APRIL 28, 2025

TIME100

THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

DEMI MOORE

BY RYAN MURPHY

+ 99 MORE

TIME100
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The Most *Influential* People in the *World*

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Photograph by Adrienne Raquel for TIME

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Shaping the *future*

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? AS JOURNALISTS, that is the question we get asked more than any other, particularly these days. As we were closing this issue, President Donald Trump introduced a tariff plan that upended the global economic system. For many readers, the move accelerated the sense that almost everything was shifting, with very real consequences for themselves and their neighbors. Some celebrate these changes. Others condemn them. No one is certain what comes next.

TIME's founders knew that focusing on the individuals who are transforming the world is the best way to help readers understand it. That belief animates much of what we do at TIME. Take Person of the Year, which in two years will reach its centennial. Or the TIME100, our annual list of the most influential people in the world, launched more than two decades ago. Both projects are as relevant today as at any point in their histories. The 2025 TIME100, in partnership with our Official Timekeeper Rolex, will be our biggest yet, including a daylong summit with interviews with world leaders, and our annual gala, which will be broadcast on May 4 on ABC in the U.S. and stream around the world on Hulu. This year, as we continue to develop TIME's signature leadership platform, we'll introduce two new TIME100 franchises: one focused on philanthropy and the other on digital creators.

What does the 2025 TIME100 tell us about the forces shaping our lives? It includes six members of the Trump Administration, the largest contingent from a political Administration since Barack Obama arrived in Washington in 2009, a recognition of where global disruption originates today. This year's group also includes 16 corporate CEOs, a record, and a sign of the emergence of a class of business leaders who are filling a leadership void. It includes nine leaders who are fighting for justice, equality, and democracy, at a moment when the rights of so many are at stake. Members of the list come from 32 countries. The youngest is 22-year-old Léon Marchand, a French swimmer who dominated the Paris Olympics. The oldest is Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel laureate who, at 84, was sworn in last summer to lead Bangladesh's interim government.

This year, TIME's journalists reported profiles of the five cover subjects. Belinda Luscombe traveled to Los Angeles to hang out with Snoop Dogg, whose omnipresence is a study in contradictions. "At a time when people increasingly huddle within cultural fortresses of their algorithms," she writes, "Snoop is a battering ram." In London, Billy Perrigo spoke with Demis Hassabis, the CEO of Google DeepMind and winner of a 2024 Nobel Prize, to determine what this singular figure in AI can tell us about the technological transformation he is leading. Sean Gregory stopped by Serena Williams' farm in South Florida to find out how the tennis legend is now reshaping both the worlds of sport and investment. Andrew Chow accompanied Ed Sheeran to a surprise St. Patrick's Day show at a Boston pub, seeking to learn how the singer emerged from a dark period to find new sources of creativity. Lucy Feldman spoke with *The Substance* star Demi Moore, who was reflective about her career and is now energized by the prospect of telling stories that challenge how we perceive women in their 60s: "In fact, this is an incredibly powerful, exciting, and alive time."

The TIME100 now lives across all the many channels where people follow TIME. At its center is a process overseen by Dan Macsai and Cate Matthews, who leads TIME's journalists through a year of debate and discovery, speaking with sources and partners around the globe to whittle down a list of 100 individuals. "The stories this project tells change with the headlines, so every May, our research starts anew. The one constant we see each year is that a single person's hard work, idea, or decision can change the world," Matthews said.

So what's going to happen? Whatever change comes, we think the 2025 TIME100 will lead it.

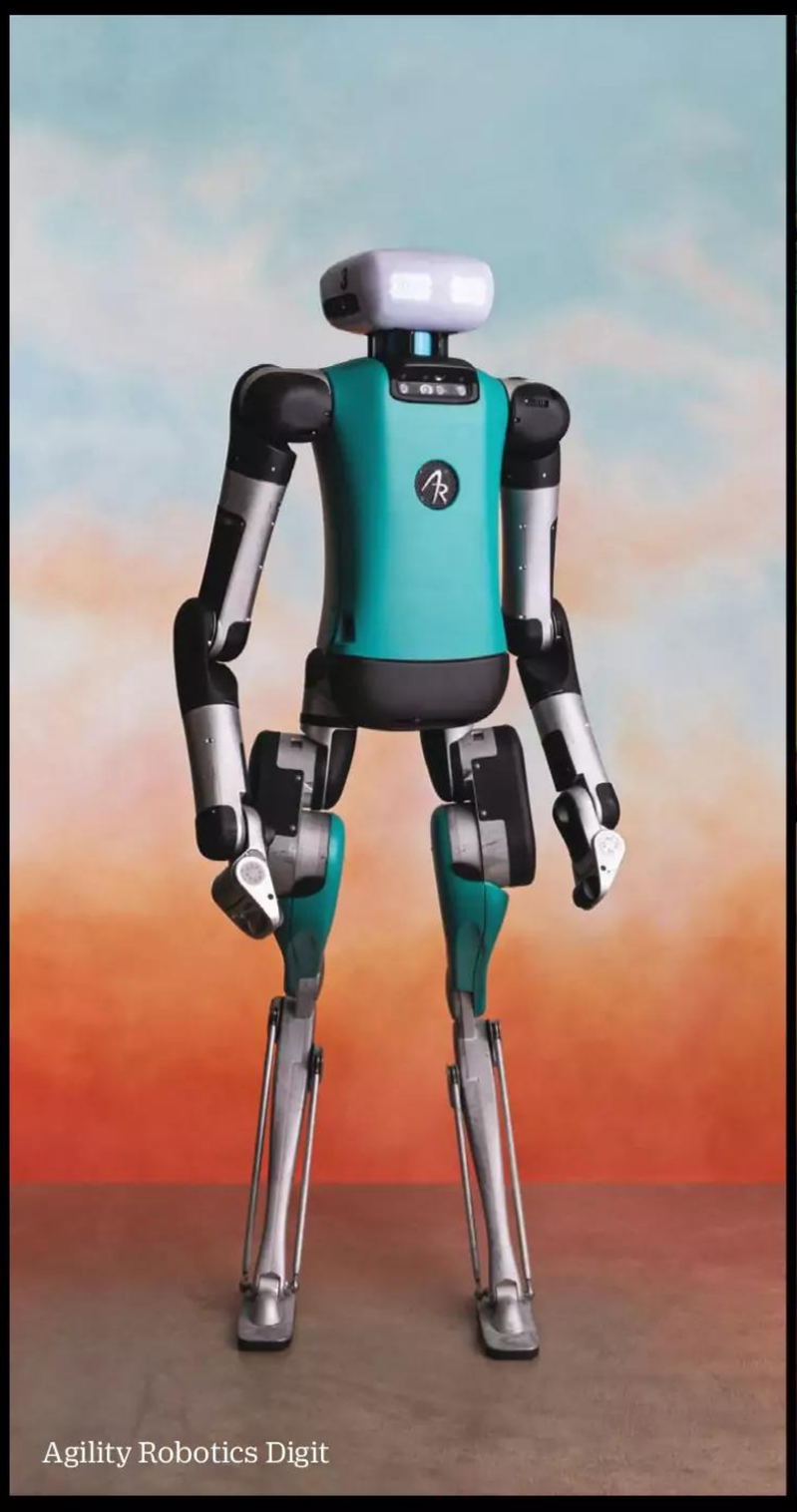
Sam Jacobs,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ON THE COVERS

Photographs by Adrienne Raquel for TIME

Photograph by David Vintiner for TIME

TIME
BEST INVENTIONS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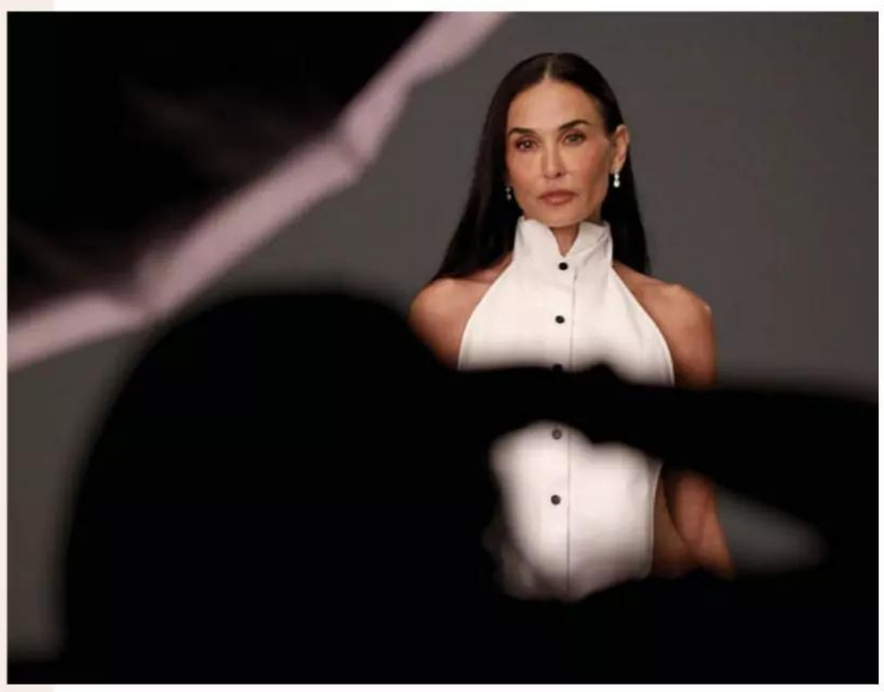
BEHIND THE SCENES

At TIME photo shoots for the covers of the issue recognizing the year's 100 most influential people, Adrienne Raquel photographed rapper Snoop Dogg *(above)*, tennis champion and entrepreneur Serena Williams *(left)*, pop star Ed Sheeran *(right)*, and actor Demi Moore *(below right)*. Demis Hassabis *(bottom left)*, winner of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, posed for David Vintiner. Find interviews with each at **time.com/time100**



SNOOP DOGG, SHEERAN, MOORE: SHARRA ROMANY FOR TIME; HASSABIS: RYAN SCAFURO FOR TIME

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

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Winner of the 2025 Seoul Peace Prize

PHOTO: Zack Hughes for Direct Relief

T*100*

The *100* Most *Influential* People in the *World*

ICONS / Fatou Baldeh. Adrien Brody. Bobbi Brown. Amy Griffin. Jalen Hurts. Léon Marchand. Demi Moore. David Muir. Angeline Murimirwa. Gisèle Pelicot. Anthony Romero. Hiroyuki Sanada. Raquel Willis. Yoshiki. **ARTISTS** / *Kristen Bell. Willy Chavarria. Danielle Deadwyler. Hozier. Branden Jacobs-Jenkins. Scarlett Johansson. Rashida Jones. Miranda July. Daniel Dae Kim. Diego Luna. Yoshitomo Nara. Mohammad Rasoulof. Nicole Scherzinger. Adam Scott. Annabelle Selldorf. Ed Sheeran. Kristen Wiig.* **LEADERS** / Mo Abudu. Noa Argamani. Duma Boko. Megyn Kelly. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Reshma Kewalramani. Lee Jae-myung. Howard Lutnick. María Corina Machado. Friedrich Merz. Javier Milei. Elon Musk. Teresa Ribera. Ahmed al-Sharaa. Claudia Sheinbaum. Keir Starmer. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Donald Trump. J.D. Vance. Andrea Vidaurre. Russell Vought. Muhammad Yunus. **PIONEERS** / *Dario Amodei. Cordelia Bähr. Julie Burkhart. Tomas Cihlar. Napheesa Collier. Andrew Forrest. Demis Hassabis. Robin Wall Kimmerer. Liang Wenfeng. Robert Montgomery. Rosé. Allison Sesso. Myles Smith. Breanna Stewart. Wesley Sundquist.* **TITANS** / Ed Bastian. Simone Biles. Bonnie Y Chan. Percival Everett. Jonathan Greenblatt. Alex Karp. Blake Lively. Doug McMillon. Lorne Michaels. Miuccia Prada. Joe Rogan. Ted Sarandos. Stephen Squeri. Lisa Su. Serena Williams. Mark Zuckerberg. **INNOVATORS** / *Tim Cadogan. Jon M. Chu. Sandra Diaz. Snoop Dogg. Ismahane Elouafi. Larry Fink. Wendy Freedman. Nikki Glaser. Christian Happi. Josh Koskoff. Ma Yansong. Kwame Onwuachi. Skye Perryman. Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon. Mickalene Thomas. Richard Thompson.*

Points of *Origin*

WHERE THE TIME100 WERE BORN

By Erin McMullen

PIONEERS

1 **DARIO AMODEI,** SAN FRANCISCO
2 **CORDELIA BÄHR,** ST. GALLEN, SWITZERLAND
3 **JULIE BURKHART,** BLACKWELL, OKLA.
4 **TOMAS CIHLAR,** CHOMUTOV, CZECH REPUBLIC
5 **NAPHEESA COLLIER,** JEFFERSON CITY, MO.
6 **ANDREW FORREST,** PERTH, AUSTRALIA
7 **DEMIS HASSABIS,** LONDON
8 **ROBIN WALL KIMMERER,** SCHENECTADY, N.Y.
9 **LIANG WENFENG,** ZHANJIANG CITY, CHINA
10 **ROBERT MONTGOMERY,** BUFFALO, N.Y.
11 **ROSÉ,** AUCKLAND
12 **ALLISON SESSO,** QUEENS
13 **MYLES SMITH,** LUTON, ENGLAND
14 **BREANNA STEWART,** SYRACUSE, N.Y.
15 **WESLEY SUNDQUIST,** ST. PAUL, MINN.

LEADERS

16 **MO ABUDU,** LONDON
17 **NOA ARGAMANI,** BE'ER SHEVA, ISRAEL
18 **DUMA BOKO,** MAHALAPYE, BOTSWANA
19 **MEGYN KELLY,** CHAMPAIGN, ILL.
20 **ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR.,** WASHINGTON, D.C.
21 **RESHMA KEWALRAMANI,** MUMBAI
22 **LEE JAE-MYUNG,** ANDONG, SOUTH KOREA
23 **HOWARD LUTNICK,** JERICHO, N.Y.
24 **MARÍA CORINA MACHADO,** CARACAS
25 **FRIEDRICH MERZ,** BRILON, GERMANY
26 **JAVIER MILEI,** BUENOS AIRES
27 **ELON MUSK,** PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA
28 **TERESA RIBERA,** MADRID
29 **AHMED AL-SHARAA,** RIYADH
30 **CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM,** MEXICO CITY
31 **KEIR STARMER,** LONDON
32 **TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS,** ASMARA, ERITREA
33 **DONALD TRUMP,** QUEENS
34 **J.D. VANCE,** MIDDLETOWN, OHIO
35 **ANDREA VIDAURRE,** FONTANA, CALIF.
36 **RUSSELL VOUGHT,** TRUMBULL, CONN.
37 **MUHAMMAD YUNUS,** CHITTAGONG, BANGLADESH

ICONS

38 **FATOU BALDEH,** SINTET VILLAGE, GAMBIA
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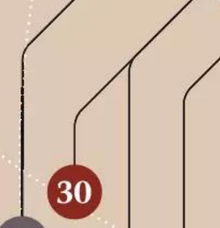
45 **DAVID MUIR,** SYRACUSE, N.Y.
46 **ANGELINE MURIMIRWA,** SEKE, ZIMBABWE
47 **GISÈLE PELICOT,** VILLINGEN-SCHWENNINGEN, GERMANY
48 **ANTHONY ROMERO,** THE BRONX
49 **HIROYUKI SANADA,** TOKYO
50 **RAQUEL WILLIS,** AUGUSTA, GA.
51 **YOSHIKI,** TATEYAMA, CHIBA PREFECTURE, JAPAN



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ICONS

GISÈLE PELICOT. JALEN HURTS.

RAQUEL WILLIS. ADRIEN BRODY. ANTHONY ROMERO + MORE

Demi *Moore*

CHANGING CULTURE

By Ryan Murphy

Demi Moore is more than just an award-winning actor. She is a high-spirited force who has shaped the culture for decades. She changed the way we talk about pregnancy and motherhood (those at-the-time-scandalous *Vanity Fair* covers!); women and economics in Hollywood (with *Striptease* and *G.I. Jane* she demanded and got financial parity with the guys); beauty and aging (*Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* and now her Oscar-nominated turn in *The Substance*).

Her story of constant survival and reinvention has always moved me, and fascinated the world. *Ghost, Indecent Proposal, A Few Good Men, St. Elmo's Fire*—her powerful and truthful spirit has permeated our lives for decades, and she is one of the most successful movie stars of all time. I've always seen her as more than that—I believe her ability to tap into her pain, resilience, and underestimated depth has made her one of our greatest actors.

I'm so thrilled and proud the entire world has woken up and finally recognized her immense and iconic *total* power. Now in her 60s, Demi has proved that it's never too late to get the flowers you truly deserve.

Murphy is an Emmy-winning producer and director

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIENNE RAQUEL FOR TIME

Léon Marchand

UNSTOPPABLE SWIMMER

By Summer McIntosh

Léon Marchand's drive to get his hand on the wall first at the Paris Olympics captivated the entire world four times over.

First, he dominated the 400-m individual medley, winning gold by over 5 seconds. He then went on to become the first swimmer ever to achieve Olympic record-breaking, back-to-back individual gold medals in the 200-m butterfly and 200-m breaststroke—each within a couple hours of each other. His fourth win? The 200-m individual medley, another broken record. I have so much respect for the incredible work and dedication that went into Léon's preparation to be the world's best across multiple races, including some of the toughest events in our sport.

Everyone in the building felt the energy when Léon was racing. The crowd would roar each time his head broke the surface of the water. His performance at the 2024 Olympics inspires the entire world of sport to bring your best when your best is required. To be able to do that under the pressure of a home crowd is nothing short of sensational. Léon is simply unstoppable.

McIntosh is a three-time Olympic gold medalist in swimming

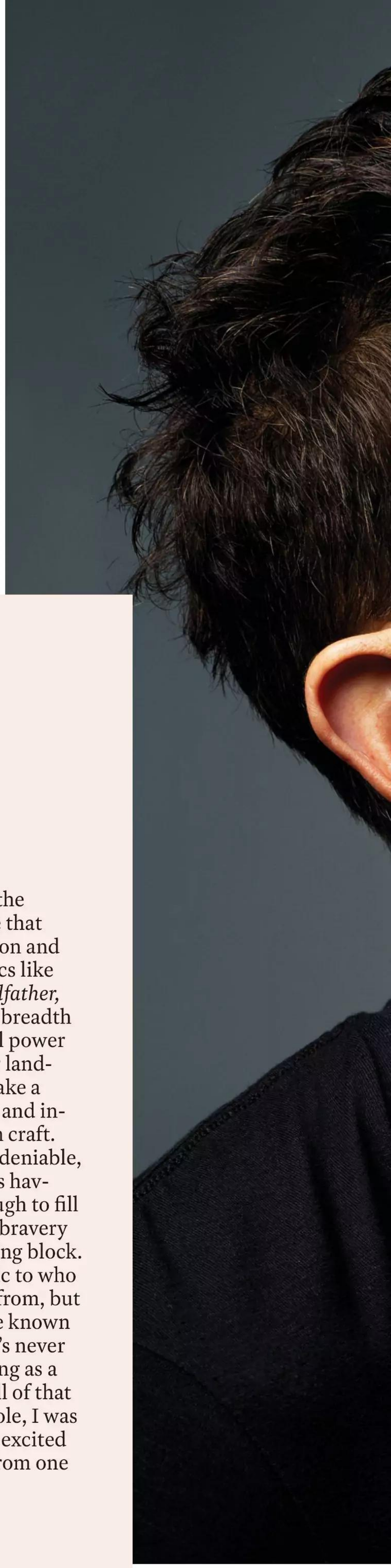
Adrien *Brody*

THE VIRTUOSO

By Rian Johnson

The Brutalist has earned the "they don't make 'em like that anymore" seal. Its ambition and craft evoke American epics like *The Deer Hunter, The Godfather,* or *The Master,* films with breadth and scope, but whose real power comes from their interior landscapes. For an actor to make a canvas that vast feel vital and intimate, it takes more than craft. Adrien Brody's skill is undeniable, but his real superpower is having an inner life rich enough to fill that epic canvas, and the bravery to put it all on the chopping block. Adrien is always authentic to who he is and where he came from, but in the nearly 20 years I've known and worked with him, he's never lost his passion for growing as a person. Seeing him put all of that up on the screen in this role, I was proud of my friend—and excited for much more to come from one of our true greats.

Johnson is a director and Oscar-nominated writer



FATOU BALDEH

Protecting girls

BY CHANTELLE LEE

Last year, Gambia's parliament considered a bill that would have repealed the country's ban on female genital mutilation (FGM). Widely recognized as a human-rights violation, FGM has been illegal in Gambia since 2015, but experts say the practice still occurs because the ban is poorly enforced. When the bill to overturn the ban came before parliament, Fatou Baldeh, the founder of the organization Women in Liberation & Leadership, sprang into action. Baldeh, herself an FGM survivor, launched a campaign with other advocates to block the bill. Ultimately, the bill failed in July 2024—thanks, in large part, to the advocates' collective efforts.

It was a victory for Gambia, but also the world at large, Baldeh says. She had feared that overturning the ban in Gambia would have a ripple effect, potentially leading to other countries backsliding on outlawing FGM. "It's been a difficult year, I have to admit, but it's also opened up the space … for more conversations around the issue," Baldeh says. "I think what happened in the Gambia has really awakened people [to] the need to do more about this."

Lee is a TIME reporter

MARCHAND: MANAN VATSYAYANA—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; BRODY: AUGUST; BALDEH: SANJEEV VERMA—HINDUSTAN TIMES/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER

Bobbi Brown

NATURAL LEADER

By Charlamagne tha God

Some people are surfers, some people are waves. My friend Bobbi Brown is the wave. She doesn't follow trends, she creates them. For decades, she's been the blueprint for what it means to be a beauty mogul. She didn't just change how people wear makeup—she changed how they see themselves. When Bobbi came into the game, she made it clear that beauty wasn't about excess or perfection; it was about enhancing what's already there.

And here's what makes her legendary—she never stops evolving. In recent years, she's reminded everyone why she's the undisputed queen of natural beauty. After building an empire with Bobbi Brown Cosmetics, she walked away and did it again with Jones Road Beauty, proving that reinvention isn't just possible, it's necessary. Bobbi has and will continue to disrupt the industry on her own terms. She's showing the world that legacy isn't just about what you build—it's about how you keep moving forward. She's an innovator, a risk taker, a visionary. And in a world obsessed with what's new, she's timeless.

Charlamagne tha God is a radio host and author

Jalen *Hurts*

INSPIRING CHAMP

By Derek Jeter

I admire how great athletes deal with both success and failure. What Jalen Hurts went through in being benched during the 2018 National Championship game would break a lot of people

down. But not Jalen; he focused on what he could control and found a new path to success. In the NFL, Jalen didn't let a Super Bowl defeat in 2023 shake his confidence. He used that loss as motivation and kept a picture of himself walking off the field after losing as his phone lock screen.

This past February, Jalen found himself on the Super Bowl stage again. This time he led Philadelphia to a convincing victory in its rematch with Kansas City. We connected shortly after, and the only thing he asked about was insight on going back and winning again. Sometimes people win, then exhale. Jalen is not exhaling. He's embracing the next challenge. Win or lose, Jalen's resilience and determination offer all of us something to admire.

Jeter is a five-time World Series champion and baseball Hall of Famer

PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS

ANTHONY D. ROMERO

Defending civil rights

BY DARREN WALKER

Among the giants of America's civil-liberties tradition—from Thomas Jefferson to John Stuart Mill, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. to Roger Baldwin—stands Anthony Romero, defender of the U.S. Constitution.

In our pluralist democracy, the work of advancing the values they embodied—and enlarged—remains our highest calling. With courage and conviction, Anthony has answered it. Today, we are reminded anew of an old idea's enduring power: as Jefferson phrased it in his Inaugural Address, "Error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

As executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, which defends our constitutional rights through litigation and advocacy, Anthony has devoted his life to protecting these twin ideals, sometimes in tension, that precede all the others: at the most basic level, our grand, complicated experiment in self-government depends on tolerance for each other and for perspectives with which we disagree, even vehemently. But it also depends on reason and truth—and on proud patriots, like Anthony, who defend and demand freedom for all.

Walker is president of the Ford Foundation

BROWN: BEN RITTER; HURTS: THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; ROMERO: PAUL MORIGI—GETTY IMAGES

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Cruise Guide

GISÈLE PELICOT

Taking a stand

BY GLORIA STEINEM

Each morning when Gisèle Pelicot arrived at a French courthouse with her head held high, she was refusing to be dominated by the patriarchal order that has for so long subjugated women.

The trial detailed a series of horrific assaults by her husband and the dozens of others he recruited. In a demonstration of extraordinary courage, Gisèle chose to shed her anonymity and participate openly in the proceedings. In her brave public fight—which saw her husband convicted of rape and 50 other defendants found guilty of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault—she has contributed to a global process of justice that will weaken patriarchy and disrupt the acceptance of sexual violence around the world. Just as Gandhi challenged racial violence in India, Gisèle has challenged the patriarchy everywhere, including within marriage, and advanced universal human rights.

There have been tributes to Gisèle in many countries. She is a symbol of strength and survival, she is a source of inspiration for women and for humane men, wherever we live. Gisèle has shown us the way. Now we must follow.

Steinem is a writer, political activist, and feminist organizer

Amy *Griffin*

TRUTH TELLER

By Reese Witherspoon

Nearly five years ago, my dear friend Amy Griffin came to me with her story—the one at the heart of her striking memoir, *The Tell*. I watched as she bravely reached into the deepest parts of herself and, after gaining access to repressed memories of abuse she faced as a child, embarked on an incredible journey of discovery, grief, and healing.

I watched her excavate childhood memories of growing up in a small, tight-knit Texas community. I wanted to help her, to take her pain and fix it. But Amy knew better. She did what all great storytellers do and began to write it all down. She gradually unlocked more and more of herself—her sadness, her rage, her acceptance—until she emerged on the other side with a new purpose: to share her story and help others experience their own catharsis.

As a businesswoman, Amy has always helped women grow their businesses and connect to their customers in the most authentic ways. Now, that vision has become her own driving force. With great courage and years of work, she captured her story in the most poetic way. By opening her heart, she became a beacon for women everywhere. Her mission to help others who have experienced sexual abuse and trauma has become a guiding light.

To say I'm enormously proud of my friend is an understatement. *The Tell* encourages us to recognize that sometimes you must understand your own pain to fully experience life's greatest joys—and Amy's courage, vulnerability, and insight are a gift to us all.

Witherspoon is a producer and Oscar-winning actor

Yoshiki

MAESTRO

By Nicole Scherzinger

Yoshiki is an absolute force—an artist whose brilliance has transcended borders and genres throughout his 40-plus-year career. Our collaboration in 2002 on "I'll Be Your Love" was one of my earliest moments in music, and even then I could feel the magnitude of his vision. He doesn't just play music; he channels emotion through every note, whether he's behind a piano or a drum kit.

In recent years, Yoshiki has continued to break boundaries—not just as a musician, but also as a cultural ambassador. From his classical world tour and his directorial debut to becoming the first Japanese artist to have his hand- and footprints memorialized on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, his influence resonates across the globe.

Yoshiki's artistry is matched only by his heart. His philanthropic efforts through his foundation have made him a timeless inspiration. He donated half a million dollars to support victims of the Los Angeles wildfires earlier this year, benefiting seven organizations.

He is a legend and a true original, and I feel blessed to call him my friend.

Scherzinger is a Grammy-nominated musical artist and actor

PELICOT: CLEMENT MAHOUDEAU—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; YOSHIKI: GENE WANG—GETTY IMAGES

PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS MCCARTY

Hiroyuki Sanada

SCENE STEALER

By Lisa Joy and Jonathan Nolan

Respect on a Hollywood set is often measured in silence. You've never been on a quieter set than one with Hiroyuki Sanada. Sanada is a legend, an actor cut from almost mythic material. He honed that coiled power and grace with a murderer's row of mentors, from Sonny Chiba and Jackie Chan to Michelle Yeoh.

If you want to be reminded of your own inadequacies, watch Hiro earn an MBE while singing in iambic and doing a flying handspring onstage in *King Lear* with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

With unerring politeness, like a gentleman thief, he steals scenes from the likes of Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, and Keanu Reeves. With *Shogun,* he stole the whole damn show.

All of this is belied by the quiet pleasure of working with Hiro. When he's on set, everyone works with a little more reverence. You think you're hiring an actor—but you're actually summoning a force of nature.

Joy and Nolan are Emmy-nominated screenwriters and producers

ANGELINE MURIMIRWA

Educating millions

BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI

Growing up in rural Zimbabwe in the 1990s, Angeline Murimirwa was a star student, but her family couldn't afford to continue her education. Around the same time, an organization called CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education) started offering scholarships covering both tuition and housing to a few hundred girls across the country, including Angeline. At school, Angeline often sat down for meals worrying guiltily whether her family had eaten that day.

Today, Angeline is the CEO of CAMFED, helping millions of girls go to school in Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Just like her, these young women may also be tomorrow's leaders.

Educating girls is the foundation of healthy and strong societies. But in many places, the barriers to attending school are mounting, depriving girls of the resources to choose their own futures. Few people are fighting to solve this crisis as tenaciously and effectively as Angeline—one reason among many that her work won her the prestigious 2024 Africa Education Medal.

Girls' education leads to healthier, more prosperous communities. How do we end poverty, mitigate climate change, and tackle so many of our world's biggest problems? As Angeline says, the closest thing we have to a silver bullet is to educate a girl.

Yousafzai is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and founder of the Malala Fund

DAVID MUIR

Steadfast anchor

BY DIANE SAWYER

At 6:28 p.m. in New York City, a man lopes up two flights of stairs, speeds down the hall, and slides into the anchor chair. At 6:30 p.m., the camera goes live.

David Muir anchors the nation's most-watched television news program, *ABC World News Tonight.* Every night more than 8 million Americans trust him to make sense of the day. Like Peter Jennings before him, David is authoritative and dynamic—the first out the door to the story. Iraq's hunt for ISIS. Hurricanes, fires. He traveled days to hold the hands of starving children in Madagascar and South Sudan, leading to millions of dollars in donations to the World Food Programme.

I think I know what destiny looks like because I've seen a photo of a serious 13-year-old boy, talking his way into an internship at the local TV station. Now he's the anchor chosen for interviews by Popes and Presidents. He shows up calm, respectful, and fearless. I am lucky that my successor is also the irreverent friend I want to hang out with when the camera shuts down. Though I am also miffed that he's the guy who can leap two flights of stairs, vault into the anchor chair, and never lose focus—or his breath.

Sawyer is a journalist and the former anchor of World News

SANADA: ROBBY KLEIN—GETTY IMAGES FOR SCAD; MURIMIRWA: CONRAD N. HILTON FOUNDATION; MUIR: ABC

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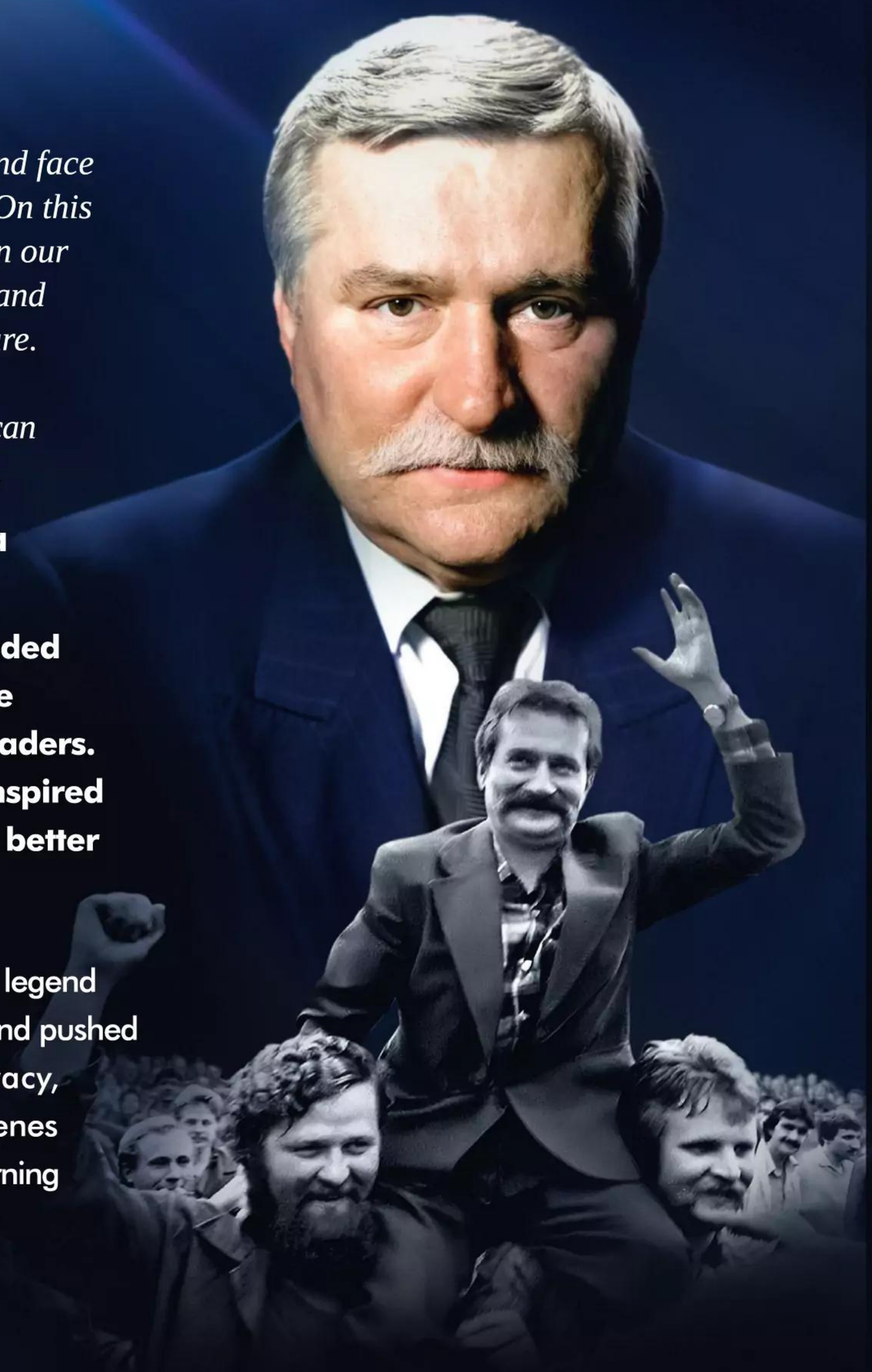

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Raquel *Willis*

MARCHING FORWARD

By Elliot Page

Raquel Willis is an author, journalist, and activist whose trailblazing organizing and advocacy efforts in the fight for Black trans lives have reverberated from politics to publishing. For Willis, writing and activism are entwined. Before she was the first trans executive editor for *Out* magazine, or a speaker at the 2017 Women's March, she was a national organizer for the Transgender Law Center. Her 2023 memoir, *The Risk It Takes to Bloom,* is both a vulnerable personal narrative and a dynamic blueprint for change, interweaving her journey with the history of Black trans liberation. She has since co-founded the Gender Liberation Movement and helped organize the first Gender Liberation March on Washington in September 2024.

"I believe in my power, I believe in your power, I believe in our power," she told a crowd of 15,000 people in 2020 at a Brooklyn march for Black trans lives. Amid unrelenting attacks on transgender rights, Willis reminds us that true liberation is not given—it's fought for.

Page is an activist, author, and Oscar- and Emmy-nominated actor

PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN J WEE

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Ed *Sheeran*

OPENHEARTED STORYTELLER

By Chris Hemsworth

I'm fortunate enough to meet some of the most talented people in the world. But every now and then, I come across a person who isn't just talented—they're something else entirely.

Ed Sheeran has an almost supernatural ability to connect. His songs, his voice, his words—they belong to all of us. Whether you're at home with your headphones on, driving through the countryside, or in a stadium packed with 70,000 people singing at the top of their lungs, his music feels personal. He has an instinct for storytelling that makes you feel like he wrote that song just for you, no matter where you're from or what you've been through.

But beyond the music, beyond the palpable anticipation for his upcoming album and the stadiums full of people hanging on to every note, is the man himself. Ed is one of the most kindhearted, down-to-earth people I've ever met. He's got this incredible ability to make you feel like you've been mates forever, even if you just met five minutes ago. There's no ego, no pretension—just warmth, laughter, and a wicked sense of humor. He can go from writing a beautiful song to cracking a joke so ridiculous you forget what you were talking about in the first place. Ed brings people together in a way that few can. He writes the songs that become the soundtrack to our lives. He makes strangers feel like family. He doesn't just perform for an audience—he creates a world where everyone is welcome.

Hemsworth is an actor and producer

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIENNE RAQUEL FOR TIME

MOHAMMAD RASOULOF

Revealing Iran

BY CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR

Mohammad Rasoulof is a courageous Iranian filmmaker, putting his freedom, safety, and even his life on the line for his craft. His latest film, *The Seed of the Sacred Fig,* received raves at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar. Rasoulof was in prison for his activism and his art when the idea for the film came to him. It's about the violent crackdown on Iran's Woman Life Freedom movement.

"The experience of this revolt," he told me, was "seeing its effect on the people who worked inside the prison. I had a casual encounter with a senior prison official who seemed to recognize me. He got close to me and told me in secret how embarrassed he was about himself, and that he was even thinking about taking his life. Then he told me that his family, his children, kept criticizing him and asking him why he collaborates with the system, with this oppression."

That admission inspired the film. Rasoulof's team inside Iran recorded in secret, while he directed remotely. If that makes him a hero, he credits the bravery and sacrifice of Iran's young people.

Amanpour is a journalist and CNN's chief international anchor

PHOTOGRAPH BY COREY NICKOLS

Danielle *Deadwyler*

SHINING HER LIGHT

By Regina King

Danielle Deadwyler is captivating. Everyone who's watched one of her performances knows this to be true. Her eyes evoke something different and riveting with every role she plays.

I first met Danielle on the set of 2019's *Watchmen*. In one scene the camera was focused on me and Jovan Adepo. Danielle was watching from the audience, and the level of performance and energy she gave without even having any lines—I remember thinking, "Wow. That's that." Her commitment was just so powerful.

Danielle doesn't see anything as small when it comes to acting: every moment has a meaning. It's been a joy to see how much range she has too—from shooting *Watchmen* to our work together on the western *The Harder They Fall*. It was wonderful to see all of the recognition this past year for her incredible performance in August Wilson's *The Piano Lesson*—so much talent comes out of her body.

I hope she continues to follow her heart in this industry. It serves her well. It can be difficult to make a living and still tell stories that really mean something to you, but she's been able to stay true to what moves her as an artist.

King is a director, producer, and Oscar- and Emmy-winning actor

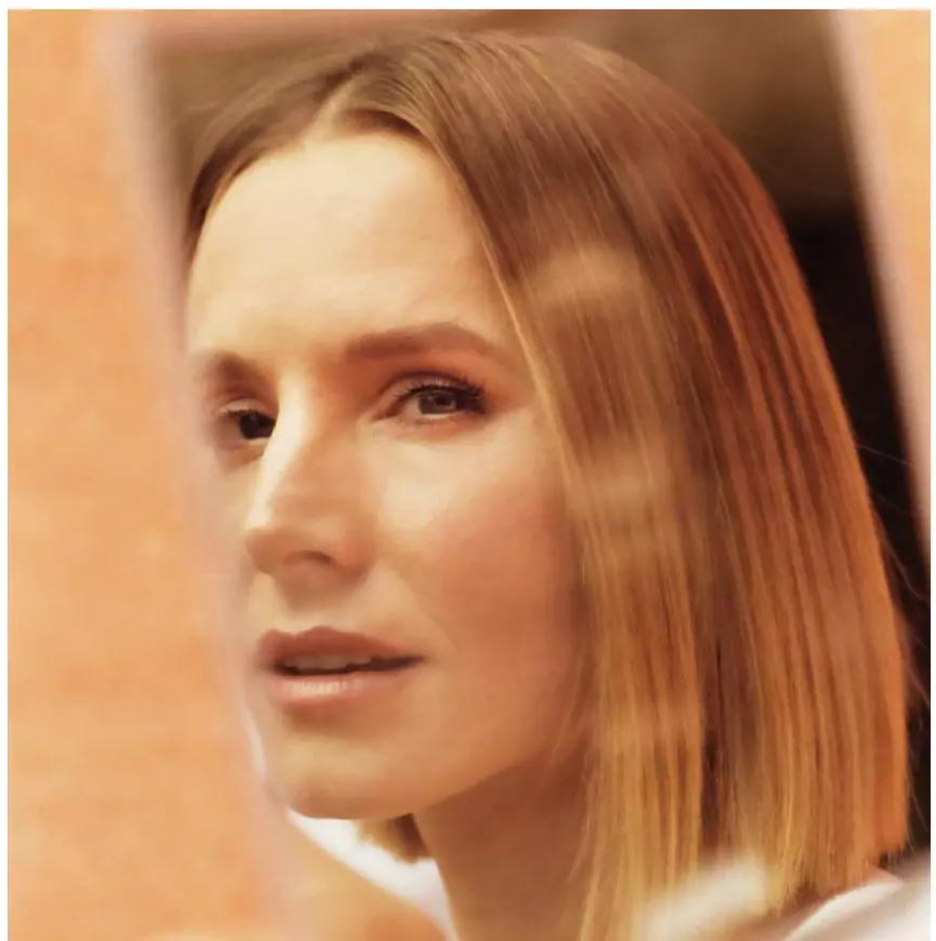
Kristen Bell

FORMIDABLE TALENT

By Ted Danson

Kristen Bell is one of the most remarkable human beings I've ever known. It may seem odd to start by labeling her as human, but it is important to clarify that although she appears to be from some other, highly evolved planet, she is not. She's human. And I adore her. I met Kristen while we were shooting *Big Miracle* in Alaska, but I really got to know her during our four years on *The Good Place*. On set, she is a dazzling combination of talent and efficiency. The efficiency comes with the caveat that *no one* should stop her from getting home in time to have dinner with her kids. While she shines as an actor-writer-director-producer (and took the world by storm last fall in *Nobody Wants This*), that's not her true calling. She's really here to use her big, beautiful brain to make the world a better place. Kristen and her amazing husband Dax Shepard spend a great deal of their time and money supporting and creating organizations that provide essential items and care for families in need across the world. Oh yeah, and she sings—like an angel! To be able to call Kristen Bell a friend is a grace upon my life.

Danson is an Emmy-winning actor



RASOULOF: JEFF SPICER—BAFTA/GETTY IMAGES FOR BAFTA; DEADWYLER: GETTY IMAGES FOR IMDB; BELL: PAT MARTIN

Nicole Scherzinger

COMMANDING PRESENCE

By Patti LuPone

I didn't know what to expect from Jamie Lloyd's explosive reimagining of *Sunset Boulevard*. While my experience with the show may not be totally objective, I feel Mr. Lloyd stripped the musical of its bloat, of its too-careful re-creation of the film—and in doing so set a theatrical pace that was exhilarating. Then there was Nicole Scherzinger: courageous, audacious, mesmerizing, elegantly beautiful, and ultimately heartbreaking. Her mad scene alone is worth the price of admission. I left the theater energized. And it's made all the more stunning by watching her transition from a pop singer to a bona fide Broadway star. All audiences want is to be assured the actors onstage are in command. From Nicole's first entrance, I sat back in my seat and happily gave her my complete and undivided attention. I was riveted. Brava, Diva.

LuPone is a Tony- and Grammy-winning actor and singer

Miranda *July*

AUDACIOUS AUTHOR

By Molly Ringwald

In 1792, Georges Danton stood before the French people and called for audacity—an insistence on courage as a means of survival. Centuries later, in a different kind of revolution, the multihyphenate artist Miranda July seemed to echo that call. Her novel *All Fours* is not about overthrowing monarchies but about dismantling something quieter, yet no less insidious: the expectation that women, as they age, should disappear.

July doesn't just tap into the zeitgeist; she helps shape it. Her prose is startlingly original yet immediately familiar, like meeting a stranger who reminds you of yourself. How did she create something so original and yet so relatable? I've known Miranda peripherally for years and once even collaborated with her, but like so many other women, after reading her book I felt like I got to know her intimately. This is her revolution: unflinching and insistent—a defiance against erasure. Audacity, always audacity.

Ringwald is an actor and writer

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANA SCRUGGS

YOSHITOMO NARA

Exuberant creative

BY STELLA MCCARTNEY

I recently had a drink with Yoshitomo Nara in Tokyo and left feeling so full of gratitude; it is such a precious gift to know this fine gentleman and the art he has given us. His work is not only childlike, innocent, and direct—it also carries messages that we need to hear, presented in a way we can digest with humor and clarity.

Nara is an artist who is truly in the moment, in the spirit. He is alive. When you look at his art, you see and feel him. His love of rock 'n' roll. How he views the world through the eyes of a child who doesn't understand why we have war and not peace; why we have killed nature instead of living in harmony with her. He is a pure jewel.

I feel privileged to know him and am so proud that he is getting global recognition, because I can't think of anyone more deserving. After spending time with Nara, I feel full of his energy and full of excitement to get to know him more as the years unfold.

McCartney is a fashion designer

SCHERZINGER: KALPESH LATHIGRA—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; ANDER GILLENEA—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; NARA: ANDER GILLENEA—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hozier

OTHERWORLDLY SOUND

By Noah Kahan

When an artist can create a sound so beautiful and melancholy, so full of symbolism and truth that you feel they must be from a different time, or a better world, you can't help but believe in magic. Hozier had me believing from the first note. His music became the barometer for my own: How can I make a song feel like an extension of my soul, the way Hozier does? How can I create a voice, a language, like he has?

It was easy to imagine Hozier as a folk deity in the forests of Ireland until I met him. At a festival in 2023, he asked if I wanted to sing together. I ran into him in a hotel lobby, in sweaty golf clothes with a bag of fast food in my hand—not how I envisioned this moment. Fortunately, he is as kind as they come. We spoke about the performance, and I pinched myself as I stuffed fries in my face on the way upstairs. Performing with him was one of the greatest moments of my life. And when we collaborated on my song "Northern Attitude," I didn't believe it was truly happening until I heard his voice on the track.

I'm not sure where my life would've gone if I hadn't been exposed to his music. Thank you, Hozier, for sharing your gift with us mere mortals.

Kahan is a Grammy-nominated musician

Adam *Scott*

UNASSUMING STAR

By Nick Offerman

If you like slightly awkward but inexplicably confident juvenile otters, you're going to go simply apesh-t for Adam Scott. A mere 30-plus years into his career, he has finally captivated the world's attention as Lumon employee Mark S. in *Severance*.

Adam has been the cause of swooning for a long time, and not just by me. From his breast-obsessed portrayal of Howard Hughes' publicist Johnny Meyer in Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* to his breakout turn as an unbearably "rad" asswipe in *Step Brothers,* Adam has displayed a knack for portraying fellows who are a little off, but in a comforting way—relatably weird.

When given top billing, Adam crafts protagonists who have so many more fascinating colors in their palettes than just his dreamboat looks. As a romantic lead, like the hapless Henry Pollard in the criminally underappreciated *Party Down* or dependable Ben Wyatt of *Parks and Recreation,* he gets the job done with a sweetness and vulnerability from which many young men (and old) might take some cues.

Adam is the unassuming hero we need in these uncertain times. Whether he's waxing on about U2 or R.E.M. on his podcast with Scott Aukerman or upsetting the goatherds in Mammalians Nurturable, this lovable nonconformist just keeps delivering exactly what the doctor ordered.

Offerman is an Emmy-winning actor

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH RENSTROM

HOZIER: KAYLA DELAURA—GETTY IMAGES; SELLDORF: STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON/SELLDORF ARCHITECTS

ANNABELLE SELLDORF

Deft architect

BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

Last summer, when Annabelle Selldorf was in the final stretch of her transformative expansion of the Frick Collection, I photographed her on the remote island in Maine where she has a small house. Annabelle is known for reimagining monumental architecture, most recently the Frick, opening in April, and the Sainsbury Wing of London's National Gallery, which opens in May. As we walked along the rocky shore, she was preoccupied with the sky, with the color of the clouds. She was thinking about how to paint the ceiling of the Frick's new auditorium.

Annabelle's mission is to make art accessible to the widest range of visitors possible. The spaces she creates are meant to accommodate large numbers of people, but they are not overpowering. They are sensitively and deftly restrained. The entrance to the Frick is no longer hard to find. Everyone can walk in through the same front door. Visitors can explore the museum at their own pace. "I get lost and feel the better for it," she says. And the DNA of the beautiful rooms is intact. Her work embodies the values she holds dear. Art and life are not separate.

Leibovitz is a photographer

DANIEL DAE KIM

Activist actor

BY J.J. ABRAMS

Daniel Dae Kim contains multitudes. A beloved star of shows such as *The Good Doctor, Hawaii Five-0,* and *Lost,* Kim is also a successful producer and director and a devoted husband and father. And he was named one of *People*'s Sexiest Men Alive. Twice.

When Kim combines his talent, skill, and humanity as an advocate for equality, he becomes a force of nature. I've seen this firsthand. When we made the *Lost* pilot, Kim insisted his character's arc defy stereotypes. Years later, when he learned of a significant pay disparity between himself and his white *Hawaii Five-0* co-stars, Kim, along with Grace Park, made the bold decision to publicly walk away from the series, demanding equity even at personal cost. His advocacy extends beyond Hollywood—in 2021, as anti-Asian violence surged in the U.S., Kim testified before the House Judiciary Committee, calling on lawmakers to take action. And in 2024, Kim returned to Broadway to star in *Yellow Face,* David Henry Hwang's acclaimed satire exploring Asian American identity, cultural appropriation, and the complexities of activism.

A career like Kim's is rare. But even rarer is a willingness to use success not just for oneself, but for others—a quality that makes Daniel Dae Kim a leading voice in the fight for change.

Abrams is an Emmy-winning director and producer, and co-created Lost

Willy *Chavarria*

MAKING A STATEMENT

By Becky G

I used to be intimidated by the fashion industry because I wasn't sure that I belonged. But then I went to a Willy Chavarria show, where all the models looked like me and my family—every person and garment I saw that night challenged my limiting beliefs. After the show, Willy embraced me like we'd known each other for years. And despite all the chaos happening backstage, he was tranquil, present, and

humble. With the biggest smile, he took the time to thank everyone. Willy became a dear friend after that, and it was such a full circle moment when he asked me to walk in his show at this year's Paris Fashion Week.

When I wear Willy Chavarria, I feel badass. His designs are bold and beautiful, and they push people to think outside of the box. There are no limits to Willy's creativity, or his passion.

Fashion is all about making statements, and Willy's pride in his Chicano roots makes his work so necessary in the industry. We both believe in building bridges, not walls, and Willy does that with his art. What he's doing for our community—for our culture—is groundbreaking, and I am deeply inspired by him.

Becky G is a musical artist and actor

PHOTOGRAPH BY IK ALDAMA

Rashida Jones

RENAISSANCE WOMAN

By Amy Poehler

Rashida Jones is a graceful and grounded example of openhearted flow. I've had the privilege to call Rashida a friend for over 25 years, and there are not enough adjectives in the world to express her beauty both inside and out. Her work crosses genres in a way that few can pull off. She lands jokes in *Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. She serves dystopian sci-fi in *Sunny* and *Silo*. She leaves us breathless in *The Social Network* and *Celeste and Jesse Forever*. Not to mention her career as a writer, and as a director, most recently of the beautiful documentary short *A Swim Lesson*.

Rashida treats life like an adventure, and she generously brings back something that she has learned along the way. She believes in the power of music, she stands up for her friends, and she is constantly searching for the truth. Rashida makes everyone feel cool, even though we all know she is the coolest. And she can dance us all under the table. Big brain, big life, and big love for Rashida Jones.

Poehler is a writer, producer, and Emmy-winning actor

KIM: RISTAN FEWINGS—GETTY IMAGES FOR THE RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL; CHAVARRIA: PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP; JONES: ELISABETH CAREN—AUGUST

Scarlett *Johansson*

GENERATIONAL STAR

By Chris Evans

Despite her being three years younger than me, I've always considered Scarlett Johansson my older sister.

We met in 2002 while filming *The Perfect Score* in Vancouver. Even at 17, she had wisdom, talent, and grit beyond her years. I quickly revered her as any younger sibling would, with equal parts admiration and intimidation. After wrapping the film, she started work on a little movie called *Lost in Translation,* and the rest was history. Since then, I've watched her craft a career entirely her own, seamlessly transitioning between independent and mainstream films, refusing to be boxed in to any one genre or type, and cementing her legacy as one of the most versatile, influential, and bankable actors of her generation. A pioneer, a rebel, a force, an artist without limits and, most important, without fear.

Scarlett is always unafraid. Unafraid to be vulnerable. Unafraid to take risks. Unafraid to be herself. Even unafraid to chase dinosaurs. She's a living testament to the power of fearlessness in art. That's why even though I'm older, I learn from her, I lean on her, and I look up to her. And as any "younger" sibling would assert, there's absolutely nothing she can't do.

Evans is an actor

PHOTOGRAPH BY THEA TRAFF

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

PROVOCATIVE PLAYWRIGHT

By Michael R. Jackson

The first time I ever saw a play by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, my jaw hit the floor. I had never seen anything so sophisticated, experimental, and intelligent that also used black (and Black) humor to such great effect. It was immediately clear to me that I was in the hands of a master. As I've gotten to know Branden over the years, his genius has only become more apparent. He is a creator of trends, not a follower, so his work is always original and interesting. And with an unflappable nature and a genuine curiosity about the world, it feels like he was simply born with the ability to create singular, knockout shows—including *An Octoroon, Appropriate,* and his latest to arrive on Broadway, *Purpose.*

Even though he's younger than me, I look up to Branden in so many ways. He is truly in a class of his own, and, as history unfolds, there is no doubt that he will be noted as one of the greats.

Jackson is a Pulitzer Prize– and Tony Award–winning playwright and composer

JACOBS-JENKINS: MERON TEKIE MENGHISTAB—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; WIIG: DIA DIPASUPIL—GETTY IMAGES; LUNA: FREDERIC J. BROWN—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

KRISTEN WIIG

Effervescent actor

BY MARIELLE HELLER

"She's one of the best comedians of all time, and me and your dad know her!" How can one person have the adoration of the snobbiest comedy nerds in the world, but also of my 4-year-old?

Because Kristen Wiig is effervescent. The human embodiment of Willy Wonka's fizzy lifting drink. With Kristen in a scene, there is always lift-off. And not just in comedies. Kristen is one of the best dramatic actors out there. She can break your heart with a look moments after making your stomach hurt with laughter. Kristen isn't capable of giving a false performance. She brings the same dedication and truthfulness whether she's playing Gilly and Dooneese on *SNL* or Annie in *Bridesmaids* or Maxine in *Palm Royale.*

There's one problem: editing her scenes is a terrible task. Picking just one take feels cruel—like casting diamonds onto the ground. Knowing the world will miss out on this version of that line, or that version of this character.

As I explained to my kids: "She's probably the funniest person on the whole planet, and we're so lucky we're here on earth at the same time as her. Don't you think it's cool that we know her?"

With her best Gilly smile and silly little Gilly nod, my daughter responds "Sorry!"

Heller is a filmmaker

DIEGO LUNA

Radiating charisma

BY GAEL GARCÍA BERNAL

For endless reasons, Diego Luna is one of the most influential people in my life. I would say that he is on this list for the same reasons. He grew up in the theater world, finding solace and adventure backstage. His mother, an artist and beloved costume designer, and his father, a master of set design, never thought Diego would find his own way and break through "the first wall" (in theatrical terms). But with his wonderful energy and ridiculously incredible charisma, he knew that onstage he was going to experience a catharsis for the common good. His laughter resonates and expands.

We both discovered the wonder of cinema at the same time—I feel grateful that as a friend and a member of the audience, I've been able to experience his journey, his questioning, his profound search for something that makes everything better for everyone.

Bernal is an actor and filmmaker

LEADERS

DONALD TRUMP. TERESA RIBERA. TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS. MUHAMMAD YUNUS. CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM. KEIR STARMER + MORE

Mo *Abudu*

FILM MOGUL

By Idris Elba

Mo Abudu's reputation precedes her. Anyone who has worked on anything relating to African film knows her. I had been an admirer of her work for some time before I reached out to her two years ago to connect. Pretty quickly we were hatching a plan to collaborate on a film, which became *Dust to Dreams*.

That's the thing about Mo: she wastes no time. She has an infectious, can-do attitude and the tenacity to overcome any obstacle in her way. Her sprawling empire—from studios and productions to cinemas and a creative academy—is testament to that.

Mo, who launched the $50 million Afro Film Fund last year, cares deeply about the African narrative, and how the continent and its people are portrayed onscreen. Anyone who wants to understand the filmmaking landscape in Africa—or anywhere else—could learn a lot from Mo, because she gets things done.

Elba is an Emmy-nominated actor

PHOTOGRAPH BY GARETH CATTERMOLE

JAVIER MILEI

Economist in chief

BY IAN BREMMER

In 2023, candidate Javier Milei offered himself to voters as the antiestablishment, chainsaw-wielding bolt from the blue that Argentina needed to tame the country's chronic inflation and government dysfunction. Twenty months later, the doubters—I was one of them—are in retreat.

Since Milei entered the Casa Rosada as President, voters have punished elected leaders and ruling parties in India, South Africa, France, Britain, Japan, Germany, and the U.S.—in part because prices have risen. Milei is the G-20 leader taking the biggest risks to turn his country around . . . and they're paying off. Annual inflation in Argentina fell from a jaw-dropping 289% in April 2024 to 66.9% in February 2025.

Critics say Milei is taming inflation with austerity measures that weigh heavily on the poor, but they've been wrong on that front too: the national poverty rate fell from 52.9% in the first half of 2024 to 38.1% in the second half.

Argentina's political system has been badly broken for decades. Turned out they needed someone to actually fix it.

Bremmer is a TIME editor-at-large and the president of Eurasia Group and GZERO Media

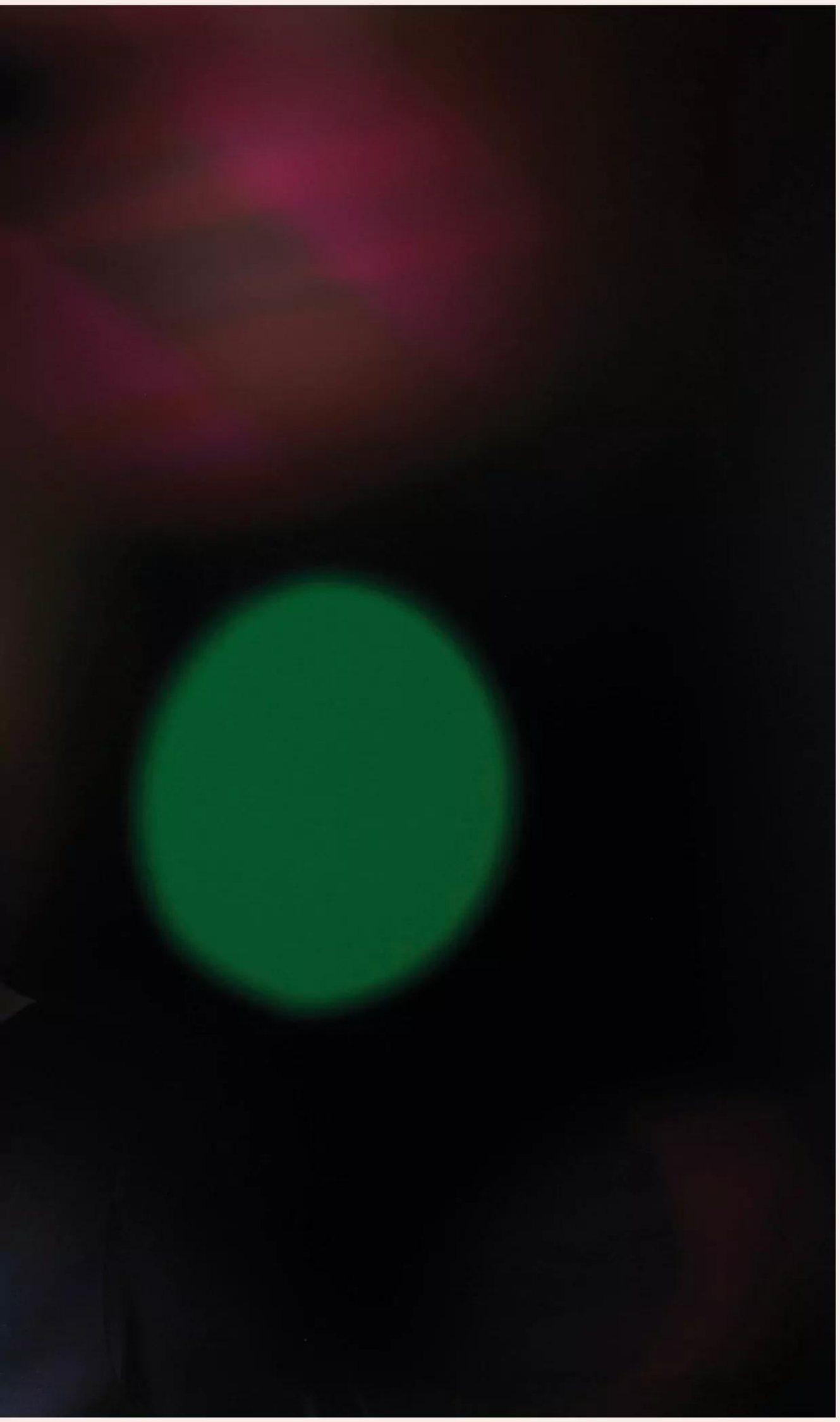
Claudia *Sheinbaum*

LA PRESIDENTA

By Jorge Ramos

She likes to be called *Presidenta*, with an *a* at the end. She made history in 2024 by becoming the first woman to lead Mexico.

Claudia Sheinbaum, 62, a politician and climate scientist, is facing two major challenges: violence fueled by drug traffickers and the expansionist instincts of U.S. President Donald Trump, who has placed tariffs on Mexico citing drugs and immigrant trafficking at the border.



She has a self-described "cool head" leadership style, and her approach to cross-border negotiations seems to have won some grudging respect from her American counterpart. But despite making shifts in Mexico's security strategy, she has refused to criticize the past policies of her predecessor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador. More than 180,000 Mexicans were killed during his presidency.

With the slogan "It's time for women," she won the presidency, and her party, Morena, controls the congress and most states. But we have yet to see what *la Presidenta* will do with that mandate.

Ramos is a journalist, author, and Emmy-winning host who anchored Univision News for 38 years

PHOTOGRAPH BY HECTOR VIVAS

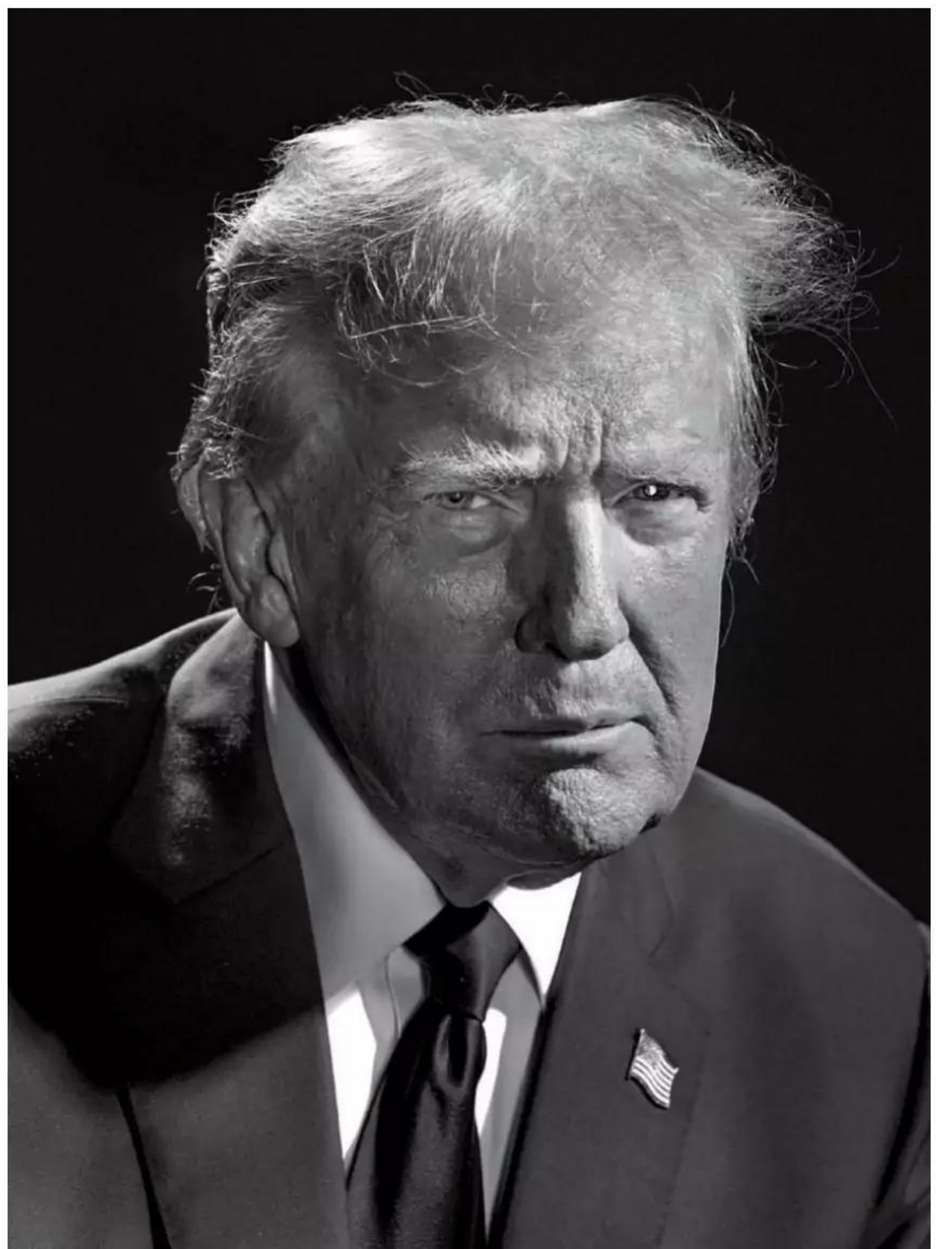
Donald Trump

UPENDING U.S. POLICY

By Brian Bennett

No other modern President has as forcefully grabbed control of the U.S. government as Donald Trump. Within weeks of moving back into the White House, he fired prosecutors and inspectors general who might check his power, dismissed thousands of federal workers, stripped away global aid programs, gutted the Department of Education, and used wartime powers to send Venezuelan men from the U.S. to a notorious prison in El Salvador. He then stepped over Congress to make erratic tariff announcements that have shaken the global economy and baffled business leaders and voters. When he hasn't been trying to steer American culture to the right by pressuring companies and universities to shut down diversity programs, he's rattling U.S. allies by threatening to invade Greenland and end U.S. support for Ukraine. The rest of his term will show just how much he can bend the country—and the world—before it breaks.

Bennett is a TIME senior correspondent



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RUSSELL VOUGHT

Agenda architect

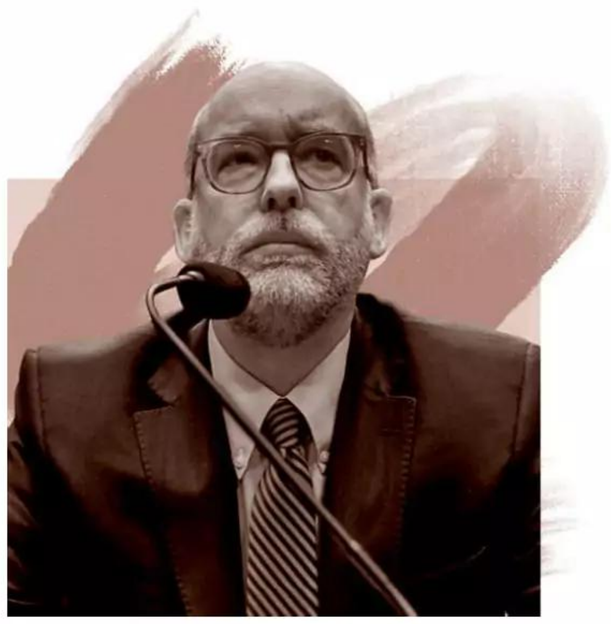
BY ERIC CORTELLESSA

When Donald Trump took office in January, he was armed with a weapon none of his predecessors had enjoyed: a shadow government in waiting, ready to turn his ideas into policy. The man who built much of that infrastructure is Russell Vought, an architect of Trump's shock-and-awe second-term agenda.

During the Biden years, Vought led the Center for Renewing America, a think tank dedicated to disempowering the administrative state and laying the groundwork for Trump 2.0. Now, many of the Administration's most aggressive moves can be traced to Vought's recommendations: from dramatically downsizing the federal bureaucracy and demoralizing career civil servants to ending diversity hiring practices and withholding congressionally appropriated funds.

As director of the Office of Management and Budget, Vought is one of Trump's closest advisers helping consolidate power within the Executive Branch. Vought may keep a low profile, but he's the intellectual lodestar of the revolution upending Washington.

Cortellessa is a TIME senior correspondent



María Corina *Machado*

A VOICE FOR VENEZUELA

By Marco Rubio

María Corina Machado, the Venezuelan Iron Lady, is the personification of resilience, tenacity, and patriotism. Undeterred by formidable challenges, María Corina has never backed down from her mission of fighting for a free, fair, and democratic Venezuela. Machado's guiding principle has remained the same since I first met her over a decade ago—to leave for her children Ana Corina, Ricardo, Henrique, and the children of Venezuela, a country free of tyranny. The phrase *"hasta el final"* encapsulates her enduring legacy. Over the past year, her resolve has faced unprecedented challenges as she has bravely confronted the Maduro regime's efforts to undermine the will of the Venezuelan people.

A woman of faith who valiantly marches the streets of her homeland armed with the holy rosary and supported by countless courageous Venezuelans, Machado has stood firm against it all, defending the land of Bolívar. Her principled leadership is a beacon of hope, making our region and our world a better place.

Rubio, a Republican, is the U.S. Secretary of State

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

PUBLIC HEALTH DISRUPTER

By Alice Park

For years, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has raised questions about vaccine safety. Now, as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kennedy oversees the government's key health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Kennedy believes that parents should choose whether to immunize their children, which contradicts the science behind population immunity. Since January, a measles outbreak originating in Texas has sickened hundreds and led to the first deaths from the disease in the U.S. in years. Meanwhile, there have been cuts and layoffs in Kennedy's HHS, the CDC has removed immunization messages, and researchers requesting grants from the NIH have been warned to avoid referencing "mRNA," the technology behind the COVID-19 vaccines. Two months into his role, Kennedy is already having an outsize impact on U.S. health care.

Park is a TIME senior correspondent

TERESA RIBERA

Climate commissioner

BY INGER ANDERSEN

The science is clear: unless we act, and act fast, the world will miss our opportunity to effectively combat climate change. Europe is already feeling the impacts of a rapidly warming world. From deadly heat waves to devastating floods, economies and livelihoods are under threat as the Continent is warming faster than anywhere else in the world.

Leadership has never been more important—or more complex to navigate in such turbulent times. European Commission Executive Vice President Teresa Ribera is a leader who not only deeply understands these challenges, but also understands how to unite people during challenging times. I have sat beside her in negotiations and seen her sharp focus on ambitious solutions that benefit people and planet. A Europe with a vibrant green economy, boosting jobs at home and abroad, benefits not only Europe but also the world. If anyone can usher in a clean, just transition that addresses climate change and makes Europe competitive in a fractured world, it is Teresa Ribera.

Andersen is executive director of the U.N. Environment Programme

AHMED AL-SHARAA

Deposing Assad

BY ROBERT FORD

Last December, after years of building a powerful armed faction—Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, classified internationally as a terrorist group—Ahmed al-Sharaa and his rebel alliance toppled Bashar Assad's brutal government in Syria.

Once aligned with al-Qaeda and then ISIS, the soft-spoken al-Sharaa later fought both groups aggressively to ensure his fighters answered to him. More recently, he assembled alliances with other Syrian rebels, often at gunpoint, and secured Turkish support. He also established a religiously conservative statelet in northwest Syria that ruled effectively and reached out to reassure minority groups—to beat Assad, the ambitious al-Sharaa understood he had to become a political leader as well as a military force.

Now interim President of all Syria, al-Sharaa balances between militants he once led and liberal Syrians relieved Assad is gone. Observers are left to wonder if al-Sharaa is an Islamist extremist whose moderate poses are only ploys for temporary political gain, or if he's more a pragmatic politician who exploited extremist groups to gain power.

Ford served as U.S. ambassador to Syria from 2011 to 2014

VOUGHT: AL DRAGO—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; MACHADO: ALFREDO LASRY R—GETTY IMAGES; KENNEDY: DAVID WILLIAMS FOR TIME; RIBERA: THIERRY MONASSE—GETTY IMAGES; AL-SHARAA: AREF TAMMAWI—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

T100
LEADERS

ELON MUSK

Slashing government

BY SIMON SHUSTER

The meteoric rise of Elon Musk has been punctuated by bouts of frenetic energy, which usually come over him when he takes on a new challenge. Musk's biographer, former TIME editor Walter Isaacson, has described these periods as "demon mode," and they have led Musk to some of his greatest conquests, like his reinvention of electric cars at Tesla, his takeover of Twitter, or his push into the cosmos with SpaceX, his rocket company.

After spending nearly $290 million in 2024 to help elect Donald Trump and other Republican candidates, Musk has applied this same energy to the task of dismantling the federal bureaucracy. In the name of efficiency, he has fired thousands of workers at some government agencies while attempting to close down others entirely. Despite the growing public backlash, Trump has applauded the effort. This time, Musk's demon mode has destroyed far more than it's created. And that seems to be the point.

Shuster is a TIME senior correspondent

ANDREA VIDAURRE

Clearing the air

BY ROBERT D. BULLARD

Today, ZIP codes are still one of the most potent predictors of an individual's health and well-being. Andrea Vidaurre has had a front-row seat as emissions suffocated her community in California's Inland Empire as 70,000-plus freight trucks crisscrossed its highways each day. The torch was lit for her leg of the environmental-justice marathon relay.

As co-founder of the People's Collective for Environmental Justice, Andrea has a unique ability to find the intersection of policy and people. She's used this skill to advocate for regulations that limit trucking and rail emissions, though such policies face an uphill battle under the new U.S. Administration. Her work shines a light on the compounding inequities that marginalized populations are often left to shoulder, and amplifies what has become a rallying cry for her community: "We're just trying to breathe."

Andrea Vidaurre is an environmental-justice change agent at the forefront of safeguarding people's rights to clean air, and she is an inspiration.

Bullard is the director of the Bullard Center for Environmental and Climate Justice at Texas Southern University

PHOTOGRAPH BY FABEHA MONIR

Muhammad *Yunus*

LAYING NEW FOUNDATIONS

By Hillary Rodham Clinton

After a student-led uprising toppled Bangladesh's authoritarian Prime Minister last year, a known leader stepped up to guide the nation toward democracy: Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus.

Decades earlier, Yunus established the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to empower the most marginalized communities through small loans, helping millions—97% of them women—build businesses, sustain their families, and reclaim their dignity. I first met Yunus when he traveled to Arkansas to help then governor Bill Clinton and me set up similar programs in the U.S. Since then, wherever I've traveled in the world, I have witnessed the extraordinary impact of his work—lives transformed, communities lifted, and hope reborn.

Now, Yunus has answered his country's call once more. As he shepherds Bangladesh out of the shadows of oppression, he is restoring human rights, demanding accountability, and laying the foundations for a just and free society.

Clinton, a Democrat, is a former U.S. Senator and Secretary of State

Keir Starmer

SHIFTING THE TIDE

By Ursula von der Leyen

As a young human-rights lawyer, Keir Starmer fought against the death penalty in courts across the world. Throughout his career, he worked to safeguard the values of justice and democracy—even taking on Vladimir Putin's government, representing the widow of murdered Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko. Those same principles have guided him since he became the U.K.'s Prime Minister this past July.

Nowhere is this clearer than in his steadfast support for a sovereign and democratic Ukraine. Under his leadership, the U.K. has signed a 100-year partnership with the government in Kyiv and stepped up military aid. He has also played an important role diplomatically maintaining global support for Ukraine. With the world in a period of geopolitical turmoil, both the E.U. and the U.K. recognize the need to take responsibility for the security of our continent. As we embark on building this new security architecture, I am glad to have someone with Keir Starmer's dedication and strong principles as a partner.

Von der Leyen is European Commission President

MUSK: KENNY HOLSTON—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; VIDAURRE: ULICES DEL TORO; YUNUS: BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; STARMER: BENJAMIN CREMEL—WPA POOL/GETTY IMAGES

LEE JAE-MYUNG

Charting a new path

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL

Nothing about Lee Jae-myung's political rise has been easy. Born the fifth of seven children to a farming family, Lee walked 10 miles round trip to elementary school daily, and later had his wrist crushed in a pressing machine while working underage in a factory. After stints as a mayor and governor, Lee lost South Korea's 2022 presidential election to Yoon Suk-yeol, and was stabbed in the neck two years later by a deranged critic. Now, the unlikely arc of Lee's story seems poised to end with his becoming his country's next leader. Lee led the charge for Yoon's impeachment following the then President's declaration of martial law in December, livestreaming himself climbing the National Assembly fence to bypass a police blockade to help repeal the order. As leader of South Korea's opposition, Lee is the clear favorite to win the coming election, though his reward will be dealing with an increasingly belligerent North Korea and an escalating trade war. Given the challenges he's already overcome, there's little chance Lee is cowed. "There are many ways that you can learn about the world," Lee told TIME in 2022. "But actually living it yourself, experiencing it, is a different thing."

Campbell is a TIME editor-at-large

Megyn *Kelly*

MEDIA MAGNATE

By Lara Trump

Megyn Kelly's journalism is unparalleled, and fearless. In 2024, she redefined media by talking about the toughest issues and engaging audiences across the spectrum. Megyn's sharp intellect and unwavering commitment to honest discourse have not only shaped public opinion but undoubtedly inspired a new generation of journalists. She's a trailblazer who isn't afraid to voice where she stands on any given issue, and her impact on the media landscape is undeniable. In March, she announced the launch of a new podcast network, MK Media, highlighting other standout perspectives. As someone who values strong, independent, female voices, I couldn't be prouder to see her recognized among the world's most influential people. Megyn Kelly is a force.

Trump, former co-chair of the Republican National Committee, is the host of My View With Lara Trump

Friedrich Merz

PRESCIENT POLITICIAN

By Mette Frederiksen

Europe stands at a crucial juncture in its history. Few articulate this better than Germany's Friedrich Merz.

Europe must not only become stronger and more adept at addressing critical challenges such as security and defense, the future of Ukraine, enhancing competitiveness, accelerating clean energy, and managing migration. It must also act swiftly.

From the outset, Merz has been remarkably clear on these priorities. His actions demonstrate a commitment to making bold and important decisions to bolster Germany's defense—and, by extension, Europe's.

There's a German saying: *"Der frühe Vogel fängt den Wurm."* (Or: The early bird catches the worm.) It underscores the importance of timeliness and making the most of one's opportunities. Friedrich Merz is an early bird, and I am confident he will leave a positive and enduring impact, ensuring a strong and resolute Europe.

Frederiksen is the Prime Minister of Denmark

HOWARD LUTNICK

Pushing tariffs

BY ERIC CORTELLESSA

A year ago, Howard Lutnick was a Wall Street power player. Running the financial-services firm Cantor Fitzgerald, he amassed an estimated net worth of more than $2 billion. Now he's at the center of Donald Trump's Washington. As the transition co-chair, he helped to shape the Administration, vetting staffers and filling the Cabinet with billionaires like himself.

As U.S. Commerce Secretary, Lutnick was one of the main officials who urged Trump toward a maximalist approach on tariffs, which triggered a global financial panic. He's at times drawn the ire of White House aides and business leaders, and some suspect he could take the fall if the nation enters a recession. Others see Lutnick, 63, as trying to expand his influence. He's made moves to fold the U.S. Postal Service, an independent agency, into the Commerce Department. Either way, Lutnick's proximity to power reflects one of Trump's core bets: that success in business can translate into success in government.

Cortellessa is a TIME senior correspondent

NOA ARGAMANI

Fighting for the hostages' return

BY DOUGLAS EMHOFF

The video of Noa Argamani on Oct. 7, 2023, is forever seared into my soul. She was joyfully dancing with so many others at the Nova music festival when Hamas launched its brutal terrorist attack. As she was kidnapped into Gaza on a motorcycle, her harrowing expression became a symbol of the pain and trauma Jews worldwide, myself included, continue to feel.

Noa was held hostage for 245 days, a period she called "a pure hell." Since her rescue, she has shown extraordinary courage and humanity in speaking out for the remaining hostages, including her partner Avinatan Or.

My wife Kamala Harris and I stand with Noa in fighting for the release of all the hostages. We cannot give up until every one of them is home.

Noa's advocacy has illuminated Hamas' extreme brutality, but more importantly, her bravery has embodied Jewish resilience and strength even in the worst moments. She is living proof to the world that, despite everything, "we will dance again."

Emhoff is the former Second Gentleman of the United States

LEE: LEE JIN-MAN—AP; KELLY: AARON SCHWARTZ—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; MERZ: ALEXANDRA BEIER—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; LUTNICK: WIN MCNAMEE—GETTY IMAGES; ARGAMANI: LEV RADIN—PACIFIC PRESS/ZUMA PRESS/ALAMY

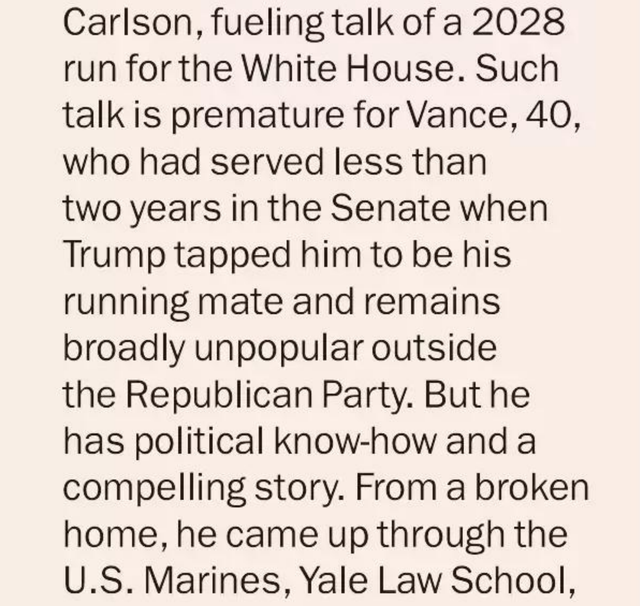
J.D. VANCE

Power player

BY MASSIMO CALABRESI

Normally, Vice Presidents fade into obscurity after taking office. Not so for J.D. Vance, whose profile and remit have grown since he and Donald Trump won last November's election. Vance was central to overcoming resistance among GOP Senators to some of Trump's controversial Cabinet picks and has taken a leading and contentious role on foreign affairs, including in peace talks between Ukraine and Russia. He's also become one of Trump's most prolific attack dogs on social media. Along the way, he's built an expanding list of pivotal supporters like Donald Trump Jr. and Tucker Carlson, fueling talk of a 2028 run for the White House. Such talk is premature for Vance, 40, who had served less than two years in the Senate when Trump tapped him to be his running mate and remains broadly unpopular outside the Republican Party. But he has political know-how and a compelling story. From a broken home, he came up through the U.S. Marines, Yale Law School, and the tech-bro world of Silicon Valley. Now, as Trump's No. 2, he's turned what was a political death sentence for his predecessor, Mike Pence, into a position of power, and potential.

Calabresi is TIME's Washington bureau chief



DUMA BOKO

Shifting gears

BY VIVIENNE WALT

Few predicted the seismic election upset that made Duma Boko President of Botswana. Last October, the 55-year-old Harvard-trained lawyer ousted the party that had ruled the nation of 2.5 million people since its independence from Britain nearly 60 years ago.

But in hindsight, the outcome seems almost inevitable. In a democratic, stable country with vast diamond reserves and the world's largest population of elephants, voters were increasingly frustrated over political corruption, and the huge influence of multinational giant De Beers, whose diamond trading accounts for more than 80% of Botswana's foreign exports. World diamond prices have been plummeting, as lower-cost lab-grown stones flooded the market.

Despite his impressive victory at the polls, Boko has no easy way to reverse the decline and fulfill his campaign promises, which include doubling the minimum wage, expanding social benefits for new mothers and seniors, and creating thousands of new jobs. He says he is eyeing cannabis and solar-power industries as two paths to better times. Whatever the recourse, he told the country bluntly: "We can no longer afford to depend on a single commodity."

Even in Botswana, diamonds might not be forever.

Walt is a TIME correspondent in Paris

Reshma Kewalramani

EXTRAORDINARY INNOVATOR

By Jason Kelly

Reshma Kewalramani's journey to become the first female CEO of a large, public U.S. biotechnology company after immigrating from India at age 11 embodies what makes America great. In 2018, her exceptional career in medical research led her to become the chief medical officer of Vertex Pharmaceuticals. Within two years, she was CEO.

Reshma sat on my board at Ginkgo Bioworks, and her insights proved invaluable: she knows how to effectively push the limits of science while navigating the drug-approval process. She told us that when you are doing something innovative, if it sounds crazy or impossible, that's OK—it's only because no one has done it before.

Under her leadership, Vertex secured the first-ever FDA approval for a CRISPR-based therapy, which treats sickle cell disease by correcting patients' own DNA mutations. Our bodies speak the language of DNA. Our best drugs in the future will use DNA to talk directly back to our bodies, leading to many more cures. Reshma is the kind of leader who can deliver that extraordinary future—it only seems crazy because no one's done it before.

Kelly is the co-founder and CEO of Ginkgo Bioworks

VANCE: ANNA MONEYMAKER—GETTY IMAGES; BOKO: JONAS ROOSENS—BELGA/REUTERS; KEWALRAMANI: ARAM BOGHOSIAN—ANTHEM MULTIMEDIA FOR VERTEX PHARMACEUTICALS

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MATTHEW 25: MINISTRIES

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Tedros Adhanom *Ghebreyesus*

GUARDIAN OF GLOBAL HEALTH

By Larry Brilliant

There have been seven directors-general of the World Health Organization since my first WHO job in India 50 years ago. They were dedicated physicians, scientists, and global diplomats. I have known them all.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had been DG for less than a year when he went to Thailand for an award ceremony recognizing leaders in medicine and public health. A group of dignitaries was onstage when a group of raucous singers and dancers swept up onto the stage and invited everyone to join them in a conga line. It is hard for me to imagine any of the previous DGs dancing in that conga line. But Tedros joined enthusiastically, and that is how I met this sui generis man who has transformed the global health landscape with visionary leadership and relentless support for science-based decisionmaking.

He has many firsts: the first DG from Africa, the first nonphysician, the first to face a global pandemic that killed millions, and now, the first to face the possibility of an irrational American withdrawal from the organization, which the U.S. helped found in 1948 and which has worked to keep Americans safer and healthier every year since then.

Tedros has been a gift to global health. He has carried the awesome responsibility of a global agency responsible for the health of people in over 194 countries—with an annual budget that works out to about 85¢ per person—with courage and wisdom. His leadership is principled. It is authentic. It is outcome-oriented. And he has made the world healthier than ever.

Brilliant is an epidemiologist who helped eradicate smallpox

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AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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PIONEERS

ANDREW FORREST. ROSÉ. BREANNA STEWART. ROBIN WALL KIMMERER. NAPHEESA COLLIER. DARIO AMODEI + MORE

Demis *Hassabis*

AI LAUREATE

By Jennifer Doudna

Demis Hassabis is reshaping what's possible in science. His work at DeepMind—most notably the development of AlphaFold, which earned him a share of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry—is already accelerating discoveries across biology and medicine. The ripple effects are real: labs around the world, including my own, are using his AI tools to tackle rare genetic diseases, antibiotic resistance, and even climate-driven challenges in agriculture. Demis brings a rare kind of mindset to biology, one shaped by deep study of neuroscience, cognition, and computation. He doesn't just build powerful systems; he builds understanding. His approach reveals biology as a system of patterns we can read, predict, and eventually design for in ways that have never been previously possible.

In our conversations, I've been struck by his clarity of vision and sense of responsibility. He's building tools that don't just help us understand life, but help us shape it wisely. The future of biology won't be siloed—it will be collaborative, interdisciplinary, and deeply creative. Demis is helping us get there faster.

Doudna is a Nobel Prize–winning biochemist, the founder of the Innovative Genomics Institute, and a professor at the University of California, Berkeley

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID VINTINER FOR TIME

T100
PIONEERS

BREANNA STEWART AND NAPHEESA COLLIER

Growing the game

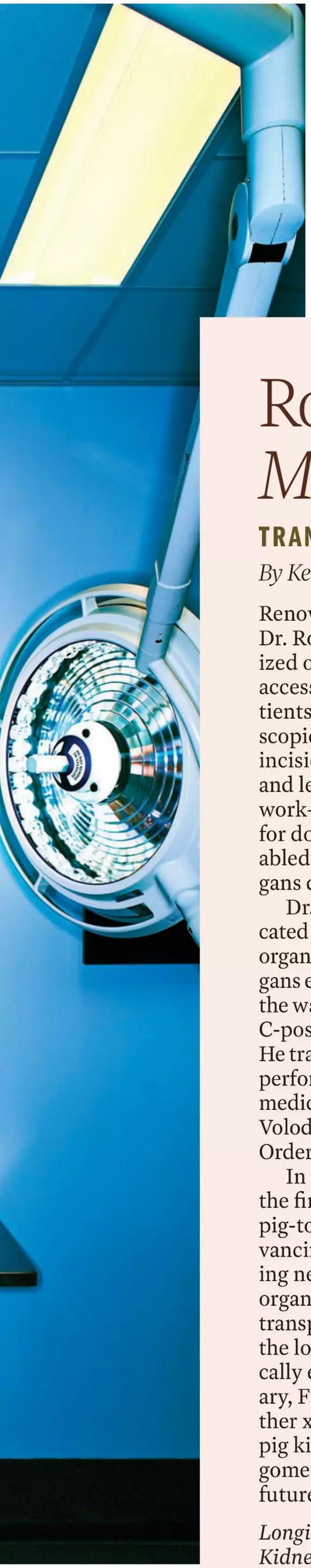
BY ALEX MORGAN

As an investor in Unrivaled, the women's 3-on-3 professional basketball league launched in January of this year, I have so much respect for Napheesa Collier and Breanna Stewart, the league's founders. Their ability to continue to shine in the WNBA—in fact, Phee and Stewie faced off in the 2024 finals—while building the next big thing blows me away. The dynamic duo stuck their necks out there to give players a chance to make money in the U.S. in the offseason, and not have to move their families across the world.

Unrivaled makes female athletes think about everything differently. It's not always just take the salary and sign on the dotted line and be happy. Sometimes you can just do it yourself better. That's what Phee and Stewie did here. The launch of Unrivaled will go down in history as a pivotal moment for continuing the tidal wave of momentum in women's sports.

Morgan is a World Cup and Olympic champion soccer player and entrepreneur

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD TRENT



Robert *Montgomery*

TRANSPLANT TRAILBLAZER

By Kevin Longino

Renowned surgeon and humanitarian Dr. Robert Montgomery has revolutionized organ transplantation, expanding access and improving outcomes for patients worldwide. He pioneered laparoscopic kidney donation, using smaller incisions to make live donation safer and less painful. Other groundbreaking work—including developing strategies for domino paired donations—has enabled thousands to receive lifesaving organs despite biological barriers.

Dr. Montgomery has also long advocated for the use of hepatitis C-positive organs—which would increase the organs eligible for transplant—and walked the walk in 2018 by accepting a hepatitis C-positive heart transplant for himself. He traveled to Ukraine during the war to perform transplants and deliver essential medical supplies. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky awarded him the Order of Merit Medal.

In 2021, Dr. Montgomery performed the first successful genetically modified pig-to-human kidney transplant, advancing xenotransplantation and offering new hope for addressing the global organ shortage. In 2024, he performed a transplant on a woman who has become the longest-living recipient of a genetically engineered pig kidney. In February, FDA approved clinical trials for further xenotransplants of these modified pig kidneys to begin this year. Dr. Montgomery's work has indelibly shaped the future of transplantation.

Longino is CEO of the National Kidney Foundation

Cordelia Bähr

SUING FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

By Katharine Hayhoe

If climate justice had a formula, it could be this: one tenacious lawyer plus 2,500 determined senior women equals a ruling that redefined climate accountability.

When Zurich-based attorney Cordelia Bähr realized elderly women were dying at higher rates from extreme heat, she didn't wait for politicians to act—she took them to court. As lead counsel for Klima-Seniorinnen Schweiz, she led an eight-year fight to hold the Swiss government accountable for failing to protect its most vulnerable citizens from climate change. And she won.

In a historic ruling last year, the European Court of Human Rights declared that inadequate climate action by a government violates fundamental human rights to protection from the "serious adverse effects of climate change on lives, health, well-being and quality of life." This sets a new legal precedent for individuals to hold their governments accountable. With science, law, and relentless determination, Bähr didn't just fight for justice—she redefined it.

Hayhoe is a climate scientist, a professor at Texas Tech University, and chief scientist for the Nature Conservancy

STEWART: DAVID BERDING—GETTY IMAGES; COLLIER: STEPH CHAMBERS—GETTY IMAGES; BÄHR: SHERVINE NAFISSI—GREENPEACE

TOMAS CIHLAR AND WESLEY SUNDQUIST

Innovative scientists

BY ALICE PARK

Today, antiviral medications can turn HIV, a once fatal infection, into a chronic condition. Nonetheless, the cocktail of pills remains out of reach for many—and lapses in the daily regimen make them less effective. Wesley Sundquist, a biochemist at University of Utah, and Tomas Cihlar, a virologist at Gilead, a biopharmaceutical company, have labored for more than a dozen years to turn one antiviral treatment, lenacapavir, into a twice-a-year therapy to prevent HIV infection in those at high risk. Sundquist laid the groundwork in studying one of HIV's proteins, the capsid, which creates a protective shell around the virus' genome; Cihlar visited his labs and was impressed enough to take his discoveries to Gilead. There, his team found ways to extend the effect of the drug over six months, meaning infected patients only receive two injections a year to treat HIV. Researchers are now studying lenacapavir in people who are not HIV positive but are at high risk of exposure. If approved, it would be the first twice-a-year injected drug to prevent HIV. Early results show great promise.

Park is a TIME senior correspondent

Andrew *Forrest*

TRANSFORMATIVE TITAN

By Fatih Birol

While some people say that transforming the energy system is too challenging, Andrew Forrest has made it his mission to prove them wrong. Not content with building one of the world's biggest mining companies, he's now in the process of turning it from a major emitter into a clean-energy powerhouse through a massive switch to solar, wind, batteries, and green hydrogen to power its operations,

way ahead of his rivals.

Blazing new trails is Andrew's modus operandi, something he does with his trademark Aussie charm. A former amateur boxer, he doesn't shy away from conflict. Raised in Australia's outback, he turned himself into one of the world's great industrialists through his foresight and grit, when some said he'd never make it. He's also been among the world's most generous philanthropists since before it was in vogue, reflecting his passion for helping people and planet.

With his determination to show cutting emissions and profit can go hand in hand, Andrew is the kind of pioneering business leader the world needs today.

Birol is the executive director of the International Energy Agency

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAM FERGUSON FOR TIME

Julie Burkhart

INCREASING ACCESS

By Charlotte Alter

Julie Burkhart has been fighting for decades to provide abortions in some of the most rural and conservative areas of the U.S. After Wyoming banned abortion in 2022, she joined other advocates to challenge the ban, and opened Wellspring Health Access, the state's only full-service abortion clinic. In 2024, a judge ruled in Wellspring's favor, declaring the near total ban unconstitutional. But in February, the governor signed new legislation requiring abortion clinics to be licensed as ambulatory surgical centers, forcing Wellspring to stop providing abortions while it challenges the regulation in court. The clinic is still open, taking phone calls and talking to patients even if it can't provide abortion services.

Burkhart is no stranger to the ups and downs of this fight—she has faced arson, death threats, and legal obstacles while starting clinics in Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma. She's now the co-owner of Hope Clinic in Illinois, which has seen a 700% increase in out-of-state patients since abortion restrictions went into effect in neighboring states. Burkhart is devoted to making sure patients can get abortion care, no matter where they live.

Alter is a TIME senior correspondent

CIHLAR: GILEAD SCIENCES INC.; SUNDQUIST: UNIVERSITY OF UTAH; BURKHART: DINA LITOVSKY—REDUX

LIANG WENFENG

Making AI more efficient

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL

It took a while for Silicon Valley to comprehend exactly what Liang Wenfeng had achieved. But soon markets were reeling, U.S. tech dominance was being openly questioned, and Liang had been propelled to global renown. By crunching data in a more efficient manner, Liang's obscure AI startup DeepSeek released a generative AI platform in January that was comparable to OpenAI's ChatGPT while using just a fraction of the bleeding-edge chips produced by Nvidia, which itself quickly lost $600 billion in market value, the largest drop for a single company in U.S. stock-market history. Meanwhile, the buzz around DeepSeek's low-cost AI helped add billions to the value of tech stocks in China and Hong Kong. By February, DeepSeek had surpassed ChatGPT to become the No. 1 free app on Apple's U.S. app store, and Liang, who grew up in a tiny village in China's southern province of Guangdong and studied computer science at Zhejiang University, was among the Chinese tech titans invited to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping. "We're not looking to make a quick profit," Liang, 40, told Chinese media. "We want to get out in front of the technology and help drive the entire ecosystem forward."

Campbell is a TIME editor-at-large

Rosé

SPARKLING SINGER

By Lily Collins

As a Blackpink fan, I was thrilled to be seated next to Rosé at a Saint Laurent show in Paris last year. Even more exciting was the fact that the two of us connected right away. She was so sweet and calm amid all the chaos of the cameras and the crowd, and we ended up chatting all night long about fashion, architecture, food, and travel. She immediately felt like a kindred spirit, and we've only grown closer since.

I've come to learn that not only is Rosé really genuine and down-to-earth, but she's also a total badass. She's such a dynamic performer and songwriter, and I think it's incredible that she's able to captivate arenas full of people as both a member of the biggest girl group in the world and also as a solo artist. Not to mention, her humor and deep soulful energy are even more captivating at a lunch for two. She's basically the definition of an icon and a boss. Her voice is so strong and her music is so much fun—and I love texting her every time I hear "APT." or "Toxic Till the End" on the radio.

I just adore Rosé's spirit and, really, everything about her. I'm so proud of all the things she's done in the past year, and I feel so lucky to call her a friend.

Collins is an actor and Emmy-nominated producer

Allison Sesso

FORGIVING DEBT

By Adam Conover

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans get sick or die for the crime of being unable to afford medical coverage, and over 100 million currently struggle with medical debt. Allison Sesso runs one of the only organizations that effectively address this crisis: Undue Medical Debt buys medical debt for pennies on the dollar, then does something unheard of: forgives it. I know—what a concept! As of 2024, the organization had forgiven more than $14 billion in debt, relieving over 9 million people of that burden. It's now partnering with local and state governments across the U.S. to make an even greater impact.

Allison's organization not only commits a stunning act of generosity, it also brings attention and awareness to a system we created, and can just as easily undo. In an era of lip service to making a better world, her work actually takes steps toward bringing that world into being.

Conover is a writer and comedian

LIANG: VCG/GETTY IMAGES; ROSÉ: GQ KOREA; SESSO: KRISTIN KARKOSKA

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM HEE JUNE

Robin Wall Kimmerer

SHARING ABUNDANCE

By Elizabeth Gilbert

Much has already been written about the unlikely success of the scientist, naturalist, and Indigenous elder Robin Wall Kimmerer. *Braiding Sweetgrass,* her meditation upon the interconnectedness of humans and nature, became a wildly successful best seller seemingly out of nowhere—despite having no mass-marketing campaign and an author with little social media presence.

But her success has never felt "unlikely" to me. Twelve years ago, after reading her first book, *Gathering Moss,* I took a pilgrimage to upstate New York to meet Robin in person. I had no choice; the beauty and power of her writing pulled me straight to her door. Since then, millions of readers have experienced that same magnetic pull—most recently with her newest offering, *The Serviceberry.* Just as nature finds a way, Robin has found her devoted readers. And during a time of tremendous environmental fear and uncertainty, we have found, to our immeasurable relief, our master teacher.

Gilbert is a best-selling author

Myles *Smith*

INSPIRING VOICE

By Shaboozey

I met Myles Smith in December at the Jingle Ball in New York City. Already a huge fan, I ran over and literally lifted him off the ground, filled with excitement. It honestly felt like meeting a long-lost brother.

Myles sees music as a limitless form of expression—and something meant to be shared with everyone. A singular talent, he has the ability to tell a compelling story over driven, energetic acoustic-guitar instrumentals with the sort of raw timbre that proves singer-songwriter music is still alive in the age of Top 40.

A warm, funny guy with an honest smile and a big heart, Myles encourages us through his music to see the world and all the wonderful things life and love have to offer. His music is welcoming and familiar, and I'd love to see his story told in a movie one day. Thank you, Myles, for inspiring me and countless others with your gift. We are forever grateful.

Shaboozey is a Grammy-nominated musical artist

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK HOENSCH

DARIO AMODEI

AI's bridge builder

BY ASHTON KUTCHER

As the CEO of Anthropic, Dario Amodei navigates the precipice between technological revolution and ethical obligation. His physics background provides the analytical foundation, while his neuroscience training informs his understanding of intelligence itself—skills perfectly calibrated for our moment of artificial awakening. His heart also plays a profound role in how he architects the future: he is kind, and that matters given the role he's playing in our world. Amodei doesn't just build advanced AI; he designs guardrails for it. While others race to deploy ever more powerful systems, Amodei deliberately applies the brakes, insisting that safety precede capability—a radical position in Silicon Valley's "move fast and break things" culture.

His recent essay "Machines of Loving Grace" reveals a leader grappling with AI's dual potential for liberation and disruption. This physics Ph.D. can explain quantum uncertainty and apply similar principles to navigating AI's probabilistic future, while maintaining that AI will be in service to a human quest rather than humans being in service to the quest of artificial general intelligence.

Amodei's approach resembles a master bridge builder who tests each support beam meticulously before allowing a single traveler to cross—knowing that what's being constructed will be humanity's most consequential crossing yet.

Kutcher, an actor and producer, is a co-founder of Sound Ventures, which invests in Anthropic

KIMMERER: ROSEM MORTON—THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES; SMITH: REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; AMODEI: FABRICE COFFRINI—AFP/GETTY IMAGES

TITANS

LORNE MICHAELS. MIUCCIA PRADA. DOUG MCMILLON. TED SARANDOS. SIMONE BILES + MORE

Serena *Williams*

THE GAME CHANGER

By Allyson Felix

Serena Williams won the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant, then returned to tennis after a difficult childbirth experience that threatened her life. Her perseverance inspired my own comeback story. After an unexpectedly difficult pregnancy that required an emergency C-section, and a lengthy recovery, I returned to the track to win two medals—a gold and a bronze—at the Tokyo Olympics.

Even as she's moved away from professional tennis, Serena continues to be impactful. Whether it's through her venture-capital fund that invests in companies founded by women and people of color, or joining the ownership group of the Toronto Tempo, a WNBA expansion team, or dancing during halftime at the Super Bowl, she continues to show that we, as athletes, are so far from one-dimensional.

She doesn't have to do any of this. She could take a break from being in the public eye and raise her family. Instead, she continues to pave the way. So many female athletes see ourselves in Serena. A win for her is a win for all of us.

Felix is an entrepreneur and seven-time Olympic gold medalist in track and field

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIENNE RAQUEL FOR TIME

T100
TITANS

BONNIE Y CHAN

Trading up

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL

Bonnie Y Chan doesn't believe a woman must be as aggressive and overbearing as some men to succeed in a male-dominated world. As co-COO of the Hong Kong Exchange and Clearing (HKEX) during the pandemic, when restaurants shut down at 6 p.m., she prepared simple meal kits for colleagues who didn't know how to cook and risked going hungry while working late. It's a people-centric approach that led to Chan's promotion last March, as the first female CEO of the HKEX.

It was a troubled time for the exchange, which had been the world's top IPO market seven times between 2009 and 2019 but slipped to 10th place in the first half of 2024. Still, Chan stayed true to her values, pushing to eradicate all-male boards from its listed companies, becoming the first major exchange to do so. By the year's end, HKEX ranked fourth for IPOs worldwide. Meanwhile, single-gender boards plummeted from 800 in 2022 to just 85 in early 2025, or 3% of listed companies.

Campbell is a TIME editor-at-large

STEPHEN SQUERI

Values-driven decisionmaker

BY ED BASTIAN

Stephen Squeri can be best summed up in one word: *magnanimous.* Since he took the helm of American Express in 2018, Steve has demonstrated the impact a leader with clear vision and deeply rooted values can have on a company. He is devoted to the notion of growth with purpose, which is evident in the investments American Express has made in expanding its global footprint, its dedication to its partners, and its passion for customer service.

It all flows from Steve's commitment to doing the right thing for people—AmEx customers, employees, and the communities they serve—which, in turn, is one of many reasons I'm proud that Delta is such a close partner. Steve is passionate about shaping future generations, whether it be improving access to values-based education, galvanizing support for those battling cancer, or growing communities through AmEx's unwavering support for small business. Bottom line: where Steve leads, excellence is sure to follow.

Bastian is CEO of Delta Air Lines

PHOTOGRAPH BY AMIT ISRAELI

Miuccia *Prada*

CREATIVE FORCE

By Baz Luhrmann

Some artists have to isolate themselves from the world in order to create their work, while others are able to access their creativity simply by living. Miuccia Prada is the latter. She is relentlessly interested in life—in meeting new people, engaging in different cultures, and going on creative adventures. Miuccia is incredibly intellectually robust and carries herself with an open and flowing energy. In addition to her great love of people, art, and life, she is an authentic and charismatic leader, one with a stunning clarity about decisionmaking and business.

The fashion that Miuccia designs, as the creative force behind Prada and Miu Miu, is completely true to her. She doesn't follow trends, she creates them. You can purchase something made by Prada one year and just know that it will still be in fashion five years later, because she's built a brand that has its own place in culture. Prada is all about the quality and richness of life, and that is also true of Miuccia.

Luhrmann is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker

Alex Karp

SECURITY EVANGELIST

By Nikhil Kumar

As Palantir, the data-analytics giant that works closely with U.S. armed forces and intelligence agencies, has grown in value on the stock market, its chief executive, Alex Karp, has become the embodiment of a new kind of Silicon Valley billionaire: an unashamed techno-nationalist who evangelizes Western power. In a February letter to his investors, he cited Samuel Huntington, the late political scientist who authored *The Clash of Civilizations:* "the rise of the West was not made possible 'by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion … but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence,'" Karp wrote, quoting Huntington. "He continued: 'Westerners often forget this fact; non-Westerners never do.'" The aggressive language has won Karp—who recently coauthored the New York *Times* best seller *The Technological Republic: Hard Power, Soft Belief, and the Future of the West*—legions of followers. Meanwhile, business is booming. In the same shareholder letter, Karp announced that Palantir's revenue in 2024's final quarter had increased by 36% over the corresponding period in 2023.

Kumar is a TIME executive editor

CHAN: VERNON YUEN—NURPHOTO/REUTERS; SQUERI: STEPHANIE KEITH—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; KARP: RYAN DAVID BROWN—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX

Lorne Michaels

MONUMENTAL WIT

By Will Ferrell

It's still hard for me to believe I know Lorne Michaels. It is also still hard for me to comprehend that I ever got picked by Lorne to be on the show.

I remember before my first episode of *Saturday Night Live,* there was a party where the cast got our photos taken for the opening credits. We were all very nervous, and Lorne came up to me and told me how funny he thought I was. How I reminded him of Chevy Chase and he thought I would do well. Well, guess what? I believed him. In one moment, Lorne filled me with confidence that allowed me to think I could be on national television—as part of the show I had always dreamed about, the show that has defined American comedy for 50 years. Lorne has seen something special in every one of us who've had the thrill of saying, "Live from New York, it's Saturday night!" He cultivates new talent and gives us the ability to express ourselves in ways we didn't know were possible. It's that ability, paired with his format, that makes us all come back again and again to watch on Saturday night.

And yes, it is live. Still.

Ferrell is a comedian, actor, and Emmy-winning producer

BLAKE LIVELY

Taking action

BY SHERRILYN IFILL

I don't know the Blake Lively of the red carpet. Or the Met Gala. I never watched *Gossip Girl.* The Blake Lively I know is a philanthropist and a student of our country's most intractable problems. She and her husband Ryan Reynolds reached out in 2019 to make a contribution to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. I had been getting a few of these calls, as our work fighting against voter suppression and police brutality was receiving national attention. I'm always curious about the kind of research famous people do before they make that cold call to offer their support. The ones I have remained in relationship with are those who, like Blake, really did their homework. I admired immediately her curiosity, and her sincere work to understand the conditions that shape this country. I remember an early conversation in which she expressed frustration that so much of our nation's history was not part of the instruction she had received as a student. Her commitment to filling those gaps—and becoming the most fully informed and prepared citizen—is what I appreciate most about her. Blake is a serious person. She's a risk taker. And she's committed to moving this country forward. For her children. And for mine.

Ifill is a civil rights lawyer

Percival *Everett*

RADICAL STORYTELLER

By Cord Jefferson

There's a moment that may surprise you reading Percival Everett's novel *James,* a reimagining of Huck Finn's Black sidekick and their treacherous journey to freedom. It's the moment when you take a break from laughing hysterically to realize you're laughing at a book about slavery. Many writers are afraid to insert levity in stories of tragedy, particularly stories of violent prejudice. But *James,* which won the National Book Award, shows that to omit joy is to do a disservice to the people who endured those tragedies—people who, despite their circumstances, always found ways to fall in love, have children, create art, and, indeed, laugh.

There's a lesson in there about how to write, but there's also one about how to live. Percival is a writer, painter, musician, equestrian, fly fisherman, mathematician, father, husband, and professor. It would all be annoying if I didn't learn so much from him—chiefly that life is long, arduous, and unfair, but it's always worth living.

Jefferson, a director and writer, won an Oscar for his screenplay of American Fiction, *his adaptation of Everett's book* Erasure

PHOTOGRAPH BY DYLAN COULTER

MICHAELS: JESSE DITTMAR—REDUX; LIVELY: GareTH CATTERMOLE—GETTY IMAGES; EVERETT: DYLAN COULTER—GUARDIAN/EYEVINE/REDUX; SARANDOS: CHARLEY GALLAY—GETTY IMAGES FOR NETFLIX

TED SARANDOS

Savvy streaming executive

BY SHONDA RHIMES

Fearless. That's the only way I can describe Ted Sarandos. Fearlessly smart, fearlessly innovative, fearlessly truthful. In an industry quick to offer platitudes, he leans into the truth.

Maybe it's instinct, maybe it's all the data he has backing him up, but Ted's truth-telling makes ideas better. And when you work with him, your ideas matter. What he's built over the past 25 years is astonishing—a house of creativity that is constantly heading into the future. Ted's genuine love of television and movies has helped him turn Netflix, and the streaming industry as a whole, into something that none of us can live without.

I love that I am along for the ride.

Rhimes is the CEO of Shondaland and an Emmy-nominated producer and writer

Lisa *Su*

STRATEGIC CEO

By Andrew Ng

Lisa Su's leadership of AMD has been phenomenal. She became its CEO in 2014 when the company faced intense challenges, turned it around, and dramatically increased its market share in PC central processing units. She also expanded the company significantly in gaming, data centers, and embedded devices. She oversaw the development of the Zen chip architecture and introduced the hugely successful line of Ryzen and Epyc processors. Her acquisition of chipmaker Xilinx gave AMD new strength in programmable system-on-a-chip devices and inference accelerators. Most importantly for AI, she's positioned the company's chips to compete as a credible alternative to Nvidia's graphics processing units.

Not every executive can be both grounded and visionary. But Lisa—a former electrical engineer who is charting a transformative course for AMD—continues to make her mark on our world, and all of us are better for it.

Ng is the founder of DeepLearning .AI and the managing general partner of AI Fund

PHOTOGRAPH BY GUERIN BLASK FOR TIME

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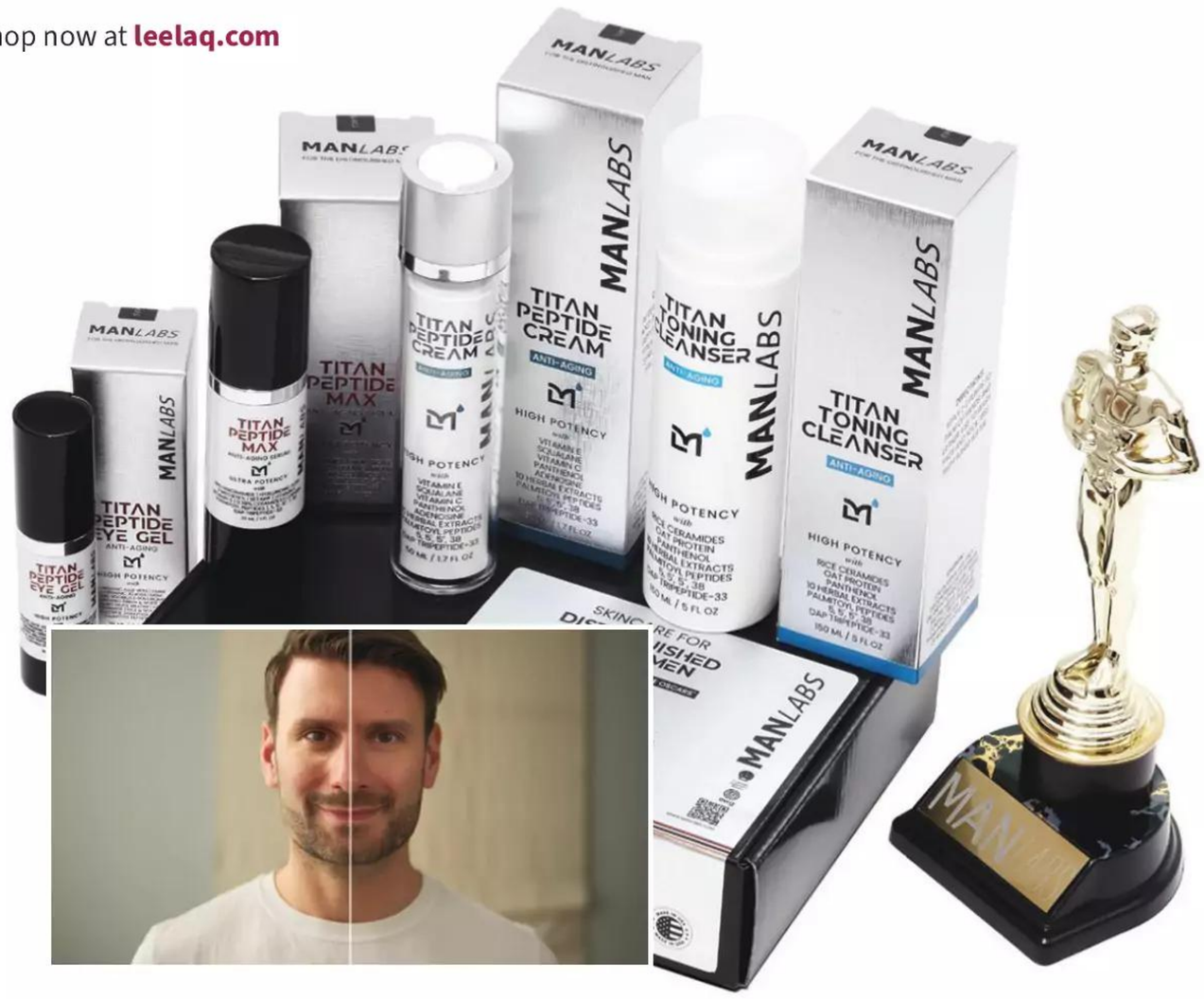

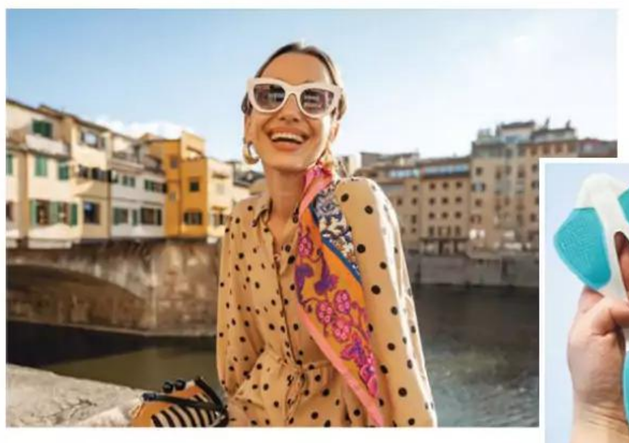

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Joe Rogan

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

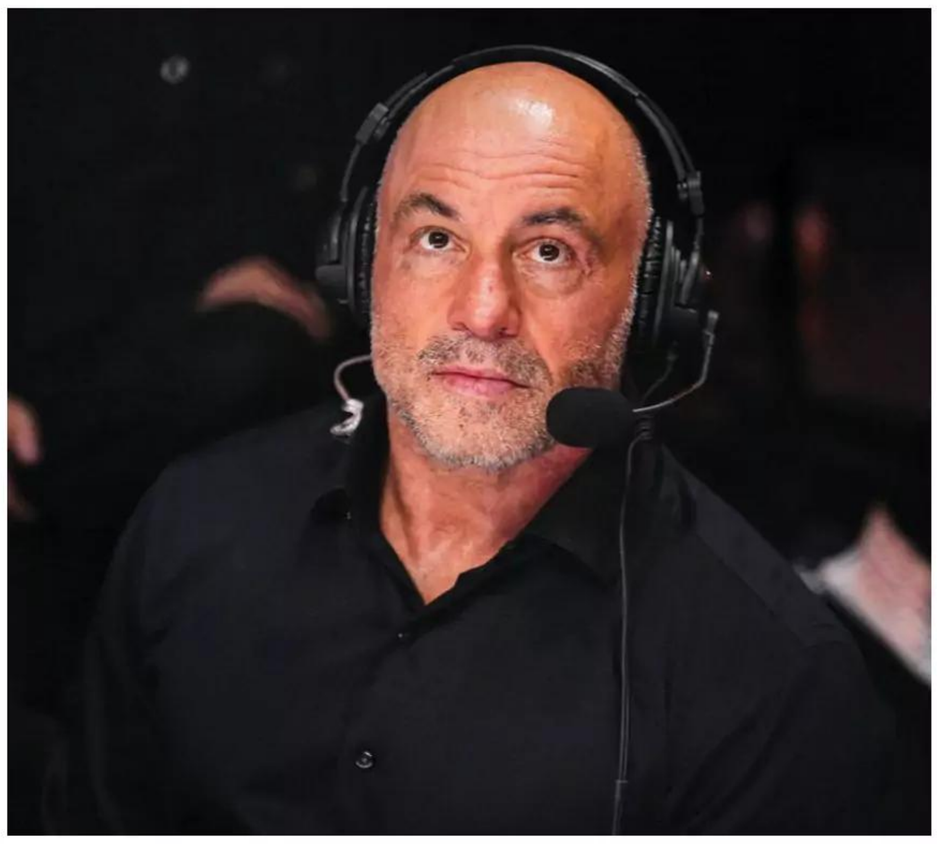
By Mike Rowe

I'd like to tell you that I enjoyed every moment of my interview with Joe Rogan, but that wouldn't be entirely true. Because Joe Rogan didn't interview me, he talked to me. For over three hours, we had ourselves a chat. The same kind of chat he's had with comedians and kickboxers, inventors and iconoclasts, dilettantes and devotees, physicians and politicians; an authentic conversation with no agenda, fueled by his own insatiable curiosity, and all the time in the world.

Never mind podcasting—Joe Rogan has changed broadcasting. His conversations have moved markets, influenced elections, and introduced millions of people to countless subjects they didn't know they were interested in. He has defied our short attention spans and given his guests—for better and worse—enough time to reveal their true selves. In other words, by letting people talk, he's changing the way we listen.

And that is changing everything.

Rowe, a TV and podcast host, is the creator of Dirty Jobs *and the CEO of the mikeroweWORKS Foundation*



MARK ZUCKERBERG

Going all in

BY DREW HOUSTON

Mark Zuckerberg has always had the courage to bet boldly on the future. Long before others saw the potential, he invested aggressively in virtual and augmented reality, later staking Meta's identity on a vision others couldn't yet see.

More recently, his belief in open-source AI—exemplified by Meta's groundbreaking Llama models, downloaded more than a billion times worldwide since the initiative's launch in 2023—has reshaped the industry, democratizing innovation and making AI more accessible and affordable for all of us.

What I admire most is his unwavering conviction. Mark never does anything halfway, in business or in life—whether mastering mixed martial arts, big-wave surfing in Kauai, or making sure he's home in time to tuck his three daughters into bed.

When Mark believes in something—a technology, a principle, a bold fashion choice—he commits completely, guided by vision rather than convention. This fearless resolve fuels Meta's mission of building the future of human connection.

Houston is the co-founder and CEO of Dropbox and a member of Meta's board of directors

ED BASTIAN

Respected leader

BY KEN CHENAULT

In both the most challenging and best of times, Ed Bastian's values hold firm. The hallmark of his leadership is people and purpose. His unwavering commitment to employees has translated into unmatched customer service and consistently successful outcomes for Delta's shareholders. An iconic American company driven by its values, Delta celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2025. Ed has built on that legacy and those values to earn the trust and loyalty of the 100,000 Delta employees dedicated to the promise of its mission to connect the world, and the hundreds of thousands of passengers it carries to almost 300 destinations daily. And, while he is the epitome of a servant leader, make no mistake, he is a tough-minded business executive. The trust and respect he's earned from his people and customers are why he is viewed as one of the most principled and successful business leaders of our time.

Chenault is the chairman and managing director of General Catalyst

ROGAN: JEFF BOTTARI—ZUFFA LLC/GETTY IMAGES; ZUCKERBERG: JASON HENRY—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; BASTIAN: BRIDGET BENNETT—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

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JONATHAN GREENBLATT

Combatting antisemitism

BY VAN JONES

Protecting the Jewish people has never been an easy job. But when threats escalated, Jonathan Greenblatt transformed the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) into an indispensable shield. In 2024 alone, the ADL briefed 17,000 law-enforcement officers, analyzed 10 million extremist messages, and processed 17,000 antisemitic incident reports. It's helped federal agencies and tech companies, and provided education materials for children. Greenblatt has challenged antisemitism on both sides of the aisle, and maintained his commitment to civil rights. After pushing for a campus crackdown on antisemitism, he spoke out against deporting student protesters. His critics have come from both left and right. But so have the threats to Jewish safety. In a moment that demands operational excellence and moral clarity, Greenblatt delivers both.

Jones, a political commentator, is the founder of DreamMachine.org

Simone *Biles*

RAISING THE BAR

By Aly Raisman

Simone Biles is a gem—one of a kind, forged by relentless hard work and polished by her own determination. She shines with a brilliance that sets her apart.

Simone dominates gymnastics, performing skills that push beyond what was once thought possible. Her routines are so difficult, my teammates and I used to joke that we were all competing for second place. Even as the GOAT, she continues to push herself—defying the very notion of limits.

With five signature skills, she has etched her name into the sport.

Simone has faced—and withstood—mounting expectations, pressures, and adversity, which seem to intensify each year. Through it all, she has embraced her vulnerability, while refusing to let it define or limit her. She is both deeply human and undeniably superhuman—a combination that makes her impact profound. She inspires us to believe that we, too, can persevere. That we, too, can shatter limits.

Simone has changed lives by bringing mental health and athlete safety to the forefront. She has transformed gymnastics—and even sport itself. But her greatest legacy may be ensuring a better future for those who follow.

Raisman is a three-time Olympic gold medalist in gymnastics

PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON BRUTY

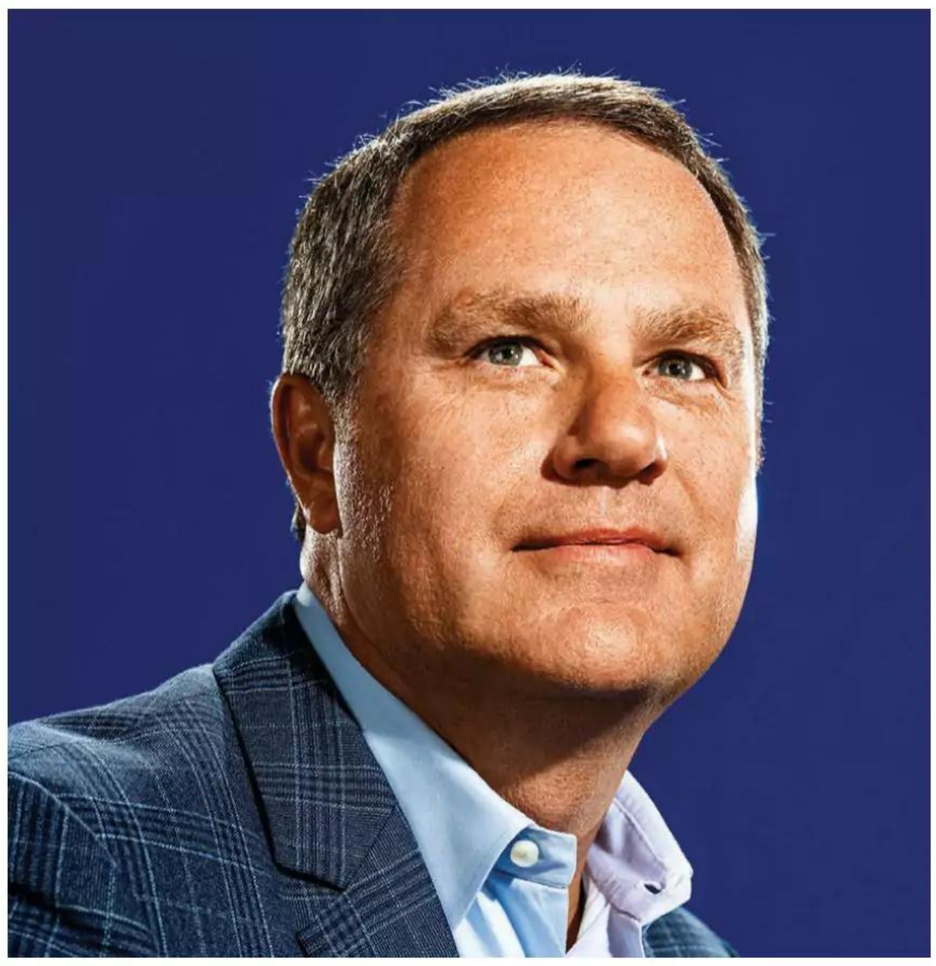
Doug McMillon

STEERING A GOLIATH

By Indra Nooyi

It's not easy to run a global retailer these days with online shopping, home delivery, fast fashion, and AI all buffeting your traditional big-box retail business. Doug McMillon has shown us all it can be done—reviving the brick-and-mortar with an eye to improving the in-store experience while investing in e-commerce, replicating the successful "everyday low prices" U.S. model globally, and rebuilding the talent base in the company for the future. This is why Walmart is the behemoth it is today, and why its market value would make it among the largest economies in the world. But Doug is more than that. He has a deep sense of purpose. He views his associates as the key performance drivers and treats them with respect, he invests to improve Walmart's environmental footprint, and judiciously engages in larger societal issues. Behind his approachable smile lies an incredible leader, deeply committed to his family, faith, community, and country.

Nooyi is the former chair and CEO of PepsiCo



GREENBLATT: JEMAL COUNTESS—GETTY IMAGES FOR ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE; BILES: ANYCHANCE/GETTY IMAGES; MCMILLON: CHRISTIE HEMM KLOK

INNOVATORS

LARRY FINK. JON M. CHU. MICKALENE THOMAS. SANDRA DÍAZ. SKYE PERRYMAN + MORE

Snoop *Dogg*

SUPERFLY SPIRIT

By Hoda Kotb

Snoop Dogg once told me he's a "moment" type of guy, and if the moment's right, he'll grab it. I'll say. The world's warmest cool kid has been carpe diem–ing for more than three decades. With his signature superfly charm, Snoop has remained consistently current and effortlessly authentic, all while rocking a jumpsuit. From his roots in gangster rap to his Cheech & Chong friendship with Martha Stewart, Snoop vibes with every generation.

I watched him work his mellow magic at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Athletes and audiences couldn't get enough of his joyful spirit. I'll never forget when gymnasts Simone Biles and Jordan Chiles spotted USA's hype man grooving in the stands and joined him, a little hit of fun at their stressful qualifying round. Whenever I saw him, he'd dance his way over to me. "C'mon, girl, show me what you got!" I dropped it like it was hot.

I gotta say, there's just something about this guy that makes me—and millions of his fans—feel so happy and loved. Do I think "Uncle Snoop" is the legit top dog for 2025? Fo shizzle.

Kotb is an Emmy-winning broadcast journalist

PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIENNE RAQUEL FOR TIME

Christian Happi

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

By Pardis Sabeti

Christian Happi has been described as a force of nature.

For 20 years, I've seen that force up close—a limitless energy and will, and dedication to science and improving lives, that makes the impossible possible. It overcame harrowing obstacles as we pursued a deadly virus, Lassa, in rural Nigeria. It built the African Centre of Excellence for Genomics of Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) to educate future generations of African scientists and launched its Sentinel program to prevent and mitigate outbreaks.

And it led ACEGID and Sentinel in responding to COVID-19, Mpox, and Ebola, training thousands of frontline scientists from across Africa, and creating a world-class genome center in rural Nigeria.

Christian won't rest until every child is safe from infectious disease, with African scientists leading the charge—because a force like his doesn't just make history, it shapes the future.

Sabeti, a computational geneticist, is a member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard

Ma Yansong

TRUE VISIONARY

By George Lucas

I have been a fan of architect Ma Yansong from his earliest works. His designs never cease to amaze and inspire me. This year, he has unveiled projects that include a striking building in Denver that takes inspiration from canyons, and Fenix, a spiraling new art museum in the Netherlands that explores human migration. Like his mentor, the great Zaha Hadid, he has been at the forefront of a massive change in architecture that will transform our structures for generations.

It's why I was so excited to collaborate with him on the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, which opens next year. I believe visitors will come not just for the collection, but also the building—it's a work of art in and of itself. Ma is a great and willing partner in the creation process. It is a joy working with him.

Lucas is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker and philanthropist

PHOTOGRAPH BY LI XIAO

WENDY FREEDMAN

Measuring the cosmos

BY JANNA LEVIN

Imagine an infinite universe expanding in all directions. Visualization is impossible. Questions abound. But cosmologist Wendy Freedman is able to conceive of these heady abstractions in concrete, physical terms. Remarkably, she has also managed to measure the actual expansion of the universe, observing its rate and its acceleration since the early universe. Seen in her measurements is the pressure of dark energy driving the expansion ever faster. From afar, as a graduate student in the ’90s, I watched Wendy’s quiet tenacity and astounding composure as she presented her results, then controversial, to a pressurized storm of critique. Calmly, she described the observations and her conclusions as she found herself at the epicenter of one of modern cosmology’s most significant debates—that of the universe’s age. A consistent history of our universe began to emerge with a clarity that exposed other conundrums. Today, Wendy is again at the center of a tension thrumming at the nexus of our understanding of the early universe, its expansion, and the cosmos as we observe, all the while exhibiting her masterful calm.

Levin is an astrophysicist

HAPPI: TOM SAATER; YANSONG: MAD; FREEDMAN: NANCY WONG/UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SANDRA DÍAZ

Tallying nature

BY ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA

Good teachers not only know the number of children in their nursery, they also understand the traits of every individual child and the dynamics of interactions in class. What a good teacher does in a classroom, ecologist Sandra Díaz does for the natural world.

Counting what is out there in the natural world seems simple, but it's an important endeavor for scientific research and protecting biodiversity around the world. A professor of community and ecosystem ecology at Argentina's Córdoba National University, Sandra uses her research to assess and quantify functional biodiversity, helping to lift our understanding of this crucial project from simply counting species to a complex examination of their roles in different ecosystems.

Yet Sandra's work resonates with me not only as a fellow lover of nature. She is an indefatigable diplomat on the front lines of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. With 1 million of the planet's 8 million plant and animal species at risk of extinction and scarce funding to protect nature, the world needs many more leaders like Sandra.

Mrema is deputy executive director of the U.N. Environment Programme

Jon M. Chu

MAGICMAKER

By Michelle Yeoh

The first project of Jon M. Chu's that caught my eye was his documentary on Justin Bieber. Jon saw beyond the tabloid stories about Justin's relationships and scandals to the young man underneath, who was very dedicated to his craft—and very lonely. I thought, this is a director who sees into the heart of things.

Making *Crazy Rich Asians,* that's when we really bonded, and I started to appreciate how talented he was at leading a room with patience and humor. He's a visionary, so he knows what he wants, but he always listens, and he's never afraid to let you try things.

When he called me about *Wicked,* I reminded him: I'm not a singer. But that's the power of persuasion that Jon Chu has. He makes you believe you can do the impossible. He coaxes what he needs out of us to help him tell stories, to push boundaries, and then he elevates our voices (OK, my voice especially), bringing joy to the millions who love his films.

To this baby genius, who I'm proud to call a friend and an honorary son all at once, I will always be eternally grateful.

Yeoh is an Oscar-winning actor

Skye Perryman

TAKING THE GOVERNMENT TO COURT

By Kelley Robinson

Skye Perryman works tirelessly every day to safeguard our enduring, yet fragile, democracy. When Donald Trump's federal-funding freeze sparked fear and confusion across the country, Skye acted decisively. As president of Democracy Forward, she mobilized a rapid-response legal team and filed the nation's first lawsuit challenging the freeze, winning the crucial administrative stay (and later injunction) that halted it nationwide. Whether litigating policy in our nation's highest courts or speaking with Medicaid recipients in small towns, she understands that institutional power structures concede nothing without pressure and demand from the people.

When Skye took the helm of Democracy Forward in 2021, she knew the work ahead would not be easy, but was desperately needed. Her work is now more critical than ever before. There is no question that we are living through uncertain, unstable, and scary times for so many Americans. We are moving through a moment that requires bold, swift action—Skye has shown time and again that she is willing and able to meet this moment.

Robinson is president of the Human Rights Campaign

LARRY FINK

Leading with empathy

BY BETH FORD

What a year my friend Larry Fink had. Already well known, respected, and incredibly influential as a founder and the CEO of the world's largest asset manager, BlackRock, he took it to another level with three groundbreaking acquisitions, including the two largest alternative asset management deals ever. In a bumpy global environment, his voice has never been more important.

I was recently reminded of what strikes me most about Larry when I joined him for a discussion about the retirement crisis. A third of Americans don't have savings to retire, and no word is more feared than *retirement*. Larry got energized around how we MUST be able to talk about uncomfortable topics like Social Security, health care, and the challenges we face. His concern was genuine … as evidenced by a backstage moment that was pure Larry.

Two speakers were onstage discussing the risks taken by their union members—firefighters and construction workers—every day. Larry shushed folks trying to get his attention, noting he wanted to listen and understand. Then we were called to the stage, and where was he? Back with the speakers as they departed, thanking them and the workers they represented.

Larry's humanity informs his influence, and that is what makes him truly special.

Ford is CEO of Land O'Lakes

TIM CADOGAN

Crowdfunder

BY SARAH FRIAR

Just days into Tim Cadogan's tenure as CEO of GoFundMe in March 2020, the pandemic hit. Offices closed overnight. Communities faced unprecedented uncertainty. Tim stepped up with clarity, compassion, and resolve. Under his steady leadership, GoFundMe swiftly became a lifeline, enabling over 175,000 campaigns across the U.S. in just the first half of the year.

Today, Tim has transformed GoFundMe into a vital lifeline for communities around the world—from supporting families devastated by California wildfires to mobilizing humanitarian aid abroad or easing burdens of health care expenses.

Tim embodies what authentic leadership looks like today. He demonstrates that true strength doesn't seek attention—it quietly does what's necessary, with empathy and unwavering determination. Tim has redefined the impact a business can have, proving it can be both deeply human and remarkably resilient, especially when the path forward is unclear. And he always does it with a wry sense of humor.

Friar is the chief financial officer of OpenAI

DIAZ: DANIEL M. CÁCERES; CHU: YURI HASEGAWA—REDUX; PERRYMAN: JEMAL COUNTESS—GETTY IMAGES FOR PEOPLE'S RALLY TO CANCEL STUDENT DEBT; FINK: KRISZTIAN BOCSI—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; CADOGAN: BETTY LAURA ZAPATA—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

JOSH KOSKOFF

Intrepid lawyer

BY CHRIS MURPHY

For almost two decades, the federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act prevented gun manufacturers from being held accountable for their role in the uniquely American epidemic of gun violence. Josh Koskoff, a feisty, public-interest-minded lawyer in Connecticut, dared to challenge what was believed to be an impenetrable shield—and won.

When Josh agreed to help the families of Sandy Hook victims take on Remington, the company that manufactured and marketed the AR-15-style rifle used to murder 20 children and six adults in Newtown, Conn., he knew it would be an uphill battle. But in 2022, his novel approach won a $73 million settlement for the families.

Josh's arguments—focused on corporate misconduct, not the Second Amendment—have become the model for holding the gun industry to account. In May, he filed lawsuits on behalf of Uvalde, Texas, families against gun manufacturer Daniel Defense, Meta, and Activision for their alleged roles in marketing AR-15-style rifles to a teenager who turned 18 just minutes before purchasing that rifle. No amount of money will bring back loved ones. But Josh gives the families he represents a real chance to seek justice.

Murphy, a Democrat, is a U.S. Senator for Connecticut

PHOTOGRAPH BY MALIKE SIDIBE

Mickalene *Thomas*

MASTER OF HER CRAFT

By Alicia Keys

As artists, it can often feel like we're expected to stay consistent, stay the course, just keep doing what we've always done. But Mickalene Thomas doesn't subscribe to that way of thinking. With her art—including in "All About Love," her exhibition currently on tour—she's constantly creating new lanes, breaking boundaries, and exceeding expectations. She plays in all realms—photography, painting, video, fashion, furniture—and creates stunning, dynamic worlds in every one. Even across different mediums, she's able to create synergy between all of her pieces. You can tell right away when you're looking at something created by Mickalene. She's a mastermind at conveying poignant messages through striking visuals, and stepping into one of her shows feels like entering another world—it's one of many reasons my husband, Kasseem Dean, and I are so honored to include her work in The Dean Collection. There's nothing else quite like it. Mickalene herself is walking art. She has such a distinct presence and aura that it's impossible not to feel inspired by her. The art and the artist both are bold, fearless, and fierce. She is uncontainable, a true giant!

Keys is a Grammy-winning musician

Nikki Glaser

COMEDIC GENIUS

By Ali Wong

In the days leading up to this year's Golden Globes, all I could think about was how excited I was to watch Nikki Glaser host. Successfully hosting an award show is such a hard thing to do, because you have to toe the line between celebrating and poking fun at people in the room. I just knew Nikki would kill it. And she did—with grace, great jokes, and incredible outfit changes.

Nikki is one of the most hardworking people I know, but she makes her comedy feel effortless. Her writing is phenomenal, with not a single word or syllable wasted. Watching her is always a thrill—not only because she's so unapologetically hot, but also because her humor is so unique and darkly funny that you never know what she's going to say next. Every time she steps onstage, it's like she's performing magic tricks. You can't look away.

There's nobody else doing it like Nikki, and I love seeing her shine.

Wong is a comedian, writer, and Emmy-winning actor and producer

KOSKOFF: SETH WENIG—AP; THOMAS: THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; GLASER: JEN ROSENSTEIN

Kwame Onwuachi

COOKING UP CHANGE

By Keke Palmer

Kwame Onwuachi is the embodiment of brilliance, passion, and perseverance. I'm talking about a chef whose heart, soul, and creativity shine through every dish he serves. From his West African roots to his upbringing in the Bronx, Chef Kwame has turned every challenge into opportunity, showing the world the power of culinary expression. He's rewriting the narrative in spaces that once overlooked Black chefs and has brought his story into each of his restaurants, including Dogon, the Afro-Caribbean eatery he opened in D.C. this past fall. What I think I admire most is Chef Kwame's unshakable commitment to breaking boundaries and continuing to elevate others along the way. He is not just cooking meals—he's changing lives and changing the game. His work and his spirit have inspired so many of us. The kitchen is his oyster, and I cannot wait to see what he cooks up next.

Palmer is an Emmy-winning actor, author, and producer

ISMAHANE ELOUAFI

Sowing resilience

BY BILL GATES

Ismahane Elouafi holds the keys to feeding our future. At a time when more people around the world are struggling to put food on the table for their families, CGIAR—the agricultural research organization she runs—is finding new ways to reduce poverty, increase food security, and improve nutrition.

I met Ismahane on her very first day on the job, and I was immediately blown away by her brilliance and passion. As the former chief scientist at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, she understands the unique challenges faced by farmers in regions like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These farmers rely on the crops they grow to feed their families and earn a living, and they are among the most vulnerable to climate change's wide-reaching effects, from unpredictable weather to rising temperatures. Under Ismahane's leadership, CGIAR helps millions of people grow stronger, healthier crops; restore damaged soil; and more. CGIAR's mission to make the global food supply more reliable and protect natural resources is as important now as it's ever been. The Gates Foundation is proud to partner in this work, and the world is lucky to have Ismahane leading the way toward a future where no child goes hungry.

Gates is the chair of the Gates Foundation

RICHARD THOMPSON

Microplastic detective

BY BILL MCKIBBEN

Marine biologist Richard Thompson was out looking at barnacles in tide pools one morning in 1993 when he started noticing small pieces of plastic deposited by the tide—lots of them. Years later, he coined the word *microplastics,* which helped everyone else see this new scourge too. The tiny particles have been found everywhere from clouds to the human bloodstream, but the consequences for human and environmental health are only just starting to be understood.

At first he helped organize beach cleanups; others have tried to vacuum the stuff from the seas. But in recent years Thompson, director of the Marine Institute at the U.K.'s University of Plymouth, has been clear about what the only solution really is: as he wrote recently, "regulators, governments, and citizens all urgently need to turn off the tide of plastic pollution at its source by reducing the production of plastics." From his pioneering research to pushing for policy change, Thompson has been pivotal to efforts to protect the ocean, and us all.

McKibben is an author and environmentalist

ONWUACHI: SCOTT SUCHMAN—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; ELOUAFI: AZIZ KARIMOV—GETTY IMAGES; THOMPSON: A.K. PURKISS

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1 Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve. 2 Sources: National Mining Association and Kitco.

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Chutatip 'Nok' *Suntaranon*

VIBRANT CHEF

By Mike Solomonov

Before you ever even see her cook, let alone taste her food, you can tell very quickly that chef Chutatip "Nok" Suntaranon is a special person. She's wild and whimsical, and somehow immediately has an emotional impact on just about everybody she comes into contact with. Talking to Nok for even a few minutes can change the course of your entire day for the better. It's clear everything she does is from the heart, and that certainly includes her cooking.

Nok's Thai cuisine embodies everything she's gone through and everything she's worked for, which means that her dishes are vibrant, personal, and full of flavor. Nok lights up any room that she enters, and her Philly restaurant, Kalaya, is no exception. She's given everyone in the city the ability to experience an incredible meal in a beautiful space, something truly special. Eating Nok's food—and being her friend—is a very visceral, delicious experience.

Solomonov is a James Beard Award–winning chef

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL PERSICO

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