

TIME

THE
FIRING
OF JAMES
COMEY

By David Von Drehle

AFTER
HOURS IN
THE WHITE
HOUSE

By Michael Scherer
and Zeke J. Miller



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FBI Director James Comey leaving a meeting on Capitol Hill on Feb. 17

Photograph by Alex Wong—Getty Images

ON THE COVER: President Trump walks in the Center Hall of the White House on May 8. Photograph by Benjamin Rasmussen for TIME



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From the Editor



From left: White House correspondent Zeke J. Miller, editor-in-chief Nancy Gibbs, Washington bureau chief Michael Scherer, President Trump and Vice President Pence in the Oval Office on May 8

The danger of governing on social media

LESS THAN 24 HOURS BEFORE HE sacked the FBI director, President Trump sat at dinner in the Blue Room sharing his bewilderment at the reactions he evokes. "It's pretty amazing to me," he said. "If you can actually make America great again, why would people be upset about it? Why would people be upset that we want to have great education, we want to have safety in our cities ... if I can do those things, why is there hatred?"

The President's critics would have no trouble prosecuting the case, but there are broader questions to raise. Why so much hate, so much obsession? Why use Twitter as a WMD? What is this doing to us, not to the electoral map or the fever dreams of future candidates, but to people watching this operatic presidency and finding that political combat is penetrating aspects of daily life that were once off-limits? Polls find that nearly two-thirds of Americans think hate has increased since the election; only 1 in 5 people trusts the government to do the right thing all or most of the time, close to an all-time low.

The firing of FBI Director James Comey shook an already rattled body politic even more profoundly. At a moment of deep division and broad distrust, the machinery of justice matters more than ever—and when the Chief Executive monkeys with that machinery, well, that's why the founders built a Constitution that checks Executive power. We are learning in real time how resilient our institutions will be when facing, among other threats, a foreign power intent on undermining them.

Among those institutions is journalism itself, which the President blames for much of the animosity he faces. "We are given a pretty bum press," he told us, and he includes TIME for publishing stories he did not much like. Here, too, is a new divide. The Pew Research Center found that a year ago, roughly three-quarters of Americans—Democrats and Republicans alike—supported the role of the press as a watchdog over public officials. Now nearly 9 in 10 Democrats think the press properly holds politicians accountable, compared with only 4 in 10 Republicans.

In 30 years, there has never been such a partisan gap in perceptions of the media.

This occurs at a moment when news organizations have delivered crucial revelations, be they the conflicts of interest of top officials or the Russia connections of fired National Security Adviser Mike Flynn. Add to that the weaponization of information by foreign powers and the rise of hackers and bots and fake-news purveyors, and the path forward feels even more hazardous. During past political scandals and even constitutional crises, the messy, miraculous contraption of checks and balances and freedoms and duties constructed by the founders somehow carried us to safe, common ground. We are testing our instruments again, the world is watching, and as exhausting as the journey has been so far, it appears it is only just beginning.

Nancy Gibbs, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Letters should include the writer's full name, address and home telephone and may be edited for purposes of clarity and space

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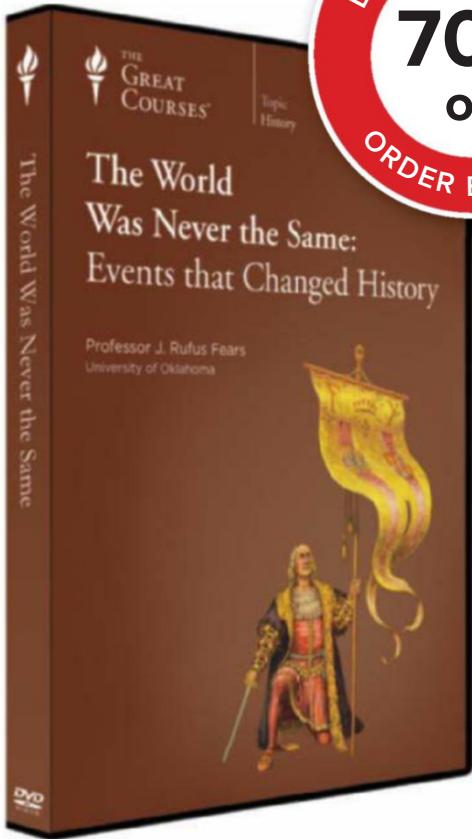
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5. Solon—Democracy Begins (594 B.C.)
6. Marathon—Democracy Triumphant (490 B.C.)
7. Hippocrates Takes an Oath (430 B.C.)
8. Caesar Crosses the Rubicon (49 B.C.)
9. Jesus—The Trial of a Teacher (A.D. 36)
10. Constantine I Wins a Battle (A.D. 312)
11. Muhammad Moves to Medina—The Hegira (A.D. 622)
12. Bologna Gets a University (1088)
13. Dante Sees Beatrice (1283)
14. Black Death—Pandemics and History (1348)
15. Columbus Finds a New World (1492)
16. Michelangelo Accepts a Commission (1508)
17. Erasmus—A Book Sets Europe Ablaze (1516)
18. Luther's New Course Changes History (1517)
19. The Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588)
20. The Battle of Vienna (1683)
21. The Battle of Lexington (1775)
22. General Pickett Leads a Charge (1863)
23. Adam Smith (1776) versus Karl Marx (1867)
24. Charles Darwin Takes an Ocean Voyage (1831)
25. Louis Pasteur Cures a Child (1885)
26. Two Brothers Take a Flight (1903)
27. The Archduke Makes a State Visit (1914)
28. One Night in Petrograd (1917)
29. The Day the Stock Market Crashed (1929)
30. Hitler Becomes Chancellor of Germany (1933)
31. Franklin Roosevelt Becomes President (1933)
32. The Atomic Bomb Is Dropped (1945)
33. Mao Zedong Begins His Long March (1934)
34. John F. Kennedy Is Assassinated (1963)
35. Dr. King Leads a March (1963)
36. September 11, 2001

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'ACTING IS ABOUT THE ABILITY TO PUT YOURSELF IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES. AND THAT DOESN'T NEED TO BE SEPARATED INTO TWO CATEGORIES.'

EMMA WATSON, actor, accepting MTV's first gender-neutral acting award at its 2017 Movie & TV Awards on May 7 for her role as Belle in *Beauty and the Beast*

'I will be a President for all the people.'

MOON JAE-IN, newly elected President of South Korea, accepting the win after a corruption scandal led to the impeachment of his conservative predecessor; the liberal human rights lawyer has advocated for dialogue with North Korea

Morning Joe
MSNBC co-hosts Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough announced their engagement



Morning eats
Aunt Jemima recalled frozen pancakes and more, fearing contamination

3,543,467

Number of Twitter users who retweeted (as of noon on May 10) an April 5 message from Nevada teen Carter Wilkinson asking Wendy's for a year of free chicken nuggets as a joke; on May 9, it became Twitter's most retweeted tweet ever, and Wendy's granted Wilkinson's wish



'Nobody dies because they don't have access to health care.'

RAÚL LABRADOR, U.S. Representative from Idaho, defending the American Health Care Act at a May 5 town-hall meeting; the day before, the Congressman and his Republican colleagues passed the bill, which if approved by the Senate would repeal much of Obamacare and potentially cause millions to lose health coverage

'You don't want your National Security Adviser compromised with the Russians.'

SALLY YATES, former acting Attorney General for the U.S., testifying on May 8 that weeks before ex-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was fired, she warned the White House that Flynn had lied about his contact with the Kremlin and could be blackmailed



100

Years that theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking predicted humans have left to **find another planet** to live on, before global warming renders Earth uninhabitable

48

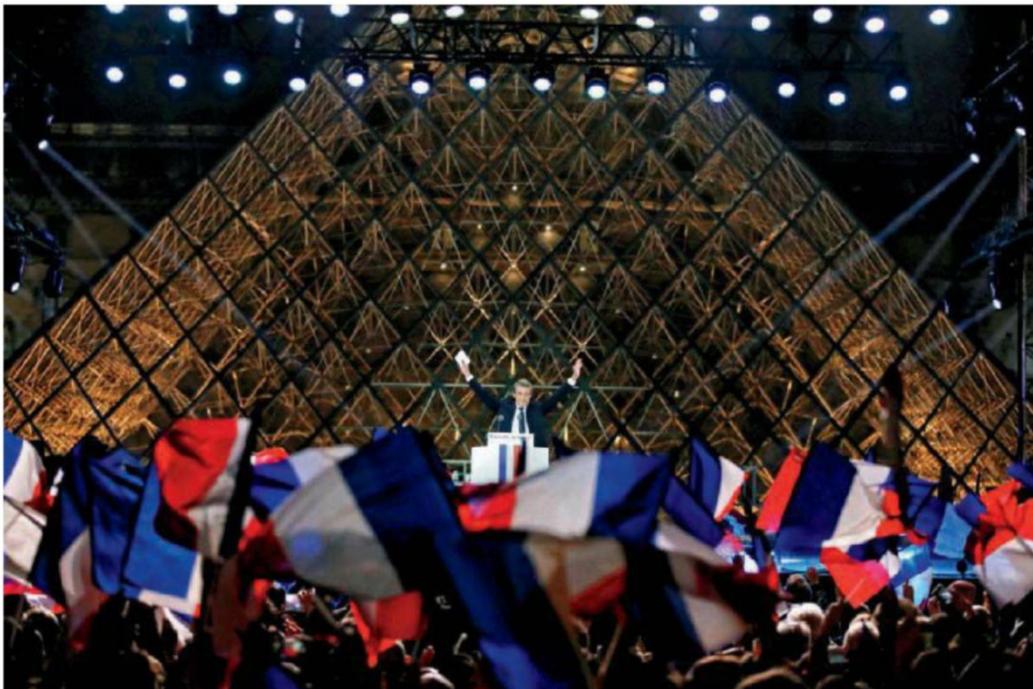
Strikeouts in a May 7 game between the New York Yankees and the Chicago Cubs, breaking a **Major League Baseball record** for most in a single game

'I still feel like I'm dreaming.'

ANTHONY BONOMO, co-owner of the Kentucky Derby-winning horse Always Dreaming, reflecting on its May 6 victory; Bonomo owns the horse with billionaire Vincent Viola, with whom he grew up in Brooklyn in the 1960s

The Brief

'THE DEMOLITION HAS AWAKENED THE GHOSTS THAT LINGER IN THE SOUTH.' —PAGE 12



The newly elected President greets supporters outside the Louvre Museum in Paris on May 7

POLITICS

France's youngest leader since Napoleon takes the stage

By Vivienne Walt/Paris

LE KID: THAT WAS HOW THE NEWS magazine *L'Express* described France's new President on its cover just hours after Emmanuel Macron's victory on May 7. The headline captured just how thoroughly Macron's lightning ascent from Rothschild banker to Economy Minister to leader of the world's sixth biggest economy—all by the age of 39—has put the country's gray-haired political grandees out to pasture.

In a stunning generational shift, millions of young French ditched the Socialist and conservative parties that have governed the country for generations, voting instead in this year's elections for insurgents like Macron, as well as for the Communist-aligned Jean-Luc Mélenchon, and the far-right National Front's Marine Le Pen. The youngest and

least experienced came out ahead, gathering nearly 21 million votes to trounce Le Pen in the runoff. The establishment now lies shattered. "The young generation was completely disconnected from political life for the past 20 years," Mounir Mahjoubi, Macron's 33-year-old digital coordinator, tells TIME. "What we are doing is a deep revolution."

The French, of course, know all about revolutions—and Macron is sure to face strong opposition as he attempts to meet his pledge to rein in spending and cut taxes in order to kick-start the sputtering economy. Nor was the landslide necessarily a mandate: fewer than half of all registered voters cast their ballot for him, and many on the fringes see him as an establishment stooge. His brand-

new La République En Marche! party must now fight to win a majority in elections (yes, again) for Parliament next month.

What, then, can *le kid* deliver for France? One answer came on election night, when he strode into the courtyard of Paris' Louvre Museum for his victory rally not to "La Marseillaise," as everyone expected, but to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"—the anthem of the 28-country E.U. The message was clear: Macron is not just the new French President but Europe's new champion. The political and economic bloc was a bitterly divisive election issue, with Le Pen issuing dire warnings about offshoring jobs and terrorists slipping into France. Just like President Trump, she pushed to close the borders and rip up free-trade accords. Unlike Trump's message, hers fell short. The shadow of the U.S. President might in fact have helped Macron's argument for a more tightly knit Europe, reminding voters of the E.U.'s new vulnerability. "Now that we know we cannot be 100% sure the U.S. will always be with us, if we don't rely on ourselves, we're doomed," says Pierre Haski, political columnist for the left-leaning magazine *L'Obs*.

Yet Macron is a total neophyte on the global stage and will now be looking for allies and possibly mentors among the world's leaders. It's clear he's already becoming a magnet for other centrists. By the time Macron arrived at the Louvre on May 7, he'd already spoken to German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Former U.S. President Barack Obama, who called him before the election and then endorsed him, could be a role model.

The same cannot be said of the current occupant of the White House. After Trump signaled in January that he might pull the U.S. out of the Paris climate-change agreement, Macron posted a video online inviting U.S. climate scientists to "come to France. You are welcome." When Trump called Macron on May 8 to congratulate him, Macron told the U.S. President he would "remain vigilant" about climate-change agreements, according to Macron spokeswoman Laurence Haïm.

But the two men are going to need each other, not least because French jets have pounded ISIS in Syria and the country has intelligence networks in Africa and the Middle East. Haïm tells TIME the pair exchanged cell-phone numbers in a prelude to their first date, scheduled for late May in Brussels. At that time, the whiz-kid new leader might reveal his approach to the world. It could be a fascinating moment—unbeholden to party orthodoxy, Macron is free to choose his alliances and priorities to a degree few world leaders are able to do.

And until then? In Macron's campaign headquarters the day after the election, one young volunteer told TIME, "Just write, 'France is back.'" □

TICKER

Charges in frat hazing death

Eighteen Penn State fraternity brothers were charged on a range of counts including manslaughter in the death of student Timothy Piazza, 19, after he was pressured to drink toxic levels of alcohol during a hazing ceremony. The fraternity members resisted getting help for Piazza for nearly 12 hours, police said.

U.S. arms Kurdish fighters

President Trump approved a plan to arm Kurdish forces in Syria with heavier weapons ahead of an offensive on the city of Raqqa, a key ISIS stronghold.

The decision was condemned by Turkey, which says the YPG militia is linked to a terrorist group.

Sanctuary-city ban signed in Texas

A bill signed into law by Texas Governor Greg Abbott requires police to cooperate with federal immigration agents even in cities that offer sanctuary for the undocumented.

Irish beach makes a comeback

Thanks to a freak tide that deposited thousands of tons of sand, a beach on the west coast of Ireland reappeared overnight nearly 33 years after it was washed away by storms.

IMMIGRATION

How 'golden visas' work

NICOLE MEYER, SISTER OF PRESIDENT Trump's senior adviser Jared Kushner, courted controversy with a presentation to Chinese investors on May 6 setting out how her family's real estate business can help foreign nationals obtain so-called golden visas through the EB-5 program. Here's how it works:

HISTORY The program was created by Congress in 1990 to spur foreign investment by providing wealthy immigrants a path to a green card. Since 2012, the program has generated at least \$8.7 billion and created more than 35,000 jobs. As of 2016, about 80% of EB-5 visas have been issued to Chinese nationals.

ELIGIBILITY Immigrants must invest \$500,000 to \$1 million for a two-year EB-5 visa, which can be turned into permanent-residence status once 10 American jobs are created or saved.

CONTROVERSY Though meant to lure investment in low-income areas, the program has been used mostly to fund upscale projects. But Meyer was criticized mainly for using her brother's name in the presentation, raising ethical concerns. —TARA JOHN

DIGITS

350

Estimated number of inmates who broke out of a jail on Indonesia's Sumatra island May 5; at least 197 were recaptured within a week





FREED In a ceremony in Abuja on May 7, Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari welcomes back 82 women abducted as schoolgirls from the town of Chibok. Militant group Boko Haram released the women a day earlier in exchange for six suspected militants. Some 276 students were abducted in 2014 in an incident that inspired the #BringBackOurGirls campaign. More than 110 are still missing. *Photograph by Bayo Omoboriowo—Presidential Office/Handout/Reuters*

DATA

AMERICA'S HAPPIEST INCOMES

Gallup analyzed over 350,000 interviews with Americans in 2015 and '16 to determine how income affects people's daily emotions. These household annual salaries correlated with peak happiness in major metropolitan areas.

—David Johnson



\$42,000
Atlanta



\$54,000
Chicago
Dallas
Miami
Phoenix
Washington



\$75,000
Boston
Houston



\$105,000
Los Angeles
New York City
Philadelphia
Seattle

WORLD

Who's who in Iran's elections

On May 19, Iranians will elect a President. The stagnant economy and access to social freedoms have become the race's main issues, but foreign policy has also played a role, with the future of the historic 2015 nuclear deal in doubt with President Trump in the White House. Here, the four key candidates.

—KayArmin Serjoie/Tehran



PRESIDENT
HASSEN ROUHANI

The moderate incumbent won in 2013 pledging to solve the nuclear dispute between Iran and world powers. Although he did just that in 2015, the economic rewards he promised have not materialized. Although his critics say he has sold revolutionary ideals short, he's favored for re-election.



MOHAMMAD-BAGHER QALIBAF

Running for President for the third time, the conservative Tehran mayor is trying to win support as a populist advocate for lower classes. He has dared to attack government officials as well as affluent Iranians, calling them a 4% minority sucking blood out of the 96%.



EBRAHIM RAISI

The conservative cleric is the race's hard-liner, campaigning as a proponent of economic equality who will fight corruption. He has never held elected office, however, and has been attacked by reformists and moderates for his alleged role in controversial retrials of anti-regime prisoners in the 1980s.



ESHAQ JAHANGIRI

Rouhani's first Vice President and a member of Cabinet in three governments, Jahangiri is the reformist movement's candidate. With less popular support than that of his three main rivals, he is almost certain to withdraw and throw support behind Rouhani in the final days.

**TICKER****Troop surge in Afghanistan?**

The White House is considering proposals to send as many as 5,000 new troops to join the 8,400 troops who are now in Afghanistan, NBC reported. If the plan is approved by President Trump, it would reverse former President Obama's efforts to limit the U.S. military role in the country.

Seattle mayor quits re-election bid

Seattle Mayor Ed Murray announced he will not seek re-election and instead will retire from politics when his term ends on Dec. 31, following allegations that he sexually assaulted four teenagers more than 30 years ago. Murray denies the claims.

Aussie gays wed in New Zealand

More foreign couples had same-sex weddings in New Zealand in 2016 than did locals, according to official statistics. The trend was driven by gay couples from Australia who are unable to wed in their own country, which has not legalized same-sex marriage.

Team wins title after tragedy

Brazil's Chapecoense soccer club won a title just months after most of its team members were killed in a plane crash on Nov. 28. The players dedicated the Santa Catarina state championship to the victims of the crash.



A worker in body armor measures New Orleans' Jefferson Davis monument for removal

NATION**New Orleans confronts its Confederate history**

EARLY ON APRIL 24, POLICE OFFICERS CORDONED OFF NEW ORLEANS' LIBERTY Monument, a granite obelisk commemorating an 1874 uprising of white citizens against the state's Reconstructionist government. With snipers posted nearby, crews of workers—their faces hidden under cloth and the logos on their trucks covered with cardboard—soon dismantled it and trucked it away.

The extreme precautions are a measure of just how intense the debate over the removal of Confederate monuments has become in this port city, which prizes both its deep-rooted history and reputation for multiculturalism and social tolerance. The fight began in 2015, when—six months after a white supremacist's rampage in a black church in Charleston, S.C.—New Orleans' city council voted to remove Liberty Monument and three other memorials to Confederate leaders. After legal challenges, the statues are starting to fall.

The demolition has awakened the ghosts that linger in the South, where some see tributes to the Confederacy as symbols of heritage and others as reminders of hate. "We should not be venerating Confederates or bestowing an honor to them," says Malcolm Suber, founder of Take 'Em Down NOLA, a group advocating the removal of 23 statues in the city.

While the Charleston shooting was a catalyst, the push to take down the symbols, including removing the Confederate flag from South Carolina's capitol, coincides with changing demographics. "The constituency for these monuments has diluted significantly," says David Goldfield, a history professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Pierre McGraw, president of the Monumental Task Committee, says keeping the memorials is about preserving history. "When we trash our historic cultural artifacts, that doesn't serve a common good," McGraw says. "It tells me that New Orleans has lost her soul."

Mayor Mitch Landrieu is standing firm, even after violence erupted following a May 7 march at a General Robert E. Lee statue. "We're correcting a historical wrong," Landrieu tells TIME. "Those monuments have never reflected the totality of who we are." —JOSH SANBURN

Milestones

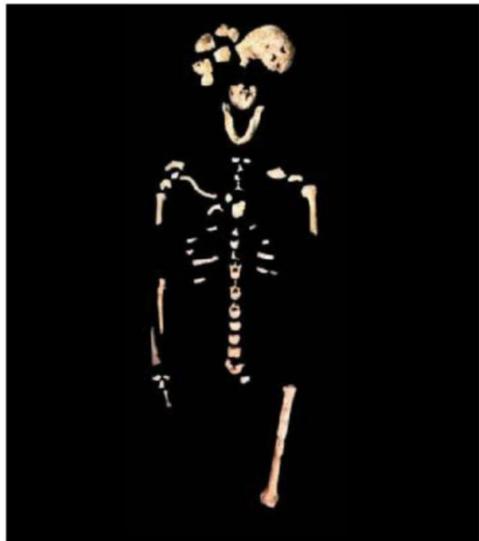
DISCOVERED

Homo naledi likely coexisted with humans

IT'S HARD TO STIR UP CONTROVERSY when you've been dead for tens of thousands of years, but 15 protohumans did just that in 2015, after their fossils were found in Johannesburg. They were hard to place on the human evolutionary ladder, with a jumble of relatively modern skeletal features but a brain as small as a gorilla's. Many questions arose over their estimated age—a matter that was at last resolved on May 9, when it was revealed that they are roughly 236,000 years old.

That matters a lot, because it means that the prehumans might have been living right alongside early modern humans, or *Homo sapiens*. Taken together with what we already know about Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*' coexisting, it essentially debunks the old idea that modern humans evolved from a single line of prehumans. Instead, there were competing human models on the road together, with only one equipped to win.

The fossils that made the latest news belong to a protohuman species called *Homo naledi* and were uncovered in a cave by paleoanthropologist Lee Berger. He initially pegged their age at approximately 2 million years, but that was just an



The remains of *Homo naledi* were first uncovered in 2015

educated guess; Berger's latest research used isotopic dating—a far more accurate tool—to place his finds at the less-than-a-quarter-million-year mark.

Nevertheless, Berger believes *Homo naledi* may be part of a more ancient line, one that could have emerged 2 million years ago but winked out—or was wiped out—when modern humans arose. We are a competitive, resource-gobbling species today, and the new research helps confirm that, for better or for worse, we always have been.

—JEFFREY KLUGER

DIED

Three-time Olympic bobsledding star **Steven Holcomb**, at 37. In 2010, Holcomb drove his four-man team to a win at the Winter Olympics, ending the U.S.'s 62-year gold-medal drought for that event.

► **Anne Morrisey Merick**, trailblazing journalist who fought for the rights of female reporters to cover the Vietnam War from the front line, at 83. As a college student, Morrisey Merick was the first female reporter allowed in the Yale Bowl press box.

► **Richard Basciano**, New York City's "prince of porn," who owned several peep shows and adult theaters in Times Square, at 91. He made millions of dollars selling real estate when the area was redeveloped in the 1990s.

ANNOUNCED

The **retirement of Britain's Prince Philip** from public duties this fall, after seven decades of official meetings and visits. Buckingham Palace said the 95-year-old had the full support of his wife, Queen Elizabeth II, who will continue to carry out her royal engagements as usual.

ACQUIRED

Kate Spade, quirky handbag and accessories brand popular with millennials, by affordable-luxury retailer Coach, in a \$2.4 billion deal after months of speculation on Wall Street.

KILLED

Pepe the Frog, by his creator, in a bid to stop alt-right groups from using the cartoon as a racist and anti-Semitic meme. Artist Matt Furie published a comic strip featuring the character, branded a hate symbol by the Anti-Defamation League, being given an open-casket funeral.

RELIGION

Where artists fall afoul of blasphemy laws

British actor Stephen Fry was investigated for blasphemy in Ireland after referring to God as "capricious, mean-minded [and] stupid" on television in 2015. The probe was dropped on May 8, but Ireland isn't the only country where artists have run afoul of laws barring sacrilege. —Tara John

PAKISTAN

Actor Veena Malik was sentenced to 26 years in prison for blasphemy in 2014 after she re-created a scene from her Muslim wedding on TV. However, the Kashmiri court ruling was only enforceable in the local region, and Malik never spent time behind bars.

EGYPT

Adel Imam, the country's most famous comic actor, was handed a three-month jail sentence in 2012 and fined about \$170 for playing characters deemed offensive to Islam, including a bumbling terrorist. He was acquitted on appeal the same year.

GREECE

Austrian cartoonist Gerhard Haderer was given a six-month suspended sentence for blasphemy by an Athens court in 2005 over his depiction of Jesus as a nude, pot-smoking surfer in a satirical picture book. He too was later acquitted on appeal.





Behind the lines

Protesters angered by a lack of housing and jobs wash tear gas from their eyes after clashes with authorities in the Eldorado Park area of Johannesburg on May 8. Officials condemned the violence after several stores were looted.

Photograph by Marco Longari—AFP/Getty Images

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PROFILE

How Senator Ben Sasse became the anti-Trump

By Michael Scherer



NEBRASKA SENATOR BEN SASSE IS NOT YET running for President, and his new book, *The Vanishing American Adult*, is not about politics, policy or his own life story, all of which someone like him would normally write about if he were thinking about running for President.

"I'm pretty certain the President is never mentioned at any point in this book," Sasse, a Republican, told me when I asked him about Donald Trump as we recently sat outside a café a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol. "I want to move upstream from politics to have that conversation about all the things that we should want for our kids."

But jump-starting a postpartisan national conversation about what the nation should want for its children is exactly the sort of thing someone who is looking to run for President might do. And the solutions that Sasse proposes are, in many cases, precisely the opposite of the examples set by Trump or Hillary Clinton, both of whom Sasse has criticized for failing to behave like "you know ... an adult."

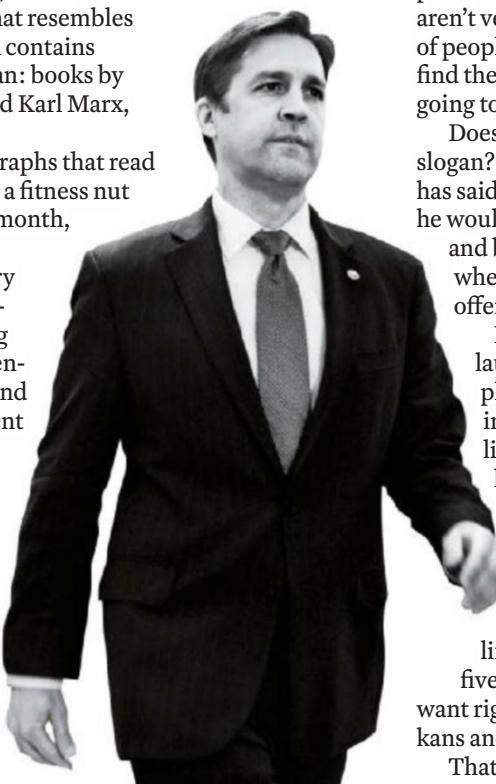
For Sasse, emotional and intellectual maturity is a lockpick for the nation's future. He speaks of an American crisis of loneliness and disconnection; he calls for parents to take back responsibility for their children's upbringing from schools and for children to resist consumerism, travel widely, work hard and "become truly literate," with a reading list that resembles a graduate-seminar syllabus. His personal canon contains unexpected choices for a conservative Republican: books by Aldous Huxley, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin and Karl Marx, along with Augustine and Alexis de Tocqueville.

In fact, Sasse's book is filled with entire paragraphs that read like thinly veiled rants against Trumpism. Sasse, a fitness nut known for sometimes doing 10,000 push-ups a month, may not name-check the current President, but Trump haunts Sasse's hip vision for a 21st century Puritan idealism. This is a serious book, if imperfectly formed, meant to wrestle honestly with big ideas. But then Sasse is not an ordinary sort of Senator. He boasts degrees from Harvard and Yale, and he has spent time working for the U.S. Department of Justice. He was also the president of Midland University, a Lutheran school west of Omaha.

He is the only sitting Senator who has driven for Uber on the weekend as a way of researching the sharing economy. "If you are an Uber driver and somebody pukes in your car, you get 150 bucks," he helpfully advises. "Which is a pretty great market mechanism."

SASSE SAYS he began thinking of writing this book years before Trump came onto the scene. One inspiration, he says, is a group of

A lot of people think that maybe they should find their meaning in politics. They're going to be let down.



Midland students who were tasked with setting up and decorating the school's 20-foot Christmas tree. When they were done, a school administrator noticed that they had put ornaments on the bottom eight feet only. "We couldn't figure out how to get the ornaments on the top," one of the students explained.

To fight this sort of helplessness, which he attributes to modern upbringing, Sasse has detailed a program of basic learning that he implores the nation to adopt: turn off the television, and keep your kids away from phone screens. "I am critical of the digital addictions of consumerism generally, and digital consumerism on top of it," he told me. "Because I think kids are being deprived by not learning how to work as teens."

His own family of five—his three children are nicknamed Peach, Crash and Dogman—aims for a full hour each night when everyone stays in the same room, with books and musical instruments. If Sasse does move forward with a run for the White House in 2020 or '24, he will have laid the groundwork to run as something of a lifestyle and career coach for Generation X. He certainly speaks the language of a coming backlash against partisanship. "These political parties aren't very interesting," he says. "A lot of people think that maybe they should find their meaning in politics. They're going to be let down."

Does that sound like a campaign slogan? Sasse's eighth-grade teacher has said that Sasse declared in class that he would go to an Ivy League school and become President. When I ask whether he is still on track, Sasse offers a pitch-perfect dodge.

First of all, Sasse says with a laugh, he doesn't think Mrs. Murphy is known for her fortune telling. "Second of all, that kid sounds like a real moron. Third of all, I have no doubt that I as a hyperactive kid probably had a new vocational plan every seven minutes. I live on a river in Nebraska, and I have little kids, and I have an awesome life, minus the fact that I commute five days a week. I have the only job I want right now, which is serving Nebraskans and raising kids on the road."

That sounds like a yes.

The View

'ANIMAL BEAUTY STANDARDS CAN BE AS IRRATIONAL, UNPREDICTABLE AND DYNAMIC AS OUR OWN.' —PAGE 18

SOCIETY

The shoddy science behind fidget spinners

By Sean Gregory

JENN JARMULA, AN ELEMENTARY- and middle-school teacher in Chicago, recently hung a sign outside her classroom. THIS IS A FIDGET SPINNER FREE ZONE, it read. Fidget spinners—which dominate Amazon's top-selling toys and games list—are nothing more than gadgets with three weighted prongs that spin, spin, spin on the fingers of sixth-graders like tiny ceiling fans. They've existed in some form since 1993, but lately they've grown so popular that retailers can barely keep them in stock. In order to keep up with demand, Toys "R" Us has chartered jets to ship spinners to its stores.

Jarmula says they've become disruptive in the classroom. She recently confiscated four spinners from a single student in one class period, stuffing them into the pockets of her pants, which she now favors wearing over skirts for their ample fidget-spinner storage space. She's just one of many teachers who are opting to ban spinners from classrooms, even as some manufacturers are touting their therapeutic benefits for students with autism, anxiety and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The alleged mental benefits of the toys have helped fuel their sales, but even a cursory look at the nonexistent science—and the history—of the spinners makes it clear that these claims are



▲
The latest toy craze comes with bold health claims—but experts say fidget spinners don't deliver

specious at best. Fidget spinners weren't created by behavioral scientists with a deep knowledge of intellectual disability nor were they created by experts in a lab; they

were first patented by an inventor from Florida named Catherine Hettinger who wanted to promote world peace. She began imagining the spinner while visiting her sister

in Israel. What if the young boys throwing rocks at police officers played with something calming instead? she thought. Hettinger's spinner never took off: Hasbro passed on it, her patent expired in 2005, and the spinner toiled in obscurity until earlier this year, when a series of YouTube videos featuring teenagers doing tricks with them went viral.

Soon, anecdotal reports emerged of special-needs kids benefiting from them. Cat Bowen, a lifestyle writer at Romper.com, a website for millennial mothers, says that since her 9-year-old son, who's on the autism spectrum, started using a spinner, he's been more focused. Math homework that used to take him an hour to get through now takes just 40 minutes, she says.

But anecdotal evidence from an individual child isn't the same as the scientific evidence required to support marketing claims like "Perfect for ADD, ADHD, Anxiety and Autism," as one fidget-spinner ad does. At least 10 other companies listed on Amazon market the product as a medical intervention.

Some scientific studies have found that fidgeting can, indeed, benefit young students with ADHD. Researchers suspect that movement helps kids maintain alertness during cognitive tasks. In her work, Julie Schweitzer, director of the attention, impulsivity and regulation laboratory at the University of California, Davis, has found that children with ADHD scored higher on an attention test while squirming in their seats and moving their legs, compared with when they sat still. Another study, published in the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, found that the more kids with ADHD fidgeted, the better their working memory. Such movement probably stimulates underactive regions of the brain, like the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, which plays a role in attention, planning and impulse control.

Many children with autism also have elevated symptoms of ADHD, so it stands to reason that fidgeting could aid them too—in theory, anyway. But experts say that playing with a fidget spinner, which does not require much physical activity, might not garner the same results as actual fidgeting. With fidget spinners, kids essentially outsource the action. "The spinner does the movement for them," says Mark Rapport, head of the Children's Learning Clinic at the University of Central Florida. "I imagine it would distract the heck out of kids."

Experts say that promising relief for a child through a \$5 spinning ball bearing can have pernicious effects. "Many parents are desperate," says Rapport. "They're looking for magic. These claims raise their hopes, only for them to get dashed."

VERBATIM
'Anxiety doesn't have to be such a dirty word. It can be there for us to harness and turn into something fierce.'

CHELSEA HANDLER, comedian and TV host, in an essay in *InStyle* about living with anxiety

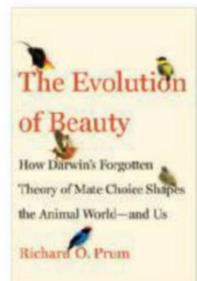


BOOK IN BRIEF

How beauty drives evolution

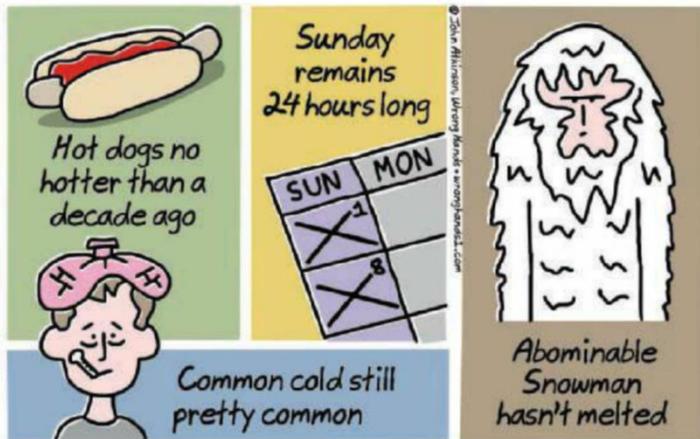
"SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST."

Although Darwin didn't come up with that phrase, it has come to define his theory of evolution: that traits that improve a species' odds of staying alive are specifically favored to be passed on. (Consider the Galápagos finches, whose beaks have changed over time to crack open different kinds of seeds.) But in *The Evolution of Beauty*, ornithologist Richard O. Prum argues that superficial desires play a role as well. Take, for instance, the male club-winged manakin, a bird whose ornate feathers have evolved to produce a "song" while they fly (thanks to a series of bumps that vibrate in the wind) that attracts females. Far from making them fitter, these feathers—and the bigger bones required to support them—actually slow the manakins down, suggesting that, as Prum concludes, animal beauty standards "can be as irrational, unpredictable and dynamic" as our own. —SARAH BEGLEY



CHARTOON

Global-warming-skeptic arguments



JOHN ATKINSON, WRONG HANDS

BIG IDEA

NASA's new 'space fabric'

How many problems can one material solve? According to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., the answer may well be limitless, thanks to its new 3-D-printed metallic "space fabric," designed to be especially useful outside Earth's atmosphere. Among its many possible applications: regulating the temperature of an astronaut's suit (one side of the textile reflects light, the other absorbs it) and folding into a backup antenna (the metal can be tailored to conduct radio waves). Although it's still a prototype, creator Raul Polit Casillas says the ultimate goal is to make the "highly adaptable" fabric even more utilitarian by enabling astronauts to custom-print in space. —Julia Zorthian

**HISTORY**

The forgotten parent behind Mother's Day

THE IDEA MAY SEEM OBVIOUS—CELEBRATE moms!—but the origin of Mother's Day is surprisingly murky.

The most common story is that it began in 1908, when a young woman named Anna Jarvis staged a Mother's Day at her West Virginia church. It was a ceremony meant to honor all mothers, especially her own, who said before she died that she wished such a holiday existed. At least that's how Jarvis, who by 1912 had quit her advertising job to boost the idea full-time, told it. The part she often skipped was that her mother Ann had already organized her own mom-centric events.

But those events were far more somber than celebratory. Of the 13 children borne by the elder Jarvis, four lived to adulthood. Her experience was not uncommon; up to 30% of infants born in the 19th century died before

turning 1. In 1858 that situation prompted her, while pregnant for the sixth time, to ask her brother, a doctor, to help arrange "mothers' day" work clubs, so that local women could learn hygienic practices to keep kids healthy.

Why didn't Anna Jarvis stick to the theme of educating mothers? Perhaps because she was not one herself, argues Katharine Lane Antolini, author of *Memorializing Motherhood: Anna Jarvis and the Struggle for the Control of Mother's Day*. Yet turning the holiday into a celebration of motherhood, rather than a reminder of its hardships, helped its popularity spread. And even as others came forth to claim credit for the idea, Jarvis proved better at promoting it than anyone else—even her mother. —OLIVIA B. WAXMAN



DATA THIS JUST IN

A roundup of new and noteworthy insights from the week's most talked-about studies:



SWEARING MAY MAKE YOU STRONGER

A small study presented at the British Psychological Society's annual conference found that participants who repeated swear words while biking or squeezing a hand grip used more power than when they didn't curse.

Previous research has suggested that swearing can activate a body's fight-or-flight response.



BLACK AMERICANS STILL DON'T LIVE AS LONG AS WHITE AMERICANS

The death rate for black Americans was 16% higher than the rate for white Americans in 2015, according to the CDC. However, that mortality gap has shrunk from 33% in 1999.



YOGA MAY ALLEVIATE PERIOD CRAMPS AND PMS

A review in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* found that regular yoga practice reduced the severity of symptoms and pain from PMS and menstrual cramps for women who had those conditions.

—J.Z.



Nation

THE COMEY MISFIRE

Did Donald Trump ax James Comey because he mishandled the Clinton email investigation? Or did he have the FBI's probe of his campaign's possible links to Moscow in mind?

By David Von Drehle



*Comey testified
before the
Senate Judiciary
Committee at a
hearing on May 3*

PHOTOGRAPH BY
KEVIN LAMARQUE

It was the mother of all bombshells, and Donald Trump dropped it late in the afternoon of May 9 on an unsuspecting Washington.

In a manila envelope hand-delivered by his longtime aide, the rookie President informed FBI Director James Comey—whose agents are shoulder-deep in an investigation of the Trump campaign's possible ties to Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign—that he was kaput. "While I greatly appreciate you informing me, on three separate occasions, that I am not under investigation, I nevertheless concur with the judgment of the Department of Justice that you are not able to effectively lead the Bureau," Trump wrote. Comey, who was in Los Angeles on bureau business, learned of the firing on television. At first he thought it was a joke.

Not a joke—but probably a gross miscalculation by Trump, like reaching for a gasoline can in order to extinguish a grease fire. Over the past year, a growing number of observers, ranging from career Justice Department officials to politicians in both parties, had come to the conclusion that Comey's fine-tuned sense of his own spotless integrity was a fire in desperate need of dousing. What one former colleague of Comey's calls his "moral vanity" led him to insert himself repeatedly in last year's election via improvised trappings of standard department procedures. The director told Congress that he was "mildly nauseous" at finding him-

self mired in politics, but had to admit he would do it all exactly the same way if he were to live through it again.

But Comey wasn't removed by some dispassionate board of inquiry. He was canned by a man whose campaign aides and at least one former National Security Adviser are under FBI investigation. Indeed, at almost the same moment that Trump pulled the trigger, news broke that subpoenas had been issued in connection with the case. Then multiple news outlets reported—and a Justice Department spokesperson denied—that Comey was axed just days after he requested more Justice Department resources to pursue possible Trump-Moscow connections. Even Republican noses wrinkled at the stench of Trump's action. Arizona Senator John McCain renewed his call for a special investigative committee—a proposal not far from the unified demand by Senate Democrats for the appointment of a special prosecutor. Meanwhile, Representative Justin Amash, a Republican from Michigan, said he is considering introducing legislation to create an independent commission of investigation.

If Trump's aim was the laudable one of restoring regular order at Justice and getting the FBI out of politics, he mistimed his shot. Ostensibly, the firing came in response to a three-page memo by the newly appointed Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, a Justice Department veteran of sterling reputation. Rosenstein argued that Comey's freelance pronouncements about Clinton's emails last year wrought "substantial damage" to "the FBI's reputation and credibility" and said that Comey's refusal to acknowledge these errors made him the wrong man to undo the damage. But the memo did not address the highly politicized nature of Trump's own entanglements with Comey.

There were the roller-coaster tweets and comments in which candidate Trump attacked the director whenever he did or said something seemingly favorable to Clinton, but lavished praise if Comey seemed to damage the Democrat. The idea



of a neutral FBI seemed alien to Trump. He continued to see the bureau through a political lens as President-elect, when he pushed Comey to track down the leakers behind news reports of ties between Trump's people and the Russians—rather than focus on the ties themselves. And he did so onward into the White House, where senior officials say the President grew tired of waiting for Comey to knock down the Russia connection ("a hoax," Trump recently fumed on Twitter).

However welcome the message of a less political FBI might be, the messenger and the moment were all wrong. Alternatively, if Trump was trying to replace the maverick in charge of the Russia investi-



gation with a more manageable FBI boss, he picked the wrong way of doing it. The explosive firing means that Comey's successor—whoever it is—will face a degree of scrutiny that would rattle Caesar's wife.

Or maybe Trump was attempting to project a well-ordered, decisive, accountable Administration in contrast with the chaos of his early days. If so, he blew that too. Even high-ranking White House officials were caught flat-footed by the firing. Press secretary Sean Spicer insisted on May 9 that "no one from the White House" was involved in Rosenstein's letter. "That was a DOJ decision." But by the next day, Spicer's deputy Sarah Huckabee Sanders was at the White House podium

▲
President Trump called Comey across the room to shake hands at an Inaugural reception at the White House in January

describing Trump's meeting with Rosenstein and Sessions in which the President asked for the letter. Nor was the staff alone in its confusion. Trump was said to be surprised by the entirely foreseeable negative reaction. Members of Congress were gobsmacked. "I've spent the last several hours trying to find an acceptable rationale for the timing of Comey's firing. I just can't do it," Republican Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona tweeted. "The timing of this firing is very troubling," Republican

Nebraska Senator Ben Sasse declared.

In a replay of his disastrous travel ban during his first week on the job, Trump once again seeded a storm without plans to explain the change in weather to the public. It was difficult—maybe impossible—to find either an angle or a metaphor that made the move look smart. The President dropped the bomb on James Comey, but he neglected to get clear of the blast zone himself.

TRUMP IS HARDLY the first President to want to dump an FBI director. The bureau's most famous executive, J. Edgar Hoover, used a combination of press hype and blackmail to survive nearly half

THE TIMELINE



THE PLAYERS

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|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | | | | |
| Bill Clinton <i>Former President</i> His meeting with Lynch on an Arizona tarmac cast a shadow over the probe into his wife's emails | Loretta Lynch <i>Former AG</i> Stepped back from the Clinton probe after the airplane meeting, leaving Comey in charge | Hillary Clinton <i>Presidential candidate</i> The Justice Department cited Comey's fumbling of the inquiry into her emails in recommending his dismissal | James Comey <i>FBI Director</i> Fired by the President May 9 while investigating whether Trump allies colluded with Russia during the 2016 election | Andrew McCabe <i>Acting FBI Director</i> The veteran official will head up the bureau until Comey's replacement is confirmed | Jeff Sessions <i>Attorney General</i> After recusing himself from the Russia investigation, the Trump ally recommended Comey's firing | Rod Rosenstein <i>Deputy AG</i> His memo panning Comey's handling of the Clinton probe preceded Trump's dramatic move | Sally Yates <i>Former acting AG</i> Warned the White House General Michael Flynn was "compromised" by lying about his contacts with Russia |

a century as director, from 1924 to 1972. During that reign, a number of Commanders in Chief longed to be rid of the conspiratorial Hoover. In one of these occasional brushes with joblessness, the director picked up rumblings that John F. Kennedy wanted him out. Hoover called on the President, armed with incriminating details of Kennedy's sexual excesses, part of the trove of dirt on public figures that Hoover collected as possible ammunition. After his visit, there was no more talk of firing Hoover. After the old man's death, Richard Nixon's inner circle exploited acting director L. Patrick Gray in a desperate effort to escape the grip of Watergate. Later, Bill Clinton seethed at the Javert-like doggedness of Director Louis Freeh, who showed uncommon energy pursuing various scandals and non-scandals around the Clinton Administration.

But this is the first time an FBI director has been fired over the way he performed his duties. (The only previous firing was for malfeasance: in 1993, Clinton dismissed Director William Sessions after a Department of Justice investigation found that Sessions had misused bureau resources.) The unprecedented nature of Trump's act brings into sharp focus the slowly tightening crisis of credibility that dates to Election Night, Nov. 8, 2016.

The possibility that Trump's narrow election win was enabled through some combination of Russian disinformation and Comey's rule-bending self-regard shook the confidence of millions in their government of, by and for the people. Even as Trump's supporters marveled at his success in storming the citadel of the elite, the still shadowy contacts between Moscow and the campaign under-

mined the new President's Administration. National Security Adviser Michael Flynn was dumped less than one month into Trump's term when it was revealed that he misled Vice President Mike Pence about his Russian contacts. (Trump later blamed former President Obama for the mess.) Attorney General Jeff Sessions was forced to recuse himself from the investigation of the matter, having failed to tell Congress about his own meeting with the Russian ambassador.

Trump may have felt empowered to strike a blow that his predecessors would not risk because of the widespread Democratic dismay at Comey's conduct over the past year. A polarizing figure, the 6-ft. 8-in. former prosecutor is seen by his admirers as a paragon of fearless integrity and by his detractors as a man drunk on self-esteem. One path or the other

● Nov. 8, 2016
Donald Trump narrowly defeats Clinton and is elected President of the United States

● Nov. 12, 2016
In a call with donors, Clinton blames Comey for her defeat

● Dec. 9, 2016
President Obama orders the intelligence community to review Russia's interference in the election



● Jan. 6, 2017
The intelligence community produces a report concluding Russian President Vladimir Putin had ordered an "influence campaign" in the 2016 election with a "clear preference" for Trump

● Jan. 25, 2017
Chairman Devin Nunes and ranking member Adam Schiff announce the House Intelligence Committee will also open an investigation into Russia's involvement in the election



● Jan. 12, 2017
The Justice Department Inspector General announces he will review the FBI's handling of Clinton's email case

● March 20, 2017
Comey confirms before the House Intelligence Committee that the FBI is investigating whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia during the election

● May 3, 2017
Comey defends his conduct in the Clinton email investigation before the Senate Judiciary Committee but says he feels "mildly nauseous" his actions may have affected the election

● May 9, 2017
Comey fired as FBI head



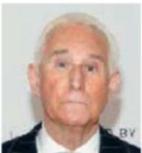
Michael Flynn
Former National Security Adviser Fired Feb. 13—18 days after Yates' warnings—for misleading the Vice President



Donald McGahn
White House counsel Trump's top lawyer met twice with Yates about Flynn, but downplayed her concerns



Carter Page
Former campaign adviser One of the subjects of the investigation into possible links between Trump allies and Russia



Roger Stone
Trump adviser Another target of investigators' scrutiny, he admitted to "innocuous" contact with a hacking group, but denies Russian ties



Paul Manafort
Former campaign chairman Pushed out of Trump's orbit in August over Russia-linked business dealings



Devin Nunes
House Intelligence chairman Removed himself from his panel's Russia probe amid an ethics investigation into his conduct



Mark Warner
Virginia Senator The lead Democrat on the Senate intelligence panel called for a special prosecutor



Richard Burr
GOP Senator The chair of the panel probing the Trump camp's links to Russia said he was "troubled" by Comey's dismissal

led him to the conclusion last year that then Attorney General Loretta Lynch had been compromised in her ability to represent the Justice Department's inquiry into Hillary Clinton's email. On an airport tarmac in Arizona, Lynch's government plane happened to be parked next to a private jet bearing former President Clinton, who decided to pay a private call on Lynch. Though both Clinton and Lynch insist the email investigation never came up, Comey testified before Congress that this meeting "was the capper for me." Comey said he decided that a statement through normal channels that the Justice Department had decided not to prosecute would have no credibility. "The best chance we have as a justice system is if I do something I never imagined before—step away ... and tell the American people, Look, here's what the FBI did, here's

what we found, here's what we think. And that that offered us the best chance of the American people believing in the system."

The result was an odd press conference on July 5, 2016, in which Comey pronounced Clinton's actions "extremely careless," but said "no reasonable prosecutor would try to make a case." On the stump, Trump howled corruption, while Clinton absorbed the scolding and hoped the matter would fade. Then, on Oct. 28, less than two weeks before Election Day, Comey struck again. Having said the case was closed, he said he felt duty-bound to report to Congress that additional emails had been discovered and the FBI was examining them. It turned out the material was found on a laptop belonging to the husband of Clinton aide Huma Abedin, who was under investigation in an unrelated sexting scandal.

This, too, was a breach of department rules. During the term of Attorney General Eric Holder, employees were reminded of regulations limiting the release of prejudicial information close to an election. And this was highly prejudicial information, indeed. Trump declared that Clinton was headed for a criminal prosecution and led crowds in chanting, "Lock her up!" The chants continued even after Comey announced shortly before Election Day that the newly discovered emails were not, in fact, relevant.

Clinton put a large share of the blame for her loss squarely on Comey's shoulders. In an interview on May 2, she said, "If the election had been on Oct. 27"—the day before Comey waded back into the fray—"I would be your President."

There was speculation during the transition that Trump would replace Comey



On May 10, the day after Comey was fired, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (in glasses), President Trump and the Russian ambassador to the U.S., Sergey Kislyak, met in the Oval Office

immediately, and when he did not, many assumed he was waiting for the results of an inquiry by Justice Department Inspector General Michael Horowitz. Instead, the occasion was Rosenstein's damning letter laying out in convincing detail Comey's repeated violations of Justice Department rules governing discussion of criminal investigations. Trump, who has not built a reputation for strict adherence to rules, may have mistakenly believed that Democrats in Congress were still so angry with Comey that they would welcome the firing. If so, it was an error born from rage. Insider reports from the White House suggest that Trump, livid over Comey's more recent statements confirming the Russia investigation and knocking down the President's tweeted claim that Obama had wiretapped Trump Tower, was itching for the first excuse he could find.

PENNED BY ROSENSTEIN and endorsed by Sessions, the letter looked pretextual, as lawyers like to say—a fig leaf to cover a decision Trump had already made for other reasons. But that sort of move didn't square with Rosenstein's rock-solid reputation. In any case, there is no doubt that Rosenstein's memo, if nothing else, certainly reflected concerns widely shared by career professionals in the Department of Justice. While Comey has his defenders, many of the thousands of prosecutors in the department have been outraged by his self-serving flouting of the rules. Re-

publicans and Democrats alike have been fuming over Comey's unilateral decision to take the July announcement out of Lynch's hands. Even if he believed that the attorney general was compromised, he should have taken his concerns to her deputy. Comey's error was compounded, they believe, by his ruminations on Clinton's alleged recklessness. "If you're dropping the case, you do it. You don't then deliver your closing argument," one former federal prosecutor explained. And then there was the politically sensitive announcement fewer than 30 days before an election. Three strikes and you're out.

"If you are in the business of enforcing the law, the worst thing in the world is to be so imbued with your own righteousness that you begin to skirt the law to protect your image," the former prosecutor summed up.

But this is really not about Comey anymore; he has been fired. What matters now is how the remaining law-enforcement officials carry out the law. And under the Constitution, no one is more squarely in the business of enforcing the law than the President. Trump is unquestionably imbued with his own righteousness. The question now is: Has

he skirted the law to protect his image?

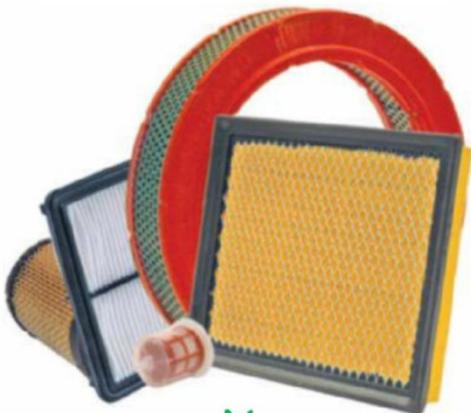
The question is especially troubling because the FBI's Russia probe was beginning to look like the only serious one in town. The House inquiry has long since become a laughingstock: the lawmaker in charge, House Intelligence Committee chair Devin Nunes, was forced to abandon his post amid an ethics investigation into whether the California Republican had improperly disclosed classified information in his rush to protect the President. The Senate's investigation is short on staff and moving slowly, compiling an ever-longer list of questions without much urgency about finding answers. Republicans John McCain and Lindsey Graham are among the Senate's most determined Russia hawks and lead committees that are pursuing probes, but they have limited investigative powers.

Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer spoke for his party in demanding a special prosecutor. But Democrats don't have the power to force the move, nor, in all likelihood, the votes to block the appointment of a new FBI director. While a handful of Senate Republicans expressed alarm at the way Trump canned Comey, none endorsed calls for a special counsel. Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has already opposed the idea. Which leaves Democrats grasping at hopes that Rosenstein—a Trump appointee who provided the pretext to jettison Comey—will somehow come to their rescue. If the Department of Justice isn't "fearless and independent," said Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, a Rhode Island Democrat, "then we are well on the way to becoming a banana republic."

As for the President, White House officials insisted that he was amazed by the hostile reaction to the firing. Where have Americans heard that before? Shocked by the protests against his travel ban, surprised by the complexity of health care, wowed by the nuances of Asian geopolitics. There's no end to the discoveries a person can make when he pursues a high office without bothering to learn what it entails. Everyone seemed to like it when Trump barked, "You're fired!" once a week on *The Apprentice*. So what happened? —With reporting by ALEX ALTMAN, MASSIMO CALABRESI, MICHAEL DUFFY and ZEKE J. MILLER/WASHINGTON



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✗No



✓Yes



✓Yes



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TRUMP AFTER HOURS

From where the 45th President works, eats
and sleeps, everything is going just great.

Now if only everyone else would see it that way.
A TIME exclusive

By Michael Scherer and Zeke J. Miller
Photographs by Benjamin Rasmussen for TIME

*Trump leads a tour of his private residence
on the second floor of the White House*



In a few minutes, President Donald Trump will release a new set of tweets, flooding social-media accounts with his unique brand of digital smelling salts—words that will jolt his supporters and provoke his adversaries.

Nearly a dozen senior aides stand in the Oval Office, crowding behind couches or near door-length windows. This is the way he likes to work, more often than not: in a crowd. He sits behind his desk finishing the tasks of the day, which have included watching new Senate testimony about Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential election, by signing orders in red folders with a black Sharpie.

When he held the job, Barack Obama tended to treat the Oval Office like a sanctum sanctorum, accessible only for a small circle of advisers to break its silence on a tightly regulated schedule. For Trump, the room functions as something like a royal court or meeting hall, with open doors that senior aides and

➤
Trump, with Pence, watches a replay of Senate hearings from his private dining room near the Oval Office on May 8





distinguished visitors flock through when he is in the building. In practice, it feels much like his old corner office on the 26th floor of Trump Tower, minus all the clutter of memorabilia, a place to convene an audience, to broadcast his exceptionalism, to entertain, take photos, amaze and make deals. Some aides still call him "Mr. Trump," and everyone turns to listen when he speaks. His presence always seems to consume the room.

And the stream of visitors is constant. Just a few hours earlier, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster had stopped by with a foreign military delegation. Vice President Mike Pence brought by the Prime Minister of Georgia unscheduled for a photo. The New England Patriots got to take pictures behind the desk recently, and the President says the billionaire Ronald Lauder, a great collector of art, went crazy when he saw the painting of George Washington above the fireplace. "Never had people," Trump likes to say of Obama's use of the space. "I use the room. I use it a lot. I had the biggest people in the country here."

But right now, there is something else he wants to show. It's down the hall, in his private dining room in the West Wing, a few steps away. As is often the case when reporters come through, he has a plan, a story he wants to tell. Tonight, at dusk on May 8, he invites three TIME correspondents for a tour of his home and office, followed by a four-course dinner in the Blue Room, the oval-shaped parlor on the first floor of the executive mansion. The first three months of his presidency have been unsettling, a blur of confrontation, policy pivots and regulatory revolution. Financial markets have climbed, cruise missiles have fallen, and the world has watched with trepidation and confusion. In less than 24 hours, Trump will roil the nation again by announcing the firing of his FBI Director, James Comey, who is leading an investigation of his campaign's ties to Russia. It will set off yet another firestorm. But for now, it's showtime once again.

"You'll see something that is amazing. It just happened," he says as he stands up from the desk. "Come on, I'll show you."

EACH PRESIDENT leaves his mark on the building, and Trump has wasted

little time making his. The modern art favored by the Obama family is mostly gone, replaced with classic oils, including portraits of Trump's favorite predecessors, like Andrew Jackson and Teddy Roosevelt. Gold curtains have replaced the maroon ones in the Oval Office, and military-service flag stands have been added around the room, topped by battle ribbons and held in place by heavy brass bases that Trump praises to visitors.

But few rooms have changed so much so fast as his dining room, where he often eats his lunch amid stacks of newspapers and briefing sheets. A few weeks back, the President ordered a gutting of the room. "We found gold behind the walls, which I always knew. Renovations are grand," he says, boasting that contractors from the General Services Administration resurfaced the walls and redid the moldings in two days. "Remember how hard they worked? They wanted to make me happy."

There was a mistake. We set a date. And when we didn't vote, everyone says, "Trump fails on health care."

PRESIDENT TRUMP

Trump says he used his own money to pay for the enormous crystal chandelier that now hangs from the ceiling. "I made a contribution to the White House," he jokes. But the thing he wants to show is on the opposite wall, above the fireplace, a new 60-plus-inch flat-screen television that he has cued up with clips from the day's Senate hearing on Russia. Since at least as far back as Richard Nixon, Presidents have kept televisions in this room, usually small ones, no larger than a bread box, tucked away on a sideboard shelf. That's not the Trump way.

A clutch of aides follow him, including McMaster, Pence and press secretary Sean Spicer. The President raises a remote and flicks on the screen, sorting through old recordings of cable news

shows, until he comes to what he is after: a clip from the Senate hearing earlier in the day, as broadcast on Fox News. The first clip he shows is of South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham speaking to former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. Graham asks if Clapper stands by his statement that he knows of no evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Trump waits quietly, until Clapper admits that nothing has changed. Trump pantomimes a sort of victory.

"Yes. He was choking on that," the President chortles. "Is there any record at all of collusion? He was the head of the whole thing. He said no. That's a big statement." Trump leaves unmentioned the fact that there is an ongoing FBI counterintelligence investigation into possible collusion, which has not yet reached any conclusions. Nor does he note that Clapper, out of government for nearly four months, could not possibly know everything the FBI has learned, and likely would have not known all even when he was in office. Trump also leaves unmentioned that he had a meeting that day with his new Deputy Attorney General about firing Comey, the director of that investigation.

But for now, Trump is focused on his TV. He watches the screen like a coach going over game tape, studying the opposition, plotting next week's plays. "This is one of the great inventions of all time—TiVo," he says as he fast-forwards through the hearing.

The next clip starts to play, this time showing Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley asking Clapper and former acting Attorney General Sally Yates if they ever requested that the names of Trump, his associates or members of Congress be identified by name, or unmasked, in a legal intelligence intercept. "Watch them start to choke like dogs," Trump says, having fun. "Watch what happens. They are desperate for breath."

Clapper, on the screen, pauses several beats to search his memory. "Ah, he's choking. Ah, look," the President says. After a delay, Clapper finally answers, admitting that he had requested an unmasking, which would have been a routine occurrence in his former job. The running Trump commentary continues. "See the people in the back, people are



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The President has been studying White House history as he puts his personal touch on the building

gasping,” he says, though it’s unclear who he is referring to on the screen. He also mentions the sound of photographers’ cameras clicking on the television.

Moments later, the President watches as both Clapper and Yates testify that they had reviewed intercepts containing the unmasked identities of Trump, his associates and members of Congress. This, to Trump, is yet another victory, the lead-lined proof of his still unproven claim that Obama surveilled him before he was sworn in. “So they surveilled me,” he says. “You guys don’t write that—wiredtapped in quotes. They surveilled me.”

THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENCY are vast, but Trump has discovered in these first months in office that they do

not include much influence over how his words and actions are consumed by the American people. Among the many frustrations, none seems to burn quite as much as the disrespect he feels he has received from the press, which has steadily failed to reflect his version of reality. The story he wants told is not the one the nation reads and sees.

In his view, the past months have included a steady string of successes, broken only by occasional missteps, which are invariably overplayed and misinterpreted. After a rough start, an Obamacare

replacement passed the House. A red line against the use of chemical weapons has been re-established in Syria. Political prisoners have been released from Egypt. China has offered new cooperation to prevent the further development of North Korea’s nuclear arsenal. American companies have been arm-twisted into staying in the country, while Trump has personally inserted himself into a handful of negotiations over weapons systems and trade agreements to try to get Americans a better deal.

But the turmoil of his presidency has so far dominated the headlines, pushing out much of what he considers to be the good news he thinks he deserves. The press has focused on the disruption; his false statements in office; the fear and dislocation in immigrant communities; the many campaign promises, from eliminating the export-import bank to declaring China a currency manipulator, on which Trump has equivocated.

Of the many firestorms he has had to fight, none has burned as brightly as the tweets he sent accusing Obama of wiretapping him at Trump Tower. The head of the FBI, Comey, whom he had discussed firing earlier that day, had testified that there is no evidence that this happened. So he has been arguing that the wiretapping he alleged could include routine surveillance, which was not directed by the White House, of legal surveillance targets who spoke with people in his campaign. That’s why he cares so much about the “unmasking” testimony. He seeks vindication.

“The truth is, I got a raw deal,” he says later in the evening, the frustration unmistakable for a man who has spent so much of his life grading himself by headlines. The détente with the press after the election that he had hoped for never came. “It’s gotten worse,” he says. “It’s one of the things that surprises me.”

To cope with this new reality, the President says he is trying a mindfulness trick: he has tried to tune out the bad news about himself. “I’ve been able to do something that I never thought I had the ability to do. I’ve been able not to watch or read things that aren’t pleasant,” he will say later in the night, listing off the networks he tries to tune out and the newspapers he struggles to skim. Of course, as his public outbursts indicate,

he does not always succeed, but he says he no longer feels a need to know everything said about him. "In terms of your own self, it's a very, very good thing," he says. "The equilibrium is much better."

The following day, the news of the Senate hearings will once again fail to comport with the meaning he derived from his TiVo. The focus instead will be on Yates' description of how she warned the White House about the apparent duplicity of Trump's first National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, who misled the Vice President about his contacts with Russia. Flynn is now facing an investigation into foreign payments that officials say he failed to report.

Trump can't do anything about that, for the most part. But he can still tweet. So now he walks out of his dining room, followed by the same substantial entourage of senior aides. Back in the Oval Office, he checks in with his waiting staff. "Did you get that stuff out?" the President asks of the tweets he had prepared. "The Russia-Trump collusion story is a total hoax," one reads, "when will the taxpayer funded charade end?" Dan Scavino, his social-media director, is sitting on the couch. "Yes, sir. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. It's everywhere," he says.

"The real story is the surveillance," the President responds, before ribbing his staff. "But my comms people can't get it out." They start laughing. But there are even more pressing matters. Trump turns to McMaster, who was the subject of a column on Bloomberg earlier in the day, quoting anonymous sources saying the President was unhappy with his performance. It's another story that Trump declares false. The President thinks he knows where the leak is coming from, which provides some comfort. But for now, he will counterprogram: "I'm so happy with him," Trump says. "I think he's wonderful." And with that, he decides, it is time to go home.

ALL PRESIDENTS must contain multitudes. But for Trump, the situation is, as usual, bigger, bolder and more complex. At core, he has always been a transactional person. That means he reacts, often in the moment, to the information and people around him. He comes to office with no well-formed ideology and with an evolving understanding of history and

Of the many firestorms he has had to fight, none has burned as brightly as the tweets he sent accusing Obama of wiretapping him at Trump Tower. The head of the FBI, James Comey, whom he had discussed firing earlier that day, had testified that there is no evidence that this happened

government, and a clear goal of using his business acumen to help his most fervent supporters. He is extremely confident in his own judgment, often willing to act alone, to take risks, even when those around him plead caution.

During the campaign, this proved to be an enormous asset, allowing him to dispatch more than a dozen opponents and remake the rules of presidential politics. Life in the White House, he has found, is somewhat more restrictive, with far greater stakes. Escalating conflict, which works so well on the campaign trail, has not always yielded results now that he is governing. And at several points, he has had to absorb the fact that the President isn't all-powerful, with his orders blocked by the courts, his wish lists discarded by Congress, a steady stream of leaks from the intelligence community sparking turmoil in his Administration and a media that writes and broadcasts as it pleases.

From the Oval Office, it's a 60-yard stroll down the sloped colonnade to the Palm Room doors that lead into his government-funded mansion. An elevator operator is waiting for him off the ground-floor hallway. "Stop up at the second floor, would you?" asks the President. Then he turns to his guests. "Did

you ever see the Lincoln Bedroom?" The Vice President, who has walked over as well, takes the stairs. As a matter of protocol, to ensure continuity of government, the two men do not share the same airplane or ride the same lift.

Trump has lived most of these first months alone in his upstairs palace, inhabiting 20,000 square feet of the residence by himself most weeknights, catered to by a household staff that totals nearly 100, including a couple of valets and a handful of butlers. During the Obama years, the second and third floors of the executive mansion were treated as private housing, not a governing space. Obama's daughters and mother-in-law lived in a few of the extra bedrooms. The first time most staff ever got to see the place was the night Obamacare passed in March 2010, when the Obamas decided to throw a party.

The current President has taken a different tack, inviting staff up regularly for meetings; hosting dinners for old friends, staff and supporters; giving tours; calling foreign leaders from Lincoln's old desk in the Treaty Room, where he will also stay late into the night doing work with his longtime personal aide and bodyguard Keith Schiller. "The phone system is so amazing here," Trump confides as he enters the space. "This one phone, it splits the words"—a reference to scrambling technology meant to disrupt eavesdropping.

The space is far larger than it looks from outside, with a long great hall, appointed with freshly cut yellow flowers. "This is the kitchen here, a beautiful kitchen," he says. "This is the dining room. Here is a room where we have a guest room." Trump shows off the Presidential Seal over the closed door to his suite and the Yellow Oval Room, which opens out onto the Truman Balcony, where Trump's security detail has discouraged him from spending too much time.

It is the Lincoln Bedroom, however, that for him holds the most symbolic value, with its display of the Gettysburg Address. "Isn't this incredible?" Trump



With First Lady Melania Trump in New York until the summer, the President gives tours of the mansion to dinner guests



asks. "He was very tall, and this bureau was built for him, with a tall mirror." If there is a pressure from the office that he feels in this building, this is where it manifests. The current President talks sympathetically about Lincoln's struggles, the death of his 11-year-old son in this building, the ghosts that haunted him afterward. "He was a great genius, but he had some difficulty," Trump explains. "He was very distressed after his son died. They say melancholy."

But this is not something to dwell on. A few moments later he is back downstairs, gazing at the East Room. Presidents from Bill Clinton to Harry Truman have joked that the White House was a sort of prison. He doesn't feel that way, he says. "You have to be a certain type of person," he explains. "People have no idea the beauty of the White House. The real beauty of the White House."

IN ABOUT FOUR WEEKS, Trump expects his wife and youngest son to join him in the mansion, and when they arrive, life is almost certain to change. But tonight, it's all business, and the Blue Room has been lit with nearly a dozen votive candles, the table is set with yellow roses, and the Washington Monument is neatly framed in the South window.

The waiters know well Trump's personal preferences. As he settles down, they bring him a Diet Coke, while the rest of us are served water, with the Vice President sitting at one end of the table. With

the salad course, Trump is served what appears to be Thousand Island dressing instead of the creamy vinaigrette for his guests. When the chicken arrives, he is the only one given an extra dish of sauce. At the dessert course, he gets two scoops of vanilla ice cream with his chocolate cream pie, instead of the single scoop for everyone else. The tastes of Pence are also tended to. Instead of the pie, he gets a fruit plate.

Trump sees the dinner with TIME as a pitch meeting as much as anything else, with an audience that he does not entirely trust. He wants to go through his many accomplishments, regularly deflecting questions to keep on task. "The big story is that we are doing a good job for the country," the President says. "We're cutting costs, big, big costs." He runs through the tales of his renegotiations with Lockheed and Boeing on the F-35 and F/A-18 Super Hornet fighters. He speaks of asking Apple's Tim Cook to build new manufacturing plants in the U.S. He talks of his plans to renegotiate any future military contracts to make sure they have fixed prices.

At length, he discusses the small details of military procurement, including the reasons why the more costly digital catapult systems on new aircraft carriers don't work as well as the old steam-driven systems. "Time and material means you're going to get your ass kicked," he says of the common government contracting method, which often leads to cost overruns. "Who ever heard of time and material?" He marvels at the technology behind the cruise missiles he launched on an airfield in Syria, noting their ability to maneuver to destroy planes hiding under concrete shelters. He even brings up his efforts to ensure that an African leader, from a country he declines to name, can buy American military equipment despite decades-old human rights concerns.

This is the part of the job that he has clearly come to enjoy, playing businessman for the American people. He brags about the close relationships he believes he has formed with foreign leaders, complimenting Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel on inviting his daughter Ivanka to speak overseas. He boasts of convincing Egypt's leader, General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, to release several political prisoners, including



an American. He even runs through the many ways he has revised the rules of engagement in the war on the Islamic State. "They keep coming to me, at weird times too," he says of requests for approval for drone strikes and Special Forces raids in his earliest days in office.

His priority was ensuring that the military didn't wait long for the operations to commence. "I authorized the generals to do the fighting," he says. Trump has shifted the authority for final approvals from the White House back to combatant commanders. Other Obama-era restrictions, like strict force-management levels in Syria, proscribing the number of troops or vehicles that can be used at any one time, have been relaxed. As a result, the reliance on foreign contractors to support U.S. forces has ebbed. He mentions the recent death of a high-ranking Islamic State fighter and promises more to come.

As the dinner goes on, he loosens up, but only a little. He admits a few small

When asked directly if he feels his Administration has been too combative, he makes a brief allowance. 'It could be my fault,' he says. 'I don't want to necessarily blame, but there's a great meanness out there that I'm surprised at.'



mistakes, including a misstep in the fight in the House to repeal Obamacare. “There was a mistake. We set a date,” he says of the first deadline by which he hoped to get a vote on the floor in mid-March. “And when we didn’t vote, everyone says, ‘Trump fails on health care.’”

He joins Pence in describing the hours he spent on the phone with dozens of lawmakers, cajoling them from no to yes. Asked if dealmaking is any different in Washington than in real estate or entertainment, he has a quick answer. “It’s always the same,” he says. “You have to know your subject.”

Then there are the emotional costs of the job, he says. He describes his visit last month to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, just outside of Washington, where he met with wounded service members from Iraq and Afghanistan, as “incredible and terrible.” He met one wounded warrior who lost his leg but is learning to walk again with a prosthesis. “All he wants to do is go back. It’s

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Some evenings, Trump works the phones from his residence before retiring for the night

amazing,” Trump says. “The spirit is so incredible.

And for the man who centered his campaign around the notion of “America first,” he explains that he is deeply moved by the violence against children in Syria, particularly Bashar Assad’s use of chemical weapons on his people. “I mean, when he actually said they were child actors, who would even think of that?” Trump says with disgust of the young bodies that were shown on television. “I felt something had to be done.”

It would be wrong to say that the presidency has softened Trump. His willingness to fight is unabated and unfiltered. But he is no longer tethered to a one-way strategy of disruption and conflict. He is willing to back down at times, to adjust course. His chief strategist, Stephen

Bannon, who has argued for a dark, generational clearing away of old institutions, found himself effectively demoted, though he remains an important player. On a wide variety of policy issues, Trump has edged toward the center, most notably allowing Congress to negotiate a spending bill that left out a number of his priorities.

When asked directly if he feels his Administration has been too combative, he makes a brief allowance. “It could be my fault,” he says. “I don’t want to necessarily blame, but there’s a great meanness out there that I’m surprised at.” The inner conflict is clearly evident. This is the same man who just a couple hours earlier had joked about former federal officials choking “like dogs.”

One senior White House official recently outlined the three rules of Trump for a group of reporters: When you’re right, you fight. Controversy elevates message. And never apologize. All of these rules have survived his time in office, if in slightly more modest forms. After bringing new levels of combativeness to the political process, “the only way you survive is to be combative,” Trump says now. “I’ll read stories in the *New York Times* that are so one-sided. Hey, I know when I am successful. I know victory.”

But that is not all he has to say. Before the dinner breaks up, the President begins to muse about an alternative world to the one he has helped create. “It never made sense to me, the level of animosity,” Trump says. “All you want to do is, like, Let’s have a great military. Let’s have low taxes. Let’s have good health care. Let’s have good education.”

For a moment, he seems to be proposing a more civil public space in American democracy, one the Trump campaign did little to foster and which the Trump Administration is unlikely to experience.

Is this real introspection or just more performance for his guests? The answer isn’t long in coming. Within a day of the plates being cleared away, Trump takes to Twitter to attack “Cryin’ Chuck Schumer,” the Democratic Senate leader. He belittles Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal for once misrepresenting his military service—“he cried like a baby and begged for forgiveness.”

No truce is around the corner. President Trump fights on. □



Paris rejoiced as Marine Le Pen fell short in her bid for the French presidency, but nationalism is far from defeated

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS DWORZAK



World

THE WAVE TO COME

The forces that made nationalism a crisis in the West will go global

By Ian Bremmer

WHEN THE STORM TURNS OUT TO BE LESS severe than the warnings, there's always a sigh of relief—and maybe a bit of overconfidence after the fact. If fans of the European Union felt better after populist Geert Wilders came up short in the Dutch elections in March, they also took heart from the absence of anti-E.U. firebrands among the leading contenders for this fall's German elections. Then came May 7. The victory of Emmanuel Macron over Marine Le Pen in France's presidential elections signaled that "the season of growth of populism has ended," Antonio Tajani, president of the European Parliament, said on May 8.

Not so fast. Europeans will soon remember that elections are never the end of anything—they're a beginning. And whether the issue is unelected Eurocrats' forcing voters to abide by rules they don't like or fears that borders are insecure, there are good reasons to doubt that the anti-E.U. fever has broken. France's Macron now faces powerful opposition on both the far right and the far left. Hungary and Poland are becoming increasingly illiberal. Brexit negotiations are getting ugly. And resentment toward the E.U. is still rising throughout Europe.

In the U.S., President Donald Trump may be pushing what increasingly resembles a

traditional Republican agenda, but polls show that his supporters are still eager for deeper disruption. Trump's embrace of Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Egypt's Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte suggests a lasting affinity with aggressive strongmen. His chief adviser and nationalist muse, Stephen Bannon, may be under fire, but he's still there. The Trump presidency has only just begun.

In short, nationalism is alive and well, partly because the problems that provoked it are still with us. Growing numbers of people in the world's wealthiest countries still fear that globalization serves only elites who care nothing about nations and borders. Moderate politicians still offer few effective solutions.

Now here's the really bad news: an even larger crisis is coming. The popular fury convulsing Europe and the U.S. may well spill over into the rest of the world. Just as the financial crisis, which began in the West, produced rumbling aftershocks around the globe, so the nationalist explosion will rattle the politics of countries on every continent. Leaders in China, India, Brazil and others will face unprecedented challenges in managing this threat.

The emergence of a truly global middle class is one of history's great success stories: more than a billion people have been lifted out of poverty, literacy rates have surged, and access to education and health care is now widespread. But this vast rising tide did not lift all boats, and those left behind are not happy. The headlines have all been about reaction in the West, where globalized trade has hit manufacturing and technological changes have transformed the workplace. Jobs are being eliminated, and the world's original middle classes are shrinking. The native-born resent immigrants seeking work, and in Europe, the debt crisis plunged some countries into austerity and others into stagnation just as the surge of Middle Eastern refugees fed fears of crime, terrorism and loss of national identity.

NOW SOME OF THE SAME STORMS are making landfall in the developing world, where governments and institutions are far less equipped to handle the stress. We've already seen the first chapter of this narrative with the quakes that have rocked the Arab world over the past seven

years. Along with a crisis of governance, inequality and connectivity have played leading roles in these dramas as citizens become both better aware of how far they're falling behind and more able to organize protests about it.

The Gini coefficient, a statistical measure of income inequality within countries, finds that the gap between rich and poor is moderately high in places like Russia, Turkey and Indonesia, and yawning in China, Brazil, Mexico and Saudi Arabia. As lower-income citizens in these countries become more aware of what they're missing—decent housing, education, work opportunities, health care and protection from crime, in particular—the risk of unrest will rise. We've already seen previews of this in Brazil and Turkey, where millions of angry people have filled city streets to protest corruption, abuse of power and lousy public services in recent years. What happens when technological change in the workplace guts the new middle classes in developing countries like China and India, where government is held more directly accountable for the creation of jobs? What about Iran and Saudi Arabia, countries with fast-expanding populations of young people with fewer jobs created? In the Middle East, over 40% of the population is under 25. Can economies there create enough jobs to sustain them? For hundreds of millions of people across the developing world, a slide back into poverty is a fear that's easy to visualize.

Then there is the question of identity politics. Globalization doesn't move just goods and services. It moves people, feeding public anxiety by shifting the racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious makeup of communities, sometimes abruptly. Trump rose to power in part by leveraging fears about immigrants' stealing American jobs. Immigration was also at the heart of the Brexit vote. Developing countries don't have to worry about waves of migrants knocking at the door in search of a better life, at least not yet. But in many of these countries, "they" are already inside or live just next door. Even in countries with unchallenged boundaries, racial, ethnic, tribal, religious and linguistic differences can become fault lines when technological change creates economic turmoil. Political opportunism is universal.

In the West, nationalist politicians have seized the opportunity created by popular anger to boost their influence. But the structures that create stability in the West have proved to be resilient. Trump is still discovering the meaning of checks and balances. And majority rule kept Le Pen and Wilders out of power.

What happens in countries where these institutions are weaker and have less popular legitimacy? Expect similar figures to emerge—but with results that are even harder to predict. Nationalists rise to power by convincing citizens that they can defend "the people" against a predatory elite and the favored groups they protect. But the hated "them" isn't always a domestic enemy or someone still hoping to come inside. If the leaders of Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Russia and China can't help their citizens compete in a 21st century globalized economy, where might they look for culprits? In the past, governments have steered public anger toward other countries, which can easily turn into military conflagrations.

Others will respond to nationalist pressures by building walls. Some of these barriers will be between the state and their subjects—China's government has taken steps to create a "social-credit system," a sort of credit rating based on economic and social behavior that determines the opportunities available to a person. Beijing claims the plan is intended to create a harmonious society and a "culture of sincerity," but it might also serve as a barrier between the ruling party and angry citizens. In India, the government has gathered biometric information on more than 900 million of its citizens for its controversial national identity-card program. There's no telling how future governments will decide to use this great trove of data; the potential for surveillance is enormous.

Information, if tightly controlled, can divide. The Russian state dominates the television channels and websites from which the vast majority of citizens get their news. Since last July's failed coup, Turkey's Erdogan has used a state of emergency in his country to tighten media controls and punish outlets critical of his government. Then there's the assault on information itself. The fake news that appeared on the Internet during the U.S. presidential election has long been



standard fare in less open societies.

These kinds of barriers may be the future in a world that was until recently described as increasingly borderless. People will gravitate toward online enclaves of information and ideas, creating virtual walls between left and right, urban and rural, different ethnic and religious groups, the religious and the nonreligious. Between “us” and “them.”

HOW CAN WE BRIDGE THE GAP? Some governments are experimenting with solutions. Finland is addressing the changing workplace with a concept called guaranteed basic income. As part of a trial, it is sending monthly tax-free payments of about \$600 to 2,000 unemployed citizens chosen at random. The recipients will continue to receive the payments even if they find work. The assumption behind the project is that future work is far more likely to be part time or self-employment—and that the unemployed are reluctant to take these sorts of jobs if

Protests like this International Workers’ Day demonstration in New York City on May 1 will become more common around the globe

they lose welfare benefits as a result. The opportunity to make more money in part-time jobs, it is hoped, will attract people receiving the guaranteed basic income, and their spending power will stimulate growth. Welfare bureaucracies will be cut, because there will be no need to maintain complicated databases to track the continuing eligibility of participants.

Local governments in Canada, the Netherlands, Scotland and Oakland, Calif., are reportedly planning to experiment with this idea. (The Swiss voted last year to reject it.) If the guaranteed-income idea seems antithetical to an American work-ethic-driven culture, consider that President Richard Nixon proposed a modest version of the basic income idea in the late 1960s. Other ideas are also out there. In Singapore, for exam-

ple, government has created “individual learning accounts” to provide every citizen over 25 with money to spend on educational training.

There will be many more such experiments as governments search for ways to rewrite the social contract to ease inequality. But the effort demands capable governance and the resources to construct and sustain the transition to a new world. Where those do not exist, solutions are much harder to come by—and darker alternatives beckon: to increase control, to suppress instead of liberate and to lash out at reliable enemies.

Dealing with the forces that drive populism is no easier than dealing with the forces that drive climate change, and they are all too easy for political leaders to avoid. But ignoring either trend will produce an overheated world and rising tides. That’s why, no matter what headlines you may read this spring about the triumph of globalists over nationalists, the truth is that we’re all in this together. □

Science

Secrets of the Canine Mind

New research is revealing how complex
a thing it is *By Jeffrey Kluger*





*Bucky is an
18-month-old pug,
a breed selected
for its small size,
baby-like face and
extreme—even by
dog standards—
attachment
to humans*

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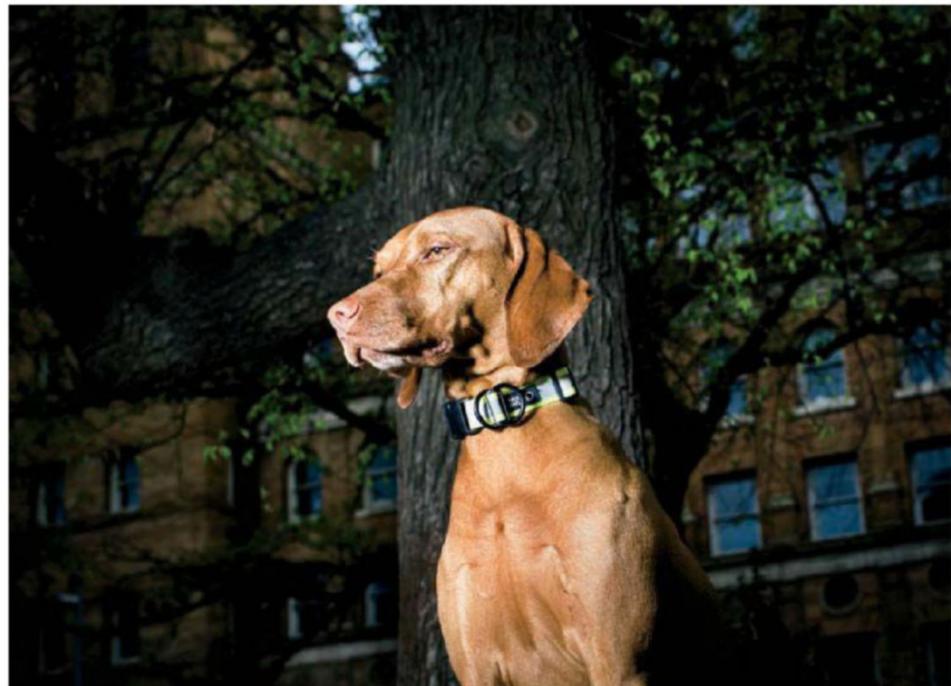
ODDS ARE YOU DON'T LOOK FORWARD TO spending time in a magnetic resonance imager—and with good reason. The clanging, coffin-like machine seems purpose-built for sensory assault. But you're not Ninja, a 3-year-old pit-bull mix, who trots into a lab at Emory University in Atlanta, catches a glimpse of the MRI in which she'll spend her morning and leaps happily onto the table.

Ninja is one of the few dogs in the world that have been trained to sit utterly still in an MRI (the little bits of hot dog she gets as rewards help) so that neuroscientist Gregory Berns can peer into her brain as it works. "What's it like to be a dog?" Berns asks, a question that is both the focus of his work and the thrust of his next book. "No one can know with certainty. But I think our dogs are experiencing things very much the way we do."

That is what we want to believe. Our love affair with dogs has been going on for 15,000 years, and there's no sign that it's flagging. About 44% of families in the U.S. include at least one dog, meaning a canine population of up to 80 million.

Most of the time, we give our dogs very good lives. We fancy that they understand us, and maybe they do: come home sad and they'll nuzzle your hand. They don't have language, but they communicate volumes—with their eyes, with their barks, with their entire expressive bodies. "Dogs pick up on all kinds of things," says Juliane Kaminski, director of the Dog Cognition Centre at the University of Portsmouth, in England. "A system has developed in which both species—ours and theirs—attend to each other's cues."

That's something we know intuitively, but science is pushing harder to understand it empirically. Canine-research facilities have been established around the



world, in Hungary, Austria, Germany, Italy, Australia and elsewhere. In the U.S. alone, there are facilities at Duke, Tufts and Yale universities. The Association for Psychological Science (APS), which typically concerns itself with the well-being of humans, recently devoted an entire issue of its journal *Current Directions in Psychological Science* to the canine mind. The findings were often impressive: Dogs can count—sort of—learning to look at two boards with geometric shapes attached to them and choose the one that has more. They can read human faces—

understanding the importance of using gaze to communicate and to direct our attention. They can excel at what is known as object permanence—understanding that when an object is out of sight, it has not vanished from existence. It takes humans a lot longer to learn such a basic truth of the world, which is why babies who toss food or a spoon from a high chair will so often not look down at the floor to try to find it.

Dogs may be better too than 3-to-4-year-old children at learning to ignore bad instructions. In a Yale study not reported



Canines of New York: Meet, clockwise from top left, Nova, Tico, Isabella and Luna—a vizsla, pit bull, Pomeranian and Boston terrier



in the APS journal, dogs and small children were given a box and taught to turn a lever to open the lid and get a treat. When the lever was rigged so that it was no longer needed, the dogs learned to ignore it and simply open the box. The children continued to turn the useless thing all the same. If dogs can beat us at this one small task, what other gifts may they be hiding?

A DOG'S BEHAVIORAL SOFTWARE is ultimately determined by the power of the hardware, and that means the brain. As with all animals, one of the most impor-

tant determinants of brainpower is size—specifically, the size of the brain relative to the size of the body. By this measure, the human brain is huge, about one-fiftieth the mass of the average human body.

Compared with humans and their 1:50 ratio, horses are dullards, at 1:600, and lions are little better at 1:550. Dogs are comparative scholars, weighing in at an impressive 1:125—a ratio that holds across all breeds of dog, from the Chihuahua to the English mastiff. All the same, a brain that makes you a genius in the animal world is not much in the human

one. Berns keeps the preserved brain of an adult German shepherd in his lab, and it starkly makes that point: the brain is the size of a tangerine. “Dog brains just don’t have the real estate to do the things ours do,” he says.

While the sizes of the two brains differ, the structures are strikingly similar. Over the past several years, Berns and his team have used that similarity to good effect. Much of their MRI work has focused on the part of the brain known as the striatum. Rich in dopamine, the striatum mediates reward, pleasure and expectation—three pillars of a dog’s world.

During Ninja’s recent visit, the experiment involved determining how quickly she would learn to expect a food reward after being exposed to one of two smells. With the scanner running, a lab assistant released intermittent puffs of either isoamyl, a chemical that smells faintly like nail-polish remover, or hexanol, a carbon molecule that is detectable in grass clippings. After each puff of isoamyl, Ninja was given a hot-dog treat; after the hexanol, she’d get nothing.

Over the course of the test, the MRI looked for upticks in electrical activity in the striatum that would indicate increased anticipation after smelling the isoamyl. Analytic software would have to determine the answer since the naked eye could not pick out such small fluctuations, but Ninja offered clues that she had learned fast. After hopping down from the scanner, she was presented with two cups in the middle of a room, each containing one of the two chemicals. She trotted straight to the one with isoamyl.

Associating a smell with a treat is basic stuff, but Berns has used his MRI to probe more sophisticated parts of dogs’ cognitive prowess: how they recognize the faces of humans and other dogs; how they recognize voices and words; even how they experience jealousy—when a treat was fed in pantomime to a dog mannequin. It’s those questions about a dog’s personality—does it love? does it empathize? is it loyal?—that most intrigue humans.

Investigators at the Messerli Research

Institute in Vienna have recently tested the ability of dogs to behave prosocially—make an effort to help another dog when there is no reward in it for them. In the experiment, two dogs were placed in side-by-side cages, and one was trained to pull a lever that would deliver food to the other. The first dog got nothing and yet was usually happy to pull the lever all the same—provided the dog on the other side was a playmate. Unknown dogs were less likely to get the same treatment.

Studies of the many ways dogs are said to come to the aid of humans have produced less positive results. There is no end of anecdotal evidence of the phenomenon: dogs that run for help when their owners are injured, dogs that bark to alert the family to a fire, dogs that know when you're sad and nuzzle to offer comfort.

Lovely—and maybe hooey. "Your dog may notice something's amiss when you're sad," says Kaminski, "but the message they're sending when they nuzzle may be 'You're acting weird, and that scares me.'" As for dogs that bark when there's a fire in the house? "They might just have been frightened," says developmental psychologist William Roberts of Ontario's Western University.

In one study Roberts and a colleague conducted, an owner walked her dog across a field and then fell to the ground, feigning a heart attack. Two other humans were seated nearby, pretending to be reading. The owner lay still for six minutes, and over repeated trials with different human and animal subjects, not a single dog sought help.

Roberts does not deny the truth of occasional stories of dogs that do seek help. But he thinks they're the exceptions. The majority of cases in which dogs do nothing "don't get reported because they are not interesting or unexpected."

If that's true, it leaves dogs as little more than, well, cats: amiable freeloaders on the human gravy train. But such a conclusion shortchanges them—by a lot.

Start with what we're learning about their intellectual octane, especially in terms of what's known as theory of mind, the ability to understand that humans and other animals have knowledge different from their own. The ability of dogs to follow pointing, and to do so innately, has generated a lot of interest in recent years. It doesn't seem like much of a skill,



except when you consider that so many other animals make no sense of the gesture. The dog knows that the hand is used to indicate something else.

"When two humans do that, they take into account the common ground—a communicative context in which all this makes sense," says Kaminski. The same is true between dogs and humans.

Not all canine researchers are sold on the significance of all of this. Behavioral scientist Clive Wynne of Arizona State University cites numerous species—including dolphins, elephants and even

bats—that learn the meaning of pointing if they've had sufficient exposure to human beings. "It's simply day-to-day experience with humans using their limbs to deliver things that matter," he says.

The canine understanding of object permanence is less open to dispute. Dogs perform well on so-called visible-displacement tasks: when they watch an object being placed in one of several containers and are then allowed to look for it, they know which container to investigate first. Dogs also master invisible displacement, in which, say, a toy is placed in a



Nina is an 8-month-old mini Australian shepherd; the herding breeds are among brainiest of the dog world

gest that they have an awareness not just of the past and the future but also of the rate at which time passes. Closed-circuit cameras show that they seem to prepare as the time comes for humans who have been out all day to return, stirring from a nap, checking the front door, becoming restless and excited.

A sense of time as a linear thing—that the current state is not the only state—is an abstraction that human babies take a long time to learn, which partly explains tantrums. A present moment without a cookie means an eternity without cookies.

Dogs may even teach us something about a common human problem: lack of willpower. Research has attributed this to what is known as ego depletion, with self-control failing over time the same way an overworked muscle does. In studies conducted in 2010 and '15, investigators found that self-discipline in dogs breaks down the same way ours does. In one experiment, dogs that had been required to perform a 10-minute sit-and-stay exercise were less likely to complete a puzzle task given to them next than dogs that had spent the same 10 minutes doing what they pleased.

The reason may be depletion of glucose in the prefrontal cortex. Dogs given glucose before the second task stayed with it longer after a sit-and-stay period. Dosing up on sugary drinks is not the way to improve self-discipline, but the research does show us one more thing we share with our favorite nonhuman species.

Ultimately, though, our curiosity about dogs will always be driven mostly by our love for dogs. Berns believes that it was juveniles on both sides of the human-dog divide that were responsible for initiating the interspecies bond. Wolf pups would be the ones likeliest to approach and appeal to early nomadic humans; and girls and boys—then and now—are the humans who love puppies most. Dogs are like us in their joy and empathy and inexhaustible curiosity, and we—at least when we're in their presence—become more like them. We are both better species for our very long union. □

container, the container is moved behind a screen and then brought back out, but the toy is no longer in it. Some dogs follow that chain of events, rightly concluding that if they go behind the barrier they will probably find the toy.

In a 2013 study, behavioral psychologist Thomas Zentall of the University of Kentucky also found that dogs are capable of understanding that not only is the existence of objects permanent but so are the characteristics. When a dog biscuit or other item of interest was carried behind a barrier and then carried back out,

the dogs would give it a glance as it reappeared. But if it was secretly replaced by a larger or smaller version of the same object or one that had changed in color, they would stare much longer. The conclusion: a two-inch dog biscuit should remain two inches and a yellow ball should remain yellow, and dogs understand that.

What, however, does all this say about dogs' emotional experience of the world? They exhibit what seems unmistakably to be joy—in the jumping, yipping thrill they show when family members come home after a long absence. That may even sug-

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Time Off

'THE RESULTING BANISHMENT FROM TEEN SOCIETY LEFT ME AMPLE FREE TIME TO BEGIN WRITING STORIES MYSELF' —PAGE 51



Hahn, the heart of Soloway's new Amazon series, with a side of Bacon

► TELEVISION

On Amazon, a troubled letter-writing campaign from the heart

By Daniel D'Addario

EVEN IN A DIGITAL AGE, THERE'S nothing quite as potent as a letter. This is the first of many takeaways from Amazon's *I Love Dick*, an eight-episode series that doesn't so much flip the epistolary genre on its head as hold it at gunpoint and force it to dance. Chris Kraus (Kathryn Hahn), a filmmaker whose career is at a standstill, becomes fixated with sculptor Dick (Kevin Bacon). She writes him letters that begin as relatively harmless and move toward consuming obsession.

Maybe it should come as no surprise that all of this—admiration slipping into sex, the commingling of one's work and one's life—takes place against the backdrop of academia. Chris, whose film got booted from the festival where it was supposed to

show, ends up stuck with her husband (Griffin Dunne) in an artists' colony in Marfa, Texas. It's a brilliant choice of setting, if a departure from author Chris Kraus' semiautobiographical 1997 novel on which the show is based. This Marfa is a West Texas community of people trapped inside their own heads and overheated in every sense—especially when Chris begins posting her letters in the center of town for everyone to read.

For Jill Soloway, the show's co-creator (with playwright Sarah Gubbins), this is familiar territory. She has explored both the desires of the body and the life of the mind on her show *Transparent*, also on Amazon. And yet *I Love Dick* is a surprise, not least because the novel seemed so unadaptable. One fix:

Chris' letters are read by Hahn in voice-over and depicted in bold type on screen. The book's frank portrayal of desire comes through even more boldly. On the page, Dick's character matters less than the fact that he exists as a man with the potential to validate Chris, to read her words and to see her. But in the show, Dick is more fleshed out. He's a sculptor who works on the grand scale of a Richard Serra, minus the light touch. There's a word for the arrogant, swaggering way he acts, but it's a bit vulgar. When the two argue, the force of his beliefs is enough to convince Chris that it might be easier to let herself be swept away by his confidence.

Ultimately, Chris can't think her way out of her desire. Hers is the crisis of being a person: we may want to live governed by our ideas, but what the body wants gets in the way. Conflicted by this, Chris has to work backward to construct a logic for her desire.

I've rarely seen a TV show so ably engage with issues of identity, sex and gender as this one. *Transparent*, similarly heady, has a tendency to get tripped up depicting its characters' process of finding themselves through endless breakups and makeups. *I Love Dick* is less reliant on that kind of drama and manages to portray Chris' inner life masterfully. She struggles to express herself, to attract, cajole and vent to Dick through her writing. Hahn, who plays Rabbi Raquel on *Transparent*, excels as a woman who simultaneously wants to be understood and respected and to sublimate herself entirely to someone else—even if it's obvious he will never respect her. The tone of her letters grows more and more aggrieved as Dick ignores her. Their one-way romance swells into something increasingly troubling.

Literature has capitalized on the tensions in *I Love Dick* for decades, if not centuries. But TV—so often praised these days as being novelistic—has been far less able to capture the true inner turmoil of being a person. This story of wrongheaded lust gets it right. □

'Dick, it's hard for me to access you tonight. All your cowboy/loner stuff seems silly.'

CHRIS KRAUS, played by Kathryn Hahn, in a letter sent to her uninterested love interest (Kevin Bacon)

QUICK TALK Jeff Garlin

The comedian, 54, wrote, directed and stars in *Handsome: A Netflix Mystery Movie* (out now). He plays a befuddled detective seeking answers to a gruesome crime alongside a mirthful cast.

You've been in comedy for decades. Have comedians had to become more sensitive in their approach? I'm conscious of the fact that so many things can be said that upset people today. I find it ridiculous, to be honest with you. Let's be empathetic. But especially in comedy, it's got to be irreverent.

Where did the concept for *Handsome* come from? The way it works in my career is, I think of it and I go do it. I love murder-mystery shows like *Columbo*. I thought it would be fun. So there you go. And it was!

What was it like working for Netflix? Here's what I would say the difference would be, and it's something that we should have been doing for a long time: making shows for specific demographics, or just making regular shows and seeing who tunes in. Because in trying to appeal to everyone on a given show—especially a comedy—you can't help but fail. It's hard to get through to them all.

Reviews have been mixed. Do you feel pressure to deliver a certain type of comedy? Nope. The only pressure I feel is to perform at the top of my intelligence. The only concern I have with something like *Handsome* is that people are watching it. If no one's digging it, then I obviously have nothing to offer.

***Curb Your Enthusiasm* is returning to HBO for a ninth season after a long hiatus. What was it like to reunite?** From the first scene we filmed, it felt like we had just worked the week before. It didn't feel like five years off. It just felt comfortable. There was no stress or anything. It was delightful. What people love about the show, the feeling, the vibe—that's still there.—RAISA BRUNER

ON MY RADAR

BETTER CALL SAUL

"My favorite show right now by a country mile is *Better Call Saul*. There's tone and nuance. With a lot of work on television, there's no tone and nuance."



TELEVISION

How *Twin Peaks* changed TV forever

By Eliana Dockterman

TELEVISION HISTORY IS DIVIDED INTO TWO ERAS: BEFORE *TWIN PEAKS*, AND AFTER. IN 1990, David Lynch and Mark Frost created a surreal show built on a scaffolding of impending dread, dream logic and bizarre aesthetics. Twenty-six years after *Peaks* ended, Showtime is reviving the series (May 21). Here's how the original inspired some of today's most influential showrunners:

'Everything was mysterious. I don't mean, "When did the perp kill the vic?" I mean the weather, the trees, the doughnuts. The dream sequences were more nightmare-like than anything I'd seen before—Fellini, Hitchcock. Lynch dug them up from the bottom of his unconscious. Anybody making one-hour drama today who says he wasn't influenced by David Lynch is lying.'

DAVID CHASE*The Sopranos*

*'So much of filmmaking is information delivery, but *Twin Peaks* created a mood with imagery that didn't always make sense: Killer BOB appears out of nowhere, raises a hair on your neck, then disappears, and you wonder if it's even real.'*

NOAH HAWLEY*Fargo; Legion*

'Lynch is disturbing, brilliant, homey and often hilarious.'

JANE CAMPION*Top of the Lake*

*'The full sensory experience of *Twin Peaks*—images, sounds, music and the completely strange yet utterly compelling characters—was unlike anything I'd ever seen. The purposeful ambiguity kept my brain churning, well, forever.'*

CARLTON CUSE*Lost; Bates Motel*

'WHILE MOST OF MY PEERS WERE OBSESSED WITH "SPORTS" AND "HAVING FUN," I WAS BLATHERING ON ABOUT THE BLACK LODGE. THE RESULTING BANISHMENT FROM TEEN SOCIETY LEFT ME AMPLE FREE TIME TO BEGIN WRITING STORIES MYSELF. MY LOVE FOR EXPLORING MYSTERY, AND THE AMBIGUITY SURROUNDING IT, WAS BORNE OF THAT QUIET, CREEPY LOGGING TOWN.'

DAMON LINDELOF*Lost; The Leftovers*

Twin Peaks: A Primer

Haven't seen it? Get thee to a streaming service. Here's a handy guide to the wonders and weirdos waiting for viewers in the little town that altered the course of American television:

**LOG LADY**

A sign that something was amiss: the townie who cradled a log like a puppy while prophesying

**CHERRY PIE**

FBI agent Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) waxed poetic about pie, rendering even the mundane bizarre

**TIBETAN METHOD**

Not your average hero cop, Cooper tapped into the supernatural to solve crimes

**ONE EYED JACK'S**

This brothel and drug den symbolized the darkness hidden in even the most wholesome of towns

**THE RED ROOM**

Lynch captured dream logic perfectly when characters entered this room of riddles

**ONE-ARMED MAN**

The show's self-mutilating mystery man was part innocent bystander, part malevolent spirit



Styles is the latest former member of One Direction to strike out on his own

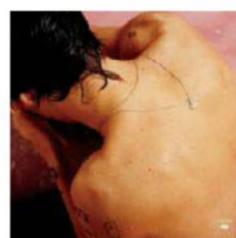
MUSIC

Harry Styles' solo album is an unexpected tour of rock history

IT WAS ALWAYS EASY TO DISMISS ONE DIRECTION. FORMED on reality TV and cannily styled to appeal to young listeners, it had all the markings of a manufactured boy band. But by its fifth and most recent album, One Direction had become a stealth classic-rock delivery service, repackaging crunchy guitar riffs and soaring arena-ready choruses that went down easy with kids and reminded parents of their youth. In 2015, Zayn Malik left the band to top charts with sulky alt-R&B songs like "Pillowtalk," a No. 1 hit last year. Now Harry Styles, the band's de facto front man, is next to make a bid for solo stardom.

On Styles' self-titled debut album, out May 12, he eschews slick production and sharp hooks. But he still synthesizes influences from the last half-century of rock, so much so that you can practically travel through history on the back of his references. The anxious opener "Meet Me in the Hallway" has a riff straight out of Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," while the operatic lead single "Sign of the Times" channels David Bowie. "Kiwi" is straight-up grunge, full of rage, and "Two Ghosts" sounds like late-'90s adult-contemporary radio, in the best way. Working with veteran producer Jeff Bhasker (Kanye West, Mark Ronson), Styles has crafted a grownup rock sound that doesn't pander.

Styles' lyrics can be opaque, which makes the confessional final track, "From the Dining Table," all the more important. It's a vulnerable ode to the lonely hotel room, the curse of the famous. The song not only proves Styles' talent as a storyteller but also shows that he may potentially be as good at looking inward as at looking backward in time. —SAM LANSKY



HIGH DEMAND

Styles has a 29-stop world tour scheduled for this year—and fans snapped up every ticket in less than two minutes on May 5, when they went on sale.

MUSIC

The agony and the ecstasy of Perfume Genius

THE SEATTLE-BASED MUSICIAN Perfume Genius, real name Mike Hadreas, came to national attention with 2014's acclaimed album *Too Bright*, a meditation on being queer in a straight world. On lead single "Queen," he intoned, "No family is safe when I sashay." His new album, *No Shape*, out now, is more about transcending the physical. These songs morph from lean ballads to textured, messy soundscapes as bubbly synths get punctured by reverb-heavy guitar and slim percussion builds to exploding chords. On the interlude "Choir," an eerie violin piece narrated by Hadreas, he groans, "I can't dream/ Something keeps me locked."

But there are lovely moments of peace too. "Did you notice babe everything is all right?" he asks in "Alan," a tender lullaby to his longtime partner and bandmate Alan Wyffels. "I'm here, how weird." He may not be entirely contented, but as a body of work, *No Shape* settles into its own affecting groove. —RAISA BRUNER



SYNERGY

Hadreas covered Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love" in a 2016 ad for Prada fragrances.



Marriage plot: Winger and Letts face marital ennui in *The Lovers*

MOVIES

Aging gracefully, if not always smoothly, in *The Lovers*

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AGING male action heroes, over-50 characters in today's movies rarely appear to have lives beyond taking care of their children. Maybe because so many mainstream movies are being made by people under 50, we don't see many depictions of what "older" people's lives are really like. They're often just the people on the other side of a FaceTime call, or the folks who greet the grandchildren warmly at vacation time. Who among us, after all, ever wants to think about our parents having sex?

But the lesson every adult has to learn is that their parents are people too. In *The Lovers*, Debra Winger and Tracy Letts play Mary and Michael, 50-somethings—and parents of a college-age son—whose marriage long ago reached comfy-slipper stasis. Each has an extracurricular lover. Michael is seeing a high-strung ballet teacher (Melora Walters), Mary a needy writer (Aiden Gillen). Both paramours want something more

permanent, and though Mary and Michael haven't discussed splitting up, each hopes to break free soon.

That's the plan, anyway. With *The Lovers*, writer-director Azazel Jacobs (*Momma's Man*) has made a nonjudgmental, openhearted, vaguely outré romantic comedy, albeit a bittersweet one. Letts and Winger are marvelous, and wholly comfortable in their own skin. The movie's seminude love scenes are one of its greatest triumphs. Why is there so much advertising telling

us that there's beauty in aging, while movies are afraid to go there? No one likes getting older, but the best gift *The Lovers* imparts—aside from simply being a charming and provocative piece of entertainment—is the tender truth that there's room for so much more in life than we can ever possibly plan for. The only way to know what awaits after age 50 is to get there yourself. —STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

'Anyone who thinks physical attraction dissipates with age is not trying hard enough.'

DEBRA WINGER, in an interview with TIME

"LOOK, I'M A BALANCING BREAKFAST!"



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Time Off Reviews

TIME
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MOVIES

King Arthur as a knockabout guy

KING ARTHUR: LEGEND OF THE SWORD

proceeds from the assumption that someone's got to jazz up that moldy old Arthurian legend, and Guy Ritchie is just the one to do it. Charlie Hunnam stars as Arthur, who, as a child, was saved from the clutches of demonic King Vortigern (Jude Law) and spirited to safety. Later, he'll return to Vortigern's kingdom and pull that stubborn Excalibur from the stone.

But the path to that moment is a morass of scenes soldered together with Ritchie's trademark chop-shop editing and scrappy, streetwise dialogue—even if the streets in question are muddy paths in mythical 5th century England. It's all more wearying than fun. Except for Law, whose courtly sangfroid can elevate even the dumbest roles. As power-mad Vortigern, he's like a medieval knight carved from the coolest marble, sprung from the crypt just to raise hell. His chronically arched eyebrow is the movie's only real magic. —STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

WHAT ABOUT GUINEVERE?

For Arthurian fans, Ritchie's take may lack the romance of the legend. Guinevere becomes "the Mage" (Astrid Bergès-Frisbey), a shadowy figure Arthur encounters on the road. That may change if there's a sequel.

MOVIES

Starring Amanda Stenberg (*The Hunger Games*), **Everything, Everything** (May 19) adapts the like-named Nicola Yoon romantic novel about a teen with an illness who falls in love with the quirky boy next door.

MUSIC

The Mountain Goats pivot to woodwinds and piano on the band's moody 16th album, **Goths** (May 19). The indie-folk quartet contemplates the titular subculture with an eerie album. Recorded live, *Goths* is a follow-up to their last thematic album, which explored wrestling.



TELEVISION

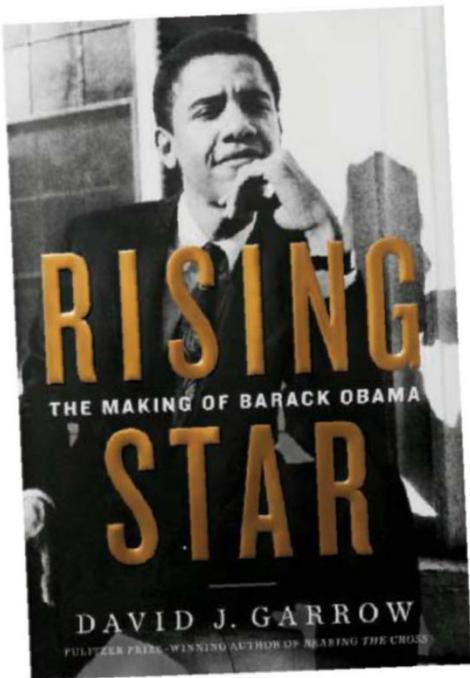
Decline and Fall (May 15) is an English comedy that faithfully reconstructs the 1928 novel of the same name. The tale of an unfairly expelled Oxford student forced into a teaching job streams on Acorn TV.

BOOKS

Author Garrett Graff's **Raven Rock** (out now) explores nuclear panic during America's Cold War-era doomsday preparations. It's a detailed account of everything from underground bunkers to Presidents' views on military power.

Hunnam as the young King Arthur, jazzed up for modern sensibilities





BIOGRAPHY

All the President's exes

DAVID J. GARROW'S *RISING STAR: THE MAKING OF BARACK OBAMA*, a 1,460-page haute-tabloid tome, came under critical fire before it was even released this month. One glaring issue for the author of a Pulitzer-winning Martin Luther King Jr. biography: his treatment of the race and love life of the 20-something who would go on to become President. The author relies heavily on interviews with a former girlfriend, Sheila Miyoshi Jager, with whom Obama lived in the 1980s, as if that relationship were the key to understanding his personality. Obama's split from her is framed as a rejection of white women (Jager is half-Japanese) in favor of the optics that would come from having a black wife. Although Garrow details the sexual chemistry between Obama and his white girlfriends, the former President's relationship with Michelle Obama is presented as business-like. Observers of the Obamas' 25-year marriage will find the characterization of their romance as merely political plainly out of touch. Despite Obama's many achievements as an adult, *Rising Star*'s epilogue returns to Jager, who claimed in 2014 that "something changed in him after we went our separate ways ... as if the part of him that was so vulnerable and open (and sensual?) went underground ... raging ambition, quest for greatness, whatever just took over instead." Would that we could all take credit for our exes' success after being left behind. —SARAH BEGLEY

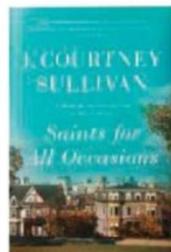
KING ARTHUR: WARNER BROS.

FICTION

Saints, elsewhere

"LIVE LONG ENOUGH, AND life teaches you that God is not your lucky rabbit foot." So says Nora Rafferty in J. Courtney Sullivan's new novel, *Saints for All Occasions*. She should know: Nora and her sister Theresa emigrate from Ireland to the U.S. in the 1950s, recalling Colm Tóibín's 2009 best seller, *Brooklyn*. When Theresa gets pregnant, Nora quickly gets married and persuades her husband to raise the baby boy as their own. Fifty years later, their son's true parentage remains a secret to almost everyone in the growing Rafferty family. By then, plenty more secrets have accumulated.

The Raffertys love one another, but their secrets turn them into strangers. Misunderstandings ricochet through the family's generations like so much shrapnel. Sullivan lets readers in on these secrets even as most of her characters stay in the dark, elevating the novel above the average family drama. With tenderness and a knack for depicting Irish grandmothers that anybody who has one will appreciate, Sullivan celebrates ordinary people doing their best to live saintly lives. They may fail, but they keep trying. —S.B.



"SPLASH DOWN!"



**CRUNCHY WHEAT.
FROSTED SWEET.
FEED YOUR
INNER KID**



What it feels like when all your parental nightmares are rolled into one TV series

By Susanna Schröbsdorff

NOBODY TELLS YOU HOW MANY TIMES YOUR HEART WILL stop when you have kids. If you knew how terrifying even the almost-tragedies are, you might not have children in the first place. The time your newborn rolled off the bed and there was a harrowing silence before she started to cry. Or when you grabbed her just before she walked into traffic. And the ballooning panic of not being able to find her in a crowd.

When they become teenagers, the mission becomes more complicated. Their bodies are their own. But the thought of them getting hurt, really hurt, is still unbearable. And the thought of them injuring themselves deliberately is painful on a level for which there are no measurements.

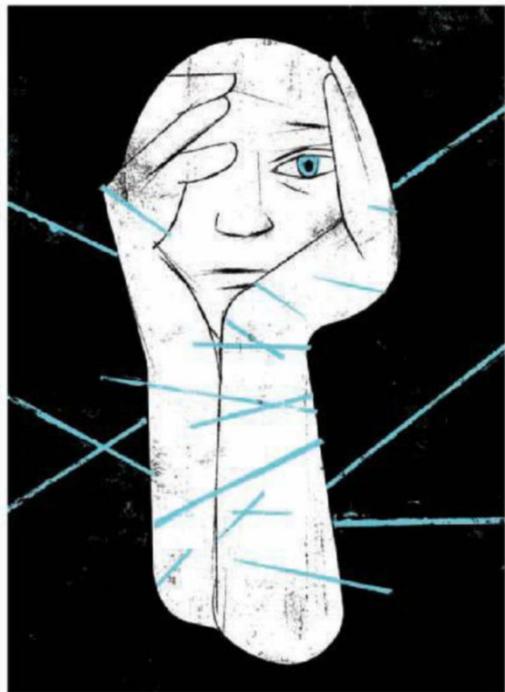
That's probably why there's been such an outpouring of emotion about the new Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, about a teenage girl's suicide and its aftermath. It's truly graphic. We see the lead character, Hannah, lie in a tub and slice into her forearms with a razor. We watch her die slowly. We see her mother cry out as she tries to pull her daughter's water-soaked body. There's no looking away.

And if that weren't enough, leading up to that scene, there's cyberbullying, self-harm, rape, sexual harassment, a fatal car crash—just about everything awful that can happen to a teen. Hannah narrates her story posthumously as a sort of crime drama via seven audio cassettes that sequentially reveal the names of 13 people whose behavior contributed to the "reasons why" she killed herself.

For parents, this is a drawn-out horror movie, one that feels all too possible. Earlier this month, a new study of 32 children's hospitals across the country showed that admissions for suicidal behavior and serious self-harm among 5-to-17-year-olds more than doubled between 2008 and '15. That's just a tiny percentage of the kids who are experiencing major depression or anxiety or are hurting themselves in various ways, like cutting. Nationally, 17.7% of teens reported seriously considering attempting suicide in 2015, according to the CDC.

Not surprisingly, the show that premiered on March 31 has become a binge-watching obsession among teens and tweens. Netflix doesn't publish ratings, but by social-media metrics, *13 Reasons Why*, based on the best-selling 2007 young-adult book by Jay Asher, is one of the network's biggest hits.

LOTS OF KIDS WATCHED THE SERIES before adults had even heard of it. Schools were forced to play catch-up with notices warning parents of the explicit depictions of suicide and rape. And clinicians like Dr. Megan Moreno, who heads the Social Media and Adolescent Health Research Team at Seattle



Children's Hospital, says her team is concerned about kids already struggling with depression because the series "presents suicide as a logical solution."

IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTROVERSY, Netflix added a warning at the start of the series. And there are extra features with help-line info and psychologists and producers (including Selena Gomez) encouraging discussion of the issues raised: "We had a number of people ask us along the way why we had Hannah kill herself in the way we did and why we showed it," said creator Brian Yorkey. "We did want it to be painful to watch. Because we wanted to be very clear that there is nothing in any way worthwhile about suicide."

Nonetheless, Jim Steyer, the CEO of Common Sense Media, a nonprofit that provides reviews for parents, has written to Netflix CEO Reed Hastings asking the network to do more to inform parents about mature content targeted to kids. The current "lack of policy," writes Steyer, is "highly irresponsible."

The most troubling thing about the series might not be how graphic it is, but the portrayal of depression. "Suicide is not a revenge game," says Dr. Fadi Haddad, co-founder of the Children's Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. "It's the act of someone in agony, and we don't see that kind of depression in the lead character. She remains functional until the end."

Of course, the hopelessness and isolation that many teens face doesn't make for a fast-paced plot. And the causes of depression can't be summed up on a list of incidents or people to blame. It'd be simpler if that were true. Treatment for depression is slow. Progress comes with heartbreaking setbacks. And you realize that after shielding your kids from danger since birth, you can't always protect them from themselves. All you can do is stay close, get help and don't ever give up. □

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