to step down was an all-too-familiar Washington story, one of power clung to at the risk of one’s own legacy, rationalized at the time by the belief in one’s own indispensability. Biden had seen more than his share of examples, from Supreme Court justices like William O. Douglas and Ruth Bader Ginsburg to former Senate colleagues like Strom Thurmond and Dianne Feinstein. “It’s a human story that repeats itself,” the Democratic political strategist James Carville told me. “Hell, the day after Bill Clinton got elected and everyone knew I wasn’t going into government with him, the phone just stopped ringing. I used to literally get the shakes, thinking nobody gave a crap about me anymore. That’s why the only way people leave Washington is in a pine box or in handcuffs. This power stuff is addictive.”

Some of Biden’s most ardent supporters began to express a new concern to me. The president seemed unlikely to beat Trump — that was bad enough. But to them, the genial, attentive man they knew now seemed beset by something worse than denial. He called in to “Morning Joe” on MSNBC to condemn “[*the elites in the party*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/)” for urging him to step down. He [*mocked*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/13/remarks-by-president-biden-at-banquet-dinner/) the media for discounting him. He said the polls were wrong. To George Stephanopoulos of ABC, he protested, “How many people draw crowds like I did today?” He was angry at the world, and seemed to be shape-shifting into the man he had pledged to defeat.

But there was another key to understanding Biden’s intransigence, according to someone who has been close to him for decades. Here was a man whose son’s death had left him all but drowning in sorrow — a man whose book about his son contains the word “purpose” 25 times, including the subtitle (“A Year of Hope, Hardship and Purpose”). Leading the country was the purpose Beau Biden in his dying days implored his father to pursue; having done so, it was perhaps the one thing that kept Joe Biden from succumbing to grief’s riptide.

Parting paths with Harris

Watching as his own political future dwindled before his eyes, Biden at last shut the door on it — an act of humility, brought on by public humiliation. On Sunday, July 21, he made an unprecedented public statement, saying that he was standing down from his campaign. In doing so, he was admitting defeat, bowing to increasing public and private pressure after insisting for weeks that he would not give in.

But if the air was freighted with lament that day at Biden’s weekend retreat at Rehoboth Beach, Del., there was also something entirely different in the wind, unknown to all but a few. An hour and a half before posting his statement on social media, the president spoke on the phone with Prime Minister Robert Golob of Slovenia. For months, the Biden administration had been secretly working with seven countries on an elaborate prisoner swap that would result in the freedom of three Americans and one permanent U.S. resident who had been wrongfully detained in Russia for over a year.

According to a national-security source with extensive knowledge of the negotiations, Biden had been deeply involved with efforts to free the American prisoners. He had spoken with their families a total of seven times. He had taken numerous briefings, engaging himself on the subject across months of turbulence in which he also oversaw the American response to the Hamas attack on Israel and Israel’s crushing retaliation in Gaza, the continued effort to supply weapons to Ukraine, the conviction of his son on federal gun charges and the vicissitudes of his own political future.

One of the detainees, the Wall Street Journal correspondent Evan Gershkovich, had been sentenced in a Russian court on false charges of espionage to 16 years in prison two days before Biden’s call to Slovenia’s prime minister. What the public did not know was that the sentence was essentially a ruse: Two days before that, after extended negotiations, Russia had agreed to swap Gershkovich and the others for several imprisoned Russians, including two spies who were being held in Slovenia.

This was the reason for Biden’s call to Golob. Slovenia required that their prisoners being released in this international exchange first be issued a pardon by the Slovenian government. That fact had apparently not been conveyed to the proper authorities in that country, and the window to consummate the deal was rapidly closing. When the White House national-security adviser, Jake Sullivan, learned about this, he spoke with a Slovenian official, who agreed that a phone call from the American president to the Slovenian prime minister might instantly end the impasse. Biden’s call to Golob proved to be the final key that locked the prisoner-swap deal in place.

Over the next 10 days, the president would be briefed on the complicated logistics of Russia, Slovenia, Germany, Norway and Poland all preparing to transfer their prisoners to the exchange point in Turkey. Then came the late evening of Aug. 1, when the plane carrying the three Americans landed at Joint Base Andrews. Awaiting their arrival on the tarmac were their families, along with Biden and Harris. After Paul Whelan, who had been held for nearly six years, disembarked to cheers, it was Gershkovich’s turn. The first to embrace him at the bottom of the stairs was Harris, now the Democratic nominee.

Biden extended his hand. Gershkovich took it before throwing his arm around the president. Then the president pointed a finger to direct the reporter’s attention to his awaiting family, as if to acknowledge what mattered most. It was a moment for Biden to savor, a moment at the height of the presidency, of what he most believed it was for and could do: to bring to bear all the friendships and alliances across the globe in order to right a wrong. He had brought Harris inside those negotiations alongside him. And now, late at night, they parted paths. She went forward onto the campaign trail. And he went home.

Source photograph for artwork above by Kelia Anne MacCluskey.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN COULSON) (MM26-MM27); Left: President Biden gave an 11-minute speech from the Oval Office after dropping out of the presidential race. Below: Biden announcing his first bid for the Democratic nomination alongside his family in 1987. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVAN VUCCI/REUTERS; CYNTHIA JOHNSON/GETTY IMAGES) (MM28-MM29); Right: With Barack Obama on the campaign trail in 2008. Below: In the Rose Garden after the Senate failed to pass gun-safety legislation in 2013. (PHOTOGRPAHS BY DOUG MILLLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM30-MM31); Left: Biden at the funeral of his son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015. Below: With Vice President Kamala Harris welcoming home Americans freed in a prisoner exchange with Russia in July. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PATRICK SEMANSKY/ASSOCIATED PRESS. BOTTOM: ERIC LEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM32-MM33); Above: At the debate with Donald Trump in Atlanta in June. Right: Boarding the flight back to Washington. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENNY HOLSTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES; HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM34-MM35) This article appeared in print on page MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33, MM34, MM35, MM42, MM43.

**Load-Date:** October 1, 2024

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[***Why the Protests Help Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY2-1S91-JBG3-64GK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 25; DAVID BROOKS

**Length:** 1308 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

These days, I think a lot about Donald Trump. When the monthly economic reports come out, I think: Will this help elect Donald Trump? And, I confess, I've started to ask myself the same question when I look at the current unrest on American college campuses over Israel and Gaza.

Now, I should say that I assume that most of the protesters are operating with the best of intentions -- to ease the suffering being endured by the Palestinian people.

But protests have unexpected political consequences. In the 1960s, for example, millions of young people were moved to protest the war in Vietnam, and history has vindicated their position. But Republicans were quick to use the excesses of the student protest movement to their advantage. In 1966, Ronald Reagan vowed ''to clean up the mess at Berkeley'' and was elected governor of California. In 1968, Richard Nixon celebrated the ''forgotten Americans -- the nonshouters; the nondemonstrators'' and was elected to the presidency. Far from leading to a new progressive era, the uprisings of the era were followed by what was arguably the most conservative period in American history.

This kind of popular backlash is not uncommon. For his latest book, ''If We Burn,'' the progressive journalist Vincent Bevins investigated 10 protest movements that occurred between 2010 and 2020 in places like Egypt, Turkey, Brazil, Ukraine and Hong Kong. He concluded that in seven of those cases, the results were ''worse than failure. Things went backward.''

In Egypt in 2011, for example, about a million protesters gathered in Tahrir Square, thrilling the world with their calls for reforms and freedom. President Hosni Mubarak was toppled, but democracy did not replace his autocratic rule; the Muslim Brotherhood did.

In June 2013, millions of Brazilians took to the streets demanding better schools, cheaper public transportation and political reform. But, Bevins laments, ''just a few years later, the country would be ruled by the most radically right-wing elected leader in the world, a man who openly called for a return to dictatorship and mass violence'' -- the über-Trumpian figure Jair Bolsonaro.

Why do these popular uprisings so often backfire? In his book, Bevins points to flaws in the way the protesters organize themselves. He notes that there are a few ways you can structure movements. The first is the Leninist way, in which power is concentrated in the supreme leader and his apparatus. Or there is the method used by the American civil rights movement, in which a network of hierarchically organized institutions work together for common ends, with clear leaders and clear followers.

Then there's the kind of movement we have in the age of the internet. Many of these protesters across the globe are suspicious of vertical lines of authority; they don't want to be told what to do by self-appointed leaders. They prefer leaderless, decentralized, digitally coordinated crowds, in which participants get to improvise their own thing.

This horizontal, anarchic method enables masses of people to mobilize quickly, even if they don't know one another. It is, however, built on the shaky assumption that if lots of people turn out, then somehow the movement will magically meet its goals.

Unfortunately, an unorganized, decentralized movement is going to be good at disruption but not good at building a new reality. As Bevins puts it, ''A diffuse group of individuals who come out to the streets for very different reasons cannot simply take power themselves.'' Instead groups that have traditional organizational structures, like the strongman populists, rise up vowing to end the anarchy and restore order.

Today's campus protesters share this weakness. When you have no formal organizational structure, you can't control the message. The most outlandish comments -- ''Zionists don't deserve to live'' -- get attention. When you have no formal organizational structure, you can't be clear on basic positions. Does the movement, for example, believe in a two-state solution, or does it want to eliminate Israel and ethnically cleanse the region?

Worse, the protests reinforce the class dynamics that have undermined the Democratic Party's prospects over the past few decades. As is well known, the Democrats have become the party of the educated and cultural elite, and the Republicans have become the party of the less educated masses. Students who attend places like Columbia and the University of Southern California are in the top echelons of cultural privilege.

If you operate in highly educated circles, it's easy to get the impression that young people are passionately engaged in the Gaza issue. But a recent Harvard Youth Poll asked Americans ages 18 to 29 which issues mattered to them most. ''Israel/Palestine'' ranked 15th out of 16 issues listed. Other issues like inflation, jobs, housing, health care and gun violence were much more pressing to most young Americans.

Especially since 2016, it's become clear that if you live in a university town or in one of the many cities along the coasts where highly educated people tend to congregate, you can't use your own experience to generalize about American politics. In fact, if you are guided by instincts and values honed in such places, you may not be sensitive to the ways your movement is alienating voters in the ***working-class*** areas of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan and Georgia. You may come across to them as privileged kids breaking the rules and getting away with it.

Over the past few decades, many universities have become more ideologically homogeneous and detached from the rest of the country. As my colleague Ross Douthat noted recently, Columbia students who study 20th-century thought in the ''core curriculum'' are fed a steady diet of writers like Frantz Fanon and Michel Foucault from one ideological perspective.

Writing in The Atlantic, George Packer quoted a letter that one Columbia student wrote to one of his professors: ''I think universities have essentially stopped minding the store, stopped engaging in any kind of debate or even conversation with the ideologies which have slowly crept into every bit of university life, without enough people of good conscience brave enough to question all the orthodoxies. So if you come to Columbia believing in 'decolonization' or what have you, it's genuinely not clear to me that you will ever have to reflect on this belief.''

These circles have become so insular that today's progressive fights tend to take place within progressive spaces, with progressive young protesters attempting to topple slightly less progressive university presidents or organization heads. These fights invariably divide the left and unify the right.

Over my career as a journalist, I've learned that when you're covering a rally, pay attention not just to protesters; pay attention to all those people who would never attend and are quietly disapproving. If you were covering the protests of the late 1960s, for example, you would have learned a lot more about the coming decades by interviewing George W. Bush than you would have by interviewing one of the era's protest celebrities like Abbie Hoffman. Hoffman was more photogenic in the moment, but Bush, and all those turned off by the protests, would turn out to be more consequential.

Over the past few days, the White House and Senator Chuck Schumer have become more critical of lawbreaking protests. They probably need to do a lot more of that if we're going to avoid ''Trump: The Sequel.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/opinion/student-protests-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/02/opinion/student-protests-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

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**End of Document**



[***Singapore’s Riches Grew Under Its Leader. So Did Discontent.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1J-SWP1-DXY4-X00C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2024 Tuesday 03:20 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; asia

**Length:** 1356 words

**Byline:** Sui-Lee Wee Sui-Lee Wee is the Southeast Asia bureau chief for The Times, overseeing coverage of 11 countries in the region.

**Highlight:** Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who is stepping down after nearly 20 years, oversaw astounding successes, but some Singaporeans want a different kind of politics.

**Body**

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who is stepping down after nearly 20 years, oversaw astounding successes, but some Singaporeans want a different kind of politics.

Singapore was once known as an affluent and strait-laced city-state. Today, it’s a glitzy international destination. It has hosted Taylor Swift concerts and Formula One night races. And it is substantially richer, per capita, than the United States.

That transformation happened under Lee Hsien Loong, the Southeast Asian country’s third prime minister. He made Singapore even more prosperous by largely following the semi-authoritarian and free-market model pioneered by his father, [*Lee Kuan Yew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html), the country’s first leader.

On Wednesday, Singapore gets a new leader for the first time in nearly 20 years. Mr. Lee, 72, is handing the office to his deputy, Lawrence Wong, 51. Their People’s Action Party has governed Singapore continuously for over six decades, and has had astounding successes. But there are concerns that the vaunted “Singapore model” is failing more and more people.

Singapore is [*one of the most expensive cities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) in the world, but it does not have a minimum wage. Housing prices have surged, and many Singaporeans say social mobility has dropped considerably. Others complain that freedom of expression is still tightly controlled, if less so than before. The strains are exacerbated by the need for overseas workers; about 40 percent of Singapore’s nearly six million people are not citizens.

Compared to his famously strict father, Mr. Lee showed flexibility and responsiveness to the public’s demands, but the P.A.P.’s popularity took a significant hit during his tenure. Nonetheless it remains, for now, firmly ensconced in power.

Mr. Wong has tried to project an everyman image: He was raised in public housing, did not attend the same elite schools as his predecessors, and loves playing the guitar. Mr. Lee will stay on as “senior minister,” as his father did after stepping down in 1990. Mr. Lee has said that his children are not interested in entering politics.

Earlier this month, Mr. Lee gave his last major address to the nation at an icon of the new Singapore, the [*Marina Bay Sands*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) casino resort.

“When I was sworn in as P.M., I promised to build a more inclusive Singapore: one where it is not every man for himself, but everyone working together to make things better for all of us,” he said.

A few hours later, a scene unfolded nearby that would have been unimaginable a few decades earlier. Hundreds had gathered for a rally at Speakers’ Corner, the one place in the city-state where Singaporeans can protest without a permit. Among them were delivery workers, bus drivers and health care workers, and many wore fluorescent yellow safety vests, evoking [*a French anti-government movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html).

Addressing the crowd, Kokila Annamalai, an activist, said the P.A.P.-led government had built systems that “have always protected the wealthy, not the ***working class***.” Singapore, she added, is “a playground for the rich while the poor are squeezed into tiny rental flats.”

The P.A.P. is one of the world’s most dominant political parties. Its ministers are paid high salaries, which the party says prevents corruption. It transformed Singapore from a backwater swamp into a first-world nation and a key cog in global maritime trade. Gross domestic product is [*about $83,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) per capita, compared with [*roughly $76,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) in the United States. The city-state, a major financial hub, deftly [*managed the coronavirus pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) and rising tensions between the United States and China.

But discontent has been growing. In the 2020 election, the P.A.P.’s share of the popular vote reached a near-record low of 61 percent, and the opposition won a record 10 seats in Parliament, out of 93 that were up for grabs.

Choo Yi Hung, 30, has never voted for Mr. Lee’s party. Two years after graduating from college with a degree in English language and linguistics, he delivers food and tutors students, making about $2,400 per month. He still lives with his parents; he would like his own apartment, but that is out of reach. He can’t buy a public housing flat from the government until he gets married or turns 35. Not that he can afford one.

Mr. Choo contrasts his predicament with that of his grandmother, who raised five children in the 1960s as an uneducated widow. Her descendants now have lifestyles that he described as “comfortably middle class,” with some owning condominiums and cars.

“I guess a lot of people will say: ‘Yeah, you grew up in a more developed country, a wealthier country,’” Mr. Choo said. “But I would argue that the opportunities for social mobility are far, far less.”

Mr. Lee once said that a two-party political system was “not workable” in Singapore. But in 2020, he formally established the position of opposition leader in Parliament and made concessions that allowed the opposition bloc to control 12 seats, more than the 10 it had won.

“He knew that if he wanted to maintain P.A.P.’s dominance — which I think he has largely done — he had to manage the pace of change,” said Eugene Tan, an associate professor of law at Singapore Management University.

On the social front, perhaps the most sweeping change that Mr. Lee made was [*repealing a colonial-era law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) that banned consensual sex between men.

“At least there’s a sense of ‘We can do this now,’ and that ultimately we are not criminals anymore,” said Leow Yangfa, the executive director of Oogachaga, an L.G.B.T.Q. rights group.

But Mr. Lee also moved to cement the definition of marriage as a heterosexual concept. Public discussion of race and religion remains tightly controlled, and rights groups say the government is still combative with its critics. In 2021, Singapore’s High Court ordered a blogger to pay Mr. Lee [*about $100,000 for defamation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html). (The New York Times Company apologized and paid fines [*in 2010*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) and [*in the mid-1990s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) to settle libel claims brought by Singaporean officials over opinion articles.)

Critics say the government has weaponized a law it says was designed to combat fake news.

“You never know when or what you’re going to say is going to run afoul of the authorities,” said Joel Tan, a playwright and podcaster.

In a statement, the Singapore government said it had increased engagement with the public. It also laid out its philosophy on free speech.

“Freedom of expression is an important part of Singapore’s constitution, but it does not confer on Singaporeans an unqualified right,” the statement said. “In situations where it affects the safety and security of people in Singapore, and the peace and harmony that Singapore enjoys, the government does and will intervene.”

For some, Mr. Wong’s appointment is encouraging.

“We don’t have a Lee anymore, but we also have a nontraditional type of leader,” said Sudhir Thomas Vadaketh, the editor in chief of Jom, an independent online magazine about Singapore. “I do like that.”

In recent years, Mr. Lee had to contend with a [*public feud with his siblings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html) and [*a series of scandals within the P.A.P*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/23/world/asia/lee-kuan-yew-founding-father-and-first-premier-of-singapore-dies-at-91.html). that sullied the squeaky-clean image the party projects. But he leaves office as a popular leader.

Zoe Tan recalled seeing Mr. Lee mingling with residents in Teck Ghee, a district in northern Singapore. “He’ll walk the market and is very humble,” Ms. Tan said. “He will take pictures with us.”

On two separate occasions, Ms. Tan said, she emailed the prime minister to ask for a grace period for housing payments. Both times, his office made quick arrangements to help her.

“I feel very sad Lee Hsien Loong is going to retire, I thought he was going to continue forever,” said Ms. Tan, who now works for Singapore’s Community Development Council.

In his speech at Marina Bay Sands, Mr. Lee suggested that political change could threaten Singapore’s prosperity.

“The system does not have to fail outright for Singapore to get into trouble,” he said. “If our politics becomes like other countries, we will end up worse than other countries.”

PHOTO: Lee Hsien Loong, right, Singapore’s ex-prime minister, congratulated Lawrence Wong, his successor. (POOL PHOTO BY EDGAR SU/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2024

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[***Ticket Splitting in Battlegrounds Gives Democrats Hope for Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1C-PR61-DXY4-X0PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

More than 7,000 U.A.W. workers at Daimler Truck plants in North Carolina are set to strike at midnight in a labor action that could carry political consequences.

Barring a last-minute breakthrough, more than 7,000 workers are set to walk off their truck and bus assembly lines on Friday night in the swing state of North Carolina, injecting the United Automobile Workers' new activism in the South directly into the 2024 election.

North Carolina has never been hospitable to organized labor, and the midnight strike at the North American subsidiary of the German industrial giant Daimler Truck has been greeted with trepidation by the state's Democratic establishment, which has long tried to project a moderate, pro-business bent.

But Shawn Fain, the U.A.W.'s brash new president, doesn't much care.

''We don't expect politicians to save the day, but at the end of the day, politicians have an obligation to the people that elect them,'' he said in an interview on Thursday, adding: ''It's our generation-defining moment. This is a time where politicians need to pick a side.''

In September, President Biden joined the picket line of the U.A.W.'s successful strike of the Big Three U.S. automakers, and Thursday, a White House spokeswoman, Robyn Patterson, indicated that the president could be equally aggressive if there was a Daimler walkout.

''President Biden strongly believes that those benefiting from our strong support for manufacturing made in American should work in good faith to do everything possible to ensure jobs -- including those in North Carolina -- remain well-paid, middle-class jobs, and that all workers have a fair and free choice to join a union if they choose,'' she said.

Democratic leaders in North Carolina, including Gov. Roy Cooper, were far more equivocal -- and deferential -- to Daimler Truck, a major employer in the state.

''North Carolina workers are the best and most productive in the world and need to be paid fairly,'' Mr. Cooper said in a statement on Thursday. ''We're proud that Daimler Trucks and its amazing U.A.W. workers are building the future of electric school bus travel right here in North Carolina, and I will continue to monitor the contract negotiations and urge a swift resolution.''

Josh Stein, the Democratic attorney general who is running to replace Governor Cooper, who is term-limited, was similarly careful in a statement.

''North Carolina workers deliver the best products in the world, and they deserve to be valued,'' he said. ''I've been in touch with both parties to encourage them to continue to work toward an agreement that supports workers and enables the company to continue to succeed.''

Making matters more delicate, one of the central grievances of the union is the electric vehicle transition pressed by Mr. Biden, in part through the $5 billion Clean School Bus Program, which has channeled $14 million worth of federal funds directly to Daimler's Thomas Built bus division in High Point, N.C., and millions more through school districts buying Thomas Built electric buses. The union says the workers at the High Point plant are among the lowest paid in the company.

''Our taxpayer dollars aren't being injected into these companies to assist with an E.V. transition just for a few people on top to get rich and leave everybody else behind,'' Mr. Fain said. ''There have to be better standards.''

To the U.A.W., a successful strike in the state with the second-lowest percentage of union workers in the country is vital. The six-week work stoppage at the three largest U.S. automakers last fall secured the largest pay raises in decades.

That helped propel U.A.W. organizers into the nonunionized South, where workers at a Volkswagen plant in Tennessee voted overwhelmingly last week to join the union, a breakthrough that created a beachhead for union organizers. Daimler Truck North America is unionized, but U.A.W. officials want to win record wage gains at Daimler's plants in Mount Holly, Cleveland, High Point and Gastonia, N.C., and parts distribution centers in Atlanta and Memphis ahead of an organizing vote next month at Mercedes-Benz in Alabama.

''Our fight at Daimler is intimately connected with something else happening in the South,'' Mr. Fain told members in a broadcast from Detroit on Tuesday night. ''Autoworkers at nonunion auto companies have launched a national movement to unionize.''

But Tennessee and Alabama are not in play in 2024. North Carolina is, and Democratic politicians there appear to be reticent hosts.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Stein have positioned themselves as centrists whose success has revolved around improving education and job training, and diversifying the economy in North Carolina, said Ferrel Guillory, a professor at the University of North Carolina.

''There's no particular upside, politically speaking, for center and center-left Democrats to come across in the same way that a Gretchen Whitmer would,'' he said, referring to the governor of heavily unionized Michigan. ''Cooper and Stein aren't anti-union, but they're not northern politicians either.''

In contrast, Mr. Biden has proclaimed himself the ''most pro-union president in history'' as he has collected union endorsements, the most recent coming on Wednesday from the North America's Building Trades Unions. If Mr. Biden steps in aggressively, he could find himself clashing with North Carolina's top Democrats when the state's highest offices are on the line.

A year ago, the Biden administration appeared to use the leverage provided by federal electric school bus subsidies to help the United Steelworkers unionize Blue Bird, a school bus company in Fort Valley, Ga. Two weeks before the union vote, the Environmental Protection Agency, which administers the Clean School Bus Program, demanded that recipients of federal subsidies detail the benefits they were offering their workers, and required the companies to ''remain neutral in any organizing campaign.''

This time, an E.P.A. spokesman said, the agency has not engaged with Daimler.

Mr. Fain said on Thursday that the union has worked with the administration, and he laid the responsibility for the possible strike at management's feet. But he was aware of the political ramifications of a major labor action in a swing state.

''You're either going to stand with the ***working-class*** people and the people that make this country move and make this world move, or they're going to stand with corporations and business leaders and the billionaires,'' he said. ''And if that's what they choose, then when it comes time to vote, we can see a shift.''

Pro-union groups want to see Democrats step up. Ahead of the Volkswagen vote in Chattanooga, Tenn., the Republican governors of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas issued a statement saying that unionizing would jeopardize auto jobs in their states. Erica Smiley, the executive director of Jobs With Justice, which helps workers seeking to unionize and bargain collectively, said on Thursday that Mr. Cooper should draw a contrast in North Carolina, which has been largely anti-union.

''Workers are doing their part to ask for democracy and to fight for it,'' she said. ''They're giving an opportunity for us and for politicians like Roy Cooper to right centuries of wrongs.''

A Daimler spokeswoman, Anja Weinert, said the company was continuing to negotiate ''in good faith.''

Any new contract should ''allow Daimler Truck North America to continue delivering the products that enable our customers to keep the world moving,'' she said.

The U.A.W. sees it differently. On Thursday, it filed four complaints with Mr. Biden's National Labor Relations Board, accusing Daimler Truck of retaliating against union organizers, interfering with collective bargaining, discriminating against union members and bargaining in bad faith.

The union, which has already endorsed the president's re-election, would clearly like help from Mr. Biden. In talking points ahead of the strike, the U.A.W. leaned into the electric school bus subsidies.

''The government is spending up to $345,000 per bus in taxpayer money,'' union officials wrote. ''Meanwhile, the workers who build the product see their quality of life going in the wrong direction. Members are asking: Why should American taxpayer dollars subsidize corporate greed?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/us/politics/uaw-strike-north-carolina.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/us/politics/uaw-strike-north-carolina.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Chris Myers, 52, a union construction worker in Hartford, Wis., won't vote for President Biden despite his infrastructure programs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA STATHAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Brian Dickinson, 25, from Las Vegas, said he was considering voting for Donald J. Trump and Democratic Senator Jacky Rosen. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARSHALL SCHEUTTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Going After the Middleman; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9R-CYG1-DXY4-X002-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

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**Byline:** Lauren Hirsch and Sarah Kessler Lauren Hirsch joined The Times from CNBC in 2020, covering deals and the biggest stories on Wall Street. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing.

**Highlight:** Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter, the Justice Department’s top antitrust official, talked with DealBook about the agency’s focus on middlemen companies and the challenge of A.I.

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They’ve zeroed in on what may sound like a nerdy legal theory, but one that could have huge implications: the tyranny of the intermediary, middleman companies that abuse their role by squeezing out competition or creating artificially expensive moats. The Justice Department has already made one high-profile strike along these lines, suing to [*break up Ticketmaster and Live Nation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html).

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Guessing what other names could be on the list has become something of a parlor game for dealmakers. A travel booking service that jacks up fees? A brokerage firm that an apartment building requires its renters to use? Shareholder advisory firms that can determine whether a deal goes through? Marketplaces that take a cut every time an NFT changes hands?

In search of more hints on what cases may be in the pipeline, DealBook’s Lauren Hirsch spoke with Kanter about cracking down on middlemen, the challenges of regulating artificial intelligence and what to do about corporate melting ice cubes.

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity.

The Times [*recently investigated*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) pharmacy benefit managers, the middlemen in health care, finding they drive up drug costs. The biggest P.B.M.s are owned by conglomerates: Optum, for example, is owned by UnitedHealth Group. CVS Caremark is owned by CVS Health.

How do you think about middlemen in health care?

Intermediaries are now commonplace in our health care economy, whether it’s an insurance company or a payer, whether it’s a P.B.M. or any other part of the health care stack where there are these often faceless intermediaries who are not only consuming a lot of money — or taking a lot of money out of the system — but making decisions about the course of care.

I’m sure they would argue it’s more efficient if it’s all in-house. P.B.M.s say their size is essential to counteract the companies that make brand-name drugs.

We’ve heard a lot over the last number of decades about what I sometimes call the “benevolent monopolist.” But the fact of the matter is our system is premised on the notion that competition yields better outcomes.

The D.O.J. is reportedly looking into the property management software company RealPage, which uses algorithmic pricing. Do you look at an A.I. tool communicating about pricing the same way you would humans colluding?

The facts matter. But I often say that if your dog bites somebody, you’re responsible for your dog biting somebody. If your A.I. fixes prices, you’re just as responsible.

If anything, the use of A.I. or algorithmic-based technologies should concern us more because it’s much easier to price-fix when you’re outsourcing it to an algorithm versus when you’re sharing manila envelopes in a smoke-filled room.

Is it easier or harder to prove collusion in the A.I. era, when there’s no manila envelope?

We’ve experienced these kinds of evolutions. This is another one, it’s a significant step forward, and it changes the game. I think it’s our job to keep pace with those technological developments.

What about dynamic pricing, which Wendy’s recently [*said it plans to test*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html). Could that be a point of concern?

Companies are getting better at figuring out how to maximize profits. The more information they have about who you are and what you’re willing to pay, the more they can charge you. I think the ability to do that on a personalized level leads to greater extraction of monopoly power than probably ever seen in history.

Speaking of A.I., the F.T.C. is [*looking into Microsoft’s investment in OpenAI*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html). Do you think OpenAI’s [*changing its corporate structure to a for-profit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) would impact how antitrust enforcers approached it?

Sometimes corporate form matters. But for the most part, the law looks at market realities. So if it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it’s not a chicken.

Some advisers say companies are being hurt because aggressive antitrust enforcement has killed their ability to do deals. They’re melting ice cubes, but they don’t quite fit the failing-firm defense.

The failing-firm defense has very strict criteria for a reason. One of the most significant and important of them involves answering the question: Is this the least anticompetitive purchaser? And many deals fail that test. Just because it might be a slow-melting ice cube doesn’t mean you should sell to the largest competitor on the market.

What if the alternate buyer is a private equity firm, which was [*an issue during the regional bank crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html)

If it’s private equity, it’s relevant to the extent that they have portfolio companies in the industry. It’s certainly relevant whether they will continue to operate the assets and compete in a full-throated way.

We’re in an election year. Should media outlets be able to coordinate on suppressing misinformation? In the past, we saw some platforms like the Apple and Google app stores and Amazon’s web services [*drop Parler*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html).

This is a thorny issue. We stand for the proposition that competition is good for our democracy and the free flow of information. There are no legal prohibitions, under the right instances, under the right circumstances, of efforts to improve safety. But it doesn’t need to come at the expense of competition.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Apple won’t release its artificial intelligence tech in the European Union over regulatory worries. The company said it would not [*introduce*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) Apple Intelligence and other features in the bloc this year, saying the bloc’s Digital Markets Act would weaken the security of its products. The European Commission said it welcomed Big Tech in Europe, provided that the companies comply with the rules.

The Washington Post’s new editor withdraws his application. Will Lewis, the embattled chief executive and publisher of The Post, told staff that [*Robert Winnett*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) would no longer take up the role that he was expected to assume after the November election. Lewis and Winnett have come under scrutiny for their journalistic record in their native Britain, including accusations that they employed unethical practices to obtain stories.

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Taxes on tips, by the numbers

Donald Trump’s proposal to eliminate taxes on tips is meant to appeal to the country’s massive service sector work force, as he and President Biden pitch for ***working-class*** and younger voters in crucial swing states. But the plan would add up to [*$250 billion to the federal deficit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) over 10 years, according to a report that the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget released this week. Here’s the story by the numbers.

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40 percent: Portion of Americans who oppose suggestions from businesses about how much to tip, according to [*a 2023 Pew Research Center survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html).

A hot office debate: Shorts at work

Nearly 100 million people spent part of this week [*under a heat advisory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html) as sweltering temperatures shattered records from the Midwest to New England. In many offices, the hot start to summer reignited a perennial debate: Is it OK to wear shorts to work?

The case against has long been the conventional wisdom: “Shorts tend to have a sporty, youthful feel to them,” said Ellie-Jean Royden, the author of an upcoming book, “How to Dress Your Best.” For that reason alone, she suggested, they are a no-no.

But office fashion has evolved since the pandemic, which introduced many former suit wearers to the comfort of working from home in sweatpants, and some stylists are making the case that shorts are now acceptable.

Jessica Sockel, who dresses clients at the personal styling service Stitch Fix, said she had noticed “more flexibility when it comes to incorporating styles — like shorts — that may have previously been considered off limits for the office.”

All of the personal styling experts polled by DealBook agreed that if you’re going to brave shorts at the office, there are some rules:

* Pick the right shorts. “Longer, loose shorts that mimic the look and feel of trousers will read as more professional,” said Shelby Goldfaden, the director of merchandising at the women’s clothing brand M.M.LaFleur. “Typically, they will have a pleat for volume and added interest.” Bermuda shorts, linen shorts and chino shorts are all good bets.

1. Dress them up. For women, Sockel suggests pairing shorts with a classic long-sleeve button-down, a blazer or a top that matches their color and fabric. For men, she recommends a crisp button-down, sport coat or knit polo. “A leather belt makes any bottom look sharper,” Goldfaden noted.

* Read the room. “If you’re on the fence, the safest way to gauge whether or not shorts feel acceptable is to assess how your peers are dressed in the office,” Sockel said.

Is baring your knees worth it? Dawnn Karen, an assistant professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology and a self-described “fashion psychologist,” told DealBook that being the only person in the office wearing shorts could lead others to see you as less competent. But if you can still produce high-quality work, she said, “you actually can break people’s perceptions and stereotypes.”

And in that case, she added, “maybe everyone will start wearing shorts in the office.”

DealBook wants to hear from you: Are shorts acceptable office-wear? Let us know [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html).

Thanks for reading! We’ll see you Monday.

We’d like your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/23/technology/ticketmaster-live-nation-lawsuit-antitrust.html).

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[***Going After the Middleman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9P-GHV1-DXY4-X0TF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 2066 words

**Byline:** By Lauren Hirsch and Sarah Kessler

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$23 billion: About how much tip income went unreported to the Internal Revenue Service in 2006, according to an estimate by the agency cited in a 2018 report by the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

91 percent: Growth in tips reported to the I.R.S. between 2008 to 2018. One reason for the explosion of gratuity? Tablet payment systems that prompt customers to tip more often and at higher percentages.

40 percent: Portion of Americans who oppose suggestions from businesses about how much to tip, according to a 2023 Pew Research Center survey.

A hot office debate: Shorts at work

Nearly 100 million people spent part of this week under a heat advisory as sweltering temperatures shattered records from the Midwest to New England. In many offices, the hot start to summer reignited a perennial debate: Is it OK to wear shorts to work?

The case against has long been the conventional wisdom: ''Shorts tend to have a sporty, youthful feel to them,'' said Ellie-Jean Royden, the author of an upcoming book, ''How to Dress Your Best.'' For that reason alone, she suggested, they are a no-no.

But office fashion has evolved since the pandemic, which introduced many former suit wearers to the comfort of working from home in sweatpants, and some stylists are making the case that shorts are now acceptable.

Jessica Sockel, who dresses clients at the personal styling service Stitch Fix, said she had noticed ''more flexibility when it comes to incorporating styles -- like shorts -- that may have previously been considered off limits for the office.''

All of the personal styling experts polled by DealBook agreed that if you're going to brave shorts at the office, there are some rules:

Pick the right shorts. ''Longer, loose shorts that mimic the look and feel of trousers will read as more professional,'' said Shelby Goldfaden, the director of merchandising at the women's clothing brand M.M.LaFleur. ''Typically, they will have a pleat for volume and added interest.'' Bermuda shorts, linen shorts and chino shorts are all good bets.

Dress them up. For women, Sockel suggests pairing shorts with a classic long-sleeve button-down, a blazer or a top that matches their color and fabric. For men, she recommends a crisp button-down, sport coat or knit polo. ''A leather belt makes any bottom look sharper,'' Goldfaden noted.

Read the room. ''If you're on the fence, the safest way to gauge whether or not shorts feel acceptable is to assess how your peers are dressed in the office,'' Sockel said.

Is baring your knees worth it? Dawnn Karen, an assistant professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology and a self-described ''fashion psychologist,'' told DealBook that being the only person in the office wearing shorts could lead others to see you as less competent. But if you can still produce high-quality work, she said, ''you actually can break people's perceptions and stereotypes.''

And in that case, she added, ''maybe everyone will start wearing shorts in the office.''

DealBook wants to hear from you: Are shorts acceptable office-wear? Let us know here.

Thanks for reading! We'll see you Monday.

We'd like your feedback. Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/business/dealbook/going-after-the-middleman.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/business/dealbook/going-after-the-middleman.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter said in a DealBook interview that ''our system is premised on the notion that competition yields better outcomes.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jose Luis Magana/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Has Your Relationship to School Attendance Changed Since the Pandemic?; Student Opinion***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPV-XGW1-DXY4-X0MW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 4, 2024 Thursday 03:04 EST

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**Section:** LEARNING

**Length:** 1035 words

**Byline:** Jeremy Engle Jeremy Engle joined The Learning Network as a staff editor in 2018 after spending more than 20 years as a classroom humanities and documentary-making teacher, professional developer and curriculum designer working with students and teachers across the country.

**Highlight:** School absences have exploded across the United States. What do you make of this trend?

**Body**

School absences have exploded across the United States. What do you make of this trend?

Take a look at the graph above. It shows rates of chronic absence in the United States since 2016. What do you notice? What do you wonder? What story does it tell about the state of education today? What headline would you write to capture the graph’s main idea?

Does the information in the graph surprise you? Or is the problem of absenteeism something you have observed in your own school and classrooms?

In “​[*Why School Absences Have ‘Exploded’ Almost Everywhere*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html),” Sarah Mervosh and Francesca Paris write about how the Covid-19 pandemic has changed families’ lives and the culture of education itself, making attendance feel optional for many:

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*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html), to [*enrollment*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html), to [*student behavior*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html).

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*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html). Chronic absence is typically defined as missing at least 10 percent of the school year, or about 18 days, for any reason.

The article continues:

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*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html).

Ms. Mervosh and Ms. Paris look at why students are missing school, describing how the “new calculus among families is complex and multifaceted”:

Across the country, students are staying home [*when sick*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html), not only with Covid-19, but also with more routine colds and viruses.

And [*more students*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html) 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.’”

Students, [*read the entire article*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html) and then tell us:

* Has your relationship to school changed since the pandemic began? Have you noticed any differences in your own attendance?

1. The article says that “the trends suggest that something fundamental has shifted in American childhood and the culture of school, in ways that may be long lasting.” Does that resonate with your own experiences? Do you agree with Katie Rosanbalm, a psychologist and associate research professor at Duke University, who said that “our relationship with school became optional”?
2. What is your reaction to the article and the accompanying graphs? Were you surprised to learn that about 26 percent of students were considered chronically absent last school year, up from 15 percent before the pandemic? Is the problem of absenteeism something you have observed in your own school and classrooms?
3. The article notes that student absenteeism is “a leading factor hindering the nation’s recovery from pandemic learning losses” and that “a rotating cast of absent classmates can negatively affect the achievement of even students who do show up.” How has the rise in absenteeism affected you?
4. Ms. Mervosh and Ms. Paris describe how schools are scrambling to improve attendance. The Ypsilanti school district in Michigan, they say in the article, has tried a bit of everything, including home visits, themed dress-up days and, after noticing a dip in attendance during winter months, warm clothing giveaways. What do you think of these strategies? What else do you think schools should do to address the problem?
5. How concerned should we be about the issue of chronic absenteeism? Is it the “new normal,” or just a minor, temporary problem? What do you think adults — parents, teachers, reporters and politicians — should know about young people and their relationship to school as we move forward?

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 and may appear in print.

[*Find more Student Opinion questions here.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html) Teachers, [*check out this guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/29/us/chronic-absences.html) to learn how you can incorporate these prompts into your classroom.

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

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***$1.1 Million Homes in Amsterdam; What you Get***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV2-TGG1-JBG3-619C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 19, 2024 Friday 18:49 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1230 words

**Byline:** Alison Gregor

**Highlight:** A three-bedroom houseboat, a duplex in a 19th-century brick building and a renovated townhouse with a roof terrace.

**Body**

A three-bedroom houseboat, a duplex in a 19th-century brick building and a renovated townhouse with a roof terrace.

IJburg | €995,000 ($1.05 million)

A three-bedroom houseboat in a floating gated community on Amsterdam’s waterfront

This three-bedroom houseboat is moored in a gated community in IJburg, an archipelago of several artificial islands with contemporary mixed-use developments on the Amsterdam waterfront. An enclosed-entrance house with a bicycle shed and mailboxes serves as a gateway to the houseboat community, where dinghies can be moored and launched onto the waterways to explore the city center and areas beyond.

IJburg has a sandy beach, about 12 minutes away by bike, which is a destination for water sports, including windsurfing. The area offers plenty of restaurants, cafes, shops, hotels and markets. There is a shopping center a few minutes away by foot, along with many schools and parking garages.

The trip to Amsterdam-Centrum can take about half an hour using various forms of public transportation, such as nearby Tram 26. By car or taxi, the trip takes less than 20 minutes.

Size: 2,303 square feet

Price per square foot: €432 ($463)

Indoors: This houseboat, built in 1962 and formerly used to transport cement, has a primary residence and an apartment with a separate entrance. It has a biomass boiler, underfloor heating and solar panels. Electricity, water, sewer and fiber-optic internet are available.

A walkway leads to the entrance of the cabin, which still has the captain’s chair, helm and instrument panel. Stairs descend to the dining room with wood floors and original windows. More stairs descend to the living room, full of natural light from portholes and skylights in the barrel ceiling, with a full open kitchen with breakfast bar. A Bullerjan wood stove provides warmth.

Off the kitchen, a door opens to a hallway that leads to two bedrooms, a half bathroom and laundry equipment. There is a beamed ceiling and porthole windows. The main bedroom has an en suite bath with a large tub and shower.

A separate entrance from the deck opens to a spiral staircase that descends into the apartment, which has a sleeping loft, a living room with a kitchen bar, and a bathroom with a shower and a sauna.

Outdoor space: The 4,263-square-foot plot includes a floating garden on the port side that is shared with the neighbors. A sloop, speedboat or yacht can be moored. The houseboat has ample lounging space on deck.

Costs: €462 ($492) a year. The leasehold is paid off through 2065.

Contact: Leon Rinsma, Honders/Alting, 031-85-330-1060, [*hondersalting.nl*](https://www.hondersalting.nl/woning/cas-oorthuyskade-29/)

Oosterpark | €1 million ($1.06 million)

A two-bedroom apartment in a 19th-century brick building overlooking Oosterpark

This two-bedroom apartment, on the top two floors of a four-story brick building, is adjacent to Oosterpark, just outside the central district in Amsterdam’s Oost borough. The apartment has north-facing views of the park — a lush urban respite laid out like an English garden and frequented by wild parakeets and herons — and south-facing views of the garden area of Tweede Oosterparkstraat.

Formerly part of an artists’ enclave, the 19th-century building sits next to the historic home of the painter and photographer Willem Arnold Witsen, who was friendly with members of the Tachtigers literary movement. The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam is around the corner, while the Artis Zoo and the Hortus Botanicus are a little over a mile away.

The neighborhood has plenty of cafes, restaurants, delicatessens and supermarkets. Nearby tram and bus lines make frequent trips to Amsterdam’s center. From Muiderpoort Station, a short walk away, trains can reach the central station in six minutes.

Size: 1,206 square feet

Price per square foot: €829 ($890)

Indoors: The two-bedroom apartment was thoroughly renovated in 2000, but retains historic details including original stained-glass windows, support beams, maple floors and ceiling heights of almost 10 feet.

A private entrance on the ground floor opens to a staircase ascending to the apartment’s hallway. Off the hallway are a large kitchen and dining area, a spacious living room and a half bathroom. The dining area has stained-glass windows and Juliet balconies overlooking Oosterpark. The kitchen with island is by Bulthaup. Ornate leaded glass doors open to the living room, which has large windows and a wood-burning stove.

The staircase continues to the top floor, which has two bedrooms and a bathroom with a tub and underfloor heating. One bedroom has views of Oosterpark; the other has folding doors along one side that open to a terrace. There is a tiled laundry room and a kitchenette on this floor.

Outdoor space: This home is situated on freehold land and has a 43-square-foot terrace with Tweede Oosterparkstraat views.

Costs: About €500 ($532) a year, including heat

Contact: Yvette Peters, DSTRCT Real Estate, 031-20-330-9454, [*dstrct.com*](https://www.hondersalting.nl/woning/cas-oorthuyskade-29/)

Jordaan | €995,000 ($1.05 million)

A renovated townhouse with three bedrooms and a roof terrace in Jordaan

This three-bedroom townhouse is situated in the centrally located Jordaan neighborhood. Historically a ***working-class*** area, the now upscale neighborhood is known for its pretty houses, petite cafes, galleries, bars and boutiques. Quaint canals bordered by elms slice through the district.

One of the primary attractions is the Anne Frank House, where the Frank family hid during World War II and Anne wrote her diary. There are other museums dedicated to such topics as houseboats, tulips, cheese and pianolas. Other sights include centuries-old churches, local gardens and traditional food markets, such as the Noordermarkt.

The tram is the easiest way to get around central Amsterdam, and sights including the Rijksmuseum, the Royal Palace and the Van Gogh Museum are easy to reach from Jordaan. The Nw. Willemsstraat tram and bus stop is about a five-minute walk from the house.

Size: 980 square feet

Price per square foot: €1,015 ($1,089)

Indoors: The townhouse was completely rebuilt from the foundation up in 2003, renovated in 2018 and upgraded in 2021 with a new kitchen and other features, such as custom wardrobes. Besides high-end finishes, the home is equipped with USB/TV/UTP connections, a modern intercom, touch dimmers and hotel switches.

The front door opens to a landing, with one staircase descending to a basement level with the kitchen and another staircase ascending to a mezzanine floor with the living area. Both floors are bathed in natural light from the double-height windows. The kitchen has brick floors, tiled walls, Leicht custom cabinetry, Bosch appliances and white marble countertops. There is a breakfast bar and a bathroom.

The second-floor living area has wood floors, built-in shelving and stairs going up to the next three levels of the home, each of which has a bedroom with en suite bath off a short hallway. The bathrooms have glass-walled showers, and each has its own boiler. All rooms are equipped with individual air-conditioning and heating.

Outdoor space: The townhouse sits on freehold land and has a 97-square-foot roof terrace with 360-degree views of the neighborhood.

Costs: About €390 ($419) a year in taxes

Contact: Sanne van der Zaag, Amsterdam Sotheby’s International Realty, 031-88-374-7000, [*sothebysrealty.com*](https://www.hondersalting.nl/woning/cas-oorthuyskade-29/)

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://www.hondersalting.nl/woning/cas-oorthuyskade-29/).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Honders/Alting FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 19, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Why the Protests Help Trump; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXX-R911-DXY4-X4SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 2, 2024 Thursday 19:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1312 words

**Byline:** David Brooks David Brooks has been a columnist with The Times since 2003. He is the author, most recently, of &amp;#8220;How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen.&amp;#8221;

**Highlight:** The excesses of social protest movements can play into the hands of candidates who promise to restore order.

**Body**

These days, I think a lot about Donald Trump. When the monthly economic reports come out, I think: Will this help elect Donald Trump? And, I confess, I’ve started to ask myself the same question when I look at the current unrest on American college campuses over Israel and Gaza.

Now, I should say that I assume that most of the protesters are operating with the best of intentions — to ease the suffering being endured by the Palestinian people.

But protests have unexpected political consequences. In the 1960s, for example, millions of young people were moved to protest the war in Vietnam, and history has vindicated their position. But Republicans were quick to use the excesses of the student protest movement to their advantage. In 1966, Ronald Reagan vowed “to clean up the mess at Berkeley” and was elected governor of California. In 1968, Richard Nixon celebrated the “forgotten Americans — the nonshouters; the nondemonstrators” and was elected to the presidency. Far from leading to a new progressive era, the uprisings of the era were followed by what was arguably the most conservative period in American history.

This kind of popular backlash is not uncommon. For his latest book, “If We Burn,” the progressive journalist Vincent Bevins investigated 10 protest movements that occurred between 2010 and 2020 in places like Egypt, Turkey, Brazil, Ukraine and Hong Kong. He concluded that in seven of those cases, the results were “worse than failure. Things went backward.”

In Egypt in 2011, for example, about a million protesters gathered in Tahrir Square, thrilling the world with their calls for reforms and freedom. President Hosni Mubarak was toppled, but democracy did not replace his autocratic rule; the Muslim Brotherhood did.

In June 2013, millions of Brazilians took to the streets demanding better schools, cheaper public transportation and political reform. But, Bevins laments, “just a few years later, the country would be ruled by the most radically right-wing elected leader in the world, a man who openly called for a return to dictatorship and mass violence” — the über-Trumpian figure Jair Bolsonaro.

Why do these popular uprisings so often backfire? In his book, Bevins points to flaws in the way the protesters organize themselves. He notes that there are a few ways you can structure movements. The first is the Leninist way, in which power is concentrated in the supreme leader and his apparatus. Or there is the method used by the American civil rights movement, in which a network of hierarchically organized institutions work together for common ends, with clear leaders and clear followers.

Then there’s the kind of movement we have in the age of the internet. Many of these protesters across the globe are suspicious of vertical lines of authority; they don’t want to be told what to do by self-appointed leaders. They prefer leaderless, decentralized, digitally coordinated crowds, in which participants get to improvise their own thing.

This horizontal, anarchic method enables masses of people to mobilize quickly, even if they don’t know one another. It is, however, built on the shaky assumption that if lots of people turn out, then somehow the movement will magically meet its goals.

Unfortunately, an unorganized, decentralized movement is going to be good at disruption but not good at building a new reality. As Bevins puts it, “A diffuse group of individuals who come out to the streets for very different reasons cannot simply take power themselves.” Instead groups that have traditional organizational structures, like the strongman populists, rise up vowing to end the anarchy and restore order.

Today’s campus protesters share this weakness. When you have no formal organizational structure, you can’t control the message. The most outlandish comments — “[*Zionists don’t deserve to live*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html)” — get attention. When you have no formal organizational structure, you can’t be clear on basic positions. Does the movement, for example, believe in a two-state solution, or does it want to eliminate Israel and ethnically cleanse the region?

Worse, the protests reinforce the class dynamics that have undermined the Democratic Party’s prospects over the past few decades. As is well known, the Democrats have become the party of the educated and cultural elite, and the Republicans have become the party of the less educated masses. Students who attend places like Columbia and the University of Southern California are in the top echelons of cultural privilege.

If you operate in highly educated circles, it’s easy to get the impression that young people are passionately engaged in the Gaza issue. But a recent Harvard Youth Poll asked Americans ages 18 to 29 which issues mattered to them most. “Israel/Palestine” [*ranked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html) 15th out of 16 issues listed. Other issues like inflation, jobs, housing, health care and gun violence were much more pressing to most young Americans.

Especially since 2016, it’s become clear that if you live in a university town or in one of the many cities along the coasts where highly educated people tend to congregate, you can’t use your own experience to generalize about American politics. In fact, if you are guided by instincts and values honed in such places, you may not be sensitive to the ways your movement is alienating voters in the ***working-class*** areas of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan and Georgia. You may come across to them as privileged kids breaking the rules and getting away with it.

Over the past few decades, many universities have become more ideologically homogeneous and detached from the rest of the country. As my colleague Ross Douthat [*noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html) recently, Columbia students who study 20th-century thought in the “core curriculum” are fed a steady diet of writers like Frantz Fanon and Michel Foucault from one ideological perspective.

Writing in The Atlantic, George Packer [*quoted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html) a letter that one Columbia student wrote to one of his professors: “I think universities have essentially stopped minding the store, stopped engaging in any kind of debate or even conversation with the ideologies which have slowly crept into every bit of university life, without enough people of good conscience brave enough to question all the orthodoxies. So if you come to Columbia believing in ‘decolonization’ or what have you, it’s genuinely not clear to me that you will ever have to reflect on this belief.”

These circles have become so insular that today’s progressive fights tend to take place within progressive spaces, with progressive young protesters attempting to topple slightly less progressive university presidents or organization heads. These fights invariably divide the left and unify the right.

Over my career as a journalist, I’ve learned that when you’re covering a rally, pay attention not just to protesters; pay attention to all those people who would never attend and are quietly disapproving. If you were covering the protests of the late 1960s, for example, you would have learned a lot more about the coming decades by interviewing George W. Bush than you would have by interviewing one of the era’s protest celebrities like Abbie Hoffman. Hoffman was more photogenic in the moment, but Bush, and all those turned off by the protests, would turn out to be more consequential.

Over the past few days, the White House and Senator Chuck Schumer have become more critical of lawbreaking protests. They probably need to do a lot more of that if we’re going to avoid “Trump: The Sequel.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.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/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html).

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html), [*Instagram*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html), [*TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html), [*WhatsApp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html), [*X*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html) and [*Threads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/29/nyregion/khymani-james-columbia-suspension.html).

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Sex, Drugs and Economics: The Double Life of a Conservative Gadfly; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C16-3YR1-DXY4-X03D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 13, 2024 Monday 20:36 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1391 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner Dwight Garner has been a book critic for The Times since 2008, and before that was an editor at the Book Review for a decade.

**Highlight:** The professor and social commentator Glenn Loury opens up about his vices in a candid new memoir.

**Body**

The professor and social commentator Glenn Loury opens up about his vices in a candid new memoir.

LATE ADMISSIONS: Confessions of a Black Conservative, by Glenn Loury

Glenn C. Loury’s new book, “Late Admissions,” is unlike any economist’s memoir I have ever read. Most don’t mention picking up streetwalkers. Or smoking crack in a faculty office at Harvard’s Kennedy School — or in an airplane at 30,000 feet. Or stealing a car. Or having sex on a beach in Israel with a mistress and attracting the attention of the Israel Defense Forces. Or later being arrested and charged with assaulting her. Or cuckolding a best friend.

Or abandoning children born out of wedlock. Or becoming estranged from the children that weren’t. Or writing computer code to win at blackjack. Or having a porn addiction. Or keeping a bachelor pleasure dome decorated with a bearskin rug, a brass four-poster bed and a fat marijuana plant. Or sidling around in a paisley smoking jacket with a matching ascot because it “radiated suave sophistication and Hefneresque cool.” Or sneaking into dorm rooms as a professor to suck face with much younger women. Or entering detox clinics, finding God when it was convenient, appearing on “The 700 Club,” then ditching God.

I’m surely missing a few things. My note-taking pen ran out of ink, shortly after I scribbled something about how all this would make for a monster screenplay if only there were a conservative Spike Lee to direct it.

Loury, 75, is a theoretical economist who has taught at Harvard and Brown, among other elite colleges and universities, though he is probably best known as a conservative Black (he prefers a lowercase “b”) commentator on social issues. The economist and the opinion-maker in him comprise one half of his person.

There is a second Glenn C. Loury, he proposes. This Loury needs people to know he is “a black Harvard professor who can hang on the corner.” He is a “Player,” a seducer, a ***working-class*** product of Chicago’s South Side, a pool shark and a “Master of the Universe” on multiple and interlocking levels. One of Loury’s uncles once told him that getting laid was all that mattered in life, and he took his uncle at his word.

“Late Admissions” passes the Orwell Test. “An autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful,” Orwell wrote. “A man who gives a good account of himself is probably lying, since any life when viewed from the inside is simply a series of defeats.” The annihilating level of detail in Loury’s book convinces you that he is aiming for straight talk, even if candor and honesty aren’t quite the same thing.

It’s among this book’s drawbacks that the two Glenn Lourys aren’t persuasively synthesized. “Late Admissions” is also about 100 pages too long. The writing can be haphazard, especially in the second half, when the clichés start to come two to a sentence. (“I wasn’t blazing any new trails in terms of technical economics down there in the basement, but I was getting my sea legs back.”)

He does not place himself on the continuum of Black conservative thought. Zora Neale Hurston and Albert Murray are just two of the names who come to mind when reading Loury, though they are unmentioned here. This book is a vat of grapes that does not transmogrify into wine. But being in the thick of America’s culture wars, as a Black intellectual on the political right, has yielded a vivid bounty. Screw the wine. Come for the grapes.

Loury grew up with his mother and his sister in Chicago; his father was absent. He was a loudmouth prodigy who entered high school at 12. He dropped out of college after getting his girlfriend pregnant. She was 15 and he was 17, working at a Burger King. They married.

Loury didn’t abandon his academic ambitions. In 1970, he was admitted to Northwestern University, where he was recognized as a major mathematics talent. He received his graduate degree from M.I.T. Along the way he benefited from the affirmative-action programs he would later criticize. His career was quickly airborne.

He first sensed his innate conservatism during the Vietnam War. It had a lot to do with social class. While still in school he was employed at a printing company in Chicago, and he felt in sync with the blue-collar men he worked beside. They had no time for protest. They were busy providing for their families. Loury felt an “uncrossable divide” between himself and draft-card burners.

At Northwestern, he bristled at wealthy Black students who, he felt, played at radicalism. “The thought that someday they’ll all sit around in their well-appointed living rooms and reminisce about their time in ‘the struggle’ makes me ill,” he writes. “This brother wouldn’t know struggle if it pinned him down and sat on his head. I know something about struggle.”

When he taught at the University of Michigan in the early 1980s, he frequently went into nearby Detroit, sometimes with his wife and sometimes, in “Player” mode, without her. The city was roiling with accusations of police brutality. In Washington, a House Judiciary subcommittee was holding hearings about it. Loury felt, conversely, that poverty and violent crime, not the police, were tearing the city apart.

Well, I think, what about the people whose rights are being violated by muggers, thieves and murderers? What about those little girls dodging rapists on their morning walks to school? Where is their House subcommittee?

Loury began writing about these issues for magazines including The New Republic, where he argued that, among other things, “the bottom stratum of the black community has compelling problems which can no longer be blamed solely on white racism, and which force us to confront fundamental failures in black society.” Why, he asks in this book, is he betraying his people because he thinks they need to get their act together?

He infuriated the left. He was called, among other things, the “pathetic black mascot of the right.” He was embraced by conservatives. Ronald Reagan’s education secretary, William Bennett, was on the verge of making Loury the department’s second in command when the F.B.I. discovered an apartment he kept for a secret girlfriend. Shortly after that, Loury was arrested at Harvard when this 23-year-old girlfriend accused him of assault. The charges, which he disputes, were dropped, but the story was national news.

At his lowest moments, he would double down on his addictions to drugs and women, because they were the only things that made him feel good about himself. He was married to his second wife, Linda Datcher Loury, for more than 25 years. Poignantly, after her death from cancer he found the heavily underlined self-help book that helped her get through his serial infidelities.

It hurt Loury that he was seldom embraced by what he called the “Negro Cognoscenti.” He did have a period, in the late 1990s, when he became a leading prison reform advocate and found himself in the left’s good graces. At the invitation of Henry Louis Gates, he gave the 2000 W.E.B. Du Bois Lectures at Harvard.

His instincts pulled him rightward again. He had an intuitive dislike for Barack Obama, whom he calls “little more than a political operator.” He asks, “What struggle did he have to overcome to get where he was?” When Donald J. Trump appeared, Loury watched his rallies with a grin on his face.

“I got visceral pleasure out of watching Trump standing onstage and hurling insults at smug, self-satisfied liberals and conservatives who had lost touch with the people whose support they relied upon.” He was dismayed by the events of Jan. 6, however, and says he was “wrong to grant Donald J. Trump the benefit of the doubt.”

Loury has left a lot of injured people in his wake. Miss Manners would need 15 mops to clean up his messes. His has been a smash-and-grab life. You don’t finish “Late Admissions” particularly liking Loury, or admiring him. He’s sorry about a lot of the things he’s done. But it’s to his credit that he doesn’t gin up a false catharsis, a ready-made “Today Show” moment of abiding contrition. He says it early on: “There are Players and there are suckers. I know which one I want to be.”

LATE ADMISSIONS: Confessions of a Black Conservative | By Glenn Loury | Norton | 428 pp. | $32.50

PHOTO: Glenn Loury in 2023. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BEA OYSTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR26.

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How and why we did this swing-state poll.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JX-F6T1-JBG3-6442-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 6, 2023 Monday 18:45 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 380 words

**Highlight:** The Times/Siena College polls were conducted in six swing states that are likely to decide the 2024 election.

**Body**

The Times/Siena College polls were conducted in six swing states that are likely to decide the 2024 election.

The Times/Siena College battleground polls released on Sunday and Monday were conducted over the past week in six swing states that are likely to decide the election: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Five of the states were won by Donald J. Trump in 2016 and then flipped by Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2020. Nevada, which has always been a close state, came down to less than one percentage point in the 2022 U.S. Senate election.

These states also contain some of the coalitions that will be crucial next fall: younger, more diverse voters in states like Arizona, Georgia and Nevada; and white ***working-class*** voters in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin who helped swing the election to Trump in 2016, and were central to Mr. Biden’s 2020 victory. They also provide some geographic diversity.

We interviewed 600 respondents in each state to ensure we had a large enough sample to speak to specific subgroups of voters within these states, including age, race and ethnicity, income, education level, and party affiliation. Taken together, these 3,600 respondents represent our largest sample size of swing state voters to date. This also includes more than 700 undecided voters, a group that will be even more consequential within these crucial states.

This is not the first time we have focused on swing states this early in an election cycle. In 2019, the poll explored a similar set of states, reflecting the battleground at the time. The political moment was slightly different, with Democrats in the thick of a nominating contest that split the party between liberals like Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren and a moderate in Mr. Biden — and Mr. Trump was the incumbent president to beat.

However, the goals of that poll were similar to this one. As Americans in key states across the political spectrum weigh their options, these polls shed light on the issues driving the election and voters’ appetites for the leading candidates.

PHOTO: Voting in Las Vegas during the 2022 midterm elections. The Senate race in Nevada was won by less than one percentage point. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Billionaires Are Reshaping the Presidential Race; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C9H-J6Y1-JBG3-61XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 21, 2024 Friday 10:51 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1863 words

**Byline:** Andrew Ross Sorkin, Ravi Mattu, Bernhard Warner, Sarah Kessler, Michael J. de la Merced, Lauren Hirsch and Ephrat Livni Andrew Ross Sorkin is a columnist and the founder and editor at large of DealBook. He is a co-anchor of CNBC&amp;#8217;s "Squawk Box" and the author of &amp;#8220;Too Big to Fail.&amp;#8221; He is also a co-creator of the Showtime drama series "Billions." Ravi Mattu is the managing editor of DealBook, based in London. He joined The New York Times in 2022 from the Financial Times, where he held a number of senior roles in Hong Kong and London. Bernhard Warner is a senior editor for DealBook, a newsletter from The Times, covering business trends, the economy and the markets. Sarah Kessler is an editor for the DealBook newsletter and writes features on business and how workplaces are changing. Michael J. de la Merced has covered global business and finance news for The Times since 2006. Lauren Hirsch joined The Times from CNBC in 2020, covering deals and the biggest stories on Wall Street. Ephrat Livni is a reporter for The Times&amp;#8217;s DealBook newsletter, based in Washington.

**Highlight:** Wealthy donors including Timothy Mellon helped Donald Trump’s campaign out-raise President Biden’s last month, but Democratic supporters are still spending.

**Body**

Wealthy donors including Timothy Mellon helped Donald Trump’s campaign out-raise President Biden’s last month, but Democratic supporters are still spending.

Billionaires versus billionaires

Donald Trump has rapidly erased his cash disadvantage against President Biden, [*out-raising his Democratic rival*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for a second straight month. Powering that fund-raising haul was a coterie of well-heeled supporters who donated millions shortly after the former president was convicted of 34 felony counts in New York.

But wealthy donors are still giving to Biden, and his campaign has used its big early financial lead to build a political machine in key battleground states. That means that success in November may come down in part to which side can keep tapping its billionaire backers for cash.

The numbers: Trump and the Republican National Committee raised $141 million last month, compared with Biden and the Democratic National Committee’s $85 million. And a partial count yesterday showed Trump and the R.N.C. had a war chest of at least $170 million, compared with $212 million for Biden and the D.N.C.

Wealthy conservatives are coming off the sidelines. Chief among them last month was [*Timothy Mellon*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), an heir to the Mellon fortune who donated $50 million to a pro-Trump super PAC. Shortly after receiving the money, the super PAC booked $100 million in ad spots through Labor Day.

It’s a reminder that many donors have gotten over any misgivings about Trump. That includes some who publicly denounced Trump’s attempts to overturn the 2020 election result and his role in the Jan. 6 Capitol riots. Among them: [*Steve Schwarzman of Blackstone*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), who cited economic, immigration and foreign policy concerns in announcing his support for Trump last month.

Many hope to get what they view as a more pro-business candidate in the White House, even though the stock market has soared under Biden. Trump’s current backers include financial and oil magnates hoping for deregulation.

They also include members of the crypto community: The [*Winklevoss twins*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), whose Gemini exchange has been [*under pressure from regulators*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), said yesterday that they each had donated $1 million in Bitcoin to back his campaign.

Biden donors are keeping up the fight. [*Mike Bloomberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) recently gave nearly $20 million to the president’s re-election efforts. And [*Melinda French Gates*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) gave Biden her first political endorsement: “This year’s election stands to be so enormously consequential for women and families that, this time, I can’t stay quiet,” she posted on X.

One question: How effectively is the money being spent? For Biden, the cash is being spent to build out an on-the-ground political machine and on TV advertising. But some Democratic figures (and the Trump campaign) note that the heavy ad spend hasn’t moved Biden’s poll numbers much.

For Trump, much of the cash is going to ads — but also to pay for his [*voluminous legal bills*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), expenses that blunt some of the renewed financial support he’s getting.

* In other campaign news: Trump was a [*guest on All-In*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the podcast hosted by the venture capitalists David Sacks and Chamath Palihapitiya.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

The Biden administration bans sales of Kaspersky Labs antivirus software in the U.S. The decision was based on fears that the Russian government’s influence on the Moscow-based company [*poses a national security risk*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). The Commerce Department also added Kaspersky to a trade restriction list, which could affect the company’s sales elsewhere.

The I.R.S. extends a freeze on a pandemic-era tax credit. The agency will continue to reject new claims for the [*Employee Retention Tax Credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), which was introduced in 2020 and allows businesses to collect up to $26,000 for each worker on its payroll. The decision followed internal analysis that found that a majority of outstanding claims appeared to be improper.

Anthropic introduces its latest competitor to OpenAI’s artificial intelligence model. The start-up unveiled [*Claude 3.5 Sonnet*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a new large-language model that it said beat the latest version of OpenAI’s GPT-4o in some benchmarks. The announcement is the latest example in the race among A.I. companies to release innovations, a contest that requires substantial funds and technical resources.

American Airlines flight attendants threaten to go on strike. The union representing the company’s 28,000 flight attendants said that it [*still hadn’t reached an agreement*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) on a new contract. It urged members to prepare for a walkout, though the union couldn’t call for one until it received permission from the National Mediation Board.

Taxing times

The Supreme Court yesterday [*upheld a Trump-era tax*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) on foreign income, a decision that experts said preserved the nation’s tax system.

But it also [*threw a potential lifeline*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) to Democratic efforts to tax the assets of the rich rather than just their income, writes The Times’s Jim Tankersley.

The context: A Washington State couple, backed by the free-market Competitive Enterprise Institute, argued that a provision of a 2017 law that imposed a one-time tax on Americans who own 10 percent or more of U.S.-owned or controlled foreign companies was unconstitutional. The justices rejected the challenge in a 7-to-2 ruling.

The decision was closely watched for how it might affect a potential wealth tax. President Biden and other Democrats have proposed raising [*taxes on the rich and companies*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). This could include taxing multimillionaires on unrealized gains as their assets increase in value, which conservative opponents argue would be unconstitutional.

Opinions in the case suggest a sharp divide among justices on such a tax. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson essentially laid out a blueprint for defending a wealth tax, writing that precedent showed decisions should be left to Congress and voters.

But Justice Amy Coney Barrett wrote that while she agreed to uphold this tax, she might not agree to do the same for a wealth tax.

Liberals and conservatives said they looked forward to such a fight:

* “The fight goes on to tax the rich, pass a wealth tax on ultra-millionaire and billionaires, and make the system more fair,” [*Senator Elizabeth Warren*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), Democrat of Massachusetts, wrote on X.

1. Dan Greenberg of the Competitive Enterprise Institute said those opposing a wealth tax would be “likely to receive a friendly audience from a substantial portion of the court.”

Tax is a political hot-button issue in this election. Donald Trump has promised to [*cut taxes*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) on the wealthy and corporations, while President Biden has spoken of raising taxes on the wealthy in an appeal to ***working-class*** voters and organized labor.

Treasury Secretary [*Janet Yellen*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) said this month that relying on tax cuts to boost growth isn’t good for workers. (But she has also [*pushed back*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) against calls for a global wealth tax.)

Can Europe shake off Swiftian inflation?

Over the past year, economists and analysts have been trying to quantify the economic impact of Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour, with the U.S. numbers running into the billions. Swift is now touring across Europe, where she’s [*creating a bonanza*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for the hotels, restaurants and other services in and around the cities where she’s playing.

But for Europe’s economists, there’s another important consideration: [*the effect she might have on inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), The Times’s Eshe Nelson writes for DealBook.

Central bankers in Europe are cutting interest rates, or are poised to, as inflation has slowed. But economists are paying attention to every data point because every potential bump in inflation data matters. That includes the Eras Tour, whose effect on airfare, hotels and restaurants could push up prices.

Policymakers want confirmation that their economies are on the right path, and recent [*surprises in services inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) are making them tread cautiously. Central bankers are scrutinizing any blip in pricing data to distinguish one-off effects from longer-lasting trends.

It’s all a matter of timing. The impact of Swift’s tour might only show up in a country’s inflation stats if an Eras show falls on the same date that national statisticians collect price data to compute inflation rates. If that happens, then the higher prices that Swifties are paying for hotels, for example, could affect the overall inflation rate.

This could happen in Britain in August, when Swift plays a second set of shows in London, according to Lucas Krishan, a strategist at TD Securities. He’s in a position to know: For the past eight months, Krishan and his colleagues have been tracking hotel prices across the country to replicate as closely as possible the information that would be collected by Britain’s statistics agency.

“All those tiny quirks are going to matter a lot,” Krishan said.

“The fish that got away was big.”

— Masa Son, the founder of SoftBank, on [*selling his company’s stake in Nvidia*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) in 2019, missing out on the meteoric rise in the chip company’s stock price. (SoftBank would have reaped some $150 billion in additional paper gains.) Speaking at SoftBank’s annual meeting today, Son also said that he had wanted to buy Nvidia in 2016, but couldn’t make a deal work.

In the papers

Some of the academic research that caught our eye this week, summarized in one sentence:

* Most ordinary people think that [*higher interest rates cause inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), a challenge for policymakers to explain traditional inflation-fighting actions. (Alberto Binetti, Francesco Nuzzi and Stefanie Stantcheva)

1. New rules to [*govern global trade*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) are needed that take climate change, political power imbalances and rapid technological innovation into account. (Martin Guzman and Joseph Stiglitz)
2. Companies are letting algorithms [*set their prices dynamicall*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)y and nobody knows what happens next. (Martin Spann et al.)
3. How to interpret a 13th-century Florentine ledger, one of the earliest examples of [*double-entry accounting*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). (Alan Sangster)
4. A [*regression analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) of people’s well-being and their Zodiac signs found “no robust associations” with career or financial satisfaction. (Mohsen Joshanloo, a Libran)

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* Revolut, the SoftBank-backed digital bank and Europe’s most valuable start-up, is reportedly weighing a stock sale at a [*$40 billion valuation*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook). (FT)

1. [*Tony Ressler*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook), the co-founder of the investment firm Ares Management, is said to be among the financiers who bought a collective 10 percent stake in Bill Ackman’s Pershing Square. (Bloomberg)

Elections, politics and policy

* Senate Democrats have opened an investigation into [*Jared Kushner’s Saudi-backed private equity firm*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) over potential violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act. (Axios)

1. The F.D.I.C. [*rejected Citi’s “living will,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) the banking giant’s plan to wind itself down should catastrophe strike. (FT)

Best of the rest

* A close look at pharmacy benefit managers — the middlemen like Caremark and Express Scripts that have been accused of [*driving up drug prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook) for millions of people, employers and the government. (NYT)

1. “China Is Mixed on Elon Musk — but [*They Sure Love His Mom*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook)” (WSJ)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/dealbook).

PHOTO: Donald Trump trailed President Biden in fund-raising for months but has closed the gap. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***$42.60***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JP-B6S1-JBG3-62MT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 5, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 377 words

**Byline:** By Marie Solis

**Body**

The six-week strike by the United Automobile Workers union ended with a tentative deal on Monday at General Motors, the last of the Big Three Detroit automakers to resolve its differences at the bargaining table. While the full details have not yet been released for G.M. or Stellantis, which reached a tentative agreement with the U.A.W. last Saturday, the bones of the deal with Ford suggest big gains for workers: Under the new contract, the top rate for production would increase 33 percent, to $42.60 an hour from $32. That higher hourly wage would allow someone working 40 hours a week to make a base salary of more than $88,000 a year.

Higher wages were at the core of the U.A.W.'s contract fights, and the union and the automakers remained far apart at first. Shawn Fain, the union's president, had demanded 40 percent wage increases over four years -- in line, he said, with how much the salaries of the companies' chief executives had increased over that same time. The automakers initially countered with proposed raises of 14 or 16 percent, and Ford said that it wouldn't raise its offer. But after the union gradually expanded its walkouts, increasing pressure on the three companies, each agreed to a 25 percent raise over the life of the contract.

So did the automakers miscalculate? The deals could be the latest example of how employers across industries appear to have been caught flat-footed by the more assertive tactics of new union leaders. And while it's not clear yet how the autoworkers' deal will reverberate through other sectors, Mr. Fain has framed it as a broad victory for the ***working class***.

''We just need a random to make the point and make her feel bad.''

Casey Bloys, the chairman of HBO, in recently unearthed comments to a colleague about finding ''a mole'' who could attack television critics through fake Twitter accounts.

''The full effects of our tightening have yet to be felt.''

Jerome H. Powell, the Federal Reserve chair, said at a news conference after the central bank's decision to hold interest rates steady.

''The fury in my DMs was unparalleled.''

Deb Perelman, the best-selling cookbook author and creator of Smitten Kitchen, describing the pressure to speak out on the Israel-Hamas war on social media.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/business/the-big-number-42-60.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/business/the-big-number-42-60.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BU2.

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Working for Denmark, One Role at a Time***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJK-FT71-DXY4-X00W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 15, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 13; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 927 words

**Byline:** By Mike Hale

**Body**

Hunting murderers, delivering babies or guarding inmates, Sofie Grabol plays women who try to keep their country safe.

If you watch much Danish television -- and that is an option these days, wherever you happen to live -- a question rises: How would Denmark function without Sofie Grabol?

In ''The Killing'' (''Forbrydelsen''), which put Danish TV on the map and made Grabol a star back in 2007, the country's justice system was held together by her morose detective, Sarah Lund. In her two most recent series, Grabol expands her public-service portfolio. In ''The Shift'' she plays Ella, the head midwife at Copenhagen's best public pediatric hospital. And in ''Prisoner'' she's Miriam, a reform-minded guard at a prison threatened with closing. Whether she is catching Denmark's murderers, delivering its babies or minding its inmates, Grabol is indispensable.

To follow Grabol's progress through the Danish infrastructure, the American viewer will need the streaming service MHz Choice (free trials currently available), which carries ''The Shift'' (2022) and premiered ''Prisoner'' (2023) this week. The three seasons of ''The Killing'' are on the streamer Topic, which will merge with MHz Choice on April 1, consolidating this segment of Grabol's catalog. (She also plays a public official in the eerie British series ''Fortitude,'' available on multiple streamers.)

The shows centered on Sarah, Ella and Miriam are quite different -- ''The Killing'' is a lurid crime thriller, ''The Shift,'' a big-hearted medical soap opera, ''Prisoner,'' a grim social-problem drama -- but the characters have much in common.

Each is aggrieved but indomitable, a ***working-class*** Sisyphus pushing ahead through institutional neglect and cowardice -- a very squeaky wheel at work -- while weighed down by personal trauma. Each is estranged from the only close family member still in her life; two become reluctant surrogate mothers to the women their troubled sons get pregnant. Perhaps Grabol has been typecast over the years, or has typecast herself. Or maybe the grouchy, standoffish, self-righteous pain in the butt is a character that resonates in Denmark.

Grabol is an economical actor, able to communicate a world of emotion through her liquid eyes and seemingly offhand movements. (She's also blessed with a notably dramatic pair of eyebrows.) She makes all of these bottled-up, difficult women believable and, even when they push everyone away, sympathetic -- you can see the layers of pain and weariness that they shelter behind and occasionally break through.

The shows share a sensibility with Grabol's performances; they are unflashy, meticulously made, superior examples of their genres. (''The Killing'' was a trendsetter in transferring the outré violence of 1990s movie murderers into TV, but it presented their offenses with a Nordic reserve.)

''The Shift'' is a forthright hospital melodrama, and there's even an amusing twist on ''Grey's Anatomy'' in which Ella is followed around the hospital by her mother, an orderly who breaks into meetings to pester her daughter about her health and love life. The mostly female midwives serve the dramatic function that nurses often do in American stories, putting up with and bailing out the mostly male doctors. The show's theme is the chronic understaffing of midwives in the public hospital, while its running motif is the staff's obsession with food, from the critical attention paid to the pastries in the break room to the prescribing of toast and tea for all noncritical medical issues.

But in the hands of its creator and showrunner, the talented director Lone Scherfig (''An Education''), ''The Shift'' (the Danish title translates as ''Day and Night'') has a winning sincerity and humor; it isn't cloying, and it doesn't traffic in bad outcomes to gin up emotion. Tricky story lines -- a midwife who doubts herself when she's gaslighted by a struggling doctor, another who sees her patients through the lens of her own history of abuse -- are handled delicately. Ella fights for more midwives and finds herself pregnant at 46 (by a married doctor), but she's chipper and funny, and Grabol gets to show a slightly softer side.

''Prisoner,'' created and written by Kim Fupz Aakeson (who, in the small world of Danish TV, wrote two episodes of ''The Shift''), takes the critique of the country's social welfare in a much darker direction. It is structured as a tragedy: Three guards at a failing prison all have fatal vulnerabilities -- a secret love life, a junkie son with debts, a friendship with an inmate -- that drag them down into a tense and cleverly worked-out spiral of lies and vengeance.

Grabol is primary in the ensemble of ''The Shift,'' but in ''Prisoner'' the attention is evenly split among her, Youssef Wayne Hvidtfeldt as the idealistic new guard Sammi and David Dencik as the compromised veteran Henrik. It's largely Dencik's show. Henrik, who vacillates between surly anger and puppy dog neediness, is the most interesting character, and Dencik (''Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy,'' ''Chernobyl'') is terrific.

The beat-downs, drug runs, racial animosities and inevitable spasm of group violence are all familiar, but in its six fairly tight episodes, ''Prisoner'' makes them credible and achieves a fair measure of the documentary-style grittiness it goes for. Grabol's Miriam goes down some dark roads -- she's not the justice-obsessed grind of ''The Killing'' or the dedicated crusader of ''The Shift'' -- but her heart is in the right place. Denmark is still lucky to have her.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/13/arts/television/sofie-grabol-prisoner.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/13/arts/television/sofie-grabol-prisoner.html)

**Graphic**

PHTOO: Sofie Grabol in ''Prisoner.'' She is one of Denmark's pre-eminent public servants on TV. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM WALLENSTEN/MHZ CHOICE) This article appeared in print on page C13.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In Blue-Collar States, 'Our Brand Is Pretty Damaged,' Democrats Find***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MY-NY51-JBG3-60JC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 26, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1223 words

**Byline:** By Katie Glueck

**Body**

The report found that the economy was a bigger problem than cultural issues for the party in the industrial Midwest. It also found hopeful signs for Democrats.

Last fall, Democrats pulled off significant victories across the industrial Midwest, reasserting power in a region that had become increasingly favorable to Republicans -- but the party still faces stark and sometimes worsening challenges in largely white, ***working-class*** counties that will help decide the outcome of the next presidential election.

That is among the conclusions of a new, unsparing report from Democratic strategists on their party's vulnerabilities and opportunities in towns and counties hit hard by deindustrialization in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In the 2016 election, Democrats faced staggering setbacks in many of these areas, but the party has worked to regain ground since.

''Our brand is pretty damaged in these places,'' warns the report, a project of the nonprofit group American Family Voices, which is assessing blue-collar voters outside major metropolitan areas and refers to the places in the study as ''Factory Towns.'' ''Voters are both cynical about what we are saying now, and unaware of all that Democrats have accomplished that will directly benefit them.''

But, the report adds, pointing to recent legislative achievements, ''Democrats have their best opportunity to make progress in these counties in a generation.''

The report, which also highlights Republican branding problems, was written by the longtime Democratic strategist Mike Lux and draws on polling conducted in December by Lake Research Partners, helmed by Celinda Lake, a veteran party pollster.

It notes that President Biden -- a Scranton, Pa., native who has long stressed his affinity for blue-collar voters -- won in 2020 in part by reducing the margins of Democratic losses in some of these areas, while Democrats up and down the ballot notched a number of outright victories last year. But Democrats also had major disappointments in the region, like Wisconsin's Senate race, and Iowa remains an especially bleak spot for the party.

Given that track record, the report argues for early organizing investments in these areas. It also acknowledges the difficulties of changing negative perceptions in a fractured and diminished news environment, and at an intensely polarized moment for the country.

Here's a look at some key findings and recommendations:

Culture aside, the economy is the bigger problem for Democrats.

Republicans have sought to brand Democrats as extreme on cultural issues like policing and education. But according to this report, Democrats are more vulnerable on matters of spending, taxes, government waste and inflation.

While ''***working-class*** folks find urban and intellectual 'wokeism' annoying,'' the report says, ''economic issues are driving the problems of Democrats in non-metro ***working-class*** counties far more than the culture war.''

A Democratic economic message -- focused on attacking corporate greed, investing in manufacturing in the United States and pursuing an economy that works for all rather than the ''wealthy few'' -- tested better, in the Lake Research Partners polling, than a Republican message that claimed liberals were undermining ''our way of life.''

A Republican message focused on the economy narrowly outperformed the Democratic message on that subject. But results varied by state, with voters in Michigan, for instance, being more receptive to the Democratic pitch than in other states, and notable warning signs for Democrats in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Lux wrote that ''voters in these counties, including swing voters, independents, and even some Democrats, are viewing the economy along a much more Republican narrative than they were a year ago,'' a sign that television ads that pummeled Mr. Biden over inflation during the midterms had broken through, even as inflation has now slowed slightly.

Both parties have branding problems.

Many voters studied in these ''Factory Towns'' are ''deeply, profoundly cynical'' about both political parties, the report found, with swing voters holding the impression that both Democrats and Republicans are ''too extreme.''

The sharpest argument against Republicans, the polling found, was that ''they are on the side of corporations and C.E.O.s and they work for the wealthy.''

Democrats, meantime, are seen as ''as weak and ineffective, especially when it comes to economics,'' the report said.

The data found that Democrats struggled with the perception that a Democratic economic plan ''doesn't exist or doesn't help regular people's own working families,'' a claim that resonated with some base Democratic and independent voters.

Democrats do have economic plans, but voters don't always know it.

Democrats can point to a long list of measures that they say are meant to improve Americans' economic standing, including the Inflation Reduction Act and huge investments in U.S. chip-making efforts.

The challenge, the report said, is to ensure that voters know about those developments, and that they can connect the legislation to their daily lives.

''Most voters are not following national news or the details of the legislation, and many haven't yet seen the impact on their lives,'' the report said. ''***Working-class*** voters outside of the big metro areas are still leading pretty tough lives, so we have to balance the story of our success on policy with the recognition of those hard times.''

The report also urged Democrats to combine traditional economic populist messaging and policies with strong emphasis on support for small businesses, as well as unions.

''Most ***working-class*** folks very much think of small-business owners as part of the ***working class***,'' the report said. It added, ''Democrats and progressive issue advocates should always talk about how much they care about small businesses doing well, and should be specific about the ways they want to help the small-business community.''

2024 looks competitive -- and there's early interest in DeSantis.

Early head-to-head presidential matchups between Mr. Biden and former President Donald J. Trump, and Mr. Biden and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, show a tight hypothetical race in these counties.

''A considerable number of voters here will have at least an initial tendency to vote for Trump even if they don't like him all that well,'' the report acknowledged.

Still, a close race at this point is notable given how much Democrats have struggled in some of these counties.

Perhaps more revealing are the favorability numbers. Just 39 percent of voters had a favorable view of Mr. Trump, while 56 percent had an unfavorable view. Mr. Biden's overall numbers were better -- 46 percent favorable to 52 percent unfavorable -- though among voters with strong opinions, both men had weak numbers, and the ratings varied considerably by state.

There is keen interest in Mr. DeSantis, who is generally regarded as Mr. Trump's strongest potential Republican rival even though he has not announced a presidential campaign and remains untested on the national stage.

He had a net positive favorability rating -- 42 percent to 37 percent -- and was ''surprisingly well known, with only a fifth of voters having no impression of him,'' the report said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/22/us/politics/democrats-factory-towns-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/22/us/politics/democrats-factory-towns-2024.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A factory in Scranton, Pa. Democratic strategists surveyed voters in major industrial states, including Pennsylvania, where there were warning signs for Democrats. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Sunak Announces U.K. Elections for July 4, Months Earlier Than Expected***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C35-1XB1-JBG3-64C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 10:57 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1470 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:** The opposition Labour Party has been ahead in most polls by double digits in recent months.

**Body**

The opposition Labour Party has been ahead in most polls by double digits in recent months.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of Britain on Wednesday called a snap general election for July 4, throwing the fate of his embattled Conservative Party to a restless British public that appears eager for change after 14 years of Conservative government.

Mr. Sunak’s surprise announcement, from a rain-spattered lectern in front of 10 Downing Street, was the starting gun for six weeks of campaigning that will render a verdict on a party that has led Britain since Barack Obama was America’s president. But the Tories have discarded four prime ministers in eight years, lurching through the serial chaos of Brexit, the coronavirus pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis.

With the opposition Labour Party [*ahead in most polls by double digits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) for the last 18 months, a [*Conservative defeat has come to assume an air of inevitability*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html). For all that, Mr. Sunak is calculating that Britain has had just enough good news in recent days — including glimmers of [*fresh economic growth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) and the [*lowest inflation rate in three years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) — that his party might be able to cling to power.

“Now is the moment for Britain to choose its future,” Mr. Sunak said as pelting rain drenched his suit jacket. The choice for voters, he said, was to “build on the future you’ve made or risk going back to square one.”

Political analysts, opposition leaders and members of Mr. Sunak’s own party agree that the electoral mountain he must climb is Himalayan. Burdened by a weak economy, a calamitous foray into trickle-down tax policies, and successive scandals, the Tories have seemed exhausted and adrift, split by internal feuds and fatalistic about their future. They face a threat on the right from the anti-immigrant Reform U.K. party.

“The Conservatives are facing a kind of extinction-level event,” said Matthew Goodwin, a professor of politics at the University of Kent who has advised Boris Johnson and other party leaders. “They look like they’re going to suffer an even [*bigger defeat than they did to Tony Blair in 1997*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html).”

Other political analysts were more cautious: Some pointed out that in 1992, the Conservative government of Prime Minister John Major overcame a polling deficit to eke out a narrow victory and stay in power.

Still, since the party won by a landslide in the 2019 elections on the slogan “Get Brexit done,” the Tories have bled support among young people, traditional Conservative voters in England’s south and southwest and, crucially, ***working-class*** voters in the industrial Midlands and north of England, whose backing in 2019 was key to then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s landmark victory.

Many are disillusioned by the scandals of Mr. Johnson’s tenure, including Downing Street social gatherings that breached Covid lockdown rules, and even more so by the fiasco of his successor, [*Liz Truss, who was toppled after just 44 days*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html), following proposed tax cuts that rattled financial markets, caused the pound to torpedo and fractured the party’s reputation for economic competence.

While Mr. Sunak, 44, steadied the markets and has run a more stable government than his predecessors, critics say he never developed a convincing strategy to recharge the country’s growth. Nor did he fulfill two other promises: to cut waiting times in Britain’s National Health Service and to stop the stream of small boats carrying asylum seekers across the English Channel.

Many voters in the “red wall” districts — so called because of Labour’s campaigning color — appear ready to return to their roots in the party. Under the competent, if uncharismatic, leadership of Keir Starmer, Labour has shaken off the shadow of his left-wing predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr. Starmer, a former government prosecutor, has methodically overhauled Labour, purging allies of Mr. Corbyn, uprooting a legacy of anti-Semitism in the party’s ranks and pulling its economic policies more to the center.

“We’ve changed the Labour Party, returned it once more to the service of working people,” Mr. Starmer said in remarks after Mr. Sunak. “Together we can stop the chaos, turn the page, start to rebuild Britain and change our country.”

Under British law, Mr. Sunak was obliged to hold an election by January 2025. Political analysts had expected him to wait until the fall to allow more time for the economy to recover. But in the wake of an announcement on Wednesday that [*inflation had fallen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) to an annual rate of 2.3 percent — just above the Bank of England’s target of 2 percent — he may have gambled that the news was as good as it is going to get.

Mr. Sunak may also be calculating that the government can put a first flight carrying asylum seekers to Rwanda in the air before the vote. That would allow him to claim progress on another of his priorities.

The Rwanda policy, which involves deporting asylum seekers to the African nation without first hearing their cases, has been condemned by rights campaigners, the courts and opposition leaders — and it has drawn a raft of legal challenges. But Mr. Sunak has made it a centerpiece of his agenda, because it is popular with the Conservative Party’s political base.

In his remarks, Mr. Sunak tried to paint Labour as lacking an agenda. “I don’t know what they offer — and in truth, I don’t think you do either,” he said. But his message was occasionally drowned out by the sound of Labour’s 1997 campaign anthem, “Things Can Only Get Better,” which blared from a demonstrator’s loudspeaker in a nearby street.

For Mr. Sunak, the son of parents of Indian heritage who emigrated from British colonial East Africa six decades ago, the decision to go to the voters earlier than expected is not completely out of character. In July 2022, he broke with Mr. Johnson by resigning as chancellor of the Exchequer, triggering the loss of cabinet support that ultimately forced Mr. Johnson out of power.

Mr. Sunak then mounted a spirited bid for party leader, losing out to Ms. Truss in a vote of the party’s 170,000 or so members. After Ms. Truss’s economic policies backfired and she was forced to resign, Mr. Sunak re-emerged to win the next contest, this time held only among members of Parliament from the Conservative Party.

Mr. Sunak inherited a forbidding set of problems: double-digit inflation, a stagnant economy and rising interest rates, which stung people in the form of higher rates on their home mortgages. Waiting times at the National Health Service, which is depleted after years of fiscal austerity, stretched into months.

Mr. Sunak had some early successes, including an agreement with the European Union that largely defused a trade impasse over Northern Ireland. He exceeded his goal of halving the inflation rate, which was 11.1 percent when he took over in October 2022. And there are signs that the economy is starting to turn.

Britain had an [*unexpectedly strong exit from a shallow recession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) at the start of this year, with the economy growing 0.6 percent. The International Monetary Fund upgraded its growth forecast for the country this year, while praising the actions of the government and the central bank.

But the good news could be fleeting. Inflation is expected to bounce back up again in the second half of this year, and April’s number was not as low as economists expected. That has led investors to rethink how soon the Bank of England might cut rates, almost ruling out that they will be lowered next month. Even expectations that rates will come down in August have diminished.

At the same time, the scope for further [*tax cuts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/world/europe/uk-rishi-sunak-conservative-conference.html) before the election has narrowed. Data published on Wednesday showed that public borrowing was up. And the I.M.F. warned the government against tax cuts, arguing that Britain had huge demands for more public spending to improve its public services, including the N.H.S., while also needing to stabilize its public debt.

Ultimately, analysts said, it was these bottom-line realities that drove Mr. Sunak’s decision to go to the voters now, and it is the economy, rather than anything else, that will decide his, and his party’s, fate.

“You can talk about Partygate and Truss,” said Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, referring to Mr. Johnson’s lockdown-breaching social gatherings. “But in the end, the factors that are going to decide this election are anemic growth and a state that is collapsing before our eyes.”

Eshe Nelson contributed reporting.

Eshe Nelson contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announcing the election date on Wednesday. At left, Labour Party leader Keir Starmer last week. Bottom left, a May 8 protest over Britain’s immigration policy. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES; LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES; BENJAMIN CREMEL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2024

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[***Paperback Row***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-MDX1-JBG3-635G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 7, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 20

**Length:** 401 words

**Byline:** By Miguel Salazar

**Body**

THE MIDNIGHT LIBRARY, by Matt Haig. (Penguin, 304 pp., $19.) In Haig's blockbuster novel, a 35-year-old woman's struggle with depression thrusts her into a liminal space between life and death: a library where each book is a doorway to an alternate life. In her review, Karen Joy Fowler described the book as an ''absorbing but comfortable read, imaginative in the details if familiar in its outline.''

YOU HAVE A FRIEND IN 10A: Stories, by Maggie Shipstead. (Vintage, 272 pp., $17.) According to our reviewer, Lizzy Harding, Shipstead is ''an intrepid chronicler of sundry experiences.'' The novelist showcases her range in these 10 stories, which capture the happenings at an artists' colony in Ireland, a honeymoon turned horror tale in the Romanian foothills and more.

THE LAST DAYS OF ROGER FEDERER: And Other Endings, by Geoff Dyer. (Picador, 304 pp., $18.) Dyer reckons with aging as he contemplates J.M.W. Turner's final paintings, Beethoven's late quartets, Nietzsche's idea of the Eternal Recurrence and more. Our critic, Jennifer Szalai, said the book ''often reads like an assemblage of notes,'' though with flashes of gorgeous writing and marvelous criticism.

YOUNG MUNGO, by Douglas Stuart. (Grove, 416 pp., $18.) Like Stuart's Booker Prize-winning debut, his second novel vividly evokes the claustrophobia of life with an alcoholic parent, telling the story of two boys who fall in love despite homophobic and sectarian forces in ***working-class*** Glasgow. Our reviewer, Yen Pham, praised Stuart's ''marvelous attunement to the poetry in the unlovely and the mundane.''

ALL IN: An Autobiography, by Billie Jean King with Johnette Howard and Maryanne Vollers. (Vintage, 528 pp., $19.) King reflects on her activism and struggle to make tennis a more inclusive and equal sport in her latest (and third) memoir. It is both a call to arms and a deeply personal account, tracing her ***working-class*** beginnings in Long Beach, Calif.; early battles with the tennis establishment; and her role in the passage of Title IX.

TRAILED: One Woman's Quest to Solve the Shenandoah Murders, by Kathryn Miles. (Algonquin, 320 pp., $17.99.) Miles draws attention to the crime rate in national parks as she revisits the botched homicide investigation of two young women who were killed on a camping trip in Virginia's Shenandoah National Park in 1996. This was one of the Book Review's best true-crime books of 2022.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/17/books/review/new-paperbacks.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/17/books/review/new-paperbacks.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR20.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***'Plan Ahead': Traffic Reporter on Congestion After Key's Collapse***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPD-Y0V1-JBG3-60N1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 2, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:** By Adeel Hassan

**Body**

Tony Thornton looks ahead to years of crowded tunnels and highways with the loss of the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

When the Francis Scott Key Bridge was built in the 1970s, it was intended to relieve congestion from the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel.

Forty-seven years later, some of that traffic will be diverted back to the tunnel after the bridge collapsed last week upon being struck by a giant cargo ship, killing six construction workers. With the rebuilding process expected to take several years, that most likely means years of gridlock for commuters, travelers and truck drivers.

The flow of traffic through and around the city is taking on new patterns and shapes, as the 35,000 cars and trucks that once crossed the Key Bridge's four lanes try alternative routes. The 1.6-mile bridge was the final link on Interstate 695, which loops around the city and is known as the Baltimore Beltway. The crossing's overall structure, including its connecting approaches, was almost 11 miles long.

The bridge, a major north-south artery in one of the nation's busiest ports, had connected ***working-class*** communities on either side, and it was used mainly by commuters. A former mayor called it the city's ''blue-collar bridge.''

Most of its local drivers will merge with some of the out-of-town drivers traversing the city through the Harbor Tunnel, on Interstate 895, and the Fort McHenry Tunnel, on Interstate 95, underneath the city's harbor and closer to Baltimore's downtown.

As a morning traffic reporter for WBAL News Radio, Tony Thornton will be keeping a close eye on the snarled commutes. Mr. Thornton, who has lived in the area for about 40 years, uses scanners and cameras to get bird's-eye views of the highways and byways.

He spoke to The Times about the Key Bridge, what drivers are facing and what may be ahead. This interview has been condensed and lightly edited for clarity.

What was it like on the morning of the bridge collapse?

I did my first traffic report, probably around 4:05. I figured out that they were detouring traffic off exit ramps prior to the bridge on each side. And I figured out where those points were. So now traffic had to be diverted to the tunnels.

And that's tricky because the commercial trucks and tractor-trailers that have hazardous materials can't go through the tunnels. They were used to taking the Francis Scott Key Bridge. So now I have to actually tell truckers the height or the clearance of the tunnel and direct them to the other side of the beltway. You're talking about an additional 20 to 25 miles just for that.

What have you seen on the roads since then?

An increase in traffic, in the tunnels, especially heading south into the tunnels. And that traffic delay has been starting earlier than usual.

So, typically, we would see a little bit of congestion in the tunnels around 8 in the morning. I've seen that now as early as 6 in the morning. It actually almost triples the time it takes for traffic to go through the tunnels.

What I've seen on cameras, if you're heading into the city, approaching the tunnels, is a lot more police presence. Just on the side, just making sure traffic is OK and responding to any accident or incident quickly. You can tell they want to clear the roadway off as quickly as possible, to make sure that traffic continues to flow. It's a lot, lot quicker than they have been in the past.

Who has been most affected?

A lot of the commercial truckers, a lot of people that work in the ports, a lot of residents that live in that area rely on that bridge. It's more just workers, folks that are heading to the ports, or folks that are looking to utilize the industry.

And it's a 24/7 type of industry, too, so it's always busy. It was just fortunate that at the time of the bridge collapse the Maryland Department of Transportation was able to stop traffic, and it wasn't as busy at 1:30 in the morning. If that happened an hour and a half later, who knows?

What are you looking ahead to this week?

It was spring break for a lot of the local school districts last week. I'm looking for more of an impact. You already have the normal traffic volume around the beltway. That's probably going to begin to double now because schools are going to be back.

During a typical school day, I will see traffic starting to build around the Baltimore Beltway around between 6:00 and 6:30. But I anticipate not only having that traffic, but also having additional traffic going through both of the tunnels now, because that's going to be the way of life.

So now you're going to have that increased traffic around the beltway, as well as increased traffic in both the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel and the Fort McHenry Tunnel. And, as you know, Interstate 95 comes from New Jersey, down through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington. It's all just one big, big, big corridor there.

What's your advice for drivers?

You're going to have to plan ahead. If your normal commute takes you 30 to 45 minutes, you may have to leave 10 to 15 minutes earlier than usual because of the traffic delays starting earlier now.

For truck drivers or commercial drivers, just heed the hazardous materials warnings. If you have any type of hazardous materials, they will literally turn you around, and you have to exit onto a side road, and you will not be able to take the tunnels.

Have some patience. It is a very, very scenic ride driving through Baltimore city. You'll be able to see a lot of the sights, whether you see the stadiums, Camden Yards, M&T Bank Stadium, you'll see the skyline of Baltimore. Baltimore is a very beautiful city.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/01/us/baltimore-bridge-traffic-congestion.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/01/us/baltimore-bridge-traffic-congestion.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: TONY THORNTON, a morning traffic reporter for WBAL News Radio, in Baltimore.

Tony Thornton, a longtime traffic reporter, uses scanners and cameras to get bird's-eye views of the highways and byways around Baltimore. Right, members of a road crew installed signs redirecting vehicles from the northern approach to the Francis Scott Key Bridge last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE KIEHART FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Los Angeles Gallery That Found a Market in Great Experimentalists***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BF0-GHS1-JBG3-62MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 27, 2024 Tuesday 22:05 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1814 words

**Byline:** Zachary Small Zachary Small is a Times reporter writing about the art world&amp;#8217;s relationship to money, politics and technology.

**Highlight:** Commonwealth and Council started in a one-bedroom apartment. Now their artists are heading to the Whitney Biennial, Venice Biennale and museums during Frieze.

**Body**

Commonwealth and Council started in a one-bedroom apartment. Now their artists are heading to the Whitney Biennial, Venice Biennale and museums during Frieze.

It’s not that Young Chung and Kibum Kim dislike traditional paintings, but as the owners of the gallery Commonwealth and Council in Los Angeles, they prefer artworks that can spin your head sideways. Their roster of 39 artists are known for eccentric practices that sometimes involve welding spacecrafts, transforming into a human disco ball and studying tree bark.

“I don’t think our clients would even know what to do if we started representing traditional painters,” Kim said, explaining that Commonwealth has supported artists who consider figurative art as a flawed approach to the thorny complexities of identity politics. Instead, the gallery has nurtured a new generation of West Coast conceptualists who apply the philosophical rigor and satirical swagger of the 1960s and ’70s to contemporary issues like marginalization and decolonization.

Chung, a longtime L.A. resident, and Kim, who is from South Korea, laid that groundwork over the last decade while running on the tight margins of the art business. Survival was never guaranteed — and still isn’t.

The gallery nearly closed in 2020 and its owners have been reluctant to increase overhead costs during the fizzy market of recent years. But the two dealers have persisted in taking risks on what they call “unsellable” artists who, for example, transform their bodies into cyborgian low riders ([*Rafa Esparza*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza)); feature electric netting and dried blood in their works ([*P. Staff*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza)); and hire men off Craigslist to [*gyrate like horseback-riding cowboys*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) on film ([*Kenneth Tam*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza)).

Over the years, they built a cult following of influential curators and museum directors. And in 2022, the gallery opened a second location in Mexico City. But creating a market for great experimentalists is always challenging. Most works at their L.A. gallery — a modest spot near a liquor store and a Korean BBQ restaurant — cost $20,000 to $50,000.

“We are in the red,” Chung said. “We are always trying to catch up.”

Kim suggested it was part of being in the art market. “If you drew up a business plan for a gallery and went to a bank, it would be a reckless banker who gives that loan,” he explained. “I think the model is meant to be precarious, because we should all make programming decisions to champion the art that we believe in.”

If the gallery lacks financial security, it compensates with influence. The dealers represent seven artists who will be included in the Whitney Biennial in March and the Venice Biennale in April. In the meantime, employees are preparing for Frieze Los Angeles, starting Feb. 29, when seven additional artists will be featured in museum exhibits across the city, including a [*solo show*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) for Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

“There are less and less galleries that have identities,” said Johanna Burton, the museum’s director. “And I really admire that Commonwealth has an actual program that is locally rooted but globally relevant.”

Burton was referring to changes in the market over the last five years, when mega-galleries have [*aggressively courted*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) artists from smaller competitors. And rising costs have strained the traditional business model for galleries wanting a tightly curated program of artists working toward a common goal. That model helped define the last 40 years, when a gallery like Metro Pictures, [*which closed in 2021*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza), could establish an era like the Pictures Generation by showing artists like Cindy Sherman, Robert Longo and Sherrie Levine.

Burton viewed Commonwealth as reviving the programmatic model through its representation of artists whose biographies weave through the West Coast and reflect the region’s economic and racial diversity. Nearly three-quarters of the roster identify as persons of color and half the artists are queer; many said they were raised in ***working-class*** families.

“There is a ***working-class*** aesthetic that is particular to Los Angeles,” observed [*Meg Onli*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza), one of the curators behind this year’s edition of the Whitney Biennial. She said that artists from the gallery — Clarissa Tossin, Eddie Rodolfo Aparicio, Lotus L. Kang, Nikita Gale and P. Staff — were early additions to her shortlist for the influential show because of their interest in class and identity.

“People always say nobody is from Los Angeles,” Onli said. “But Los Angeles has been a hub of art-making forever. I have been really interested in it as a site of creative production, particularly for people of color.”

Kim said the gallery often chooses artists who represent marginalized communities. “When identity is addressed more directly, it is often with a critical edge, like the work of [*American Artist*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza),” whose media include sculpture, software and video, he said. American Artist, who is a lecturer at Yale School of Art, “interrogates traces of systemic racism in digital technology, a supposedly neutral arena but which often does not recognize darker faces,” Kim added.

Chung originally hosted the gallery in his one-bedroom apartment in Historic Filipinotown, staging a 2010 exhibition with [*Gala Porras-Kim,*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) whose projects often involve deep research and institutional critiques.

“When we met, she was a PDF artist. The studio visit was on a laptop. But her ideas were remarkable,” Chung said.

Chung was an artist himself, who had a day job doing clerical work at a psychoanalyst’s office. But during the evenings, he would take Porras-Kim around the neighborhood.

“I made a map based on his life,” Porras-Kim said. “We went up and down the streets of Koreatown. He showed me where his dad used to take him to get rice cakes.”

The exhibition was a success as a proof of concept, though not financially. And so the gallery slowly professionalized as Chung expanded the circle of friends he exhibited. In 2011, he moved the gallery into a second-floor space about a mile away from his apartment and acquired a business license in 2014.

Three years later, artists staged an intervention, asking Chung to create an official roster by turning his artist-run operation into a real gallery.

Around the same time, Kibum Kim joined the gallery to focus on the financial side, allowing Chung to make the artistic program his priority. The duo have gained a cult following with collectors looking to buy from dealers who really know L.A.

“My gut feeling is that they represent the city better than anyone else in town,” said [*Jarl Mohn,*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) a venture capitalist and former chief executive of National Public Radio until 2019. He counted at least 13 works in his collection from Commonwealth artists, including photographs by [*Guadalupe Rosales*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) and [*Beatriz Cortez*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza), who has a sculpture that will be in the Venice Biennale — a project that Mohn is financially supporting.

“This is not a casual affair,” Mohn said, laughing.

Commonwealth has also taken the unusual step of asking collectors and museums to donate the industry-standard 10 percent discounts they get on purchases toward a flexible fund that benefits artists. The idea came from a group effort between the gallery and its artists, when the gallery raised over $100,000 for health-care emergencies during the pandemic.

“I decided to participate because not all artist boats rise and fall at the same time,” said [*Miyoung Lee,*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza) a collector who is a vice chair of the Whitney Museum of American Art. “I hadn’t heard of this at other places. At some big galleries, artists don’t even meet, let alone support each other.”

Lee said that Commonwealth belonged to a crop of small galleries that really support emerging artists — the West Coast equivalent to 47 Canal, a gallery on New York’s Lower East Side founded in 2011 by the artist Margaret Lee and the dealer Oliver Newton that became popular by representing artists like Josh Kline, Anicka Yi and Elle Pérez.

Collectors cited the dedication to difficult work. In her New York apartment, Lee has a 2022 installation by P. Staff called “Love Life,” which features a holographic fan that projects poetry as its blades twirl in circles.

“It is not the easiest work to live with,” Lee admitted, “But the gallery is not going after the pretty things that sell. They are looking at the quality of the artist.”

Kim has made frequent trips to South Korea, the wellspring of a budding market for international collectors. The gallery co-represents the artist Suki Seokyeong Kang, who lives in Seoul. Her minimal and modular works include the 2018 sculpture, “Grandmother Tower — tow,” a haphazard column of dish racks mimicking her grandmother’s aging back.

The last time Kim lived with his parents in South Korea was 1993, whereupon he moved to the United States with his grandmother to seek a better life.

“Which is why I was very invested in traditional success in my younger years,” Kim said, referencing careers as a banker, lawyer and even a New York Times [*contributor*](https://www.queer-art.org/rafa-esparza). “Through the gallery, I have a more holistically rich life.”

And a life of unexpected challenges. The gallery could become a victim of its own success, as the price of participating in art fairs and museum exhibitions continues to rise.

“We would love the luxury of time,” Kim said. “For artists today, the whole run of their career toward a big show can happen in three to four years. Ideally, we would have a bit longer so they can hone their art-making, experiment and make some mistakes.”

And even as its roster expands and its core artists become famous, the gallery is holding onto its hippy-dippy California charm. The dealership’s website is still organized under sections like “now,” “tomorrow,” “together” and “trust.” The gallerists are reachable via email addresses that start with “we” and “ours.”

But as Lee, the collector, said, “Scale is always an issue. How many artists can you add without losing the magic? The challenge will be how they stay special, viable.”

PHOTOS: Young Chung, left, and Kibum Kim, owners of the Commonwealth and Council gallery in Los Angeles, with works by Carmen Argote and Jesse Chun. Artists they represent will take part in the Whitney Biennial and the Venice Biennale. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX WELSH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C1); Top, “Corpo RanfLA: Terra Cruiser,” a performance by the artist Rafa Esparza, who is represented by the Los Angeles gallery Commonwealth and Council. Above, the artists championed by the gallery’s owners reflect the region’s economic and racial diversity. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MYLEEN HOLLERO; RUBEN DIAZ); Below, from left: works by Gala Porras-Kim that were included in the 2019 Whitney Biennial; and a detail of “In Ekstase,” 2023, by P. Staff. Both artists work with Commonwealth and Council, which aims to nurture and promote a new generation of West Coast conceptualists. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RON AMSTUTZ; P. STAFF AND KUNSTHALLE BASEL; PHOTO BY PHILIPP HÄNGE) (C2) This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Biden Bashes Trump as a Pawn of Billionaires as He Lays Out His Tax Plan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTG-PF01-JBG3-600K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1081 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Nehamas Nicholas Nehamas is a Times political reporter covering the re-election campaign of President Biden.

**Highlight:** Speaking in Scranton, Pa., his hometown, the president used a speech about economic fairness as a new avenue of attack against his Republican rival, who was in a courtroom two hours away.

**Body**

Speaking in Scranton, Pa., his hometown, the president used a speech about economic fairness as a new avenue of attack against his Republican rival, who was in a courtroom two hours away.

President Biden delivered a flurry of attacks on former President Donald J. Trump during a Tuesday speech in Pennsylvania about taxes and economic policy, painting his Republican rival as a puppet of plutocrats who had ignored the ***working class***.

Visiting his hometown, Scranton, in a top battleground state that he has visited more often than any other, Mr. Biden laid out his vision for a fairer tax code, including raising rates on the wealthy and corporations and using the money to expand the economy and help working families.

But in a speech that signaled the Biden campaign’s intention to make the 2024 election a referendum on his polarizing Republican opponent, the president returned again and again to Mr. Trump. His jabs at his predecessor took aim at the former president’s wealthy upbringing, his friendships with billionaires and his 2017 tax cuts that [*disproportionately benefited America’s upper crust*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html).

“Donald Trump looks at the world differently than you and me,” Mr. Biden told a crowd of more than a hundred supporters at a cultural center in Scranton. “He wakes up in the morning at Mar-a-Lago thinking about himself. How he can help his billionaire friends gain power and control, and force their extreme agenda on the rest of us.”

Aiming for a clear contrast, Mr. Biden laid out his proposals: Expanding the child tax credit. Providing a $10,000 tax credit for first-time home buyers. Raising the minimum tax rate for billionaires and corporations.

“We know the best way to build an economy is from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down,” Mr. Biden said. “Because when you do that, the poor have a ladder up and the middle class does well and the wealthy still do very well. We all do well.”

Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, disputed that Mr. Biden’s plan would benefit Americans.

“President Trump proudly passed the largest tax CUTS in history,” she said in a statement. “Joe Biden is proposing the largest tax HIKE ever.”

Throughout his speech, Mr. Biden wove in criticism of Mr. Trump — including a needling joke about [*the falling shares*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) in the former president’s social media company.

“If Trump’s stock in Truth Social — his company — drops any lower, he might do better under my tax plan than his,” Mr. Biden said.

The president’s speech kicked off a three-day swing through Pennsylvania, with appearances scheduled in Pittsburgh on Wednesday and Philadelphia on Thursday. The trip came as Mr. [*Trump appeared in court*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) in Manhattan for the second straight day as his first criminal trial begins — a striking split screen welcomed by the Biden campaign.

Since Mr. Biden delivered [*his State of the Union address*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) last month, his campaign has shifted into general election mode, after a far quieter start to the year. In recent weeks, he has visited every major battleground state. His campaign has opened more than 100 field offices around the nation in coordination with state Democratic parties, spent $30 million in an advertising blitz and built a significant fund-raising advantage over Mr. Trump. An Arizona court decision that upheld a near-total abortion ban dating to 1864 [*has also energized Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html).

As those efforts have taken place, Mr. Biden’s depressed poll numbers have improved, with a survey this month by The New York Times and Siena College finding that he had [*nearly erased*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) Mr. Trump’s lead nationwide. The president had trailed Mr. Trump by five percentage points in the previous survey. Much of Mr. Biden’s recovery came from his improved standing among traditional Democratic voters, a signal that his campaign’s messaging efforts may be having an effect.

Still, Mr. Biden faces an uphill battle in convincing Americans that he is a better steward of the nation’s economy than Mr. Trump. In the latest Times/Siena poll, 64 percent of voters said they approved of how Mr. Trump had handled the economy while in office. Only 34 percent said the same of Mr. Biden, the [*poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) found.

The tax cuts that Mr. Trump signed into law in 2017 have [*proved unpopular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) with voters. And while they increased investment in the U.S. economy and delivered a modest pay bump for workers, they [*fell short*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) of Republican promises and are adding greatly to the national debt, one academic study found. Many parts of those tax cuts are set to expire next year.

Mr. Biden pledged in his speech that under his plan, nobody earning less than $400,000 would see their taxes go up.

“I hope you’re able to make $400,000,” he told the crowd. “I never did.”

As Mr. Biden spoke, Mr. Trump was seated in a Manhattan courtroom roughly two hours away, watching the selection of the first jurors in his trial. Mr. Biden has generally refrained from mentioning the charges Mr. Trump faces in four criminal cases, but his campaign did [*troll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/30/business/trump-tax-cuts-beat-gilti.html) the former president on social media for appearing to fall asleep during proceedings on Monday.

Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, did not answer when asked if Mr. Biden was watching the Trump trial or being briefed on it.

“His focus is on the American people,” she said during a briefing with reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Scranton.

But even in his hometown, Mr. Biden could not avoid the anger that many Democrats feel over his support for Israel during its war in Gaza. As Mr. Biden walked up the steps of his childhood home, a crowd of protesters down the block waved Palestinian flags and chanted “Genocide Joe has got to go” through a loudspeaker.

Mr. Biden is set to speak on Wednesday at the headquarters of the United Steelworkers union in Pittsburgh before visiting Philadelphia on Thursday. He narrowly defeated Mr. Trump in Pennsylvania in 2020, and winning the state is crucial to his re-election strategy.

Democratic allies of Mr. Biden said they thought his message on economic fairness would resonate in Pennsylvania.

“Scranton versus Fifth Avenue was one of the most successful frames from the 2020 campaign,” said Representative Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania, referring to the location of Trump Tower in Manhattan. “You’re going to see more of it in this campaign.”

PHOTO: During his speech in Scranton, Pa., President Biden called for raising taxes on the wealthy and expanding the child tax credit. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How to Cajole A Blasé Voter Off the Fence***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4K-8DK1-JBG3-602C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1644 words

**Byline:** By Katie Glueck and Nick Corasaniti

**Body**

Politically disengaged Americans are increasingly Trump-curious, but President Biden has a shot at winning some of them back. Reaching them in a changed media environment will be his challenge.

Joe Perez is exactly the type of voter President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump are fighting over: A 22-year-old Hispanic man in Las Vegas who grew up leaning Republican, he also supports abortion rights and was turned off by the Capitol rioters on Jan. 6, 2021.

But Mr. Perez -- unenthusiastic about a Biden-Trump rematch, overwhelmed by the news and disillusioned by politics -- is tuning out.

''If you ask me right now what's going on with, like, the presidential race, or the situation in Gaza or Ukraine or whatever, I don't think I can answer,'' said Mr. Perez, who supported Mr. Trump in 2020 and is intrigued by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. now. ''I'm not trying to follow that anymore.''

Instead, said Mr. Perez, a valet who hopes to become a firefighter, ''I'm just going to have to roll with the punches, because I don't think I'm going to make a difference.''

In fact, people like him could be quite important.

Politically disengaged Americans are emerging as one of the most unpredictable, complex and potentially influential groups of voters in the 2024 race. They are fueling Mr. Trump's current polling leads but in many cases hail from traditionally Democratic communities, giving Mr. Biden a chance to win some of them back -- if he can get their attention.

No shortage of events could jolt alienated voters over the next five months, starting with a verdict in the first criminal trial of a former president in American history, which could arrive this week. Even though many of these people are historically infrequent voters, those who do cast ballots could make the difference in an inevitably close race.

But reaching them is a problem. Campaigns up and down the ballot are operating in an ever-more-fragmented media landscape where misinformation thrives -- spread especially by Mr. Trump and his allies -- and basic facts are often ignored, disputed or filtered through a partisan lens.

''People have really separated into their own information cul-de-sacs,'' said former Representative Stephanie Murphy, a Florida Democrat. ''It's harder now to reach people than it was in previous elections because of that disaggregated or decentralized information network.''

'When your team's losing, you don't read the sports page'

In a presidential election in which more than 80 percent of voters, according to a Pew Research Center survey, say they wish one or both major candidates were not running, some are opting out of straight-ahead political news entirely.

That is evident in polling about current events.

Recent New York Times/Siena College/Philadelphia Inquirer surveys found that nearly 20 percent of voters in battleground states said Mr. Biden was responsible for ending the constitutional right to abortion, even though it was Mr. Trump's choices for the Supreme Court who helped overturn Roe v. Wade.

Almost half of the country believes the unemployment rate is at a 50-year high, a Harris poll conducted for The Guardian found, even though it is near a 50-year low.

And in a recent Politico-Morning Consult poll, voters were divided over who had done more to ''promote infrastructure improvements and job creation.'' Mr. Biden signed a $1 trillion infrastructure bill into law, while Mr. Trump repeatedly failed to advance the issue.

''When your team's losing, you don't read the sports page after the game,'' said Ken Goldstein, a professor of politics at the University of San Francisco. ''You have a big swath of the country that just thinks they're losing when it comes to politics, and so the way to deal with that is to just not pay attention.''

Low-information voters are hardly a new phenomenon: Landmark studies dating back nearly 80 years have found that the public is often uninformed on key issues.

And many Americans are indeed following this contest.

A Gallup survey released this month showed that 71 percent said they had given ''quite a lot'' of thought to the upcoming presidential election, in keeping with findings around this time in 2020 and 2008.

'People out here are struggling'

Voters who are paying less attention, pollsters say, tend to be younger or more ***working-class***, and are more likely to engage late in the race, if they do at all.

''It's not that politics is unimportant to them, but they have other priorities,'' said Whit Ayres, a veteran Republican pollster. ''Turning out the low-information voters who favor your candidate is one of the major tasks of political consultants.''

An NBC News poll conducted last month found that 15 percent of voters surveyed said they did not follow political news closely. Among those voters, Mr. Trump had an edge of 26 percentage points over Mr. Biden.

By contrast, among voters who primarily consume news through newspapers, national network and cable news -- 54 percent of those surveyed -- Mr. Biden was up by 11 points.

Mr. Trump's commanding lead among the politically disengaged underscores how hard it may be for Mr. Biden to translate his record and vision into a galvanizing and attention-grabbing message for these voters, some of whom are firmly committed to Mr. Trump.

But some Democrats also see an opportunity.

''A single piece of information might have a radical impact on them, because they are by definition low-information,'' former Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York said.

Pointing to subjects like Mr. Trump's record on abortion rights or Mr. Biden's work to lower the cost of insulin for older people, he added: ''That doesn't take a lot of explaining. It takes focusing people, it takes jolting them, but these are not complex points to get across.''

Mr. Trump also remains unpopular, and Democrats are betting that he will grow weaker as more voters see reminders of what they disliked about him.

Republicans, however, note that most Americans drew conclusions about Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden years ago -- and that many voters are not following the former president's provocations closely.

''Trump, I think he gets up there and talks a lot of stuff,'' said Carla Williams, 50, of Detroit.

But Ms. Williams, who said she was often too busy with her work at an auto factory and a hotel to follow the news closely, said she was considering him anyway. She faulted Mr. Biden, whom she said she supported in 2020, for the high cost of living.

''People out here are struggling,'' she said. ''Everything is expensive.''

For voters who pay less attention to the news, ''short-term forces'' tend to play a dominant role in their thinking about politics, said Christopher H. Achen, an emeritus professor of politics at Princeton University.

''If the price of eggs goes up, they're more likely to vote against the incumbent, even if the incumbent has nothing to do with the price of eggs,'' he said.

Those are among the concerns driving Paul Ferando, 61, of Henderson, Nev., to consider voting for the first time, he said.

''You go to the grocery store, 150 bucks for one bag,'' said Mr. Ferando, who works in construction and said he was too busy to closely follow the news. ''It's a joke.''

He added of Mr. Trump, ''This year I might vote just to make sure he gets in.''

'The only night where you're not yelling at each other about the election'

Many Americans now consume political news through social media, and TikTok's emergence has greatly accelerated that trend.

By 2023, almost a third of people aged 18 to 29 were regularly getting news from TikTok, a hub for liberal causes that has also had an uptick of pro-Trump influencers since the last election.

The nature of social media -- fast-moving and sometimes driven by unreliable narrators or bad actors -- means that large audiences are more vulnerable to misinformation.

''I don't really dig into it very much,'' said Dean Citroni, 30, of Newnan, Ga., who works in TV and film production and said he predominantly got political news from Facebook or TikTok. Mr. Citroni, who said he would ''probably'' lean toward Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden but was interested in Mr. Kennedy, added, ''Somebody posts a reel of it, I'm probably looking at it, going: 'Huh! Can't believe that!'''

And even as young voters get much of their information from individualized social media feeds, while cable news often reinforces partisan instincts, Americans have fewer cultural connections to unite them.

The era of major-network, prime-time TV hits has given way to pay-walled streaming services. Music has moved into personalized, app-driven experiences. Instagram and TikTok algorithms pelt people with unending, individualized streams of content.

And Americans' shared vocabulary -- and shared set of facts -- is shrinking.

''It used to be that you could reach practically every voter through conventional electronic media, radio and television,'' said Representative Dan Kildee, a Michigan Democrat. Now, he said: ''You can't really even just reach them through the more popular social media platforms. The splintering of information, the way people consume information, it's much more difficult.''

Darrell Hammond, the comedian and former ''Saturday Night Live'' cast member, said those realities were even changing the nature of political comedy.

''You'd like to think that in order to laugh at a joke, the crowd has to basically understand the premise and agree with it to some extent,'' he said. ''But now, you have blanket generalizations only.''

Kal Penn, an actor who worked in the Obama administration, said he challenged himself to bridge the divide through humor.

''I love making something that your crazy uncle can watch with you on Thanksgiving,'' he said. ''And it's like the only night where you're not yelling at each other about the election.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/us/politics/trump-biden-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/us/politics/trump-biden-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''I don't think I'm going to make a difference,'' said Joe Perez, a Las Vegas valet soured on politics. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARSHALL SCHEUTTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

TikTok and other social media platforms now have highly individualized content. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YUVRAJ KHANNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Democratic Report Explores Blue-Collar Struggles: ‘Our Brand Is Pretty Damaged’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M3-8HD1-JBG3-6282-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1249 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** The report found that the economy was a bigger problem than cultural issues for the party in the industrial Midwest. It also found hopeful signs for Democrats.

**Body**

The report found that the economy was a bigger problem than cultural issues for the party in the industrial Midwest. It also found hopeful signs for Democrats.

Last fall, Democrats pulled off [*significant victories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/us/politics/state-legislatures-democrats-trifectas.html) across the industrial Midwest, reasserting power in a region that had become increasingly favorable to Republicans — but the party still faces stark and sometimes worsening challenges in largely white, ***working-class*** counties that will help decide the outcome of the next presidential election.

That is among the conclusions of a new, unsparing report from Democratic strategists on their party’s vulnerabilities and opportunities in towns and counties hit hard by deindustrialization in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In the 2016 election, Democrats faced staggering setbacks in many of these areas, but the party has worked to regain ground since.

“Our brand is pretty damaged in these places,” warns [*the report*](https://www.americanfamilyvoices.org/post/a-strategy-for-factory-towns), a project of the nonprofit group [*American Family Voices*](https://www.americanfamilyvoices.org/about), which is [*assessing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/us/politics/democrats-votes-midwest.html) blue-collar voters outside major metropolitan areas and refers to the places in the study as “Factory Towns.” “Voters are both cynical about what we are saying now, and unaware of all that Democrats have accomplished that will directly benefit them.”

But, the report adds, pointing to recent legislative achievements, “Democrats have their best opportunity to make progress in these counties in a generation.”

The report, which also highlights Republican branding problems, was written by the longtime Democratic strategist Mike Lux and draws on polling conducted in December by Lake Research Partners, helmed by Celinda Lake, a veteran party pollster.

It notes that President Biden — a Scranton, Pa., native who has [*long stressed his affinity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/19/us/politics/joe-biden-working-class.html) for blue-collar voters — won in 2020 in part by reducing the margins of Democratic losses in some of these areas, while [*Democrats up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/13/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-voters-democrats.html) and [*down the ballot*](https://www.twincities.com/2023/02/05/minnesota-democrats-trifecta-moving-quickly-to-advance-agenda/) notched a number of outright victories last year. But Democrats also had major disappointments in the region, like [*Wisconsin’s Senate race*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/ron-johnson-mandela-barnes-wi.html), and Iowa remains [*an especially bleak spot*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/us/politics/iowa-democrats-republicans.html) for the party.

Given that track record, the report argues for early organizing investments in these areas. It also acknowledges the difficulties of changing negative perceptions in a fractured and diminished news environment, and at an intensely polarized moment for the country.

Here’s a look at some key findings and recommendations:

Culture aside, the economy is the bigger problem for Democrats.

Republicans have sought to brand Democrats as extreme on cultural issues like policing and education. But according to this report, Democrats are more vulnerable on matters of spending, taxes, government waste and inflation.

While “***working-class*** folks find urban and intellectual ‘wokeism’ annoying,” the report says, “economic issues are driving the problems of Democrats in non-metro ***working-class*** counties far more than the culture war.”

A Democratic economic message — focused on attacking corporate greed, investing in manufacturing in the United States and pursuing an economy that works for all rather than the “wealthy few” — tested better, in the Lake Research Partners polling, than a Republican message that claimed liberals were undermining “our way of life.”

A Republican message focused on the economy narrowly outperformed the Democratic message on that subject. But results varied by state, with voters in Michigan, for instance, being more receptive to the Democratic pitch than in other states, and notable warning signs for Democrats in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Lux wrote that “voters in these counties, including swing voters, independents, and even some Democrats, are viewing the economy along a much more Republican narrative than they were a year ago,” a sign that television ads that pummeled Mr. Biden over inflation during the midterms had broken through, even as inflation [*has now slowed slightly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/business/economy/january-cpi-inflation-report.html).

Both parties have branding problems.

Many voters studied in these “Factory Towns” are “deeply, profoundly cynical” about both political parties, the report found, with swing voters holding the impression that both Democrats and Republicans are “too extreme.”

The sharpest argument against Republicans, the polling found, was that “they are on the side of corporations and C.E.O.s and they work for the wealthy.”

Democrats, meantime, are seen as “as weak and ineffective, especially when it comes to economics,” the report said.

The data found that Democrats struggled with the perception that a Democratic economic plan “doesn’t exist or doesn’t help regular people’s own working families,” a claim that resonated with some base Democratic and independent voters.

Democrats do have economic plans, but voters don’t always know it.

Democrats can point to a long list of measures that they say are meant to improve Americans’ economic standing, including [*the Inflation Reduction Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/business/biden-climate-tax-inflation-reduction.html) and huge investments [*in U.S. chip-making efforts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/01/technology/us-chip-making-china-invest.html).

The challenge, the report said, is to ensure that voters know about those developments, and that they can connect the legislation to their daily lives.

“Most voters are not following national news or the details of the legislation, and many haven’t yet seen the impact on their lives,” the report said. “***Working-class*** voters outside of the big metro areas are still leading pretty tough lives, so we have to balance the story of our success on policy with the recognition of those hard times.”

The report also urged Democrats to combine traditional economic populist messaging and policies with strong emphasis on support for small businesses, as well as unions.

“Most ***working-class*** folks very much think of small-business owners as part of the ***working class***,” the report said. It added, “Democrats and progressive issue advocates should always talk about how much they care about small businesses doing well, and should be specific about the ways they want to help the small-business community.”

2024 looks competitive — and there’s early interest in DeSantis.

Early head-to-head presidential matchups between Mr. Biden and former President Donald J. Trump, and Mr. Biden and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, show a tight hypothetical race in these counties.

“A considerable number of voters here will have at least an initial tendency to vote for Trump even if they don’t like him all that well,” the report acknowledged.

Still, a close race at this point is notable given how much Democrats have struggled in some of these counties.

Perhaps more revealing are the favorability numbers. Just 39 percent of voters had a favorable view of Mr. Trump, while 56 percent had an unfavorable view. Mr. Biden’s overall numbers were better — 46 percent favorable to 52 percent unfavorable — though among voters with strong opinions, both men had weak numbers, and the ratings varied considerably by state.

There is keen interest in Mr. DeSantis, who is generally regarded as Mr. Trump’s strongest potential Republican rival even though he has not announced a presidential campaign and remains untested on the national stage.

He had a net positive favorability rating — 42 percent to 37 percent — and was “surprisingly well known, with only a fifth of voters having no impression of him,” the report said.

PHOTO: A factory in Scranton, Pa. Democratic strategists surveyed voters in major industrial states, including Pennsylvania, where there were warning signs for Democrats. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** February 25, 2023

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[***Ruben Gallego and the Fight for Arizona; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2N-YR91-JBG3-621P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1529 words

**Byline:** Tom Zoellner

**Highlight:** The Grand Canyon State is up for grabs — and so is its political future.

**Body**

Arizona has become an epicenter of political discord and conflict over issues that have roiled the national discourse. In the fall, the outrage over an abortion ban from 1864 and a potential ballot initiative on the issue are likely to motivate Democrats, and the outrage over chaos at the border is likely to motivate Republicans.

The margins in recent elections have been razor-thin: Purple Arizona is very much up for grabs in this election and beyond. Democrats might be thinking about building on their success in recent elections to secure the state as a future Sun Belt bulwark. Republicans want to re-establish dominance in the state.

Democrats are hoping that future may be embodied by Representative Ruben Gallego, who is running for a Senate seat to replace Kyrsten Sinema. Kari Lake is his likely Republican opponent.

Arizona may be offering a peek at the future of American politics, and the outcome of the Senate race will offer evidence for Arizona’s trajectory: Will the state continue to shade blue, as its older conservative base ages, or will it act like a Texas or Florida, with a red conservative attitude and blue pockets in the cities?

Mr. Gallego neatly personifies some of the state’s emerging demographic trends. Once a progressive, he now presents himself as a centrist Democrat who is young, Hispanic and — importantly — a striver who came here from the Midwest without connections, money or roots in Arizona. Since territorial days, a big part of Arizona’s pitch to the rest of the country is how friendly it is to newcomers, despite the heat and cactus thorns. You can move here cold and get plugged in fast.

The easy on-ramp also applies to politics. Arizona has historically sent lots of people to state and federal office who seemingly moved here yesterday, and the migratory badge is worn with pride. During the 2020 State of the State address, Gov. Doug Ducey proclaimed himself “a kid from Toledo” and noted that over 70 percent of the adults in Arizona weren’t born there. He asked the assembled legislators who else came from elsewhere. Hands shot up all over the chamber.

Mr. Gallego, a Marine Corps veteran, found a marketing job here in March 2006. It allowed him to be closer to his future wife, Kate (who would later become the mayor of Phoenix).

“My life fit into two seabags in the back of my beat-up 1998 Jeep Cherokee,” he wrote in his memoir. He was soon working for a candidate for the Phoenix City Council, organizing volunteers into military-style “fireteams” to go door-knocking in the summer heat. They won. Within a few years, Mr. Gallego was in the state House of Representatives, and then four years after that, in Congress, representing South Phoenix, which was one of the most economically hard-hit sections of the state.

The voter registration trendlines aren’t good for Mr. Gallego’s party. Democrats suffered a net loss of more than 61,700 in the past four years, compared with a more than 76,400 pickup by the Republicans and a gain of some 138,000 for independents and other registrations.

The state in-migration, in other words, is not a wind at Mr. Gallego’s back, contrary to beliefs that liberal Californians or Pacific Northwesterners moving to Arizona are turning the state blue.

“So many of these domestic migrants are mad about something they left behind: crime spun out of control, houses got too expensive, traffic got terrible, and they dropped their Democratic membership cards when they got to Arizona,” said Stacy Pearson of Lumen Strategies, a Phoenix consulting group that mainly works for Democrats (though not Mr. Gallego). “Even the most socially liberal Democrat wants the government to do something about crime and immigration. They are genuinely angry.”

Polling conducted by Noble Predictive Insights in February showed that among Arizona independents, immigration and inflation were the top concerns, with abortion further down the list behind education, health care and climate change.

These opinion patterns typically favor Republicans, but Mr. Gallego may get lucky in running against a relatively weak opponent, Ms. Lake. Another transplant, she moved here from Iowa and spent more than two decades as a television news anchor before running a smashmouth campaign for governor in 2022 that ended in a flurry of lies about a stolen election. She has been all over the place on the state’s abortion ban, which has the religious right worried about her commitment to its signature cause, and she has struggled with fund-raising after a long history of alienating the business-minded establishment faction of the state Republican Party.

Still, polling averages suggest a [*close race*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego). (A recent Times/Siena [*poll*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego) put Mr. Gallego up by four points.) He is half Colombian and half Mexican, which certainly helps in a state where Hispanics are projected to be the largest ethnic group by 2045. The prevailing sentiment among this crucial voting bloc is still Democratic, though with a persistent malaise among younger voters and a heavy lacing of Latino [*support*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego) for Mr. Trump. The G.O.P.’s traditional message of faith, family and free enterprise sits well with the sensibilities of many Hispanic newcomers.

Mr. Gallego’s path to the seat may have been epitomized by another military migrant to the state who propelled himself into Congress within two years of arrival: Senator John McCain.

Mr. McCain used to joke about getting lost on the way to his own rallies. He also defined himself as an ideologically flexible moderate Republican — a “maverick” — with appeal to centrist Democrats wary of party orthodoxy. Ms. Sinema won her own Senate seat with a similar tack-to-the-middle formula in 2018.

In 2022, Senator Mark Kelly (another combat veteran who moved to Arizona because it was home to his wife) made an echo of Mr. McCain’s heterodox profile and conspicuous disdain of money in politics.

The key to Arizona politics lies in finding the squishy and slightly reddish group of voters who call themselves independents — the roughly one-third of the electorate who profess disgust with both parties but nevertheless care enough to stay registered. They turn out every two years in reliably erratic ways, often focused on single issues like guns or public schools.

“They have no meetings, no candidates and no T-shirts,” said Kevin DeMenna, a longtime consultant who works mainly for Republicans. “This is the cul-de-sac of voters who are taking a timeout. And that’s the governing center of Arizona. It makes it very difficult to talk to the whole population.”

Whether Mr. Gallego can peel off some of the 1.6 million voters who went for Mr. Trump in 2020 may not be as crucial as the appeal to the independent-minded within the flow of recent arrivals. Mr. Gallego has the kind of personal qualities that map well onto the ambitions of both the white and the Latino ***working class***: impoverished background, hard work, defiant attitude, military, first-generation college.

“Lying on the floor of our apartment one night, hungry and tired because I worked after school earning money to help my mother pay for things, I told myself this was not who I was,” he wrote in his autobiography. “I was not going to be poor trash the rest of my life. I was going to college, no matter what it took.”

Mr. Gallego’s future most likely involves that most Arizona of maneuvers: yet another reinvention. He will have to distance himself from a previously liberal record in the Congress, probably say at least a few unkind words about Joe Biden and ease up on the hot-tempered and progressive persona that characterized his first years in elective office. He made a point of sounding hawkish in his support for the now-scuttled bill to toughen border security.

Beyond his pro-choice position in a state where many voters of both parties were left terrified by the draconian 1864 abortion ban, Mr. Gallego is also likely to emphasize lunch-bucket issues like prescription drug costs, affordable housing and further investments in semiconductor production, which have already brought a mammoth manufacturing plant to the north edge of Phoenix. He must steer between the extremes, stay reasonable-looking and eschew labels.

“The way you win a statewide race is to disavow most things that Democrats do nationally,” Stan Barnes, a Republican consultant, said. “That’s how Sinema and Kelly did it. You don’t talk about Democratic themes. You talk about Arizona themes.”

If Mr. Gallego succeeds not only in winning the seat against Ms. Lake but also in dealing a convincing blow to the MAGA minority she represents, it would be one indication that Arizona — while retaining its unpredictable independent edge — is moving more in the direction of California than of Texas.

Tom Zoellner is a journalist and the author of “[*Rim to River*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego): Looking Into the Heart of Arizona.”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.realclearpolling.com/polls/senate/general/2024/arizona/lake-vs-gallego).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rebecca Noble/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2024

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[***Ladle Me a Bowl of the Midwestern Good Stuff; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YS-9441-JBG3-6466-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1216 words

**Byline:** Hannah Chouinard

**Highlight:** My pursuit of culinary knowledge became an escape from the mundane, the provincial, the ***working class***.

**Body**

I was not raised in a family of cooks. My parents grew up in the Midwest, in the second half of the last century, during a period in which a [*great deal of culinary knowledge*](https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/15/garden/new-lost-generation-the-cooking-illiterate.html#:~:text=But%20once%20they%20arrive%20in,t%20know%20how%20to%20cook.) was lost. Our signature meals came out of cardboard or cellophane or, most often, some combination of the two. My dad who, for the region, is something of an epicure, loved to “spice up” boxed holiday stuffing by tossing it with lightly sautéed onions and peppers. My mom took many a weekday dinner out of the chest freezer in the basement.

My first experience of what I would think of as “good food” — when I was around 10 years old — was a bacon blue cheese burger. The details of time and place are lost to me, but I still remember the euphoria of that first bite. I was transported, caught in a delirious tide of new textures and bright, tangy umami flavors, and I was determined to return. Though I could not tell the difference between cilantro and thyme (all small green things were interchangeable to me) and wasn’t familiar with any stovetop setting other than “high,” I spent many prepubescent hours in the kitchen attempting to recreate recipes from Alton Brown, Ina Garten and Giada De Laurentiis. I loved the way the chefs spoke about unfamiliar places. I loved how they whisked me to a world where it mattered how you cut an onion.

My pursuit of culinary knowledge became an escape from the mundane, the provincial, the ***working class***. Tossing a soft-boiled egg and nori into a bowl of rehydrated noodles, I could forget that I’d never had ramen that didn’t come out of a 30-cent packet. Pulling together a budget imitation of savory, ricotta-filled crepes, I could pretend the real thing wasn’t more than an hour outside of town. Cooking was freedom from poverty and suburban boredom.

To the degree that it existed, my parents’ culinary snobbery manifested in taking extra care with one Midwestern staple: potatoes. My mom was raised on instant mashed potatoes and loathed them. Her small protest against the product was an overflowing bowl of russet potatoes next to the stove, which I don’t recall ever being empty in more than 18 years of cohabitation with her. And while my dad was happy to serve us frozen pizza, his face would twist with revulsion in the face of dried, flaky bits of tuber. Their disavowal of what was once a family staple instilled in me the realization that sometimes, something better to eat waited on the other side.

My parents split when I was young; I don’t really remember the time they were together. My mom and dad’s new partners, both kind, gentle, generous men, brought their own culinary flair to the family; respectively, pot roast braised with off-brand Coca-Cola and tater tot casserole. Together, my parents, my brother and I remained a take-and-bake household, a Lean Cuisine household, a Hot Pocket household. We were not people who took joy in the preparation or consumption of food.

My brother and I spent our youth shuttling along the western edge of Lake Michigan between our mom and my stepdad in Green Bay, Wis., and our dad and his partner, who were forever moving from house to house somewhere along the edge of Chicagoland. I felt most alive during our rare weekends there, spent draped in cosmopolitan anonymity. Watching people lounge at the downtown beaches and casually dine at upscale restaurants, I saw a fantasy of my adult life play out in front of me. Like the chefs on Food Network, the people who lived in Chicago knew of the world and its wonders. I wanted to be the sort of person who had a passport, who could hold a conversation in another language. I wanted extraordinary, I wanted grand, and I was convinced they existed only somewhere else.

Since I left the Midwest after college five years ago, the everyday act of cooking and eating has become an ever-present opportunity for self-improvement. I’ve learned to season breakfast sausage with sage and white wine and top a chirashi with shiso chiffonade. My dinner spreads have evolved to include dishes that once felt alien and impenetrable, like duck tagine and vegan béarnaise. I’ve learned to cherish marinated tofu, braised leeks, roasted brussels sprouts and all manner of food my family rejects.

When my stepdad entered hospice care in Wisconsin this summer, and I began the dizzying plummet into grief, I started questioning my endless search for more. What if in improving the quality of my life, I had given up something more meaningful?

Returning home, I hoped to introduce my family to the joys of saffron rice and lamb Bolognese; my goal quickly changed to getting them to eat anything at all. Grief does strange, confusing things. For weeks, my mom had been subsisting on a diet of sour candies and fruit. My brother emerged from his room only in manic flurries, leaving kitchen surfaces smeared in teriyaki sauce. I searched for some nourishment they would accept or some recipe they would find enticing, but I realized that I didn’t know what their comfort foods were or what or where they ate on a daily basis. Going back home to New York, a place most of my family has never visited, felt simultaneously like a relief and a betrayal.

Even though I have moved from city to ever larger city in an attempt to improve myself by seeking a more exciting life, New York — like no other place has — feels like home. Yet my urge to find something different, better, still remains. I no longer believe this appetite can ever be sated. I’ve achieved the metropolitan life I always wanted and now long for something small and quiet and sweet — something closer to what I could have had if I’d never left the Midwest to begin with.

During his first and only trip to visit me in the Northeast, my stepdad told me he knew when I was young that I would be “a city person.” He saw in my child self a yearning for something bigger, bolder, busier.

This was the first Christmas that my family was without my stepdad. As I sit in my bedroom in Brooklyn, mourning his death from a thousand miles away, I wonder how my life would have been different if I had been satisfied with what I could find in Wisconsin. What if I hadn’t chased a sophisticated world of New York kitchens, a career of studying and serving food? My family, surrounded by ketchup and ranch instead of roux and romesco, has taught me that fulfillment is a choice. I could have been satisfied with S.U.V.s and strip malls and maple trees. I could have chosen American cheese and frozen hash browns and Kringles. My life would have been different, but it would have been good.

Especially around the holidays, family recipes — including my mom’s recipe for mashed potatoes — always bring me back to my first home. When my heart aches and I am feeling especially homesick, I recall frigid Midwestern nights and tuck into a bowl of the good stuff.

Hannah Chouinard is a Wisconsin expat living in Brooklyn. She is completing her master’s degree in food studies at New York University this spring.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Lauren Martin FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2023

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[***Eyeing Trump, but on the Fence: How Tuned-Out Voters Could Decide 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4C-NMT1-DXY4-X05B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1674 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck and Nick Corasaniti Katie Glueck covers American politics with a focus on the Democratic Party. Nick Corasaniti is a Times reporter covering national politics, with a focus on voting and elections.

**Highlight:** Politically disengaged Americans are increasingly Trump-curious, but President Biden has a shot at winning some of them back. Reaching them in a changed media environment will be his challenge.

**Body**

Politically disengaged Americans are increasingly Trump-curious, but President Biden has a shot at winning some of them back. Reaching them in a changed media environment will be his challenge.

Joe Perez is exactly the type of voter President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump are fighting over: A 22-year-old Hispanic man in Las Vegas who grew up leaning Republican, he also supports abortion rights and was turned off by the Capitol rioters on Jan. 6, 2021.

But Mr. Perez — unenthusiastic about a Biden-Trump rematch, overwhelmed by the news and disillusioned by politics — is tuning out.

“If you ask me right now what’s going on with, like, the presidential race, or the situation in Gaza or Ukraine or whatever, I don’t think I can answer,” said Mr. Perez, who supported Mr. Trump in 2020 and is intrigued by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. now. “I’m not trying to follow that anymore.”

Instead, said Mr. Perez, a valet who hopes to become a firefighter, “I’m just going to have to roll with the punches, because I don’t think I’m going to make a difference.”

In fact, people like him could be quite important.

Politically disengaged Americans are emerging as one of the most unpredictable, complex and potentially influential groups of voters in the 2024 race. They are [*fueling Mr. Trump’s current polling leads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) but in many cases hail from traditionally Democratic communities, giving Mr. Biden a chance to win some of them back — if he can get their attention.

No shortage of events could jolt alienated voters over the next five months, starting with a verdict in the [*first criminal trial of a former president in American history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), which could arrive this week. Even though many of these people are historically infrequent voters, those who do cast ballots could make the difference in an inevitably close race.

But reaching them is a problem. Campaigns up and down the ballot are operating in an ever-more-fragmented media landscape where misinformation thrives — [*spread especially by Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) and his allies — and basic facts are often ignored, disputed or filtered through a partisan lens.

“People have really separated into their own information cul-de-sacs,” said former Representative Stephanie Murphy, a Florida Democrat. “It’s harder now to reach people than it was in previous elections because of that disaggregated or decentralized information network.”

‘When your team’s losing, you don’t read the sports page’

In a presidential election in which more than [*80 percent of voters, according to a Pew Research Center survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), say they wish one or both major candidates were not running, some are opting out of straight-ahead political news entirely.

That is evident in polling about current events.

Recent [*New York Times/Siena College/Philadelphia Inquirer surveys*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) found that nearly 20 percent of voters in battleground states said Mr. Biden was responsible for ending the constitutional right to abortion, even though it was Mr. Trump’s [*choices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) for the Supreme Court who helped overturn Roe v. Wade.

Almost half of the country believes the unemployment rate is at a 50-year high, a [*Harris poll conducted for The Guardian found*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), even though it is near a 50-year low.

And in a recent [*Politico-Morning Consult poll,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) voters were divided over who had done more to “promote infrastructure improvements and job creation.” Mr. Biden [*signed a $1 trillion infrastructure bill into law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), while Mr. Trump [*repeatedly failed to advance the issue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html).

“When your team’s losing, you don’t read the sports page after the game,” said Ken Goldstein, a professor of politics at the University of San Francisco. “You have a big swath of the country that just thinks they’re losing when it comes to politics, and so the way to deal with that is to just not pay attention.”

Low-information voters are hardly a new phenomenon: Landmark studies [*dating back nearly 80 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) have found that the public is often uninformed on key issues.

And many Americans are indeed following this contest.

A [*Gallup survey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) released this month showed that 71 percent said they had given “quite a lot” of thought to the upcoming presidential election, in keeping with findings around this time in 2020 and 2008.

‘People out here are struggling’

Voters who are paying less attention, pollsters say, tend to be younger or more ***working-class***, and are more likely to engage late in the race, if they do at all.

“It’s not that politics is unimportant to them, but they have other priorities,” said Whit Ayres, a veteran Republican pollster. “Turning out the low-information voters who favor your candidate is one of the major tasks of political consultants.”

An [*NBC News poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) conducted last month found that 15 percent of voters surveyed said they did not follow political news closely. Among those voters, Mr. Trump had an edge of 26 percentage points over Mr. Biden.

By contrast, among voters who primarily consume news through newspapers, national network and cable news — 54 percent of those surveyed — Mr. Biden was up by 11 points.

Mr. Trump’s commanding lead among the politically disengaged underscores how hard it may be for Mr. Biden to translate his record and vision into a galvanizing and attention-grabbing message for these voters, some of whom are firmly committed to Mr. Trump.

But some Democrats also see an opportunity.

“A single piece of information might have a radical impact on them, because they are by definition low-information,” former Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York said.

Pointing to subjects like [*Mr. Trump’s record on abortion rights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) or Mr. Biden’s work to [*lower the cost of insulin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) for older people, he added: “That doesn’t take a lot of explaining. It takes focusing people, it takes jolting them, but these are not complex points to get across.”

Mr. Trump also [*remains unpopular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), and Democrats are betting that he will grow weaker as more voters see reminders of what they disliked about him.

Republicans, however, note that most Americans drew conclusions about Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden years ago — and that many voters are not following the former president’s provocations closely.

“Trump, I think he gets up there and talks a lot of stuff,” said Carla Williams, 50, of Detroit.

But Ms. Williams, who said she was often too busy with her work at an auto factory and a hotel to follow the news closely, said she was considering him anyway. She faulted Mr. Biden, whom she said she supported in 2020, for the high cost of living.

“People out here are struggling,” she said. “Everything is expensive.”

For voters who pay less attention to the news, “short-term forces” tend to play a dominant role in their thinking about politics, said Christopher H. Achen, an emeritus professor of politics at Princeton University.

“If the price of eggs goes up, they’re more likely to vote against the incumbent, even if the incumbent has nothing to do with the price of eggs,” he said.

Those are among the concerns driving Paul Ferando, 61, of Henderson, Nev., to consider voting for the first time, he said.

“You go to the grocery store, 150 bucks for one bag,” said Mr. Ferando, who works in construction and said he was too busy to closely follow the news. “It’s a joke.”

He added of Mr. Trump, “This year I might vote just to make sure he gets in.”

‘The only night where you’re not yelling at each other about the election’

Many Americans now consume political news through social media, and TikTok’s emergence has greatly accelerated that trend.

By 2023, almost a third of people aged 18 to 29 were regularly [*getting news from TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html), a hub for liberal causes that has [*also had an uptick of pro-Trump influencers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) since the last election.

The nature of social media — fast-moving and sometimes driven by unreliable narrators or [*bad actors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) — means that large audiences are more vulnerable to misinformation.

“I don’t really dig into it very much,” said Dean Citroni, 30, of Newnan, Ga., who works in TV and film production and said he predominantly got political news from Facebook or TikTok. Mr. Citroni, who said he would “probably” lean toward Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden but was interested in Mr. Kennedy, added, “Somebody posts a reel of it, I’m probably looking at it, going: ‘Huh! Can’t believe that!’”

And even as young voters get much of their information from individualized social media feeds, while cable news often reinforces partisan instincts, Americans have fewer cultural connections to unite them.

The era of major-network, prime-time TV hits has given way to pay-walled streaming services. Music has moved into personalized, app-driven experiences. Instagram and TikTok algorithms pelt people with unending, individualized streams of content.

And Americans’ shared vocabulary — and shared set of facts — is shrinking.

“It used to be that you could reach practically every voter through conventional electronic media, radio and television,” said Representative Dan Kildee, a Michigan Democrat. Now, he said: “You can’t really even just reach them through the more popular social media platforms. The splintering of information, the way people consume information, it’s much more difficult.”

Darrell Hammond, the comedian and former “Saturday Night Live” cast member, said those realities were even changing the nature of political comedy.

“You’d like to think that in order to laugh at a joke, the crowd has to basically understand the premise and agree with it to some extent,” he said. “But now, you have blanket generalizations only.”

Kal Penn, an actor [*who worked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/24/upshot/trump-biden-polls-voters.html) in the Obama administration, said he challenged himself to bridge the divide through humor.

“I love making something that your crazy uncle can watch with you on Thanksgiving,” he said. “And it’s like the only night where you’re not yelling at each other about the election.”

PHOTOS: “I don’t think I’m going to make a difference,” said Joe Perez, a Las Vegas valet soured on politics. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARSHALL SCHEUTTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); TikTok and other social media platforms now have highly individualized content. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YUVRAJ KHANNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Trump-Backed Neophyte Wins Senate Primary in Ohio***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-96G1-DXY4-X00R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 21, 2024 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 974 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

Mr. Moreno, who has never held elected office, will try to unseat Senator Sherrod Brown, the last remaining Democrat to hold statewide office.

Bernie Moreno, a wealthy former car dealer and political newcomer, rode the endorsement of former President Donald J. Trump to victory on Tuesday in a hotly contested primary to determine which Ohio Republican would take on incumbent Senator Sherrod Brown, the last Democrat to hold elective statewide office in the increasingly Republican state.

Mr. Moreno beat State Senator Matt Dolan, whose family is a majority owner of the Cleveland Guardians baseball team, and Frank LaRose, Ohio's secretary of state, once again proving the power of Mr. Trump's backing among Republican primary voters. Rarely has a contest so clearly divided the old-line Republican establishment from the new Trump wing of the party, and again, the former president's movement prevailed.

''We're the party of the future,'' declared Mr. Moreno, who would be one of the Senate's richest members, and its only South American-born member, if elected in November. ''We're the party that's going to rebuild the middle class in this country.''

Mr. Brown answered, ''The choice ahead of Ohio is clear: Bernie Moreno has spent his career and campaign putting himself first and would do the same if elected. Elections come down to whose side you're on, and I'll always work for Ohio.''

It was, for Mr. Trump, another triumph. For Mr. Dolan, it was a second loss to a Trump-backed political neophyte. In 2022, the author and investor J.D. Vance beat him in the primary race for retiring Senator Rob Portman's seat and went on to win the general election that fall.

In stumping for Mr. Dolan, Mike DeWine, Ohio's Republican governor, tried to make the case that Mr. Dolan was the best candidate to take on Mr. Brown, whose blue-collar appeal and well-established political persona could be tough to beat, even in a state where Mr. Trump won the last two presidential elections by more than eight percentage points each time.

But in the Trump era, electability has rarely beaten fealty when the former president has gotten involved. Mr. Moreno flooded Ohio airwaves with advertisements attacking Mr. Dolan for what he called an insufficient level of support for Mr. Trump's border policies. Mr. Trump rallied voters for Mr. Moreno over the weekend outside Dayton, making headlines for saying some migrants were ''not people'' and, amid a discussion of the auto industry, predicting ''a blood bath'' if he lost in November.

Mr. Moreno will enter the general election depleted of cash and bruised by an extremely negative primary campaign that ended with a super PAC backing Mr. Dolan airing allegations from an Associated Press report that he had once advertised on an adult website for male dates. Mr. Moreno's campaign said the adult website profile was created in 2008 by an intern as a prank.

Of the $9.7 million that Mr. Moreno has raised for his run, less than $2.4 million remained at the end of February, according to campaign finance reports.

A Democratic super PAC aired advertisements in the closing days of the primary to elevate Mr. Moreno, clearly indicating that he was the candidate the party wanted to take on in November.

That same organization, the Senate Majority PAC, immediately castigated the candidate it had elevated, saying in a statement that Mr. Moreno ''won't be able to hide from the fact that he is a shady car salesman.'' The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee attacked him immediately as well, recycling videos of attacks from Mr. Dolan and Mr. LaRose that tarred the newly minted nominee as an untrustworthy, corrupt extremist.

The Senate Republicans' political arm framed the race differently. ''Bernie is a political outsider running against a liberal career politician who has been running for office for 50 years,'' said Senator Steve Daines of Montana, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Mr. Brown enters the general election primed, rested and ready. He has raked in money not only from unions that are steadfastly loyal to him but also from corporations that have business before the Senate Banking Committee, which he chairs. His campaign has raised at least $26.7 million this election cycle, and has more than $13.5 million cash on hand.

But Mr. Moreno will be running in a state that has become increasingly hostile to Democrats -- and that President Biden is unlikely to contest seriously as he campaigns for another term.

Mr. Brown, who was first elected to the Senate in 2006, evinced little concern over his third re-election bid. The Democrat has made his reputation as a pro-worker politician who has stood against free-trade agreements and stood for unions in a state where the ***working class*** has drifted to the G.O.P. since Barack Obama won it twice.

''We will spend this campaign contrasting my position on taking on Wall Street, my position on taking on the drug companies, my position on trade with theirs,'' he told reporters on Monday in Dayton, Ohio.

Ohioans did vote last November to enshrine abortion rights in the state's Constitution and to legalize marijuana, votes that Mr. Brown says show a political complexity that defies clear partisan division.

With control of the Senate within Republicans' reach, Ohio and Montana -- the only states where Mr. Trump won in 2020 and a Democrat is standing for re-election -- promise to gain huge national attention. Democrats hold 51 Senate seats, but one of those, in deep-red West Virginia, is virtually gone with the retirement of the conservative Democrat Joe Manchin III.

The Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with the Senate Republican leadership, and an allied group, American Crossroads, have already reserved nearly $83 million worth of advertising time this fall in Ohio.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/ohio-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Bernie Moreno, left, a wealthy Republican, will face Senator Sherrod Brown, the last Democrat to hold statewide elective office. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Searing Social Novel Featuring U.F.O.s, Mutants and Wormholes; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-57R1-DXY4-X007-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday 23:49 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 700 words

**Byline:** Ainslie Hogarth

**Highlight:** In Isabel Waidner’s new novel, “Corey Fah Does Social Mobility,” a struggling writer gets pulled into a surreal, multidimensional quest for a coveted literary prize.

**Body**

In Isabel Waidner’s new novel, “Corey Fah Does Social Mobility,” a struggling writer gets pulled into a surreal, multidimensional quest for a coveted literary prize.

COREY FAH DOES SOCIAL MOBILITY, by Isabel Waidner

In the first few pages of Isabel Waidner’s new novel “Corey Fah Does Social Mobility,” our titular character learns that they’ve won “The Award for the Fictionalization of Social Evils,” a literary prize that comes with a substantial cash purse (which Corey, a ***working-class*** writer who lives in a social housing estate, desperately needs) and enormous prestige (which, according to the prize committee, is even more valuable than money). To secure these bounties, all Corey has to do is collect the award trophy. But the trophy doesn’t look like a trophy — it’s a “neon beige” U.F.O. And to make matters worse, it’s disappeared, possibly into a wormhole.

The prize committee is less than helpful when Corey asks for assistance. “The assumption had been that a winner would know how to collect. That prize culture etiquette, its unwritten rules and regulations, would be second nature to them,” Corey reflects. But Corey doesn’t know how to collect, and the unwritten rules and regulations aren’t second nature to them. “I’d not won an award before, and neither had anybody I knew.” This is the paradox that drives “Corey Fah Does Social Mobility”: A person needs to already have social and financial capital in order to get social and financial capital.

We follow Corey; their loving partner, Drew; and their mutant charge, Bambi Pavok (an arachnoid creature with deer-like qualities who crawled out of another dimension and sometimes stays with Corey and Drew), in furious pursuit of this confounding trophy. They dive into wormholes, explore alternate universes and timelines, even appear on (and eventually host) a popular wormhole-focused reality show, all in the hopes of catching the coveted prize “before the judges change their minds.” It feels, in the best way, like a spirited romp through someone else’s stress dream.

Sometimes surreal satires can be inaccessible, too clinically strange to connect with, but Waidner anchors the reader with familiar emotion: the discomfort Corey feels in the warmth of Drew’s unconditional love; the way Corey handles Bambi Pavok with a tenderness that neither the arachnoid creature nor Corey has ever experienced before. In a world full of wormholes and neon beige U.F.O. trophies, these relationships seem heartbreakingly real.

Waidner’s humor is similarly accessible — playful and unpretentious; and their prose, despite being peppered with foreign phrases and grammatical oddities, is disarmingly smooth. But working hard just beneath the surface of this feisty, funny, easily digestible insanity are bigger ideas, about who deserves to be rescued from tough circumstances, and why. What happens if the person in need of assistance doesn’t match the image of a model recipient?

Though “Corey Fah” is a critique of the literary world, it’s easy to apply the novel’s commentary to other, higher-stakes systems. Corey’s attempts to make sense of the literary fun house they’ve been thrust into will remind some readers of, for instance, the challenges low-income students face when they are granted admission to Ivy League schools but are [*not given the support they need to successfully navigate*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/college-inequality.html) those rarefied spaces.

The novel is an allegory that argues, effectively, that admission is not the same thing as access. Even though Corey has managed to hustle and, in the end, earn recognition from a lofty literary organization, the award, and all the money and prestige that come with it, still evades them. Which is to say: Corey has bent and contorted themself in ways big and small, but it’s still not enough. And as the narrative comes to its wild end, Waidner conveys, quite poignantly, that a person has no other choice in this life but to be true to themself.

COREY FAH DOES SOCIAL MOBILITY | By Isabel Waidner | Graywolf Press | 147 pp. | Paperback, $16

Ainslie Hogarth is the author of “Motherthing,” “The Boy Meets Girl Massacre (Annotated),” “The Lonely” and, most recently, “Normal Women.”

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page BR16.

**Load-Date:** February 20, 2024

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[***Why Is the Democratic Base Eroding?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MC-6M61-DXY4-X1DN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 13, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; LETTERS

**Length:** 1162 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''The Democrats Are Their Own Worst Enemies,'' by Pamela Paul (column, Nov. 3), about why polls are showing a loss of support for the party among minorities and the ***working class***:

Ms. Paul writes that ''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.''

That, she says, is the reason that ''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.''

Is she talking about the same G.O.P. that, under the former president, passed legislation that gave enormous tax breaks to the wealthiest in the country? Is she referring to G.O.P. legislators who now want to reduce funding for the I.R.S., an agency that serves as a watchdog against unfair tax manipulation that leaves the middle class with a proportionately greater tax burden than the richest?

If so, it is hard to imagine that the G.O.P., as opposed to the Democratic Party, is prioritizing the economic well-being of the American majority.

Sheila Terman CohenMadison, Wis.

To the Editor:

OMG! I had no idea how crazy the Democrats really are! As Pamela Paul reminds us, they are out of touch with the ''broadly shared beliefs within the electorate.''

Democrats support legal immigration and care for refugees. They think Social Security is a good idea. They think everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. They think that people who want to impose their religion on this country are just wrong. They think that people are entitled to autonomy over their own bodies and health care. They recognize the rule of law.

And the worst part is they are right up front about it. Thank you, Pamela, for helping me feel better about how I plan to vote.

Richard W. PoetonLenox, Mass.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul is correct that there is room for robust debate about what policies the Democrats should adopt to better help most Americans, but she misses the bigger problem. The Republican Party is full of one-issue voters who will vote to promote racist policies, misogyny or guns regardless of whether most Republican policies are good for America or not.

Many Democratic voters have been quick to say they won't vote for a Democratic candidate since that candidate promises to do only seven of the 10 things they want. Especially with the Electoral College and gerrymandering favoring minority rule, everyone who recognizes the danger that the current Republican Party poses to our freedoms must vote for the Democratic candidate, even if they want some different policies.

Until the current Republican Party is out of power, any debate within the Democratic Party must take a back seat to saving our country from election deniers.

Richard DineSilver Spring, Md.

Income Inequality and Test Scores

To the Editor:

Re '''18 Years Too Late' to Solve SAT Gap'' (The Upshot, Oct. 30):

It is unsurprising that SAT scores correlate strongly to family income. A huge portion of top scorers come from the richest families. Only 0.6 percent of all students from the bottom 20 percent of family income score above 1300 out of 1600.

This data dispels the myth that the SAT boosts access to higher education by identifying ''diamonds in the rough'' from historically underrepresented populations. They are far outnumbered by students from wealthy families taking full socioeconomic advantage to achieve higher scores. The ''rough'' -- in the form of under-resourced public education and family poverty -- completely obscures the diamonds.

Furthermore, the SAT is a very weak predictor of undergraduate performance. Grades work better. The test is a strong measure of accumulated opportunity rather than college readiness. Relying on SAT results to prejudge future educational performance locks in inequity.

That is one reason that nearly 90 percent of U.S. four-year colleges and universities now have SAT/ACT-optional or test-blind policies.

Of course, such policies alone will not solve the college access problem. Admissions offices need to scrutinize other determinative factors. A fair process should not provide the greatest opportunities to teenagers who have already had the most advantages in life.

Harry FederBrooklynThe writer is the executive director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest).

To the Editor:

Again and again, research has shown that poverty and income inequality are the most powerful influence on school performance. How could it be otherwise in a country without a real safety net, with parents working two gig jobs and juggling which bills to pay, with no secure access to health care, rampant evictions and parking lots for employed people who have to live in their cars? Yet the public refuses to believe this, and at best seeks to bolster schools in the hopes that they will make up for fundamental deprivation.

It is deeply distressing to see how many reader comments declare that wealth reflects genetic superiority and other ''virtues.'' In an era of barely taxed billionaires building self-perpetuating stock market fortunes on the labor of warehouse workers and A.I., that view is not only undemocratic and ahistorical. It's also dangerously complacent.

Nina BernsteinNew YorkThe writer is a former New York Times reporter.

Helping Kids Thrive With Full WIC Funding

To the Editor:

Re ''Infant Mortality Up for 1st Time in Two Decades'' (front page, Nov. 2):

The increase in America's infant mortality rate is a deeply alarming sign that policymakers do not adequately prioritize children's health and well-being.

Sadly, it is not the only sign.

The child poverty rate more than doubled last year. Nearly 9 percent of households with children were food insecure in 2022, up from 6.2 percent the year before. Children's reading and math scores have plummeted since the pandemic.

No single program can fix all of this. But the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which serves about half of all infants born in the United States, should be considered our first line of defense.

A 2019 study found that WIC participation is directly attributable to a 16 percent reduction in the risk of infant mortality. WIC participation also lowers the risk of poverty, reduces food insecurity, improves nutritional intake and strengthens kids' cognitive development.

Yet new data from the Department of Agriculture finds a significant gap between WIC eligibility and coverage. For instance, only 25 percent of 4-year-olds eligible for WIC are actually enrolled.

All children deserve to grow up healthy and thrive. Full funding for WIC is an essential step toward that goal.

Georgia MachellWashingtonThe writer is interim president and C.E.O. of the National WIC Association.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/12/opinion/democratic-party.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/12/opinion/democratic-party.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** November 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Zellnor Myrie Is Second Democrat to Challenge Adams’s Re-election Path***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C04-83H1-JBG3-60Y7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 8, 2024 Wednesday 13:03 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1322 words

**Byline:** Jeffery C. Mays and Emma G. Fitzsimmons Jeffery C. Mays is a Times reporter covering politics with a focus on New York City Hall. Emma G. Fitzsimmons is the City Hall Bureau Chief for The Times, covering Mayor Eric Adams and his administration.

**Highlight:** Mr. Myrie, a left-leaning state senator from Brooklyn, is moving to run against Mayor Eric Adams in the Democratic primary next June.

**Body**

Mr. Myrie, a left-leaning state senator from Brooklyn, is moving to run against Mayor Eric Adams in the Democratic primary next June.

Zellnor Myrie, an Afro-Latino state senator from Brooklyn known for backing progressive causes, announced on Wednesday that he is moving to challenge Mayor Eric Adams in next year’s Democratic primary in New York City.

Mr. Myrie’s announcement is further indication that Mr. Adams’s path to re-election is expected to be more challenging than is typical for Democratic mayors in New York. Mr. Adams, who faces [*record low poll numbers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) and a federal investigation into his campaign fund-raising, now must contend with at least two challenges from his own party.

In an interview, Mr. Myrie said that the mayor had shown a “failure of competence” and that his administration did not have a “full grasp of the nuts and bolts of how city government should work.” He also criticized the mayor’s cuts to libraries, parks and schools, arguing that they were driving families out of the city.

“For too many New Yorkers that I speak to, they’re tired of the showmanship,” he said. “What people want to see are results. They want to see their government working relentlessly to make this city affordable, to make this city safe, to make it livable.”

Mr. Myrie, 37, who is often called “Z,” opened an exploratory committee on Wednesday to begin raising money for his campaign.

He is part of a new generation of leaders who [*ousted moderate Democratic incumbents in Albany in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html). His Senate district is the same one Mr. Adams once represented, but the men have different political stances.

Mr. Myrie pointed to his record in the State Senate of building coalitions to pass laws, including the Clean Slate Act, which [*sealed many criminal records*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) to help formerly incarcerated people access jobs and housing.

But one of his greatest challenges is a lack of name recognition outside [*his district*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) in Crown Heights and Park Slope. When Mr. Myrie visited Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem in March — an important stop for any politician of color seeking citywide office — the minister introduced Mr. Myrie as “Zenor Marhee.”

His colleagues in Albany were quick to offer praise, even as they were reluctant to handicap his chances. John Liu, a state senator from Queens, called his entrance into the race “exciting” and said that “Z has made the most impressive first impression that I’ve ever had.” Brad Hoylman-Sigal, a state senator from Manhattan, called him “one of the most serious and thoughtful people in the State Legislature.”

Liz Krueger, a state senator from Manhattan, shared her admiration for Mr. Myrie, and unlike her colleagues, she made it clear whom she didn’t want to win the race.

“I want a different mayor for New York City — desperately,” she said. “One who has competence and actually understands the job.”

Other Democratic candidates have been eyeing the mayoral race, including Scott Stringer, the former city comptroller who [*formed his own exploratory committee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) in January; Jessica Ramos, a progressive state senator from Queens; and former Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who appears eager to make a political comeback.

But Mr. Adams has some key advantages, including a huge campaign war chest and strong support from key unions and power brokers.

Mr. Adams, a former police officer who won a close race in 2021 in part by embracing a tough-on-crime message, has [*increasingly been in campaign mode*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html), with many of his public appearances highlighting a campaign-like mantra, [*“Crime is down, jobs are up.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html)

“The mayor’s laser focus on public safety is the reason that crime is down and jobs are up,” said Frank Carone, a former chief of staff to Mr. Adams who now serves as the de facto head of his campaign. “We look forward to being able to keep showing that to New Yorkers.”

Assemblywoman Rodneyse Bichotte Hermelyn, a Brooklyn Democratic leader and ally of the mayor, said that the Black unemployment rate had lowered under Mr. Adams and test scores had risen, and that ***working-class*** New Yorkers in particular “will be behind him for mayor.”

But there are signs that Mr. Adams’s base is fraying. In a Quinnipiac University poll from December, the mayor [*scored the lowest rating since the poll began surveying the city in 1996*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html). He also lost support among Black and Latino voters: 38 percent of Black voters disapproved of the mayor’s job performance, an increase from 29 percent last February; 65 percent of Latino voters disapproved of the mayor’s handling of his job, the highest among all racial and ethnic groups.

The dissatisfaction over Mr. Adams’s performance, as well as his more conservative stances on criminal justice issues, has prompted left-leaning Democrats to [*search for a candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) who might be best positioned to defeat the mayor in the June primary.

Mr. Myrie might check some boxes for left-leaning voters. While Mr. Adams has received criticism over his cuts to prekindergarten, Mr. Myrie has embraced “universal after-school” as a signature issue. His plan calls for [*offering free after-school programs to all families*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html), starting with the poorest school district in each borough.

Mr. Myrie said that he was less interested in running as a progressive candidate and more focused on how he could improve upon the mayor’s management of the city. He said that when Mr. Adams [*proposed cuts to the budget*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html), some of which were eventually restored, he created a sense of “instability” among the voters he’s spoken with. He also criticized the mayor’s “mismanagement” of the city’s response to the influx of more than 190,000 asylum seekers, which led him to issue some of his own recommendations.

At his appearance at Abyssinian Baptist Church, Mr. Myrie spoke about how his mother, an immigrant from Costa Rica, took him to vote for the first time for Barack Obama in 2008, using the anecdote in stirring remarks about voter suppression.

“Sometimes we think voter suppression is a relic of the South, that it just happens elsewhere,” Mr. Myrie said to nods of approval. “Church, let me tell you, right here in New York, they purge voter rolls for people that look like us.”

Mr. Myrie’s advisers took the positive response from congregants at the church (the mispronunciation of his name notwithstanding) as a positive sign that his appeal would stretch beyond Brooklyn and into the neighborhoods where he would need to dig into Mr. Adams’s base of Black and Latino working- and middle-class voters.

Mr. Myrie, a lawyer and a longtime advocate for affordable housing and gun control, has made headlines recently for trying to prevent SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn from closing; [*appearing at a rally with the Rev. Al Sharpton in February*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html); and for his [*support of criminal justice reforms*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html), including bail reform efforts that Mr. Adams has opposed.

Last year, Mr. Myrie married Diana Richardson, a former state assemblywoman. The [*pair sued the Police Department*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) in 2021 after they were [*beaten with bicycles and pepper-sprayed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/09/nyregion/mayor-adams-problems-future.html) by the police during a Black Lives Matter protest in Brooklyn.

The couple are renters, Mr. Myrie said, and they are worried that they might not be able to afford to buy a home. He said he wanted the next generation of New Yorkers to live in a more affordable and climate-resilient city with the “best subway system in the world.”

“That is the heart to me of why we are running — to provide opportunities for families for safety and for flourishing and I hope to bring that as the next mayor,” he said.

Claire Fahy reported from Albany, N.Y.

Claire Fahy reported from Albany, N.Y.

PHOTOS: New York State Senator Zellnor Myrie, a first-term Democrat from Brooklyn, above, has opened an exploratory committee for a potential run against Mayor Eric Adams, left, in next year’s primary. Scott Stringer, the former city comptroller, did so in January. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID DEE DELGADO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** August 16, 2024

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[***Explaining Bidenomics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693W-MT71-JBG3-64S5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 6, 2023 Wednesday 11:58 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1797 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** What’s behind the shift in the Democratic Party’s economic policy?

**Body**

What’s behind the shift in the Democratic Party’s economic policy?

Bill Clinton and Barack Obama both ran for president promising to reinvigorate the economy for ordinary Americans. And both enacted laws that helped millions of people. Clinton expanded children’s health care and tax credits for low-income families. Obama accomplished even more, making it possible for almost anybody to afford health insurance.

Yet neither Obama nor Clinton managed to alter the basic trajectory of the American economy. Income and wealth inequality, which had begun rising in the early 1980s, continued to do so. So did inequality in other measures, like health and life expectancy. Polls continue to show that most Americans are frustrated with the country’s direction.

In response, a growing number of policy experts aligned with the Democratic Party have decided in recent years that their party’s approach to economic policy was flawed. They concluded that Democrats had not gone far enough to undo the revolution that Ronald Reagan started in the 1980s — a revolution that sparked the huge rise in inequality.

These Democratic experts have grown skeptical of the benefits of free trade and Washington’s hands-off approach to corporate consolidation. They want the government to spend more money on highways, technological development and other policies that could create good-paying jobs. The experts, in short, believe that they had been too accepting of the more laissez-faire economic agenda often known as neoliberalism.

This turnabout is the central explanation for President Biden’s economic agenda, which White House aides call Bidenomics and will be core to his re-election campaign. He has signed laws (sometimes with bipartisan support) spending billions of dollars on semiconductor factories, roads, bridges and clean energy. He has tried to crack down on monopolies. He has encouraged workers to join unions.

The best description of this shift I’ve yet read appears in [*“The Last Politician,”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/534055/the-last-politician-by-franklin-foer/) a new book about Biden’s first two years in office by Franklin Foer of The Atlantic. Foer tells the story partly through Jake Sullivan, who helped design Biden’s domestic agenda during the campaign and then became national security adviser.

Sullivan was nobody’s idea of a left-wing populist: He is a Rhodes Scholar with two Yale degrees who was a close aide to Hillary Clinton before Biden. But the financial crisis and then Donald Trump’s victory led Sullivan to reflect on Americans’ frustration, and he decided that elites like him had not done enough to address its underlying causes. (Here’s [*a 2018 article*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/opinion/sullivan-manifesto-economic-policy.html) in which I described his shift.)

“An entire generation of young Democratic wonks, with a similar establishment pedigree, found itself in the same brooding mood, tinged with fear,” Foer writes. These wonks built alliances with the more progressive parts of the party — those represented by Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — during Trump’s presidency. That’s why several Warren protégés, like Bharat Ramamurti, work in senior White House roles today.

Biden himself embodies the shift, too. Although he has long emphasized his humble background in Scranton, Pa., he supported his party’s more neoliberal agenda in the 1980s and 1990s. Recently, he has returned to some of the populist themes that he used to launch his political career a half-century ago. He has lamented the Democratic Party’s drift from ***working-class*** families toward college-educated professionals.

New terrain

Much of the 2024 presidential campaign will revolve around the economy’s short-term performance, and both Biden and his Republican critics will be able to cite evidence to make their case. Republicans will note that inflation remains uncomfortably high and that Biden’s pandemic relief spending played a role (albeit a secondary one, as my colleague German Lopez [*has explained*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/19/briefing/inflation-britain-united-states-europe.html)). Biden’s campaign will counter that job growth is solid, and wages have risen across the income spectrum. His investments, in semiconductors and more, seem to be playing a role.

But I would encourage you not to lose sight of the bigger picture during the back and forth of the campaign. The biggest picture is that the post-1980 economy failed to deliver the broad-based benefits that Reagan and his allies promised. So did several economic policies, like expanded global trade, that many Democrats favored.

Biden represents a response to these unfulfilled promises, as do the [*small but growing number of Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/briefing/republicans-inequality-free-market.html) pushing their party to change. Whatever happens with the economy over the next year or with Biden’s presidency, the policy debate has shifted.

“Bidenomics sounds banal when plastered as a slogan across the backdrop of a presidential stump speech,” Foer told me. “But it’s more than a set of positive economic indicators. It’s a shift in ideology. For a generation, Democratic presidents were inclined to be deferential to markets, basically uninterested in the problem of monopoly, and lukewarm to unions. Biden has gone in the other direction.”

Related: Some people mistakenly think that “***working class***” is a euphemism for “white ***working class***.” It isn’t. The American ***working class*** spans all races, and the Democratic Party has also lost ground with voters of color, especially those without a four-year college degree. [*You can read more from my colleague Nate Cohn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html).

More economic news

* Read more about the [*Republican debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/business/economy/economy-republicans-inequality.html) on how much the government should do about inequality.

1. Many experts predicted Medicare would be an ever-growing burden on the federal budget. Instead, spending per person has been [*flat for the past decade*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/05/upshot/medicare-budget-threat-receded.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Politics

* The former leader of the Proud Boys [*received 22 years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/politics/enrique-tarrio-proud-boys-sentenced.html) for his role on Jan. 6, the longest sentence yet for the Capitol riots.

1. A federal court again struck down Alabama’s congressional map, saying the revision [*diluted Black voters’ power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/politics/alabama-congressional-map.html).
2. Senator Mitch McConnell [*did not suffer seizures or strokes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/politics/mcconnell-health-capitol-physician-letter.html) when he froze publicly in recent weeks, according to the Capitol’s physician.
3. Gabriel Amo, a moderate Democrat who won a special House primary election in Rhode Island, is likely to become the state’s [*first Black member of Congress*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/elections/rhode-island-democratic-primary.html).

War in Ukraine

* Ukrainian forces are focusing on punching a [*second hole in Russia’s defenses*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-zelensky.html), a few miles from the town they retook last week.

1. Antony Blinken, the secretary of state, [*arrived in Kyiv this morning*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/09/06/world/russia-ukraine-news). He is expected to announce a more than $1 billion aid package.

* A Russian military pilot who defected to Ukraine said he escaped by [*flying his helicopter low*](https://www.wsj.com/world/russia/russian-pilot-describes-defection-to-ukraine-urges-others-to-follow-8574d0f7) to evade detection, The Wall Street Journal reports.

International

* The coach of the Spanish women’s national soccer team [*was fired*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/europe/jorge-vilda-coach-spain-soccer.html), but his boss — who kissed a player without her consent — is hanging on.

1. China’s economic slowdown is [*challenging Xi Jinping’s obsession with control*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/world/asia/china-economy-xi-jinping.html), Chris Buckley writes.
2. Violent gangs control roughly 80 percent of Haiti’s capital. There’s [*a plan to send in an outside police force*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/americas/haiti-kenya-force-gangs.html), but people in the country are skeptical.
3. In South Korea, known for its competitive schools, teachers are protesting [*intense parental demands*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/asia/south-korea-teachers-rally.html).

Climate

* Investors are now putting more money in solar than oil. The poorest countries, mostly in Africa, [*want more of the spending*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/04/climate/climate-finance-congo-kenya-cop.html).

1. Torrential rain that [*flooded Greece*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/europe/greece-flooding-rain.html) has moved on to Bulgaria and Turkey. At least seven people have died.
2. Temperatures in the New York City area [*are breaking records*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/nyregion/nyc-heat-wave.html) for early September.
3. How hot will your city be in 2050? [*Check with these graphics*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/interactive/2023/extreme-heat-wet-bulb-globe-temperature/) from The Washington Post.
4. Water scarcity is causing conflicts — including in Colorado, where a Denver suburb is fighting its neighbors for [*the right to use its own water*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/05/climate/colorado-water-climate-change.html).

Health Care

* Rigid abortion laws are driving doctors out of states like Idaho, [*leaving gaps in maternity care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/us/politics/abortion-obstetricians-maternity-care.html).

1. After a campus suicide, Yale [*revised its mental health policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/health/yale-mental-health.html), which had required students seeking medical leave to withdraw from the school and reapply.

Other Big Stories

* Lawyers for Alex Murdaugh, who was convicted of murdering his wife and son, accused a court official of jury tampering and [*asked for a new trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/alex-murdaugh-clerk-rebecca-hill.html).

1. “Cop City”: Dozens of people protesting an Atlanta police training facility were [*indicted on racketeering charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/us/cop-city-atlanta-indictment.html), accused of violence and destroying property.
2. Sam Bankman-Fried, founder of FTX, has [*protested his conditions in jail*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/technology/sam-bankman-fried-jail-peanut-butter-vegan.html) while he awaits trial for fraud, including a lack of hot vegan food.

Opinions

New discoveries are likely to leave experts wanting to tweak the Big Bang theory. They should instead [*depart from the idea entirely*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/02/opinion/cosmology-crisis-webb-telescope.html), Adam Frank and Marcelo Gleiser write.

Here are columns by Thomas Friedman on [*diplomacy with Israel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/opinion/biden-middle-east-deal.html) and Bret Stephens on [*American pessimism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/opinion/columnists/biden-unpopular-2024.html).

MORNING READS

“Irreversible damage”: Two people plowed through the Great Wall of China, [*leaving a gaping hole*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/asia/great-wall-china-excavator-damage.html).

Toes: Will fungus [*go away on its own*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/well/toenail-fungus-treatment.html)

Dining hall dilemmas: Colleges are struggling to cater to [*every student’s dietary restrictions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/dining/college-dining-halls-allergies-restrictions.html).

Lives Lived: Gloria Coates was among the most prolific female composers of symphonies, writing 17 in her lifetime. Her calling card was the orchestral glissando. [*She died at 89.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/arts/music/gloria-coates-dead.html)

SPORTS NEWS

A new star: At just 20, Ben Shelton is through to the U.S. Open semifinals after [*beating Frances Tiafoe*](https://theathletic.com/4837082/2023/09/06/us-open-frances-tiafoe-ben-shelton/) last night.

Injury: The Kansas City tight end Travis Kelce has a knee inflammation. Read [*how the team could adjust*](https://theathletic.com/4836303/2023/09/05/travis-kelce-knee-injury/).

W.N.B.A.: Breanna Stewart [*broke the league’s record*](https://theathletic.com/4836912/2023/09/05/libertys-breanna-stewart-season-points-record/) last night for most points scored in a single season.

A landmark: The Yankees slugger Giancarlo Stanton hit his [*400th career home run*](https://theathletic.com/4827776/2023/09/05/yankees-giancarlo-stanton-400-home-runs/) last night.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Galactic journey: Starfield, an adventure game set in a galaxy of 1,000 planets, comes out today on Xbox. Its release is a [*big deal for gamers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/arts/starfield-bethesda-microsoft-xbox.html): The company behind the game, Bethesda, is revered for its earlier creations like Fallout, and Starfield is its first new franchise in 25 years. The game was so eagerly anticipated that Microsoft recently bought the studio, in part to ensure that the franchise would be on its platforms exclusively.

More on culture

* Outside the premiere of Woody Allen’s 50th film at the Venice Film Festival, [*protesters urged the organizers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/movies/woody-allen-venice-film-festival.html) to “turn the spotlight off of rapists.”

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Braise [*white beans*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1021902-braised-white-beans-and-greens-with-parmesan) and add Parmesan.

Prepare for an emergency with [*these supplies*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/emergency-preparedness/).

Prevent tick bites on [*your next hike*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/prevent-ticks-lyme-disease/).

GAMES

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

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

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

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

PHOTO: President Joe Biden speaking during a groundbreaking for a wind tower manufacturing facility in New Mexico, last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kenny Holston/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***A Strike Looms in a Battleground State***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWM-M941-DXY4-X01R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1267 words

**Byline:** Matthew Cullen

**Highlight:** Also, Biden said he would be “happy to debate” Trump. Here’s the latest at the end Friday.

**Body**

Also, Biden said he would be “happy to debate” Trump. Here’s the latest at the end Friday.

More than 7,000 workers who make trucks and buses at Daimler Truck plants in North Carolina are [*poised to go on strike at midnight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html), barring a last-minute breakthrough. The United Automobile Workers, the union that represents the workers, said it was demanding a “historic deal” from the truck maker, including pay raises and more job security.

The planned walkout would open another front in the U.A.W.’s campaign to expand its power in Southern states, where organized labor has long been weak. The union is hoping it can build on the success of its work stoppages last fall at the three largest U.S. automakers not just by securing higher wages elsewhere, but also by forming more unions in the South.

“It’s our generation-defining moment,” Shawn Fain, U.A.W.’s president, said.

A strike in North Carolina — a battleground state that has a Democratic governor, but that President Biden narrowly lost in 2020 — [*could also have repercussions on the 2024 campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html). Biden, who has proclaimed himself the “most pro-union president in history,” has indicated that he could step in aggressively to support the Daimler workers. That could find him clashing with the state’s more pro-business Democrats, just months before Election Day.

Biden said he would be ‘happy to debate’ Trump

President Biden said today that he would participate in a debate with Donald Trump. [*His comments were a striking shift*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) after months in which he declined to commit to a debate. Trump’s campaign responded: “OK let’s set it up!”

Biden made the announcement during an interview with the radio host Howard Stern — a move that, my colleague Jeremy Peters suggested, could be an effort to reach a more ***working-class*** audience. “Hillary Clinton told Mr. Stern in 2019 that she might have done better with those voters if she’d agreed to do his show in 2016,” Jeremy said.

In related news, Biden has recently embraced the kinds of [*insults and taunts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) more commonly associated with Trump.

The U.S. will not deny aid for Israeli units accused of abuse

The Biden administration has decided that it [*will not suspend aid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) to three Israeli military units and two civilian units whose members committed gross human rights violations against Palestinians in the West Bank, so long as Israel holds the units accountable.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken notified House Speaker Mike Johnson of the decision in a letter. Johnson complained to the White House last week after news broke that the U.S. was considering withholding aid from the units.

Blinken will [*visit Israel next week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) to discuss efforts to free the remaining hostages held in Gaza and the Israeli military’s planned invasion of Rafah, which the U.S. opposes.

Hopes for substantial cuts in interest rates are fading

The latest reading of the Fed’s most closely watched inflation measure showed this morning that [*price increases remained notably faster*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) than the policymakers’ goal of 2 percent. It was just the latest sign that, after months of steady improvement in 2023, progress on cooling inflation is stalling out.

The data could prod the Fed to keep borrowing costs [*high for a longer period*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html), as many economists are now forecasting.

More top news

* China: A meeting between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and China’s leader, Xi Jinping, yielded some progress. But there was [*no budging on core differences*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

1. Trial: Prosecutors called their second and third witnesses to the stand in Trump’s hush-money trial: Rhona Graff, [*Trump’s former longtime executive assistant,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) and Gary Farro, [*a banker*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).
2. Health: The Biden administration delayed a decision on [*whether to ban menthol cigarettes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).
3. Protests: Video surfaced of a leader of the pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia saying “Zionists don’t deserve to live.” Today, [*he said his comments were wrong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

* Transportation: New York City’s congestion pricing program, the first in the U.S., [*will go into effect June 30*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

1. Real estate: The brokerage HomeServices of America agreed to [*pay $250 million to settle claims*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) brought by home sellers who said they were forced to pay inflated commissions.
2. Ukraine: Russia attacked railway facilities in three Ukrainian regions after its defense minister [*promised to target Western weapons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) arriving in Ukraine.
3. Cars: The federal auto safety agency is investigating Tesla’s recall of its Autopilot system because of concerns that the company [*has not done enough to ensure safety.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html)
4. South Africa: The country will celebrate 30 years since the end of apartheid tomorrow. We looked at [*how far South Africa has come in meeting its freedom goals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).
5. Royals: King Charles will [*return to public duties next week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html), nearly three months after he disclosed that he had cancer.

TIME TO UNWIND

Broadway is buzzing

The past 10 days have been the busiest stretch Broadway has seen in a long time: A dozen new plays and musicals opened ahead of last night’s deadline for the Tony Award nominations. (The nominees will be announced on Tuesday.) The season has become so stuffed that the producers of “Forbidden Broadway” [*scrapped their plans for a summer opening*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Now that the rush is over, theatergoers have many options. Our critics put together [*a list of nine shows that they think are worth considering*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

A new take on slouching

For many decades, proper posture has been considered a necessity — initially as a matter of etiquette, but more recently as a way to improve health. But the historian and sociologist Beth Linker argues in a new book that the “posture panic” has been misguided.

We sat down with her to talk about [*what science says about uprightness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Dinner table topics

* Football fashion: Here are the [*best looks from the first day of the N.F.L. draft*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

1. Titanic treasures: Collectors are ready to pounce on artifacts from the Titanic, including a violin case, [*coming up for auction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).
2. Tremaine Emory: The raconteur of streetwear’s Black history survived Ye, Supreme and a near-death experience. [*But can he survive the internet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html)
3. Princes in the tower: A historian is trying to crack a 15th-century cold case: [*Did Richard III really assassinate his nephews*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html)

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND

Cook: Brighten up your day with a [*homemade açaí bowl*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Watch: The Times [*has a new documentary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) exploring the underbelly of horse racing.

Read: Here are nine [*new books we recommend this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Plan: We put together an enjoyable [*itinerary for a short trip to Maui*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Slumber: Wirecutter tested 16 duvet covers. [*These are their favorites*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Compete: Take [*this week’s news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Play: Here are today’s [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html) and [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html). Find [*all of our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

ONE LAST THING

A $13,000 pair of Cartier earrings for $13

Rogelio Villarreal said he had never heard of the luxury jeweler Cartier until an ad popped up on his Instagram in December. He clicked on it and scrolled past pricey necklaces and watches until he came across a pair of rose-gold earrings listed at just 237 Mexican pesos, or about $13. [*He bought two pairs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

Cartier later adjusted the price to 237,000 pesos (well over $13,000) and made several attempts to cancel Villarreal’s order within a week of his purchase. The jeweler offered Villarreal a few gifts in exchange, but he declined. Finally, after filing a complaint to Mexico’s consumer protection agency, Villarreal said that Cartier informed him this week that his order would be fulfilled.

Have a lucky weekend.

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back on Monday. — Matthew

We welcome your feedback. Write to us at [*evening@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/26/business/daimler-truck-uaw-strike.html).

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, the president of the United Automobile Workers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY George Walker/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***He Played the Victim. It Earned Him Attention, Success and a Lot of Trouble.; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHB-5HW1-DXY4-X013-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 890 words

**Byline:** Mateo Askaripour

**Highlight:** In Andrew Boryga’s debut novel, a young writer creates a career for himself by exaggerating, or sometimes completely manufacturing, stories of tragedy.

**Body**

In Andrew Boryga’s debut novel, a young writer creates a career for himself by exaggerating, or sometimes completely manufacturing, stories of tragedy.

VICTIM, by Andrew Boryga

There’s real value in being a victim. Serious profit in pity, but only so long as you don’t become too ambitious, too greedy or too arrogant. Veer too far, and you run the risk of becoming dependent on disaster. That’s when real trouble ensues.

And that’s exactly what happens to Javier “Javi” Perez, the hustling Icarus at the center of Andrew Boryga’s energetic and deeply satisfying debut novel, “Victim.”

The story, which is presented as a memoir written by Javi himself, is at once an act of redemption and condemnation. As Javi explains in the first sentence, “I wasn’t trying to play the victim until the world taught me what a powerful grift it is.”

Boryga’s novel opens with Javi’s youth. He was born in the Bronx to ***working-class***, Puerto Rican parents. To outside eyes, his background is rough, but, from his own perspective, it’s not hell. Misfortune does eventually manifest for Javi when, at 12, he witnesses his father’s fatal shooting. Surprisingly, he’s only shaken, because, as Javi explains, he was “losing a person who was only kind of there.” However, Javi soon learns that within tragedy lies opportunity. Assuming he’s traumatized, his teachers give him a free pass to go to the nurse whenever he wants, which he frequently uses to cut class. It’s his “first taste of the high that comes from being a victim.”

Javi’s main goal in life is to “become a famous writer who makes bank,” but before that: college. He assumes he’ll just go somewhere local, but his guidance counselor, Mr. Martin, urges him to consider “more prestigious” institutions, like Donlon University, which offers full-ride scholarships for “poor, underserved minority students.” The key to these scholarships is to write an essay stuffed with tragedy and trauma — basically catnip for the admissions committee.

“I had never thought about my life in that way,” Javi muses. In his eyes, he’s not a victim; he’s not “poor. But poorish.” Still, Javi writes the essay and it works: He gains entrance to Donlon. It’s a critical lesson that teaches our inner-city Icarus how to fly — Javi realizes that his personal history and his skin color can be a gold mine and that, “with people like Mr. Martin, I was rich.”

His ascent continues at Donlon, where he becomes the first Latino columnist of the school newspaper in its 100-year existence. But instead of writing his truth, he constantly stretches it, lying about various instances of victimization. And just as they did with his college essay, people eat it up. His editors place his first column “prominently on the front page,” and his “exaggerated and outright manufactured” writing brings Javi more and more success, earning him first attention, then freelance pieces in a famous magazine, then a job as a staff writer at the storied publication. But like Icarus with his wings of wax, Javi learns that counterfeit fabrications eventually fall apart.

In “Victim,” Boryga skillfully conveys that “victim” is often an external label slapped onto us (“It was in one of my very first classes,” Javi hilariously recounts, “that I learned something profound: I am a victim of systemic oppression”), but whether we rock it proudly or reject it loudly is up to us. Regardless, every choice comes with a consequence.

It’s a thorny and nuanced conversation, but Boryga handles it judiciously. His prose is animated and active; his character writing is a crowning achievement. The people who populate the book are, at first glance, so familiar that they could devolve into caricature, but with Boryga’s empathetic prose and startling self-awareness, they come to life with beating hearts and distinct personalities without sacrificing veracity. The sum of this is a story that reads like an enthralling account told by a friend rather than some stuffy, moralistic cautionary tale. Boryga is having fun, and he’s inviting us to join in.

But let’s be clear: Though Boryga is playing, he’s not playing around. Through Javi’s story, Boryga humorously and scathingly calls out the gluttonous consumption of stories of victimhood. Javi’s scam is possible only because he understands that people will all too willingly, and uncritically, embrace tales of woe in order to reinforce their own sense of self and morals — especially in public. The perils of this, the novel suggests, are twofold: It strips victims of their personhood, reducing them to faces on T-shirts and pixels on a screen, while also cultivating a society fertile for fraud. Yes, Boryga’s critiques are uncomfortable, and entirely necessary. His debut signals the arrival of a writer courageous enough to dive into the difficult head-on.

A thrilling work that requires a sense of openness and surrender, not only does this novel place the onus on us to decide whether Javi is a victim, a victimizer or both, it also forces us to interrogate our own complicity in the commodification of being a casualty. Because, as Javi says: Life ain’t neat. “No one among us is righteous.”

VICTIM | By Andrew Boryga | Doubleday | 276 pp. | $27

Mateo Askaripour’s debut novel is “Black Buck.” His second novel, “This Great Hemisphere,” will be published in July.

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

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[***In the new trade war with China over green technology, U.S. leaders seem to be in denial about just how far behind America is.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C40-7XF1-JBG3-61WT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 18; DAVID WALLACE-WELLS

**Length:** 1673 words

**Byline:** By David Wallace-Wells

**Body**

On May 14, President Biden announced a major escalation of the country's emerging climate trade war with China, raising existing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to 100 percent -- a unilateral quadrupling. A few days earlier, responding to reports of Biden's plans, Donald Trump outdid him, promising tariffs of 200 percent should he win the 2024 election.

It's not just E.V.s. Five years after blasting Trump for imposing tariffs on Chinese exports, Biden raised them -- on aluminum, steel, lithium batteries, solar cells and semiconductors, among other products. Trade protections of this scope would have been almost unthinkable even half a generation ago, when free markets were largely seen by leaders of both parties as opportunities to exploit and tariffs were regarded as an expression of hostile desperation by weak, developingnations. And tariffs would have been perhaps even harder to imagine then in pursuit of global climate goals, which had always called to mind not zero-sum economic competition but virtuous visions of ''Kumbaya'' cooperation and even global governance in the name of Gaia.

But since Trump's election in 2016, chastened Democratic policymakers have come to see green industrial policy as a kind of one-size-fits-all, policy-and-politics tool -- a recipe for addressing the climate crisis, yes, but also for the postindustrial ''secular stagnation'' of the U.S. economy, for the domestic manufacturing decline, for white ***working-class*** resentment and for the geopolitical challenge posed by China. Trade protectionism is now perhaps the closest thing we have to a bipartisan consensus in Washington, but sometimes all those goals sit at cross purposes. ''There are few things that would decarbonize the U.S. faster than $20,000 E.V.s,'' the M.I.T. economics professor David Autor recently said. ''But there is probably nothing that would kill the U.S. auto industry faster, either.'' And BYD, a Chinese automaker, just rolled out a model priced under $10,000.

Play a word-association game for ''E.V.,'' and an American is most likely to say ''Tesla'' first, but these days it would be better to say ''China,'' so astonishing has been the growth of the country's electric-vehicle sector. In 2019, Chinese E.V. exports totaled $400 million; by 2023, they had reached $34 billion, a precipitous 85-fold increase and enough to help make the country, as recently as five years ago an afterthought in global auto exports, today the world's top exporter of all cars. Nearly 60 percent of all the world's E.V.s are now sold in China, which is home to three of the world's four biggest E.V. manufacturers. In late 2023, BYD moved briefly into the top spot, shortly before Tesla issued a mass recall of its Cybertruck and reportedly canceled its plans for an affordable sedan.

At present, there are hardly any Chinese-manufactured E.V.s even available for sale in the United States, which makes the back and forth over tariffs look pretty performative in the short term. (Symbolically, it has got to be reassuring to American autoworkers, a key swing-state constituency.) But cast your eyes a little deeper into the future, and E.V. protectionism looks less like a market tweak, designed to even the playing field for American automakers, than a market wall. It's designed to keep Chinese exports entirely out of the United States, at least while the huge industrial stimulus of the Inflation Reduction Act kicks in, and to protect domestic manufacturers from the competition of cars that might be half as expensive or twice as appealing through years in which the country is meant to be transitioning rapidly. (E.V.s are supposed to be half of all new car sales by 2030, according to the White House, up from 7.6 percent last year.)

Biden wagered an awful lot of first-term political capital on a new green industrial policy, which allocated more than $2 trillion in spending on the climate-focused I.R.A. and the climate-inflected infrastructure law and CHIPS Act. Now, toward the end of his term, he is trying to build a protective moat around America's budding green industries. From the outside, it looks like a genuine climate trade war. Can it even be won?

You have probably heard about the miraculous growth of green energy around the world in recent years -- in 2023, renewables for the first time provided 30 percent of all global electricity, and last month, in another first, fossil fuels provided less than a quarter of European Union power.

But though the carbon reductions are most impressive in Europe, the green boom is overwhelmingly a Chinese story. More than half of all new solar power installed in the world last year was installed inside China. For wind power, the share was even larger: China was responsible for 60 percent of all new global capacity. In just three years, the country has more than doubled the total amount of solar and wind power installed within its borders; in the United States, what looks like a breakneck build-out over the same period has pushed capacity up by less than 50 percent. Batteries, too: Last year China manufactured storage capacity equal to total global demand.

When you move upstream from final products into the green-tech supply chain, China dominates even more. It produces 84 percent of the world's solar modules, according to a recent report by BloombergNEF. It produces 89 percent of the world's solar cells and 97 percent of its solar wafers and ingots, 86 percent each of its polysilicon and battery cells, 87 percent of its battery cathodes, 96 percent of its battery anodes, 91 percent of its battery electrodes and 85 percent of its battery separators. The list goes on.

It is in this context that the United States is undertaking its clean-tech trade war -- not from a position of strength or even parity. When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, it was in response to plans for an American satellite, which made it into orbit just three months after the Russian launch; later in the Cold War, when American hawks lamented the ''missile gap,'' they were referring to a fiction, because the Russians had no advantage. Today, China controls more than 80 percent of many essential aspects of the global clean-energy supply chain; the United States controls almost none of it.

Does it matter? To hear Democratic policymakers from Biden and Janet Yellen on down tell it, the answer is yes. To navigate the green transition smoothly, they say, the country needs to avoid growing entirely dependent on China for clean energy in the way we previously relied so heavily on autocratic gulf states for dirty energy. They also want to avoid a replay of the ''China shock'' of the early 2000s, which decimated manufacturing labor across the industrial Midwest especially, and to combat the problem of ''oversupply'' from China on American businesses and workers. In a best-case scenario, subsidies and tariffs would together help American companies ramp up E.V. production so rapidly that U.S. manufacturers become a driving force behind the decarbonization of global transportation.

But there are risks. To begin with, industrial policy isn't guaranteed to work, and no tariff is large enough to really reduce China's global green-tech dominance, because the U.S. market isn't all that significant to the Chinese. Green self-sufficiency is more achievable, and tariff defenders suggest they are meant to be temporary, allowing the American E.V. industry merely to find its footing. But for how long should we baby domestic industry when it means higher prices on so much of the good green stuff? ''A glut in renewables and green products is precisely what the climate doctor ordered,'' Dani Rodrik of Harvard wrote this month. As Bloomberg's David Fickling has pointed out, Trump's imposition of tariffs on Chinese solar-panel exports in 2018 may have meaningfully slowed American renewable rollout. Will American E.V.s fare any better?

A few weeks ago, the electric-vehicle analyst Kevin Williams took a trip to Beijing to take the measure of the competition. Williams had gone to the city's big annual automotive show to test one American perspective on China's E.V. boom -- that it was something between a state-sponsored boondoggle and a mirage of pointless overproduction.

After test-driving a dozen vehicles, Williams thought he had his answer: Chinese E.V.s were simply better and more compelling than their European and American counterparts, he said. ''Now that I've seen a glimpse of what's going on in China,'' he wrote, ''the Western manufacturers, particularly the American ones, don't seem like they're trying at all.''

Further reading

Elizabeth Pancotti of the Roosevelt Institute: ''Why It's Good, Actually, That You Can't Buy the World's Cheapest Electric Vehicle.''

Adam Tooze on the sheer scale of the Chinese green-energy boom.

Kate McKenzie and Tim Sahay, of the Polycrisis newsletter, on the ''Great Green Wall.''

''Don't Slam the Door on Inexpensive Electric Vehicles,'' write Gernot Wagner and Conor Walsh, suggesting a carbon tariff instead.

''Chinese Clean Tech Is Not the Enemy,'' writes David Fickling in Bloomberg.

''What are the prospects for turning the U.S. auto sector into a lean, green E.V.-manufacturing machine?'' asks Kate Aronoff in The New Republic. ''And is there any potential role for Chinese companies to play in getting there?''

In The Financial Times, Edward Luce describes the tariffs as ''pulling up the drawbridge.''

Noah Smith on ''the Big Tariffs'' and the British commentators scolding the U.S. for imposing them.

Arnaud Bertrand looks at just how far behind China the United States is in producing steel, aluminum and solar panels (not to mention E.V.s).

Luke Patey in China wire on ''the great E.V. glut.''

Brad Setser of the Council on Foreign Relations talks about Chinese overcapacity and the new tariffs with Bloomberg's Odd Lots and the ''ChinaTalk'' podcast, and writes that the best argument for the efficacy of industrial policy is China's own success with it.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/opinion/america-green-tech-trade-war-china.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/22/opinion/america-green-tech-trade-war-china.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page MM18, MM19.

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2024

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[***Pulitzer Prizes 2024: A Guide to the Winning Books and Finalists***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYS-D7T1-JBG3-6024-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 6, 2024 Monday 20:35 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; booksupdate

**Length:** 1406 words

**Byline:** Elizabeth A. Harris and Joumana Khatib Elizabeth A. Harris covers books and the publishing industry, reporting on industry news and examining the broader cultural impact of books. She is also an author. Her novel, &amp;#8220;How To Sleep At Night,&amp;#8221; will be published in 2025.

**Highlight:** Jayne Anne Phillips won the fiction award for “Night Watch,” while Jonathan Eig and Ilyon Woo shared the biography prize.

**Body**

Jayne Anne Phillips won the fiction award for “Night Watch,” while Jonathan Eig and Ilyon Woo shared the biography prize.

Eighteen books were recognized as winners or finalists for the Pulitzer Prize on Monday, in the categories of history, memoir, poetry, general nonfiction, fiction and biography, which had two winners.

[*Night Watch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Jayne Anne Phillips*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

A story about a mother and daughter set in the Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum in Weston, W.Va., after the Civil War. “Night Watch,” which was also longlisted for the National Book Award, is about surviving war and its aftermath. “I consider Phillips to be among the greatest and most intuitive of American writers,” wrote our critic Dwight Garner.

Knopf

Fiction finalist: [*Wednesday’s Child: Stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Yiyun Li*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

A short story collection written over the course of a decade that examines aging and loss. The stories touch on a woman who makes a spreadsheet of every person she’s lost, a middle-aged practitioner of Eastern medicine and an 88-year-old biologist.

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux

Fiction finalist: [*Same Bed Different Dreams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by Ed Park

An imagined alternate history of Korea that includes assassins, slasher films and the dangers of social media. In a review in The Times, the critic Hamilton Cain called the book “wonderfully suspenseful, like watching a circus performer juggle a dozen torches; will one slip his agile hands?”

Random House

[*No Right to an Honest Living*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by Jacqueline Jones

Jones, a historian and a two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, examines the hypocrisy of Boston before the Civil War. The city was known for its antislavery rhetoric and as the center of abolitionism, but Black residents endured “casual cruelty” in the work force and were condemned to lives of poverty without the chance for equal employment.

Basic Books

History finalist: [*Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by Elliott West

This is an examination of the American West and its physical and cultural transformation in the 19th century. The book covers the 1840s, when the West was home to various Native cultures, and moves through the next three decades, when the area was organized into states and territories and connected by railroads and telegraph wires.

University of Nebraska Press

History finalist: American Anarchy: The Epic Struggle Between Immigrant Radicals and the U.S. Government at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century, by Michael Willrich

This book is a history of the American anarchist movement in the early 20th century. While many ***working class*** immigrants saw it as heroic, others considered it a frightening foreign ideology.

Basic Books

[*King: A Life*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Jonathan Eig*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

This major study of the civil rights icon draws on a landslide of recently released White House telephone transcripts, F.B.I. documents, letters, oral histories and other material. Eig shows a masterly command of his research, showing King in intimate moments, and arguing that his nonviolence has been mistaken for passivity. Put simply, our critic Dwight Garner wrote, “Eig’s book is worthy of its subject.”

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux

[*Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey From Slavery to Freedom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by Ilyon Woo

In 1848, William and Ellen Craft, an enslaved couple, disguised themselves as a sick, wealthy white man traveling with his male slave and headed north. Woo tells the story of their stunning, perilous journey in novelistic detail, tracing their path through the United States and eventual passage to England, where they wrote a popular book about their escape.

Simon &amp; Schuster

Biography finalist: “[*Larry McMurtry: A Life*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html),” by Tracy Daugherty

This is the first comprehensive biography of McMurtry, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “Lonesome Dove” and “The Last Picture Show,” among other novels. Daugherty has also written biographies of Joseph Heller and Joan Didion, and his latest “reads a bit like one of McMurtry’s novels,” our critic Dwight Garner wrote in his review. “Elegy and humor bleed into each other.”

St. Martin’s Press

[*Liliana’s Invincible Summer: A Sister’s Search for Justice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Cristina Rivera Garza*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

In 1990, Rivera Garza’s 20-year-old sister was killed, and the case is a jumping-off point for this searching, personal examination of femicide in Mexico. The book is “one of the most effective resurrections of a murder victim I have ever read,” our reviewer, Katherine Dykstra, wrote. “Rivera Garza draws her sister, then complicates that drawing and then complicates the complication, creating layer upon layer of nuance.”

Hogarth

Memoir finalist: [*The Country of the Blind: A Memoir at the End of Sight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Andrew Leland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

The author, a longtime editor and podcaster, details his life with retinitis pigmentosa, a disease that is gradually causing him to lose his vision. His writing is “jazzy and intelligent,” our critic Alexandra Jacobs said, “with licks of understated humor.” Yet Leland also “rigorously explores the disability’s most troubling corners,” resulting in an affecting study of vision and its limits.

Penguin Press

Memoir finalist: [*The Best Minds: A Story of Friendship, Madness, and the Tragedy of Good Intentions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by Jonathan Rosen

In this account of his friendship with Michael Laudor, who came to prominence as a Yale student trying to publicly destigmatize mental illness and later was convicted of stabbing his pregnant girlfriend to death, Rosen offers a look at the boundaries between brilliance and insanity. Our critic Alexandra Jacobs called it “an act of tremendous compassion and a literary triumph.”

Penguin Press

[*A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Nathan Thrall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

This book tells the story of a deadly bus crash outside Jerusalem through the eyes of a Palestinian father whose 5-year-old died in the accident. The father’s agony is compounded by the physical and legal restrictions that shape the lives of Palestinians in East Jerusalem. Thrall also examines the political, bureaucratic and personal decisions that contributed to the crash, and “vignettes of individual guilt come up against stark political realities,” our reviewer Rozina Ali wrote.

Metropolitan Books

General nonfiction finalist: [*Fire Weather: A True Story From a Hotter World*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*John Vaillant*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

In 2016, wildfires tore through Fort McMurray, in the Canadian province of Alberta. Vaillant details how the fire began, how it traveled and the wreckage it left behind, weaving a story of a warming climate, a massive oil reserve and the apocalyptic fallout. The heart of the story, of course, is the fire itself: “Vaillant anthropomorphizes fire,” our reviewer David Enrich wrote. “Not only does it grow and breathe and search for food; it strategizes. It hunts. It lays in wait for months, even years.”

Knopf

General nonfiction finalist: [*Cobalt Red: How the Blood of the Congo Powers Our Lives*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Siddharth Kara*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

Cobalt is an essential mineral used in the lithium-ion rechargeable batteries that power devices from smartphones to electric vehicle. This book, from an academic who has studied modern slavery, examines the horrors of cobalt mining, particularly the hazardous conditions and subsistence pay that workers face.

St. Martin’s Press

Tripas: Poems, by Brandon Som

In this collection, Som celebrates his multicultural heritage and family memories, writing about his grandmother, who was Chicana and worked nights on an assembly line at a Motorola factory, and his Chinese American father and grandparents, who ran a corner store.

Georgia Review Books

Poetry finalist: [*Information Desk: An Epic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html), by [*Robyn Schiff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

Schiff chronicles her five years working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s information desk, where she answered mostly one question. As she writes in “Information Desk,” the “catechism/commences: Where’s the bathroom?/Where’s/the bathroom? Can you direct me to a/men’s room?” Writing about the book for The Times, Maggie Lange called it “a searing yet reverent book-length poem, containing as many jokes as it does social critiques.”

Penguin Poets

Poetry finalist: To 2040, by [*Jorie Graham*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/books/review/jayne-anne-phillips-finds-anguish-and-asylum-in-civil-war-america.html)

Graham’s 15th poetry collection is narrated by a speaker looking toward the future while reflecting on her own mortality. The collection begins with questions stated as fact: “Are we / extinct yet. Who owns / the map.”

Copper Canyon Press

PHOTO: Jayne Anne Phillips won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for her novel “Night Watch,” about surviving war and its aftermath. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Right: Elena Seibert FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2024

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[***33 Novels Coming This Summer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C82-GJ61-JBG3-6012-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 14, 2024 Friday 17:04 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1954 words

**Byline:** Kate Dwyer

**Highlight:** Watch for new books by J. Courtney Sullivan, Kevin Barry and Casey McQuiston; re-immerse yourself in beloved worlds conjured by Walter Mosley, Elin Hilderbrand and Rebecca Roanhorse.

**Body**

Watch for new books by J. Courtney Sullivan, Kevin Barry and Casey McQuiston; re-immerse yourself in beloved worlds conjured by Walter Mosley, Elin Hilderbrand and Rebecca Roanhorse.

June

[*Farewell, Amethystine*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Walter Mosley

The latest in this best-selling mystery series about Easy Rawlins centers on a missing-persons case that takes the beloved private detective deep into his own past. Easy’s lost love asks for help finding her ex-husband — a forensic accountant who got mixed up in trouble — prompting a torrent of memories.

Mulholland Books, June 4

[*Fire Exit*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Morgan Talty

This novel, from the author of “Night of the Living Rez,” is told from the perspective of a man who was expelled from Maine’s Penobscot Reservation when he was a young adult, and must decide how much of his history to reveal to his daughter.

Tin House, June 4

[*Godwin*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Joseph O’Neill

This globe-trotting romp from the author of “Netherland” chronicles a man’s quest to find a mysterious soccer prodigy in West Africa and the unraveling of his workplace back in Pittsburgh.

Pantheon, June 4

[*Mirrored Heavens*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Rebecca Roanhorse

Roanhorse is [*one of several Indigenous writers*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/) reshaping American science fiction and fantasy. The final installment in her Between Earth and Sky series, this novel follows the ultimate fates of the people of Meridian.

S &amp; S/Saga Press, June 4

[*The Road to the Country*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Chigozie Obioma

Set during Nigeria’s civil war, this novel follows a man who is conscripted to fight for the Biafran army after embarking on a search for his missing brother.

Hogarth, June 4

[*Swift River*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Essie Chambers

Diamond Newberry is the only Black person in Swift River, a New England mill town in decline. When her mother decides to start filing the paperwork to declare her missing father officially dead, Diamond uncovers a lineage of Black women she didn’t know existed.

Simon &amp; Schuster, June 4

[*Horror Movie*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Paul Tremblay

Alternating between the ’90s, the present day and scenes from a screenplay, Tremblay’s latest follows the Hollywood remake of “Horror Movie,” a cult-favorite art house film with a cursed history. Tragedy struck the original shoot, and just a handful of scenes ever made it to the public, yet the only surviving cast member is hellbent on reliving his very dark past.

William Morrow, June 11

[*One of Our Kind*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Nicola Yoon

The promise of Liberty, Calif., is a Black utopia, but when Jasmyn and King move their young family there, they discover a place whose citizens are more interested in luxury wellness than social justice.

Knopf, June 11

[*Swan Song*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Elin Hilderbrand

The final novel in Hilderbrand’s beloved Nantucket series is here. The Richardsons caused a stir on the island when they purchased a $22-million beach house, started hosting Gatsby-ish parties and campaigned to join the old-money Field &amp; Oar club. But when the couple’s home burns down and their personal assistant disappears, the police chief Ed Kapenash must put his retirement plans on hold and find the missing girl.

Little, Brown, June 11

[*Four Squares*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Bobby Finger

Shifting between 1992 and 2022, Finger chronicles the life of Artie, a gay copywriter who meets his partner, Abe, at the height of the AIDS crisis. Thirty years later, Abe has passed away, and his ex-wife and daughter — the people closest to Artie — move to the West Coast. After an accident, Artie unexpectedly finds a group of kindred spirits at a local L.G.B.T.Q. senior center.

G.P. Putnam’s Sons, June 18

[*The Glassmaker*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Tracy Chevalier

From the author of “Girl With a Pearl Earring,” this is a new historical novel with an artistic bent, following a family of Murano glassblowers starting in 1400s Venice.

Viking, June 18

[*Little Rot*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Akwaeke Emezi

Emezi’s novel takes readers into the underworld of Lagos, where sex, power and corruption intersect. After Kalu breaks up with his longtime partner, he crosses paths with two sex workers at an party hosted by his best friend, turning all of their lives upside down.

Riverhead, June 18

[*Same As It Ever Was*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Claire Lombardo

After decades of instability, Julia Ames finally feels in control of her life. But after she bumps into an estranged friend at the grocery store, her 20-something son announces plans to marry his pregnant girlfriend and her teenage daughter starts acting out in increasingly worrisome ways, Julia reflects upon her life’s pivotal moments, including her own mother’s ambivalence and its ripple effects.

Doubleday, June 18

[*Sandwich*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Catherine Newman

Rocky is middle-aged, grappling with the intensities of perimenopause and “sandwiched” between her young adult children and ailing parents. Each chapter of this novel covers a day at her idyllic but aging house on Cape Cod, tracing her family’s revelations during a moment of transition.

Harper, June 18

[*Bear*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Julia Phillips

Two sisters work service jobs on a wealthy tourist island off the coast of Washington. When a bear swims across the channel and arrives in their backyard, the sisters take it as a sign to change their lives.

Hogarth, June 25

[*Shanghai*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Joseph Kanon

In the mid-1930s, many Jewish refugees fled Germany for Shanghai, where they didn’t need an entry visa. One of them, Daniel Lohr, reconnects there with his uncle Nathan, a gangster who works in nightlife. Now embroiled in some murky business dealings, Daniel finds Leah — a fellow émigré with whom he had an affair — involved with one of the lawless city’s top intelligence officers. As the world careens toward global conflict, Daniel works to keep his loved ones safe.

Scribner, June 25

July

[*The Cliffs*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by J. Courtney Sullivan

Upon returning to her Maine hometown, Jane, an archivist, learns that the crumbling Victorian mansion she loved as a teenager is now a cookie-cutter McMansion owned by Genevieve, a wealthy summer resident from Boston. Believing the house to be haunted, Genevieve hires Jane to research the house’s history, revealing ghosts of a different kind.

Knopf, July 2

[*The God of the Woods*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Liz Moore

In 1975, a teenager goes missing from the Adirondack summer camp her family owns, forcing a ***working-class*** community to confront its long-held class issues while an industrial dynasty grapples with its toll on a region.

Riverhead, July 2

[*The Heart in Winter*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Kevin Barry

In Butte, Mont., during the 1890s, two forbidden lovers, Tom and Polly, skip town with a stolen horse and $600 in cash. But Polly’s religious-zealot husband is intent on tracking them down, and soon, the couple find themselves outrunning a manhunt in a brutal Western winter.

Doubleday, July 9

[*Long Island Compromise*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Taffy Brodesser-Akner

Brodesser-Akner, a staff writer at The New York Times Magazine, follows a wealthy family grappling with the aftershocks of its patriarch’s kidnapping 40 years earlier: Carl, the target, has been privately seeking closure while his wife tries to tend to his emotional needs. Their now-grown children have suffered in different ways — and that’s all before they realize the family fortune has dwindled to almost nothing.

Random House, July 9

[*The Black Bird Oracle*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Deborah Harkness

The latest in Harkness’s best-selling All Souls series, this novel picks up with Diana, a scholar-witch, and Matthew, a vampire geneticist, who must reckon with how to build a future for their young twins. Along the way, Diana confronts her own family history and caliber of magic.

Ballantine, July 16

[*The Bright Sword*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Lev Grossman

The author of the blockbuster Magicians trilogy returns with an epic set in Arthurian legend. After the death of King Arthur, a young knight named Collum joins the Round Table’s lesser-known players to restore Camelot to its former glory, find Excalibur and unravel the mysteries that led to the king’s demise.

Viking, July 16

[*I Was a Teenage Slasher*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Stephen Graham Jones

Tolly Driver — a kid full of promise whose life changed one summer night in 1989 — is writing a memoir about his murderous youth and thirst for revenge. Riffing on 1980s slasher tropes with an antihero protagonist, Jones explores friendship, nostalgia and life in small-town Texas.

S &amp; S/Saga Press, July 16

[*The Book of Elsewhere*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Keanu Reeves and China Miéville

Set in the universe of BRZRKR, Reeves’s comic series, this sci-fi novel traces a warrior’s 1,000-year journey to understand — and shed — his immortality.

Del Rey, July 23

[*Liars*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Sarah Manguso

When Jane, a writer, meets a multimedia artist named John, she feels immediate relief; they have the same ambition to focus on their creative work and share the same idea of happiness. But once they have children, Jane finds herself stymied by the responsibilities of motherhood and John’s own work, which leads the family to hopscotch around the country. This novel traces the decline of their marriage, and Jane’s emergence from this crucible of domestic pressure.

Hogarth, July 23

[*Pearl*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Siân Hughes

Longlisted for the 2023 Booker Prize, “Pearl” follows an English woman in the decades following her mother’s disappearance. As she reckons with its effects on her adolescence and experience of motherhood, she finds comfort in a 14th-century poem.

Knopf, July 30

August

[*The Chamber*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Will Dean

In this locked-room thriller, six divers enter a hyperbaric chamber to explore the depths of the ocean. But when one diver is found dead, and a second unconscious shortly after, those who remain — now aware there’s either a lethal human or substance among them — must survive the four days it’ll take to return to the surface.

Atria/Emily Bestler Books, Aug. 6

[*Hum*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Helen Phillips

After A.I. claims her job, May signs up to participate in an experiment that will render her face unrecognizable to surveillance cameras. To help jolt her family from their addiction to devices, she books a tech-free getaway inside a local botanical garden. When her children’s safety is threatened, she must join forces with one of the unknowable robots who live among mankind.

S &amp; S/Mary Sue Rucci Books, Aug. 6

[*The Pairing*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Casey McQuiston

Theo, who dreams of becoming a sommelier, and Kit, a pastry chef, end up on the same European food and wine tour four years after their devastating breakup. As they travel by bus across Italy, France and Spain, they compete to see who can rack up more sexual conquests, as if to prove just how much they’ve moved on — if they’ve moved on at all.

St. Martin’s Griffin, Aug. 6

[*The Seventh Veil of Salome*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

An unknown Mexican actress, Vera Larios, rockets to stardom when she’s cast as Salome — the biblical Jewish princess — in a Golden Age Hollywood blockbuster, inspiring the jealousy of a castmate. The story of Salome is braided in with this tale, creating a narrative that comments on ambition, race and patriarchy.

Del Rey, Aug. 6

[*Burn*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Peter Heller

Two childhood friends, Jess and Storey, return from an off-grid hunting trip to discover a dystopian reality where their home state of Maine has fallen to violent secessionists at odds with the U.S. military.

Knopf, Aug. 13

[*Jimi Hendrix Live in Lviv*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Andrey Kurkov. Translated by Reuben Woolley.

Longlisted for the 2023 International Booker Prize, this magical realist romp takes place in the landlocked Ukrainian city of Lviv as sea gulls and starfish mysteriously appear, hippies and ex-K.G.B. agents mourn Jimi Hendrix and young lovers try to forge a future together.

HarperVia, Aug. 13

[*There Are Rivers in the Sky*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/walter-mosley/farewell-amethystine/9780316491112/), by Elif Shafak

This new novel is a narrative in three parts: the rags-to-riches story of a publisher in 1840 London, the impending baptism of a Yazidi 10-year-old in 2014 Turkey and the life-changing epiphany of a hydrologist in 2018 London. Shafak unites her characters using the Epic of Gilgamesh and a single drop of water.

Knopf, Aug. 20

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 9, 2024

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[***In San Francisco, a Home Renovation Can Become a Battle Royale***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVX-P641-JBG3-60SD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 23, 2024 Tuesday 11:29 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1217 words

**Byline:** Heather Knight Heather Knight is a reporter in San Francisco, leading The Times&amp;#8217;s coverage of the Bay Area and Northern California.

**Highlight:** Neighbors have multiple opportunities to raise objections, and some disputes can only be resolved by the city’s top governing body.

**Body**

Neighbors have multiple opportunities to raise objections, and some disputes can only be resolved by the city’s top governing body.

San Francisco’s top governing body spent time on Tuesday discussing what most residents surely would not consider a major priority for the city: whether Julie Park and Tom McDonald can raise the roof of their $2.1 million Victorian home by 7 feet and 3 inches.

The project complies with city codes, and the San Francisco Planning Commission gave unanimous approval months ago; in many cities that would have been good enough for the remodel to move forward. But in San Francisco, neighbors wield unusual power over next-door renovations and modest improvements and can appeal even the replacement of rotted front steps.

So on Tuesday, 11 members of San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors served as judges in home construction, hearing from Ms. Park, a lawyer representing her neighbors and Planning Department experts.

The feud between wealthy neighbors is emblematic of the city’s languor when it comes to building anything. San Francisco has already [*drawn the ire of state housing officials*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7), who have demanded that the city add 82,000 units in the next seven years, a goal that seems out of reach when many projects draw multiple rounds of challenges and years of delays.

“This isn’t to say that other California cities don’t have similar planning battles royale, but historically speaking, San Francisco has distinguished itself as the leader of the pack,” Dan Sider, chief of staff for the San Francisco Planning Department, said.

Ms. Park, a 40-year-old consultant for start-ups and small businesses, began her quest during the pandemic when she and Mr. McDonald, a 38-year-old climate researcher, bought their three-story home on Harper Street on the edge of Noe Valley in 2020. The neighborhood is popular with families and close to hilltop hikes that provide stunning views.

The four-bedroom, one-bath home was built in 1905 and still had its original foundation and old plumbing. The couple’s idea was to turn the ground level into a separate living unit for Mr. McDonald’s parents and the middle level into the family’s living space and kitchen.

The plan was to raise the upper level’s gabled roof to make way for two bathrooms and three bedrooms for the couple and hoped-for children.

As required by city law, Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald notified their neighbors in February 2023 and quickly learned that several of them worried that a taller building would affect their views of the city, cast shadows and allow the couple to peer into their homes.

In a city full of tech workers, the squabble led one neighbor to post signs with a QR code and the words “SAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD” on utility poles. The QR code led to a website, [*whatupsf.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7), which encouraged people to sign a petition opposing the renovation, to attend Tuesday’s meeting and to fight the “monster home.”

“This whole thing has become a legal and financial nightmare,” Ms. Park said in an interview, adding that she had already spent $250,000 on architecture fees, the permit application and a lawyer.

Building new projects in San Francisco can be famously expensive and time-consuming. A new public toilet was slated to cost $1.7 million and take up to three years until [*a donor gave the city a free one*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7). Constructing 1.7 miles for the new Central Subway line took 12 years and went hundreds of millions of dollars over budget.

The state and city have recently enacted laws to rubber-stamp some housing projects without the say of neighbors, but getting approval for changes to single-family homes can still be excruciating.

The Planning Department approved Ms. Park’s plans in October, but a month later four neighbors filed an appeal, which went to the Planning Commission for review. The commission unanimously approved the project, calling it “modest” and “lovely” and applauding it for adding another housing unit to the city.

The neighbors, however, said that the Planning Department erred by exempting the project from the California Environmental Quality Act and that the Harper home must account for various impacts.

The neighbors wanted the city’s top leaders to consider on Tuesday, among other things, that it should be preserved intact because of “the property’s history as a post-Civil War era home for ***working class*** San Franciscans.”

Ryan Patterson, an attorney for the neighbors fighting the project, declined to comment before the hearing and said that the neighbors should speak for themselves. Just one of them did.

David Garofoli owns a home next door. He doubled the size of the home, which was built in 1908, with a big remodel eight years ago but said that he did a better job of preserving the historic facade. Mr. Garofoli, a former developer who is now a business coach, said that he had since moved to Boston and was renting out his house.

But he remains invested in his old neighborhood. He paid for a light expert to study shadows that would be cast by Ms. Park’s raised roof; an architect to study whether her house was historic; and lawyers to work on the appeals.

“I care about the neighborhood, and I care about the historic nature of our homes,” he said.

[*Scott Wiener*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7), a state senator from San Francisco, used to represent the neighborhood on the Board of Supervisors and said he had spent a lot of time mediating disputes among neighbors. He said that most California cities automatically approve projects that abide by city code.

“Good government means setting clear rules ahead of time, and if you comply with the rules, you get your permit,” Mr. Wiener said. “In San Francisco, we’ve chosen to make everything political instead of predictable. It creates a lot of bad blood.”

[*Aaron Peskin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7), president of the Board of Supervisors and a candidate for mayor, largely supports the current system. He said that project reviews do not take up too much of the supervisors’ time and do recognize the due process rights of residents.

“There are people who file frivolous lawsuits, but they get their day in court, and the judge can tell them to pound sand,” he said. “This has not been a distraction.”

The neighborhood has had similar disputes before. Several years ago, behind the home owned by Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald, property owners wanted to tear down an 875-square-foot cottage from the early 1900s and turn it into a 5,100-square-foot home with an elevator, two outdoor kitchens and walls of glass. Neighbors intensely fought that project but lost.

The home was built and dubbed the [*“Noe Looking Glass”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/san-francisco-housing.html?searchResultPosition=7) before it was sold for $7.4 million in 2018.

Its current owners, who did not respond to a request for comment, were among those disputing Ms. Park’s and Mr. McDonald’s project.

On Tuesday, none of the neighbors personally addressed the board, letting a lawyer speak on their behalf instead. But he was unsuccessful. After one supervisor asked why they were discussing the matter at all, the board sided unanimously with the couple.

PHOTOS: Julie Park and her husband, Tom McDonald, are trying to renovate their home, but the project has been stalled by objections.; Ms. Park and Mr. McDonald want to raise the roof of their home by 7 feet 3 inches. Some neighbors worry it would block their view. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** April 24, 2024

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[***In Speech at CPAC, Trump Will Outline a Thriving U.S. Amid a Second Term***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDB-X4X1-DXY4-X005-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 24, 2024 Saturday 07:03 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 780 words

**Byline:** Michael Gold Michael Gold is a political correspondent for The Times covering the campaigns of Donald J. Trump and other candidates in the 2024 presidential elections.

**Highlight:** Former President Donald J. Trump has so far largely campaigned on a dark vision of the United States under President Biden. A speech on Saturday will take a different approach.

**Body**

Former President Donald J. Trump has so far largely campaigned on a dark vision of the United States under President Biden. A speech on Saturday will take a different approach.

As voters in South Carolina head to the polls in what is only the fifth nominating contest in the Republican presidential race, former President Donald J. Trump will give a speech on Saturday afternoon near Washington, where he is expected to focus largely on his anticipated general-election contest against President Biden.

According to senior campaign officials, Mr. Trump will use his remarks at the Conservative Political Action Conference, known as CPAC, to expand on a vision that he has evoked since 2020: that the United States is destined for a bleak future under President Biden and other Democrats.

But while Mr. Trump has largely cast his vision of the United States in dark terms during his third run for office, his CPAC speech will present a brighter vision for the country brought about by a second Trump term, said the officials, who requested anonymity to discuss campaign strategy freely.

“If we can break out of this Biden nightmare, we have it in our grasp to make America richer, safer, stronger, prouder and more beautiful than ever before,” Mr. Trump is expected to say, according to prepared remarks shared with The New York Times. “To lift millions from poverty. To give young people hope for the future again. To forge peace out of conflict, strength out of hardship and new industries on the ruins of hollowed-out towns.”

Such language is considerably more optimistic than Mr. Trump’s recent rhetoric on the campaign trail, where he has argued that his political opponents are a pernicious “threat from within” determined to destroy foundational American values.

Throughout his 2024 bid, Mr. Trump has portrayed the United States under the Biden administration as a nation in steep decline. Much of his stump speech focuses on denouncing Mr. Biden’s policies and insisting that he will halt them full-stop if he wins re-election.

Underpinning this appeal has been a sense of nostalgia: Mr. Trump has made explicit that he wants to restore the policies of his four years in office and build on them, particularly regarding immigration.

But the Trump campaign officials said Mr. Trump’s speech at CPAC was intended to be forward-looking. First, he will conjure a dark vision of what he sees as the future under Mr. Biden. Then, he will lay out a road map for a second term.

As part of his speech, Mr. Trump will vow to “throw out Bidenomics” and “reinstate MAGAnomics,” an effort to redefine terms that Mr. Biden has used to promote his economic policies and denigrate Mr. Trump’s.

Mr. Biden has frequently argued that he has been a [*better steward of the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/21/us/politics/fact-check-biden-economy.html) than Mr. Trump, whom he portrays as having undercut ***working-class*** Americans. Under Mr. Biden, [*the economy grew 3.1 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/21/us/politics/fact-check-biden-economy.html) from the end of 2022 to the end of 2023.

Mr. Trump will also take aim at Mr. Biden’s efforts to fight climate change, saying that “our economy will be starved of energy” and that “millions of manufacturing jobs will be choked into extinction,” adding, “You’ll have constant blackouts and rampant inflation.”

Mr. Trump’s focus on Mr. Biden will be a stark contrast from the major political event of the day: His effort to rout Nikki Haley, his lone remaining primary rival, in South Carolina and hand her a humiliating blow that could push her to exit the race.

But the CPAC speech will be one of several recent signals that Mr. Trump has turned his eye toward the general election in November, shifting his message from one intended to rally his conservative base to one that can win undecided voters in battleground states.

Last year at CPAC, Mr. Trump promised his followers that he would [*be their “retribution.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/21/us/politics/fact-check-biden-economy.html) On the campaign trail, he has vowed to use the Justice Department to investigate, if not prosecute, his political opponents.

But Mr. Trump has backed off those promises in the face of polls showing that non-Republican voters are concerned that he poses a threat to democracy.

And so during this year’s CPAC speech, Mr. Trump is expected to say that President Biden will be “tried at the ballot box this November, and he will be judged and convicted by the American people.”

And he will repeat a more recent assertion about vengeance that is designed to reassure voters who will be key in November: that his “ultimate and absolute revenge” will be America’s success under a second Trump administration.

PHOTO: Attendees at the Conservative Political Action Conference, known as CPAC, in National Harbor, Md., on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2024

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[***What Voters Really Think Of the Current Economy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BC3-8HH1-JBG3-62DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 18, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 11; DINGUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1818 words

**Byline:** By Nate Silver

**Body**

We look to be headed for what could be the most unpopular sequel since ''Home Alone 3'': Biden versus Trump 2.0.

One question goes to the heart of shaping expectations for that matchup: Why does everyone think the economy stinks? The answer is critical, given that this election is probably going to be close and that a variety of research suggests that the incumbent party's chances are better when the economy is going well. President Biden, trailing Donald Trump in early polls, will need all the economic tailwind he can get.

Many commentators on the left have focused on a purported gap between what they see as objective data signaling a strong economy (in particular, persistently low unemployment) and middling to poor consumer sentiment, as in the University of Michigan's monthly survey. This gap is sometimes attributed to partisanship -- Republican voters being unwilling to give any credit to Mr. Biden -- and at other times to media bias or misinformation driven by social media.

But a more careful look at the numbers reveals a different answer, and it requires no great mystery to solve, no inexplicable gap in the data.

Consumers don't think the economy stinks. Rather, they quite rationally have mixed feelings about this economy -- and they'll reveal different things depending on exactly what you ask them.

They are pessimistic about the future, but that's a matter of prediction, not misinterpreting the current economic situation. And here's the good news for Mr. Biden: They've noticed that the data has been improving.

The terms ''consumer sentiment'' and ''consumer confidence'' are sometimes used interchangeably, but in fact, they reflect two distinct, longstanding monthly surveys often cited by economists. First, there's the University of Michigan's Index of Consumer Sentiment and, second, the Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Survey.

One is not inherently better than the other. The best approach, as I usually recommend with polls, is to average them. They actually show rather different things: The Michigan numbers are bearish (although growing less so), and the Conference Board's are bullish. That's because they focus on different parts of the economy.

The Michigan survey puts a lot of weight on voter assessment of pocketbook conditions, like whether it's a good time to buy major household items. The Conference Board, meanwhile, asks consumers for their appraisal of the employment and business outlook but nothing that really gets directly at things like consumer prices.

Also, and this is often overlooked: In both surveys, the majority of the questions are about voters' predictions about future economic conditions and not how they think the economy is doing at the moment. For example, the Michigan survey asks about the possibility of a severe economic downturn over the next five years -- a question that is notoriously hard even for professional economists to answer.

Fortunately, instead of one measure of consumer confidence, Michigan and the Conference Board publish separate subindexes, one focused on consumers' perceptions of current conditions and the other about their outlook for the future. So we actually have four measures: two major surveys each asking two varieties of big-picture questions.

In these surveys, from January 1978 to January 2021, consumers' assessments of current conditions usually tracked each other well. But in summer 2021, they began to diverge -- and not just a little but hugely.

For the graphic below, I'm normalizing these four data series such that they're all on the same scale, with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 20. This just means we can make an apples-to-apples comparison. A score of 100 represents the average consumer outlook between 1978 and 2024.

Why the divergence? The Michigan survey's questions are highly sensitive to inflation, whereas the Conference Board's are not. And spring 2021 is when inflation really began to ramp up, as a white-hot-recovery summer ran headlong into supply chain disruptions, the Delta variant and an injection of stimulus cash that led people to splurge on everything from revenge travel to meme stocks. It was a deeply strange economy -- good for businesses and good for job seekers but sometimes awful for consumers.

So while the Conference Board numbers have consistently been above average, at roughly a score of 120 on my normalized scale, the Michigan ones took longer to recover. However, they have rebounded recently, reflecting a deceleration of inflation since roughly mid-2023, perking up to 82 on my adjusted scale in the January 2024 reading after having bottomed out at 41 in June 2022.

If you're wondering why a rebound took so long -- or why the numbers are still below average -- there are a lot of good explanations. First, although inflation numbers when reported in the news typically focus on the year-over-year change, that's not necessarily how consumers see them. Prices in December 2023 were only 3 percent higher than they were a year earlier, but they were 10 percent higher than they were two years earlier and about 18 percent higher than three years ago.

It takes some time for consumers to adjust to the new normal. Historically, Michigan consumer sentiment is more closely correlated with the two-year change in inflation than the one-year shift. If so, the timing could work out well for Mr. Biden, since the period of peak inflation will be farther in the rearview mirror by the time people vote this November.

But it's a mistake to assume that consumers have just been reacting to news accounts of high gasoline or fast-food prices instead of actually observing the impact on their bottom lines. People's pocketbooks really aren't in great shape -- income growth has struggled to keep up with inflation.

Per capita disposable income is historically one of the variables that most accurately predicts election outcomes. Although heavily affected by the timing of Covid stimulus payments, nothing about this data suggests that consumers have had a smooth economic ride under Mr. Biden. While corporate profits have soared to record levels, Americans quickly spent down the savings they built up during the pandemic.

It's not just that goods have cost more; people have also been spending more on an inflation-adjusted basis. Often, that's a sign of healthy economic demand. But consumers may be getting the short end of the stick as companies use algorithm-driven price discrimination to induce them to spend more on things they don't necessarily want or need.

In short, consumers' assessment of the current economic situation has been rational. They accurately report in the Conference Board survey that the business and labor outlook has been good. And they accurately report in the Michigan data that their pocketbooks were in bad shape because of inflation but are now recovering. But what about their future outlooks?

The Michigan and Conference Board surveys closely overlap and tell the same story. Consumers were in an optimistic mood for roughly the first six months of Mr. Biden's term, with both surveys usually showing above-average forward-looking numbers. Then the Delta variant and the period of extremely high inflation hit in midsummer 2021 and knocked the wind out of Mr. Biden's promise of a rapid return to normalcy. Inflation was more persistent than economists were initially expecting, and the S&P 500 lost around a fifth of its value on an inflation-adjusted basis in 2022.

Combined with the profound disruptions of the pandemic itself, there has been a lot of anxiety-inducing economic news for consumers. Although optimism is up in recent surveys, it's not surprising that it's taken some time to process everything.

There are other long-term factors pointing toward greater pessimism. For almost a quarter-century, a majority of voters have consistently thought the country is on the wrong track. There are many indications of a rise in poor mental health (and equally many hypotheses for why that's happened). Many Americans have existential concerns about the long-term future for reasons ranging from environmental degradation to runaway artificial intelligence.

Fundamentally, Mr. Biden's challenge is that it's hard to persuade voters who are used to constant doomscrolling that it's Morning in America again. The incumbency advantage seems to be declining; it's been 40 years since a president won re-election by a double-digit margin.

But there is good news for Mr. Biden: Voter perceptions about the economy are not just vibes -- in fact, consumer sentiment has tracked the objective data well. That data, particularly the pocketbook numbers that were the weak point before, has begun to improve, and that leaves the door open for a potential second Biden term.

It will be a close call. His numbers against Mr. Trump haven't improved yet -- in fact, they've gotten slightly worse lately -- even as consumers' mood has become more buoyant. His age is still a big concern for voters (yes, Mr. Trump is old, too), and the Democratic coalition is bitterly divided over the Israel-Hamas war and other issues.

Polls show that Mr. Biden has lost the most ground with lower-income voters -- even as the robust labor market has helped the ***working class***. His campaign, however, has said it will replay its 2020 strategy, with a heavy emphasis on Mr. Trump and a lesser one on the economy. It's plausible that this is a mistake. Mr. Trump is no longer the incumbent president. And ***working-class*** Democrats don't necessarily have the instinctual dislike for Mr. Trump that college-educated progressives do.

Still, we ought not to take an overly deterministic view of the relationship between the economy and elections. With any sort of presidential election forecast, we're limited in making reliable inferences because of small sample sizes. This is only the 12th presidential election, for instance, since Michigan began regularly publishing its consumer numbers. We're in dangerous territory where models sometimes fail. No previous presidential incumbent has been as old as Mr. Biden -- and no major-party challenger has been as old as Mr. Trump.

If Mr. Biden loses, it may be because the relationship between the economy and perceptions of the president has weakened -- not because voters are mistaking a good economy for a bad one.

Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

Nate Silver, the founder and former editor of FiveThirtyEight and the author of the forthcoming book ''On the Edge: The Art of Risking Everything,'' writes the newsletter Silver Bulletin.

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)

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X and Threads.Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/12/opinion/biden-trump-consumer-confidence-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/12/opinion/biden-trump-consumer-confidence-economy.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

**Load-Date:** February 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Biden Urged to Broaden Pennsylvania Campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRX-SWT1-JBG3-601T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 9, 2024 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1109 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Nehamas

**Body**

Vice President Kamala Harris will stop in the city on Monday to promote efforts to forgive student debt. Some local officials are calling for greater outreach in more rural areas.

President Biden loves Philadelphia. And he loves campaigning there, too.

No part of the country has seen more visits from Mr. Biden so far this year, or throughout his presidency. Four years ago, the city -- and its increasingly Democratic suburbs -- cast one-third of the total votes in Pennsylvania, the nation's most populous battleground state. Winning the region by large margins is essential for Mr. Biden's hopes in November.

On Monday, Vice President Kamala Harris will stop in Philadelphia to promote the Biden administration's efforts to forgive student debt, her third trip there since last summer.

Now, some Democrats are saying that it is time for Mr. Biden and his campaign to widen their reach across the Keystone State, which he narrowly won by about 80,000 votes last time around.

''Biden tiptoed in the right direction in 2020,'' said former U.S. Representative Conor Lamb, a moderate Democrat who won a Pittsburgh-area district in 2018 that Donald J. Trump had carried by double digits. ''And I think he needs to go much further this time.''

Mr. Biden won in 2020 not just because of Philadelphia. He also drove turnout in Pittsburgh, lifted his margins in smaller cities and flipped back swing counties that Barack Obama won in 2012 but that Hillary Clinton lost in 2016. And he prevented Mr. Trump from running up the score in the conservative, rural areas that span much of the state, partly with old-fashioned efforts like a whistle-stop Amtrak tour of western Pennsylvania. Mr. Biden will need to reunite that multiracial coalition of voters -- which polling shows is in danger of fracturing -- in 2024.

Mr. Lamb acknowledged that all candidates have time constraints, especially the president of the United States. But he urged Mr. Biden to spend more time in the state's rural and rust-belt communities, which are predominantly home to white ***working-class*** voters but also have pockets of African American voters in former mill towns.

''I think people in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh are reachable online and over TV in a way that voters in some of these smaller, older places might not be,'' he said.

Lt. Gov. Austin Davis of Pennsylvania, a Democrat, said that he had no doubt that Mr. Biden would campaign across the state as the race moved into full gear.

''You have to show up in communities sometimes where it's not easy to be a Democrat,'' said Mr. Davis, who is from the Pittsburgh area. ''You have to address those voters' concerns and talk about how you're going to make their lives better.''

So far this year, Mr. Biden has visited Philadelphia and its suburbs three times. He also stopped in a small western Pennsylvania town on his way to visit East Palestine, Ohio, where a train carrying toxic chemicals derailed last year, and has campaigned in the Lehigh Valley. Ms. Harris appeared in Pittsburgh in February.

The Biden campaign says that it is taking a robust, statewide approach, opening 14 offices across Pennsylvania last month, including in swing areas like Erie County, a union stronghold in the state's northwest that Mr. Biden flipped back to blue in 2020. It has also hired several senior staff members.

''Donald Trump has no presence in the battleground,'' said Jack Doyle, the Biden campaign's communications director for Pennsylvania.

Mr. Biden is expected to campaign in western Pennsylvania in the coming weeks, according to two people with firsthand knowledge of the planned trip who asked for anonymity because it had not yet been made public.

In contrast, Mr. Trump has yet to announce the opening of a single office in Pennsylvania. And his travel has been more limited. The former president spoke at a National Rifle Association event in Harrisburg, the state capital, this year. He also appeared at a sneaker convention in Philadelphia to promote Trump-branded shoes and was met with both loud boos and cheers. On Saturday, he plans to hold a rally in Lehigh County.

''Joe Biden secured his nomination on Jan. 1, but he's underwater in national polls and just now -- after three months -- staffing up in key battleground states,'' Chris LaCivita, a senior adviser to the Trump campaign, said in a statement. ''We have the message, the operation and the money to propel President Trump to victory on Nov. 5.''

Polls generally show Mr. Trump with a narrow lead in Pennsylvania. It seems wildly improbable that Mr. Biden could win back the White House without carrying the state and its 19 electoral votes. Pennsylvania is part of the so-called blue wall that includes Michigan and Wisconsin.

''The road to 1600 Pennsylvania goes through Pennsylvania,'' said Michael A. Nutter, a Democrat and former mayor of Philadelphia. ''And when you're in Philly, you're really almost in half of the state because of the proximity of media and the attention you get.''

Democrats have been doing well at the ballot box in Pennsylvania, winning the governorship and picking up a Senate seat in 2022. They've also shown strength in local elections.

Mr. Biden's connection to Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania more broadly, is personal. He spent much of his childhood in Scranton, in the state's northeast. His wife, Jill Biden, is from the Philadelphia suburbs. And his home in Wilmington, Del., is less than an hour away, making Philadelphia an easy place to campaign. (Washington, D.C., is relatively close, too.)

''Folks, it feels good to be home,'' Mr. Biden told union members at a rally in Philadelphia last summer.

His biggest trip outside Philadelphia this year took him to Allentown, a city of roughly 125,000 that is majority Hispanic. Mr. Trump is increasingly popular with Hispanic voters. Mr. Biden's campaign has targeted Allentown's Hispanic voters lately, with Ms. Harris doing an interview on a local Spanish-language radio channel.

Mayor Matt Tuerk of Allentown, a Democrat, said that the president's January visit to the city was a good strategy.

''Historically, it's a point of irritation for Latinos that politicians show up in October,'' just before the election, Mr. Tuerk said.

Mr. Biden is also almost certain to return to his hometown, Scranton, where he campaigned on Election Day in 2020 and where the city's mayor, Paige Cognetti, a Democrat, said that the president had maintained close ties.

''It's hard to find somebody in Scranton who doesn't know someone whose mother or father or aunt or uncle's funeral he attended,'' Ms. Cognetti said. ''He's very much a son of Scranton.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/us/politics/democrats-pennsylvania-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/08/us/politics/democrats-pennsylvania-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A Biden rally in Philadelphia in 2020. The campaign is opening 14 offices across Pennsylvania. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** April 9, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Despair Fueling America’s Chronic Pain; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685N-G4Y1-DXY4-X1GC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 6, 2023 Saturday 12:59 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 387 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** Millions are suffering in ways that lead to addiction, sorrow and a tangle of other pathologies. Why?

**Body**

One of the mysteries of America is why so many people are in pain.

Neck pain! Back pain! Hip pain! Knee pain! Perhaps 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain, and the problem seems to be getting worse even as workplace injuries go down. In other countries it’s mostly older people who report pain, which makes some sense since their bodies are beyond warranty, but in the United States it’s the middle-aged who suffer most, especially in the ***working class***. So what’s going on?

For [*a column about chronic pain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/opinion/chronic-pain-america-working-class.html), I interviewed a woman named Bobbie Wert who has been racked by stomach pain since she was a young girl. Doctors poked and prodded and occasionally operated to remove bits and pieces, but none of this helped — and Wert eventually understood that the problem probably wasn’t her uterus or bladder. “It was trauma,” she said.

Physical and sexual abuse had whirled around her when she was young, and it may be that it put the brain on a hair-trigger alarm system that periodically went haywire. The mechanisms aren’t fully understood, but it is clear that chronic pain sometimes originates in the brain rather than in the body part that hurts; phantom pain from an amputated limb is one example.

I decided to write about chronic pain not just because so many suffer from it, but also because there is a growing amount of helpful research into how to ease it. This many people don’t need to suffer.

This essay is the first in an occasional series I’ll be writing about the interwoven crises affecting ***working-class*** Americans and, more important, how we can address these challenges. The series, “How America Heals,” will explore education, health, homelessness, loneliness, addiction and more.

The series arises from a deeply personal place. As I wrote in [*my last book*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/books/review/tightrope-americans-reaching-for-hope-nicholas-kristof-sheryl-wudunn.html), more than a quarter of my childhood classmates on my old No. 6 bus have died from drugs, alcohol or suicide. Sometimes these friends confided in me about their chronic pain, and at the time I wondered if they were malingering; in retrospect, I don’t think they were. This series is a way to highlight these problems across America and explore how we can heal together.

PHOTO: When Bobbie Wert feels pain coming on, she repeats to herself, “It’s not so bad.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Photographs by Ricardo Nagaoka for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Garry Hynes Brings Sean O’Casey’s Dublin Trilogy to Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699W-R781-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 4, 2023 Wednesday 10:44 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1292 words

**Byline:** Laura Collins-Hughes

**Highlight:** At NYU Skirball, Druid’s marathon production depicts the beginning of a free Irish state through the voices of the ***working class***.

**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*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0330.html), 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*](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2023/jul/30/druidocasey-review-sean-ocasey-dublin-trilogy-in-one-day-galway-international-festival-druid-theatre-company-garry-hynes?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other) production [*DruidO’Casey*](https://www.druid.ie/productions/druidocasey/overview). 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/29/theater/reviews/29juno.html),” a musical adaptation of “Juno and the Paycock,” starring [*Victoria Clark*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/theater/kimberly-akimbo-victoria-clark.html), 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/06/08/theater/art-wins-best-play-in-tonys-lion-king-gets-best-musical.html) 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/12/theater/reviews/12drui.html), [*DruidShakespeare*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/14/theater/review-druidshakespeare-the-history-plays-is-complete-with-a-crown-fit-for-many-kings.html) and [*DruidMurphy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/10/theater/reviews/druidmurphy-plays-by-tom-murphy-at-lincoln-center.html). 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*](https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/archives/production_detail/527/) I directed in the Abbey when I became artistic director there. And then [*I did a “Juno”*](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/1999/sep/22/theatre.artsfeatures?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other) with [*Michael Gambon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/theater/michael-gambon-theater-appraisal.html). 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.

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

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[***Democrats in Pennsylvania Urge Biden to Branch Out Beyond Philadelphia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRR-X851-JBG3-600G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 8, 2024 Monday 23:41 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1127 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Nehamas Nicholas Nehamas is a Times political reporter covering the re-election campaign of President Biden.

**Highlight:** Vice President Kamala Harris will stop in the city on Monday to promote efforts to forgive student debt. Some local officials are calling for greater outreach in more rural areas.

**Body**

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Mr. Biden is expected to campaign in western Pennsylvania in the coming weeks, according to two people with firsthand knowledge of the planned trip who asked for anonymity because it had not yet been made public.

In contrast, Mr. Trump has yet to announce the opening of a single office in Pennsylvania. And his travel has been more limited. The former president spoke at a National Rifle Association event in Harrisburg, the state capital, this year. He also [*appeared*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) at a sneaker convention in Philadelphia to promote Trump-branded shoes and was met with both loud boos and cheers. On Saturday, he plans to hold a [*rally*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) in Lehigh County.

“Joe Biden secured his nomination on Jan. 1, but he’s underwater in national polls and just now — after three months — staffing up in key battleground states,” Chris LaCivita, a senior adviser to the Trump campaign, said in a statement. “We have the message, the operation and the money to propel President Trump to victory on Nov. 5.”

Polls generally show Mr. Trump with [*a narrow lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) in Pennsylvania. It seems wildly improbable that Mr. Biden could win back the White House without carrying the state and its 19 electoral votes. Pennsylvania is part of the so-called blue wall that includes Michigan and Wisconsin.

“The road to 1600 Pennsylvania goes through Pennsylvania,” said Michael A. Nutter, a Democrat and former mayor of Philadelphia. “And when you’re in Philly, you’re really almost in half of the state because of the proximity of media and the attention you get.”

Democrats have been doing well at the ballot box in Pennsylvania, winning the governorship and picking up a Senate seat in 2022. They’ve also [*shown strength*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) in local elections.

Mr. Biden’s connection to Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania more broadly, is personal. He spent much of his childhood in Scranton, in the state’s northeast. His wife, Jill Biden, is from the Philadelphia suburbs. And his home in Wilmington, Del., is less than an hour away, making Philadelphia an easy place to campaign. (Washington, D.C., is relatively close, too.)

“Folks, it feels good to be home,” Mr. Biden told union members at a rally in Philadelphia last summer.

His biggest trip outside Philadelphia this year took him to Allentown, a city of roughly 125,000 that is majority Hispanic. Mr. Trump is [*increasingly popular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) with Hispanic voters. Mr. Biden’s campaign has targeted Allentown’s Hispanic voters lately, with Ms. Harris doing an [*interview*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/05/us/politics/biden-student-loan-debt.html) on a local Spanish-language radio channel.

Mayor Matt Tuerk of Allentown, a Democrat, said that the president’s January visit to the city was a good strategy.

“Historically, it’s a point of irritation for Latinos that politicians show up in October,” just before the election, Mr. Tuerk said.

Mr. Biden is also almost certain to return to his hometown, Scranton, where he campaigned on Election Day in 2020 and where the city’s mayor, Paige Cognetti, a Democrat, said that the president had maintained close ties.

“It’s hard to find somebody in Scranton who doesn’t know someone whose mother or father or aunt or uncle’s funeral he attended,” Ms. Cognetti said. “He’s very much a son of Scranton.”

PHOTO: A Biden rally in Philadelphia in 2020. The campaign is opening 14 offices across Pennsylvania. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2024

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[***If Not in New York, Then Where?; David Wallace-Wells***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C7K-7G01-DXY4-X4FK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 12, 2024 Wednesday 12:40 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2034 words

**Byline:** David Wallace-Wells

**Highlight:** The city was the best-case scenario for congestion pricing. What does it mean that the plan was shelved?

**Body**

Here is what the indefinite pause on New York City’s congestion pricing program, if it sticks, will cost: 120,000 more cars daily clogging Lower Manhattan’s bumper-to-bumper streets, according to a New York State analysis, and perhaps $20 billion annually in additional lost productivity and fuel and operating costs, as well as health and environmental burdens and a practically unbridgeable budget shortfall for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority that will straitjacket an already handicapped agency and imperil dozens of planned necessary capital improvement projects for the city’s aging subway system.

Here is what it gains Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, who announced her unilateral decision about the suspension last week: perhaps slightly better chances for New York Democrats in a couple of fall congressional races. [*According to reporting*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/), these are especially important to the House minority leader, Hakeem Jeffries, who may still be somewhat embarrassed about his state’s performance in the 2022 elections, when surprise victories for several New York Republicans kept the House of Representatives out of Democratic control. It has also handed the governor several news conferences so bungled, they have made reversing a policy [*unpopular with voters*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) into a genuine political humiliation.

In her announcement, Hochul emphasized the precarious state of the city’s recovery from the Covid pandemic, but car traffic into Manhattan has [*returned*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) to prepandemic levels, as has New York City employment, which is now higher than ever before; New York City tourism metrics are barely behind prepandemic records and are expected to [*surpass*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) them in 2025. Tax coffers have rebounded, too, to the extent that the city canceled a raft of planned budget cuts. The one obvious measure by which the city has not mounted a full pandemic comeback is subway ridership — a measure that congestion pricing would have helped and pausing it is likely to hurt.

In announcing the pause, she also expressed concern for the financial burden the $15 surcharge would impose on working New Yorkers, though the city’s ***working class*** was functionally exempted from the toll by a rebate system for those with an annual income of $60,000 or less. In a follow-up news conference, she emphasized a few conversations she’d had with diner owners, who she said expressed anxiety that their business would suffer when commuters wouldn’t drive to their establishments. But each of them was within spitting distance of Grand Central, where an overwhelming share of foot traffic — and commercial value — comes from commuters using mass transit.

Robinson Meyer, a contributing Times Opinion writer, wrote for Heatmap that delaying the plan will be “a generational setback for climate policy in the United States,” adding that “it is one of the worst climate policy decisions made by a Democrat at any level of government in recent memory.” He called it worse than the Mountain Valley Pipeline and the Willow oil project in Alaska — not just because of the direct effect on emissions, though that would be large, but what a pause means for the morale and momentum of any American movement toward a next-generation, climate-conscious urbanism.

For years, the country’s liberals have envied the transformation of London by its Ultra Low Emission Zone, which generates hundreds of millions of pounds annually and quickly cut nitrogen dioxide air pollution in central London by 44 percent from projected levels. And liberals practically salivated over the remaking of Paris by Mayor Anne Hidalgo, whose policies have significantly reduced the number of cars in the city center, cutting nitrogen oxide pollution by 40 percent from 2011 levels, and turned huge swaths of the urban core into a paradise for pedestrians and bikers.

Similar programs have been carried out in Stockholm and Oslo, proving remarkably popular, and while it didn’t exactly seem likely that all the world’s cities were on the verge of leaving behind the car, the fact that any American city was taking the leap looked like a sign that change was possible. There aren’t many places in the United States that could plausibly hope to take even a few steps in the direction of the 15-minute city. But the New York City metro area — which has higher public transportation ridership than the next 16 American cities combined and whose residents account for 45 percent of U.S. commutes by public transit — was the obvious place to try. At least until last week.

To enthusiastic reformers, the reversal was all the more painful because the obvious hurdles had already been cleared. Especially after the Inflation Reduction Act kicked off a frenzied real-world spending spree, progress-minded Democrats have argued about the difficulties of building things at anywhere close to the necessary speed, taking aim at a bundle of obstacles to more rapid development and build-out of green infrastructure — rampant NIMBYism, burdens of environmental review, permitting and zoning challenges, social justice litmus tests. It had taken a few decades, but congestion pricing had jumped through all the necessary hoops. The [*everything bagel*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) had been slathered with cream cheese and was ready to serve. And Hochul put the kibosh on it anyway.

The cash-strapped Metropolitan Transportation Authority has spent $500 million developing the system and installing its hardware, and the inevitable shortfall now means a much less ambitious future for the agency, to trust its spokesmen, which is now probably incapable of extending the Second Avenue Subway or undertaking the Interborough Express project, which promised to revitalize huge corridors of Brooklyn and Queens and give more than 100,000 New Yorkers more viable public transit commutes. (Hochul says the pause won’t imperil those projects.) The pause may even be illegal, as State Senator Liz Krueger [*argued*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) last week in The Daily News.

But for all its inscrutability, Hochul’s reversal follows a recent partisan pattern, a sort of centrist backlash among establishment Democrats and their supporters against left-wing causes and their supporters in the run-up to the November elections, partly as a matter of electoral strategy and perhaps as part of a pre-emptive blame game in anticipation of Republican victories, possibly including Donald Trump’s re-election.

The backlash is perhaps most visible in commentary from liberal pundits, who in recent weeks [*have tried to blame*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) [*the party’s left wing*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) [*for President Biden’s dicey re-election prospects*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/), though the most obvious drags on those chances are his age and voters’ perceptions about the cost of living. At the national level it is best embodied by Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania, who rarely speaks at length but happily seizes opportunities to punch left, particularly toward those protesting the war in Gaza. More locally, it is embodied by Mayor Eric Adams, who won election in 2021 as a kind of centrist backlash candidate — hailed at the time as a political counterweight to progressive candidates like Maya Wiley and progressive forces like the Black Lives Matter movement and perhaps even as a future face of the Democratic Party — and whose approval ratings are now lower than any other New York City mayor [*in decades*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/), even as the city has inarguably bounced back from its pandemic trough on his watch.

Hochul has been a less visible and less polarizing figure than Adams. But every time she has poked her head up and made national news lately, it has been in the same spirit, to roll her eyes at or pick fights with those to her left. In February she mocked critics of Israel’s war in Gaza by [*saying*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/), “If Canada someday ever attacked Buffalo, I’m sorry, my friends, there would be no Canada the next day.” (She later apologized.) In March she suddenly deployed the state’s National Guard to patrol the subways, on the same day that Adams boasted about rapid declines in subway crime. And now on congestion pricing, just weeks after bragging she was proud to stand up to “set in their ways” drivers, she reversed course out of apparent deference to those drivers and their outsize political clout. The state government and the transit authority have hard-earned [*reputations*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) for [*ineffectuality*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/), and faced with an opportunity to do something big, the governor chose to retreat and do nothing instead.

“It makes me think about the fight for progress, and how any real progress in the moment seems impossible,” [*wrote*](https://punchbowl.news/article/campaigns/jeffries-comeback-new-york-house-races/) Cooper Lund in a melancholy reflection he called “Who Gets to Be a Constituent?” Nine times as many people ride public transit into the central business district each day as take cars there. There are 11 times as many people living in Manhattan who breathe the air polluted by automobile exhaust each day as there are who drive there for work. And those who work in the greater New York area lose 113 million hours each year to traffic, at an estimated cost of nearly $800 for each commuter. “With N.Y.C.’s reputation you’d think that the Democrats would be eager to uphold the city as an example of what a liberal, multicultural society is capable of, and to foster it,” Lund went on. “But both the mayor or the governor proved that they don’t have any interest in that. Instead, the things that would improve the city are pushed away for the suburban lifestyle that both parties seem to agree represents their actual constituency.”

A generation ago, it was common for informed liberals to lament the transformation of the country’s densest and most walkable city into a traffic-snarled carscape at the hand of Robert Moses in the mid-20th century. But despite the rise of YIMBYism and a sort of conventional wisdom new urbanism, the city hasn’t become meaningfully less automobile-centric since. More cars traveled into Lower Manhattan in 1990 than in 1981, more came in 2000 than in 1990, and although the rates dropped a bit after Sept. 11, they were still slightly higher in 2010 than they were 20 years before and have remained pretty flat since. Decades into new urbanism, the country’s most walkable city has just about the same number of cars driving into its in-demand downtown.

Taxi registrations doubled from 1980 to 2010 and then grew even more rapidly through the Uber years that followed, so that there are now five times as many taxis registered in the city as there were nearly 40 years ago and two and a half times as many taxi rides. (The difference between the two figures suggests that a pretty big portion of the increase is empty cars idling or cruising without fares.) Since 2006, excess congestion has grown by 53 percent, and since 2010, the average travel speed in the central business district has fallen 22 percent, from a crawl of 9.1 miles per hour to a glacial 7.1. I can comfortably run faster.

As has been the case everywhere, the kind and size of cars in New York have changed, too. When I was growing up there in the 1980s and ’90s, I could look out at the streetscape and see things other than trucks and supersized sport utility vehicles — trees, storefronts, pedestrians on the opposite curb, each of them visible because the streets were much less packed with automobiles the size of small elephants. Parking spots were not walls of S.U.V.s back then but lines of sedans, nestled along the sidewalk, it seemed, almost like a string of small boats puttering by the boarding platform of a flume ride. I remember climbing down into cars then, even as a 9- or 10-year-old. As a grown-up, I’m now climbing up, into what feels more like a cockpit and an imperious claim to the street.

My parents and in-laws remember a different kind of city still, the kind where you could park right in front of restaurants, play stickball in the street with infrequent interruptions, ride bikes down the cobblestones of SoHo and see only the occasional delivery truck along the way. I never knew that world, except through photographs and the haze of secondhand nostalgia. By the time I came around, the streets were already pretty full of cars. But even so, the city as a whole didn’t seem to belong to them yet. Certainly they didn’t seem to be holding its future hostage.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Ibrahim Rayintakath FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 25, 2024

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[***America Is Losing the Green Tech Race to China; David Wallace-Wells***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C35-0R91-DXY4-X4Y3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2024 Wednesday 22:35 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

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**Byline:** David Wallace-Wells

**Highlight:** The Biden administration seems to be in denial about China’s staggering advantage.

**Body**

On May 14, President Biden announced a major escalation of the country’s emerging climate trade war with China, raising existing tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles to 100 percent — a unilateral quadrupling. A few days earlier, responding to reports of Biden’s plans, Donald Trump outdid him, promising tariffs of 200 percent should he win the 2024 election.

It’s not just E.V.s. Five years after blasting Trump for imposing tariffs on Chinese exports, Biden raised them — on aluminum, steel, lithium batteries, solar cells and semiconductors, among other products. Trade protections of this scope would have been almost unthinkable even half a generation ago, when free markets were largely seen by leaders of both parties as opportunities to exploit and tariffs were regarded as an expression of hostile desperation by weak, developingnations. And tariffs would have been perhaps even harder to imagine then in pursuit of global climate goals, which had always called to mind not zero-sum economic competition but virtuous visions of “Kumbaya” cooperation and even global governance in the name of Gaia.

But since Trump’s election in 2016, chastened Democratic policymakers have come to see green industrial policy as a kind of one-size-fits-all, policy-and-politics tool — a recipe for addressing the climate crisis, yes, but also for the postindustrial “secular stagnation” of the U.S. economy, for the domestic manufacturing decline, for white ***working-class*** resentment and for the geopolitical challenge posed by China. Trade protectionism is now perhaps the closest thing we have to a bipartisan consensus in Washington, but sometimes all those goals sit at cross purposes. “There are few things that would decarbonize the U.S. faster than $20,000 E.V.s,” the M.I.T. economics professor David Autor recently said. “But there is probably nothing that would kill the U.S. auto industry faster, either.” And BYD, a Chinese automaker, just rolled out a model priced under $10,000.

Play a word-association game for “E.V.,” and an American is most likely to say “Tesla” first, but these days it would be better to say “China,” so astonishing has been the growth of the country’s electric-vehicle sector. In 2019, Chinese E.V. exports totaled $400 million; by 2023, they had reached $34 billion, a precipitous 85-fold increase and enough to help make the country, as recently as five years ago an afterthought in global auto exports, today the world’s top exporter of all cars. Nearly 60 percent of all the world’s E.V.s are now sold in China, which is home to three of the world’s four biggest E.V. manufacturers. In late 2023, BYD moved briefly into the top spot, shortly before Tesla issued a mass recall of its Cybertruck and reportedly canceled its plans for an affordable sedan.

At present, there are hardly any Chinese-manufactured E.V.s even available for sale in the United States, which makes the back and forth over tariffs look pretty performative in the short term. (Symbolically, it has got to be reassuring to American autoworkers, a key swing-state constituency.) But cast your eyes a little deeper into the future, and E.V. protectionism looks less like a market tweak, designed to even the playing field for American automakers, than a market wall. It’s designed to keep Chinese exports entirely out of the United States, at least while the huge industrial stimulus of the Inflation Reduction Act kicks in, and to protect domestic manufacturers from the competition of cars that might be half as expensive or twice as appealing through years in which the country is meant to be transitioning rapidly. (E.V.s are supposed to be half of all new car sales by 2030, according to the White House, up from 7.6 percent last year.)

Biden wagered an awful lot of first-term political capital on a new green industrial policy, which allocated more than $2 trillion in spending on the climate-focused I.R.A. and the climate-inflected infrastructure law and CHIPS Act. Now, toward the end of his term, he is trying to build a protective moat around America’s budding green industries. From the outside, it looks like a genuine climate trade war. Can it even be won?

You have probably heard about the miraculous growth of green energy around the world in recent years — in 2023, renewables for the first time provided 30 percent of all global electricity, and last month, in another first, fossil fuels provided less than a quarter of European Union power.

But though the carbon reductions are most impressive in Europe, the green boom is overwhelmingly a Chinese story. More than half of all new solar power installed in the world last year was installed inside China. For wind power, the share was even larger: China was responsible for 60 percent of all new global capacity. In just three years, the country has more than doubled the total amount of solar and wind power installed within its borders; in the United States, what looks like a breakneck build-out over the same period has pushed capacity up by less than 50 percent. Batteries, too: Last year China manufactured storage capacity equal to total global demand.

When you move upstream from final products into the green-tech supply chain, China dominates even more. It produces 84 percent of the world’s solar modules, according to a recent report by BloombergNEF. It produces 89 percent of the world’s solar cells and 97 percent of its solar wafers and ingots, 86 percent each of its polysilicon and battery cells, 87 percent of its battery cathodes, 96 percent of its battery anodes, 91 percent of its battery electrodes and 85 percent of its battery separators. The list goes on.

It is in this context that the United States is undertaking its clean-tech trade war — not from a position of strength or even parity. When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, it was in response to plans for an American satellite, which made it into orbit just three months after the Russian launch; later in the Cold War, when American hawks lamented the “missile gap,” they were referring to a fiction, because the Russians had no advantage. Today, China controls more than 80 percent of many essential aspects of the global clean-energy supply chain; the United States controls almost none of it.

Does it matter? To hear Democratic policymakers from Biden and Janet Yellen on down tell it, the answer is yes. To navigate the green transition smoothly, they say, the country needs to avoid growing entirely dependent on China for clean energy in the way we previously relied so heavily on autocratic gulf states for dirty energy. They also want to avoid a replay of the “China shock” of the early 2000s, which decimated manufacturing labor across the industrial Midwest especially, and to combat the problem of “oversupply” from China on American businesses and workers. In a best-case scenario, subsidies and tariffs would together help American companies ramp up E.V. production so rapidly that U.S. manufacturers become a driving force behind the decarbonization of global transportation.

But there are risks. To begin with, industrial policy isn’t guaranteed to work, and no tariff is large enough to really reduce China’s global green-tech dominance, because the U.S. market isn’t all that significant to the Chinese. Green self-sufficiency is more achievable, and tariff defenders suggest they are meant to be temporary, allowing the American E.V. industry merely to find its footing. But for how long should we baby domestic industry when it means higher prices on so much of the good green stuff? “A glut in renewables and green products is precisely what the climate doctor ordered,” Dani Rodrik of Harvard wrote this month. As Bloomberg’s David Fickling has pointed out, Trump’s imposition of tariffs on Chinese solar-panel exports in 2018 may have meaningfully slowed American renewable rollout. Will American E.V.s fare any better?

A few weeks ago, the electric-vehicle analyst Kevin Williams took a trip to Beijing to take the measure of the competition. Williams had gone to the city’s big annual automotive show to test one American perspective on China’s E.V. boom — that it was something between a state-sponsored boondoggle and a mirage of pointless overproduction.

After test-driving a dozen vehicles, Williams thought he had his answer: Chinese E.V.s were simply better and more compelling than their European and American counterparts, he said. “Now that I’ve seen a glimpse of what’s going on in China,” he wrote, “the Western manufacturers, particularly the American ones, don’t seem like they’re trying at all.”

Further reading

* Elizabeth Pancotti of the Roosevelt Institute: [*“Why It’s Good, Actually, That You Can’t Buy the World’s Cheapest Electric Vehicle.”*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the)

1. Adam Tooze on the [*sheer scale of the Chinese green-energy boom*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the).
2. Kate McKenzie and Tim Sahay, of the Polycrisis newsletter, on the [*“Great Green Wall.”*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the)
3. “Don’t Slam the Door on Inexpensive Electric Vehicles,” [*write*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) Gernot Wagner and Conor Walsh, suggesting a carbon tariff instead.
4. “Chinese Clean Tech Is Not the Enemy,” [*writes*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) David Fickling in Bloomberg.
5. “What are the prospects for turning the U.S. auto sector into a lean, green E.V.-manufacturing machine?” [*asks*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) Kate Aronoff in The New Republic. “And is there any potential role for Chinese companies to play in getting there?”
6. In The Financial Times, Edward Luce [*describes*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) the tariffs as “pulling up the drawbridge.”
7. Noah Smith on [*“the Big Tariffs”*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) and the British commentators [*scolding*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) the U.S. for imposing them.
8. Arnaud Bertrand [*looks*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) at just how far behind China the United States is in producing steel, aluminum and solar panels (not to mention E.V.s).
9. Luke Patey in China wire on [*“the great E.V. glut.”*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the)
10. Brad Setser of the Council on Foreign Relations talks about Chinese overcapacity and the new tariffs with Bloomberg’s [*Odd Lots*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) and the “[*ChinaTalk” podcast*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the), and [*writes*](https://rooseveltforward.substack.com/p/why-its-good-actually-that-you-cant?utm_source=polycrisisdispatch&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=the) that the best argument for the efficacy of industrial policy is China’s own success with it.

This article appeared in print on page MM18, MM19.

**Load-Date:** May 23, 2024

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein on Kamala Harris’s Convention Speech; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CT1-CPR1-JBG3-608J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 23, 2024 Friday 18:56 EST

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**Length:** 6033 words

**Highlight:** The Aug. 23, 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 Aaron Retica on the final night of the 2024 Democratic National Convention. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: It is Thursday, Aug. 22. We are just back from the arena having watched Kamala Harris accept the Democratic nomination for president. She gave a speech, I think was quite extraordinary and also quite unusual by the standards of recent Democratic convention speeches. She did quite a lot, I think, to define herself to the country but also to define what kind of campaign she’s going to run — what her campaign’s theory of this election, and a victory and it would be.

I’m joined here by my revered editor, Aaron Retica. Aaron, welcome back to the show.

AARON RETICA: Thanks. Let’s cast our minds back to the Paleolithic era — by which I mean, you know, July — and stop for a second and talk about the Republican Convention and where things seemed while that was happening. And then we’re going to, of course, turn to the events this weekend, particularly Kamala’s speech tonight.

How would you contrast — first, before we get into the nitty-gritty of what she said — the overall feeling of the Republican convention when it looked to the Republicans like they were going to win, and this week in Chicago?

EZRA KLEIN: Republicans ran a convention like they had already won, and Democrats ran a convention like they wanted to win.

Everybody I talked to there — I was not myself in Milwaukee — said this. The dominant mood at the Republican convention was, it was like the victory night party. That’s what Tim Alberta said on the show — from The Atlantic. And I think he saw that in Donald Trump’s speech. You also saw that, by the way, in Donald Trump’s choice of JD Vance, which I think has proven to be, uh, unwise, but you saw it in his speech that night.

It was self-indulgent. It was, first — and do remember the context. He had just suffered an assassination attempt. It was a long retelling of that, followed by an extremely long, all over the place, unfocused, rally-like performance by Trump. What the convention was not — and what Trump’s performance in particular was not — was aimed at voters he needed to persuade. You could not look at that speech and say, well, Donald Trump sat down with LaCivita and Wiles and thought through who it was that he needed to win over, who he had not yet won over, and decided what it was he needed to say to them.

By contrast, that is exactly what Kamala Harris’s speech was. Kamala Harris’s speech was reverse engineered from their theory of who it is they needed to win. We can talk about the way she introduced herself, which is very much putting herself in, in the narrative of immigrant stories. But if you think about what she promised at that speech, what she actually said she was going to do is a quite conservative speech. She’s going to restore Roe, the protections for reproductive freedom, as she put it. And she’s going to pass a quite conservative bipartisan border bill that was negotiated with James Lankford of Oklahoma.

I cannot remember a speech from a Democrat at a convention that in its promises that in its imagery, that in its story was as fundamentally conservative — and I don’t mean that in the sort of modern Republican Party movement term, I mean that in the sort of original term — as this one.

AARON RETICA: I’m going to push back on that a little bit later because I think there were a lot of cultural — I hate to use this word, but — cultural signifiers that were there for people who wanted to see them.

But let’s first talk about — she started with a love story and an immigrant story. When you get a chance to tell your story the way you want to tell it, which is what happens at these conventions, you reveal a lot about yourself. Even though people are always talking about, oh, you reveal yourself so much under pressure. But when you have control over the story, it’s actually very revealing.

As you said a minute ago, people don’t know her that well. What did she tell us about herself? Not necessarily that it was new, but how did she configure it so that we would think about her differently? The core

EZRA KLEIN: The core thread of her biography in her speech and in her sister Maya Harris’ speech was her mother. And she wrapped herself in, I would say the dual threads of, one, her mother’s work ethic.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: Before she could finally afford to buy a home, she rented a small apartment in the East Bay. In the Bay. In the Bay. You either lived in the hills or the flatlands? We lived in the flats. A beautiful ***working-class*** neighborhood of firefighters, nurses and construction workers, all who tended their lawns with pride.

EZRA KLEIN: She talked about her mother having a tight budget. She talked about the work her mother did. But she also talked about her mother, and for that matter, her father’s commitment to civil rights, her mother’s activism, her mother’s intolerance for complaint.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: My mother was a brilliant five-foot tall brown woman with an accent. And as the eldest child, I saw how the world would sometimes treat her. But my mother never lost her cool. She was tough, courageous, a trailblazer in the fight for women’s health, and she taught Maya and me a lesson that Michelle mentioned the other night. She taught us to never complain about injustice but do something about it. Do something about it. That was my mother. And she taught us and she always — she also taught us — and she also taught us — and never do anything half-assed. And that is a direct quote.

EZRA KLEIN: I am the son of an immigrant.

AARON RETICA: Me too.

EZRA KLEIN: And if you have any of that in you, this was very recognizable, the emphasis on hard work. There was a lot of, I thought, beauty in it. And it was an Oakland, California of a different time that she was describing. And I was just reading the book she released for her 2020 campaign, and she describes her upbringing in that book in a lot more detail. And she talks a lot about what was clearly the sort of Bay Area politics that her family was involved in. She talks about really lovely sounding, but if you know that area, sort of utopian and communal sort of arrangements and activist spaces.

I found it very recognizable, but that was not the version of it really, that she told tonight. The version of it she told tonight, introducing herself to the American people who know her but don’t know her, was the extremely hardworking daughter of socially committed immigrants who was lit by injustice she saw around her. She told a story she often tells that’s quite moving.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: You see, when I was in high school, I started to notice something about my best friend, Wanda. She was sad at school. And there were times she didn’t want to go home. So one day I asked if everything was all right, and she confided in me that she was being sexually abused by her stepfather, and I immediately told her she had to come stay with us, and she did. This is one of the reasons I became a prosecutor — to protect people like Wanda. Because I believe everyone has a right to safety, to dignity and to justice.

AARON RETICA: Let’s talk about the prosecutor aspect of all this. Throughout the week, they’ve really been hammering that home. She’s been talking a lot about it on the road. When she ran in 2020, she didn’t get to 2020 in part because she was a prosecutor. The idea of, you know, Kamala as a cop. How much do you think that she is now, oddly, freed by the chance to talk about herself as a law and order person? You used the word conservative before. But it almost seemed like moving into that framework, which might seem restrictive, actually was kind of liberating for her.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s right. It’s true that if your whole political experience, everything you have done, the person you have made yourself into is suddenly judged politically lethal, and yet people still want you to run for office, that’s going to be a very hard problem to solve. In 2020, she couldn’t solve it because it wasn’t actually a solution. Now there is a solution, which is, it’s not a problem anymore — and, in fact, is an asset. And so you see her up there with a tremendous amount of natural ease. You see much more of the person that, when her star was initially rising, people were looking for.

I’ll say one more thing on this, because it had occurred to me while reading her book, which is, one way that Harris is very different than Obama — and different than what we sometimes see in Democratic politics and liberal politics — is that a lot of people who get into politics as liberals get into it to confront power. Barack Obama was famously a community organizer organizing people to confront power. Harris, what she did was become power. She didn’t become a public defender; she became a prosecutor. She didn’t go work for a legal nonprofit; she became a prosecutor.

And she tells a story very early in this book about — I think it was when she was an intern in the prosecutor’s office. There was a case coming — or at least a proceeding coming. And she’s pushing to get the judge back because this woman who is involved in this but not necessarily at the center of it, if the judge wouldn’t come back for like five minutes, she would be held all weekend and she probably had kids. And she talks about realizing just how important it was that you could use power compassionately.

So I think something you see with Harris — which is not true for all kinds of different people — is she’s quite comfortable in the position of being the person who wields power. That’s what she actually intended to do. She wasn’t there to like her rise and her, the way she got herself involved in politics was not as somebody trying to compassionately challenge the power structure. It was somebody trying to become the power structure from a compassionate place.

AARON RETICA: So she is the first presidential candidate on the Democratic side from California. She presented a kind of California story today, and she’s presenting a California that is not the dystopian hell that the right-wing media that Trump himself and, really, quite a lot of people are trying to push. Now, you’re of course, yourself a product of California, and I was thinking a lot tonight about how, here is a vision of California as the leading light in the United States, as the future. She didn’t talk a ton about that, but I was feeling it — the sunniness. She’s not Reagan, obviously, but like there was a Reaganesque element to it. And they’ve been talking endlessly about joy, and I was wondering what you thought about that presentation, what that does politically. And also, again, in terms of making Harris comfortable with the job that she’s now chosen to do?

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not sure that as much as I love my home state, I think we have a monopoly on joy, on happiness, on that kind of politics of pleasure even. But I do think there’s something important about the California roots, and you could see it in a couple ways tonight.

One is that California, in general, and — here I’m talking specifically about Los Angeles but really specifically about San Francisco. The politics of San Francisco from the outside that you get on Fox News are not the politics on the inside. San Francisco’s politics have a very core tension to them, which is San Francisco is a very, very, very tolerant place. That’s what Fox News is getting at that. Is constantly consumed by political anger over the tolerated level of disorder. And not San Francisco, but Oakland, which is where Harris grew up, has been at times and has been in recent times, too, a very violent place.

And politicians who come up through San Francisco are very liberal on one level, but they also have to be able to manage the absolute fury that defines San Francisco politics toward the level of disorder around them, the level of crime around them, more recently, toward the level of housing and affordability around them.

And you saw Harris tonight get huge, huge, huge applause for calling for building more homes. The YIMBY-ization of the Democratic Party.

AARON RETICA: Which Barack Obama also talked about.

EZRA KLEIN: But this is coming through California, right? The YIMBY movement that has influenced Democratic Party is a San Francisco-based movement.

AARON RETICA: Let’s tell people what YIMBY is.

EZRA KLEIN: “Yes in my backyard.” This is my podcast — they know what YIMBY is. [LAUGHS]

AARON RETICA: You never know. Someone might be listening who hasn’t listened before.

EZRA KLEIN: So I think all that was there, but what I do think is sort of important is that, on the one hand, the union you see in a politician like Harris that I think is maybe not only Californian but reads to me is distinctively California — and you see a version of it, by the way, in Gavin Newsom too — is this mixture of quite liberal, particularly in its symbolic politics, but quite intolerant of disorder, quite aware of the anger that disorder, crime, lawlessness creates in the population. That is the particular strain of politics that she comes up in.

When she runs for Attorney General in California, she runs against a quite popular Republican from Los Angeles, and it’s a very, very, very close race. But he was popular because he was known as a strong law-and-order candidate. The way she knocked off an incumbent in San Francisco and then ran against this popular Republican from Los Angeles was by arguing that she was going to be a tougher and more effective prosecutor or district attorney, attorney general than they were.

So this is a very natural politics for her, which I think is then something she’s bringing to the way she’s talking here about foreign policy and the way she’s talking here about Donald Trump. Kamala Harris is a candidate, a politician who knows both the importance of looking strong and knows how to perform looking strong, and I think you saw both tonight.

AARON RETICA: You’ve talked a couple times now about her being, in some sense, conservative with the speech. And it’s already being applauded by the kind of Democratic analysts who want the party to swing toward the center. What was her projected electorate from the speech, and talk a little bit about how she did that.

EZRA KLEIN: So it’s worth thinking about who preceded her on the stage. You had, a little bit to my surprise, Leon Panetta, the politician living who is closest to what Leo McGarry was on “The West Wing.”

Leon Panetta, former congressman, important member of the Clinton Administration — I believe a budget director for a period — later, though, a Secretary of Defense. And Leon Panetta gives a searing speech about Donald Trump’s disrespect to the troops, to veterans, to our allies.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Leon Panetta: Look, Donald Trump does not understand the world. And he does not understand the service and sacrifice of our military. Our fallen veterans are not suckers. They are not losers. They are our heroes.

EZRA KLEIN: You also have Adam Kinzinger, former Republican congressman, who’s become a searing critic of Donald Trump and sort of gives a speech welcoming Republicans into the patriotic embrace of the Democratic Party, saying there are things that are beyond partisanship.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Adam Kinzinger: I’ve learned something about the Democratic Party. And I want to let my fellow Republicans in on the secret. The Democrats are as patriotic as us. They love this country just as much as we do.

EZRA KLEIN: You have Maya Harris, who’s, of course, Kamala Harris’s sister. It’s a more sort of biographical speech. And you have Roy Cooper of North Carolina who talks about Harris’s toughness in negotiating with the banks.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Roy Cooper: She went toe to toe with some of the world’s most powerful executives, and she refused to give in. Let me tell you, this was a huge risk, but she knew it was a risk worth taking. That’s Kamala, and we all know what happened. The banks caved that $4 billion for California families became $20 billion.

EZRA KLEIN: And so first you had this sort of run-up that was about foreign policy, reaching out to Republicans and a kind of nonpartisan populism. And then you get the speech, which, beyond its biographical dimensions, when you think about what the Democratic Party wants to do, what it runs on, what it is trying to win power to achieve, what is it? On that huge laundry list of things Democrats want, what did she say about climate in this speech?

AARON RETICA: Not a lot.

EZRA KLEIN: Basically nothing. What did she say about health care? I mean, she touched it, but for like a second. Did she promise a universal child care policy? No. Universal pre-K? No.

There are a million things Democrats promise and care about and that she cares about that if she gets a governing trifecta, I think she will try to do. But this speech did not really spend time on any of that. It was about shoring up what might’ve been her weaknesses. The border — you saw her pushing the bipartisan border bill, not comprehensive immigration reform. She gave an immigrant story, but the immigration policy she offered was tightening the border in the asylum system.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: Well, I refuse to play politics with our security, and here is my pledge to you. As president, I will bring back the bipartisan border security bill that he killed, and I will sign it into law.

EZRA KLEIN: She showed a lot of steel on foreign policy. The message that she was offering on foreign policy was she was tough.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: I will not cozy up to tyrants and dictators like Kim Jong Un who are rooting for Trump, who are rooting for Trump.

EZRA KLEIN: She had a very, I think, again, effective line that dictators understand that Donald Trump is easily manipulated and easily flattered, but that she was going to stand with Ukraine and stand with our allies and stand against autocrats.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: Because he wants to be an autocrat himself. And as president, I will never waver in defense of America’s security and ideals because in the enduring struggle between democracy and tyranny, I know where I stand, and I know where the United States belongs.

EZRA KLEIN: And you had her pushing for the restoration of — she wasn’t super specific about what this bill would include, but the restoration of reproductive rights, of reproductive freedom. There was just nothing in there that was part of the liberal list beyond, again, restoring Roe. But that is going back to where we were a couple of years ago. It’s not going to somewhere the country has not yet been.

When you think about how she ran in 2020, having endorsed Medicare for All and then come out with this slightly triangulated but very expansive Medicare expansion plan, when you think about the immigration politics of that year, where the Democratic Party is, most of the people on that stage, including her, but not Joe Biden are saying they would decriminalize border crossing, she was not doing any work to get liberals excited by offering a list of the big things she would do that they’ve always wanted done. She was doing work to say to somebody who maybe is leans a little right, maybe doesn’t like Joe Biden that much actually but is sort of uncomfortable with Donald Trump, she was working to make herself a safe home for them.

AARON RETICA: She used an interesting word talking about Trump. She said he was unserious and then went on to talk about all the serious consequences of his unseriousness. She talked about obviously respecting the rule of law and the peaceful transfer of power. Do you think that that depiction of Trump as a more effective way of framing him as her opponent?

EZRA KLEIN: She had a lot of framings of Trump and. I thought that one was effective. And one of the things I thought was interesting throughout the week of the convention was that both Bill Clinton and Barack Obama’s speeches, in their own ways, I thought were arguments to Kamala Harris and the rising generation of the Democratic Party about how to run against Donald Trump.

I thought one of the best lines of the convention was Bill Clinton’s line, don’t count Donald Trump’s lies. “Count the I’s.” Clinton’s argument there being, stop obsessing over fact-checking Donald Trump. The point of Donald Trump is he’s a self-centered narcissist who’s going to line his own pockets and will care for you not at all.

And Harris picked up the exact same theme at real length. She didn’t attack Donald Trump as a liar — or not primarily, or just a liar. Both Obama and Clinton made a point of talking about how to talk to and reach out to voters who don’t agree with you. And she definitely made a point in the speech of talking about — and this is cliché in American politics, but it’s not a cliché that you heard Donald Trump spending a lot of time on — about being a president for all Americans. About putting country first. Again, here, an echo of Adam Kinzinger.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: And let me say, I know there are people of various political views watching tonight, and I want you to know, I promise to be a president for all Americans. You can always trust me to put country above party and self. To hold sacred America’s fundamental principles, from the rule of law to free and fair elections to the peaceful transfer of power.

EZRA KLEIN: One thing that I thought was important about the speech is that she left vibes for TikTok. There’s been such an explosion of vibe around her. Coconut tree memes.

AARON RETICA: The endless memes.

EZRA KLEIN: Weird from Tim Walz. Brat. She didn’t play with any of that here. She didn’t even allude to any of that. There wasn’t a joke about JD Vance on the couch.

One of the things that I had heard people worry about because it was connected to worries they had about her in the past, was that they would mistake the enthusiasm they were getting online for what you needed to do to win over 53-year-old suburbanites in Pennsylvania. And she just didn’t. Whether they’re right about what wins those voters over, I don’t know. I’ve never won an election in Pennsylvania or in Wisconsin or anywhere else.

But this was not a campaign that was, so to speak, high on its own digital supply. It was not mistaking engagement for what you need to do to actually achieve persuasion. It was, instead, assuming — and I think correctly — that the engagement, enthusiasm, the vibes it was getting on the left actually gave her room to not pander or even worry all that much about the left.

I do think the one place that there is an important divergence from that is on Israel and Gaza, where I thought this was a very not just effective part of the speech, but I thought, just substantively from where I sit, an important and very well done part of the speech.

Within the administration, she’s to Joe Biden’s left on this issue. She’s not on the left on this issue. She’s a two state solution person. But she spoke about both the horrors of Oct. 7 and what Hamas has done and represents quite eloquently,

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: And let me be clear. I will always stand up for Israel’s right to defend itself, and I will always ensure Israel has the ability to defend itself. Because the people of Israel must never again face the horror that a terrorist organization called Hamas caused on Oct. 7, including unspeakable sexual violence and the massacre of young people at a music festival.

EZRA KLEIN: But also spoke about the devastation in Gaza and the need to take the Palestinian right to self-determination and safety as seriously as the Israeli right to security. I’m not saying Joe Biden doesn’t believe it, but when he talks about it, you don’t feel it. And when she did, you could feel it.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Kamala Harris: What has happened in Gaza over the past 10 months is devastating. So many innocent lives lost. Desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety over and over again. The scale of suffering is heartbreaking. President Biden and I are working to end this war such that Israel is secure, the hostages are released, the suffering in Gaza ends and the Palestinian people can realize their right to dignity, security, freedom and self-determination.

AARON RETICA: Yeah. Where we were sitting, with people who did not necessarily seem to be super interested in that issue, when she was talking about it, people were really into it. They were talking back to her and with her as she went through that, which I thought was very interesting.

EZRA KLEIN: She announced no break with administration policy here, and it felt like a complete break with the administration. And I think it actually is, in a way. Because just the truth is that Joe Biden’s heart is very deeply with Israel.

And I think the criticism of him — I’m not saying he does not care about Palestinians or Palestinian lives. But his fundamental identification is with Israel and Israel’s security. And you could feel in this that Harris is more balanced than he is, that she was — where she really is, I don’t know. I don’t know her that well.

AARON RETICA: She may also just be reading the party better, right?

EZRA KLEIN: This is based on some reporting, but she’s in a different place than him. I think she does feel this differently. I think it does read to her differently for a lot of different reasons, not least of them, again, that her mother’s an Indian immigrant. The rest of the world looks at this very differently. I’m not saying this was a huge topic in her house growing up, but to the degree that Joe Biden has felt himself wrapped in the Israeli story, it’s possible if she just does not have that identification.

And usually in American policy, Israeli security is a nonnegotiable and Palestinian security or self-determination is completely negotiable. It’s contingent. And that is not how — I don’t know what her policy will be in office, because there’s a whole state apparatus, right?

AARON RETICA: And she has to win.

EZRA KLEIN: And Congress — and she has to win. But that is not how she presented. It felt different, right?

AARON RETICA: It did not feel like lip service to the two-state solution as it does with so many politicians. I’m a little older than you. If you’re my age, seeing any politician talk with compassion about the Palestinians and about a Palestinian state and that they deserve it, that it’s not just a subset of what Israel needs.

EZRA KLEIN: In addition to, I think, her trying to bridge a divide a lot of people feel inside themselves and that exists in her own party, she was also trying to show that she had a strong perspective that she would forcefully pursue. She was trying to clear that bar of, could you imagine her in the commander-in-chief role? Could you imagine the aides coming to her to say that the war had just expanded? She had a whole section on Iran and, you know, Madam President, what do you want to do? She was trying to help people imagine her into that situation room.

AARON RETICA: It was interesting also because if you think that part of what’s needed is some kind of Metternich-type solution where all the top leaders, or most of them, go to Cyprus and they just stay there until they figure it out, she kind of gave the feeling that that was something she might push.

EZRA KLEIN: Look, I know that Joe Biden is working hard for a cease-fire, right? I have, really, very complicated feelings on this situation. I think he’s given Netanyahu much too much room at this point.

If the Israeli military establishment felt that American armaments were actually at risk, that would be calculus changing for them. I mean, we are, in a very important way their armory. And Netanyahu has been stalling this out and has been defying the Biden administration functionally completely. I think that the support Biden offered early on was important, and there was a pivot that needed to be made at some point that he didn’t fully make. And one consequence of that is that we have completely lost credibility with Palestinians. We are considered completely on the Israeli side of this and not a credible broker at all. And maybe that’s fine because maybe other Arab states would be involved in this, when you talk about that kind of solution.

But if America is going to be the country that sort of brings us together, you probably need a president who is viewed with somewhat more trust and viewed as somewhat more fundamentally sympathetic by the Palestinian side. And I think for where this now is and where it’s going, Harris is presenting herself — and I don’t mean this politically, I think substantively — as more credible. Not in a way that Israel might like, but there’s not going to be a deal that only Israel likes.

AARON RETICA: I was hinting earlier at the question of what is the imagined electorate of this speech? This race is very, very close. The enthusiasm for Harris has brought it back to parity. Maybe she’s ahead in some places where Trump was ahead before, but it’s nothing like a slam dunk that she’s going to win. Far from it. I guess I’m also wondering how you think the speech reflects how she sees the contest? You know, the real contest is in five to seven states, right?

EZRA KLEIN: Look, there’s a long-running theory of the election I think I associate with Michael Podhorzer, the former AFL-CIO political director, that there is. MAGA Coalition and an anti-MAGA coalition, and the anti-MAGA coalition is a set of factions — it’s bigger than the Democratic Party — that, in the right circumstances, come together to beat back MAGA candidates. They beat back all kinds of Senate candidates and gubernatorial candidates, and in 2020 they beat Donald Trump.

I think this was a speech that reflected that theory of politics. There are other theories of politics right now. Bernie Sanders’s theory of politics, for instance, is you beat Donald Trump’s fake economic populism with real economic populism. You make bigger, bolder, stronger promises. You make him out to be a liar and a cheat and a billionaire, a guy on the side of the billionaires ‘cause he has one himself or claims to be or whatever. There are all kinds of theories of this, but Harris’s theory was quite clearly making herself a safe harbor for a very large coalition.

So I think she has confidence she’s going to hold most of the Democratic Party with her. And to the extent that we kind of saw the way she’s thinking about this election, I think that the speakers who came before her, including, going a little bit further back in the night, Mark Kelly and Gabby Giffords, and the thing she’s emphasizing is about being a safe harbor for this political tendency to reassemble — possibly enlarge, but definitely reassemble — a coalition that has won in American politics before.

This was not, to me, a hope and change speech. She does talk about, we’re not going back, we’re going forward. But we’re not going back is to Trump. Forward is honestly not exactly clear.

In many ways, this was very similar to Joe Biden’s theory of politics here. She’s just able to prosecute that case — no callback to her language intended — in a way he just no longer had the capability to do. When she made the arguments about Trump on Jan. 6, when she made the arguments about his self-dealing, when she made the arguments about abortion, they’re not different substantially than arguments he’s been making. She’s just able to make them much better.

And so, in this way — I’ve talked a lot over these past couple of dispatches about different torches being passed in the Democratic Party. But she was a very strong inheritor of Bidenism here.

AARON RETICA: One thing she did do tonight, even though she didn’t push hard on the part of her biography with her father, she did talk about him saying that she should run free, which I thought was interesting. But she did seed in all these little things — she mentioned Aretha Franklin, she mentioned John Coltrane. She mentioned Miles Davis. She mentioned Thurgood Marshall and, for the aficionados, she mentioned Constance Baker Motley. The last two of whom were instrumental in all kinds of civil rights cases. So the stuff was there, right. But it wasn’t highlighted. But one of the things that was very interesting about this whole convention, if we’re looking at the whole thing, is — and the daughter spoke tonight, Ella Emhoff — and then two days ago, Doug Emhoff.

Do you see any fundamental differences in the way all of these things are being approached, whether it’s the women’s roles, the men’s roles, the way families were presented, the way the mixed family, the blended family, like any of that in a way that

EZRA KLEIN: I thought the family presentations were really touching. I’m not going to talk about their politics because I don’t think they’re fundamentally political. I loved Doug’s speech. I thought it was charming.

And in terms of contrasts, try to imagine Melania Trump offering that kind of speech about Donald Trump. I don’t know that I thought any moment in the convention is more moving to me than Gus Walz’s tears and joy, and then later his embrace of his father. These families seem to love each other. And that’s not an unknown thing in politics, but it’s quite lovely.

I think, in terms of the presentation that Harris is offering, one thing she’s able to do — that Obama was able to do before her, that Hillary Clinton, in a funny way, was not able to do — was Harris is able to let who she is but also how she is speak very loudly, and that then allows her to generate an enthusiasm that means she doesn’t have to say other things quite so explicitly.

Hillary Clinton, following after Barack Obama and his charisma and his movement building and having been in politics for a very long time — simultaneously being this generationally historic figure, right, if she had won, and even just winning the nomination — nevertheless, she had to go quite a bit further left than Obama did in making explicit arguments that he made implicitly or frankly didn’t make at all.

And she would talk very explicitly about systemic racism and “I’m with her” was the slogan. And everything was trying to remind you that this was something you were supposed to be excited about. This was something we’d never seen before.

And Harris is more in the line of what Obama was able to do, which is people have gotten very excited about her. It’s her performance, it’s her style. It’s who she is. It is Doug. But because that excitement has emerged organically, it gives her a lot of room to make other political moves. This is also room Obama took, and it allows her to allow the enthusiasm to be about her, and so she doesn’t have to make a ton of promises that might turn off other kinds of voters.

There’s a sort of implicit contract being drawn up between her and her base right now, which is, you let me do what I need to do to win over the voters. I need to win over to beat Donald Trump and then we’ll do this thing, this governing together.

AARON RETICA: Well, that seems like a very good place to end. Ezra, thanks so much for staying up with me to talk about all this.

EZRA KLEIN: Aaron, thank you for being here — what is now almost 1 a.m. [LAUGHS]

AARON RETICA: [LAUGHS] We have an ongoing conversation, but it doesn’t usually quite go this late.

EZRA KLEIN: And thank you to the whole team who has worked incredibly hard to put out all of these episodes across the Democratic convention week.

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Claire Gordon. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris, with Jack McCordick. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Aman Sahota. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. This show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin, Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. 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 and, of course, to Aaron Retica for joining me.

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[***Workers in Tennessee Vote to Join the U.A.W.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVH-8G41-DXY4-X1TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 22

**Length:** 1267 words

**Byline:** By Neal E. Boudette

**Body**

The Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga is set to become the first unionized auto factory in the South not owned by one of Detroit's Big Three.

In a landmark victory for organized labor, workers at a Volkswagen plant in Tennessee have voted overwhelmingly to join the United Automobile Workers union, becoming the first nonunion auto plant in a Southern state to do so.

The company said in a statement late Friday that the union had won 2,628 votes, with 985 opposed, in a three-day election. Two earlier bids by the U.A.W. to organize the Chattanooga factory over the last 10 years were narrowly defeated.

The outcome is a breakthrough for the labor movement in a region where anti-union sentiment has been strong for decades. And it comes six months after the U.A.W. won record wage gains and improved benefits in negotiations with the Detroit automakers.

The U.A.W. has for more than 80 years represented workers employed by General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the producer of Chrysler, Jeep, Ram and Dodge vehicles, and has organized some heavy-truck and bus factories in the South.

But the union had failed in previous attempts to organize any of the two dozen automobile factories owned by other companies across an area stretching from South Carolina to Texas and as far north as Ohio and Indiana.

With the victory in Chattanooga, the U.A.W. will turn its focus to other Southern plants. A vote will take place in mid-May at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Ala., near Tuscaloosa. The U.A.W. is hoping to organize a half-dozen or more plants over the next two years.

''Tonight you all together have taken a giant, historic step,'' Shawn Fain, the president of the U.A.W., said at a celebratory gathering in Chattanooga. ''Tonight we celebrate this historic moment in our nation's and our union's history. Let's get to it and go to work and win more for the ***working class*** of this nation.''

A string of victories for the U.A.W. could have profound effects for Southern auto workers and the broader auto industry. Nonunion auto workers typically earn significantly lower wages than those in U.A.W.-represented plants, and collective bargaining could bring them substantial increases in pay, benefits and job security.

''Volkswagen workers will have a chance for better pay and working conditions under a collective bargaining agreement,'' said Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. ''They'll have a lot of job protections under a union contract that they don't have now.''

At G.M., Ford and Stellantis, any layoffs have to be planned with advance notice to the union, and workers get supplemented unemployment benefits. Nonunion plants don't have to take such measures.

A large U.A.W. presence in the South would also upset an automotive landscape in which U.A.W. contracts have left G.M., Ford and Stellantis with higher labor costs than nonunion rivals like Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Tesla and Hyundai.

''This is a watershed moment for the industry,'' said Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, who has followed the U.A.W. for more than three decades. ''It sets an example that would resonate across the industry, and across other industries where there's a large presence of nonunion workers.''

The U.A.W.'s success in the negotiations with the Big Three in the fall set off a surge in interest among Southern autoworkers in organizing their own plants, the union said, and prompted the U.A.W. to kick off a $40 million effort to support them.

Volkswagen workers who voted in favor of U.A.W. representation said they hoped the union would help them win higher wages and more paid time off. The Chattanooga factory currently pays a top wage of about $35 an hour, compared with the top wage of more than $40 an hour that G.M., Ford and Stellantis now pay U.A.W. workers.

The U.A.W. contracts also provide health care coverage that is almost entirely paid by the companies, substantial profit-sharing bonuses, cost-of-living adjustments to insulate workers from inflation and generous retirement programs.

Among those voting for the U.A.W. in Chattanooga was Tony Akridge, 48, who is in his second year at the VW plant, working on motors and transmissions on the night shift. His $23 hourly wage exceeded what he earned in previous jobs, he said, but he voted for the U.A.W. in hopes that the union could help improve workers' living standards.

''It gives us a better opportunity,'' Mr. Akridge said. ''They pay us OK, but it's not good enough for the things they need done. Noting the rising cost of living, he added that the union ''will get better benefits toward that, making life just a little bit more easy.''

Others are counting on U.A.W. representation to bring more paid time off. Most VW workers must either take unpaid time off when the plant shuts down in the summer and around the holidays, or use paid time off to cover those periods. If they do, many are left with only a few days to cover any sick days or family leave the rest of the year, workers said.

''We're forced to use our P.T.O. a lot instead of using it on our own terms sometimes,'' said Craig Jackson, 56, who voted for the union.

At the Detroit automakers, U.A.W. workers get up to five weeks of vacation and 19 paid holidays, and are allowed two weeks for parental leave.

Workers who opposed the union at VW said they were unsure what gains the U.A.W. could bring them.

''You really don't have any kind of guarantee with them,'' said Darrell Belcher, 54, who has worked on the assembly floor for 13 years and voted against the U.A.W. in the two previous elections at the plant. ''I'm not saying we won't gain anything, but we are probably going to lose something just to gain it.''

As the voting was about to start, the governors of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas -- all Republicans -- issued a statement on Tuesday saying unionizing would jeopardize auto jobs in their states.

''We want to keep good-paying jobs and continue to grow the American auto manufacturing sector here,'' the governors said. ''A successful unionization drive will stop this growth in its tracks, to the detriment of American workers.''

But even some VW workers who opposed the U.A.W. said they did not think union representation would endanger the Chattanooga plant. ''I do not feel that the plant will leave Chattanooga or the South,'' said Cody Rose, 34, a 13-year veteran of the plant who works in body shop production. ''Volkswagen has too much invested in this area.''

The Chattanooga plant opened in 2011, and employs 5,500 people, of whom about 4,300 were eligible to vote in the union election. The plant produces the VW Atlas, a large sport utility vehicle, and an electric vehicle, the ID.4. It is Volkswagen's only plant in the United States, and was the only VW plant in the world that was not unionized.

The U.A.W. had some advantages in winning support at Volkswagen. Its effort had the support of IG Metall, the powerful union that represents autoworkers in Germany. German companies also have a strong tradition of giving workers a voice. Under German law, worker representatives must hold half the seats on a company's supervisory board, the equivalent of a board of directors.

The U.A.W. can now turn its attention to the Mercedes plant in Alabama, which employs about 6,100 people. The union tried to organize that plant once before, but the effort died out before coming to a vote.

Jamie McGee contributed reporting.Jamie McGee contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/19/business/economy/volkswagen-united-automobile-workers-union.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/19/business/economy/volkswagen-united-automobile-workers-union.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The Volkswagen assembly plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., was the automaker's only plant in the world that was not unionized. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MELISSA GOLDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2024

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[***The Actress Who Looks Out for Denmark; critic’s notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJ7-9VR1-DXY4-X012-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 13, 2024 Wednesday 15:00 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 951 words

**Byline:** Mike Hale Mike Hale is a television critic for The Times. He also writes about online video, film and media.

**Highlight:** Hunting murderers, delivering babies or guarding inmates, Sofie Grabol plays women who try to keep their country safe.

**Body**

Hunting murderers, delivering babies or guarding inmates, Sofie Grabol plays women who try to keep their country safe.

If you watch much Danish television — and that is an option these days, wherever you happen to live — a question rises: How would Denmark function without Sofie Grabol?

In “The Killing” (“Forbrydelsen”), which put Danish TV on the map and made Grabol a star back in 2007, the country’s justice system was held together by her morose detective, Sarah Lund. In her two most recent series, Grabol expands her public-service portfolio. In “The Shift” she plays Ella, the head midwife at Copenhagen’s best public pediatric hospital. And in “Prisoner” she’s Miriam, a reform-minded guard at a prison threatened with closing. Whether she is catching Denmark’s murderers, delivering its babies or minding its inmates, Grabol is indispensable.

To follow Grabol’s progress through the Danish infrastructure, the American viewer will need the [*streaming service MHz Choice*](https://watch.mhzchoice.com/browse) (free trials currently available), which carries “The Shift” (2022) and premiered “Prisoner” (2023) this week. The three seasons of “The Killing” are on the streamer Topic, which will merge with MHz Choice on April 1, consolidating this segment of Grabol’s catalog. (She also plays a public official in the eerie British series “Fortitude,” available on multiple streamers.)

The shows centered on Sarah, Ella and Miriam are quite different — “The Killing” is a lurid crime thriller, “The Shift,” a big-hearted medical soap opera, “Prisoner,” a grim social-problem drama — but the characters have much in common.

Each is aggrieved but indomitable, a ***working-class*** Sisyphus pushing ahead through institutional neglect and cowardice — a very squeaky wheel at work — while weighed down by personal trauma. Each is estranged from the only close family member still in her life; two become reluctant surrogate mothers to the women their troubled sons get pregnant. Perhaps Grabol has been typecast over the years, or has typecast herself. Or maybe the grouchy, standoffish, self-righteous pain in the butt is a character that resonates in Denmark.

Grabol is an economical actor, able to communicate a world of emotion through her liquid eyes and seemingly offhand movements. (She’s also blessed with a notably dramatic pair of eyebrows.) She makes all of these bottled-up, difficult women believable and, even when they push everyone away, sympathetic — you can see the layers of pain and weariness that they shelter behind and occasionally break through.

The shows share a sensibility with Grabol’s performances; they are unflashy, meticulously made, superior examples of their genres. (“The Killing” was a trendsetter in transferring the outré violence of 1990s movie murderers into TV, but it presented their offenses with a Nordic reserve.)

“The Shift” is a forthright hospital melodrama, and there’s even an amusing twist on “Grey’s Anatomy” in which Ella is followed around the hospital by her mother, an orderly who breaks into meetings to pester her daughter about her health and love life. The mostly female midwives serve the dramatic function that nurses often do in American stories, putting up with and bailing out the mostly male doctors. The show’s theme is the chronic understaffing of midwives in the public hospital, while its running motif is the staff’s obsession with food, from the critical attention paid to the pastries in the break room to the prescribing of toast and tea for all noncritical medical issues.

But in the hands of its creator and showrunner, the talented director Lone Scherfig (“An Education”), “The Shift” (the Danish title translates as “Day and Night”) has a winning sincerity and humor; it isn’t cloying, and it doesn’t traffic in bad outcomes to gin up emotion. Tricky story lines — a midwife who doubts herself when she’s gaslighted by a struggling doctor, another who sees her patients through the lens of her own history of abuse — are handled delicately. Ella fights for more midwives and finds herself pregnant at 46 (by a married doctor), but she’s chipper and funny, and Grabol gets to show a slightly softer side.

“Prisoner,” created by Kim Fupz Aakeson with Frederik Louis Hviid and Michael Noer and written by Aakeson (who, in the small world of Danish TV, wrote two episodes of “The Shift”), takes the critique of the country’s social welfare in a much darker direction. It is structured as a tragedy: Three guards at a failing prison all have fatal vulnerabilities — a secret love life, a junkie son with debts, a friendship with an inmate — that drag them down into a tense and cleverly worked-out spiral of lies and vengeance.

Grabol is primary in the ensemble of “The Shift,” but in “Prisoner” the attention is evenly split among her, Youssef Wayne Hvidtfeldt as the idealistic new guard Sammi and David Dencik as the compromised veteran Henrik. It’s largely Dencik’s show. Henrik, who vacillates between surly anger and puppy dog neediness, is the most interesting character, and Dencik (“Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy,” “Chernobyl”) is terrific.

The beat-downs, drug runs, racial animosities and inevitable spasm of group violence are all familiar, but in its six fairly tight episodes, “Prisoner” makes them credible and achieves a fair measure of the documentary-style grittiness it goes for. Grabol’s Miriam goes down some dark roads — she’s not the justice-obsessed grind of “The Killing” or the dedicated crusader of “The Shift” — but her heart is in the right place. Denmark is still lucky to have her.

PHTOO: Sofie Grabol in “Prisoner.” She is one of Denmark’s pre-eminent public servants on TV. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM WALLENSTEN/MHZ CHOICE) This article appeared in print on page C13.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2024

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[***Is New York's Quality of Life Better Than It Was 7 Years Ago? Residents Say No.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BM3-7XV1-JBG3-600C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2024 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 22

**Length:** 1058 words

**Byline:** By Dana Rubinstein

**Body**

From public safety to schools, New Yorkers across all five boroughs feel that their city's quality of life has worsened in recent years, according to a survey.

In the South Fordham section of the Bronx, residents give their neighborhood a Bronx cheer. In Park Slope in Brooklyn -- known and parodied for its self-consciously liberal politics and wealth -- residents are much happier.

But if there's one thing that New Yorkers can agree upon, it's that the quality of life in New York City has suffered.

Only half of New Yorkers plan to stay in the city, according to the survey of more than 6,600 New York City households conducted in the second half of 2023 by the nonpartisan Citizens Budget Commission -- a follow-up to similar studies in 2017 and 2008.

Only 39 percent are content with the state of public education. Only 37 percent are happy with the level of public safety in their neighborhood, and only 34 percent are satisfied with their neighborhood's cleanliness. Less than a third rate the city's quality of life as excellent or good. Less than a quarter are content with the overall quality of government services.

And in nearly every category, New Yorkers felt worse about the city in 2023 than they did in 2017 and 2008.

How would you rate the quality of life in New York City overall?

2023: 29.8 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as ''excellent'' or ''good''

2017: 51.2 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as ''excellent" or ''good''

2008: 50.9 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as ''excellent'' or ''good''

''The drop is stark,'' said Andrew Rein, president of the Citizens Budget Commission, even as he stressed that context matters. In 2017, New York City was ''seven years into a really robust recovery,'' he said. In 2023, New York City was still emerging from a pandemic that brought economic and social upheaval.

While New Yorkers largely agreed that quality of life in New York City was unimpressive, they diverged widely on how that manifested itself in their particular neighborhoods -- an apparent reflection of neighborhood wealth.

Residents of Brooklyn's Community Board 6, which includes Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Park Slope, Cobble Hill and Red Hook, were the city's most content, with more than 38 percent describing their local quality of life as ''excellent.'' The nearby communities of Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene and Dumbo clocked in next, with 37.8 percent calling their neighborhoods ''excellent,'' followed by Manhattan's Greenwich Village.

''Gosh,'' said Andrew Gounardes, a state senator whose district encompasses several of those Brooklyn neighborhoods. ''I would guess that that's due to a combination of factors, probably access to parks -- whether it's Prospect Park or the waterfront parks, green space, lots of strong schools, lots of vibrant nightlife and commercial corridors and restaurants and small businesses.''

In no other neighborhood did more than 30 percent rate of residents rate their neighborhood as highly.

On the flip side, 54 percent of residents in the Bronx's Community Board 5, which encompasses South Fordham, ranked the quality of life in their neighborhood as ''poor'' -- the worst ranking in New York City. The next two lowest-ranking community boards were also in the Bronx, including neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Melrose, Port Morris, Belmont and East Tremont.

Pierina Sanchez, the Bronx councilwoman whose district includes Community Board 5, said she was not surprised. ''Our crime rates in the district, they've not been great, right?'' she said.

''The perceptions of New York City going in the wrong direction are compounded with a district that has a harsher socioeconomic reality,'' Ms. Sanchez said. ''It's facing generations of disinvestment.''

Fifty percent or less of New Yorkers rated positively 52 of 68 metrics, from overall quality of life in New York City and the quality of after-school programs and public housing, to ease of travel within the five boroughs, neighborhood cleanliness and rat control. They expressed more satisfaction with New York's Fire Department, emergency medical services, libraries, neighborhood parks and garbage collection.

The survey was sent to a random sampling of nearly 126,000 households, 6,632 of which participated. The respondents included at least 90 households from each of New York City's 59 community boards, and each board's responses are available on an interactive map on the commission's website.

Sixty-two of the survey metrics were similar to topics in the 2017 survey. In 54 of those, residents expressed more dissatisfaction than in 2017, with the satisfaction level relatively unchanged in the other eight.

Of particular note were New Yorkers' feelings about crime. There were more murders, robberies, felony assaults, burglaries and grand larcenies last year than in 2019, before the pandemic began, and the survey questions reflected a marked unease in how people felt riding the subway or walking the streets at night.

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel ... riding a subway during the day

2023: Only 49 percent of New Yorkers felt at least somewhat safe riding the subway during the day.

2017: 82 percent of New Yorkers

2008: 86 percent of New Yorkers

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel ... riding a subway at night

2023: Only 22 percent of New Yorkers feel at least somewhat safe riding the subway at night.

2017: 46 percent

2008: 45 percent

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel ... walking alone on a street in your neighborhood at night

2023: Only 51 percent of New Yorkers felt at least somewhat safe walking in their neighborhood at night.

2017: 70 percent of New Yorkers

2008: 69 percent of New Yorkers

Mayor Eric Adams, a retired police captain, ran for office in 2021 on an anti-crime platform, and the Citizens Budget Commission gave him credit for trying to target areas of concern to New Yorkers.

''We will continue to advance Mayor Adams's bold plans to make the city safer, more prosperous, and more livable, and we look forward to working with our partners at the City Council, in Albany, and in Washington, D.C., to ensure the city continues to work for ***working-class*** New Yorkers,'' said Charles Lutvak, a spokesman for the mayor.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/nyregion/new-yorkers-poll-survey.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/nyregion/new-yorkers-poll-survey.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Nearly 38 percent of residents surveyed in Brooklyn Heights rated the neighborhood ''excellent.'' Other areas fared less well. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Can Biden Take a Page Out of Trump’s Playbook?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B77-8J71-JBG3-6014-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 31, 2024 Wednesday 09:58 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2863 words

**Highlight:** The prize in the struggle over the border is the 2024 presidency and all the power that goes with it.

**Body**

In a bid to weaken Donald Trump’s domination of the immigration crisis going into the 2024 election, President Biden has reversed his position and adopted a high-risk strategy.

Biden is seeking [*enactment of border legislation*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/01/26/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-the-bipartisan-senate-border-security-negotiations/) that “would give me, as president, a new emergency authority to shut down the border when it becomes overwhelmed.”

On Monday, The Times [*described*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/us/politics/biden-border-crisis-immigration.html?searchResultPosition=7) Biden’s rationale in [*“How the Border Crisis Shattered Biden’s Immigration Hopes”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/us/politics/biden-border-crisis-immigration.html?searchResultPosition=7):

The number of people crossing into the United States has reached record levels, [*more than double than in the Trump years*](https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-land-border-encounters). The asylum system is still all but broken.

On Friday, in a dramatic turnaround from those early days, the president implored Congress to grant him [*the power to shut down the border*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/26/us/politics/johnson-opposes-border-deal.html) so he could contain one of the largest surges of uncontrolled immigration in American history.

Trump, acutely aware of the critical importance of immigration to his campaign, is determined to block Biden’s border security [*proposal*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-deal-biden-senate-us-mexico-border-bill/#:~:text=Biden%20referred%20to%20as%20an,surpass%204%2C000%20in%20a%20week.), now under negotiation in the Senate. Trump, of course, wants to make sure that the “[*crisis at the border*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/03/25/border-crisis-immigration-explained-biden-trump-mexico-478049)” remains foremost in the minds of voters through Election Day.

“A Border Deal now would be another Gift to the Radical Left Democrats,” Trump declared in a [*post*](https://www.bostonherald.com/2024/01/28/border-disputes-enter-2024-politics-as-tensions-flare-in-texas-and-d-c-efforts-stumble/) on Jan. 25 on Truth Social. “They need it politically, but don’t care about our Border.”

The prize in this struggle is the 2024 presidency and all the power that goes with it.

I asked political strategists and American and European scholars to evaluate the viability of Biden’s immigration initiative and received a wide range of responses.

[*Ruy Teixeira*](https://www.aei.org/profile/ruy-teixeira/), a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who has often argued that Democrats have moved too far to the cultural left, questioned the viability of Biden’s immigration strategy in an email:

It’s a steep political hill Biden has to climb on this issue. His approval rating on “handling the immigration situation at the U.S.-Mexico border” is now 18 percent. Eighteen percent! That’s really, really bad and the lowest presidential approval on the issue ABC News has measured since 2004. In the latest Wall Street Journal poll, Trump is preferred over Biden by 30 points, his greatest lead on any issue.

Illuminating detail, Teixeira continued,

comes from a [*December survey*](https://blueprint2024.com/polling/foreign-policy-immigration-toplines/) conducted by the Blueprint group. Between Trump and Biden, who are voters most likely to think is close to their views on immigration? It’s Trump by a country mile: 44 percent of voters say Trump is close to their position, compared to a mere 25 percent who say Biden is close to their position. Even Hispanic voters are more likely to say Trump is closer to their views on immigration than to say Biden is.

Frankly, Teixeira continued,

It’s a bit late in the day to finally be moving on this issue and only under duress from the Republicans. The border debacle has been unfolding throughout Biden’s term and the political damage has been accumulating. A big part of the problem is that there are a lot of Democrats who didn’t — and don’t — really want to do much about border security.

Teixeira suggested that Biden may not have the stomach to turn a “red meat” conservative stance on immigration into a wedge issue:

I don’t think Biden is really committed to being a different kind of Democrat, just a somewhat more palatable one. And I don’t think he really wants to go after some specific person or group to forcefully dissociate himself from “weak on border security” views in and around the Democratic Party. That limits the salience of his repositioning both in the general political discourse and to voters’ perceptions of him and his party.

“All this said, it’s still worth striking a tougher stance on border security,” Teixeira wrote. “It’s the beginning of a move in the right direction and could help Biden modestly.”

Would Biden “lose more support on the progressive left than he would gain in the center?” Teixeira asked. His answer: “My view is that, on this issue as on so many others, the progressive left is a paper tiger.”

“The net for the Democrats,” he concluded, “is likely to be strongly positive.”

Others find a different range of reasons to be skeptical of the effectiveness of Biden’s about-face on immigration.

[*William Galston*](https://www.brookings.edu/people/william-a-galston/), a senior fellow at Brookings, voiced concern about Biden’s strategy, writing by email:

Biden’s shift on immigration will make a political difference to the situation on the ground well before the election only if his new policies change the day. In the last year of the Trump administration, encounters with illegal migrants at the southern border numbered less than 500 thousand. During the third year of the Biden administration, the total rose to 2.5 million, and the dispersal of these migrants throughout the country has produced fiscal and housing crises in large cities controlled by Democrats.

If he intends to reduce this flow, Galston continued,

Biden will have to undertake tough measures that won’t be easy to distinguish from Trump’s. The Democrats who understand the political stakes will probably go along with this, while those who see this issue through humanitarian or ideological lenses will balk. If he proceeds down this path, Biden will have to hope that gains among swing voters exceed the losses in his base.

Trump and the Republicans, in Galston’s view, “will pay a price if they are seen as being driven by politics rather than the desire to address a really difficult problem,” but Biden faces a big hurdle in his bid to take command of the immigration issue:

The administration has waited so long to act that it faces a credibility problem that will only get worse if it flinches and settles for half-measures whose effects are incremental at best. Turning this issue around will take determination — and a willingness to endure criticism from fellow Democrats that hasn’t been the administration’s long suit thus far.

[*Joel Kotkin*](https://joelkotkin.com/), of Chapman University and the Houston-based Urban Reform Institute, argued that adopting a tougher immigration stance is a plus for Biden that comes with little cost: “The progressives, faced with the odious Trump, will fall into line, except on the margins. The open border is not welcomed by most people.”

It’s hard to see, Kotkin continued,

how either ***working-class*** Latinos or African Americans welcome their communities being inundated by people who have entered illegally and about whom we know nothing. Protests in New York and Chicago by ***working-class*** people should not be ignored. This year, if I were Biden, I would be more worried about them than far-left foundations or cheap-labor lobbyists who might object.

Overall, Kotkin contended, “The political rewards of standing up on the border are far greater than backing the current chaos. Everywhere in Europe support for stricter immigration is moving from the right to the center and even the left, particularly in the ‘enlightened’ North.”

I asked [*Herbert Kitschelt*](https://provost.duke.edu/profile/herbert-p-kitschelt/), a political scientist at Duke and an expert in political parties both here and in Europe, about the Biden immigration strategy, and he emailed back a detailed examination of the complexities of the politics of immigration.

“What really politicizes immigration,” Kitschelt wrote, “is the interaction of structural threat to the established life chances of a resident native population with rates and levels of immigration/immigrants, even if immigration is not a powerful feature in the local residential experience.”

In other words, in communities suffering economic decline and growing isolation, a relatively small influx of immigrants can propel voters to the right.

As a result, “the strongest feelings against immigrants may be voiced in areas where the actual immigration rate is not high, but structural social decline interacts with the perception of immigration in the broader national unit: Think of the rise of anti-immigrant parties in Saxony, Germany, or in West Virginia, both places with few immigrants.”

As Western countries experience very high immigration rates, Kitschelt wrote,

The issue increasingly converts from a primarily sociocultural question of tolerance to difference and diversity to a socio-economic question of the allocation of scarce resources: Municipal and even national social care and protection budgets must be expanded, and growing increments accrue to caring for the immigrant population. Immigration becomes increasingly a question of distributive conflict.

The obstacle Biden faces in trying to gain support by shifting to the right on immigration, according to Kitschelt, is that

The Democratic Party does not have the credibility and reputation for social protection and economic redistribution in the United States. It is therefore less likely that a sharp swing on immigration in the run-up to a presidential election will dramatically increase the support of a Democratic presidential candidate from people who are concerned by immigration, and particularly not from those for whom immigration is a major concern while they are also worried about their future social-status decline and the precarity of their economic well-being.

Despite the slim chance of success, Kitschelt made the case that

under current conditions of ascending chances of Trump winning the presidential election in November, Democrats have little choice but to backpedal from uncompromising pro-immigration stances.

Whether or not this change happens in the nick of time to salvage the November election, however, is highly uncertain, given the weak social protectionist reputation of the party and the imperatives of not letting immigration progressives defect into electoral abstention in November.

[*Ed Goeas*](https://politics.georgetown.edu/profile/ed-goeas/), a Republican pollster, replying by email to my inquiry concerning the current politics of immigration, argued that the Republican Party has increased the odds that the Biden strategy will work.

“I believe the Republicans may have given the Biden campaign the opportunity to turn this issue into a real plus,” Goeas wrote, referring to the politicized reasoning Republicans are using to reject the legislation under consideration in the Senate.

If immigration becomes a less cutting issue, he continued, Republicans will be left “with little of an issue-dominated agenda. That is dangerous territory for Trump with all those Republicans who say they like his policies but hate his persona! The emperor will truly have no clothes!”

Political scientists in Europe are split on the effectiveness of center-left parties embracing more restrictive immigration policies, in what political scientists call an [*accommodation strategy*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/political-science-research-and-methods/article/does-accommodation-work-mainstream-party-strategies-and-the-success-of-radical-right-parties/5C3476FCD26B188C7399ADD920D71770) — the adoption of policies traditionally associated with partisan and ideological adversaries in a bid to win support from opposition voters.

[*Frederik Georg Hjorth*](https://fghjorth.github.io/) of the University of Copenhagen wrote by email that he and [*Martin Vinaes Larsen*](https://www.martinvlarsen.com/), a political scientist at Aarhus University, found in their 2020 [*paper,*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science/article/abs/when-does-accommodation-work-electoral-effects-of-mainstream-left-position-taking-on-immigration/635035541EF9781C0B002F47FC7F965C) “When Does Accommodation Work? Electoral Effects of Mainstream Left Position Taking on Immigration,” that in Denmark “a more restrictionist stance on immigration by the Social Democrats successfully attracted former radical right and other anti-immigration voters.”

In the case of the 2019 Danish election, “pro-immigration voters repelled by this move can defect from the Social Democrats to other left-wing parties that hold seats in parliament and will therefore still underpin a left-wing government.”

Hjorth pointed out that in the American system “a Biden accommodation strategy carries the risks that pro-immigration Democrats will either abstain or defect to third parties, both of which detract from the coalition Democrats need to win in November. These risks make accommodation as a strategy for Joe Biden less favorable, and the electoral calculus overall more complex.”

Despite that risk, Hjorth argued that “if Trump is the Republican nominee, he will likely mobilize large numbers of Democratic voters — voters who will ‘hold their noses’ and vote for Biden. This will, all else equal, give Biden more leeway for an accommodation strategy.”

[*Kristian Kongshoj*](https://vbn.aau.dk/en/persons/116345), a political scientist at Denmark’s Aalborg University, shares the view that accommodation strategies deployed by the center-left can be effective. But Kongshoj stressed in his email that the center-left Social Democratic Party in Denmark “would never have regained support from many rural, blue-collar, etc. voters had it not been for this reorientation of immigration policy toward especially restricting asylum and family reunification, speeding up repatriation toward home countries, current attempts at externalizing asylum processing to other countries, etc.”

It took more than immigration to win over these voters, in Kongshoj’s view:

It was certainly also very important that the Social Democrats gained credibility 2015-2019 on welfare politics — lower retirement age for blue-collar workers, a promise to fund/finance welfare for future needs and demographic change, etc. The S.D.P. had really lost a lot of trust and credibility here in the years previously.

Kongshoj is less optimistic than Hjorth on the political value, for Democrats in America, of adopting an immigration accommodation strategy: “In the United States, the problem is of course that in a polarized context with low-to-moderate turnout, it is just as important — or perhaps even more important — to feed your core support base compared to swaying ‘moderates’ and undecideds.”

Another paper, “[*Economic Risk Within the Household and Voting for the Radical Right*](https://kops.uni-konstanz.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/5c77ed51-cb59-49f0-9a49-d6638558d146/content)” by [*Tarik Abou-Chadi*](https://www.tarikabouchadi.net/) and [*Thomas Kurer*](https://thomaskurer.net/), political scientists at Oxford and the University of Zurich, provides strong evidence of the crucial importance of a credible welfare policy for a center-left party taking more conservative stands on immigration to win back ***working-class*** voters.

Abou-Chadi and Kurer find, for example, that “occupational unemployment risk is systematically related to supporting radical-right parties” and that “one high-risk individual per household is sufficient to significantly increase the probability of supporting the radical right among all household members.”

Put another way, winning over those voters who have shifted to right-wing populist parties requires that the center-left guarantee a strong safety net for those who lose their jobs.

There is no consensus among European scholars on the effectiveness of acceding to the right on immigration by mainstream left parties.

In “[*Does Accommodation Work?*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/5C3476FCD26B188C7399ADD920D71770/S2049847022000085a.pdf/does-accommodation-work-mainstream-party-strategies-and-the-success-of-radical-right-parties.pdf) Mainstream Party Strategies and the success of Radical Right Parties,” [*Werner Krause*](https://www.sowi.hu-berlin.de/de/lehrbereiche/comppol/team/werner-krause) and [*Denis Cohen*](https://denis-cohen.github.io/cv/), political scientists at Humboldt University in Berlin and the University of Mannheim, along with Abou-Chadi, argue that making concessions to the right is a losing proposition:

We do not find any evidence that accommodative strategies reduce radical right support. If anything, our results suggest that they lead to more voters defecting to the radical right. … The findings of our article open up a puzzle. While it is well-documented that mainstream parties react to radical right success by shifting toward their policy position, these strategies do not seem to pay off electorally.

In their October 2023 paper, “[*How to Counter Exclusionary Far Right Politics With a Progressive Inclusionary Agenda on Equality*](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4606801),” [*Daphne Halikiopoulou*](https://www.reading.ac.uk/politics-international-relations/stories/daphne-halikiopoulou) and [*Tim Vlandas,*](https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/people/dr-tim-vlandas) political scientists at the University of Reading and Oxford, argue: “Co-opting the policy agendas of far-right parties is not a winning strategy for Social Democrats and trade unions because in most cases accommodation will probably alienate a large proportion of their traditional left-wing supporters.”

The difficulties that center-left parties face, in the view of Halikiopoulou and Vlandas, is less the challenge from the right on issues like immigration than it is a failure to remain true to welfare and redistribution policies:

Left-wing governments and trade unions should focus on addressing economic grievances by reducing labor market insecurity, promoting economic growth and ensuring effective welfare protection. They should reclaim ownership of issues they are associated with, most notably, equality. Successful strategies galvanize the center-left’s core supporter base and mobilize beyond it by addressing the economic grievances that concern large parts of the electorate.

Looking at the immigration and border issue from a purely political vantage point, Biden has much more to gain from taking a tough conservative stance than he stands to lose.

The public clearly wants the government to take steps to control the border. If Biden does nothing, Trump will retain his advantage on immigration, which [*consistently ranks*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx) among the [*top three voter concerns*](https://www.statista.com/statistics/323380/public-opinion-on-the-most-important-problem-facing-the-us/) in polls. And most progressive voters understand, deep down, that if they cast a ballot for a third-party candidate or abstain from voting at all, they are in practice supporting Trump.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jose Luis Gonzalez/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***2024 Isn’t 2022***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B7N-GYJ1-DXY4-X0MX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1701 words

**Highlight:** Voters may express dissatisfaction with President Biden in surveys. But he could still get their votes.

**Body**

Voters may express dissatisfaction with President Biden in surveys. But he could still get their votes.

For the many Americans who are nervous about the polls showing that President Biden may lose to Donald Trump in November, there is one big source of comfort. Since Trump took office in 2017, Republicans have lost many more elections than they’ve won, sometimes even when the polls looked bad for Democrats.

The list of recent Democratic victories is striking: In the 2018 midterms, the party retook the House. In 2020, Biden beat Trump, and Democrats retook the Senate. In the 2022 midterms, Democrats fared better than many pundits expected. Last year, Democrats did well in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia and Wisconsin. They have also won many special elections to fill political offices that unexpectedly came open.

Voters may express dissatisfaction with Biden in surveys. When the stakes have been real, however, a crucial slice of these voters prefers Democrats to Trump-aligned Republicans. The pattern is a legitimate reason for Democrats — and others who fear [*the consequences of a second Trump presidency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/briefing/donald-trump-second-term.html) — to be hopeful about the 2024 election. The U.S. may indeed have an [*“anti-MAGA majority.”*](https://washingtonmonthly.com/2023/07/05/the-emergence-of-the-anti-maga-coalition/)

But there is also one clear reason to question this narrative. In [*the latest edition of his newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/upshot/special-elections-democrats-turnout-2024.html), my colleague Nate Cohn — The Times’s chief political analyst — explains why Democrats shouldn’t take too much comfort from recent results.

2024 isn’t 2022

Nate’s key insight is that the electorate in a presidential race is different from the electorate in midterms or special elections. In off-year elections, fewer people vote. Those who do are more likely to be older, highly educated and close followers of politics, as this table shows:

As a result, midterms and special elections often revolve around turnout, rather than persuasion. And Democrats now have a turnout advantage.

In part, this advantage stems from [*the class inversion in American politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html) — namely, the shift of college graduates toward the Democratic Party and ***working-class*** voters toward the Republican Party. But the Democrats’ new turnout edge is not only about the class inversion. More broadly, Democrats of all demographic groups have been more politically engaged than Republicans since Trump won the presidency in 2016, at least when Trump himself is not on the ballot.

“This energy among highly engaged Democrats has powered the party’s victory in special elections, and in 2022 it helped the party hold its own in the midterms,” Nate writes.

A presidential electorate, though, is much larger. It includes many more voters who don’t follow politics closely. These less engaged voters are more likely to be independents and more open to persuasion. A presidential electorate also includes more young voters, more voters of color and more voters who didn’t graduate from college. These are [*precisely the voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/27/upshot/poll-biden-young-voters.html) with whom Biden is struggling to match his support from 2020.

A thin margin

Here’s one way to think about the situation: Biden won the 2020 election by a very small margin. Nationally, he beat Trump by seven million votes, but the Electoral College margin was much narrower. If the right mix of about 50,000 people across a few swing states had switched their votes, Trump could have won.

By almost any measure, Biden’s standing [*seems to be weaker today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/23/us/politics/biden-congressional-democrats-concern.html) than it was in November 2020. Only 41 percent of Americans viewed him favorably in a recent Gallup poll, down from 46 percent shortly before the election four years ago.

This deterioration is arguably more meaningful than the string of Democratic victories since 2020. In November, Biden won’t be facing the electorate that shows up for midterms and special elections. He will be facing a presidential electorate that is less favorable to his party — and less favorable to him than it was four years ago.

The big question is whether Biden can come close enough to matching his 2020 support in 2024 to win re-election.

Nate is careful to explain that the answer may well be yes. One reason is that Trump also has weaknesses he didn’t in 2020, including his role in the Jan. 6 attack on Congress and his criminal indictments. The safest conclusion, I think, is the 2024 race will be so close that the events of the next eight months are likely to determine the outcome. But Democrats shouldn’t assume recent history will repeat itself.

I encourage you to [*read Nate’s piece*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/upshot/special-elections-democrats-turnout-2024.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Middle East

* Biden [*imposed sanctions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/world/middleeast/biden-sanctions-israel-west-bank.html) on Israeli settlers accused of attacking Palestinians in the West Bank, cutting them off from the U.S. financial system.

1. Biden also lamented “the trauma, the death and destruction in Israel and Gaza,” saying he was “actively working for peace, security, dignity” for Israelis and Palestinians.
2. Social media posts with opposing views of the Israel-Hamas war cost two New York doctors their jobs. [*Then their fates diverged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/nyregion/nyu-langone-israel-firing.html).
3. For many Palestinians in the West Bank, life is now subject to even more restrictions, [*including at checkpoints*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/world/middleeast/west-bank-palestine-israel.html).
4. Iran [*trained and funded the militia groups*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/politics/austin-iran-militias.html) targeting ships and U.S. troops in the Middle East, Biden’s defense secretary said.
5. Iran is sending more conciliatory signals, sensing a line has been crossed. Its supreme leader [*wants to avoid war*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/world/middleeast/iran-us-war.html).

Aid to Ukraine

* The E.U. will create a $54 billion fund to support Ukraine’s economy after leaders from Italy, France and other countries [*pushed Hungary into dropping its opposition*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/world/europe/eu-hungary-ukraine-fund.html).

1. Ukraine is one of many issues that Viktor Orban, Hungary’s leader, has [*used to antagonize what he describes as Europe’s liberal elite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/world/europe/orban-ukraine-funding-hungary.html).

2024 Election

* Biden is publicly urging grocery chains [*to lower food prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/politics/biden-food-prices.html), accusing them of ripping off shoppers.

1. Allen Weisselberg, who ran the finances of Trump’s family business for years, may [*plead guilty to perjury*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/nyregion/weisselberg-perjury-trump-fraud.html). It could strengthen prosecutors’ hand in Trump’s New York criminal trial.

More on Politics

* Chuck Schumer, the Senate majority leader, promised a vote next week on a bill to secure the border and aid Ukraine. Bipartisan negotiators have [*yet to release text for it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/politics/schumer-ukraine-border-immigration-senate.html).

1. Twice in two decades, senators of both parties have tried together to change immigration law, and failed. [*Will that happen again?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/congress-border-immigration-history.html)
2. The Biden administration made opening offers to drug companies whose products [*face Medicare price negotiations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/politics/medicare-drug-price-negotiations.html).
3. Impeachment was once seen as a serious check on corruption. It’s at risk of becoming [*another partisan weapon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/politics/impeachments-weapon-partisan-warfare.html), The Times’s Peter Baker writes.

China

* India is quietly trying to [*grab more of China’s iPhone business*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/business/india-iphone-tech-manufacturing.html).

1. China and the U.S. are meeting to [*discuss restricting the flow of fentanyl*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/world/asia/china-us-fentanyl-iran-north-korea.html) into America.

Other Big Stories

* A shortage of guards in Wisconsin’s prisons has left inmates with monthslong lockdowns and miserable conditions. Officials [*knew for years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/us/wi-prison-staffing-shortage.html) that the crisis was building.

1. Witnesses say a man executed with nitrogen gas in Alabama last week stayed conscious for minutes, [*jerking and gasping*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/alabama-nitrogen-execution-kenneth-smith-witnesses.html). State officials had sworn that wouldn’t happen.
2. After five days of freedom in the Scottish Highlands, an escaped monkey [*has been recaptured*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/world/europe/escaped-scottish-monkey-captured.html).
3. Elon Musk is unfathomably rich. The Washington Post explains [*where he holds his money*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2024/02/01/elon-musk-wealth-net-worth-companies/).
4. An atmospheric river has [*drenched California*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/us/california-storm-atmospheric-river.html).

Opinions

The latest adaptation of “Mean Girls” pretends the world has gotten nicer, Jessica Bennett writes, while failing to acknowledge the ways it has [*gotten nastier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/opinion/mean-girls-movie-bullying.html).

Pollution is contributing to a [*Black American exodus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/opinion/great-migration-black-americans-environment.html) in the North, and Southern states are unprepared for the influx, Adam Mahoney argues.

Here are columns by Ezra Klein on [*Democrats and the* ***working class***](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/opinion/biden-trump-democratic-party-future.html) and Paul Krugman on [*a “Goldilocks” economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/opinion/biden-trump-economy-goldilocks.html).

MORNING READS

Dog years: All dogs go to heaven, but which live longest? [*See a table of breeds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/science/dogs-longevity-health.html).

Garbage trucks: Trash in New York has been collected in much the same way for a century. [*That changed this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/nyregion/new-garbage-truck-sanitation-nyc.html).

Try again: February might be the [*best month for resolutions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/well/live/new-years-resolutions-february.html).

Minus 35: [*See the northern lights*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/travel/canada-yukon-weather-tourism.html) in Canada.

Cholesterol: Managing your levels is critical for preventing serious health problems. [*Here’s how*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/31/well/live/cholesterol-tests-levels-heart-disease.html).

Flip Phone February: Read a practical guide to [*quitting your smartphone*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/technology/iphone-mental-health-flip-phone.html).

Lives Lived: Toni Stern, a sunny California poet, became a trusted lyricist for Carole King, on “It’s Too Late” and other songs during King’s chart-topping career. Stern [*died at 79*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/arts/music/toni-stern-dead.html).

SPORTS

N.F.L.: The Washington Commanders [*hired Dan Quinn*](https://theathletic.com/5241496/2024/02/01/commanders-dan-quinn-head-coach-hire/), the Dallas Cowboys’ defensive coordinator, as head coach.

Mark Andrews: The Ravens’ tight end was [*feted as a hero*](https://theathletic.com/5244988/2024/02/01/ravens-mark-andrews-saves-woman-flight/) for helping a woman with a medical emergency during a flight.

M.L.B.: Days after the team was sold, the [*Baltimore Orioles traded*](https://theathletic.com/5245875/2024/02/01/brewers-orioles-trade-corbin-burnes/) for the 2021 Cy Young winner Corbin Burnes.

Lindsey Horan: The U.S. women’s soccer captain said most American soccer fans “aren’t smart” and “don’t know the game” in [*a wide-ranging interview*](https://theathletic.com/5242921/2024/02/01/lindsey-horan-uswnt-world-cup/) with The Athletic.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Ancient wonders: The Egyptian authorities recently announced a plan to cover the Pyramid of Menkaure, the smallest of Giza’s three main pyramids, with granite blocks of the kind that once clad part of its exterior. It has revived what experts say is a [*constant debate in conservation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/arts/design/resurfacing-pyramid-ignites-debate.html): whether to try to return ancient structures to their earlier splendor, or minimize intervention.

More on culture

* [*Is it real love?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/style/taylor-swift-travis-kelce-relationship.html)On social media, body language experts are discussing Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce.

1. Our tech columnist explains why he swapped Google for [*an A.I.-powered search engine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/01/technology/perplexity-search-ai-google.html).
2. “I’m 33 and Botox messed up my face”: The Cut [*addresses concerns*](https://www.thecut.com/article/im-33-and-botox-messed-up-my-face-help.html).
3. Stephen Colbert joked about [*Biden’s approval ratings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/02/arts/television/late-night-trump-biden-poll.html). “Ladies love Cool Joe,” he said.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Serve [*turmeric-black pepper chicken*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020970-turmeric-black-pepper-chicken-with-asparagus) with asparagus over a bed of rice.

Learn how alcohol affects your [*gut microbiome*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/well/eat/alcohol-gut-health-microbiome.html).

Wash your clothes with [*the best detergent*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/the-best-laundry-detergent/).

Eat [*the best bowl of beans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/24/magazine/beans-olives-ci-siamo-recipe.html) our cooking writer has ever had.

Give the [*most sophisticated chocolates*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/gifts/best-boxed-chocolates/) this Valentine’s Day.

Take [*our news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/02/02/briefing/news-quiz-israel-jordan.html).

GAMES

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

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

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

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

PHOTO: President Joe Biden (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kenny Holston/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***U.S. Underdogs in Hitler's Berlin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YB-0CF1-JBG3-62KB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 551 words

**Byline:** By Amy Nicholson

**Body**

George Clooney's film covers a high water point when the University of Washington's junior varsity crew paddled all the way to the 1936 Olympics.

''The Boys in the Boat,'' directed by George Clooney, is an old-fashioned movie about old-fashioned moxie. Based on a section of Daniel James Brown's 2013 nonfiction book of the same name, and set to a plucky score by Alexandre Desplat, it's a handsome, forthright flashback to a high water point of the Depression Era when the University of Washington's junior varsity crew paddled all the way to the 1936 Olympics. Approximately 300 million radio listeners tuned in to hear live sporting news from Berlin, and the film cuts to what feels like all of them rooting on these tall, ruddy and heroic amateurs. I've never seen a movie with this much applause -- the extras must have been as winded as the athletes.

The United States eight-man rowing team had won every gold medal since 1920, but the screenwriter Mark L. Smith glides past that fact to emphasize that these particular boys were at a disadvantage. Unlike the prestigious Ivy League squads, the Huskies were mostly middle and ***working class*** landlubbers who'd only taken up oars to pay for school. Our lead, Joe Rantz (Callum Turner), trudges to campus from a Hooverville; later, the coach, Al Ulbrickson (Joel Edgerton), pokes around his crew's lockers to count the holes in their shoes. Before a pivotal regatta, a radio sportscaster (John Ammirati) bellows the obvious theme: ''A clash of character! Old money versus no money at all! It's a boat full of underdogs representing an underdog nation!''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The script is as subtle as a bonk on the nose, and the editing repeats every beat twice-over in broad pantomime and meaningful looks. Despite some tender philosophizing from the racing shell designer George Pocock (Peter Guinness), we never quite get an insight into exactly how these eight undergrads melded into a winning team. The main oarsmen, Don Hume (Jack Mulhern) and Rance, rarely speak, and the others hardly register. Thank heavens for Luke Slattery as the coxswain Bobby Moch, who straps on a hands-free leather and metal megaphone -- a contraption that, to modern eyes, looks like a torture device for mumblers -- and instantly screams some life into the picture.

With the female characters sidelined to one-note cheerleaders, Clooney puts his focus on the fantastic production design. The pennant budget alone must have cost a fair penny, but he even includes an assembly line scene of those pennants being made. Just as faithfully, Clooney acknowledges how little politics registered to these jocks. In Berlin, they become passingly acquainted with Jesse Owens (Jyuddah Jaymes), but when Adolf Hitler (Daniel Philpott) pops up in a Seattle newsreel, no one bothers to boo.

So it's for our sake that the film gives us the Führer pounding his fist in fury that the Yanks might one-up Germany in his moment of triumph -- and for our kicks that the cinematographer Martin Ruhe bests a shot from Leni Riefenstahl's documentary ''Olympia,'' a dynamic redo of Moch heaving in and out of the frame, his megaphone eclipsing everything but his hair and lips.

The Boys in the BoatRated PG-13 for cursing and cigarettes. Running time: 2 hours 4 minutes. In theaters.

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left, Bruce Herbelin-Earle, Callum Turner and Jack Mulhern flex their moxie. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURIE SPARHAM/AMAZON MGM STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page C2.

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[***Why Aren't the Democrats Trouncing These Guys?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SK-YJR1-DXY4-X4S8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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

**Length:** 956 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

My big takeaway from this election season would be this: We're about where we were. We entered this election season with a nearly evenly divided House and Senate in which the Democrats had a slight advantage. We'll probably leave it with a nearly evenly divided House and Senate in which the Republicans have a slight advantage. But we're about where we were.

Nothing the parties or candidates have done has really changed this underlying balance. The Republicans nominated a pathetically incompetent Senate candidate, Herschel Walker, in Georgia, but polls show that race is basically tied. The Democrats nominated a guy in Pennsylvania, John Fetterman, who suffered a stroke and has trouble communicating, but polls show that that Senate race is basically tied.

After all the campaigning and the money and the shouting, the electoral balance is still on a razor's edge.

What accounts for this? It's the underlying structure of society. Americans are sorting themselves out by education into two roughly equal camps. As people without a college degree have flocked to the G.O.P., people with one have flocked to the Democrats.

''Education polarization is not merely an American phenomenon,'' Eric Levitz writes in New York Magazine, ''it is a defining feature of contemporary politics in nearly every Western democracy.''

Over the past few years, the Democrats have made heroic efforts to win back ***working-class*** voters and white as well as Black and Hispanic voters who have drifted rightward. Joe Biden's domestic agenda is largely about this: infrastructure jobs, expanded child tax credit, raising taxes on corporations. This year the Democrats nominated candidates designed to appeal to ***working-class*** voters, like the sweatshirt-wearing Fetterman in Pennsylvania and Tim Ryan in Ohio.

It doesn't seem to be working. As Ruy Teixeira, Karlyn Bowman and Nate Moore noted in a survey of polling data for the American Enterprise Institute last month, ''The gap between non-college and college whites continues to grow.'' Democrats have reason to worry about losing ***working-class*** Hispanic voters in places like Nevada. ''If Democrats can't win in Nevada,'' one Democratic pollster told Politico, ''we can complain about the white ***working class*** all you want, but we're really confronting a much broader ***working-class*** problem.'' Even Black voters without a college degree seem to be shifting away from the Democrats, to some degree.

Forests have been sacrificed so that Democratic strategists can write reports on why they are losing the ***working class***. Some believe racial resentment is driving the white ***working class*** away. Some believe Democrats spend too much time on progressive cultural issues and need to focus more on bread-and-butter economics.

I'd say these analyses don't begin to address the scale of the problem. America has riven itself into two different cultures. It's very hard for the party based in one culture to reach out and win voters in the other culture -- or even to understand what people in the other culture are thinking.

As I've shuttled between red and blue America over decades of reporting on American politics, I've seen social, cultural, moral and ideological rifts widen from cracks to chasms.

Politics has become a religion for a lot of people. Americans with a college education and Americans without a college education no longer just have different ideas about, say, the role of government, they have created rival ways of life. Americans with a college education and Americans without a college education have different relationships to patriotism and faith, they dress differently, enjoy different foods and have different ideas about corporal punishment, gender and, of course, race.

You can't isolate the differences between the classes down to one factor or another. It's everything.

But even that is not the real problem. America has always had vast cultural differences. Back in 2001, I wrote a long piece for The Atlantic comparing the deeply blue area of Montgomery County, Md., with the red area of Franklin County in south-central Pennsylvania.

I noted the vast socio-economic and cultural differences that were evident, even back then. But in my interviews, I found there was a difference without a ton of animosity.

For example, Ted Hale was a Presbyterian minister there. ''There's nowhere near as much resentment as you would expect,'' he told me. ''People have come to understand that they will struggle financially. It's part of their identity. But the economy is not their god. That's the thing some others don't understand. People value a sense of community far more than they do their portfolio.''

Back in those days I didn't find a lot of class-war consciousness in my trips through red America. I compared the country to a high school cafeteria. Jocks over here, nerds over there, punks somewhere else. Live and let live.

Now people don't just see difference, they see menace. People have put up barricades and perceive the other class as a threat to what is beautiful, true and good. I don't completely understand why this animosity has risen over the past couple of decades, but it makes it very hard to shift the ever more entrenched socio-economic-cultural-political coalitions.

Historians used to believe that while European societies were burdened by ferocious class antagonisms, Americans had relatively little class consciousness. That has changed.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A27.

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[***‘The Boys in the Boat’ Review: Taking Up Oars***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69Y4-WC71-DXY4-X3SM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 577 words

**Byline:** Amy Nicholson

**Highlight:** George Clooney’s film covers a high water point when the University of Washington’s junior varsity crew paddled all the way to the 1936 Olympics.

**Body**

George Clooney’s film covers a high water point when the University of Washington’s junior varsity crew paddled all the way to the 1936 Olympics.

“The Boys in the Boat,” directed by George Clooney, is an old-fashioned movie about old-fashioned moxie. Based on a section of Daniel James Brown’s 2013 nonfiction book of the same name, and set to a plucky score by Alexandre Desplat, it’s a handsome, forthright flashback to a high water point of the Depression Era when the University of Washington’s junior varsity crew paddled all the way to the 1936 Olympics. Approximately 300 million radio listeners tuned in to hear live sporting news from Berlin, and the film cuts to what feels like all of them rooting on these tall, ruddy and heroic amateurs. I’ve never seen a movie with this much applause — the extras must have been as winded as the athletes.

The United States eight-man rowing team had won every gold medal since 1920, but the screenwriter Mark L. Smith glides past that fact to emphasize that these particular boys were at a disadvantage. Unlike the prestigious Ivy League squads, the Huskies were mostly middle and ***working class*** landlubbers who’d only taken up oars to pay for school. Our lead, Joe Rantz (Callum Turner), trudges to campus from a Hooverville; later, the coach, Al Ulbrickson (Joel Edgerton), pokes around his crew’s lockers to count the holes in their shoes. Before a pivotal regatta, a radio sportscaster (John Ammirati) bellows the obvious theme: “A clash of character! Old money versus no money at all! It’s a boat full of underdogs representing an underdog nation!”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/dfEA-udzjjQ)]

The script is as subtle as a bonk on the nose, and the editing repeats every beat twice-over in broad pantomime and meaningful looks. Despite some tender philosophizing from the racing shell designer George Pocock (Peter Guinness), we never quite get an insight into exactly how these eight undergrads melded into a winning team. The main oarsmen, Don Hume (Jack Mulhern) and Rantz, rarely speak, and the others hardly register. Thank heavens for Luke Slattery as the coxswain Bobby Moch, who straps on a hands-free leather and metal megaphone — a contraption that, to modern eyes, looks like a torture device for mumblers — and instantly screams some life into the picture.

With the female characters sidelined to one-note cheerleaders, Clooney puts his focus on the fantastic production design. The pennant budget alone must have cost a fair penny, but he even includes an assembly line scene of those pennants being made. Just as faithfully, Clooney acknowledges how little politics registered to these jocks. In Berlin, they become passingly acquainted with Jesse Owens (Jyuddah Jaymes), but when Adolf Hitler (Daniel Philpott) pops up in a Seattle newsreel, no one bothers to boo.

So it’s for our sake that the film gives us the Führer pounding his fist in fury that the Yanks might one-up Germany in his moment of triumph — and for our kicks that the cinematographer Martin Ruhe bests a shot from Leni Riefenstahl’s documentary “Olympia,” a dynamic redo of Moch heaving in and out of the frame, his megaphone eclipsing everything but his hair and lips.

The Boys in the Boat

Rated PG-13 for cursing and cigarettes. Running time: 2 hours 4 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: From left, Bruce Herbelin-Earle, Callum Turner and Jack Mulhern flex their moxie. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LAURIE SPARHAM/AMAZON MGM STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page C2.

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[***Nate Silver on Kamala Harris’s Chances and the Mistakes of the ‘Indigo Blob’; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CPT-DSW1-DXY4-X1WD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 4847 words

**Highlight:** The election forecaster discusses 2024 and what politicians can learn from gamblers.

**Body**

Nate Silver came to fame in American politics for election forecasting. But before Silver was in politics, he was a poker player. And after getting into politics, he went back to being a poker player. He’s been running through poker championships and out there on tables — partly because he’s been writing a book about risk.

The book is called “[*On the Edge: The Art of Risking Everything*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/).” And it applies the frameworks of the gambler to politics, to A.I., to venture capital.

The way Silver thinks about politics I find very useful. So I invited him on my podcast to talk about how that thinking has guided him over the past year and how he’s thinking about the election going forward.

This is an edited transcript of part of our conversation. For the full conversation, watch the video below, or listen to “[*The Ezra Klein Show*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/).”

The last I looked, your model has Kamala Harris winning the election at around 52 percent — it might be a little different today. But this has been an unusual election. How much stock do you put in your model right now?

I think the model is balancing these different factors pretty well. There are some things you could argue are favorable to Harris, one of which is that, for the past few weeks, we’ve been in what the model thinks is supposed to be the convention bounce period for Republicans. Typically you poll pretty well after your convention; there’s the afterglow of the new nomination and things like that — the afterglow of the V.P. pick, too. And Kamala Harris kind of stomped on Donald Trump’s news cycle. So maybe it’s an overly favorable assumption for Harris. There’s also in polls what’s known as nonpartisan response bias. So when voters get more enthusiastic, you’d rather have that than not as a candidate. But it also means that they sometimes are more likely to respond to polls.

At the same time, her momentum has been pretty good, which usually I dismiss, but we don’t really know what the base line is here. Hillary Clinton, who was, I think, kind of a terrible candidate, won the popular vote by two points. Is she a little bit better than Hillary Clinton? Probably, right? So can she win by three or four? Well, if you win by three or four, then you win the Electoral College in most instances.

I don’t think many people expected the turnaround in her numbers we’ve seen since she’s become a presumptive nominee. She’s gone to net favorables, which I would not have bet a ton of money on — at this speed, at least. People were looking at a lot of data on Harris and assuming that data was solid. That data was not solid.

When a candidate’s a hypothetical candidate, you have to treat that polling very carefully. People think it’s a weird thing to ask, you know, what if Gavin Newsom ran against Trump? It’s not the same thing as when you actually have the candidate in front of you and have the advertisements and have the news articles and everything else to actually evaluate.

I think this is on the higher side for a jump in favorables. But she was amazingly well organized at getting the entire establishment behind her within minutes of Biden announcing he was going to step down. So that suggested that maybe she did have more support in the party than she let on.

And I think the Biden people may have been in somewhat bad faith — maybe not consciously, but I’m not sure they weren’t trying to undermine her. Because the obvious thing to do would be to have this qualified — if not always that politically adept — much younger vice president take over for you when you’re about to be 82. But they gave her the border, they gave her voting rights, which is kind of the one major domestic policy area where they got very little done. So I don’t think they gave her a very good hand to play. But meanwhile she’s getting a lot of reps and giving speeches and building connections and played the game really well. I have a lot of respect for that.

We’ve known each other a long time; we’re old-school bloggers. My read of you is that somewhat over the 2016 election, then specifically over the pandemic — and your experience with online liberalism in the pandemic — you became much more disillusioned with the people who once felt to you like your group, your coalition, your tribe. There’s been kind of an alienation for you. Is that a fair read?

Yeah, I’d say it’s — no. 1 was the 2016 aftermath. I thought a lot of the liberal and centrist news media kind of were in denial about their own role in the “but her email” stuff and then picked scapegoats for Trump’s victory that were not the real reasons that he won. Russian bot farms have approximately nothing to do with why Donald Trump won the 2016 election. And the Russia stuff in general was treated with an order of magnitude of more importance than it probably objectively had. And blaming Facebook and the tech industry for that — I thought that was irresponsible. And the discussion over the polls in 2016, where there was some revisionist history. The polls actually showed a pretty close race — we had Trump with a 30 percent chance. And it was the conventional wisdom that assumed he was dead in the water.

Part 2 was the pandemic, absolutely. And, “orange man bad,” I think, was often the reason people believed a lot of what they believed. Because in some ways the move to shut down society kind of went against the values of traditional liberalism. There’s a transfer of welfare from younger people and people who are not able to work from home to wealthy suburbanites and older people who you’re protecting their health, but you’re undermining the education of millions of school kids around the country, and essential workers are still putting themselves at risk that you deem unacceptable for people who are able to work with laptops to take. So I thought it was very self-serving, and I thought expertise was co-opted and corrupted by political partisans.

And then the third was the Biden stuff.

It seemed to me that it happened for you before the Biden stuff. My sense was that you ended up in a lot of fights on Twitter with liberals who had a much lower risk tolerance than you did. You began to see habits of what you call “the village.”

Yeah, and that’s been a term that’s been used by others. But the village is basically media, politics, government, the progressive establishment, The New York Times, Harvard University ——

The establishment, “the regime.”

Yeah.

You’ve also called it the indigo blob in different ways. You began to see it as a set of aligned cognitive tendencies that you disagreed with. What were they?

So one of them is the failure to do what I call decoupling. It’s not my term. Decoupling is the act of separating an issue from the context. The example I gave in the book is that if you’re able to say, “I abhor the Chick-fil-A’s C.E.O.’s position on gay marriage” — I don’t know if it’s changed or not, but he was anti-gay marriage at least for some period of time — “but they make a really delicious chicken sandwich.” That’s decoupling. Or, you can say, you know, Michael Jackson, Woody Allen, separate the art from the artist kind of thing. That tendency goes against the tendency on the progressive left to care a lot about the identity of the speaker, in terms of racial or gender identity and in terms of their credentials.

In this other world that I call “the river,” the kind of gambling, risk-taking world, all that matters is that you’re right. It doesn’t matter who you are; it matters that you’re right and you’re able to prove it or bet on it in some way.

And that’s very against the kind of credentialism that you have within the progressive Democratic left, which I also call the “indigo blob” because it’s a fusion of purple and blue. There’s not a clear separation between the nonpartisan centrist media and the left-leaning progressive media rooting for Democrats. Different parts of The New York Times have both those functions.

And as someone who’s more on the nonpartisan side — even though, again, I would prefer to see Kamala Harris than Donald Trump — I think people are exploiting the trust that institutions have earned for political gain.

What you seem to be doing in the book is making an interesting cut in society between people with different forms of risk tolerance and thinking about risk. And you wrote something that caught my eye: “Covid made those risk preferences public, worn on our proverbial sleeves and our literal faces.” And you go on to say, “People are becoming more bifurcated in their risk tolerance and that this affects everything from who we hang out with to how we vote.” Tell me about both sides of that, the way that it made risk tolerance visible, and how risk tolerance is becoming a deeper cleavage in society.

On the one hand, there are lots of signs that risk tolerance is going down, among young people in particular. They’re smoking less, drinking less, doing fewer drugs, having less sex — a different type of risk tolerance. They are less willing to defend free speech norms if it potentially would cause injury to someone. Free speech is kind of a pro-risk take in some ways because speech can cause effects, of course.

On the other hand, you have various booms and busts in crypto. You have Las Vegas bringing in record revenue. You have record revenue in sports betting. You have the C.E.O. of OpenAI saying, yeah, this might destroy the universe, but it’s a good gamble to take. You have FTX and all this stuff.

And so it just seems to me we are in a world now where institutions are less trusted. And some people respond to that by saying, OK, I make my own rules now, and this is great and I have lots of agency. And some respond by withdrawing into an online world or clinging on to beliefs and experts that have lost their credibility or just by becoming more risk averse.

One of the things that’s kind of fun about the book is you spend time with people whose approach to risk you find sophisticated and interesting. One of them is Peter Thiel. What did you learn spending time with him?

The first impression is that he’s a weird dude. I interviewed him by phone, and the first question I asked him, he took half an hour to answer. So he’s very thoughtful. And the question was kind of a softball question: “If you ran the world a 1,000 times or 10,000 times, how often do you think you’d wind up in a situation like the one that you’re in?” It was a nerdy way to ask, “Do you think you got lucky?”

Which in Thiel’s case is interesting. There’s an anecdote in the book about this infamous car trip he took with Elon Musk. They were going to pitch Michael Moritz at Sequoia Capital, and Elon had a new McLaren F1 and was going way too fast and spun out of control in the middle of Sand Hill Road or whatever, and they totaled the car. They could easily have been killed. And, instead, they actually hitchhike to this meeting and save what was then called Confinity, which was like the future of PayPal.

Most people, when you ask that question — I asked it to Mark Cuban, for example — they give the politically correct response, which is, oh, of course, I’ve been very lucky and I’m a talented person. But, of course, it’s a one-in-a-million thing.

And Thiel objected to the question. He said, well, if it’s predetermined, then the odds are 100 percent. And if the world’s not predetermined, then the odds are probably approximately zero. But it doesn’t really make sense. Like, how can you perturb the world by exactly this amount? But I think he kind of believes in pre-destiny a little bit.

As a spiritual thing or as a matter of classical physics?

There’s a good book by Max Chafkin about Peter Thiel called “The Contrarian,” which is convincing that Thiel is actually quite conservative more than libertarian and probably quite religious.

I mean, the amounts of wealth and success and power that Silicon Valley has — I do think some people pinch themselves and wonder if they have been one of the chosen ones in some ways, or been blessed in some ways, or maybe the nerdy version of it, think they’re living in a simulation of some kind.

I used to interview Thiel every so often. Talking to him was always interesting because, over the course of conversation, he would offer 15 or 20 ideas. I would call them more thought experiments than analytical arguments — they were not empirically backed, typically. And you would leave and be like, 13 of those seem genuinely ridiculous to me, two of them might be very importantly right, and I’m not 100 percent sure which are the two and which are the 13. Peter Thiel is a sort of template of the V.C. mind, which is oriented toward being right in important and counterintuitive ways three out of 20 times and doesn’t care about being wrong 17 out of 20 times. You want big payouts, not a high betting average.

This is core to the V.C. mind-set. The two things that you hear from every V.C. — one is the importance of the longer time horizons. You’re making investments that might not pay off for 10 or 15 years.

No. 2, even more important, is the asymmetric ability to bet on the upside. They are all terrified because they all had an experience early in their career where Mark Zuckerberg or Larry Page or Sergey Brin walked through their door, and they didn’t give them funding and then they wound up missing on an investment that paid out at 100x or 1,000x or 10,000x. And so if you can only lose 1x your money, but you can make 1,000x if you have a successful company, then that changes your mind-set about everything. You want to avoid false negatives. You want to avoid missed opportunities.

You spent some time with Sam Bankman-Fried. Tell me what you learned about him.

I think Sam is kind of insane, and I’m not very sympathetic to him. I mean, I’m sympathetic in the sense that this is this very dramatic reversal of fortune, where he’s kind of literally emerging and on top of the whole world and, shooting commercials with Tom Brady, and it kind of all collapses and he becomes very abandoned overnight.

I think Sam is somebody who has to be owned by the river. He’s unabashedly a part of that world. I mean, he had his tentacles in every part of that world. He was active in Democratic and — actually, under-the-radar — Republican political donations. FTX was trying to figure out how to get into sports betting legally and things like that. And so he is kind of everywhere.

There’s a bias in the world you’re describing — an aesthetic around talking in probabilities. I see this a lot in Silicon Valley. I would call it faux Bayesian reasoning, where they’re given some probability, but they have no reason to base the probability. And it makes you sound much more precise. It makes you sound like you know what you’re talking about. SBF was known for always talking in terms of expected value, which is very appealing to the kinds of people you’re describing. But it can become a costume of sloppy thinking. I’m curious how you think about it.

There’s two things here. One is there is a jargon, where there’re just a lot of shared cultural norms and unspoken discursive tendencies. It’s just the way we communicate, I think, in the river. But also, it’s really easy to build bad models. A model is supposed to describe something in the real world, and if you lose sight of the real world and it fails to describe the real world, then it’s the model’s fault and your fault for building the model, and not the real world’s fault. And that’s a lesson that people, I think, have a lot of trouble learning.

Bankman-Fried is in prison. Thiel might, in some ways, be responsible for destroying the Republican ticket this year. I mean, in a close election, JD Vance now seems to have about as much negative value as we’ve seen from a recent vice president. I’m not saying Peter Thiel is the only reason Vance got chosen for the ticket, but he is one of the key reasons Vance is in politics. You mentioned Bankman-Fried’s political donations, which were kind of disastrous in a direct way sometimes, also ended up taking a lot of other people down over time. If these guys seem to be so good at making bets, what are they missing in politics?

Both the river and the village are groups of elites. And, ironically, I think both groups’ critiques of one another are kind of true.

They [the river] can be epistemic trespassers, but they are not very data driven when it comes to politics. I think Peter was interesting, too, in that he thought maybe that people had some deeper intuitive sense in 2016 that something was wrong with Hillary Clinton, even though she was ahead in the polls. And to his credit, he did back Trump at a time when that seemed like a big risk to take. It seemed like it was probably going to be the wrong bet, and it seemed like he was losing a lot of credibility. And now it turns out that he was kind of ahead of the curve.

But no, I mean, these guys often are pretty dumb about politics. It’s the same — the guys in the hedge fund poker game that I play sometimes are the guys that are like, “I think Gavin Newsom’s going to replace Joe Biden on the ticket,” and it’s like, “You actually were kind of right about part of this, but why Gavin Newsom? What is the infatuation with Gavin Newsom?”

I would say what they’ve often missed is how human beings react to different human beings. When they look at the world too much in numbers, the intangibles begin to dissolve.

Although I think some of these tangibles aren’t so intangible, right? You can look at JD Vance’s margins in Ohio. But the V.C. guys are like, oh, JD Vance is one of us, and he probably is smarter than the average V.P. or something. But that appeal has been demonstrated not to work — I mean, you saw it with Blake Masters, for example, right? It works every now and then. I guess, you know, Rick Scott had a background in I don’t know what exactly, but —

Medicare fraud. The guy ran a health company that was convicted of the single largest Medicare fraud at that point in history.

What I tell my V.C. friends is if you have a rich guy, just have him buy a basketball team or something. He’s not going to come across very well to the average voter. And I think they don’t understand that.

Look, in some ways, these V.C.s are obviously incredibly deeply flawed people. So why do they succeed despite that? I think because the idea of having a longer time horizon, No. 1, and being willing to make these positive expected value, high-risk, but very high upside bets and gathering a portfolio of them repeatedly and making enough of these bets that you effectively do hedge your risk, right? Those two ideas are so good that it makes up for the fact that these guys often have terrible judgment and are kind of vainglorious assholes, half of them, right? They’re interesting people, too, and I’m happy the book is able to present a complete journalistic portrait of some of them.

Let me get us back to the election. Harris’s approval ratings have gone from significantly underwater to net favorable very fast. She’s now leading in head-to-head polls. More than that, there’s a real organic enthusiasm that has unleashed itself around her. She turns out to be very meme-able in a way I’m not sure people quite predicted. So what was missed here?

Maybe you really can meme your way to victory. I don’t know. I wouldn’t necessarily have thought that. There’s something about how it’s off-trend a little bit, and it’s kind of unexpected. And people are ready for a vibe shift. I think people in politics neglect just how annoying the pedantic, dramatic, no-fun tone of politics was. And if the worst Republicans can say about Kamala Harris is, oh, she laughs a lot — maybe it suits the mood after so many years of doom and gloom, so maybe it was just spontaneous and lucky.

Harris ended up choosing Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, as her V.P. pick. You made a case that it should have been Josh Shapiro. Why?

Pennsylvania, No. 1. There’s about a 4 percent chance in our model that Harris will lose the election because of Pennsylvania.

If you’re a probabilist, a 4 percent chance — because campaigns often don’t make a difference. If we go into a recession in the third quarter, then Harris will probably lose through no fault of her own. But in the worlds where campaign strategy can make a difference, then the V.P. being from Pennsylvania is a reasonably big upgrade. And the fact that he has demonstrated his popularity with this very diverse state that’s kind of a microcosm of the U.S. as a whole, and he’s 15 points above water approval-wise, that’s pretty powerful information to work with.

I happen to think that Tim Walz is an above-average pick. Better than JD Vance — not a particularly high bar. But better than a lot of the recent picks. I think he’s kind of meme-able as America’s goofy dad. And he had a pretty moderate track record in Congress. And again, my premise is that, generally speaking, moderation wins. A lot of people disagree with that, but I think the empirical evidence is strong there. More progressive governance, of course, in Minnesota. But I think it was a somewhat risk-averse decision.

Why did you say that you understood Walz as risk averse?

Because I think they were worried about news cycles where the left got mad and/or the Gaza issue was elevated and/or you had protests at the convention in Chicago in a couple of weeks. I think they were worried about that and maybe kind of undermining what is clearly good vibes right now. Maybe I just think it’s a lower expected value decision.

Tim Alberta in The Atlantic had a great piece on the way the Trump campaign was thinking about the race that came out after the debate, and they felt they had Nevada, North Carolina and Georgia completely locked up, and that the election was really a race in three, maybe four states. My understanding is Harris and her team think they have re-expanded the map. They think that Nevada, Arizona, Georgia are back in play. They think that North Carolina might be back in play. Do you think that’s true?

I think that’s right. Look at the voters that Biden was falling off with. Nevada is extremely diverse and it’s ***working class*** voters of color — big fall-off constituency for Biden. Georgia, you have tons of young professionals and tons of great colleges and universities and, of course, tons of Black voters — the same groups that he’s declining from a little bit. North Carolina has been interestingly close in the polls. Arizona is the one that doesn’t seem to have moved quite as much, though there was one poll with Harris ahead there.

But that’s right. I think the map has expanded, and it’s obviously plausible again now that she would win Georgia, especially with the Brian Kemp stuff not helping Trump one bit.

At the moment when Trump gets shot I think a lot of people seem to be like, oh, he’s just going to win the election, right? And then he picks JD Vance and I think got a little arrogant. And then, you know, again, in poker, when you go from having a big stack, and then you lose a big pot, then you lose another big pot, and then you go on tilt, and before long, you have no chips left in front of you.

I want to end on a part of your book I found really interesting, which is about the physical experience of risk in gambling but in other things, too. You talk about pain tolerance, you talk about how the body feels when you’re behind on a hand and you’re losing your chips. You’ve talked about being on tilt. But I see it in politics, too. There is a physical question that comes into the decisions you make. Tell me a bit about how you think about this relationship between the body and the ability to act under pressure to make intuitive decisions in moments of very high stress.

Human beings have tens of thousands of years of evolutionary pressure, which is inclined to respond in a heightened way to moments that are high stakes, that are high stress moments. Your body will know when you’re playing a $100, $200 game where it really matters. You will just know. You’ll experience that stress. Even if you suppress it consciously, it will still affect the way that you’re literally ingesting your five senses. So if your heart rate goes up, that has discernible effects. But actually your body’s providing you with more information. You’re taking in more in these short bursts of time. People who can master that zone — and I use the term zone intentionally because it’s very related to being in the zone, like Michael Jordan used to talk about — learning to master that and relish that is a very powerful skill because you are experiencing physical stress whether you want to or not.

How much is that learnable, and how much of it is a kind of natural physical intelligence that some people have and some people don’t?

I think it’s actually quite learnable. It’s a little bit like if you’ve been on mushrooms before, then you kind of learn like, oh, these are the things that look a little funny when you’re on mushrooms. And you can tone it up or tone it down. I mean, it’s terrifying the first time it happens, but when you start to recognize it and you make a conscious effort to slow down a little bit and take your time and try to execute the basics. It’s not as much about trying to be a hero. It’s about trying to execute the basics. Because if everyone is losing their [expletive], if you can do your basic ABC blocking and tackling, then you’re ahead of 95 percent of the people.

It’s funny, because that feels to me like a very important question that is hard to test in politics. People have to make profound decisions under incredibly high stress. This question of how good is a person at that moment, how do you evaluate that?

Trump, after getting shot, kind of performed very well, and I think, again, the Harris moment of leaping right into action to secure the nomination also has to be seen as very good performance under stress, right? And Biden’s failure under stress — I mean, he went to some kind of spiral — physical or mental or whatever else. So those three pivotal moments speak to the difference in performance.

I was just reading Nancy Pelosi’s new book because I just had her on the show. And she says that, above all, what a speaker of the House needs is intuition. They need to be able to act. And she says that the key thing is you have to act fast because every moment you don’t act, your options are diminishing. And I ended up thinking of this when reading your book, because what she is describing is quite, I think for her, physical. Something in her knows how to act and is unafraid to act in those moments. You look at her career, and she has this intuitive capability to know when to move. And there’s something in it that I don’t think she can explain, but it makes her a fascinating leader.

Yeah. So is gut instinct overrated or underrated? It depends on how much experience you have. The best poker players can have uncannily good instincts based on reading physical tells, just the kind of vibe someone gives off.

I played a lot of poker in writing this book, and you develop a sixth sense for whether someone has a strong hand. And you can test it because you can say, I know that I’m supposed to fold this hand here, it’s a little bit too weak to call against a bluff, but I just have a sense that he’s bluffing. And lo and behold, you’re right, more often than you think.

So, if Nancy Pelosi has decades and decades of experience in politics — reading the moves of how the coalition is moving, that’s something where intuition probably plays a pretty good role, and also the fact that being willing to work with incomplete information. I mean, I don’t know how much longer Biden could have — maybe they could have run out the clock potentially.

A hundred percent could’ve. That day when he sent that letter to congressional Democrats and said, I’m not leaving, I had Congressional Democrats tell me, this is done. Then Nancy Pelosi goes on “Morning Joe” two days later and says, we’re really looking forward to him making a decision.

I asked her about this moment, and she said, yeah, but that was just a letter. That didn’t sound like him to me. I’m like, oh, you read a bluff.

So I think Nancy Pelosi might be pretty good at poker.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” [*NYT Audio App*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/), [*Apple*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/), [*Spotify*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/), [*Amazon Music*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/), [*YouTube*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/), [*iHeartRadio*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/529280/on-the-edge-by-nate-silver/).

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Rollin Hu. Fact-checking by Kate Sinclair and Mary Marge Locker. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Efim Shapiro and Aman Sahota. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin, Michelle Harris, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. 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. Special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Richard Burbridge FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***How 1.2 Million Marijuana Arrests Will Shape New York’s Legal Market***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PR-YPM1-DXY4-X001-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1240 words

**Byline:** Ashley Southall

**Highlight:** 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.

**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*](https://cannabis.ny.gov/communities-disproportionately-impacted) 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/nyregion/new-york-marijuana-rollout-delay.html) 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/13/nyregion/stop-and-frisk-practice-violated-rights-judge-rules.html) stops targeting Black and Latino men.

Researchers have found [*stark racial disparities in arrests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/13/nyregion/marijuana-arrests-nyc-race.html) 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*](https://mjbizdaily.com/cannabis-growers-showcases-a-lifeline-for-new-york-farmers/).

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.”

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.

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[***Why Aren’t the Democrats Trouncing These Guys?; David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SG-MXX1-DXY4-X4KS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2022 Thursday 16:56 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 952 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** A pathetic G.O.P. still manages to thrive.

**Body**

My big takeaway from this election season would be this: We’re about where we were. We entered this election season with a nearly evenly divided House and Senate in which the Democrats had a slight advantage. We’ll probably leave it with a nearly evenly divided House and Senate in which the Republicans have a slight advantage. But we’re about where we were.

Nothing the parties or candidates have done has really changed this underlying balance. The Republicans nominated a pathetically incompetent Senate candidate, Herschel Walker, in Georgia, but polls show that race is basically tied. The Democrats nominated a guy in Pennsylvania, John Fetterman, who suffered a stroke and has trouble communicating, but polls show that that Senate race is basically tied.

After all the campaigning and the money and the shouting, the electoral balance is still on a razor’s edge.

What accounts for this? It’s the underlying structure of society. Americans are sorting themselves out by education into two roughly equal camps. As people without a college degree have flocked to the G.O.P., people with one have flocked to the Democrats.

“Education polarization is not merely an American phenomenon,” Eric Levitz [*writes*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2022/10/education-polarization-diploma-divide-democratic-party-working-class.html) in New York magazine, “it is a defining feature of contemporary politics in nearly every Western democracy.”

Over the past few years, the Democrats have made heroic efforts to win back ***working-class*** voters and white as well as Black and Hispanic voters who have drifted rightward. Joe Biden’s domestic agenda is largely about this: infrastructure jobs, expanded child tax credit, raising taxes on corporations. This year the Democrats nominated candidates designed to appeal to ***working-class*** voters, like the sweatshirt-wearing Fetterman in Pennsylvania and Tim Ryan in Ohio.

It doesn’t seem to be working. As Ruy Teixeira, Karlyn Bowman and Nate Moore [*noted*](https://www.aei.org/politics-and-public-opinion/elections-and-demography-democrats-lose-ground-need-strong-turnout/) in a survey of polling data for the American Enterprise Institute last month, “The gap between non-college and college whites continues to grow.” Democrats have reason to worry about losing ***working-class*** Hispanic voters in places like Nevada. “If Democrats can’t win in Nevada,” [*one Democratic pollster told Politico*](https://www.politico.com/amp/news/2022/10/25/nevada-becomes-ground-zero-in-democrats-fight-to-preserve-working-class-appeal-00063465), “we can complain about the white ***working class*** all you want, but we’re really confronting a much broader ***working-class*** problem.” Even Black voters without a college degree [*seem to be shifting away*](https://morningconsult.com/2022/11/02/republicans-outperforming-2018-margins-among-voters-of-color/) from the Democrats, to some degree.

Forests have been sacrificed so that Democratic strategists can write reports on why they are losing the ***working class***. Some believe racial resentment is driving the white ***working class*** away. Some believe Democrats spend too much time on progressive cultural issues and need to focus more on bread-and-butter economics.

I’d say these analyses don’t begin to address the scale of the problem. America has riven itself into two different cultures. It’s very hard for the party based in one culture to reach out and win voters in the other culture — or even to understand what people in the other culture are thinking.

As I’ve shuttled between red and blue America over decades of reporting on American politics, I’ve seen social, cultural, moral and ideological rifts widen from cracks to chasms.

Politics has become a religion for a lot of people. Americans with a college education and Americans without a college education no longer just have different ideas about, say, the role of government; they have created rival ways of life. Americans with a college education and Americans without a college education have different relationships to [*patriotism*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/394202/record-low-extremely-proud-american.aspx) and [*faith*](https://www.slowboring.com/p/should-democrats-talk-more-about), dress differently, [*enjoy different foods*](https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2017/07/20/in-america-you-are-what-you-eat) and have different ideas about [*corporal punishment*](https://www.slowboring.com/p/should-democrats-talk-more-about), [*gender*](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2017/10/18/wide-partisan-gaps-in-u-s-over-how-far-the-country-has-come-on-gender-equality/) and, of course, [*race*](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/04/09/views-of-racial-inequality/).

You can’t isolate the differences between the classes down to one factor or another. It’s everything.

But even that is not the real problem. America has always had vast cultural differences. Back in 2001, I wrote a [*long piece*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/12/one-nation-slightly-divisible/376441/) for The Atlantic comparing the deeply blue area of Montgomery County, Md., with the red area of Franklin County in south-central Pennsylvania.

I noted the vast socioeconomic and cultural differences that were evident, even back then. But in my interviews, I found there was a difference without a ton of animosity.

For example, Ted Hale was a Presbyterian minister there. “There’s nowhere near as much resentment as you would expect,” he told me. “People have come to understand that they will struggle financially. It’s part of their identity. But the economy is not their god. That’s the thing some others don’t understand. People value a sense of community far more than they do their portfolio.”

Back in those days I didn’t find a lot of class-war consciousness in my trips through red America. I compared the country to a high school cafeteria. Jocks over here, nerds over there, punks somewhere else. Live and let live.

Now people don’t just see difference; they see menace. People have put up barricades and perceive the other class as a threat to what is beautiful, true and good. I don’t completely understand why this animosity has risen over the past couple of decades, but it makes it very hard to shift the ever more entrenched socio-economic-cultural-political coalitions.

Historians used to believe that while European societies were burdened by ferocious class antagonisms, Americans had relatively little class consciousness. That has changed.

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[***For Millions in Mexico City, Water Is Disappearing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C2G-FKB1-DXY4-X0KK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1572 words

**Byline:** By James Wagner, Emiliano Rodríguez Mega, Somini Sengupta and César Rodríguez

**Body**

A system of dams and canals may soon be unable to provide water to one of the world's largest cities, a confluence of unchecked growth, crumbling infrastructure and a changing climate.

A collision of climate change, urban sprawl and poor infrastructure has pushed Mexico City to the brink of a profound water crisis.

The groundwater is quickly vanishing. A key reservoir got so low that it is no longer used to supply water. Last year was Mexico's hottest and driest in at least 70 years. And one of the city's main water systems faces a potential ''Day Zero'' this summer when levels dip so much that it, too, will no longer provide water.

''We're suffering because the city is growing immeasurably and it cannot be stopped,'' said Gabriel Martínez, 64, who lives in an apartment complex that struggles to get enough water for its roughly 600 residents. ''There aren't enough resources.''

Mexico City, once a water-rich valley that was drained to make way for a vast city, has a metropolitan population of 23 million, among the top 10 largest in the world and up from 15 million in 1990. It is one of several major cities facing severe water shortages, including Cape Town; São Paulo, Brazil; and Chennai, India. Many are the consequence of years of poor water management compounded by scarce rains.

And while Mexico City's problems are worsening, they are not new. Some neighborhoods have lacked adequate piped water for years, but today, communities that have never had shortages are suddenly facing them.

Experts were warning about dwindling water supplies almost two decades ago to little avail. If the capital's water network was already held together by a thread then, now ''some parts of the system are falling apart,'' said Manuel Perló Cohen, an urban planning researcher who studies Mexico City's water system.

''Mexico is the biggest market in the world for bottled water,'' said Roberto Constantino Toto, who heads the water research office at the Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City. It is a reflection, he added, ''of the failure of our water policy.''

Exceptionally dry conditions are the immediate source of the city's water plight. Mexico has long been vulnerable to droughts, but nearly 68 percent of the country is in moderate or extreme drought, according to the National Water Commission.

The Cutzamala water system -- one of the world's largest networks of dams, canals and pipes that supplies 27 percent of the capital's water -- is at a historically low 30 percent of its normal capacity, official figures show. At the same point last year, it was at 38 percent, and in 2022, it stood at 45 percent.

Officials have projected June 26 as an estimated Day Zero, when the Cutzamala system could drop to the 20 percent base line where it would no longer be tapped to provide water to Mexico City.

The water level at one reservoir fell so low that officials halted its use in April.

''It's sad,'' Juan Carlos Morán Costilla, 52, a fisherman who lives along the reservoir, said as he stood on heat-cracked ground that was once underwater.

Groundwater, which supplies most of the city's water, is pumped out twice as fast as it is replenished, experts said.

The city's water supply, some of which is brought in from far away, flows through old pipes along an 8,000-mile-long grid vulnerable to earthquakes and sinking ground, and where leaks have caused an estimated 35 percent water loss -- more than the Cutzamala system provides.

The city's water challenge has become an issue in elections next month.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, whose aides have said that Day Zero will not happen, has insisted that his government is already addressing Mexico City's water problems. New wells were being dug, he said, and officials are working to end corruption involving water consumed by big industries. He has also proposed bringing more water in from outside the city.

Claudia Sheinbaum, Mr. López Obrador's protégée who resigned as Mexico City mayor last year to become the leading presidential candidate, has defended her administration's handling of the water crisis.

Scientists, she said recently, could not have predicted the prolonged drought, and, if elected president, she would present an ambitious plan to fix the issues.

The National Water Commission did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Some areas of Mexico City have long been without sufficient tap water, including Iztapalapa, a ***working-class*** community and the capital's most populous borough with 1.8 million people. Residents rely on municipal water trucks to fill cisterns or water tanks in homes or buildings. If that is not enough, people pay for private trucks or, in extreme cases, illegally tap water lines.

But as water has become scarcer, other areas of the city are facing increased rationing, including reduced flow and getting water during only certain times of the day or on certain days of the week. Water has been rationed to 284 neighborhoods this year, even to more affluent ones, compared with 147 in 2007.

''Boroughs that have never suffered from water problems in their life are going to have to really learn how to take care of it,'' said Adriana Gutiérrez, 50, who manages and lives in a 154-unit apartment complex in Iztapalapa that relies on water trucks. Residents treat every drop as precious, using water from showers to clean their homes.

For 20 years, Dan Ortega Hernández, 50, never had a problem with running water at his barbershop in Mexico City's Tlalpan borough. But in November, he said he turned on the faucet and nothing came out. Now, when he does get running water under the rationing plan, he fills a 1,100-liter tank and hopes it lasts until the next scheduled day for running water.

That is a more regular supply than at his home elsewhere in Tlalpan. He said municipal water trucks used to come every four days or so but now take longer, sometimes up to a month. Rather than using water at home, he washes the family's clothes at a laundromat near his shop.

''It's scary that we're running out of resources,'' he said.

There is no evidence that Mexico's drought is attributable to climate change. But the effects are made worse by rising temperatures.

Mexico City's average temperature rose by around 3 degrees Celsius (4.5 degrees Fahrenheit) in the past century, more than double the global average. Exceptionally hot days (above 30 degrees Celsius, or 86 degrees Fahrenheit) have doubled in some parts of the city, according to a 2020 study. That could partly be because of climate change, and partly because of the city's exponential growth, with concrete and asphalt replacing trees and wetlands.

Heat aggravates a water crisis: People need more water and more water evaporates.

The latest Water Risk Atlas, published by the World Resources Institute, describes Mexico City as facing ''extremely high'' water stress, its highest category.

As Mexico prepares to head to the polls to elect a new president, the water problems have been largely overshadowed by other topics, like crime and the economy. Water has, however, been a main focus of the mayoral race.

Water will reach the entire city, regardless of where people live, one candidate said. The leaks that the governing party failed to repair will be fixed, another proclaimed. A master plan will be put in place, a third added, to unearth buried rivers that run through the capital.

''Now everybody is like, 'Yeah, I'm going to solve the water problem,''' Dr. Perló said. ''But I've heard this story many times before.''

Some progress has been made. An enormous $2 billion tunnel opened in 2019 to take wastewater from Mexico City to a distant water treatment plant. A program to harvest unutilized rainwater was launched in some poorer neighborhoods. A small section of Lake Texcoco, largely drained to build the city, was restored. More wells and aquifers are being explored.

But several experts said the steps taken so far had not been aggressive enough and others ill directed.

Most of the focus by city and national governments has been on seeking faraway watersheds that supply other Mexican states to quench Mexico City's thirst. But the majority of the city's treatment plants do not operate at full capacity. Many let wastewater go untreated, which is then discharged into rivers or lakes, polluting what could be alternative sources of water.

The estimated price tag for addressing the water crisis reaches as high as $13.5 billion, according to the city's water agency.

The rainy season, which typically runs from roughly June to November, would usually help replenish Mexico City's water systems. But the capital saw historically low rainfalls during last year's rainy season.

The Day Zero warning by some experts has been a flashpoint in Mexico City, used to bash the governing party, which includes Mr. López Obrador and Ms. Sheinbaum. But it has also helped train the public's attention to the deepening problem.

''It creates a feeling of fear, anxiety, worry,'' said Fabiola Sosa Rodríguez, a water management and climate policy researcher.

Lizbeth Martínez García, 26, who lives in a hillside community in Iztapalapa where a weekly municipal water truck fills the tanks that supply the four families in her building, said she asked the delivery man about the future.

He told her, she said, that the future meant even less water.

''We're scared,'' she said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/americas/mexico-city-water.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/18/world/americas/mexico-city-water.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Distributing containers to collect water in Mexico City, where scores of neighborhoods are rationing the dwindling supply. (A1)

As neighborhoods face increased water rationing, including reduced flow and getting water during only certain times or days, residents save what they can in barrels or small containers and buckets. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CÉSAR RODRÍGUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12) This article appeared in print on page A1, A12.

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[***Trump Invokes 'Blood Bath' in Border Remarks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPV-WCV1-JBG3-600V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael Gold and Anjali Huynh

**Body**

The former president has tried to stoke fear around immigration and border security throughout his 2024 campaign, as he has done in the past.

Former President Donald J. Trump again cast President Biden's immigration record in violent and ominous terms on Tuesday, accusing him in two speeches in battleground states of creating a ''border blood bath'' and once more using dehumanizing language to describe some migrants entering the country illegally.

In a speech in Grand Rapids, Mich., Mr. Trump, flanked by law enforcement officers, reiterated his baseless claim that other countries were sending ''prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients and terrorists, the worst they have'' to the United States. Immigration officials have said that most of the people crossing the border are members of vulnerable families escaping poverty and violence.

Mr. Trump also used his speech, which lasted roughly 45 minutes, to defend his use of dehumanizing language to refer to immigrants accused of crimes. After referring to the man who the authorities say killed a 22-year-old nursing student in Georgia in February, Mr. Trump said: ''Democrats said please don't call them 'animals.' I said, no, they're not humans, they're animals.''

Mr. Trump drew attention last month when, while discussing the U.S. auto industry, he predicted a ''blood bath for the country'' should he lose in November. After critics accused him of stoking violence, Mr. Trump and his allies pointed back to Mr. Biden, insisting he was responsible for a ''blood bath'' because of his immigration policies.

The former president has repeatedly criticized Mr. Biden, accusing him of maintaining lax border security that he blames for violent crime, though available data does not support the idea that migrants are contributing to increases in crime.

Mr. Trump's campaign appears to be trying to turn ''blood bath'' into a catchphrase, essentially trolling his critics and shifting the focus to Mr. Biden. On Tuesday, the Republican National Committee, which the Trump campaign now effectively controls, introduced a website, BidenBloodbath.com, that mirrors Mr. Trump's argument that Mr. Biden is responsible for an ''invasion'' at the United States' border with Mexico. The site highlights a number of violent crimes in which undocumented immigrants have been accused.

But his remarks in Michigan and at a rally later in Green Bay, Wis., also demonstrated how the former president has tried to stoke fears around immigration and border security in the 2024 election, a tactic he used effectively in 2016. Republicans have been eager to keep the issue at the top of voters' minds in a bid to chip away at Mr. Biden's support.

''This is country-changing, it's country-threatening, and it's country-wrecking,'' Mr. Trump said in Michigan of migrants crossing the southern border. ''They have wrecked our country.''

Democrats have pushed back against that framing. Ahead of Mr. Trump's visit, the Democratic National Committee put up billboards near Grand Rapids referring to a bipartisan border bill that fell apart in the Senate after Mr. Trump pressed Republicans to block it. The billboards claimed that ''Donald Trump broke the border'' and that the former president wanted only ''chaos, not solutions.''

Mr. Trump's speeches in both states were his first campaign events after a weekslong break from the trail, during which he raised money, contended with legal issues and blasted his political and legal opponents on social media.

Mr. Trump has seized on high-profile crimes involving immigrants to try to make inroads in key battleground states, including Michigan and Wisconsin, connecting the influx of migrants at the southern border to states hundreds of miles away.

On Tuesday, he said that ''once peaceful suburban Michigan'' was coming ''under an invasion'' and spoke of the recent killing of Ruby Garcia, who was found dead on the side of a highway in Grand Rapids last month. The authorities have said that Ms. Garcia was dating the man accused of killing her, who entered the country illegally as a child and was deported to Mexico in 2020.

Michigan Democrats blasted Mr. Trump's references to Ms. Garcia in remarks before his appearance. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Democrat of Michigan, said Mr. Trump was ''exploiting'' Ms. Garcia's death and called his response ''shameful.'' And while Mr. Trump said in Michigan that he had spoken with some of Ms. Garcia's family, her sister told a local television station that Mr. Trump ''did not speak with us.''

Ahead of Mr. Trump's speech in Michigan, his campaign handed out packets to reporters that highlighted other people who the campaign said had been affected by crimes involving undocumented immigrants. They included Laken Riley, the Georgia nursing student whose death has become a flashpoint among Republicans. The authorities say Ms. Riley was killed by a Venezuelan migrant who had entered the country illegally.

Pete Hoekstra, the chair of the Michigan Republican Party, said that ''it's clear immigration and the economy are going to dominate the debate here in Michigan.'' He added that he believed voters in the state ''look at what's happening on the border, and it's hard for them to believe exactly what they're seeing, that there's no rule of law.''

Both Michigan and Wisconsin were part of the so-called blue wall that Democrats had counted on for two decades before the 2016 race, when Mr. Trump won over ***working-class*** white voters who are key parts of the electorate in both states.

Mr. Biden won both states in 2020, although Mr. Trump falsely claimed during his rally in Wisconsin, which held its presidential primaries on Tuesday, that he had won there ''by a lot'' and insisted that the election had been stolen from him.

Democrats also won governors' races in both states in 2018 and defended their seats in 2022, in part by making protecting abortion access central to their races.

The party continued its efforts on Tuesday to make abortion rights a key campaign issue. Though Mr. Biden did not hold public campaign events, his campaign seized on a ruling by the Florida Supreme Court on Monday that allowed the state's six-week abortion ban but also put abortion access on the ballot there this fall.

There is little indication that Mr. Biden will devote significant time and resources to competing in Florida. But his campaign released a television ad that it plans to run in battleground states -- including Michigan and Wisconsin -- that attacked Mr. Trump for statements claiming credit for the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade in 2022.

A senior adviser to the Trump campaign, Brian Hughes, addressed the ruling in Florida, saying in a statement that Mr. Trump supports states' rights and thinks ''voters should have the last word.''

Mr. Trump did not mention abortion, or his role in appointing three of the Supreme Court justices who helped overturn Roe, at either event. But after his remarks in Michigan, he responded to a reporter's question about the Florida ruling by saying that his campaign would ''be making a statement next week'' on abortion.

A spokeswoman for the Democratic National Committee, Aida Ross, said in a statement: ''We don't need to wait until next week to know where Donald Trump stands on abortion -- he has been peddling the same anti-choice extremism for years.''

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from Washington.Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from Washington.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/us/politics/trump-border-blood-bath.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/02/us/politics/trump-border-blood-bath.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: ''They have wrecked our country,'' former President Donald J. Trump said of migrants during an event in Michigan on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NIC ANTAYA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2024

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Simon Rosenberg; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B61-5N01-DXY4-X020-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 11955 words

**Highlight:** The Jan. 25, 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 Simon Rosenberg. 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.”

So a bit of housekeeping ahead of today’s episode, we are hiring a column assistant for me and Tressie McMillan Cottom to do fact-checking, research, clerical work. It’s a great entry-level role, and you can find it by clicking the link in the show notes here or going to nytco.com/careers.

So we’ve done a couple episodes recently on the Republican Party, and we want to follow that up with a couple of different views on the Democratic Party. And I think, for Democrats, the core question that I get asked, that you hear asked, is, why are Democrats letting this unpopular 81-year-old president run again? I think it’s worth stepping back and asking, if you were a politician in the Democratic Party who had wanted to run against Joe Biden, what would you have run on?

One theory of how you would challenge an incumbent president would be you would say he’s a bad president. But actually, Biden has passed a ton of critical legislation with the Democrats — the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Bill, CHIPS and Science. The economy is doing pretty well. The labor market is really strong. Inflation is coming down.

So it’s kind of hard to run, saying, Joe Biden has done a bad job being president. There are important differences now increasingly on foreign policy. But if you think back eight months ago, that wasn’t as true.

The other way you could have run against Joe Biden is to say, the guy’s a loser. He’s not going to be able to win. And the crucial moment for that, I think, the way to think about why Biden, in the end, did not face so much pressure that he either had to step aside or face a set of serious primary challenges is that, in 2022, Democrats did not get wiped out.

And more than did not get wiped out, they won. They did much better than you would have expected. They gained in the Senate. They gained in state legislatures. They gained in governorships. They did lose the House, but they held down losses.

And I always thought that, if Democrats got wiped out in 2022, there really would be primary challenges. And because they did so much better than expected, there wasn’t really room for them to get off the ground. There wasn’t a critique to be made of Biden’s Democratic Party. It wasn’t, obviously, losing elections. It wasn’t failing to govern.

So how are you going to attack it? That doesn’t mean that Democrats have made the right decision, but I think it is crucial context and context that is often lost in thinking about why Democrats are making the strategic decisions they’re making. There is this difference between how Democrats are polling and how they are performing.

But the Democratic Party is a complicated thing that no one player really holds power over. And so I wanted to take it from two very different perspectives. And I’ll say, even as we go into these episodes, I don’t fully agree with either theory of the Democratic Party. But opposite ways of thinking about something can both carry important truths or at least things worth thinking about.

And I wanted to begin, then, with a perspective that gets heard less often but I think explains more in terms of how the Democratic Party is actually acting, which is that, if you look at elections rather than polls and look at governance rather than vibes, Democrats are not doing that badly. It’s actually a little hard to make the case that it’s a party making huge mistakes. They definitely don’t look like a party in crisis.

So for this show, for the more optimistic perspective on the Democrats, I invited strategist Simon Rosenberg on the show. Rosenberg has been in Democratic party politics a long time. He played a key role in Clinton’s 1992 election victory. He founded and was a longtime head of the New Democrat Network, which was an influential think tank that, at times, has been pushing Democrats in more liberal and in more moderate directions, that is very early and trying to build a stronger Hispanic strategy for the Democratic Party.

And he became kind of famous, again, in 2022 for accurately predicting that there would not be a red wave, that the belief that Democrats were going to get destroyed was not going to prove to be correct. Now he’s the author of the Substack Hopium Chronicles, where he is trying to offer Democrats this constant argument that they are way too down on the party, and actually they have a lot of reason for hope and work to do, sure, but that they need to understand they’re coming to this from a strong position. As always, my email, [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

Simon Rosenberg, welcome to the show.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Ezra, it’s great to be here.

EZRA KLEIN: So when I looked at polls, at about this point in the cycle in 2016, Trump was trailing a bit. When I look at polls at this point in the cycle in 2024, he’s roughly even with Biden. It depends on the poll you look at. He’s maybe ahead, maybe behind, but stronger than he was. And most Democrats I know are freaking out about those polls, so why aren’t you?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Because since Trump unveiled himself as MAGA in the 2017-2018 cycle, we just keep winning elections. We won the 2018 cycle. We won the 2020 cycle. We won in ways that people never thought we would in 2022.

And in 2023, which I think has not gotten as much coverage as it should have, it was a blue wave all across the country. We won in all sorts of Republican places and flipped seats and ballot initiatives all across the country. And when you just look at that as a political person, that’s exactly what you want a political party to be doing. We’re winning all kinds of elections.

Democrats keep overperforming in elections. Republicans keep underperforming and struggling. And we even saw just this week in Iowa, despite Trump’s strong victory, turnout there was abysmal. They had 186,000 people voted in 2016. Only 110,000 people voted this time.

Trump only got — 7 percent of all registered Republicans voted for Donald Trump in Iowa. It’s a terrible number. And so when we actually go vote, we just keep winning, and they keep losing. And so I go into 2024 feeling really good about where we are.

Look, we have a lot of work to do, Ezra. I’m not sitting here and telling you everything is great. We got a long way to go. But if we run a good campaign and execute well, I think we’re going to win this election by high single digits and make this election a clear repudiation of MAGA, which will, hopefully, start to loosen this dark grip on the Republican Party.

EZRA KLEIN: So you and I have known each other a long time, but I think you’ve had a burst of renown in politics after 2022 when you were one of relatively few people out there, saying, this is not going to be a red wave election. Democrats are going to hold on much better than people think. And that’s more or less what happened.

They won seats in the Senate. They won governorships. They won state legislatures. They held down losses in the House.

You’ve made the argument, based on what we can see in data about the 2022 election, that there were really two elections in there that had different dynamics. What were they?

SIMON ROSENBERG: I think it’s sort of very foundational to understand where we are today. And so in 2022, there were two elections. There was a bluer election inside the battleground and a redder election outside the battleground.

Inside the battleground, where Democrats turned on their big campaigns, we were able to actually not just do well, but we got to 59 percent in Colorado, 57 percent in Pennsylvania, 55 percent in Michigan, 54 percent in New Hampshire.Those would be extraordinary performances in a good year, and this was supposed to be a bad year for us. We were supposed to be the party that was — the red wave was going to wash all across the country and wipe us out. And so we did extraordinarily well, where we were contesting Republicans, in many cases, these Trumpy Republicans that were nominated in these states and where the issues of abortion and democracy were on the ballot.

And we actually gained ground, against all conventional wisdom outside the battleground, where we didn’t have these big campaigns, where we didn’t control the information environment and push our turnout to the upper end of what was possible. We actually lost ground in New York and in California. And it’s one of the reasons we lost the House in 2022.

And so to me, the admonition is where we run our big campaigns, we do really well. When we go head to head with Republicans and the grass roots of the Democratic Party is focused, we keep winning. But when we don’t run those campaigns, it reminds us of the power of the right-wing noise machine and their politics, which is still formidable.

And we can’t, in any way, discount the significance of their ability on a daily basis to dictate the daily discourse in the United States. And so in 2024, we need to get much more focused as Democrats about being loud and trying to close that what I call the loudness gap with the right in order to be where we want to be in 2024.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to pick up on a few questions and counter theories there. So one, you said something interesting, which is that, in these battleground areas, Democrats controlled the information environment they ran their campaigns. And I read it differently, which is to say that, in those battleground environments, what actually happened is that Republicans controlled the information environment and ran their — or MAGA, actually, in many cases, controlled the information environment and ran their campaigns. And that is an extraordinary countermobilizing force for Democrats.

Something you said there I think is really important. I don’t think people quite realize that it was Democrats in New York and California who lost the House by not coming out. So those were not huge MAGA elections. Those were not elections people felt had a big sense of weight to them. And because they then had low turnout, Democrats gave up seats.

But in the battlegrounds, where MAGA candidates were a mobilizing force for Democrats, Democrats did great. And so there is a theory of the Democratic Party right now, Michael Podhorzer, the former AFL-CIO political director, kind of makes this argument, that it’s an anti-MAGA coalition, that it has turned itself into a vessel to stop this other political tendency. And where that tendency is on the ballot, it rises. And where that tendency is not on the ballot, it struggles. Does that track for you?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah. The anti-MAGA theory is something that I actually promoted very heavily in 2022 during that time where I was battling the red wave. And I think there is — what I often said during that time was there was an anti-MAGA majority in the country that we saw show up in 2018 and 2020. And so the question is, would it show up again in 2022?

I wrote a piece in the fall of 2021, saying, that I thought this would be a close competitive election and not a wave election because of this, because there had been — the Republicans have made — in the grand scheme of politics, when you have a politics that loses twice in a row as it did for the Republicans in 2018 and 2020, MAGA, that is, usually a party runs away from that politics because it’s failed. And they lost elections. And they lost the House, the Senate, and the presidency in those two elections.

The Republicans didn’t do that. They ran right towards MAGA. They doubled down. They became super MAGA.

And that’s, in my view, an enormous strategic error that is continuing through to today. We saw this play out not just in 2022 but in 2023. It’s already playing out in early 2024. I think MAGA is even unattractive to Republican voters, and I think the Republican Party is splintered.

What’s interesting for me about this is that, if you watch cable news, if you watch MSNBC, a third of the contributors and a third of the people on TV are former Republicans in some form or fashion. We’ve never had that kind of abandonment or splintering of a modern political party in our lifetime. Yes, MAGA is deeply unattractive, and my argument is that Trump and MAGA are even more unattractive, more dangerous, more ugly, more extreme in 2024 than they were even in 2022 and 2023. And so if this has been a failed politics in all these elections, they continue to double down on it, then I think it’s why I’m so optimistic about what we’re going to be able to do this year.

EZRA KLEIN: But let me flip part of that dynamic on you. You made the point you often see these former Republicans on MSNBC, which is true. And there is a slice of the Republican Party the Democratic Party has begun to win over, which is these more educated, higher information, which these folks are, of course, at the apex of. And the argument you will hear from people who are a lot less sanguine about this than you are is that Democrats have been outperforming in 2018 and 2022 and 2023 because they have won over a kind of voter that used to be a Republican and is more likely to come out in a lower turnout special election, more likely to know what’s going on, show up at the polls.

But in a presidential election, where you get a lot more kind of unusual voters, where you get a lot more low-attachment voters, Republicans are doing stronger numbers among some of those factions. And it’s not like Donald Trump saw his number of voters collapse from 2016 to 2020. More people voted for Donald Trump in 2020 than voted in 2016. It’s just even more people than that voted for Joe Biden.

But it was close enough that a shift in the winds could lead to Joe Biden winning the popular vote by 2.5 points and losing the presidency. So there is no margin here.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Well, listen. I understand the theory, and it’s a theory. It’s not actually played out in practice. It could happen in 2024. It might be what happens.

But it hasn’t happened. The theory is that all this, the fact that Democrats just keep winning everywhere in red states and blue states, and ballot initiatives, and off-year elections, and special elections isn’t going to translate over into 2024. And yet when you look at what’s happened, when we’ve gone to the general election, since 1992, Democrats have won more votes in seven out of eight presidential elections. No American political party has done that in our history. It’s the best popular vote run for a political party in American history.

And in the last four elections, we’ve beaten the Republicans on average by 51 to 46, a 5-point gap. The last time Democrats averaged over 50 percent of the vote in four consecutive elections was during F.D.R.’s presidency. And so we’re in the midst of our best presidential run that we’ve been on since the 1930s and ’40s.

And this idea that somehow something’s going to happen in this election that has not happened in seven out of eight of the previous presidential elections and isn’t happening across the states, it’s a theory of somebody who doesn’t really work in politics every day because that’s not really how politics works. There isn’t one set of dynamics that are playing out again and again and again all across the country, and then, all of a sudden, everything dramatically shifts.

And so I know this could happen. I understand the theory. A lot could happen. A meteor could hit the Earth tomorrow. I don’t think it’s going to happen in 2024 for all the reasons that we discussed earlier about the counter-mobilization against MAGA, which is still the most powerful force in our politics, far more powerful than disappointment in Joe Biden and the Democrats.

EZRA KLEIN: So I have this experience sometimes when I listen to you because it’s very persuasive on one level. And then I also have this kind of, [SHIVERS]: wait, but I’ve just been living through this other thing happening, which is there is no such thing in the American political system as a popular vote presidential election. The only thing that matters is the electoral college.

I am old enough to remember Donald Trump winning the electoral college in 2016. It feels very fresh as a wound. I’m also old enough to remember that he had a Republican House and Senate then. Democrats did win that back in 2018. Although they did well in 2022, they did lose the House.

There is a Republican speaker now. In fact, there have been many Republican speakers since Democrats lost the House in 2022. Republicans control more governors’ mansions. They control more state legislatures.

There is a lot of truth to this. And so as a corrective, I buy it. There is a tendency, I think, to see Donald Trump and MAGA as this unstoppable political force, and the polls are now feeding a kind of panic about that among Democrats. But also to listen to you, you’re describing a dominant political party that is wielding power continuously.

But Republicans have the Supreme Court. They have the House. They have the governorships. They have the state legislatures. Democrats have the presidency and the Senate. I would not say, well, the Democratic Party is an, obviously, dominant party on historic run of success.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah, I don’t agree. I understand —

EZRA KLEIN: But what don’t you agree with?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Don’t discount the importance of a popular vote. We’re in a democracy, and winning more votes than the other side is the core of what a campaign.

EZRA KLEIN: Are we in a democracy, though?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Well, this is —

EZRA KLEIN: Oftentimes we’re not.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I know, and I’ve written about this extensively. And you and I — actually, the last time that you and I actually really connected was actually over this issue about how our power is appropriated in the United States and how you can be a party winning elections by five points and still not be in power. Right now, I just want to remind your listeners that people say the popular vote doesn’t matter in a general election. Of course, it does. Because there are tons of down ballot races below the Senate and House races all across the country. And so winning an election by four or five points, of course, it matters because there’s all these other elections happening, too. And so both can be true. You want to both win the popular vote, and you want to win the electoral college.

So what I look at and the reason that I am talking the way that I talk about this is that what’s happened to a great degree is that we’ve had a couple of bad elections where Republicans have run up the score. And it’s one of the reasons why they’ve maintained so much political power around the country.

But on balance, where I’m satisfied with our performance, is that for a party that when I got into this business back in the late ’80s and early ’90s, where the Republicans were on this incredible presidential run, the Democratic Party in the late ’80s and early ’90s was getting wiped out at the presidential level. And the reason that the New Democrats came about was to reverse that and was to create a competitive national party again.

And since 1992 and Clinton’s presidency, we’ve won more votes seven out of eight times. And yes, two of those elections, we didn’t win the electoral college, and they won the presidential election. But the goal was to make us competitive at a national level again when we weren’t. This idea that at some point the Democrats used to be really strong and have sort of fallen down, the exact opposite is true.

We used to be really weak, and we were getting killed in national elections. And now we’re not. In fact, we’re in the best popular vote run that we’ve been in since the F.D.R.’s presidency. I can see Joe Biden’s path for victory as a strategist. He’s been a good president. He’s going to have a strong case for re-election. We keep winning elections all across the country.

Trump, to me, is a much weaker candidate than he was in 2016 and 2020. I don’t know how you dress this guy up, Donald Trump, and make him look like a serious candidate for president again. I just don’t think it’s possible. And part of the reason why is not just because he’s more extreme and more dangerous than he was and MAGA is more of a threat to the country. But his performance on the stump is far worse and more wild.

And so when I look, as somebody who’s been doing this for over 30 years, what I see as a really crappy presidential candidate, and I think we’re going to kick his ass.

EZRA KLEIN: You’re a strategist, and you see a path to clean victory for Joe Biden. So if you were running that campaign, what’s the approach? What’s the message? What would you be telling Joe Biden to be doing, saying, emphasizing?

SIMON ROSENBERG: We’re going to have a hard time, I think, in the day-to-day information war. What Trump still have and what the Republicans still have is they’re much louder than we are, just his ability to dominate the daily news and to give us very little space to make our case. And I think this is also exacerbated by Joe Biden’s age, and just this is where his age is not an asset.

I think, in general, his age is an asset. It’s made him a strong president. But I think it means that, as somebody who grew up in politics in the war room in 1992, which was really about reinventing the way that information and media is done in a campaign and how you contest the information space every day, the theory of the campaign in ’92, coming out of the loss of Dukakis, is that we had to contest the information space every day. Then any attack that was made, if we didn’t rebutted or counter it, it would stick. We were very on the front foot. We were fighting with incredible intensity.

The Biden communications operation, to me, has a slightly different understanding of all this, which is that they believe there are things that are never going to amount to anything that’s going to matter. And they can kind of ignore them.

And I just don’t agree with that. And I don’t agree with that from having been in this game for a long time. I was a guest on Fox News for 17 years and did thousands of appearances on Fox. I’ve been in this thing pretty deeply for a long time.

And I think my greatest advice to the campaign is that there has to be a tempo and an expectation that they are fighting with unbelievable ferocity and intensity every day in the information space in order for us to control the information environment and to allow us to win. And that’s, to me, the most important thing that we need to do in the coming months.

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t think they’re ever going to do that. And let me try an analogy on you that’s been in my head, which is that Trump is a street fighter. His theory of the information space is that of a street fighter. He’s going to punch at it and hit it with a pole as hard as he can until it crumbles beneath him.

And Biden and his team, going back now some years — and I think this might be somewhat mediated by their own concerns about him or what he’s willing to do and not do. But whatever it is, they do aikido. They try to let the other person create the energy and use it against them.

I actually think the one thing Donald Trump and Joe Biden agree on is that Donald Trump should be in the news every day and Donald Trump should control the information space.

Look, getting into the news — this is my profession — is not a mystery if you’re the president. You announce things that are significant enough. You say things that are conflictual enough. Or you do things that are unexpected or outrageous enough.

Donald Trump does all of them constantly to the extent that he can. There’s a reason he’s showing up at all these hearings and getting in arguments with the judges. He wants that covered on the news.

If Joe Biden and his team believed it was good for them, or wanted to, or believed Joe Biden was good at being in constant fights with Donald Trump, they could unload on him day after day after day after day. And I think their view — and this has been my sense of them for some time — is that it is good for them when Donald Trump dominates the news because, again, it’s a counter-MAGA coalition. It’s an anti-MAGA coalition. And as long as you have some MAGA figure driving the story, day after day after day, that will, ultimately, counter-mobilize the Democrats. And the counter-mobilization of the Democrats is larger than the mobilization of the Republicans.

That’s I think what they’re trying to do. I’m not saying it’s my preferred strategy, but that’s my read of them.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I think you’re exactly right, by the way. Completely. And I talk to them all the time, and I’m close to both the campaign and the White House.

What I don’t mean is getting in his face every day. Democrats have to feel the campaign. They have to feel us fighting. They have to feel the intensity because part of the reason we’ve been winning so much is because of this counter-mobilization. And the counter-mobilization isn’t just with voters. It’s with our activists.

There is a massive new Democratic political machine that has grown up organically in recent years. It was very accelerated during Covid when these new technologies allowed remote activity. And one of the remote activities is Zoom. What’s happening now is that there are hundreds of thousands of Democrats who are listening to people like me over Zoom, and campaign people, and other folks, Democratic politics every week on Zoom, where they have this far more intimate relationship with politics than they ever used to have.

And so what’s happening is the counter-mobilization is also providing our campaigns more money than they’ve ever had in our history. We’re building unprecedentedly large campaigns with the biggest field operations we’ve ever had. And there are more volunteers to fit into those campaigns than we’ve ever had before because you can now not just export your money out of California. You can export your labor.

And yesterday, we won this race in Orlando, And I spoke to Fentrice Driskell, who’s the state house leader for the Democrats, who I worked with very closely on this race. And she said, at the victory party, Simon, a woman came up to me and said, I’m here. I drove two hours to be with you and do G.O.T.V. because Simon asked me to go help you guys.

And so what’s happening is this counter-mobilization has created the strongest Democratic Party than any of us have ever seen. And it’s why, when I wrote in the fall of 2021, as I said, because of all of this, we had more tools to mitigate midterm dropoff than we’ve ever had before. And I felt that we were going to be able to use that to have a good election in 2022.

Well, that huge machine just played a major role in winning an election in Orlando, Florida that nobody in Florida thought we were going to win. We flipped the state house in Virginia, just in November, which none of the political operatives on the ground thought we were going to do. And we keep doing things that we didn’t think we could do. We keep performing at the upper end of what’s possible as Democrats because of this machine, this counter-mobilization you’re describing.

And I think it’s just going to be too big and too overwhelming for Donald Trump in 2024 because it’s independent of any candidate. It has nothing to do with who’s running. It’s not connected to an ideology. It’s the simple thing. Democrats are going to save the country. Republicans are dangerous. And you’ve got millions of proud Patriots who love their country who are fighting to make sure their democracy doesn’t slip away. They have nothing like that.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to go back to the question I asked you about Biden and his path because, when I said what would you tell them to do, you said fight. But I actually meant to ask something closer to, what should this be about? One thing they want to make it about, clearly, is Donald Trump, and MAGA, and democracy. You go to Biden’s big speech a couple of weeks ago about democracy and January 6.

They’re, in many ways, running against Donald Trump almost as if Trump is an incumbent. But Joe Biden is the incumbent. And you go back to 2020 and how they ran then. They ran against Trump, and he was the incumbent. And they ran against the pandemic. They ran against the Trump administration’s pandemic operation, which, at that point, was completely flailing.

And right now, there is no pandemic at that level that is dominating politics. Obviously, there’s a lot of Covid going around. Donald Trump is not the incumbent. And the bigger problem Biden faces, I think, is widespread voter dissatisfaction with the economy, which is somewhere where I do think polls are important. I don’t believe polls are predictive of elections this far out, but they are reasonable snapshots of public opinion.

And people are not happy with the state of the economy. And when you ask them who they trust on it, they say they trust Donald Trump. So in terms of what the Biden administration should be saying about itself in the election, what should they be saying?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Well, listen. They’ve made it very clear based on that speech in Valley Forge that they believe the sort of foundational contrast is Joe Biden protecting democracy and Donald Trump trying to end it. And it’s a pretty powerful argument. It’s actually been working pretty well all across the country. And it’s also true. It has the virtue of being true.

And we know from polling and market research that we all do that creating a narrative about who we are around freedom is incredibly powerful. And this has been heavily tested by lots of different people. And it’s how we’ve been running, frankly, in these elections that we keep winning. And so I think, first of all, he’s on the right track. This is a very good early orientation.

I do think there’s also going to be an element of the campaign that’s about making the case that he’s been a good president and then rolling out, which I assume is going to happen in the State of the Union, his second-term agenda. And these things are also going to matter a lot. I’m a little bit more optimistic than you are about our ability to sell his economic story because I don’t think the country is down on the economy.

I think that Republicans are. And if you look at Democrats, and the people that are available to us, and the people who we have to talk to get to win the election, they actually give Biden very high marks on the economy, and they think the economy is doing really well. I think this is one of these polarized issues that, just like the Biden approval rating, I don’t think it’s nearly as descriptive as people think it is.

So I think we can make progress there. I don’t know that we’re going to catch up with Trump on the economy. But I think there’s a lot of ground we can make up this year once the campaign really engages. And so your point —

EZRA KLEIN: But I want to stop there for a minute because I think this is actually very important and is a big question for me in the election. I’m not pessimistic or optimistic on their ability to sell an economic message. What I do think is true is that I spend time looking at the consumer sentiment data. I spend I’m looking at the polling here. I spend time looking at the various indicators we have of how the economy is doing and how people are feeling about it.

And what looks both like a huge opportunity for them to me and a genuine problem for them to me is that there is a gigantic delta between what the economy looks like and how people feel about it. If you were just running this through a statistics machine, Joe Biden’s record looks fantastic. You want to be Joe Biden, created a huge number of jobs. Unemployment is extremely low. Wage gains have been very strong.

Inflation was up, but now it’s down. We are outperforming European economies that kind of look like ours superficially. Like if you —

SIMON ROSENBERG: You sound like —

EZRA KLEIN: — wanted to be any —

SIMON ROSENBERG: — me now. Ezra, you sound like me now. [LAUGHS]

EZRA KLEIN: But this is just the economic facts, right? A campaign is an effort to tell a story. We have a serious affordability crisis, in my mind, specifically in housing and a couple other things. But that’s been going on for a very long time.

But in the economic data, it looks very strong. This is the data you would want as the raw material to tell a story. And whatever they’re doing to tell the story or not tell the story, it is not working. Elections are also about the public perception. They are not just about people reading the Michigan Consumer Sentiment index. How do they close that gap?

SIMON ROSENBERG: So number one, just like what happened in 2022, where everyone thought we were going to lose because there was low Biden approval and high inflation and we ended up having a really good election, despite the disappointment with the economy that you’re describing, we keep winning everywhere because going back to the thing that you said in the beginning of the interview is there’s a force in our politics that’s more powerful than disappointment in Joe Biden and the Democrats, which is the fear and opposition to MAGA.

That’s the thing that’s been driving our politics since 2018, and it’s going to drive the election in 2024. The second thing is you’re right. A campaign is about putting information into people’s heads that they don’t have. That’s a core of what you do in a campaign. That’s why advertising exists is you’re moving narratives and stories that people need to hear that they may not totally understand.

But part of what’s a challenge now, there isn’t one information environment in the United States. There are at least two, and there may be even more. But Republicans are living in a completely different information environment than Democrats are or than non-MAGA and non-Republicans. And in the non-MAGA information environment, the economy is actually doing well. People are happy.

EZRA KLEIN: No, wait. I want to push you on this because I know where you’re going here.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I can show you tons of data on this, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, but I know the media environments very well. And what I would say is, yes, there’s a very MAGA information environment. There’s also, obviously, a more liberal information.

But most people are not in really either one of them. Most people just don’t read that much news because the news makes you feel bad. And people have other things they want to do in their lives. They get the news ambiently.

And I want to say, extremely clearly, I think that is a perfectly reasonable life choice to make. That is the way human beings mostly operate. Lives are busy. They have other things they want to focus on.

I always say that the biggest divide in the news is not left to right. It’s interested, uninterested. The news is fundamentally a hobby.

I can look at the polling on how people feel about the economy, and I can tell you the number of people dissatisfied is significantly larger, multiples larger, than the number of people watching Fox News, to say nothing of watching or absorbing smaller than Fox News conservative outlets. So I don’t want to just give that all to the news.

SIMON ROSENBERG: No, I’m not going to give it all to the news. But I just — let’s just go to data because I think that one of the things you were saying earlier is that there are — we have to distinguish when we talk about these things, particularly here in your kind of setting, between things that are true and things that people believe because they’re not the same. And it’s really important in a time of rising untruth that we don’t give up on the idea that there is an objective reality out there.

And the objective reality is the country is far better off than when Joe Biden came to office in the midst of Covid, a huge recession, insurrection, and all the other things that were happening. And that’s why I believe that, over the course of this election, he’s going to be able to make the case that he’s made the country better, which was his primary goal as president. And he’s got a strong agenda for the second term.

But I go back to this basic idea. If you look at polling and in polls, high-quality large interview polls, on the economy, Democrats are giving Biden very high marks on the economy and believe the economy is doing really well. There is a huge divergence in the universe that we have to talk to that’s available to us because 40 percent of the country is not available to us — we have no ability to reach them — people are not nearly as down on the economy as the overall numbers are. They just aren’t. This is clear as day.

When you look at these other measures — life satisfaction, job satisfaction, income satisfaction — life satisfaction numbers are up in the 70s and 80s. Job satisfaction numbers are up in the 60s. Income satisfaction are in the 50s. And if you look at the Axios poll that they released just the other day, on questions of, how are you doing, not how is the economy doing, the numbers are way up in the 50s and 60s.

And so what it means to me is that we can make significant progress on this issue. We may not catch up to Trump, but we can’t expect to have the election we want to have if we’re trailing Trump on the economy by 10 points. And so we’ve got work to do here. But to your point, we have really powerful raw material to make the argument.

And I think television advertising and a real campaign where we’re prosecuting this stuff every day, I’m optimistic we can make progress because it’s true. And things being true does matter in a campaign. It’s easier to win arguments that are true than to win arguments that aren’t true, traditionally, in a campaign. It’s not always the case but usually the case.

So what we have to do is doable in traditional politics. The things we have to do are doable. The things they have to do I don’t think are doable. I don’t think that they can take this guy because — let me make one basic point about Trump, which we haven’t talked about is that the question was asked of Iowa voters, Iowa Republicans, if he is convicted of a crime, would you view it as a disqualifier for him being able to run for president? 30 percent of those voters said it would be a disqualifier.

If you want to talk about a blinking red warning light about the potential for the Trump candidacy to collapse and for us to have a route in the election, the data is there if you want to look at. It the second data piece on this? NBC Sunday poll with Des Moines Register, Haley voters, 20 percent of the Iowa electorate were asked in the poll, would you vote for Trump or Biden in the general election? 43 percent said Biden. 22 percent said Trump.

These are crazy numbers. If we get 40 percent of the Haley voters, we’re going to be getting up into the 50s. Now, I don’t think they’ll all come with us. But there is incredible clear data from this past week that Trump is a deeply troubled candidate and that he could easily go into the general election as the most wounded, degraded candidate that we’ve seen in the modern era.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: You worked for Bill Clinton. You were in the Barack Obama Democratic Party orbit.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And both of them I think are interesting here. If you go back to their midterm elections, they got stomped, absolutely stomped. Under Clinton, Democrats lost the House for the first time in 40 years. Under Obama, the Democratic Party just got annihilated in 2010. And they both looked fairly weak.

Obviously, Joe Biden had a better midterm than they did. And he’s polling a little bit behind where they were, which people can interpret in different ways. But what lessons do those politicians have for him or the Democratic Party now? What can Joe Biden learn from what Clinton and Obama did to then win re-election?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Both of those campaigns started much earlier than the Biden campaign has. Clinton was an incredible politician, and was in the game every day, and let his team loose early on in 1995. We really set the terms of the debate early, which, really, we ended up winning re-election by eight points. It was an enormous victory in 1996.

And Obama, same thing. The campaign was much further along than where the Biden campaign is now. And so, to me, the urgency of the moment is they’ve got to just accelerate the development of the campaign. Campaigns are organic things. They grow.

It’s like building a battleship. You can’t do it overnight. You can’t just flip a switch, and a campaign turns on. You have to hire people, and some people don’t work out. And you try tactics, and they don’t work. And you’ve got to learn from it, and you’ve got to keep reiterating all the time.

And this is why I’m talking about the need for them to engage more frontally in the day-to-day battle because we’ve got to go through an accelerated process of getting this thing into a general election, day-to-day general election, mode. We have a very short window here now. The general election is really beginning.

It’s now. Trump’s won, functionally. And we’re in the general election. I think Trump is going to start attacking Biden much more frontally very soon, I would imagine, even with his ads and in terms of their day-to-day engagement because he doesn’t really have any opposition in the Republican Party anymore. And I think the campaign isn’t really ready for that right now. And so, to me, the most important thing is the Biden world needs to accelerate the development of the campaign.

EZRA KLEIN: I think a lot, as a lot of people do, about the role Joe Biden’s age will play in the campaign. You look at polling. Biden’s age is the number one concern voters have about him. But then I’ve been trying to think about what is that concern at its core because something you’ll hear people say, I’ve said something like it — I think he’s been a pretty good president, not that I wouldn’t argue with some things he has done.

But I think economic outcomes are looking strong. I think his management of a lot of foreign policy crises has been very stable, very steady. The ability to build international coalitions has been very impressive. The congressional dynamics have been very good. They’ve gotten a lot of big legislation passed.

That said, I think two things emerge here. One is that organizations reflect their leaders. That is like a truism across any organization you can think of, businesses, campaigns, everything. And what you were saying about Bill Clinton and about Barack Obama, about the energy of it, Clinton being out there immediately after the loss in the midterms, Barack Obama beginning to try all these grand bargains, and super negotiating committees, and rages endlessly out there, showing that he’s trying.

And Biden hangs back, and I think his organization strangely — not strangely — predictably has this quality of him. There is a lack of energy to it because there’s a lack of energy at this point to him, which I do think is age related. I followed Joe Biden for a long time. This is not something I would have said about the Joe Biden of 2000, or 2008, or 2012. That’s one dimension of it.

The other dimension of it that worries me is that I think, at a very fundamental level — and this is going to be reflected in a piece I’m working on — the Democratic Party has become the party of normalcy, almost like the Conservative Party in a more philosophical way, the party that is saying, we are going to keep American democracy. We are going to have relatively competent people in the relevant positions doing the things they are supposed to be doing.

It’s not democratic socialism. It’s not intense around different forms of identity anymore. Under Joe Biden and in relationship to MAGA, the Democratic Party, at least for this moment in American politics, is the party of normalcy. And the one problem with that for them is that Joe Biden is himself somewhat abnormal.

He is just older than we’ve ever seen in a president. And in terms of that promise of stability, of consistency, the promise that on an emotional level is a party saying to everybody, look, those people are nuts. We’ve got this. We have the people who can just keep this under control.

And then people see Joe Biden, and he doesn’t project that command to them. Command is a performance. It’s a sense of what people are capable of. It’s energy. It’s not just outcomes.

And that feels, to me, to be where right now I look at his age, and I see it actually affecting things. I think that he hangs back in part because of whether they don’t think he’s an effective messenger. Or he doesn’t. Or he doesn’t. I don’t know.

But it just reflects something now in him that is now we’re seeing it in the campaign. And I think this fundamental thing they want to say, which is, we are the party of people you can trust. And they’re the party of people who God knows what. People worry about his ability to do this.

And they’ve not even tried, as best I can tell, to answer that. You could imagine things they could do, but they are not trying. And those things concern me.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah. Listen, I really — I was listening very closely to what you were saying because I think it’s very nuanced. And you’ve, obviously — you’re writing a piece about it. So you’ve been thinking about it, and I think it was very well articulated.

And so let me try to respond. I do think that we have to litigate the age issue in this election. And the way that I tell Democrats all the time, we have to run towards it, not run away from it because it really matters. It’s front of mind for voters, and we can’t pretend that it isn’t.

And I think we have to make the case that, as somebody who’s formerly young myself, that when you get older, you not just lose a step. But you also gain wisdom, experience, and capabilities and that that wisdom, experience, and capability have been central to his success, and that his success as president is actually because of his age, not despite of it. I do believe that we’re going to have to invest a lot of money and energy in explaining why the first term was successful.

He offered to do one thing in the first term, which was to get us to the other side of Covid effectively. And he has. And he needs to own that, I think, and to make it clear that you made me president to do this thing. I did it. We’re on the other side.

And I think that he’s going to be able, I think, to make a very clear argument that you asked me to do something. I did it. I got two more big things I want to do with all of you together. If you elect me, we can do those things together and continue to make progress.

This next set of challenges have to be grounded, I think, deeply in this fight for democracy, domestically and abroad. And I also think climate change is this other existential fight that’s in front of us. And so I do think there’s a way to address all that.

But the other part of what you said is that I do think the communications burden of this election is going to fall much more on the campaign than is traditionally the case. Think about the difference between running a campaign for this Joe Biden and running it for Barack Obama or Bill Clinton, who were two of the best communicators in modern American history. It means that the campaign has greater responsibilities.

And so it means that the ability of the campaign to execute, the team that’s in there, their strategies, their day-to-day operations, their mobilizing, what I’ve called for is a reinvention of the war room. This is part of the new way we have to be thinking, which is the war room in our mind’s eye is 20 sweaty kids drinking Red Bulls, producing TikTok videos. And what we need the war room to be now is two - to three-million people who are networked into the campaign, amplifying the good works of Joe Biden and the Democrats, to redesign a campaign so that the campaign itself is louder, is taking on more communications’ responsibility, acknowledging everything that you’re describing.

It has to do more and be better than most presidential campaigns have had to be in recent years, which is why we needed to get going. It needs to accelerate its growth. But look, you’re raising really important issues. I think these are all things that can be managed. They’re not unmanageable in a political context. I think fixing Donald Trump and making him look like a presidential candidate is not something that is manageable.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to talk about some trends inside the Democratic Party that stretch before and beyond Joe Biden. And the big one is the changing composition of the parties. So it’s, I think cliché at this point, known to say that Democrats have gained higher-income voters, lost ***working-class*** voters. I’ll put some numbers to that. In 1968, 52 percent of white people who never attended college voted Democratic. In 2020, only 35 percent did.

When you look at voters of color, Donald Trump improved his margins among particularly ***working class*** Latinos between 2016 and 2020. Democrats did not hugely roll that back in 2022. So even if Democrats can win elections with this sort of emergent higher-income, more-educated coalition, why are they losing ***working-class*** voters? And what can they do about it?

SIMON ROSENBERG: I don’t have the numbers right in front of me, but I’m pretty sure that Biden won voters under $100,000 in 2020.

EZRA KLEIN: Yes, but by less than Democrats used to, and that’s consistent across elections going before Biden.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I think — but this is important because we’re not losing ***working-class*** voters. We actually won ***working-class*** voters in 2020 and because of the strong performance with Hispanic and minority people-of-color ***working-class*** voters, and yes, some of the margins have been cut a little bit. And we’ll see if that happens again in 2024.

I think 2020 was a highly unusual election because of Covid. More Hispanics had to work in in-person jobs. Fewer had health insurance. And I think the shutdown Democrat argument against Biden in 2020 that Trump made actually was material, and it’s still material today in our politics because I think, for some younger working people, Biden got on the other side of opportunity for them whereas Trump was the guy fighting to make sure they could continue to earn a living right and to feed their family and that, for Biden, the shutdown argument, I think, is lingering and is part of his brand that we’ve never really been able to fully overcome.

And I think it’s particularly important for people of lower-socioeconomic status who needed to work every day in order to feed their family, who had no reserves. We have a more acute problem with white ***working class*** than we do with the overall ***working class***. And the erosion that’s taken place, the so-called erosion that’s taken place, with Hispanics and African Americans I don’t think is as great as some have argued. And let me make my case for this is that, on Hispanics, and, as you know, this has been an area that I’ve been a pioneer in in working with the Hispanic community. I did the first bilingual poll ever done in the Democratic Party and produced the first Spanish language ads back 20 years ago.

And part of where I think a lot of the analysis in the Hispanic vote has gotten completely wrong is that it’s not factoring in the growth of the population. And so if you get 65 percent of 100, that’s 65 votes. But if you get 63 percent of 200, you have more. Smaller piece of a bigger pie, you still get more pie. So in the Southwest, in the heavily Mexican-American parts of the United States, Democrats are far stronger in every state than they were 20 years ago.

We are burying the Republican Party now in the Southwest and in California. And we’re even getting reasonably close in Texas. And we can’t do it against Abbott, but in the other elections, we’ve gotten reasonably close. And so I think things are not nearly as dire as some folks of my colleagues in the industry have represented, in my view.

EZRA KLEIN: I feel like this is a little bit confusing things through statistics, or at least taking statistics, that tell you different things. I take your point on the bigger pie, smaller percentage is still more pie. Nevertheless, if you keep losing percentage, eventually, you get less of the pie.

And so there’s an erosion here. We watched it with Democrats, with the white ***working class***. You could have said that for some time. And it’s like, OK, well, they’re still winning the white ***working class***. They’re still winning it. Oh, now they’re not winning it, but it’s close enough.

And so something is happening here, whether you buy all of educational polarization or not. I’m on record many times saying I think educational polarization is tracking something else than what people think it is tracking. It is some kind of referent for class, and I think there’s issues of cultural representation there, and whether or not people feel respected, and other things happening. So I don’t love the educational polarization conversation nor am I going to completely throw it overboard.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I’m with you, by the way. Can I endorse your interpretation of that? [LAUGHS]

EZRA KLEIN: I appreciate that. But you are seeing very — and I take your point on the Southwest. But again, if Republicans begin closing that proportion gap, eventually they’re going to close the election gap, too.

SIMON ROSENBERG: But they’re not — this candidate, Donald Trump, this candidate can’t do that.

EZRA KLEIN: Maybe he can’t. Well, I don’t know. I would not have expected if you had told me from 2016 to 2020, for all the messaging the Democratic Party and the sense of what Donald Trump was doing was destroying the Republican Party forever among voters of color but maybe winning over these racist whites, actually what happens is that Joe Biden wins the election because suburban whites move over to him, even as they suffer very surprising defections among voters of color in different ways.

And so I think you should take more seriously than you are. Or I would at least like to get you to answer the question from the perspective of somebody who takes more seriously that Democrats understand themselves to be the party of the ***working class***. And even if they do have a majority now among voters making less than $100,000, they are increasingly reliant on a different kind of voter. And that is both a question for building a bigger majority.

At some point, you’ve got to start winning back some of these ***working-class*** voters if you want 55 percent. It’s also a kind of spiritual moral identity question. If you’re the party who your whole thing is that you are trying to make things better for ***working-class*** Americans and you are losing your margin among ***working-class*** Americans, I think you should wonder what is happening here. So if you were to buy that, what would you say is happening here?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah, no. So I want to be clear that I think also, to get granular on the data, I think we’re seeing more erosion with ***working class*** men. And that also may have to do with Trump’s machismo and his —

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, that’s closer to my theory of it.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah, no, no. I think that that’s very real because it’s not just people of color. There didn’t used to be such big gender gaps in Black and Hispanic communities, and now there are starting to be significant gender gaps, which the abortion issue in the Hispanic community is exacerbating. I’m not dismissing this at all. We have to be concerned about the erosion you’re describing.

But we also have to be careful to be accurate in understanding what is actually happening. And yes, if we keep eroding, if we keep seeing a diminishment of our vote with Hispanics, some of the margins we have will be diminished. But that’s not what’s happening. I want to be clear.

We are doing better in Arizona, in the parts of the country with heavily Mexican-American populations, than we’ve ever done. Where I find one of the people who make this argument, Ruy Teixeira, to be so comical, frankly, is that his book is called “Where Have All the Democrats Gone?” and yet we’ve just gotten more votes in the last four presidential elections than we’ve gotten since the 1930s and ’40s. We’re actually doing better nationally than we’ve done since he’s been alive.

And the idea that we’re losing things as opposed to gaining things, net, is just not the right way to look at all this. Our coalition’s changing. We have to adapt to it in part because their party is changing. And I think we have to be open and to do what you’re describing, which is we have to really study this stuff and come to an understanding about how do we build majority coalitions.

And so I hear you on the spiritual piece of this. And I think that we have work to do here. Look, I want to be very clear. I’m optimistic, but we have a lot of work to do.

Big chunks of our coalition have wandered from us right now. And we’ve got work to do to get them back. Largely young people, people of color are wandering from the Democratic Party right now. And if you look at polling, they’re not wandering into being nonvoters. They’re wandering into third-party options for now.

And so we’re going to have to contest — with these third-party candidates, we’re going to have to go in there and fight it out. Joe Biden’s not going to just have to run against one candidate. He could be running against four altogether. But I’m confident that we have a strong enough argument. And if the campaign is strong, I’m confident that we’ll be reasonably successful.

EZRA KLEIN: You made this point that there were distinctive dynamics in 2020 around Covid that might have really cut Democrats’ margins among Hispanics. I think that the possible analogy to that this year is young voters in Israel. And I’ll be honest that, two months ago, I wasn’t taking this that seriously. I kind of figured it would blow over in American polling, and that may still very much be true when you think 10 months into the future.

But when I look at the polling now, it does seem very real to me. This is something that, emotionally, is very real to the people following it, which, if you’re on social media, you’re one of them now, more often than not. And I’m curious how you take that, the possibility of a fracture over foreign policy between Biden and young voters who he very much needs to turn out, who did turn out in 2022. But that was before this war.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah, who turned out in 2018, 2020, and 2022. We’ve had very, very strong historical performance with young people in recent elections. Would a foreign policy issue like this become a top-tier voting issue for any age cohort in the country in a general election that’s going to be about so many other things? It would be unusual for that to happen. And for the marginal 25-year-old young voter in the United States, the idea that, in November, Israel-Hamas will be more important to them than their job, or health care, or democracy, or abortion, or climate, or guns, it’s unlikely that that’s the case.

I think there is, though, however, an influential small group of young people who this is going to be a top-tier voting issue. And they’re very organized. And they’re very loud. And they’re going to be part of what we have to deal with.

And it’s one of the reasons why I’ve been very aggressive about trying to get the youth-oriented part of this campaign up. And what I hope is that we’re going to see the most sophisticated, most well-funded youth campaign that we’ve ever seen in modern American history. I think the Biden team has to do this. I don’t think they really have any choice.

I think we’re going to do really, really well with young people. We’re going to do particularly really, really well with young women because of abortion and all the issues. I think we’ve got to start really treating the gender gap that’s growing. And the youth vote, which is connected to some of the other things we’ve talked about today, is something that has to become more understood about what’s happening with young people.

Many, many young women are just not available to Republicans anymore and may never be for the rest of their lives, by the way. I think this abortion extremism that we’ve seen, which we haven’t really talked about very much today, is the kind of thing that could cause the Republicans to lose elections for a generation. It is one of the most extreme policy outcomes in American history, stripping rights away from more than half the population.

What happens with men is going to be — we’re going to have to contest that more. I think that some of the allure of Trump’s machismo and his kind of Joe Rogan-ish positioning has been attractive to a lot of young men. And I think we’re going to have to go in and fight it out with young men in a way that’s going to be very different from young women.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the reasons I think it’s important to look at the shifting composition is the parties have to adapt — you said this a minute ago — have to adapt to who is actually in them. And when you do that, it shifts what you can say, what you can do. This is very true for the Republicans.

We can talk about the Democrats all day. The fact that Republicans have to adapt to being a MAGA coalition and have to say things that only that people in MAGA agree with, like the 2020 election was stolen, is a real problem for them.

For Democrats, there is, I think, the concern — and you see it if you read Ruy’s book. You could see it if you read my colleague David Leonhardt’s book, which is a more sort of economic take on this. His book is called “Ours Was the Shining Future”, and it’s a, I think, a very deep look at some of these issues. And the argument is that the Democratic Party, as it has become more connected to these higher-income, more-educated voters, has begun to reflect their concerns more, so emphasize things like environmentalism, abortion, and things like that that were — certainly tough for abortion before Dobbs.

But I think behind that is also reflect their cultural taste more. I think one of the things that happens with the educational polarization conversation is people want to look at it as materialism. But it’s partially a question of class representation.

That’s something Donald Trump and some Republicans are increasingly good at is saying to people who feel like they are on the outs of American life, whether they really are or not, I see you. I like you. You’re great. These other people are terrible. They’re elites looking down on you.

And the Democratic Party is losing the kinds of voters, it seems to me, that don’t like a vibe within the Democratic Party. They like the consumer protections, but they’re not really that connected to politics. So calling up the policies from one side or the other is not really how they think about politics. But they look around, and they see a party led by people who they don’t think would like them if they met them, that the most important question in politics is not, do you like the candidate, but, do you think the candidate would like you?

And that’s the vulnerability here, that, if these dynamics persist, we’re not just talking about vote totals. We’re talking about what a party feels like to people because it reflects who has power in it. As the Democratic Party is more and more people with literal power in society inside of it, it reflects that.

That turns off people who feel on the outside of that power structure. And that also just creates a very combustible kind of polarization in the country. That is, I think, my deeper concern about the set of things, not that you can’t imagine an electoral-winning coalition. But you can imagine feedback cycle effects in terms of what the parties are that is not great for the country, not great for them, but also not great for the party, the Democratic Party, has traditionally intended itself to be.

SIMON ROSENBERG: There’s a lot there, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: Sure is.

SIMON ROSENBERG: We have to just ground ourselves in the reality that Trump has lost and the Republicans have lost the 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2023 elections. And so the loss is their loss, not our loss, and we have to not allow ourselves to get to a place where the Democratic Party is in trouble or losing. I just don’t —

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not saying that. I’m saying that these other dynamics that are worth taking seriously.

SIMON ROSENBERG: I know, but I think this notion that the Democratic Party is sort of in trouble or in losing, I just reject that in many of these arguments.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, what about able to vanquish MAGA? Not win elections by a bit, not win the Senate but lose a house, not win specials by a bit, but actually destroy it.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Well, let’s see what happens in 2024. I want to go back to this basic reality that I think is not present adequately in the daily discourse that we all have with each other, which is that something really significant has happened in the last two years, which is the party in power has actually gained seats all across the country. It’s an anomalous event.

And so, to me, this is the most important electoral data that exists, far more important than any crappy 800-sample poll that’s being done out there right now because we keep having a dramatic thing happen. There is a massive repudiation of MAGA happening all across the country. I’m going to answer your question here in a second, but I want to start by not conceding that the Republican Party is strong and winning. They’re not.

And so I don’t know that their formula is successful. And I think what you’re going to see in 2024 is a really substantial and significant splintering of the Republican Party. I think the Never Trump or Never MAGA, former Republican wing of the Republican Party, if we were in a parliamentary system right now, there would be a new party, a center-right party that would have emerged with Liz Cheney as the head of it. She’d be in our cabinet. We would have — MAGA would be down in the 40s, right in the low 40s and polling. And we would be a sort of a coalition government. We can’t do that in our system.

I do think the Biden campaign is going to have to figure out some way to do that virtually. If we have Liz Cheney and Mitt Romney and Adam Kinzinger and all these folks campaigning for us in 2024, it’s going to make a big difference. It’s going to create a huge permission structure for Republicans who are not MAGA, which could be up to 20 percent of the Republican Party, by the way. We’re talking about huge numbers.

And I do think going back to what you said earlier, my other response to all this is that you argued earlier that we’re the party of normalcy, that we’re the party that is presenting a normal face for America, a very normal guy, one of the most religious presidents in modern American history, that the face of the Democratic Party is one of normalcy, and regular people. And that’s part of our goal.

Investment is being made in red states and red districts all across the country because of Biden’s huge investment agenda. We’re not running away from Republican voters. We’re trying to run towards them and help bring them into our coalition. And so I think all — again, I go back to this basic view that the things that we have to do are doable.

Every party has issues. We have assets, liabilities. You’ve got challenges and things. But I don’t think we’re as culturally — if we were so culturally out of it, why do we keep winning elections, again and again and again?

And so I think this has been exaggerated, in my view. I think it’s a problem to be managed, but it’s not a problem that is defining the Democratic Party. And frankly, on the issue of the polarization you’re talking about, that polarization has been created and fostered by a political leader and by his allies in the right-wing media. And the idea that, somehow, we’re responsible for the polarization in the country right now I think is just unbelievable bullshit.

Joe Biden has been a good president. He’s been a good president for everybody. So I stand by this basic idea that the Democratic Party is strong. We’re winning elections. I’m proud of my president, proud of my country, proud of my party, and I think we’re going to have a really good election.

And I think there’s, obviously, Ezra, to your point, there are things to worry about, things to manage. But I think, on balance, things are going really well, and I’m really looking forward to this election, and engaging with the Republicans frontally, and having these arguments out in the public.

EZRA KLEIN: Always our final question. What are three books you would recommend to the audience?

SIMON ROSENBERG: Yeah. These are three — I prepped for this, and it was an interesting question because it was not what have I read recently but what would I recommend. And so three — I just finished a book called “A New Deal for the World” by Elizabeth Borgwardt. I think a lot about how the four freedoms speech that F.D.R. gave in January of 1941 was really the beginning of the modern Democratic Party as we know it. And it put us on the side as Democrats.

And I’ll just do this really quickly is that part of my whole story that I tell is that the world that we imagined and built as Democrats in the 1940s has created a golden age in human history. There’s never been a better time to be alive in the history of the world and the history of humanity than it has been during this period of Pax Americana and the world that we imagined and built together. And as I tell Democrats in my talks, that we’re part of the most noble political enterprise that’s ever existed, the Democratic Party.

We’ve done more good for more people than any other organized political entity in human history. And that’s why this fight for preserving that global order and making sure that people of the world, their kids, and their grandkids have the opportunities that we had is so central to everything that we need to do now as Democrats. We’ve been called before, and we’re being called again.

The second book that I just went back and have been rereading is “On Tyranny” by Timothy Snyder. And his first chapter, which is called “Do Not Obey in Advance”, is something that I literally think about every single day about everything that I do. And it’s a very powerful articulation of how we can’t yield to the authoritarian narrative story impulse. We can’t self censor and that we need to create our own reality and stay in our own reality and not yield to what they want us to do.

I think this is so central. It’s a central operating principle, I think, for Democrats and for people who are pro-democracy in the United States now.

And then the third book, a little bit less weighty, was — I’m a big fan of Daniel Silva. And his latest Gabriel Allon book “The Collector” is something that I — just recently, I finally got to it. It had been sitting on my bedside for months. And I just love his books.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: Simon Rosenberg, thank you very much.

SIMON ROSENBERG: Thanks, Ezra, for what you do.

EZRA KLEIN: This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Rollin Hu. Fact checking by Michelle Harris. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld with additional mixing by Jim Shapiro. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon.

The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin and Kristin Lin. 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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[***Trump-Backed Bernie Moreno Wins the Republican Senate Primary in Ohio***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKJ-3C81-DXY4-X001-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 19, 2024 Tuesday 23:46 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1003 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:** Mr. Moreno, who has never held elected office, will try to unseat Senator Sherrod Brown, the last remaining Democrat to hold statewide office.

**Body**

Mr. Moreno, who has never held elected office, will try to unseat Senator Sherrod Brown, the last remaining Democrat to hold statewide office.

Bernie Moreno, a wealthy former car dealer and political newcomer, rode the endorsement of former President Donald J. Trump to victory on Tuesday in a hotly contested primary to determine which Ohio Republican would take on incumbent Senator Sherrod Brown, the last Democrat to hold elective statewide office in the increasingly Republican state.

Mr. Moreno beat State Senator Matt Dolan, whose family is a majority owner of the Cleveland Guardians baseball team, and Frank LaRose, Ohio’s secretary of state, once again proving the power of Mr. Trump’s backing among Republican primary voters. Rarely has a contest so clearly divided the old-line Republican establishment from the new Trump wing of the party, and again, the former president’s movement prevailed.

“We’re the party of the future,” declared Mr. Moreno, who would be one of the Senate’s richest members, and its only South American-born member, if elected in November. “We’re the party that’s going to rebuild the middle class in this country.”

Mr. Brown answered, “The choice ahead of Ohio is clear: Bernie Moreno has spent his career and campaign putting himself first and would do the same if elected. Elections come down to whose side you’re on, and I’ll always work for Ohio.”

It was, for Mr. Trump, another triumph. For Mr. Dolan, it was a second loss to a Trump-backed political neophyte. In 2022, the author and investor J.D. Vance beat him in the primary race for retiring Senator Rob Portman’s seat and went on to win the general election that fall.

In stumping for Mr. Dolan, Mike DeWine, Ohio’s Republican governor, tried to make the case that Mr. Dolan was the best candidate to take on Mr. Brown, whose blue-collar appeal and well-established political persona could be tough to beat, even in a state where Mr. Trump won the last two presidential elections by more than eight percentage points each time.

But in the Trump era, electability has rarely beaten fealty when the former president has gotten involved. Mr. Moreno flooded Ohio airwaves with advertisements attacking Mr. Dolan for what he called an insufficient level of support for Mr. Trump’s border policies. Mr. Trump rallied voters for Mr. Moreno over the weekend outside Dayton, making headlines for saying some migrants were “not people” and, amid a discussion of the auto industry, predicting “a blood bath” if he lost in November.

Mr. Moreno will enter the general election depleted of cash and bruised by an extremely negative primary campaign that ended with a super PAC backing Mr. Dolan [*airing allegations from an Associated Press report*](https://buckeyeleadershipfund.com/) that he had once advertised on an adult website for male dates. Mr. Moreno’s campaign said the adult website profile was created in 2008 by an intern as a prank.

Of the $9.7 million that Mr. Moreno has raised for his run, less than $2.4 million remained at the end of February, according to campaign finance reports.

A Democratic super PAC aired advertisements in the closing days of the primary to elevate Mr. Moreno, clearly indicating that he was the candidate the party wanted to take on in November.

That same organization, the Senate Majority PAC, immediately castigated the candidate it had elevated, saying in a statement that Mr. Moreno “won’t be able to hide from the fact that he is a shady car salesman.” The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee [*attacked him immediately*](https://buckeyeleadershipfund.com/) as well, recycling videos of attacks from Mr. Dolan and Mr. LaRose that tarred the newly minted nominee as an untrustworthy, corrupt extremist.

The Senate Republicans’ political arm framed the race differently. “Bernie is a political outsider running against a liberal career politician who has been running for office for 50 years,” said Senator Steve Daines of Montana, who chairs the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Mr. Brown enters the general election primed, rested and ready. He has raked in money not only from unions that are steadfastly loyal to him but also from corporations that have business before the Senate Banking Committee, which he chairs. His campaign has raised at least $26.7 million this election cycle, and has more than $13.5 million cash on hand.

But Mr. Moreno will be running in a state that has become increasingly hostile to Democrats — and that President Biden is unlikely to contest seriously as he campaigns for another term.

Mr. Brown, who was first elected to the Senate in 2006, evinced little concern over his third re-election bid. The Democrat has made his reputation as a pro-worker politician who has stood against free-trade agreements and stood for unions in a state where the ***working class*** has drifted to the G.O.P. since Barack Obama won it twice.

“We will spend this campaign contrasting my position on taking on Wall Street, my position on taking on the drug companies, my position on trade with theirs,” he told reporters on Monday in Dayton, Ohio.

Ohioans did vote last November to enshrine abortion rights in the state’s Constitution and to legalize marijuana, votes that Mr. Brown says show a political complexity that defies clear partisan division.

With control of the Senate within Republicans’ reach, Ohio and Montana — the only states where Mr. Trump won in 2020 and a Democrat is standing for re-election — promise to gain huge national attention. Democrats hold 51 Senate seats, but one of those, in deep-red West Virginia, is virtually gone with the retirement of the conservative Democrat Joe Manchin III.

The Senate Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with the Senate Republican leadership, and an allied group, American Crossroads, have already reserved nearly $83 million worth of advertising time this fall in Ohio.

PHOTO: Bernie Moreno, left, a wealthy Republican, will face Senator Sherrod Brown, the last Democrat to hold statewide elective office. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** March 21, 2024

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[***Is New York Better Off Than It Was 7 Years Ago? New Yorkers Say No.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKF-CMK1-DXY4-X0PY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 19, 2024 Tuesday 00:08 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1077 words

**Byline:** Dana Rubinstein Dana Rubinstein covers New York City politics and government for The Times.

**Highlight:** From public safety to schools, New Yorkers across all five boroughs feel that their city’s quality of life has worsened in recent years, according to a survey.

**Body**

From public safety to schools, New Yorkers across all five boroughs feel that their city’s quality of life has worsened in recent years, according to a survey.

In the South Fordham section of the Bronx, residents give their neighborhood a Bronx cheer. In Park Slope in Brooklyn — known and parodied for its self-consciously liberal politics and wealth — residents are much happier.

But if there’s one thing that New Yorkers can agree upon, it’s that the quality of life in New York City has suffered.

Only half of New Yorkers plan to stay in the city, according to [*the survey*](https://cbcny.org/2023-resident-survey) of more than 6,600 New York City households conducted in the second half of 2023 by the nonpartisan Citizens Budget Commission — a follow-up to similar studies in 2017 and 2008.

Only 39 percent are content with the state of public education. Only 37 percent are happy with the level of public safety in their neighborhood, and only 34 percent are satisfied with their neighborhood’s cleanliness. Less than a third rate the city’s quality of life as excellent or good. Less than a quarter are content with the overall quality of government services.

And in nearly every category, New Yorkers felt worse about the city in 2023 than they did in 2017 and 2008.

How would you rate the quality of life in New York City overall?

2023: 29.8 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as “excellent” or “good”

2017: 51.2 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as “excellent" or “good”

2008: 50.9 percent of New Yorkers rated the quality of life in New York City as “excellent” or “good”

“The drop is stark,” said Andrew Rein, president of the Citizens Budget Commission, even as he stressed that context matters. In 2017, New York City was “seven years into a really robust recovery,” he said. In 2023, New York City was still emerging from a pandemic that brought economic and social upheaval.

While New Yorkers largely agreed that quality of life in New York City was unimpressive, they diverged widely on how that manifested itself in their particular neighborhoods — an apparent reflection of neighborhood wealth.

Residents of Brooklyn’s Community Board 6, which includes Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Park Slope, Cobble Hill and Red Hook, were the city’s most content, with more than 38 percent describing their local quality of life as “excellent.” The nearby communities of Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Fort Greene and Dumbo clocked in next, with 37.8 percent calling their neighborhoods “excellent,” followed by Manhattan’s Greenwich Village.

“Gosh,” said Andrew Gounardes, a state senator whose district encompasses several of those Brooklyn neighborhoods. “I would guess that that’s due to a combination of factors, probably access to parks — whether it’s Prospect Park or the waterfront parks, green space, lots of strong schools, lots of vibrant nightlife and commercial corridors and restaurants and small businesses.”

In no other neighborhood did more than 30 percent rate of residents rate their neighborhood as highly.

On the flip side, 54 percent of residents in the Bronx’s Community Board 5, which encompasses South Fordham, ranked the quality of life in their neighborhood as “poor” — the worst ranking in New York City. The next two lowest-ranking community boards were also in the Bronx, including neighborhoods of Mott Haven, Melrose, Port Morris, Belmont and East Tremont.

Pierina Sanchez, the Bronx councilwoman whose district includes Community Board 5, said she was not surprised. “Our crime rates in the district, they’ve not been great, right?” she said.

“The perceptions of New York City going in the wrong direction are compounded with a district that has a harsher socioeconomic reality,” Ms. Sanchez said. “It’s facing generations of disinvestment.”

Fifty percent or less of New Yorkers rated positively 52 of 68 metrics, from overall quality of life in New York City and the quality of after-school programs and public housing, to ease of travel within the five boroughs, neighborhood cleanliness and rat control. They expressed more satisfaction with New York’s Fire Department, emergency medical services, libraries, neighborhood parks and garbage collection.

The survey was sent to a random sampling of nearly 126,000 households, 6,632 of which participated. The respondents included at least 90 households from each of New York City’s [*59*](https://cbcny.org/2023-resident-survey) community boards, and each board’s responses are available on an [*interactive map*](https://cbcny.org/2023-resident-survey) on the commission’s website.

Sixty-two of the survey metrics were similar to topics in the 2017 survey. In 54 of those, residents expressed more dissatisfaction than in 2017, with the satisfaction level relatively unchanged in the other eight.

Of particular note were New Yorkers’ feelings about crime. There were [*more*](https://cbcny.org/2023-resident-survey) murders, robberies, felony assaults, burglaries and grand larcenies last year than in 2019, before the pandemic began, and the survey questions reflected a marked unease in how people felt riding the subway or walking the streets at night.

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel … riding a subway during the day

2023: Only 49 percent of New Yorkers felt at least somewhat safe riding the subway during the day.

2017: 82 percent of New Yorkers

2008: 86 percent of New Yorkers

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel … riding a subway at night

2023: Only 22 percent of New Yorkers feel at least somewhat safe riding the subway at night.

2017: 46 percent

2008: 45 percent

Please rate how safe or unsafe you feel … walking alone on a street in your neighborhood at night

2023: Only 51 percent of New Yorkers felt at least somewhat safe walking in their neighborhood at night.

2017: 70 percent of New Yorkers

2008: 69 percent of New Yorkers

Mayor Eric Adams, a retired police captain, ran for office in 2021 on an anti-crime platform, and the Citizens Budget Commission gave him credit for trying to target areas of concern to New Yorkers.

“We will continue to advance Mayor Adams’s bold plans to make the city safer, more prosperous, and more livable, and we look forward to working with our partners at the City Council, in Albany, and in Washington, D.C., to ensure the city continues to work for ***working-class*** New Yorkers,” said Charles Lutvak, a spokesman for the mayor.

PHOTO: Nearly 38 percent of residents surveyed in Brooklyn Heights rated the neighborhood “excellent.” Other areas fared less well. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2024

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[***What a Split in Consumer Confidence Means for Biden; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9S-XWM1-JBG3-600D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 12, 2024 Monday 10:40 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1811 words

**Byline:** Nate Silver

**Highlight:** Americans voters don’t think the economy stinks, actually.

**Body**

We look to be headed for what could be the [*most unpopular sequel*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) since “[*Home Alone 3*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible)”: Biden versus Trump 2.0.

One question goes to the heart of shaping expectations for that matchup: Why does everyone think the economy stinks? The answer is critical, given that this election is probably going to be close and that a [*variety*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) of [*research*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) suggests that the incumbent party’s chances are better when the economy is going well. President Biden, trailing Donald Trump in [*early polls*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible), will need all the economic tailwind he can get.

Many commentators on the left have focused on a [*purported gap*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) between what they see as objective data signaling a strong economy (in particular, [*persistently low unemployment*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible)) and middling to poor consumer sentiment, as in the University of Michigan’s [*monthly survey*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible). This gap is sometimes attributed to [*partisanship*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) — Republican voters being unwilling to give any credit to Mr. Biden — and at other times to [*media bias*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) or [*misinformation driven by social media*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

But a more careful look at the numbers reveals a different answer, and it requires no great mystery to solve, no inexplicable gap in the data.

Consumers don’t think the economy stinks. Rather, they quite rationally have mixed feelings about this economy — and they’ll reveal different things depending on exactly what you ask them.

They are pessimistic about the future, but that’s a matter of prediction, not misinterpreting the current economic situation. And here’s the good news for Mr. Biden: They’ve noticed that the data has been improving.

The terms “consumer sentiment” and “consumer confidence” are sometimes used interchangeably, but in fact, they reflect two distinct, longstanding monthly surveys often cited by economists. First, there’s the University of Michigan’s [*Index of Consumer Sentiment*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) and, second, the Conference Board’s [*Consumer Confidence Survey*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

One is not inherently better than the other. The best approach, as I usually recommend with polls, is to average them. They actually show rather different things: The Michigan numbers are bearish (although growing less so), and the Conference Board’s are bullish. That’s because they [*focus on different parts of the economy*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

The Michigan survey puts a lot of weight on voter assessment of [*pocketbook conditions*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible), like whether it’s a good time to buy major household items. The Conference Board, meanwhile, [*asks*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) consumers for their appraisal of the employment and business outlook but nothing that really gets directly at things like consumer prices.

Also, and this is often overlooked: In both surveys, the majority of the questions are about voters’ predictions about future economic conditions and not how they think the economy is doing at the moment. For example, the Michigan survey asks about the possibility of a severe economic downturn over the next five years — a question that is [*notoriously hard*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) even for professional economists to answer.

Fortunately, instead of one measure of consumer confidence, Michigan and the Conference Board publish separate subindexes, one focused on consumers’ perceptions of current conditions and the other about their outlook for the future. So we actually have four measures: two major surveys each asking two varieties of big-picture questions.

In these surveys, from January 1978 to January 2021, consumers’ assessments of current conditions usually tracked each other well. But in summer 2021, they began to diverge — and not just a little but hugely.

For the graphic below, I’m [*normalizing*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) these four data series such that they’re all on the same scale, with a mean of 100 and a [*standard deviation*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) of 20. This just means we can make an apples-to-apples comparison. A score of 100 represents the average consumer outlook between 1978 and 2024.

Why the divergence? The Michigan survey’s questions are highly sensitive to inflation, whereas the Conference Board’s are not. And spring 2021 is when inflation really [*began to ramp up*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible), as a white-hot-recovery summer ran headlong into supply chain disruptions, the Delta variant and an injection of stimulus cash that led people to splurge on everything from [*revenge travel*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) to [*meme stocks*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible). It was a deeply strange economy — good for businesses and good for job seekers but sometimes awful for consumers.

So while the Conference Board numbers have consistently been above average, at roughly a score of 120 on my normalized scale, the Michigan ones took longer to recover. However, they have rebounded recently, reflecting a deceleration of inflation since roughly mid-2023, perking up to 82 on my adjusted scale in the [*January 2024 reading*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) after having bottomed out at 41 in June 2022.

If you’re wondering why a rebound took so long — or why the numbers are still below average — there are a lot of good explanations. First, although inflation numbers when reported in the news typically focus on the year-over-year change, that’s not necessarily how consumers see them. [*Prices*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) in December 2023 were only 3 percent higher than they were a year earlier, but they were 10 percent higher than they were two years earlier and about 18 percent higher than three years ago.

It takes some time for consumers to adjust to the new normal. Historically, Michigan consumer sentiment is more closely correlated with the two-year change in inflation than the one-year shift. If so, the timing could work out well for Mr. Biden, since the period of peak inflation will be farther in the rearview mirror by the time people vote this November.

But it’s a mistake to assume that consumers have just been reacting to news accounts of high gasoline or fast-food prices instead of actually observing the impact on their bottom lines. People’s pocketbooks really aren’t in great shape — income growth has struggled to keep up with inflation.

[*Per capita disposable income*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) is historically one of the variables that most accurately predicts election outcomes. Although heavily affected by the timing of Covid stimulus payments, nothing about this data suggests that consumers have had a smooth economic ride under Mr. Biden. While corporate profits have [*soared to record levels*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible), Americans quickly [*spent down the savings they built up*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) during the pandemic.

It’s not just that goods have cost more; people have also been spending more on an inflation-adjusted basis. Often, that’s a sign of healthy economic demand. But consumers [*may be getting the short end of the stick*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) as companies use [*algorithm-driven*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) [*price discrimination*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) to induce them to spend more on things they don’t necessarily want or need.

In short, consumers’ assessment of the current economic situation has been rational. They accurately report in the Conference Board survey that the business and labor outlook has been good. And they accurately report in the Michigan data that their pocketbooks were in bad shape because of inflation but are now recovering. But what about their future outlooks?

The Michigan and Conference Board surveys closely overlap and tell the same story. Consumers were in an optimistic mood for roughly the first six months of Mr. Biden’s term, with both surveys usually showing above-average forward-looking numbers. Then the Delta variant and the period of extremely high inflation hit in midsummer 2021 and knocked the wind out of Mr. Biden’s promise of a rapid return to normalcy. Inflation was more persistent than economists were initially expecting, and the S&amp;P 500 lost around a [*fifth of its value on an inflation-adjusted basis in 2022*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

Combined with the profound disruptions of the pandemic itself, there has been a lot of anxiety-inducing economic news for consumers. Although optimism is up in recent surveys, it’s not surprising that it’s taken some time to process everything.

There are other long-term factors pointing toward greater pessimism. For almost a quarter-century, a majority of voters have consistently thought [*the country is on the wrong track*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible). There are [*many indications of a rise in poor mental health*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) (and [*equally*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) many [*hypotheses*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) for why that’s happened). Many Americans have [*existential concerns about the long-term future*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) for reasons ranging from environmental degradation to runaway artificial intelligence.

Fundamentally, Mr. Biden’s challenge is that it’s hard to persuade voters who are used to constant doomscrolling that it’s [*Morning in America again*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible). The [*incumbency advantage seems to be declining*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible); it’s been 40 years since a president won re-election by a double-digit margin.

But there is good news for Mr. Biden: Voter perceptions about the economy [*are*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) [*not*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) [*just vibes*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) — in fact, consumer sentiment has tracked the objective data well. That data, particularly the pocketbook numbers that were the weak point before, has begun to improve, and that leaves the door open for a potential second Biden term.

It will be a close call. His numbers against Mr. Trump haven’t improved yet — in fact, they’ve [*gotten slightly worse lately*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) — even as consumers’ mood has become more buoyant. His age is still a [*big concern for voters*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) (yes, Mr. Trump is old, too), and the [*Democratic coalition is bitterly divided*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) over the Israel-Hamas war and other issues.

Polls show that Mr. Biden has [*lost the most ground with lower-income voters*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) — even as the robust labor market has helped the ***working class***. His campaign, however, has said it will replay its 2020 strategy, [*with a heavy emphasis on Mr. Trump*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) and a lesser one on the economy. It’s plausible that this is a mistake. Mr. Trump is no longer the incumbent president. And ***working-class*** Democrats don’t necessarily have the instinctual dislike for Mr. Trump that college-educated progressives do.

Still, we [*ought not to take an overly deterministic view*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) of the relationship between the economy and elections. With any sort of presidential election forecast, we’re limited in making reliable inferences because of small sample sizes. This is only the 12th presidential election, for instance, since Michigan began regularly publishing its consumer numbers. We’re in dangerous territory where models sometimes fail. No previous presidential incumbent has been as old as Mr. Biden — and no major-party challenger has been as old as Mr. Trump.

If Mr. Biden loses, it may be because the [*relationship between the economy and perceptions of the president has weakened*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) — not because voters are mistaking a good economy for a bad one.

Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

Nate Silver, the founder and former editor of FiveThirtyEight and the author of the forthcoming book “[*On the Edge*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible): The Art of Risking Everything,” writes the newsletter [*Silver Bulletin*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/160-million-americans-are-eligible).

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Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

This article appeared in print on page SR11.

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[***Mexico City Has Long Thirsted for Water. The Crisis Is Worsening.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C27-YTT1-JBG3-61HP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** James Wagner, Emiliano Rodríguez Mega, Somini Sengupta and César Rodríguez James Wagner covers Latin America, including sports, and is based in Mexico City. A Nicaraguan American from the Washington area, he is a native Spanish speaker. Emiliano Rodr&amp;#237;guez Mega is a reporter and researcher for The Times based in Mexico City, covering Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Somini Sengupta is the international climate reporter on the Times climate team.

**Highlight:** A system of dams and canals may soon be unable to provide water to one of the world’s largest cities, a confluence of unchecked growth, crumbling infrastructure and a changing climate.

**Body**

A system of dams and canals may soon be unable to provide water to one of the world’s largest cities, a confluence of unchecked growth, crumbling infrastructure and a changing climate.

A collision of climate change, urban sprawl and poor infrastructure has pushed Mexico City to the brink of a profound water crisis.

The groundwater is quickly vanishing. A key reservoir got so low that it is no longer used to supply water. Last year was Mexico’s hottest and driest in at least 70 years. And one of the city’s main water systems faces a potential “Day Zero” this summer when levels dip so much that it, too, will no longer provide water.

“We’re suffering because the city is growing immeasurably and it cannot be stopped,” said Gabriel Martínez, 64, who lives in an apartment complex that struggles to get enough water for its roughly 600 residents. “There aren’t enough resources.”

Mexico City, once a water-rich valley that was [*drained*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) to make way for a vast city, has a metropolitan population of [*23 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), among the [*top 10*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) largest in the world and up from 15 million in 1990. It is one of several major cities facing severe water shortages, including [*Cape Town*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html); [*São Paulo*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), Brazil; and [*Chennai*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), India. Many are the consequence of years of poor water management compounded by scarce rains.

And while Mexico City’s problems are worsening, they are not new. Some neighborhoods have lacked adequate piped water for years, but today, communities that have never had shortages are suddenly facing them.

Experts were warning about dwindling water supplies almost two decades ago to little avail. If the capital’s water network was already [*held together by a thread*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) then, now “some parts of the system are falling apart,” said Manuel Perló Cohen, an urban planning researcher who studies Mexico City’s water system.

“Mexico is the biggest market in the world for bottled water,” said Roberto Constantino Toto, who heads the water research office at the Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City. It is a reflection, he added, “of the failure of our water policy.”

[*Exceptionally dry conditions*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) are the immediate source of the city’s water plight. Mexico has long been [*vulnerable to droughts*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), but nearly [*68 percent of the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) is in moderate or extreme drought, according to the [*National Water Commission*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html).

The Cutzamala water system — one of the world’s largest networks of dams, canals and pipes that supplies 27 percent of the capital’s water — is at a historically low 30 percent of its normal capacity, [*official figures*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) show. At the same point [*last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), it was at 38 percent, and in [*2022*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), it stood at 45 percent.

Officials have projected June 26 as an estimated Day Zero, when the Cutzamala system could drop to the 20 percent base line where it would no longer be tapped to provide water to Mexico City.

The water level at one reservoir fell so low that officials [*halted*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) its use in April.

“It’s sad,” Juan Carlos Morán Costilla, 52, a fisherman who lives along the reservoir, said as he stood on heat-cracked ground that was once underwater.

Groundwater, which supplies most of the city’s water, is pumped out twice as fast as it is replenished, experts [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html).

The city’s water supply, some of which is brought in from far away, flows through old pipes along an [*8,000-mile-long grid*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) vulnerable to earthquakes and sinking ground, and where leaks have caused an estimated 35 percent water loss — more than the Cutzamala system provides.

The city’s water challenge has become an issue in elections next month.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, whose aides have said that Day Zero [*will not happen*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), has insisted that his government is already addressing Mexico City’s water problems. New wells were being dug, he said, and officials are working to end corruption involving water consumed by big industries. He has also proposed bringing more water in from outside the city.

Claudia Sheinbaum, Mr. López Obrador’s protégée who resigned as Mexico City mayor last year to become the [*leading presidential candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), has defended her administration’s handling of the water crisis.

Scientists, she said recently, could not have predicted the prolonged drought, and, if elected president, she would present an ambitious plan to fix the issues.

The National Water Commission did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Some areas of Mexico City have long been without sufficient tap water, including Iztapalapa, a ***working-class*** community and the capital’s most populous borough with 1.8 million people. Residents rely on municipal water trucks to fill cisterns or water tanks in homes or buildings. If that is not enough, people pay for private trucks or, in extreme cases, illegally tap water lines.

But as water has become scarcer, other areas of the city are facing increased rationing, including reduced flow and getting water during only certain times of the day or on certain days of the week. Water has been rationed to 284 neighborhoods [*this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), even to more affluent ones, compared with 147 [*in 2007*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html).

“Boroughs that have never suffered from water problems in their life are going to have to really learn how to take care of it,” said Adriana Gutiérrez, 50, who manages and lives in a 154-unit apartment complex in Iztapalapa that relies on water trucks. Residents treat every drop as precious, using water from showers to clean their homes.

For 20 years, Dan Ortega Hernández, 50, never had a problem with running water at his barbershop in Mexico City’s Tlalpan borough. But in November, he said he turned on the faucet and nothing came out. Now, when he does get running water under the rationing plan, he fills a 1,100-liter tank and hopes it lasts until the next scheduled day for running water.

That is a more regular supply than at his home elsewhere in Tlalpan. He said municipal water trucks used to come every four days or so but now take longer, sometimes up to a month. Rather than using water at home, he washes the family’s clothes at a laundromat near his shop.

“It’s scary that we’re running out of resources,” he said.

There is no evidence that Mexico’s drought is attributable to climate change. But the effects are made worse by rising temperatures.

Mexico City’s [*average temperature rose*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html) by around 3 degrees Celsius (4.5 degrees Fahrenheit) in the past century, more than double the global average. Exceptionally hot days (above 30 degrees Celsius, or 86 degrees Fahrenheit) have doubled in some parts of the city, according to [*a 2020 study*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html). That could partly be because of climate change, and partly because of the city’s exponential growth, with concrete and asphalt replacing trees and wetlands.

Heat aggravates a water crisis: People need more water and more water evaporates.

The latest [*Water Risk Atlas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), published by the World Resources Institute, describes Mexico City as facing “extremely high” water stress, its highest category.

As Mexico prepares to head to the polls to elect a new president, the water problems have been largely overshadowed by other topics, like crime and the economy. Water has, however, been a main focus of the mayoral race.

Water will reach the entire city, regardless of where people live, one candidate said. The leaks that the governing party failed to repair will be fixed, another proclaimed. A master plan will be put in place, a third added, to unearth buried rivers that run through the capital.

“Now everybody is like, ‘Yeah, I’m going to solve the water problem,’” Dr. Perló said. “But I’ve heard this story many times before.”

Some progress has been made. An enormous $2 billion tunnel opened in 2019 to take wastewater from Mexico City to a distant water treatment plant. A program to harvest unutilized rainwater was launched in some poorer neighborhoods. A small section of Lake Texcoco, largely drained to build the city, was restored. More wells and aquifers are being explored.

But several experts said the steps taken so far had not been aggressive enough and others ill directed.

Most of the focus by city and national governments has been on seeking faraway watersheds that supply other Mexican states to quench Mexico City’s thirst. But the majority of the city’s treatment plants do not operate at full capacity. Many [*let wastewater go untreated*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html), which is then discharged into rivers or lakes, polluting what could be alternative sources of water.

The estimated price tag for addressing the water crisis reaches as high as $13.5 billion, according to [*the city’s water agency*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html).

The rainy season, which typically runs from roughly June to November, would usually help replenish Mexico City’s water systems. But the capital saw historically low rainfalls during last year’s rainy season.

The Day Zero warning by some experts has been a flashpoint in Mexico City, used to bash the governing party, which includes Mr. López Obrador and Ms. Sheinbaum. But it has also helped train the public’s attention to the deepening problem.

“It creates a feeling of fear, anxiety, worry,” said Fabiola Sosa Rodríguez, a water management and climate policy researcher.

Lizbeth Martínez García, 26, who lives in a hillside community in Iztapalapa where a weekly municipal water truck fills the tanks that supply the four families in her building, said she asked the delivery man about the future.

He told her, she said, that the future meant even less water.

“We’re scared,” she said.

PHOTOS: Distributing containers to collect water in Mexico City, where scores of neighborhoods are rationing the dwindling supply. (A1); As neighborhoods face increased water rationing, including reduced flow and getting water during only certain times or days, residents save what they can in barrels or small containers and buckets. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CÉSAR RODRÍGUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12) This article appeared in print on page A1, A12.

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[***Acolyte of the Left Aims to Kill Race-Based College Admission***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WR-PB31-JBG3-608V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

For decades, Richard Kahlenberg has pushed for a class-conscious approach to college admissions. He may finally get his wish, but it comes at a personal cost.

ROCKVILLE, Md. -- For the college class he teaches on inequality, Richard D. Kahlenberg likes to ask his students about a popular yard sign.

''In This House We Believe: Black Lives Matter, Women's Rights Are Human Rights, No Human Is Illegal, Science Is Real,'' it says.

His students usually dismiss the sign as performative. But what bothers Mr. Kahlenberg is not the virtue signaling.

''It says nothing about class,'' he tells them. ''Nothing about labor rights. Nothing about housing. Nothing that would actually cost upper-middle-class white liberals a dime.''

Since picking up a memoir of Robert F. Kennedy at a garage sale his senior year of high school, Mr. Kahlenberg, 59, has cast himself as a liberal champion of the ***working class***. â€Œ 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.

In books, â€Œarticles and academic papers, Mr. Kahlenberg has spent decadesâ€Œ â€Œarguing for a different vision of diversity, one based in his 1960s idealism. He believes that had they lived, Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have pursued a multiracial coalition of poor and ***working class*** people, a Poor People's â€ŒCampaign that worked together toward the same goal of economic advancement in education, employment and housing. â€Œ â€Œ

Race-conscious affirmative action, while it may be well intentioned,â€Œ â€Œdoes just the opposite, he says -- aligning with the interests of wealthy studentsâ€Œ and creating racial â€Œanimosity.

With class-conscious affirmative action, ''Will there be people in Scarsdale who are annoyed that ***working-class*** people are getting a break? Probably,'' he said in an interview. ''But the vast majority of Americans support the idea, and you see it across the political spectrum.''

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.

That alliance has cost him his position as a senior fellow at the Century Foundation, the liberal-leaning think tank where he had found a home for 24 years, according to friends and colleagues. (Mr. Kahlenberg and the Century Foundation said he left to pursue new opportunities and would not elaborate.)

Criticsâ€Œ â€Œdispute everything from his statistics to his rosy outlook on politics. They say that the concept of race-neutral diversity underestimates how racism is embedded in American life. They say that classâ€Œ-conscious affirmative action will bring its own set of problems as universities try to maintain high academic standards. â€Œ

And they argue that his class-based solution could backfire.

''It may well be where we wake up,'' said Douglas Laycock, a law professor at the University of Virginia who has been involved in litigation on the side of universities. ''But if you get rid of affirmative action, then you create racial hostility in the other direction.''

Mr. Kahlenberg is unfazed.

''I think people will have to come around,'' he said, ''because class will be the only game in town.''

The Harvard Legacy

Mr. Kahlenberg's own life shows the complicated calculus of college admissions.

He grew up in White Bear Lake, Minn., a suburb of St. Paul, where his father was a liberal Presbyterian minister and his mother was on the school board. His father had gone to Harvard, and when he came of age, so did Mr. Kahlenberg. His grandfather paid for his college tuition.

Decades later, he seemed a little defensive about possibly having benefited from the ''tip'' that Harvard gives to the children of alumni.

''This will sound incredibly insecure or something, but I was gratified that I got into Yale and Princeton, because it made me feel like, OK, it wasn't just legacy, hopefully,'' he said.

Around the time he was accepted to Harvard, he was smitten by a memoir of R.F.K. by the Village Voice journalist Jack Newfield. Mr. Kahlenberg wrote his senior thesis on Kennedy's campaign for president. And today, a nicked and scratched poster of his idol hangs in his study at home.

At Harvard, Mr. Kahlenberg was surrounded by ''immense wealth,'' he recalled. ''I didn't feel like an outsider. I was second-generation Harvard, I was upper middle class and a lot of my friends went to boarding school.''

But his roommate, who came from more modest circumstances, ''helped educate me on the idea that ***working-class*** white people had a raw deal in this country, too,'' he said.

Mr. Kahlenberg studied government and went on to Harvard Law School, where he wrote a paper about class-based affirmative action, advised by Alan Dershowitz, his professor, known for defending unpopular causes and clients.

The paper inspired him to write his influential 1996 book, ''The Remedy,'' which developed his theory that affirmative action had set back race relations by becoming a source of racial antagonism.

''If you want ***working-class*** white people to vote their race, there's probably no better way to do it than to give explicitly racial preferences in deciding who gets ahead in life,'' he said. ''If you want ***working-class*** whites to vote their class, you would try to remind them that they have a lot in common with ***working-class*** Black and Hispanic people.''

The book caused a stir, in part because of the timing. California voters adopted a ban on affirmative action in public colleges and universities the same year. Such bans have since spread to eight other states, and California voters reaffirmed it in 2020.

Today, as in the mid-1990s, polls show that a majority of people oppose race-conscious college admissions, even as they support racial diversity. Public opinion may not always be right, Mr. Kahlenberg said, but surely it should be considered when developing public policy.

What has changed, he said, is the political environment. Universities and politicians and activists have hardened their positions on affirmative action.

And the Supreme Court supported them, at least until now.

A Different Measure of Diversity

If Mr. Kahlenberg had his way, college admissions would be upended.

His basic recipe: Get rid of preferences for alumni children, as well as children of faculty, staff and big donors. Say goodbye to recruited athletes in boutique sports like fencing. Increase community college transfers. Give a break to students who have excelled in struggling schools, who have grown up in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, in families with low income, or better yet, low net worth. Pump up financial aid. Look for applicants in towns that do not normally send students to highly selective colleges.

It's an expensive punch list and requires more financial aid for ***working class*** and poor students, which is the main reason, he believes, that universities have not rushed to embrace it.

Meanwhile, elite colleges have become fortresses for the rich, he said. Harvard had ''23 times as many rich kids as poor kids,'' Mr. Kahlenberg testified in 2018 at the federal court trial in the Harvard case, referring to a 2017 paper by Raj Chetty, then a Stanford economist, and colleagues.

Mr. Kahlenberg said the civil rights movement has made strides, while overall, poor people have been left further behind. He points to studies that found that the achievement gap in standardized test scores between rich and poor children is now roughly twice the size of the gap between Black and white children, the opposite of 60 years ago.

He said his theories are working in states with affirmative action bans, pointing to his 2012 study that found seven of 10 leading universities were able to return to previous levels of diversity through race-neutral means.

Even the University of California, Berkeley, which was having trouble achieving its pre-ban levels of diversity, has made progress, he said. In 2020, Berkeley boasted that it had admitted its most diverse class in 30 years, with offers to African American and Latino students rising to the highest numbers since at least the late-1980s, without sacrificing academic standards.

Mr. Kahlenberg's analysis of Harvard's outlook is also optimistic.

In a simulation of the class of 2019, he found that the share of Black students at Harvard would drop to 10 percent from 14 percent, but the share of white students would also drop, to 33 percent from percent from 40 percent, mainly because of the elimination of legacy and other preferences. The share of Hispanic students would rise to 19 percent from 14 percent and the Asian American share would rise to 31 percent from 24 percent.

The share of ''advantaged'' students (parents with a bachelor's degree, family income over $80,000, living in a neighborhood not burdened by concentrated poverty) would make up about half of the class, from 82 percent. SAT scores would drop to the 98th percentile from the 99th.

Because he is focused on class-based diversity, Mr. Kahlenberg is satisfied with these results, but for many educators, the rise in low-income students does not make up for a drop in Black students.

Harvard, for instance, says it crafts every class carefully, looking for diversity of life experiences, interests and new ideas -- and to cultivate potential leaders of society. Fewer Black students make that mission harder.

In the affirmative action trial, Harvard said that Mr. Kahlenberg's model would produce too little diversity, and water down academic quality. Its actual class of 2026 is 15.2 percent African American, 12.6 percent Hispanic and 27.9 percent Asian American.

Universities should not turn to class-conscious admissions, ''under the illusion that it will automatically produce high levels of racial diversity,'' said Sean Reardon, an empirical sociologist at Stanford.

''It's just sort of the math of it,'' Dr. Reardon said. ''Even though the poverty rates are higher among Blacks and Hispanics, there are still more poor whites in the country.''

Dr. Reardon does not dispute that society should provide more educational opportunity for low-income students. But, he said, ''I think in recent years, there's been much more of a perspective that there's structural racism in America society. The idea that race and racial differences are sort of explainable by class differences is no longer the dominant idea.''

An Uneasy Alliance

Edward Blum, the conservative activist behind the lawsuits against Harvard and U.N.C., said Mr. Kahlenberg came to his attention when ''The Remedy'' was published. The focus on class seemed like a powerful bridge between the left and the right, Mr. Blum said.

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''I don't know who could be against that,'' he said. ''That's the unifying theme that Rick Kahlenberg -- he's the godfather of it."

Although the two men have had a long correspondence, Mr. Kahlenberg said they are more strange bedfellows than ideological soul mates, and that his views have been unfairly conflated with Mr. Blum's.

''If the choice were race-based preferences or nothing, I would be for race-based preferences,'' Mr. Kahlenberg said, his delivery more emotional than usual. ''For those who think in terms of guilt by association, that point is lost.''

There are those who think that Mr. Kahlenberg is being used by Mr. Blum, who has made a specialty of challenging laws that he believes confer advantages or disadvantages by race. He orchestrated a lawsuit that led to the Supreme Court gutting a key section of the Voting Rights Act, and was responsible for litigation against the University of Texas, charging discrimination against a white applicant, which failed.

Dr. Laycock, of the University of Virginia, expects that once the Supreme Court rules, conservative groups that are now promoting race-neutral alternatives will claim they are racial proxies and turn against them. ''Everybody knows that's why it's being used,'' he said. (Mr. Blum said his group will not, though other conservative groups could do so.)

In other words, that Kennedy- and King-style multiracial coalition may not come easily.

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Kitty Bennett and Jack Begg contributed research.Kitty Bennett and Jack Begg contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/richard-kahlenberg-affirmative-action.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/richard-kahlenberg-affirmative-action.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Richard D. Kahlenberg's vision of diversity is rooted in class. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1)

Richard D. Kahlenberg, who traces his political awakening to Robert F. Kennedy, joined with the conservative activist Edward Blum, left, in arguing against race-based affirmative action in cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina.

Demonstrators outside the Supreme Court last October, during hearings on affirmative action. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17) This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Liberal Maverick Fighting Race-Based Affirmative Action***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WK-56P1-DXY4-X43F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 10:12 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 2390 words

**Byline:** Anemona Hartocollis

**Highlight:** For decades, Richard Kahlenberg has pushed for a class-conscious approach to college admissions. He may finally get his wish, but it comes at a personal cost.

**Body**

For decades, Richard Kahlenberg has pushed for a class-conscious approach to college admissions. He may finally get his wish, but it comes at a personal cost.

ROCKVILLE, Md. — For the college class he teaches on inequality, Richard D. Kahlenberg likes to ask his students about a popular yard sign.

“In This House We Believe: Black Lives Matter, Women’s Rights Are Human Rights, No Human Is Illegal, Science Is Real,” it says.

His students usually dismiss the sign as performative. But what bothers Mr. Kahlenberg is not the virtue signaling.

“It says nothing about class,” he tells them. “Nothing about labor rights. Nothing about housing. Nothing that would actually cost upper-middle-class white liberals a dime.”

Since picking up a memoir of Robert F. Kennedy at a garage sale his senior year of high school, Mr. 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.

In books, ‌[*articles*](https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/27/should-affirmative-action-be-based-on-income/class-based-affirmative-action-works) and academic papers, Mr. Kahlenberg has spent decades‌ ‌arguing for a different vision of [*diversity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/01/us/supreme-court-affirmative-action-diversity.html), one based in his 1960s idealism. He believes that had they lived, Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have pursued a multiracial coalition of poor and ***working class*** people, a [*Poor People’s ‌Campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/1968/05/13/archives/5000-open-poor-peoples-campaign-in-washington-5000-open-poor.html) that worked together toward the same goal of economic advancement in education, employment and housing. ‌ ‌

Race-conscious affirmative action, while it may be well intentioned,‌ ‌does just the opposite, he says — aligning with the interests of wealthy students‌ and creating racial ‌animosity.

With class-conscious affirmative action, “Will there be people in Scarsdale who are annoyed that ***working-class*** people are getting a break? Probably,” he said in an interview. “But the vast majority of Americans support the idea, and you see it across the political spectrum.”

His advocacy has brought him to an uncomfortable place. The Supreme Court is widely [*expected*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/31/us/supreme-court-harvard-unc-affirmative-action.html) 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*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/19/us/affirmative-action-lawsuits.html); 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.

That alliance has cost him his position as a senior fellow at the Century Foundation, the liberal-leaning think tank where he had found a home for 24 years, according to friends and colleagues. (Mr. Kahlenberg and the Century Foundation said he left to pursue new opportunities and would not elaborate.)

Critics‌ ‌dispute everything from his statistics to his rosy outlook on politics. They say that the concept of race-neutral diversity underestimates how racism is embedded in American life. They say that class‌-conscious affirmative action will bring its own set of problems as universities try to maintain high academic standards. ‌

And they argue that his class-based solution could backfire.

“It may well be where we wake up,” said Douglas Laycock, a law professor at the University of Virginia who has been involved in litigation on the side of universities. “But if you get rid of affirmative action, then you create racial hostility in the other direction.”

Mr. Kahlenberg is unfazed.

“I think people will have to come around,” he said, “because class will be the only game in town.”

The Harvard Legacy

Mr. Kahlenberg’s own life shows the complicated calculus of college admissions.

He grew up in White Bear Lake, Minn., a suburb of St. Paul, where his father was a liberal Presbyterian minister and his mother was on the school board. His father had gone to Harvard, and when he came of age, so did Mr. Kahlenberg. His grandfather paid for his college tuition.

Decades later, he seemed a little defensive about possibly having benefited from the “tip” that Harvard gives to the [*children of alumni*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/us/legacy-admissions-colleges-universities.html).

“This will sound incredibly insecure or something, but I was gratified that I got into Yale and Princeton, because it made me feel like, OK, it wasn’t just legacy, hopefully,” he said.

Around the time he was accepted to Harvard, he was smitten by a [*memoir*](https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/a/jack-newfield-4/robert-kennedy-a-memoir/) of R.F.K. by the Village Voice journalist Jack Newfield. Mr. Kahlenberg wrote his senior thesis on Kennedy’s campaign for president. And today, a nicked and scratched poster of his idol hangs in his study at home.

At Harvard, Mr. Kahlenberg was surrounded by “immense wealth,” he recalled. “I didn’t feel like an outsider. I was second-generation Harvard, I was upper middle class and a lot of my friends went to boarding school.”

But his roommate, who came from more modest circumstances, “helped educate me on the idea that ***working-class*** white people had a raw deal in this country, too,” he said.

Mr. Kahlenberg studied government and went on to Harvard Law School, where he wrote a paper about class-based affirmative action, advised by Alan Dershowitz, his professor, known for defending unpopular causes and clients.

The paper inspired him to write his influential 1996 book, “The Remedy,” which developed his theory that affirmative action had set back race relations by becoming a source of racial antagonism.

“If you want ***working-class*** white people to vote their race, there’s probably no better way to do it than to give explicitly racial preferences in deciding who gets ahead in life,” he said. “If you want ***working-class*** whites to vote their class, you would try to remind them that they have a lot in common with ***working-class*** Black and Hispanic people.”

The book caused a stir, in part because of the timing. California voters adopted a ban on affirmative action in public colleges and universities the same year. Such bans have since spread to eight other states, and California voters reaffirmed it in 2020.

Today, as in the mid-1990s, polls show that a majority of people oppose race-conscious college admissions, even as they support racial diversity. Public opinion may not always be right, Mr. Kahlenberg said, but surely it should be considered when developing public policy.

What has changed, he said, is the political environment. Universities and politicians and activists have hardened their positions on affirmative action.

And the Supreme Court supported them, at least until now.

A Different Measure of Diversity

If Mr. Kahlenberg had his way, college admissions would be upended.

His basic recipe: Get rid of preferences for alumni children, as well as children of faculty, staff and big donors. Say goodbye to recruited athletes in boutique sports like [*fencing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/us/fencing-ivy-league-college-admissions.html). Increase community college transfers. Give a break to students who have excelled in struggling schools, who have grown up in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, in families with low income, or better yet, low net worth. Pump up financial aid. Look for applicants in towns that do not normally send students to highly selective colleges.

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Meanwhile, elite colleges have become fortresses for the rich, he said. Harvard had “23 times as many rich kids as poor kids,” Mr. Kahlenberg [*testified*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/23/us/harvard-admissions-race.html) in 2018 at the federal court trial in the Harvard case, referring to a 2017 [*paper*](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23618/w23618.pdf) by Raj Chetty, then a Stanford economist, and colleagues.

Mr. Kahlenberg said the civil rights movement has made strides, while overall, poor people have been left further behind. He points to [*studies*](https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/27/no-rich-child-left-behind/) that found that the achievement gap in standardized test scores between rich and poor children is now roughly twice the size of the gap between Black and white children, the opposite of 60 years ago.

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Harvard, for instance, says it crafts every class carefully, looking for diversity of life experiences, interests and new ideas — and to cultivate potential leaders of society. Fewer Black students make that [*mission*](https://college.harvard.edu/about/mission-vision-history) harder.

In the affirmative action trial, Harvard said that Mr. Kahlenberg’s model would produce too little diversity, and water down academic quality. Its actual class of [*2026*](https://college.harvard.edu/admissions/admissions-statistics) is 15.2 percent African American, 12.6 percent Hispanic and 27.9 percent [*Asian American*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/15/us/harvard-asian-enrollment-applicants.html).

Universities should not turn to class-conscious admissions, “under the illusion that it will automatically produce high levels of racial diversity,” said Sean Reardon, an empirical sociologist at Stanford.

“It’s just sort of the math of it,” Dr. Reardon said. “Even though the poverty rates are higher among Blacks and Hispanics, there are still more poor whites in the country.”

Dr. Reardon does not dispute that society should provide more educational opportunity for low-income students. But, he said, “I think in recent years, there’s been much more of a perspective that there’s structural racism in America society. The idea that race and racial differences are sort of explainable by class differences is no longer the dominant idea.”

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Kitty Bennett and Jack Begg contributed research.

Audio produced by Adrienne Hurst.

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PHOTOS: Richard D. Kahlenberg’s vision of diversity is rooted in class. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A1); Richard D. Kahlenberg, who traces his political awakening to Robert F. Kennedy, joined with the conservative activist Edward Blum, left, in arguing against race-based affirmative action in cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina.; Demonstrators outside the Supreme Court last October, during hearings on affirmative action. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHURAN HUANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17) This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** April 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Las Vegas, Biden Promotes Promises Kept to Black and Hispanic Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B88-9H21-JBG3-6067-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2024 Monday 12:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 784 words

**Highlight:** While Nevada has a primary this week, the president is looking ahead to the general election and trying to energize supporters in a key swing state.

**Body**

While Nevada has a primary this week, the president is looking ahead to the general election and trying to energize supporters in a key swing state.

Fresh off an [*overwhelming victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/03/us/politics/biden-win-south-carolina-primary.html) in South Carolina’s Democratic primary, President Biden rallied supporters on Sunday in Nevada, saying that he had kept his promises to the Black and Hispanic voters who helped elect him.

Mr. Biden spoke at a community center in the historic Westside neighborhood of Las Vegas, home to an African American community in a critical battleground state. He rattled off statistics about reductions in child poverty for Black, Hispanic and Indigenous people, talked about growth in minority-owned business and attacked former President Donald J. Trump for saying that immigration was “poisoning the blood” of the United States.

But he seemed to acknowledge that many voters were skeptical of his accomplishments as president at a time when his approval rating had [*sunk*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/biden-approval-rating/) below 40 percent

“I know, we know, we have a lot more to do,” Mr. Biden said. “Not everyone is feeling the benefits of our investments and progress yet.”

The president has been working to shore up his support among Black and Hispanic voters, who make up key Democratic constituencies, as Mr. Trump, his likely Republican opponent in November, [*tries to make inroads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/27/us/politics/trump-2024-nevada-caucus.html) among both groups.

Nevada will hold its Democratic primary on Tuesday, the party’s second official nominating contest after South Carolina. But Mr. Biden faces scant opposition here. One long-shot challenger, Representative Dean Phillips of Minnesota — who finished third in South Carolina on Saturday, behind the self-help author Marianne Williamson — [*will not even be on the ballot*](https://www.startribune.com/rep-dean-phillips-misses-filing-deadline-for-nevadas-presidential-primary/600312832/).

Instead, Mr. Biden made his trip on Sunday with an eye to the general election. Although Nevada has voted for Democrats in every presidential election since 2008, including for Mr. Biden in 2020, it remains a swing state with a recently elected Republican governor. In November, a New York Times/Siena poll found that Mr. Biden was [*trailing Mr. Trump by 10 points*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) in Nevada.

The president’s allies are working to bolster him. A pro-Biden super PAC recently announced it would reserve $250 million in advertising across seven battleground states, including Nevada — [*a record sum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/us/politics/biden-tv-ads-super-pac.html).

Shelby Wiltz, the president’s campaign manager in Nevada, said in a statement that the state’s “diverse communities” had delivered the White House for Mr. Biden.

In his narrow victory in Nevada four years ago, Mr. Biden was [*greatly helped*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/business/economy/las-vegas-casino-culinary-workers.html) by the state’s influential unions, which represent workers in the hospitality and casino industries. Many of those workers are Hispanic. Last month in Las Vegas, Mr. Trump [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/27/us/politics/trump-2024-nevada-caucus.html) that Mr. Biden had “devastated the Latino community” economically and that Hispanics had been “better off” financially under the Trump administration.

Mr. Biden last visited Nevada in December, when he [*announced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/us/politics/biden-las-vegas-trump.html) $8.2 billion in funding for passenger rail projects. He slammed Mr. Trump’s approach to infrastructure, saying that the former president had failed to deliver. The Biden campaign is [*heavily promoting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/25/us/politics/taking-on-trump-biden-promotes-infrastructure-decade-in-wisconsin.html) a bipartisan infrastructure bill that Mr. Biden has championed as a cudgel against Mr. Trump, although it could take years for voters to see the results of such projects.

Artie Blanco, a Democratic National Committee member from Nevada, called Mr. Biden the most “pro-worker president we have seen in generations,” but said he and his campaign needed to “ensure the ***working class*** know what he has done.”

As it has become more likely that Mr. Trump will win the Republican nomination, Mr. Biden has swung into campaign mode, holding rallies to trumpet his administration’s record. So far, he has faced few road bumps in the primary election. He won New Hampshire as [*a write-in candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/23/us/politics/biden-wins-democratic-primary-new-hampshire.html) last month, and then earned 96 percent of the vote in South Carolina.

On Saturday, Mr. Biden met with Black entertainment industry leaders at a fund-raiser at the Los Angeles mansion of George Lucas, the “Star Wars” filmmaker, before traveling to Las Vegas the next day.

Mr. Biden also took time over the weekend to commemorate the birthdays of his sons, Beau and Hunter.

Before leaving for the West Coast, he visited the site of Beau’s grave in Delaware on Saturday. Beau Biden, born on Feb. 3, [*died*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/31/us/politics/joseph-r-biden-iii-vice-presidents-son-beau-dies-at-46.html) at the age of 46 in 2015.

On Sunday, Mr. Biden brunched with Hunter, who turned 54 on Feb. 4, at a restaurant in Los Angeles. Hunter Biden is facing charges in two federal criminal cases that could [*go to trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/11/us/politics/hunter-biden-tax-charges.html) during the thick of the presidential campaign.

PHOTO: President Biden arriving in Las Vegas on Sunday, before the state’s primary election on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***How Much Longer Can ‘Vote Blue No Matter Who!’ Last?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67FK-WP41-JBG3-6016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 1, 2023 Wednesday 11:29 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2800 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** “It’s important not to overstate the damage that some perceive liberalism as having done to the Democrats’ electoral fortunes,” one scholar says.

**Body**

Over the past four decades, the percentage of white Democrats who identify themselves as liberal has more than doubled, growing at a much faster pace than Black or Hispanic Democrats.

In 1984, according to [*American National Election Studies*](https://electionstudies.org/data-tools/anes-guide/anes-guide.html?chart=lib_con_identification_7_pt) data, 29.8 percent of white Democrats identified as liberal; by 2020, that percentage grew to 68.5 percent. Over the same period, the percentage of liberals among Black Democrats grew from 19.1 percent to 27.8 percent and among Hispanic Democrats from 18 percent to 41 percent.

This shift raises once again a question that people have been asking since the advent of Reagan Democrats in the 1980s: What does it mean for a party that was once the home of the white ***working class*** to become a coalition of relatively comfortable white liberals and less-well-off minority constituencies?

I posed this and other questions to a range of scholars and political strategists, including [*William Galston*](https://www.brookings.edu/experts/william-a-galston/), a senior fellow at Brookings, who recently cited similar (though not identical) trends in [*Gallup data*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/467888/democrats-identification-liberal-new-high.aspx). In an essay last month, “[*The Polarization Paradox*](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2023/01/20/the-polarization-paradox-elected-officials-and-voters-have-shifted-in-opposite-directions/): Elected Officials and Voters Have Shifted in Opposite Directions,” Galston wrote:

In 1994, white, Black and Hispanic Democrats were equally likely to think of themselves as liberal. But during the next three decades, the share of white Democrats who identify as liberal rose by 37 points, from 26 percent to 63 percent, while Black and Hispanic Democrats rose by less than half as much, to 39 percent and 41 percent, respectively.

Galston argued in an email that Black Democrats have assumed an unanticipated role in the party:

African Americans are now a moderating force within the party. It was no accident that they rallied around the most moderate candidate with a serious chance of winning the nomination in 2020, or that the leader of the pro-Biden forces took the lead in rejecting the “defund the police” slogan.

The coalition of upper-middle-class liberals and minority voters, Galston wrote, “has been sustainable because the former believe in the active use of government to fight disadvantage of various kinds and are willing, within limits, to vote against their economic self-interest.”

[*Julie Wronski*](https://politicalscience.olemiss.edu/julie-a-wronski/), a political scientist at the University of Mississippi, wrote back by email:

Underlying the liberal shift among white Democrats is their tendency to hold more liberal racial attitudes. In the Voter Study Group’s [*Racing Apart*](https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publication/racing-apart) report, the percentage of white Democrats that hold the most liberal positions on the standard [*racial resentment measure*](https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/you.stonybrook.edu/dist/f/1052/files/2018/03/Feldman-and-Huddy-2005-Racial-Resentment-and-White-Opposition-to-Race-Conscious-Programs-10jw0wa.pdf) has increased over the last decade to such a large extent that their racial resentment views match those of Black Democrats.

The Democratic Party, Wronski continued, has become

a coalition of racial minorities (especially Blacks) and whites who are sympathetic to the inequities and challenges faced by minority groups in America. Racial identities and attitudes are the common thread that link wealthier, more educated whites with poorer minority constituencies.

The Democrats’ biracial ***working-class*** coalition during the mid-20th century, in Wronski’s view, “was successful because racial issues were off the table.” Once those issues moved front and center, the coalition split: “Simply put, the parties are divided in terms of which portion of the ***working class*** they support — the white ***working class*** or the poorer minority communities.” The level of educational attainment is the line of demarcation between the two groups of white voters.

By 2020, the white ***working class*** — [*defined*](file:///C:/Users/Thomas%20Edsall/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/TNY793P5/The%20White%20Working%20Class:%20National%20Trends,%20Then%20and%20Now%20%7C%20St.%20Louis%20Fed%20(stlouisfed.org)) by the Federal Reserve of St. Louis as “whites without four-year college degrees” — voted for Donald Trump over Joe Biden, 67 to 32 percent, according to [*network exit polls*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results). In the 2022 election, white ***working-class*** voters [*backed Republican House candidates*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2022/exit-polls/national-results/house/0) at almost the same level, 66 to 32 percent.

The shift of non-college white ***working-class*** support to the Republican candidates, Wronski wrote,

was driven by racial group animus. Trump was particularly able to attract members of the white ***working class*** on the basis of racial (and other) group sentiments — with those disliking minority groups being uniquely attracted to Trump, in a continuation of the division of the ***working class*** along racial lines.

There are those who argue, however, that the contemporary Democratic coalition is more fragile than Wronski suggests. [*Ryan Enos*](https://www.ryandenos.com/), a political scientist at Harvard, emailed to say, “If you’re a Democrat, you might worry that the coalition is not stable.”

Over the long haul, Enos wrote:

College-educated whites, especially those with higher incomes, are not clear coalitional partners for anyone — they don’t favor economic policies, such as increasing housing supply or even higher taxes on the rich, that are beneficial to the ***working class***, of any race. And many college-educated whites are motivated by social issues that are also not largely supported by the ***working class***, of any race. It’s not clear that, with their current ideological positions, socially liberal and economically centrist or rightist college-educated whites are natural coalition partners with anybody but themselves.

Enos went so far as to challenge the depth of elite support for a liberal agenda:

My sense is that much of the college-educated liberal political rhetoric is focused on social signaling to satisfy their own psychological needs and improve their social standing with other college-educated liberals, rather than policies that would actually reduce racial gaps in economic well-being, civil rights protections and other quality of life issues.

[*Paul Begala*](https://www.cnn.com/profiles/paul-begala), a Democratic strategist, is an explicit critic of the left wing of the party. “It is plain to me that the Democrats’ greatest challenge is the progressive left,” Begala wrote in an email:

Pew Research shows they are the most liberal, most educated and most white subgroup in the Democratic coalition. They constitute 12 percent of Democrats and those who lean Democrat — which means 88 percent of us are not on their ideological team.

In contrast, Begala continued:

Black voters are both the most loyal Democrats and the most sensible, practical, strategic and moderate voters. This is why it was important, politically and even morally, for President Biden to move the African-American-rich South Carolina primary ahead of overwhelmingly white Iowa and New Hampshire.

In the [*November 2021 study*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/11/09/the-democratic-coalition/#divides-within-the-democratic-coalition) of the composition of the Democratic Party that Begala referred to, Pew Research reported:

The progressive left makes up a relatively small share of the party, 12 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents. However, this group is the most politically engaged segment of the coalition, extremely liberal in every policy domain and, notably, 68 percent white non-Hispanic. In contrast, the three other Democratic-oriented groups are no more than about half white non-Hispanic.

This disproportionately white wing of the party, as I previously [*discussed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/opinion/ocasio-cortez-pressley-democrats.html?searchResultPosition=1), provided crucial support for Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ayanna Pressley when they ran for Congress in 2018, putting them over the top in their first primary victories over powerful Democratic incumbents.

A variety of forces is straining the center-left coalition.

[*Bruce Cain*](https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/people/bruce-cain), a political scientist at Stanford, replied by email to my inquiries:

Many white liberals live in enclaves of affluence, sheltered from the economic and personal insecurity of the low-income communities. They are more strongly motivated by identity issues around gender and race but are less concerned with poverty or economic insecurity issues than liberals in the sixties.

As a result, in Cain’s view:

Parts of the Democratic coalition are talking past each other and sometimes clashing. In the case of climate change, white liberals want to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles that most low-income nonwhites cannot afford. During Covid, affluent white liberals could work at home and have food delivered to them by nonwhite workers who left the food packages at their doorstep or who had to go to work and suffer higher rates of illness.

When all said and done, “White liberals are still a better deal for nonwhites than the Republican Party,” Cain contended, “but it is revealing that the African Americans in South Carolina preferred Biden to Sanders or Warren.”

The liberalism of white Democrats cuts across a wide range of issues. [*Brian Schaffner*](https://facultyprofiles.tufts.edu/brian-schaffner), a political scientist at Tufts, cited data collected by the [*Cooperative Election Study*](https://cces.gov.harvard.edu/):

In 2020 white Democrats scored similarly low on racial resentment as Black Democrats. And white Democrats actually have significantly lower levels of sexism than Black or Hispanic Democrats. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Democratic Party was indeed fairly divided on issues of race in particular, but that no longer seems to be the case.

Now, Schaffner continued, “white Democrats appear to be the most liberal group in the party on a range of issues, including immigration, climate, crime/policing, abortion, health care, gun control and economic/social welfare.”

I asked [*James Stimson*](https://stimson.web.unc.edu/), a political scientist at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, how the meaning of “liberal” changed over the past 40 years. He replied:

The term has become infused with racial content. That may be the key to the conversion of educated suburban voters into liberals and Democrats. Trump’s open racism must surely have added greatly to the new meaning of liberalism. Perhaps the L-word has become a way to say, “I am not a bigot.”

Along similar lines, [*Viviana Rivera-Burgos*](https://www.vivianariveraburgos.com/), a political scientist at Baruch College of the City University of New York, pointed out how much the liberal agenda has transformed in a relatively short time:

Issues like abortion, same-sex marriage and L.G.B.T.Q.+ rights and immigration have become important ideological cleavages in the past 40 years or so. Being a liberal today means you’re most likely pro-choice, pro-same-sex marriage, pro-expansion of L.G.B.T.Q.+ rights and anti-restrictive or punitive immigration laws. These issue positions couldn’t be inferred based on someone’s ideology alone 40 years ago.

[*Lanae Erickson*](https://www.thirdway.org/about/staff/lanae-erickson), a senior vice president at Third Way, a centrist Democratic group, argued in an email that there is a danger of overemphasizing the liberal tilt of the Democratic electorate:

Although the percentage of Democrats calling themselves liberal has grown over the past three decades, it still remains true that only about half of self-described party members identify that way — in contrast to Republican voters, about 80 percent of whom call themselves conservative. So Democrats have long had and continue to have a more ideologically diverse coalition to assemble, with nearly half of the party calling themselves moderate or conservative.

Erickson did not hesitate, however, to describe the party’s educated left wing as

overrepresented in the media, on Twitter and in positions of power. That group is loud and more culturally liberal, though they often purport to speak or act on behalf of communities of color. Meanwhile, the African American and Latino voters who deliver victories to Democratic candidates in nearly every race have remained much more ideologically mixed.

“If we continue to let white liberals on Twitter define what it means to be a Democrat,” Erickson warned her fellow Democrats, “we are going to continue to alienate the voters of color who are essential majority makers in our coalition. While the Twitterati wants to ‘Defund the Police,’ communities of color want their neighborhoods to be safe — both from police violence AND violent crime.”

To build her case, Erickson cited that role of minority voters in the last New York City mayoral election: “They elected Eric Adams and rejected the far-left candidates whose voting blocs were made up primarily of white liberals,” noting that “Adams outpaced [*Maya Wiley*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_Wiley) by 23 points with Black voters and 10 points with Hispanic voters.”

In local elections in 2021, Erickson continued, Black voters “rejected a measure in Minneapolis, where George Floyd was killed, to defund the police: According to ward-level data, the predominantly Black Wards 4 and 5 rejected the Minneapolis ballot measure by wide margins (over 60 percent voted no), while predominantly white wards drove the measure’s support.

Erickson suggested that the culturally liberal tilt of the party’s left wing was a factor in declining minority support:

Case in point: Democrats dropped nine percentage points with non-college voters of color between 2012 and 2020, falling from 84 percent support in 2012 to 75 percent in 2020, [*according to Catalist*](https://www.thirdway.org/blog/the-college-degree-conundrum-catalist-edition). This was most pronounced with non-college men of color who went from 81 percent Democratic in 2012 to 69 percent in 2020.

These losses reflect “a divergence in priorities and values,” Erickson wrote, citing [*poll data*](https://www.thirdway.org/memo/a-nuanced-picture-of-what-black-americans-want-in-2020) showing that

while Democratic primary voters say hard work is no guarantee of success, Black voters disagree — saying most people can get ahead in America if they work hard — and that by a two-to-one margin, Black Americans say it is necessary to believe in God to have good morals. Democratic primary voters of all races disagree with that statement by similar margins.

While the party is divided on values and priorities, Erickson pointed out that Democrats in Congress have reached general agreement on many issues that were highly divisive in the past:

There is only one pro-life Democrat left in Congress, and today’s moderate Democrats are loudly supportive of reproductive rights. There are no more N.R.A.-endorsed Democrats on the Hill, and if gun safety legislation were brought up tomorrow, every single Democrat in federal office would support it. Similarly, every Democrat not only supported the [*Respect for Marriage Act*](file:///C:/Users/Thomas%20Edsall/Desktop/117th%20Congress%20(2021-2022):%20Respect%20for%20Marriage%20Act) but would’ve likely gone further to explicitly codify marriage equality into law at the federal level.

The major intraparty conflicts that remain, Erickson wrote,

are concentrated around two big questions. One is a process question: Do you believe progress is achieved by incremental steps or revolutionary change? The other is a values question: Do you believe that, with some basic policy reforms, our economic system can deliver a good life to those who work hard in this country, or rather that it needs to be torn down and fundamentally rebuilt from the ground up?

The transition from a partisan division among white voters based on economic class to one based on level of educational attainment has had substantial consequences for the legislative priorities of the Democratic Party.

[*Frances Lee*](https://politics.princeton.edu/people/frances-lee), a political scientist at Princeton, pointed out in an email that “the class base of the parties has atrophied” with the result that “the party system in the U.S. simply does not represent that ‘haves’ against the ‘have-nots.’ Both parties represent a mix of haves and have-nots in economic terms.”

Because the Democratic Party must hold down “a coalition of upper-income whites and minority constituencies across all income groups,” Lee wrote, party leaders

are likely to prioritize issues that do not pit the well-off against the poor very directly, such as the rights agenda (e.g., voting rights, abortion, gays and lesbians) and climate/environment. Democrats in government are unlikely to genuinely prioritize the economic interests of low-income and ***working-class*** voters, because those voters simply do not represent a majority of their party’s coalition.

As an example, Lee wrote, “Current Democrats are much more concerned about forgiving student loans than about the majority of voters who will not or did not go to college.”

What, then, is likely to happen in the Democratic ranks?

The reality, as summed up by Ryan Enos, is that for all their problems,

The Democrats are clearly the majority party and may be experiencing an unparalleled period of dominance: Since 1992, a period of 30 years, Republicans have only won a majority of popular presidential votes once, in 2004, and that was during the extraordinary time of two overseas wars.

For the moment, the Democratic coalition — with all its built-in conflicts between a relatively affluent, well-educated, largely white wing, on the one hand, and an economically precarious, heavily minority but to some degree ascendant electorate on the other — remains a functional political institution.

“In this sense,” Enos told me, “it’s important not to overstate the damage that some perceive liberalism as having done to the Democrats’ electoral fortunes.”

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[***What Would Jesus Do? House the Homeless, Some Say.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C03-WRF1-JBG3-60BW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Conor Dougherty

**Body**

The ''Yes in God's Backyard'' movement to build affordable housing on faith organizations' properties is gaining steam in California and elsewhere.

Walking past empty pews and stained-glass windows, the Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin, pastor of Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Inglewood, Calif., talked about how housing prices were threatening his flock.

Congregants were being priced out of the neighborhood, he said. Many of those who remained were too burdened by rent to give to the church.

As Mr. Cyrus-Franklin spoke, a 78-year-old man named Bill Dorsey was a few yards away in an outdoor corridor that led to the chapel, amid tarps and piles of clothes. Mr. Dorsey's makeshift residence, which the church tolerates, is one of several homeless encampments that sit in and around Inglewood First's property, which is in a neighborhood of modest homes and small apartment buildings near Los Angeles International Airport.

''We know their stories and we know how hard it is to find housing,'' Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said.

So the church is trying to help -- by building housing.

Early next year, Inglewood First United Methodist is scheduled to begin construction on 60 studio apartments that will replace three empty buildings behind its chapel that, until a few years ago, were occupied by a school.

Half of the units will be reserved for older adults. All of them will have rents below the market rate.

Inglewood First United Methodist is one of a growing number of churches, mosques and synagogues that have started developing low-cost housing on their properties. In interviews, faith leaders said they hoped to help with the growing housing and homeless problems that were most acute in California but have spread across the country. Virtually every major religious tradition teaches the importance of helping those in need: The idea fits the mission.

But it can also be lucrative. In Los Angeles and around the country, faith organizations are often on prime urban land that sits smack in the middle of residential neighborhoods or along major corridors.

Today, with Americans of all persuasions worshiping less, these properties are frequently aging and underutilized, pocked by empty parking lots and meeting halls where nobody meets. By redeveloping their property into affordable housing, congregations hope to create a stream of rental revenue that can replace declining income and lower membership numbers.

These initiatives are also helping to bring lower-cost housing to neighborhoods where it is close to nonexistent. Take, for instance, IKAR, a Jewish congregation in Los Angeles whose progressive politics and bohemian feel (think services with rhythmic drums) have given it a national profile and an expanding membership. Later this year, the congregation plans to break ground on a new synagogue that will include a worship space, a preschool and 60 units of affordable housing in the Mid-City neighborhood, where the typical home is valued at $1.8 million.

Having affordable housing on site ''gives us the opportunity to practice what we preach,'' said Brooke Wirtschafter, IKAR's director of community organizing.

In order to encourage these projects, California legislators passed SB 4 last year. The law allows nonprofit colleges and faith-based institutions to build up to 30 units per acre in major cities and urban suburbs regardless of local zoning rules, and also fast-tracks their approval -- so long as 100 percent of the units are affordable housing with below market-rate rents.

In effect, the bill rezoned a large swath of the state's low-slung landscape by forcing cities to allow apartment development near single-family homes. To do that one parcel at a time would take ''infinity,'' said State Senator Scott Wiener, a Democrat from San Francisco and the author of SB 4.

''The cities would say, 'No, we're not rezoning you,''' Mr. Wiener said. ''For a lot of this land it would have been impossible to build anything, let alone ***working class*** housing.''

Bills that change zoning laws are notoriously divisive, pitting neighborhoods and environmental groups against real-estate developers. But SB 4 skirted many of the usual battles by uniting faith groups with affordable housing developers (which in California are usually nonprofits), which made for an unusually powerful coalition.

California has a total of 120 legislators in its Senate and Assembly. Only three of them voted against SB 4. By the time the law passed and was signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, the main opponents were city governments that argued that it removed their ability to control zoning on church parcels -- a small step that they feared would be a precursor to a further loss of local control over land use.

''Our concern is: What's next?'' said Brian Saeki, the city manager of Whittier, Calif., in an interview.

Mr. Saeki's city is an example of SB 4's power. Whittier is home to East Whittier United Methodist Church, which takes up four acres in a neighborhood of single-family homes whose zoning prohibits multifamily housing. For years, the church had been planning to do a housing project, and, on account of local zoning rules, had proposed 31 single units that would be spread across its grounds.

After the statewide bill passed, the congregation said it planned to propose something bigger: a 98-unit apartment project.

''The city no longer has a chokehold on the project,'' said Paul Gardiner, who is leading the housing effort for the church.

Led by California, cities and states are increasingly turning to so-called YIGBY bills -- short for ''Yes in God's Backyard'' -- to expand their supply of affordable housing. Over the past few years, local governments in Atlanta, San Antonio and Montgomery County, Md., along with the State Legislature in New York, have all passed or considered new policies or legislation to make it easier for faith groups to develop their land into housing.

In March, Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio, introduced a national bill to encourage more affordable housing called the YIGBY Act. Among other things, the bill would use grants to encourage localities to enact policies that make it easier to build housing on faith land.

Thanks to the zoning changes in California, about 80 Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations have already begun looking into developing housing, said John Oh, who heads the housing efforts for L.A. Voice, a cross-faith community organizing group that has become a central clearinghouse for affordable housing projects.

Multiply that story across a state of 40 million, and the potential impact is huge. According to an analysis by the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at U.C. Berkeley, California nonprofit colleges and religious institutions own about 171,000 acres of potentially developable land. (That's about half the size of the city of Los Angeles.)

Inglewood First United Methodist Church was founded in 1905, back when Inglewood was mostly white. As the city desegregated in the 1960s and 1970s, the congregation became more diverse, with many Black, Latino and Pacific Islander worshipers.

The congregation has also spent much of its recent life shrinking. At its peak, the church had more than 3,000 members. Today, it has less than 100, Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said.

To support itself, the church has become what amounts to a leasing business with a ministry attached to it. Most of this revenue came from a charter school that operated in a block of classrooms adjacent to the church's sanctuary and paid about $20,000 a month in rent. That money represented about three-quarters of the church's budget, so when the school left in 2019, Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said there was a very real fear that it could be fatal.

The rescue plan was housing. After the school left, the church struck a deal that would allow a developer called BMB Company to build and operate the 60 studio apartments. Instead of selling the land, the church created a ground lease structure in which the developer could operate the housing for 65 years in exchange for a lump sum that Mr. Cyrus-Franklin refused to disclose beyond saying that it was several million dollars.

All of a sudden, a church that has spent much of the past two decades worrying about money is now consumed with how to invest its sudden fortune. Its first big step is a new community center, to be built along with the apartments, that Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said would offer mental health services, music classes and free yoga.

''Once upon a time, the members of the congregation, they were the bankers, they ran the local clinics, they were the managers for the grocery store -- the community partnerships were inherent because the leaders of those institutions were also the members of the church,'' Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said. ''Becoming one of the centers of community life again, but in a new way -- that's what we're preparing for and creating.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/business/affordable-housing-religious-organizations.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/27/business/affordable-housing-religious-organizations.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin is leading an affordable housing initiative at Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, where prices have soared.

Bill Dorsey, 78, lives on church property. His makeshift residence is one of several encampments in a neighborhood of modest homes and apartments. (B1)

Plans for affordable housing and community space hang on the walls of Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Los Angeles.

The church is scheduled to begin construction on 60 studio apartments that will replace three empty buildings behind its chapel that used to be a school. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B6) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2024

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[***Philadelphia Tries to Break the Drug Trade's Grip on Troubled Streets***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C03-WRF1-JBG3-609X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1530 words

**Byline:** By Campbell Robertson and Rachel Wisniewski

**Body**

The vow was unequivocal: The city of Philadelphia was finally going to root out the drug trade that has long monopolized the streets of Kensington.

Around the neighborhood, where scores of people languish in the shadows of the elevated train, injecting, smoking and nodding in and out of consciousness, the expectations were far more tempered.

Antonio Alvarez, 58, surrounded by grandchildren on his porch, believed the drug market would go quiet, temporarily, and then return as it always had. Harris Steinberg, 57, standing at the counter of his auto parts shop, said that everything along Kensington Avenue -- the tents, dealers and stray needles -- was already moving to the neighborhood's back streets. Elizabeth, 29, who was sitting on a mattress on the sidewalk -- and, like many of those using drugs on the street, declined to give her last name -- heard that mass arrests were coming for those like her. But, she said, she was stuck on a waiting list for a shelter bed.

No one except the drug dealers said that they were happy with how things were in Kensington, one of the most sprawling areas of open drug use and dealing on the East Coast. And almost no one expected things to really change.

Mayor Cherelle Parker, who took office in January, insists that this time is different. She campaigned on restoring ''lawfulness,'' and no neighborhood has come to symbolize disorder like Kensington, highlighted by candidates for national office as evidence of the country's ''depraved reality.''

Ms. Parker, a Democrat, talked of bringing in the National Guard (Gov. Josh Shapiro, also a Democrat and the person who would have to authorize such a deployment, was against the idea). And last month her administration released a highly-anticipated plan to ''eliminate Kensington as the narcotics destination of Philadelphia.''

The effort is heavy on ambition and light on specifics, particularly how the city will address the long-term needs of the hundreds of people suffering from addiction and now living on the sidewalks. Officials have told the City Council that they are creating a ''medium- to long-term system and structures for care, treatment, housing, jobs'' -- a system, they acknowledge, that does not currently exist.

Central to the initiative is heavier law enforcement in the neighborhood, and, though this phase has yet to formally begin, the police are clearing a large homeless encampment this week.

Much of this has troubled some public health experts. The city's aim, said Scott Burris, who directs the Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University, is to ''exercise pressure on people to get treatment services.''

But this would not solve the fundamental challenge of Kensington, he said, where large numbers of people need wound care, treatment for infectious disease, counseling, short- and long-term housing and jobs, even as they struggle to recover from an ever-changing mix of new and devastating drugs. ''That's always been our problem,'' he said. ''We don't have the actual services available.''

The drug trade moved into Kensington in the 1970s, setting up in empty warehouses and eventually creating what Mr. Shapiro, then the state's attorney general, described as a nearly ''billion-dollar enterprise'' in a neighborhood where the median household income is below $30,000. Known for the purity of its heroin, the market drew people from all over the Northeast. The market also brought the rampant gun violence, turning local blocks into some of the most dangerous in the country.

Still, the death toll from guns in Philadelphia, even at its worst, is far below the toll from overdoses. In recent years, the market in Kensington shifted from heroin to more lethal and destructive synthetic drugs like fentanyl, which can brings swift, severe withdrawals, and xylazine, which leaves festering wounds that can lead to amputations. The city's fragmented treatment services have struggled to handle these compounding miseries.

Years of police operations and encampment sweeps failed to fundamentally change the neighborhood. Mayor Parker's predecessor, Jim Kenney, moved the city's strategy decidedly away from law enforcement and toward ''harm reduction,'' aimed at keeping drug users alive while coaxing them into recovery.

Many residents insist this strategy made things worse. ''It seems like people are being coddled!'' Crystal Anderson, 52, declared at a recent meeting of the Harrowgate Civic Association. ''We are tired!''

Quetcy Lozada, a City Council member whose district includes much of Kensington, said that the previous approach would never have been tolerated in a wealthier neighborhood. ''They basically sent a message that there was not going to be policing,'' she said.

Under the city's new approach, she said, people would be offered the services they need. The city is already expanding on the treatment and shelter options that are available, but on the street, she said, ''business as usual will no longer be tolerated.''

Outreach teams have been telling people what is coming and offering to connect them with available treatment. The eventual aim is to direct people to ''wellness facilities'' that city officials say they are planning, though it's unclear when the facilities will open and what specific services they will provide. Those who are found committing quality-of-life offenses will be offered treatment and shelter. If they refuse, they could face arrest.

What this new strategy will not entail are some of the key elements of harm reduction.

The city effectively banned supervised injection sites, and in February a harm-reduction nonprofit was kicked out of its building. The mayor, as she had pledged to do, proposed cutting all city funding for the needle exchange program run by Prevention Point Philadelphia, an organization based in a church on Kensington Avenue.

Though it now offers a range of services, including a shelter, Prevention Point began 33 years ago with the needle exchange. One study found that this program very likely prevented more than 10,000 H.I.V. cases and saved the city hundreds of millions of dollars. Mayor Parker said that the exchange could still operate, just not with city money. Responding to questions about the funding cuts, officials from the Parker administration told the City Council that they were preparing for an increase in H.I.V. cases.

The turn away from harm reduction is by design: With fewer day-to-day resources and more rigorous law enforcement, the plan's supporters argue, drug users would be more likely to seek help.

''The Police Department is going to have to reset the norms,'' Police Commissioner Kevin J. Bethel said in an interview, insisting that the neighborhood had become too much of ''a place of comfort'' for people using drugs. With a more ''stringent'' approach, he said, ''hopefully we'll be pushing more people to treatment.''

Among some workers in public health, and people on the street -- many of whom say they have been in rehab multiple times -- this has drawn skepticism and apprehension. The prospect of discomfort, even the threat of a stay in Philadelphia's troubled jails, would mean little to those who have lost limbs to a drug they are still injecting. Addiction is a chronic disorder, they point out, which functionally changes the brain's circuitry.

''About a year ago they said, 'We're going to try a pilot,''' said David Malloy, director of mobile services at Merakey Parkside Recovery, a treatment program that operates in Kensington. The plan was to offer a choice between jail or treatment to a few in the neighborhood facing low-level charges. Six people took up the offer, he said. On the way to treatment facilities, he said, ''three of them literally jumped out of moving vehicles.''

Mr. Malloy, who years ago was using drugs and living on the streets of Kensington himself, believed that change in the neighborhood was possible. But he said it would require better cooperation between harm-reduction advocates and those who believe in more policing, and ''an understanding that all of this fits together.'' Coercion won't work, he said.

Still, some believe that there could be more dramatic changes coming to the neighborhood than many realize.

Just a few blocks south of Kensington Avenue, large residential buildings are rising, a new frontier in the ongoing development of North Philadelphia. More than 4,000 units have recently been built or proposed in the area, according to the New Kensington Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit that has been in the neighborhood since the 1980s.

That interest from the real estate industry was hardly there during past efforts to clean up the neighborhood, said Bill McKinney, executive director of the development corporation and a resident of the neighborhood for 20 years. Now, with developers on the doorstep, he said, a cleaner Kensington, long sought by many of the neighborhood's ***working-class*** residents, could bring far more disruptive consequences to their lives than they had anticipated.

''We're actually celebrating our own demise,'' he said. ''Because folks here are going to get pushed out in a heartbeat.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/07/us/philadelphia-kensington-drugs.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/07/us/philadelphia-kensington-drugs.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left, Quetcy Lozada, a City Council member whose district includes Kensington, said ''business as usual will no longer be tolerated.''

Mayor Cherelle Parker ran on ''restoring lawfulness''

the intersection of Kensington and Allegheny Avenues.

Harris Steinberg, a business owner, said drug sales had moved to the back streets.

Elizabeth, who declined to give her last name, said she expected mass arrests.

Antonio Alvarez said drug dealing would go quiet, then return as it always had. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WISNIEWSKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A21.

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[***In State of the Union, Biden Will Cheer the Economy and Draw a Contrast With Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH3-V0T1-JBG3-62T7-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Allies are pushing the president to do more to sell skeptical voters on his economic record and to attack his likely Republican rival on tax policy.

Follow live updates on Biden's State of the Union address.

President Biden enters his State of the Union speech on Thursday with an economic record that has defied forecasters' gloomy expectations, avoiding recession while delivering stronger growth and lower unemployment than predicted.

But polls suggest voters know relatively little about the legislation Mr. Biden has signed into law that seeks to boost the economy through spending and tax breaks for infrastructure, clean energy, semiconductors and more.

They remain frustrated over high prices, particularly for groceries and housing, even though the rapid inflation that defined Mr. Biden's early years in office has cooled. Mr. Biden consistently trails his predecessor and likely November opponent, former President Donald J. Trump, on economic issues.

His speech on Thursday will try to make the case for the success of ''Bidenomics.'' Mr. Biden will begin to hint at what his agenda might bring in a second term, including efforts to increase corporate taxes and to reduce the cost of housing, one of the most tangible examples of what Mr. Biden calls his attempts to build an economy that prioritizes workers and the middle class.

Mr. Biden's State of the Union speech will ''discuss the historic achievements he's delivered for the American people and lay out his vision for the future,'' Lael Brainard, who heads the president's National Economic Council, told reporters ahead of the speech. She stressed recent wage gains, low unemployment and new factory construction that she said were linked to Mr. Biden's agenda.

Ms. Brainard and other administration officials said the president would try to draw sharp contrasts with Mr. Trump on economic issues during his annual speech, including on tax policy and reducing consumer costs. Mr. Biden's aim is to cast Mr. Trump and his Republican Party as allies of the wealthy and large corporations instead of Americans who are struggling with rising costs.

Those contrasts will include policy departures from Mr. Trump's legacy. Mr. Biden will propose raising the corporate income tax rate to 28 percent, up from the 21 percent rate that Mr. Trump signed into law in 2017. He will also call for increasing a new minimum tax on large corporations, which Mr. Biden signed into law in 2022, to 21 percent from 15 percent.

Mr. Biden will also propose ending the ability of corporations to deduct compensation costs for any employee who is paid more than $1 million per year.

The president's allies in Washington diverge on what economic issues he should focus on in this week's speech. But they roundly agree that he should claim credit for measures of economic strength on his watch, while promising to fight more to tame prices.

''He's got economic growth, he's got wage growth, inflation's coming down,'' said Ellen Hughes-Cromwick, a former chief global economist for the Ford Motor Company who is now a senior resident fellow at the centrist Democratic think tank Third Way.

Mr. Biden should stress those trends, she said, along with the manufacturing investments spurred by his agenda. Her advice to the president is to ''keep repeating'' those wins.

Third Way's latest polling in February illustrates Mr. Biden's struggles to sell voters on his economic record. On some metrics, the president's stewardship of the economy is as strong as -- or better than -- Mr. Trump's. But those views are dogged by voter frustration with inflation. That polling finds that respondents trust Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden by a nearly 20-point margin on the economy -- and on related issues like supporting manufacturing and reducing the cost of oil and gas.

A new group funded by Democratic donors released polling on Wednesday suggesting that Mr. Trump is vulnerable to attacks on tax policies that favor the wealthy. The poll, by Blueprint, found that two of the top five voter concerns about the former president were the possibility that he would let rich tax cheats ''off the hook'' and cut taxes for the wealthy but not ***working-class*** families. Mr. Trump's 2017 tax cuts delivered a large share of their gains for corporations and high earners, but also cut taxes for typical workers.

In a memo released on Thursday morning, Blueprint said its polling suggested that three in five voters ''say that lower prices on the costs of goods and services is the aspect they'd most like to see improved in the economy'' -- but fewer than a quarter see it as Mr. Biden's top economic priority.

Progressive groups are also calling on Mr. Biden to target costs aggressively, including blaming corporate greed for some rising prices. They also want him to vigorously defend the power of government spending to boost the economy, including in pivotal areas like affordable housing.

The Center for Popular Democracy, a progressive advocacy group, released a memo on Wednesday asking Mr. Biden to call for $1 trillion in new government funding to create 12 million ''high-quality, permanently and deeply affordable, green homes that are publicly owned or under democratic community control.'' White House aides did not preview any new proposal of that scope.

Republicans have largely countered Mr. Biden's messaging by accusing him of unleashing high inflation with the spending measures he has signed into law. They have previewed similar attacks ahead of the State of the Union speech.

''President Biden's reckless spending agenda is a threat to our national security and America's way of life,'' Republicans on the House Budget Committee said in a release on Wednesday. ''It threatens to destabilize today's economy and rob future generations of Americans of the blessings of liberty that make our nation exceptional.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/us/politics/sotu-biden-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/07/us/politics/sotu-biden-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Biden is expected to tout strong economic growth and low unemployment in his State of the Union address on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Al Drago for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein on How the Democratic Party Is Talking About Freedom; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CSW-PF61-JBG3-600M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 6376 words

**Highlight:** The August 22, 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 on the Democratic National Convention. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: It is Thursday, Aug. 22. We just saw the third day of the Democratic National Convention, an evening dedicated to the Democrats evolving theory and message on freedom. I’m joined today by my producer Annie Galvin. Annie, welcome to the show.

ANNIE GALVIN: Thank you for having me. So, as you mentioned, the stated theme of last night at the DNC was a fight for our freedoms. And from the jump, we heard a lot about freedom.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Jared Polis: Tonight, let’s talk about freedom.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Suzan DelBene: This election is about our rights, our freedoms, our democracy, and our future.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Hakeem Jeffries: Kamala Harris is fighting for our freedom. Kamala Harris is fighting for our families. Kamala Harris is fighting for our future together.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Mindy Kaling: Kamala Harris cares deeply about other people. She will fight to protect our freedoms because those are the values that her mother passed down to her.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Oprah Winfrey: Let us choose. Let us choose truth. Let us choose honor. And let us choose joy, because that’s the best of America. But more than anything else, let us choose freedom. Why? Because that’s the best of America. We’re all Americans, and together let’s all choose Kamala Harris. [APPLAUSE] Thank you, Chicago. Thank you.

ANNIE GALVIN: How were Democrats talking about freedom last night? What did you notice?

EZRA KLEIN: They’ve been talking about freedom across the campaign since Kamala Harris became the nominee or presumptive nominee. And they’ve been talking about it in a way that has an old echo in democratic politics. So F.D.R. very famously gave this speech about the four freedoms. This was his 1941 State of the Union.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Franklin Roosevelt: We look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

EZRA KLEIN: And the four freedoms, which everyone in the world he said should enjoy were freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

And obviously freedom from want and freedom from fear are more significant promises. But you often hear among political philosophers this distinction between the negative and the positive freedoms. There are the freedoms from — I’m supposed to be “free from” the government busting into my room and searching it without a warrant. But that does not necessarily mean I am “free to” have a life that, uh, flourishes because I have good, reliable healthcare or childcare or elder care or guaranteed income.

And you see sort of Democrats moving between these two ideas over the course of the week. Kamala Harris, in being a lawyer who thinks a lot in terms of rights, I think, found this very natural as language to adopt. And now you see it filtering through the party.

ANNIE GALVIN: To illustrate this, I’d like to play a clip from Tim Walz. And just to set this up, right before this, he went on this pretty moving riff about how he and his wife Gwen used fertility treatments after struggling with infertility for quite a while. And in that riff, he made the point that having access to fertility treatments is a kind of freedom in and of itself. So let’s hear that clip.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Tim Walz: I’m letting you in on how we started a family, because this is a big part about what this election is about: Freedom. When Republicans use the word freedom, they mean that the government should be free to invade your doctor’s office. Corporations free to pollute your air and water. And banks free to take advantage of customers. But when we Democrats talk about freedom, we mean the freedom to make a better life for yourself and the people that you love. Freedom to make your own healthcare decisions. And, yeah, your kid’s freedom to go to school without worrying about being shot dead in the hall.

ANNIE GALVIN: So how is Walz putting his spin on this? How is he approaching this project of reclaiming freedom for Democrats?

EZRA KLEIN: I would call what he’s doing negative freedom — freedom from the government, getting involved in your life. Freedom from the fear of your child being shot dead in the halls. Freedom from intrusion, from other things.

And that speaks to a broader set of arguments that Walz was on that stage to make. One of his big applause lines was that in the kinds of communities he comes from, they have the Golden Rule. And the Golden rule is “mind your own damn business.” That is not how Democrats traditionally speak. The Democratic idea is not “mind your own damn business.” It is, “help,” and it’s help from the government.

But there is a tension in the argument being made here. When you begin talking about those “freedoms from” — freedom from having the government involved in your libraries, in your doctor’s office, et cetera — then you get the Republican counterargument, well, what about my freedom to have the kind of car I want? Or to use plastic straws in California? Or my freedom to not be covered by a vaccine mandate, if you’re thinking a couple of years ago.

So this is where, so Democrats began to lose that argument because there’s quite a lot they want the government to regulate. There are a million places where Democrats do not mind their own damn business. So that’s the tension here. It’s being portrayed as a principle, but it’s not a principle. In either party by the way. Republicans who have often portrayed themselves as more small government and libertarian, they’re not at all.

And what you’re seeing here is not a sort of new agenda being adopted. It is a bid for rhetorical high ground based on which issues are salient in this election. And the reason Democrats are being able, or at least see an opportunity to flip this, is that in repealing Roe v. Wade and the sort of reproductive freedom, which is built on a right to privacy, Republicans have created space for the government to become much more intrusive in people’s personal and sexual and familial lives.

And having done that, having made that kind of government intervention and intrusion salient, now all of a sudden Democrats can turn around and say, the hell is wrong with you all? Get out of here. Get out of the doctor’s office. Get out of the bedroom. Leave us alone.

Which is usually not an argument Democrats have a lot of standing to make because honestly, usually it’s a Democrat saying, we’re gonna force you to have healthcare insurance. We’re going to make sure you’re following good environmental practices and standards. We’re going to try to get you to get rid of your old furnace and buy a, you know, electric fuel pump. There are all these different things where Democrats want the government involved, but Republicans have made salient the single biggest place where they want to expand the government’s control over people’s intimate lives.

ANNIE GALVIN: We also heard a version of this from Josh Shapiro, the governor of Pennsylvania and almost vice presidential pick. So let’s hear that.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Josh Shapiro: You know what, Democrats? We are the party of real freedom. That’s right. The kind of real freedom that comes when that child has a great public school with an awesome teacher because we believe in her future. Real freedom that comes when we invest in the police and in the community, so that child can walk to and from school and get home safely to her mama. Real freedom that comes when she can join a union. Marry who she loves. Start a family on her own terms. Breathe clean air. Drink pure water. Worship how she wants. And live a life of purpose where she is respected for who she is.

ANNIE GALVIN: Shapiro there is obviously trying to flip freedom from being a Republican value to a Democratic one. How effective do you think Shapiro was in making that rhetorical move there?

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t know that the question for Shapiro is whether he’s being effective, right? You’re not going to do that in one speech. You’re not going to do that at a convention.

If the Democratic Party wants to reclaim freedom, which is something that factions within it and pollsters within it, and strategists within it, and philosophers within it have wanted it to do for a long time, that’s gonna require time. That is gonna be a multi-administration, maybe even multi-generational effort.

That said, I’ve always thought the argument for positive freedoms — or what Shapiro called “real freedom” — is pretty powerful. I don’t know what vision of freedom you are really talking about when you say you are free — this is within the sort of the hardcore capitalist way of looking at the world — you are free to freely contract, which is to say that you are free to not have a job. You are free to walk away from something without any power in the marketplace and be poor and go hungry and be homeless. That is not freedom, right? That is not real choice.

A thicker idea and understanding of freedom has always included within it what you need to flourish, right? To be free to make the choices you want to make in your life requires the furnishing of a foundation and protections that people need. Social security is a remarkable enabler of freedom among older Americans. Among other things, it is the freedom to retire. Absent it, you might be free to retire, but you are not actually capable of making that choice. So there’s power in this.

ANNIE GALVIN: Since maybe 9/11, the right really claimed a monopoly on freedom. I mean, you had kind of silly things like freedom fries. But you also had the rise of the Freedom Caucus. You now have Republicans branding basically every Democrat as a socialist — and not a friendly Swedish socialist but a Stalinist, basically.

And then on the left, I think maybe around Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, you would hear words like equality, justice, maybe progress. But freedom seemed sort of off-limits or uncool. So why is this the moment for Democrats to step in and try to seize freedom as their value?

EZRA KLEIN: I think one reason is that Trump and Vance don’t speak in terms of freedom. Donald Trump is not highly engaged with discussions of freedom one way or the other. It’s just not what his politics are about. And I think you have to understand a lot of this election as being shaped by Vance’s spin on Trumpism.

Vance’s spin on Trumpism — and the sort of postliberal spin on Trumpism — is very dismissive of freedom. To take the philosophical roots of what is going on in the right seriously for a minute, when you read these critiques of liberalism, when you read Patrick Deneen, when you read Adrian Vermeule, the thing that they’re critiquing in liberalism is its emphasis on individual freedom. And the argument is that individual freedom has led to social atomization, has led to people having too few children for societies to grow and flourish and replace themselves. It has led to loneliness. It has led to companies that can, you know, ship their jobs overseas and destroy communities.

But it has led, above all, to this world where individual choice and individual freedom have become the dominant values. And so people can go off and live these lives of sexual libertinism and atheism, and they don’t have children, and that all this freedom has become hollow and rotten at its core. To make these arguments about these miserable cat ladies is at least to begin to make the argument, there should be social and cultural sanction over people exercising an individual choice not to have children.

So part of what is happening is Democrats are responding to a reform, a shift, a pivot inside their Republican Party. And add in, then, Dobbs and book bans and a bunch of Republicans saying publicly that they want to use the power of the state to bring other institutions, ranging from businesses to universities, in life to heel so they stop being so woke and they stop being so liberal and they stop being a deep state and so on, and all of a sudden you have a Republican party that is coming to a very, very different understanding of freedom, right? It’s not interested in freedom. It’s interested in using the power of the state and the power of the culture to reshape decision making quite powerfully.

And all of a sudden the Democratic Party could turn around and say, the hell are you weirdos doing? Get out of here. That was the argument that launched Tim Walz. And part of elevating Walz to the ticket was also Harris elevating the critique and argument he was making to the ticket.

ANNIE GALVIN: I think that’s a really good point that Trump, Vance, DeSantis have created an opening in a way that McCain, Romney maybe didn’t.

I’m curious then about the appeal that Democrats think this might have, because I think over the last three nights we’ve seen a lot of appeals from actual Republicans — former Trump staffers, Oprah, who said she’s a registered, independent and spoke very directly to independent voters — trying to get them to come over to the Kamala side.

And you see that at most conventions, right? You saw it at the Republican National Convention a bit. But do you see this turn to freedom as an attempt to woo these people? I’m just curious what the point is of this electorally.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the inversions of politics right now is traditionally the Republican Party is the party that wants to conserve, the party that doesn’t want to do all that much. The conservative party. You can argue that’s not been true for a long time, and Republicans have been more radical going sometime back, arguably since Reagan. But there has always been, or for a long time, has been a theory that Democrats are the party that wants to change everything — Barack Obama hope and change — and Republicans are the party that wants to preserve America as it is and as it was.

And as Republicans become more radical and more oriented towards upheaval — JD Vance, again, if you go listen to things he said is very straightforward about this. And so too is Donald Trump. Right? You know, Donald Trump has always portrayed himself as a wrecking ball, not as a conservationist. That has created the space among Democrats who have also become a coalition with a lot of more educated members, with a lot of higher income members — a lot of people who maybe want things to be a little bit different but don’t want them completely different than they are — to be a party that is actually arguing, we should conserve things.

One thing that has been striking to me about this convention is if you watch it and ask yourself, day after day, what promises are being made up there? What is the Democratic Party saying it will do for you? Not that much is being said all that consistently. This is not a convention built around a couple of big promises from an agenda. It’s not a convention built around bringing universal healthcare to the nation, not a convention built around bringing universal childcare to the nation.

To the extent it is about any one policy promise, the policy promise is restoring something people had a couple of years ago, which is the protections of Roe v. Wade. And so in a way that’s actually conservative. It’s saying America was at a reasonable equilibrium for a very long time, and Republicans built around a quite radical Supreme Court have upended that equilibrium. They changed the country in a heedless and thoughtless and dangerous way, and Democrats are going to put things back the way they were. And that sort of allows them to be the party of change, because that is different than where things are right now, but also conservation, conservatism at the same time.

ANNIE GALVIN: The crux of the four freedom speech that you mentioned was really F.D.R. during World War II trying to define the free world in contrast to authoritarianism. And when we’re talking about “freedom to,” the most basic one of those in a democracy is the freedom to vote. And I think that word “democracy” was a huge part of the Biden era of this campaign. So is this messaging around freedom a way to kind of signal the democracy message?

EZRA KLEIN: Earlier in the night last night, they did a video — and had speakers also. But they did a video about Jan. 6. And it was incredibly powerfully done, I thought. And they sort of matched what Trump was saying at any given moment to what was happening. And you saw the video of the officers trying to halt, barricade the doors and screaming as they tried to push back the crowd. You heard them on their intercom saying, the line is broken, the line is broken, fall back. You saw their vantage point from high up at the Capitol saying, “we’re in danger,” like, “look at the size of that crowd.”

It was chilling. And it also came early in the night. And I wondered if the rest of that was gonna be more Jan. 6-y, right? They had a police officer after that. But it wasn’t.

I think if it was Biden’s campaign, this convention would would’ve been about Jan. 6. That was Mike Donilon’s theory of the election. But also Biden — putting aside some of the ways his communication capabilities have changed — Biden was good messenger on democracy. Biden really does believe America and democracy to be a sacred trust. You could feel that he felt it. It was always said that he decided to run after Charlottesville. He read “How Democracies Die” by Levitsky and Ziblatt. That influenced him in running. And then Jan. 6 was — as his people remind you — an effort to steal the election not just from the American people but from Joe Biden personally.

Biden is not that good of a messenger on abortion. Among other things, his own history on it is checkered. He opposed the Roe decision when it came down. Now he’s evolved quite a lot on that issue since then. But he’s just not that good at talking about abortion and Dobbs. You saw this in the debate. And Harris is.

And so I think that the emphasis has really shifted from this being about democracy, with Jan. 6th as the evidence, to this being about freedom, with Dobbs being the evidence. And I think that’s a better place for Democrats just because I think Dobbs is — Jan. 6th happened, but it is not currently happening. It could of course happen again — something like it or something worse. But most people who are open to voting for Donald Trump do not believe Donald Trump is just gonna do endless Jan. 6th. Maybe they should believe that, but I don’t think that’s how they look at him. But they do believe — because it’s true — that he was the one who appointed Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe and that the people in this party want to ban abortion.

Jan. 6 failed. People died. It was horrifying. But it failed. Joe Biden became president. Dobbs succeeded. There are many states now where you cannot get an abortion. And unless Democrats get rid of the filibuster, even in a situation where they win the Senate, they’re not going to be able to restore Roe. Though maybe they will get rid of the filibuster for that — I don’t think it is a completely unimaginable turn of events.

It is true that, in power, Democrats can do a lot to protect abortion rights or to open access to it, particularly chemical abortion. And it is also true that Republicans, if they get a chance, might take this in a very sharply different direction.

If you had a Republican trifecta, you know, Donald Trump now talks about wanting this all to be on the states, but if Republicans sent him a 15 week abortion ban, House and Senate Republicans, would he veto it? I’m skeptical of that. I think one should be skeptical of that.

And so this has been a shift in where the party is. And I think it’s a good shift because it’s very hard to get people to vote on the abstraction of democracy. It’s not how I wish things were, but I think it is how things actually are. But it is not impossible — and we’ve seen it — to get them to vote based on the extremely tangible stakes for whether or not people have access to abortions, if and when they need them.

ANNIE GALVIN: So I wanna talk a little bit about the difference between the R.N.C. and the D.N.C. — specifically, their focus. And you said to our team that the two conventions have had a feeling of the Marvel Universe versus Thanos. And I’ll admit I do not know what that means, [LAUGHS] but I am confident there’s some merit there. So what did you mean by that analogy? That way of describing the difference here?

EZRA KLEIN: You’ve never seen “Avengers: Endgame”? Come on, Annie.

ANNIE GALVIN: I’ve seen one or two, but I don’t even know which ones. I’m so sorry.

EZRA KLEIN: You would remember. So the argument I’m making there — you look at the Democratic convention, every major Democrat from the last 40 years of American life — it’s Joe Biden. It’s Barack Obama. It’s Bill Clinton. It’s Hillary Clinton. It’s Michelle Obama. I saw a picture of John Edwards standing in the hallway. If Jimmy Carter were well enough, he would be here. Every Democrat who has had any significant national profile and is still upright and walking, more or less, in my lifetime, is here lending their talents, their particular political profile to the fight against Donald Trump.

Go look at the Republican Convention. Who in national Republican politics who was significant in 2020 or before that is still there? There’s no Mike Pence. There’s no George W. Bush. There are no Cheneys — Liz Cheney’s been ejected from the party. There’s no Mitt Romney. No Paul Ryan. They’re all gone.

So it does have this feeling — if you’re a comic books nerd, and I am — the Democrats have this feeling of the Avengers, right? It’s like every significant figure in the party, coming together, like we’re assembling a team. And the Republican party is sort of the big, powerful, bad guy with a billion henchmen. They’re all smaller than Donald Trump. They’re all the guys he orders around. Whereas the Democratic Party, the way it is presenting itself is this sort of union of significant figures. You have the young heroes in Harris right now and Walz. But they’re going around and pulling out of retirement anybody who’s a heavy hitter who can possibly be conscripted into the cause.

And I guess just another way of saying that without the perhaps too cute by half comic book analogy is just that the Democratic Party is a political party, and the Republican Party is a personality cult.

And what you see when you look at the Democratic convention is a political party — a lot of different people representing a lot of different factions and eras. Somebody on social media made, I thought, a quite funny point that the Democratic convention is like the Eras tour for liberals — which is true. And the Republican Party has functionally erased its history before, I mean, you could call 2016, but a lot of people who were significant in the Republican Party between 2016 and 2020 are now also a persona non grata. Again, thinking about people like Paul Ryan there and Mike Pence. So it almost doesn’t have history pre-Jan. 6. That’s just a very different structure.

ANNIE GALVIN: So just to dig into the portrait of a party that, I think, the D.N.C. has pretty successfully given us so far, I think you see this coalition across ages, which is interesting because aging was the problem a month ago, two months ago. But you’re now seeing these elder statesmen all given speaking slots — the Clintons, the Obamas, Biden himself. But I think you’re also seeing this kind of murderers’ row of new talent, and you’re free to name check some of these.

But just to start with the elder statesmen, what did you make of Bill Clinton’s speech last night? What was his role there, and how did he execute on that?

EZRA KLEIN: Bill Clinton’s gotten a lot older. This was not the kind of speech Bill Clinton was able to give in, say, 2012, when he was a star of the convention. There was a — for me, at least — a kind of sadness watching him up there. You could see his hands shaking. His voice has always been such a remarkable instrument. His voice was thick and he would lose control over it. It would crack. It’d be hard to hear. The intonation would be wrong.

But Clinton had a real capability, a real self-awareness about that, in which to strike the tone of the truly elder statesman. But one thing Clinton did very effectively was use his age against Donald Trump.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Bill Clinton: Two days ago I turned 78, the oldest man in my family in four generations. And the only personal vanity I want to assert is I’m still younger than Donald Trump.

EZRA KLEIN: And he did something else too, which is, Clinton has always had this capability to slip into the highly idealistic register of what American politics can be. And I’m just speaking for myself here — I found it powerful when he made this argument that it’s not Trump’s lying that should be our focus. It’s his solipsism, his narcissism, his inability to talk about anything other than himself.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Bill Clinton: What does her opponent do with his voice? He mostly talks about himself. Right. So the next time you hear him, don’t count the lies. Count the I’s. [APPLAUSE] Count the I’s. His vendettas. His vengeance. His complaints. His conspiracies. He’s like one of those tenors opening up before he walks out on stage, like I did, trying to get his lungs open by saying, “me, me, me, me, me, me.” [LAUGHS]

EZRA KLEIN: Clinton is just good at delivering that kind of thing. I think both with Obama and with Clinton, what you should understand them as doing is saying, I am one of the best to ever do this. They’re two of the best campaigners to ever campaign. And what they are saying is, if I were doing it, this is how I would do it.

But Clinton wasn’t there as the representative anymore of a politics that he was saying, you know, Harris and Walz should pick up from him. He’s there as a party elder just being part of the Avengers.

I’ve been interested in this convention at who I feel is picking up different, I don’t know, torches in the party. I don’t know why. But you’re right, Annie. This convention has felt like a real moment of generational change in the party. It’s easy to forget just for how long we’ve had Obamas, Clintons and Bidens on the ticket. And I thought one of the best speeches of last night and the one who sounded most like Bill Clinton to me was Buttigieg.

Pete Buttigieg, who is an amazing communicator, I think arguably the best communicator right now in the Democratic Party if you don’t count Michelle Obama, who doesn’t like doing politics. But he gave a very Clinton-like speech, in his ability to talk about — to marry the high level, the aspirational level of American politics with the kitchen table level of American politics.

Buttigieg is often compared to Obama. He kind of seems like him. He comes from that era. But I think the politics he often feels like he’s representing to me is a little bit more Clintonian.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Pete Buttigieg: I’m thinking of dinner time at our house in Michigan. When the dog is barking and the air fryer is beeping and the mac and cheese is boiling over. And it feels like all the political negotiating experience in the world is not enough for me to get our 3-year-old son and our 3-year-old daughter to just wash their hands and sit at the table. It’s the part of our day when politics seems the most distant, and yet the makeup of our kitchen table, the existence of my family is just one example of something that was literally impossible as recently as 25 years ago, when an anxious teenager growing up in Indiana wondered if he would ever find belonging in this world. This kind of life went from impossible to possible, from possible to real, from real, to almost ordinary in less than half a lifetime.

ANNIE GALVIN: Yes. As someone who loves literary language, I thought that that was so beautiful. So a word that keeps coming to mind as I watch is “rebrand.” We’ve talked about freedom. We’ve talked about some other dimensions of that. But I think if you listen to the subtleties of some of the language here, you hear an attempt to rebrand politics and rebrand government.

And just to give some specific examples, in our episode yesterday, you mentioned Raphael Warnock’s line that a vote is a kind of prayer and —

EZRA KLEIN: Oh yeah. By the way, Raphael Warnock should just be on any list like that.

ANNIE GALVIN: Absolutely.

EZRA KLEIN: He gave great speech at the convection.

ANNIE GALVIN: And then in the Buttigieg speech last night that you mentioned, he has this line that politics or a certain kind of politics, importantly, “can make an impossible dream into an everyday reality.”

And there he’s talking about just the daily experience of sitting in his kitchen with his husband and his twin children, which is something that, quite literally, would have been impossible in the ’90s — legally, socially. And he elsewhere describes politics as a kind of soul craft. There’s a kind of spiritual dimension here; I think a very moving humane dimension. And I’m just kind of curious where you think that’s coming from and how that has struck you as you’ve watched and listened.

EZRA KLEIN: I mean, this to me is an old strain of the Democratic party. Democrats believe in government. They believe in the government’s ability to make your life better. And that also means Democrats, or many Democrats, believe in politics.

And there are different ways that Democrats believe in politics. One way can be that politics is a way that the ***working class*** or the majority of Americans can band together to overturn the power and dominance of the rich, of corporations. But there’s also a way in which they believe in politics for its pluralism, for its ability to build and strengthen bonds in a country that might otherwise come apart. This is a very old vision of politics, right? Politics is how you work through disagreement without coming to war.

You heard Obama quoting Abraham Lincoln on the eve of the Civil War talking about the need to renew our bonds of affection. You heard both Obama and Bill Clinton — and I think this is important parts of their, not just speeches, but what they were trying to tell the generation coming up — talking about how important it is in politics to talk with the people you disagree, to not demean them, to be open to them, to make space for them even in disagreement. To make sure they know that you will govern for them and you’ll keep them in mind and you will respect them even if they’re not where you are.

So there’s been a real strain in this convention around politics not as war, which I think is often how Donald Trump portrays it, right? This is our final battle, right? I am your vengeance. But politics as pluralism. Politics is a thing that isn’t supposed to drive us apart but is supposed to help us come together or stay together. And that to me is why Buttigieg’s speech was so powerful. He did a better job than anybody else did at connecting these grand things that happened in politics, these huge challenges and conflicts and campaigns and organizing efforts that it’s easy to say politics doesn’t do anything, right, there’s so much cynicism about what politics can do. But here he is saying, politics has made my Tuesday night possible. It has changed the most fundamental thing in my life, which is, can I marry the person I love? And can I have two beautiful children who I can’t get to eat dinner — acannot get out the door in the morning.

ANNIE GALVIN: So, relatable.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah. Very relatable. But it was that weaving of the texture of the extraordinary and the ordinary — which he said very explicitly. Again, that to me was its power. And it’s why it felt Clintonian to me. That’s what Bill Clinton used to do very well.

ANNIE GALVIN: Yeah, I think Buttigieg is a really good representative of this new class or new generation of Democrats that we’re really seeing on display.

It’s just true that after Obama — in 2016, in 2020, even up till a month or two ago, the candidates just have been older. Hillary, Biden, you know, Bernie being sort of the radical up and comer. But to me, this convention has felt like a dam breaking. All these people coming in and really seizing the limelight in a way. And so what has felt exciting or meaningful about this to you as you’ve watched the past three nights?

EZRA KLEIN: The Democratic Party just has a lot of talent in it right now. And it has a lot of communicative talent in a way I’m not sure people realized was true in, say, 2020.

You could talk about your Pete Buttigieg’s, your Kamala Harris’s. But if you’ve ever been in a room with Wes Moore, I mean, that guy’s charisma is like a clean energy source. He just really lights up a room. Shapiro — really, really good. Tim Walz — nobody saw that coming. It’s not the same kind of charisma as some of the others, but wow, can that guy break through in the media. I mean, he came outta nowhere to become the vice president through sheer skill of communication. AOC gave a speech on the first night that completely brought the house down.

There’s been movement, in terms of his leadership — including, by the way, Nancy Pelosi and Steny Hoyer handing over power to a new generation of leaders in the house led by Hakeem Jeffries, who is himself quite a phenomenal speaker. If you imagine what a primary would’ve looked like in this year or in 2028, you can imagine a lot of people running at the moment.

And I think one of the other interesting things about it is that the energy in the party is not just ideological, it’s also very pragmatic. Democrats have been very interested in who knows how to win Pennsylvania? That’s why Shapiro’s become such a big figure. Who knows how to win in Michigan? That’s part of why Gretchen Whitmer has become such a big figure. So you have the people coming ideologically, the people coming through raw charisma, the people who are coming because they have proven how to do something Democrats want to be able to do, which is win the key Midwestern and Sunbelt states that Democrats need to win in to keep MAGA Republicans out of power.

And this convention has been a real showcase for that. And I think you really see that in the sequencing, right? Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton on night one, whether you like this or not, that was a night that was about turning the page. The Obamas on night two — that was a night about passing the torch. The lineup of Buttigieg and Wes Moore and Josh Shapiro and Tim Walz on night three — that was about the rising generation.

And then tonight, which is gonna be about Kamala Harris, now the leader of the Democratic Party and, if she wins in November, the leader of it for some time to come. Much more so than any convention I’ve covered, this convention has been the old guard giving way to the new.

ANNIE GALVIN: Let’s close with a bit more on Tim Walz. I think one thing that he did early in his speech, and we can play a clip, is try to kind of recast what government is and what its function is and almost de-stigmatize it.

^ARCHIVED CLIP^ Tim Walz: Growing up in a small town like that, you learn how to take care of each other. That family down the road, they may not think like you do. They may not pray like you do. They may not love like you do, but they’re your neighbors. And you look out for them, and they look out for you. Everybody belongs, and everybody has a responsibility to contribute. For me, it was serving in the Army National Guard. I joined up two days after my 17th birthday, and I proudly wore our nation’s uniform for 24 years. My dad, a Korean War-era Army veteran, died of lung cancer a couple years later. He left behind a mountain of medical debt. Thank God for Social Security survivor benefits, and thank God for the G.I. Bill that allowed my dad and me to go to college — and millions of other Americans.

ANNIE GALVIN: What is Walz doing there?

EZRA KLEIN: I think one of Tim Walz’s political talents is making the argument for big government with the aesthetic of small communities. But he doesn’t argue it in the way that a Bernie Sanders might or an AOC might. He argues it as an expression of small state rural values. Whether that connects, whether or not people buy that, I don’t exactly know. But I think you have to understand that as one of the things that makes him an interesting communicator in the party.

He is able to give quite significant expansions of the state — quite significant new programs — a very, very familiar spin. And he does that in part by connecting that to his own life story and his own family. His dad went on the G.I. Bill. He went on the G.I. Bill. I think it’s powerful. I think it’s why he’s on the ticket. Tim Walz is on the ticket because he helps the ticket bridge the political experience and appeal of Kamala Harris, which is fundamentally urban — born in Oakland, California, rises up in San Francisco — to a strain of Democratic Party politics, a strain of Democratic Party populism that is fundamentally rural, which has a very deep history in Minnesota.

The arena was not full of signs that said, “Governor Walz.” The arena was full of signs that said, “Coach Walz.” The videos about him were about his military service, about the children — I mean now adults — he taught. Before he came out, a bunch of people who played for his football team and are now adults came out and stood in formation. He is a weaponized Norman Rockwell painting that the Democrats have aimed directly at JD Vance and Donald Trump.

ANNIE GALVIN: I think that’s a nice place to end. So, Ezra, thank you for being here after a series of very late nights and sharing your insights.

EZRA KLEIN: Thank you, Annie.

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced and hosted by Annie Galvin. 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 Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. 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.

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[***‘Plan Ahead’: Baltimore Traffic Reporter on Congestion After Bridge Collapse***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BP7-B541-DXY4-X0VB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2024 Monday 22:41 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1002 words

**Byline:** Adeel Hassan Adeel Hassan is a reporter and editor on the National Desk. He is a founding member of Race/Related, and much of his work focuses on identity and discrimination. He started the Morning Briefing for NYT Now and was its inaugural writer. He also served as an editor on the International Desk.

**Highlight:** Tony Thornton looks ahead to years of crowded tunnels and highways with the loss of the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

**Body**

Tony Thornton looks ahead to years of crowded tunnels and highways with the loss of the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

When the Francis Scott Key Bridge was built in the 1970s, it was intended to relieve congestion from the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel.

Forty-seven years later, some of that traffic will be diverted back to the tunnel after the bridge [*collapsed last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/race) upon being struck by a giant cargo ship, killing six construction workers. With the rebuilding process expected to take several years, that most likely means years of gridlock for commuters, travelers and truck drivers.

The flow of traffic through and around the city is taking on new patterns and shapes, as the 35,000 cars and trucks that once crossed the Key Bridge’s four lanes try alternative routes. The 1.6-mile bridge was the final link on Interstate 695, which loops around the city and is known as the Baltimore Beltway. The crossing’s overall structure, including its connecting approaches, was almost 11 miles long.

The bridge, a major north-south artery in one of the nation’s busiest ports, had [*connected*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/race) ***working-class*** communities on either side, and it was used mainly by commuters. A former mayor called it the city’s “[*blue-collar bridge*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/race).”

Most of its local drivers will merge with some of the out-of-town drivers traversing the city through the Harbor Tunnel, on Interstate 895, and the Fort McHenry Tunnel, on Interstate 95, underneath the city’s harbor and closer to Baltimore’s downtown.

As a morning traffic reporter for WBAL News Radio, Tony Thornton will be keeping a close eye on the snarled commutes. Mr. Thornton, who has lived in the area for about 40 years, uses scanners and cameras to get bird’s-eye views of the highways and byways.

He spoke to The Times about the Key Bridge, what drivers are facing and what may be ahead. This interview has been condensed and lightly edited for clarity.

What was it like on the morning of the bridge collapse?

I did my first traffic report, probably around 4:05. I figured out that they were detouring traffic off exit ramps prior to the bridge on each side. And I figured out where those points were. So now traffic had to be diverted to the tunnels.

And that’s tricky because the commercial trucks and tractor-trailers that have hazardous materials can’t go through the tunnels. They were used to taking the Francis Scott Key Bridge. So now I have to actually tell truckers the height or the clearance of the tunnel and direct them to the other side of the beltway. You’re talking about an additional 20 to 25 miles just for that.

What have you seen on the roads since then?

An increase in traffic, in the tunnels, especially heading south into the tunnels. And that traffic delay has been starting earlier than usual.

So, typically, we would see a little bit of congestion in the tunnels around 8 in the morning. I’ve seen that now as early as 6 in the morning. It actually almost triples the time it takes for traffic to go through the tunnels.

What I’ve seen on cameras, if you’re heading into the city, approaching the tunnels, is a lot more police presence. Just on the side, just making sure traffic is OK and responding to any accident or incident quickly. You can tell they want to clear the roadway off as quickly as possible, to make sure that traffic continues to flow. It’s a lot, lot quicker than they have been in the past.

Who has been most affected?

A lot of the commercial truckers, a lot of people that work in the ports, a lot of residents that live in that area rely on that bridge. It’s more just workers, folks that are heading to the ports, or folks that are looking to utilize the industry.

And it’s a 24/7 type of industry, too, so it’s always busy. It was just fortunate that at the time of the bridge collapse the Maryland Department of Transportation was able to stop traffic, and it wasn’t as busy at 1:30 in the morning. If that happened an hour and a half later, who knows?

What are you looking ahead to this week?

It was spring break for a lot of the local school districts last week. I’m looking for more of an impact. You already have the normal traffic volume around the beltway. That’s probably going to begin to double now because schools are going to be back.

During a typical school day, I will see traffic starting to build around the Baltimore Beltway around between 6:00 and 6:30. But I anticipate not only having that traffic, but also having additional traffic going through both of the tunnels now, because that’s going to be the way of life.

So now you’re going to have that increased traffic around the beltway, as well as increased traffic in both the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel and the Fort McHenry Tunnel. And, as you know, Interstate 95 comes from New Jersey, down through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington. It’s all just one big, big, big corridor there.

What’s your advice for drivers?

You’re going to have to plan ahead. If your normal commute takes you 30 to 45 minutes, you may have to leave 10 to 15 minutes earlier than usual because of the traffic delays starting earlier now.

For truck drivers or commercial drivers, just heed the hazardous materials warnings. If you have any type of hazardous materials, they will literally turn you around, and you have to exit onto a side road, and you will not be able to take the tunnels.

Have some patience. It is a very, very scenic ride driving through Baltimore city. You’ll be able to see a lot of the sights, whether you see the stadiums, Camden Yards, M&amp;T Bank Stadium, you’ll see the skyline of Baltimore. Baltimore is a very beautiful city.

PHOTOS: TONY THORNTON, a morning traffic reporter for WBAL News Radio, in Baltimore.; Tony Thornton, a longtime traffic reporter, uses scanners and cameras to get bird’s-eye views of the highways and byways around Baltimore. Right, members of a road crew installed signs redirecting vehicles from the northern approach to the Francis Scott Key Bridge last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE KIEHART FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2024

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[***Democrats Try to Navigate a Looming Strike in a Swing State***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWJ-KWH1-DXY4-X0H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 26, 2024 Friday 00:17 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1446 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:** More than 7,000 U.A.W. workers at Daimler Truck plants in North Carolina are set to strike at midnight in a labor action that could carry political consequences.

**Body**

More than 7,000 U.A.W. workers at Daimler Truck plants in North Carolina are set to strike at midnight in a labor action that could carry political consequences.

Barring a last-minute breakthrough, more than 7,000 workers are set to walk off their truck and bus assembly lines on Friday night in the swing state of North Carolina, injecting the United Automobile Workers’ new [*activism in the South*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) directly into the 2024 election.

North Carolina has never been hospitable to organized labor, and the midnight strike at the North American subsidiary of the German industrial giant Daimler Truck has been greeted with trepidation by the state’s Democratic establishment, which has long tried to project a moderate, pro-business bent.

But Shawn Fain, the U.A.W.’s brash new president, doesn’t much care.

“We don’t expect politicians to save the day, but at the end of the day, politicians have an obligation to the people that elect them,” he said in an interview on Thursday, adding: “It’s our generation-defining moment. This is a time where politicians need to pick a side.”

In September, President Biden [*joined the picket line*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) of the U.A.W.’s successful strike of the Big Three U.S. automakers, and Thursday, a White House spokeswoman, Robyn Patterson, indicated that the president could be equally aggressive if there was a Daimler walkout.

“President Biden strongly believes that those benefiting from our strong support for manufacturing made in American should work in good faith to do everything possible to ensure jobs — including those in North Carolina — remain well-paid, middle-class jobs, and that all workers have a fair and free choice to join a union if they choose,” she said.

Democratic leaders in North Carolina, including Gov. Roy Cooper, were far more equivocal — and deferential — to Daimler Truck, a major employer in the state.

“North Carolina workers are the best and most productive in the world and need to be paid fairly,” Mr. Cooper said in a statement on Thursday. “We’re proud that Daimler Trucks and its amazing U.A.W. workers are building the future of electric school bus travel right here in North Carolina, and I will continue to monitor the contract negotiations and urge a swift resolution.”

Josh Stein, the Democratic attorney general who is running to replace Governor Cooper, who is term-limited, was similarly careful in a statement.

“North Carolina workers deliver the best products in the world, and they deserve to be valued,” he said. “I’ve been in touch with both parties to encourage them to continue to work toward an agreement that supports workers and enables the company to continue to succeed.”

Making matters more delicate, one of the central grievances of the union is the electric vehicle transition pressed by Mr. Biden, in part through the $5 billion Clean School Bus Program, which has channeled $14 million worth of federal funds directly to Daimler’s Thomas Built bus division in High Point, N.C., and millions more through school districts buying Thomas Built electric buses. The union says the workers at the High Point plant are among the lowest paid in the company.

“Our taxpayer dollars aren’t being injected into these companies to assist with an E.V. transition just for a few people on top to get rich and leave everybody else behind,” Mr. Fain said. “There have to be better standards.”

To the U.A.W., a successful strike in the state with [*the second-lowest percentage of union workers*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) in the country is vital. The six-week work stoppage at the three largest U.S. automakers last fall [*secured the largest pay raises*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) in decades.

That helped propel U.A.W. organizers into the nonunionized South, where [*workers at a Volkswagen plant in Tennessee voted overwhelmingly*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) last week to join the union, a breakthrough that created a beachhead for union organizers. Daimler Truck North America is unionized, but U.A.W. officials want to win record wage gains at Daimler’s plants in Mount Holly, Cleveland, High Point and Gastonia, N.C., and parts distribution centers in Atlanta and Memphis ahead of an organizing vote next month at Mercedes-Benz in Alabama.

“Our fight at Daimler is intimately connected with something else happening in the South,” Mr. Fain [*told members in a broadcast from Detroit*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) on Tuesday night. “Autoworkers at nonunion auto companies have launched a national movement to unionize.”

But Tennessee and Alabama are not in play in 2024. North Carolina is, and Democratic politicians there appear to be reticent hosts.

Mr. Cooper and Mr. Stein have positioned themselves as centrists whose success has revolved around improving education and job training, and diversifying the economy in North Carolina, said Ferrel Guillory, a professor at the University of North Carolina.

“There’s no particular upside, politically speaking, for center and center-left Democrats to come across in the same way that a Gretchen Whitmer would,” he said, referring to the governor of heavily unionized Michigan. “Cooper and Stein aren’t anti-union, but they’re not northern politicians either.”

In contrast, Mr. Biden has proclaimed himself the “most pro-union president in history” as he has collected union endorsements, the most recent coming on Wednesday from the North America’s Building Trades Unions. If Mr. Biden steps in aggressively, he could find himself clashing with North Carolina’s top Democrats when the state’s highest offices are on the line.

A year ago, the Biden administration appeared to use the leverage provided by federal electric school bus subsidies [*to help the United Steelworkers unionize Blue Bird*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080), a school bus company in Fort Valley, Ga. Two weeks before the union vote, the Environmental Protection Agency, which administers the Clean School Bus Program, [*demanded that recipients*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) of federal subsidies detail the benefits they were offering their workers, and required the companies to “remain neutral in any organizing campaign.”

This time, an E.P.A. spokesman said, the agency has not engaged with Daimler.

Mr. Fain said on Thursday that the union has worked with the administration, and he laid the responsibility for the possible strike at management’s feet. But he was aware of the political ramifications of a major labor action in a swing state.

“You’re either going to stand with the ***working-class*** people and the people that make this country move and make this world move, or they’re going to stand with corporations and business leaders and the billionaires,” he said. “And if that’s what they choose, then when it comes time to vote, we can see a shift.”

Pro-union groups want to see Democrats step up. Ahead of the Volkswagen vote in Chattanooga, Tenn., the Republican governors of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas [*issued a statement*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1783500614212694080) saying that unionizing would jeopardize auto jobs in their states. Erica Smiley, the executive director of Jobs With Justice, which helps workers seeking to unionize and bargain collectively, said on Thursday that Mr. Cooper should draw a contrast in North Carolina, which has been largely anti-union.

“Workers are doing their part to ask for democracy and to fight for it,” she said. “They’re giving an opportunity for us and for politicians like Roy Cooper to right centuries of wrongs.”

A Daimler spokeswoman, Anja Weinert, said the company was continuing to negotiate “in good faith.”

Any new contract should “allow Daimler Truck North America to continue delivering the products that enable our customers to keep the world moving,” she said.

The U.A.W. sees it differently. On Thursday, it filed four complaints with Mr. Biden’s National Labor Relations Board, accusing Daimler Truck of retaliating against union organizers, interfering with collective bargaining, discriminating against union members and bargaining in bad faith.

The union, which has already endorsed the president’s re-election, would clearly like help from Mr. Biden. In talking points ahead of the strike, the U.A.W. leaned into the electric school bus subsidies.

“The government is spending up to $345,000 per bus in taxpayer money,” union officials wrote. “Meanwhile, the workers who build the product see their quality of life going in the wrong direction. Members are asking: Why should American taxpayer dollars subsidize corporate greed?”

PHOTOS: Chris Myers, 52, a union construction worker in Hartford, Wis., won’t vote for President Biden despite his infrastructure programs. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA STATHAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Brian Dickinson, 25, from Las Vegas, said he was considering voting for Donald J. Trump and Democratic Senator Jacky Rosen. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARSHALL SCHEUTTLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2024

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[***Biden’s Energy Balancing Act***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFD-PXV1-DXY4-X283-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 29, 2024 Thursday 10:16 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1962 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley Jim Tankersley writes about economic policy at the White House and how it affects the country and the world. He has covered the topic for more than a dozen years in Washington, with a focus on the middle class.

**Highlight:** The last few years have been great for energy production. You won’t hear the president bragging about it.

**Body**

The last few years have been great for energy production. You won’t hear the president bragging about it.

A junior White House economist made a chart last year — the sort of chart that previous presidents might have put in a campaign ad. It shows that U.S. energy production, from wind and solar to oil and gas, has boomed under President Biden. The nation is closer than ever to a goal that presidents have pursued for decades: true energy independence.

The Times has recreated the chart, using the same data:

The Biden administration has never published that chart. The president isn’t bragging about record oil and gas production.

His reluctance highlights a political problem for him and other Democrats. Biden wants to phase out oil and gas eventually to fight global warming. But domestic oil and gas production is expanding on his watch. That brings political benefits: It helps reduce energy costs, and polls show Americans largely support it. But more drilling also means more pollution — and more fury from young progressive voters.

“It is a tough balancing act,” said Ryan Cummings, the economist who created the energy chart. “You want to reduce emissions, but you need a bridge to get there.”

Frack, baby, frack

Republicans and fossil-fuel groups have accused Biden of waging “war” on American energy because he wants to halt America’s greenhouse gas emissions in a quarter century.

But no president has overseen energy production like Biden has. He loves to talk about part of that story: how the United States is [*producing more power from renewables*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), including a surge in solar power accelerated by the climate law he signed in 2022.

It’s the other half of the story he shies away from: the increased production of oil and natural gas.

For decades, America’s oil wells seemed to be slowly drying up. The country’s daily oil production [*fell by half*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) from the early 1970s to the 2008 financial crisis. Oil [*imports rose*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Hydraulic fracturing — fracking, a process that allows drillers to access oil and gas reserves that were previously too expensive to tap — changed that. Production rebounded. It reached record highs when Donald Trump was president. The United States was suddenly selling more oil than any other country and exporting more than it imported.

Under Biden’s watch, the U.S. broke that record [*last fall*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html). The country also set records for [*natural gas output*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html). In the first half of 2023, the United States was the world’s largest exporter of [*liquefied natural gas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Those developments have strengthened Biden’s hand in foreign policy: Europe has been able to replace much of the gas it once imported from Russia during the war in Ukraine. And oil prices have stayed relatively low, even as Saudi Arabia and other countries cut production to increase profits.

The political bind

But all that production has brought Biden grief from environmental groups, which successfully pushed America to join nearly 200 nations last year [*in agreeing to phase out*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) fossil fuels.

Climate activists are a key plank of Biden’s liberal base. So are young voters — and polls show that climate change is among the most important issues motivating them this year. Under pressure from those groups, Biden said last month that he would [*pause approval of new natural-gas export terminals*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

But other Democrats, including a new Democratic polling group called Blueprint, have pushed Biden to tout record drilling. They say it will help him attract independent voters — the sort of people past candidates wooed with promises of energy independence.

In one way, Biden has embraced the drilling boom: gasoline prices. He released oil from America’s strategic reserve around the invasion of Ukraine. [*He has since boasted*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) that the move helped reduce gas prices that hit $5 a gallon in June 2022.

In private conversations, Biden and his team can be frank. They say that keeping oil and gas flowing in the short term can ease the path to a no-emission energy future by shielding ***working-class*** consumers from high prices that might turn them against climate policies.

Biden told me as much in 2021, when I asked at a news conference about the tension between his efforts to lower gas prices and emissions at the same time. He said it was important to keep gas prices down because they had a “profound impact” on ***working-class*** families.

“So,” he added, “I don’t see anything inconsistent with that.”

Related: Conservatives want the next Republican president to end restrictions on emissions and [*repeal Biden’s signature climate law*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Supreme Court

* The Supreme Court agreed to hear [*Trump’s claim that he is immune from prosecution*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), delaying a federal criminal case involving his actions on Jan 6. The court scheduled arguments for late April.

1. The court’s decision to hear the case reduces the chances of a verdict in the criminal trial before Election Day. Trump’s actions suggest he wants to delay the trial. [*Read Alan Feuer’s analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).
2. In a separate case, an Illinois judge ordered Trump’s name [*removed from the state’s primary ballot*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The Supreme Court’s ruling on whether states can disqualify Trump is pending.
3. The court seemed split over a challenge to [*a Trump-era ban on bump stocks*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), attachments that let semiautomatic rifles fire at speeds rivaling machine guns.

Mitch McConnell

* “It’s time for the next generation”: Mitch McConnell will [*step down after November as the Senate Republican leader*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), a position he has held for a record 17 years.

1. McConnell had a serious fall last year and has had episodes where he momentarily froze in front of the media.
2. His support for more aid to Ukraine, leadership style and relationship with Trump have left him out of step with his party.
3. Three Johns — Thune, Cornyn and Barrasso — top the list of his [*potential replacements*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).
4. The late night hosts [*discussed McConnell’s decision*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Congress

* Congressional leaders reached a deal on a short-term spending bill to [*avert a government shutdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) this weekend.

1. Senate Republicans [*blocked a bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) that would protect I.V.F. and other fertility treatments nationwide after Alabama’s top court ruled that frozen embryos are children.

Migration

* Illegal crossings have fallen in the last month, but the migrant crisis still defines life on the border. Read about [*residents and workers in Arizona*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

1. Trump and Biden will [*both visit the Texas border today*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), a rare convergence on the campaign trail.
2. Republican lawmakers in Georgia are pushing to [*toughen immigration detention laws*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) after the murder of a college student.

More on Politics

* A judge [*rejected Trump’s offer of a $100 million bond*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) as he tries to pause the $454 million penalty in his civil fraud case. Trump said he might have to sell properties to pay.

1. Hunter Biden [*denied involving his father in his business*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) and criticized Republicans’ impeachment inquiry as a “political pursuit” in closed-door testimony.
2. Biden’s allies are optimistic that no other Democratic primary will [*present the same challenges as Michigan*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), where the “uncommitted” option drew over 100,000 votes after a protest campaign over his handling of the war in Gaza.

Israel-Hamas War

* The Gazan health ministry said [*more than 30,000 people had been killed in the war*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) since Oct. 7. The ministry’s toll does not distinguish between civilians and combatants. Many experts say it may be an undercount.
* Dozens of family members of hostages held by Hamas [*began a four-day march*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) from the Gaza border to Jerusalem, pushing for Israeli leaders to reach a deal to release them.

1. Israeli reservists are returning from the war to a divided country. Inspired by the unity they experienced in the army, many are [*organizing for political change*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).
2. A U.S. airman lit himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy this week to protest the war. [*Read about his road*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) from an isolated Christian community to leftist and anarchist activism.

International

* Russia’s capture of the city of Avdiivka shifted the front line in Ukraine westward. Nearby, farmers, miners and their families [*are poised to flee*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

1. Ghana’s Parliament passed a bill that would jail [*people who identify as L.G.B.T.Q.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) or organize gay advocacy groups.

Business

* Apple spent a decade working on a car before the project was killed this week. Internal disagreements meant [*the effort sputtered for years*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

1. Biden has ordered an investigation into security threats from [*Chinese electric cars*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) with internet connectivity.
2. The F.A.A. [*asked Boeing for a “comprehensive action plan”*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) on quality control after a panel came off one of the company’s jets in flight last month.

Other Big Stories

* Older Americans should [*get a dose of the latest Covid vaccine*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) this spring, the C.D.C. recommended.

1. [*Wildfires in Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html)have consumed houses, burned vast ranch lands and forced evacuations across the Panhandle.

Opinions

Carlos Lozada read the 887-page plan that would [*guide a second Trump term*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html). It treats the law as an obstacle to conservative power, he writes.

Here is a column by Jamelle Bouie about [*the pressure on Trump to nationalize fetal personhood*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

MORNING READS

Happy birthday: Leap day babies get to celebrate once every four years. [*Today is their day*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Font nerds, rejoice: After 17 years of Calibri, Microsoft Word has a [*new default typeface: Aptos*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Ice cream, oils and drinks: So many products were once infused with the cannabis-derived compound CBD. [*Has its moment passed?*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html)

Lives Lived: The outsider artist Melvin Way began his career in the basement of a notorious and violent New York City homeless shelter. Some of his drawings are now in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum. He [*died at 70*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

SPORTS

College basketball: Caitlin Clark has broken [*the A.I.A.W. large school scoring record*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) with a career total of 3,650.

M.L.B.: The Dodgers pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto impressed in his [*first spring training appearance*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

College football: The new playoff system could change again in two years; officials are homing in on [*a 14-team bracket*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

A guide to Baldwin: James Baldwin wrote with grace across genres: essays, novels, short stories, songs, children’s literature, drama, poetry, even screenplays. The author Robert Jones Jr. has advice for those seeking an entry point. His picks include:

* “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” a semi-autobiographical account of the Black American journey from the South to the North. “Nearly biblical in its tenor, it is a kind of gospel.”

1. “Sonny’s Blues,” a short story about two brothers in Harlem, a teacher and a jazz pianist. “Baldwin explains to us, in ways that are wholly astonishing, the nature of music itself.”
2. “The Devil Finds Work,” Baldwin’s most underrated book, an essay collection about his love affair with movies.

[*Read more recommendations*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

More on culture

* Surrealism revolutionized culture. This year, exhibitions around the world [*celebrate the movement’s 100th birthday*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

1. The comedian Richard Lewis, known for his sarcastic stand-up and his starring role on “Curb Your Enthusiasm,” [*died at 76*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Stir together a high-comfort, low-fuss [*lemony pearl barley soup*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Play [*a game with the family*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

Buy a [*smart smoke detector*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html). Yesterday’s pangram was backroom.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

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

P.S. Today’s print front page is the last to be drawn by Tom Bodkin, The Times’s chief creative officer, who is retiring after 46 years. Tom has regularly designed the paper’s front page over the decades, always by hand, using pencil on green paper. Here is today’s version:

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/12/climate/clean-energy-us-fossil-fuels.html).

PHOTO: A natural gas flare burns on the oil field near Pecos, Texas (PHOTOGRAPH BY Paul Ratje FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Soft Corruption and the Limits of Populism***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6984-F6Y1-JBG3-602K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 902 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

There are currently two clown shows -- sorry, but let's be honest -- going on in the Republican Party. One is the intraparty fighting that seems extremely likely to cause a government shutdown a few days from now. The other is the fight over who will come a distant second to Donald Trump in the presidential primaries.

There are many strange aspects to both shows. But here's the one that has long puzzled me: Everyone says that with the rise of MAGA, the G.O.P. has been taken over by populists. So why is the Republican Party's economic ideology so elitist and antipopulist?

Listen to the rhetoric of the people making Kevin McCarthy look like a fool or of the presidential candidates, and it's full of attacks on elites -- but also of promises to cut taxes for the rich and slash government spending that benefits the ***working class***. For example, Nikki Haley -- who is making a credible bid to be Trump's also-ran, given Ron DeSantis's implosion -- is calling for big cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

As I write this, McCarthy is reportedly trying to appease MAGA dissidents with a temporary funding bill that would cut nonmilitary discretionary spending outside of Veterans Affairs by 27 percent -- meaning savage cuts to things like the administration of Social Security (as opposed to the benefits themselves).

The thing is, such proposals are deeply unpopular. It's true that Americans tell pollsters that the government spends too much, but if you ask them about specific types of spending, the only area on which they say we spend too much is foreign aid, which is a trivial part of the budget. Oh, and most Americans still support aid to Ukraine.

So there would seem to be an opening for politicians who are right wing on social issues like immigration and wokeness but are also genuinely populist in their spending priorities. Such politicians exist in other countries. For example, Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, whose party has deep links to the nation's fascist past, ran last year on a platform calling for earlier retirement for some workers and increases in minimum pensions and child benefits.

So why aren't there such figures in the G.O.P.? To be fair, during the 2016 campaign Trump sometimes sounded as if he might turn his back on Republican economic orthodoxy, but once in office he pursued the usual agenda of tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy combined with benefit cuts for the rest.

Part of the answer may lie in the American right's general mind-set, which valorizes harshness, not empathy. People who are drawn to MAGA tend to imagine that solving society's problems should involve punishing people, not helping them.

Also, we shouldn't underestimate the power of ignorance: MAGA politicians, who generally disdain any kind of expertise, may not have any clear idea of what the federal government does and where tax dollars go.

Finally, there's the Clarence Thomas factor.

What I mean is that part of the explanation for the absence of genuine Republican populists may involve the gravitational pull of big money, which is both broader and subtler than the way it's often portrayed.

If the accusations against Senator Robert Menendez are true -- and it's not looking good -- old-fashioned bribery, payments to politicians in exchange for favors, hasn't gone away. But it's probably not shaping party ideology.

Campaign contributions, on the other hand, definitely do shape ideology; DeSantis was touted as a rival to Trump because he got a lot of support from big donors who believed he would serve their interests and had real political skills. (Being rich doesn't necessarily come with good judgment.)

But there's a sort of gray area that doesn't involve outright bribes in the sense of money given in return for specific actions but nonetheless involves a form of soft corruption. For the fact is that public figures whom the very rich see as being on their side can reap considerable personal rewards from their positions.

Recent revelations about Justice Thomas show how this works. ProPublica reports that he has received many favors from ultrawealthy conservatives, notably lavish free vacations. These reports are shocking because we don't expect such behavior from a Supreme Court justice, and Thomas may have violated the law by failing to disclose these gifts. But does anyone doubt that many politicians who favor tax cuts for the rich and reduced benefits for the ***working class***, even as they rail against elites, receive similar favors?

And the hermetic information space of the American right surely facilitates this soft corruption. Suggestions of improper influence on right-wing officials and politicians won't get much coverage on Fox News, except possibly for claims that they're the victims of a liberal smear campaign.

Now, I don't know how important these different factors are to the fact that America's ''populists'' are anything but populist in practice. But we do need to ask why people who denounce elites somehow always manage to avoid targeting corporations not named Disney and billionaires not named George Soros.

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/2023/09/25/opinion/columnists/republicans-populism-soft-corruption.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/opinion/columnists/republicans-populism-soft-corruption.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

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**End of Document**



[***Conflict at the Heart of the Galliano Documentary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJC-GN91-JBG3-64B6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 4; FACE FORWARD

**Length:** 1073 words

**Byline:** By Rhonda Garelick

**Body**

''High & Low: John Galliano'' captures one of the fashion world's greatest talents, while raising troubling industrywide issues that go beyond one man's story.

What moral lapses should genius be permitted? John Galliano, self-styled bad boy of fashion, seemed determined to find out.

He was a fashion-world Icarus: a prodigious talent who soared high, then crashed to earth in 2011, losing his reputation and his position as creative director of Dior, after a series of highly publicized drunken, racist and antisemitic tirades. He would rise again, but the path back was steep.

The aptly titled ''High & Low: John Galliano,'' directed by Kevin Macdonald, chronicles this roller coaster of a career, while exposing some of the less beautiful side of the fashion industry -- the toll it exacts from even those it most glorifies.

Mr. Galliano proved himself a genius early on, designing not just clothes, but hallucinogenic visions, alive with color, movement, texture and, above all, stories. Skyrocketing out of St. Martin's School of Art in London in 1984, he produced a dazzling graduation collection called ''Les Incroyables,'' inspired by an 18th-century French fashion movement. In the film, the renowned fashion journalist, Hamish Bowles, calls it one of the five greatest runway shows he's ever seen.

Mr. Galliano's star rose quickly. He attracted backers, key editors (André Leon Talley and Anna Wintour anointed him), a slinky entourage that featured Amanda Harlech as his personal muse and a bevy of one-named '90s glamazons -- Naomi, Linda, Kate. After a stint at Givenchy, Mr. Galliano ascended to Dior, one of France's most historic luxury houses.

In Mr. Galliano's hands, fashion blossomed into alternate universes. For one Dior collection, he reimagined ancient Egypt, dreaming up golden pyramidal dresses, gem-encrusted makeup, jackal headdresses, Nefertiti and Tutankhamen masks. He plucked motifs merrily and irreverently from everywhere.

Every collection unfolded like experimental theater or film, with odd, discordant touches reminiscent of Bunraku or Dada. Mr. Galliano put trees in models' hair. He had them toss dead mackerels into the audience. Everything was beautiful. Nothing was sacred.

For his ''clochard'' (or 'hobo') show, in 2000, Mr. Galliano drew inspiration, he said, from the homeless people he saw while jogging along the Seine. The collection featured clothes resembling piles of newspapers, and accessories made of found objects, like whiskey bottles. The show ignited mass demonstrations and accusations of cruel indifference to social problems, which only baffled Mr. Galliano. He had just thought the clothes were beautiful, he said.

In the documentary, models Kate Moss and Amber Valletta recall Mr. Galliano's theater-director approach, his instructions to imagine themselves as storybook princesses running from danger. The most recurrent theme was ''escape.''

Mr. Galliano was running, too, from a painful past, from inner demons. He too sought escape in playing characters. ''John Galliano,'' darling of the international beau monde, was actually the invention of the boy born Juan Carlos Galliano-Gallien, to ***working-class*** parents in Gibraltar. Aware of being gay from early childhood, he kept his sexuality a secret from his strict Catholic family, especially his disapproving father who could be violent. Juan Carlos took refuge in make-believe and drawing pictures. ''It was nicer in my head,'' Mr. Galliano explains.

Eventually, the pictures inside his head sprang to three-dimensional life through fashion, and Mr. Galliano developed his increasingly extravagant persona. He dressed in costumes: as a pirate, a sailor, an astronaut or an emperor -- affecting a Napoleonic tricorn. The director of ''High & Low,'' Mr. Macdonald, underscores both Mr. Galliano's cinematic life and his penchant for Napoleon (which Mr. Galliano denies) by punctuating the documentary with clips from ''Napoléon,'' Abel Gance's 1927 silent film.

The clips are an odd, self-consciously auteur-ish touch, and appear with little explanation. Yet the implication is clear: Like Mr. Galliano, Napoleon was a bullied outsider (from the French province of Corsica), whose enormous ambition gave him the world but led eventually to defeat and exile. Mr. Macdonald also weaves in (unexplained) clips from the 1948 classic, ''The Red Shoes,'' in which a gifted ballerina is forced, by enchanted pointe shoes, to dance herself to death. Mr. Macdonald seems to see shades of this frenzied dancer in Mr. Galliano.

The documentary reveals much about Mr. Galliano's frenzied life: the demands for ever more collections (up to 32 per year), the excesses that isolated him from reality (Mr. Galliano recalls six people helping him light a cigarette), the pills and booze and the grief over the death of his closest friend and assistant, Steven Robinson, at 38, a man who'd all but given up his own life to serve Mr. Galliano.

Such pressures preceded Mr. Galliano's now-famous, drunken outbursts in a Paris bar. ''You are so ugly. I don't want to see you,'' he said to one woman, using antisemitic language and insulting her clothes and body. In a second incident, Mr. Galliano declared, ''I love Hitler,'' adding, ''People like you would be dead today.''

Today, the now-sober Mr. Galliano blames drugs and alcohol for these episodes, claiming to have no recollection of them. He has been through a trial, gone to rehab and met with rabbis.

Mr. Galliano seems contrite. The film seems to suggest that all should be forgiven, even while demonstrating its subject's curious oblivion to social and political issues, and his blithe disregard of the suffering of close associates like Mr. Robinson. But it raises, too, troubling issues that go beyond one man's story.

Mr. Galliano's particular insults connected ethnicity and race to questions of appearance and belonging. He offered judgments about who is beautiful and who is not. Who deserved to live and who did not. These tirades were racist, yes, but they also smacked of some of the very judgments that preoccupy fashion, with its habit of legislating what, or who, is in or out. Fashion, the exquisite haven that welcomed the former bullied child, the place that indulged his dreams and nurtured his talent, is also the place that helped drive him to self-destruction, a place of ravenous, incessant demands for youth, status, money and, especially, beauty.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/style/the-conflict-at-the-heart-of-the-galliano-documentary.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/style/the-conflict-at-the-heart-of-the-galliano-documentary.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: John Galliano, left, and above with Anna Wintour in Paris in 1993. Bottom, from left: Galliano looks from 2004, 1997 and 2000. The documentary ''High & Low: John Galliano'' chronicles his roller coaster career and exposes the less beautiful side of the fashion industry. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MUBI

FIRSTVIEW

GALLIANO) This article appeared in print on page D4.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The Conflict at the Heart of the Galliano Documentary; Face Forward***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJC-HPN1-JBG3-64Y6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 14, 2024 Thursday 16:00 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1125 words

**Byline:** Rhonda Garelick Rhonda Garelick writes the Face Forward column for The Times&amp;#8217;s Style section. She is the D.E. Hughes Jr. Distinguished Chair for English and Professor of Journalism by courtesy at Southern Methodist University.

**Highlight:** “High &amp; Low: John Galliano” captures one of the fashion world’s greatest talents, while raising troubling industrywide issues that go beyond one man’s story.

**Body**

“High &amp; Low: John Galliano” captures one of the fashion world’s greatest talents, while raising troubling industrywide issues that go beyond one man’s story.

What moral lapses should genius be permitted? John Galliano, self-styled bad boy of fashion, seemed determined to find out.

He was a fashion-world Icarus: a prodigious talent who soared high, then crashed to earth in 2011, losing his reputation and his position as creative director of Dior, after a series of highly [*publicized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/07/opinion/07Garelick.html) drunken, racist and antisemitic tirades. He would rise again, but the path back was steep.

The aptly titled “High &amp; Low: John Galliano,” directed by Kevin Macdonald, chronicles this roller coaster of a career, while exposing some of the less beautiful side of the fashion industry — the toll it exacts from even those it most glorifies.

Mr. Galliano proved himself a genius early on, designing not just clothes, but hallucinogenic visions, alive with color, movement, texture and, above all, stories. Skyrocketing out of St. Martin’s School of Art in London in 1984, he produced a dazzling graduation collection called “Les Incroyables,” inspired by an 18th-century French fashion movement. In the film, the renowned fashion journalist Hamish Bowles calls it one of the five greatest runway shows he’s ever seen.

Mr. Galliano’s star rose quickly. He attracted backers, key editors (André Leon Talley and Anna Wintour anointed him), a slinky entourage that featured Amanda Harlech as his personal muse and a bevy of one-named ’90s glamazons — Naomi, Linda, Kate. After a stint at Givenchy, Mr. Galliano ascended to Dior, one of France’s most historic luxury houses.

In Mr. Galliano’s hands, fashion blossomed into alternate universes. For one Dior collection, he reimagined ancient Egypt, dreaming up golden pyramidal dresses, gem-encrusted makeup, jackal headdresses, Nefertiti and Tutankhamen masks. He plucked motifs merrily and irreverently from everywhere.

Every collection unfolded like experimental theater or film, with odd, discordant touches reminiscent of Bunraku or Dada. Mr. Galliano put trees in models’ hair. He had them toss dead mackerels into the audience. Everything was beautiful. Nothing was sacred.

For his “clochard” (or ‘hobo’) show, in 2000, Mr. Galliano drew inspiration, he said, from the homeless people he saw while jogging along the Seine. The collection featured clothes resembling piles of newspapers, and accessories made of found objects, like whiskey bottles. The show ignited mass demonstrations and accusations of cruel indifference to social problems, which only baffled Mr. Galliano. He had just thought the clothes were beautiful, he said.

In the documentary, models Kate Moss and Amber Valletta recall Mr. Galliano’s theater-director approach, his instructions to imagine themselves as storybook princesses running from danger. The most recurrent theme was “escape.”

Mr. Galliano was running, too, from a painful past, from inner demons. He too sought escape in playing characters. “John Galliano,” darling of the international beau monde, was actually the invention of the boy born Juan Carlos Galliano-Gallien, to ***working-class*** parents in Gibraltar. Aware of being gay from early childhood, he kept his sexuality a secret from his strict Catholic family, especially his disapproving father who could be violent. Juan Carlos took refuge in make-believe and drawing pictures. “It was nicer in my head,” Mr. Galliano explains.

Eventually, the pictures inside his head sprang to three-dimensional life through fashion, and Mr. Galliano developed his increasingly extravagant persona. He dressed in costumes: as a pirate, a sailor, an astronaut or an emperor — affecting a Napoleonic bicorn. The director of “High &amp; Low,” Mr. Macdonald, underscores both Mr. Galliano’s cinematic life and his penchant for Napoleon (which Mr. Galliano denies) by punctuating the documentary with clips from “Napoléon,” Abel Gance’s 1927 silent film.

The clips are an odd, self-consciously auteur-ish touch, and appear with little explanation. Yet the implication is clear: Like Mr. Galliano, Napoleon was a bullied outsider (from the French province of Corsica), whose enormous ambition gave him the world but led eventually to defeat and exile. Mr. Macdonald also weaves in (unexplained) clips from the 1948 classic, “The Red Shoes,” in which a gifted ballerina is forced, by enchanted pointe shoes, to dance herself to death. Mr. Macdonald seems to see shades of this frenzied dancer in Mr. Galliano.

The documentary reveals much about Mr. Galliano’s frenzied life: the demands for ever more collections (up to 32 per year), the excesses that isolated him from reality (Mr. Galliano recalls six people helping him light a cigarette), the pills and booze and the grief over the death of his closest friend and assistant, Steven Robinson, at 38, a man who’d all but given up his own life to serve Mr. Galliano.

Such pressures preceded Mr. Galliano’s now-famous, drunken outbursts in a Paris bar. “You are so ugly. I don’t want to see you,” he said to one woman, using antisemitic language and insulting her clothes and body. In a second incident, Mr. Galliano declared, “I love Hitler,” adding, “People like you would be dead today.”

Today, the now-sober Mr. Galliano blames drugs and alcohol for these episodes, claiming to have no recollection of them. He has been through a trial, gone to rehab and met with rabbis.

Mr. Galliano seems contrite. The film seems to suggest that all should be forgiven, even while demonstrating its subject’s curious oblivion to social and political issues, and his blithe disregard of the suffering of close associates like Mr. Robinson. But it raises, too, troubling issues that go beyond one man’s story.

Mr. Galliano’s particular insults connected ethnicity and race to questions of appearance and belonging. He offered judgments about who is beautiful and who is not. Who deserved to live and who did not. These tirades were racist, yes, but they also smacked of some of the very judgments that preoccupy fashion, with its habit of legislating what, or who, is in or out. Fashion, the exquisite haven that welcomed the former bullied child, the place that indulged his dreams and nurtured his talent, is also the place that helped drive him to self-destruction, a place of ravenous, incessant demands for youth, status, money and, especially, beauty.

PHOTOS: John Galliano, left, and above with Anna Wintour in Paris in 1993. Bottom, from left: Galliano looks from 2004, 1997 and 2000. The documentary “High &amp; Low: John Galliano” chronicles his roller coaster career and exposes the less beautiful side of the fashion industry. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MUBI; FIRSTVIEW; GALLIANO) This article appeared in print on page D4.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Dating on Apps, and the Old-Fashioned Way***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNT-1X61-DXY4-X4GN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 30, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; LETTERS

**Length:** 1176 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''It's Not You: Dating Apps Are Getting Worse,'' by Magdalene J. Taylor (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, March 16):

With more people on online dating platforms than ever, we have entered a new era rife with hot takes and opinions based on a narrow set of experiences. Recent surveys say that dating apps are the No. 1 way people meet today, and nearly 70 percent of individuals who met someone on a dating app said it led to a romantic, exclusive relationship.

I am not here to question individual experiences, or pretend that every date will lead to success. Matching two people is an imperfect science and rests on shared interests, complex personalities, timing and more. It's an age-old axiom for a reason: You have to kiss a few frogs before you find your prince or princess.

But lately, we've been building to an environment where critiques of apps are presented as a monolith and pessimism over a bad date is taken to signal the end to a generation's romantic future. There's this false notion suggesting that dating apps don't work. The numbers tell us that broadly speaking and for more people than ever: They work.

Bernard KimLos AngelesThe writer is chief executive officer of Match Group.

To the Editor:

Re ''With Lackluster Growth, Dating Apps Are in Need of a Spark'' (front page, March 13):

There was a time when finding a partner was an adventure that played out in public spaces: the park while walking your dog, the bar while calming down from a hectic week, the art class that opened you up to new experiences and people.

Now apps let you sit on your sofa in your slippers and shop, viewing only what the app reveals. Are they kind? Would their smile make you look twice?

We used to live somewhere, interact with people we found there who had our approach to life -- and would actually move if we found no synergy (why live somewhere that is like that?). These were all actions that led to personal connections.

So unless you are forced to live somewhere totally out of sync with your values, stop playing the game the apps have created and get off the sofa!

Susan FraserJacksonville, Fla.

Donald Trump and Louis XIV

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump Seeks Full Immunity From 2020 Election Charges'' (news article, March 20):

Not even French kings in the pre-revolutionary Old Regime had the absolute immunity that Donald Trump believes he deserves.

In 1709 the French bishop and theologian Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet's tract on royal absolutism, ''Politics Derived From the Words of Holy Scripture,'' was published posthumously.

Bossuet affirmed that the king is a sacred being who represents the divine majesty; he is God's ''lieutenant on earth.'' But Bossuet also underscored that the king ''is not exempt from the law; for if he sins, he destroys the laws by his example.''

Though the king, endowed with ''a divine quality,'' was ''not subject to the penalties of the law,'' the American president is not so endowed.

Susan DunnWilliamstown, Mass.The writer is emerita professor of humanities at Williams College and the author of ''Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light.''

At Stake in the Election

To the Editor:

Re ''The Safety Net Is on the Ballot,'' by Paul Krugman (column, March 17):

Mr. Krugman's astute assessment of our nation's entitlement programs was a timely reminder of two of the many things at stake in our next election.

I fear that many Americans lack an interest in understanding the catastrophic possibilities should Donald Trump be re-elected. Many voters would choose to form their opinions around sound bites from social media or partisan cable channels rather than taking the time to read up on the issues that will ultimately matter most to them and their futures.

I fear that another Trump presidency will mark the end of many time-honored traditions and programs that have become a bedrock in our society.

Mr. Krugman gives President Biden his due on Mr. Biden's understanding of and commitment to our Social Security and Medicare programs. Should Americans fail to heed Mr. Krugman's warnings, it will be far too late to walk back the damage Republicans would do.

Amy M. FergusonDunmore, Pa.

The Music Business: Tough for New Talent

To the Editor:

Re ''Why Does Every Song Sound Familiar,'' by Marc Hogan (Opinion guest essay, March 24):

The commodification and exploitation of music are as old as selling sheet music by Tin Pan Alley song pluggers over 100 years ago. The hitmakers have always driven revenue, while the wannabes eternally struggle for traction.

While Mr. Hogan criticizes the current monetization of hit songwriters' catalogs -- and ties it to the dearth of opportunities for new talent -- the richness and breadth of musical content these days are remarkable and overwhelming. It's just difficult for new talent to break through and make a living, and I've never known it to be any different.

''Music business'' is two words. I've been a songwriter, recording artist, record producer and music executive for more than four decades, and the song remains the same.

Robert KraftEncino, Calif.The writer is former president of 20th Century Fox Music.

Killing Animals: Avoid the Euphemisms

To the Editor:

Re ''OK, Class, First We Shoot the Deer'' (Food, March 20):

Can we please stop using euphemisms such as ''harvest'' and ''cull'' when referring to killing animals? Let's not sugarcoat it: School hunting and animal agriculture programs take impressionable children who are considered too immature to make responsible decisions about voting, smoking cigarettes or operating a car, and teach them how to kill living beings.

It's especially troubling when you consider that a large number of U.S. mass shooters were exposed to or took part in violence against animals or other forms of cruelty at an early age.

Having been a teacher in the Bronx for many years, I feel strongly that educators have an obligation to model kindness to those different from us and compassion for those weaker. Children are naturally empathetic, and we do them and the greater population a disservice when we teach them to suppress that.

Lisbet ChiribogaNorfolk, Va.The writer works for TeachKind, PETA's humane education division, but is not writing on behalf of the organization.

To the Editor:

The photos of the blood and organs of the deer were somewhat repulsive, but the article's title is cruel.

But then, it was truthful. My memories of ''Bambi'' haunt me still.

Rosemary AbbateMoorestown, N.J.

Memo to Liberals

To the Editor:

Re ''Should Wildlife Advocates Help Set Hunting Rules in Vermont?'' (news article, March 26):

As a liberal non-hunter and non-fisher (I live in Brooklyn, for goodness' sake), I read the article with interest. My conclusion is that for each of my fellow liberals' attempts to regulate something like this, it becomes obvious why Democrats are losing the nonelite ***working class***.

Let it go, people, or you will continue to feed the class anger that led to a Donald Trump presidency.

Paul SwetowBrooklyn

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/opinion/dating-apps.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/29/opinion/dating-apps.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2024

**End of Document**



[***$900,000 Homes in Rome; What you Get***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNK-DMN1-JBG3-619J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 29, 2024 Friday 11:50 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1192 words

**Byline:** Lana Bortolot

**Highlight:** A one-bedroom apartment near the Trevi Fountain, a two-bedroom duplex on the western edge of town, and a spacious pied-à-terre across from the Basilica of Santa Cecilia.

**Body**

A one-bedroom apartment near the Trevi Fountain, a two-bedroom duplex on the western edge of town, and a spacious pied-à-terre across from the Basilica of Santa Cecilia.

Via delle Muratte | 829,000 euros ($896,000)

A one-bedroom walk-up apartment near the Trevi Fountain

This one-bedroom, one-bath apartment is on the top floor of a four-story 18th-century building near the Trevi Fountain. Built in the Renaissance style, it features cornices above the windows and wood shutters. An inscription above the main entry has the Latin motto, “Ne Gloriari Libeat Alienis Bonis” (“Do not boast of the merits of others”), taken from an ancient fable by Phaedrus.

Via delle Muratte is a busy pedestrian passage constructed of sampietrini pavement — the black basalt cobblestones typical of Rome’s ancient streets — and lined with cafes and shops catering to tourists. Nearby landmarks include the Pantheon, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, the Quirinal presidential palace and museum, and the historic Theater Quirino Vittorio Gassman. Also nearby are the Via Corso, a fashionable shopping street, and Giolitti, Rome’s famous gelateria.

The neighborhood is served by buses and the No. 8 tram line at Piazza Venezia. The Barberini and Spagna metro stations are nearby, as is Termini, Rome’s main train station, recently renovated to include dining and shopping.

Size: 1,076 square feet

Price per square foot: $833

Indoors: The apartment, with hardwood floors, unique light fixtures and original exposed wood ceiling beams, has been updated with energy-efficient heating and cooling systems that are independent of the building, as well as optic fiber.

The generous foyer is large enough for a dining area and features floor-to-ceiling built-in bookshelves and a stained-glass window. The foyer and living room (with built-in bookshelves) are in an open, adjoined format separated by a partial partition; the other rooms spur off from a long hallway, with the bedroom at the far end.

The updated eat-in kitchen has stainless steel appliances and cabinetry, as well as integrated pantry storage. The tiled bathroom has been updated with a walk-in shower and small tiles. The bedroom has an ample closet.

The apartment may include partial furnishings, to be negotiated with the seller.

Outdoor space: There is no access to exterior space.

Costs: €3,100 ($3,358) a year for nonresident second home taxes. An estimated €65 a month in condominium fees.

Contact: Salvatore Leggio, Tecnocasa; +39-373-5252622 or +39-06-94807609; [*rmcbg@tecnocasa.it*](mailto:rmcbg@tecnocasa.it) | [*tecnocasa.it*](mailto:rmcbg@tecnocasa.it)

Circonvallazione Gianicolense | €785,000 ($848,000)

A two-bedroom duplex penthouse with a double terrace

On the western edge of Rome, this two-bedroom, three-bath duplex, on the fifth and sixth floors of an 1960s building with 20 units, has been renovated and updated to offer a loft-like format while keeping some of its midcentury-modern character. The seller, a film set designer, customized numerous spaces for storage and sleeping according to his needs.

The building is near Piazzale Enrico Dunant, in a residential neighborhood of postmodern apartment buildings near the Testaccio Bridge and the Tiber River. The historic Testaccio food market, renovated in 2012, is about a mile away.

The Gianicolense neighborhood abuts the Trastevere and Monteverde neighborhoods and the Ostiense street-art district. It is serviced by the No. 8 tram to Piazza Venezia and the Piramide metro station, the latter also providing connection to Rome Fiumicino airport.

Size: 2,163 square feet

Price per square foot: $392

Indoors: The entryway leads into a double-size living room with a fireplace fueled by gas or wood, an open dining area, and egress to one of the two terraces, which is also accessed through the kitchen just beyond the living room. Also on this floor are two bathrooms and a bedroom with a sliding wall that, when open, enlarges the common spaces. A bonus room that can be a bedroom or study offers access to the second terrace.

Up a spiral staircase, the top level is devoted to the primary bedroom and a bathroom, with access to two private terraces with views over the neighborhood. A private garage space, 200 meters from the apartment, may be purchased separately for €50,000 ($54,000).

With large windows on three sides and southern exposures, the apartment receives generous natural light. From the top floor, the views extend out to EUR, a neighborhood originally designed to host the 1942 World Expo Fair and known for its skyline-defining architecture, and to the Gasometro in Ostiense, an [*industrial relic and local landmark*](mailto:rmcbg@tecnocasa.it), often called a “modern Colosseum.”

Outdoor space: The fifth floor has a balcony and a terrace, and the sixth floor has two terraces.

Costs: €3,600 ($3,891) a year for nonresident second home taxes. A monthly condominium fee of €70 ($76).

Contact: Monica Bossi, Sotheby’s International Real Estate; +39-06-7925-8888; [*monica.bossi@sothebysrealty.com*](mailto:rmcbg@tecnocasa.it) | [*sothebysrealty.com*](mailto:rmcbg@tecnocasa.it)

Trastevere | €800,000 ($865,000)

A one-bedroom apartment across from the historic Basilica of Santa Cecilia

This one-bedroom, one-bath apartment is on the second level in a 17th-century building in a quiet nook of the popular Trastevere neighborhood. The six-unit building is cater-cornered from the Basilica of Santa Cecilia, a fifth-century church named for the patron saint of musicians, and faces a large, open courtyard.

The ancient Trastevere neighborhood was once ***working-class*** and is now popular with students, tourists and expatriates. The apartment, however, is off the beaten path, two blocks from the Tiber River and a five-minute walk from Porta Portese, one of Rome’s city gates and the site of a popular weekend flea market. Besides neighborhood dining, nearby attractions include the Colosseum, the Roman Forum and other ancient landmarks.

Size: 883 square feet

Price per square foot: $980

Indoors: The apartment’s open-floor-plan dining room/living room faces the basilica and receives ample light, thanks to the church’s open courtyard. The living room features painted wood coffered ceilings and a reading nook with custom shelving and a small portion of exposed brick as a design accent.

The galley kitchen is accessible from the dining area of the main room and has a glass-pane window configured in the corner. It has been fully updated with a new induction cooktop, integrated oven and dishwasher.

A hallway has additional storage and leads to the bathroom, which has been updated with a glass shower and subway tiling, and finally the bedroom, where the architectural details include a coffered ceiling, integrated bookshelves and a small wood-burning fireplace in the corner. A door leads out to a terrace with terracotta tiles.

Outdoor space: A small private terrace, large enough for plants and a table, is accessed through the bedroom.

Costs: €2,000 ($2,173) a year for a nonresident second home taxes. Monthly condominium fees of €40 ($43).

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Coldwell Banker/Immobilare Santo Sorrentino ROMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Manliness, Cat Ladies, Fertility Panic and the 2024 Election; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRF-BHT1-JBG3-64WX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 16, 2024 Friday 19:01 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 5918 words

**Highlight:** Christine Emba and Zack Beauchamp discuss how gender and family politics are shaping this election.

**Body**

Presidential elections are too vast and complicated to be about any one thing, but they’re sometimes more about one thing than they are about other things. The 2016 election was more about immigration, about who counted as an American. The 2020 election was more about Donald Trump, about what kind of country America was and would become.

And the 2024 election is more about gender. Normally, when people say an election is about gender and family, they’re saying it’s about women, men in politics, men in power. But that is not what I’m saying is happening in the 2024 election. It’s visions of masculinity that are unstable and contested in this race.

In Donald Trump and in Tim Walz, you have two very different, but very explicit, archetypes, visions of what it means to be a man. Trump’s pitch is built on what I would call an almost cartoonish overperformance of masculinity, which is aimed at alienated young men. Having Hulk Hogan and the head of the U.F.C. on your night at the convention really puts a sharp point on that. But in Tim Walz, Democrats have found their own version of a male archetype: a football coach, a soldier, a guy who will fix your car, but also an ally, a man comfortable being in the role of supporting women, a man unthreatened by social change, a man even excited by it.

And then there’s family. Dobbs, of course, put abortion at the center of the election. But the other side of that fight this year — it’s not the pro-choice movement versus the pro-life movement. It’s something newer and stranger — a panic about falling fertility that doesn’t just want to ban abortion — though it does want to do that. It wants to shame anyone who doesn’t have kids. It wants to undermine their legitimacy as full participants in political and I would even say cultural and civilizational life. What does it mean to be pro-family? Is it to support people in finding the life path they want to walk, whether that’s becoming a parent or not? That’s more or less what Kamala Harris believes. Or is it to use policy and culture to push people to have children? To reward them for having more children? To demean and even punish them for choosing to not have children? That’s more or less what JD Vance and the people who have influenced him believe.

To understand this election, you need to swim in some ideological currents that most people don’t understand. But there are people who spend a lot of time in those waters. Christine Emba is a staff writer at The Atlantic and the author of “[*Rethinking Sex: A Provocation*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/).” Zack Beauchamp is a senior correspondent at Vox who focuses on politics in the U.S. and abroad. He just published a book called “[*The Reactionary Spirit: How America’s Most Insidious Political Tradition Swept the World*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/).” And they are the perfect guides on this.

This is an edited transcript of part of our conversation. For the full conversation, listen to “[*The Ezra Klein Show*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/).”

Ezra Klein: I want to start by playing a clip from JD Vance’s 2021 interview with Tucker Carlson. That interview is now very famous. It’s the one where he talks about cat ladies. I think that’s what most people have heard from it, but I want to play you a different piece of it.

[Audio Clip of JD Vance] And it’s just a basic fact. If you look at Kamala Harris, Pete Buttigieg, A.O.C., the entire future of the Democrats is controlled by people without children. And how does it make any sense that we’ve turned our country over to people who don’t really have a direct stake in it?

I want to zoom in on that last idea — “people who don’t really have a direct stake in it.” Christine, if you know the ideological world that JD Vance has become part of, what do you hear in that? What is the clearest version of the argument he’s making?

Christine Emba: There are a couple of things going on in this statement. First, I think, is the idea that the family should be in some ways the center of government, that families are the most important part of the nation. That if you are not part of a family or embedded in this familial web, that you are therefore less committed to the country. I think that we’re also seeing JD Vance’s suggesting that also having children is kind of the purpose of citizens — a pronatalist policy, basically — that families with children are therefore furthering the nation or making America better and that families without children or people without children, those aforementioned childless cat ladies, are holding America back.

This is a thing I’ve heard people on the right say before Vance. But is it a thing people actually believe, or is it a signifier? At what level do you take it?

Emba: I think that it’s a little bit of both. JD Vance and his wife in interviews have rushed to say that, no, they aren’t talking about all childless people. They aren’t talking about people who have had fertility issues. They’re talking about the intentionally childless. So in some sense, you could say that Vance doesn’t necessarily believe the extreme version of what he’s saying, that all childless people are, in a sense, useless to America.

I think if you also look at the ideological background that he comes from, whether it’s the post-liberals or the Catholic integralists, or even just the new right generally, there’s been an increasing open dislike of those in nonfamily or nontraditional family situations, whether it’s gay people — JD Vance has spoken about how he would have voted in favor of the Defense of Marriage Act and against L.G.B.T.Q. rights — whether it’s in their terminology when they talk about single women and childless women. There are right-wing influencers who JD Vance has unfortunately very visibly spoken with, who have come up with the term “AWFL,” for affluent white female liberal, their conversations about the “longhouse,” a place where women rule and men don’t have a role in moving the family forward. I think he both believes in this but in a slightly different way than his most extreme statements would make it seem.

Vance has bragged about being “plugged into” a lot of weird right-wing subcultures. You, my friend, are plugged into a lot of weird right-wing subcultures.

Zack Beauchamp: That is true.

Where is he coming from?

Beauchamp: A few seconds ago, Christine mentioned something about post-liberalism. And I think that’s a very important term here. It’s also a loosely defined one. And that comes from people like law professor Adrian Vermeule and Patrick Deneen, who is a political theorist at Notre Dame. And they basically take an argument or vision of the world that challenges liberalism’s emphasis on the individual. Instead of saying the state is meant to be an engine for individual self-fulfillment or to allow people to live life as best they want it, they argue that there’s a shared telos, a purpose, a common good to politics. And for them, it’s primarily defined by Catholic doctrine, and the purpose of politics should be moving us toward that goal. And part of that envisions the nation almost as an organic whole rather than a series of discrete individuals making choices. So it’s the question of what is good for the body politic as a unit, and that includes perpetuity, survival, children — hence the natalism that’s so important in Vance’s thought.

But this is not the only strain. It’s part of a world where many people sort of cross-pollinate. One of them is the online manosphere — a bunch of men who have become extremely resentful about the current state of gender affairs. But that also cross-pollinates a little bit with the tech right, which has its own versions of right-wing ideology, but shares a sort of contempt for democracy and liberalism with these other strains, with perhaps an even more valid contempt for democracy in the likes of Peter Thiel and Curtis Yarvin, also known as Mencius Moldbug, both of whom are influences on JD Vance sort of directly — he worked in this tech world. And then there’s the national conservatives who are the more mainstream face of a lot of this stuff.

You’ve made this point about the differences between what you call sort of the neopatriarchy right and the Barstool conservatism right. And the Barstool conservatism right has been a little less excited about some of what it is hearing from Vance. Can you walk through the difference there?

Beauchamp: These are cross-cutting currents throughout all of those different groups that I described. The neopatriarchal right, the one that Vance has really aligned itself with, is a group that says a major focus of the state should be on fostering traditional morality and family formation. They don’t explicitly say women shouldn’t be working most of the time — though sometimes they do — but it basically means an emphasis on traditional loosely defined family structure. So you got to have kids, you got to get married, you shouldn’t be having sex out of marriage, birth control is probably bad. You can see some of this in the book by the head of the Heritage Foundation, which JD Vance wrote the foreword to. The publications have been delayed, but some of the excerpts have leaked, and he makes exactly this kind of argument about birth control specifically and other family planning choices.

So that’s one version of conservatism when it comes to views of the family, but another one, which honestly I think fits Donald Trump a little bit better, is this Barstool conservative. It’s a term that’s named after Barstool Sports, the popular sports website. The term was coined by Matthew Walther, a conservative columnist. And Walther’s argument is that these kinds of conservatives aren’t social conservatives like he is. They are people who really are frustrated with the left’s control of culture in the same way that the neopatriarchal right is, but for completely different reasons. They’re angry that they can’t say sexist stuff in public. They’re angry that sexual harassment has become something whose prohibitions are strictly enforced and they think prevent, you know, flirting in the workplace or something like that. They like seeing cheerleaders at football halftime shows.

And these dudes — I use that term very explicitly because it really speaks to the self-identity, right? These dudes are very, very different from the people who are telling you, don’t have sex before marriage, have a family as soon as you can. And while those distinctions are papered over when they’re fighting and at loggerheads against the left in a kind of alliance, they really disagree fundamentally on certain key issues. One good way to see this tension come up is the way that Dave Portnoy, who founded Barstool Sports, got really angry after Roe v. Wade was overturned. He thought that this was not the state’s business to be interfering with abortion. This tension, it’s almost embodied by the Republican ticket, right? Because Donald Trump is nothing if not a Barstool conservative.

I want to play what Trump said about JD Vance’s comments, which in a way was both a defense and a disavowal.

[Audio Clip of Donald Trump] Well, first of all, he’s got tremendous support, and he really does among a certain group of people, people that like families, you know. He made a statement having to do with families. That doesn’t mean that people that aren’t a member of a big and beautiful family with 400 children around and everything else, it doesn’t mean that a person doesn’t have — he’s not against anything, but he loves family. It’s very important to him.

What are you hearing in that Christine?

Emba: It was very clear that Donald Trump was really reaching to make JD Vance’s statement sound a little bit less extreme. But I think it’s really interesting what you heard him say in the first part of his statement: Vance is very popular among a certain group of people — which is to say, or rather not say, not my group of people. But some people really like Vance, and we have to respect them.

The other thing that he was saying: JD Vance isn’t against families — he loves families. But he doesn’t want to actually state the policies that JD Vance is in favor of, because those are policies that actually could alienate voters and, in fact, already have alienated voters. He isn’t stating the things that Vance has said about how no-fault divorce has become basically a scourge on the country and that parents who are arguing, should stay together for the sake of the kids, even if there is perhaps violence in the relationship, which is something he said in a speech in, I think, 2021. He isn’t stating that JD Vance has voted against a bill that would protect I.V.F. He isn’t talking about Vance’s statements about abortion. Vance has said that he is against abortion and has previously been against exceptions, even in the case of rape and incest. He has only recently moderated his stance to provide for reasonable exceptions, what he calls them, after he was being considered for the Republican ticket, because Donald Trump knows that that doesn’t really fly with the majority of Americans. And those are seen as pretty extreme views outside of the small group of people who Vance really gets along with.

There’s a way that the imagined voter for Vance and for Trump seems very different to me. Vance, I think, has wanted to cleave politics around this idea of the family. And I think, in his head, you can sort of pit the families against the nonfamilies. Trump has not been doing that. What I’ve watched him doing has a lot more to do with masculinity. The final night of the Republican National Convention struck me as a gender performance. It was camp masculinity. He had Hulk Hogan. He’s introduced by the head of the U.F.C., Dana White. Axios reported that this was really a strategy. Republicans believed young men are ready to leave the left, that Trump was going to soak his campaign in testosterone and symbols of strength. And Republicans, I think, have had reason to believe that there is a wedge emerging between young men, their politics and the left. Why?

Emba: There’s always been kind of a marriage gap in voting. Since at least the 1990s, married Americans have voted more consistently for Republican candidates than single Americans have. And there’s always been a gender gap in voting, or at least something of a gender gap. Women tend to be slightly more liberal than men. But this gap really has opened up in the past 20 years, especially around and past the 2016 election. Especially young women versus young men. And I think the Republican Party has identified this as a fruitful opening, especially after the #MeToo movement, after the 2016 election, after all the things that happened in the late 2010s regarding gender. I think it just became a more salient issue for both sexes.

Women were awakened to the idea and clarity of sex discrimination, feeling that it wasn’t something that had happened in the past. The idea that Roe v. Wade could be overturned — and then was — cemented that vision in women’s minds, and they have begun voting more on feminist principles. Men, on the other hand, and especially young men — or many of them, I would say, not all of them — began to see those movements as attacks on men and attacks on masculinity. So men, and especially young men, are more likely to say that they are not feminist and that they have experienced discrimination due to their sex. That gap has grown significantly. And Republicans are willing to exploit that.

Isn’t there something to that, at least aesthetically? The left became, in this period — I wouldn’t say hostile to men and their interests, but maybe to masculinity. You had all the “future is female” shirts and “I drink male tears” mugs and talk of toxic masculinity was everywhere. But that got picked up. At least when Biden was running, you had moved from young men being in support of Joe Biden in 2020 to being heavily for Donald Trump in 2024. You have this wide online manosphere. There is a sense that the left became hostile to what you might call masculinity.

Emba: I think you’re actually observing something really real, and I would agree with you there. First of all, we have to think of the material conditions of the last couple of decades. We’ve seen a shift in the economy away from traditional and perhaps masculine-favoring manufacturing jobs and labor jobs to social skills jobs that have tended to favor or at least allow women to enter the marketplace. Post the 1970s, women who were previously barred or kept out of schools and employment entered the work force and entered the educational market and have really succeeded and, in many cases, are outpacing men.

Right now, we’re seeing men only earn about 74 bachelor’s degrees for every 100 that women earn. Wages for men, especially ***working-class*** men, have basically stagnated since the 1970s or even declined — wages for men everywhere except the very top of the economic ladder. And so I think that men now in competition with women generally are feeling a little bit of anxiety — perhaps more than a little bit, I would say — and uncertainty about where they fit in America, both in a social sense and in the economy. That stress was already on the ground and underlying our political landscape.

And then, especially around the #MeToo movement in 2018, when the terrible behavior of certain men became really noticeable and women felt compelled to speak out about their own experiences, there was a general aura that masculinity was a bad thing. And a lot of men, I think, felt attacked. They felt that women were not just succeeding but actually holding them back and discriminating against them. In real life, I think this was not necessarily the case. I think that men and women clearly need each other to survive. But the discourse — especially the popular discourse on TV, on podcasts, did seem, I think, offensive to a large group of men and made them resentful.

In this election where Republicans have sort of been turned into the weird ones, the wedge I see some of them still trying to use is trans issues. You can see that in JD Vance trying to turn around the weird label in this online video:

[Audio Clip of JD Vance] The people who call me weird want to give, like, hormone therapies and sterilize 9-year-olds. I think it’s a lot weirder than, you know, me just like living a normal life with my kids and my wife. But this is what they do, I think, is they latch onto a message and they try to sell it, even if it’s fake.

What do you think of that, Christine?

Emba: One of the things that, I think, has been very unsettling to the men who are, in many cases now, core supporters of Trump and the MAGA movement is the idea of gender being flexible. The idea that there could be trans people in public or trans people in schools or even — gasp — using the bathroom, is really unsettling to the secure vision of gender that the right had embraced. And what Vance is trying to do in this clip is make the sort of unsettling nature of transness, the unsettling nature of alternative sexual identities, feel very salient to voters, as a way to suggest that, yes, the Democrats are doing something weird with gender that’s unsettling, that’s coming for your kids. And that Republicans are on the literal straight and narrow and will save you from that.

Republicans talk about themselves as the party of family. JD Vance talks about being very pro-family. Since 2016, QAnon has been just obsessed with the idea of people preying on children to the point of totally insane conspiracy theories. In that clip, JD Vance talks about how the left wants to sterilize children. They have tried to brand Tim Walz as Tampon Tim because he pushed public schools to put, you know, tampons and pads in the boys bathrooms as if this was somehow going to hurt boys to see a box of pads in their bathroom. Talking constantly about not just drag queens or Pride parades, but drag queen story hours for kids and Pride parades that walk past children — this idea that trans people are a threat to the young specifically and that the left or liberals somehow want to hurt children or make children change in a way that’s unhealthy for them makes the idea seem much scarier, both to those deep into conservative and other politics, but also perhaps to the average voter who isn’t that interested necessarily in trans sports or L.G.B.T. issues but wants kids to be safe.

Beauchamp: The other thing I want to add is that trans issues play a really important gluing role in the conservative coalition. We’ve been talking a lot about the distinction between Barstool conservatives and neopatriarchal conservatives. One way that you get people who have such different views on gender and social roles to align is by creating a shared enemy. And trans people are, for different reasons, disfavored by both groups. These two factions, they can both agree that liberals should not be allowed to be deciding what gender means or changing the way the bathrooms work or letting men into women’s sports in their view.

Zack, your book, “The Reactionary Spirit,” tracks the reactionary ideologies that we’re seeing in America, with their ties to other worldwide movements. The gender dimension, the arguments about family and masculinity — how much does what’s happening in the American context have to do with our culture and our movements, and how much is this something we’re seeing cross-nationally?

Beauchamp: The cross-national picture is really complicated. The way that I define the reactionary spirit in the book is when a movement inside a democracy that supports a certain set of social hierarchies is seeing egalitarian change happen through democratic means, they’re faced with a choice. And that choice is either accept that change might happen through democratic means and try to sand off what they see as the worst edges, or else try to go outside of democracy and take authoritarian, maybe even extralegal steps necessary to prevent democracy from leading to changes in social hierarchy.

I think that’s really important because the feminist revolution happened across the world. This is not just an American thing. So, people committed to traditional gender norms everywhere are grappling with changes to family structure, to women entering the work force, to the idea that certain things that they took for granted are sexist, and the result of that becoming a major part of our social and political world, is being felt everywhere, not just in the United States, and has become a very potent political fuel for reactionary political movements.

In Hungary, for example, which I think is one of the most sterling examples of a democracy backsliding into authoritarianism, powered by a sort of reactionary sentiment, gender politics are at the forefront of the government’s pitch to voters. A large portion of its message is saying we are the party of the traditional family, defending it against whatever kind of enemy is coming in — not just immigrants, but leftists at home, the European Union, “gender ideology,” which is referring to the L.G.B.T. movement. But all of this is centered around the idea of preserving the Hungarian nation.

And perhaps the example that people cite the most when they talk about a country where gender is becoming the center of politics is South Korea. The current president of South Korea won office on a pitch to disaffected men. And gender conflict has really become maybe the cultural battleground inside South Korea. But the degree to which gender has become the dominant issue in different countries is very different and depends on a lot of specific local circumstances.

I’m glad you brought in South Korea here, because South Korea’s fertility rate has become extremely low — 0.8 when you need about 2 for replacement. So South Korea is a society that, if something doesn’t change, is on the verge of really radical shrinkage. Which is already creating problems. But America is also beneath replacement rate fertility. And this has become, I think, almost akin on the right to what climate change is on the left. It is the problem that is the context for all future problems, the problem that is actually existential. I want to play a clip here from a Tucker Carlson interview with Elon Musk:

[Audio Clip of Elon Musk] And I think we just want to make sure that, you know, we have civilization go onward and upward. And that’s for example, why I’m concerned about decreasing birthrates and the fact that, for example, Japan had twice as many deaths last year as births. And they’re a leading indicator.

[Tucker Carlson] You’ve written a lot and talked a lot about this, but can I just ask you to pause just for a parenthetical note — why is that? The urge to have sex and to procreate is, after breathing and eating, the most basic urge. How has it been subverted?

[Elon Musk] Well, it’s just, in the past, we could rely upon, you know, simple limbic system rewards in order to procreate. But once you have birth control and abortions and whatnot, now you can still satisfy the limbic instinct but not procreate. So we haven’t yet evolved to deal with that because this is all fairly recent, you know, last 50 years or so for birth control. I’m sort of worried that, hey, if we don’t make enough people to at least sustain our numbers, perhaps increase a little bit, then civilization is going to crumble. The old question of, like, will civilization end with a bang or a whimper? Well, it’s currently trying to end with a whimper in adult diapers. Which is depressing as hell.

Christine, tell me about the role these fears are playing on the right and the sort of different ideas here that maybe tie together.

Emba: One of the things that is unspoken in this clip, but seems very important, is the idea that citizens have to create the citizens to replace them in whatever country they’re in, which sort of negates the idea that immigration could be a possible way to help expand a society or prop up a civilization. This idea that, in fact, immigration is a bad thing and we should be wary of it, is a huge part of the Republican Party’s platform.

The Great Replacement Theory is something that the right has mentioned often and that Tucker Carlson mainstreamed on his show — that Democrats and liberals are somehow going to bring in immigrants to replace American citizens who aren’t having enough children, to fill up America by themselves basically, and that this is a bad thing.

So often when you see conservatives talking about a lack of family formation, they’re talking about a specific kind of family that aligns with their ideals. Which is why, even though there’s a lot of talk about how Americans aren’t having enough children, how there aren’t enough babies, how we’re below replacement rate, politicians like JD Vance have still voted against policies that would allow Americans to access I.V.F. and fertility treatments. There is the right kind of family that’s supposed to be reproducing, and that’s the family that they’re worried about.

Beauchamp: Apocalypses, imagined or real, tell you a lot about a political movement. And one thing I think that’s really interesting is the shift in the conservative vision of a future apocalypse from being the debt and the deficit, which used to be really the centerpiece of conservative fears about the future. And that’s declined in prominence in conservative movement rhetoric, with a lot of the family formation stuff and declining birthrates becoming a much more central theme.

And not an economically framed one. It’s not the typical, well, if we don’t have enough babies, then we’re not going to be able to pay for Social Security or for the welfare state anymore, which is a big theme in a country like Japan. It’s this existential civilization stuff that you heard Elon Musk talking about — that there’s the death of a country when it doesn’t have enough children.

And I think this speaks to the changing nature of the political right. What I talk about in the book is that politics in general has moved away from having a material foundation — where primarily, divisions about class and questions of the distribution of wealth defined the division between left and right — and toward more cultural issues. And gender is one of them, a really important one that’s more or less salient in different countries based on particular circumstances. But the trend toward post-material politics is true across the advanced democratic world.

I want to turn to the Democrats. Christine, how would you say they’re treating gender this year? Because it feels to me, since Harris has become the presumptive — or even actual, now — nominee, that it feels subtly different than in the past couple of elections.

Emba: I think you’re right about that. One way to talk about this is to compare this election with a female presidential candidate to the last election with a female presidential candidate, 2016 Hillary Clinton. Hillary’s campaign slogan was “I’m with her,” foregrounding the revolutionary possibility of the first female president. Kamala Harris, on the other hand, has not actually spent very much time talking about the idea that she could be the first female president. What we are seeing is a foregrounding of gendered concerns specifically around abortion.

I think that we’re seeing Democrats make the Dobbs decision one of the defining elements of their campaign. Talking about how the reversal of Roe v. Wade was bad for women and anti-democratic and placing that squarely on the Republicans’ plates. And I actually think that this is perhaps maybe a wise strategy for Democrats. We talked earlier about how there is this increasing gender gap and how young women have become increasingly politically awakened and perhaps even radicalized in the leftward direction by the reversal of Roe v. Wade, by the #MeToo moment and the visions of patriarchy that they saw behind that, by simply the presence of Donald Trump on the political scene. So gender has become much more salient for women. It is an exciting factor for women — exciting, not in the happy way, but that it excites a lot of emotion.

JD Vance has, I think, unintentionally put more logs on the fire here by making basically his entire identity seem centered around insulting childless cat ladies, insulting women who presumably have made their own choices or even didn’t make a choice and don’t necessarily feel that happy about it. And I think that the Democratic Party is going to use this idea of supporting women and pushing against people who appear not to support women.

I think Dobbs has allowed the Democrats to talk about gender in a specific and tangible and normal and policy-oriented way instead of this abstract ideological one. It’s not an election about ending the patriarchy or recognizing implicit misogyny. It’s about abortion. It’s about Roe. It’s about I.V.F. And it seems to me that this has allowed Harris to keep things grounded in a way that I think Hillary Clinton had made them more symbolic, more philosophical, more ideological. It’s also been an interesting contrast from Vance and, in a different way, Trump, who don’t have a way of saying, this is the thing we are going to do for you.

Beauchamp: If you listen to Harris’s speeches — or Tim Walz’s, for that matter — there’s one word that they use over and over again, and that word is freedom. And there’s good reason for that. Freedom is one of those contested American values that used to be the centerpiece of Republican rhetoric. And there’s a lot of polling recently that shows that if you can convince voters that Republicans are anti-freedom — and Dobbs was really the opening here, Dobbs and election denial, right? They’re going after your freedom to have the kind of family you want and your freedom to vote. Those two things end up becoming really, really powerful in making Democrats seem like the live-and-let-live party, the one that wants to embody the American ethos of freedom.

Harris is not just saying, vote for me because my policies will give you a better world. What she’s saying is, vote for me because I’m the one who stands up for this essential American and crucially liberal value of freedom. If JD Vance wants to be the candidate of post-liberals, Harris is saying, great, I’m going to be the candidate of liberals. I’m going to be the candidate of liberalism. I’m for freedom. And what are you for? You’re for weird attacks on childless cat ladies and vague ideas about a structured society that you don’t even really want to own, because they’re unpopular. And it’s put her on immensely effective rhetorical ground.

I think Tim Walz is interesting in this election, both for his own role and for what it says about how Democrats are thinking and talking about gender. There’s a very Judith Butler dimension to the Walz pick — football coach, National Guard, straight-talkin’ Midwesterner. How do you see Walz playing into this?

Emba: In the past, Republicans have put themselves forward as the party of masculinity. The Democrats, the liberals are sort of the female party. But Tim Walz versus that vision of masculinity is turning that vision on its head. In the same way that Republicans seem to have gone from the party of freedom to the anti-freedom party, they have gone from the party of real masculinity, of men who shoot guns and work in the yard to, I don’t know, World Wrestling Federation performers? Whereas Democrats seem to have gone or are trying to go from a party of feminized soy boys — as they used to be insulted by Republicans — to, yes, the party of Tim Walz, a dad who wears a camouflage hat. The memes circulating of him online are of a guy from the Midwest who’s straight-talking, loves eating meat and will help you fix your car when it’s on the side of the road. And this is a vision of masculinity that is still very stereotypically masculine. He’s a football coach. He was in the military. But also positive. One might call it a tonic masculinity. He’s male, but he’s helpful. He supports women, but he says he’s not trying to be in their business and legislate how they should use their uteri.

He’s talked about, in his interviews, how he views the Republican Party as having become what he termed the “He-Man Woman Haters Club,” as opposed to presumably his party, the Democratic Party, where men are there and they’re helpful, but they also love women. So this is a vision of masculinity that I think Democrats think will play across America. It’s a very recognizable one, but it’s a friendly one. It’s a down-to-earth one. It’s not a frightening one in the same way that Donald Trump was trying to portray, but an approachable one.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” [*NYT Audio App*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/), [*Apple*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/), [*Spotify*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/), [*Amazon Music*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/), [*YouTube*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/), [*iHeartRadio*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622579/rethinking-sex-by-christine-emba/).

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Annie Galvin. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris, with Mary Marge Locker. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Isaac Jones and Aman Sahota. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. 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. Special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

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[***Dating on Apps, and the Old-Fashioned Way; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNN-0CF1-DXY4-X3MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1159 words

**Highlight:** Different ways of dating. Also: Donald Trump and Louis XIV; the stakes in the election; the music business; killing animals; memo to liberals.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*It’s Not You: Dating Apps Are Getting Worse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1),” by Magdalene J. Taylor (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, March 16):

With more people on online dating platforms than ever, we have entered a new era rife with hot takes and opinions based on a narrow set of experiences. [*Recent surveys*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1) say that dating apps are the No. 1 way people meet today, and nearly 70 percent of individuals who met someone on a dating app said it led to a romantic, exclusive relationship.

I am not here to question individual experiences, or pretend that every date will lead to success. Matching two people is an imperfect science and rests on shared interests, complex personalities, timing and more. It’s an age-old axiom for a reason: You have to kiss a few frogs before you find your prince or princess.

But lately, we’ve been building to an environment where critiques of apps are presented as a monolith and pessimism over a bad date is taken to signal the end to a generation’s romantic future. There’s this false notion suggesting that dating apps don’t work. The numbers tell us that broadly speaking and for more people than ever: They work.

Bernard Kim

Los Angeles

The writer is chief executive officer of Match Group.

To the Editor:

Re “[*With Lackluster Growth, Dating Apps Are in Need of a Spark*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (front page, March 13):

There was a time when finding a partner was an adventure that played out in public spaces: the park while walking your dog, the bar while calming down from a hectic week, the art class that opened you up to new experiences and people.

Now apps let you sit on your sofa in your slippers and shop, viewing only what the app reveals. Are they kind? Would their smile make you look twice?

We used to live somewhere, interact with people we found there who had our approach to life — and would actually move if we found no synergy (why live somewhere that is like that?). These were all actions that led to personal connections.

So unless you are forced to live somewhere totally out of sync with your values, stop playing the game the apps have created and get off the sofa!

Susan Fraser

Jacksonville, Fla.

Donald Trump and Louis XIV

To the Editor:

Re “[*Trump Seeks Full Immunity From 2020 Election Charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (news article, March 20):

Not even French kings in the pre-revolutionary Old Regime had the absolute immunity that Donald Trump believes he deserves.

In 1709 the French bishop and theologian Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet’s tract on royal absolutism, “Politics Derived From the Words of Holy Scripture,” was published posthumously.

Bossuet affirmed that the king is a sacred being who represents the divine majesty; he is God’s “lieutenant on earth.” But Bossuet also underscored that the king “is not exempt from the law; for if he sins, he destroys the laws by his example.”

Though the king, endowed with “a divine quality,” was “not subject to the penalties of the law,” the American president is not so endowed.

Susan Dunn

Williamstown, Mass.

The writer is emerita professor of humanities at Williams College and the author of “Sister Revolutions: French Lightning, American Light.”

At Stake in the Election

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Safety Net Is on the Ballot*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1),” by Paul Krugman (column, March 17):

Mr. Krugman’s astute assessment of our nation’s entitlement programs was a timely reminder of two of the many things at stake in our next election.

I fear that many Americans lack an interest in understanding the catastrophic possibilities should Donald Trump be re-elected. Many voters would choose to form their opinions around sound bites from social media or partisan cable channels rather than taking the time to read up on the issues that will ultimately matter most to them and their futures.

I fear that another Trump presidency will mark the end of many time-honored traditions and programs that have become a bedrock in our society.

Mr. Krugman gives President Biden his due on Mr. Biden’s understanding of and commitment to our Social Security and Medicare programs. Should Americans fail to heed Mr. Krugman’s warnings, it will be far too late to walk back the damage Republicans would do.

Amy M. Ferguson

Dunmore, Pa.

The Music Business: Tough for New Talent

To the Editor:

Re “[*Why Does Every Song Sound Familiar,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1) by Marc Hogan (Opinion guest essay, March 24):

The commodification and exploitation of music are as old as [*selling sheet music by Tin Pan Alley song pluggers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1) over 100 years ago. The hitmakers have always driven revenue, while the wannabes eternally struggle for traction.

While Mr. Hogan criticizes the current monetization of hit songwriters’ catalogs — and ties it to the dearth of opportunities for new talent — the richness and breadth of musical content these days are remarkable and overwhelming. It’s just difficult for new talent to break through and make a living, and I’ve never known it to be any different.

“Music business” is two words. I’ve been a songwriter, recording artist, record producer and music executive for more than four decades, and the song remains the same.

Robert Kraft

Encino, Calif.

The writer is former president of 20th Century Fox Music.

Killing Animals: Avoid the Euphemisms

To the Editor:

Re “[*OK, Class, First We Shoot the Deer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (Food, March 20):

Can we please stop using euphemisms such as “harvest” and “cull” when referring to killing animals? Let’s not sugarcoat it: School hunting and animal agriculture programs take impressionable children who are considered too immature to make responsible decisions about voting, smoking cigarettes or operating a car, and teach them how to kill living beings.

It’s especially troubling when you consider that a large number of U.S. mass shooters were exposed to or took part in [*violence against animals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1) or other forms of cruelty at an early age.

Having been a teacher in the Bronx for many years, I feel strongly that educators have an obligation to model kindness to those different from us and compassion for those weaker. Children are naturally empathetic, and we do them and the greater population a disservice when we teach them to suppress that.

Lisbet Chiriboga

Norfolk, Va.

The writer works for TeachKind, PETA’s humane education division, but is not writing on behalf of the organization.

To the Editor:

The photos of the blood and organs of the deer were somewhat repulsive, but the article’s title is cruel.

But then, it was truthful. My memories of “Bambi” haunt me still.

Rosemary Abbate

Moorestown, N.J.

Memo to Liberals

To the Editor:

Re “​[*Should Wildlife Advocates Help Set Hunting Rules in Vermont?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/16/opinion/dating-apps-hinge-tinder-bumble.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (news article, March 26):

As a liberal non-hunter and non-fisher (I live in Brooklyn, for goodness’ sake), I read the article with interest. My conclusion is that for each of my fellow liberals’ attempts to regulate something like this, it becomes obvious why Democrats are losing the nonelite ***working class***.

Let it go, people, or you will continue to feed the class anger that led to a Donald Trump presidency.

Paul Swetow

Brooklyn

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2024

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[***Read the Transcript of J.D. Vance’s Convention Speech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH7-GFW1-JBG3-602B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2024 Thursday 10:34 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 3329 words

**Byline:** The New York Times

**Highlight:** The Ohio senator officially accepted the Republican vice-presidential nomination.

**Body**

The Ohio senator officially accepted the Republican vice-presidential nomination.

Greetings, Milwaukee. My fellow Americans and my fellow Republicans, my name is J.D. Vance, from the great state of Ohio.

Tonight —

O-H-I-O.

You guys, we gotta chill with the Ohio love. We gotta win Michigan too here, so.

My friends, tonight is a night of hope. A celebration of what America once was, and with God’s grace, what it will soon be again. And it is a reminder of the sacred duty we have to preserve the American experiment, to choose a new path for our children and grandchildren.

But as we meet tonight, we cannot forget that this evening could have been so much different. Instead of a day of celebration, this could have been a day of heartache and mourning. For the last eight years, President Trump has given everything he has to fight for the people of our country. He didn’t need politics, but the country needed him.

Now, prior to running for president, he was one of the most successful businessmen in the world. He had everything anyone could ever want in a life. And yet, instead of choosing the easy path, he chose to endure abuse, slander and persecution. And he did it because he loves this country. I want all Americans to watch the video of a would-be assassin coming a quarter of an inch from taking his life. Consider the lies they told you about Donald Trump. And then look at that photo of him defiant — fist in the air. When Donald Trump rose to his feet in that Pennsylvania field — all of America stood with him. And what did he call for us to do for his country? To fight. To fight for America.

Even in his most perilous moment we were on his mind. His instinct was for us, for our country. To call us to something higher. To something greater. To once again be citizens who ask what our country needs of us. Now consider what they said. They said he was a tyrant. They said he must be stopped at all costs. But how did he respond? He called for national unity, for national calm literally right after an assassin nearly took his life. He remembered the victims of the terrible attack, especially the brave Corey Comperatore, who gave his life to protect his family. God bless him.

And then President Trump flew to Milwaukee and got back to work.

Now that’s the man I’ve gotten to know personally over the last few years. He is tough, and he is, but he cares about people. He can stand defiant against an assassin one moment and call for national healing the next. He is a beloved father and grandfather, and, of course, a once-in-a-generation business leader. He’s the man who’s feared by America’s adversaries, but two nights ago, and I’ll share a moment, said good night to his two boys, told them he loved them, and made sure to give each of them a kiss on the cheek. And I will say, Don and Eric squirmed the same way my 4-year-old does when his daddy tries to give him a kiss on the cheek. Sorry, guys.

He is all those things, but tonight, we celebrate. He is our once and future president of the United States of America.

Now, I want to respond to his call for unity myself. We have a big tent on this party, on everything from national security to economic policy.

But my message to you, my fellow Republicans, is — we love this country and we are united to win.

Now I think our disagreements actually make us stronger. That’s what I’ve learned in my time in the United States Senate, where sometimes I persuade my colleagues and sometimes they persuade me. And my message to my fellow Americans, those watching from across the country, is shouldn’t we be governed by a party that is unafraid to debate ideas and come to the best solution?

That’s the Republican Party of the next four years: united in our love for this country, and committed to free speech and the open exchange of ideas.

And so tonight, Mr. Chairman, I stand here humbled, and I’m overwhelmed with gratitude to say I officially accept your nomination to be vice president of the United States of America.

Now, never in my wildest imagination could I have believed that I could be standing here tonight.

I grew up in Middletown, Ohio, a small town where people spoke their minds, built with their hands, and loved their God, their family, their community and their country with their whole hearts.

But it was also a place that had been cast aside and forgotten by America’s ruling class in Washington.

When I was in the fourth grade, a career politician by the name of Joe Biden supported NAFTA, a bad trade deal that sent countless good jobs to Mexico.

When I was a sophomore in high school, that same career politician named Joe Biden gave China a sweetheart trade deal that destroyed even more good American middle-class manufacturing jobs.

When I was a senior in high school, that same Joe Biden supported the disastrous invasion of Iraq.

And at each step of the way, in small towns like mine in Ohio, or next door in Pennsylvania or Michigan, in other states across our country, jobs were sent overseas and our children were sent to war.

[Crowd chants “Joe must go.”]

I agree.

And somehow, a real estate developer from New York City by the name of Donald J. Trump was right on all of these issues while Biden was wrong. President Trump knew, even then, that we needed leaders who would put America first.

Now, thanks to these policies that Biden and other out-of-touch politicians in Washington gave us, our country was flooded with cheap Chinese goods, with cheap foreign labor— and in the decades to come, deadly Chinese fentanyl.

Joe Biden screwed up, and my community paid the price. Now, I was lucky. Despite the closing factories and the growing addiction in towns like mine, in my life, I had a guardian angel by my side. She was an old woman who could barely walk but she was tough as nails.

I called her “Mamaw,” the name we hillbillies gave to our grandmothers.

Mamaw raised me as her own — excuse me —

Mamaw raised me as my mother struggled with addiction. Mamaw was in so many ways a woman of contradictions. She loved the Lord, ladies and gentleman. She was a woman of very deep Christian faith.

But she also loved the F word. I’m not kidding. She could make a sailor blush.

Now, she once told me, when she found out that I was spending too much time with a local kid who was known for dealing drugs, that if I ever hung out with that kid again, she would run him over with her car.

That’s true. And she said, “J.D., no one will ever find out about it.”

Now, now thanks to that Mamaw, things worked out for me.

After 9/11, I did what thousands of other young men my age did in that time of soaring patriotism and love of country: I enlisted in the United States Marines. Semper Fi to my fellow Marines.

Now I left the Marines after four years and went to The Ohio State University. I’m sorry Michigan, I had to get that in there.

Come on, come on. We’ve had enough political violence. Let’s —

Now after Ohio State I went to Yale Law School, where I met my beautiful wife, and I then started businesses to create jobs in the kinds of places I grew up in.

Now, my work taught me that there is still so much talent and grit in the American heartland. There really is. But for these places to thrive, we need a leader who fights for the people who built this country.

We need a leader who’s not in the pocket of big business, but answers to the working man, union and nonunion alike. A leader who won’t sell out to multinational corporations, but will stand up for American companies and American industry. A leader who rejects Joe Biden and Kamala Harris’s Green New Scam and fights to bring back our great American factories.

We need President Donald J. Trump.

Some people tell me I’ve lived the American dream, and of course they’re right. And I’m so grateful for it.

But the American dream that always counted most was not starting a business or becoming a senator or even being here with you fine people, though it’s pretty awesome. My most important American dream was becoming a good husband and a good dad. Of being able to give —

I wanted to give my kids the things that I didn’t have when I was growing up.

And that’s the accomplishment that I’m proudest of.

That tonight I’m joined by my beautiful wife, Usha, an incredible lawyer and a better mom. And our three beautiful kids, Ewan who’s 7, Vivek who’s 4, Mirabel who’s 2.

Now they’re back at the hotel, and kids, if you’re watching, Daddy loves you very much but get your butts in bed. It’s 10 o’clock.

But, my friends, things did not work out well for a lot of kids I grew up with. Every now and then I will get a call from a relative back home who asks, “Did you know so-and-so?”

And I’ll remember a face from years ago, and then I’ll hear, “They died of an overdose.”

As always, America’s ruling class wrote the checks. Communities like mine paid the price.

For decades, that divide between the few, with their power and comfort in Washington, and the rest of us only widened.

From Iraq to Afghanistan, from the financial crisis to the Great Recession, from open borders to stagnating wages, the people who govern this country have failed and failed again.

That is, of course, until a guy named President Donald J. Trump came along.

President Trump represents America’s last best hope to restore what — if lost — may never be found again. A country where a ***working-class*** boy born far from the halls of power can stand on this stage as the next vice president of the United States of America.

But, my fellow Americans, here in this stage and watching at home, this moment is not about me; it’s about all of us, and it’s about who we’re fighting for.

It’s about the auto worker in Michigan, wondering why out-of-touch politicians are destroying their jobs.

It’s about the factory worker in Wisconsin who makes things with their hands and is proud of American craftsmanship.

It’s about the energy worker in Pennsylvania and Ohio who doesn’t understand why Joe Biden is willing to buy energy from tinpot dictators across the world, when he could buy it from his own citizens right here in our own country.

You guys are a great crowd. Wow.

And, it’s about, our movement is about single moms like mine, who struggled with money and addiction but never gave up.

And I’m proud to say that tonight my mom is here, 10 years clean and sober.

I love you, Mom.

And, you know, Mom, I was thinking. It’ll be 10 years officially in January of 2025, and if President Trump’s OK with it, let’s have the celebration in the White House.

And our movement, ladies and gentlemen, it’s about grandparents all across this country, who are living on Social Security and raising grandchildren they didn’t expect to raise.

And while we’re on the topic of grandparents, let me tell you another Mamaw story. Now, my Mamaw died shortly before I left for Iraq, in 2005. And when we went through her things, we found 19 loaded handguns. They were —

Now, the thing is, they were stashed all over her house. Under her bed, in her closet. In the silverware drawer. And we wondered what was going on, and it occurred to us that towards the end of her life, Mamaw couldn’t get around very well. And so this frail old woman made sure that no matter where she was, she was within arms’ length of whatever she needed to protect her family. That’s who we fight for. That’s American spirit.

Now, Joe Biden has been a politician in Washington for longer than I’ve been alive. Thirty-nine years old. Kamala Harris is not much further behind.

For half-a-century, he’s been the champion of every major policy initiative to make America weaker and poorer.

And in four short years, Donald Trump reversed decades of betrayals inflicted by Joe Biden and the rest of the corrupt Washington insiders.

He created the greatest economy in history for workers. It really was amazing. There’s, there’s this chart that shows worker wages. And they stagnated for pretty much my entire life, until President Donald J. Trump came along. Workers’ wages went through the roof. And just imagine what he can do with four more years in the White House.

Months ago, I heard some young family member observe that their parents’ generation — the baby boomers — could afford to buy a home when they first entered the work force. “But I don’t know,” this person observed, “if I’ll ever be able to afford a home.”

The absurd cost of housing is the result of so many failures. And it reveals so much about what’s broken in Washington. I can tell you exactly how it happened.

Wall Street barons crashed the economy and American builders went out of business.

As tradesmen scrambled for jobs, houses stopped being built.

The lack of good jobs, of course, led to stagnant wages.

And then the Democrats flooded this country with millions of illegal aliens.

So citizens had to compete — with people who shouldn’t even be here — for precious housing.

Joe Biden’s inflation crisis, my friends, is really an affordability crisis.

And many of the people that I grew up with can’t afford to pay more for groceries, more for gas, more for rent, and that’s exactly what Joe Biden’s economy has given them. So prices soared, dreams were shattered.

And China and the cartels sent fentanyl across the border, adding addiction to the heartache.

But ladies and gentlemen, that is not the end of our story.

We’ve heard about the villains and their victims; I’ve talked a lot about that. I’ve talked a lot about that. But let me tell you about the future.

President Trump’s vision is so simple and yet so powerful. We’re done, ladies and gentlemen, catering to Wall Street. We’ll commit to the working man.

We’re done importing foreign labor, we’re going to fight for American citizens and their good jobs and their good wages.

We’re done buying energy from countries that hate us; we’re going to get it right here, from American workers in Pennsylvania and Ohio and across the country.

We’re done sacrificing supply chains to unlimited global trade, and we’re going to stamp more and more products with that beautiful label, “Made in the U.S.A.”

We’re going to build factories again, put people to work making real products for American families, made with the hands of American workers.

Together, we will protect the wages of American workers — and stop the Chinese Communist Party from building their middle class on the backs of American citizens.

Together, we will make sure our allies share in the burden of securing world peace. No more free rides for nations that betray the generosity of the American taxpayer.

Together, we will send our kids to war only when we must.But as President Trump showed with the elimination of ISIS and so much more, when we punch, we’re going to punch hard.

Together, we will put the citizens of America first, whatever the color of their skin.

We will, in short, make America great again.

You know, one of the things that you hear people say sometimes is that America is an idea. And to be clear, America was indeed founded on brilliant ideas, like the rule of law and religious liberty. Things written into the fabric of our Constitution and our nation. But America is not just an idea. It is a group of people with a shared history and a common future. It is, in short, a nation.

Now, it is part of that tradition, of course, that we welcome newcomers. But when we allow newcomers into our American family, we allow them on our terms. That’s the way we preserve the continuity of this project from 250 years past to hopefully 250 years in the future. And let me illustrate this with a story, if I may.

I am, of course, married to the daughter of South Asian immigrants to this country. Incredible people. People who genuinely have enriched this country in so many ways.

And, of course, I’m biased, because I love my wife and her family, but I it’s true.

Now when I proposed to my wife, we were in law school, and I said, “Honey, I come with $120,000 worth of law school debt, and a cemetery plot on a mountainside in Eastern Kentucky.”

And I guess standing here tonight it’s just gotten weirder and weirder, honey. But that’s what she was getting. Now that cemetery plot in Eastern Kentucky is near my family’s ancestral home. And like a lot of people, we came from the mountains of Appalachia into the factories of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Now that’s Kentucky coal country, one of the 10 —

Now, it’s one of the 10 poorest counties in the entire United States of America.

They’re very hardworking people, and they’re very good people. They’re the kind of people who would give you the shirt off their back even if they can’t afford enough to eat.

And our media calls them privileged and looks down on them.

But they love this country, not only because it’s a good idea, but because in their bones they know that this is their home, and it will be their children’s home, and they would die fighting to protect it.

That is the source of America’s greatness.

As a United States senator, I get to represent millions of people in the great state of Ohio with similar stories, and it is the great honor of my life.

Now in that cemetery, there are people who were born around the time of the Civil War. And if, as I hope, my wife and I are eventually laid to rest there, and our kids follow us, there will be seven generations just in that small mountain cemetery plot in eastern Kentucky. Seven generations of people who have fought for this country. Who have built this country. Who have made things in this country. And who would fight and die to protect this country if they were asked to.

Now. Now that’s not just an idea, my friends. That’s not just a set of principle. Even though the ideas and the principles are great, that is a homeland. That is our homeland. People will not fight for abstractions, but they will fight for their home. And if this movement of ours is going to succeed, and if this country is going to thrive, our leaders have to remember that America is a nation, and its citizens deserve leaders who put its interests first.

Now we won’t agree on every issue of course, not even in this room. We may disagree from time to time about how best to reinvigorate American industry and renew American family. That’s fine. In fact its more than fine, it’s good.

But never forget that the reason why this united Republican Party exists, why we do this, why we care about those great ideas and that great history, is that we want this nation to thrive for centuries to come.

Now eventually, in that mountain cemetery, my children will lay me to rest.

And when they do, I would like them to know that thanks to the work of this Republican Party, the United States of America, it is strong, and as proud and as great as ever.

That is who we serve, my friends. That is who we fight for. And the only thing that we need to do right now, the most important thing that we can do for those people, for that American nation that we all love, is to re-elect Donald J. Trump president of the United States.

Mr. President, I will never take for granted the trust you have put in me.

And what an honor it is to help achieve the extraordinary vision that you have for this country.

Now I pledge to every American, no matter your party, I will give you everything I have. To serve you and to make this country a place where every dream you have for yourself, your family and your country will be possible once again.

And I promise you one more thing. To the people of Middletown, Ohio, and all the forgotten communities in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Ohio, and every corner of our nation:

I promise you this — I will be a vice president who never forgets where he came from.

And every single day for the next four years, when I walk into that White House to help President Trump, I will be doing it for you. For your family, for your future and for this great country.

Thank you, God bless all of you, and God bless our great country.

PHOTO: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio accepted the Republican Party’s vice-presidential nomination at the party convention on Wednesday night. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2024

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[***Housing Crunch Could Hinder Biden's 2024 Bid***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFV-1251-JBG3-61R9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 2, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 969 words

**Byline:** By Jim Tankersley

**Body**

The president and his team are seeking ways to help Americans afford to rent and buy homes, as high borrowing costs dampen views of the economy.

President Biden and his economic team, concerned that elevated mortgage rates and housing costs are hurting Americans and hindering his re-election bid, are searching for new ways to make housing more available and affordable.

Mr. Biden's forthcoming budget request will call on Congress to pass a raft of initiatives to build more affordable housing and help certain Americans afford to purchase a home. The president is also expected to address housing affordability for both homeowners and renters in his State of the Union address next week, according to people familiar with the speech planning.

On Thursday, administration officials announced a handful of relatively modest executive actions, including steps to increase the supply of manufactured homes. White House officials said this week that they would announce ''additional actions we are taking to lower housing costs.''

The increased focus on housing affordability comes as congressional Republicans assail Mr. Biden over high mortgage rates and housing costs, and as allies of the president warn that those costs are hurting ***working-class*** voters he needs to win in November.

There is little Mr. Biden can do immediately and directly to affect mortgage rates. Those are heavily influenced by the Federal Reserve's interest rate policies, and the White House is careful not to appear to be pressuring the central bank to cut rates. Fed officials have signaled that they expect to begin cutting rates this year.

New research from economists at Harvard University and the International Monetary Fund -- including Lawrence H. Summers, the former Treasury secretary -- suggests high mortgage rates and other borrowing costs are contributing to Americans' relatively gloomy mood about the economy, despite low unemployment and healthy growth. By weighing on consumer confidence, those costs could be depressing Mr. Biden's re-election hopes.

''If you're Biden, you're cheering for inflation to continue its way down and for the Fed to lower interest rates,'' Judd N.L. Cramer, a Harvard economist and one of the paper's authors, said in an interview. The president should particularly care about that, he added, ''because consumers are more aware than we've given them credit for of those borrowing costs.''

Mr. Biden has made a habit of asking aides about the current state of mortgage rates, which have more than doubled since he took office and as the Fed raised rates to combat the worst bout of inflation in four decades.

The average 30-year mortgage rate jumped to nearly 8 percent last fall from below 3 percent in 2021. It has declined slightly this year but recently ticked up again and now sits just under 7 percent.

Monthly payments for prospective homeowners have soared because of the increase. The monthly payment for a typical mortgage for a $400,000 home -- which is just under the median sales price nationwide -- is about $2,900 at a 7 percent interest rate, assuming a 20 percent down payment. That is about $800 more per month than the payment would be at a 3 percent rate.

The increased burden of high borrowing costs can make home buying seem prohibitive, which is one reason polls show that younger adults in particular are concerned about housing prices. Mr. Cramer said his research suggested that high mortgage rates also frustrate existing homeowners, who may want to sell their home but have seen the ranks of potential buyers thinned because fewer people can afford to pay their asking price.

The research, published on Monday as a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, seeks to shed light on a puzzle of the Biden economy: why consumer sentiment remains lower than historical evidence suggests it should be, given the job market is strong and wages are rising.

Drawing partly on alternate ways of calculating inflation rates in the past, the researchers -- Mr. Cramer, Mr. Summers and Karl Oskar Schulz of Harvard, along with Marijn A. Bolhuis of the I.M.F. -- conclude that rising borrowing costs for homes, cars and more under Mr. Biden account for much of the depression in sentiment.

''Consumers, unlike modern economists, consider the cost of money part of their cost of living,'' they write.

White House economists have run their own calculations on consumer sentiment. They find it is largely dragged down by persistently high grocery prices and residual frustration with the coronavirus pandemic. In recent months, as mortgage rates fell slightly, they calculated that housing issues were helping to brighten consumers' moods.

Still, Mr. Biden's aides say they know how difficult housing costs are for Americans. They are scrounging for ways to alleviate them, even on the margins, before the election.

The president has already tried and failed to persuade Congress to pass expansive plans to build more affordable housing units, along with aid for certain Americans trying to buy homes, like down payment assistance for people whose parents do not own homes. Republicans who control the House have not been receptive to those proposals this year.

''The president considers the long-term shortage of affordable housing to be one of the most important pieces of unfinished business we have,'' Jared Bernstein, the chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said in an interview.

The research suggest a drop in mortgage rates could swiftly lift Mr. Biden with consumers and in his campaign. They suggest the slight fall in rates in recent months was a reason sentiment surged at the end of last year and the start of this one.

White House officials agree. But, they are quick to add, Mr. Biden will not push the Fed to cut rates.

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2024

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[***Likely U.K. Foreign Secretary Has Many U.S. Ties***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVP-BJT1-JBG3-603F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 22, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1350 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler

**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 who grew up poor in ***working-class*** London, he spent summers with relatives in Brooklyn and Queens, working at Con Edison, before earning a master'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, 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 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 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, who served as secretary of state and C.I.A. director, and Robert C. O'Brien, 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.

Mr. Vance's best-selling memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' 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 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 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'' 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, 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. 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.''

''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 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.

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.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/world/europe/david-lammy-interview-obama-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/21/world/europe/david-lammy-interview-obama-trump.html)

**Graphic**

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**



[***Taking TikTok Vibe To the Big Screen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BN5-40N1-DXY4-X1VH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 1152 words

**Byline:** By Beatrice Loayza

**Body**

Radu Jude's films are messy mash-ups of art, literature, advertising and social media, with some dirty jokes thrown in.

Halfway through a recent Zoom interview with Radu Jude, the acclaimed Romanian director of ''Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World,'' he offered a glimpse into his creative process. He pulled out one of the books he's reading, an illustrated tome about commedia dell'arte. Then he shared his screen to reveal a collection of texts and images -- Van Gogh still lifes, Giacometti sculptures, Japanese haikus -- saved in folders on his computer. Jude stopped scrolling at a picture he took of a sign posted on an apartment building entrance.

''It says 'Please have oral sex so as not to disturb the other tenants,''' Jude explained, translating from the Romanian with a grin on his face.

The autodidact Jude is not above a dirty joke. His work melds tragedy and farce, drawing promiscuously from art, literature, street ads and social media to fuel his brazen visions of Romanian history and contemporary life.

Jude's previous film, the Golden Bear-winner ''Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn,'' starts out with the making of a humorously sloppy sex tape and concludes with a witch trial against one of the tape's participants. His latest, ''Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World,'' arrives in U.S. theaters on Friday.

The black comedy follows Angela (Ilinca Manolache), a film production assistant who spends most of her 16-hour workdays in her car, shuttling clients and equipment around Bucharest, Romania's capital. One of Angela's gigs entails interviewing former factory employees who were injured on the clock for a chance to feature in a corporate safety video. Scenes from the present-day, shot in black-and-white, are interwoven with colorful clips of another woman named Angela: a taxi driver in the 1980s also chained to a thankless job that involves navigating the streets of Bucharest.

Jude, 46, was born and raised in Bucharest, and lived through the communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu. After graduating from film school, he cut his teeth in the Romanian film industry in the early 2000s directing commercials and corporate films. Exploitation on these sets was rife, Jude recalled.

''Romania was a haven for international productions from all over the world because of the cheap locations and labor,'' he said: Working preposterously long hours was expected. ''At the time, I thought it was romantic and part of the mythology of cinema,'' Jude added. ''Then I remember hearing about one guy who was pushed to work without sleep: 'Just one more coke, one more red bull.''' The man eventually died in a car crash.

Manolache said that Jude instructed her to watch Andy Warhol movies and performances by Nico of ''The Velvet Underground'' to infuse her gig-economy workhorse with a punk energy. The character's sequined dress and constant bubble-gum-chewing help give off this rogue vibe, but her outlaw behavior comes through most powerfully when she's playing Bobita, an online alter-ego that Manolache created independently of the film, but who appears in frenzied outbursts throughout it.

Bobita is summoned when Angela posts videos of herself with a filter that resembles Andrew Tate, the online personality currently facing extradition from Romania on sex crime charges, and performs vulgar monologues that play like mockeries of the influencer's misogynist speeches. Manolache said she hadn't heard of Tate when she first debuted the Bobita persona on social media in 2021, and that she was actually inspired by Miranda July's Instagram performances and her own frustrations with Romania's culture of toxic masculinity. Though some of her family members and colleagues were dismissive of Bobita, Manolache said, Jude was a fan of her sordid satire, and invited her to lead his new film.

''Most big artists, they don't see what's valuable about TikTok,'' Manolache said. ''They reject it and call it a weird subculture. That's what's rare about Radu and what makes him such a modern voice.''

During the Zoom, Jude whipped out his phone and presented his TikTok feed to the camera. It showed an older woman performing a workout routine, then a hen that had reportedly survived a dog attack. ''They have a certain beauty,'' he said. ''Here you can see people and places you don't typically find in Romanian cinema. Why aren't they in the movies? I often feel that cinema is behind TikTok. It's not familiar with these expressions of life.''

For much of his career, beginning with his 2009 feature debut, ''The Happiest Girl in the World'' -- about a provincial teenager who is forced to take part in a soda commercial -- Jude was considered part of the ''Romanian New Wave'' of filmmakers united by their social-realist perspectives and ***working-class*** subjects. Though several Romanian New Wave directors (like Cristian Mungiu and Cristi Puiu) emerged as film festival heavyweights in the mid-'00s, Jude only gained international recognition in 2015, when he won a prize at the Berlin Film Festival for his 19th-century picaresque, ''Aferim!''

Dorota Lech, a programmer for Central and East European cinema at the Toronto Film Festival, said that the label of ''New Wave'' had become passé. Jude's constant reinvention, she added, makes him too dynamic a filmmaker to fit in one box, anyway. ''He's a true artist in a sea of paint-by-number content creators,'' Lech said by email. He ''can be crude,'' she added, ''but he can also go toe-to-toe with anyone on any subject.''

Some critics have drawn parallels between Jude and the French auteur Jean-Luc Godard -- another fiercely political artist who played with the tools of new media -- but Jude was bashful about the comparison.

He conceded that, like Godard, he tired to ''discover the beauty in all kinds of images'' (though he noted that Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage and John Dos Passos did that, too) and added that he plans to shoot his next film on an iPhone precisely because the format is considered uglier.

''When you read a history book you only ever retain a few traces or details. That's how cinema works. All of a sudden, details jump out and become cinematic. An Instagram page can be cinematic. A reflection in a puddle. You need to force cinema in new directions, make it impure and mess it up in order to be able to see these small details.''

''I just draw attention to what's there,'' he said. ''Maybe that means I'm not a serious filmmaker.''

In fact, several of Jude's films -- like his next feature, a Dracula adaptation -- began as jokes. ''I was pitching a new project to some producers and they weren't excited. Then I told one of them, 'Well, I'm from Transylvania, so I also have a Dracula project,' which I didn't. Suddenly, he was very interested.'' Then -- unsurprisingly, considering Jude's freewheeling, improvisatory spirit -- he figured: ''Why not?''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/movies/radu-jude-do-not-expect-too-much-from-the-end-of-the-world.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/21/movies/radu-jude-do-not-expect-too-much-from-the-end-of-the-world.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The black comedy ''Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World,'' above, is the latest film from the Romanian director Radu Jude, below. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY 4 PROOF FILM

ANDREEA CAMPEANU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Bobby Kennedy and Tom Suozzi***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBF-4B81-DXY4-X00B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1915 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:** Suozzi’s campaign offered an early glimpse of messages that Democrats plan to use against Donald Trump.

**Body**

Suozzi’s campaign offered an early glimpse of messages that Democrats plan to use against Donald Trump.

Tom Suozzi’s victory this week in a special election for a House district in Long Island and Queens [*has allowed other Democrats to dream*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) about what success might look like in November.

Yes, Suozzi’s race was atypical. Above all, voter turnout in special elections is much lower than in presidential elections, and low turnout now benefits Democrats, [*as my colleague Nate Cohn has emphasized*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Still, Suozzi’s campaign offered an early glimpse of messages that Democrats plan to use against Donald Trump. And in those messages is a larger theme. It’s a theme with a rich history, including in Robert F. Kennedy’s 1968 presidential campaign. In today’s newsletter, I’ll explain.

Voting your conscience

A common lament from Democrats is: Why do so many Americans vote against their economic interests?

It’s an understandable question in many ways. Even though the Republican Party favors tax cuts for the rich and cuts in government programs that benefit most Americans, Republican candidates now win most ***working-class*** voters (defined as people without a bachelor’s degree).

But the question also exposes a lack of self-awareness on the political left. After all, many liberals vote against their economic interests, too. The country’s wealthiest suburbs, as well as vacation spots like the Hamptons, [*generally vote Democratic*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) despite the party’s belief in taxing the rich.

These patterns are a reminder that Americans, across ideological groups, care about more than just economic policy — and voting on these other beliefs is not irrational. Climate change, for instance, matters enormously. So do abortion, guns, crime, education, immigration and foreign policy.

‘Meet the conservative’

Robert Kennedy understood this reality better than many other Democrats.

Today, Kennedy is remembered as a progressive hero. No wonder: His economic policy was so populist that C.E.O.s disliked him more than any presidential candidate since F.D.R., as Fortune magazine wrote during the 1968 campaign. Kennedy also emphasized civil rights even when speaking to white audiences. A poll found him to be the most popular white politician among Black Americans.

But Kennedy believed that it was madness to tell voters to ignore social issues and focus only on economic ones. His main rival during the 1968 primaries, Eugene McCarthy, tried to do exactly this on the biggest social issue at the time. In the 1960s, crime was rising sharply, yet McCarthy avoided the topic. He refused to use the phrase “law and order,” because he considered it a racist dog whistle.

Kennedy took the opposite approach. He ran as the law-and-order Democrat, knowing that both Black and white voters worried about crime. He described himself as having been “the chief law enforcement officer of the United States” (as attorney general), and an aide joked that he sometimes seemed to be running for sheriff. If Democrats wouldn’t talk about crime, Kennedy believed, crime-wary voters would abandon them for Richard Nixon, the Republican nominee in 1968, or George Wallace, the segregationist running as an independent.

“We’re going to talk about what people will listen to,” Kennedy explained. “You have to get them listening by talking about what they’re interested in, before you can start trying to persuade them about other matters.”

Other liberals were aghast. The New Republic and The Village Voice criticized him. A New York Times headline announced, “Kennedy: Meet the Conservative.” (You can read that Times story [*in our archives*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), and I tell the story of the 1968 campaign [*in my recent book*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).)

Kennedy, however, recognized something vital. ***Working-class*** Americans tend to be more socially moderate than the affluent, highly educated Democrats who shape the party’s strategy.

It’s impossible to know what would have happened if Kennedy had not been assassinated in June 1968. He might not have won the presidency. But he was beating McCarthy in the primaries.

Echoes of Bobby

As I watched Suozzi’s campaign, I was struck by its Kennedy-esque approach — [*with immigration playing the role*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) that crime did in 1968.

Suozzi set himself apart from many national Democrats by describing the recent surge of illegal immigration as unacceptable. He also criticized Republicans for opposing a bill that would have strengthened border security, suggesting that they cynically wanted to prolong the crisis for political advantage. And he criticized Republicans on both crime (normally a Democratic weakness) and abortion (a Democratic strength). He talked about economic policy too, but he did not treat voters as irrational for caring about social issues or for having moderate views.

Other Democrats, including President Biden, have tried to avoid talking about immigration — much as McCarthy tried to avoid crime in 1968. Suozzi, by contrast, echoed Kennedy (unknowingly, I assume). “You want to try to respond to what the people are hungering for,” Suozzi said last month. “This is what the people are hungering for.”

In the upcoming campaign, this strategy will be harder for Biden and other incumbents. Unlike Suozzi, who has been out of office, they will need to explain what they are already doing to solve the immigration problem. Nonetheless, there is a lesson here — be it for Democrats on immigration or Republicans on abortion.

When politicians tell voters to stop caring about an issue, voters often hear it as a sign of disrespect. People rarely vote for a candidate who doesn’t seem to respect them.

For more

* How Senate Democrats flipped the border issue on Republicans: The Times’s Carl Hulse [*takes you behind the scenes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Immigration officials say [*they may need to cut detention capacity*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) after Republicans blocked new border funding.
2. Suozzi’s victory [*narrows Republicans’ thin House majority*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Once he’s sworn in, Republicans can afford only two defections on party-line votes.
3. Jimmy Kimmel [*joked about Suozzi’s win*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). He said the results had to be verified “to make sure the winner wasn’t George Santos in disguise.”

THE LATEST NEWS

Israel-Hamas War

* Israeli forces have [*entered a hospital complex*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in southern Gaza. Israel accused Hamas of hiding fighters and possibly the bodies of hostages inside.

1. Read a [*father’s story from inside the hospital*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. Biden used his immigration authority to [*shield about 6,000 Palestinians in the U.S. from deportation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Kansas City Shooting

* One person was killed and at least 21 others were wounded [*in a shooting*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) at the Kansas City Chiefs’ Super Bowl celebration.

1. The police detained three people in connection with the shooting, but many details, including a motive, were still unknown. [*Here’s what we know*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. Nine children were injured by gunfire, hospital officials said. None of them were in critical condition.
3. Chiefs players, who had left on buses after the rally, [*expressed sorrow and shock*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). “Praying for Kansas City,” Patrick Mahomes wrote.

Politics

* [*Russia may be developing*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)a space-based nuclear weapon to threaten satellites, U.S. officials believe. A Republican congressman urged more public information.

1. Trump’s comments about NATO reflect a [*shift in America’s position*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) as an international leader, Peter Baker writes.
2. The Senate is planning to [*quickly reject*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) the House’s impeachment articles against Alejandro Mayorkas, Biden’s homeland security secretary.
3. Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and a former White House adviser, said he [*wouldn’t serve in a second Trump administration*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
4. Nikki Haley trails Trump in her home state, South Carolina, [*by 36 points*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), a poll shows.

Trump Trials

* Jack Smith, the special counsel prosecuting Trump on charges of plotting to overturn the 2020 election, urged the Supreme Court to [*let the trial start soon*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
* The New York judge overseeing Trump’s criminal case over hush-money payments to a porn star is expected to rule today on whether the case can [*move to trial next month*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

International

* In Indonesia, a former general who was found responsible for the kidnapping of political dissidents is [*projected to win the presidential election*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Russia often keeps its wounded soldiers [*out of public view*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to avoid an increase in antiwar sentiment.
2. Investors are losing confidence in Beijing’s ability to turn the Chinese economy around, [*Li Yuan writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. Greece is set to become the first Orthodox Christian country [*to allow same-sex marriage*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
4. Mysterious cave markings are [*the oldest rock art found in Patagonia*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Other Big Stories

* Some violent acts by migrants in New York have made headlines, but police statistics [*do not point toward a crime surge*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. A lunar lander named Odysseus, made by a private space company, [*launched overnight*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Opinions

Republicans want to [*weaken vaccine mandates for children*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Their success would mean more measles outbreaks, and more deaths, Zeynep Tufekci writes.

Cities and states are [*stripping rights from transgender people*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Chase Strangio writes.

One key to a happy, stable marriage: having [*strong friendships besides your spouse*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Rhaina Cohen writes.

Here are columns by Pamela Paul on [*Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and Nicholas Kristof on [*addiction recovery*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Sheffield: An English city gave soccer to the world. [*Now it wants credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Social Qs: “My oldest friend is being paroled from prison. [*Can I dump her?*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)”

The oldest-known wild platypus: Scientists say the animal could [*help them preserve the species*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Keep calm: Fighting in the Red Sea has disrupted [*tea shipments to Britain*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

“How did you meet?” The Times hit the street with the [*team behind Meet Cutes NYC*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), which shares miniature stories of love on social media.

Lives Lived: William Post, a bakery manager in Michigan, worked with Kellogg’s to create Pop-Tarts in 1964. The snack became an American classic, growing from four flavors to more than 30. Post [*died at 96*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

A long-running saga: The Golden State Warriors tried to acquire LeBron James at the trade deadline, ESPN reported. [*Here’s the latest on his future*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Caitlin Clark: The Iowa superstar [*will probably become*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) the N.C.A.A. women’s basketball scoring leader tonight. She sits eight points shy of Kelsey Plum’s mark.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Slime time: Marc Summers, the exuberant host of “Double Dare,” the Nickelodeon game show from the 1980s and ’90s, is the [*subject (and star) of a new Off Broadway production*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), “The Life &amp; Slimes of Marc Summers.” The show includes serious topics one might expect from a biography — like Summers’s journey through show business and his struggles with O.C.D. — but also a recreation of “Double Dare” that puts audience members through the show’s messy obstacles.

More on culture

* The Times Magazine interviewed actors off-duty. [*See what stars do*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) when they aren’t shooting films.

1. In Paris, booksellers on the Seine will be allowed to remain during the Olympics. They had [*threatened to barricade their stalls*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. Jeffrey Wright recently earned his first Oscar nomination, for “American Fiction.” [*Read his story*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Marinate chicken thighs in soy sauce, garlic, ginger and pineapple juice to make [*Seattle-style teriyaki*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Give your photos [*a vintage look*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Wash [*your comforter*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Use sound machines to [*help you focus at work*](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 evolving.

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) and [*Connections*](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: Tom Suozzi (PHOTOGRAPH BY Anna Watts for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Greene Ignores Allies And Snipes at Johnson***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXV-2GH1-DXY4-X3SD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The Georgia Republican's doomed push to remove the speaker has placed her at odds with most in her party, but it has brought her back to her roots as a norm-busting provocateur.

When Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia, first dangled the threat of ousting Speaker Mike Johnson, she received a call from a longtime ally and fellow hard-right Republican who urged her not to follow through.

''I don't know how this helps us, six months before an election when we're trying to win the White House,'' Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio, told her, he said in a recent interview. Republicans were in a strong position to win back the Senate, Mr. Jordan said, and former President Donald J. Trump had a decent shot at winning the White House.

''The only thing that makes me a little nervous is, could we somehow lose the House?'' he told Ms. Greene, adding: ''Let's don't make it a chance.''

Mr. Jordan was far from the only person Ms. Greene respected telling her to stand down. Mr. Trump, who thinks the chaos in the House is harming his re-election chances, publicly vouched for Mr. Johnson as someone doing ''about as good as you're going to do'' and has gently pressed Ms. Greene in private to move on, according to people familiar with their conversations who described them on condition of anonymity.

Former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who elevated Ms. Greene and turned her into one of his top allies during his abbreviated time in the top post, never criticized her publicly. But privately, he called Mr. Johnson and offered to intervene with her on his behalf, according to people knowledgeable about the exchange.

Ultimately, none of it mattered. Ms. Greene could not be controlled -- even if her campaign against the speaker has left her isolated within her party.

So on Wednesday morning, wearing a red MAGA cap and standing in front of a blown-up picture of Mr. Johnson embracing Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, Ms. Greene said she would demand a vote next week to remove Mr. Johnson from the speakership. Mr. Jeffries, she said, had embraced Mr. Johnson with ''a warm hug and a big, wet, sloppy kiss,'' making them the joint leaders of what she refers to disdainfully as the ''uniparty.''

She did so knowing that her effort to depose Mr. Johnson was all but certain to fail. She has only two Republicans publicly committed to backing it and Democrats have said they would vote to block any motion to oust the speaker, giving him more than enough votes to kill it.

But Ms. Greene has never abided by the conventional rules of politics, where a loss on the House floor is considered a major defeat. Since arriving in Congress four years ago, she has played a different game all together -- one in which the only way to lose is by becoming irrelevant and inconspicuous.

That was true when she first arrived in Washington after embracing the QAnon conspiracy theory during her campaign (she later said she decided to ''choose another path'') and caused constant headaches for House Republican leaders with her inflammatory statements. After a brief interlude of trying to play the inside game by forming an alliance with Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Greene is back to her old playbook, even though she insists she is being deliberate about how she proceeds.

For more than a month, she has dangled the threat of an ouster over Mr. Johnson, raising doubts about whether she would go through with a move even hard-right Republicans oppose. She continued to hesitate even on Wednesday, when she said she wanted to give her colleagues one more weekend to think about how they would vote, and offered Mr. Johnson one last opportunity to resign.

''I'm not irresponsible,'' she told reporters outside the Capitol. ''I care about my conference. I have been measured. I have given this time. I have been giving warning after warning. It was a warning to stop serving the Democrats and support our Republican conference and support our agenda. And he didn't do it.''

To understand her refusal to drop the matter in the face of solid resistance from her colleagues, it helps to know how Ms. Greene spends her time. In Congress, she operates more as a MAGA influencer than a legislator, relentlessly attacking Democrats and railing about the southern border. In doing so, she appeals to a white, ***working-class*** audience that sees her as one of them.

As isolated as she appears to be on Capitol Hill, Ms. Greene's strategy is working for her political brand. In mid-April, Mr. Johnson was more popular with Trump voters than Ms. Greene, according to a poll by The Economist/YouGov. About 18 percent of Trump voters at that time held an unfavorable view of him, compared to 25 percent who held a negative view of Ms. Greene.

But after the House passed a massive foreign aid bill with bipartisan support and Ms. Greene continued to threaten Mr. Johnson, his popularity with Trump voters suffered and Ms. Greene's increased. About 31 percent of those voters now have a negative view of Mr. Johnson, compared to 23 percent who hold an unfavorable view of Ms. Greene.

She also epitomizes the incentive system that many blame for Congress's deep dysfunction. Her rhetoric and behavior generate viral social media content that keeps her where she most likes to be -- in front of a camera -- which in turn helps make her more famous and drives more small-dollar donations to her campaign.

Ms. Greene is not necessarily concerned that her behavior will hurt the House Republican conference, a place where she has few allies, as long as she is strengthening her own brand that is beloved by the MAGA base.

''It's a brilliant move,'' Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump adviser and host of the influential ''War Room'' podcast, said of Ms. Greene's decision to move ahead with the effort to oust Mr. Johnson. ''The old politics is gone. Politics today is media and theater and drama and coming into the moment. You have to pierce the white noise, and she knows how to pierce it. She doesn't need to connect to the donors. What's relevant is this mass movement that's out there that's looking for leadership.''

He added, ''She's giving original, pure Trump.''

On Wednesday morning, Ms. Greene's first stop after her news conference was a 45-minute appearance on Mr. Bannon's program. Ms. Greene said her goal was to put her colleagues ''on record'' by holding the vote ''to see who the uniparty is.''

Mr. Bannon, whose show serves as a major fund-raising platform for MAGA Republicans, previously banned Ms. Greene from appearing there after she made an alliance with Mr. McCarthy and supported the debt limit deal he negotiated with President Biden.

During that period, Ms. Greene was taking a different approach to the job, trying on the uniform of team player in an attempt to gain more influence. Ms. Greene, who had been stripped of her committee seats by Democrats during her first term in Congress, tried transforming from a powerless sideshow into a more serious legislator.

During Mr. McCarthy's weeklong, 15-vote ordeal to win the gavel last year, Ms. Greene locked arms with him in a surprise move and said she just wanted Congress to get down to business.

''I've been here for two years without committees, and I'm really ready to get to work,'' she said in an interview last year. ''Before I even came to Congress, that's what I did in my life, was work. We need to be doing that.'' She was later kicked out of the House Freedom Caucus because of her close alliance with Mr. McCarthy.

But now she has returned to a posture that's a more natural fit: berating the leader of her party on Capitol Hill and seeking maximum attention, even if nobody is rushing to join her.

At Mr. Biden's State of the Union address this year, Ms. Greene came dressed like a one-woman political protest -- complete with MAGA cap, political buttons and a T-shirt bearing the name of Laken Riley, a nursing student alleged to have been killed by an undocumented immigrant -- and heckled Mr. Biden in the middle of his speech.

Ms. Greene has maintained that her actions are not driven by a deep need for attention or by any personal animus toward Mr. Johnson. Instead, she said it's about policy, and his decision to push through a foreign aid package that included $60.8 billion in aid to Ukraine by relying on Democratic votes.

''Nobody wants this drama right now, but it's Mike Johnson who has completely brought it on all of us,'' she told Mr. Bannon on his show. ''Yeah, this is inconvenient, but I didn't come up here to Washington to go along and get along and put it in cruise control.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-congress.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-congress.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Republicans worry that more chaos around the speakership could risk control of the House, but that hasn't stopped Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene's push to oust Speaker Mike Johnson. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VALERIE PLESCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2024

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[***Why Is the Democratic Base Eroding?; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M7-7RX1-JBG3-635C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday 23:07 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1152 words

**Highlight:** Readers react to a column by Pamela Paul criticizing the party’s direction. Also: Inequality and test scores; WIC funding.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Democrats Are Their Own Worst Enemies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/opinion/democrats-elite-judis-teixeira.html),” by Pamela Paul (column, Nov. 3), about why polls are showing a loss of support for the party among minorities and the ***working class***:

Ms. Paul writes that “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.”

That, she says, is the reason that “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.”

Is she talking about the same G.O.P. that, under the former president, passed legislation that gave enormous tax breaks to the wealthiest in the country? Is she referring to G.O.P. legislators who now want to reduce funding for the I.R.S., an agency that serves as a watchdog against unfair tax manipulation that leaves the middle class with a proportionately greater tax burden than the richest?

If so, it is hard to imagine that the G.O.P., as opposed to the Democratic Party, is prioritizing the economic well-being of the American majority.

Sheila Terman Cohen

Madison, Wis.

To the Editor:

OMG! I had no idea how crazy the Democrats really are! As Pamela Paul reminds us, they are out of touch with the “broadly shared beliefs within the electorate.”

Democrats support legal immigration and care for refugees. They think Social Security is a good idea. They think everyone is entitled to equal protection under the law regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. They think that people who want to impose their religion on this country are just wrong. They think that people are entitled to autonomy over their own bodies and health care. They recognize the rule of law.

And the worst part is they are right up front about it. Thank you, Pamela, for helping me feel better about how I plan to vote.

Richard W. Poeton

Lenox, Mass.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul is correct that there is room for robust debate about what policies the Democrats should adopt to better help most Americans, but she misses the bigger problem. The Republican Party is full of one-issue voters who will vote to promote racist policies, misogyny or guns regardless of whether most Republican policies are good for America or not.

Many Democratic voters have been quick to say they won’t vote for a Democratic candidate since that candidate promises to do only seven of the 10 things they want. Especially with the Electoral College and gerrymandering favoring minority rule, everyone who recognizes the danger that the current Republican Party poses to our freedoms must vote for the Democratic candidate, even if they want some different policies.

Until the current Republican Party is out of power, any debate within the Democratic Party must take a back seat to saving our country from election deniers.

Richard Dine

Silver Spring, Md.

Income Inequality and Test Scores

To the Editor:

Re “[*‘18 Years Too Late’ to Solve SAT Gap*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/10/23/upshot/sat-inequality.html)” (The Upshot, Oct. 30):

It is unsurprising that SAT scores correlate strongly to family income. A huge portion of top scorers come from the richest families. Only 0.6 percent of all students from the bottom 20 percent of family income score above 1300 out of 1600.

This data dispels the myth that the SAT boosts access to higher education by identifying “diamonds in the rough” from historically underrepresented populations. They are far outnumbered by students from wealthy families taking full socioeconomic advantage to achieve higher scores. The “rough” — in the form of under-resourced public education and family poverty — completely obscures the diamonds.

Furthermore, the SAT is a very weak predictor of undergraduate performance. Grades work better. The test is a strong measure of accumulated opportunity rather than college readiness. Relying on SAT results to prejudge future educational performance locks in inequity.

That is one reason that nearly 90 percent of U.S. four-year colleges and universities now have SAT/ACT-optional or test-blind policies.

Of course, such policies alone will not solve the college access problem. Admissions offices need to scrutinize other determinative factors. A fair process should not provide the greatest opportunities to teenagers who have already had the most advantages in life.

Harry Feder

Brooklyn

The writer is the executive director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest).

To the Editor:

Again and again, research has shown that poverty and income inequality are the most powerful influence on school performance. How could it be otherwise in a country without a real safety net, with parents working two gig jobs and juggling which bills to pay, with no secure access to health care, rampant evictions and parking lots for employed people who have to live in their cars? Yet the public refuses to believe this, and at best seeks to bolster schools in the hopes that they will make up for fundamental deprivation.

It is deeply distressing to see how many reader comments declare that wealth reflects genetic superiority and other “virtues.” In an era of barely taxed billionaires building self-perpetuating stock market fortunes on the labor of warehouse workers and A.I., that view is not only undemocratic and ahistorical. It’s also dangerously complacent.

Nina Bernstein

New York

The writer is a former New York Times reporter.

Helping Kids Thrive With Full WIC Funding

To the Editor:

Re “[*Infant Mortality Up for 1st Time in Two Decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/health/infant-mortality-rate-rise.html)” (front page, Nov. 2):

The increase in America’s infant mortality rate is a deeply alarming sign that policymakers do not adequately prioritize children’s health and well-being.

Sadly, it is not the only sign.

The child poverty rate [*more than doubled*](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-280.pdf) last year. Nearly 9 percent of households with children were [*food insecure*](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/key-statistics-graphics/#children) in 2022, up from 6.2 percent the year before. Children’s reading and math scores have [*plummeted*](https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/) since the pandemic.

No single program can fix all of this. But the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which [*serves about half of all infants*](https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic) born in the United States, should be considered our first line of defense.

A 2019 [*study*](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2756257) found that WIC participation is directly attributable to a 16 percent reduction in the risk of infant mortality. WIC participation also [*lowers*](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-280.pdf) the risk of poverty, [*reduces*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/soej.12078) food insecurity, [*improves*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9910511/#:~:text=Although%20some%20existing%20research%20has,eligible%20but%20did%20not%20enroll.) nutritional intake and [*strengthens*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4703081/) kids’ cognitive development.

Yet [*new data*](https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/wic/eligibility-and-program-reach-estimates-2021) from the Department of Agriculture finds a significant gap between WIC eligibility and coverage. For instance, only 25 percent of 4-year-olds eligible for WIC are actually enrolled.

All children deserve to grow up healthy and thrive. Full funding for WIC is an essential step toward that goal.

Georgia Machell

Washington

The writer is interim president and C.E.O. of the National WIC Association.

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

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[***Editors' Choice / Staff Picks From the Book Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X036-00000-00&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. 27

**Length:** 506 words

**Body**

MADONNA: A Rebel Life, by Mary Gabriel. (Little, Brown, $38.) 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.

THANK YOU (FALETTINME BE MICE ELF AGIN): A Memoir, by Sly Stone with Ben Greenman. (AUWA, $30.) 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.

MCU: The Reign of Marvel Studios, by Joanna Robinson, Dave Gonzales and Gavin Edwards. (Liveright, $35.) 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.

FOREIGN BODIES: Pandemics, Vaccines, and the Health of Nations, by Simon Schama. (Ecco, $32.99.) 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.

JOANNA RUSS: Novels & Stories, edited by Nicole Rudick. (Library of America, $37.50.) 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.

THE LUMUMBA PLOT: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination, by Stuart A. Reid. (Knopf, $35.) 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.

ORGAN MEATS, by K-Ming Chang. (One World, paperback, $18.) 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.

THE GLUTTON, by A.K. Blakemore. (Scribner, $28.) 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.

JUDGMENT AT TOKYO: World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia, by Gary J. Bass. (Knopf, $46.) 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.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/12EdChoice.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/books/review/12EdChoice.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR27.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2023

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[***High Mortgage Rates Leave Biden Searching for Housing Relief***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BFN-5VM1-DXY4-X2TH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 1, 2024 Friday 21:58 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 967 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley Jim Tankersley writes about economic policy at the White House and how it affects the country and the world. He has covered the topic for more than a dozen years in Washington, with a focus on the middle class.

**Highlight:** The president and his team are seeking ways to help Americans afford to rent and buy homes, as high borrowing costs dampen views of the economy.

**Body**

The president and his team are seeking ways to help Americans afford to rent and buy homes, as high borrowing costs dampen views of the economy.

President Biden and his economic team, concerned that elevated [*mortgage rates and housing costs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) are hurting Americans and [*hindering his re-election bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html), are searching for new ways to make housing more available and affordable.

Mr. Biden’s forthcoming budget request will call on Congress to pass a raft of initiatives to build more affordable housing and help certain Americans afford to purchase a home. The president is also expected to address housing affordability for both homeowners and renters in his State of the Union address next week, according to people familiar with the speech planning.

On Thursday, [*administration officials announced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) a handful of relatively modest executive actions, including steps to increase the supply of manufactured homes. White House officials said this week that they would announce “additional actions we are taking to lower housing costs.”

The increased focus on housing affordability comes as congressional Republicans assail Mr. Biden over high mortgage rates and housing costs, and as allies of the president warn that those costs are hurting ***working-class*** voters he needs to win in November.

There is little Mr. Biden can do immediately and directly to affect mortgage rates. Those are heavily influenced by the Federal Reserve’s interest rate policies, and the White House is careful not to appear to be pressuring the central bank to cut rates. Fed officials have [*signaled that they expect to begin cutting rates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) this year.

[*New research from economists*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) at Harvard University and the International Monetary Fund — including Lawrence H. Summers, the former Treasury secretary — suggests high mortgage rates and other borrowing costs are contributing to Americans’ relatively gloomy mood about the economy, despite low unemployment and healthy growth. By weighing on consumer confidence, those costs could be depressing Mr. Biden’s re-election hopes.

“If you’re Biden, you’re cheering for inflation to continue its way down and for the Fed to lower interest rates,” Judd N.L. Cramer, a Harvard economist and one of the paper’s authors, said in an interview. The president should particularly care about that, he added, “because consumers are more aware than we’ve given them credit for of those borrowing costs.”

Mr. Biden has made a habit of asking aides about the current state of mortgage rates, which have more than doubled since he took office and as the Fed raised rates to combat the worst bout of inflation in four decades.

The [*average 30-year mortgage rate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) jumped to nearly 8 percent last fall from below 3 percent in 2021. It has declined slightly this year but recently ticked up again and now sits just under 7 percent.

Monthly payments for prospective homeowners have soared because of the increase. The [*monthly payment for a typical mortgage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) for a $400,000 home — which is just under the median sales price nationwide — is about $2,900 at a 7 percent interest rate, assuming a 20 percent down payment. That is about $800 more per month than the payment would be at a 3 percent rate.

The increased burden of high borrowing costs can make home buying seem prohibitive, which is one reason polls show that [*younger adults in particular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) are concerned about housing prices. Mr. Cramer said his research suggested that high mortgage rates also frustrate existing homeowners, who may want to sell their home but have seen the ranks of potential buyers thinned because fewer people can afford to pay their asking price.

The research, published on Monday as a National Bureau of Economic Research working paper, seeks to shed light on a puzzle of the Biden economy: why consumer sentiment remains lower than historical evidence suggests it should be, given the job market is strong and wages are rising.

Drawing partly on alternate ways of calculating inflation rates in the past, the researchers — Mr. Cramer, Mr. Summers and Karl Oskar Schulz of Harvard, along with Marijn A. Bolhuis of the I.M.F. — conclude that rising borrowing costs for homes, cars and more under Mr. Biden account for much of the depression in sentiment.

“Consumers, unlike modern economists, consider the cost of money part of their cost of living,” they write.

White House economists have run their own calculations on consumer sentiment. They find it is largely dragged down by persistently [*high grocery prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) and residual frustration with the coronavirus pandemic. In recent months, as mortgage rates fell slightly, they calculated that housing issues were helping to brighten consumers’ moods.

Still, Mr. Biden’s aides say they know how difficult housing costs are for Americans. They are scrounging for ways to alleviate them, even on the margins, before the election.

The president has already tried and failed to persuade Congress to pass expansive plans to build more [*affordable housing units*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html), along with aid for certain Americans trying to buy homes, like [*down payment assistance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/26/business/economy/housing-inflation-fed.html) for people whose parents do not own homes. Republicans who control the House have not been receptive to those proposals this year.

“The president considers the long-term shortage of affordable housing to be one of the most important pieces of unfinished business we have,” Jared Bernstein, the chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said in an interview.

The research suggest a drop in mortgage rates could swiftly lift Mr. Biden with consumers and in his campaign. They suggest the slight fall in rates in recent months was a reason sentiment surged at the end of last year and the start of this one.

White House officials agree. But, they are quick to add, Mr. Biden will not push the Fed to cut rates.

This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2024

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Discusses Kamala Harris’s VP pick; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CNC-XYN1-DXY4-X0C1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 6, 2024 Tuesday 07:52 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 4710 words

**Highlight:** The Aug. 6, 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, reacting to Kamala Harris’s VP pick, Tim Walz. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: From New York Times Opinion, this is the Ezra Klein Show.

It is Tuesday, August 6. We just found out that Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, who we just did a show with a week ago — you can find it just back there in the archives — is going to be Kamala Harris’s choice for vice president. And so we now know what the shape of the race is. We have Donald Trump and JD Vance on one side, and we have Kamala Harris and Tim Walz on the other.

We’ve been covering this closely enough and talking about Walz enough that it felt like it would be good to just have a conversation about how this looks. So I’m joined, as I am so often in the cycle by our great senior editor, Claire Gordon.

CLAIRE GORDON: Hi, Ezra. So I’ve seen Walz described as a unity pick, but he isn’t exactly a moderate, and Minnesota isn’t exactly a swing state. So would you describe this as a safe choice or a bold choice?

EZRA KLEIN: I would describe Walz as clearly a bold choice.

My friend Nate Silver, who I have been aligned with on most questions over the course of this campaign, has been making this argument that Shapiro would have been the bold choice. And Shapiro would have been the bold choice because there’s a little bit of friction with the left, potentially, on Israel, maybe on some other questions. But, look, Shapiro has a 60 percent plus approval rating in Pennsylvania.

So far as any state in the country is likely to decide the election, Pennsylvania has the best shot at it. And so — forget what the left is saying. Pick the guy who’s going to give you the best shot at winning the state you most need to win.

I would say, in that analysis, Shapiro is a safe choice. I don’t think that there would have been static from the left in a way that would have been meaningful for the Harris campaign. Democrats were quite united. Shapiro’s actual positions on Israel are not very different from Kamala Harris’s, not very different from, frankly, any of the other vice presidential possibilities.

Walz emerges as a media phenomenon. He is not an unknown figure — he’s the head of the Democratic Governors Association. He’s the governor of Minnesota, which is not a swing state, though it is worth noting that in internal Democratic polling after Biden’s collapse, Minnesota had become competitive. But it’s probably not with Harris under any of the vice presidential possibilities. Borders Wisconsin. There’s an argument that somebody like Walz will be appealing in Midwestern states. I don’t expect there to be a significant effect like that. But Walz gives this interview on “Morning Joe” where he says that Trump and Vance are weird. They’re the kind of people who ruin Thanksgiving.

And in a minute, he functionally upends all Democratic messaging. The Harris campaign begins to sound like him. Walz goes on a media tour. He’s on CNN a bunch, MSNBC a bunch. He does an hour interview on “The Ezra Klein Show,” which I will say, by the way, I have interviewed a lot of politicians. I don’t know how many by now. I try to avoid doing it because politicians are terrible to interview. And Walz is one of the five best politicians I’ve ever interviewed because he actually thinks aloud. He is responding to you in the moment in a genuine conversational way. You can always tell with politicians this buffering happening in their heads. You ask a question, and this program fires up really fast. It says, what are all the ways I could answer this wrong? And what is my message here supposed to actually be?

And Walz, you could feel the conversation actually happening. It was like talking to a normal person, which is one reason he’s so effective on TV. But Walz begins giving these interviews, he breaks through the media, he breaks through the attentional field, is what I would say. Shapiro becomes the candidate who is most likely to help you win Pennsylvania. Walz becomes the vice presidential candidate most likely to help you win the day-to-day fight for attention and message and enthusiasm.

And Harris picks Walz, which I’m sure there are a lot of reasons she did so, but it is a pick about making the ticket most appealing nationally and trying to continue generating a momentum and energy that she has been generating to the surprise of many Democrats since the moment she became the presumptive nominee. And that is a riskier play. But it is a bigger play. It is a bet on the intangibles of the Harris ticket, not the tangible possibilities of Pennsylvania.

CLAIRE GORDON: So the comparison that you see around to, Tim Kaine, Hillary Clinton’s 2016 pick, because they have similar affable dad vibes, you don’t think that’s a fair comparison?

EZRA KLEIN: I think that comparison is insane. And I don’t understand the people — like, I’ve seen people who know a thing about politics making that comparison, and it has made me question their judgment at a fundamental level. [Laughs] I like Tim Kaine. Tim Kaine is a good man. I’ve covered Tim Kaine for a long time. Nobody can remember a thing Tim Kaine has ever said in public. He is just not a memorable media figure.

The theory of a candidate like Tim Kaine was the theory of a good governing partner. Hillary Clinton was very confident she was going to win the election. She really liked Tim Kaine. She felt that Tim Kaine, in an election where she was trying to appear reassuring against the very un-reassuring Donald Trump, Tim Kaine helped her do that. But she wasn’t looking at Kaine to win her any states. She wasn’t looking at Kaine to be a kind of messenger she could not be. She liked him. It was a perfectly good pick for a perfectly good way of thinking about the vice president, which is, who do you think can best do the job if you die?

But what Walz is, again, is a media phenomenon. He also has a great record as a governor. We can talk about some of that. He could be a very significant governing partner in his ability to help Harris with particularly House Democrats, where he served for some time and actually knows them and has a good sense of how the House works. You can imagine that as one of the things in her head. Tim Walz is a candidate who knows the House and he knows governors. And those are two places that Harris does not herself have any kind of deep experience.

But that is not what vaulted Walz from being an obscure governor to becoming her vice president. What vaulted Walz from being an obscure governor to vice president was Walz broke through the cacophony of not just the campaign but the post Harris moment, the run of every charismatic white male Democrat who thought he could be a possible vice presidential pick for Harris — that’s Buttigieg, that’s Roy Cooper, that’s Shapiro, you could just run this list down, that’s Mark Kelly — he broke through past all of them, reshaped the whole way people were talking about the race, developed a rabid online fan base in a matter of days.

There’s a certain segment of liberal-leaning pundits or campaign strategists act like attention is not a thing, who act like that whole mediating layer between what a candidate says and how they get heard doesn’t exist, and that the only thing that really matters are their sort of demographic characteristics, the state they are from, the kinds of policy positions they take. But that’s not true at all.

To compare it to Tim Kaine is to just miss the entire field on which Harris is currently thinking about playing, which is a field, by the way, that Joe Biden ceded to Donald Trump, which is a field of attention. Joe Biden’s theory in 2020 and then again in 2024 was that the election should be about Donald Trump. In 2020, when Donald Trump was the unpopular incumbent president, that was a theory that benefited Joe Biden hugely. Donald Trump wanted the election to be about Donald Trump. Joe Biden wanted it to be about Donald Trump. The election was about Donald Trump, and Donald Trump lost.

In 2024, when Biden’s communication skills had deteriorated, and he was the unpopular incumbent president, making the election about Donald Trump, which was always the theory of the Biden campaign was failing. In part, it wasn’t working because Biden’s age had made the election too much about Biden’s own competence. But also people had become somewhat nostalgic — I think wrongly, but nevertheless — for Donald Trump’s economy, for a time before the war in Gaza, a time before the war in Ukraine. And Trump’s existence was not repelling people in the way that strategy required him to do.

Harris, from the second she became the clear nominee, some intangible energy emerged around her, to the extent that Republicans were so shocked by this vibe shift. They’ve called it a psy-op. They pretend it’s concocted. But no Democrat expected it either. The whole ‘Kamala is brat.’ The whole world of being coconut-pilled. Harris has completely shouldered Trump out of his typical position of dominating the media — dominating social media, dominating cable news. It has become harder and harder for Trump to get a word in edge-wise. The main ways that Trump and Vance are breaking through are when they say outrageous, unpopular things, which, by the way, was predictable.

It is what Donald Trump always does when he can’t break through into the media. He gets crazier and crazier until people begin to report on him again, which is an excellent strategy for the Harris campaign, but so they have begun dominating attentionally. And they have picked a vice-presidential candidate who is able to help them do that, a vice presidential candidate with a very, very clear capability to dominate in the media. Now whether or not that works all the way through, I don’t know, but that is the theory here. That was not the Tim Kaine theory.

CLAIRE GORDON: So just to underline this, you think “weird” won this for Walz?

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t think there’s any doubt.

CLAIRE GORDON: And do you think weird is more than just a moment? Do you think that’s a sustainable message, a successful long term message in this election?

EZRA KLEIN: I think they could overdo it. If you go to the conversation I had with Walz, we talked a lot about that. And I both think the weird messaging is very powerful, and Walz is able to do it from a grounded place that other Democrats can’t when he actually delivers that line the first time — not the first time he has ever delivered it, but where it broke through in the cycle — he talks about being from a small town of 400. He talks about there being no private schools in that town. He talks about the way in which JD Vance’s effort to weaponize the resentment of rural people Midwestern Appalachian whites is inauthentic — that that is not what people in small towns are like. That people don’t like that politics has become like this. They don’t want politics tearing their Thanksgiving dinner table apart.

Other Democrats picking up the “weird” thing, they can take it into a bit of a schoolyard place. Fine. So they have to be careful with that, and I think Walz talks in that interview quite perceptively about how to be careful with it. But I do think he picks up there and that the Democrats have now understood this vulnerability in Trump and Vance in an important way. And I would say it’s actually a different vulnerability in the two of them. Donald Trump is weird in a very particular way. He’s a person who you might ask, how will you make social security solvent? And he might answer by lying about how many people were at his inauguration speech when he became president. He’s a narcissist. His mind goes down very strange pathways. I’ve talked to somebody who worked with him, where the guy was telling me what it’s like to brief Donald Trump. And he said, you just spend the whole hour chasing squirrels. You tell him something, and he just goes wherever he goes.

JD Vance, he’s not weird, he’s off putting, is the way I would put it. And the particular problem with Vance is that he’s too online. Behind Donald Trump, where Donald Trump had a very authentic-to-Donald-Trump form of weirdness — but it was a showman’s weirdness, it was a Barnum and Bailey weirdness — behind him emerged This very dark online set of subcultures, I would call it the sort of extended MAGA online cinematic universe, but it has white supremacists in it, it has very weird forms of natalists — pronatalists in it. It has people who just are obsessed with race and immigration. It has neoreactionaries. If you dig in to where the intellectual world that is following behind Donald Trump has gone — and I’ve done a lot of this reading — it’s bizarre. And JD Vance, his conversion went through this online world.

What is weird about JD Vance is what is weird about somebody who spends too much time watching neoreactionary YouTube videos and then participating in the comments sections. And that is why Vance has this completely unusual — particularly for a vice presidential nominee — tendency to take a perfectly popular policy idea or insight about the world and present it in the most unpopular off-putting possible way. So when he comes out and says that childless people should pay a higher tax rate than people with children — because we want to disincentivize bad things and incentivize good things — in some way, he’s describing the child tax credit, which is a very popular policy — supported by, among other people, Kamala Harris, supported by among other people Tim Walz, not supported, importantly, by many Congressional Republicans. But you would never describe that policy in terms of punishing people without children. You describe that policy in terms of helping people with children.

When Vance is out there saying that people without children are more often deranged and sociopathic on Twitter, these things are natural in the world he was in, where you are vying to show that you are most on the train. He has described himself in this language that is very common out there as an anti-regime politician. When you begin talking to those people, like Patrick Deneen and these post-liberals, they talk a lot about the “regime,” right, the sort of networked group of institutions, media, government, business, et cetera, that dominates all American life. And in this world, you have to show you’re actually on board, and the way you show it — and if you go to the Tucker Carlson interview where JD Vance makes his comment about childless cat ladies, it’s actually worth hearing the way Tucker Carlson opens that interview.

[Clip - Tucker Carlson] So there are two kinds of people who run for office, and one category is really big, one category is really small. The big category is people who just want to get to office because they want to prove something to their apps and their alcoholic fathers or fill some empty space inside or have power over you. That’s almost everybody. There’s a small category of people who run for office because they really believe something and they’ve got something to say. They really mean it. You almost never see these people. One of them is JD Vance. He didn’t need to run for office, but he is. He’s running for Senate in Ohio. And since the second he announced, places like the Daily Beast, and the Washington Post, and the Atlantic, the Axis of Protectors, the ruling class, have gone crazy. They hate him. They really hate him. And that’s how you know he means it.

EZRA KLEIN: This is how you know JD Vance is serious. By inviting that kind of attack and opprobrium, he is proving to these people that he is for real. The politicians in the MAGA world who are for real are the ones who everybody else hates. Vance is promoted to Donald Trump by the very online people around Donald Trump, Donald Trump Jr., Steve Bannon, Elon Musk reportedly was pushing for JD Vance. Elon Musk is terminally online. And that is what I think Walz picked up on.

And now what Democrats are picking up on, which is that there’s something unsettling about where these folks have gone. And Trump picked a vice president who amplifies that, rather than someone who, like Doug Burgum, who calms it down.

CLAIRE GORDON: But Trump in 2016 said a lot of things that the media thought was off-putting, and it turned out he could win a presidential election saying those things. A lot of that stuff that seemed to come out of right-wing talk radio world. Is it possible this is just the next wave, next gen of this kind of rhetoric?

EZRA KLEIN: Donald Trump can absolutely win this election, and nobody should have any illusions about that. This is, at best, a toss up. If you look at the polling right now, Harris has gained a lot from where Joe Biden was. She’s ahead of Trump narrowly in national polling. It depends on what polls you’re looking at of battleground states, and we don’t have a lot of high quality battleground state polling since Joe Biden stepped aside. But she’s much more competitive there. But it is very competitive. It’s like tied in Pennsylvania, tied in Wisconsin, tied in Michigan. The thing that is different is she might have brought Georgia, Arizona, Nevada, back into a winnable place for Democrats. So I think she’s expanded the map. But she hasn’t made Trump an underdog in the Midwest.

So the idea that Trump can’t win, that’s wrong. The things that Donald Trump has been good at are not the things that make him off-putting in the media, I don’t believe. So Donald Trump correctly identifies certain things that people are very upset about, including immigration. And that had been suppressed in both Republican and Democratic Party politics in 2016. So Donald Trump creates a cleavage in terms of what the election is about in 2016 that favored Republicans. In 2012, the Obama Romney cleavage was over the economy. In 2016, the central cleavage was over immigration.

I think the smart run for Donald Trump in 2024, which at times it seemed like he was leaning into, was almost as a kind of stability candidate. Remember how much you liked the Donald Trump economy before all this inflation? Remember how the world seemed more peaceful? Maybe that was because Donald Trump was such a loose cannon that people were afraid to do anything that made him angry. Right? That was the argument Trump was making for a while. And that argument was breaking through. People felt there was a lot of disorder under Joe Biden. They also felt that Joe Biden was too old to be in charge of it, right? They didn’t trust that he could handle a world that had gone a little nuts in the way prices seemed to be going nuts, in the way that Russia had invaded Ukraine — what was happening, Gaza was a catastrophe.

And the more Trump falls away from that, the more he’s not making the argument about inflation but is making the argument that it’s not possible to be both Black and Indian American at the same time, the more he is out there giving voice to his resentments, the more he is out there saying the election has been and will be stolen. Trump was campaigning in Georgia, and he opened up in Georgia by attacking Kemp, the popular Republican governor of Georgia, for not doing enough to steal the election on his behalf in 2020. That is not the Donald Trump that wins elections. And what seems to be happening right now is as he feels more backed into a corner and is having more trouble breaking through. He is lashing out from that space of resentment, ‘pay attention to me.’ He’s running a more high risk set of plays. And as of yet, I don’t think they’re working out great for him.

In some ways, the single best thing that Kamala Harris has done for Democrats is to knock Trump off the campaign he was running and knock him back into the resentful, cramped, conspiratorial version of himself that is now emerging. Because this guy, who is raging at Kemp, this guy who is going to the National Association of Black Journalists and saying that nobody knew Kamala Harris was Black. I will say, by the way, as a Californian who was aware of Kamala Harris in California politics, it was known, actually. People were aware of that.

This guy does not strike people as excellent on inflation, laser-focused on the economic and pocketbook problems they have to solve. This is not effective campaigning right now from Donald Trump, and Vance is not helping.

CLAIRE GORDON: Well, I’d love to wrap by just talking about Walz’s potential vulnerabilities, particularly with race becoming more salient in the campaign. And one that’s come up, I think, the most is how he responded to the protests and the riots after George Floyd’s murder. Do you think that’s going to be a risk and a point of attack? Or maybe even bringing 2020 back into the electorate’s memory could potentially be a plus for Democrats?

EZRA KLEIN: Do you want to say what the attack is?

CLAIRE GORDON: He hesitated in calling the National Guard to respond to the riots in Minneapolis.

EZRA KLEIN: So it’s interesting to me because the attack on the left on Walz was that he did call in the National Guard, and there are places that didn’t.

I think it is going to be hard for Trump to make the election about the George Floyd riots. It’s also not for nothing, a period in which Donald Trump was the president, right? It reminds people of a period of disorder and chaos under Donald Trump.

Bringing people back to 2020, when Trump was mishandling the pandemic and there was a huge racial reckoning is not bringing people back to the part of the Trump presidency that I think Trump should want to remind people of.

I don’t want to tell you that Walz doesn’t have possible vulnerabilities. Every politician does. I think they’re not likely to go after his vulnerabilities or likely to go after Kamala Harris’s vulnerabilities. So I don’t think Walz has said or done things that are offensive or unusual enough for them to become major dimensions of the campaign. And I think the question is, does he help fortify Harris?

So that leads you to what are Harris’s vulnerabilities? I think the case we’re going to make on Harris is one that she is responsible, or at least, can be blamed for things people do not like about the Biden administration. Inflation and high prices and high levels of border crossings — although those have gone substantially down in the last couple of months. So that is going to be a series of attacks they run. I don’t really think Walz helps her on that in particular, but maybe.

And then there’s a, you know — the thing that Democrats have often worried about with Harris, which is just to be blunt about it, that a liberal black woman from San Francisco is not a good candidate profile to win Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania. And there, what Walz is on the ticket to do is balance out the perceptions of Harris. They’re gonna have Walz functionally going door to door, offering to check the oil in your car in those states. That is the vibe of Walz. That is what they have picked with him.

I actually think in a weird way Shapiro would have been worse for Harris on this level. Shapiro and Harris are both lawyers. They both have a sort of Obama era politics vibe to them. Very smart, very educated. Seemed like they could have been on the same law review in law school. Seemed like they could have worked for the same firm. And if you’re worried about the way in which the Democratic Party has become a more educated coalition, that it seems to give off a college voter vibe and has begun winning college voters and losing non-college voters, even though Shapiro does very well in Pennsylvania — but remember, Shapiro ran against a truly deranged candidate in Pennsylvania, so I don’t know how much we should look at that election for governor as a sort of comp with people who ran against stronger candidates in their races. But even though Shapiro does well well in Pennsylvania, when you look at them and you listen to them, they sort of have the same energy, which if what you’re trying to do is balance out that dimension of Harris and send a signal to voters who don’t see in her and in the sort of online fervor around her, something that looks like them or feels like them, Walz might be helpful from that perspective. Walz is not a former high-flying lawyer, but a former high school football coach and longtime army reservist.

Again, from everything we know from vice-presidential past, that probably is not going to matter that much. People vote for the top of the ticket, not the bottom of the ticket. But to the extent that there are attacks that I think the Harris campaign is thinking about — she has these past liberal positions, she is associated with the unpopular parts of the Biden administration, and she is a candidate who reflects the increasingly highly educated Democratic coalition, as opposed to the sort of older, more ***working class*** Democratic coalition — I think Walz is there to help with the last of those. And he doesn’t make the first two worse.

CLAIRE GORDON: Did Harris just pick a younger Biden as her VP? Her version of the kid from Scranton?

EZRA KLEIN: It looks like that to me, and it doesn’t. I do think it is easy to forget that what Biden was there to do in 2008 was add foreign policy experience. That was a foreign policy election, first and foremost, at least until the financial crisis hit and it became an economic election. And Biden had a confidence and an ease talking about foreign policy that if you were worried that Obama’s position on Iraq was really helpful among Democratic primary voters but just as a younger, less tested candidate that there were some voters who might think, this is not the guy I want — to use a Hillary Clinton ad — answering the 3 a.m. phone call, Biden was there to help with that. He was there for other reasons, too. You know, Joe from Scranton, that kind of thing. But first and foremost, that was a foreign policy election at that time, and Joe Biden was a balancing pick for an anti-war ticket. And I think to the extent Walz is there to balance, he’s balancing other things for Harris. He’s not really a foreign policy figure. He’s not a long time member of the Senate. He’s a midwestern governor who, again, broke through because there’s a straight-talking plainness to the way he is able to attack the Trump Vance ticket and the way he is able to present who Democrats are and who occupies the space of normalcy in American life that reshaped the way Democrats were talking in the election.

For all that he was known as both a blustery but very effective orator, Biden was never able to do that. He did not break through in the ’08 campaign. He was there to make Obama seem more seasoned. Walz is there to help Harris dominate the messaging of his campaign and help push Trump and Vance into a space that Democrats want them to occupy, which is a space of abnormalcy, a space of something’s off with these guys. You can’t trust them. They’re not going to bring stability. They’re going to bring eccentricity and chaos. And Democrats have become very much the party of normalcy. The problem Joe Biden begun to represent for them is that in his age and in the way he presented, he didn’t comfort people.

It seemed like a risk to choose Joe Biden. Harris and Walz, they want to be the non-risky ticket. And Walz is there to make Vance and Trump look weird, not just by saying it, but by existing as a kind of icon of what normalcy looks like in American life.

CLAIRE GORDON: Well, I was just waiting for you to say “weird” again, so I think that’s a good moment to wrap. Thank you so much, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: Thank you, Claire.

This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by our senior editor, Claire Gordon. Fact checking by Kate Sinclair and Mary Marge Locker. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Aman Sahota. The show’s production team also includes Annie Galvin, Michelle Harris, Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith, and Kristin Lin. 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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**Body**

In his State of the Union address, the president signaled the opening of a yearslong push to persuade white ***working-class*** voters to return to the Democratic fold. Winning them over on cultural issues may be more difficult.

With his call for a ''blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America,'' President Biden on Tuesday night acknowledged rhetorically what Democrats have been preparing for two years: a fierce campaign to win back white ***working-class*** voters through the creation of hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs that do not require a college degree.

Mr. Biden's economically focused State of the Union address may have avoided the cultural appeals to the white ***working class*** that former President Donald J. Trump harnessed so effectively, the grievances encapsulated by fears of immigration, racial and gender diversity, and the sloganeering of the intellectual left. But at the speech's heart was an appeal to Congress to ''finish the job'' and a simple challenge. ''Let's offer every American the path to a good career whether they go to college or not,'' he said.

In truth, much of that path was already laid by the last Congress with the signing of a $1 trillion infrastructure bill, a $280 billion measure to rekindle a domestic semiconductor industry and the Inflation Reduction Act, which included $370 billion for low-emission energy to combat climate change.

Whether or not Mr. Biden can persuade a divided Congress to act on his remaining plans, the money from those laws has just begun to flow, and a surge of hiring is coming. Many of those jobs will be in the industrial battlegrounds that Democrats either took back from Mr. Trump in 2020 or will need in 2024, when endangered senators like Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Joe Manchin III of West Virginia and Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin face re-election.

But Democrats will have to match those jobs against Republican appeals aimed at white grievances.

Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas, a Republican, ordered state agencies and universities this week to stop considering racial and ethnic diversity in hiring. Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida is waging a campaign against diversity, equity and inclusion efforts while funding the shipping of migrants from the Mexican border to Democratic cities. The Republican-led House is holding hearings blaming illegal immigrants for the smuggling of fentanyl that is ravaging blue-collar cities and towns, though most of the arrests in the fentanyl trade have involved American smugglers.

Republicans openly mocked Mr. Biden's ''Finish the Job'' slogan, and among ***working-class*** voters, they have public opinion on their side. In a recent Washington Post/ABC News poll, just 36 percent of Americans without a college degree approved of Mr. Biden's job performance, compared with 53 percent of college graduates. His approval on economic issues was even worse, with just 31 percent of voters without a degree approving of his handling of the economy.

''Finish the job? On what? Fueling inflation? Opening the border? Lowering wages? Emptying our energy reserves?'' asked Tommy Pigott, the rapid response coordinator at the Republican National Committee.

Without doubt, Democrats have their work cut out for them. About two-thirds of eligible voters do not have four-year college degrees, and over the last decade, Democrats have lost ground with them, especially with less educated white voters. 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.

In a New York Times/Siena College poll in September, 59 percent of white ***working-class*** voters said Republicans were the party of the ***working class***, compared with 28 percent who chose Democrats. Sixty-eight percent of these voters said they agreed more with Republicans than Democrats on the economy, while just 25 percent picked Democrats. Beyond economics, white ***working-class*** voters sided overwhelmingly with Republicans on building a border wall, opposing gun control, stopping illegal immigration and seeing gender as immutable and determined at birth.

Democrats, caught between those sentiments on social policy and the party's core constituencies of people of color, women and the college-educated, are hoping that tangible improvements in well-being can persuade white voters without a college education to focus on their economic interests.

''Jobs are coming back, pride is coming back, because choices we made in the last two years,'' Mr. Biden said on Tuesday. ''This is a blue-collar blueprint to rebuild America and make a real difference in your lives.''

Democratic problems with the ***working class*** are not limited to white voters. Some blue-collar Black, Latino and Asian American voters have drifted toward Republicans, and Mr. Biden rolled out a range of economic appeals aimed broadly at people who are more sensitive to high prices.

He highlighted his efforts to lower insulin costs and cited pocketbook issues recognizable to almost any consumer -- what he called ''junk fees.'' He identified ''exorbitant'' bank overdraft charges; credit card late fees; ''resort fees'' charged by hotels; change-of-service fees by cable and internet providers; and airline ''surcharges.''

''Junk fees may not matter to the very wealthy, but they matter to most folks in homes like the one I grew up in,'' Mr. Biden said. ''They add up to hundreds of dollars a month.''

Other Democrats are taking a similar approach. On his first full day in office, Pennsylvania's new Democratic governor, Josh Shapiro, signed an executive order declaring that thousands of state jobs would no longer require a four-year college degree.

And it might work. The Pew Research Center found recently that 71 percent of voters with no degree beyond a high school diploma said the economy should be a top priority for the president and Congress this year, higher than any other issue.

To that end, Mr. Biden spoke of ''a literal field of dreams'' outside Columbus, Ohio, where a huge new Intel semiconductor plant is being built that will, he said, ''create 10,000 jobs,'' including ''7,000 construction jobs'' and ''3,000 jobs once the factories are finished.'' Already, unions in Ohio are ramping up training and apprenticeship programs that are explicitly favored by the federal semiconductor legislation, the CHIPS and Science Act, and reaching out to women, teenagers, veterans and other workers who have traditionally been outside the organized labor movement to prepare for the semiconductor work.

''To the extent that manufacturing is characteristic of a lot of places that will become competitors for CHIPS investment, there's implicit orientation toward significant union history,'' said Mark Muro, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. ''There are going to be significant numbers of noncollege jobs and a real opportunity for the economic inclusion of noncollege workers.''

For Ohio, that Intel plant is only the beginning. Spurred by large tax incentives in the Inflation Reduction Act, Honda has announced a reworking of its Ohio plants to build electric vehicles and batteries. General Motors is retooling its plant in Toledo for electric vehicle production, and Arizona-based First Solar is dumping money into northern Ohio. In December, workers at a new E.V. battery plant outside Youngstown voted overwhelmingly to join the United Auto Workers, giving the unions a toehold in the rapidly growing battery industry.

The rebuilding of the Brent Spence Bridge connecting Kentucky to Ohio with money from the infrastructure law will employ construction workers in Cincinnati for six to 10 years. And explicit language in the federal laws mandates the payment of union-scale wages, the employment of union-trained apprentices and the purchase of American-made materials.

''We just can go on and on, but it's real, what the president has done,'' said Mike Knisley, executive secretary and treasurer of the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, who was at the White House for the signing of the semiconductor bill. ''Everybody's talked about it, Democrats and Republicans alike, but Biden delivered.''

Beyond the Midwest, the Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 81 in Syracuse, N.Y., is scrambling to bring in thousands of new members to work at Micron's chip plant under construction in upstate New York. Last week, Mr. Biden promoted major infrastructure projects in Baltimore, New York and New Jersey that will create tens of thousands of jobs, ''every freaking one, union labor.''

None of this guarantees that rank-and-file union workers -- or the 90 percent of privately employed workers who are not in a union -- will shift back to the Democrats. Mr. Biden's approval rating remains mired in the low 40s, and confidence in the economy is abysmal.

Even union workers seem to maintain skepticism. Josh Abernathy, the business manager for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Eight in Toledo, complained bitterly that while his members had been used to build a First Solar panel fabrication plant outside the city, the contractor on the project had brought in workers from Croatia and other Eastern European countries to install and maintain the fabrication equipment, work that ultimately outpaced construction jobs.

Mr. Abernathy filed a formal protest with the Biden administration's Labor Department, saying that imported workers -- the kind of nonlocal hires the administration had vowed to stop -- were making $500 every two weeks and room and board.

''We had 150 electricians out there; don't get me wrong,'' he said. ''But then we were equally matched with the installation of conveyor work when we were long gone.''

Rusty Brown, who was an official with the Trump administration's Labor Department and is now with the anti-union Freedom Foundation, said the explicit requirement that federally funded infrastructure, semiconductor and clean energy projects pay union-scale wages would mean the wasting of taxpayer money.

''This is not at all the way a normal person would run a business,'' he said. ''If somebody was mowing your lawn for $50 and someone else said he'd do it for $40, you'd do it. You just would.''

But he acknowledged the power of provisions in federal legislation to mandate the employment of workers trained through ''registered'' apprenticeship programs -- more than half of which are run through the unions.

The Trump administration tried to encourage private industry to develop its own apprenticeship programs for workers without college degrees through regulation and exhortation but got nowhere, Mr. Brown said.

''It's something I wish companies would have taken more seriously,'' he said with a sigh.

Nate Cohn contributed reporting.Nate Cohn contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/08/us/politics/biden-blue-collar-white-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/08/us/politics/biden-blue-collar-white-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, President Biden at the construction site for a semiconductor plant in Ohio. Left, First Solar, a maker of solar panels, has poured money into its operations in the state. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MEGAN JELINGER/REUTERS) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

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[***Freethinkers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BVH-8G41-DXY4-X1X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1480 words

**Byline:** By S. C. Gwynne

**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 influenced American founders like Thomas Jefferson 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. 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,'' 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

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/26/books/review/an-emancipation-of-the-mind-matthew-stewart-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-second-american-republic-manisha-sinha.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/26/books/review/an-emancipation-of-the-mind-matthew-stewart-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-second-american-republic-manisha-sinha.html)

**Graphic**

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.

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[***In Bid to Oust Johnson, Greene Tries to Reclaim a Powerful Perch on the Fringe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXP-CS11-JBG3-62JH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 1, 2024 Wednesday 09:21 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1474 words

**Byline:** Annie Karni Annie Karni is a congressional correspondent for The Times. She writes features and profiles, with a recent focus on House Republican leadership.

**Highlight:** The Georgia Republican’s doomed push to remove the speaker has placed her at odds with most in her party, but it has brought her back to her roots as a norm-busting provocateur.

**Body**

The Georgia Republican’s doomed push to remove the speaker has placed her at odds with most in her party, but it has brought her back to her roots as a norm-busting provocateur.

When Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia, first dangled the [*threat of ousting Speaker Mike Johnson*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-speaker.html), she received a call from a longtime ally and fellow hard-right Republican who urged her not to follow through.

“I don’t know how this helps us, six months before an election when we’re trying to win the White House,” Representative Jim Jordan, Republican of Ohio, told her, he said in a recent interview. Republicans were in a strong position to win back the Senate, Mr. Jordan said, and former President Donald J. Trump had a decent shot at winning the White House.

“The only thing that makes me a little nervous is, could we somehow lose the House?” he told Ms. Greene, adding: “Let’s don’t make it a chance.”

Mr. Jordan was far from the only person Ms. Greene respected telling her to stand down. Mr. Trump, who thinks the chaos in the House is harming his re-election chances, publicly vouched for Mr. Johnson as someone doing “about as good as you’re going to do” and has gently pressed Ms. Greene in private to move on, according to people familiar with their conversations who described them on condition of anonymity.

Former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who elevated Ms. Greene and turned her into one of his top allies during his abbreviated time in the top post, never criticized her publicly. But privately, he called Mr. Johnson and offered to intervene with her on his behalf, according to people knowledgeable about the exchange.

Ultimately, none of it mattered. Ms. Greene could not be controlled — even if her campaign against the speaker has left her isolated within her party.

So on Wednesday morning, wearing a red MAGA cap and standing in front of a blown-up picture of Mr. Johnson embracing Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Democrat of New York and the minority leader, Ms. Greene said she would demand a vote next week to remove Mr. Johnson from the speakership. Mr. Jeffries, she said, had embraced Mr. Johnson with “a warm hug and a big, wet, sloppy kiss,” making them the joint leaders of what she refers to disdainfully as the “uniparty.”

She did so knowing that her effort to depose Mr. Johnson was all but certain to fail. She has only two Republicans publicly committed to backing it and Democrats have said they would vote to block any motion to oust the speaker, giving him more than enough votes to kill it.

But Ms. Greene has never abided by the conventional rules of politics, where a loss on the House floor is considered a major defeat. Since arriving in Congress four years ago, she has played a different game all together — one in which the only way to lose is by becoming irrelevant and inconspicuous.

That was true when she first arrived in Washington after embracing the QAnon conspiracy theory during her campaign (she [*later said she decided to “choose another path”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-speaker.html)) and [*caused constant headaches for House Republican leaders with her inflammatory statements*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-speaker.html). After a brief interlude of trying to play the inside game by forming an alliance with Mr. McCarthy, Ms. Greene is back to her old playbook, even though she insists she is being deliberate about how she proceeds.

For more than a month, she has dangled the threat of an ouster over Mr. Johnson, raising doubts about whether she would go through with a move even hard-right Republicans oppose. She continued to hesitate even on Wednesday, when she said she wanted to give her colleagues one more weekend to think about how they would vote, and offered Mr. Johnson one last opportunity to resign.

“I’m not irresponsible,” she told reporters outside the Capitol. “I care about my conference. I have been measured. I have given this time. I have been giving warning after warning. It was a warning to stop serving the Democrats and support our Republican conference and support our agenda. And he didn’t do it.”

To understand her refusal to drop the matter in the face of solid resistance from her colleagues, it helps to know how Ms. Greene spends her time. In Congress, she operates more as a MAGA influencer than a legislator, relentlessly attacking Democrats and railing about the southern border. In doing so, she appeals to a white, ***working-class*** audience that sees her as one of them.

As isolated as she appears to be on Capitol Hill, Ms. Greene’s strategy is working for her political brand. In mid-April, Mr. Johnson was more popular with Trump voters than Ms. Greene, according to a poll by The Economist/YouGov. [*About 18 percent of Trump voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-speaker.html) at that time held an unfavorable view of him, compared to 25 percent who held a negative view of Ms. Greene.

But after the House passed a massive foreign aid bill with bipartisan support and Ms. Greene continued to threaten Mr. Johnson, his popularity with Trump voters suffered and Ms. Greene’s increased. About 31 percent of those voters now have a negative view of Mr. Johnson, [*compared to 23 percent who hold an unfavorable view of Ms. Greene*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/01/us/politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-speaker.html).

She also epitomizes the incentive system that many blame for Congress’s deep dysfunction. Her rhetoric and behavior generate viral social media content that keeps her where she most likes to be — in front of a camera — which in turn helps make her more famous and drives more small-dollar donations to her campaign.

Ms. Greene is not necessarily concerned that her behavior will hurt the House Republican conference, a place where she has few allies, as long as she is strengthening her own brand that is beloved by the MAGA base.

“It’s a brilliant move,” Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump adviser and host of the influential “War Room” podcast, said of Ms. Greene’s decision to move ahead with the effort to oust Mr. Johnson. “The old politics is gone. Politics today is media and theater and drama and coming into the moment. You have to pierce the white noise, and she knows how to pierce it. She doesn’t need to connect to the donors. What’s relevant is this mass movement that’s out there that’s looking for leadership.”

He added, “She’s giving original, pure Trump.”

On Wednesday morning, Ms. Greene’s first stop after her news conference was a 45-minute appearance on Mr. Bannon’s program. Ms. Greene said her goal was to put her colleagues “on record” by holding the vote “to see who the uniparty is.”

Mr. Bannon, whose show serves as a major fund-raising platform for MAGA Republicans, previously banned Ms. Greene from appearing there after she made an alliance with Mr. McCarthy and supported the debt limit deal he negotiated with President Biden.

During that period, Ms. Greene was taking a different approach to the job, trying on the uniform of team player in an attempt to gain more influence. Ms. Greene, who had been stripped of her committee seats by Democrats during her first term in Congress, tried transforming from a powerless sideshow into a more serious legislator.

During Mr. McCarthy’s weeklong, 15-vote ordeal to win the gavel last year, Ms. Greene locked arms with him in a surprise move and said she just wanted Congress to get down to business.

“I’ve been here for two years without committees, and I’m really ready to get to work,” she said in an interview last year. “Before I even came to Congress, that’s what I did in my life, was work. We need to be doing that.” She was later kicked out of the House Freedom Caucus because of her close alliance with Mr. McCarthy.

But now she has returned to a posture that’s a more natural fit: berating the leader of her party on Capitol Hill and seeking maximum attention, even if nobody is rushing to join her.

At Mr. Biden’s State of the Union address this year, Ms. Greene came dressed like a one-woman political protest — complete with MAGA cap, political buttons and a T-shirt bearing the name of Laken Riley, a nursing student alleged to have been killed by an undocumented immigrant — and heckled Mr. Biden in the middle of his speech.

Ms. Greene has maintained that her actions are not driven by a deep need for attention or by any personal animus toward Mr. Johnson. Instead, she said it’s about policy, and his decision to push through a foreign aid package that included $60.8 billion in aid to Ukraine by relying on Democratic votes.

“Nobody wants this drama right now, but it’s Mike Johnson who has completely brought it on all of us,” she told Mr. Bannon on his show. “Yeah, this is inconvenient, but I didn’t come up here to Washington to go along and get along and put it in cruise control.”

PHOTO: Republicans worry that more chaos around the speakership could risk control of the House, but that hasn’t stopped Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene’s push to oust Speaker Mike Johnson. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VALERIE PLESCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***A New Law Will Help Bolster Voting in New York***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YR-XST1-JBG3-63JC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 27, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 17; MARA GAY

**Length:** 670 words

**Byline:** By Mara Gay

**Body**

In a rare bit of political good news in the final days of 2023, Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York has signed into law legislation aimed at increasing voter turnout.

For so many people, the temptation to tune out in this moment of uninspiring politics is stronger than ever. But in Albany, as in Washington, one of the clearest ways to build a saner, more responsive political system is to vastly increase the number of voters who cast ballots.

The bill enacted by Ms. Hochul and the State Legislature will do just that, by moving many county and local elections across New York to even-numbered years, aligning them with federal, statewide and State Legislature elections that draw more voters to the polls.

Abysmally low turnout in New York is a key culprit behind Albany's dysfunctional politics, which sometimes seem mystifyingly divorced from the urgent needs of millions of residents. Consider, for example, the state's failure over the past year to address a brutal housing crisis by adopting policies to build housing in the New York City suburbs and enact protections for tenants such as requiring a good cause for evictions.

When smaller numbers of people show up at the polls, elections are less competitive, enhancing the power of special interests -- from donors to industry lobbyists and the so-called NIMBYs who have resisted the development of much-needed housing across New York State.

The research backs this up. One report, from the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, found that changing local elections to coincide with national elections led to more accountable and responsive government and saved taxpayers money.

''Voters in on-cycle races appear to focus on the broader concerns of the community,'' the author wrote, while ''off-cycle races seem to bring out an electorate with narrower, parochial concerns.''

A 2005 study in The Journal of Politics found that moving local elections to even years increased Black turnout. Consolidating elections could make it easier for ***working-class*** voters and those living in poverty to participate in elections.

''Just by changing the date of these elections you can empower these voters,'' James Skoufis, a Hudson Valley Democratic state senator who sponsored the legislation, told me.

The measure is in some ways modest: It doesn't apply to New York City and other cities across the state, which are required by the State Constitution to hold elections during odd-numbered years. Also thanks to the State Constitution, the legislation doesn't apply to elections for district attorney, county clerk, sheriff or many judicial posts. (The State Constitution seems due for some revisions on this count, despite the effort that would require.) The new law does apply to other county and town elections, from county executives and town supervisors to town board members, as well as county legislators and town clerks.

''It makes for more efficient elections and is less confusing to voters, too,'' said Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause New York, a nonpartisan good government group.

The law is a no-brainer for New York. Despite this, the bill faced opposition from some elected officials in the state -- from both parties -- who prefer that New York's elections stay as they are.

''Even some Democratic elected officials have raised some concerns, a nonzero number of elected Democrats,'' Mr. Skoufis told me. ''It's very much, 'OK, the current system got me elected.' They don't want to lose that.''

Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick, a Long Island Republican, said so out loud.

''If it ain't broke, don't fix it,'' Mr. Fitzpatrick said in June. ''The system works fine.''

It is broke. Hopefully, this law will make it less so.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL IWASAKI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** December 27, 2023

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[***VW Workers in Tennessee Vote for Union, a Labor Milestone***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV7-T6J1-JBG3-6009-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 19, 2024 Friday 22:41 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1290 words

**Byline:** Neal E. Boudette Neal E. Boudette is based in Michigan and has been covering the auto industry for two decades. He joined The New York Times in 2016 after more than 15 years at The Wall Street Journal.

**Highlight:** The Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga is set to become the first unionized auto factory in the South not owned by one of Detroit’s Big Three.

**Body**

The Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga is set to become the first unionized auto factory in the South not owned by one of Detroit’s Big Three.

In a landmark victory for organized labor, workers at a Volkswagen plant in Tennessee have voted overwhelmingly to join the United Automobile Workers union, becoming the first nonunion auto plant in a Southern state to do so.

The company said in a [*statement*](https://media.vw.com/en-us/releases/1794) late Friday that the union had won 2,628 votes, with 985 opposed, in a three-day election. Two earlier bids by the U.A.W. to organize the Chattanooga factory over the last 10 years were narrowly defeated.

The outcome is a breakthrough for the labor movement in a region where anti-union sentiment has been strong for decades. And it comes six months after the U.A.W. won record wage gains and improved benefits in negotiations with the Detroit automakers.

The U.A.W. has for more than 80 years represented workers employed by General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the producer of Chrysler, Jeep, Ram and Dodge vehicles, and has organized some heavy-truck and bus factories in the South.

But the union had failed in previous attempts to organize any of the two dozen automobile factories owned by other companies across an area stretching from South Carolina to Texas and as far north as Ohio and Indiana.

With the victory in Chattanooga, the U.A.W. will turn its focus to other Southern plants. A vote will take place in mid-May at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Ala., near Tuscaloosa. The U.A.W. is hoping to organize a half-dozen or more plants over the next two years.

“Tonight you all together have taken a giant, historic step,” Shawn Fain, the president of the U.A.W., said at a celebratory gathering in Chattanooga. “Tonight we celebrate this historic moment in our nation’s and our union’s history. Let’s get to it and go to work and win more for the ***working class*** of this nation.”

A string of victories for the U.A.W. could have profound effects for Southern auto workers and the broader auto industry. Nonunion auto workers typically earn significantly lower wages than those in U.A.W.-represented plants, and collective bargaining could bring them substantial increases in pay, benefits and job security.

“Volkswagen workers will have a chance for better pay and working conditions under a collective bargaining agreement,” said Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. “They’ll have a lot of job protections under a union contract that they don’t have now.”

At G.M., Ford and Stellantis, any layoffs have to be planned with advance notice to the union, and workers get supplemented unemployment benefits. Nonunion plants don’t have to take such measures.

A large U.A.W. presence in the South would also upset an automotive landscape in which U.A.W. contracts have left G.M., Ford and Stellantis with higher labor costs than nonunion rivals like Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Tesla and Hyundai.

“This is a watershed moment for the industry,” said Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, who has followed the U.A.W. for more than three decades. “It sets an example that would resonate across the industry, and across other industries where there’s a large presence of nonunion workers.”

The U.A.W.’s success in the negotiations with the Big Three in the fall set off a surge in interest among Southern autoworkers in organizing their own plants, the union said, and prompted the U.A.W. to kick off a $40 million effort to support them.

Volkswagen workers who voted in favor of U.A.W. representation said they hoped the union would help them win higher wages and more paid time off. The Chattanooga factory currently pays a top wage of about $35 an hour, compared with the top wage of more than $40 an hour that G.M., Ford and Stellantis now pay U.A.W. workers.

The U.A.W. contracts also provide health care coverage that is almost entirely paid by the companies, substantial profit-sharing bonuses, cost-of-living adjustments to insulate workers from inflation and generous retirement programs.

Among those voting for the U.A.W. in Chattanooga was Tony Akridge, 48, who is in his second year at the VW plant, working on motors and transmissions on the night shift. His $23 hourly wage exceeded what he earned in previous jobs, he said, but he voted for the U.A.W. in hopes that the union could help improve workers’ living standards.

“It gives us a better opportunity,” Mr. Akridge said. “They pay us OK, but it’s not good enough for the things they need done. Noting the rising cost of living, he added that the union “will get better benefits toward that, making life just a little bit more easy.”

Others are counting on U.A.W. representation to bring more paid time off. Most VW workers must either take unpaid time off when the plant shuts down in the summer and around the holidays, or use paid time off to cover those periods. If they do, many are left with only a few days to cover any sick days or family leave the rest of the year, workers said.

“We’re forced to use our P.T.O. a lot instead of using it on our own terms sometimes,” said Craig Jackson, 56, who voted for the union.

At the Detroit automakers, U.A.W. workers get up to five weeks of vacation and 19 paid holidays, and are allowed two weeks for parental leave.

Workers who opposed the union at VW said they were unsure what gains the U.A.W. could bring them.

“You really don’t have any kind of guarantee with them,” said Darrell Belcher, 54, who has worked on the assembly floor for 13 years and voted against the U.A.W. in the two previous elections at the plant. “I’m not saying we won’t gain anything, but we are probably going to lose something just to gain it.”

As the voting was about to start, the governors of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas — all Republicans — [*issued a statement*](https://media.vw.com/en-us/releases/1794) on Tuesday saying unionizing would jeopardize auto jobs in their states.

“We want to keep good-paying jobs and continue to grow the American auto manufacturing sector here,” the governors said. “A successful unionization drive will stop this growth in its tracks, to the detriment of American workers.”

But even some VW workers who opposed the U.A.W. said they did not think union representation would endanger the Chattanooga plant. “I do not feel that the plant will leave Chattanooga or the South,” said Cody Rose, 34, a 13-year veteran of the plant who works in body shop production. “Volkswagen has too much invested in this area.”

The Chattanooga plant opened in 2011, and employs 5,500 people, of whom about 4,300 were eligible to vote in the union election. The plant produces the VW Atlas, a large sport utility vehicle, and an electric vehicle, the ID.4. It is Volkswagen’s only plant in the United States, and was the only VW plant in the world that was not unionized.

The U.A.W. had some advantages in winning support at Volkswagen. Its effort had the support of IG Metall, the powerful union that represents autoworkers in Germany. German companies also have a strong tradition of giving workers a voice. Under German law, worker representatives must hold half the seats on a company’s supervisory board, the equivalent of a board of directors.

The U.A.W. can now turn its attention to the Mercedes plant in Alabama, which employs about 6,100 people. The union tried to organize that plant once before, but the effort died out before coming to a vote.

Jamie McGee contributed reporting.

Jamie McGee contributed reporting.

PHOTO: The Volkswagen assembly plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., was the automaker’s only plant in the world that was not unionized. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MELISSA GOLDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

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[***How to Boost Voter Turnout With Just One Signature; Mara Gay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YJ-9Y71-DXY4-X1F5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 676 words

**Highlight:** Ending off-year elections will make races more competitive, increasing voter power and diminishing the role of special interests.

**Body**

In a rare bit of political good news in the final days of 2023, Gov. Kathy Hochul of New York has [*signed into law*](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-voting-rights-legislation-expand-access-ballot-box-and-improve-voter) legislation aimed at increasing voter turnout.

For so many people, the temptation to tune out in this moment of uninspiring politics is stronger than ever. But in Albany, as in Washington, one of the clearest ways to build a saner, more responsive political system is to vastly increase the number of voters who cast ballots.

The bill enacted by Ms. Hochul and the State Legislature will do just that, by moving many county and local elections across New York to even-numbered years, aligning them with federal, statewide and State Legislature elections that draw more voters to the polls.

Abysmally [*low turnout*](https://vote.nyc/page/election-results-summary) in New York is a [*key culprit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/02/opinion/editorials/better-government-in-new-york-depends-on-higher-voter-turnout.html) behind Albany’s dysfunctional politics, which sometimes seem [*mystifyingly divorced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/04/opinion/new-york-housing-migrants.html) from the urgent needs of millions of residents. Consider, for example, the state’s [*failure*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/nyc-housing-hochul-long-island-westchester.html) over the past year to address a brutal housing crisis by adopting policies to build housing in the New York City suburbs and enact protections for tenants such as requiring a good cause for evictions.

When smaller numbers of people show up at the polls, elections are less competitive, enhancing the power of special interests — from donors to industry lobbyists and the so-called [*NIMBYs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/opinion/new-york-housing-crisis-kathy-hochul.html) who have resisted the development of much-needed housing across New York State.

The research backs this up. One [*report*](https://manhattan.institute/article/revitalizing-local-democracy-the-case-for-on-cycle-local-elections), from the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, found that changing local elections to coincide with national elections led to more accountable and responsive government and saved taxpayers money.

“Voters in on-cycle races appear to focus on the broader concerns of the community,” the author wrote, while “off-cycle races seem to bring out an electorate with narrower, parochial concerns.”

A 2005 study in The Journal of Politics [*found*](https://pages.ucsd.edu/~zhajnal/page1/page2/files/page2_2.pdf) that moving local elections to even years increased Black turnout. Consolidating elections could make it easier for ***working-class*** voters and those living in poverty to participate in elections.

“Just by changing the date of these elections you can empower these voters,” James Skoufis, a Hudson Valley Democratic state senator who sponsored the legislation, told me.

The [*measure*](https://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=%0D%0A&amp;leg_video=&amp;bn=A4282&amp;term=2023&amp;Summary=Y&amp;Actions=Y&amp;Memo=Y&amp;Text=Y) is in some ways modest: It doesn’t apply to New York City and other cities across the state, which are [*required*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/07/nyregion/city-elections-in-new-york-odd-numbered-years.html) by the State Constitution to hold elections during odd-numbered years. Also thanks to the State Constitution, the legislation doesn’t apply to elections for district attorney, county clerk, sheriff or many judicial posts. (The State Constitution seems due for some revisions on this count, despite the effort that would require.) The new law does apply to other county and town elections, from county executives and town supervisors to town board members, as well as county legislators and town clerks.

“It makes for more efficient elections and is less confusing to voters, too,” said Susan Lerner, executive director of Common Cause New York, a nonpartisan good government group.

The law is a no-brainer for New York. Despite this, the bill faced opposition from some elected officials in the state — from both parties — who prefer that New York’s elections stay as they are.

“Even some Democratic elected officials have raised some concerns, a nonzero number of elected Democrats,” Mr. Skoufis told me. “It’s very much, ‘OK, the current system got me elected.’ They don’t want to lose that.”

Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick, a Long Island Republican, said so out loud.

“If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” Mr. Fitzpatrick [*said*](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2023/06/09/counties-irate-over-legislature-s-plan-to-change-election-law) in June. “The system works fine.”

It is broke. Hopefully, this law will make it less so.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL IWASAKI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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[***What’s Behind Elon Musk’s Bromance with Donald Trump; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4V-3S81-DXY4-X1R7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BUSINESS; dealbook

**Length:** 1924 words

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**Highlight:** The Republican is courting the mogul to bolster his re-election fight, but the Biden campaign sees a political opportunity to exploit.

**Body**

The Republican is courting the mogul to bolster his re-election fight, but the Biden campaign sees a political opportunity to exploit.

Trump and Musk’s growing courtship

For much of President Biden’s time in the White House, his relations with Elon Musk have been tense. They may be about to plunge to a new low after Biden’s re-election campaign hit out at reports that [*Donald Trump could make Musk an adviser*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) if the Republican were to win in November.

The president’s campaign sees mileage in targeting Trump’s ties to moguls. “Despite what Donald Trump thinks, America is not for sale to billionaires, oil and gas executives, or even Elon Musk,” James Singer, a spokesman for the campaign, told DealBook, in its first comments on Musk.

What we know about the Musk and Trump’s warming ties, according to The Wall Street Journal:

* The two talk often: Musk and Trump speak on the phone several times a month.

1. The relationship is about influence rather than money: Musk doesn’t simply want to write a check for Trump’s campaign; he’s offered to use his sway with business leaders to help fight Biden’s re-election bid. Musk co-hosted a dinner at the Los Angeles home of the investor David Sacks last month that included Peter Thiel, Steven Mnuchin and Rupert Murdoch.
2. Nelson Peltz has played a central role. Musk and Trump [*met*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in March at the billionaire investor’s Palm Beach, Fla., estate, where the advisory role discussions took place. Peltz and Musk have also briefed Trump on a plan to invest in a project to prevent the possibility of voter fraud.

Musk hasn’t commented on The Journal report. In an interview earlier this year with Don Lemon, he downplayed the meeting. “Let’s just say he did most of the talking,” [*he said*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1).

Musk voted for Biden in 2020 but has turned to the right. He has increasingly used X, his social media platform, to [*berate the president*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) on migration and health care policies, and has criticized diversity, equity and inclusion programs that the political left has embraced. Musk was also miffed that the [*White House didn’t invite Tesla*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) to an electric vehicle event in 2021.

Biden has seemingly been keen to fuel the feud. The president has had a habit of dismissing Musk’s views, a tactic that could backfire. As Andrew has pointed out, whether you like him or not, Musk is [*a natural ally*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) on issues like tackling climate change. The Biden campaign’s latest comments suggest that it sees political mileages in distancing itself from the billionaire class (its [*pitching hard for* ***working-class*** *votes*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in battleground states.)

For Trump, Musk’s backing would be the latest billionaire to come to his side. Musk has indicated that he’s not ready to endorse a candidate and has said he [*won’t donate*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) to either of them. But reports of their warming ties are surely a boost for the Republican just days after [*Steve Schwarzman*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1), the Blackstone C.E.O., threw his weight behind Trump.

HERE’S WHAT’S HAPPENING

Jury deliberations in Donald Trump’s hush-money trial enter a second day. The panel of seven men and five women on Wednesday asked to hear more pieces of testimony from two witnesses, including that of David Pecker, the former publisher of The National Enquirer. The jurors will reconvene at 9:30 a.m. Eastern on Thursday, with [*no clear sign on when they might reach a verdict*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1).

Nelson Peltz sells his Disney shares. The hedge fund billionaire [*controlled about $3.5 billion*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) of stock in the company, most of which was owned by Ike Perlmutter, the former chairman of Marvel Entertainment. Peltz has sold his portion of those shares weeks after failing in his campaign to appoint directors to Disney’s board.

A Goldman Sachs veteran is tapped to run the Cleveland Fed. [*Beth Hammack*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) will replace Loretta Mester, who steps down as president on June 30. Hammack, the Wall Street giant’s former co-head of global financing, has decades of experience in finance and capital markets. Her first vote on interest rates could come as soon as the September meeting.

Sticky inflation

The S&amp;P 500 has edged lower in premarket trading on Thursday, and is on track to snap its five-week winning streak as inflation and interest rate jitters again grip the markets.

Investors are expected to get little relief from Friday’s Personal Consumption Expenditures index. Economists [*forecast only a slight improvement*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in the Fed’s preferred inflation measure.

Here’s what to watch for:

* April’s core P.C.E., which excludes volatile food and fuel prices, is forecast to come in at 2.8 percent on an annualized basis, in line with the previous month but still above the Fed’s 2 percent target.

1. Analysts will be watching for signs that so-called shelter inflation has begun to ease. Pricing on consumer goods has fallen over the past year. The same cannot be said of what households spend on rents and the homes they own. One example: [*skyrocketing home insurance premiums*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1). This inflation gauge doesn’t put a large weighting on this category of expenditures, but homeowners are feeling the pinch.

“It is the housing crisis that nobody is talking about,” Holly Meyer Lucas, a Florida realtor told The Times.

The renewed focus on inflation follows a strong earnings season. Over the past month, stocks rallied as investors grew more optimistic about the health of corporate America after a string of better-than-expected results. Attention is now shifting back to inflation, the Fed and interest rates.

There are signs that the economy is beginning to slow. On Wednesday, the Fed issued its latest Beige Book report, which showed that [*consumers were pulling back on spending*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) and showed only “slight or modest” economic growth across much of the country.

Hopes for a near-term interest rate cut are fading. Raphael Bostic, the Atlanta Fed president, said Wednesday that “[*we still have a ways to go*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1)” to tame the “explosive” inflation that emerged after coronavirus-related lockdowns measures were eased. Other Fed inflation hawks have made similar comments lately.

The markets appear to be getting the message. Futures traders on Thursday expect the Fed to lower its prime lending just once this year, most likely in November. Two weeks ago, the consensus call was for two rate cuts.

A new fight for Big Oil

Senate Democrats want the Biden administration to keep the pressure on Big Oil. Chuck Schumer, the majority leader, and nearly two dozen colleagues have asked the Justice Department to investigate collusion and price-fixing in the sector weeks after the F.T.C. [*approved*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) Exxon Mobil’s $60 billion deal for Pioneer Natural Resources.

The lawmakers want to broaden scrutiny of the sector. They say their suspicions were raised after the F.T.C. gave the green light to the Exxon-Pioneer deal but also accused Scott Sheffield, the former Pioneer C.E.O., of colluding with OPEC to manipulate prices and barred him from sitting on Exxon’s board.

Sheffield has hit back against the accusations. “They couldn’t find anything wrong with the merger — because the merger only represents 11 percent of the oil in the Permian Basin — so they scapegoated me,” [*Sheffield*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) told The Financial Times.

“The F.T.C. stands by our allegations,” said Doug Farrar, a spokesman for the agency.

The senators have deeper concerns. The F.T.C. findings “lend credence to the fear that corporate avarice is keeping prices artificially high,” they wrote in a letter to Merrick Garland, the attorney general, and Jonathan Kanter, the Justice Department’s antitrust chief.

Potential collusion “may have cost the average American household up to $500 per car in increased annual fuel costs” they added, and noted that “only the D.O.J. can prosecute and fully redress the alleged anticompetitive behavior.” The Justice Department declined to comment.

The calls come amid a wave of industry consolidation. [*ConocoPhillips agreed Wednesday to buy Marathon Oil*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in an all-stock deal worth $22.5 billion, a day after Hess shareholders [*approved*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) Chevron’s $53 billion takeover of the company.

The U.S. last year set a record for oil production, potentially helping to offset predictions of $100 crude.

“My wife is fond of flying flags. I am not.”

— [*Samuel Alito*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1). The Supreme Court justice said he would not recuse himself from two cases arising from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol after reports that flags appearing to support the “Stop the Steal” movement were displayed outside his houses.

A hack attack crime wave continues

In recent months, a barrage of cyberattacks have hobbled companies, with intruders breaking into the digital vaults of [*UnitedHealth Group*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1), the auction house [*Christie’s*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) and [*MGM Resorts*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in Las Vegas. In each case, the hackers demand big ransoms or threaten to inflict bigger damage.

The latest target appears to be Live Nation’s Ticketmaster, [*after reports*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) that the hacking group ShinyHunters apparently breached the company’s computer systems and pilfered the account details of more than 500 million customers.

Live Nation has not confirmed the reports, and didn’t respond to a request for comment.

The groups behind these intrusions may change, but the modus operandi is similar. After gaining access, they typically look for sensitive information — customer names, addresses and credit card details — and then demand a ransom.

ShinyHunters is reportedly seeking $500,000 to prevent the information from being sold on the dark web. (One hacker watcher website [*says*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) it may already be too late for that.)

The payments can be steep. This month, Andrew Witty, the C.E.O. of UnitedHealth, testified before the Senate that the health care giant was forced to pay a different group of hackers a $22 million ransom. “This was one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever had to make, and I wouldn’t wish it on anyone,” [*Witty said*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) during a contentious hearing.

With hack attacks on the rise, Washington is taking notice. The S.E.C. in December [*introduced new cyberattack disclosure*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) rules for listed companies that some Republican lawmakers [*had fought to kill*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1). Compliance [*has been patchy*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1), however.

The apparent hack has added to Ticketmaster’s woes. The Justice Department [*sued Live Nation last week*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) claiming it has an illegal monopoly on the live entertainment industry and could force it to break up.

The authorities worldwide are investigating. Australian officials are working with Ticketmaster on the breach, [*the BBC reports*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1), and the F.B.I. is said to be offering assistance.

THE SPEED READ

Deals

* Goldman Sachs has [*amassed a roughly $20 billion war chest*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) to expand into private credit lending — a growing market that JPMorgan Chase’s [*Jamie Dimon*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) says could sour. (FT, Bloomberg)

1. Saudi Arabia could reportedly start selling more shares in the energy giant Saudi Aramco [*as soon as Sunday*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in a deal that may raise at least $10 billion. (Bloomberg)

Policy

* The European Central Bank is set to [*fine as many as four banks*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) for failing to adequately disclose their climate risks. (Bloomberg)

1. Hong Kong [*convicted 14 pro-democracy activists*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) in the city’s largest national security trial. (NYT)
2. Gemini, the Winklevoss brothers’ crypto exchange, [*will return more than $2 billion*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) to customers of a now defunct lending program. (CNBC)

Best of the rest

* New Delhi recorded its highest temperature ever measured — [*126 degrees Fahrenheit*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) — Wednesday, and the heat wave shows little sign of abating. (NYT)

1. “[*Romance Writers Group Goes Bankrupt*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1) After Diversity Fight Decimates Ranks” (Bloomberg)

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](https://www.wsj.com/politics/donald-trump-elon-musk-alliance-d1fe43e3?mod=hp_lead_pos1).

PHOTO: Will Elon Musk play the spoiler role in the 2024 presidential election? (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jonathan Ernst/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***People Places Things***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1T-N571-DXY4-X008-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 3; ARTIST'S QUESTIONNAIRE

**Length:** 1639 words

**Byline:** By Evan Nicole Brown

**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,'' 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 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.

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 & 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. 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.

**Graphic**

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 17, 2024

**End of Document**



[***In State of the Union, Biden Will Cheer the Economy and Draw a Contrast With Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGX-74N1-JBG3-61JT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1003 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley Jim Tankersley writes about economic policy at the White House and how it affects the country and the world. He has covered the topic for more than a dozen years in Washington, with a focus on the middle class.

**Highlight:** Allies are pushing the president to do more to sell skeptical voters on his economic record and to attack his likely Republican rival on tax policy.

**Body**

Allies are pushing the president to do more to sell skeptical voters on his economic record and to attack his likely Republican rival on tax policy.

Follow live updates on [*Biden’s State of the Union address*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates).

President Biden enters his State of the Union speech on Thursday with an economic record that has [*defied forecasters’ gloomy expectations*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates), avoiding recession while delivering stronger growth and lower unemployment than predicted.

But polls suggest voters know relatively little about the legislation Mr. Biden has signed into law that seeks to boost the economy through spending and tax breaks for infrastructure, clean energy, semiconductors and more.

They remain frustrated over high prices, particularly for [*groceries*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates) and [*housing*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates), even though the rapid inflation that defined Mr. Biden’s early years in office has cooled. Mr. Biden consistently trails his predecessor and likely November opponent, former President Donald J. Trump, on economic issues.

His speech on Thursday will try to make the [*case for the success of “Bidenomics.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates) Mr. Biden will begin to hint at what his agenda might bring in a second term, including efforts to increase corporate taxes and to reduce the cost of housing, one of the most tangible examples of what Mr. Biden calls his attempts to build an economy that prioritizes workers and the middle class.

Mr. Biden’s State of the Union speech will “discuss the historic achievements he’s delivered for the American people and lay out his vision for the future,” Lael Brainard, who heads the president’s National Economic Council, told reporters ahead of the speech. She stressed recent wage gains, low unemployment and new factory construction that she said were linked to Mr. Biden’s agenda.

Ms. Brainard and other administration officials said the president would try to draw sharp contrasts with Mr. Trump on economic issues during his annual speech, including on tax policy and reducing consumer costs. Mr. Biden’s aim is to cast Mr. Trump and his Republican Party as allies of the wealthy and large corporations instead of Americans who are struggling with rising costs.

Those contrasts will include policy departures from Mr. Trump’s legacy. Mr. Biden will propose raising the corporate income tax rate to 28 percent, up from the 21 percent rate that Mr. Trump signed into law in 2017. He will also call for increasing a new minimum tax on large corporations, which Mr. Biden signed into law in 2022, to 21 percent from 15 percent.

Mr. Biden will also propose ending the ability of corporations to deduct compensation costs for any employee who is paid more than $1 million per year.

The president’s allies in Washington diverge on what economic issues he should focus on in this week’s speech. But they roundly agree that he should claim credit for measures of economic strength on his watch, while promising to fight more to tame prices.

“He’s got economic growth, he’s got wage growth, inflation’s coming down,” said Ellen Hughes-Cromwick, a former chief global economist for the Ford Motor Company who is now a senior resident fellow at the centrist Democratic think tank Third Way.

Mr. Biden should stress those trends, she said, along with the [*manufacturing investments*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates) spurred by his agenda. Her advice to the president is to “keep repeating” those wins.

[*Third Way’s latest polling*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates) in February illustrates Mr. Biden’s struggles to sell voters on his economic record. On some metrics, the president’s stewardship of the economy is as strong as — or better than — Mr. Trump’s. But those views are dogged by voter frustration with inflation. That polling finds that respondents trust Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden by a nearly 20-point margin on the economy — and on related issues like supporting manufacturing and reducing the cost of oil and gas.

A new group funded by Democratic donors [*released polling on Wednesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/03/07/us/biden-state-of-the-union-updates) suggesting that Mr. Trump is vulnerable to attacks on tax policies that favor the wealthy. The poll, by Blueprint, found that two of the top five voter concerns about the former president were the possibility that he would let rich tax cheats “off the hook” and cut taxes for the wealthy but not ***working-class*** families. Mr. Trump’s 2017 tax cuts delivered a large share of their gains for corporations and high earners, but also cut taxes for typical workers.

In a memo released on Thursday morning, Blueprint said its polling suggested that three in five voters “say that lower prices on the costs of goods and services is the aspect they’d most like to see improved in the economy” — but fewer than a quarter see it as Mr. Biden’s top economic priority.

Progressive groups are also calling on Mr. Biden to target costs aggressively, including blaming corporate greed for some rising prices. They also want him to vigorously defend the power of government spending to boost the economy, including in pivotal areas like affordable housing.

The Center for Popular Democracy, a progressive advocacy group, released a memo on Wednesday asking Mr. Biden to call for $1 trillion in new government funding to create 12 million “high-quality, permanently and deeply affordable, green homes that are publicly owned or under democratic community control.” White House aides did not preview any new proposal of that scope.

Republicans have largely countered Mr. Biden’s messaging by accusing him of unleashing high inflation with the spending measures he has signed into law. They have previewed similar attacks ahead of the State of the Union speech.

“President Biden’s reckless spending agenda is a threat to our national security and America’s way of life,” Republicans on the House Budget Committee said in a release on Wednesday. “It threatens to destabilize today’s economy and rob future generations of Americans of the blessings of liberty that make our nation exceptional.”

PHOTO: President Biden is expected to tout strong economic growth and low unemployment in his State of the Union address on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Al Drago for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2024

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[***Voting Tests Union's Push At VW Plant***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTV-J441-JBG3-6034-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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

**Length:** 1345 words

**Byline:** By Neal E. Boudette

**Body**

The United Automobile Workers hopes contract gains at the Big Three carmakers will provide momentum in a broad effort to organize nonunion plants.

Last fall the United Automobile Workers union won big pay increases from the Detroit automakers, and the impact rippled quickly through the nonunion auto plants scattered across the South.

Afterward, Toyota, Honda, Volkswagen, Nissan, Hyundai and Tesla raised wages for their own hourly workers in the United States, none of whom are unionized. On production lines in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and elsewhere, those pay increases have been referred to as the ''U.A.W. bump.''

Now 4,300 workers at Volkswagen's plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., will test whether the union can achieve an even greater bump. On Wednesday, they began voting on whether to join the U.A.W., and the prospects of a union victory appear high. About 70 percent of the workers pledged to vote yes before the union asked for a vote, according to the U.A.W.

''I think our chances are excellent,'' said Kelcey Smith, 48, who has worked in the VW plant's paint department for a year and is a member of a committee working to build support for the U.A.W. ''The energy is high. I think we are going to nail it.''

Volkswagen has presented reasons it believes a union is not needed at the plant, including pay that is above average for the Chattanooga region. But it has also said it encourages all workers to vote in the election, which is to conclude on Friday, and decide for themselves. ''No one will lose their job for voting for or against the union,'' a company spokesman said.

The stakes go beyond the Tennessee plant, Volkswagen's only U.S. factory. A victory there would add fuel to the U.A.W.'s push to extend its presence to the more than two dozen nonunion auto plants in the United States, mostly clustered in Southern states where union resistance has been strong historically, and where right-to-work laws make it hard for unions to organize workers.

The U.A.W.'s chances beyond the Volkswagen factory are unclear. Japanese and South Korean automakers have demonstrated more forceful opposition to the U.A.W. than the German companies. Tesla's chief executive, Elon Musk, has spoken out against the U.A.W. on several occasions over the last few years.

And on Tuesday, the Republican governors of six states -- Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas -- denounced the U.A.W. drive, saying in a statement that they were ''highly concerned about the unionization campaign driven by misinformation and scare tactics that the U.A.W. has brought into our states.''

''We have worked tirelessly on behalf of our constituents to bring good-paying jobs to our states,'' the governors declared. ''These jobs have become part of the fabric of the automotive manufacturing industry. Unionization would certainly put our states' jobs in jeopardy.''

The vote at VW will be followed by another election -- as yet unscheduled -- at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Ala., where the U.A.W. says a majority of workers have signed up to back the union.

The U.A.W. says victories at VW, Mercedes and other plants would bring increased wages, richer benefits and higher living standards for tens of thousands of workers, many of them in the nation's poorer counties.

Widespread unionizing in the Southern plants would also help level a playing field that for nearly half a century has been tilted against the three unionized Detroit manufacturers -- General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the parent of Chrysler. In operating nonunion factories, foreign-owned companies have a significant labor-cost advantage over their U.S.-based rivals.

''It would be a revolution for the U.A.W. and for the auto industry,'' said Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, who has followed the U.A.W. for more than three decades. ''It would break the glass ceiling for unions in the South, and would mean more purchasing power for ***working-class*** people in that region.''

The U.A.W. has organized several heavy-truck and bus plants in the South, but for decades has tried and failed to do the same at automobile factories, which are typically larger.

The VW election is the union's third try at the plant. Workers rejected U.A.W. representation by a vote of 712 to 626 in 2014, and by an even narrower margin, 833 to 776, in 2019. Opposition from Republican elected officials in Tennessee was vociferous in those campaigns.

In the last 10 years, the U.A.W. also lost in a 2017 vote at a Nissan plant in Canton, Miss., and an organizing drive at the Mercedes plant fizzled without an election.

In those efforts, the U.A.W. was hampered by a dubious track record and a questionable reputation. Over nearly 30 years, the Detroit automakers closed dozens of plants, eliminating tens of thousands of hourly jobs, despite the U.A.W.'s objections. Some industry executives have blamed high union wages, in part, for pushing G.M. and Chrysler into bankruptcy in 2009. In addition, the union was racked by corruption scandals that resulted in prison sentences for two former presidents and about a dozen other senior U.A.W. officials.

In the past two years, however, the U.A.W. has undergone a transformation. Financial reforms and transparency measures overseen by a federal monitor have helped root out corruption. A feisty president, Shawn Fain, was chosen in the union's first direct election by the membership. In the contract negotiations last year with G.M., Ford and Stellantis, Mr. Fain used a new approach, choosing all three companies as strike targets but shutting down only selected plants, which put pressure on the companies without crippling them or damaging the broader U.S. economy.

After six weeks, the union had contracts raising the top wage 25 percent, to more than $40 an hour. Pay for workers lower on the wage scale will rise to the top wage over three years instead of eight. Some will see their pay double. A worker putting in 40 hours a week at the top wage will earn about $83,000 a year. In recent years, profit-sharing bonuses have added about $9,000 to $14,000.

On top of that, the new contracts provide wage adjustments if inflation pushes the cost of living higher, improved pensions and retirement benefits, and increased paid time off. U.A.W. workers have also long had company-paid health care with no deductibles or co-payments.

Hourly wages at the nonunion auto plants used to start under $20 and top out around $32. The ''U.A.W. bump'' lifted the range to roughly $22 to $35. Volkswagen said its workers typically earned about $60,000 a year. (The annual mean wage for all occupations in the Chattanooga area was $54,480 in May, according to the U.S. Labor Department.)

Seizing on momentum from the Big Three negotiations, Mr. Fain said, the union will spend $40 million through 2026 to support organizing at plants owned by Toyota, Honda, Hyundai, Nissan, BMW, Mercedes, Subaru, Volkswagen, Mazda, Volvo and Tesla, as well as others owned by the electric vehicle start-ups Rivian and Lucid Motors.

VW workers who support the U.A.W. say their wages are pretty good for Tennessee but point 300 miles north to Louisville, Ky., where Ford pays many workers more than $40 an hour to make the Expedition sport utility vehicle, which competes with the VW Atlas made in Chattanooga.

''If Ford can pay that much, why can't Volkswagen pay us the same?'' said Isaac Meadows, 40, a father of six who has worked at the VW plant for 14 months. ''We have more worth than they're paying us.''

There are concerns beyond the hourly wage. Workers must use paid time off if they want to be paid during two periods when the plant shuts down around the year-end holidays and in summer.

Once he covers the shutdowns with vacation days, Mr. Meadows said, he is left with about 16 hours of paid time off to cover any family events or sick days for the rest of the year. ''I miss my kids' dances, sporting events, family gatherings,'' he said. ''I miss a lot because I've got to work.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/business/economy/volkswagen-united-auto-workers-union.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/17/business/economy/volkswagen-united-auto-workers-union.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Workers at a Ford plant in Chicago. Ford pays its union workers more than $40 an hour. Wages at nonunion plants start at $22 and top out around $32. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Democrats Who Are Winning***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C4K-WTP1-JBG3-60P2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 29, 2024 Wednesday 06:31 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1981 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:** We examine if populism is crucial to that appeal.

**Body**

We examine if populism is crucial to that appeal.

Recent polls contain [*a surprising combination of results*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing): Democrats appear to be leading in six tough Senate races even as President Biden trails Donald Trump in the same states.

What are these Democratic Senate candidates doing right? To answer that question, I studied their campaigns, looking at advertisements, social media posts and local news coverage. In today’s newsletter, I’ll highlight the single biggest theme that emerged: The six Democrats are basing their campaigns around a populism that harshly criticizes both big business and China.

(In a follow-up newsletter, I’ll look at several other campaign themes.)

It’s still early in the campaign, obviously, and some candidates who are leading now may lose in November. Still, most of the Democrats in these races aren’t merely ahead in the polls; they also have a track record of winning tough races by appealing to voters who are skeptical of the Democratic Party. I think that their use of populism is crucial to that appeal.

‘Corporate greed’

Successful campaigns, like movies and novels, tend to have heroes and bad guys. Republicans are comfortable with this idea. Their bad guys in recent years have included criminals, illegal immigrants and cultural elites. Democrats are sometimes squeamish about naming antagonists (other than Republicans) and prefer a higher-minded version of politics.

This year’s swing-state Democrats are not squeamish. They portray both China and big business as making life hard on working families. Here’s a flavor of what they are saying about corporations:

* “I’ll never stop fighting to crack down on corporate greed,” Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio says in one ad.
* Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania talks about corporate “greedflation” and “shrinkflation.” One ad, set to “Pink Panther”-style music, shows fictional C.E.O.s sneaking around a supermarket at night to shrink product sizes.

1. In an ad for Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, workers talk about how “Wall Street greed” slashed their pensions and say that Baldwin “fought like hell” to restore them. Brown has run a similar ad, in which a truck driver talks about how Wall Street is trying to “screw Ohio workers.”
2. An ad for Senator Jacky Rosen of Nevada boasts that she “took on the big drug companies — and won.” Senator Jon Tester of Montana and Ruben Gallego, an Arizona congressman running for Senate, also criticize Big Pharma.

* “The rich and the powerful — they don’t need more advocates,” Gallego says in an ad introducing himself to voters. “It’s the people that are still trying to decide between groceries and utilities that needs a fighter for them.”

‘The greatest threat’

The other main antagonist is China, which the candidates portray as using unfair trade tactics to undermine American jobs.

* Tester’s first television ad of the campaign described China as “the greatest threat facing our nation,” [*Marissa Martinez of Politico noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Baldwin, in one of her ads, says, “We can’t let China steal Wisconsin jobs.”
* Casey and Brown have trumpeted their work on a law that requires the federal government to use American steel on infrastructure projects. “We were getting screwed,” a steelworker in Casey’s ad says.
* In another Brown ad, workers at a washing-machine maker joke about his reputation for looking rumpled, disheveled and wrinkled — and say they don’t care because he fights to protect their jobs against companies that break trade rules.[*Brown’s blue-collar reputation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) is central to his uncommon electoral success. He is the only Democrat to have won a Senate, governor or presidential race in Ohio over the past decade. He, Tester and Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia (who’s retiring) are the only Democratic senators who represent states that Trump won in 2020.

What about Biden?

This kind of populism, in which politicians promise to fight for ordinary people against the powerful, was once core to the Democratic Party. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman were more populist than many people now remember. Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign was notably populist, too, as was Barack Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign.

It’s true that almost all elected Democrats today favor some populist policies, like raising taxes on the rich. But as the party has become dominated by college graduates and white-collar professionals, it has tended to emphasize other issues, like climate change and cultural liberalism, that fail to resonate with ***working-class*** Americans. Remember — most Americans don’t have a bachelor’s degree.

Biden has shown some signs of running a populist campaign this year. (He has begun to emphasize Trump’s wealth, [*as my colleague Jess Bidgood has noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).) Still, Biden devotes more attention to Trump’s anti-democratic behavior and to what Biden calls “the very soul of America.”

Democracy is obviously a vital issue. So far, though, the polls suggest that pocketbook issues may be more resonant this year.

For more: [*My recent essay on “neopopulism”*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) tries to explain why many Americans are so frustrated with the economy. And you can [*watch the campaign ads mentioned in today’s newsletter here*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

THE LATEST NEWS

Trump on Trial

* The prosecution and the defense [*made their closing arguments*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in Trump’s Manhattan criminal trial. The jury will begin deliberating today.

1. Trump’s lawyer tried to undermine Michael Cohen, the prosecution’s key witness, calling him the “M.V.P. of liars” and “the human embodiment of reasonable doubt.” [*Read takeaways from the trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. The prosecution walked jurors through their case over more than five hours, describing “a conspiracy and a coverup” and calling the hush money an “effort to hoodwink the American voter.”
3. Prosecutors also sought to bolster Cohen’s credibility. In a moment of stagecraft, one of them feigned a short phone call to show that Cohen could have spoken to both Trump and his bodyguard in quick succession, as Cohen testified.

2024 Election

* Robert F. Kennedy Jr. criticized the removal of Confederate monuments as “[*destroying history*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing),” adding there were “heroes in the Confederacy who didn’t have slaves.”

1. Many of the Republicans angling to be Trump’s running mate have visited him in court or joined him at rallies. Senator Marco Rubio is [*trying a quieter strategy*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
2. An early deadline threatened to keep Biden off the ballot in Ohio. To get around it, Democrats will [*nominate him virtually*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) before their official convention.

More Politics

* Justice Samuel Alito said his wife flew an upside-down American flag in response to a neighbor’s insult. But the name-calling happened weeks after the flag came down, and the neighbor says [*Alito’s wife started the conflict*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. The judge overseeing Trump’s classified documents case [*denied prosecutors’ request for a gag order*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). The request was a response to Trump’s claim that Biden authorized F.B.I. agents to kill him during their raid on Mar-a-Lago.
2. In Senator Robert Menendez’s bribery case, [*prosecutors showed private messages*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) between Menendez and his future wife — what they say was the start of a conspiracy.

Israel-Hamas War

* Israeli forces [*used U.S.-made bombs*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in the strike that killed dozens of Palestinians on Sunday when fires spread quickly through a camp for displaced people near Rafah.

1. Israel said it had [*sent more combat troops*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) to southern Gaza.
2. Nikki Haley wrote “Finish Them!” on Israeli artillery shells during a Memorial Day visit to Israel, [*CNN reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).
3. A floating pier built by the U.S. to get more aid into Gaza [*broke apart in rough seas*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). The U.S. will try to repair it.
4. The Great Omari Mosque has been central to life in Gaza for centuries. It has been [*badly damaged during the war*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

South Africa’s Election

* South Africans vote today. It’s the country’s most consequential election since the end of apartheid 30 years ago. [*Read what to know*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. Polls predict that [*the governing party*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) will receive less than half the national vote for the first time since 1994. [*Learn about its competitors*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More International News

* Pope Francis apologized after the Italian media reported that he had [*used an anti-gay slur*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) in a private meeting with bishops.

1. Haiti named a new prime minister, Garry Conille. He [*takes office in a deep crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) and is expected to serve until elections can be held.
2. There will be no French fries for athletes at the Olympics. [*France is trying to update its culinary reputation*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), and chefs will serve quinoa instead.

Other Big Stories

* A storm with high winds and golf-ball-sized hail killed one person in Texas and left [*half a million without power*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. In a private text thread, a group of Mississippi deputies joked about rape, shooting people and shocking suspects in the genitals, a [*Times investigation found*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing). Their supervisor often joined in the conversations.
2. A federal judge sentenced an executive at the failed crypto exchange FTX to [*seven and a half years in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Opinions

Democrats want criminal law to decide whether Trump is worthy of a second term. [*It’s really for voters to decide*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), Matthew Walther writes.

By taking fewer positions on hot-button issues, [*universities can promote the intellectual pursuit of truth*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), argue Noah Feldman and Alison Simmons, who helped write Harvard’s new policy.

Here is a column by Bret Stephens on [*necessary wars*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

MORNING READS

Shellfish: Americans love shrimp. [*Is it good for you*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

Flaco the Owl: The American Museum of Natural History [*will keep Flaco’s remains*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Ask Well: Influencers say you should delay your morning caffeine for a better buzz. [*We fact-checked their claims*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Brief romance: A trailblazer, a magic dress and waiting in the rain. [*Enjoy readers’ Tiny Love Stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Lives Lived: Sue Johnson, a British-born clinical psychologist and best-selling author, developed a method of couples therapy based on emotional attachment, challenging what had been the dominant behavioral approach. [*She died at 76*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

SPORTS

M.L.B.: Starting today, the league [*will officially recognize*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) Negro Leagues statistics from around a century ago, which will change who holds some records.

N.B.A.: The Minnesota Timberwolves [*won Game 4*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) over the Dallas Mavericks.

N.H.L.: Sam Reinhart’s [*overtime goal*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) pushed the Florida Panthers past the New York Rangers, tying their Eastern Conference final series at 2-2.

“Inside the NBA”: The TNT studio show, beloved by basketball fans for over two decades, may end after next season. [*Charles Barkley isn’t going quietly.*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing)

ARTS AND IDEAS

The European Space Agency recently released images and early science gathered from Euclid, a telescope that it launched into space last summer. The telescope can capture, in impressive detail, large swaths of sky. It will help astronomers make sense of two universal mysteries: dark matter and dark energy. [*See images captured by Euclid*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

More on culture

* The house from “Home Alone,” in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka, Ill., is for sale. [*Asking price: $5.25 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

1. A museum in Tasmania will let visitors hear songs from a [*one-of-a-kind Wu-Tang Clan album*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing), which has never been played for the public.
2. See what people are [*wearing on the streets of New York*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing) this season.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Combine beans and cheese for this [*easy five-ingredient dinner*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Read [*books about California*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Prepare for [*wildfires*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/us-morning-briefing).

Fight clothing stains with [*these products*](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 namecheck.

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

P.S. We heard from some readers who thought that our use of the phrase “happy Memorial Day” in Monday’s newsletter trivialized a day to honor Americans killed in wars. We understand that criticism, and we won’t use the phrase again. We always welcome feedback and critique from readers.

[*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: Images from each of the six candidates’ campaign ads. (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 29, 2024

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[***VW Workers in Tennessee Start Vote on U.A.W., Testing Union Ambitions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTM-W541-JBG3-60PG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2024 Wednesday 09:49 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1375 words

**Byline:** Neal E. Boudette Neal E. Boudette is based in Michigan and has been covering the auto industry for two decades. He joined The New York Times in 2016 after more than 15 years at The Wall Street Journal.

**Highlight:** The United Automobile Workers hopes contract gains at the Big Three carmakers will provide momentum in a broad effort to organize nonunion plants.

**Body**

The United Automobile Workers hopes contract gains at the Big Three carmakers will provide momentum in a broad effort to organize nonunion plants.

Last fall the United Automobile Workers union won big pay increases from the Detroit automakers, and the impact rippled quickly through the nonunion auto plants scattered across the South.

Afterward, Toyota, Honda, Volkswagen, Nissan, Hyundai and Tesla raised wages for their own hourly workers in the United States, none of whom are unionized. On production lines in Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky and elsewhere, those pay increases have been referred to as the “U.A.W. bump.”

Now 4,300 workers at Volkswagen’s plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., will test whether the union can achieve an even greater bump. On Wednesday, they began voting on whether to join the U.A.W., and the prospects of a union victory appear high. About 70 percent of the workers pledged to vote yes before the union asked for a vote, according to the U.A.W.

“I think our chances are excellent,” said Kelcey Smith, 48, who has worked in the VW plant’s paint department for a year and is a member of a committee working to build support for the U.A.W. “The energy is high. I think we are going to nail it.”

Volkswagen has presented reasons it believes a union is not needed at the plant, including pay that is above average for the Chattanooga region. But it has also said it encourages all workers to vote in the election, which is to conclude on Friday, and decide for themselves. “No one will lose their job for voting for or against the union,” a company spokesman said.

The stakes go beyond the Tennessee plant, Volkswagen’s only U.S. factory. A victory there would add fuel to the U.A.W.’s push to extend its presence to the more than two dozen nonunion auto plants in the United States, mostly clustered in Southern states where union resistance has been strong historically, and where right-to-work laws make it hard for unions to organize workers.

The U.A.W.’s chances beyond the Volkswagen factory are unclear. Japanese and South Korean automakers have demonstrated more forceful opposition to the U.A.W. than the German companies. Tesla’s chief executive, Elon Musk, has spoken out against the U.A.W. on several occasions over the last few years.

And on Tuesday, the Republican governors of six states — Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas — denounced the U.A.W. drive, [*saying in a statement*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/) that they were “highly concerned about the unionization campaign driven by misinformation and scare tactics that the U.A.W. has brought into our states.”

“We have worked tirelessly on behalf of our constituents to bring good-paying jobs to our states,” the governors declared. “These jobs have become part of the fabric of the automotive manufacturing industry. Unionization would certainly put our states’ jobs in jeopardy.”

The vote at VW will be followed by another election — as yet unscheduled — [*at a Mercedes-Benz plant in Vance, Ala.*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/), where the U.A.W. says a majority of workers have signed up to back the union.

The U.A.W. says victories at VW, Mercedes and other plants would bring increased wages, richer benefits and higher living standards for tens of thousands of workers, many of them in the nation’s poorer counties.

Widespread unionizing in the Southern plants would also help level a playing field that for nearly half a century has been tilted against the three unionized Detroit manufacturers — General Motors, Ford Motor and Stellantis, the parent of Chrysler. In operating nonunion factories, foreign-owned companies have a significant labor-cost advantage over their U.S.-based rivals.

“It would be a revolution for the U.A.W. and for the auto industry,” said Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley, who has followed the U.A.W. for more than three decades. “It would break the glass ceiling for unions in the South, and would mean more purchasing power for ***working-class*** people in that region.”

The U.A.W. has organized several heavy-truck and bus plants in the South, but for decades has tried and failed to do the same at automobile factories, which are typically larger.

The VW election is the union’s third try at the plant. Workers [*rejected U.A.W. representation*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/) by a vote of 712 to 626 in 2014, and by [*an even narrower margin, 833 to 776, in 2019*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/). Opposition from Republican elected officials in Tennessee was vociferous in those campaigns.

In the last 10 years, the U.A.W. also [*lost in a 2017 vote at a Nissan plant in Canton, Miss.*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/), and an organizing drive at the Mercedes plant fizzled without an election.

In those efforts, the U.A.W. was hampered by a dubious track record and a questionable reputation. Over nearly 30 years, the Detroit automakers closed dozens of plants, eliminating tens of thousands of hourly jobs, despite the U.A.W.’s objections. Some industry executives have blamed high union wages, in part, for pushing G.M. and Chrysler into bankruptcy in 2009. In addition, the union was racked by [*corruption scandals*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/) that resulted in prison sentences for two former presidents and about a dozen other senior U.A.W. officials.

In the past two years, however, the U.A.W. has undergone a transformation. Financial reforms and transparency measures overseen by a federal monitor have helped root out corruption. A feisty president, Shawn Fain, was chosen in the union’s first direct election by the membership. In the contract negotiations last year with G.M., Ford and Stellantis, Mr. Fain used a new approach, choosing all three companies as strike targets but shutting down only selected plants, which put pressure on the companies without crippling them or damaging the broader U.S. economy.

After six weeks, the union had contracts raising the top wage 25 percent, to more than $40 an hour. Pay for workers lower on the wage scale will rise to the top wage over three years instead of eight. Some will see their pay double. A worker putting in 40 hours a week at the top wage will earn about $83,000 a year. In recent years, profit-sharing bonuses have added about $9,000 to $14,000.

On top of that, the new contracts provide wage adjustments if inflation pushes the cost of living higher, improved pensions and retirement benefits, and increased paid time off. U.A.W. workers have also long had company-paid health care with no deductibles or co-payments.

Hourly wages at the nonunion auto plants used to start under $20 and top out around $32. The “U.A.W. bump” lifted the range to roughly $22 to $35. Volkswagen said its workers typically earned about $60,000 a year. (The [*annual mean wage*](https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2024/04/governor-ivey-other-southern-governors-issue-joint-statement-in-opposition-to-united-auto-workers-uaws-unionization-campaign/) for all occupations in the Chattanooga area was $54,480 in May, according to the U.S. Labor Department.)

Seizing on momentum from the Big Three negotiations, Mr. Fain said, the union will spend $40 million through 2026 to support organizing at plants owned by Toyota, Honda, Hyundai, Nissan, BMW, Mercedes, Subaru, Volkswagen, Mazda, Volvo and Tesla, as well as others owned by the electric vehicle start-ups Rivian and Lucid Motors.

VW workers who support the U.A.W. say their wages are pretty good for Tennessee but point 300 miles north to Louisville, Ky., where Ford pays many workers more than $40 an hour to make the Expedition sport utility vehicle, which competes with the VW Atlas made in Chattanooga.

“If Ford can pay that much, why can’t Volkswagen pay us the same?” said Isaac Meadows, 40, a father of six who has worked at the VW plant for 14 months. “We have more worth than they’re paying us.”

There are concerns beyond the hourly wage. Workers must use paid time off if they want to be paid during two periods when the plant shuts down around the year-end holidays and in summer.

Once he covers the shutdowns with vacation days, Mr. Meadows said, he is left with about 16 hours of paid time off to cover any family events or sick days for the rest of the year. “I miss my kids’ dances, sporting events, family gatherings,” he said. “I miss a lot because I’ve got to work.”

PHOTO: Workers at a Ford plant in Chicago. Ford pays its union workers more than $40 an hour. Wages at nonunion plants start at $22 and top out around $32. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2024

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[***'Salt'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JP-B6S1-JBG3-62ST-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 5, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 480 words

**Byline:** By Noam Scheiber

**Body**

The term refers to people who take jobs at a workplace solely to help unionize it, a practice that appears to be on the rise.

/sôlt/

A person who takes a job in a workplace specifically to help unionize it, either at the direction of a union or of the person's own accord.

The past two years have seen an increase in union organizing, including at several high-profile, previously nonunionized companies like Starbucks and Amazon. To help secure these victories, workers benefited from a little-known ally: ''salts.''

''Salt'' is a term for a person who takes a job with the specific goal of helping to unionize the workplace. Salts typically begin by establishing themselves as loyal colleagues, then quietly raise the topic of unionizing with co-workers who they believe might be receptive.

Around the turn of the 20th century, union organizers borrowed the term from the mining industry, which had used it to describe the practice of spreading a layer of gold dust on a mine to make it look more lucrative. The undercover organizers were the gold dust in this analogy, placed to look like typical workers.

Most early salts were ***working-class*** people, said Barry Eidlin, a sociologist at McGill University in Montreal who studies labor.

In recent decades, however, salts have increasingly been college-educated activists.

There are also variations in how salts make their way into a workplace. Workers United, the union helping to organize Starbucks, has played a key role in recruiting and training salts. Some have gone on to work for the union.

At Amazon, by contrast, many salts decided on their own to apply for a job.

One of them was Cassio Mendoza, who joined Amazon's massive Staten Island warehouse to help unionize it. Shortly after the victory there, he told me, ''If we hadn't won or I had gotten fired beforehand, there was no union there to greet me and help me find another job.''

Salting is legal, but it can be controversial. Employers typically fulminate against salts -- both real and imagined.

Not long after he returned for a third tour as Starbucks chief executive in 2022, Howard Schultz suggested that some employees were ''colluding with outside union forces.''

Salts also vary in how open they are with co-workers. At Starbucks, many salts maintained their cover with colleagues. Some co-workers told Bloomberg that they had felt manipulated once they learned of the salts' union affiliation. The Amazon salts tended to be more transparent.

While there is no official measure of salting activity, Mie Inouye, a Bard College professor who has written about the phenomenon, said it appeared to be on the rise. The worker who prepares your sandwich or burrito, or rings up your next pair of chinos, could well be a salt.Shop Talk explores the idioms of the business world. Want to nominate a word or term for the column?Email [*shoptalk@nytimes.com*](mailto:shoptalk@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/business/labor-movements-sprinkled-with-salts.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/business/labor-movements-sprinkled-with-salts.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BU4.

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2023

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[***Democrats See a Blueprint in Fetterman’s Victory in Pennsylvania***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66VK-C591-DXY4-X1VG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1458 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** John Fetterman flipped a key Senate seat in part by attracting white ***working-class*** votes, including in the reddest parts of his state.

**Body**

John Fetterman flipped a key Senate seat in part by attracting white ***working-class*** votes, including in the reddest parts of his state.

KITTANNING, Pa. — Did John Fetterman just show Democrats how to solve their white-***working-class*** problem?

Mr. Fetterman’s decisive victory in Pennsylvania’s Senate race — arguably Democrats’ biggest win of the midterms, flipping a Republican-held seat — was achieved in no small part because he did significantly better in counties dominated by white ***working-class*** voters compared with Joseph R. Biden Jr. in 2020.

These voters for years have been thought to be [*all but lost to Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/30/us/politics/blue-collar-voters-pennsylvania.html), ever since Donald J. Trump turned out explosively high numbers of white voters in rural and exurban counties, especially in Pennsylvania and the northern Midwest. Mr. Biden recaptured Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin two years ago largely by drumming up support in the suburbs, while ***working-class*** white voters stuck with Mr. Trump.

But Mr. Fetterman, with his tattoos and Carhartt wardrobe, and priorities like marijuana legalization, appears to have regained ground with the white ***working class*** — though whether he persuaded many Trump voters to back him, or whether he improved on Mr. Biden with the demographic in other ways, awaits more detailed data.

“It was enormously beneficial,” Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, a Democrat, said of Mr. Fetterman’s red-county incursion. “It’s really what Democrats have to try to do. I know we’ve had a debate in our party — you work to get your urban and suburban base out and hope for the best.” But Mr. Fetterman showed that a Democratic win in a battleground state could also run through rural Republican regions, Mr. Casey said.

Mr. Fetterman’s [*4.4-percentage-point victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-pennsylvania.html) over Mehmet Oz, his Republican opponent, outpaced Mr. Biden’s 1.2-point win in Pennsylvania in 2020. Mr. Fetterman, Pennsylvania’s lieutenant governor, who posed for his official portrait in an open-collar gray work shirt, won a larger share of votes than Mr. Biden did [*in almost every county*](https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/inq2/john-fetterman-2022-pa-senate-race-results-map-biden-20221111.html).

In suburban counties, where the Oz campaign tried to undermine Mr. Fetterman with college-educated voters by painting him as an extremist and soft on crime, Mr. Fetterman largely held on to Democratic gains of recent years, winning about one percentage point more of the votes than Mr. Biden did in 2020.

Mr. Fetterman’s biggest gains were in deep-red counties dominated by white ***working-class*** voters. He didn’t win these places outright, but he drove up the margins for a Democrat by three, four or five points compared with Mr. Biden.

“Pennsylvania elections are about margins, and he cut into the margins Republicans had across the counties that they usually control,” said Christopher Borick, a political scientist and pollster at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa. “He got a lot of looks from voters who aren’t very open to looking at Democrats right now.”

In almost no county did Mr. Fetterman improve on Mr. Biden’s margin more than in Armstrong County, in the northern exurbs of Pittsburgh, [*where more than 97 percent of residents are white*](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/armstrongcountypennsylvania) and fewer than one in five adults has a four-year college degree.

“I expected him to win, but I didn’t think he’d do that well,” said Robert Beuth, 72, a retired factory worker in the county who voted for Mr. Fetterman, speaking of the statewide result. “I think the biggest drawback for a lot of people about Oz is that he moved from New Jersey to Pennsylvania to run for election. To me that’s not right.” He added that he hoped Mr. Fetterman and other Democrats in Congress would “come up with some ideas” to help “poor people working two or three jobs just to get by.”

To be sure, Dr. Oz carried deep-red Armstrong County, whose biggest employers include Walmart and a coal mining company, with 71 percent of the vote. But Mr. Fetterman’s 29 percent share was 5.4 points higher than Mr. Biden’s support two years ago.

In interviews with more than two dozen voters in Armstrong County on Friday, most said they voted for Dr. Oz, though many expressed a lack of enthusiasm that may partly explain Mr. Fetterman’s gains. Oz supporters groused that he was not a true Pennsylvanian, saying he moved to the state to run. They also indicated that his background — he gained wealth and fame as a TV host — was not something they could relate to.

“I don’t think he represents or relates to the majority of us,” said Aaron Milliken, 41, an operating engineer at a power plant, who nonetheless voted for Dr. Oz over Mr. Fetterman. A registered Republican, Mr. Milliken said, “Quite frankly, I don’t think either was a very good candidate.”

Dr. Oz’s share of support in Armstrong County was similar to the 68 percent that Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential nominee, received there. Mr. Romney, a traditional Republican with a plutocratic veneer, lost Pennsylvania to President Barack Obama. Indeed, Dr. Oz seemed to face the same challenges as Mr. Romney in persuading ***working-class*** voters to warm up to him.

“Should you compare Oz to Trump in 2020, or to some version of Romney?” Mr. Casey said.

Rob Gleason, a former chairman of the state Republican Party who lives in central Pennsylvania, rejected the idea that Democrats, thanks to Mr. Fetterman, had made lasting inroads with white ***working-class*** voters. Dr. Oz, Mr. Gleason said, lost mostly because Mr. Fetterman succeeded in painting him as a rich out-of-stater with multiple houses — a class-war campaign.

“I’m still mystified how he could do so well because he didn’t release any of his medical records, he didn’t do good in the debate, he embraced Biden,” Mr. Gleason said of Mr. Fetterman, who is continuing to recover from a severe stroke in May. “He’s an odd-looking guy, in shorts and a hoodie. I thought this was going to be easy.

“The class struggle and fact Oz wasn’t from Pennsylvania,” Mr. Gleason continued, “that was the death knell.”

It was rare to find Trump voters in Armstrong County who had crossed party lines to vote for Mr. Fetterman. One of them, Michael Yeomans, 66, a retired heavy-equipment operator who supported Mr. Trump in 2016, said he never considered voting for Dr. Oz “based on the things I have seen Dr. Oz do before he was interested in running, like on TV.’’

“I think in the older days,” he added, “they’d call it a snake-oil salesman.”

Emmy McQuaid, a retired teacher who identified herself as a political independent, had a more sympathetic view of Dr. Oz, though she voted for Mr. Fetterman. “I think he’s a good man,” she said. “I’m not sure how his health is going to hold up, but I think his intentions might be good. I think Dr. Oz’s would have, too, but I’d like to see John have a go.”

An alternative explanation for why Mr. Fetterman did so much better than Mr. Biden in red counties, besides winning some former Trump supporters, is that a different spectrum of voters turned out in 2022 than during the presidential race two years ago.

Mr. Fetterman, who campaigned aggressively for more than a year in the rural counties before his stroke under the banner “every county, every vote,” may have inspired inconsistent voters who still leaned Democratic to turn out for him.

And Trump supporters may have skipped voting in the midterms because Dr. Oz failed to excite them.

One of those voters was Jeffrey Astle, a Harley-Davidson-riding union steelworker in Bridgeville, Pa., a southern suburb of Pittsburgh. He voted for Mr. Trump but sat out the election this month.

Mr. Astle said he was “not enthusiastic at all” about Dr. Oz. “I looked at him as a television personality, not as a political candidate, especially for the State of Pennsylvania,” he said.

He added, “I think the only reason he’s where he is today is because of Oprah Winfrey.”

Mr. Astle, 53, voted twice for Mr. Trump and said that his presidency would have been more successful “had they left him alone and didn’t try to trash him for four years while he was in the White House.”

Like some other blue-collar Trump supporters, Mr. Astle said Mr. Fetterman seemed inauthentic to him in his shorts-and-hoodie get-ups, given that Mr. Fetterman’s affluent family supported him through his 40s, when he drew a token salary as the mayor of Braddock, Pa.

“Carhartt was originally designed for blue-collar people,” Mr. Astle said about Mr. Fetterman’s famous workwear wardrobe. “But now Carhartt is one of those brands all the yuppies wear.”

John Fetterman’s 4.4-percentage-point Senate victory over Mehmet Oz outpaced Mr. Biden’s 1.2-point win in Pennsylvania in 2020. PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES Above, Mr. Fetterman’s supporters. Top, Jeffrey Astle, a steelworker, voted for Donald J. Trump but sat out this election. He was “not enthusiastic” about Dr. Oz and thought Mr. Fetterman inauthentic.

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2022

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[***Barbara Lee Is a Progressive Hero. Why Is She Trailing in the Polls in California?; Charles M. Blow***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BGH-KJR1-DXY4-X1JT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2024 Tuesday 13:11 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 937 words

**Byline:** Charles M. Blow Charles M. Blow is an Opinion columnist for The New York Times, writing about national politics, public opinion and social justice, with a focus on racial equality and L.G.B.T.Q. rights.

**Highlight:** Her vote against authorizing the war in Afghanistan was an act of true courage.

**Body**

“The perspective, the lens, the representation, the experience of a Black woman from California is badly needed.”

That’s what Representative Barbara Lee — a California Democrat vying for the Senate seat held for three decades by Dianne Feinstein — [*told*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) a television reporter last month about why people should vote for her in the race.

On Sunday, before a rally that evening outside a production studio in Los Angeles owned by the former N.B.A. all-star Baron Davis, I asked Lee what she meant by that, since Black people are only about 7 percent of the population of the state.

She replied in a way that was both shrewd and true to her career in politics: “I’ve taken everything I know about what it means to be Black in America or brown in America or low-income in America or a woman in America and tried to turn it into policies.”

On paper, Lee strikes me as the perfect candidate. She has a decades-long record of standing up for progressive policies, she is a woman of color at a time when women of color are central to the success of the Democratic Party and she is a capable politician who has never lost an election.

But [*polls*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) show her in fourth place going into Tuesday’s primary. Under California’s open primary rules, the top two finishers will advance to the general election, regardless of party.

One of the keys to political success is timing — it’s about that magical moment when a candidate’s experience and talents align with the ever-shifting appetite of the electorate. I can’t help but think that the best time for Lee would have been four or five years ago, but of course this Senate seat wasn’t open then. Around that time, Black Lives Matter was at its peak and the challenges facing Black Americans were top of mind across the electorate.

In 2018, London Breed won a special election to become mayor of San Francisco, the first Black woman to do so, and LaToya Cantrell was inaugurated as New Orleans’s first woman mayor. In 2020, the Black progressives Cori Bush and Jamaal Bowman were elected to Congress. As a presidential candidate, Joe Biden [*pledged*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) to put a Black woman on the Supreme Court — a pledge he made good on when he nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson — and chose Kamala Harris, who of course became the first Black, Asian American woman vice president, as his running mate.

Back in 2019, Lee [*boasted*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) that her Bay Area district was “the wokest district in the nation.” But, she told me, “I don’t say it that much now, knowing how the Republicans have weaponized it.”

At this point five years ago, Representative Adam Schiff, the Los Angeles Democrat [*expected to come in first*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) in Tuesday’s race, wasn’t yet a household name for chairing the House hearings in which the special counsel Robert Mueller was questioned about his famous report and later managing Donald Trump’s first impeachment trial in the Senate.

Those roles made Schiff Trump’s nemesis, which in turn made him a Democratic hero and a fixture on cable news.

Back then, Representative Katie Porter, another Southern California Democrat who is expected to finish ahead of Lee on Tuesday, was just starting her congressional career and hadn’t yet become a cult hero for lecturing congressional witnesses [*while tapping on her whiteboard*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s).

A few years ago, the war at the forefront of Americans’ minds was very likely the war in Afghanistan, the war that Lee was the [*only member of Congress*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) to vote against in 2001 — an act of true political courage.

Back then, Lee might have had an easier time raising money for her Senate race, but this cycle she has struggled. As Lee sees it, race is a factor: “We can’t raise money like white candidates can.” In February, she [*told*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) New York magazine’s Rebecca Traister that several supporters have said to her, “Barbara, we love you, but Adam Schiff just looks like a senator.”

Our country has had around 2,000 senators. Of those, only [*60 have been women*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s), only [*12 have been Black*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) and only three have been Black women, including Laphonza Butler, the caretaker appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom after Feinstein died in September.

This cycle, [*early turnout has been low*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s), particularly [*among younger voters*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) and [*voters of color*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) whose support Lee needs to be competitive, and whom Lee believes are disenchanted with the entire political structure.

On Monday around midday, when I accompanied Lee to a voting center in the San Fernando Valley, just blocks from where she attended high school, a poll worker told me that only four or five people had been in to vote that morning — there were more people working at the voting center than there had been voters, seeming to confirm that turnout won’t favor Lee.

Lee is a true progressive and has been for decades, long before calling oneself a progressive was the dernier cri. She has fought for the ***working class***, racial minorities and the L.G.B.T.Q. community — and she has consistently staked out a humanist position on foreign policy, not only opposing, more than two decades ago, a war that lasted two decades, but also now calling for an unconditional cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war, unlike her opponents in the race.

It’s tragic that someone with those bona fides is languishing in the polls because the [*donor base*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) and the voter base of the moment seem to be misaligned for her success.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) 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=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s).

Follow the New York Times Opinion section on [*Facebook*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s), [*Instagram*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s), [*TikTok*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s), [*X*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s) and [*Threads*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63jGn4-QSRc&amp;t=432s).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jake Michaels for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***What Would Jesus Do? Tackle the Housing Crisis, Say Some Congregations.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWS-K4M1-DXY4-X0M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 27, 2024 Saturday 00:31 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 1589 words

**Byline:** Conor Dougherty Conor Dougherty covers housing and development, focusing on the rising costs of homeownership. He is based in Los Angeles.

**Highlight:** The “Yes in God’s Backyard” movement to build affordable housing on faith organizations’ properties is gaining steam in California and elsewhere.

**Body**

The “Yes in God’s Backyard” movement to build affordable housing on faith organizations’ properties is gaining steam in California and elsewhere.

Walking past empty pews and stained-glass windows, the Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin, pastor of Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Inglewood, Calif., talked about how housing prices were threatening his flock.

Congregants were being priced out of the neighborhood, he said. Many of those who remained were too burdened by rent to give to the church.

As Mr. Cyrus-Franklin spoke, a 78-year-old man named Bill Dorsey was a few yards away in an outdoor corridor that led to the chapel, amid tarps and piles of clothes. Mr. Dorsey’s makeshift residence, which the church tolerates, is one of several homeless encampments that sit in and around Inglewood First’s property, which is in a neighborhood of modest homes and small apartment buildings near Los Angeles International Airport.

“We know their stories and we know how hard it is to find housing,” Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said.

So the church is trying to help — by building housing.

Early next year, Inglewood First United Methodist is scheduled to begin construction on 60 studio apartments that will replace three empty buildings behind its chapel that, until a few years ago, were occupied by a school.

Half of the units will be reserved for older adults. All of them will have rents below the market rate.

Inglewood First United Methodist is one of a growing number of churches, mosques and synagogues that have started developing low-cost housing on their properties. In interviews, faith leaders said they hoped to help with the growing housing and homeless problems that were most acute in California but have spread across the country. Virtually every major religious tradition teaches the importance of helping those in need: The idea fits the mission.

But it can also be lucrative. In Los Angeles and around the country, faith organizations are often on prime urban land that sits smack in the middle of residential neighborhoods or along major corridors.

Today, with Americans of all persuasions worshiping less, these properties are frequently aging and underutilized, pocked by empty parking lots and meeting halls where nobody meets. By redeveloping their property into affordable housing, congregations hope to create a stream of rental revenue that can replace declining income and lower membership numbers.

These initiatives are also helping to bring lower-cost housing to neighborhoods where it is close to nonexistent. Take, for instance, IKAR, a [*Jewish congregation*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/) in Los Angeles whose progressive politics and bohemian feel (think services with rhythmic drums) have given it a national profile and an expanding membership. Later this year, the congregation plans to break ground on a new synagogue that will include a worship space, a preschool and 60 units of affordable housing in the Mid-City neighborhood, where the [*typical home is valued at $1.8 million*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/).

Having affordable housing on site “gives us the opportunity to practice what we preach,” said Brooke Wirtschafter, IKAR’s director of community organizing.

In order to encourage these projects, California legislators passed SB 4 [*last year*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/). The law allows nonprofit colleges and faith-based institutions to build up to 30 units per acre in major cities and urban suburbs regardless of local zoning rules, and also fast-tracks their approval — so long as 100 percent of the units are affordable housing with below market-rate rents.

In effect, the bill rezoned a large swath of the state’s low-slung landscape by forcing cities to allow apartment development near single-family homes. To do that one parcel at a time would take “infinity,” said State Senator Scott Wiener, a Democrat from San Francisco and the author of SB 4.

“The cities would say, ‘No, we’re not rezoning you,’” Mr. Wiener said. “For a lot of this land it would have been impossible to build anything, let alone ***working class*** housing.”

Bills that change zoning laws are notoriously divisive, pitting neighborhoods and environmental groups against real-estate developers. But SB 4 skirted many of the usual battles by uniting faith groups with affordable housing developers (which in California are usually nonprofits), which made for an unusually powerful coalition.

California has a total of 120 legislators in its Senate and Assembly. Only [*three*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/) of them voted against SB 4. By the time the law passed and was signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, the main opponents were city governments that argued that it removed their ability to control zoning on church parcels — a small step that they feared would be a precursor to a further loss of local control over land use.

“Our concern is: What’s next?” said Brian Saeki, the city manager of Whittier, Calif., in an interview.

Mr. Saeki’s city is an example of SB 4’s power. Whittier is home to East Whittier United Methodist Church, which takes up four acres in a neighborhood of single-family homes whose zoning prohibits multifamily housing. For years, the church had been planning to do a housing project, and, on account of local zoning rules, had proposed 31 single units that would be spread across its grounds.

After the statewide bill passed, the congregation said it planned to propose something bigger: a 98-unit apartment project.

“The city no longer has a chokehold on the project,” said Paul Gardiner, who is leading the housing effort for the church.

Led by California, cities and states are increasingly turning to so-called YIGBY bills — short for “Yes in God’s Backyard” — to expand their supply of affordable housing. Over the past few years, local governments in [*Atlanta*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/), [*San Antonio*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/) and [*Montgomery County, Md.*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/), along with the State Legislature in [*New York*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/), have all passed or considered new policies or legislation to make it easier for faith groups to develop their land into housing.

In March, Senator Sherrod Brown, Democrat of Ohio, introduced a national bill to encourage more affordable housing called the [*YIGBY Act*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/). Among other things, the bill would use grants to encourage localities to enact policies that make it easier to build housing on faith land.

Thanks to the zoning changes in California, about 80 Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations have already begun looking into developing housing, said John Oh, who heads the housing efforts for [*L.A. Voice*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/), a cross-faith community organizing group that has become a central clearinghouse for affordable housing projects.

Multiply that story across a state of 40 million, and the potential impact is huge. According to an analysis by the [*Terner Center*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/) for Housing Innovation at U.C. Berkeley, California nonprofit colleges and religious institutions own about 171,000 acres of potentially developable land. (That’s about half the size of the city of Los Angeles.)

Inglewood First United Methodist Church was founded in 1905, back when Inglewood was mostly white. As the city desegregated in the 1960s and 1970s, the congregation became more diverse, with many Black, Latino and Pacific Islander worshipers.

The congregation has also spent much of its recent life shrinking. At its peak, the church had more than 3,000 members. Today, it has less than 100, Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said.

To support itself, the church has become what amounts to a leasing business with a ministry attached to it. Most of this revenue came from a charter school that operated in a block of classrooms adjacent to the church’s sanctuary and paid about $20,000 a month in rent. That money represented about three-quarters of the church’s budget, so when the school left in 2019, Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said there was a very real fear that it could be fatal.

The rescue plan was housing. After the school left, the church struck a deal that would allow a developer called [*BMB Company*](https://forward.com/news/402306/ikar-is-building-something-just-dont-call-it-a-synagogue/) to build and operate the 60 studio apartments. Instead of selling the land, the church created a ground lease structure in which the developer could operate the housing for 65 years in exchange for a lump sum that Mr. Cyrus-Franklin refused to disclose beyond saying that it was several million dollars.

All of a sudden, a church that has spent much of the past two decades worrying about money is now consumed with how to invest its sudden fortune. Its first big step is a new community center, to be built along with the apartments, that Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said would offer mental health services, music classes and free yoga.

“Once upon a time, the members of the congregation, they were the bankers, they ran the local clinics, they were the managers for the grocery store — the community partnerships were inherent because the leaders of those institutions were also the members of the church,” Mr. Cyrus-Franklin said. “Becoming one of the centers of community life again, but in a new way — that’s what we’re preparing for and creating.”

PHOTOS: Rev. Victor Cyrus-Franklin is leading an affordable housing initiative at Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, where prices have soared.; Bill Dorsey, 78, lives on church property. His makeshift residence is one of several encampments in a neighborhood of modest homes and apartments. (B1); Plans for affordable housing and community space hang on the walls of Inglewood First United Methodist Church in Los Angeles.; The church is scheduled to begin construction on 60 studio apartments that will replace three empty buildings behind its chapel that used to be a school. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B6) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Among Those Lifting Trump: College Grads***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B3T-C7M1-DXY4-X029-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 15, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2024 The New York Times Company

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

**Length:** 1662 words

**Byline:** By Michael C. Bender

**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 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 the Constitution and faced sharp criticism 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 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 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.

Other surveys have revealed similar trends.

Mr. Trump's backing from white, college-educated Republicans doubled to 60 percent over the course of last year, 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 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 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 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, which the U.S. Supreme Court is now considering, 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.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/politics/trump-college-educated-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/14/us/politics/trump-college-educated-voters.html)

**Graphic**

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 15, 2024

**End of Document**



[***A Director Brings TikTok’s Chaotic Vibe to the Big Screen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKX-DXS1-JBG3-601K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 21, 2024 Thursday 23:24 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1180 words

**Byline:** Beatrice Loayza

**Highlight:** Radu Jude’s films are messy mash-ups of art, literature, advertising and social media, with some dirty jokes thrown in.

**Body**

Radu Jude’s films are messy mash-ups of art, literature, advertising and social media, with some dirty jokes thrown in.

Halfway through a recent Zoom interview with Radu Jude, the acclaimed Romanian director of “Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World,” he offered a glimpse into his creative process. He pulled out one of the books he’s reading, an illustrated tome about commedia dell’arte. Then he shared his screen to reveal a collection of texts and images — Van Gogh still lifes, Giacometti sculptures, Japanese haikus — saved in folders on his computer. Jude stopped scrolling at a picture he took of a sign posted on an apartment building entrance.

“It says ‘Please have oral sex so as not to disturb the other tenants,’” Jude explained, translating from the Romanian with a grin on his face.

The autodidact Jude is not above a dirty joke. His work melds tragedy and farce, drawing promiscuously from art, literature, street ads and social media to fuel his brazen visions of Romanian history and contemporary life.

Jude’s previous film, the Golden Bear-winner “[*Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/movies/bad-luck-banging-or-loony-porn.html),” starts out with the making of a humorously sloppy sex tape and concludes with a witch trial against one of the tape’s participants. His latest, “Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World,” arrives in U.S. theaters on Friday.

The black comedy follows Angela (Ilinca Manolache), a film production assistant who spends most of her 16-hour workdays in her car, shuttling clients and equipment around Bucharest, Romania’s capital. One of Angela’s gigs entails interviewing former factory employees who were injured on the clock for a chance to feature in a corporate safety video. Scenes from the present-day, shot in black-and-white, are interwoven with colorful clips of another woman named Angela: a taxi driver in the 1980s also chained to a thankless job that involves navigating the streets of Bucharest.

Jude, 46, was born and raised in Bucharest, and lived through the communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu. After graduating from film school, he cut his teeth in the Romanian film industry in the early 2000s directing commercials and corporate films. Exploitation on these sets was rife, Jude recalled.

“Romania was a haven for international productions from all over the world because of the cheap locations and labor,” he said: Working preposterously long hours was expected. “At the time, I thought it was romantic and part of the mythology of cinema,” Jude added. “Then I remember hearing about one guy who was pushed to work without sleep: ‘Just one more coke, one more red bull.’” The man eventually died in a car crash.

Manolache said that Jude instructed her to watch Andy Warhol movies and performances by Nico of “The Velvet Underground” to infuse her gig-economy workhorse with a punk energy. The character’s sequined dress and constant bubble-gum-chewing help give off this rogue vibe, but her outlaw behavior comes through most powerfully when she’s playing Bobita, an online alter-ego that Manolache created independently of the film, but who appears in frenzied outbursts throughout it.

Bobita is summoned when Angela posts videos of herself with a filter that resembles Andrew Tate, the online personality currently facing [*extradition from Romania on sex crime charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/movies/bad-luck-banging-or-loony-porn.html), and performs vulgar monologues that play like mockeries of the influencer’s misogynist speeches. Manolache said she hadn’t heard of Tate when she first debuted the Bobita persona on social media in 2021, and that she was actually inspired by Miranda July’s Instagram performances and her own frustrations with Romania’s culture of toxic masculinity. Though some of her family members and colleagues were dismissive of Bobita, Manolache said, Jude was a fan of her sordid satire, and invited her to lead his new film.

“Most big artists, they don’t see what’s valuable about TikTok,” Manolache said. “They reject it and call it a weird subculture. That’s what’s rare about Radu and what makes him such a modern voice.”

During the Zoom, Jude whipped out his phone and presented his TikTok feed to the camera. It showed an older woman performing a workout routine, then a hen that had reportedly survived a dog attack. “They have a certain beauty,” he said. “Here you can see people and places you don’t typically find in Romanian cinema. Why aren’t they in the movies? I often feel that cinema is behind TikTok. It’s not familiar with these expressions of life.”

For much of his career, beginning with his 2009 feature debut, “The Happiest Girl in the World” — about a provincial teenager who is forced to take part in a soda commercial — Jude was considered part of the “Romanian New Wave” of filmmakers united by their social-realist perspectives and ***working-class*** subjects. Though several Romanian New Wave directors (like Cristian Mungiu and Cristi Puiu) emerged as film festival heavyweights in the mid-’00s, Jude only gained international recognition in 2015, when he won a prize at the Berlin Film Festival for his 19th-century picaresque, “Aferim!”

Dorota Lech, a programmer for Central and East European cinema at the Toronto Film Festival, said that the label of “New Wave” had become passé. Jude’s constant reinvention, she added, makes him too dynamic a filmmaker to fit in one box, anyway. “He’s a true artist in a sea of paint-by-number content creators,” Lech said by email. He “can be crude,” she added, “but he can also go toe-to-toe with anyone on any subject.”

Some critics have drawn parallels between Jude and the French auteur [*Jean-Luc Godard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/movies/bad-luck-banging-or-loony-porn.html) — another fiercely political artist who played with the tools of new media — but Jude was bashful about the comparison.

He conceded that, like Godard, he tired to “discover the beauty in all kinds of images” (though he noted that Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage and John Dos Passos did that, too) and added that he plans to shoot his next film on an iPhone precisely because the format is considered uglier.

“When you read a history book you only ever retain a few traces or details. That’s how cinema works. All of a sudden, details jump out and become cinematic. An Instagram page can be cinematic. A reflection in a puddle. You need to force cinema in new directions, make it impure and mess it up in order to be able to see these small details.”

“I just draw attention to what’s there,” he said. “Maybe that means I’m not a serious filmmaker.”

In fact, several of Jude’s films — like his next feature, a Dracula adaptation — began as jokes. “I was pitching a new project to some producers and they weren’t excited. Then I told one of them, ‘Well, I’m from Transylvania, so I also have a Dracula project,’ which I didn’t. Suddenly, he was very interested.” Then — unsurprisingly, considering Jude’s freewheeling, improvisatory spirit — he figured: “Why not?”

PHOTOS: The black comedy “Do Not Expect Too Much From the End of the World,” above, is the latest film from the Romanian director Radu Jude, below. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY 4 PROOF FILM; ANDREEA CAMPEANU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C3.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Rink Solidarity Effort Feels a Chill***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BYG-W5M1-DXY4-X15J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 5, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1603 words

**Byline:** By David Waldstein

**Body**

A simmering labor dispute involving figure skating coaches at Sky Rink in Manhattan ramped up in recent days after two leaders of a fledgling union were fired as part-time employees.

Chelsea Piers, which owns Sky Rink, said the terminations were not an act of union busting and described them as part of the ''normal course of business.'' But the coaches say the reason for the firings was to squash the union and scare others away from organizing.

''I can't say with 100 percent certainty,'' said Angela Chiang, one of the coaches who was fired, ''but it sure feels like it.''

Ms. Chiang has been coaching at Sky Rink, the picturesque twin sheets of ice overlooking the Hudson River, for 23 years, since she was a senior in high school. A former competitive skater herself, she is considered one of the pre-eminent and most popular coaches in the region, and was one of the few invited by Chelsea Piers to teach a summer camp during the pandemic in 2020.

She said she received notification of her termination via an automated email on April 19, and that it arrived without any explanation.

The next week, Marni Halasa, another longtime coach at Sky Rink who was also involved in the union, was fired. Both coaches said they were told by managers that they could continue coaching as independent contractors, renting ice time from Sky Rink and charging customers directly, at least ''for now.''

Ms. Chiang and Ms. Halasa had been among the leaders of an effort to create the NYC Coaches Collective, which they believe would be the first union of figure skating coaches in the world. They do not profile as ***working-class*** agitators. But though they can charge upward of $60 for a 30-minute lesson, they earn a modest living, especially for New York. The top tier gross perhaps $40,000 per year, and many of the coaches earn half that.

There are roughly 50 coaches who work in some capacity at Sky Rink; according to organizers, 38 of them voted to join the collective last August. Their only demand is for Chelsea Piers to allow them to negotiate their yearly contracts collectively. The coaches, who meet regularly in nearby apartments and communicate by text and email, sent a letter to Chelsea Piers after the vote asking to be recognized as a bargaining unit. They said they received no response.

Ria Julien, a lawyer for the coaches, said that the two terminations violated the National Labor Relations Act.

''Chelsea Piers' decision to retaliate and make examples of prominent members of this group, who are outspoken and well known, is really just an effort to chill other members of the collective,'' Ms. Julien said. ''This is a violation of their rights, and they will work together to hold Chelsea Piers accountable under the law.''

The lawyer also suggested that Chelsea Piers may have violated state whistle-blower regulations because the coaches had previously complained about health and safety concerns at the rinks after a ventilation unit fell from the rafters onto the ice during a late-night hockey game.

David Tewksbury, one of the owners of Chelsea Piers, called the whistle-blower complaint ''absurd'' in an email on Tuesday, and said he was surprised by the allegations, adding that the coaches and their lawyers were selling a ''bill of goods.''

''Chelsea Piers does not discriminate against employees based on their membership in any protected class and does not retaliate against employees that engage in any form of protected activity,'' he wrote. He added that many inactive, part-time employees have been removed from active employment status as a normal business practice, and said the company ''is unable to comment on any specific individual termination.''

Matthew Bodie, a law professor at the University of Minnesota who previously worked at the National Labor Relations Board, said the coaches could take their case to the board claiming they were fired for organizing.

''The board gets very upset when that happens, because when you fire union leaders just because they are union leaders, in order to chill an organizing campaign, it's kind of the worst thing you can do in labor law,'' he said.

Manhattan's Backyard by the Hudson

The Chelsea Piers sports complex opened in 1995, revitalizing the decrepit Hudson River waterfront in Chelsea. The 780,000-square-foot facility offers bowling lanes; basketball, volleyball and pickleball courts; soccer fields; a driving range; gymnastics equipment and more. Sky Rink became one of the gems of the facility and one of the premier rinks in the New York region, enjoyed by legions of figure skaters, hockey teams and recreational skaters.

The figure skating coaches have a multilayered relationship with Sky Rink. They are independent contractors -- renting ice time from the company and charging students directly -- who also work as part-time employees, teaching at camps, clinics and parties. Many of the coaches, like Ms. Chiang and Ms. Halasa, have worked there for decades. Ms. Halasa began coaching at the original Sky Rink location in Midtown in 1992.

''It's basically my entire life, my identity, my profession,'' Ms. Halasa, 58, said. ''To lose all of that would be devastating.''

The coaches say they share a special fondness for Sky Rink, and note that their organizing efforts began in 2011, when they won concessions from management during a disagreement over contract terms. Mr. Tewksbury said recent meetings between management and coaches were evidence that the company was listening.

''To the best of our knowledge, the coaching rates paid at Sky Rink for skating-school work and special-event work are the highest in the tristate region,'' he wrote in an email in March.

Figure Skating's 'Norma Rae'

In some ways, Ms. Chiang was the inspiration for the unionizing effort. Soft-spoken and measured, she began coaching at 17. Other than babysitting, it is the only job she has ever had.

Now 39, she is one of several coaches to assume a leadership role, but the other members say Ms. Chiang's steady, dispassionate involvement solidified their resolve. Many of them said they worried that their pro-union activity could jeopardize their ability to work at Sky Rink in the future.

''Angela is our Norma Rae,'' Amy Engeler, a coach at Sky Rink for 28 years, said, referring to the character played by Sally Field in the 1979 film based on the organizing efforts of Crystal Lee Sutton. ''But she's no firebrand. She's very quiet and thoughtful, so when she was willing to take a stand, it made us all take a look.''

The collective intensified its organizing efforts last summer, after the company presented the coaches with a new contract that the coaches said cost them money. They said that after they raised objections, the company demanded that each coach sign the new contract by noon on Sept. 4 -- Labor Day. The coaches felt compelled to sign, but they each added a line after the signature: ''Member, NYC Coaches Collective.'' It was a symbolic gesture, to be sure, but Ms. Chiang said it felt empowering. Six months later, Ms. Chiang received the email informing her that she was no longer a Sky Rink employee.

Ms. Halasa was told about her dismissal not long after she handed out Coaches Collective fliers at a gala dinner at Chelsea Piers. The dinner was hosted by North Star Fund, a social justice organization. Security guards tried to stop Ms. Halasa, but Jennifer Ching, the fund's executive director, who had granted her permission to distribute the cards, intervened. Chelsea Piers employees later told Ms. Halasa that they were concerned that the fliers were related to war protests.

Nine days later, she was fired. The reason given, she said, related to a letter she had written on behalf of a student's mother, who was going through a divorce. The letter angered the student's father, who complained to Sky Rink. Ms. Halasa said that management discussed the letter with her in February and told her at the time it was not actionable. She, too, believes she was fired for her role in the union.

''I've been there over 30 years, and they rarely fire coaches,'' she said. ''Then I get fired days after I hand out fliers at the North Star dinner, and they say it's for a reason they always said was inconsequential. It doesn't add up.''

Ms. Chiang said she initially thought the email terminating her employment was a mistake and reached out to a manager for clarification. When they connected the next day, she was coaching a student at a competition in Connecticut.

Ms. Chiang said she was told the reason for the termination was that she did not teach 10 hours of classes per month, a new minimum threshold that was established on March 23, a little more than a week before her dismissal took effect (the emailed notice of termination was dated April 1, though she did not receive it until April 19).

Although she teaches few class hours during the school year, she said that tends to increase to about 60 hours a month in the summer. Part-time work for the rink both supplements her income and is a good way to cultivate private clients. Without it, she is now worried she will not be able to pay rent.

Still able to teach private lessons for now, she said it has been awkward returning to Sky Rink even though she has spent most of her life skating and coaching there.

''It's a weird situation where you get terminated, but you are still working there,'' she said. ''It's really awkward and uncomfortable. At times I felt like this must be what it feels like to lose your home in a tornado or something. I have memories of this place, and it's not really mine anymore.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/nyregion/what-happened-when-the-skating-coaches-wanted-a-union.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/nyregion/what-happened-when-the-skating-coaches-wanted-a-union.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Angela Chiang was fired in April as a figure skating coach at Sky Rink in Manhattan, where she has coached for 23 years. She and another fired coach are involved in a union drive. (MB1)

Top, members of the New York City Coaches Collective at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan: back from left, Nancy Quach, Maria O'Connor and Karina Manta

middle, Amy Engeler, Denise Beaumont and Zoe Ferguson

and front, Angela Chiang and Marni Halasa. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB6) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB6.

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2024

**End of Document**



[***London’s Other Royals, the ‘Pearlies,’ Keep Alive Cockney Customs; London Dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6844-VYD1-DXY4-X38V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The Pearly Kings and Queens, known for their button-festooned costumes, preserve a charitable tradition that began in the Victorian era and became a symbol of the city’s ***working-class*** culture.

**Body**

The Pearly Kings and Queens, known for their button-festooned costumes, preserve a charitable tradition that began in the Victorian era and became a symbol of the city’s ***working-class*** culture.

The kings and queens of London’s lesser-known royal family gathered outside a church in Covent Garden on a recent Sunday afternoon dressed in their sparkly finery.

But their jewels of choice were not diamonds or rubies. They were buttons made of mother-of-pearl that covered their jet-black suits and hats in intricate patterns, sewn by hand into elaborate designs that glitter in the sunlight.

These are the Pearly Kings and Queens of London — keepers of a tradition that began in the Victorian era, was passed down through generations of families and became a symbol of the city’s ***working-class***, Cockney culture. They see themselves as custodians of a waning way of life, which they carry on by singing Cockney songs, sharing Cockney stories and, crucially, collecting money for good causes.

Modern pearlies, grouped by geographic area of London, have organized themselves into a few charitable groups and, like the better-known royal family, have at times feuded. But the pearlies argue over which group [*is the rightful caretaker of the pearly legacy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/the-war-of-the-pearly-kings-9143352.html).

Once a month, some pearlies rattle blue plastic buckets to collect charity donations at Covent Garden, a former market turned tourist draw, in London’s West End.

“Most Londoners know about the Pearly Kings and Queens,” said John Walters, 75, who holds the title of Pearly King of Finsbury, an area of north London. “I had an elderly lady come up here and she grabbed hold of me and she started crying and said, ‘I’m so pleased to see you’re still around.’ She said, ‘You are London.’”

Tourists, though, are often pleasantly surprised to encounter them.

On a bright March morning, Mr. Walters and Clive Bennett, 68, the Pearly King of Woolwich, in the city’s southeast, were approached by a group of young women — one wearing a “bride to be” sash — who asked for a photograph. The men, in Cockney accents, instantly broke into a rendition of “Get Me to the Church on Time” from “My Fair Lady” as the women erupted in laughter and threw a few pounds into their buckets. The men tipped their flat caps.

“It’s a real honor to be able to do something like this actually, and it’s fun,” Mr. Bennett said. “You meet all sorts of people.”

He was invited to take part in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics and took part in events on the sidelines of Queen Elizabeth II’s jubilee and funeral.

The over-the-top outfits that the pearlies are known for — with the back of their clothing bearing their august titles in bold lettering — are as peculiar as they are eye-catching, with feathers, shine and patterns assaulting the eyes. The idea for the finery grew from the tradition in Cockney culture of thumbing noses at London society’s disdainful view of the lower classes.

For Mr. Bennett, and many others, being a pearly is a family affair. His wife, Kim, 66, is a Pearly Queen and his daughter and grandchildren take part in fund-raising events, as well, under the title of Pearly Princesses and Princes.

Like most royal families, pearlies typically inherit their titles or marry into the tradition. But others, like the Bennetts, have been invited in because of their commitment to community work and charity.

“Today, there is a need for us now more than ever, ” Ms. Bennett said, as she pointed to the inflationary pressures on many local communities.

Henry Croft — an orphan and a London street sweeper — is considered the first Pearly King. In the late 1870s, he became known for covering his clothing with mother-of-pearl buttons to draw attention as he collected money for hospitals and orphanages.

Mr. Croft was said to have taken his fashion inspiration from costermongers, who were roving traders selling fruit, vegetables, fish and produce on the streets of east London, a ***working-class*** area that developed its own distinct accent and vocabulary riddled with rhyming slang, known as Cockney.

The costermongers sewed buttons onto their clothes to distinguish themselves and to mimic the rich, [*according to the Museum of London*](https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/six-things-you-never-knew-about-pearly-kings-queens). These coster communities would elect a leader in their local area to keep the peace and collect money to support fellow traders down on their luck.

“If someone’s fruit went off, or the donkey was ill, or something like that,” said Mr. Bennett, describing how the costermongers would have a singalong and pass around a bucket for donations. “I think that’s where Henry Croft got his whole ethos from.”

But Mr. Croft took his pearly suits and generosity to a new level, putting on his dazzling button suit as he gathered money for the poor and the sick.

Others soon joined him. At the time of Mr. Croft’s funeral in 1930, dozens of pearlies from across London joined the cortege to honor him, [*decked out in their buttoned glory*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Gyv8TR8eVE).

While London lore holds that to be a true Cockney, a person must be born within earshot of Bow Bells, which ring from [*St. Mary-le-Bow church*](https://www.stmarylebow.org.uk/) in east London, pearly titles are now held by people from communities across all of London’s boroughs.

While some pearly traditions have shifted, the rules on the buttons themselves have stayed consistent: They must be true mother-of-pearl, not imitation. Generally, they are passed down through families.

“A lot of the buttons are over 100 years old on there,” said David Hemsley, 60, describing the jacket he inherited from his father.

In Covent Garden, after a few hours of cheekily delivering rhyming Cockney slang to curious crowds and singing old tunes with gusto while collecting donations, the pearlies make their way into the nearby St. Paul’s Church to hold their monthly meeting.

“Come on then, let’s go!” Doreen Golding, 83, the Pearly Queen of Bow Bells and the Old Kent Road, shouted to the group as she led the way to the church vestry.

As the chairwoman of London’s Pearly Kings and Queens Society, Ms. Golding was honored by the late queen for her charity efforts. She said the pearlies would continue to wear their buttons and keep up their charitable giving for as long as there was a need.

“I get upset when someone says, ‘Oh, are you still around? We didn’t think there was any more of you left,’” Ms. Golding said with a laugh. “And I think, ‘Now hang on, open your bloody eyes and look, we are here!’”

PHOTOS: The Pearly Kings and Queens of London meeting last month in Covent Garden. Mother-of-pearl buttons, originally sewn onto their clothes to mimic the rich, figure prominently in their attire. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden, Campaigning for Hispanic Voters in Nevada, Says of Trump, 'This Guy Despises Latinos'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKN-9NX1-JBG3-60B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1231 words

**Byline:** By Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Body**

The president's sharp-elbowed pitch came as polls show former President Donald J. Trump gaining ground with the crucial voting bloc.

President Biden on Tuesday began a tour through Nevada and Arizona by championing his economic policies and making a sharp-elbowed pitch to the crucial Hispanic electorate in the two battleground states, saying that former President Donald J. Trump, his Republican rival, ''despises Latinos.''

Mr. Biden is seeking to use the trip this week through the Sun Belt to turn what polls have shown to be three of his biggest weaknesses -- the economy, immigration and slipping support among Latinos -- into strengths. The visit comes as the president has adopted an aggressive new tone as he opens the general election campaign against Mr. Trump.

As he traveled to Reno, Nev., and Las Vegas on Tuesday, Mr. Biden made clear his campaign has its eye on Latino voters, who are increasingly gravitating toward Mr. Trump, recent polls have found.

''This guy despises Latinos,'' Mr. Biden said in an interview with Univision Radio that aired on Tuesday as he criticized Mr. Trump's economic policies and proposals to launch mass deportations. ''I understand Latino values.''

Mr. Biden's remarks, among the most strident the president has made toward Mr. Trump on the subject, highlighted the fierce battle for an increasingly up-for-grabs voting bloc. And they illustrated the stakes for the president and his party if Latinos turn away from them, a shift that would threaten to unravel the diverse coalition that has delivered Democrats the White House, as well as a plethora of House and Senate seats, in recent years.

Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, accused Mr. Biden of caring more ''about illegal immigrant criminals than American citizens.''

''President Trump will secure the southern border and deport illegal criminals to protect ALL American citizens,'' Ms. Leavitt said in a statement.

Latino voters are particularly crucial in states like Nevada and Arizona, where they make up roughly one in four eligible voters and where Mr. Biden won in 2020. But Mr. Trump has found support in the diverse Latino electorate, including among evangelicals and those focused on border security. He has appealed in particular to those without college degrees, an educational divide that has captured the attention of the White House.

Surveys show Mr. Trump winning more than 40 percent of Latino voters, a level not achieved by a Republican in two decades. Some polls even show Mr. Trump ahead of Mr. Biden among Latino voters after Mr. Biden won nearly 60 percent of their vote in 2020.

''People like to be entertained and sometimes Donald Trump, what he does is it provides that entertainment. People like laugh at his rallies, you know, it's like they're going to a circus,'' Arizona Democratic Party chairwoman Yolanda Bejarano told reporters in Phoenix, Arizona, on Tuesday. ''We just need to be very, very focused and you know, make sure that Latinos understand exactly who Donald Trump is and what a danger he presents to us.''

Mr. Biden's campaign aides believe they can contrast the president with his predecessor by homing in not just on issues like abortion and the economy but also on what the president's aides once viewed as a political vulnerability: immigration and the border. In a memo written by Mr. Biden's campaign manager, Julie Chávez Rodríguez, his approach on immigration is listed as a primary way to ''contrast on the issues that matter most to Western voters.''

In the interview with Univision, Mr. Biden attacked Mr. Trump's comments saying migrants are ''not people.'' He also said Mr. Trump was to blame for encouraging Republicans to sink legislation that would have imposed sweeping restrictions at the southwestern border, partly to avoid providing Mr. Biden an election-year win.

''He says immigrants are 'poisoning the blood' of this country, separated children from parents at the border, caged the kids, planned mass deportations systems,'' Mr. Biden said. ''We have to stop this guy. We can't let this happen. We are a nation of immigrants.''

While Mr. Biden has recently shifted his language around immigration to the right, he also emphasized his efforts to provide undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship.

John Tuman, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who focuses on the Latino electorate, said that was necessary in a state with voters interested in hearing about reforming the overall immigration system.

''It pays dividends politically to push immigration from the margins to the center,'' Mr. Tuman said.

But Andrea Masnata, a 34-year-old Nevada resident who immigrated from Bolivia, said she and many Latino peers were not enthused with either candidate. She had also noticed Latinos increasingly becoming disengaged with the Democratic Party, said Ms. Masnata, the communications director for Make the Road Action in Nevada, a grass-roots group of Latinos and other ***working-class*** people of color.

''It's a clear statement of the disappointment the community has,'' Ms. Masnata said, adding that many of her peers were concerned about grocery and housing prices, and the administration using immigration as a political talking point. ''They know we have one option that is less threatening to our community, but they don't feel backed by President Biden, either.''

Like the overall electorate in Nevada, Mr. Tuman said, Latino voters want to see progress on the economy, including job growth and lower housing costs.

Mr. Biden visited Washoe County, the home of Reno and Nevada's lone swing county, where he said Mr. Trump would work to undo the Biden administration's agenda. At the same time, his campaign kicked off a program called Latinos con Biden-Harris, which will organize Latino voters in battleground states with significant Hispanic communities, including Nevada, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Wisconsin. It will focus on Mexican Americans, Venezuelan Americans and Puerto Ricans.

Mr. Biden later traveled to Stupak Community Center in Las Vegas, where he spoke of his efforts to cut housing costs.

In a sign of how the White House hoped his economic message would appeal to Latino voters, Mr. Biden was introduced by Juan Pablo Leos Soria, a member of a union for plasterers and cement masons, who rallied the crowd by saying he was on his way to soon buying a home.

''I know he's making this a reality for so many people just like me,'' Mr. Leos Soria said.

But Mr. Biden can do little to change mortgage rates -- they are heavily influenced by the Federal Reserve. The average 30-year mortgage rate jumped to nearly 8 percent last fall from below 3 percent in 2021. It now sits just under 7 percent.

Mr. Biden once again called on Congress to pass a mortgage relief credit that would give first-time homeowners a $10,000 tax credit. He promoted his coronavirus stimulus plan, which invested $1 billion in Nevada to help provide affordable housing and lower housing costs. And he said his new budget proposal would include a $20 billion grant fund for affordable housing.

Mr. Biden later traveled to a Mexican restaurant in Phoenix and brought with him a blunt message.

''You're the reason why in large part I beat Donald Trump,'' Mr. Biden said at an event meant to rally Latino voters. ''I need you badly.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/biden-nevada-arizona.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/19/us/politics/biden-nevada-arizona.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A13.

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**Body**

Alex Karp never learned to drive.

''I was too poor,'' he said. ''And then I was too rich.''

In fact, Mr. Karp, a co-founder and the C.E.O. of Palantir Technologies, the mysterious and powerful data analytics firm, doesn't trust himself to drive. Or ride a bike. Or ski downhill.

''I'm a dreamer,'' he said. ''I'll start dreaming and then I fall over. I started doing tai chi to prevent that. It's really, really helped with focusing on one thing at a time. If you had met me 15 years ago, two-thirds of the conversation, I'd just be dreaming.''

What would he dream about?

''Literally, it could be a walk I did five years ago,'' he said. ''It could be some conversation I had in grad school. Could be my family member annoyed me. Something a colleague said, like: 'Why did they say this? What does it actually mean?'''

Mr. Karp is a lean, extremely fit billionaire with unruly salt-and-pepper curls. He is introvert-charming (something I aspire to myself). He has A.D.H.D. and can't hide it if he is not interested in what someone is saying. After a hyper spurt of talking, he loses energy and has to recharge on the stationary bike or by reading. Even though he thinks of himself as different, he seems to like being different. He enjoys being a provocateur onstage and in interviews.

''I'm a Jewish, racially ambiguous dyslexic, so I can say anything,'' he said, smiling.

Unlike many executives in Silicon Valley, Mr. Karp backed President Biden, cutting him a big check, despite skepticism about his handling of the border and his overreliance on Hollywood elites like Jeffrey Katzenberg. Now he is supporting Vice President Kamala Harris, but he still has vociferous complaints about his party.

When he donates, he said, he does it in multiples of 18 because ''it's mystical -- 18 brings good luck in the tradition of kabbalah. I gave Biden $360,000.''

The 56-year-old is perfectly happy hanging out in a remote woodsy meadow alone -- except for his Norwegian ski instructor, his Swiss-Portuguese chef, his Austrian assistant, his American shooting instructor and his bodyguards. (Mr. Karp, who has never married, once complained that bodyguards crimp your ability to flirt.)

''This is like introverts' heaven,'' he said, looking at his red barn from the porch of his Austrian-style house with a mezuza on the door. ''You can invite people graciously. No one comes.''

The house is sparse on furniture, but Mr. Karp still worries that it is too cluttered. ''I do have a Spartan thing,'' he said. ''I definitely feel constrained and slightly imprisoned when I have too much stuff around me.''

So how did a daydreaming doctoral student in German philosophy wind up leading a shadowy data analytics firm that has become a major American defense contractor, one that works with spy services as it charts the future of autonomous warfare?

He's not a household name, and yet Mr. Karp is at the vanguard of what Mark Milley, the retired general and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called ''the most significant fundamental change in the character of war ever recorded in history.'' In this new world, unorthodox Silicon Valley entrepreneurs like Mr. Karp and Elon Musk are woven into the fabric of America's national security.

Mr. Karp is also at the white-hot center of ethical issues about whether firms like Palantir are too Big Brother, with access to so much of our personal data as we sign away our privacy. And he is in the middle of the debate about whether artificial intelligence is friend or foe, whether killer robots and disembodied A.I. will one day turn on us.

Mr. Karp's position is that we're hurtling toward this new world whether we like it or not. Do we want to dominate it, or do we want to be dominated by China?

Critics worry about what happens when weapons are autonomous and humans become superfluous to the killing process. Tech reflects the values of its operators, so what if it falls into the hands of a modern Caligula?

''I think a lot of the issues come back to 'Are we in a dangerous world where you have to invest in these things?''' Mr. Karp told me, as he moved around his living room in a tai chi rhythm, wearing his house shoes, jeans and a tight white T-shirt. ''And I come down to yes. All these technologies are dangerous.'' He adds: ''The only solution to stop A.I. abuse is to use A.I.''

Inspired by Tolkien

Palantir's name is derived from palantíri, the seeing stones in the J.R.R. Tolkien fantasies. The company's office in Palo Alto, Calif., features ''Lord of the Rings'' décor and is nicknamed the Shire.

After years under the radar, Mr. Karp is now in the public eye. He has joked that he needs a coach to teach him how to be more normal.

Born in New York and raised outside Philadelphia in a leftist family, Mr. Karp has a Jewish father who was a pediatrician and a Black mother who is an artist. They were social activists who took young Alex to civil rights marches and other protests. His uncle, Gerald D. Jaynes, is an economics and African American studies professor at Yale; his brother, Ben, is an academic who lives in Japan.

''I just think I've always viewed myself as I don't fit in, and I can't really try to,'' Mr. Karp said. ''My parents' background just gave me a primordial subconscious bias that anything that involves 'We fit in together' does not include me.

''Yes, I think the way I explain it politically is like, if fascism comes, I will be the first or second person on the wall.''

Mr. Karp has his own unique charisma. ''He's one of a kind, to say the least,'' said the Democratic strategist James Carville, who is an informal adviser to Palantir.

When I visited the Palo Alto office, Mr. Karp accidentally knocked down a visitor while demonstrating a tai chi move. He apologized, then ran off to get a printout of Goethe's ''Faust'' in German, which he read aloud in an effort to show that it was better than the English translation.

''If you were to do a sitcom on Palantir, it's equal parts Larry David, a philosophy class, tech and James Bond,'' he said.

Palantir was founded in 2003 by a gang of five, including Karp and his old Stanford Law School classmate Peter Thiel (now the company's chairman). It was backed, in part, by nearly $2 million from In-Q-Tel, the C.I.A.'s venture capital arm.

''Saving lives and on occasion taking lives is super interesting,'' Mr. Karp told me.

He described what his company does as ''the finding of hidden things'' -- sifting through mountains of data to perceive patterns, including patterns of suspicious or aberrant behavior.

Mr. Karp does not believe in appeasement. ''You scare the crap out of your adversaries,'' he said. He brims with American chauvinism, boasting that we are leagues ahead of China and Russia on software.

''The tech scene in America is like the jazz scene in the 1950s,'' he said in one forum. He told me: ''I'm constantly telling people 86 percent of the top 50 tech companies in the world just by market cap are American -- and people fall out of their chair. It's hard for us to understand how dominant we are in certain industries.''

In the wake of 9/11, the C.I.A. bet on Palantir's maw gobbling up data and auguring where the next terrorist attacks would come from. Palantir uses multiple databases to find the bad guy, even, as Mr. Karp put it, ''if the bad guy actually works for you.''

The company is often credited with helping locate Osama bin Laden so Navy SEALs could kill him, but it's unclear if that is true. As with many topics that came up in the course of our interviews in Washington, Palo Alto and New Hampshire, Mr. Karp zips his lips about whether his company was involved in dispatching the fiend of 9/11.

''If you have a reputation for talking about what the pope says when you meet him,'' Mr. Karp explained, ''you'll never meet the pope again.''

He does crow a little about Western civilization's resting on Palantir's slender shoulders, noting that without its software, ''you would've had massive terror attacks in Europe already, like Oct. 7 style.'' And those attacks, he believes, would have propelled the far right to power.

Palantir does not do business with China, Russia or other countries that are opposed to the West. Mr. Thiel said the company tries to work with ''more allied'' and ''less corrupt'' governments, noting dryly that aside from their ideological stances, ''with corrupt countries, you never get paid.''

''We have a consistently pro-Western view that the West has a superior way of living and organizing itself, especially if we live up to our aspirations,'' Mr. Karp said. ''It's interesting how radical that is, considering it's not, in my view, that radical.''

He added: ''If you believe we should appease Iran, Russia and China by saying we're going to be nicer and nicer and nicer, of course you'll look at Palantir negatively. Some of these places want you to do the apology show for what you believe in, and we don't apologize for what we believe in. I'm not going to apologize for defending the U.S. government on the border, defending the Special Ops, bringing the people home. I'm not apologizing for giving our product to Ukraine or Israel or lots of other places.''

As one Karp acquaintance put it: ''Alex is principled. You just may not like his principles.''

Kara Swisher, the author of ''Burn Book: A Tech Love Story,'' told me: ''While Palantir promises a more efficient and cost-effective way to conduct war, should our goal be to make it less expensive, onerous and painful? After all, war is not a video game, nor should it be.''

Mr. Karp's friend Diane von Furstenberg told me that he sees himself as Batman, believing in the importance of choosing sides in a parlous world. (The New York office is called Gotham and features a statue and prints of Batman.) But some critics have a darker view, worrying about Palantir creating a ''digital kill chain'' and seeing Mr. Karp less as a hero than as a villain.

Back in 2016, some Democrats regarded Palantir as ominous because of Mr. Thiel's support for former President Donald J. Trump. Later, conspiracy theories sprang up around the company's role in Operation Warp Speed, the federal effort pushing the Covid-19 vaccine program from clinical trials to jabs in arms.

Some critics focused on Palantir's work at the border, which helped U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement track down undocumented migrants for deportation. In 2019, about 70 demonstrators blocked access to the cafeteria outside the Palo Alto office. ''Immigrants are welcome here, time to cancel Palantir,'' they shouted.

The same year, over 200 Palantir employees, in a letter to Mr. Karp, outlined their concerns about the software that had helped ICE. And there was a campaign inside Palantir -- in vain -- to get him to donate the proceeds of a $49 million ICE contract to charity.

I asked Mr. Karp if Mr. Thiel's public embrace of Mr. Trump the first time around had made life easier -- in terms of getting government contracts -- or harder.

''I didn't enjoy it,'' he said. ''There's a lot of reasons I cut Biden a check. I do not enjoy being protested every day. It was completely ludicrous and ridiculous. It was actually the opposite. Because Peter had supported Mr. Trump, it was actually harder to get things done.''

Did they talk about it?

''Peter and I talk about everything,'' Mr. Karp said. ''It's like, yes, I definitely informed Peter, 'This is not making our life easier.'''

Mr. Thiel did not give money to Mr. Trump or speak at his convention this time around, although he supports JD Vance, his former protégé at his venture capital firm. He said he might get more involved now because of Mr. Vance.

Palantir got its start in intelligence and defense -- it now works with the Space Force -- and has since sprouted across the government through an array of contracts. It helps the I.R.S. to identify tax fraud and the Food and Drug Administration to prevent supply chain disruptions and to get drugs to market quicker.

It has assisted Ukraine and Israel in sifting through seas of data to gather relevant intelligence in their wars -- on how to protect special forces by mapping capabilities, how to safely transport troops and how to target drones and missiles more accurately.

In 2022, Mr. Karp took a secret trip to war-ravaged Kyiv, becoming the first major Western C.E.O. to meet with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, and offering to supply his country with the technology that would allow it to be David to Russia's Goliath. Time magazine ran a cover on Ukraine as a lab for A.I. warfare, and Palantir operatives embedded with the troops.

While Palantir's role in helping Ukraine was heralded, its work with Israel, where targeting is more treacherous, because the enemy is parasitically entangled with civilians, is far more controversial.

''I think there's a huge dichotomy between how the elite sees Ukraine and Israel,'' Mr. Karp said. ''If you go into any elite circle, pushing back against Russia is obvious, and Israel is complicated. If you go outside elite circles, it's exactly the opposite.''

Independent analysts have said that Israel, during an April operation, could not have shot down scores of Iranian missiles and drones in mere minutes without Palantir's tech. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's scorched-earth campaign in Gaza, the starving and orphaned children and the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians have drawn outrage, including some aimed at Mr. Karp and Mr. Thiel.

In May, protesters trapped Mr. Thiel inside a student building at the University of Cambridge. In recent days, senior U.S. officials have expressed doubts about Israel's conduct of the war.

Mr. Karp's position on backing Israel is adamantine. The company took out a full-page ad in The New York Times last year stating that ''Palantir stands with Israel.''

''It's like we have a double standard on Israel,'' he told me. If the Oct. 7 attack had happened in America, he said, we would turn the hiding place of our enemies ''into a parking lot. There would be no more tunnels.''

As Mr. Karp told CNBC in March: ''We've lost employees. I'm sure we'll lose more employees. If you have a position that does not cost you ever to lose an employee, it's not a position.''

He told me, ''If you believe that the West should lose and you believe that the only way to defend yourself is always with words and not with actions, you should be skeptical of us.''

He added: ''I always think it's hard because where the critics are right is what we do is morally complex. If you're supporting the West with products that are used at war, you can't pretend that there's a simple answer.''

Does he have any qualms about what his company does?

''I'd have many more qualms if I thought our adversaries were committed to anything like the rule of law,'' he said, adding: ''A lot of this does come down to, do you think America is a beacon of good or not? I think a lot of the critics, what they actually believe is America is not a force for good.'' His feeling is this: ''Without being Pollyannaish, idiotic or pretending like any country's been perfect or there's not injustice, at the margin, would you want a world where America is stronger, healthy and more powerful, or not?''

Asked about the impending TikTok ban, he said he's ''very in favor.''

''I do not think you should allow an adversary to control an algorithm that is specifically designed to make us slower, more divided and arguably less cognitively fit,'' he said.

He considered the anti-Israel demonstrations such ''an infection inside society,'' reflecting ''a pagan religion of mediocrity and discrimination and intolerance, and violence,'' that he offered 180 jobs to students who were fearful of staying in college because of a spike in antisemitism on campuses.

''Palantir is a much better diploma,'' he told me. ''Honestly, it's helping us, because there are very talented people at the Ivy League, and they're like, 'Get me out of here!'''

Mr. Karp sometimes gets emotional in his defense of Palantir. In June, when he received an award named in honor of Dwight Eisenhower at a D.C. gala for national security executives, he teared up. He said that when he lived in Germany, he often thought about the young men from Iowa and Kansas who risked their lives ''to free people like me'' during World War II. He said he was honored to receive an award named after the president who had integrated schools by force.

Claiming that his products ''changed the course of history by stopping terror attacks,'' Mr. Karp said that Palantir had also ''protected our men and women on the battlefield'' and ''taken the lives of our enemies, and I don't think that's something to be ashamed of.''

He told the gala audience about being ''yelled at'' by people who ''call themselves progressives.''

''I actually am a progressive,'' he said. ''I want less war. You only stop war by having the best technology and by scaring the bejabers -- I'm trying to be nice here -- out of our adversaries. If they are not scared, they don't wake up scared, they don't go to bed scared, they don't fear that the wrath of America will come down on them, they will attack us. They will attack us everywhere.''

He added that ''we in the corporate world'' have ''to grow a spine'' on issues like the Ivy League protesters: ''If we do not win the battle of ideas and reassert basic norms and the basic, obvious idea that America is a noble, great, wonderful aspiration of a dream that we are blessed to be part of, we will have a much, much worse world for all of us.''

How It Started

The wild origin story of Palantir plays like a spy satire.

After graduating from Haverford College, Mr. Karp went to Stanford Law School, which he called ''the worst three years of my adult life.''

He wasn't interested in his classmates' obsession with landing prestigious jobs at top law firms. ''I learned at law school that I cannot do something I do not believe in,'' he said, ''even if it's just turning a wrench.''

He met Mr. Thiel, a fellow student, and they immediately hit it off, trash-talking law school and, over beers, debating socialism vs. capitalism. ''We argued like feral animals,'' Mr. Karp told Michael Steinberger in a New York Times Magazine piece.

The liberal Heidegger fan and the conservative René Girard fan made strange bedfellows, but that's probably what drew them together.

''I think we bonded on this intellectual level where he was this crazy leftist and I was this crazy right-wing person,'' Mr. Thiel told me, ''but we somehow talked to each other.''

''Alex did the Ph.D. thing," he continued, ''which was, in some ways, a very, very insane thing to do after law school, but I was positive on it, because it sounded more interesting than working at a law firm.''

Mr. Karp received his doctorate in neoclassical social theory from Goethe University Frankfurt. He reconnected with Mr. Thiel in 2002, while working at the Jewish Philanthropy Partnership in San Francisco. The two began doing ''vague brainstorming,'' as Mr. Thiel put it, about a business they could start.

Mr. Thiel thought he could figure out how to find terrorists by using some of the paradigms developed at PayPal, which he helped found, to uncover patterns of fraud.

''I was just always super annoyed when, every time you go to the airport, you had to take off a shoe or you had to go through all this security theater, which was both somewhat taxing but probably had very little to do with actual security,'' Mr. Thiel said.

They brought in some software engineers.

''It was two and a half years after 9/11, and you're starting a software company with people who know nothing about the C.I.A. or any of these organizations,'' Mr. Thiel recalled.

It was all very cloak-and-dagger, in an Inspector Clouseau way. They decided to seek out John Poindexter, a retired rear admiral who was dubbed the godfather of modern surveillance; Admiral Poindexter had been forced to resign as President Ronald Reagan's national security adviser after the Iran-Contra scandal broke. After 9/11, he worked at the Pentagon on a surveillance program called Total Information Awareness.

During the meeting, Mr. Thiel said he felt he was in the presence of a medal-festooned, Machiavelli-loving member of the military brass out of ''Dr. Strangelove,'' with ''a LARPing vibe.''

''We had a hunch that there was a room marked 'Super-Duper Computer,' and if you went inside, it was just an empty room,'' Mr. Thiel said. They feared their budding algorithm ''would end up in a broom closet in the Pentagon,'' so they moved on.

In 2005, Mr. Thiel asked Mr. Karp to be the frontman of a company with few employees, no contracts, no investors, no office and no functional tech. ''It charitably could have been described as a work in progress,'' Mr. Thiel said.

Mr. Karp and his motley crew got a bunch of desks and explained to clients that they were unmanned because the (fictional) engineers were coming in later.

''God knows why Peter picked me as co-founder,'' said Mr. Karp, who had to learn about coding on the job. ''It was, in all modesty, a very good choice.''

Mr. Thiel explained: ''In some ways, Alex doesn't look like a salesperson from central casting you would send to the C.I.A. The formulation I always have is that if you're trying to sell something to somebody, the basic paradox is you have to be just like them, so they can trust you -- but you have to be very different from them so that they think you have something they don't have.''

He said that Mr. Karp would not be suited to running Airbnb or Uber ''or some mass consumer product.'' But Palantir, he said, ''is connected with this great set of geopolitical questions about the Western world versus the rising authoritarian powers. So if we can get our governments to function somewhat better, it's a way to rebalance things in the direction of the West.''

''Normally,'' Mr. Thiel continued, ''these are bad ideas to have as a company. They're too abstract, too idealistic. But I think something like this was necessary in the Palantir case. If you didn't get some energy from thinking about these things, man, we would've sold the company after three years.''

Mr. Karp could not have been more of an outsider, to Silicon Valley and to Washington. He and his engineers had to buy suits for their visits to the capital. ''We had no believers,'' he said. ''I kept telling Palantirians to call me Alex, and they kept calling me Dr. Karp. Then I realized the only thing they could believe in was that I had a Ph.D.''

The first few years, when tech investors were more interested in programs that let you play games on your phone, were rough. ''We were like pariahs,'' Mr. Karp said. ''We couldn't get meetings. If they did, it was a favor to Peter.''

With administrators in Washington, Mr. Karp recalled: ''It was like, What is this Frankenstein monster doing in my office, making these wild claims that he can do better on things I have a huge budget for? How can it be that a freak-show motley crew of 12-year-old-looking mostly dudes, led by a pretty unique figure, from their perspective, would be able to do something with 1 percent of the money that we can't do with billions and billions of dollars?''

''There's nothing that we did at Palantir in building our software company that's in any M.B.A.-made playbook,'' Mr. Karp said. ''Not one. That's why we have been doing so well.''

He said that ''the single most valuable education I had for business was sitting at the Sigmund Freud Institute, because I spent all my time with analysts.'' When he worked at the institute in Frankfurt while getting his doctorate, Mr. Karp said, he would smoke cigars and think about ''the conscious subconscious.''

''You'd be surprised how much analysts talk about their patients,'' he said. ''It's disconcerting, actually. You just learn so much about how humans actually think.'' This knowledge helps him motivate his engineers, he said.

How It's Going

Mr. Karp said he likes to think of Palantir's workers as part of an artists' colony or a family; he doesn't use the word ''staff.'' He enjoys interviewing prospective employees personally and prides himself on making hires in under two minutes. (He likes to have a few people around who can talk philosophy and literature with him, in German and French.)

''A lot of my populist-left politics actually bleed into my hiring stuff,'' he said. ''If you ask the question that the Stanford, Harvard, Yale person has answered a thousand times, all you're learning is that the Stanford, Harvard, Yale person has learned to play the game.''

Even if he gets a good answer from a ''privileged'' candidate and a bad answer from ''the child of a mechanic,'' he might prefer the latter if ''I have that feeling like I'm in the presence of talent.''

He views Palantirians like the Goonies, underdogs winning in the end. ''Most people at Palantir didn't get to do a lot of winning in high school,'' Mr. Karp said at a company gathering in Palo Alto, to laughter from the audience.

He thinks the United States is ''very likely'' to end up in a three-front war with China, Russia and Iran. So, he argues, we have to keep going full-tilt on autonomous weapons systems, because our adversaries will -- and they don't have the same moral considerations that we do.

''I think we're in an age when nuclear deterrent is actually less effective because the West is very unlikely to use anything like a nuclear bomb, whereas our adversaries might,'' he said. ''Where you have technological parity but moral disparity, the actual disparity is much greater than people think.''

''In fact,'' he added, ''given that we have parity technologically but we don't have parity morally, they have a huge advantage.''

Mr. Karp said that we are ''very close'' to terminator robots and at the threshold of ''somewhat autonomous drones and devices like this being the most important instruments of war. You already see this in Ukraine.''

Palantir has learned from some early setbacks.

In 2011, the hacker group Anonymous showed that Palantir employees were involved in a proposed misinformation campaign to discredit WikiLeaks and smear some of its supporters, including the journalist Glenn Greenwald. (Mr. Karp apologized to Mr. Greenwald.) Then, at least one Palantir employee helped Cambridge Analytica collect the Facebook data that the Trump campaign used ahead of the 2016 election.

A pro bono contract with the New Orleans Police Department starting in 2012 was dropped after six years amid criticism that its ''predictive policing'' eroded privacy and had a disparate impact on people of color.

''We reduced the rates of Black-on-Black death in New Orleans,'' Mr. Karp said, ''and we have these critics who are like, 'Palantir is racist.' I don't know. The hundreds of people that are alive now don't think we're racist.''

Mr. Carville, a New Orleans pooh-bah, asserted that the partnership ended because of ''left-wing conspiracy theories.''

Palantir's rough start in Silicon Valley came about, in part, because many objected to its work with the Department of Defense.

In 2017, Google won a Pentagon contract, Project Maven, to help the military use the company's A.I. to analyze footage from drones. Employees protested, sending a letter to the C.E.O., Sundar Pichai: ''Google should not be in the business of war,'' it read. Soon after, Google backed away from the project.

In response, Palantir shaded Google in a tweet that quoted Mr. Karp: ''Silicon Valley is telling the average American 'I will not support your defense needs' while selling products that are adversarial to America. That is a loser position.'' Palantir picked up the contract in 2019.

That same year, Mr. Thiel said that Google had a ''treasonous'' relationship with China. When Google opened an A.I. lab in 2017 in China, where there's little distinction between the civilian and the military, he argued, it was de facto helping China while refusing to help America. (That lab closed in 2019, but Google still does business with China, as does Apple.)

''When you have people working at consumer internet companies protesting us because we help the Navy SEALs and the U.S. military and were pro-border -- and you're becoming incredibly, mind-bogglingly rich, in part because America protects your right to export -- to me, you've lost the sheet of music,'' Mr. Karp said. ''I don't think that's good for America.''

Scott Galloway, a professor at New York University and an authority on tech companies, agrees that many Silicon Valley C.E.O.s have been virtue-signaling and pretending to care about the progressive political views of employees, but really would sell ''their mother for a nickel.''

''They're not there to save the whales,'' Mr. Galloway said. ''They're there to make money.''

He added: ''Some of these big tech companies seem to be engaged in raising a generation of business leaders that just don't like America, who are very focused on everything that's wrong with America.

''Alex Karp is like, 'No, we'll cash the Pentagon's check and we'll collect data on our enemies.' He's gone the entirely opposite way, and I think it was a smart move.''

Palantir's ''spooky connotations,'' as one executive put it, dissipated quite a bit when the company went public in 2020 and took on more commercial business; its clients include Airbus, J.P. Morgan, IBM and Amazon.

Mr. Thiel said that while Palantir had a brief stint working on a pilot program for the National Security Agency, the company would not want to do any more work there: ''The N.S.A., it hoovers up all the data in the world. As far as I can tell, there are incredible civil liberties violations where they're spying on everybody outside the U.S., basically. Then they're fortunately too incompetent to do much with the data.''

The company has started turning a profit, and the stock has climbed. After a triumphant earnings report this month, Palantir's stock price jumped again.

''The share price gives us more street cred,'' Mr. Karp said.

In 2020, after 17 years in Silicon Valley, Mr. Karp moved Palantir's headquarters to Denver. ''I was fleeing Silicon Valley because of what I viewed as the regressive side of progressive politics,'' he said.

He thinks that the valley has intensified class divisions in America.

''I don't believe you would have a Trump phenomenon without the excesses of Silicon Valley,'' he said. ''Very, very wealthy people who support policies where they don't have to absorb the cost at all. Just also the general feeling that these people are not tethered to our society, and simultaneously are becoming billionaires."

''Not supporting the U.S. military,'' he said, in a tone of wonder. ''I don't even know how you explain to the average American that you've become a multibillionaire and you won't supply your product to the D.O.D. It's jarringly corrosive. That's before you get to all the corrosive, divisive things that are on these platforms.''

Akshay Krishnaswamy, Palantir's chief architect, agreed on their Silicon Valley critics: ''You live in the liberal democratic West because of reasons, and those reasons don't come for free. They act like it doesn't have to be fought for or defended rigorously.''

Mr. Karp said things had evolved. ''I think there's a different perception of us now a little bit. A lot of that was tied to Trump, ICE work. It built up and we were definitely outsiders. We're still outsiders, but I feel less resistance for sure. And people have a better idea of what we do, maybe.'' He added, ''Defense tech is a big part of Silicon Valley now.''

The A.I. revolution, he said, will come with a knotty question: ''How do you make sure the society's fair when the means of production have become means that only 1 percent of the population actually knows how to navigate?''

I asked if he agrees with Elon Musk that A.I. is eventually going to take everyone's jobs.

''I think what's actually dangerous,'' Mr. Karp replied, ''is that people who understand how to use this are going to capture a lot of the value of the market and everyone else is going to feel left behind.''

Mr. Karp's iconoclastic style and ironclad beliefs have inspired memes and attracted a flock of online acolytes -- some call him Papa Karp or Daddy Karp. He has no social media presence, but his online fans treat him like a mystic, obsessing over the tight white T-shirts he wears for earnings reports, his Norwegian ski outfits, his corkscrew hair, his Italian jeans and sunglasses and his extreme candor. (In a recent earnings report, Mr. Karp dismissed his rivals as ''self-pleasuring'' and engaging in ''self-flagellation.'')

He is not, as one colleague puts it, ''a wife, kids and dog person.''

''I tend to have long-term relationships,'' he told me. ''And I tend to end up with very high IQ women,'' including some who tell him he's talking nonsense.

He prefers what he calls a German attitude toward relationships, where ''you have a much greater degree of privacy,'' he said, with separate bedrooms and ''your own world, your own thoughts, and you get to be alone a lot.'' There is much less requirement to ''micro-lie'' about where you were or whom you were with.

I asked Mr. Karp about his 2013 quote to Forbes that ''the only time I'm not thinking about Palantir is when I'm swimming, practicing qigong or during sexual activity.''

He frowned, noting: ''It should be tai chi. I don't know why people always conflate tai chi with qigong. Yes, that was in my early days, when we were a pre-public company and I was allowed to admit I had sexual activity.''

So it's true that the notion of settling down and raising a family gives him hives?

''There's some truth in that,'' he said. ''This is how I like to live. See, I'm sitting here doing my freedom thing. I train. I do distance shooting.'' He reads. ''Who else has a Len Deighton spy novel next to a book on Confucian philosophy?''

Many of the doyennes of Washington society would love to snag the eligible Mr. Karp for a dinner party. He told me he has ''a great social life.'' But when I asked him what that is, he replied, ''First of all, I'm a cross-country skier, so then I do all this training.''

He continued, ''To have an elite VO2 max, an elite level of strength, it's just consistency and the Norwegian-style training method.''

Some who know Mr. Karp said that the happiest they had ever seen him was last year when Mike Allen reported for Axios that the C.E.O.'s body fat was an impressive 7 percent.

Mr. Karp may be able to do more than 20 miles of cross-country skiing without being out of breath, but there are some sports at which, he admitted, he's ''a complete zero. For example, ball sports. I really suck at them.''

Unlike Mr. Musk and other tech lords, Mr. Karp is not into micro-dosing ketamine or any other drug. ''My drug is athletics,'' he said. ''I love drinking, but now I've moved to drinking very little because what I've noticed is if you're traveling all the time, the alcohol, it really affects your brain.'' He's on the road about 240 days a year.

Mr. Karp said of his dyslexia: ''I think this is not getting less, it's likely getting more. In 40 years, I'll be unable to read.''

In New Hampshire, we had a lunch of lobster pasta -- he kept his panic button on the table -- and then went shooting on his property. He expertly hit targets with a 9-millimeter pistol from 264 yards. When an aide suggested that a photographer not shoot Mr. Karp in the act of shooting, he overruled the idea.

''Actually, honestly, guns would be much better regulated if you had someone who knows guns,'' he said. ''I'm not a hunter. I'm an artist with a gun.''

(Later, Mr. Karp pointed out that he had been shooting at targets that were about twice as far from him as Mr. Trump was from his would-be assassin. ''There's something really wrong with security for our future president, or maybe not future president,'' he said. ''All these people need a different level of security.'')

Mr. Karp believes the Democrats need to project more strength: ''Are we tough enough to scare our adversaries so we don't go to war? Do the Chinese, Russians and Persians think we're strong? The president needs to tell them if you cross these lines, this is what we're going to do, and you have to then enforce it.''

He thinks that in America and in Europe, the inability or unwillingness to secure borders fuels authoritarianism.

''I see it as pretty simple: You have an open border, you get the far right,'' he said. ''And once you get them, you can't get rid of them. We saw it in Brexit, we see it with Le Pen in France, you see it across Europe. Now you see it in Germany.''

''They should be much stricter,'' he continued. That, he said, ''is the only reason we have the rise of the right, the only reason. When people tell you we need an open border, then they should also tell you why they're electing right-wing politicians, because they are.''

''The biggest mistake -- and it's not one politician, it's a generation -- was believing there was something bigoted about having a border, and there are just a lot of people who believe that,'' he said.

Weeks later, we were back in the Washington office, which is dubbed Rivendell, after a valley in Tolkien's Middle-earth, and is filled with tech goodies like a Ping-Pong table, a pool table and a towering replica of Chewbacca.

We picked up our conversation about politics, talking about the swap of President Biden and Vice President Harris, the rise of JD Vance, the assassination attempt and the changed political landscape.

Mr. Karp concurred with his friend Mr. Carville on the problem of drawing men to the Democratic Party, saying, ''If this is going to be a party complaining about guys and to guys all the time, it's not going to succeed.''

He continued: ''The biggest problem with hard political correctness is it makes it impossible to deal with unfortunate facts. The unfortunate fact here is that this election is really going to turn on 'What percentage of males can the Democrats still get?'''

Describing himself as ''progressive but not woke,'' he said, ''We are so unwilling to talk to the actual constituents that are voting for the Democratic Party who would probably strongly prefer policies that are more moderate.''

Given Mr. Karp's blended racial identity, I wondered how he felt about Mr. Trump's attack on the vice president's heritage.

''I think people are most fascinated by the fact of this whole Black-Jewish thing,'' he said. ''I tend to be less fascinated by that.''

He added: ''I think that people always expect me somehow to see the world in one way or another, and I don't really understand what that means. I see the world the way I see it. I think, at the end of the day, if people want to choose what their identity is, then they choose it, and that's their definition.''

I note that he recently made an elite list of Black billionaires.

He shrugged. ''Some Black people think I'm Black, some don't,'' he said. ''I view me as me. And I'm very honored to be honored by all groups that will have me.''

He added: ''I do not believe racism is the most important issue in this country. I think class is determinate, and I'm mystified by how often we talk about race. I'm not saying it doesn't exist. I'm not saying people don't have biases. Of course, we all do, but the primary thing that's bad for you in this culture is to be born poor of any color.''

He said he would support class-based affirmative action and declared himself ''pro draft.''

''I think part of the reason we have a massive cleavage in our culture is, at the end of the day, by and large, only people who are middle- and ***working-class*** do all the fighting,'' he said.

Since I had last seen him, Mr. Karp had gotten caught between two of the battling billionaires of Silicon Valley, lords of the cloud vituperously fighting in public over the possible restoration of Donald Trump.

According to an account in Puck, Mr. Karp was onstage with the LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman at a conference last month in Sun Valley, Idaho, sponsored by the investment bank Allen & Company, when Mr. Hoffman called Mr. Thiel's support for Mr. Trump ''a moral issue.'' Speaking up from his seat in the audience, Mr. Thiel sarcastically thanked Mr. Hoffman for funding lawsuits against Mr. Trump, which allowed the candidate to claim that he is ''a martyr.''

Mr. Hoffman snapped back, ''Yeah, I wish I had made him an actual martyr'' -- an unfortunate comment given what would later happen in Butler, Pa.

I asked Mr. Karp whether the encounter was as uncomfortable as it seemed.

''Well, I'm used to being uncomfortable,'' he said. ''I'm going to stick with my friends. I just feel the same way I always feel when Peter is under attack, which is: 'This is my friend. I feel that my friend is being attacked, and I will defend him.'''

The fancy digital clock behind Mr. Karp's desk, which tells time in German, had gone from ''Es ist zehn nach drei'' to ''Es ist halb vier.''

It was time to go.

Confirm or Deny

Maureen Dowd: You run the Twitter account Alex Karp's Hair.

Alex Karp: I wish.

Your favorite movie is the classic kung fu flick ''The 36th Chamber of Shaolin.''

One of my favorite movies.

You have 10 houses around the world, from Alaska to Vermont, from Norway to New Hampshire.

You have to reframe that as I have 10 cross-country ski huts.

You love the idea of Peter Thiel backing Olympic-style games where the athletes will dope out in the open.

Deny. I want the best cross-country skiers to win without doping.

You love to watch spy shows and German movies, and one of your favorite filmmakers is Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

Confirm.

You have 20 identical pairs of swim goggles in your office.

No longer. I used to. I gave up swimming. There's an emptiness to it.

You commissioned a French comic book, ''Palantir: L'Indépendance,'' with yourself as the protagonist.

Oui!

You starred in a movie by Hanna Laura Klar in 1998, ''I Have Two Faces,'' where you looked like a young Woody Allen.

I look better than Woody Allen.

Your dissertation is about how people transmit aggression subconsciously in language, presaging the rise of the right in America and Europe.

Often, the more charismatic ideologies were, the more irrational they were.

The dissertation touched on expressing taboo wishes. Do you want to share some of those?

I would love to express taboo wishes with you, but not to your audience.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/17/style/alex-karp-palantir.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/17/style/alex-karp-palantir.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top left and right, Alex Karp at home practicing tai chi. Left, a Ukrainian government handout image of Mr. Karp in 2022 with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, left, and Mykhailo Fedorov, at the time a deputy prime minister, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN DAVID BROWN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE)

Center, Alex Karp doing target practice on his property. Right, a protest in 2019 outside the office of Palantir Technologies. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN DAVID BROWN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS) (ST10-ST11) This article appeared in print on page ST10, ST11.

**Load-Date:** August 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Trump’s Criminal Trial Begins With a Bumpy Jury Selection***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT9-19F1-DXY4-X035-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 15, 2024 Monday 18:39 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1365 words

**Byline:** Matthew Cullen

**Highlight:** Also, Israel weighs retaliation against Iran. Here’s the latest at the end of Monday.

**Body**

Also, Israel weighs retaliation against Iran. Here’s the latest at the end of Monday.

New York prosecutors joined Donald Trump and his attorneys today in a Manhattan courtroom for the [*official start of the first criminal trial of an American president*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial). Trump is facing 34 felony counts of falsifying business records to cover up a sex scandal during his 2016 campaign. If convicted, he could face up to four years in prison.

After the judge overseeing the case rejected Trump’s latest effort to oust him, the prosecution and the defense began collaborating on the arduous process of choosing a jury. Immediately, they ran into problems.

More than half of the first pool of 96 prospective jurors was dismissed after they indicated they did not believe they could be impartial, and court adjourned for the day with zero jurors chosen. My colleague Alan Feuer noted that such a high initial failure rate is “surpassingly rare,” underscoring the challenges of seating an impartial jury for a defendant whom much of the country has already made its mind up about. [*Here’s an explanation of the jurors both sides want.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)

The trial — perhaps the only one against Trump that will unfold before Election Day — is projected to take about six weeks, the judge told the prospective jurors. But it could stretch out longer if jury selection turns out to be especially time consuming. The process will be crucial for both sides, but could be especially challenging for the defense, who will effectively be searching for red needles in Manhattan’s giant blue haystack.

“The defense will be looking for ***working class*** voters, people that work in city jobs, perhaps firefighters, police, sanitation workers,” my colleague Jesse McKinley, who is writing our [*Trump on Trial newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), said.

Israel’s war cabinet met to weigh a response to Iran

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is facing conflicting pressures as he considers whether and how to retaliate against Iran for its missile and drone attack over the weekend. Some far-right members of his government have called for an immediate military response, while many international leaders, including President Biden, have urged Israel to de-escalate.

Netanyahu’s war cabinet met again today, but so far there has been no response to the attack. And rather than preparing the public for a showdown with its archrival, the government signaled a return to relative normalcy, lifting restrictions on large gatherings and allowing schools to reopen. [*Here’s the latest*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

For more: Our national security correspondent David Sanger explained why it has become [*more difficult to contain Iran over the last several years*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

Scientists warned of the widest-ever threat to coral

Record ocean temperatures have put so much stress on the world’s coral reefs that they are losing their vital algae — a process referred to as bleaching — on an unprecedented scale. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projected that the current crisis would within weeks [*become the most extensive bleaching event on record*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

A NOAA official said that more than 54 percent of the world’s coral area has experienced bleaching-level heat stress in the past year, and that figure is increasing by about 1 percent per week.

Congress is targeting a Chinese firm that makes key U.S. drugs

WuXi AppTec is among the Chinese drug companies that lawmakers have identified as a potential threat to the security of Americans’ genetic information and U.S. intellectual property. But the company develops and produces [*crucial therapies for cancer, cystic fibrosis, H.I.V.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) and other illnesses.

As Congress considers legislation to push U.S. companies away from doing business with firms like WuXi, drug executives have warned that removing the company from the American market could also take some drugs out of the pipeline for years.

More top news

* Tesla: Turmoil continued at the electric car company as it announced that it would [*lay off 10 percent of its work force*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

1. Business: Goldman Sachs earned nearly $4 billion in profit in the first quarter — [*around $1 billion more than analysts expected*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).
2. New York: Lawmakers reached a deal on a framework to [*address one of the worst housing crises in the nation*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).
3. Markets: Shares of Trump Media fell 18 percent today, and are [*down more than 50 percent since its first days of trading*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).
4. Film: The armorer who loaded the gun before a fatal shooting on the “Rust” set was sentenced to [*18 months in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) for involuntary manslaughter.
5. Police: [*Two officers were killed in a shootout*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) near Syracuse, New York.
6. Music: Beyoncé’s “Cowboy Carter” is at [*No. 1 for a second week*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), a feat the artist last managed 11 years ago.
7. Nature: Fish off the Florida Keys started swimming upside down, spinning and dying. [*Scientists are racing to figure out why.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)
8. Boston Marathon: Hellen Obiri [*claimed her second straight women’s title*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), while Sisay Lemma won the men’s race with the 10th fastest time in the event’s history.

TIME TO UNWIND

A landmark art career outside the establishment

Faith Ringgold, who [*died on Saturday at 93*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), was most famous for her narrative quilts depicting the joys and rigors of Black lives. But she was an expert at mixing the personal and political across a number of mediums, including sculpture, painting and writing.

But major museums, auction houses and galleries never quite knew what to do with her art, [*so they mostly ignored it*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial). This was a consequence, she often said, of her race, her sex and her uncompromising focus on art as a vehicle for social justice. It wasn’t until very recently, when Ringgold was approaching 90, that MoMA finally acquired some of her works. The museum paired one alongside a Picasso.

Do clearer images make movies better?

Film restorers are taking advantage of rapidly improving artificial intelligence tools to sharpen decades-old movies. Recently, several of James Cameron’s films, including “True Lies” and “Aliens,” were upgraded with machine-learning technology that makes water appear crystalline and colors look bright and vivid.

[*Some critics strongly dislike the results*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial). The lack of imperfections delivers an uncanny feeling for some viewers, while others are more broadly skeptical of the suggestion that A.I. could improve on human art.

For more, our tech columnist explained [*why we struggle to explain how smart A.I. tools are*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

Dinner table topics

* A pricey symbol of love: A dozen red roses may be timeless, but the price isn’t. Here’s [*why a New York City bouquet now costs $72*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

1. An ageless sip: There’s a [*new straw that doesn’t cause facial wrinkles*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), yet another solution to a problem we didn’t know we had. (And still might not).
2. A new classic: Gen Z wanted a co-op version of Scrabble, and Mattel obliged. [*Some fans of the original aren’t happy.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)
3. A win in the second half: Dating after 50 can be miserable. But there’s liberation there too, and [*unexpected pleasure.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)

WHAT TO DO TONIGHT

Cook: This [*one-pot pasta dish*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) combines the crisp salt of prosciutto with the bright pop of green peas.

Watch: The W.N.B.A. draft airs tonight on ESPN. Here’s [*what else is on TV this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

Dine: Here are the [*25 best restaurants*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) in Boston right now.

Clean: Get organized quickly with [*decluttering sprints lasting 30 minutes or less.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)

Travel: Planning to bring your pet onto the plane? [*Here’s how different airlines handle that.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)

Repel: We’d like to tell you about a secret weapon in the [*war against ticks.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial)

Compete: Take this week’s [*Flashback history quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

Play: Here are today’s [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial) and [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial). Find [*all of our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

ONE LAST THING

A handmade video game

For more than a decade, Onat Hekimoglu had wanted to make a video game about a hapless janitor stuck in an undersea city. But he had no digital design experience. So he made Harold Halibut [*almost entirely by hand*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

Nearly everything onscreen was made of physical materials like cardboard and clay, including the characters, with costumes sewn from real textiles, then 3-D scanned so they could be animated digitally.

Have a skillful evening.

Thanks for reading. I’ll be back tomorrow. — Matthew

We welcome your feedback. Write to us at [*evening@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/15/nyregion/trump-hush-money-trial).

PHOTO: Donald Trump in court today. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jefferson Siegel for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2024

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[***Soft Corruption and the Limits of Populism; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6981-4SJ1-JBG3-6021-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 25, 2023 Monday 16:02 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; columnists

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman, 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.

**Highlight:** Why Republicans are still addicted to right-wing economics.

**Body**

There are currently two clown shows — sorry, but let’s be honest — going on in the Republican Party. One is the intraparty fighting that seems extremely likely to cause a government shutdown a few days from now. The other is the fight over who will come a distant second to Donald Trump in the presidential primaries.

There are many strange aspects to both shows. But here’s the one that has long puzzled me: Everyone says that with the rise of MAGA, the G.O.P. has been taken over by populists. So why is the Republican Party’s economic ideology so elitist and antipopulist?

Listen to the rhetoric of the people making Kevin McCarthy look like a fool or of the presidential candidates, and it’s full of attacks on elites — but also of promises to cut taxes for the rich and [*slash government spending*](https://newrepublic.com/article/175689/2024-republicans-wreck-civil-service?utm_medium=social&amp;utm_campaign=SF_TNR&amp;utm_source=Twitter) that benefits the ***working class***. For example, Nikki Haley — who is making a credible bid to be Trump’s also-ran, given Ron DeSantis’s implosion — is calling for [*big cuts*](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/if-we-do-nothing-social-security-will-be-bankrupt-in-10-years-republican-presidential-candidate-nikki-haley-says-4920660c) to Social Security and Medicare.

As I write this, McCarthy is reportedly trying to appease MAGA dissidents with a temporary funding bill that would cut nonmilitary discretionary spending outside of Veterans Affairs by [*27 percent*](https://twitter.com/elwasson/status/1705651354218225848) — meaning savage cuts to things like the [*administration of Social Security*](https://twitter.com/BBKogan/status/1705655359552029056) (as opposed to the benefits themselves).

The thing is, such proposals are deeply unpopular. It’s true that Americans tell pollsters that the government [*spends too much*](https://apnorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/APNORC_Mar2023_Topline_Budget.pdf#page=18), but if you ask them about [*specific types*](https://apnorc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/APNORC_Mar2023_Topline_Budget.pdf#page=19) of spending, the only area on which they say we spend too much is foreign aid, which is a [*trivial part*](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/what-every-american-should-know-about-u-s-foreign-aid/) of the budget. Oh, and most Americans still support aid to [*Ukraine*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ukraine-americans-aid-poll-2023-09-10/).

So there would seem to be an opening for politicians who are right wing on social issues like immigration and wokeness but are also genuinely populist in their spending priorities. Such politicians exist in other countries. For example, Giorgia Meloni, the Italian prime minister, whose party has [*deep links*](https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/02/06/why-giorgia-meloni-wont-distance-herself-from-italys-fascist-past/) to the nation’s fascist past, ran last year on a [*platform*](https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/10/06/can-italys-giorgia-meloni-afford-the-things-she-wants) calling for earlier retirement for some workers and increases in minimum pensions and child benefits.

So why aren’t there such figures in the G.O.P.? To be fair, during the 2016 campaign Trump sometimes sounded as if he might turn his back on Republican economic orthodoxy, but once in office he pursued the usual agenda of tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy combined with benefit cuts for the rest.

Part of the answer may lie in the American right’s general mind-set, which valorizes harshness, not empathy. People who are drawn to MAGA tend to imagine that solving society’s problems should involve punishing people, not helping them.

Also, we shouldn’t underestimate the power of ignorance: MAGA politicians, who generally disdain any kind of expertise, may not have any clear idea of what the federal government does and where tax dollars go.

Finally, there’s the Clarence Thomas factor.

What I mean is that part of the explanation for the absence of genuine Republican populists may involve the gravitational pull of big money, which is both broader and subtler than the way it’s often portrayed.

If the accusations against [*Senator Robert Menendez*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/nyregion/robert-menendez-political-future.html) are true — and it’s not looking good — old-fashioned bribery, payments to politicians in exchange for favors, hasn’t gone away. But it’s probably not shaping party ideology.

Campaign contributions, on the other hand, definitely do shape ideology; DeSantis was touted as a rival to Trump because he got a lot of support from big donors who believed he would serve their interests and had real political skills. (Being rich doesn’t necessarily come with good judgment.)

But there’s a sort of gray area that doesn’t involve outright bribes in the sense of money given in return for specific actions but nonetheless involves a form of soft corruption. For the fact is that public figures whom the very rich see as being on their side can reap considerable personal rewards from their positions.

Recent revelations about Justice Thomas show how this works. ProPublica [*reports*](https://www.propublica.org/article/clarence-thomas-secretly-attended-koch-brothers-donor-events-scotus) that he has received many favors from ultrawealthy conservatives, notably lavish free vacations. These reports are shocking because we don’t expect such behavior from a Supreme Court justice, and Thomas may have violated the law by failing to disclose these gifts. But does anyone doubt that many politicians who favor tax cuts for the rich and reduced benefits for the ***working class***, even as they rail against elites, receive similar favors?

And the hermetic information space of the American right surely facilitates this soft corruption. Suggestions of improper influence on right-wing officials and politicians [*won’t get much coverage*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/04/14/clarence-thomas-gifts-ethics-fox-news/) on Fox News, except possibly for claims that they’re the victims of a liberal smear campaign.

Now, I don’t know how important these different factors are to the fact that America’s “populists” are anything but populist in practice. But we do need to ask why people who denounce elites somehow always manage to avoid targeting corporations not named Disney and billionaires not named George Soros.

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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This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***Biden, Vying for Hispanic Voters in Nevada, Says Trump ‘Despises Latinos’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKF-PVR1-JBG3-64J3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 19, 2024 Tuesday 23:52 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1223 words

**Byline:** Zolan Kanno-Youngs Zolan Kanno-Youngs is a White House correspondent, covering President Biden and his administration.

**Highlight:** The president’s sharp-elbowed pitch came as polls show former President Donald J. Trump gaining ground with the crucial voting bloc.

**Body**

The president’s sharp-elbowed pitch came as polls show former President Donald J. Trump gaining ground with the crucial voting bloc.

President Biden on Tuesday began a tour through Nevada and Arizona by championing his economic policies and making a sharp-elbowed pitch to the crucial Hispanic electorate in the two battleground states, saying that former President Donald J. Trump, his Republican rival, “despises Latinos.”

Mr. Biden is seeking to use the trip this week through the Sun Belt to turn what polls have shown to be three of his biggest weaknesses — the economy, immigration and slipping support among Latinos — into strengths. The visit comes as the president has adopted an aggressive new tone as he opens the general election campaign against Mr. Trump.

As he traveled to Reno, Nev., and Las Vegas on Tuesday, Mr. Biden made clear his campaign has its eye on Latino voters, who are increasingly gravitating toward Mr. Trump, recent polls have found.

“This guy despises Latinos,” Mr. Biden said in an interview with Univision Radio that aired on Tuesday as he criticized Mr. Trump’s economic policies and proposals to launch mass deportations. “I understand Latino values.”

Mr. Biden’s remarks, among the most strident the president has made toward Mr. Trump on the subject, highlighted the fierce battle for an increasingly up-for-grabs voting bloc. And they illustrated the stakes for the president and his party if Latinos turn away from them, a shift that would threaten to unravel the diverse coalition that has delivered Democrats the White House, as well as a plethora of House and Senate seats, in recent years.

Karoline Leavitt, a spokeswoman for the Trump campaign, accused Mr. Biden of caring more “about illegal immigrant criminals than American citizens.”

“President Trump will secure the southern border and deport illegal criminals to protect ALL American citizens,” Ms. Leavitt said in a statement.

Latino voters are particularly crucial in states like Nevada and Arizona, where they make up roughly one in four eligible voters and where Mr. Biden won in 2020. But Mr. Trump has found support in the diverse Latino electorate, including among evangelicals and those focused on border security. He has appealed in particular to those without college degrees, an educational divide that has captured the attention of the White House.

Surveys show Mr. Trump winning more than 40 percent of Latino voters, a level not achieved by a Republican in two decades. Some polls even show Mr. Trump ahead of Mr. Biden among Latino voters after Mr. Biden won nearly 60 percent of their vote in 2020.

“People like to be entertained and sometimes Donald Trump, what he does is it provides that entertainment. People like laugh at his rallies, you know, it’s like they’re going to a circus,” Arizona Democratic Party chairwoman Yolanda Bejarano told reporters in Phoenix, Arizona, on Tuesday. “We just need to be very, very focused and you know, make sure that Latinos understand exactly who Donald Trump is and what a danger he presents to us.”

Mr. Biden’s campaign aides believe they can contrast the president with his predecessor by homing in not just on issues like abortion and the economy but also on what the president’s aides once viewed as a political vulnerability: immigration and the border. In a memo written by [*Mr. Biden’s campaign manager, Julie Chávez Rodríguez*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/us/politics/who-is-julie-chavez-rodriguez-biden-2024-campaign.html), his approach on immigration is listed as a primary way to “contrast on the issues that matter most to Western voters.”

In the interview with Univision, Mr. Biden attacked Mr. Trump’s comments saying migrants are “not people.” He also said Mr. Trump was to blame for encouraging Republicans to sink legislation that would have imposed sweeping restrictions at the southwestern border, partly to avoid providing Mr. Biden an election-year win.

“He says immigrants are ‘poisoning the blood’ of this country, separated children from parents at the border, caged the kids, planned mass deportations systems,” Mr. Biden said. “We have to stop this guy. We can’t let this happen. We are a nation of immigrants.”

While Mr. Biden has recently shifted his language around immigration to the right, he also emphasized his efforts to provide undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship.

John Tuman, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who focuses on the Latino electorate, said that was necessary in a state with voters interested in hearing about reforming the overall immigration system.

“It pays dividends politically to push immigration from the margins to the center,” Mr. Tuman said.

But Andrea Masnata, a 34-year-old Nevada resident who immigrated from Bolivia, said she and many Latino peers were not enthused with either candidate. She had also noticed Latinos increasingly becoming disengaged with the Democratic Party, said Ms. Masnata, the communications director for Make the Road Action in Nevada, a grass-roots group of Latinos and other ***working-class*** people of color.

“It’s a clear statement of the disappointment the community has,” Ms. Masnata said, adding that many of her peers were concerned about grocery and housing prices, and the administration using immigration as a political talking point. “They know we have one option that is less threatening to our community, but they don’t feel backed by President Biden, either.”

Like the overall electorate in Nevada, Mr. Tuman said, Latino voters want to see progress on the economy, including job growth and lower housing costs.

Mr. Biden visited Washoe County, the home of Reno and Nevada’s lone swing county, where he said Mr. Trump would work to undo the Biden administration’s agenda. At the same time, his campaign kicked off a program called Latinos con Biden-Harris, which will organize Latino voters in battleground states with significant Hispanic communities, including Nevada, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Wisconsin. It will focus on Mexican Americans, Venezuelan Americans and Puerto Ricans.

Mr. Biden later traveled to Stupak Community Center in Las Vegas, where he spoke of his efforts to cut housing costs.

In a sign of how the White House hoped his economic message would appeal to Latino voters, Mr. Biden was introduced by Juan Pablo Leos Soria, a member of a union for plasterers and cement masons, who rallied the crowd by saying he was on his way to soon buying a home.

“I know he’s making this a reality for so many people just like me,” Mr. Leos Soria said.

But Mr. Biden can do little to change mortgage rates — they are heavily influenced by the Federal Reserve. The average 30-year mortgage rate jumped to nearly 8 percent last fall from below 3 percent in 2021. It now sits just under 7 percent.

Mr. Biden once again called on Congress to pass a mortgage relief credit that would give first-time homeowners a $10,000 tax credit. He promoted his coronavirus stimulus plan, which invested $1 billion in Nevada to help provide affordable housing and lower housing costs. And he said his new budget proposal would include a $20 billion grant fund for affordable housing.

Mr. Biden later traveled to a Mexican restaurant in Phoenix and brought with him a blunt message.

“You’re the reason why in large part I beat Donald Trump,” Mr. Biden said at an event meant to rally Latino voters. “I need you badly.”

This article appeared in print on page A13.

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[***This Is What Elite Failure Looks Like; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CDP-W1Y1-DXY4-X1VH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3603 words

**Byline:** Oren Cass

**Highlight:** A revolution is about to swallow U.S. politics, and it’s based on the simplest and most radical theory of power.

**Body**

I first learned about the opioid crisis three presidential elections ago, in the fall of 2011. I was the domestic policy director for Mitt Romney’s campaign and questions began trickling in from the New Hampshire team: What’s our plan?

By then, opioids had been fueling the deadliest drug epidemic in American history for years. I am ashamed to say I did not know what they were. Opioids, as in opium? I looked it up online. Pills of some kind. Tell them it’s a priority, and President Obama isn’t working. That year saw [*nearly 23,000 deaths*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) from opioid overdoses nationwide.

I was no outlier. America’s political class was in the final stages of self-righteous detachment from the economic and social conditions of the nation it ruled. The infamous [*bitter clinger*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) and “[*47 percent*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf)” comments by Mr. Obama and Mr. Romney captured the atmosphere well: delivered at private fund-raisers in San Francisco in 2008 and Boca Raton in 2012, evincing disdain for the voters who lived in between. The opioid crisis gained more attention in the years after the election, particularly in 2015, with Anne Case and Angus Deaton’s [*research*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) on deaths of despair.

Of course, 2015’s most notable political development was Donald Trump’s presidential campaign launch and subsequent steamrolling of 16 Republican primary opponents committed to party orthodoxy. In the 2016 general election he narrowly defeated the former first lady, senator and secretary of state Hillary Clinton, who didn’t need her own views of Americans leaked: In public remarks, she [*gleefully*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) classified half of the voters who supported Mr. Trump as “deplorables,” as her audience laughed and applauded. That year saw more than [*42,000 deaths*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) from opioid overdoses.

In a democratic republic such as the United States, where the people elect leaders to govern on their behalf, the ballot box is the primary check on an unresponsive, incompetent or corrupt ruling class — or, as Democrats may be learning, a ruling class that insists on a candidate who voters no longer believe can lead. If those in power come to believe they are the only logical options, the people can always prove them wrong. For a frustrated populace, an anti-establishment outsider’s ability to wreak havoc is a feature rather than a bug. The elevation of such a candidate to high office should provoke immediate soul-searching and radical reform among the highly credentialed leaders across government, law, media, business, academia and so on — collectively, the elites.

The response to Mr. Trump’s success, unfortunately, has been the opposite. Seeing him elected once, faced with the reality that he may well win again, most elites have doubled down. We have not failed, the thinking goes; we have been failed, by the American people. In some tellings, grievance-filled Americans simply do not appreciate their prosperity. In others they are incapable of informed judgments, leaving them susceptible to demagoguery and foreign manipulation. Or perhaps they are just too racist to care — never mind that polling consistently suggests that most of Mr. Trump’s supporters are women and minorities, or that polling shows he is attracting far greater Black and Hispanic support than prior Republican leaders.

Mr. Trump is by no means an ideal tribune of the popular will, especially considering his own efforts to defy it after the 2020 presidential election. But the nation, given full opportunity to assess that conduct, seems to have decided it likes him more than ever, at least compared with the alternatives on offer. Somehow the response of elites to that humiliating indictment of their leadership is a redoubled obstinance: Democracy itself is at stake if the election does not go their way, they lecture, even as they [*pursue*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) [*plainly*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) [*anti-democratic*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) strategies. How’s that going? One [*recent poll*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) of swing-state voters found that most see “threats to democracy” as an extremely important issue in the coming election, and that they are more likely to believe Mr. Trump can handle the issue well.

The result is a shockingly irresponsible national game of chicken. Barreling from one side are elites who remain fully committed to their own preferences, to pulling the levers of power for their own benefit and to offering candidates in both parties who would preserve the status quo. Barreling from the other are ordinary people, the majority of Americans, who reject elite preferences but feel unable to assert others, except through the last resort that democracy affords them. Both sides are honking as loudly as they can.

The people do not pull to the side, nor should they. “The administration of the government, like the office of a trustee, must be conducted for the benefit of those entrusted to one’s care, not of those to whom it is entrusted,” observed Cicero more than 2,000 years ago. Anyone worried about the future of American democracy should be concerned foremost with the elites’ bizarre belief that the road is theirs. This is the root cause of present instability and poses the most serious long-term threat to the Republic.

The U.S. Constitution is designed to bend without breaking regardless of any one election’s outcome. It has done so before and it will do so again. In [*words widely attributed to James Madison*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf), “dependence on the people is no doubt the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.” Thus the separation of powers, the checks and balances, the countervailing state and federal power. But no system can save a nation from a ruling class so unresponsive that it would choose to accelerate toward political collapse.

Taking the majority’s preferences seriously, even when they conflict with the preferences of more sophisticated experts, is often disparaged as populism. But while elected officials and their technocratic advisers may have special insight into how the people’s goals are best achieved, only the people can determine what those goals should be and whether they are being met.

Opioid deaths are more than a terrible tragedy. They are also a telltale sign of national decay and desperation. Wages for the typical worker have stagnated for decades, and [*research I conducted at American Compass*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf), the think tank where I work, has found that the typical worker no longer earns enough to provide middle-class security for a family.

We also found that only around [*one in five*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) young Americans makes the transition smoothly from high school to college to career, and for young men the figure is lower still. The anti-poverty scholar Scott Winship [*has shown*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) that for men ages 25 to 29, inflation-adjusted median earnings and compensation were lower in 2020 than they were 50 years earlier. The years leading up to Mr. Trump’s election coincided with [*the first time on record*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) that Americans ages 18 to 34 were more likely to be living at home with their parents than independently with a significant other.

Measured in flat-screen televisions owned, health-care treatments received and calories consumed, Americans have been on an upward trajectory. But while popular media often translates the American dream as being better off than your parents in materialistic terms, polling conducted by American Compass in partnership with YouGov indicates that [*Americans between 18 and 50*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) were more than twice as likely to say “earning enough to support a family” is what’s most important. Related, our polling has found that the vast majority of American parents consider “being able to support your family on one parent’s income” to be an important or essential [*marker of middle-class life*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf). For all the talk of “upward mobility,” [*more than 90 percent of Americans*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) chose “financial stability” as more important in a 2014 Pew survey.

Note the contrast with the small cohort of upper-class Americans with college degrees and the highest incomes, who see the American dream more in terms of going as far as their talents and hard work take them than as either supporting a family or even getting married and raising children. They prefer having both parents work full-time and using paid child care full-time, and regard the chance for their children to pursue postsecondary education that would offer “the best possible career options but was far from home” as [*more desirable*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) than one that would offer “good career options close to home.” All other groups said they preferred the latter.

The same pattern repeats itself on issue after issue. While policy initiatives so often seek to maximize efficiency and growth, move people to opportunity and redistribute from the economy’s winners to the losers, the typical American has an attachment to place, a focus on family, a commitment to making things, and would accept economic trade-offs in pursuit of those priorities.

Public education [*devotes disproportionate resources*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) to getting students into and through college as compared to the other pathways most ultimately take. But an American Compass survey found that American parents say nearly three to one that the more important [*task*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) should be to “help students develop the skills and values needed to build decent lives in the communities where they live,” compared with helping students “maximize their academic potential and pursue admission to colleges and universities with the best possible reputations.” Most would prefer to have their children offered three-year apprenticeships that lead to good jobs over full college scholarships.

Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, [*remarked*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) recently that concern for American manufacturing reflects “the fetish for keeping white males of low education outside the cities in the powerful positions” he believes they have occupied in America. But to most people, it’s just common sense that making things matters.

Another American Compass poll found that [*Americans agree*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) by 10 to one that “we need a stronger manufacturing sector,” most often because it “is important to a healthy, growing, innovative economy.” Asked to choose, most say they would much rather pay higher prices to strengthen domestic manufacturing than to combat climate change. Only the upper class was evenly split on this question. Is America a “nation of immigrants”? Perhaps. But while most Americans believe that immigration is a good thing for the country, at no time on record have more than around one-third wanted to [*increase immigration levels*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf); support for decreasing the level is almost always much stronger.

The important feature of all these preferences is that they are inherently valid. No set of facts or statistical analyses, to which an expert might have superior access, overrides what people actually value and what trade-offs they would choose to make. Leaders might seek to shape public opinion and alter preferences — indeed, that is part of leading — but they must yield to the outcome. Their obligation is to pursue the community’s priorities, not their own.

The Democratic Party celebrates worker power but has little appetite for enforcing immigration law, let alone reducing the legal level of low-skill immigration. Its education policy strives to pay off the debts of the college-educated while leaving the broken system that created the debts largely untouched and the majority who do not earn college degrees underserved. President Biden’s agenda features welcome emphasis on domestic manufacturing, but with a counterproductive and distinctly elite approach to a green transition.

Climate change is a problem worth fighting, but many Americans have been rightly doubtful that the enormous cost of economic transformation is [*worth the benefits*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) these programs promise. The existing energy sector provides productive blue-collar jobs and a source of inexpensive power. A [*coherent industrial policy*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) would double down on those advantages; investing hundreds of billions of dollars to jeopardize them may satisfy climate activists, but the trade-off is a poor one for workers and their communities.

As for the Republican establishment: During the Trump administration, a G.O.P.-controlled Congress made its one major accomplishment a tax cut. Wall Street remains mostly off-limits to criticism, let alone constraint. Representative Patrick McHenry, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, has obstructed efforts to restrict U.S. investment in China and, in fact, [*argued for expanding it*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf). Former Vice President Mike Pence’s organization Advancing American Freedom [*says*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) that making more ***working-class*** families eligible to receive the full child tax credit would transform it “into another welfare program.” The party’s anti-Trump faction spent eight years plotting its return to power only to rally behind Nikki Haley, the quintessential vessel for the anti-government, pro-globalization ideology already rejected by the party’s voters.

The promise — and necessity — of the more populist mode of economic policy gaining momentum in the United States is that it chooses differently on all these fronts. Mr. Trump himself represents that movement imperfectly, and most often just by rejecting the old regime. Like an earthquake triggered by the shifting tectonic plates of American politics, he disrupted a great deal. And in shaking existing structures to their foundations, he exposed and collapsed those that were outdated or poorly constructed. But his manner is not that of a rebuilder.

Look toward the horizon, though, to the next generation of conservatives poised to lead the post-Trump Republican Party, and the signs of a possible sea change are visible. A cadre of young senators, led by Marco Rubio, J.D. Vance, Josh Hawley and Tom Cotton, have released a flood of proposals in the past few years for reshaping global trade and confronting China, rebuilding domestic manufacturing, removing environmental constraints on industrial development, enforcing immigration law and reducing the flow of low-wage workers into the country, discouraging mergers and taxing stock buybacks more aggressively, shifting resources from higher education to noncollege pathways, providing financial support directly to working families instead of through child-care subsidies, and so on. (My organization has worked with all four lawmakers on a variety of proposals.) They have done things like join picket lines with striking workers, push to increase the minimum wage and demand stronger regulation of railroads. Not coincidentally, Mr. Rubio, Mr. Vance and Mr. Cotton have [*all received attention*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) as potential running mates for Mr. Trump.

They have areas of agreement with Democrats that present enormous opportunities for progress — and have already yielded some bipartisan legislation — but the conservative reformers’ positions on immigration, climate, education and family policies signal a different set of priorities. They also pair this economic agenda with an unapologetic patriotism and more traditional views on hot-button issues such as policing, racial preferences and transgender athletes.

Two threads run through this more populist, conservative economics, and they offer the best hope of rebuilding a capitalism that first and foremost serves the prosperity, liberty and security of the American people. The first thread is creating productive markets, which starts with an acknowledgment that many are anything but. The key to capitalism, as Adam Smith observed with his metaphor of the invisible hand, is that private actors pursuing their own self-interest can behave in ways that advance the public interest as well. But this holds true only if the activities that yield the greatest profit are also ones that yield broad benefits. Smith was quite explicit: For the invisible hand to work, the capitalist must prefer “the support of domestic to that of foreign industry” and “direct that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value,” which would also “give revenue and employment to the greatest number of people of his own country.”

Those are substantial constraints, which modern economists managed to miss. When larger, easier profits can be achieved by offshoring production to countries that exploit workers or bringing foreign workers who will [*accept lower wages into the country*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf), corporations will do just that. When the highest compensation goes to Wall Street speculators and the developers of addictive social-media algorithms, the most promising business leaders will pursue those careers. What share of Ivy League graduates bring their talents to vocations that will improve the productivity, and with it the earning potential, of anyone without a college degree, or create booming new businesses in struggling regions? It should be no surprise that the productivity growth [*necessary for rising wages*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) has slowed and, in manufacturing, turned negative, that the longtime pattern in American economic development of poorer areas catching up with richer ones [*no longer holds.*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf)

The tragedy, but also the good news, is that these trends are not inevitable. They represent foolish policy choices, which means we can choose differently. Instead of the globalization that cast aside workers like unsold inventory and hollowed out communities, we can structure our trade and industrial policies to ensure the path to profit runs through domestic investment that creates productive jobs throughout the country. Instead of allowing migrants to enter the country illegally and employers to exploit them, we can enforce our laws rigorously and further restrict entry into the labor market’s low end, forcing employers to offer good, highly productive jobs to American workers [*instead of undercutting them*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf).

In the financial sector, deregulation, tax and bankruptcy laws, international agreements and the [*mismanagement of public pensions*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) have all encouraged the smart money and top talent to gravitate toward manipulating and trading piles of assets rather than building anything. Capital markets that once served to deploy the nation’s accumulated wealth broadly now extract value from enterprises and communities to reaccumulate it in narrow enclaves. The financial sector keeps growing, salaries and profits keep rising, and yet my research has shown that [*actual investment*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) has been weakening. This is not the capitalism that any coherent economics would celebrate. Some leaders on the right have now joined those on the left in arguing that its excesses must be discouraged, regulated, taxed and perhaps banned.

The second thread that runs through this new conservative economics is supporting communities. People rely on the institutions around them, beginning with their families, to form them as productive citizens, to help them build decent lives and to prepare them to raise children of their own. But it is the Americans most in need of supportive communities who are often least likely to have them. The elite conception of support for families tends to be paid leave and child-care subsidies that push toward the career-optimizing and G.D.P.-maximizing arrangement of all parents in the work force. Proper family policy, as a range of Republicans [*have now proposed*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf), would provide funds directly to working families to help with the cost of raising children and let them arrange their lives as they themselves prefer. Public education, likewise, would focus less on filling the high-school-to-college-to-career pipeline that benefits so few and more on improving the range of pathways that most people travel.

Another key institution is the labor union. Organized labor can be a vital force for giving workers power in the labor market, representation on the job and support in the community. Unfortunately, in the United States, the labor movement now often operates as a force for progressive political activism unrelated to the priorities of most workers, which may help explain why [*nearly three-quarters of potential union members say*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) they would prefer a worker organization that focused only on workplace issues to one that is also engaged in national politics. Some conservatives are making progress by working directly with less partisan unions and proposing alternative forms of representation that might put worker representatives on corporate boards or encourage industrywide bargaining rather than company-by-company fights.

In 2023, the United States saw [*81,000 deaths*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf) from opioid overdose. Other forms of drug overdose are climbing faster: Fatal cocaine overdoses rose sixfold in [*the past decade*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf), to 30,000. Psychostimulant deaths rose tenfold, to 36,000. All told, the rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States is now similar to the average death rate from alcohol use disorders in Russia during the decade after the Soviet Union’s collapse.

Are American elites capable of seeing beyond their own preferences? Can they admit that what they value is not what’s best for everyone — shoddily constructed rationales notwithstanding? Their moment of decision — the oncoming car — feels like it is fast approaching. The off-ramp is available, but only they can decide to take it.

Oren Cass is the chief economist at American Compass, a conservative economic think tank, and writes the newsletter Understanding America.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.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.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db457-tables.pdf).

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[***Joe From Scranton Didn’t Win Back the Working Class; On Politics With Lisa Lerer***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61FJ-TVB1-JBG3-616T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

An economic analysis of the counties that Joe Biden won and lost shows how the two parties are continuing to realign.

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For years, Democrats have preached [*the gospel*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) of [*changing demographics*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline).

As the country grew more diverse, they argued, the electorate would inevitably tilt in their favor and give their party an unbeatable edge.

Well, the country is more racially diverse than ever before. But exit polls suggest that Joe Biden lost ground among [*Latino, Black*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) and [*Asian-American voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) in 2020 compared with Hillary Clinton’s performance in 2016.

Demographics, it turns out, are not political destiny. But diplomas just might be.

The clearest way to understand the results of the 2020 election — and, perhaps, the shifting state of our politics — is through the education voting gap. Voters with college degrees flocked to Mr. Biden, emerging as the crucial voting bloc in the suburbs. Those without them continued their flight from the Democratic Party.

“The big-picture problem is that the Democratic Party is increasingly reflecting the cultural values and political preferences of educated white people,” said David Shor, a data scientist who advises Democratic campaigns and organizations. “Culturally, ***working-class*** nonwhite people have more in common with ***working-class*** white people.”

The shifts were at the margins: Voters of color still overwhelmingly backed Mr. Biden, sticking with the Democratic candidate as they had for decades. But these small swings hint at the possibility of a broader realignment in American politics. Political parties, after all, are dynamic. Coalitions can and do change.

Think about how Democrats have won over the past four years. In 2018, they flipped affluent, diversifying inner-ring suburbs and ran up their margins in cities to gain control of the House of Representatives. Mr. Biden followed that same path to the presidency: [*A New York Times analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) found that he improved on Mrs. Clinton’s performance in suburban counties by an average of about five percentage points.

What else do these areas have in common? They are more likely to be dominated by highly educated voters.

One way to examine this trend county by county is to look at the number of voters who have white- or blue-collar jobs. (I know, your buddy never graduated from college and now makes a killing as a real estate broker. It’s not a perfect metric but a pretty good proxy for education, given the economic data available.)

The results were striking. Of the 265 counties most dominated by blue-collar workers — areas where at least 40 percent of employed adults have jobs in construction, the service industry or other nonprofessional fields — Mr. Biden won just 15, according to data from researchers at the Economic Innovation Group, a bipartisan policy research group.

On average, the work force in counties won by Mr. Biden was about 23 percent blue collar. In counties won by President Trump, blue-collar workers made up an average of 31 percent of the work force.

This isn’t a new trend. For decades, Democrats have been trading the support of union members for broader backing from the professional classes. And the G.O.P., once the party of white college-educated voters, has increasingly found support among white ***working-class*** voters.

Many Democratic primary voters saw Mr. Biden as uniquely positioned to cut into the Republican advantage with the ***working class***. For decades, he’s built his political brand on being a scrappy kid from Scranton, Pa., who became just another guy riding the train to work. The rallying cry of his campaign in the final weeks was: “This election is Scranton versus Park Avenue.”

But Mr. Biden fared worse than Mrs. Clinton in 2016 and Barack Obama in 2012 and 2008 in counties dominated by blue-collar workers.

That outcome should scare Democratic strategists about their party’s future, Mr. Shor said, because of structural dynamics like the Electoral College that give rural areas political influence far beyond the size of their population.

If Democrats can’t win blue-collar workers in less-populated areas — or at least cut some of their losses — winning control of the Senate or the White House will become very difficult. And with Republicans maintaining their hold on state legislatures, Democrats may find themselves cut out of some of those friendlier suburban House seats when districts are redrawn after the census.

“It’s very hard for us to imagine us taking the Senate between now and the end of the decade,” Mr. Shor said. “And it would be very hard just to win the presidency. Our institutions are very biased specifically against this coalition we are putting together.”

What is happening with Georgia Republicans?

Georgia is on my mind this week. (Yes, I know, low-hanging cliché.)

With control of the Senate hinging on the two runoff elections there, the political world is pouring money and resources into the state. But as we reported this week, things are getting [*a little … complicated*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline).

Unsurprisingly, the cause of the political chaos is President Trump. As he continues to push baseless allegations about the presidential election results in Georgia — a state he lost — Republicans are getting nervous that his attacks could depress their turnout in the Jan. 5 runoffs.

Some Trump allies in the state have urged conservatives to boycott the election or write in Mr. Trump’s name — an option that’s not even provided on the runoff ballot. Though Mr. Trump and his campaign have tried to distance themselves from that effort, they’ve continued their drumbeat of attacks on Gov. Brian Kemp, a Republican, and other G.O.P. election officials. Some Republican strategists were worried that rhetoric [*could further alienate suburban voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), who helped deal Mr. Trump his loss in Georgia but might be more receptive to the Republican runoff candidates, the incumbent Senators Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue.

Mr. Trump [*is scheduled to campaign with them*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) in Valdosta, Ga., on Saturday. Republicans are uncertain whether his remarks could do more harm than help, particularly if he remains unable to put aside some of his personal pique about his own loss.

The situation offers a preview of the kind of political dynamics that Republicans could face even after Mr. Trump leaves office as [*they try to navigate his continuing ambitions*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline). With the president considering [*another run for the White House in 2024*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline), his political aspirations may not align with Republicans’ goals in a divided Washington.

By the numbers: $908 billion

… [*That’s the new starting point*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline) in negotiations for another pandemic relief bill.

With coronavirus cases spiking and the economy showing signs of weakening, Democrats made a big concession — they had been demanding at least $2 trillion — to prod Republicans and the Trump administration into compromise legislation.

Along with ending a monthslong congressional stalemate, passage of stimulus legislation could help the new Biden administration enter office on slightly stronger economic footing.

… Seriously

I did not think anything could outdo Rudy Giuliani’s [*dripping face*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline).

[*I was wrong.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/politics?module=inline)

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS)

**Load-Date:** December 5, 2020

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[***Trump Again Invokes ‘Blood Bath’ and Dehumanizes Migrants in Border Remarks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPH-9NW1-JBG3-6013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 2, 2024 Tuesday 23:54 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1272 words

**Byline:** Michael Gold and Anjali Huynh Michael Gold is a political correspondent for The Times covering the campaigns of Donald J. Trump and other candidates in the 2024 presidential elections. 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 has tried to stoke fear around immigration and border security throughout his 2024 campaign, as he has done in the past.

**Body**

The former president has tried to stoke fear around immigration and border security throughout his 2024 campaign, as he has done in the past.

Former President Donald J. Trump again cast President Biden’s immigration record in violent and ominous terms on Tuesday, accusing him in two speeches in battleground states of creating a “border blood bath” and once more using dehumanizing language to describe some migrants entering the country illegally.

In a speech in Grand Rapids, Mich., Mr. Trump, flanked by law enforcement officers, reiterated his baseless claim that other countries were sending “prisoners, murderers, drug dealers, mental patients and terrorists, the worst they have” to the United States. Immigration officials have said that most of the people crossing the border are members of vulnerable families escaping poverty and violence.

Mr. Trump also used his speech, which lasted roughly 45 minutes, to defend his use of dehumanizing language to refer to immigrants accused of crimes. After referring to the man who the authorities say killed a 22-year-old nursing student in Georgia in February, Mr. Trump said: “Democrats said please don’t call them ‘animals.’ I said, no, they’re not humans, they’re animals.”

Mr. Trump drew attention last month when, while discussing the U.S. auto industry, he predicted a “blood bath for the country” should he lose in November. After critics accused him of stoking violence, Mr. Trump and his allies pointed back to Mr. Biden, insisting he was responsible for a “blood bath” because of his immigration policies.

The former president has repeatedly criticized Mr. Biden, accusing him of maintaining lax border security that he blames for violent crime, though available data does not support the idea that migrants are contributing to increases in crime.

Mr. Trump’s campaign appears to be trying to turn “blood bath” into a catchphrase, essentially trolling his critics and shifting the focus to Mr. Biden. On Tuesday, the Republican National Committee, which the Trump campaign now effectively controls, introduced a website, BidenBloodbath.com, that mirrors Mr. Trump’s argument that Mr. Biden is responsible for an “invasion” at the United States’ border with Mexico. The site highlights a number of violent crimes in which undocumented immigrants have been accused.

But his remarks in Michigan and at a rally later in Green Bay, Wis., also demonstrated how the former president has tried to stoke fears around immigration and border security in the 2024 election, a tactic he used effectively in 2016. Republicans have been eager to keep the issue at the top of voters’ minds in a bid to chip away at Mr. Biden’s support.

“This is country-changing, it’s country-threatening, and it’s country-wrecking,” Mr. Trump said in Michigan of migrants crossing the southern border. “They have wrecked our country.”

Democrats have pushed back against that framing. Ahead of Mr. Trump’s visit, the Democratic National Committee put up billboards near Grand Rapids referring to a bipartisan border bill that fell apart in the Senate after Mr. Trump pressed Republicans to block it. The billboards claimed that “Donald Trump broke the border” and that the former president wanted only “chaos, not solutions.”

Mr. Trump’s speeches in both states were his first campaign events after a weekslong break from the trail, during which he raised money, contended with legal issues and blasted his political and legal opponents on social media.

Mr. Trump has seized on high-profile crimes involving immigrants to try to make inroads in key battleground states, including Michigan and Wisconsin, connecting the influx of migrants at the southern border to states hundreds of miles away.

On Tuesday, he said that “once peaceful suburban Michigan” was coming “under an invasion” and spoke of the recent killing of Ruby Garcia, who was found dead on the side of a highway in Grand Rapids last month. The authorities have said that Ms. Garcia was dating the man accused of killing her, who [*entered the country illegally*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) as a child and was deported to Mexico in 2020.

Michigan Democrats blasted Mr. Trump’s references to Ms. Garcia in remarks before his appearance. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Democrat of Michigan, [*said Mr. Trump was “exploiting”*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) Ms. Garcia’s death and called his response “shameful.” And while Mr. Trump said in Michigan that he had spoken with some of Ms. Garcia’s family, her sister [*told a local television station*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) that Mr. Trump “did not speak with us.”

Ahead of Mr. Trump’s speech in Michigan, his campaign handed out packets to reporters that highlighted other people who the campaign said had been affected by crimes involving undocumented immigrants. They included Laken Riley, the Georgia nursing student whose death has become a flashpoint among Republicans. The authorities say Ms. Riley was killed by a Venezuelan migrant who had entered the country illegally.

Pete Hoekstra, the chair of the Michigan Republican Party, said that “it’s clear immigration and the economy are going to dominate the debate here in Michigan.” He added that he believed voters in the state “look at what’s happening on the border, and it’s hard for them to believe exactly what they’re seeing, that there’s no rule of law.”

Both Michigan and Wisconsin were part of the so-called blue wall that Democrats had counted on for two decades before the 2016 race, when Mr. Trump won over ***working-class*** white voters who are key parts of the electorate in both states.

Mr. Biden won both states in 2020, although Mr. Trump falsely claimed during his rally in Wisconsin, which held its [*presidential primaries on Tuesday*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/), that he had won there “by a lot” and insisted that the election had been stolen from him.

Democrats also won governors’ races in both states in 2018 and defended their seats in 2022, in part by making protecting abortion access central to their races.

The party continued its efforts on Tuesday to make abortion rights a key campaign issue. Though Mr. Biden did not hold public campaign events, his campaign seized on a ruling by the Florida Supreme Court on Monday that allowed the state’s [*six-week abortion ban*](https://www.nytco.com/careers/newsroom/newsroom-fellowship/) but also put abortion access on the ballot there this fall.

There is little indication that Mr. Biden will devote significant time and resources to competing in Florida. But his campaign released a television ad that it plans to run in battleground states — including Michigan and Wisconsin — that attacked Mr. Trump for statements claiming credit for the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade in 2022.

A senior adviser to the Trump campaign, Brian Hughes, addressed the ruling in Florida, saying in a statement that Mr. Trump supports states’ rights and thinks “voters should have the last word.”

Mr. Trump did not mention abortion, or his role in appointing three of the Supreme Court justices who helped overturn Roe, at either event. But after his remarks in Michigan, he responded to a reporter’s question about the Florida ruling by saying that his campaign would “be making a statement next week” on abortion.

A spokeswoman for the Democratic National Committee, Aida Ross, said in a statement: “We don’t need to wait until next week to know where Donald Trump stands on abortion — he has been peddling the same anti-choice extremism for years.”

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from Washington.

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from Washington.

PHOTO: “They have wrecked our country,” former President Donald J. Trump said of migrants during an event in Michigan on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NIC ANTAYA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2024

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[***Alex Karp Has Money and Power. So What Does He Want?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CRN-9J31-JBG3-605P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 7071 words

**Byline:** Maureen Dowd Maureen Dowd is an Opinion columnist for The Times. She won the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for distinguished commentary.

**Highlight:** In a rare in-depth interview, this billionaire man of mystery, the head of Palantir Technologies, talks about war, A.I. and America’s future.

**Body**

Alex Karp never learned to drive.

“I was too poor,” he said. “And then I was too rich.”

In fact, Mr. Karp, a co-founder and the C.E.O. of Palantir Technologies, the mysterious and powerful data analytics firm, doesn’t trust himself to drive. Or ride a bike. Or ski downhill.

“I’m a dreamer,” he said. “I’ll start dreaming and then I fall over. I started doing tai chi to prevent that. It’s really, really helped with focusing on one thing at a time. If you had met me 15 years ago, two-thirds of the conversation, I’d just be dreaming.”

What would he dream about?

“Literally, it could be a walk I did five years ago,” he said. “It could be some conversation I had in grad school. Could be my family member annoyed me. Something a colleague said, like: ‘Why did they say this? What does it actually mean?’”

Mr. Karp is a lean, extremely fit billionaire with unruly salt-and-pepper curls. He is introvert-charming (something I aspire to myself). He has A.D.H.D. and can’t hide it if he is not interested in what someone is saying. After a hyper spurt of talking, he loses energy and has to recharge on the stationary bike or by reading. Even though he thinks of himself as different, he seems to like being different. He enjoys being a provocateur onstage and in interviews.

“I’m a Jewish, racially ambiguous dyslexic, so I can say anything,” he said, smiling.

Unlike many executives in Silicon Valley, Mr. Karp backed President Biden, cutting him a big check, despite skepticism about his handling of the border and his overreliance on Hollywood elites like Jeffrey Katzenberg. Now he is supporting Vice President Kamala Harris, but he still has vociferous complaints about his party.

When he donates, he said, he does it in multiples of 18 because “it’s mystical — 18 brings good luck in the tradition of kabbalah. I gave Biden $360,000.”

The 56-year-old is perfectly happy hanging out in a remote woodsy meadow alone — except for his Norwegian ski instructor, his Swiss-Portuguese chef, his Austrian assistant, his American shooting instructor and his bodyguards. (Mr. Karp, who has never married, once complained that bodyguards crimp your ability to flirt.)

“This is like introverts’ heaven,” he said, looking at his red barn from the porch of his Austrian-style house with a mezuza on the door. “You can invite people graciously. No one comes.”

The house is sparse on furniture, but Mr. Karp still worries that it is too cluttered. “I do have a Spartan thing,” he said. “I definitely feel constrained and slightly imprisoned when I have too much stuff around me.”

So how did a daydreaming doctoral student in German philosophy wind up leading a shadowy data analytics firm that has become a major American defense contractor, one that works with spy services as it charts the future of autonomous warfare?

He’s not a household name, and yet Mr. Karp is at the vanguard of what Mark Milley, the retired general and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has called “the most significant fundamental change in the character of war ever recorded in history.” In this new world, unorthodox Silicon Valley entrepreneurs like Mr. Karp and Elon Musk are woven into the fabric of America’s national security.

Mr. Karp is also at the white-hot center of ethical issues about whether firms like Palantir are too Big Brother, with access to so much of our personal data as we sign away our privacy. And he is in the middle of the debate about whether artificial intelligence is friend or foe, whether killer robots and disembodied A.I. will one day turn on us.

Mr. Karp’s position is that we’re hurtling toward this new world whether we like it or not. Do we want to dominate it, or do we want to be dominated by China?

Critics worry about what happens when weapons are autonomous and humans become superfluous to the killing process. Tech reflects the values of its operators, so what if it falls into the hands of a modern Caligula?

“I think a lot of the issues come back to ‘Are we in a dangerous world where you have to invest in these things?’” Mr. Karp told me, as he moved around his living room in a tai chi rhythm, wearing his house shoes, jeans and a tight white T-shirt. “And I come down to yes. All these technologies are dangerous.” He adds: “The only solution to stop A.I. abuse is to use A.I.”

Inspired by Tolkien

Palantir’s name is derived from palantíri, the seeing stones in the J.R.R. Tolkien fantasies. The company’s office in Palo Alto, Calif., features “Lord of the Rings” décor and is nicknamed the Shire.

After years under the radar, Mr. Karp is now in the public eye. He has joked that he needs a coach to teach him how to be more normal.

Born in New York and raised outside Philadelphia in a leftist family, Mr. Karp has a Jewish father who was a pediatrician and a Black mother who is an artist. They were social activists who took young Alex to civil rights marches and other protests. His uncle, Gerald D. Jaynes, is an economics and African American studies professor at Yale; his brother, Ben, is an academic who lives in Japan.

“I just think I’ve always viewed myself as I don’t fit in, and I can’t really try to,” Mr. Karp said. “My parents’ background just gave me a primordial subconscious bias that anything that involves ‘We fit in together’ does not include me.

“Yes, I think the way I explain it politically is like, if fascism comes, I will be the first or second person on the wall.”

Mr. Karp has his own unique charisma. “He’s one of a kind, to say the least,” said the Democratic strategist James Carville, who is an informal adviser to Palantir.

When I visited the Palo Alto office, Mr. Karp accidentally knocked down a visitor while demonstrating a tai chi move. He apologized, then ran off to get a printout of Goethe’s “Faust” in German, which he read aloud in an effort to show that it was better than the English translation.

“If you were to do a sitcom on Palantir, it’s equal parts Larry David, a philosophy class, tech and James Bond,” he said.

Palantir was founded in 2003 by a gang of five, including Karp and his old Stanford Law School classmate Peter Thiel (now the company’s chairman). It was backed, in part, by nearly $2 million from In-Q-Tel, the C.I.A.’s venture capital arm.

“Saving lives and on occasion taking lives is super interesting,” Mr. Karp told me.

He described what his company does as “the finding of hidden things” — sifting through mountains of data to perceive patterns, including patterns of suspicious or aberrant behavior.

Mr. Karp does not believe in appeasement. “You scare the crap out of your adversaries,” he said. He brims with American chauvinism, boasting that we are leagues ahead of China and Russia on software.

“The tech scene in America is like the jazz scene in the 1950s,” he said in one forum. He told me: “I’m constantly telling people 86 percent of the top 50 tech companies in the world just by market cap are American — and people fall out of their chair. It’s hard for us to understand how dominant we are in certain industries.”

In the wake of 9/11, the C.I.A. bet on Palantir’s maw gobbling up data and auguring where the next terrorist attacks would come from. Palantir uses multiple databases to find the bad guy, even, as Mr. Karp put it, “if the bad guy actually works for you.”

The company is often credited with helping locate Osama bin Laden so [*Navy SEALs*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) could kill him, but it’s unclear if that is true. As with many topics that came up in the course of our interviews in Washington, Palo Alto and New Hampshire, Mr. Karp zips his lips about whether his company was involved in dispatching the fiend of 9/11.

“If you have a reputation for talking about what the pope says when you meet him,” Mr. Karp explained, “you’ll never meet the pope again.”

He does crow a little about Western civilization’s resting on Palantir’s slender shoulders, noting that without its software, “you would’ve had massive terror attacks in Europe already, like Oct. 7 style.” And those attacks, he believes, would have propelled the far right to power.

Palantir does not do business with China, Russia or other countries that are opposed to the West. Mr. Thiel said the company tries to work with “more allied” and “less corrupt” governments, noting dryly that aside from their ideological stances, “with corrupt countries, you never get paid.”

“We have a consistently pro-Western view that the West has a superior way of living and organizing itself, especially if we live up to our aspirations,” Mr. Karp said. “It’s interesting how radical that is, considering it’s not, in my view, that radical.”

He added: “If you believe we should appease Iran, Russia and China by saying we’re going to be nicer and nicer and nicer, of course you’ll look at Palantir negatively. Some of these places want you to do the apology show for what you believe in, and we don’t apologize for what we believe in. I’m not going to apologize for defending the U.S. government on the border, defending the Special Ops, bringing the people home. I’m not apologizing for giving our product to Ukraine or Israel or lots of other places.”

As one Karp acquaintance put it: “Alex is principled. You just may not like his principles.”

Kara Swisher, the author of “Burn Book: A Tech Love Story,” told me: “While Palantir promises a more efficient and cost-effective way to conduct war, should our goal be to make it less expensive, onerous and painful? After all, war is not a video game, nor should it be.”

Mr. Karp’s friend [*Diane von Furstenberg*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) told me that he sees himself as Batman, believing in the importance of choosing sides in a parlous world. (The New York office is called Gotham and features a statue and prints of Batman.) But some critics have a darker view, worrying about Palantir creating a “digital kill chain” and seeing Mr. Karp less as a hero than as a villain.

Back in 2016, some Democrats regarded Palantir as ominous because of Mr. Thiel’s support for former President Donald J. Trump. Later, conspiracy theories sprang up around the company’s role in [*Operation*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) [*Warp Speed*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html), the federal effort pushing the Covid-19 vaccine program from clinical trials to jabs in arms.

Some critics focused on Palantir’s work at the border, which helped U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement track down undocumented migrants for deportation. In 2019, about 70 demonstrators blocked access to the cafeteria outside the Palo Alto office. “Immigrants are welcome here, time to cancel Palantir,” they shouted.

The same year, over 200 Palantir employees, in a letter to Mr. Karp, outlined their concerns about the software that had helped ICE. And there was a campaign inside Palantir — in vain — to get him to donate the proceeds of a $49 million ICE contract to charity.

I asked Mr. Karp if Mr. Thiel’s public embrace of Mr. Trump the first time around had made life easier — in terms of getting government contracts — or harder.

“I didn’t enjoy it,” he said. “There’s a lot of reasons I cut Biden a check. I do not enjoy being protested every day. It was completely ludicrous and ridiculous. It was actually the opposite. Because Peter had supported Mr. Trump, it was actually harder to get things done.”

Did they talk about it?

“Peter and I talk about everything,” Mr. Karp said. “It’s like, yes, I definitely informed Peter, ‘This is not making our life easier.’”

Mr. Thiel did not give money to Mr. Trump or speak at his convention this time around, although he supports JD Vance, his former protégé at his venture capital firm. He said he might get [*more involved*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) now because of Mr. Vance.

Palantir got its start in intelligence and defense — it now works with the Space Force — and has since sprouted across the government through an array of contracts. It helps the I.R.S. to identify tax fraud and the Food and Drug Administration to prevent supply chain disruptions and to get drugs to market quicker.

It has assisted Ukraine and Israel in sifting through seas of data to gather relevant intelligence in their wars — on how to protect special forces by mapping capabilities, how to safely transport troops and how to target drones and missiles more accurately.

In 2022, Mr. Karp took a secret trip to war-ravaged Kyiv, becoming the first major Western C.E.O. to meet with Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelensky, and offering to supply his country with the technology that would allow it to be David to Russia’s Goliath. Time magazine ran a [*cover*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) on Ukraine as a lab for A.I. warfare, and Palantir operatives embedded with the troops.

While Palantir’s role in helping Ukraine was heralded, its work with Israel, where targeting is more treacherous, because the enemy is parasitically entangled with civilians, is far more controversial.

“I think there’s a huge dichotomy between how the elite sees Ukraine and Israel,” Mr. Karp said. “If you go into any elite circle, pushing back against Russia is obvious, and Israel is complicated. If you go outside elite circles, it’s exactly the opposite.”

Independent analysts have said that Israel, during an April operation, could not have [*shot down*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) scores of Iranian missiles and drones in mere minutes without Palantir’s tech. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s scorched-earth campaign in Gaza, the starving and orphaned children and the deaths of tens of thousands of civilians have drawn outrage, including some aimed at Mr. Karp and Mr. Thiel.

In May, protesters trapped Mr. Thiel inside a student building at the University of Cambridge. In recent days, [*senior U.S. officials have expressed doubts*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) about Israel’s conduct of the war.

Mr. Karp’s position on backing Israel is adamantine. The company took out a full-page ad in The New York Times last year stating that “Palantir stands with Israel.”

“It’s like we have a double standard on Israel,” he told me. If the Oct. 7 attack had happened in America, he said, we would turn the hiding place of our enemies “into a parking lot. There would be no more tunnels.”

As Mr. Karp [*told*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) CNBC in March: “We’ve lost employees. I’m sure we’ll lose more employees. If you have a position that does not cost you ever to lose an employee, it’s not a position.”

He told me, “If you believe that the West should lose and you believe that the only way to defend yourself is always with words and not with actions, you should be skeptical of us.”

He added: “I always think it’s hard because where the critics are right is what we do is morally complex. If you’re supporting the West with products that are used at war, you can’t pretend that there’s a simple answer.”

Does he have any qualms about what his company does?

“I’d have many more qualms if I thought our adversaries were committed to anything like the rule of law,” he said, adding: “A lot of this does come down to, do you think America is a beacon of good or not? I think a lot of the critics, what they actually believe is America is not a force for good.” His feeling is this: “Without being Pollyannaish, idiotic or pretending like any country’s been perfect or there’s not injustice, at the margin, would you want a world where America is stronger, healthy and more powerful, or not?”

Asked about the impending TikTok ban, he said he’s “very in favor.”

“I do not think you should allow an adversary to control an algorithm that is specifically designed to make us slower, more divided and arguably less cognitively fit,” he said.

He considered the anti-Israel demonstrations such “an infection inside society,” reflecting “a pagan religion of mediocrity and discrimination and intolerance, and violence,” that he offered 180 jobs to students who were fearful of staying in college because of a spike in antisemitism on campuses.

“Palantir is a much better diploma,” he told me. “Honestly, it’s helping us, because there are very talented people at the Ivy League, and they’re like, ‘Get me out of here!’”

Mr. Karp sometimes gets emotional in his defense of Palantir. In June, when he received an award named in honor of Dwight Eisenhower at a D.C. gala for national security executives, he teared up. He said that when he lived in Germany, he often thought about the young men from Iowa and Kansas who risked their lives “to free people like me” during World War II. He said he was honored to receive an award named after the president who had integrated schools by force.

Claiming that his products “changed the course of history by stopping terror attacks,” Mr. Karp said that Palantir had also “protected our men and women on the battlefield” and “taken the lives of our enemies, and I don’t think that’s something to be ashamed of.”

He told the gala audience about being “yelled at” by people who “call themselves progressives.”

“I actually am a progressive,” he said. “I want less war. You only stop war by having the best technology and by scaring the bejabers — I’m trying to be nice here — out of our adversaries. If they are not scared, they don’t wake up scared, they don’t go to bed scared, they don’t fear that the wrath of America will come down on them, they will attack us. They will attack us everywhere.”

He added that “we in the corporate world” have “to grow a spine” on issues like the Ivy League protesters: “If we do not win the battle of ideas and reassert basic norms and the basic, obvious idea that America is a noble, great, wonderful aspiration of a dream that we are blessed to be part of, we will have a much, much worse world for all of us.”

How It Started

The wild origin story of Palantir plays like a spy satire.

After graduating from Haverford College, Mr. Karp went to Stanford Law School, which he called “the worst three years of my adult life.”

He wasn’t interested in his classmates’ obsession with landing prestigious jobs at top law firms. “I learned at law school that I cannot do something I do not believe in,” he said, “even if it’s just turning a wrench.”

He met Mr. Thiel, a fellow student, and they immediately hit it off, trash-talking law school and, over beers, debating socialism vs. capitalism. “We argued like feral animals,” Mr. Karp told Michael Steinberger in a [*New York Times Magazine piece*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html).

The liberal Heidegger fan and the conservative René Girard fan made strange bedfellows, but that’s probably what drew them together.

“I think we bonded on this intellectual level where he was this crazy leftist and I was this crazy right-wing person,” Mr. Thiel told me, “but we somehow talked to each other.”

“Alex did the Ph.D. thing," he continued, “which was, in some ways, a very, very insane thing to do after law school, but I was positive on it, because it sounded more interesting than working at a law firm.”

Mr. Karp received his doctorate in neoclassical social theory from Goethe University Frankfurt. He reconnected with Mr. Thiel in 2002, while working at the Jewish Philanthropy Partnership in San Francisco. The two began doing “vague brainstorming,” as Mr. Thiel put it, about a business they could start.

Mr. Thiel thought he could figure out how to find terrorists by using some of the paradigms developed at PayPal, which he helped found, to uncover patterns of fraud.

“I was just always super annoyed when, every time you go to the airport, you had to take off a shoe or you had to go through all this security theater, which was both somewhat taxing but probably had very little to do with actual security,” Mr. Thiel said.

They brought in some software engineers.

“It was two and a half years after 9/11, and you’re starting a software company with people who know nothing about the C.I.A. or any of these organizations,” Mr. Thiel recalled.

It was all very cloak-and-dagger, in an Inspector Clouseau way. They decided to seek out John Poindexter, a retired rear admiral who was dubbed the godfather of modern surveillance; Admiral Poindexter had been forced to resign as President Ronald Reagan’s national security adviser after the Iran-Contra scandal broke. After 9/11, he worked at the Pentagon on a surveillance program called Total Information Awareness.

During the meeting, Mr. Thiel said he felt he was in the presence of a medal-festooned, Machiavelli-loving member of the military brass out of “Dr. Strangelove,” with “a LARPing vibe.”

“We had a hunch that there was a room marked ‘Super-Duper Computer,’ and if you went inside, it was just an empty room,” Mr. Thiel said. They feared their budding algorithm “would end up in a broom closet in the Pentagon,” so they moved on.

In 2005, Mr. Thiel asked Mr. Karp to be the frontman of a company with few employees, no contracts, no investors, no office and no functional tech. “It charitably could have been described as a work in progress,” Mr. Thiel said.

Mr. Karp and his motley crew got a bunch of desks and explained to clients that they were unmanned because the (fictional) engineers were coming in later.

“God knows why Peter picked me as co-founder,” said Mr. Karp, who had to learn about coding on the job. “It was, in all modesty, a very good choice.”

Mr. Thiel explained: “In some ways, Alex doesn’t look like a salesperson from central casting you would send to the C.I.A. The formulation I always have is that if you’re trying to sell something to somebody, the basic paradox is you have to be just like them, so they can trust you — but you have to be very different from them so that they think you have something they don’t have.”

He said that Mr. Karp would not be suited to running Airbnb or Uber “or some mass consumer product.” But Palantir, he said, “is connected with this great set of geopolitical questions about the Western world versus the rising authoritarian powers. So if we can get our governments to function somewhat better, it’s a way to rebalance things in the direction of the West.”

“Normally,” Mr. Thiel continued, “these are bad ideas to have as a company. They’re too abstract, too idealistic. But I think something like this was necessary in the Palantir case. If you didn’t get some energy from thinking about these things, man, we would’ve sold the company after three years.”

Mr. Karp could not have been more of an outsider, to Silicon Valley and to Washington. He and his engineers had to buy suits for their visits to the capital. “We had no believers,” he said. “I kept telling Palantirians to call me Alex, and they kept calling me Dr. Karp. Then I realized the only thing they could believe in was that I had a Ph.D.”

The first few years, when tech investors were more interested in programs that let you play games on your phone, were rough. “We were like pariahs,” Mr. Karp said. “We couldn’t get meetings. If they did, it was a favor to Peter.”

With administrators in Washington, Mr. Karp recalled: “It was like, What is this Frankenstein monster doing in my office, making these wild claims that he can do better on things I have a huge budget for? How can it be that a freak-show motley crew of 12-year-old-looking mostly dudes, led by a pretty unique figure, from their perspective, would be able to do something with 1 percent of the money that we can’t do with billions and billions of dollars?”

“There’s nothing that we did at Palantir in building our software company that’s in any M.B.A.-made playbook,” Mr. Karp said. “Not one. That’s why we have been doing so well.”

He said that “the single most valuable education I had for business was sitting at the Sigmund Freud Institute, because I spent all my time with analysts.” When he worked at the institute in Frankfurt while getting his doctorate, Mr. Karp said, he would smoke cigars and think about “the conscious subconscious.”

“You’d be surprised how much analysts talk about their patients,” he said. “It’s disconcerting, actually. You just learn so much about how humans actually think.” This knowledge helps him motivate his engineers, he said.

How It’s Going

Mr. Karp said he likes to think of Palantir’s workers as part of an artists’ colony or a family; he doesn’t use the word “staff.” He enjoys interviewing prospective employees personally and prides himself on making hires in under two minutes. (He likes to have a few people around who can talk philosophy and literature with him, in German and French.)

“A lot of my populist-left politics actually bleed into my hiring stuff,” he said. “If you ask the question that the Stanford, Harvard, Yale person has answered a thousand times, all you’re learning is that the Stanford, Harvard, Yale person has learned to play the game.”

Even if he gets a good answer from a “privileged” candidate and a bad answer from “the child of a mechanic,” he might prefer the latter if “I have that feeling like I’m in the presence of talent.”

He views Palantirians like the Goonies, underdogs winning in the end. “Most people at Palantir didn’t get to do a lot of winning in high school,” Mr. Karp said at a company gathering in Palo Alto, to laughter from the audience.

He thinks the United States is “very likely” to end up in a three-front war with China, Russia and Iran. So, he argues, we have to keep going full-tilt on autonomous weapons systems, because our adversaries will — and they don’t have the same moral considerations that we do.

“I think we’re in an age when nuclear deterrent is actually less effective because the West is very unlikely to use anything like a nuclear bomb, whereas our adversaries might,” he said. “Where you have technological parity but moral disparity, the actual disparity is much greater than people think.”

“In fact,” he added, “given that we have parity technologically but we don’t have parity morally, they have a huge advantage.”

Mr. Karp said that we are “very close” to terminator robots and at the threshold of “somewhat autonomous drones and devices like this being the most important instruments of war. You already see this in Ukraine.”

Palantir has learned from some early setbacks.

In 2011, the hacker group Anonymous showed that Palantir employees were involved in a proposed misinformation campaign to discredit WikiLeaks and smear some of its supporters, including the journalist Glenn Greenwald. (Mr. Karp apologized to Mr. Greenwald.) Then, [*at least one Palantir employee*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) helped Cambridge Analytica collect the Facebook data that the Trump campaign used ahead of the 2016 election.

A pro bono contract with the New Orleans Police Department starting in 2012 was dropped after six years amid criticism that its “predictive policing” eroded privacy and had a disparate impact on people of color.

“We reduced the rates of Black-on-Black death in New Orleans,” Mr. Karp said, “and we have these critics who are like, ‘Palantir is racist.’ I don’t know. The hundreds of people that are alive now don’t think we’re racist.”

Mr. Carville, a New Orleans pooh-bah, asserted that the partnership ended because of “left-wing conspiracy theories.”

Palantir’s rough start in Silicon Valley came about, in part, because many objected to its work with the Department of Defense.

In 2017, Google won a Pentagon contract, Project Maven, to help the military use the company’s A.I. to analyze footage from drones. Employees protested, sending a letter to the C.E.O., Sundar Pichai: “Google should not be in the business of war,” it read. Soon after, Google backed away from the project.

In response, Palantir shaded Google in a tweet that quoted Mr. Karp: “Silicon Valley is telling the average American ‘I will not support your defense needs’ while selling products that are adversarial to America. That is a loser position.” Palantir picked up the contract in 2019.

That same year, Mr. Thiel said that Google had a “treasonous” relationship with China. When Google [*opened*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) an A.I. lab in 2017 in China, where there’s little distinction between the civilian and the military, he argued, it was de facto helping China while refusing to help America. (That lab closed in 2019, but Google still does business with China, as does Apple.)

“When you have people working at consumer internet companies protesting us because we help the Navy SEALs and the U.S. military and were pro-border — and you’re becoming incredibly, mind-bogglingly rich, in part because America protects your right to export — to me, you’ve lost the sheet of music,” Mr. Karp said. “I don’t think that’s good for America.”

Scott Galloway, a professor at New York University and an authority on tech companies, agrees that many Silicon Valley C.E.O.s have been virtue-signaling and pretending to care about the progressive political views of employees, but really would sell “their mother for a nickel.”

“They’re not there to save the whales,” Mr. Galloway said. “They’re there to make money.”

He added: “Some of these big tech companies seem to be engaged in raising a generation of business leaders that just don’t like America, who are very focused on everything that’s wrong with America.

“Alex Karp is like, ‘No, we’ll cash the Pentagon’s check and we’ll collect data on our enemies.’ He’s gone the entirely opposite way, and I think it was a smart move.”

Palantir’s “spooky connotations,” as one executive put it, dissipated quite a bit when the company went public in 2020 and took on more commercial business; its clients include Airbus, J.P. Morgan, IBM and Amazon.

Mr. Thiel said that while Palantir had a brief stint working on a pilot program for the National Security Agency, the company would not want to do any more work there: “The N.S.A., it hoovers up all the data in the world. As far as I can tell, there are incredible civil liberties violations where they’re spying on everybody outside the U.S., basically. Then they’re fortunately too incompetent to do much with the data.”

The company has started turning a profit, and the stock has climbed. After a triumphant earnings report this month, Palantir’s stock price jumped again.

“The share price gives us more street cred,” Mr. Karp said.

In 2020, after 17 years in Silicon Valley, Mr. Karp moved Palantir’s headquarters to Denver. “I was fleeing Silicon Valley because of what I viewed as the regressive side of progressive politics,” he said.

He thinks that the valley has intensified class divisions in America.

“I don’t believe you would have a Trump phenomenon without the excesses of Silicon Valley,” he said. “Very, very wealthy people who support policies where they don’t have to absorb the cost at all. Just also the general feeling that these people are not tethered to our society, and simultaneously are becoming billionaires."

“Not supporting the U.S. military,” he said, in a tone of wonder. “I don’t even know how you explain to the average American that you’ve become a multibillionaire and you won’t supply your product to the D.O.D. It’s jarringly corrosive. That’s before you get to all the corrosive, divisive things that are on these platforms.”

Akshay Krishnaswamy, Palantir’s chief architect, agreed on their Silicon Valley critics: “You live in the liberal democratic West because of reasons, and those reasons don’t come for free. They act like it doesn’t have to be fought for or defended rigorously.”

Mr. Karp said things had evolved. “I think there’s a different perception of us now a little bit. A lot of that was tied to Trump, ICE work. It built up and we were definitely outsiders. We’re still outsiders, but I feel less resistance for sure. And people have a better idea of what we do, maybe.” He added, “Defense tech is a big part of Silicon Valley now.”

The A.I. revolution, he said, will come with a knotty question: “How do you make sure the society’s fair when the means of production have become means that only 1 percent of the population actually knows how to navigate?”

I asked if he agrees with Elon Musk that A.I. is eventually going to take everyone’s jobs.

“I think what’s actually dangerous,” Mr. Karp replied, “is that people who understand how to use this are going to capture a lot of the value of the market and everyone else is going to feel left behind.”

Mr. Karp’s iconoclastic style and ironclad beliefs have inspired memes and attracted a flock of online acolytes — some call him Papa Karp or Daddy Karp. He has no social media presence, but his online fans treat him like a mystic, obsessing over the tight white T-shirts he wears for earnings reports, his Norwegian ski outfits, his corkscrew hair, his Italian jeans and sunglasses and his extreme candor. (In a recent earnings report, Mr. Karp dismissed his rivals as “self-pleasuring” and engaging in “self-flagellation.”)

He is not, as one colleague puts it, “a wife, kids and dog person.”

“I tend to have long-term relationships,” he told me. “And I tend to end up with very high IQ women,” including some who tell him he’s talking nonsense.

He prefers what he calls a German attitude toward relationships, where “you have a much greater degree of privacy,” he said, with separate bedrooms and “your own world, your own thoughts, and you get to be alone a lot.” There is much less requirement to “micro-lie” about where you were or whom you were with.

I asked Mr. Karp about his 2013 [*quote*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) to Forbes that “the only time I’m not thinking about Palantir is when I’m swimming, practicing qigong or during sexual activity.”

He frowned, noting: “It should be tai chi. I don’t know why people always conflate tai chi with qigong. Yes, that was in my early days, when we were a pre-public company and I was allowed to admit I had sexual activity.”

So it’s true that the notion of settling down and raising a family gives him hives?

“There’s some truth in that,” he said. “This is how I like to live. See, I’m sitting here doing my freedom thing. I train. I do distance shooting.” He reads. “Who else has a Len Deighton spy novel next to a book on Confucian philosophy?”

Many of the doyennes of Washington society would love to snag the eligible Mr. Karp for a dinner party. He told me he has “a great social life.” But when I asked him what that is, he replied, “First of all, I’m a cross-country skier, so then I do all this training.”

He continued, “To have an elite VO2 max, an elite level of strength, it’s just consistency and the Norwegian-style training method.”

Some who know Mr. Karp said that the happiest they had ever seen him was last year when Mike Allen [*reported*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) for Axios that the C.E.O.’s body fat was an impressive 7 percent.

Mr. Karp may be able to do more than 20 miles of cross-country skiing without being out of breath, but there are some sports at which, he admitted, he’s “a complete zero. For example, ball sports. I really suck at them.”

Unlike Mr. Musk and other tech lords, Mr. Karp is not into micro-dosing ketamine or any other drug. “My drug is athletics,” he said. “I love drinking, but now I’ve moved to drinking very little because what I’ve noticed is if you’re traveling all the time, the alcohol, it really affects your brain.” He’s on the road about 240 days a year.

Mr. Karp said of his dyslexia: “I think this is not getting less, it’s likely getting more. In 40 years, I’ll be unable to read.”

In New Hampshire, we had a lunch of lobster pasta — he kept his panic button on the table — and then went shooting on his property. He expertly hit targets with a 9-millimeter pistol from 264 yards. When an aide suggested that a photographer not shoot Mr. Karp in the act of shooting, he overruled the idea.

“Actually, honestly, guns would be much better regulated if you had someone who knows guns,” he said. “I’m not a hunter. I’m an artist with a gun.”

(Later, Mr. Karp pointed out that he had been shooting at targets that were about twice as far from him as Mr. Trump was from his would-be assassin. “There’s something really wrong with security for our future president, or maybe not future president,” he said. “All these people need a different level of security.”)

Mr. Karp believes the Democrats need to project more strength: “Are we tough enough to scare our adversaries so we don’t go to war? Do the Chinese, Russians and Persians think we’re strong? The president needs to tell them if you cross these lines, this is what we’re going to do, and you have to then enforce it.”

He thinks that in America and in Europe, the inability or unwillingness to secure borders fuels authoritarianism.

“I see it as pretty simple: You have an open border, you get the far right,” he said. “And once you get them, you can’t get rid of them. We saw it in Brexit, we see it with Le Pen in France, you see it across Europe. Now you see it in Germany.”

“They should be much stricter,” he continued. That, he said, “is the only reason we have the rise of the right, the only reason. When people tell you we need an open border, then they should also tell you why they’re electing right-wing politicians, because they are.”

“The biggest mistake — and it’s not one politician, it’s a generation — was believing there was something bigoted about having a border, and there are just a lot of people who believe that,” he said.

Weeks later, we were back in the Washington office, which is dubbed Rivendell, after a valley in Tolkien’s Middle-earth, and is filled with tech goodies like a Ping-Pong table, a pool table and a towering replica of Chewbacca.

We picked up our conversation about politics, talking about the swap of President Biden and Vice President Harris, the rise of JD Vance, the assassination attempt and the changed political landscape.

Mr. Karp concurred with his friend Mr. Carville on the problem of [*drawing men*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) to the Democratic Party, saying, “If this is going to be a party complaining about guys and to guys all the time, it’s not going to succeed.”

He continued: “The biggest problem with hard political correctness is it makes it impossible to deal with unfortunate facts. The unfortunate fact here is that this election is really going to turn on ‘What percentage of males can the Democrats still get?’”

Describing himself as “progressive but not woke,” he said, “We are so unwilling to talk to the actual constituents that are voting for the Democratic Party who would probably strongly prefer policies that are more moderate.”

Given Mr. Karp’s blended racial identity, I wondered how he felt about Mr. Trump’s attack on the vice president’s heritage.

“I think people are most fascinated by the fact of this whole Black-Jewish thing,” he said. “I tend to be less fascinated by that.”

He added: “I think that people always expect me somehow to see the world in one way or another, and I don’t really understand what that means. I see the world the way I see it. I think, at the end of the day, if people want to choose what their identity is, then they choose it, and that’s their definition.”

I note that he recently made an elite list of Black billionaires.

He shrugged. “Some Black people think I’m Black, some don’t,” he said. “I view me as me. And I’m very honored to be honored by all groups that will have me.”

He added: “I do not believe racism is the most important issue in this country. I think class is determinate, and I’m mystified by how often we talk about race. I’m not saying it doesn’t exist. I’m not saying people don’t have biases. Of course, we all do, but the primary thing that’s bad for you in this culture is to be born poor of any color.”

He said he would support class-based affirmative action and declared himself “pro draft.”

“I think part of the reason we have a massive cleavage in our culture is, at the end of the day, by and large, only people who are middle- and ***working-class*** do all the fighting,” he said.

Since I had last seen him, Mr. Karp had gotten caught between two of the battling billionaires of Silicon Valley, lords of the cloud vituperously fighting in public over the possible restoration of Donald Trump.

According to an [*account*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/02/world/asia/abbottabad-map-of-where-osama-bin-laden-was-killed.html) in Puck, Mr. Karp was onstage with the LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman at a conference last month in Sun Valley, Idaho, sponsored by the investment bank Allen &amp; Company, when Mr. Hoffman called Mr. Thiel’s support for Mr. Trump “a moral issue.” Speaking up from his seat in the audience, Mr. Thiel sarcastically thanked Mr. Hoffman for funding lawsuits against Mr. Trump, which allowed the candidate to claim that he is “a martyr.”

Mr. Hoffman snapped back, “Yeah, I wish I had made him an actual martyr” — an unfortunate comment given what would later happen in Butler, Pa.

I asked Mr. Karp whether the encounter was as uncomfortable as it seemed.

“Well, I’m used to being uncomfortable,” he said. “I’m going to stick with my friends. I just feel the same way I always feel when Peter is under attack, which is: ‘This is my friend. I feel that my friend is being attacked, and I will defend him.’”

The fancy digital clock behind Mr. Karp’s desk, which tells time in German, had gone from “Es ist zehn nach drei” to “Es ist halb vier.”

It was time to go.

Confirm or Deny

Maureen Dowd: You run the Twitter account Alex Karp’s Hair.

Alex Karp: I wish.

Your favorite movie is the classic kung fu flick “The 36th Chamber of Shaolin.”

One of my favorite movies.

You have 10 houses around the world, from Alaska to Vermont, from Norway to New Hampshire.

You have to reframe that as I have 10 cross-country ski huts.

You love the idea of Peter Thiel backing Olympic-style games where the athletes will dope out in the open.

Deny. I want the best cross-country skiers to win without doping.

You love to watch spy shows and German movies, and one of your favorite filmmakers is Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

Confirm.

You have 20 identical pairs of swim goggles in your office.

No longer. I used to. I gave up swimming. There’s an emptiness to it.

You commissioned a French comic book, “Palantir: L’Indépendance,” with yourself as the protagonist.

Oui!

You starred in a movie by Hanna Laura Klar in 1998, “I Have Two Faces,” where you looked like a young Woody Allen.

I look better than Woody Allen.

Your dissertation is about how people transmit aggression subconsciously in language, presaging the rise of the right in America and Europe.

Often, the more charismatic ideologies were, the more irrational they were.

The dissertation touched on expressing taboo wishes. Do you want to share some of those?

I would love to express taboo wishes with you, but not to your audience.

PHOTOS: Top left and right, Alex Karp at home practicing tai chi. Left, a Ukrainian government handout image of Mr. Karp in 2022 with Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelensky, left, and Mykhailo Fedorov, at the time a deputy prime minister, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN DAVID BROWN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE); Center, Alex Karp doing target practice on his property. Right, a protest in 2019 outside the office of Palantir Technologies. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RYAN DAVID BROWN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS) (ST10-ST11) This article appeared in print on page ST10, ST11.

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Oren Cass; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6CH4-63W1-JBG3-609W-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The July 17, 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 Oren Cass. 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.”

Good lord, what a week in politics. Over the weekend, there was an assassination attempt on Donald Trump. I thought that was going to reshape everything going forward. But then on Monday, everything shifted again and Donald Trump picked Ohio Senator J.D. Vance as his vice-presidential running mate.

There is a lot to say about Vance. Maybe I’ll start here. Vance is a very ideological pick, not a political one. If Trump was worried about the polls, if Trump thought he might lose, if he wanted a vice president who could help him win Virginia or win Wisconsin, those picks were on offer. But in Vance, he showed a different kind of confidence. He picked the vice-presidential candidate who has done the most to turn Trump’s impulses, his rhetoric, his political and personal brand into a coherent governing philosophy.

Vance has done that in ways I find scary, like the deep distaste for a democratic process and elections that he’s shown since 2020. But he’s also done that in ways I find interesting, maybe even important, like the more serious form of economic populism he’s pursued in the Senate.

I find that a lot of liberals don’t want to admit this is happening. They want to brush it off as just delusion. But something is happening here. If you watched the first night of the Republican National Convention, the key speech was given by Sean O’Brien, the president of the Teamsters union. That was startling. And listen for a second to O’Brien.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING^ SEAN O’BRIEN:

There are some in the party who stand in active opposition to labor unions. This, too, must change.

[CHEERING]

The Teamsters and the G.O.P. may not agree on many issues. But a growing group has shown the courage to sit down and consider points of view that aren’t funded by big money think tanks.

[CHEERING]

Senators like J.D. Vance, Roger Marshall and representatives are among elected officials who truly care about working people. And this group is expanding and is putting fear into those who have monopolized our very broken system in America today.

EZRA KLEIN: Hearing a stadium full of Republicans cheer the idea of being a pro-union party? That’s different. Something is changing here. Whether or not it actually changes, I don’t think we know yet. But there is some factional struggle happening in the Republican Party. And in picking Vance, Trump has given a lot of power to the emergent faction.

On Friday — so a few days before Vance was named — I sat down with Oren Cass. Cass is interesting. He was Mitt Romney’s domestic policy director in the 2012 campaign — so as orthodox a Republican economic thinker as you could find back then. But then after Romney’s loss and Trump’s victory in 2016, Cass went through this evolution, founding a group called American Compass that’s become a policy nerve center for the party’s younger, more populist generation that has critiqued the Republican Party, that has attacked the Republican Party for being an anti-worker party, for giving up on the very people who vote for it, who it is supposed to represent.

American Compass does not represent or speak for a large faction of Senate Republicans. But there are a number of younger Senate Republicans, like Tom Cotton, like Marco Rubio, like Josh Hawley, like J.D. Vance, who are quite close to it, who are part of this emergent faction.

And so I think it’s worth exploring what Cass has been trying to do here. He wants Republicans to become a pro-worker party as he and they define it, which is definitely different than how Democrats define it. He wants to see Republicans become a pro-union party. It’s not often that I have Republican policy experts on the show who make an argument for sectoral bargaining. That is something new.

And the Vance pick makes this conversation a lot more relevant because it means Cass’ thinking is now much closer to the center of Republican Party politics. It might soon, if Donald Trump wins, be in the White House, or at least in the vice president’s office.

But that doesn’t mean that Cass’ thinking is alone. Look at Project 2025. That’s not an economically populist document. Look at the G.O.P. platform. The Republican Party is in the midst of a factional ideological battle. You still see it proposing these corporate giveaways and all this deregulation and these tax cuts.

And so it’s easy enough to wonder, is any of this real or is it just putting another populist face on the same old agenda? And if it is real, is what is being proposed here even a good idea? As always, my email: [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

Oren Cass, welcome to the show.

OREN CASS: Thank you so much for having me.

EZRA KLEIN: So we’re here talking on the cusp of the 2024 Republican National Convention. But I wanted to play you a clip from the 2012 Republican National Convention, when Mitt Romney received the nomination. And I wanted to hear how you hear this now.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]:

* In America, we celebrate success. We don&#39;t apologize for success.

[CHEERING]

Now, we weren’t always successful at Bain. But no one ever is in the real world of business. That’s what this president doesn’t seem to understand. Business and growing jobs is about taking risk, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding, but always striving. It’s about dreams.

Usually, it doesn’t work out exactly as you might have imagined. Steve Jobs was fired at Apple. And then he came back and changed the world. It’s the genius of the American free enterprise system to harness the extraordinary creativity and talent and industry of the American people with a system that’s dedicated to creating tomorrow’s prosperity, not try to redistribute today’s.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]:

EZRA KLEIN: You were Mitt Romney’s domestic policy adviser on that campaign. What do you think of that political message now?

OREN CASS: Well, let me say, first of all, I’m relieved. I thought you were going to play the bit with Clint Eastwood and the chair.

EZRA KLEIN: I was there for that. That was one of the most surreal moments in my political life.

OREN CASS: Yes. Well, anyway, we’ve only moved to the more surreal from there, in various respects. But it is a fascinating clip. And one of the things that strikes me most about it is it’s almost drowned out in the applause. But what he describes as the secret of the free enterprise system is harnessing the — I don’t remember the exact adjectives — ingenuity and productivity and so forth of the American people to build these successful enterprises. And I think that remains exactly correct.

I think what was so often missing in the Republican Party, including in the message as often presented in the Romney-Ryan campaign, was recognizing that we had moved away from that system, that if you ask who was being most successful in the American economy, whether you’re talking about Steve Jobs at Apple or the folks running Bain Capital, it was not achieving success by harnessing the power of the American worker. It was achieving success by avoiding the American worker.

EZRA KLEIN: One thing that strikes me about that clip and Republican Party rhetoric from that period is that it is pitched at somebody specific. The sense was that we had come to talk down the entrepreneurs, the risk takers, the corporate executives. And now when I listen to a lot of Republicans — and I don’t think their policy always backs us up. But when I listen to them and when I listen to you, there has been an implicit shift, at least rhetorically, in who is the vox populi, who is the political ideal voice.

OREN CASS: That’s definitely true, I think. And it is true both in a political understanding of who the Republican Party’s base is. It’s also true as a matter of understanding what message they want to hear.

Of course, it was always the case that most Republican voters were not the business creators and the entrepreneurs — that’s always a small share of the population — but that those who weren’t were not necessarily as enamored of that message as maybe people assumed, as the consultants and the speechwriters certainly seem to assume. And then, of course, that’s only become more true.

If you look at the realignment going on within American politics, you see increasingly the upper income, most educated parts of the population moving left. And you see a huge number of working, middle-class moving right. And so you have a new political coalition that Republicans are speaking to. And I think you have a much better understanding of reality among conservatives about the real challenges the country has and the kinds of things you’re going to have to not just talk about, but actually focus on if you’re going to solve anything.

EZRA KLEIN: My sense is the shift you have made — and some of the people who politically you are closer to, like J.D. Vance and Marco Rubio and Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley have made — is a sense that the Republican Party’s view of what, if anything, economic policy should be subordinate to — what it is downstream of, what it is trying to achieve — has changed.

So in 2012, what would you say Republicans believed the point of economic policy actually was? And what now is the faction of Republicans that you are part of trying to say the point of economic policy actually is?

OREN CASS: If you look back to 2012 to the pre-Trump, Reagan, Ryan, G.O.P., whatever you want to call it, there was essentially this view that GDP was the goal, that we’re here to grow the pie, growth is the end, and maybe if there’s a lot of inequity as we get that growth, we’ll do some redistribution on the back end. But we’ll complain along the way.

And I think you’re exactly right that underlying this shift in thinking on trade, on labor, on any of these things and so forth, is the recognition that GDP growth is nice — I’m not a de-growther who wants to go live in a log cabin — but that it’s certainly not the be all and end all. And it’s not even a very good proxy for a lot of the things that matter most.

One thing that I’ve always found fascinating and somewhat coincidental — but it’s between the 2012 election and the 2016 election that all of the research on deaths of despair even emerged. It’s during that same period that David Autor’s research on the China shock emerged and the consensus among economists that, well, free trade is always good, so of course free trade with China has been good, was finally challenged by the reality that, in fact, free trade with China had not been good.

It’s an interesting thing about Romney. And this thing I’ve written about that was very formative for me was that he was actually very skeptical of the China trade story. And I got sent off to do the research on why was that not working well for the American people. But that was seen as a weird, one-off exception. And the basic assumption was still the understanding of the invisible hand as people thought Adam Smith spoke of the invisible hand, which was that there is some miraculous force out there that ensures that when everyone is left to pursue their own profit, the public benefits as well. The rising tide lifts all ships.

And that is something, I think — certainly I, to a significant extent — took for granted and just proved as an empirical matter not to be the case. We have now had decades for which that did not happen. And so I think the shift certainly that has occurred in my own thinking and — I think you’re right — that is driving a lot of what’s going on within conservatism is a recognition that the ends that were actually focused on, which you might broadly describe in a vague term, like human flourishing, has a bunch of specific elements within it.

And high material living standards is one of them. But strong, stable communities, family formation, the ability of people to build decent lives, typically in the communities where they’ve lived and where their families have lived, to raise children, to be productive contributors to their communities — that that’s really what the goal is supposed to be and that we’re actually allowed to assert that those things are goals instead of just saying, well, whatever liberty and the market produce is the end unto itself.

Senator Rubio has a very good line about this, that the market or the economy is supposed to be serving people, not people serving the economy. That is then not only our right, but in our sense, our duty to think about how we want to govern and to proactively govern, to ensure that the market is generating the kinds of outcomes we care most about, even if those aren’t the ones that would get as A on the exam as efficient.

EZRA KLEIN: But let me try to understand why this felt so earthshaking to you. Because I’m more liberal. I would describe the dominant view among liberals in this era as pro-free trade, but quite aware that you had markets that were poorly structured, you had people — a huge shift in income to capital away from labor, and that that income should be redistributed. I don’t exactly understand the shift from that insight, which felt true to me then and is true to me now, to where at least some on the right have gone, which is to a full-on skepticism. We should fully move away from the level of global integration we’ve had.

OREN CASS: There’s a lot to unpack there. I think exactly as you described, the progressive view tends to more take for granted that markets are good for some things, but they’re not going to work all that well. You have to have, therefore, a lot of interventions all over the place in various ways, both in advance, hopefully to get more equitable market outcomes, and after the fact to redistribute and compensate for inequitable outcomes. And I think the conservative view — certainly, my view — is that there is always going to be some need for that, but that the better model, the one that we should be aspiring to, to the extent that we can, is one in which we actually set up markets so that they do work well, that in some respects, the big structural questions are the better place to operate.

And so that’s where one of the key arguments we make at American Compass, certainly to right-of-center audiences in particular, is to say it’s not even necessarily a trilemma. It’s a pretty basic dilemma. Either you have to be willing to put constraints around the American market such that we can have a relatively free American market or you’re going to leave the American market totally exposed to global forces and then, on the back end, going to have to intervene all over the place. And so we’d, in a sense, rather focus on those big structural questions and see if we can get them right.

EZRA KLEIN: Let’s ground this in tariffs because I think it’s helpful to put this around a policy. Because, look, anybody trying to get the right to question the idea that markets are some natural phenomenon that arise out of natural law and then work perfectly wherever they appear so long as the government doesn’t get in their way, you’re doing the lord’s work. I appreciate it. I appreciate everything you do on that.

But I do think that the traditional way that progressive economics thinkers think about this is, which markets are failing and why? And what you’re saying is that a place where conservative reformers, populist conservatives like yourself, have begun to diverge is saying, well, we don’t want this piece-by-piece set of interventions. We want to put in place some big rules that shift the structure.

So a big rule that would shift the structure that you have proposed, that Donald Trump has now proposed is a 10 percent tariff on all imported goods, a significantly higher percent tariff than that on imported goods from China. I believe for Trump, it’s 60 percent. Start by making the case for that policy to me.

OREN CASS: I think where it starts is with consideration of the trade balance and whether or not you care that we run roughly $1 trillion a year trade deficit. And what that trade deficit represents at the end of the day is roughly $1 trillion worth of stuff being made overseas to be consumed in the American market that is exchanged not for stuff that we make here to be consumed elsewhere, but that is instead exchanged for assets because when you have a large trade deficit, when people are sending you a lot more than you’re sending them, it’s not being sent to you for free as a favor. You are, in fact, buying it on credit.

And so to a significant extent, what we send back, for instance, is Treasury bonds. We literally send back pieces of paper that say, well, the U.S. government will pay you via taxpayers at some point in the future. You’re sending back corporate debt. You’re sending back corporate equity. You’re literally saying, here, you can have our companies and the future profits that come from them and so forth. And we’ll just consume this stuff now.

And in some respects, hopefully, as that description makes clear, that is an extraordinary long-term concern for the health of an economy and of a nation. But in the short run, what you’re doing is you’re taking what would otherwise have been demand for things that are produced in America and you’re just eliminating it. You’re just saying there is now less demand for stuff made in this country. There is less demand for the American labor that comes with that. There’s less need to do investment in the United States. And we’re just going to enjoy the consumption, anyway.

Now, there are some people who say that’s fine. For a long time, the mainstream view among economists was that that’s great, even on the left of center. And I think what people are increasingly recognizing is that this is a terrible model. It is bad for American workers. It is bad for the communities in large portions of the country where manufacturing, resource development, things in the physical economy are where there — can be most productive.

It’s bad for innovation because in the long run, it turns out that you can try to do the iPhone designed in California, assembled in Shenzhen thing. But in the long run, actually, where the manufacturing goes, then the research and development goes. And you end up not being able to do it at all. And that has happened in broad swaths of the American economy with our industrial base.

And so if you look at this and say, this is not good, then you are prepared to ask what we can do about it. And so that then leads you to start thinking about things like tariffs.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m not a believer here that there’s a one-size way to think about industries. I think it’s good to make some garments in America. But I don’t think given an economy like ours, with labor like ours, it makes sense to try to imagine a world where most garments that Americans wear are made in America. I’ll be interested to hear when I finish this question if you disagree with that.

But let’s think about, say, semiconductors. I’m completely bought in that we want semiconductor manufacturing to a much greater extent than is true now to happen in America. Semiconductors are a huge global industry. They are of tremendous strategic importance. If we lost access to semiconductors made in Taiwan, say, we’d be in terrible trouble. And Taiwan is a very politically volatile spot.

But the reason we lost dominance in semiconductor manufacturing is — it’s a complicated story. But one of the major parts of the story is it just became too expensive to make things here. And the semiconductor supply chain is insanely complex. And there’s no way it’s all going to be here. You have to import a huge number of goods.

And so at this exact moment when we are trying to bring back semiconductor manufacturing through the CHIPS and Science Act, through giving groups like Intel money to create plants here, we’re going to come in and say to them, also, every part that you import to make semiconductors in America is going to be 10 percent more expensive because we’re going to slap a tariff on it. And when I hear that, I think that’s going to be really good for anybody who wants to locate a semiconductor manufacturing plant in Canada or, for that matter, in Taiwan because we’re creating a cost increase to making complex goods here. Tell me why I’m wrong here about what this will mean for, say, an Intel.

OREN CASS: Well, what I would start with is your description of why we lost semiconductor manufacturing as because it got too expensive to make things here, which I don’t think is really true at all. The reason that semiconductor manufacturing moved overseas at a significant rate was because other countries introduced massive subsidies to invite and underwrite the cost of building fabs elsewhere.

So it is true that, relatively speaking, it ended up being more expensive here. But that wasn’t a market force. There wasn’t any sort of comparative advantage, like rocky outcroppings off the coast of China turn out to just be really great places to make semiconductors and Silicon Valley is not.

And the reason I start with that is to say I think it’s really important to recognize that our basic model that we learn in economics class of so-called comparative advantage, where everybody’s going to specialize in the thing that they’re relatively more efficient in making, simply does not describe a modern industrial economy. Comparative advantage is really created, not discovered, based on who invests in what.

If the United States decides it wants to have semiconductor manufacturing here, we really should do two things. We both need the industrial policy, things like the CHIPS Act. But then we’re also going to need policies that essentially just say, if you want to serve the U.S. market, you are going to have to do it from the U.S. And that may raise your costs somewhat relative to elsewhere. And that may mean the final cost of the thing that you produce is higher, at least in the short run. I think we have to question whether over time it will be cheaper or more expensive to do something in the U.S. But that’s just the way it’s going to be.

So to answer the question specifically, when you say, well, maybe I’ll go do it in Canada instead, well, the answer is no, you won’t, because if you do, then you’re going to have to pay the 10 percent tariff when you try to import the chip into the U.S., anyway. And so what you’re doing at the end of the day is saying — access to the U.S. market — it is going to be more advantageous to be in the U.S. market.

And sometimes, that will mean you end up having to pay tariffs for some of your inputs. But it’s also going to mean other parts of the supply chain move to the U.S., as well, because it’s certainly the case that Guatemala can’t have a soup-to-nuts supply chain in semiconductors, but I have yet to hear a reason why the United States can’t. Of course, the United States did when we pioneered and developed the semiconductor before we allowed it all to move overseas.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, let me make a couple of points on this. So one, I really just want to say strongly disagree that it is plausible that we would have a soup-to-nuts advanced semiconductor supply chain in America. If people read “Chip War” which is, I think, the best book on this, the semiconductor supply chain is just extraordinarily complicated and fragile. And there’s a lot of populism in the way these proposals are framed. But something we have seen with real starkness in the past couple of years is people do not like higher prices. Those are politically unstable.

Something we have also seen and something you’re talking about is Americans like to have — want to have, in many of these cases — strong, export-focused industries. We want to have global leadership. And to the extent that we have made it very difficult for these industries to import what they need to then be cost-competitive when exporting what they need to export, that’s going to be of a lot of anger, possibly, to voters.

We’re not going to turn the country out of being in a globalized world where there are real advantages to participating globally and to selling globally. And particularly, a one-time huge shock to prices is going to be politically tricky. So I’d also be very curious how you think about that.

OREN CASS: It would be lovely to have high levels of trade if it’s balanced trade. If we are making things and sending them elsewhere in return for things that are made elsewhere and sent to us, that is the economic model we all thought we were signing up for. So my point is not that literally we will be a closed economy that makes everything and we can’t use ASML machines from the Dutch or whatever else.

But I do think it’s worth just noting that this idea that, well, we couldn’t do that — I’m not sure why. There was a time when the soup-to-nuts semiconductor process was executed in the U.S. because we had literally invented the whole thing.

EZRA KLEIN: But it was much simpler then. I think that’s the answer to the question you’re asking. The semiconductors being made then were extraordinarily simplistic compared to the hyper-advanced semiconductors that TSMC is now dominant in now.

OREN CASS: If you look at what the U.S. has done repeatedly in industry after industry as it has developed these technologies, we show an extraordinary ability to innovate and develop the entire thing. And then we look away and say, well, it was literally our view. We don’t care whether or not we actually make it.

The most famous quote on this is “computer chips, potato chips — what’s the difference?” That was the policy environment in which we stopped making all of this stuff. It was not because it was too complicated for us to make. It was not because we were not the best at making it. It was because we just didn’t care.

And so I do think it’s important to step back and recognize that in a well-functioning trading system, first of all, most of this stuff never would have left. You could make the case that we’re not going to have every raw mineral that goes into the chip. That might very well be the case. But the idea that we can’t be the technological leader in the various stages of the semiconductor manufacturing process when we are still 25 percent of GDP, among other things — of global GDP, 20 percent, 25 percent — I don’t know why that would be the case.

EZRA KLEIN: To be very clear, my view is that the U.S. actually can be the leader on many dimensions of these things, but that to take seriously the complexity of the things we need to make and the cooperation across supply chains needed to make them — that to try to achieve leadership by raising the prices we pay for the things we need to be competitive both on a manufacturing level and on a innovation level in these things is likely to be counterproductive.

And as you say, you learn a lot by manufacturing. And so if it’s much cheaper to manufacture in other places, not just because labor costs are lower, but because there’s — much easier to cooperate across supply chains, et cetera, we are not going to take over that manufacturing. And if we don’t take over that manufacturing, we’re not going to take over that innovation. And if we don’t take over that innovation, we’re not going to have the leadership that you want us to have.

So I’m not arguing that we shouldn’t have leadership in these places. I am skeptical that broad-based tariffs will get us there.

OREN CASS: Yes, there is absolutely a cost associated with reshoring and regaining leadership. But I think the two things I would say about it first is the cost is certainly temporary and potentially quite short-lived. And I think a good illustration of this comes from the auto industry, where one of the quintessential illustrations of successful trade policy, and it wasn’t even tariffs — it was an outright quota — was the 1980s, when the Japanese auto makers were not just making inroads, but poised to badly beat Detroit. And Reagan just negotiated an outright import quota with the Japanese. You will not import — growth of imports will simply stop.

Now, what happened? The economists will tell you Japanese car prices, therefore, did go up, maybe as much as 5 percent to 10 percent in those initial years. But more importantly, what happened is all of the Japanese automakers moved their production facilities to the United States.

Right away, they started with assembly facilities. Soon after that, their entire supply chains moved. Then they started opening R&amp;D centers here. It was literally only a few years before the quotas could be lifted because once you could actually change the flow of that investment and said, if you want to sell in the American market, you have to make it in the American market, guess what? You can actually make things in the American market quite efficiently and effectively.

For many, many years, the Toyota Camry was the most American car on the market, in terms of American content in the vehicle. And so you could step back and say, whoa, what a disaster. Look at how the prices of these cars went up for a couple of years. But I’m not sure if there’s anybody who would say — well, actually, I know a couple of people at the Cato Institute who would. So let me say there are not many people who would say, well, this was just a mistake, having the Japanese auto industry now in the U.S. employing hundreds of thousands of people, all of those jobs, all of that future innovation, et cetera. Well, we shouldn’t have done that because if you actually intervene in the market like that, you’re going to raise the price for consumers.

So that’s one point. The second point is that it’s really important to keep in mind — and I find it funny when folks on the left of center make this mistake because it is the quintessential right-of-center mistake. I fight with the Tax Foundation folks about this all the time. People complaining that tariffs are going to raise prices behave as if the tariffs just set the money on fire. Tariffs are tax revenue. What you’re talking about is a tax, the incidence of which is not entirely borne by Americans, anyway, and, even to the extent that it is, lands as revenue in the treasury.

And so I think we have to have a much broader conversation about what an economy with versus without tariffs looks like and how that balances out and who wins in the long term because I would say it is, in fact, working families that win the most rather than do this very narrow static analysis of, well, there’s a tariff, so now the Banana is 10 percent more expensive.

EZRA KLEIN: Oren, you’ve put me in genuinely a terrible position here because there are a lot of things I want to ask you about. But I also really enjoy talking about trade policy. And I’m having trouble between the part of me that knows how to structure a good conversation and the party that just wants to do this forever. I’m going to do one more beat on this. And you can have the last word on it. Then we’ll move on.

I have friends who are trade economists. And the auto example is really interesting. And it drives them bananas to keep using bananas in different ways in our conversation because as you know, the Japanese example is really interesting. We decided we needed to bring in Japanese manufacturing. What we created in that policy that you’re talking about under Reagan — it was a profound collaboration with Japanese firms. And we learned a lot from those firms.

We respected Japanese innovations in manufacturing and logistics and organizational processes. You could find from that era a lot of books about how Toyota was run as a company. And the Five Whys is still a tactic from how Toyota was run that is often talked about in American business classes.

So what we did was we brought that in. And we learned a lot in addition to profiting from the fact that now Toyota was running manufacturing facilities in America. Right now, we know that China is not just effective as a manufacturer because there’s a lot of low-wage labor in China. They have figured things out as a manufacturer that we have not. They have developed kinds of expertise that we have not. They know how to make things that we are not as good at making.

One thing you can imagine doing is a policy. What we want to do is bring in these Chinese electric vehicle manufacturing firms to work in America to start up these factories and do roughly what we did when we were doing this with Japan and Japanese automaking in the ’80s.

That is not the policy, really, of either Biden or Trump, to my knowledge. They have been in a much more competitive position with China. They want to see the Chinese auto firms weakened. They do not want them to have a foothold in the American market, even if that foothold would come through having factories in the American market. And also, we don’t treat Chinese manufacturing as something we could learn from. We don’t treat Chinese firms as having lessons to teach us.

My sense of the politics is that nobody is saying, well, the real thing we’re trying to aim at here is having Chinese E.V. firms manufacturing their low-cost, very popular electric vehicles here, which is what we did with the Japanese. Are you saying that that’s what we should do, that’s the point of where our policy should go?

OREN CASS: No, definitely not. And I think you’ve put your finger on a really interesting challenge. And the E.V. industry is, in fact, the exact quintessential illustration of it. I just finished up a large project on E.V.s for this exact reason, that the Japanese analogy fails when you get to the point that, well, just getting BYD to set up American factories is not where we want to end up.

EZRA KLEIN: But you’re the one using the Japanese analogy.

OREN CASS: Yeah. I would — won’t tie a bow on it. But you’re exactly right. There are things about China and the relationship between the U.S. and China that makes it a lot harder. What we’re talking about setting up if we create the incentive that you have to make it in America is not bringing Chinese factories to America. It’s creating that incentive and then allowing the investment to figure out the best way to do it here, which is going to look very different, but given where we are in technological development, potentially is an ideal time to be doing it.

And maybe that’s just the free market conservative in me talking. But I think that’s exactly the formula we should be striving for. I don’t want to just see us going around and trying to figure out, here, this spot and that spot — that we need to do a big subsidy.

To answer your question, I actually think garments are an extraordinary potential area of innovation. And I would love to see our policy be — it’s going to be more expensive if you have to use foreign stuff than if you can use domestic stuff. Now, companies of the free world, investors of the United States, go forth and figure out what to do.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: There is a lot that you now propose, that others now propose, which, if you squint, it can sound like Elizabeth Warren — not the tariffs, but policies around labor, for instance — that they get much closer to what liberals have been saying for a long time. But my sense is this is where a lot of things diverge, that when I read you and I read some others in your sphere, what I really hear being said is that we need to use economic policy to make the single-breadwinner, but two-parent family with not one to two kids, but three to five kids possible again, specifically, although not only, for a lot of these men in the Midwest for whom we see really now quite negative outcomes. How fair or unfair is that as a description of your goal?

OREN CASS: I’d say partly fair, partly unfair. The part that’s definitely fair is I think you’ve put your finger on very specifically when I talk about the idea that human flourishing means people being able to build decent lives in their communities, contribute productively, form and raise families. Yeah, we want that to be possible in the ways that most people, in fact, say they want to do it, which is that model you’ve described — being able to get married, have kids, and have a single income be sufficient to support the family so that you have choices about the extent to which you want one or two earners. And especially, you can have a parent at home with young kids.

The part I would say is very unfair is I think when you start to throw in that we’re specifically talking about men in certain Midwestern communities and so forth. Adam Posen, who was the president of the Peterson Institute, had an infamous quote a couple of years ago saying that the concern for manufacturing was a — it really about a fetish for keeping white men in rural areas in powerful positions.

Whether white men in rural areas have ever been all that powerful position is another matter. But this isn’t an issue of race or gender or region within the country. It’s an issue of making sure that people actually have the ability to pursue the life courses they themselves say they want to pursue, and recognizing that that only happens if you have an economy that makes it possible to raise a family on one income. And if that is a possibility, then you can do that and you have lots of flexibility around that. But I don’t think we have that today.

EZRA KLEIN: The reason I focus it there is that things I notice — the whole deaths of despair thing was about white men in particular parts of the country. It has now expanded. I’m not a believer, really, in deaths of despair. I don’t think the evidence on that has held up as what is going on. But it is where a lot of this was generated from.

And because there is a very strong focus in the work you and others do on manufacturing and production and what has happened to the declining fortunes of men who have lost a space as breadwinners — and by the way, I actually am concerned about that. I don’t think it’s a thing to wipe aside. So when I say this, it’s not really as an attack. It just strikes me that the concern came from somewhere and the policies being proposed are more specific to a certain kind of job whereas, say, if you’re really worried about families headed by Black or Hispanic mothers, you would be much more concerned about service sector jobs and whether or not those pay well and what kind of advancement they have and how the scheduling works.

And I’m not saying you or the people you advise don’t care about that. But I hear a lot less about it. And going back to what I was saying earlier about Mitt Romney and Donald Trump and implicitly who is being spoken about, it often seems to me we’re implicitly speaking about the kinds of people that say Vance was worried about in his book, “Hillbilly Elegy.” And the policy proposals are flowing in that direction.

OREN CASS: I don’t think that’s the right way to characterize the policy agenda overall. I think you’re certainly right that when we’re talking about globalization and trade deficits and so forth, we’re obviously talking about manufacturing. It wasn’t predominantly because those are the good family-supporting jobs. These are going to be highly automated factories. I think they certainly provide some good family-supporting jobs.

That is among the reasons we care about them. But in my mind, actually, a critical reason to care about those manufacturing jobs is because manufacturing and the industrial economy — describe it more broadly — is typically recognized, I think correctly, as the foundation for productivity growth more generally. It is a lot easier to get high levels of productivity growth in the making of things than in many parts of the service sector. And it is, in fact, through productivity growth in the manufacturing sector that everybody can be paid higher wages everywhere else. And so an industrial economy as the anchor for productivity growth and innovation, where you can get productivity growth and then can provide the anchor of local economies that can enjoy more prosperity in the service sector, as well, I think is, at the end of the day, the reason that manufacturing is such an important place to focus.

I think if you look then at other parts of the policy agenda, you see again that much greater focus on service sector. So just to give you two examples, one is immigration policy. And I always love hassling my progressive friends on this point that it is unclear to me how one talks about worker power or higher wages in the service sector or that Hispanic mother you were just describing while taking the Democratic Party’s position on immigration. In fact, tight labor markets, particularly at the low end, are incredibly important to higher wages in the service sector.

And then another area, I think, where you see a lot of focus is on, as you mentioned, some of these questions around labor and how do you develop a labor movement and a model for organized labor that actually works effectively in the especially more distributed service sector. And I think that’s a key argument for more of a sectoral bargaining model.

The American model that we take for granted as what a labor union is, Norma Rae standing up at the table with a sign that says “union,” this idea that organizing is supposed to be this company by company, factory by factory, worksite by worksite fight, which, among other things, companies quite rationally resist — it is a real competitive problem to have a union if your competitors don’t.

Pick your industry. Let’s say you’re a janitor in New York City. There shouldn’t be a fight in your building or in the janitorial service company you work for whether that is going to be unionized. There should be a janitors union. And we can talk about all the upsides and downsides of that. But I think it avoids a lot of what’s worst and most dysfunctional about our system in the U.S. and empirically has shown much better outcomes where it is used as a way of giving workers power and representation.

And so I think if you’re having a discussion about trade and tariffs, then yes, you’re quickly talking about manufacturing jobs. But if you’re looking at the agenda as a whole, I think it is very clearly and holistically — and in good faith. I think if you asked Senator Vance this, he would tell you the same thing. He is deeply concerned about wages in the service sector of people of all races and genders and how you give those workers more power at the low end.

EZRA KLEIN: It is fascinating to me that you and some others in the Republican Party have begun to get interested in sectoral bargaining, which for a very long time has been a policy view held by people like me that would have been last on my list to ever imagine there might be any kind of Republican interest in. So on the one hand, there is something happening there. On the other hand, I would not look at Donald Trump’s Agenda 47 and say what I see is a holistic focus on the labor power of Hispanic mothers in the service sector. I think that would be an unusual argument to defend, quite hostile to unions, et cetera.

Something people like me worry about and I worry about even when I do shows like this is that within Republican Party economic politics, you’re one of the people I find more interesting, I find myself more sympathetic to. But there can be a dimension of populist washing, where there are people who have more holistic agenda here. And they’re part of the coalition. But the parts where they get listened to are not necessarily those parts.

You were a contributor to the labor chapter specifically in Project 2025. And that proposes a number of reversals on pro-union policies. So I’d be curious for your description because I’m, obviously, outside your coalition. From inside it, how would you describe what the factional cleavages are that allow some of these ideas to get over the finish line and do not allow, at least at this juncture, some of the other ones to become the headline proposals or make it into these big coalitional documents?

OREN CASS: Working on that was a fascinating experience because, as you said, the coalitional dynamics are front and center. It is certainly not the labor chapter I would write. But I’m actually incredibly proud of what we accomplished because it maybe in all of Project 2025 departs most from what was the standard orthodoxy on the right of center for so long.

There’s actually a ton of stuff in there, so much so that they then, for coalitional reasons, had to include dissenting opinions. One of my favorites is prohibiting a B.A. requirement in a job description, embracing the idea that workers should have voice and power, that we care about that, the idea of putting workers on corporate boards. I could go on.

I think that being said, certainly as you note, there is not an endorsement of unions today. Labor unions are functionally arms of the Democratic Party in the way that they collect enormous amounts of money from what is an entirely heterodox set of workers — if any, a set of workers that probably tilts more pro-Trump than pro-Biden at this point — and converts that into political and financial support for the Democratic Party.

So at the end of the day, I can’t blame Republicans and folks in the conservative movement for saying, purely as an instrumental matter, that we are not going to support that. Trump is going to talk about what Trump is going to talk about. And so if your observation is that the politically salient things that Trump is focused on don’t align entirely with this economic vision, you won’t get any argument from me about that.

But I think in — earlier in the conversation, when you were characterizing this movement and thinking, I think you rightly identified Senators Rubio, Vance, Cotton, Hawley. And if you look at what they’re working on and, in fact, bringing to the floor as legislation, I think it’s exactly across this swath of topics.

Just to give some examples, I believe it’s Romney, Cotton and Vance — are all on a proposal to raise the federal minimum wage significantly and impose mandatory e-verify. That is a quintessential raising wages at the low end focused on immigration policy in a constructive tightening of labor market way proposal.

Hawley, more generally, I think has particularly made a point of trying to be more engaged with unions. I was just at a speech he gave where he basically said it’s time for conservatives to embrace unions, private sector unions. But he’s obviously been working with the Teamsters in particular. Trump has Sean O’Brien, the Teamsters president, speaking at the RNC. Senator Rubio has, likewise, done concrete things on labor. He and Jim Banks, who is currently a congressman likely to win a Senate election in Indiana in November — done a proposal for alternative models of worker representation, including putting workers on boards.

And so we could go on across all these areas. I think certainly interesting work on industrial policy, other work on immigration enforcement, other work on non-college pathways, which I think is an incredibly important area — and so my factional analysis would be the question is, first of all, who is going to be making policy in Congress if there is a Trump administration? And then what comes after Trump? And on both of those fronts, I think what you see is that this exact cohort is the rising leadership not just in the conservative movement, but in the Republican Party. And this is the stuff they’re talking about and working on.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: One reason I’m interested in the work you’re doing — I have been for some time, but it feels more relevant to me now — is by the time this comes out, we’ll know who Donald Trump’s pick is. But all the reporting suggests that it’s down to Rubio, Vance and Burgum. And Rubio and Vance are — so far as anybody is in your camp in the senate, Rubio and Vance are in your camp in the Senate. So two of Trump’s three plausible vice-presidential picks are very American Compass-curious, we could say. But I think you could put it more strongly than that. So it does seem to me when I talk also to younger Republicans that there’s something generational happening here.

The other thing that I’ll throw you a softball on here is one of the reasons or one of the ways it feels to me like it’s playing out is a sense that the liberal coalition’s self-conception of who it is for and who it serves is no longer true. And there’s a tremendous wedge that can be driven in there. And I took that as part of the argument you were making in your Times piece about populism and elite failure.

And so I’d like you to expand on that a bit because I do sense that part of the opportunity you see, and that Rubio and Vance and some of these others were talking about see, is a view that liberal economics is not about what liberals think it is about, it is not about who liberals think it is about, and that there is some political opportunity there. So do you mind laying out that critique?

OREN CASS: Why, thank you, Ezra. I would be delighted to.

To pick up briefly on the generational point, I think you’re exactly right. And in some respects, this is a process that is ongoing in conservatism that looks a little bit confusing because of Trump’s presence.

If you think about the 15 or 20-year periods over which parties truly realign and shift their ideology, typically it starts with something of a bang. And that bang is usually a massive electoral loss. It’s Goldwater in ’64 that eventually leads to Reagan in 1980. It’s then Reagan crushing Mondale that gives birth to the new Democrats and ultimately leads to Clinton.

And I think all of this work would be going on post-2016 on the right of center. And it would look a lot more familiar to analysts if Trump had lost. And you have a lot of this work more going on in the wilderness and building to something that emerges as the next generation takes over. And in a sense, that is just happening in parallel to the things going on at the top.

And so it is — when you say Rubio, Hawley, Cotton, Vance, not by coincidence are you talking also about a younger generation of Republican leaders. When you look at what the orientation is of, essentially, everybody under 40 on the right, it’s overwhelmingly in this direction. I’m right at that cutoff. And I essentially qualify as a gray beard, I guess.

EZRA KLEIN: An elder millennial?

OREN CASS: That’s right, an elder millennial. For me, the interesting question is, what’s my first political memory? And for me, it’s watching the jets take off of the aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf in 1991, watching CNN, which means that Ronald Reagan is — fall of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War — that’s just in a history book. And that’s not at all to minimize its significance. But it is to say that when I think about political problems, orientation of political parties, economic challenges for the nation, it is the problems and challenges of the ’90s and 2000s and 2010s. And picking up a Ronald Reagan Heritage Foundation playbook and flipping through it for the answer just seems absurd.

And so I think generational turnover is almost inevitable in the post-Cold War era. I’m very pleased to see that this kind of conservative economics is what people are moving toward. And it is, I think, what is going to come next. But certainly, there’s a lot of chaos and inconsistent conflicts and factional fights along the way.

So this then, I think, connects to your point about the Democratic coalition, the Republican coalition. What I think is especially exciting and appealing about this situation for conservatives is that moving in this direction has the prospects of building a durable governing majority. It is true that you lose libertarians as well as gaining ***working-class*** voters of all races. But it turns out there are maybe 10 times as many ***working-class*** voters who are fairly socially conservative and would just like to hear something sane on economics from the right as there are libertarians who are taking their college degrees and their $7 lattes over to the Democratic Party.

EZRA KLEIN: How much are the lattes you buy?

OREN CASS: [LAUGHS] Maybe lattes in these coastal elite markets are even more expensive now, especially when you add the soy milk and the shot of chia. Obviously, I’m no longer in my area of expertise.

EZRA KLEIN: You don’t go to coffee shops?

OREN CASS: I’m not a coastal elite living in a big city. So I can’t tell you what the prices are, anyway. But the point is that in theory, there could be an opportunity here for either political party.

I was just delivering remarks at the National Conservatism Conference, where I made this point. There’s a world in which the Democrats take some of the basis of their economic message and combine it with just something slightly more sane on their progressive social issues. And you could imagine them coming out on top.

The reality is that they seem to be headed in the opposite direction still. And you do see on the right at least the potential for a conservatism that combines a social conservatism that attracts a lot of working and middle-class voters with an economic message that appeals to them as well.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, you’ve described this in terms of the wedge being social. But when I read you, I often see the wedge as educational, that the critique you make of the Democrats is that whether or not they realize it’s been happening — that their economic policy has begun to serve more and more the questions of a more educated electorate, that their economic policy is more for people with college diplomas than without them. Make that case, because I don’t think that’s how Democrats see themselves.

OREN CASS: Yeah, I think that’s right. And so what I’d say is it seems to me there are a lot of people out in the U.S., maybe even the majority, who, on these more social issues, tend to be more conservative, but have typically preferred what was the traditional, more ***working-class***-focused Democratic message. But what you have today from the Democrats, notwithstanding some of the rhetoric, is an agenda that, to me, anyway, looks overwhelmingly focused on the interests of a quite narrow, highly educated, high-income set of voters.

And so the quintessential set of policies — if I think about the big fights that the Biden administration has chosen to pick, certainly, immigration policy is one example. An education policy focused overwhelmingly on just telling people they don’t have to pay back what they borrowed to go to college is another element of that. I think the climate agenda as the focus of industrial policy is another element of that.

A lot of people ask, well, isn’t the stuff you’re talking about on industrial policy — isn’t that exactly what the Biden administration is doing? I would say conceptually, to some extent, it is. But it is all done subject to this green agenda, which has a set of costs and benefits that I don’t think pans out very well for most workers. And I don’t think they do, either. And so I think when you step back and look at it, it’s very hard to make out the priorities of the Democratic Party and the things they’re going to the mat on as at all aligning with what most Americans care about, and certainly what those who are not doing so well economically are focused on.

EZRA KLEIN: Although when I look at a lot of Republican Party positioning, and this includes still with things like Project 2025, I still see a lot of financial deregulation proposals. Project 2025 wants to get rid of the financial industry regulatory authority. It wants to severely limit the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. I still see a lot of proposals to slash Medicaid very, very deeply, to cut the Affordable Care Act. As much as you might be for a child tax credit, it is Republicans who let the expanded child tax credit expire and have been very, very resistant — though, again, not your faction — to figuring out some way forward on it.

It still seems like there is a Republican Party that has the old Reaganite spending priorities and the old Reaganite views on regulation. And the Democratic Party — while it does, say, have a view on college loans that it didn’t used to have — and my view for a very long time has been if you want to go around forgiving debt, you want to start with medical debt, which I think is much more built around bad luck than college debt is. But nevertheless — that it’s still very focused on negotiating pharmaceutical prices and trying to expand subsidies and health insurance programs and trying to expand things in Medicare — that there is this old spending line — has actually not changed all that much.

OREN CASS: Well, no disagreement on the Republican point. And if I could quote one of our great statesmen, I am, in a sense, trying to imagine what could be, unburdened by what has been. What I’m describing is a potential future for conservatives. And to your point, it’s the one that folks like Vance, Rubio, Hawley are also trying to make the case for. You don’t hear J.D. Vance out there talking about cutting entitlements and removing access to medical care and so on and so forth.

I think on the Democratic side, you’re right that Democrats certainly do stand up for and represent, essentially, the big spending element of the agenda. I’m also not sure at this point how much it actually does distinguish them from where Republicans are on any of this stuff. And so that’s why I very specifically said if I look at the fights the Biden administration chose to pick, if you’re looking at where are the actual political conflicts, where are you actually going to see a very different world depending on which party is in power, the things the Democrats, at least the Biden administration, really seem to have planted their flag on are these set of things that are very important to people who work for the Biden administration, but not necessarily those that a critical mass of voters are interested in.

And I think just the last thing to say about this — a really interesting place to see where the rubber meets the road, where we’ve started doing a lot of work at American Compass, is on fiscal and budget questions. Because it seems to me there’s no question, given where we are right now, you are going to have to bring spending down. And I think that is something that there is going to be significant support for in the country. Whether either party can find the right position on that remains to be seen. I’ve at least started to see some Republicans going out there saying, we need both to bring spending down and we are going to need more revenue. I have yet to see the Democrat ready to acknowledge that, yes, some spending is going to have to come down. And here’s where we’re going to focus.

EZRA KLEIN: Really? I feel like Democrats acknowledge that. I feel like we’re acting like we just fell out of a coconut tree, to quote the same great stateswoman. I feel like Democrats talk about this, frankly, all the time. You walk into Mark Warner’s office and ask him if he doesn’t think spending needs to come down sometime.

I think Joe Biden would be perfectly happy to get into a negotiation with congressional Republicans. I would bet money on this, real money, that if Mike Johnson wanted to come to Joe Biden and say, hey, I think our fiscal position is out of whack and we’re open to a deal that cuts spending and raises taxes, Joe Biden be like, I would love to have those negotiations. Whereas Donald Trump has a real articulated policy here, which is that he wants to continue his tax cuts, which cost in the trillions of dollars and were largely unpaid for, or at least were not nearly fully paid for is another way of putting that, and he wants to use some of the money from the very tariffs we were talking about earlier to do a deeper corporate tax cut.

This is a place where, since the Republican Party of Mitt Romney and Oren Cass and Paul Ryan in 2012, things really seem to have changed, where I can’t track what Republicans even think about debt and fiscal policy any longer. They don’t really seem to care. It doesn’t seem to motivate anybody. And Donald Trump specifically seems to care a lot about tax cuts.

The suspicion Democrats always have about Republicans because it has, in the lifetime of someone like me, always been proven true, is the Republicans want to talk about fiscal irresponsibility. But then when they get into office, the first thing they want to do is cut taxes.

So what I see when I look at Republicans — and you can tell me if you think this is wrong — is a desire to extend the Trump tax cuts, a desire to cut taxes more, and a desire to radically, or at least significantly, increase defense spending. And I’ve heard, actually, zero that is not old-school Paul Ryan-ism — we’re going to get rid of the Department of Education or something — about how they’re going to pay for any of this.

Am I misstating it, in your view?

OREN CASS: I think you are a little bit. I would have agreed with that as of a couple of years ago, and also so stipulated with respect to Trump. I have not heard anything fiscally responsible from —

EZRA KLEIN: But that’s a big stipulation, because he is the leader of the party and people fall in behind him.

OREN CASS: And I think we’ve made clear at a number of points during this conversation that certainly, what I’m speaking about and have optimism for, broadly speaking, is essentially what this set of folks in Congress is working on, where conservatism is headed. And in that respect, if you look at this exact question, you’ve seen a dramatic change even just in the last year on how very prominent Republicans are talking about this.

So Jodey Arrington, who’s chair of the House Budget Committee, went on the record saying we need to put revenue on the table. Tom Cole, chair of the Appropriations Committee, went on the record saying we need to put revenue on the table. Chip Roy, policy director of the House Freedom Caucus, went on the record saying he’s open to taking the corporate tax rate up. Josh Hawley — I mentioned this speech he just gave about embracing unions — also specifically highlighted corporate tax cuts as a mistake, suggesting we should have a higher corporate tax rate.

And so it seems to me that quite recently, there is actual reason for some optimism that there could be progress on this and that the 2017 version of the Paul Ryan-led fiscal policy is not what is going to be the future here for conservatives.

I am struck by your comment, though, about go and ask Mark Warner, go and ask Joe Biden, because something that we’ve tried to do some work on given this openness that some Republicans have conveyed is — who are the Democrats? Who could be the other side of it?

And just an example — we did an American Compass podcast interviewing Jodey Arrington and then also interviewing Ro Khanna, the Democratic representative. And it was fascinating to interview Khanna about this because he essentially just said, no, I’m not actually interested in reducing spending. I do believe we could get more efficiency in health care spending, negotiating drug prices, et cetera — but that what he’d do with that is plow that into more health care programs, not actually bringing spending down at all.

Certainly, other Hill offices on the Democratic side we’ve spoken with — we’ve run into the same thing, which is I’m not actually sure what would Mark Warner say. You don’t have to speak for him directly. But what is the spending cut that Democrats might actually be open to putting on the table at this point?

EZRA KLEIN: Unlike literally any significant policy I know of during the Trump administration, the Inflation Reduction Act was scored as fully paid for and more. They raised taxes in order to pay for what they wanted to do and then raised taxes by a bit more than that so they would get a positive score under the Congressional Budget Office.

So I think, one, there’s just a baseline level outside the stimulus spending of Covid, which I think was a very extraordinary situation for all kinds of reasons. There’s a baseline level of belief that you should not worsen the fiscal picture and you should pay for what you’re doing.

And then, though, and I do think this — I won’t speak for Ro. But I feel like I have a good sense of people like Warner and your Tim Kaines and your Ron Wydens and so on on this. They all feel very burned — and your Joe Bidens, for that matter. They feel very burned by the budget negotiations of the Obama era, where they feel like they put a lot on the table. And at the end, it was endlessly difficult to get Republicans to deliver, such you finally just had the supercommittee sequestration process engage. And we just had these dumb automatic cuts for years and years.

And so my read of them, because I don’t think they’ve been saying anything different than they, frankly, always said — and all of these people have, at different times, endorsed all kinds of packages of potential spending cuts. But they don’t believe it’s there for a deal. I remember Barack Obama signaling openness to raising the Medicare retirement age, which made everybody on the left super angry at him, only at the end for Boehner to not be able to deliver. And the view of Democrats is that Republicans cannot deliver on hard votes in Congress any longer. And so the upside of getting into that kind of process, particularly around an election year, would be quite low.

I’d be very curious to see what would happen in the kinds of negotiations you’re talking about. If you’re asking me why is Joe Biden, which is a different question — if you’re asking me why Joe Biden has not engaged in a budget process with Republicans, I think it’s an interesting question. But I don’t think they believe Speaker Johnson can deliver. And I don’t think Johnson has signaled the kinds of things you’re talking about here.

I agree that people like Vance and Rubio have, at times, signaled an openness to a bit more revenue. But I think that there is a credibility-building operation that would need to happen there before people took that seriously.

OREN CASS: Yeah, no. Totally agree. And we just did a big project on where on Earth do we go on this stuff. And that was exactly where we landed, that these — here’s my 10-year path to a balanced budget. Here’s your commission on this or that — is exactly backward. What’s needed is these smaller credibility-building exercises. Can we get in a room and actually do — can we do $50 billion of revenue and $100 billion of spending cuts, just something that both sides actually begin to believe the other side is serious?

I am more optimistic than I’ve been in a long time that that could actually happen. And it is a function of — as with other things we’ve been talking about, I — some of these shifts on the right that I hope will continue.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me end here on a question about prices. One thing that you are very sensitive to in your writing is that if you want to be a populist economics thinker, you have to take pretty seriously what the public thinks. And the public is pretty clear right now that they want prices to go down. They are very mad about how much they are paying.

A lot of these policies that — even some of the ones that I agree with, but some of the ones that I don’t, tariffs and sharply curtailing immigration — they’re price increasing sometimes as a one-time thing, sometimes for longer than that. How is your thinking about the politics and pitfalls of prices changed given how many people say the thing they want from their politicians above all is for things to be cheaper again?

OREN CASS: It hasn’t really changed my thinking very much. The inflation of the past few years was, obviously, very damaging. It is, in my mind, rightly connected to some quite irresponsible policy choices that were made. And I don’t think that’s going to be forgiven. And so I think that is priced into current thinking about how people feel about the last few years.

That being said, inflation has, obviously, now come back down. Hopefully, we are returning to a period of price stability. And I think it would be a mistake to infer from this experience, therefore, the correct policy agenda is one that, first and foremost, promises low prices because I think what there is still an opportunity for is to essentially be honest about and intentionally pursue a policy that has trade-offs. And that’s something that’s been lacking in our politics for a very long time.

And I honestly think there’s an opportunity right now — and this is something we’re doing a lot of work on — particularly in a populist framing, to be quite honest about the hole that we have dug for ourselves over the last 40 years and about some of the things we can and should do to dig back out of that hole.

And I think if it were understood that you were actually getting something for your price increase — that is, that this was not a result of bad policy and mistakes, this is happening because we actually are doing the reshoring because we actually are bringing up wages for those who have been struggling — I really do think there’s a political message to be built around that that is way more effective than a lot of what we’ve been hearing. And certainly, all the polling that we do finds that same thing — that when you tell people honestly, here are the ups and downsides of a tariff — one of the downsides of a tariff is it raises prices — that doesn’t reduce support for tariffs. But the idea that you should ask people to pay a price for something is not foreign to our politics and, in fact, can be a very healthy part of a message.

EZRA KLEIN: Then I’m ask our final question. What are three books would recommend to the audience?

OREN CASS: I put some thought into this because I want to provide a useful and diverse set of recommendations. So I have nonfiction. I’ve been reading Robert Caro’s Lyndon Johnson biography. And I must admit, I’m not very far into what — the thousands of pages and four volumes. But I’d always been skeptical that a four-volume, thousands of pages biography could be especially interesting. And I have to say, it’s phenomenal. So “The Path to Power” by Robert Caro would be one.

For those who enjoy science fiction, and especially if you need an audiobook for a long drive, I would recommend “Project Hail Mary” by Andy Weir. He’s the guy who wrote “The Martian,” which became the movie with Matt Damon stranded on Mars. But this one’s even better. And without too many spoilers, it is an intrepid scientist and his little alien buddy saving the world.

And finally, for those with kids, a wonderful bedtime read-aloud — it’s called “The Green Ember.” It’s actually given to me by my team because they knew I like reading to my kids. And it is about rabbits fighting with swords. Who could do better than that?

EZRA KLEIN: Oren Cass, thank you very much.

OREN CASS: This was awesome. Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Annie Galvin. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris, with Kate Sinclair and Mary Marge Locker. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing by Aman Sahota and Isaac Jones. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Rollin Hu, Elias Isquith and Kristin Lin. We’ve 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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**Highlight:** Four recent books wrangle with threats to — and from — the American news media.

**Body**

Four recent books wrangle with threats to — and from — the American news media.

According to a recent poll, trust in the media to “fully, accurately and fairly” report the news is at an all-time low. And no wonder: A former president has tried ( often successfully) to make the term “fake news” synonymous with, well, news. This comes amid traditional media’s economic decline.

Theories — and questions — abound. What is the role of a free press in a democracy? Is objectivity possible, or even desirable? What is the responsibility of journalists to protect democracy or expose those who undermine it? Some see the press as under threat; to others, it is itself the threat.

In UNCOVERED: How the Media Got Cozy With Power, Abandoned Its Principles, and Lost the People (Center Street, 201 pp., $29), Steve Krakauer floats a number of reasons as to why the news media has shifted from “reality to reality show”: proximity to power, doom narratives and a Trump addiction.

But Krakauer doesn’t blame ideology for what he regards as flawed coverage. It is, rather, geography — the insularity of echo-chamber “Acela media,” most of whom, he asserts, don’t own a gun or know anyone who does. Instead, they practice “helicopter” journalism — swooping into red states like amateur anthropologists. At least the right-wing media, he says, is open about its biases.

Krakauer believes that many of the excesses he decries stem from a kind of collective guilt about Trump’s 2016 victory — and the liberal press’s determination to never repeat the mistake.

The reason for this, he suggests, is that these journalists see Trump as a unique threat to democracy. Krakauer, like many conservative media critics, cites the journalism of the 1950s and 1960s as a kind of objective oasis.

CITY OF NEWSMEN: Public Lies and Professional Secrets in Cold War Washington (University of Chicago, 295 pp., $30.00), by Kathryn McGarr, provides a corrective to this nostalgia. Indeed, her deeply reported look at Washington between the 1940s and the 1970s exposes this idealization as dangerously naïve. The “Cronkite Consensus” was, she argues, manufactured by media elites, liberal internationalists who believed in the importance of preserving and extending American power and influence.

“At the supposed height of the era of objective journalism,” McGarr writes, “the news was subjectively and consciously crafted.” Although a common critique of today’s media is that journalists and the “deep state” are too enmeshed, McGarr demonstrates that such coziness is nothing new. During the Cold War, a shared sense of responsibility existed not just to inform the public but to protect them. “Many reporters,” she says, “were willing to prioritize citizenship over scoops.”

Vietnam and Watergate changed everything: The gentlemanly code of coverage was shattered by the brazenness of government lies. The press corps became more Ivy League; at the same time, efforts began to reform the profession’s racial and sexual segregation — and McGarr notes that the early Black press was willing to question authority more than the white boys’ club. Journalists became more adversarial, more skeptical of official messaging. Ironically, she claims, it was this post-Watergate hostility that would trigger right-wing antipathy to the media.

Batya Ungar-Sargon begins BAD NEWS: How Woke Media Is Undermining Democracy (Encounter, 302 pp., $28.99) with the Penny Press revolution of the 19th century, in which newspapers reduced their prices to render their papers universally affordable. Journalists tended to be ***working-class*** themselves, she writes, and were proud to be on the side of the everyman rather than any one political party or figure. The press baron Joseph Pulitzer boasted, “Our aristocracy is the aristocracy of labor.”

To Ungar-Sargon, “wokeness” is the civil religion of wealthy elites. She defines the frequently weaponized word as the endorsement of “race as the most important and inescapable facet of America life, reducing America’s past and present to a binary” of oppressors and victims. This embrace of America as “an unrepentant white supremacist state,” she claims, is particularly attractive to liberals because it allows them to feel less guilty about the current economic and class inequality, in which they are complicit.

Her argument is primarily an economic one. Ungar-Sargon sees the embrace of wokeness as a function of an insular press’s abandonment of the little guy to court more affluent readers who can buy expensive subscriptions and enjoy luxury car ads. Advertising dollars, not ideology, drive the commitment to progressivism — a century-long shift from a press that aspired to transcend class to one that has abandoned all objectivity in order to focus on wealthy audiences. This, in turn, has led to the abandonment of the more ***working-class*** perspective and traditional objectivity.

Margaret Sullivan was the fifth public editor of The New York Times and later a media columnist for The Washington Post. NEWSROOM CONFIDENTIAL: Lessons (and Worries) From an Ink-Stained Life (St. Martin’s, 278 pp., $28.99) is a memoir, but also an extended homily on the meaning and purpose of journalism. Sullivan’s evolution from an old-school, just-the-facts reporter to one who has become a passionate advocate for journalism with a pro-democracy bias was fueled by the rise of Donald Trump and his relentless assault on the press. She sees the diminishing trust in the media and the success of authoritarian attacks on her industry as an existential crisis.

Her argument is clear: Journalism is in the public interest and the public interest is preserving American democracy, which can only be built on a shared set of facts. But she wonders if our media ecosystem has become so polluted with mis- and disinformation that we can’t recognize truth — or facts — when they are in front of us. In Sullivan’s view, the right-wing media is not only promoting false narratives, but undermining an even more fundamental idea — that there are a set of facts on which we can all agree. Forget profits and prizes, she says, the press “has to reorient itself, framing its core purpose as serving democracy.” This very fight, in other words, must become the most vital journalistic beat of all.

Richard Stengel served in the Obama administration as under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs. His most recent book is “Information Wars: How We Lost the Global Battle Against Disinformation and What We Can Do About It.”

PHOTO: Enemy or hero? Often today, the press itself is the story (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jonathan Ernst/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What Does Eric Adams, Working-Class Champion, Mean for the Democrats?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:630V-RG91-JBG3-60WT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1751 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** Mr. Adams, who ran a campaign focused on appealing to blue-collar Black and Latino voters, said America does not want “fancy candidates.”

**Body**

Mr. Adams, who ran a campaign focused on appealing to blue-collar Black and Latino voters, said America does not want “fancy candidates.”

He [*bluntly challenged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/05/nyregion/aoc-maya-wiley-endorsement-nyc-mayor.html) left-wing leaders in his party over matters of policing and public safety. He campaigned heavily in Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx, often ignoring Manhattan neighborhoods besides Harlem and Washington Heights. And he branded himself a blue-collar candidate with a keen personal understanding of the challenges and concerns facing ***working-class*** New Yorkers of color.

With his [*substantial early lead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/22/nyregion/nyc-mayor.html) in the Democratic mayoral primary when votes were counted Tuesday night, [*Eric Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/eric-adams-mayor-nyc), the Brooklyn borough president, demonstrated the enduring power of a candidate who can connect to working- and middle-class [*Black*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/nyregion/adams-second-black-mayor.html) and Latino voters, while also appealing to some white voters with moderate views.

Mr. [*Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/02/nyregion/nyc-mayor-race-voting-count-eric-adams.html) is [*not yet assured*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/22/nyregion/nyc-mayor.html) of victory. But if he prevails, it would be a triumph for a campaign that focused more heavily on those constituencies than any other winning New York City [*mayoral candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/nyregion/adams-second-black-mayor.html) in recent history.

As the national Democratic Party navigates debates over identity and ideology, the mayoral primary in the largest city in the United States is highlighting critical questions about which voters make up the party’s base in the Biden era, and who best speaks for them.

Barely a year has passed since President Biden clinched the Democratic nomination, defeating several more progressive rivals on the strength of support from [*Black*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/nyregion/adams-second-black-mayor.html) voters and older moderate voters across the board, and running as a [*blue-collar candidate himself*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/19/us/politics/joe-biden-working-class.html). But Democrats are now straining to hold together a coalition that includes college-educated liberals and centrists, young left-wing activists and ***working-class*** voters of color.

“America is saying, we want to have justice and safety and end inequalities,” Mr. [*Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/22/nyregion/eric-adams-advisers.html) [*declared*](https://twitter.com/GloriaPazmino/status/1408083637103439872?s=20) at a [*news conference*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/24/nyregion/eric-adams-crime-mayor.html) on Thursday, offering his take on the party’s direction. “And we don’t want fancy candidates.”

Mr. [*Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/10/nyregion/eric-adams-issues-mayor.html)’s allies and advisers say that from the start, he based his campaign strategy on connecting with working- and middle-class voters of color.

“Over the last few cycles, the winners of the mayor’s race have started with a whiter, wealthier base generally, and then expanded out,” said Evan Thies, an Adams spokesman and adviser. Mr. Adams’s campaign, he said, started “with low-income, middle-income, Black, Latino, immigrant communities, and then reached into middle-income communities.”

[*Mr. Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-primary-results.html?searchResultPosition=11) would be New York’s second [*Black mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/nyregion/adams-second-black-mayor.html), after [*David N. Dinkins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/24/nyregion/david-dinkins-dead.html). Mr. Dinkins, who described the city as a “gorgeous mosaic,” was more focused than Mr. Adams on trying to win over liberal white voters.

Mr. Adams was the first choice of about 32 percent of New York Democrats who voted in person on Tuesday or during the early voting period. Maya Wiley, a former counsel to [*Mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/nyregion/adams-second-black-mayor.html) Bill de Blasio and a progressive favorite, pulled in about 22 percent of that vote. Kathryn Garcia, a former sanitation commissioner who touted her managerial experience, got 19.5 percent.

Under the city’s new [*ranked-choice system*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/nyregion/ranked-choice-voting-nyc.html?name=styln-nyc-mayor&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=LegacyCollection&amp;variant=show&amp;is_new=false), in which voters could rank up to five candidates, the Democratic nominee will now be determined through a process of elimination. Ms. Garcia or Ms. Wiley [*could ultimately surpass Mr. Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/nyregion/ranked-choice-voting-nyc-mayor.html), although that appears to be an uphill battle, and a final winner may not be determined for weeks.

If [*Mr. Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/nyregion/eric-adams-video-interview.html?searchResultPosition=14) does win, it will be partly because he had major institutional advantages.

He was well financed and spent heavily on advertising. He received the support of several of the city’s [*most influential labor unions*](https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2021/03/10/eric-adams-consolidates-labor-support-with-backing-of-building-service-workers-union-1367668), which represent many Black and Latino New Yorkers. His name was also well known after years in city politics, including as a state senator.

And although some of the most prominent members of New York’s congressional delegation [*supported*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/16/nyregion/maya-wiley-hakeem-jeffries-endorsement.html) Ms. Wiley as their first choice, Mr. Adams landed other important endorsements, including those of the Queens and [*Bronx*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/nyregion/eric-adams-diaz-endorsement-mayor.html) borough presidents and [*Representative Adriano Espaillat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/31/nyregion/latino-voters-nyc-mayors-race.html), the first Dominican-American member of Congress, and a powerful figure in Washington Heights.

Just as importantly, in his supporters’ eyes, Mr. Adams was perceived as having credibility on what emerged as the most consequential, and divisive, issue in the race: public safety.

Mr. Adams, who experienced economic hardship as a child and has said he was once beaten by police officers, grew up to join the Police Department, rising to captain. Critics within the department saw him as[*something of a rabble-rouser*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/19/nyregion/eric-adams-nyc-police-mayor.html), while many progressive voters now think his answers to complex problems too often involve an emphasis on law enforcement.

But to some voters, he long ago cemented a reputation as someone who challenged misconduct from within the system, giving him authority to talk about bringing down crime.

“He was in the police force, he knows what they represent,” said Gloria Dees, 63, a Brooklyn resident who voted for Mr. Adams and described being deeply concerned about both rising crime and police violence against people of color. “You have to understand something in order to make it work better.”

Polls this spring [*showed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/12/nyregion/progressives-democrats-nyc.html) public safety increasingly becoming the most important issue to Democratic voters amid random subway attacks, a spate of bias crimes and a spike in shootings. On the Sunday before the primary, Mr. Adams’s campaign staff [*said*](https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/nyc-elections-2021/ny-eric-adams-volunteer-stabbed-mayoral-race-20210620-p7yrrk235raf3nezqtnsxd5llu-story.html) that a volunteer had been stabbed in the Bronx.

“Being an ex-cop, being able to have safety and justice at the same time, was a message that resonated with folks in the Bronx,” said Assemblywoman Karines Reyes, a Democrat who represents parts of the borough and who did not endorse anyone in the race. Mr. Adams won the Bronx overwhelmingly in the first vote tally. “They’re looking for somebody to address the crime.”

The rate of violent crime in the city is far below where it was decades ago, but shootings have been up in some neighborhoods, and among older voters especially, there is a visceral fear of returning to the “bad old days.”

Donovan Richards, the Queens borough president and a supporter of Mr. Adams, cited the [*recent fatal shooting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/nyregion/queens-shooting.html) of a 10-year-old boy in the Rockaways as something that hit home for many people in the area.

“We’re nowhere near where we were in the ’80s or ’70s,” he said. But, he added, “when you see a shooting in front of you, no one cares about statistics.”

Interviews on Thursday with voters on either side of Brooklyn’s Eastern Parkway illustrated vividly Mr. Adams’s appeal and limitations. In parts of Crown Heights, the parkway was a physical dividing line, [*early results show*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/06/23/nyregion/nyc-mayor-primary-results-precinct-map.html?action=click&amp;module=ELEX_results&amp;pgtype=Interactive&amp;region=Component), between voters who went for Ms. Wiley and those who preferred Mr. Adams.

Among older, ***working-class*** voters of color who live south of the parkway, Mr. Adams held a commanding lead.

“He’ll support the poor people and the Black and brown people,” said one, Janice Brathwaite, 66, who is disabled and said she had voted for Mr. Adams.

Ms. Brathwaite ruled out Ms. Wiley after hearing her plans for overhauling the Police Department, including a reallocation of $1 billion from the police budget to social service programs and anti-violence measures.

“She is someone who is against the policeman who is protecting me, making sure nobody is shooting me,” Ms. Brathwaite said.

Ms. Wiley has said there are times when armed officers are needed, but she has also argued that in some instances, mental health experts can halt crime more effectively.

That approach appealed to Allison Behringer, 31, an audio journalist and podcast producer who lives north of the parkway, where Mr. Adams’s challenges were on display among some of the young professionals who live in the area.

“She was the best progressive candidate,” Ms. Behringer said of Ms. Wiley, whom she ranked as her first choice. “She talked about reimagining what public safety is, that really resonated with me.”

Ms. Behringer alluded to concerns about ethical issues that have been raised about Mr. Adams. He has faced scrutiny over his taxes, real estate holdings, fund-raising practices and residency.

A fresh round of voting results to be released on Tuesday will provide further clarity about the race. They may show whether those issues hurt Mr. Adams among some highly engaged voters in Manhattan and elsewhere. The new results could also indicate whether Ms. Wiley or Ms. Garcia had sufficiently broad appeal to cut into his lead.

As in Brooklyn, there was a clear geographic divide among voters in Manhattan: East 96th Street, with those who ranked Ms. Garcia first mostly to the south, and those who favored Mr. Adams or Ms. Wiley further uptown.

Ms. Garcia, a relatively moderate technocrat who was endorsed by The New York Times’s editorial board, among others, won Manhattan handily. Like Ms. Wiley, she hopes to beat Mr. Adams by being many voters’ second choice, and with the benefit of absentee votes that have not been counted.

In Harlem one afternoon this month, Carmen Flores had just cast her early vote for Mr. Adams when she came across one of his rallies. She said she found his trajectory inspiring.

“He’s coming from the bottom up,” she said, adding, “He’s been in every facet of life.”

Whatever the final vote tally, Democratic strategists caution against drawing sweeping political conclusions from a post-pandemic, municipal election held in June. If Mr. Adams becomes mayor, as the Democratic nominee almost certainly will, progressive leaders can still point to signs of strength [*in other city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/24/nyregion/brad-lander-comptroller-primary.html) races and [*elsewhere in the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/nyregion/india-walton-socialist-nyc-primary-buffalo.html).

Asked about the mayor’s race, Waleed Shahid, a spokesman for the left-wing organization Justice Democrats, said, “fear-mongering works when crime is rising,” while noting that several left-wing candidates in the city were leading their races.

He also argued that some people who supported Mr. Adams could have done so for reasons that were not ideological.

“There might be some voters who voted for Eric Adams based on his policy platform,” Mr. Shahid said. “But there are probably many more voters who voted for Eric Adams based on how they felt about him. It’s often whether they identify with a candidate.”

Nate Schweber contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: To some voters, Eric Adams had long ago cemented a reputation as someone who had the authority to talk about bringing down crime. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Maya Wiley, a favorite of progressives, seemed to turn off some of those same voters with her plans to redirect police funding. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE KEITH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Trump Meets With Teamsters President as Union Weighs 2024 Endorsement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1H-M6M1-JBG3-602M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 4, 2024 Thursday 16:55 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 685 words

**Highlight:** The Teamsters union has yet to endorse a presidential candidate, even as President Biden has called himself the most pro-union president in history.

**Body**

The Teamsters union has yet to endorse a presidential candidate, even as President Biden has called himself the most pro-union president in history.

Sean M. O’Brien, the general president of the Teamsters union, sat down with former President Donald J. Trump on Wednesday at Mr. Trump’s seaside mansion, Mar-a-Lago, in Palm Beach, Fla.

Kara Deniz, a spokeswoman for the union, said the meeting was simply one of a series of meetings the Teamsters plan to have with all the presidential candidates.

But this particular meeting, which the union [*detailed in a lengthy post on social media*](https://twitter.com/Teamsters/status/1742743244461465636) that was accompanied by a picture of Mr. O’Brien and Mr. Trump, came at a remarkable moment. At a public hearing in November, Senator Markwayne Mullin, a [*staunchly pro-Trump Republican*](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/meetthepressblog/trump-picks-fifth-senate-endorsement-rcna70118) from Oklahoma, [*called Mr. O’Brien a “thug,” a “bully”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLjblX0oguo) and a coward, and challenged him to a fight.

President Biden has called himself the most pro-union president in history, as have several leaders of organized labor, and the Teamsters [*endorsed his candidacy in 2020*](https://teamster.org/2020/08/teamsters-endorse-biden-harris/). In December, Mr. Biden issued an executive order mandating what are known as project labor agreements — which establish fixed work, wage and labor standards at construction sites — for all federal contracts exceeding $35 million. That order was a potential boon to the Teamsters union, which is likely to control transportation at many of those sites and would have to be brought into contract talks as funds from Mr. Biden’s signature domestic achievements start to flow.

Just last week, [*the Biden administration named Cole Scandaglia*](https://teamster.org/2023/12/teamsters-legislative-representative-appointed-to-u-s-dot-advisory-council/), the Teamsters’ senior legislative representative, to a high-profile advisory board at the Transportation Department. And in 2022, the [*administration moved*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/08/fact-sheet-president-biden-announces-historic-relief-to-protect-hard-earned-pensions-of-hundreds-of-thousands-of-union-workers-and-retirees/) to [*shore up a pension fund that affected 350,000 Teamster retirees*](https://teamster.org/2022/12/in-victory-for-teamster-retirees-central-states-pension-fund-awarded-36-billion/).

Yet there was Mr. O’Brien next to a beaming Mr. Trump, whose appeal to ***working-class*** voters will be key to his re-election bid. Mr. O’Brien promised the former president a seat at another meeting later this month in Washington, this time with rank-and-file members.

Serious issues need to be addressed “to improve the lives of working people across the country, and the Teamsters union is making sure our members’ voices are heard as we head into a critical election year,” Mr. O’Brien said in a statement. “We thank the former president for taking time during this private meeting to listen to the Teamsters’ top priorities.”

Teamsters leaders have met with other candidates, mainly on the margins of the 2024 election and none with Mr. Trump’s profile. The [*first two meetings came last month*](https://twitter.com/Teamsters/status/1735818534326845525), with former Gov. Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas, [*whose presidential campaign has barely registered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/12/us/politics/asa-hutchinson-iowa.html) with voters, and with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the anti-vaccine independent who [*qualified this week for the presidential ballot in Utah*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/03/us/politics/utah-robert-kennedy-ballot.html). The union has [*also met with*](https://teamster.org/2023/12/teamsters-kick-off-first-presidential-roundtables/) Marianne Williamson and Dean Phillips, Democratic candidates, as well as Cornel West, who is running as a left-wing independent.

A spokesman for the Biden campaign, Ammar Moussa, said the president “looks forward to continuing to work with the Teamsters and workers across America to ensure working Americans get a fair share of the wealth they’re helping to create.”

In September, Mr. Biden became the first sitting president to join a picket line when [*he stood with members of the United Auto Workers striking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) in Michigan. Pressure from the administration helped resolve the strike, and has helped [*other unions expand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/us/politics/clean-energy-unions.html) their organizing.

Still, while the [*U.A.W.’s brash new president, Shawn Fain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/business/economy/shawn-fain-uaw-profile.html), has praised Mr. Biden and castigated Mr. Trump, the U.A.W. has so far not endorsed the president’s re-election bid, and Mr. O’Brien may have added to the White House’s frustration. As the Teamsters line up meetings with each presidential candidate, the union’s leadership appears intent on maintaining its leverage, just as Mr. Fain has.

PHOTO: Sean M. O’Brien, the general president of the Teamsters union, in Charlestown, Mass., in 2021. The union endorsed Joe Biden’s candidacy in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MediaNews Group/Boston Herald, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2024

**End of Document**



[***What Happened When the Skating Coaches Wanted a Union***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY2-N391-JBG3-6546-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1676 words

**Byline:** David Waldstein David Waldstein writes about the greater New York region with an emphasis on sports.

**Highlight:** A group of figure skating coaches at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan, many of whom earn less than $40,000 a year, sought to bargain their contracts collectively. Two were fired.

**Body**

A simmering labor dispute involving figure skating coaches at Sky Rink in Manhattan ramped up in recent days after two leaders of a fledgling union were fired as part-time employees.

Chelsea Piers, which owns Sky Rink, said the terminations were not an act of union busting and described them as part of the “normal course of business.” But the coaches say the reason for the firings was to squash the union and scare others away from organizing.

“I can’t say with 100 percent certainty,” said Angela Chiang, one of the coaches who was fired, “but it sure feels like it.”

Ms. Chiang has been coaching at Sky Rink, the picturesque twin sheets of ice overlooking the Hudson River, for 23 years, since she was a senior in high school. A former competitive skater herself, she is considered one of the pre-eminent and most popular coaches in the region, and was one of the few invited by Chelsea Piers to teach a summer camp during the pandemic in 2020.

She said she received notification of her termination via an automated email on April 19, and that it arrived without any explanation.

The next week, Marni Halasa, another longtime coach at Sky Rink who was also involved in the union, was fired. Both coaches said they were told by managers that they could continue coaching as independent contractors, renting ice time from Sky Rink and charging customers directly, at least “for now.”

Ms. Chiang and Ms. Halasa had been among the leaders of an effort to create the NYC Coaches Collective, which they believe would be the first union of figure skating coaches in the world. They do not profile as ***working-class*** agitators. But though they can charge upward of $60 for a 30-minute lesson, they earn a modest living, especially for New York. The top tier gross perhaps $40,000 per year, and many of the coaches earn half that.

There are roughly 50 coaches who work in some capacity at Sky Rink; according to organizers, 38 of them voted to join the collective last August. Their only demand is for Chelsea Piers to allow them to negotiate their yearly contracts collectively. The coaches, who meet regularly in nearby apartments and communicate by text and email, sent a letter to Chelsea Piers after the vote asking to be recognized as a bargaining unit. They said they received no response.

Ria Julien, a lawyer for the coaches, said that the two terminations violated the National Labor Relations Act.

“Chelsea Piers’ decision to retaliate and make examples of prominent members of this group, who are outspoken and well known, is really just an effort to chill other members of the collective,” Ms. Julien said. “This is a violation of their rights, and they will work together to hold Chelsea Piers accountable under the law.”

The lawyer also suggested that Chelsea Piers may have violated state whistle-blower regulations because the coaches had previously complained about health and safety concerns at the rinks after a [*ventilation unit fell from the rafters onto the ice*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgKjYjlewGA) during a late-night hockey game.

David Tewksbury, one of the owners of Chelsea Piers, called the whistle-blower complaint “absurd” in an email on Tuesday, and said he was surprised by the allegations, adding that the coaches and their lawyers were selling a “bill of goods.”

“Chelsea Piers does not discriminate against employees based on their membership in any protected class and does not retaliate against employees that engage in any form of protected activity,” he wrote. He added that many inactive, part-time employees have been removed from active employment status as a normal business practice, and said the company “is unable to comment on any specific individual termination.”

Matthew Bodie, a law professor at the University of Minnesota who previously worked at the National Labor Relations Board, said the coaches could take their case to the board claiming they were fired for organizing.

“The board gets very upset when that happens, because when you fire union leaders just because they are union leaders, in order to chill an organizing campaign, it’s kind of the worst thing you can do in labor law,” he said.

Manhattan’s Backyard by the Hudson

The Chelsea Piers sports complex opened in 1995, revitalizing the decrepit Hudson River waterfront in Chelsea. The 780,000-square-foot facility offers bowling lanes; basketball, volleyball and pickleball courts; soccer fields; a driving range; gymnastics equipment and more. Sky Rink became one of the gems of the facility and one of the premier rinks in the New York region, enjoyed by legions of figure skaters, hockey teams and recreational skaters.

The figure skating coaches have a multilayered relationship with Sky Rink. They are independent contractors — renting ice time from the company and charging students directly — who also work as part-time employees, teaching at camps, clinics and parties. Many of the coaches, like Ms. Chiang and Ms. Halasa, have worked there for decades. Ms. Halasa began coaching at the original Sky Rink location in Midtown in 1992.

“It’s basically my entire life, my identity, my profession,” Ms. Halasa, 58, said. “To lose all of that would be devastating.”

The coaches say they share a special fondness for Sky Rink, and note that their organizing efforts began in 2011, when they won concessions from management during a disagreement over contract terms. Mr. Tewksbury said recent meetings between management and coaches were evidence that the company was listening.

“To the best of our knowledge, the coaching rates paid at Sky Rink for skating-school work and special-event work are the highest in the tristate region,” he wrote in an email in March.

Figure Skating’s ‘Norma Rae’

In some ways, Ms. Chiang was the inspiration for the unionizing effort. Soft-spoken and measured, she began coaching at 17. Other than babysitting, it is the only job she has ever had.

Now 39, she is one of several coaches to assume a leadership role, but the other members say Ms. Chiang’s steady, dispassionate involvement solidified their resolve. Many of them said they worried that their pro-union activity could jeopardize their ability to work at Sky Rink in the future.

“Angela is our Norma Rae,” Amy Engeler, a coach at Sky Rink for 28 years, said, referring to the character played by Sally Field in the 1979 film based on the organizing efforts of Crystal Lee Sutton. “But she’s no firebrand. She’s very quiet and thoughtful, so when she was willing to take a stand, it made us all take a look.”

The collective intensified its organizing efforts last summer, after the company presented the coaches with a new contract that the coaches said cost them money. They said that after they raised objections, the company demanded that each coach sign the new contract by noon on Sept. 4 — Labor Day. The coaches felt compelled to sign, but they each added a line after the signature: “Member, NYC Coaches Collective.” It was a symbolic gesture, to be sure, but Ms. Chiang said it felt empowering. Six months later, Ms. Chiang received the email informing her that she was no longer a Sky Rink employee.

Ms. Halasa was told about her dismissal not long after she handed out Coaches Collective fliers at a gala dinner at Chelsea Piers. The dinner was hosted by North Star Fund, a social justice organization. Security guards tried to stop Ms. Halasa, but Jennifer Ching, the fund’s executive director, who had granted her permission to distribute the cards, intervened. Chelsea Piers employees later told Ms. Halasa that they were concerned that the fliers were related to war protests.

Nine days later, she was fired. The reason given, she said, related to a letter she had written on behalf of a student’s mother, who was going through a divorce. The letter angered the student’s father, who complained to Sky Rink. Ms. Halasa said that management discussed the letter with her in February and told her at the time it was not actionable. She, too, believes she was fired for her role in the union.

“I’ve been there over 30 years, and they rarely fire coaches,” she said. “Then I get fired days after I hand out fliers at the North Star dinner, and they say it’s for a reason they always said was inconsequential. It doesn’t add up.”

Ms. Chiang said she initially thought the email terminating her employment was a mistake and reached out to a manager for clarification. When they connected the next day, she was coaching a student at a competition in Connecticut.

Ms. Chiang said she was told the reason for the termination was that she did not teach 10 hours of classes per month, a new minimum threshold that was established on March 23, a little more than a week before her dismissal took effect (the emailed notice of termination was dated April 1, though she did not receive it until April 19).

Although she teaches few class hours during the school year, she said that tends to increase to about 60 hours a month in the summer. Part-time work for the rink both supplements her income and is a good way to cultivate private clients. Without it, she is now worried she will not be able to pay rent.

Still able to teach private lessons for now, she said it has been awkward returning to Sky Rink even though she has spent most of her life skating and coaching there.

“It’s a weird situation where you get terminated, but you are still working there,” she said. “It’s really awkward and uncomfortable. At times I felt like this must be what it feels like to lose your home in a tornado or something. I have memories of this place, and it’s not really mine anymore.”

PHOTOS: Angela Chiang was fired in April as a figure skating coach at Sky Rink in Manhattan, where she has coached for 23 years. She and another fired coach are involved in a union drive. (MB1); Top, members of the New York City Coaches Collective at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan: back from left, Nancy Quach, Maria O’Connor and Karina Manta; middle, Amy Engeler, Denise Beaumont and Zoe Ferguson; and front, Angela Chiang and Marni Halasa. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE KEYSSAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB6) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB6.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2024

**End of Document**



[***The First Year***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6949-05S1-JBG3-61SJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 8, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 6; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 359 words

**Byline:** By Devika Girish

**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,'' 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.]

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 YearNot 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.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/movies/the-first-year-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/movies/the-first-year-review.html)

**Graphic**

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 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***At Present, A Perfect Fit For the Past***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK7-C7T1-DXY4-X00H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 18, 2024 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1064 words

**Byline:** By Christopher Kuo

**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,'' 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 & 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, one of the producers 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.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/15/arts/television/anthony-boyle-manhunt-masters-of-the-air.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/15/arts/television/anthony-boyle-manhunt-masters-of-the-air.html)

**Graphic**

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 18, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Minneapolis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C0R-R2C1-DXY4-X02R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2024 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Travel Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1717 words

**Byline:** By Ingrid K. Williams

**Body**

Friday

4 p.m. | Search for prints

For a friendly introduction to the city's engaging arts community, start in the southwestern Uptown neighborhood at the Highpoint Center for Printmaking. At this multipurpose cultural hub, staff members are more than happy to guide visitors through the gallery spaces and the printmaking co-op, an area with machinery used by local artists working in various media, including screen-printing and lithography. Don't miss the small Highpoint Editions gallery showcasing fine artworks made on-site, including a series of haunting abstract screen-prints entitled ''Corner of Lake and Minnehaha,'' by the artist Julie Mehretu, who was inspired by a photograph taken at the Minneapolis intersection during the turmoil ignited by the killing of George Floyd in 2020.

5:30 p.m. | Taste the bounty

Book an early table at Owamni, which earned the James Beard Award for best new restaurant in 2022. The chef Sean Sherman, of the Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe, has a commitment to using only ingredients native to North America. The menu changes seasonally and recently included an earthy tepary-bean dip with pepitas and wild-rice crackers ($12), smoked quahog clams ($40) and tender bison tacos with guajillo-chili salsa ($9). For a drink and something sweet, stroll to Spoon and Stable in the Warehouse District. Grab a seat at the backlit bar, which was remodeled this year. A recent dessert standout was the almond cake with coconut and lime curd, pineapple sherbet and ancho chile powder ($15).

7:30 p.m. | Catch a performance

In addition to the Guthrie Theater, with its repertory and modern geometric architecture, and First Avenue, a rock club where the hometown artist Prince performed in the 1984 film ''Purple Rain,'' Minneapolis is also home to several smaller stages worth seeking out. Across the street from Spoon and Stable, duck inside Berlin, a polished jazz club that opened in February with acts ranging from string trios to ambient bands (cover is usually $10 to $25). Or see if there's a play running at Mixed Blood, a theater and social justice organization in a former firehouse in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Admission is by donation, an effort to remove all barriers to attend performances, which recently included ''The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington,'' a satire by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright James Ijames.

10:30 p.m. | Drink at a dive

For cheap beer and a shot of whiskey, you'll do fine at any of the many dive bars clustered in the Northeast, a historically ***working-class*** neighborhood. But there's a more interesting option right across the Mississippi River. Meteor, which opened on an industrial block in late 2019, has the grungy patina of a bar that's been around for decades, with exposed brick walls, checkerboard floors and a well-worn wooden bar. The friendly bartenders mix excellent cocktails -- try the Secret Tiger, a spicy passion fruit mezcal margarita ($14) -- but they'll also pour you a boilermaker (a shot and a beer; a tequila and Tecate is $9), to pair with a relish-topped hot dog ($6).

Saturday

9 a.m. | Loop around a lake

Many visitors start the morning with a stroll along the Mississippi River for views of the Stone Arch Bridge and the dueling Pillsbury's Best and Gold Medal Flour signs, which are on opposite banks. Locals, however, prefer the lakes. Southwest of downtown, a string of lakes are encircled by walking and biking trails, a subset of the 51-mile citywide Grand Rounds Scenic Byway. Start at the picturesque Lake of the Isles, with its leafy islands, marshy coves and winding lakeside path. It's an easy 2.7-mile loop that can be extended by continuing south to Bde Maka Ska, a larger oval lake with areas for fishing, swimming, biking and canoeing along the popular three-mile pedestrian path.

10:30 a.m. | Browse bookstores

Skip the massive Mall of America, with its theme park, aquarium and hundreds of chain stores, in favor of a novel shopping experience at Open Book. At this three-story center of literary arts downtown, several book-related organizations are housed within the handsome brick building. Browse the titles at Milkweed Editions, an independent publisher with a bookshop on the first floor. Then cross the lobby to the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, a nonprofit dedicated to the art of making books -- letterpress printing, bookbinding, papermaking -- with workshops, classes and a first-floor gallery space. In its shop, you'll find beautiful marbled paper and letterpress cards, instructional guides to linocuts and printmaking, quirky zines and little hand-sewn books containing a single poem.

11:30 a.m. | Get your daily bread

Laune Bread began as a micro-bakery, delivering bread around the city by bike, before opening a storefront southeast of downtown in 2022. In addition to hearty sourdough loaves made from Midwestern grains, the bakery also offers an array of sweet and savory baked goods, which recently included caramelized-onion-and-gouda tarts ($5.25), mandarin-marmalade Danish pastries ($5.20) and veggie-and-Cheddar sandwiches on a sesame crust simit, a ring-shaped bread ($9.75). Don't miss the chocolate babka knots ($4) or a handful of the honey-sesame coconut macaroons ($2 each).

1 p.m. | Go gallery hopping

It's easy to gallery-hop around this city, where it's rarely more than a five- or 10-minute drive to the next locale. Start at the Weinstein Hammons Gallery, which specializes in contemporary photography, then check out the Northern Clay Center, with its wide-ranging ceramic artworks. Continue to All My Relations Gallery, which showcases the work of Native American artists. Or instead, you could easily spend an hour exploring the Northrup King Building, a massive brick industrial complex in the Northeast that now houses more than 300 art studios, galleries and shops. Many open to the public on Saturday afternoons, and although the quality varies, it's worth seeking out the first-floor Galleri 167 with colorful abstract paintings and wall-mounted sculptures, and the second-floor studio where the printmaker Beth Dorsey, a Queens-born Minneapolis transplant, makes intricate lattice prints.

4 p.m. | Sip a lager

Across the train tracks from the Northrup King Building, Indeed Brewing Company draws crowds with delightfully unusual craft beers and an inviting taproom filled with whimsical art. Start with a few smaller pours to sample the range on tap, like the tangy mango sour, the aromatic pistachio cream ale and the refreshing sea-salt-and-lemon lager (from $4 for six-ounce pours). If the bar is packed, head over to Pryes Brewing Company, a brewery on the western bank of the river. Order a soft pretzel ($10) and a pint of Glamorama, a citrusy West Coast-style I.P.A. ($8), and try your hand at feather bowling, where players roll a wooden ball shaped like a cheese wheel down a sloped lane to land as close as possible to a vertical feather at the other end.

7:30 p.m. | Chow down Uptown

The Uptown neighborhood has struggled to regain its prepandemic vibrancy, but you wouldn't know it by stepping inside Kim's. The chef Ann Kim opened this casual restaurant with a rollicking energy last November in the same space as her former Mexican-inflected restaurant. Now, her Korean American background takes the spotlight: a smash burger on a soft hotteok bun ($12), Korean fried chicken wings with ranch dressing ($16) and the dish my table fought over: a twist on mac and cheese with chewy rice cakes smothered in a cheese sauce spiked with gochugaru, a red-pepper powder ($15). Ask for a booth by the window with space for all the sharing plates, including bindaetteok (mung bean pancakes, $12) and soy-glazed beef-and-kimchi mandu dumplings ($12), along with a few banchan (sides).

10 p.m. | Drink and bowl

After dinner, head down the mural-splashed alley behind Kim's to Bronto Bar. At this moody basement bar, which opened last year, settle into one of the soft couches and peruse the menu of fun cocktails, the best of which is By the Sea, a neon-blue concoction of shochu, Curaçao, pineapple and bitter Americano liqueur with a shark gummy candy garnishing the delicate stemmed glass ($13). Or hop over to Bryant Lake Bowl, a classic eight-lane bowling alley nearby that was built in the 1930s (and recently appeared on the cover of the Black Keys' latest album). Soak up the old-school vibes -- no automatic scoring or video screens here -- with a Hamm's tall boy ($4.50) from the bar while rolling a few late-night games ($5 each; shoe rental $2).

Sunday

10 a.m. | Savor breakfast

Minneapolis may be famous for the Jucy Lucy -- a burger with molten cheese inside two patties. But it ought to be known for the outstanding egg-and-cheese breakfast sandwich at Marty's Deli, a sunny shop in the Northeast that the chef Martha Polacek opened in 2023. What sets this sandwich apart is the fluffy housemade focaccia flecked with rosemary and sea salt, which is filled with soft eggs, melted American cheese and a schmear of garlicky aioli ($9). Pro tip: Order the hash browns on the side ($5) and cram bits into the sandwich for extra crunch. It's best enjoyed with a cup of coffee ($3) at a table flooded with light from the wall of windows. Before leaving, grab a scotcharoo (the Midwest's salty-sweet, chocolate-and-butterscotch-topped twist on a Rice Krispies Treat, $3.50) for later.

Noon | Explore art

There's always something new to discover at the Walker Art Center, the city's pre-eminent arts institution (admission, $18). The latest exhibition, ''Keith Haring: Art is for Everybody,'' which opened last weekend, includes over 100 works and archival material from the American pop artist (through Sept. 8). And in June, the center will open ''This Must Be the Place,'' an exhibition of works from its evolving collection, with paintings by Edward Hopper and Franz Marc alongside new acquisitions from contemporary artists like Jennifer Packer. Outside in the adjacent sculpture garden (free), which will host its first art fair May 11 to 12, most visitors beeline to the supersize ''Spoonbridge and Cherry'' sculpture. Instead, climb the hill to enter a hidden bunkerlike installation by James Turrell, and watch clouds float across a square of blue sky overhead.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/travel/11hours-minneapolis-print.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/03/travel/11hours-minneapolis-print.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, the Amber Box at the Guthrie Theater overlooking downtown Minneapolis and the Mississippi River. Middle row from left: an assortment of goodies at Laune Bread

and the city in bloom. Bottom row from left: a view of downtown

and diners at Kim's in the city's Uptown neighborhood. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JENN ACKERMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C8.

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**End of Document**