

The Pandemic's Mental Health Toll

06.12.2020

Newsweek

WHAT WOULD FDR DO?

To revive
the economy,

Joe Biden

wants to build
his own New Deal.

Is he up to
the challenge?



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FEATURES

AWAY FROM HOME

Michael Kim, a University of Southern California physician, checked into a Los Angeles hotel in April to avoid possibly exposing his young children and elderly parents to COVID-19.

COVER CREDIT

Photo illustration by Ryan Olbrysh for Newsweek; Source images Getty



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Channeling FDR

Joe Biden wants to build his own New Deal. Whether he can pull it off if he becomes president is another question.

BY STEVE FRIESS

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Diseases of Isolation

A rise in suicides, opioid abuse, domestic abuse and depression could rival the toll from the coronavirus.

BY ADAM PIORE

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TOGETHERNESS

Many places are trying to find a new normal, but no one knows what will happen next.



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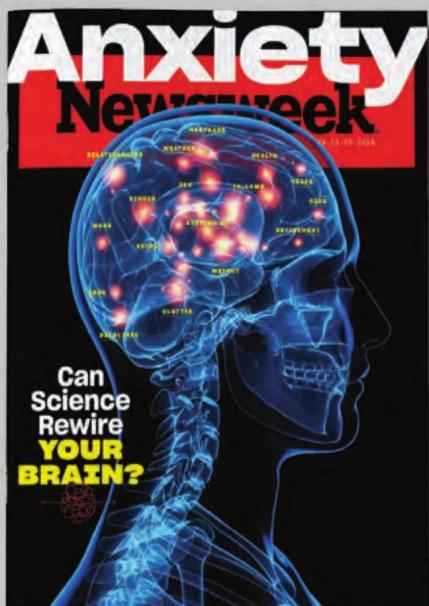
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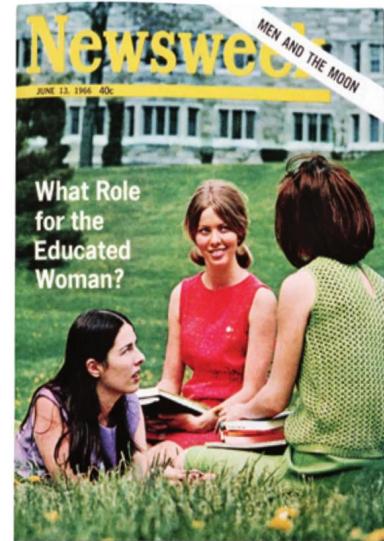
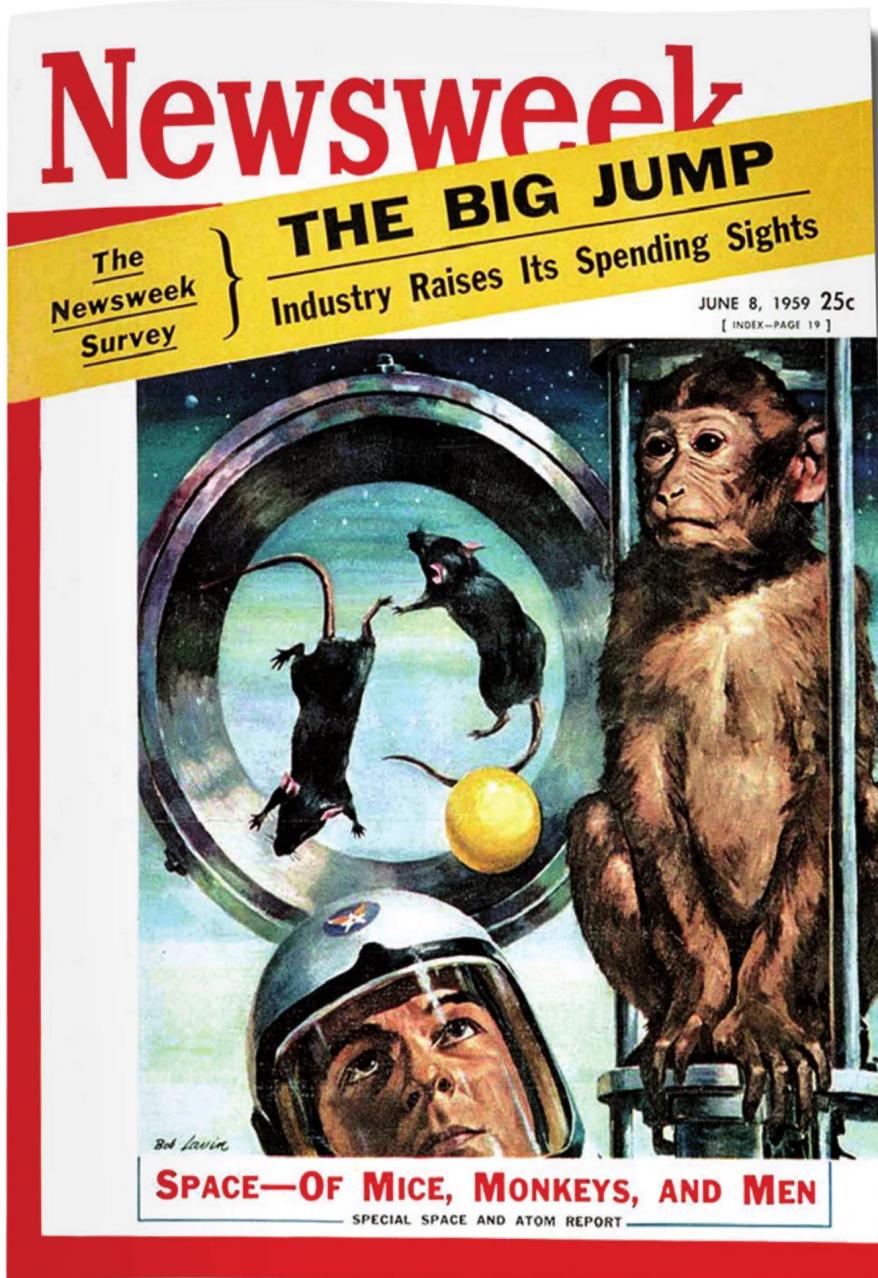
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The Archives

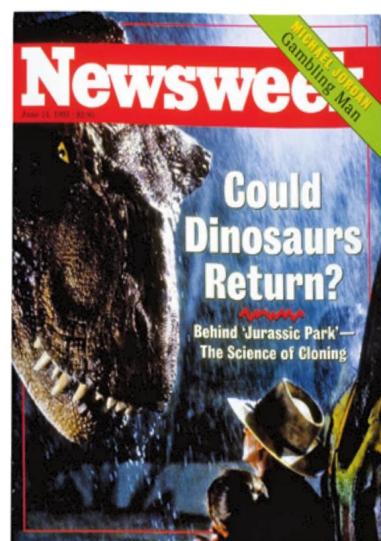
1959

Newsweek reported on the latest U.S. achievements and setbacks in the space race: on May 28, two monkeys—Able and Baker—were launched into space and returned to Earth healthy and unharmed. These were the first U.S. animals to survive an extra-terrestrial journey. Scientists were still unsure if living creatures could survive long periods of weightlessness. Therefore, NASA launched black mice aboard the Discoverer 3 satellite several days later. They were supposed to orbit Earth for four days, but a technical malfunction caused the rockets to steer the satellite into the Pacific Ocean.



1966

Newsweek posed a challenging question: What do educated women want? After talking to students at elite colleges such as Vassar and Radcliffe, the magazine determined that while many young women wanted to marry, it was also true that “the career drive is strong.”



1993

Newsweek said that two weeks into filming Jurassic Park, two biologists announced “they had cloned DNA from a 40 million-year-old bee preserved in amber.” This gave ample fuel to sci-fi lovers who were now fantasizing about whether a recreated age of dinosaurs was really possible—and lots of people who fret about where it’s all leading. ■

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of
Perfect Madness and *We've Got Issues*

JUDITH WARNER

“And Then They Stopped Talking to Me brilliantly captures the landscape of kids’ experiences today and the psychological, familial, and cultural forces shaping them.”

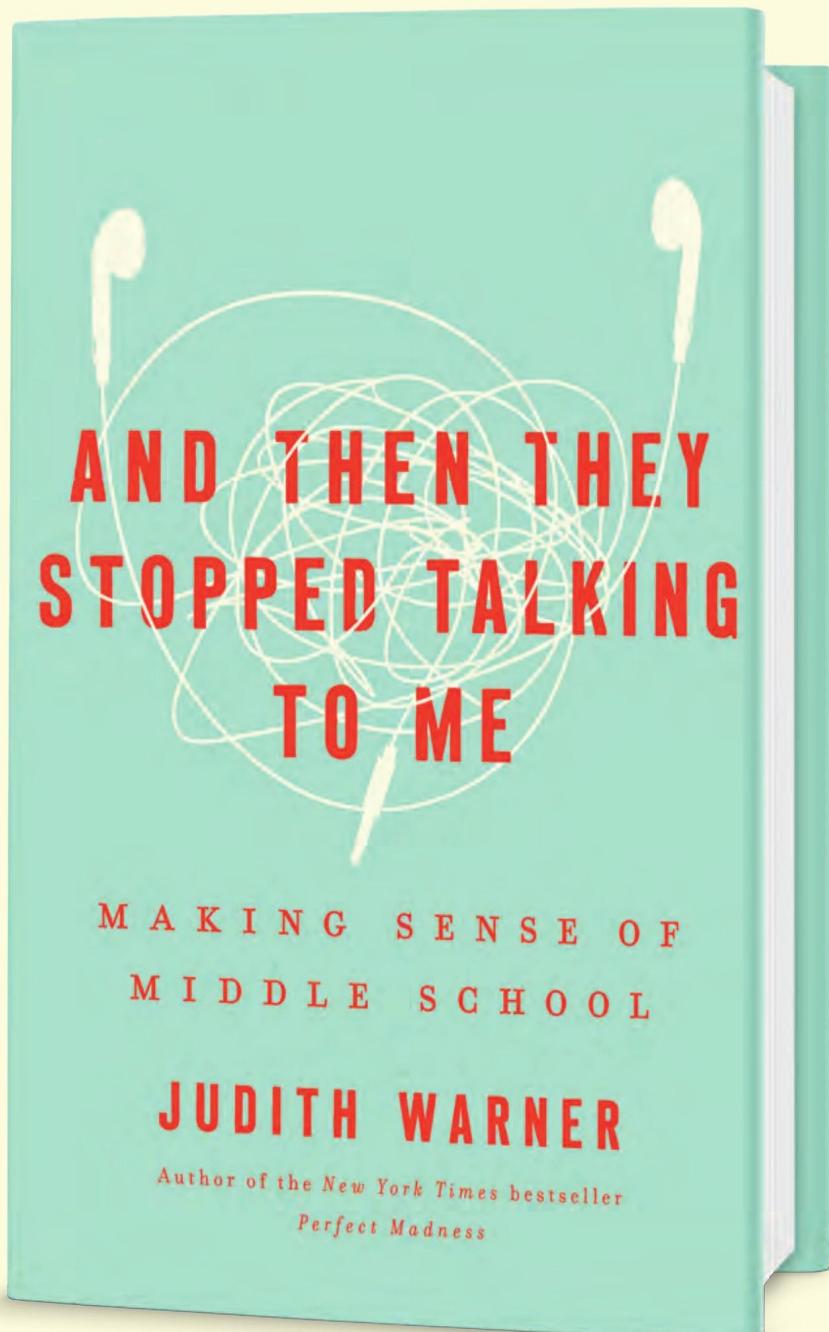
—LORI GOTTLIEB, AUTHOR OF *MAYBE YOU SHOULD TALK TO SOMEONE*

“If your child’s middle school journey is unraveling you, Warner’s new book is the one you need to read.”

—MICHAEL G. THOMPSON,
CO-AUTHOR OF *RAISING CAIN*

“Judith Warner brilliantly challenges the assumption that middle school has to be a chalkboard jungle.”

—PEGGY ORENSTEIN, AUTHOR OF
BOYS & SEX AND GIRLS & SEX



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In Focus

— THE NEWS IN PICTURES





MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Ground Zero

Protests, some violent, spread across the nation into the weekend after the deadly May 25 arrest and apprehension of George Floyd, an unarmed African American, was captured on video. The Third Precinct and surrounding stores, pictured here, were set aflame on May 28. The police abandoned the building after protesters pushed through barriers. Demonstrations broke out in cities from Atlanta, New York and Louisville, Kentucky, to Houston and even Milan, Italy.

→ KEREM YUCEL



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: MATTHEW HATCHER/GETTY; ALESSANDRO BREMEC/NURPHOTO/GETTY; TIMOTHY A. CLARY/AFP/GETTY



MILAN, ITALY

Solidarity

During the second phase of the Coronavirus National Lockdown in Italy, a crowd protesting Floyd's death gathered in front of the U.S. consulate in Milan last Thursday. The protesters held signs that read "Black Lives Matter" and Justice for George Floyd." They also wore face masks, as pictured here, with the words "I can't breathe," the words spoken by Floyd after a Minneapolis police officer placed his knee on Floyd's neck, which led to Floyd's death. Protesters also gathered in front of the U.S. Embassy in Rome.

→ ALESSANDRO BREMEC



NEW YORK CITY

Street Fights

Demonstrations broke out on May 29 in New York City to protest the death of Floyd, who passed away in police custody four days earlier. Thousands, for instance, gathered in front of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. According to *The New York Times*, some demonstrators "hurled bottles... at police, who responded with pepper spray." Pictured here: New York police officers arrest a protester during a "Black Lives Matter" rally.

→ TIMOTHY A. CLARY



COLUMBUS, OHIO

Capital Clash

After a skirmish with police, Geroge Floyd protesters were hit with rubber bullets and pepper spray. The protesters headed to the Ohio Statehouse where windows were smashed out; at least two men were detained by police. What started out as a peaceful protest devolved into a riot, according to press reports. Looters began smashing windows at the state capitol and targeted retailers in downtown Columbus.

→ MATTHEW HATCHER

Periscope

NEWS, OPINION + ANALYSIS





MICROSTOCKHUB/GETTY; TOP RIGHT: GUTZEMBERG/GETTY

"Trump's peace plan will improve the rule of law." »P.14



PANDEMIC

Phase Two: Maximum Uncertainty

Contact-tracing won't keep the coronavirus at bay, warns a leading epidemiologist.

AS WARM WEATHER SIGNALS A START TO SUMMER, Americans are yearning for a return to normal. Restrictions are falling by the wayside throughout the country. Maine's governor is allowing sleep-away camps to open. New York City is considering opening beaches. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis lifted prohibitions on all youth activities. "At the end of the day," he said, "we trust parents to be able to make decisions."

The United States and the rest of the world are entering a new, uncertain phase of the COVID-19 outbreak. Severe social-distancing measures have broken the initial wave, with cases flattening and heading downward in hard-hit places like New York, Italy and the U.K. What comes next is the trickier task of loosening up on restrictions enough to save people's livelihoods and sanity while keeping the virus from roaring back to overwhelm emergency rooms and intensive-care units.

The trouble is, there's no consensus on how to reopen a nation reeling

from both the disease and the cure. The language from politicians and even public health experts is often conflicting. Some experts are calling for a massive effort in contact-tracing, which involves tracking down anyone who may have come into contact with an infected person and asking them to quarantine themselves for 14 days. Other experts don't think contact tracing is a workable defense against the coronavirus, especially in America, where people don't like strangers asking prying questions and telling them what to do.

Amid the uncertainty, we're entering what you might call the personal-responsibility phase of the COVID-19 outbreak. About 40 percent of Americans are either older or have underlying conditions that put them at high risk of death from COVID-19.

This summer, it will be incumbent on them and their families and communities to decide how much risk of exposure to the coronavirus they're willing to accept.

"What is an individual's ability to

BY

FRED GUTERL

✉ @fredguterl

protect themselves versus what is government's ability to help protect them?" asks Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota. "We all agree that government should take drunk drivers off the road. But we also take responsibility for our own behavior and not being drunk while driving."

Osterholm, a leading epidemiologist, was quick to sound the alarm that SARS-CoV-2 was going to spread as a pandemic and hit urban areas hardest. Now he's saying that the shape of the pandemic is highly uncertain. Although SARS-CoV-2 is a coronavirus—the same category as viruses that cause the common cold—the pandemic has so far played out more like an influenza pandemic, with rapid spread and big initial peaks in cases. As summer unfolds, nobody knows which personality the virus will adopt.

Some facts are clear. Economic hardship is taking a devastating toll on livelihoods and mental health. At the same time, the pandemic is far from over. The virus continues to circulate, with the prospect of a second wave in the fall that could be deadlier than the first. "This virus is going to continue to spread by the force of what I call viral gravity," says Osterholm. "It's biology, chemistry and physics. No policy decisions are going to keep it from happening."

Newsweek spoke with Osterholm about the next phase of COVID-19. The following are excerpts from the conversation.

Newsweek: Forty percent of Americans are vulnerable because they are older or have underlying conditions. What should they do to protect themselves?

OSTERHOLM: That is the challenge. We're at a crossroads in terms of

how we recommend what we're going to do to protect people who are at highest risk.

If you are in a high-risk group for a serious illness, it's your choice whether to go into the public and do grocery shopping or whatever you do. Most people don't have the [luxury] of making that decision. They don't have the ability to say, "I'll limit my contact." They also have to deal with all the mental health issues of being isolated.

I don't have the answers, but I have the questions that I wish people were talking about. We've got to have that discussion soon. One set of guidelines cannot make this happen. There's got to be a national consensus, at least among a significant number of people.

At my local hardware store the other day, some people had N95 masks and others walked around with no masks and didn't seem to care about social distancing. What should a vulnerable person do in that circumstance? Leave the store?

That's exactly what we're struggling with right now. My advice would be: if you are at increased risk, or you are a routine contact of somebody at increased risk, you just have to consider this.

This is not an answer—there is no

good answer right now.

The very question is critical to being better prepared for what's going to happen in the months ahead. My greatest fear is that we're not even beginning to address them, let alone answer them.

You say that the virus won't slow down until it has infected 60 to 70 percent of the population. Do most people understand that it's not going away?

There's a mistaken belief that if we just somehow get over [the initial peak] and get to summer, we're okay. It's understandable. Everybody wants to get back to normal. I'm just saying, "No, this is just a momentary, quiet period in this horrible storm."

Did Vice President Pence and President Trump create false hopes by saying over the past few months that we'll soon have the pandemic behind us?

Yes, that's exactly right. If you look historically at all pandemics involving a respiratory pathogen, they play out over months to years, not over weeks to months. People are just not understanding that that's the case.

You've said the prospect of the virus disappearing over the summer scares you. Why?

Because it would [lead to a] big peak of cases. Imagine the experience they had in New York City, but a much, much larger event, where cases were two or three times what they were. For much of the New York City metropolitan area, much less than 20 percent of the population have been infected. That's a long way from the 60 to 70 percent to begin to achieve herd immunity. That tells you, with all the pain and suffering and death and economic disruption that we've

"Everybody wants to get back to normal. I'm just saying, 'No, this is just a momentary, quiet period in this horrible storm.'"



OPEN FOR SUMMER

Many people have the mistaken impression that the pandemic is largely behind us. Clockwise from top: a drive-thru testing site; President Trump at an April briefing; social distancing in Brooklyn's Domino Park.

overwhelm our hospitals.

Do you think more testing is the answer?

We need to get rid of this “testing, testing, testing” mantra. People look at testing almost like a Dow Jones average—if we have 20,000 tests in a day, it’s even better to have 30,000.

We want smart testing. You want the right population and the right person in that population to be tested at the right time, with the right test, with the right result and the right outcome for what you’re going to use that test result for. It’s about being strategic.

What about contact tracing?

Contact tracing has been largely a groupthink concept. Nobody’s really looked at whether it makes any difference. We know that there are countries in Asia that if you test positive, you are automatically sent to an isolation center for 14 days. Would that work in the United States?

Are you saying contact tracing is not possible or realistic?

I don’t think it’s realistic.

What messages should people be getting from leaders right now?

None of us has the right answer because I don’t know if there is a right answer. How do we protect, as much as we can, those who are most likely to have severe illness and die? And how do we also function as a society? I see our job right now is to ask the question, not to answer it. Because it takes all of society to come together here.

We have to continue to have debate, discussion and consensus development, and we’ve got to do it soon. Because we could have really very, very horrible days ahead of us in terms of this pandemic. **N**

had to date, we really are just in the second inning of a nine inning game.

How is this next phase of the pandemic different from what we've seen in the last few months?

In late January we knew that this [outbreak] would unfold in countries around the world, likely showing up in late February, early March and most likely show up in the higher density population areas of the world. It followed exactly as we predicted.

The reason I'm telling you that is because now we're at the end of our headlights.

Is this virus going to act like an influenza virus and unfold a pandemic that looks like a previous influenza pandemic? Or is it to be a coronavirus pandemic that we've never seen before and don't know what it's going to do?

The one thing we do know is a respiratory pathogen like this is not going to rest until basically it infects as many humans as it possibly can. We're stuck with the notion that all we can really do for the moment is control how quickly this thing goes through the population and try to keep it below kind of a threshold where we don't



THE DEBATE
Newsweek

Should Israel Annex the West Bank?

One commentator argues the move would be an entirely justified step towards peace and security. Another says it would be a reckless and historic mistake



Israeli Sovereignty Is the Key to Lasting Peace

By Caroline Glick

IN THE COMING MONTHS, ISRAEL IS expected to apply its civilian law and administration to the 30 percent of Judea and Samaria (or the “West Bank”) that President Donald Trump’s recently unveiled peace plan anticipates remaining with Israel after a final peace agreement.

One might expect that Israel’s

plan would be hailed for advancing peace and the equal rights of Israelis and Palestinians alike. But the more common response of many so-called experts has been to distort the facts and preemptively condemn Israel. Across platforms, “experts” fret over what they call “Israeli annexation.”

As I explained in my 2014 book *The Israeli Solution: A One State Plan for Peace in the Middle East*, Israel cannot “annex” any part of Judea and Samaria. Annexation is an act under which a state imposes its sovereignty over another state’s territory.

The state of Israel has sovereign rights to Judea and Samaria by force of its declaration of independence issued 72 years ago on May 14, 1948. With its declaration of independence, together with Britain’s surrender of the Mandate it had been granted by the League of Nations to reconstitute the ancient Jewish national home, Israel became the one and only state that acquired sovereignty over all the Mandate’s territory.

The second problem with the discourse surrounding Israel’s plan to apply its laws to these areas is that it

EXCHANGING VIEWS A Palestinian and an Israeli soldier during a protest against troops conducting an exercise in a residential area in the West Bank. Below: President Donald Trump with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Oval Office.

ignores both why doing so is important for Israel and why President Trump included Israeli sovereignty in his peace plan in the first place.

From Israel's perspective, the plan is important because it will significantly improve the rule of law and the civil rights of residents of the areas. For the past 26 years, Israel has shared governance of the "West Bank" with an autonomous Palestinian Authority. Israel has governed its portion of the territory under military administration. Nearly half a million Israelis and more than 100,000 Palestinians reside in cities, towns and villages in Judea and Samaria governed by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Israel's civilian legal code is far more liberal than the military laws that currently apply to the areas. The IDF will benefit from the move because soldiers and officers will not be responsible for issues like directing traffic and providing building permits for everything from parking lots to kindergartens to neighborhoods.

As for the Trump peace plan, I detailed in my book the long-standing delusion that served as the basis for decades of failed peace processes. That delusion holds that Israel is to blame for the Palestinian war against it and that to win peace, Israel has to appease the Palestinians by surrendering land.

The truth is precisely the opposite. Since 1937, Israel has consistently agreed to share its land with the Palestinians and the Palestinians have consistently refused. Since 2000, Israel has made three separate offers

of peace that involved Israel surrendering nearly all of Judea and Samaria to the Palestinians and repartitioning Jerusalem. The Palestinians rejected all of those offers. In 2000, the Palestinians initiated a terror war against Israel in response to Israel's peace offers at Camp David and at Taba. Two thousand Israelis were murdered in that war. And the Palestinians responded to Israel's 2008 peace offer by escalating their political war against the Jewish state.

The failed would-be peacemakers who preceded President Trump

didn't induce the Palestinians to accept peaceful coexistence with Israel. Instead, they convinced the Palestinians that they could continue and enhance their aggression against Israel without risking international condemnation or withdrawal of support.

So too, the support that the Palestinians have received from Western governments, including the Obama administration, for their bigoted demand that all Jews must be expelled from Judea and Samaria and unified Jerusalem as a precondition for their agreement to live in peace with the Jewish state has made peace impossible to achieve.

The Trump peace plan is the first proposed American peace plan with any chance of success because it rejects the pathological—and anti-Semitic—delusion at the heart of all of its predecessor plans. The Trump plan rejects the notion that Israel is

"The Trump plan rejects the Palestinian demand for the ethnic cleansing of Jews."



to blame for the Palestinians' hundred-year refusal to accept the Jewish people's right to self-determination and independence in their ancestral homeland. Instead of blaming Israel, it accepts the fact that Israel has both legal and national rights to sovereignty in all of its national home, including in Judea and Samaria. It also accepts that Israel cannot defend itself and secure its future without permanent control over its eastern frontier in the Jordan Valley.

Finally, the Trump plan rejects the Palestinian demand for the ethnic cleansing of Jews. The Trump plan accepts that Jews too have legal and moral rights to live peacefully in their homes in their nation-state.

Beyond the legally unsupported claim that Israel has no legal rights to Judea and Samaria and the immoral demand that Jews be expelled from the areas, self-proclaimed experts argue that applying Israeli law to these areas will undermine Israel's burgeoning relations with the Sunni Arab states. But the Palestinians themselves make clear that this is not the case. Daily, Palestinian leaders bemoan their inability to convince Arab leaders to abandon their support for the Trump plan and their interest in good relations with Israel.

As Saudi journalist Abdul Hameed Al-Ghabbin recently explained to the BBC, "It is no longer just public support for normalization and building ties with Israel. Our public has turned against the Palestinians, in general."

→ **Caroline B. Glick** is a senior columnist at Israel Hayom and the author of *THE ISRAELI SOLUTION: A ONE-STATE PLAN FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST*, (Crown Forum, 2014). From 1994-1996, she served as a core member of Israel's negotiating team with the Palestine Liberation Organization.



Annexation Would Be a Strategic Blunder

By Michael J. Koplow

WEST BANK ANNEXATION IS A CLASSIC example of a maneuver that carries enormous risks with few, if any, rewards. The argument in favor of annexing the West Bank is an appeal to a powerful and emotional but ultimately symbolic victory. In doing so, however, Israel will create a host of real-world problems that will undermine the supposed benefits.

The most common arguments against West Bank annexation have to do with the opposition from the international community and the diplomatic fallout for Israel. Depending on how it unfolds, these might range from a near-certain condemnation from the United Nations and European countries, to the refreezing of recently thawed relations with various Sunni Arab states, to the suspension of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. There is also the matter of turning Israel

into even more of a wedge issue in the United States between Republicans and Democrats. Finally, there is the inescapable fact that West Bank annexation will put a potential resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that respects the dreams for independence and sovereignty of both Israelis and Palestinians further out of reach. These are all important considerations, but there are reasons that are closer to home for Israelis that weigh against annexation.

First and foremost, West Bank annexation will create a bevy of security challenges for Israel. Annexation of the portions of the West Bank envisioned under the recently unveiled Trump peace plan as becoming part of Israel proper will create a new border between Israel and the West Bank that, at 850 miles long, is more than quadruple the 197 miles of the current Green Line and nearly double the 460 mile length of the current security barrier that serves as a de facto border.

Not only will IDF troops have to patrol the length of this new border, which also traverses mountainous

SENDING A MESSAGE A man at a demonstration in the village of Beit Sahour in the West Bank in July 2019, protesting against the demolition of Palestinian buildings in the village and in the nearby village of Sur Baher in East Jerusalem.

and inhospitable terrain in many spots, but they will have to secure the 15 enclaves of Israeli territory that the Trump annexation plan leaves behind inside of the non-annexed portion of the West Bank. These enclaves—along with the roads between them, the roads linking them to Israel, and the security buffer zones that will be required for each of these components—will be guarded by IDF troops in what is essentially hostile territory. What this might look like can be gleaned from a similar situation that exists today in Hebron, where the IDF requires more than one soldier per Jewish resident in order to effectively protect the city's Israeli citizens.

This situation becomes exponentially more complicated if Israel annexes what the Oslo Accords dubbed “Area C,” which is the most popular annexation plan in Israeli circles and is championed by, among others, current Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett. Area C, which is 60 percent of the West Bank, contains within it 169 islands of Areas A and B that are under the administration of the Palestinian Authority. Annexing Area C would leave Israel with 169 separate borders in the West Bank alone, all requiring their own border walls if Israel is to maintain its current security architecture and posture. Building and maintaining those 169 new borders would not only cost \$7.5 billion at the outset and \$1.5 billion in annual maintenance costs, but it would require thousands of IDF soldiers to patrol and man

those border structures and gates, all while creating what would possibly be the most unwieldy and least defensible border regime in human history.

No matter the precise partial annexation plan, all of them rely on the Palestinian Authority remaining in power and continuing to act as the effective government for West Bank Palestinians. Whether it be the Trump plan or Area C annexation, the animating idea is to incorporate as many Israelis into Israel with the fewest number of Palestinians. But the danger of partial annexation is that it will inevitably weaken the Palestinian Authority and, at some point, lead to either its involuntary collapse or its purposeful rejection of any past understandings with Israel. Should this happen, the result is the same as if Israel were to annex the entirety of the West Bank: a security nightmare in which the IDF has to carry out basic law-and-order policing inside Palestinian cities and towns, responsibility for running the lives of 2.5 million Palestinians to the tune of an additional \$20 billion a year, and a choice between granting those Palestinians Israeli citizenship or denying them basic political and civil rights.

What makes assuming the risks that annexation entails even more myopic is that Israel already enjoys many of the benefits that annexation

would allegedly confer. Today, Israel exercises complete security control of the Jordan Valley, Jews are living in Jewish communities across the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria, Israel has security relationships with its neighbors, including the Palestinian Authority, and the world accepts Israel as a Jewish state. Annexation will not create these possibilities, because they already exist. It will instead put them all at risk, to varying degrees. Formally extending sovereignty over the West Bank is not going to be recognized by any country outside of the U.S.—whose own recognition may last only as long as President Trump’s tenure in office—and will certainly not create affirmation of the Jewish connection to the land of the patriarchs that Jews already know exist. It will not magically cause the Palestinians to drop their wish for sovereignty and independence any more than thousands of years of Jewish exile erased dreams of a Jewish homeland.

The alternative to West Bank annexation is not the creation of a terrorist state on Israel’s borders. This straw man argument posits that the choices are Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria or immediate Israeli withdrawal from the territory, but nobody is advocating that Israel unilaterally or immediately withdraw from the West Bank. The actual choices are an incredibly reckless and foolhardy upending of the status quo that will destroy Israel’s freedom of action, or maintaining the current basic situation while working to create a political and security environment where a negotiated permanent status agreement can be possible in the future. ■

“The argument in favor of annexing the West Bank is an appeal to a powerful and emotional but ultimately symbolic victory.”

→ Michael J. Koplow is the policy director of the Israel Policy Forum.

MISINFORMATION MONITOR

Where Is Your News Really Coming From?

Major Republican and Democratic campaign organizations are using shady “news” sites to spread political propaganda

THE MISINFORMATION MONITOR is a monthly roundup of trending stories about the creation, dissemination and monetization of false and misleading news, based on exclusive data from NewsGuard, which applies basic journalistic criteria to provide news consumers warnings about misinformation by rating the reliability of news and information sites

ELECTION UPDATE: AMERICAN POLITICAL groups invest in deceptively-named websites to make their arguments seem more legitimate

The Free Telegraph and the American Ledger: One of these purported news organizations is run by a Democratic super PAC and one is run by the Republican Governors Association (RGA). Judging by their names, it would be impossible to guess which is which.

At FreeTelegraph.com, readers find stories criticizing Democrats and praising Republican governors on everything from their handling of the coronavirus pandemic to their stances against China. The site is sponsored by the RGA, which works to elect Republican governors.

If you click through and scroll all the way down to the bottom of an article, you'll see a note: "Sponsored by the Republican Governors

Association." But on Twitter, where the Free Telegraph shares its articles to 54,000 followers, the website is described only as "your home for breaking conservative news and political opinion," with no mention of its connection to a major political organization.

Articles are shared on Facebook by Republican Party chapters. Because the name Free Telegraph suggests a generic local newspaper that could be located anywhere, the Republican Party is giving off the impression that its political positions are backed up by legitimate reporting when all these pages are doing is sharing campaign talking points.

American-Ledger.com is even more opaque. The site is run by American Bridge PAC, a leading Democratic super PAC. American-Ledger.com only notes, at the bottom of each page, "PAID FOR BY AB PAC," with no further explanation of what AB PAC is.

Posts on American-Ledger.com are the opposite of everything on FreeTelegraph.com. They provide negative coverage of Republicans that Democrats hope to defeat in 2020. It's basically a hub for anti-GOP opposition research—which makes sense, given how American Bridge describes itself: "We find what Republicans are hiding and make sure voters hear about it."

The site's Twitter page says its goal is "empowering the public and exposing wrongdoing," with no reference to American Bridge. American Ledger's articles have been posted by left-leaning activist groups such as Emily's List and state Democratic Parties, who don't let on that what they're posting is not journalism.

With in-person campaign events on hold, social media matters more than ever for candidates. Political campaigns will continue looking for new ways to reach voters—and deceptive "news" sites like these are an increasingly popular method.

MYKITA DOLMATOV/GETTY



THE GROWING OVERLAP BETWEEN vaccine opponents and anti-lockdown protestors is the culmination of years of anti-vax narratives

Anti-vaccine activists have been warning against a future coronavirus vaccine from the moment the virus emerged. In their early messaging about the as-yet-nonexistent COVID-19 vaccine, you'll see echoes of vaccine opponents' narrative about other vaccines—that they are part of a government plot to control citizens by forcing them to get supposedly harmful medical procedures against their will, all to line the pockets of

pharmaceutical executives. (No evidence exists to back up these claims.)

First, anti-vax sites were quick to speculate that COVID-19 was a scheme by "Big Pharma" and "globalists" to gin up fear and force people

to get a vaccine, thereby making people like Bill Gates even richer in the process. (In Europe, anti-vax narratives have coalesced around Gates purportedly forcing the vaccine on the global population.)

From a January 31 post on HealthNutNews.com and Mercola.com, two NewsGuard-rated "Red" health care hoax sites: "The hysteria being drummed up follows a well-worn pattern where the population is kept in a state of fear about microbes so that drug companies can come to the rescue with yet another expensive (and potentially mandatory) drug or vaccine."

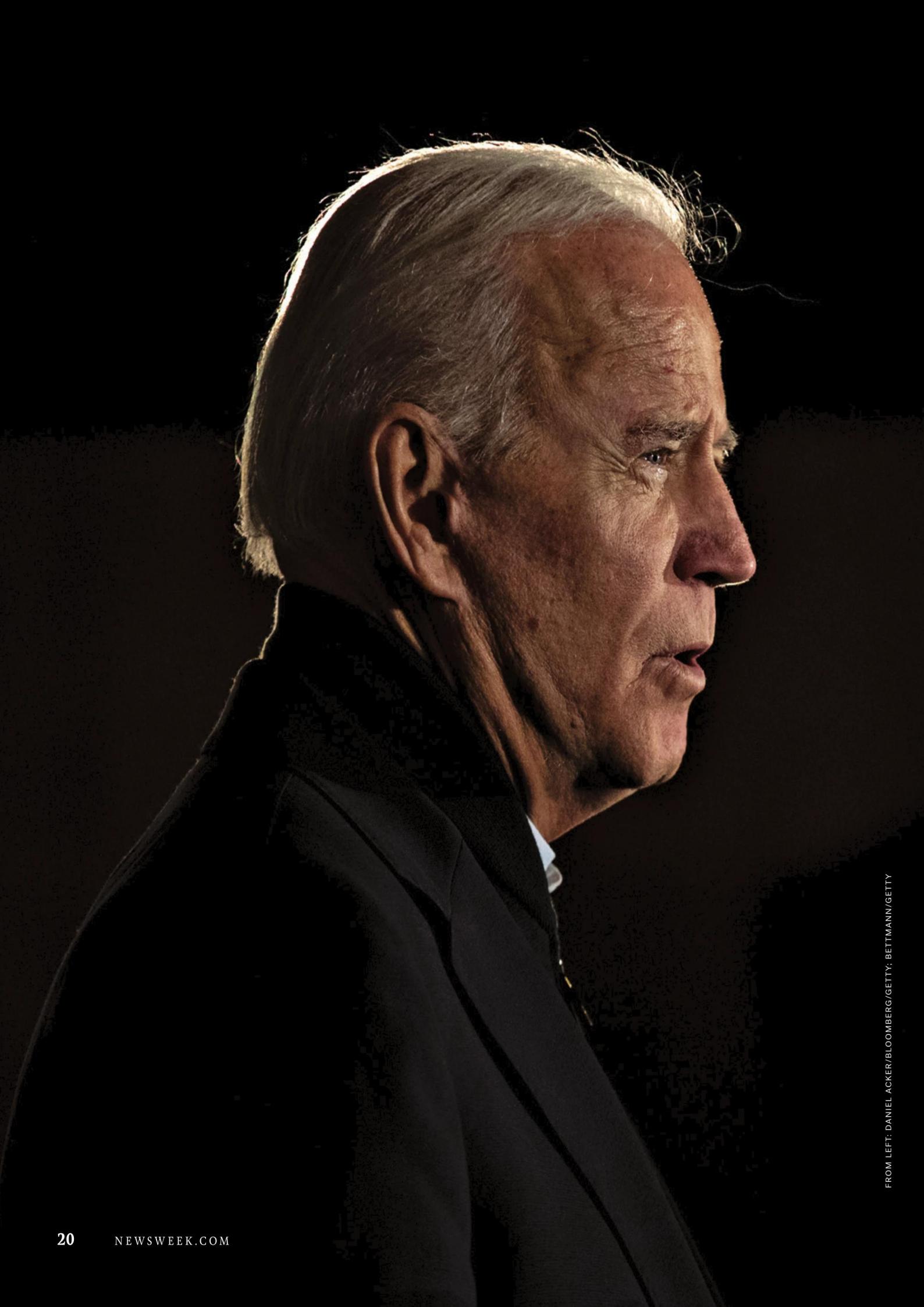
By March, these sites could no longer pretend the pandemic wasn't real. They pivoted to proposing false "cures" that, they claimed, would work better than vaccines. The popular NaturalNews.com suggested that readers look at "intravenous (IV) high-dose vitamin C" as an alternative solution to vaccines. Conveniently, NaturalNews.com sells multiple varieties of vitamin C, though not for intravenous use.

A key element of the anti-vaccine narrative is that mandatory vaccinations infringe on personal freedom. When some Americans began arguing that government stay-at-home orders, meant to slow the spread of the virus, limited their freedom, vaccine opponents saw natural partners—and began further discrediting public health officials.

As the virus stymied world leaders and health professionals, vaccine opponents saw an opportunity to spread anti-vaccine dogma to the millions of Americans living in a world that has been irrevocably changed by the pandemic. Now, the challenge for institutions is not only beating COVID-19—it's winning back the trust of the people the anti-vax movement has converted. ■

"The challenge is winning back the trust of the people the anti-vax movement has converted."





FROM LEFT: DANIEL ACKER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; BETTMANN/GETTY

TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY, **Joe Biden** WANTS TO BUILD HIS OWN NEW DEAL.
THE BIG QUESTION: IS HE UP TO THE CHALLENGE?

Channelling



BY
STEVE FRIESS

FDR

I

N LATE APRIL, AS COVID-19 PANICKED the nation and all but paralyzed his campaign, Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., huddled—virtually, of course—with his team of economic advisers. Being stuck running for the presidency from the basement of his home in Wilmington, Delaware, had given the former vice president a lot of time to think, he told them, and he wanted bigger ideas.

Go forth, he urged his financial brain trust, and bring back the boldest, most ambitious proposals they'd ever dreamed of to reshape the U.S. economy, with an eye toward making it more fair for all Americans and less easily unhinged by a future crisis like the coronavirus pandemic. Should he unseat Donald Trump in November's election, the challenge before him would be at least on par with what Franklin Delano Roosevelt contended with when he came to power in 1933. Biden wanted FDR-sized solutions.

At least a few participants on the call hung up in shock and awe. "Did that really happen?" one texted in messages shown to *Newsweek*. "Yep. Sleepy Joe is awake," the recipient replied, invoking a mocking nickname of Trump's—one that feels so absurd to those who know the workaholic Biden that it's become a standing joke among campaign insiders.

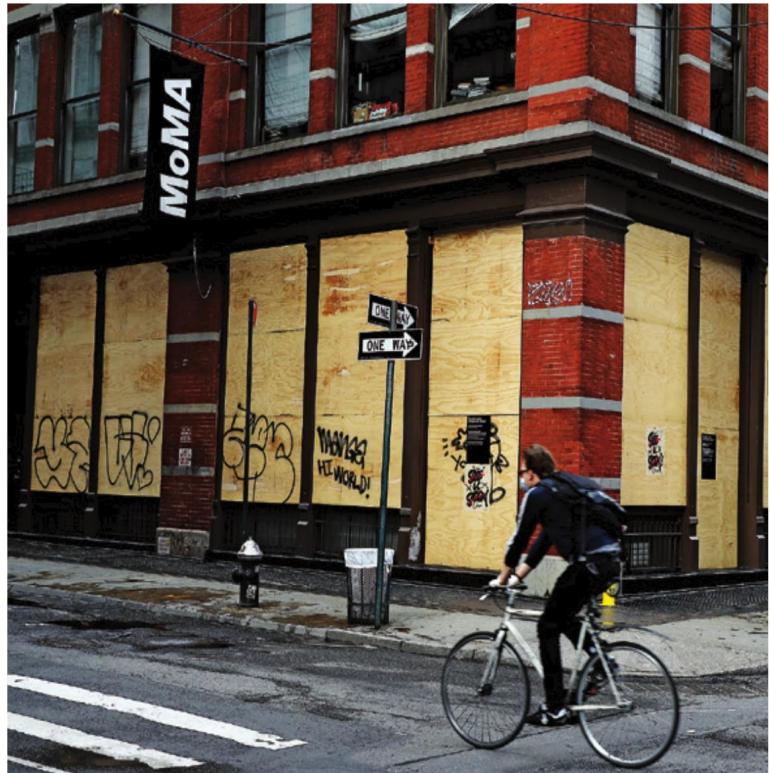
Even accounting for the magnitude of the pandemic-fueled economic meltdown, their surprise was understandable. Biden had just spent more than a year arguing successfully to Democratic primary voters that he was the sensible candidate, the one offering familiarity and experience rather than radicalism. He was the advocate for incremental not sweeping change and the one willing to ask his more populist, big-thinking rivals the critical question: How are you going to pay for all that?

Getting to Yes, Yes, Yes

BUT AS THE PANDEMIC GRIPPED THE COUNTRY this spring, sickening or killing nearly two million Americans and putting tens of millions out of work, Biden began issuing a raft of new proposals that move his positions closer to the progressive wing of the Democratic Party and promised to unveil an even more transformative

DEJA VU?

Shuttered businesses (like this museum store in New York City, top left) and food banks to feed the hungry (like this one in Kissimmee, Florida, top right) echo the hardship of the Depression era (at right, a Dust Bowl road camp in Texas).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY; PAUL HENNESSY/NURPHOTO/GETTY; DOROTHEA LANGE/RESETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/GETTY



**“FROM THIS MOMENT, FROM THIS CRISIS,
WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY NOT JUST TO REBUILD
THE ECONOMY BUT TO *transform it.*”**



economic plan this summer. Now it's a yes from Joe to student debt cancellation for large numbers of borrowers and yes to free public college for lower-income and middle-class families. It's a yes to adding \$200 a month to Social Security benefits and lowering the qualifying age for Medicare from 65 to 60. Yes to trillions in new spending, yes to new regulations on banks and industry, yes to devil-may-care deficits.

As recently as late February, after his definitive South Carolina primary victory thwarted Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders' takeover of the Democratic Party, Biden exulted that "talk about revolution isn't changing anyone's life." By mid-May, though, he took to his *Here's the Deal* podcast to declare—in a discussion with former rival and universal basic income champion Andrew Yang, no less—"We need some revolutionary institutional changes."

Biden's historical reference point these days when he talks about the policy shifts needed to overcome repair what's broken in the economy is not the Great Recession but rather the Great Depression. That's true even though his role in the financial-crisis recovery, particularly overseeing the auto-industry bailout and stimulus spending, has been Biden's signature economic achievement to date in a career more focused on foreign policy and criminal justice reform. And the leader he most often invokes—in interviews, in public addresses, on his podcast—is no longer Barack Obama but Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

"He is looking at similarities between the upheaval of the Great Depression and thinking about the policy agenda that surrounded that moment," says informal Biden adviser Jared Bernstein, a senior fellow at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities who served as the former vice president's chief economist from 2009 to 2011. "You don't necessarily want to look back there and say, OK, we have to replicate what they did. But you can look at that era for what is possible at a moment like this."

Biden's expansive new economic vision is still coming into focus. What seems clear is that the

candidate is recognizing the moment, one in which bold action, not change around the edges, is required, along with the kind of empathetic, uplifting leadership associated with Roosevelt during the Depression era. What is still an open question: Can Biden convince voters and the progressive wing of his own party that he will deliver?

A key challenge for Biden is that it may be easier to craft policies than to communicate them. Saying that Biden doesn't rank with FDR as a communicator doesn't begin to convey the problem. His fumbling, stumbling debate appearances were painful for supporters, and it's not merely that Biden has no quote as memorable as, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." It's his gaffes that linger in the memory. "If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, you ain't black," said during an

interview with popular African American radio host Charlamagne tha God in late May, was only his latest cringe-making statement. The pandemic lockdown has been helpful to him in that respect. As the campaign opens up—or his presidency begins—he'll have to either step up his game or hope the public will take him on faith.

An Emerging Economic Plan

THE MOST RECENT DATA ON THE ECONOMY PAINTS A bleak picture of current conditions. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, GDP dropped by an annualized rate of five percent in the first quarter of the year and the Congressional Budget Office estimates it will contract at an annual rate of 40 percent in the second quarter before rebounding in the second half of the year.

Meanwhile, from mid-March to late May, more than 40 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits—10 weeks straight of record-shattering jobless claims. The most recent unemployment rate for April stood at 14.7 percent, the highest since



"THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO HELICOPTER THE MONEY IN ORDER TO prevent riots."

the Depression, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics says that many workers who lost jobs were missing from the count. A more accurate measure would have put the rate near 20 percent and if those not actively looking for a job (say, because they're now caring for children at home) or who are working part-time but want to work full-time were included, it would have been 22.8 percent. That's perilously close to the all-time high of 24.9 percent hit in 1933, when FDR took office. Although the rate is also expected to improve in the second half of 2020, it's still likely to be in double digits by Election Day, White House senior economic adviser Kevin Hassett told CNN in late May.

It was against this backdrop that Biden in mid-May assembled a new economic task force—one of six teams put together in key policy areas. In a bid to involve and assuage the party's progressive die-hards, each of the groups includes five advisers chosen by Biden and three by Sanders. By Memorial Day, the economics group, which includes

Bernstein, had met only once for a getting-to-know-you Zoom meeting and it isn't expected to report back to the campaign until July, in line with Biden's public promises to unveil a detailed economic plan later this summer.

The broad strokes are already there, though. In an economic address in early May, Biden (who did not respond to several requests from *Newsweek* for an interview) talked about remaking the country's unemployment insurance system, providing paid sick leave and child care support, guaranteeing access to higher education and high-quality health care and putting more protections in place to ensure fair wages among other measures. It's a veritable laundry list of progressive agenda items, New Deal-like in its intent to strengthen the social safety net and revive prosperity. And it's likely to lead to what many observers are describing as the most liberal platform in the history of the Democratic Party.

The new economic agenda represents a swift, sharp turn for the typically moderate Biden, who

ECONOMIC PLAYERS
Bernie Sanders, seen with Biden at a virtual event in April, has endorsed the presumptive Democratic nominee; the proprietor of a barber shop in Massachusetts is among the many thousands of small business owners struggling in the pandemic; Jared Bernstein, Biden's chief economist during the financial crisis in 2009, continues to advise him in the current campaign.

during the debates scoffed at the impracticality of many of the policy positions he's now adopting. But a pandemic that has sickened or killed hundreds of thousands of Americans and put 40 million out of work has a way of changing one's views. So does the need to win over Sanders supporters.

Advocating for small adjustments won't cut it. "The vice president is asking, 'How do you use this kind of pause in the economy as an opportunity to transform it,'" says Democratic Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio, a failed 2020 presidential contender turned Biden surrogate.

Transformation is fast becoming a campaign byword and the notion that the financial fallout from the pandemic has revealed deep cracks in the system that must be fixed is a major campaign theme. As Biden said in his May address, "From this moment, from this crisis, we have an opportunity not just to

rebuild the economy but to transform it, to make our economy more resilient no matter what comes along in the future."

Indeed, Biden has already made a series of significant leftward policy shifts since effectively sewing up the nomination in March. His original campaign pitch was to make community college free and provide some student debt refinancing. Now he's pushing free four-year public college tuition for families making less than \$125,000, student loan cancellation for low- and middle borrowers who attended a public college or private historically black university and forgiveness of at least \$10,000 in federal student loan debt for everyone. He now supports Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren's call to repeal parts of the federal code that make it harder for people to get out of credit card debt when they file for bankruptcy, a major capitulation because Biden himself helped write that law in 2005.

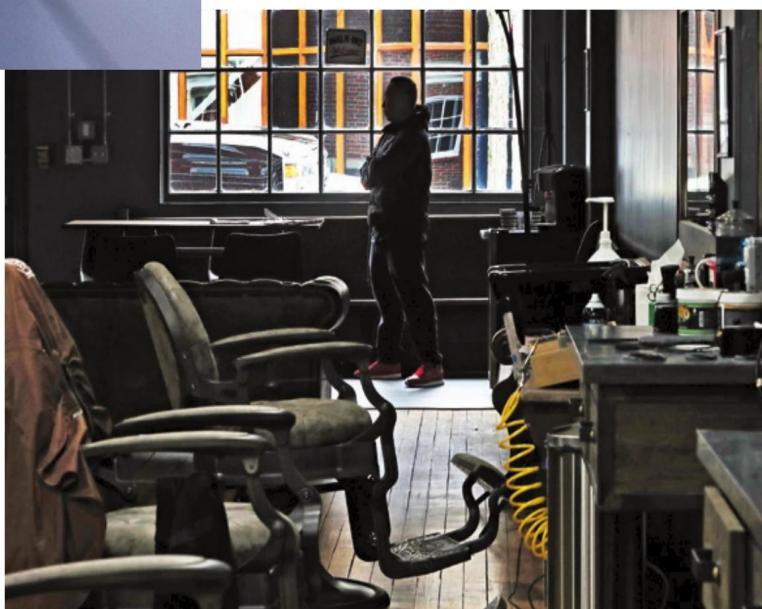
Building on one of the signature programs created during the New Deal, Biden also has proposed a national "employment insurance" program in which the federal government would pay wages and health premiums for workers furloughed or whose hours are cut due to an emergency or crisis like COVID-19. Another addition to a Depression-era initiative: Biden's plan to enhance Social Security benefits (the system was created in 1935), along with his proposal to expand Medicare (a Great Society program enacted in 1965), in a bid to help protect older Americans.

These steps now sit alongside previously announced Biden plans that include doubling the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour; tripling federal support for schools in low-income neighborhoods; and making low-income housing assistance available to all who qualify.

"Whether you're talking to the chairman of the Fed, [or] economic experts almost across the board, conservative to liberal, there's an overwhelming consensus that it's critical to, as Nancy Pelosi calls it, go big," says former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, a Biden campaign surrogate. "Joe is responding to that appropriately because this is probably one of the most complicated and challenging [periods] we've had in all of American history."

Yet Biden is in a tricky spot. The same COVID-19 crisis that appears to have unleashed his inner FDR makes it impossible to predict what will be needed

FROM TOP: ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; JIM DAVIS/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY; NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/GETTY



next year. Will the economy bounce back sharply in the second half of the year as some suggest or will a second wave of infections extend the economic pain for months or years to come? Either way, many key decisions about the economy and government spending must be made now as the country attempts to reopen without a vaccine or effective treatments.

Biden speaks regularly to House Speaker Pelosi and supports many of the ideas in the House's stalled-in-the-Senate \$3 trillion HEROES Act, such as \$1 trillion in aid for states and local governments and \$25 billion to bail out the U.S. Postal Service. But without an official role, and despite all the new proposals announced this spring, the presumptive Democratic nominee often appears to be hanging out on the sidelines.

A Growing Appetite for Change

BIDEN HAS YET TO CONVINCE VOTERS THAT HE IS the better choice to fix the economy.

A Quinnipiac University survey of registered

voters in late May found the Democrat statistically tied with Trump on whom respondents trust more to manage the economy. That's a stark contrast to Biden's 20-point lead when respondents were asked who they thought would do a better job of handling the coronavirus response.

On the one hand, it was a surprisingly dismal showing for Trump given that economic stewardship is one of the few areas where he has enjoyed approval from a majority of voters throughout his tenure. On the other hand, it didn't bode well for the former vice president either that he didn't have a stronger showing amid soaring unemployment and an economy at a near standstill, although he did gain four points from the previous month's survey. (Trump slipped just two points, well within the poll's margin of error.)

What's seems clear—and Biden supporters hope will ultimately weigh in their candidate's favor—is that the public, for now at least, seems receptive to dramatic New Deal-like ideas about what's needed to restore the country to economic health and



SPLIT DECISION

By a wide margin, prospective voters believe former Vice President Joe Biden would manage the pandemic better than President Donald Trump has, but they're divided when it comes to the candidates' handling of the economic fallout. **Who would do a better job of handling the...**

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

57%
BIDEN

37%
TRUMP

THE ECONOMY

48%
BIDEN

47%
TRUMP

NOTE: Poll of 1,323 registered voters, May 14–18, 2020, margin of error +/- 2.7 percentage points **SOURCE:** Quinnipiac University



FROM TOP: JEFF KOWALSKY/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; ERIC BARADAT/AFP/GETTY

open to Congress spending trillions of dollars to get the job done. "It's fair to say that virtually every American politician has now voted for additional funds to support the American economy, so we've shattered the notion that the federal budget deficit is some sort of obstacle to additional federal spending," says Duke University economist Sandy Darity, referring to the \$3 trillion already spent by Congress in pandemic relief this spring.

Recent polls back up a striking receptivity to big economic thinking, and not only among Democrats. In late April, the left-leaning Groundwork Collective reported that 71 percent of respondents agreed with the statement that the federal government "should take major, sweeping action to address the economic impact of the pandemic," including 68 percent of independents and 63 percent of Republicans. And in late May, Navigator Research found that 67 percent of Americans supported Pelosi's \$3 trillion HEROES Act, including 80 percent of independents and 56 percent of Fox News viewers.

Of course, there are the typical partisan interpretations. Bernstein, the Biden adviser, asserts Americans are re-evaluating Trump's economic leadership because the pandemic has shown that the previously booming economy "was clearly built on sand." The economist says Trump's controversial and odd remarks, such as his suggestion that household disinfectant might be used inside the body to cure COVID-19, don't sit well with the public in these times. "When the unemployment rate is 3.5 percent and the president tells you to drink bleach, you laugh it off," says Bernstein. "When it's 20 percent and he's tweeting awful medical advice, that gets in a lot more people's craws."

Some Republicans, though, cackle in delight over Biden's big-spending laundry list. "It plays well on the conservative side because this is going to make us more dependent on government," says Vance

THEN AND NOW
Biden, speaking at a Chrysler plant in Ohio in 2010, has been lauded for his oversight of the auto-industry bailout during the Great Recession; a demonstrator in front of the White House in May lets her face mask do the talking.

Ginn, chief economist at the conservative think tank Texas Public Policy Foundation and, until recently, Trump's associate director for economic policy of the Office of Management and Budget. "It is going to keep us from growing as fast as we could

Yet such traditional conser-

vative economic thinking may not be what Americans want to hear when there's so much financial hardship, says former Trump ally and White House spokesman Anthony Scaramucci, a lifelong Republican who owns the hedge fund Skybridge Capital. Scaramucci pointed to Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell's comments in May that 40 percent of households earning less than \$40,000 had lost jobs in the pandemic and Powell's recommendation that "additional fiscal support could be costly but worth it if it helps avoid long-term economic damage and leaves us with a stronger recovery."

Scaramucci is baffled by Trump supporters like Ginn who are singing from the fiscal responsibility hymnal right now—and believes that whoever wins in November will have to make dramatic moves to get the economy going again.

"At the end of the day, Jerome Powell, Donald Trump, Steve Mnuchin, the secretary of treasury designee for the Biden administration, Joe Biden, [the] vice president of [a] Biden administration—they are all going to run ridiculous levels of deficit spending similar to World War II," he says. "There is no alternative. Whoever wins the presidency, they're going to adapt the same policies. Just the fringes are going to change—more state support from Biden, potentially more infrastructure from Biden, a possible tax increase after the midterm elections from Biden. No tax increases from Trump, run the deficit to the moon. The government is going to pay people for a while. They're going to have to helicopter the money in order to prevent riots."

Winning Over Progressives

TO COME OUT ON TOP IN NOVEMBER, THOUGH, Biden still must persuade the wing of the party he vanquished with naysaying during the primaries that he's a convert to the virtues of government expansion and big spending. "There's a need and desire [for Biden] to get even bolder," says Faiz Shakir, Sanders' 2020 campaign manager and now a member of the former vice president's health care policy task force. "You've heard him say the words of FDR to suggest he'd like to be a very progressive president. That's great to hear. Obviously details will help fill that in and build credibility for him."

Biden's reputation as a centrist was built over his 36 years in the Senate (1973–2009), where, according to the website FiveThirtyEight, he cast votes that



"THERE'S AN **overwhelming**

were more liberal than at least 44 percent of his Democratic colleagues but less liberal than at least 43 percent of them. So it makes sense that there are questions about such a seemingly profound transformation in less than three months. Will he really be the type of president to advocate for bold, unprecedented initiatives, as Roosevelt did in creating safety-net programs like Social Security and unemployment insurance from scratch? Or is he more likely to tinker with existing programs, as he's currently suggesting with, well, Social Security and unemployment?

Also giving progressives pause: Biden has long been known as a fiscally responsible Senate deal-maker skilled at finding common ground with Republicans. That reputation can be traced all the way back to his 1987 announcement to launch his first presidential campaign when he railed against deficits and debt. The 1988 election, the then-44-year-old Delaware senator told that crowd at the Wilmington



train station from which he commuted to Washington via Amtrak, was a choice between “the easy path in which we consolidate our current comforts in a quick and false prosperity by consuming our children’s future and another more difficult task that builds a more genuine prosperity for ourselves while guaranteeing our children their birthright.”

If the candidate says he’s open to costly ideas he didn’t embrace before, says Shakir, he deserves the chance to prove it. “Because of the manner in which Joe Biden won this nomination—he didn’t win it on the backs of a robust policy platform—he’s got a lot of room to run in terms of fleshing out the ideas that contrast him with Trump and the idea upon which he would govern,” Shakir says. “Hopefully, that space there allows us to suggest things that he might entertain and adopt into his campaign. Can you excite me about an agenda or can you offer a vision?”

Darity, the Duke economist, is skeptical. FDR proposed a slew of government work programs, restored faith in banking by federally insuring deposits and, of course, created Social Security. So far, Biden’s pitches are “somewhat tepid” and amount to some increased spending and heightened en-

that everybody’s getting a certain amount from the federal government?”

Many progressives believe Biden could prove his big-think bona fides by capitulating on Medicare For All, but he’s continued to express his opposition to it, preferring to add a public option to buy health insurance via the Affordable Care Act’s exchanges. “To the extent that there was one policy position that came to define him during the primaries, it was his opposition to Medicare For All,” Shakir says. “But it cannot be the case that simply because he doesn’t support Medicare For All, we just throw up our hands and walk away. If that were the case, we would just never be making progress in this country for millions of people who need it.”

Biden supporters say there are other ideas that will show the candidate is serious about far-reaching fundamental change. Ryan says he’s expecting “an ambitious agenda item” involving ways to train millions of out-of-work or under-employed Americans for a rapidly automating economy where many jobs lost in the pandemic crash may never return. Such efforts would play particularly well in swing states with high unemployment rates like

consensus THAT IT’S CRITICAL TO, AS NANCY PELOSI CALLS IT, GO BIG.”

forcement of labor and banking regulations, but nothing as groundbreaking as, say, Medicare For All or a federal jobs guarantee, Darity notes. Darity is a leading proponent of the federal jobs guarantee, which would have the government promise to find work for anyone who can’t find a private-sector job. “That is one of the policies that people view as radical that has a significant amount of support across the American public,” he says, pointing to a Civis Analytics poll earlier this year showing 52 percent backing for the concept.

Darity is also looking for details on the initiatives Biden has already gotten behind, like an income support program. Asks Darity: “How much is it going to be per month? Is it going to be sufficient to offset the lost income that many, many people are experiencing? If it’s something that we continue to keep in place beyond the [current] situation, would it actually have the effect of allowing employers to reduce wages because the private sector would know

Michigan (22.7 percent), Pennsylvania (15.1 percent), Wisconsin (14.1 percent) and North Carolina (12.2 percent), Ryan says.

What It Means to Be FDR Today

PERHAPS EVEN MORE THAN ANY SPECIFIC PROGRAMS Biden might embrace, living up to the legacy of FDR in the current environment, observers say, means becoming the kind of inspirational leader in an extreme crisis that Roosevelt was.

Bernstein, for one, believes that Biden has had the potential inside him all along. The Roosevelt analogy is meant as a template, a signal of how broad and grave the circumstances are, Bernstein says. Biden’s embrace of initiatives far left of his usual centrist stance, proposals that adopt key tenets of the New Deal—what historian refer to as the three R’s: relief, recovery, reform—shows that he recognizes the moment and is rising to the occasion, Bernstein believes.

STALLED HEROES
At a May 27 press conference, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, with Representative Robin Kelly of Illinois, discussed the pandemic relief measures in the recently passed House HEROES Act, now held up by opposition in the Senate.

"He is looking over his shoulder at FDR coming out of a similar economic cataclysm and thinking about lessons about transforming an economy to be more resilient," Bernstein says.

Progressive activist Heather McGhee, who originally backed Elizabeth Warren, is also looking for Biden to help Americans deal with the emotional toll of the pandemic and the physical and financial hardship that's resulted. Roosevelt, she points out, revolutionized a president's ability to communicate directly to the public in his 1930s radio addresses, comforting the nation with his fireside chats. Biden, McGhee says, should be offering the public daily commentaries online.

Lately the candidate has been more prone to verbal gaffes than inspirational messages. But once upon a time he won praise for his eloquent oratory (see the sidebar at right) and McGhee is looking for that guy to make a reappearance.

"It is extremely important that Joe Biden offer the vision of a president-in-waiting who is present and is telling the stories that Trump refuses to tell, is helping us mourn in a way that Donald Trump is refusing to do and that is explaining exactly what he would do differently at every point," she says. "To date, Joe Biden has not yet become the reassuring daily presence that will help ensure that as Americans turn away from Trump, they turn toward him."

Like many hopeful progressives, though, McGhee seems willing to believe something fundamental has shifted in Biden and he will rise to the occasion as a leader. After all, she points out, "FDR didn't talk like FDR until the moment made him." ■

DIVIDING POINT
Progressives, who say the pandemic has underscored the need, want Biden to endorse Medicare for All (here, promoted on a billboard in Washington, D.C.). But the candidate instead advocates adding a public option to the existing health care exchanges.



AN ORATOR LIKE NO OTHER

A SAMPLING OF LINES FROM JOE BIDEN'S MOST ELOQUENT SPEECHES—SURPRISE, THERE ARE MANY!—AND A FEW OF HIS MORE NOTORIOUS RHETORICAL MISSTEPS



ONE OF FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT'S GREATEST gifts was his oratory, an area that Joe Biden himself admits is not his strong suit. If anything, the self-described "gaffe machine" leans in hard on the narrative that he overcame a childhood stutter through grit and determination that, at age 77, he still occasionally battles. Even more challenging, Biden has become infamous, both as vice president during the Obama administration and in his current presidential campaign, for garbled statements and inappropriate remarks—most recently when he told popular African American radio host Charlamagne tha God that, "If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump, then you ain't black."

Yeah, that didn't go over too well for him.

Yet between his stuttering youth and his current occasionally irascible elder statesman status, Biden rose to prominence with a reputation for being an exceptional speaker given to soaring prose and inspirational sentiment. (Yes, really.) A 1985 profile in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* cited a group of politicos who regarded Biden as, "with the possible exception of Jesse Jackson, the most spellbinding orator in the Democratic Party." In February 1986, *Washington Post* columnist Mary McGrory noted Biden was "much in demand as a star speaker, one guaranteed to rouse Democrats from the melancholy torpor in which they have languished." And, after his 1988 candidacy flamed out amid charges of plagiarism and academic resume padding, another *Washington Post* columnist, Michael Barone, bemoaned Biden's departure as "a final stage in the disappearance from presidential



politics of the inspirational speech."

Barone wrote in October 1987: "Biden's ability to get Democratic audiences in Iowa and Mississippi to their feet, cheering and with tears glistening in their eyes, is what attracted a lot of talented insiders to his campaign. He was the closest thing to the heir to a tradition that goes back through the Kennedys to Franklin Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan."

Here's a look a look back at Biden's career as a public speaker, his best lines as well as some especially notable blunders.

THE HITS

"For too long in this society, we have celebrated unrestrained individualism over common community. For too long as a nation, we have been lulled by the anthem of self-interest. For a decade, led by Ronald Reagan, self-aggrandizement has been the full-throated cry of this society: 'I've got mine so why don't you get yours?' and 'What's in it for me?'"

→ SPEECH DECLARING HIS CANDIDACY FOR PRESIDENT, JUNE 9, 1987

"The cynics believe that my generation has forgotten. They believe that the ideals and compassion and conviction to change the world that marked our youth is now nothing but a long-faded wisp of adolescence . . . But they have misjudged us."

→ STUMP SPEECH DURING THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

"A noun and a verb and 9/11."

→ DESCRIBING THE ONLY THREE THINGS THAT REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE RUDY GIULIANI MENTIONS IN A SENTENCE, SAID DURING A DEMOCRATIC DEBATE ON OCTOBER 30, 2007 TO underscore THE FORMER NEW YORK CITY MAYOR'S LACK OF QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE OVAL OFFICE

"In the face of the deepest economic crisis in our lifetime, this generation of Americans has proven itself as worthy as any generation before us. For we possess that same grit, that same determination, that same courage that has always defined what it means to be an American, has always defined all of you."

→ ACCEPTANCE SPEECH FOR VP NOMINATION, SEPTEMBER 6, 2012

"When people harm Americans, we don't retreat, we don't forget, we take care of those grieving. And when that's finished, they should know [that] we follow them to the gates of hell until they are brought to justice, because hell is where they will reside."

→ SPEECH IN MEMORY OF STEVEN SOTLOFF, A U.S. JOURNALIST BEHEADED BY ISIS MILITANTS, SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

"There are times when life can be so cruel, pain so blinding, it's hard to see anything else. It's brutal. It's relentless. It's unforgiving. And it takes so much for those we love and for the families that love them, that in order to survive, we have to remember how they lived, not how they died."

→ EULOGY FOR SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, AUGUST 30, 2018

THE MISSES

"You cannot go to a 7-Eleven or a Dunkin' Donuts unless you have a slight Indian accent...I'm not joking."

→ TALKING ON C-SPAN ABOUT THE GROWTH OF DELAWARE'S INDIAN-AMERICAN POPULATION, JUNE 17, 2006

"I mean, you got the first mainstream African-American who is articulate and bright and clean and a nice-looking guy. I mean, that's a storybook, man."

→ INTERVIEW, TALKING ABOUT HIS RUNNING MATE BARACK OBAMA, JANUARY 31, 2007

"Now is the time to heed the timeless advice from Teddy Roosevelt: 'Speak softly, and carry a big stick.' I promise you, the president has a big stick."

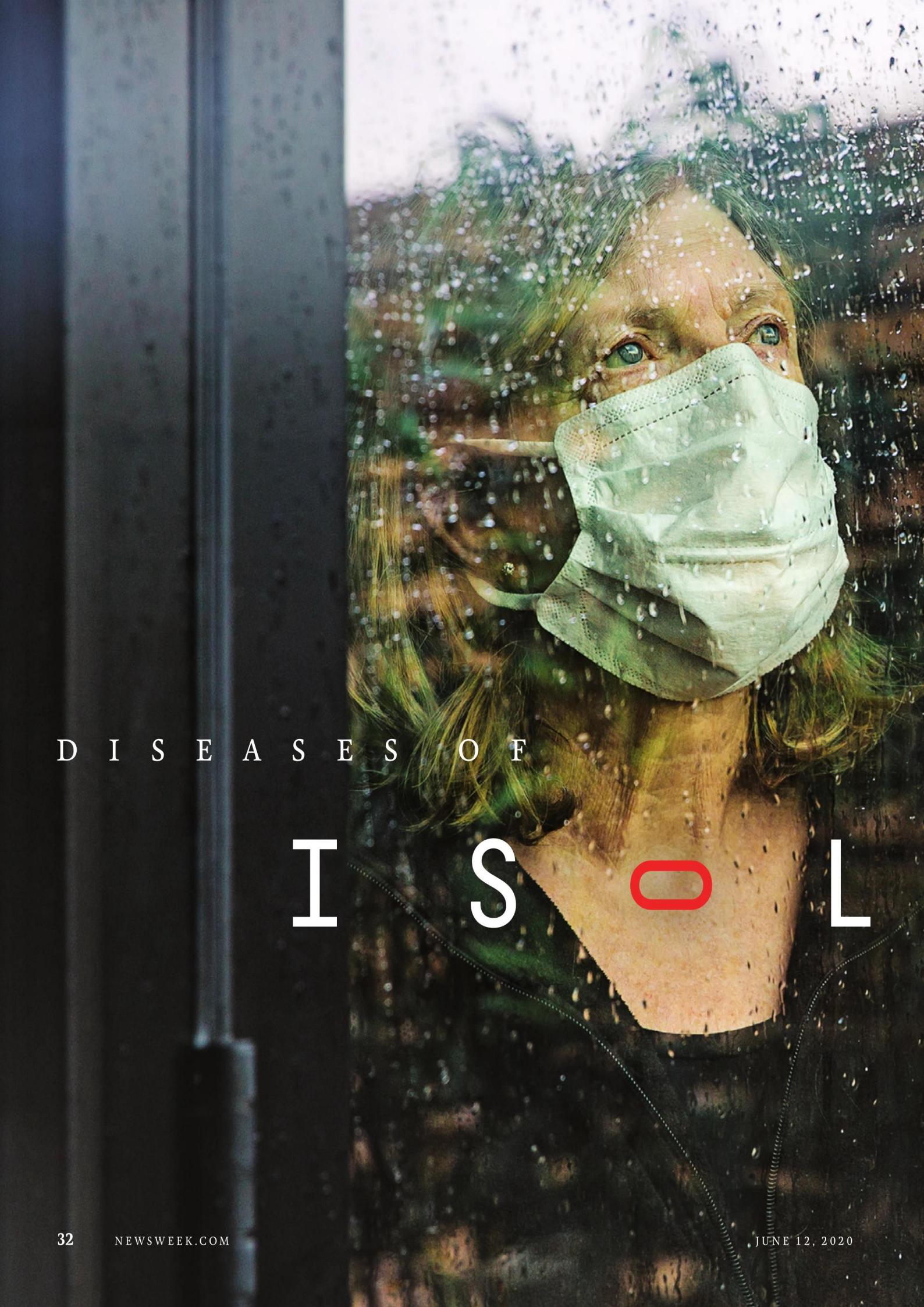
→ FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS AT NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, APRIL 26, 2012

"We have this notion that somehow if you're poor, you cannot do it. Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids."

→ SPEAKING AT AN IOWA EVENT HOSTED BY THE ASIAN AND LATINO COALITION IN AUGUST 9, 2019

"You're a lying dog-faced pony soldier."

→ RESPONSE TO A TOWN-HALL QUESTION ON FEBRUARY 9, 2020 FROM A COLLEGE STUDENT WHO SAID SHE'D ATTENDED AN IOWA CAUCUS. IT WAS AN APPARENT MANGLING OF AN OLD MOVIE LINE, SAID JOKINGLY, BUT FEW FOUND IT FUNNY. N

A close-up photograph of a woman's face, partially obscured by a green surgical mask. She has light-colored hair and blue eyes. She is looking directly at the viewer through a window pane that is heavily covered in raindrops. The background is dark and out of focus.

DISEASES OF

I S O L



Mental health experts
are anticipating a
steep rise in suicides,
opioid abuse, domestic
violence and depression
that could rival the
toll from the coronavirus.

A T I O N

by

Adam Piore

photograph by
Justin Paget



T

OM INSEL HAS WATCHED THE NATION GRAPPLE with plenty of psychologically challenging situations over his long career in the field of mental health.

The trim, bespectacled, salt-and-pepper haired psychiatrist became director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in the months following 9/11, when Americans were traumatized over the Twin Tower bombings. He watched residents of Louisiana and Mississippi dig out from the water-logged rubble of Hurricane Katrina. He's seen mass shootings in Tucson, Arizona; Fort Hood, Texas; and Newtown, Connecticut.

But nothing in Insel's experience has tested the nation's psychological resilience like COVID-19, which has millions of Americans living in fear of contracting a deadly new disease, hunkering down in involuntary confinement, contemplating rising unemployment and the prospect of a worldwide economic collapse, cut off and worried about loved ones, besieged by a parade of bad news and

tormented by boredom, fear and loneliness.

Mental health experts are now bracing for what Insel calls a "mental health tsunami." They're anticipating a steep rise in the diseases of isolation—suicides, opioid abuse, domestic violence and depression—that will unfold over the next few months and could stretch on for years.

The plague is not only fueling these mental health problems. The same economic collapse that is putting people out of work is also eroding the ability of society to deal with the crisis. In particular peril are the federally-funded mental health clinics that treat millions of the poorest and sickest. Two months into a crisis that could last years, they are already on the edge of failure.

Casualties from the mental health problems are expected to rival the pandemic itself. Deaths from drug overdoses and suicide totaled about 110,000 a year before COVID-19 struck. Historically, each five percent increase in the unemployment rate leads to about

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

An unemployment rate of 20 percent could lead to an additional 20,000 deaths. "We've never seen a moment where the demand for mental health care will be as great as it's going to be in the next few months and next couple of years," says Tom Insel, former director of the National Institute of Mental Health. Clockwise from right: Insel; New Orleans shortly after Hurricane Katrina; and a nurse leaves Mount Sinai Morningside Hospital in New York City in April.

3,000 additional suicides and 4,800 overdose deaths, says Insel. That means an unemployment rate of 20 percent would cause an additional 20,000 deaths.

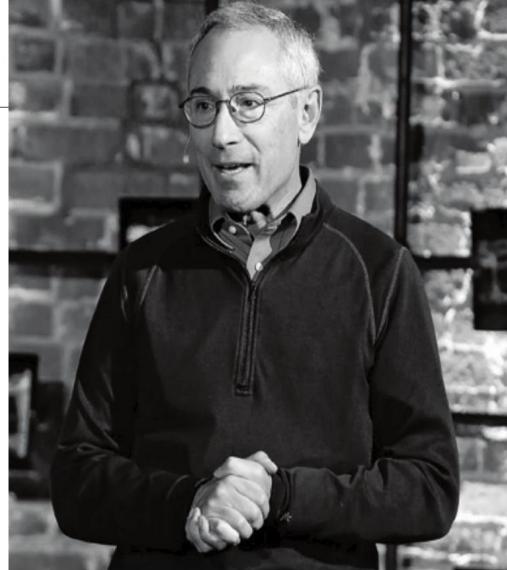
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The Disaster Model

MENTAL HEALTH FALLOUT USUALLY FOLLOWS A disaster. In hurricanes, there's generally a 60- to 90-day lag from the "acute" phase of the crisis before the full psychological fallout is felt. Once the imperative to survive the immediate calamity passes and people begin to grapple with what they have just been through and what it means for the future, their resilience faces its true test. The psychological impact begins to show up in a rise in suicides, alcohol- and drug-related incidents and new mental health-related cases. Economic downturns typically take a couple of years before the



impact begins to show up in the statistics that suggest the true mental costs on the population.

The 2003 SARS epidemic was followed by a 30 percent increase in suicide deaths among those 65 and older in Hong Kong. Half the population remained anxious in the months that followed. As many as 50 percent of New Orleans residents who were present during Hurricane Katrina experienced a diagnosable mental disorder such as PTSD, major depression or an anxiety disorder.

Likewise, says Stefan Hofmann, a clinical psychologist who directs Boston University's Psychotherapy and Emotion Research Laboratory at the Center for Anxiety and Related Disorders, "once the viral pandemic passes, there will be the pandemic of emotional distress." Hofman predicts the full extent of the damage won't be clear for months, and it may unfold at a different pace for different people.

For some, the challenges are already beginning. Presently, about one third of Americans say they have experienced "high levels" of psychological distress such as anxiety, sleeplessness or depression at some point during the extended period of social distancing because of the present circumstances, according to a study by Pew Research Center, released in early May. Kaiser Family Foundation put the number of Americans for whom worry or stress had caused at least one negative effect on mental health and wellness at 56 percent. Calls to a government disaster distress helpline were up tenfold in April from the previous year; a Los Angeles suicide and help hotline handled 8,000 percent more calls than usual in February and March.

Domestic abuse hotlines are also seeing



"Deaths of despair in the months ahead could very likely surpass the final MORTALITY numbers for COVID."

A LACK OF FUNDS

Despite efforts to draw attention to the mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic, so far there's been little action in providing funding to address it. Clockwise from below: Second Lady Karen Pence launched a three-year initiative aimed at changing the culture around mental health and suicide just as COVID-19 struck; an apartment building in Washington, D.C., in May; and a heroin addict in Philadelphia in 2018.

increased activity: More than 5,000 people have reportedly called the National Domestic Violence Hotline since mid-March, specifically referring to COVID-19 as the catalyst for their problems.

In recent years, psychologists have established strong evidence that loneliness is linked to higher levels of anxiety, depression, alcoholism and drug abuse. It can also be a threat to physical health. Lonely people feel more pain, which has some public health officials worried about a second spike in opium use. Lonely people are also more likely to get physically sick. The impact of social isolation on mortality is greater than obesity, smoking 15 cigarettes a day or high blood pressure, researchers have found.

"The recognition of the impact of social isolation on the rest of our mental health is going to hit everyone really soon," says Kay Tye, a neuroscientist at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies who studies the brain circuits involved in loneliness. "The impact on mental health will be pretty intense and pretty immediate."

How lethal the fallout turns out to be may depend on the depth and duration of the current economic downturn. One study based on data from Hurricanes Katrina and Harvey found that every 1 percent rise in unemployment preceded a 2 percent increase

in the number of drug overdose deaths. Another found that a 1 percent uptick in unemployment was associated with a 1.6 percent rise in the number of people who successfully commit suicide.

Suicides were already rising when the pandemic hit. The U.S. has seen a 33 percent increase since the year 2000, according to an analysis released last year by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which placed the rate at 14 deaths by suicide for every 100,000 Americans—the highest age-adjusted suicide rate recorded in the U.S. since 1942. Although men were still three times as likely to kill themselves as women, female suicide rates increased by 53 percent between 1999 and 2017, almost twice the rate of increase for men.

Insel attributes the spike to a wide range of factors ranging from a lack of treatment options for the mentally ill to societal factors that are adding to stress and uncertainty. COVID-19, however, "really adds fuel to the fire."

The most ominous warnings are emerging from a report on "projected deaths of despair" from COVID-19 by the Robert Graham Center, a think tank associated with the American Academy of Family Physicians and the nonprofit Well Being

"For thousands of Americans, staying home isn't safe. We really must start to talk about the mental health **CONSEQUENCES** of what's hap

Trust. They are predicting tens of thousands of additional deaths from suicide, alcohol and drug overdoses, depending on the extent of the economic dislocations and action taken to help those who are struggling. Their estimates range from an additional 27,644 deaths if there is a quick recovery, with the smallest impact on unemployment. In a worst-case scenario, they predict the number of additional Americans who will die from suicide, drug overdoses and alcohol-related deaths will hit 154,037.

Self-Medicating

EVEN IF THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM HAD THE CAPACITY to treat everyone, research and history show that 50 to 60 percent of those who need treatment fall through the cracks. Most people don't seek care, instead turning to alcohol and drugs. Some



CAROLINE BREHMAN/CQ-ROLL CALL, INC/GETTY; SPENCER PLATT/GETTY

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: KIRSTY O'CONNOR/PA IMAGES/GETTY;



withdraw, becoming more isolated. Some become angry and uncontrollably violent or self-destructive. In the months and years ahead, we will be battling an epidemic we may not always be able to see.

Social distancing may be fueling opioid abuse, worries Elinore F. McCance-Katz, assistant secretary for mental health and substance use at the Department of Health and Human Services. When doctors cannot meet face to face with patients, they are more likely to prescribe addictive drugs, she says.

COVID-19 could erase progress of the last few years in dealing with the opioid epidemic. By some accounts, federal efforts to get the crisis under control were beginning to yield results. In 2017, more than 70,000 people died of drug overdoses—68 percent involving prescription or illicit opioids—making it the leading cause of injury-related deaths in the U.S. Between 2017 and 2018, overall overdose death rates decreased by 4.1 percent—with prescription opioid-involved overdose death rates decreasing by 13.5 percent. (Deaths from synthetic opioids, excluding methadone, increased by 10 percent over the same period.)

However, previous studies have found that for every 1 point increase in unemployment, drug-related deaths increase by between 3.3 percent and 3.9 percent. An unemployment rate of 20 percent or higher, which economists predict is likely in May and June, would probably be devastating.

Data on domestic violence and child abuse is spotty, but local officials tell McCance-Katz that cases seem to be rising. She recently issued a document of resources for victims to access help and has been pleading with the media during interviews to publicize it.

"It's very important to get the message out there that for thousands of Americans staying home isn't safe," she says. "We expect that we are going to see great increases in these numbers. We know from some cities that they're already seeing big increases in calls to domestic violence hotlines. We're quite concerned."

A Lack of Action

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF EFFORTS TO ATTRACT attention to the problem. Second Lady Karen Pence launched a three-year initiative aimed at changing the culture around mental health and suicide just as COVID-19 struck. Pence, serving as a "lead ambassador" along with a dozen other



"influencers"—including Surgeon General Jerome Adams, the celebrity DJ Nash and several former presidents of the American Psychiatric Association—will try and attract attention via social media and get people talking to one another.

Joshua Gordon, current NIMH director, and former Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy, founder of The Kennedy Forum, announced an effort in late April to raise money and awareness to address mental health and prevent suicide. "I'm particularly concerned about those who might have trouble accessing mental health care, such as homeless, seriously mentally ill, incarcerated individuals because they might have challenges staying well," Gordon told *Newsweek*.

So far, there's been little action where it is needed most: providing funding to address the mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic. Of the \$3 trillion passed for economic stimulus and relief, only a tiny sliver has been allocated for mental health. "People have been speaking up about the mental health effects of this emergency, but we have yet to see real concrete actions to shore up our mental health system," says Angela Kimball, national director of advocacy and public policy for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). "Any shortfall is likely to hit the poorest the hardest."

The nation's existing mental health infrastructure is not even remotely equipped to handle the rise in mental health problems, says Insel, and he should know—he spent last year surveying California's mental health system. He found the prisons filled

"Most people are resilient."

GETTING BY

To keep operating, mental health advocates claim they need \$38 billion—about 90 times what Congress allocated in its last relief bill. Top: Carme Peris, 88, tries to touch her granddaughter at La Mallola nursing home, near Barcelona, Spain, in May. Right: an outreach coordinator helps a homeless man in Los Angeles in 2019.



with mental health patients and mental health facilities filled with the criminally insane. "We were in a bad place before," he says. "And now we have COVID."

Mental health agencies, which operate on a shoestring budget in the best of times, have seen reimbursements plummet. The federal Medicaid program funds behavioral health clinics to low-income Americans with the most severe conditions, such as schizophrenia, psychosis, depression, OCD and other disorders—usually the last stop before the streets or prison. When COVID-19 hit, federal officials at the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services moved with uncharacteristic speed to revise its regulations and allow reimbursement for telehealth appointments, which some mental health advocates have been urging for years. (Many private insurers followed suit.) But the poorest patients don't have laptops or access to broadband internet; many are homeless.

Instead, patients have inundated crisis services lines. One mother called NAMI pleading for help for her daughter, an Iraqi-war vet, who was psychotic, homeless, off her meds and unable to get help. "She's desperately worried, because her daughter believes we are being invaded by aliens," says Kimball. "She's been in contact via cell phone. But she can't get mental health services to come help her daughter." Kimball has compiled a list of more than 600 such stories to share with lawmakers and the media in the hope of getting more funding.

The problems appear to be widespread and getting worse. The National Council for Behavioral Health, the nation's biggest association of mental health and community substance abuse clinics, found in a survey of members that more than 90 percent had cut back on some programs, and 30 percent were turning people away.

The initial relief bill passed by Congress included about \$425 million in additional federal funds to help HHS boost suicide prevention efforts and treat patients with serious mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders through certified community behavioral health centers. To keep operating, mental health advocates claim they need \$38 billion—about 90 times that amount. "Urgent assistance is needed to keep the doors open," the National Alliance on Mental Illness wrote in a letter.

In early April, President Donald Trump held a half-hour call with leaders of the mental health and substance abuse community to hear their concerns. Last month, a coalition of lawmakers sent a letter to congressional leaders to increase funding for mental health in the next coronavirus package.

"Many organizations that primarily treat individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders...are at risk of closing their doors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," the lawmakers wrote. "The immediate and long-term effects of this cannot be overstated."

As long as they know this isn't **F O R E V E R** they will find a way to make it through."



Congressional leaders, having already doled out more than \$3 trillion, have been deadlocked over the next spending package.

Whatever happens, the reality, experts agree, is that most of the population will get through the crisis intact. "We are all highly, highly stressed," says Insel. "But most people are resilient. As long as there is an endpoint, as long as they know this isn't forever, they will find a way to make it through."

How many tens of thousands of fellow Americans we lose along the way, he notes, will depend on the actions we take in the weeks and months ahead to help them get through it, too. ■

Culture

HIGH, LOW + EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

A close-up portrait of Ariana Grande. She has long dark hair and is wearing a bright pink turtleneck sweater. Her hand is resting against her chin, with her fingers near her mouth. Several white speech bubbles of varying sizes are scattered around her head, containing her quotes. The background is a solid teal color.

'I'LL RECORD MYSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AND THEN I'LL WATCH IT, AND THEN I'LL DELETE THAT AND THEN I'LL DO IT AGAIN.'

"I closed my eyes and I could visualize the whole thing."

"I'LL PRACTICE LIP-SYNCING, I'LL STOP LIP-SYNCING AND THEN TRY TO JUST SAY THE WORDS FROM MEMORY."

SPEAKING IN TRUMP

Cooper makes the president look ridiculous just by miming what he actually says.

"Hundreds of people take the audio that I put in there and they make their own version of it."

"That took me, like, 50 or 60 takes to get, just because it just comes out of nowhere."

"I think there is something refreshing about a woman challenging him."

**"I DON'T
RUN IT BY MY
HUSBAND OR
LOOK IN THE
MIRROR."**

A FRIEND IN SPACE

"Is she a badass or what happened?" » P. 48



HUMOR

How to Be Funny by Not Being Funny

Comedian Sarah Cooper went viral by playing Donald Trump straight. She learned how by watching executives fake their way through meetings

THE SECRET TO PARODYING DONALD TRUMP, as comedian Sarah Cooper's hugely popular homemade online videos prove, is simply to let the president do all the talking.

When Trump said on April 30 that the country's "death totals" were "very, very strong," Cooper reenacted that on TikTok from her Brooklyn apartment, miming to an audio track of Trump's exact words, while pointing to a whiteboard with an ascending line labeled "Death Totals." In late April, Trump commented that disinfectant could knock coronavirus out "in a minute." Cooper acted that out deadpan too, pointing a spray bottle of household cleaner at her arm and face. And on May 21, when Trump told a reporter that he had "tested positively toward negative," Cooper pantomimed the president's attempt to clarify, her expression toggling rapidly from cer-

tainty to confusion and then back again.

The disinfectant clip has been viewed more than 18 million times on Twitter and earned praise from Jerry Seinfeld, who told *The New York Times*, "The reason this is funny is because she doesn't think she's being funny. When you think you're being funny, that's less funny for us as the audience. When you're being dead serious, that's funnier."

Cooper says, "Because we're so used to really great Donald Trump impressions, it's like we needed something different—we needed something a little bit more absurd. And it is absurd to hear Trump's voice coming out of my mouth." She

adds, "We know that he is not a fan of women who challenge him, so I think there is something refreshing about a woman challenging him, or a woman making fun of him in this way." Filming these videos allows Cooper to "be

BY

KYLE MCGOVERN

Twitter: @ktmcgovern

the blowhard that I know I could never be, because of society."

The New York City-based Cooper was born in Jamaica but raised in Maryland. (She declined to give her age.) She says she recognized Trump's combination of supreme masculine self-confidence and a free-associating verbal style from her pre-show biz job as a "user experience designer" for Google. She says, "The thing that I just noticed is that he sort of says a lot without saying anything at all, which just sort of reminded me of being in the corporate world and people who are able to B.S. their way through meetings and they can look like they knew what they were talking about, when they really didn't have any idea. I just liked this idea of basically pretending to be one of those failing-up, cocky VPs. And, to me, Trump is like the ultimate 'fail-er upper.'"

Cooper says she thinks her work has "taken a lot of power away from him. Because it's like, 'No, this is a human being and he is out of his element. He is completely incompetent and has no idea how to do his job.' And I feel like that even more with almost every clip that I do."

In 2014, Cooper had her first brush with viral fame, thanks to a blog post on Medium called "10 Tricks to Appear Smart During Meetings." ("Draw a Venn diagram," "Encourage everyone to 'take a step back.'") That same year, she left her job at Google to pursue writing full time, and within six months landed a book deal. Those include 2016's *100 Tricks to Appear Smart in Meetings* and 2018's *How to Be Successful Without Hurting Men's Feelings* (both Andrews McMeel Publishing). She's working on one more, an Audible Original that she described as "a modern, female-focused take" on Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends*

and Influence People.

For now, however, she's got her hands full with Trump. *Newsweek* asked Cooper to break down her process and explain how she chooses from the seemingly endless stream of material Trump supplies her with and how she turns already bizarre reality into sharp-edged comedy.

Step 1: Think Visual

"It really starts with either reading or watching something that Trump has said—the latest crazy thing that he's said," she says. "The press conference where he talked about the disinfectant, it was just immediately compelling to me because I closed my eyes and I could visualize the whole thing. I could visualize how I would bring that to life."

Once she pinpoints the soundbyte she wants to recreate, Cooper uses an app on her iPhone that lets her record clips. Then she adds the recording of Trump to TikTok as a private video that only she can see. Finally, she plays that audio while filming herself acting it out.

Step 2: Practice, Practice, Practice

Because TikTok doesn't allow for much post-production editing, before she begins filming, Cooper does something it is difficult to imagine

her target ever doing: she practices. "I'll practice lip-syncing, I'll stop lip-syncing and then try to just say the words from memory, as myself, a few times. And then practice lip-syncing a little bit more."

Cooper estimates her rehearsals run for about an hour and says she does them alone. "I don't run it by my husband or look in the mirror. It's really just looking at takes. I'll record myself over and over again, and then I'll watch it, and then I'll delete that and then I'll do it again."

Step 3: Get Rhythm

Once she's done with practice, successfully scouted a location (that is, the right room in her apartment), gathered any necessary props and set her iPhone up on a tripod, Cooper starts filming. The difficulty of each take depends largely on Trump.

"That first one with the disinfectant, he was speaking so slowly that I think it was a little bit easier. There's a video that I did with him talking about testing and he goes from talking about testing to talking about South Korea without a breath in between the two things, and that took me, like, 50 or 60 takes to get, just because it just comes out of nowhere."

Step 4: Go Viral

This last step is the simplest: Once the video is done, Cooper posts it online on TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. She says it's particularly rewarding to see how TikTok users take her work and repurpose it to make their own Trump content. "Hundreds of people take the audio that I put in there and they make their own version of it. So, it's like I'm sort of inspiring hundreds of people to make fun of him as well, which I kind of like." ■

"We needed something a little bit more absurd. And it is absurd to hear Trump's voice coming out of my mouth."



"If you want to know about AMAZON ... you have to read this book."

-ANDY SERWER, Editor-in-Chief of *Yahoo! Finance*

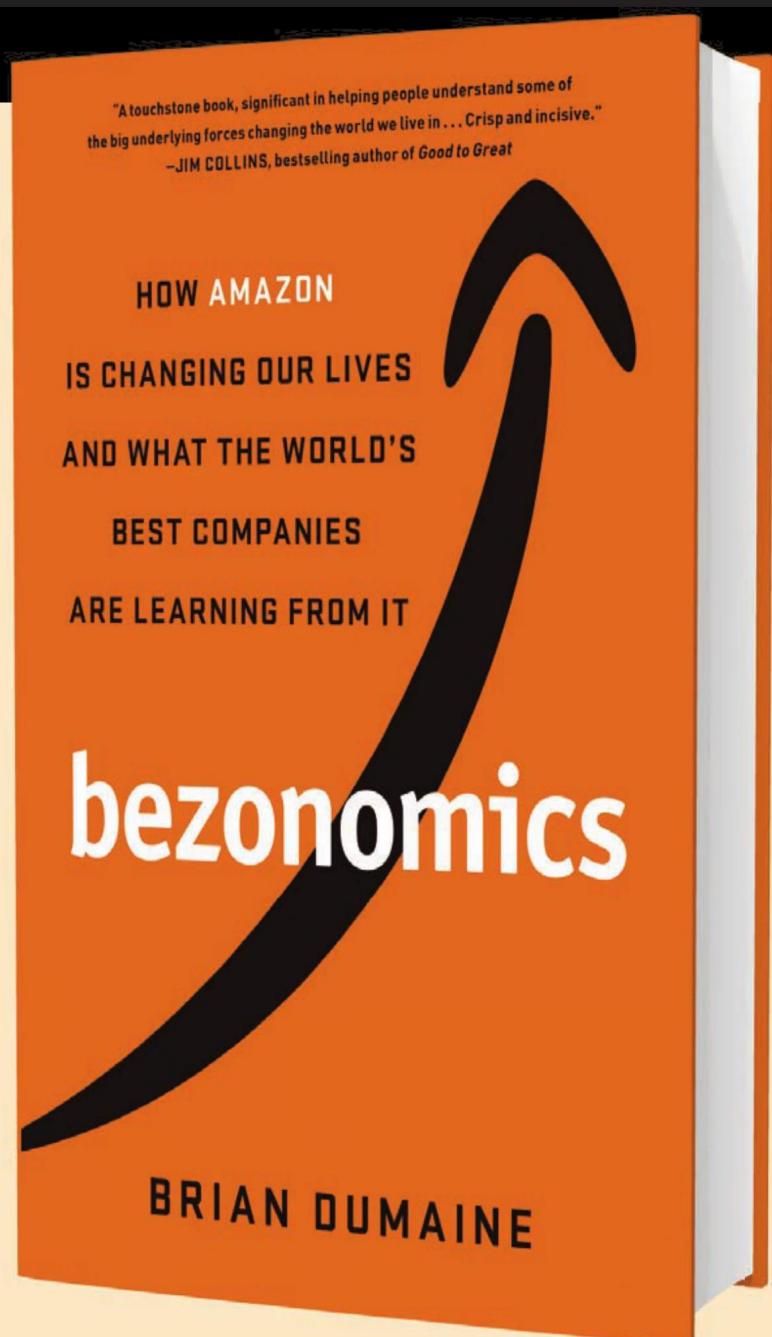
**FROM AN AWARD-WINNING
FORTUNE MAGAZINE WRITER—**
an in-depth, revelatory, and even-handed look
at Amazon's world-dominating business
model and the ways Bezonomics is altering
the life of every American consumer.

**"A touchstone book,
significant in helping people
understand some of the big
underlying forces changing
the world we live in."**

**—JIM COLLINS,
author of *Good to Great***

**"How does Amazon do it all?
You'll marvel at the
tech giant's magic after
reading *Bezonomics*."**

**—DAVID A. VISE,
Pulitzer Prize-winning coauthor
of *The Google Story***



SOCIAL GRACES

Is the Mask This Century's Handkerchief?

Miss Manners tackles COVID-19

↗ MISS MANNERS, AKA JUDITH MARTIN, HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN AS THE VOICE OF authority on all things etiquette. While what seems normal in today's society may be very different than it was just a few short months ago before COVID-19 swept the planet, the social graces are still essential—if only as a way to keep some sense of order and sanity when all else seems out of kilter. In this excerpt from her new book, *Miss Manners' Guide to Contagious Etiquette*, columnist and author Martin, along with her adult children Nicholas and Jacobina, take on the challenges of maintaining polite interactions among people who really want to stick their (ideally well-covered) noses into others' business in the age of the coronavirus pandemic.

OF WHAT PURPOSE OR RELEVANCE IS etiquette in a time of social distancing? Miss Manners has long suffered from the popular misconception of etiquette as pertaining only to "society" in the sense of the rich and frivolous, and the illusion that normal people behave naturally. There is nothing like social distancing to serve as a reminder that society means all of us, and that behaving like our better selves benefits everyone.

Public Health Vigilantes

MINDING OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS, which has always been a major etiquette hazard, has taken on the noble mantle of ministering to public health. To the extent that people are out and about, there are also vigilantes who are vehemently scolding strangers, if not

making citizens' arrest.

The rationale is that etiquette is suspended in an emergency.

Well, yes and no. Miss Manners does not quibble with suspending the rule against shouting at strangers when an occasion arises to shout "Help!" but that is a request, however urgent, and not an insult.

In the opposite situation, when one seems to be in danger from others, tact is required—for the sake of being effective as well as being respectful.

We all know the rules about staying home when sick, keeping our distance and washing our hands. They must be enforced.

But that does not give license to the sort of people who, under normal circumstances, would be telling you that you should get married or divorced,

have or stop having children and find or quit a job.

What they are doing now is summarily ordering people to go home, without knowledge of why they are out. Even strict quarantines recognize the need to buy food and medicine, exercise and tend to those in severe need.

And never mind that those disciplinarians are outside themselves, or they

BY

JUDITH MARTIN,
NICHOLAS MARTIN &
JACOBINA MARTIN





“Rather than ‘Back off,’ Miss Manners recommends, ‘I think we had better keep farther apart.’”

wouldn’t be within shouting distance.

We all also know that coughing can be lethal. But as any performer can tell you, there are plenty of coughs that don’t harm others, but may arise from asthma, acid reflux, allergies and being in an audience. Targeting such people as public enemies is as unhelpful as it is mean. Even when it was done at symphony concerts.

But what about those who actually

are breaking the basic rules?

Then it takes tact to be effective. Reforming strangers only works when it assumes mistaken goodwill and allows them to comply without enduring public embarrassment, even if they deserve to be ashamed of themselves.

Dear Miss Manners—When out in public, how can you politely ask

people to keep their social distance?

Gentle Reader—By treating it as a common problem, rather than showing offense at being encroached upon. Rather than “Back off,” Miss Manners recommends, “I think we had better keep farther apart.”

Dear Miss Manners—It is my understanding that when walking on a sidewalk or path, one should walk on his or her right side of the path. And now, with the requirement for social distancing, couples or groups should walk single file when passing others coming in the opposite direction to allow for a 6-foot clearance if possible.

What is the proper response when people either don’t understand this or choose to ignore it? I often find myself stepping off the sidewalk or path and into the street or a driveway in order to avoid these people. Other than glaring at them as they pass, is there a proper way to inform them?

Gentle Reader—Not having the power to lock people up, etiquette can seldom guarantee that you will change another person’s behavior—only that you will have made every effort short of rudeness or force.

This is why governments get involved in pandemics. Miss Manners assures you that crossing the street to avoid someone, stepping on to a driveway and waiting or—presuming that you are not putting yourself in even more imminent danger—stepping into the street will make your point. The glare is optional.

Dear Miss Manners—At what point am I allowed to adopt an angry tone and drop the “please” after repeated requests to the person behind me in line for “social distancing at 6 feet, please?”

In my experience, people back up for a short time and then creep back



BOOKS

Q&A: Judith Martin

BY MEREDITH WOLF SCHIZER

up next to me—repeatedly. I have to admit that the other day, I said loud enough for others to hear, “This is the fifth time I’ve had to ask you for the social distancing the CDC is telling us all to do. What is wrong with you?”

I finally got the reaction I needed. I’m so exasperated, I’m thinking of carrying a yardstick with me wherever I go and using it like a sword to fend off intruders.

Gentle Reader—No, no, no. You would only end up hitting someone with that yardstick, adding violence into a difficult enough situation. Besides, it is only 3-feet-long, and you would need two of them.

Even before the advent of the virus, Miss Manners noticed that people turn especially vicious in grocery stores. (Other lines, too, but especially in grocery stores. Perhaps, as their mothers told them, they are acting like that because they are hungry.)

And customer-to-customer corrections rarely succeed. To do so, these not only have to be police, but must offer a face-saving way for the offender to retreat. Perhaps “I don’t know if you heard me, but I’m worried about our sticking to the new rules about keeping distances.” Said loudly, it should encourage everyone to back up.

Far better to invoke third-party authority. You could ask the cashier to remind the entire line to keep to the space. But that, too, would have to be repeated. Please suggest to the store’s management the practice that some states have started placing tape at intervals on the floor to mark the proper spacing.

Dear Miss Manners—In these days of COVID-19 and forever hence, may I offer individuals with overt symptoms of sickness (coughing, sneezing, etc.) a spare sealed face mask?

I’ve always been charmed by the

ethos of some cultures in Asia where individuals don them automatically. Over the years, I’ve also stewed in silence, particularly strapped on airplanes, while an individual clearly continues to exhibit symptoms of sickness. I usually carry a mask or two for myself, but they are so much more effective in preventing the transmission of “germs,” rather than shielding one from them.

One can never tell who might be immune-compromised, from medical conditions or medical treatments. “I happen to have a spare mask. May I offer it to you?”

Gentle Reader—Do you mean, is the surgical mask this century’s handkerchief?

It could well be, but only as long as we pay careful attention to the ever-changing protocols (it is the “forever hence” that gives Miss Manners pause).

Even a short time ago, your generosity might have been perceived as an accusation: that the person in question was obviously sick and not being mindful of others. As this is being written, however, most would see it as a much-coveted offering, on a level in value with toilet paper and facial tissue.

As your intention could still fall into the former category, Miss Manners suggests that you choose your phrasing carefully. Yours is not bad, but she suggests that the intonation make it clear that you would offer it to anybody—and that you are not targeting this particular persona based on age or perceived condition. Even if this is not, in fact, the case. ■

→ Excerpted from *MISS MANNERS’ GUIDE TO CONTAGIOUS ETIQUETTE*. Copyright © 2020 by Judith Martin, Nicholas Martin and Jacobina Martin. Published by Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Face masks, which are now de rigueur, prevent the most common polite gesture—the smile. How can we compensate?

You’ve heard of smiling eyes (“sure, they steal your heart away...”)? Even above a mask, one can see the raised cheeks and narrowed but sparkling eyes that indicate a smile. True, you can get the same effect by scowling, but let’s assume the best. Anyway, a friendly word would also help.

Do you think the pandemic brought out the best in how people interact with one another? Or the worst?

Yes.

With people spraying their deliveries down with disinfectant and “quarantining” them for three days prior to opening where possible, do you see any case where an electronic note can replace a handwritten, mailed one?

How deep an expression of gratitude is owed? There is no emoji that conveys “Thank you for risking your life for me.”

A handwritten letter will dry and last, when an electronic one has vanished among the hundreds from commercial establishments declaring how much they care about you and their employees’ safety.

Are there any social graces that have

surfaced during the pandemic that you think should continue when life returns back to normal?

Indeed. People should no longer have to endure unwelcome hugs from strangers who pity them and want to advertise their own love of humanity.

Couples should have discovered that a personalized, memorable wedding is not the standard bloated extravaganza, but a serious ceremony, celebrated, to whatever extent possible, with their intimates.

Those whose rigid dress code is Casual and Comfortable for all occasions should be bored with their sweatpants—or at least be ready to part with them long enough for a thorough wash.

What have you been doing to keep busy during the stay-at-home orders?

Answering questions about the new behavior requirements, posing a better standard for the future and thinking about organizing the attic.

When you go out, what kind of face covering do you employ? Do you wear other protective gear?

Out? I may go out now? I am beginning to think of my basic white face mask as underwear, and to consider what might be seemly and decorous to put over it. ■

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PARTING SHOT

Lisa Kudrow

LISA KUDROW IS UP THERE WITH LUCILLE BALL, CAROL BURNETT AND Julia Louis-Dreyfus as one of the great icons of TV comedy. With her new Netflix series *Space Force*, released May 29, one thing is also becoming clear: Kudrow loves leisurewear. For nearly the entire season, her character, Maggie, wears a prison jumpsuit similar to the tracksuit she wore on *The Comeback*. "It was just as comfortable as Aunt Sassy's tracksuit." *Space Force*, created by *The Office* alums Greg Daniels and Steve Carell, finds Kudrow's character in prison while her husband, played by Carell, leads a new government agency to get the U.S. back on the moon. However, why Maggie is in prison is just as much a mystery to Kudrow as it will be viewers. "She's still sort of up in the air. Is she a badass or what happened? They don't know." It's a busy time for Kudrow. Soon she'll take part in a *Friends* reunion special for HBO Max, but she's quick to point out it's not a new episode. "It worries me that people think it's going to be an episode. It's not. It's a special. We don't want to disappoint people."



"Here's the embarrassing thing, I didn't know this country had a space force."

What about the show inspired you to want to do *Space Force*?

Daniels and Carell together was already wow, great, yes! Here's the embarrassing thing, I didn't know this country had a space force until after I was done shooting it. Somehow it never came up because I think everyone just assumed that I knew what was going on in the world.

Was it difficult not knowing a lot about Maggie's backstory?

No. Look, if she does turn out to be this like super-spy badass, then you know that works. Now that I've said it, it probably won't be that.

It's the 15th anniversary of *The Comeback*. What do you think Valerie Cherish would be up to today, especially in isolation?

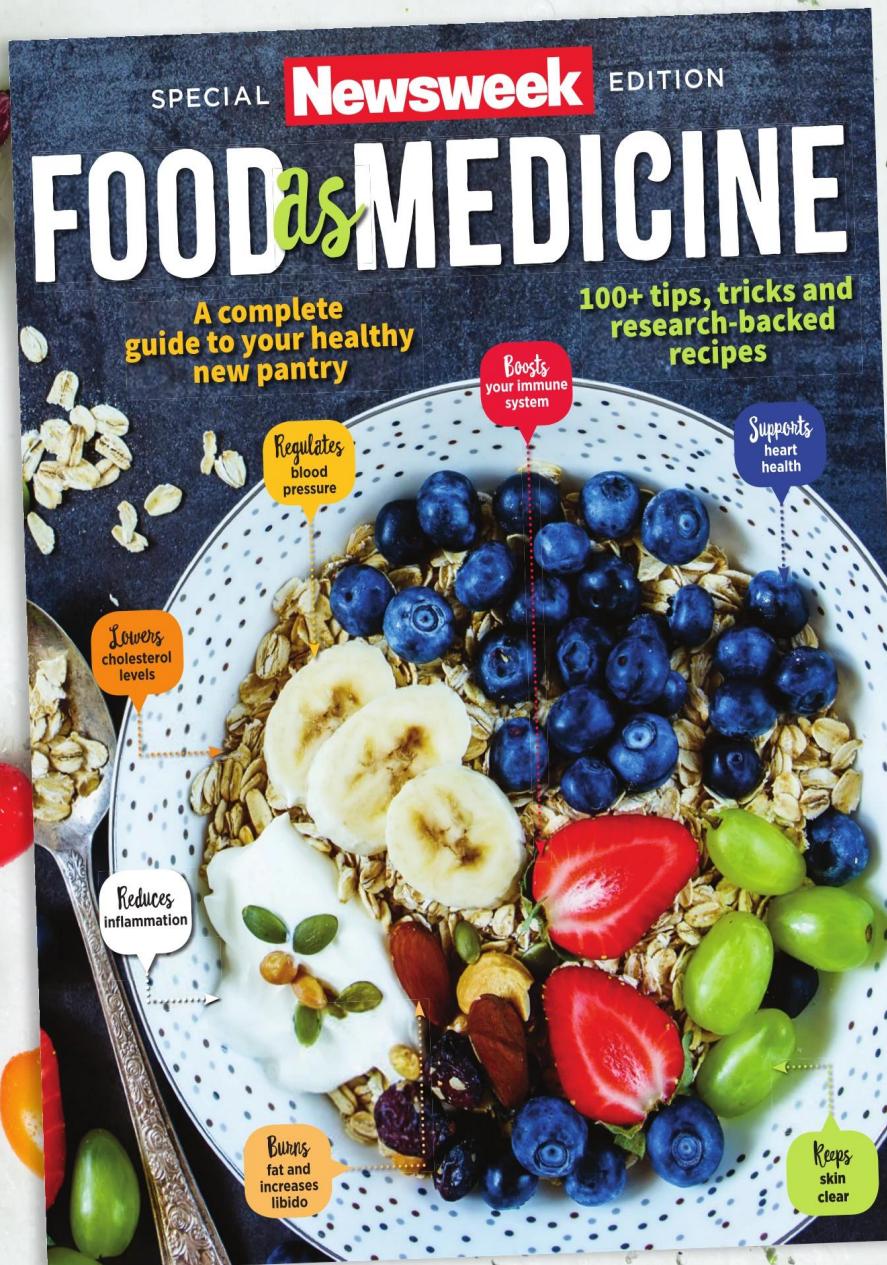
I think she'd be trying to get her 200 followers to start a thing. Like, "Let's watch *I'm It*. While we're sitting here and have nothing better to do. Right? Fun. Take your mind off things. Stop watching the briefings. Time to laugh."

The *Friends* reunion special was postponed because of COVID-19, but what are you looking forward to most about returning to the set?

We've only all been together once before, privately years ago. To me, the fun thing is we all remembered different things. Jennifer and LeBlanc remember absolutely everything perfectly. I can't wait to just relive the stuff that was behind the scenes.

—H. Alan Scott

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