

# TIME

CHAPTER 4 ★ AMERICAN HISTORY

critical race theory

1619

# THE

Board of Education

\*this will be on the test

1776

patriots

controversial issues of public policy and social affairs

race

# HISTORY

concerned parents

America

patriotism

advocacy groups

# WARS

curriculum

historical facts

slavery

patriotic education

Declaration of Independence

inclusion

civil rights

endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights

What does this say about America?

Is this really true?

How do we know?

## THE POLITICS OF TEACHING AMERICA'S PAST

by OLIVIA B. WAXMAN



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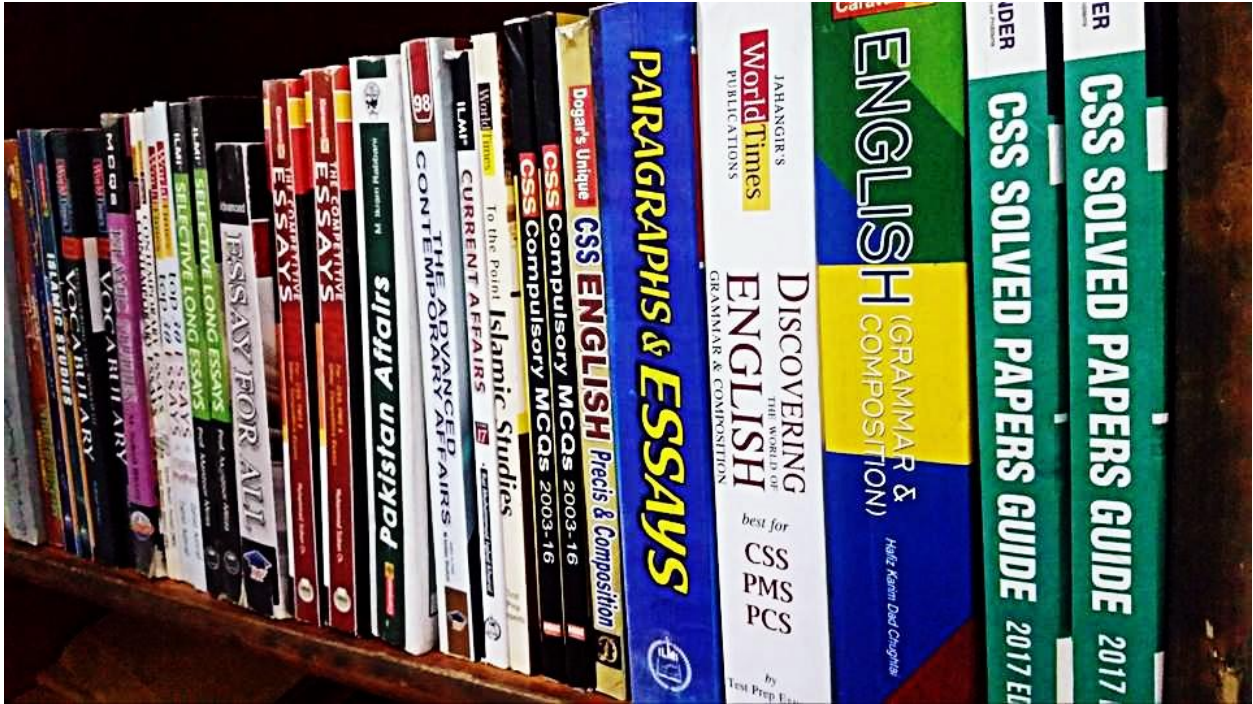
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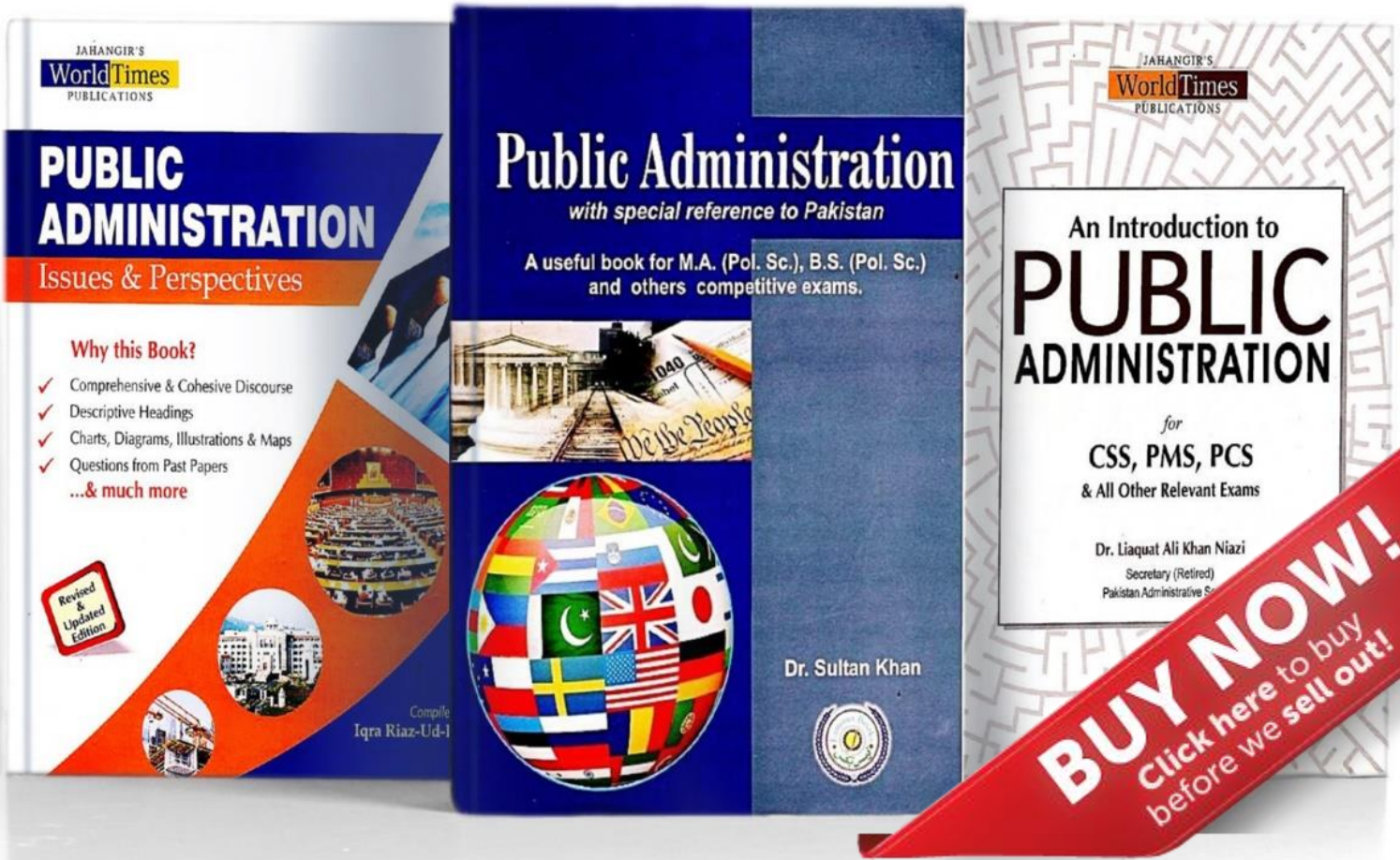


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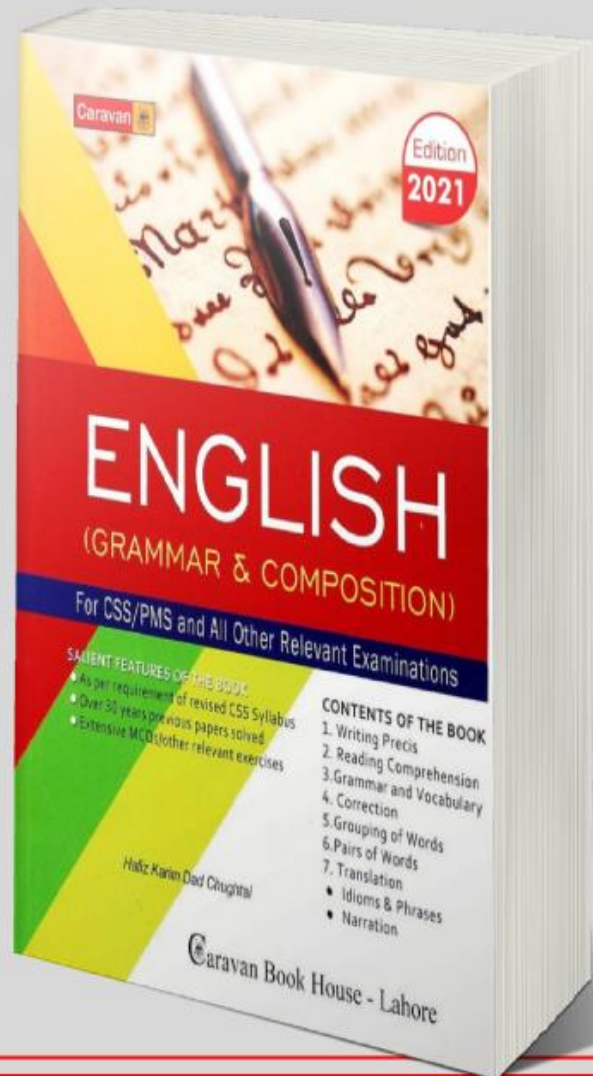
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**Employees of Jones and Church Farms in Unicoi, Tenn., line up to get vaccinated on June 2**

Photograph by Mike Belleme for TIME

**ON THE COVER:** TIME photo-illustration



# Conversation



## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

**TIME100 HEALTH SPECIAL** Readers wrote of being inspired by the “New Hope for Health Care” package in TIME’s June 21/ June 28 issue, and called for more changes and innovation in the field. Responding to Jamie Ducharme’s reporting on the future of telehealth, Loriann Oberlin of Gaithersburg, Md., wrote that the practice can offer greater flexibility and access for both patients and therapists but insurers “need to improve the system ... and reimburse providers to keep up with inflation.” Other readers, like Twitter user @ivan3bx, found hope in the “insightful perspectives” of the resilient young people who shared life lessons they learned during the pandemic with TIME.

**‘We need to remember that telehealth does not equal access.’**

@BRITTANY\_RISHER, on Twitter

**ON TWITTER,** Jennifer L.W. Fink wrote that Abigail Abrams’ feature identifying endemic issues in the elder care industry “nails it,” while Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union, called it a “must-read” on “the urgent need for solutions.” Joshua Siderowitz of New York City found one solution in Belinda Luscombe’s profile of billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott and her efforts to give away her fortune. (As Luscombe’s piece noted, donations made by Scott are believed to have accounted for 20% of COVID-related philanthropy in 2020.) Scott’s monies could be “better spent for vaccine development,” Siderowitz wrote, citing Alice Park’s piece on a genetic-sequencing lab working to prevent another epidemic as deserving of a big check.

**‘We must invest in technology and public-health professionals.’**

TOM FRIEDEN, former CDC director

## TIME for Kids

TIME for Kids kid reporter Afton Campbell, 12, spoke with America’s top infectious-disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci about COVID-19 vaccinations—which kids 12 and older in the U.S. are now eligible for—and how the vaccines’ rollout could impact summer vacations and returning to school in the fall. “A vaccinated person should feel absolutely safe, that you’re going to be O.K.,” Fauci told Afton. “Whether or not what’s surrounding you is going to dictate you wearing a mask, you should feel that you are going to be safe from getting infected.” Watch the interview in full at [timeforkids.com/fauci](https://timeforkids.com/fauci)



**KUDOS** TIME’s senior national correspondent W.J. Hennigan has received a 2020 **Gerald R. Ford Journalism Prize for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense**. Hennigan, who reports on national-security issues, was recognized for his coverage of the U.S. military amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



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# ‘MISSILES ARE NOT NEGOTIABLE.’

**EBRAHIM RAISI**, Iran’s President-elect, in a June 21 press conference, discussing negotiations with the U.S. over its nuclear capabilities

*‘A herring for a job. Who could possibly resist?’*

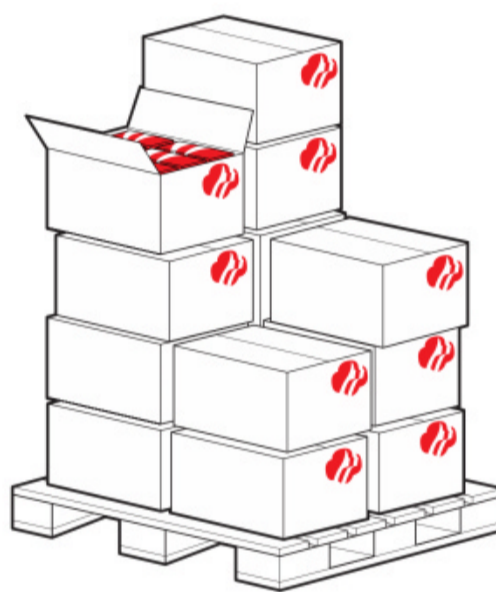
**AGNES LEEWIS**, director of the Netherlands’ fish marketing board, in a June 16 interview announcing that all Dutch residents receiving COVID-19 vaccines will receive a gift of *Hollandse nieuwe*—soused herring

*‘I’m a pretty private person, so I hope you guys know that I’m really not doing this for attention.’*

**CARL NASSIB**, Las Vegas Raiders defensive lineman, coming out in a June 21 video message and becoming the first openly gay active NFL player

**15 million**

Number of boxes of Girl Scout cookies that went unsold in 2021 as the pandemic put constraints on in-person sales, the organization told the Associated Press on June 14



*‘There is no happiness in life. There’s only a mirage on the horizon.’*

**VLADIMIR PUTIN**, President of Russia, quoting Leo Tolstoy on June 16, after being asked if his summit with U.S. President Joe Biden had built trust between their two nations

*‘Can you please repeat that?’*

**CINDY GREENBERG**, president and CEO of youth community-service organization Repair the World, recalling her initial response to a \$7 million donation from billionaire MacKenzie Scott, in a interview with TIME published on June 17

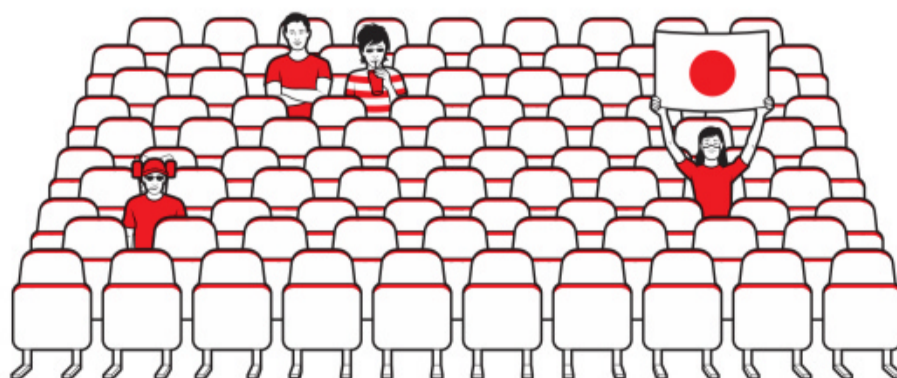


**GOOD NEWS**  
*of the week*

**The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced on June 20 that gender confirmation surgery for transgender veterans will be covered by VA health insurance for the first time**

**10,000**

Maximum number of fans allowed to watch Olympic events in person in Japan this summer, per organizers on June 21





# The Brief Opener

RELIGION

## Will U.S. bishops break bread with Joe Biden?

By Brian Bennett

**A** POLITICIZED RIFT IN THE AMERICAN Catholic Church has widened in June, as U.S. bishops voted to draft instructions to the faithful on who should receive Communion—with an eye toward dissuading high-profile Catholics who support abortion policies and gay rights, like Joe Biden, from presenting themselves for the ritual.

According to a church official, many bishops had been concerned about the confusion such an apparent conflict could otherwise cause among Catholics. Biden regularly attends Mass and takes Communion at St. Joseph on the Brandywine near his home in Wilmington, Del., and at Holy Trinity in Georgetown, two miles from the White House. He has long turned to his faith for solace, close friends say—in particular during times of trial or personal tragedy. But how the President practices is “personal,” White House press secretary Jen Psaki said on June 21 in response to a question from TIME. “That’s how many Americans see their faith as well, not through a political prism.”

In many ways, Biden represents the culmination of decades of increased Catholic representation in American politics. Six of nine current Supreme Court Justices are Catholic, as are the Speaker of the House, multiple Cabinet secretaries and senior officials. Catholic voters cast one-fifth of the votes in the 2020 election—about half of which were for Biden.

But Biden’s presidency also comes as the church is struggling internally over how to navigate the role of the spiritual in a polarized political sphere. Within days of his winning the White House, 10 of the nation’s most powerful bishops launched a “working group” on how to handle a Biden presidency, meeting over Zoom to discuss a response to his policies that conflict with Catholic teaching—and how to minister to his soul.

Now they’ve gone further. During an assembly on June 17, U.S. bishops voted to draft a “teaching document on the beauty and power of the Eucharist,” José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a statement. When the bishops gather for another assembly in

November, the document will be discussed and its release will be voted on.

The bishops want to clarify Communion’s purpose for priests and laypeople, and call for “consistency” when worshippers present themselves for the rite, said Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne–South Bend, Ind., who is leading the writing of the document, in an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor*, a Roman Catholic publication.

**THE VOTE IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE** of the conservative American bishops moving in a more political direction, says Massimo Faggioli, a theology professor at Villanova University and author of *Joe Biden and Catholicism in the United States*. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has become “beholden to the political agenda of the Republican Party,” Faggioli says. But the fact that half of American Catholic voters backed Biden shows that many are seemingly open to policies that embrace gay rights and access to abortion, even if they go against church doctrine or their own personal beliefs.

Biden also campaigned on several issues the church embraces, such as aiding refugees, advancing racial justice, ending the death penalty and addressing climate change. And some church observers are concerned that the bishops’ hard-line approach to Biden is a symptom of an attitude toward the faith that could further alienate American Catholics at a time when congregations are shrinking.

The move also cuts against a welcoming tone set by Pope Francis when he became Pontiff eight years ago, allowing more perspectives to be aired within the church. Francis, who clashed with former President Donald Trump over racism and immigration, has repeatedly shown his openness to Biden in closely choreographed moves seen as signaling a desire for dialogue and engagement. In May, a papal adviser, Cardinal Luis Ladaria, sent the U.S. bishops a letter warning them that moving forward with a teaching document on Communion could sow “discord” and that efforts should be made to “preserve unity” in the church.

This isn’t the first clash between Biden’s faith and politics: in 2019, while he was campaigning in South Carolina, a Catholic priest released a statement saying he had denied Biden Communion because of his stance on abortion. But asked on June 18 at the White House whether he thought the bishops’ decision could lead to his being denied the sacrament, Biden said, “It’s a private matter, and I don’t think that’s going to happen.” □



President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden greet a priest after attending Mass in Wilmington, Del., on June 19



## NEWS TICKER

### Court fines Masterpiece Cakeshop

Jack Phillips—the baker who won a First Amendment case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 2018 after refusing to design a gay couple’s wedding cake—was fined \$500 by a Colorado judge on June 15 **over his bakery’s 2017 refusal to produce a cake celebrating a trans woman’s identity.**

### Leftist leads in divisive Peru election

Results from Peru’s June 6 presidential election **put far-left candidate Pedro Castillo ahead** with 50.1% of the vote. His far-right opponent, Keiko Fujimori, has claimed voter fraud. Authorities are still finalizing the count; the U.S. said on June 22 that the elections were free and fair.

### Medicaid hits record levels amid COVID-19

Enrollment in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) reached new highs during the coronavirus pandemic. As of January, **more than 80 million people in the U.S. had coverage under the public-health programs**, with nearly 10 million signing up in the previous 12 months.

## COVID-19

### The Delta variant is spreading fast as vaccinations continue to lag

THERE’S NO QUESTION OF WHICH STRAIN of the COVID-19 virus is winning the evolutionary arms race: it’s the B.1.617.2, or Delta, variant. “[It] is faster, it is fitter, it will pick off the more vulnerable more efficiently than previous variants,” said Dr. Mike Ryan, executive director of the WHO’s health-emergencies program, at a June 22 press conference.

**WORRYING SIGNS** According to accounts from doctors on state-run television in China, symptoms develop more quickly and grow more severe in people infected with the Delta variant. Health officials are sounding the alarm that its spread threatens to reverse progress made in countries currently beating COVID-19 into retreat—and worsen conditions in those still deep in crisis. The variant has been found in nearly 100 countries, including the U.S., where it already accounts for about 10% of new cases.

**HERD IMMUNITY** The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 88% effective in preventing disease caused by the Delta variant, Dr. Anthony Fauci noted at a June 8 White House briefing. But given low rates of vaccination in Southern and Appalachian states, Delta transmission could fuel case spikes in pockets across the U.S. and risk overwhelming regional medical systems, warns Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy.

**VIRAL MUTATION** Vaccination rates remain low in much of the world; in Africa, the WHO reports, 9 in 10 nations will miss a September goal to vaccinate at least 10% of their populations. The U.S. is also not on pace to meet its goal of vaccinating 70% of adults by July 4. “Every time you’re giving the virus a chance to replicate, you’re giving a chance for another variant to take hold,” says Gigi Gronvall of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. —JEFFREY KLUGER and ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA



**CONTINUED CRISIS** Workers carry sacks of wheat to be distributed among those who fled ongoing violence—including reported human-rights abuses and atrocities—in Ethiopia’s Tigray region on June 22 in Mekele, the region’s capital. Voting began on June 21 in a parliamentary election critics say has been marred by delays, instability and a boycott by some parties. Its results are expected to cement Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s hold on power, amid what international observers have described as an authoritarian shift. —Madeline Roache



## NEWS TICKER

### Hong Kong's *Apple Daily* shuts down

In a blow to press freedom in Hong Kong, the pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily* announced June 23 it would close its doors, following a campaign of legal harassment by authorities. In the past week, police have arrested staff and frozen bank accounts. Its activist founder, Jimmy Lai, is already serving prison sentences.

### GOP blocks Dem voting-rights bill

Senate Republicans moved on June 22 to block the For the People Act, a sweeping Democratic-backed voting-rights bill that would further access to the ballot. Progressives ramped up their calls to abolish the legislative filibuster—the tool used by the GOP to block the bill—in response, arguing it's the only option left.

### 'Tense' food shortage in North Korea

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned that his country is facing a food shortage because of sanctions, recent flooding and COVID-19, state media reported June 16. In a rare admission, Kim said it was "essential for the whole party and state to concentrate on farming" to keep food stocks up.

## GOOD QUESTION

### What's the future for U.S. cities as segregation grows?

THE U.S. IS AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE nation, but this obscures a troubling trend: its cities are more segregated now than they were 30 years ago.

More than 80% of large metropolitan areas across the U.S. were more segregated in 2019 than in 1990, according to an analysis released June 21 by the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley. Detroit is the most segregated city, followed by Hialeah, Fla., and then Newark, N.J., Chicago and Milwaukee, the report says. Only two of 113 cities with populations of 200,000 or more qualified as integrated: Colorado Springs and Port St. Lucie, Fla.

While the U.S. has become more diverse over time, this has obscured the persistence of segregation, the report finds. Metropolitan areas aren't all-white, all-Black or all-Latino, but within them, different races live in segregated neighborhoods, creating social and economic divisions.

The conclusion may not be surprising in a country confronting the racial disparities laid bare by COVID-19 and by the murder of George Floyd last year. But as many wealthy Americans get to work remotely and live where they like in the pandemic's aftermath, it calls into question whether the U.S. will become even more segregated—and

polarized—as they flee cities for the suburbs.

"This country is still in dire shape," warns Stephen Menendian, assistant director at the institute, which studies the roots of social and economic inequality in the U.S. "The uprisings of the last few years are not going to die down as long as we have a deeply racially unjust and racially segregated society."

The report shows that efforts to integrate housing have fallen short, including the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which sought to prohibit racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. Affluent communities responded with zoning laws that blocked the construction of multifamily or low-income residential units. Black Americans, faced with redlining and other racist practices, were kept out.

"You really cannot name any significant social injustice in the United States that's not undergirded by residential housing segregation," says Craig Gurian, executive director of the Anti-Discrimination Center, which litigates fair-housing cases. "Jurisdictions themselves know very well that they are segregated," Gurian says. "The absence of change is not, for them, an absence of information. It's an absence of will."

There are few big policy ideas that could quickly reverse this segregation. Some cities, like Berkeley, Calif., have eradicated single-family zoning. In theory, this should allow construction of more residential units and lower prices. But Berkeley will have to build at an almost unimaginable scale to make housing affordable; a two-bedroom apartment there rents for almost \$3,000 a month, according to real estate site Zumper. —ALANA SEMUELS

## WORLD

### Royal dropouts

The heir to the Dutch throne, 17-year-old Princess Amalia, requested on June 11 that her nearly \$2 million annual income be waived while she remains a student and cannot perform royal duties, saying the stipend makes her "uncomfortable." Here, other reasons why blue bloods have given up their palace privileges.

—Madeleine Carlisle



#### ALL FOR LOVE

In 2017, Japan's Princess Mako announced her engagement to her college boyfriend Kei Komuro, a commoner. While the couple has not yet wed, Japanese law dictates that Mako must leave the imperial family once she is married.



#### LOST TITLE

Norway's Princess Martha Louise gave up her Royal Highness status in 2002 to work on her career—but continued using her princess title in commercial contexts. After backlash in 2019, she said she would stop.



#### MEGXIT

Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle gave up their royal patronages when fully stepping back from official royal duties in 2021, citing racism and hostility Markle experienced from the press and the palace itself.





## DIED

► President **Joe Biden's German shepherd** Champ, 13, the family announced June 19.

► Antivirus software pioneer **John McAfee**, at 75, on June 23. McAfee's death in a Spanish jail came shortly after a high court's ruling approved an extradition request from the U.S.

## LAUNCHED

An investigation, by the European Commission, on June 22, into whether **Google unfairly favors its own online display advertising technology** over its competitors'.

## APPROVED

**Blood donation by gay and bisexual men**, in England, Scotland and Wales, as of June 14, in a momentous shift in the U.K.'s National Health Service guidelines.

## CONFIRMED

Zahid Quraishi, as a U.S. District Court judge, by the U.S. Senate, on June 10, making him the **first Muslim-American federal judge** in U.S. history.

## QUALIFIED

Weight lifter Laurel Hubbard, to represent New Zealand, in the Tokyo Olympics, the team said June 21, making her the **first openly transgender athlete** to compete in the Games.

## PARDONED

**Nine Catalan separatist leaders**, who were serving lengthy prison sentences after their failed 2017 attempt at independence, by Spain's Prime Minister, on June 21.



*Singh at an athletics meet in Edinburgh in 1960*

## DIED

### **Milkha Singh** *India's "Flying Sikh"* By Farhan Akhtar

I PLAYED MILKHA SINGH—THE INDIAN SPORTING LEGEND WHO died on June 18 of COVID-19 complications at age 91—in the 2013 biopic *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*. The first time we met was at a running track in Mumbai where I was training for the film. He arrived dressed in a tracksuit and told me, “Let’s not stand here and talk. Let’s jog.” There was an electric energy; once young athletes on the field realized he was in their presence, they all rushed to touch his feet as a sign of respect.

Singh—or the “Flying Sikh,” as he was widely known and beloved—became the first Indian athlete to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in 1958. He represented India in track and field in three Olympics, and narrowly missed out on a bronze medal at the 1960 Games in Rome. (Still, his performance set an Indian national record that lasted for nearly 40 years.)

As a child, Singh witnessed the deaths of his parents and siblings during India’s violent partition in 1947. It can take more than a lifetime to get over that sort of trauma, but he somehow chose to make peace with it, and continued to represent unity and forgiveness at a time when India and Pakistan still struggle with issues related to caste, religion and race.

I remember exactly what Singh told me when I asked what he wanted me to convey in *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*: “I want everyone to know that Milkha Singh worked harder than everybody else, and that’s why he became Milkha Singh.” His dream was always for an Indian to win an Olympic medal in track and field. Hopefully his legacy will inspire others to make that dream a reality. —As told to SANYA MANSOOR

*Akhtar is an award-winning Indian actor*

## DIED

### **Richard Stolley** *Man of the people* By Richard Stengel

RICHARD STOLLEY’S *PEOPLE* only seemed like a celebrity magazine. What really hooked its readers, Stolley, who launched the magazine in 1974, later explained, was its focus on “extraordinary people doing ordinary things and ordinary people doing extraordinary things.”

Stolley, who died on June 16 at age 92, had previously been one of *Life* magazine’s most tenacious reporters. His work on the civil rights movement in the 1960s brought home to many Americans the bravery and idealism of racial-justice protesters. And Stolley didn’t just report history, he made it: after John F. Kennedy’s assassination, he flew to Dallas and single-handedly acquired the 26-sec.-long Zapruder film that documented JFK’s death. It’s now housed in the National Archives.

Later, as an executive at Time Inc.—*TIME*’s former parent company—Stolley was unfailingly generous with young editors, myself included. Charming, wise and self-deprecating, he was an extraordinary man who did extraordinary things.

*Stengel is a former editor of TIME and an MSNBC analyst*





## Arab leader **Mansour Abbas** explains why he joined forces with Israel's far right to oust Netanyahu

By Orly Halpern/Kafr Qana, Israel

IT WAS A PICTURE NOBODY IN ISRAEL COULD have imagined: the Arab leader of the political party of the Islamic Movement, Mansour Abbas, sitting alongside Naftali Bennett, the envoy of Jewish ultranationalism. But there they were with the secular centrist Yair Lapid on June 2, pens in hand, ready to sign documents bringing a devout Muslim into coalition with two Jewish Zionist leaders. "It was a historic moment," Abbas tells TIME on June 9 from his party office in Kafr Qana. "Some people in the room teared up."

Over the past two years, Israelis had gone to the polls four times to elect a government to run the country, and each time Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had failed to muster support to form a stable coalition. The people on the left, center and right who wanted to bring him down couldn't form one either.

In June, they finally did. The Israeli parliament approved the Change coalition to form a government on June 13, ending the reign of Netanyahu, the longest-serving leader in the country's short history. Bennett became Prime Minister and will rotate with Lapid in September 2023.

They couldn't have done it without Abbas and his United Arab List (UAL) party, which made the unprecedented decision to join forces with right-wing parties whose policies are to expand Israeli presence and sovereignty in the West Bank.

UAL represents Palestinian citizens of Israel, sometimes called Arab Israelis, who live within the borders of the state as founded in 1948 and make up about one-fifth of its population. For decades they have lacked political representation at the senior level; no Arab-led party has joined a coalition government since 1977. Now Abbas is betting he can bring change, both real and symbolic, to his people. "The very act of our participation in this government and in this political process brings, and I could be wrong, it brings calm to the region, a feeling of hope, that it's possible to live together," he says. "That it's possible to do things differently."

**THE ODDS ARE STACKED** against this government's success. Besides ousting Netanyahu, the coalition partners have nothing in common and on many issues are diametrically opposed. Far-right Israeli opposition parties are furious that an Arab party is in a position to influence policy;

### ABBAS QUICK FACTS

#### Witness to history

Abbas' family has lived in the city of Maghar for more than 150 years.

#### Knowing the drill

Abbas trained and practiced as a dentist before entering politics.

#### Changing perspectives

Naftali Bennett, Israel's Prime Minister, once called Abbas a "terror supporter"—but now says he is a "brave leader."

meanwhile, some Arab citizens accuse Abbas of abandoning the Palestinian cause. "He probably thinks he can improve the lot of the people by joining the government, but that's not how I view the system," says Diana Buttu, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, who is an analyst and lawyer in Haifa. "I don't see that we will be beneficiaries."

Abbas was born and raised in a traditional Muslim family with 10 siblings in Maghar, in northern Israel. His parents were farmers who grew chickpeas, watermelon and wheat, and raised goats. As a student he became a disciple of Sheik Abdullah Nimr Darwish, an Arab-Israeli jihadist turned peace proponent who founded the Islamic Movement in Israel in 1971 and established the UAL in 1996. Darwish, who died in 2017, believed that the route to improving the lives of Palestinians in Israel and pursuing peace was through political participation. To Jewish Israelis who assume the movement is extremist because it is Islamist, Abbas says "[once] they get to know the path I've made in the last 20, 30 years, they begin to think differently."

The UAL supports a Palestinian state and the end of the Israeli occupation, but its active goals are to aid Arab citizens of Israel who face systematic discrimination and high levels of poverty and crime. "We have cardinal problems: crime, violence, economic distress, severe lack of housing," Abbas says. "We want to heal our own problems."

Historically, Jewish Zionist parties don't make alliances with Arab parties, seeing it as compromising the Jewish nature of the state. In April 2020, then opposition leader Benny Gantz, who ran on a campaign to oust Netanyahu, ended up joining him in a unity government after he decided he could not accept the support of a coalition of Arab parties. "That was a defining moment," he says. Soon after, Abbas declared he was open to alliances not just with the liberal left, the traditional allies of Arabs in the parliament, but also with right-wing parties. Netanyahu agreed to help Abbas win concessions for Arab citizens in exchange for his support on key votes.

That is now ostensibly the approach of the government that ousted Netanyahu. In coalition negotiations, Bennett and Lapid agreed to double the five-year budget for developing Israel's Arab sector to as much as 35 billion shekels (\$10.75 billion). "We understand the plight and needs of the Arab society," Bennett said in his first speech as Prime Minister. "The fight against crime and violence, the housing crisis, the gaps in education and infrastructure will be addressed."

Nevertheless, Palestinians in Israel are skeptical of what Abbas can actually deliver. Although his party is part of the coalition that underpins the government, he has no ministerial or executive role. His real power derives from his ability to





bring down the government by withdrawing from the coalition. He says he would consider that only if his partners renege on their support for his people or cross certain red lines. “I will never give up on my values and my rights, the natural ones, the civilian ones, the collective ones,” he says. “But you don’t throw the baby out with the water.”

**THOSE RED LINES** were tested two days after the government took office, when it allowed right-wing ultranationalist Jews to stage a march at the entrance to the Muslim Quarter of Jerusalem’s Old City. In response, Hamas in Gaza launched incendiary balloons across the border into Israel, sparking field fires, and Israel reacted with airstrikes in Gaza. There were no casualties on either side.

Abbas opposed the march, he tells *TIME* in a phone interview on June 20, and says his party helped prevent things from escalating to the level of the full-blown conflict in May. “Everything is relative. We compare how the previous government acted and how this one is acting. I think the Naftali Bennett government is acting responsibly,” he says. “This is not a

**‘We removed a wall that Arab citizens faced.’**

MANSOUR ABBAS, shown above (center) on the campaign trail in Daburiyya, Israel, on Feb. 18

child’s game. We must conduct ourselves responsibly in order to give this process a chance.”

Buttu says that morally you can’t ignore actions against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in order to improve the situation of Arabs in Israel. “Being part of the government means maintaining the blockade and dropping bombs on Gaza, evicting Palestinians [in East Jerusalem] and building settlements. You can’t say, ‘I’m part of the coalition but my hands are clean.’ We are one people.”

It’s clear, though, that Abbas believes the act of joining the coalition is itself a step forward. “We removed a wall that Arab citizens faced. There was a feeling that we achieved something.” But he also fears the repercussions if this unlikely coalition falls apart. The stakes are high “not just on a political level, a party level or an individual level, but in terms of the relations between the two peoples, the Arab society and the Jewish society, between the Arab society and the state itself,” he says. “You fear that if this step fails, the people will lose hope and then we’ll lose control.” —*With reporting by*

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BY SANDRA OH



FAMILY



# The View

SPORTS

## JUSTICE FOR NCAA ATHLETES

By Sean Gregory

For years, critics of the college-sports business model—which tends to enrich schools and administrators but not the actual players—have relished the potential of a Supreme Court ruling against the NCAA. The June 21 unanimous court opinion, which allows schools to provide uncapped education benefits to college athletes, offers real change in college sports. But for the good stuff, go to Kavanaugh. ▶

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A MED STUDENT'S QUEST TO  
EMPOWER PEOPLE ABOUT HEALTH



# The View Opener

As in, the concurring opinion of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Kavanaugh took a sharp turn from the measured approach in criticizing NCAA arguments offered by Justice Neil Gorsuch, who authored the principal opinion of the case (*National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston*). It shouldn't be entirely surprising. During oral arguments in *NCAA v. Alston*, which questioned whether the NCAA was permitted to cap education-related benefits to college athletes—a district court ruled that it couldn't, and the Supreme Court upheld that decision on June 21—Kavanaugh was particularly aggressive in his questioning of NCAA lawyers. “It does seem ... schools are conspiring with competitors—agreeing with competitors, let's say that—to pay no salaries for the workers who are making the schools billions of dollars on the theory that consumers want the schools to pay their workers nothing,” Kavanaugh said during the March 31 proceedings. “And that just seems entirely circular and even somewhat disturbing.”

In his opinion, Kavanaugh seemed to invite more legal challenges to the NCAA's caps on all forms of compensation for athletes, not just those tethered to education, which was the narrower focus of this particular Supreme Court case. “Nowhere else in America can businesses get away with agreeing not to pay their workers a fair market rate on the theory that their product is defined by not paying their workers a fair market rate,” Kavanaugh wrote. “And under ordinary principles of antitrust law, it is not evident why college sports should be any different. The NCAA is not above the law.”

Those words—from a Supreme Court Justice, no less—serve as a useful rallying cry, sure to be quoted by lawyers representing college athletes, and college athletes themselves, for years to come.

**NOT THAT A RULING** that allows schools to offer athletes additional education-related benefits like scholarships for graduate school, internships and computer equipment isn't of great importance on its own. These items are intrinsically valuable to college athletes. And second, the timing of a Supreme Court victory for college athletes couldn't be better, as they fight for additional economic rights. On July 1, state laws allowing athletes to profit from their own name, image and likeness (NIL) are set to go into effect in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, New Mexico and Texas. The NCAA has pushed for Congress to pass a national NIL law by July 1, but that's unlikely.

Although the court did not rule on the rights of athletes to secure third-party sponsorships in *NCAA v. Alston*, it did strike down the NCAA's continued reliance on language from a 1984 Supreme Court case to justify its commitment to curtailing



West Virginia running back Shawne Alston, who in 2014 filed an antitrust suit against the NCAA just ruled on by the Supreme Court, celebrates a score

## \$1.1 billion

Annual worth of the NCAA's current broadcast contract for the March Madness basketball tournament

## \$470 million

Approximate annual value of the television deal for the College Football Playoff

## \$2.5 million

Annual salary of some college football assistant coaches

SOURCE: OPINION OF THE COURT, *NCAA V. ALSTON*

compensation. The court, Gorsuch wrote, “could not agree” with the NCAA's long-standing argument that, essentially, amateurism must be maintained because it says so (and that a 37-year-old Supreme Court opinion justifies this stance). The court also noted the massive size of the NCAA's business, pointing out that “those who run this enterprise profit in a different way than the student-athletes whose activities they oversee.”

So while the court was careful not to officially settle the debate about whether athletes have rights to all forms of compensation—agreeing with an appeals court that “the national debate about amateurism in college sports is important. But our task as appellate judges is not to resolve it. Nor could we”—a reasonable takeaway from the court seems clear: the current model is broken.

Kavanaugh makes things even clearer. “The NCAA's business model would be flatly illegal in almost any other industry in America,” he wrote. He also cites a brief, filed by a group of African-American antitrust lawyers, that squarely frames the issue as a civil rights one. “College presidents, athletic directors, coaches, conference commissioners, and NCAA executives take in six- and seven-figure salaries,” Kavanaugh wrote. “Colleges build lavish new facilities. But the student athletes who generate the revenues, many of whom are African American and from lower-income backgrounds, end up with little or nothing.”

The Supreme Court may not have blown up college sports with one swipe of the pen. But college athletes will soon get their fairer share, thanks to the court. □



**BUSINESS****Ready to sail**

With Celebrity Cruises preparing for its first departure from a U.S. port in 15 months, on June 26 from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., CEO Lisa Lutoff-Perlo acknowledges that cruising is not first on everybody's list of reopening activities. She tells TIME, "I've been in this business for 36 years, and long before COVID, people said, 'Oh, I don't think cruising is for me,' so I'm not surprised when people say that cruising might not be at the top of their list of vacation choices."

Still, she claims her company's ships are "probably the safest place you can be on the planet right now. If I'm traveling, or if I'm going out to dinner and I'm sitting in a crowded restaurant with no social distancing and no requirements for vaccinations and I don't know who I'm sitting next to—I would feel much safer on a cruise ship right now than I would just about anywhere else, including traveling on an airplane."

Still, she adds, "There have been cruise rejecters since the beginning of time. There will be cruise rejecters long after I retire from this business."

—Eben Shapiro



Lisa Lutoff-Perlo,  
CEO of Celebrity Cruises

**THE RISK REPORT****France faces an uncertain future as the Macron dream falters**

By Ian Bremmer



FOLLOWING A THREE-month pandemic delay, French voters went to the polls on June 20 for the first round of local elections, which will fill the seats of assemblies in France's 13 regions and 96 departments. There will be a second round of voting on June 27, but the electorate has already sent some clear messages. President Emmanuel Macron's party, La République en Marche (LREM), has little local support. Main opposition leader Marine Le Pen and her right-wing National Rally party are not expanding their base. And a record number of eligible French voters can't be bothered to vote.

Four years ago, the French electorate cast a ballot for change. In presidential voting, the traditional center-right finished in third place behind Le Pen and her far-right party. The traditional center-left Socialists finished in fifth place behind the Communist Party. The winner was Macron, a man who had never before run for office at the head of a party he had created from scratch little more than a year earlier. Macron's party won an astounding 308 of 577 seats in the Assemblée Nationale, France's powerful lower house of Parliament.

**ONCE IN OFFICE**, the goal of any change candidate is to convince voters that he or she has made life better and the country stronger so that future elections will reject more change in favor of a new status quo. But on June 20, Macron's LREM won just 11% of the vote, on par with the Green Party and the Socialists. That's less of a shock than you might think. Incumbent parties rarely fare well in France's local elections, and LREM didn't exist in 2015, the last time they were held. But there is nothing in these numbers to boost Macron's confidence as he heads into a bitter re-election fight next year. His best hope

for now is that a swooning economy, pandemic lockdown fatigue and an initially slow vaccine rollout will give way to renewal by year's end.

His other hope is that the opposition won't get its act together, and here's a rare bit of positive news for Macron. Le Pen's National Rally, which was expected to finish first in the local elections, scored just 19% after taking more than 28% in 2015. The center-right Les Républicains, the political heirs to Charles de Gaulle, Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy, won about 29%. Many experts and voters had

**There is also evidence that voters have their doubts that any party can bring real change to France**

predicted a Macron–Le Pen matchup in next year's presidential second-round runoff. Opinion polls had suggested that Le Pen has expanded the National Rally's support base beyond voters who like the anti-immigrant, anti-E.U., Islamophobic and sometimes anti-Semitic image of the National Front, the party's predecessor, created nearly 50 years ago by Le Pen's father Jean-Marie. But these numbers tell a different story, feeding persistent doubts that she can ever win a majority of voters. Le Pen has name recognition and an ability to attract media coverage, but we shouldn't mistake those advantages for national electability.

Yet there is also evidence that voters have their doubts that any party can bring real change to France. Only about one-third of eligible voters bothered to show up, a 17-point drop from 2015 and an all-time low for the republic.

There was one winner from this muddle: Xavier Bertrand of the center-right Les Républicains has emerged as a serious challenger for President next year. It's too early to know whether remarkably low turnout in regional elections has provided an accurate picture of the national mood in 2021. But maybe Bertrand is the fresh face who can sweep past an opposition figure (Le Pen) who has spent most of her political career trying to reinvent her party, and then oust Macron. □



## Grateful for the hugs I can share, haunted by the ones I can't

By Nicole Chung

I'M AT THE STAGE OF PANDEMIC LIFE WHEN I AM STILL counting the hugs.

The first time I invited a good friend not just over to but into my house, postvaccination, sans masks, I couldn't even wait until she walked up to my door—I ran outside to greet her, and we tackle-hugged each other in the driveway. We both held on tight, the otherworldly buzz of a thousand cicadas in our ears, as we took turns exclaiming how good it was to see each other. We hadn't hung out in person since January 2020, and of course I was looking forward to talking, sharing a meal, catching up on all her news—but somehow I'd forgotten that before any of that happened, I would also get to hug her. It was my first hug from a friend in more than a year, and a reminder of just how comforting a good hug can be.

I've been a hugger since middle school, when my friends and I would run up to one another in the halls between classes and embrace as though we hadn't just seen one another the day before and wouldn't see one another again at lunch. In high school, I volunteered at a Girl Scouts camp every summer, and at the end of each session, many of our campers would seek us out to say goodbye. My fellow counselors and I would typically offer them a choice: Hug, handshake or high five? Most of the kids would choose a hug. But there were always at least a few who would opt for a high five, some slapping hard enough to make my hand sting a little, or a handshake, at times delivered

**I don't remember our final hug itself because I thought I'd be back soon. I didn't know it was the last time I would ever see her**

so solemnly I felt like we were going into business together. I always appreciated this ritual, especially the individual ask, because it allowed me to think about and honor each camper's wishes. As I venture out from my pandemic bubble, I hope to bring the same kind of intentionality to every much anticipated reunion.

**IN MARCH 2020**, when our once far-ranging lives shrank to texts, phone calls and faces on screens, I knew my family and I were going to miss seeing close friends and relatives in person. But over the past year, I've also caught myself feeling bereft over the absence of briefer interactions, even those impromptu two-ships-passing moments, with more casual friends. I've missed the experience of meeting someone new, striking up a conversation and realizing you might be friends in the making. I've missed running into old friends on my travels, or going to a reading or event alone and reconnecting with someone I hadn't expected to see.



I know I'm very lucky not to have gone without human contact in the last year of relative social isolation. With my spouse and I working from home, our kids attending virtual school and a (now 54-lb.!) puppy zooming from room to room, the house has felt far from empty. Thanks to my family—as well as the dog, who can really hold her ground when tackle-hugged, as she frequently is—I've also not had to go without hugs.

But just as there are many different kinds of relationships and friendships, there are also many different kinds of hugs, and I've missed the satisfying hugs you share with friends you haven't seen in a while, the quick hugs you exchange with frequent companions

ILLUSTRATION BY GRACIA LAM FOR TIME





when you sit down for coffee, the long hug you might give a favorite relative before you part ways.

Most of all, I am haunted by the hugs I'll never get to give my mother, who died of cancer early in the pandemic. I have a lifetime of her love and affection to remember. I know the exact day we must have hugged for the last time, weeks before COVID-19 forced shutdowns and stay-at-home orders throughout the country. But I don't remember our final hug itself—how long we held on, or how tight, or her exact words before I left for the airport—because I thought I'd be back soon. I didn't know it was the last time I would ever see her.

I've spent my entire adult life far from my family and many of the people I'm closest to, so I've often had to rely on letters and texts and calls to maintain these important connections, let the people I love know what I'm feeling. I have long been confident in my ability to express myself in words, written or spoken. But when my mother was dying and the pandemic kept me from her, I was constantly aware of just how much *couldn't* be expressed in words, especially once she had a harder time speaking or following the conversation.

Although I called nearly every day, it never seemed like enough; by the end, she was mostly listening while I told her that I loved her. How much more, I thought, would it mean to both of us if I could simply sit next to her and hold her hand in silence? How much more might she feel my love if she could feel my arms around her?

**AFTER SHE DIED**, I was incredibly fortunate in the support I had from loved ones near and far. Friends sent food and flowers, cards and video messages. Neighbors wearing masks waved at me through my kitchen window, left bouquets on the front step. But none of them could come into the house, sit beside me and listen to a story or give me a hug, and this felt like its own kind of loss.

Watching my mother's livestreamed funeral from across the country, I realized that even an on-site gathering could feel lonely absent the embraces and comforting touches we often look for and expect when we mourn. Very few people could attend because of COVID-19 restrictions, and no one hugged anyone else—they all stayed a responsible 6 ft. apart, masks on, their faces and emotions more than half-hidden from one another. Once or twice, I saw friends reaching out to one another from a distance, but they knew they couldn't come close enough for a real hug.

Lower infection rates and vaccinations came too late for my mom and me—and so many others—to have the last visits, the last hugs we wanted. Still, I'm grateful to be vaccinated now, to find myself looking forward to life in the hopefully not too distant future when my entire family is protected. Slowly, unbelievably, it's becoming more commonplace to socialize with people outside of our household, to meet a friend for dinner or drinks or have people over to our house. We invited some friends (and their dog!) to a cookout on Memorial Day, greeting them with unmasked grins and open arms, and when the following weekend brought not one but two small get-togethers, one of my kids joked, "It's just like the old days!" Next month, I'll finally get to see my sister for the first time since Christmas 2019.

It feels so good to share space with our loved ones, even though I'll never stop wishing that I could see and hug my mom again. And I know it will be some time before I'm able to travel to see all of my nearest and dearest, who are scattered throughout the country. When I do see them, though, they've been warned: I have a *lot* of hugging to make up for. I expect I'll never take it for granted again.

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*Chung is the author of All You Can Ever Know*



## FRONTIERS OF MEDICINE

### A new way to fight racial disparities in health care

By Angelina Jolie

WHEN MALONE MUKWENDE, 21, STARTED medical school in London, he identified a fundamental problem: almost all the images and data used in its teaching were based on studies of white patients. But medical symptoms can present very differently on Black and brown skin, leading to misdiagnosis, suffering and even death. Still a student, he has launched both a handbook, *Mind the Gap*, and Hutano, a new online platform intended to empower people with knowledge about their health.

**How would you explain *Mind the Gap*?** I got to medical school and noticed there was a gap in our teaching. If we learned about a particular type of rash or disease that manifests on skin, it would always have white skin as the reference. I would ask, “What does this look like on other skin tones?” just for my own learning. Often people told me that they didn’t know. I decided that something needed to be done. Some members of staff at the university and I started collating pictures and descriptions of different conditions on darker skin, and we compiled them all into a handbook that we called *Mind the Gap*.

**The gap isn’t just because there haven’t been studies on Black and brown skin. It’s because it wasn’t considered important, right?** After the publication of *Mind the Gap*, someone reached out to me who is a student in Zimbabwe. They said that all the books and reference images they use are also from white skin, even though the population [is] predominantly of darker skin. It really shows you that the legacies of colonialism are still living in 2021.

**I have children from different backgrounds, and I know when there was a rash that everybody got, it looked drastically different depending on their skin color. But whenever I looked at medical charts, the reference point was always white skin. Recently my daughter Zahara, whom I adopted from Ethiopia, had surgery, and afterward a nurse told me to call them if her skin “turned pink.”** Almost the entirety of medicine is taught in that way. There’s a language and a culture that exists in the medical profession, because it’s been done for so many years, and because we are still doing it so many years later it doesn’t seem like it’s a problem.

**Now that there is so much online, it should be so much easier. So what is your new digital platform,**



**‘It really shows you that the legacies of colonialism are still living in 2021.’**

MALONE MUKWENDE

**and why are you calling it Hutano?** Hutano, in my native language, Shona, translates directly to *health*. It’s a health social platform, where people from all over the world can connect and really discuss these different conditions.

**What do you hope it will achieve?** We want people who are living with these conditions to have a platform to be seen and empower their health care literacy. We need to start empowering the individual, and that, I hope, will start to reduce some of the health care disparities that exist.

**And this goes beyond just looking at skin, doesn’t it? There are wider problems with our medical knowledge and our evidence and our measurements?** It’s the politics of medicine. For instance, if you read an old medical textbook, it will tell you from a European perspective that a 70-kg [154 lb.], 25-year-old male is the reference point, and if you are above that, you are obese; if you are below that, you are malnourished, and who came up with this scale? We like to say medicine is evidence-based, but we need to question where our evidence is coming from. A lot of the studies only included people from Europe and America.

**So how do we recalculate?** I can’t say I have a solution because if we decide to group by age, that will also open a can of worms; [the same is true] if we group by race, if we group by income. It just depends on individual circumstances a lot of the time. If [individual] people are empowered, they will have an adequate amount of information or an adequate ability to ask the right questions about their health care. □



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< Participants in a Pride rally march through downtown Washington on June 12

## It's the queerest Congress ever. It doesn't feel like it

By Philip Elliott

FOR MANY AMERICANS, IT'S ALL TOO EASY TO ASSUME THAT the fight for LGBTQ rights has been won. After all, same-sex couples have enjoyed the same right to marriage as their straight neighbors since 2015; the Supreme Court ruled last year that a person's sexuality alone is not a justifiable reason for them to lose their job. Support for same-sex relationships is at a record high, while major corporations for the past month have been bathing consumers in rainbow-hued marketing and affirmations amid Pride celebrations. In Washington, D.C., more LGBTQ lawmakers than ever before are in power at the Capitol—and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg is the first openly gay member of a presidential Cabinet.

But Americans would be better served by benching gestures of performative allyship and recognizing just how many ways this country still discriminates—in perfectly legal ways—against the LGBTQ community. From financial contracts to mental-health services, housing to parenthood, institutions find ways large and small to stack the deck against LGBTQ people. In just one example, a 2018 study found that LGBTQ students left college with about \$16,000 more student debt than their straight classmates, owing to factors like decreased family support, their requiring more time to finish a degree and external costs like counseling.

At the federal level, some steps are being considered to provide LGBTQ people with more support. The Equality Act, the most sweeping rewrite of civil rights laws since the 1960s, would offer protections for fair access to housing, education and even jury service without regard to sexuality or gender. But the legislation is stuck in the Senate.

Meanwhile, a bevy of efforts are under way to roll back existing protections; dozens of bills are winding their way through state capitols to make it more difficult—if not impossible—for transgender students to play school sports or use restrooms corresponding to their gender identity. Self-styled “religious liberty” laws that permit discrimination in the name of faith are chugging along with few checks in state legislatures that are dominated by Republicans. And in June, the Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Philadelphia was on the wrong side of the law when it said that to receive city funding, a Catholic social-service agency had to provide services to same-sex couples looking to adopt.

**AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, TIME** spoke with two co-chairs of the Congressional LGBTQ+ Equality Caucus, Representatives Sharice Davids of Kansas and Mondaire Jones of New York, as part of its 2021 virtual Pride Summit highlighting perspectives on identity, creativity and equality. Both Democrats, they've made history: Davids in 2018 as the first openly LGBTQ Native American elected to Congress and Jones as one of two gay Black men elected to Congress in the 2020 elections.

“It's important that we are living authentically and visibly, giving inspiration to kids like [I was] when I was growing up wondering if there was a place for me in a world filled with so much injustice,” Jones tells TIME. “And of course you have to shoulder some of the important work that the LGBTQ movement has still yet to accomplish.”

They may be firsts, but they're not ones to puff up their chests just because they will have places in future history books. “A lot of people know what it's like to be the only person like them in the room,” Davids says. And even with the strides being made to ensure Congress is more representative of America's changing demographics, there's still plenty more work to do. Of the 535 voting members of Congress, just 11 identify publicly as LGBTQ. □

**‘We bring this lived experience that is different than what we’ve seen in the Congress for so long.’**

REPRESENTATIVE SHARICE DAVIDS (D., KANS.)





Willie B. Thomas  
Digital Vision via Getty Images

## VISIBILITY MATTERS.

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SEMICONDUCTORS DRIVE THE WORLD,  
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THEM. CAN THE COUNTRY CATCH UP?

BY ANDREW BLUM

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS PRIOR FOR TIME

THIS  
CONTROLS  
YOUR  
TOASTER

THIS  
HELPS  
MEASURE  
BLOOD  
SUGAR

YOU  
NEED THIS  
TO STREAM  
MUSIC



## **‘THE ONLY OPERATORS ARE THE ONES IN THE CEILING,’ SAYS CHRIS BELFI,**

wrapped up in a Tyvek bunny suit, tinted yellow under the photo-safe lights. The robots rush by on overhead tracks, blinking and whirring. Every few seconds, one pauses above a giant machine. Out of its laundry-basket-size belly, a plastic box drops on thin wires, like Tom Cruise in a catsuit. It holds precious cargo: up to 25 shiny silicon wafers, each the size of a 12-in. pizza. The process of transforming them into tiny computer brains—call them microchips, semiconductors or just chips—takes nearly three months. “I use an analogy like baking a cake,” says Belfi, an automation engineer at chipmaker GlobalFoundries. “The only difference is our cake is about 66 layers.”

This \$15 billion complex tucked away behind trees north of Albany, N.Y., is one of only a handful of advanced semiconductor factories, or “fabs,” in the U.S. Its receiving docks pull in 256 specialty chemicals, like argon and sulfuric acid. Its shipping docks send out finished wafers, ready to be cut up, encased in metal and ceramic shells, and assembled into everything from airbags to blenders, headphones to fighter jets.

Since it opened in 2011, Fab 8, as it’s known, has kept a low profile. But as with toilet paper and chicken wings, the pandemic shocked the global semiconductor supply chain, leading to shortages in surprising places—and pulling the U.S. semiconductor industry to center stage. The car industry has been hardest hit of all. When the initial lockdowns caused car sales to collapse, automakers cut



their orders for parts, including semiconductors. (A typical new car can contain more than a thousand chips.) Chip manufacturers saw the slack and shifted their output to serve the surging demand for consumer electronics, like webcams and laptops.

But when car sales snapped back last fall, a dramatic misstep became apparent: the automakers couldn’t get enough chips. They still can’t.





Missing chips are now expected to lower global output by 3.9 million vehicles in 2021, or 4.6%. Ford alone expects to produce 1.1 million fewer vehicles, leading to a \$2.5 billion earnings hit. (Even before it gets to its silicon-heavy electric F-150.)

As automakers and chipmakers scrambled for equilibrium, the White House stepped in to help, urging industry leaders to untangle the supply chain

**THE FABRICATION  
CLEAN ROOM,  
CONTAINING ALL  
PROCESS TOOLS  
FOR THE FAB 8 AT  
GLOBALFOUNDRIES**

and increase production. The problem wasn't only that there weren't enough chips being made in America. The problem was that no one was paying attention to where chips were being made at all—and, more important, how long it took to make them. In June, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill with \$52 billion in funding aimed at increasing chip production and cutting-edge research—competing directly with China's ambitions of becoming the global semiconductor champion. But new chip fabs take years. Analysts now worry that the auto chip shortage will slosh back to consumer electronics, affecting



# Business

manufacturing all the way to Christmas. “Never seen anything like it,” tweeted Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

Microchips, long revered as the brains of modern society, have become its biggest headache. The stakes extend beyond pandemic-era shortages. Because chips are a crucial component of so many strategic technologies—from renewable energy and artificial intelligence to robots and cybersecurity—their manufacturing has become a geopolitical thorn. In the 20th century, oil was the supreme global resource. But this year’s shortages have prompted a 21st century catchphrase among policymakers and diplomats: *Chips are the new oil*. As the U.S. resets to post-pandemic life, a steady supply of semiconductors has become a high-priority benchmark of preparedness and resilience. Except there’s a bigger problem: semiconductors were invented in the U.S., but fabs like GlobalFoundries have become a dying breed. In 1990, 37% of chips were made in American factories, but by 2020 that number had declined to just 12%. All the new pieces of the growing pie had gone to Asia: Taiwan, South Korea and China. Chip fabs aren’t just factories, but linchpins of American self-reliance.

**SEMICONDUCTORS ARE ASTONISHING**, with billions of transistors packed into a space the size of a dime, and they are astonishingly hard to make.

**THE AMHS (AUTOMATED MATERIAL HANDLING SYSTEM), WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MOVING THE CONTAINERS OF WAFERS TO AND FROM THE PROCESS TOOLS AT THE FOUNDRY**



## EVERYDAY ITEMS THAT RELY ON MICROCHIPS



TOASTER



TV



REFRIGERATOR



COFFEE MACHINE



CAMERA

If Henry Ford imagined an assembly line, a silicon wafer’s path through a factory is more like a labyrinth. At GlobalFoundries, the journey from raw material to finished chip—what engineers like Belfi call the “process flow”—is typically 85 days and encompasses more than a thousand steps. The whole time, the chips travel in sealed pods called FOUPs, entirely untouched by human hands. The robots do the driving, careening on their suspended tracks above machines the size of small RVs. One polishes wafers with a slurry that acts like liquid sandpaper. Another uses lasers to imprint circuits just 12 nanometers wide—about the length your fingernail grows in 12 seconds. Electron microscopes inspect the wafers for imperfections, and a robotic arm immerses them 25 at a time into a chemical bath like

a carnival dunk tank. “We basically are bouncing wafers to and from each section of the fab, all day every day,” Belfi says. “It’s a lot of putting things on, taking it off, printing, putting more on, taking more off.” Humans intrude only when something goes wrong. The showstopper is a problem with one of the lithography machines, which set the pace of the whole operation. Each costs more than \$100 million. “When one of those go down, it is all hands on deck,” says Belfi.

Yet when COVID-19 hit, the fab never stopped. “We never shut down a single factory—not for an

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JORDON CHEUNG FOR TIME





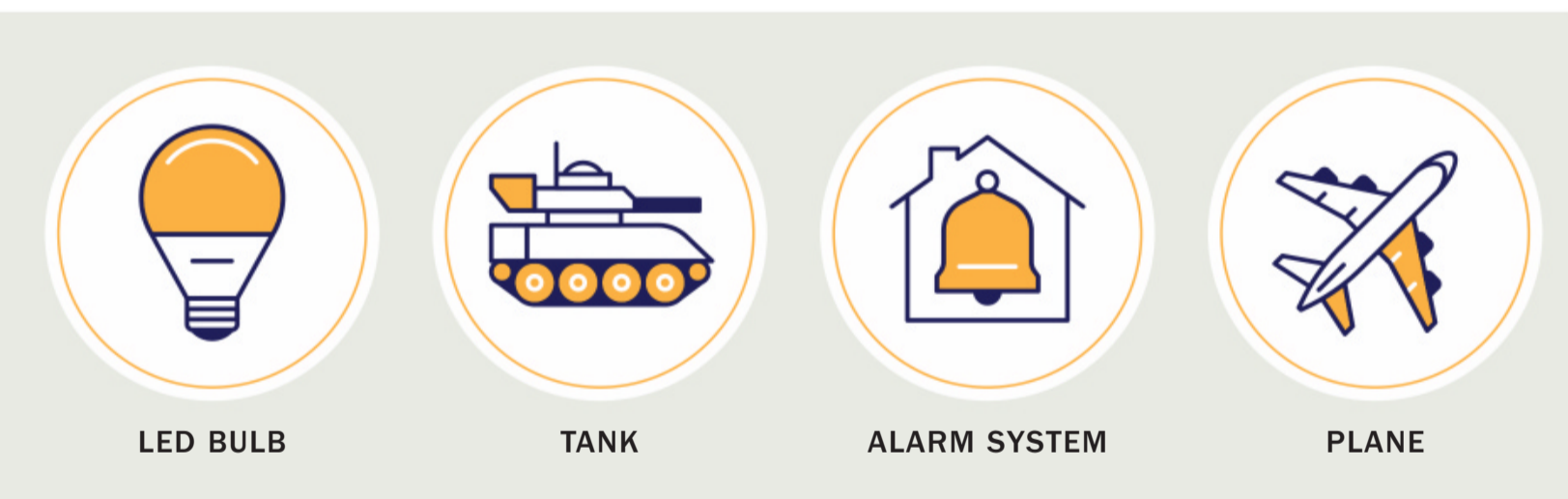
## CHIP FABS AREN'T JUST FACTORIES, BUT LINCHPINS OF AMERICAN SELF-RELIANCE

partment of education purchased 350,000 iPads.

The only thing it seemed no one needed was a new car, at least at first. Sales were off by a third in April, May and June 2020. Auto-component makers—not the brand-name car companies but their suppliers, and their suppliers' suppliers—canceled orders.

But a semiconductor fab can't turn on a dime. *Foundry* is the chip-industry term for a contract manufacturer, like a \$15 billion Kinko's. GlobalFoundries alone prints chips for more than 250 customers, which in turn supply components to device manufacturers—big, familiar names like Apple or Samsung, as well as industrial brands like Continental or Bosch. The supply chains are long. It takes three months to bake a chip, but it won't end up in a car engine or smart speaker for months beyond that—and in consumers' hands for more months still. On any given day at GlobalFoundries, there might be only 10 different kinds of chips in some phase of production. Each unique new chip design arrives on a 6-sq.-in. piece of quartz glass called a reticle. Like an old photographic slide, it contains a map of the chip, ready to be projected onto the silicon wafer with lasers. A reticle is its own trade secret, a protected piece of intellectual property belonging to the company that designed it, and adjusted to the unique specifications of GlobalFoundries' proprietary process. Switching fabs isn't easy, and definitely isn't quick.

Around Thanksgiving, eight months into the pandemic, Caulfield's phone started ringing. Auto executives who had never heard of GlobalFoundries were realizing they couldn't make cars without them. "There is no way if you're a supply-chain owner of an auto-manufacturing company, and you didn't ship a car because you didn't have a \$5 or \$10 chip, that you're ever going to let this happen again," Caulfield says. By New Year's, the implications were alarming. In 2019, the auto industry spent \$43 billion on chips—but they made up just 10% of the total chip market. The world's largest foundry, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), supplies more chips than anyone else to the automotive industry—but the automotive industry makes up just 3% of its rev-



hour," recalls Tom Caulfield, CEO of GlobalFoundries, in his office two levels above the fab floor. Long accustomed to wearing masks and full PPE, the engineers kept their usual watch on the robots. The business shocks proved harder to handle. As in so many industries, Caulfield's initial financial models left him bracing for the worst. "We told our team, 'We entered this pandemic together; we're going to exit together. The world needs us to continue to make semiconductors.'" It was not an understatement. Chips powered the pandemic response—webcams, laptops, COVID-19 testing machines. In New York City alone, the de-



# Business

enue. (Apple makes up more than 20%.) At GlobalFoundries, chips destined for cars accounted for less than 10% of its business—enough to matter, but not enough to set the clocks.

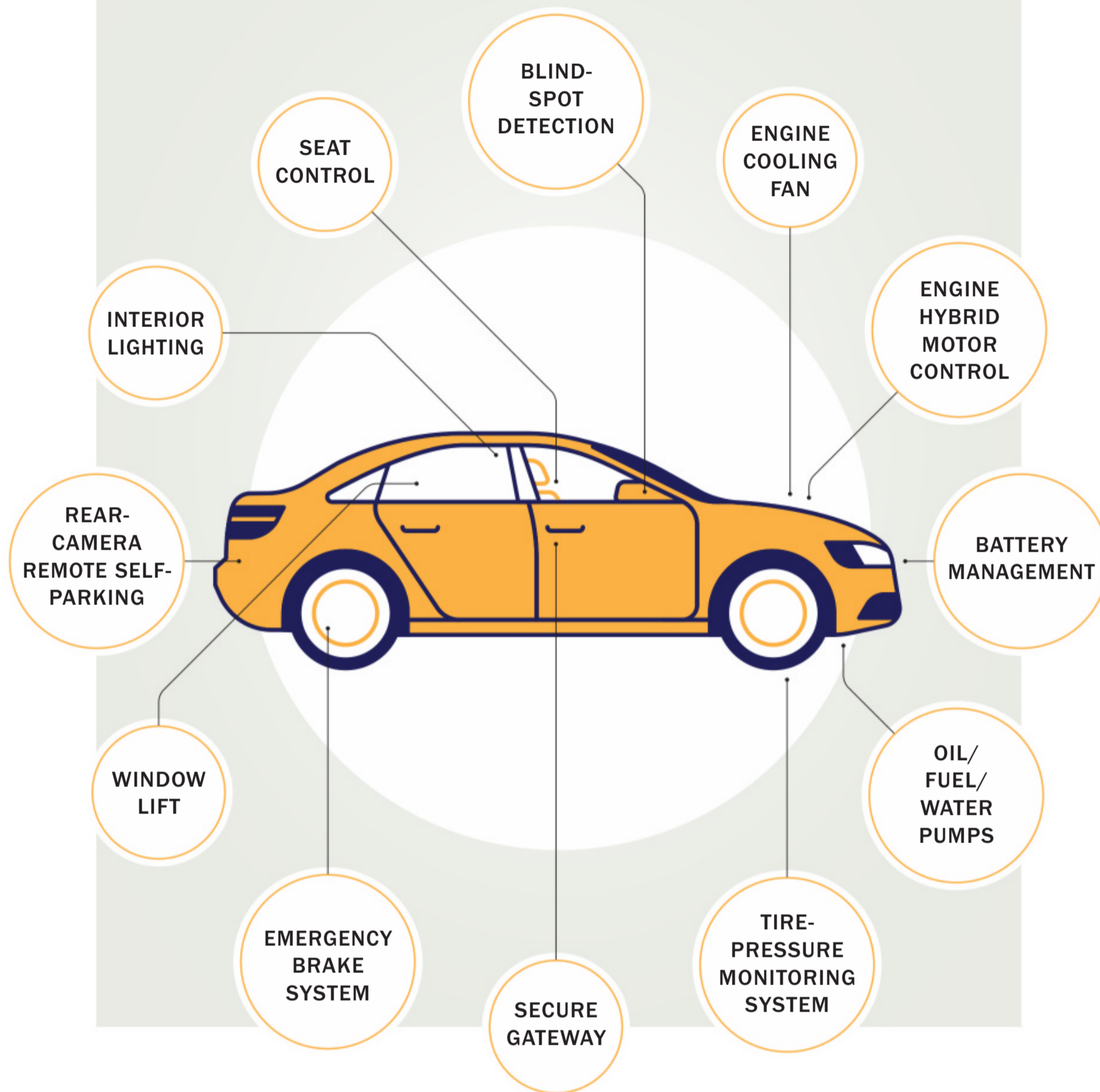
That changed this year, when the political stakes for chipmakers rose dramatically. Caulfield called on his engineers to “remix their output,” sidelining some orders and prioritizing car chips. “We made very difficult decisions,” Caulfield says. “Wherever we could create more capacity, we gave it to automotive to make sure we were no longer the gate to manufacture.” The implications were obvious to him. “I didn’t need a letter from the White House to do the right thing.”

But the White House was paying attention. Before this year, lawmakers saw chipmaking as a local economic issue. Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer championed the construction of GlobalFoundries’ fab in his home state of New York, and lobbied for more. But the pandemic revealed how the decline in chipmaking wasn’t only about jobs and regional economic impacts, but also had strategic implications at a global scale. In February, President Biden signed an Executive Order launching a review of critical supply chains. If a pandemic could cause chip-induced shocks across industries, what else might happen? “We explicitly saw geopolitics as one of the risks to our supply chains,” says a senior Administration official.

**IN THE EARLIEST DAYS** of semiconductor manufacturing, in the 1960s, Intel co-founder Gordon Moore observed that he and his colleagues were able to double the number of transistors they could squeeze onto a chip every year. A decade later, that pace of innovation slowed (a little) to a doubling merely every two years. But then, it held. Chips got faster, cheaper and more efficient, eventually achieving a kind of social liftoff—powering computers that fit in a pocket.

But Moore’s law, as it became known, isn’t a fact of nature but the hard-earned result of enormous expenditures on research and development to conceive of new chip designs, and to find ways to manufacture them. Each new generation of semiconductor requires, in effect, a new factory to make it. Each new “process,” as it’s known, is named for the size of the chip’s smallest feature, like a jeweler whose fingertips keep getting finer. In the 1970s, chips were measured in micrometers, or one millionth of a meter. Since the 1980s, “leading edge” fabs have measured their handiwork in nanometers, or one billionth of a meter. Today, the benchmark is set by TSMC, which runs the 5-nanometer fab that makes Apple’s new M1 chips, for its latest computers and tablets. Each step down in process size—and increase in performance—requires the fab to be retooled with the latest generation of lithogra-

## A TYPICAL NEW CAR CONTAINS MORE THAN A THOUSAND CHIPS



phy machines to “print” the chips, along with the fleet of equipment that rings them. The newest fabs cost at least \$12 billion.

Today, the semiconductor industry has predominantly split between the “fabless” companies that design chips and the foundries that make them. “There’s really two giant pieces of fixed costs,” says Chad Bown, an economist at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. “One set of fixed cost is all of the R&D—you need to come up with the chip’s ideas. The other fixed cost is all of the capital equipment—you need to build one of these fabs.” For decades, the leading companies—like Intel—did both. “Real men have fabs,” Jerry Sanders, former CEO of Advanced Micro Devices, famously insisted in the 1990s, in a comment as sexist as it is now outdated. AMD went fabless in 2009—selling its chip factories to GlobalFoundries.

But it was TSMC in Taiwan that pioneered the



## **CHIPS POWERED THE PANDEMIC RESPONSE— WEBCAMS, LAPTOPS, COVID-19 TESTING MACHINES**

division between fab and fabless, and that dominates the industry today. Its founder, Morris Chang, was born in China and educated in the U.S. When he worked at Texas Instruments in the 1960s and 1970s, his engineering creativity and management acumen were legendary. He helped improve a chip fab's "yield"—the number of chips good enough to be sold—and drive down prices. But after managing TI's entire semiconductor division, Chang came to the conclusion that he would never be an American CEO. "I felt that essentially I had been put out in the pasture," Chang recalled in a published oral history. "My hope of further advancement was gone."

While at Texas Instruments, Chang had seen the rising cost of chip factories, and the way in which it can hold back innovation. His colleagues were eager to strike out on their own with new innovations, but never could. The barriers to entry were too high, if you had to run your own fab. He seized on the idea of a "pure-play foundry," as he called it—a merchant semiconductor company focused on making chips for others—and, with support from Taiwan's government, founded TSMC in 1987.

It was an auspicious moment in global trade policy. The Reagan Administration had enacted policies to counter rising Japanese production of semiconductors—but the first Bush Administration took a more hands-off approach. "Potato chips, computer chips, what's the difference?" Michael Boskin, an economic adviser to George H.W. Bush, famously said. Along with TSMC in Taiwan, South Korean and Chinese companies began ramping up chip manufacturing, constructing high-tech fabs, often with the help of government subsidies. By the 1990s, even Intel began shifting some production overseas. "And while that's all happening, we are adhering to our market-economics principles strongly—obsessively," says John Neuffer, CEO of the Semiconductor Industry Association, a leading trade group. The prevailing attitude was to leave companies alone—to keep government out of business.

When in 2010 Apple announced its first custom-designed chip, the A4, it was self-evident in the semiconductor industry that it would be made by a foundry in Asia. This particularly stung Intel, which until then had both designed and manufactured the chips Apple used in its devices. But that division in the industry had become the norm, and it continues today: the most sophisticated chips are likely to still be designed in America but manufactured overseas. Silicon Valley still deserves its name—but only thanks to the dozens of fabless chip-design startups, not the foundries that once replaced its fruit

orchards. Without the government incentives offered by Asian nations, that's unlikely to change. "The U.S. policy was 'We don't create winners; we let capitalism work,'" says GlobalFoundries' Caulfield. "That's a great philosophy if everybody around the world plays that way."

Now U.S. lawmakers are changing course. June's Senate bill, officially the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act, is squarely aimed at competing with China, in part by subsidizing semiconductor manufacturing. "There's been a growing bipartisan consensus over several years now that the U.S. needs to make more domestic investments to keep our competitive edge, particularly in an era of sort of strategic competition with China," says a senior Administration official. "It was an easy political oversight," says Neuffer, of the Semiconductor Industry Association. "It's not an oversight anymore."

The aggressive trade policy of the Trump Administration opened the door for Republicans to support greater economic intervention. Now they are clamoring for more. "There really has been a mistake here," says Oren Cass, executive director of American Compass, a conservative think tank, who sees semiconductors as the "ultimate case study" for this necessary shift in American economic policy. "They are so obviously high-tech, they were an American area of dominance for so long, they so obviously have national-security implications, and you can so nicely quantify who is ahead or behind," Cass says. "It crystallizes the issue in a way few other things could."

For President Biden, semiconductors are an opportunity to stimulate high-tech American industry. "This is infrastructure," the President said in April, holding up a glinting silicon wafer at the White House.

But bringing leading-edge semiconductor manufacturing to the U.S. will take years. In March, Intel announced plans for a \$20 billion expansion of its factory in Arizona—designed specifically to manufacture chips for others, as part of a newly launched division, Intel Foundry Services. But unlike TSMC—itsself building a new factory estimated to cost \$10 billion to \$12 billion in Arizona, and possibly more—it will not be able to manufacture the cutting-edge chips. Smaller means faster,



# Business

because you can squeeze more transistors into less space. But Intel has struggled to bring even its 7-nanometer node online, while TSMC is moving beyond its 5-nanometer node and preparing a 3-nanometer node for production. (Apple will reportedly again be its major customer.) It's about "capacity and capability," says Intel's Al Thompson, vice president of U.S. government relations. "We're going to spend a great deal of money in the U.S., creating a lot of jobs, to put us on a path to ensure that we're doing our part to protect our nation's economic and national security." But there is a long way to catch up.

**IN APRIL**, a Silicon Valley startup called Cerebras announced a new computer called the CS-2. It's meant not for Zoom calls or Netflix parties, but for the most sophisticated research in artificial intelligence—like discovering cancer drugs or

**'THERE ARE ONLY TWO CHOICES  
IF YOU WANT TO BUILD CHIPS  
AT THE CUTTING EDGE. YOU  
CAN SWIM TO CHINA FROM ONE,  
AND YOU CAN THROW A STONE  
TO THE DMZ AT THE OTHER.'**

—ANDREW FELDMAN, CEREBRAS CEO

simulating fusion reactions. At its heart is a custom-designed chip with a remarkable new design.

Rather than chop up a 12-in. silicon wafer into hundreds of tiny chips—punching each one out like a gingerbread cookie—Cerebras has found a way to make a single giant chip, like a cookie cake. Today's smartphone chips contain billions of tiny transistors, etched into silicon like a miniature city. Cerebras' custom chip contains trillions of transistors. To make it work, Cerebras engineers found a way to work around a basic flaw of silicon wafers. Typically, they are sliced from an ingot, like deli salami. But even the most sophisticated of these crystalline disks have imperfections, which ruin a chip. Semiconductor designers and manufacturers get around this by keeping each chip small, and throwing out the bad ones. (The yield is what's left.)

The engineers at Cerebras created a design with 850,000 identical blocks, like wallpaper, and a system to turn off any flawed sections without







**CHEMICAL  
LINES IN THE  
GLOBALFOUNDRIES  
FAB IN MALTA, N.Y.**

ruining the entire chip. Most supercomputers chain thousands of individual chips together. But moving information between those chips slows things down. Cerebras keeps it all on a single—giant—chip. “We found a way to use the fact that silicon moves information at nearly the speed of light, and at tiny fractions of the power taken to move bits elsewhere,” says Cerebras CEO Andrew Feldman. For customers like the drugmaker GlaxoSmith-Kline and the Argonne National Laboratory, it provides the horsepower needed for breakthroughs in artificial intelligence—a key ambition of U.S. technology policy.

It’s the kind of bold idea that defined the early days of Silicon Valley innovation, and the ongoing creativity of American chip designers. But if in the 1960s and 1970s, chip fabs were all over the valley, when it was time for Cerebras to find a fab for its chip, there were no local options. “There are only two choices if you want to build chips at the cutting edge,” Feldman says portentously. “You can swim to China from one, and you can throw a stone to the DMZ at the other”—meaning Taiwan’s TSMC and South Korea’s Samsung. Like Apple—whose headquarters are just a 10-minute drive away—Cerebras uses TSMC for its manufacturing, using its 7-nanometer fab.

If the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act survives its journey through the House and becomes a law, billions of federal dollars will flow into the semiconductor industry—already one of the most profitable. But it will take years to turn that investment into new chip factories, new chip designs and a new pipeline of engineering talent. The challenge for the industry isn’t merely to catch up to where Taiwan is today, and China plans to be by 2025, but to meet them where they’ll be in the future—or go further.

Except chips improve nonlinearly. A 3-nanometer node is more expensive than a 5-nanometer. “The amount of money it takes to stay ahead of that curve keeps going up,” says Alisa Scherer, an independent chip-manufacturing expert. And the time span does too. It is almost impossible to skip a generation. The environmental permitting alone can take years. “These aren’t Taco Bells,” says Feldman. “You don’t knock them out. They don’t arrive in a box.” For his giant AI chips, TSMC and Samsung are the only two choices, “as far as the eye can see.”

Until then, chip manufacturing—and all of the geopolitical and economic reverberations it causes—will continue to depend on a global web, stretched delicately across the oceans. —*With reporting by* BARBARA MADDUX *and* SIMMONE SHAH

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*Blum is the author of* Tubes: A Journey to the Center of the Internet *and* The Weather Machine: A Journey Inside the Forecast



Nation

# ‘My Name Is Mookie.’

Terrance Franklin was killed by  
Minneapolis police in 2013.  
The department cleared its officers.  
But there was a video.

BY KARL VICK AND JOSIAH BATES





**TERRANCE FRANKLIN**

WHEN TERRANCE FRANKLIN WAS SHOT TO death in a Minneapolis basement eight years ago, the only witnesses were the five police officers assembled to capture him. Two of them were bleeding—wounded by rounds from a police submachine gun the department declared the young Black man had managed to get control of in a brief struggle, a contest it said ended with Franklin’s death in a fusillade of immediate return fire. The officer who gave the most detailed account said the fatal encounter lasted “seconds.”

Franklin’s death was briefly a major story in the Twin Cities but nowhere else, not least because it was a story told by the police alone. On May 10, 2013, there was no body-camera footage that his skeptical family could demand be released, and no demands on the nightly news for an impartial inquiry. The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) investigated its own officers and concluded they had heroically taken down a would-be cop killer.

But there was a video, and it suggests a different story.

The video, shot by a passerby, begins after

Franklin is supposed to be dead. It runs 62 seconds and, in visual terms, reveals nothing of note: cops running up and down a tree-lined street outside a house. The audio, however, captured voices from the basement of that house, whose side door had been opened to retrieve the wounded. Shouts carried up the stairs and onto a soundtrack that seems—on first listening, and even second and third—to be merely a murky cacophony: sirens, voices, radio traffic and, toward the end, the roar of a descending airliner.

But with careful listening, and an assist from noise-filtering software, troubling words can be made out.

“Mookie!” some eight seconds into the recording, is the first, according to a forensic audio expert hired by Franklin’s family. “Mookie” had been Franklin’s nickname since childhood, and relatives say they recognize the voice as his. All five officers had sworn the suspect never uttered a word.

Nineteen seconds later, what seems to be the same voice implores: “Man, let me go!”

Other shouts are audible:



“Damn freakin’ n----r!”

“Come out, little n----r!”

“Don’t go putting those hands up now!”

Moments later, Franklin is killed by 10 pistol shots, five of them to the head.

“This was a straight-up execution,” says Michael Padden, the attorney for the Franklin family, which in 2014 filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the city of Minneapolis based on the recording. The lawsuit, which contains the language above, calculated that even if jurors could not make out every word, the tape exploded the police version of how Franklin had died. In addition to the prominent forensic audio expert who certified the authenticity of the recording, the family hired a forensic specialist in firearms. That expert reconstructed the shooting scene with the help of a private investigator who says two of the fatal bullets apparently were fired by officers holding their pistols side by side near Franklin’s head and pulling the triggers at the same time.

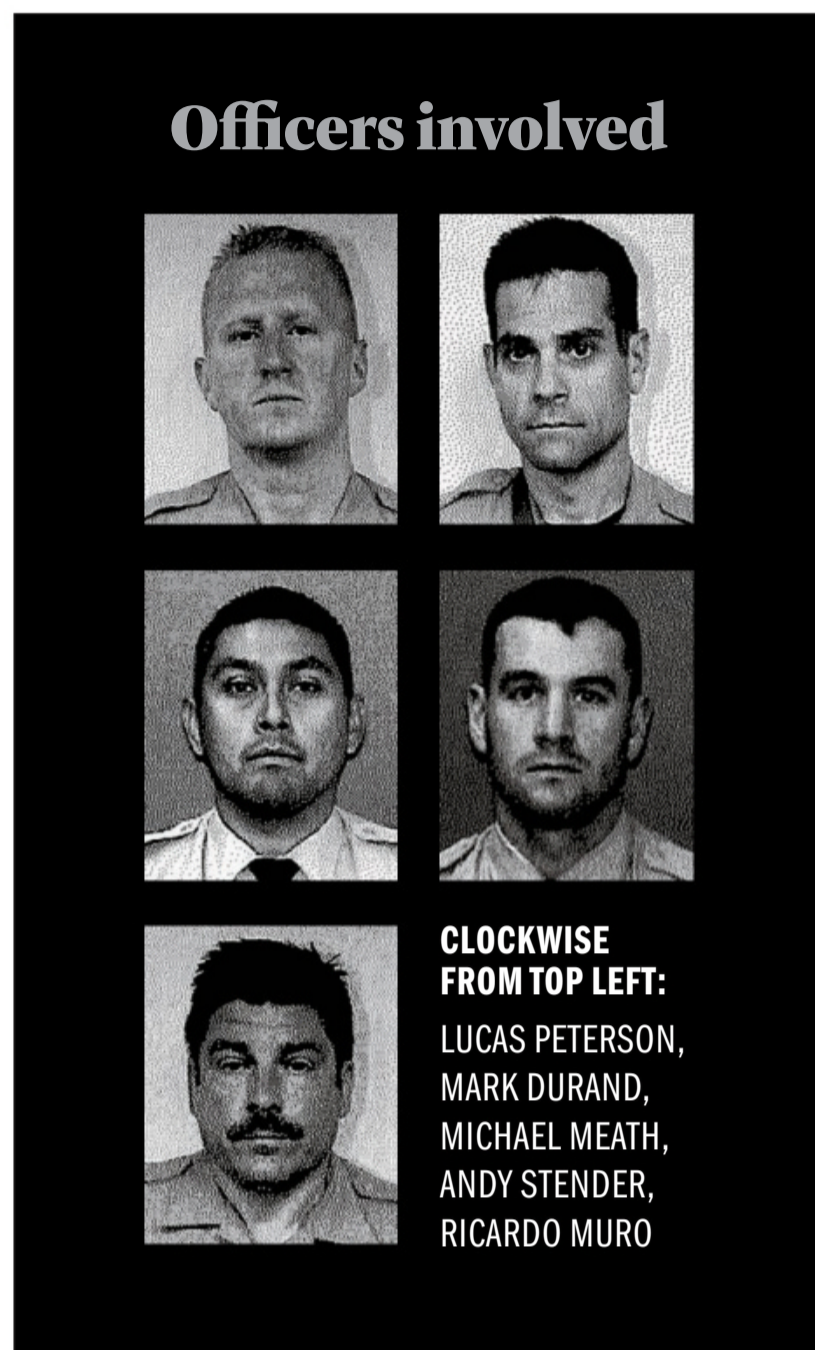
“To me, it was like assassination, and it wasn’t right,” says Walter Franklin, Terrance’s father. “If he had his hands up, he should have come out the basement handcuffed.”

Franklin died on a cusp. Five years earlier, his death might have remained lost among the uncounted Black and brown people killed in police encounters before cameras became ubiquitous. His family’s suspicions would have gathered not traction, but sympathetic nods: their word against the police’s. Had he been killed five years later, an outside agency would have investigated, perhaps with vigor. And Terrance Franklin might have been among the names that his father, listening to the radio one day this spring, heard a Minneapolis DJ solemnly recite: “... George Floyd, Jamar Clark, Justine Damond and others.”

Walter Franklin was so agitated he called the announcer. “I said, ‘You didn’t mention my son.’ He said, ‘What’s your son’s name?’ I said, ‘Terrance Franklin.’ He said, ‘I said *others*.’”

“And I felt like, My son’s name is not *others*.”

The elder Franklin says he no longer has faith in Minnesota authorities and is now looking to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to prosecute the



five officers. On April 21, the day after former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of murdering George Floyd, Attorney General Merrick Garland announced an investigation of the MPD. Investigators from the DOJ’s Civil Rights Division will look for a “pattern or practice” that violates constitutional rights, starting with “persistent patterns of misconduct.”

The Franklin case should qualify. The SWAT officer who fired the most rounds into Franklin’s head, Lucas Peterson, had been named in 13 complaints involving excessive force at the time, and settlements by the city and other agencies totaling \$700,000. Peterson used a choke hold on a Black man in 2002, whose subsequent death was ruled a homicide, and in 2006 falsely reported that a Black woman attacked a fellow officer, which was disproved by surveillance video.

The video in the Franklin case would reveal more, but it was probed neither by Minneapolis police nor Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman, the prosecutor charged with keeping the police honest.

Instead, officials doubled down on a narrative, one casting the fatal encounter not as a police chase gone catastrophically awry, but as a thrilling showdown with a

supervillain. Franklin was described as a dangerous Black man in dreadlocks intent on killing police and weirdly impervious to pain, who crashed a car, attacked a police dog, overpowered the SWAT police officers who rushed to the animal’s rescue, gained control of a submachine gun strapped to one of them and squeezed off two rounds, both on target.

It’s a narrative that conformed less to facts—many of which would prove fanciful—than to familiar tropes about Black male suspects. And it began taking shape even before Franklin reached the basement. On an open police channel, a report went out that the suspect they were chasing had tried to run down a sergeant. Surveillance video shows that Franklin did no such thing, but the all-points broadcast amped up the officers racing across the city to join the pursuit.

“Half of them you could tell were scared sh-tless, and half, this was the greatest day of their lives,” recalls Jimmy Gaines, who found himself across the street from the house the police surrounded more than an hour into the chase. When he heard two “booms,” he reached into his pocket for his iPod Touch and pointed it toward the house on Bryant Avenue South.

“Something was going to happen,” Gaines says. “I filmed to see how it would play out.”

**IN THE AUTOPSY REPORT,** Franklin began to resume his normal dimensions. The police had described him as 196 lb. He weighed 173. The tattoo on his left forearm, MOOKIE, was what he had been called since he was a boy, growing up in his father’s house on the city’s historically Black north side. NEHEMIAH, the name on the other forearm, is his son, who was 4 years old when Franklin died. Franklin was no longer with Nehemiah’s mother, Ashley Martin, but she said he sent money when he had it, and covered half the cost of birthdays, Christmases and school supplies. He had taken the boy to the Mall of America the previous week. Now 13, Nehemiah says he knows his father mostly from what his mother tells him (“He would sing a lot,” she says, “and to me he wasn’t the best singer”) and what he can find online: “About like him and the cops and stuff”

“He had a good head on his shoulders,” says Walter Franklin, who knows





the hazards facing Black men in Minneapolis. A police officer shot and killed his uncle Hosie Walton Jr. in 1987; three years later, a 17-year-old cousin, Tycel Nelson, was outside a party when an officer fatally shot him in the back. Walter Franklin says his own parents raised him to steer clear of dangerous company, and he taught his kids to do the same. Two of them went to St. Thomas University, and a son, “Little Walt,” became a mechanical engineer.

Terrance was on a shakier path. He had become a father at 17 and had worked only intermittently, in warehouses and a shoe store. What the Minneapolis police described as “an extensive criminal history” included an assortment of misdemeanor arrests and at least two felony convictions, including one in 2011 for assault, after using a knife on a store clerk who caught him shoplifting.

Still on probation for that offense, Franklin was circling the edge of the hard things his father had warned him against.

▲  
*Jimmy Gaines, whose recording is key to allegations of police misconduct in Terrance Franklin’s death*

About a year before he died, he was shot by a man Walter Franklin described as a friend of Nehemiah’s mother. Another relative said that when police arrived, they handcuffed Terrance before realizing he was the victim. But if Franklin harbored hard feelings toward cops, they were not apparent to his family. Martin said he “wanted to do something with law enforcement,” perhaps become a probation officer or work in corrections.

Other times he thought he could make it as a rapper. His stage name, P. Cutty, was also his Twitter handle, and the portrait that emerges from both his posts and his music is of an attractive young man whose abiding interests were reefer and women. On the day he died, Franklin’s application to a local technical college was in the backseat of one girlfriend’s car. He was driving the borrowed

car of another girlfriend to visit a third.

At 2:09 p.m., the blue PT Cruiser was parked outside her apartment building on Lyndale Avenue in south Minneapolis. Franklin was behind the wheel beside the woman, whose two small children were in the back. He was rolling a blunt; on surveillance footage, his hand flicks stems out of the car’s sunroof.

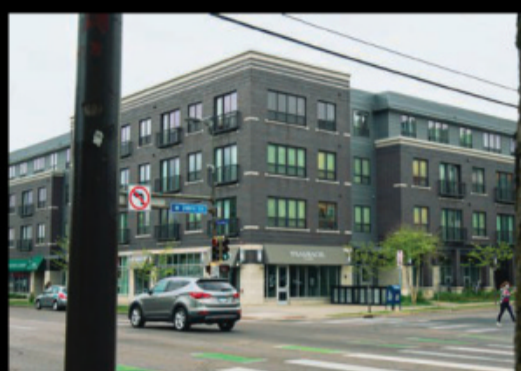
The building’s manager was watching Franklin remotely, convinced this was the same person who had burglarized an apartment a few days earlier. He had called 911, and now three police cars pulled into the lot. Two moved beyond camera range while the third, driven by Sergeant Katherine Smulski, stopped near the parking lot entrance, in full view of a surveillance camera. Smulski got out of the car and leveled her gun, leaving open the driver’s side door that now blocked the way to the exit. Franklin backed up slowly, paused 10 seconds, then drove away, nudging shut the open door in order to reach Lyndale.



## The timeline

**1:58 P.M.**

An apartment manager at 2743 Lyndale Ave. South calls 911 after seeing a man he suspects of a burglary days earlier



**2:16 P.M.**

Franklin drives a few blocks, abandons the vehicle and sets off on foot, hopping backyard fences

**2:18 P.M.**

Franklin calls the car's owner to tell her where to find it

**2:22 P.M.**

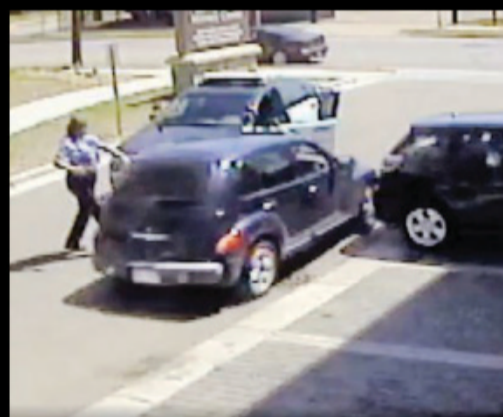
Franklin is spotted running southbound on busy Lyndale, then on a residential street

**2:10 P.M.**

Police find Franklin in the parking lot and draw their weapons. He backs out and, after a long pause, drives toward the exit. His vehicle hits the open door of a squad car blocking the way.

**2:12 P.M.**

After police radio a "flee," one falsely broadcasts that Franklin tried to run down an officer—seen on video running toward his car



**2:30 P.M.**

Believing the suspect is now hiding, police cordon off four blocks and begin a house-to-house search

With that, Franklin became not only a "flee," but a wannabe cop killer, transformed by a radio call that described him as trying to hit an officer. The tape shows Franklin making a wide arc around Smulski and Smulski then scampering forward to kick the PT Cruiser's rear fender as it passed, but two years later, she insisted under oath: "I contend he was trying to injure or kill me."

Nobody knows why Franklin ran. If it was not guilty knowledge of the earlier burglary, it may have been fear that the marijuana in his hand would send him to jail. Then there was a stolen 9 mm Desert Eagle pistol found, months later, hidden under a porch near where Franklin left the car. He may have been holding it for someone. Police said they did not suspect Franklin of stealing it, and his DNA was found only on the sock it was in.

A few blocks away, Franklin abandoned the car, with the woman and children in it, and set off on foot. As he ran, he carried only his phone. He called the woman who owned the car and told her where to find it. He ducked into a bicycle shop, paced nervously and asked into his phone, "Are they gone?" then dashed out again. An officer saw him cross one street, then another, but not the third, and

a four-square-block residential area was cordoned off. Inside it, Franklin forced open the back door of a house where no one was home, put on a robe from an upstairs closet and headed for the basement. He tried calling a woman he had lived with for eight months, an ex-girlfriend who had sent him packing over the other women, but she'd changed her number. At 3 p.m., he messaged her on Facebook: "Call me." When she did 10 minutes later, he asked her to come get him. She drove toward the house but could not get past the police cordon. She called Franklin back to ask him what he had done. He had no answer. She says they talked for at least 15 minutes, exchanging *I love yous* and reassurances. "He was going to jail. That's what he was trying to get across to me," she said later. "And he asked me, you know, 'Are you going to wait for me? Are you going to talk to me?'"

From a window in the basement, Franklin could see officers moving between houses. "I'm pretty sure they've figured out where I am," he said. He told her he heard footsteps upstairs and what sounded like a police dog. Then the phone went dead.

In 2013, police in no major U.S. city wore body cameras. Smartphones were

not in even half of Americans' pockets. The most dramatic and violent events were described in newspapers and on newscasts in sentences ending with the words *according to police*. But law enforcement's power to dictate reality was about to be challenged, by technology and by the angry awakening that first erupted in Ferguson, Mo., a year later. As a movement, Black Lives Matter expanded with proof that all was not as we had been told. But when Franklin was killed, the story that emerged was told only by the MPD. And in it, the protagonist was the dog.

"The canine located the suspect inside the residence, and while trying to apprehend the suspect, the suspect attacked the canine," then police chief Janeé Harteau told a news conference that day. "Additional officers entered the residence to help the canine handler and the canine. An intense struggle then ensued." (Police issued a statement later stating that the dog was home safe with its handler.)

In truth, no one knew what had happened. Two of the five officers involved had left in ambulances; they would not be interviewed for at least 14 days. The others gave statements three and four days later. But first they were escorted separately to city hall. If five civilians



**3 P.M.**

Franklin, hiding in the basement of a home on Bryant Avenue South, contacts an ex on Facebook to ask for help

**3:29:45**

"We got shots fired." Two officers are wounded by MP5 fire, police say.

**3:29:58**

Across the street, Jimmy Gaines hears two booms and hits "record" on his iPod Touch

**3:30:24**

"Damn freakin' n----r" is audible, per Franklin family lawsuit

**3:30:41**

"Come out, little n----r!" is shouted, according to the suit

**3:30:51**

Police fire kills Franklin, the family's investigator says

**3:25 P.M.**

Estimated time that five SWAT officers and a K-9 enter the home

**3:30:06**

"My name is Mookie!" is heard, according to a forensic audio expert hired by the Franklin family

**3:30:25**

"Man, let me go!" is heard, the lawsuit says

**3:30:43**

"Don't go putting those hands up now!", per the family's suit

emerged from a room with a corpse, they could expect to be questioned separately, to have their stories compared, and to then be questioned again. But the policy of the Minneapolis Police Department not only barred officers involved in shootings from being questioned for several days, it also directed that they be placed in a room together and allowed to talk among themselves with a representative of their union. They would share a lawyer. "There was no attempt to prevent the officers from getting together before they gave their statements," Harteau acknowledged later.

In any event, the police department had scant incentive to press any of them. In terms of public relations, the day had been a disaster. Two wounded cops and a dead Black man were bad enough. To make matters worse, a squad car racing to the scene had run a red light, killing a motorcyclist and badly injuring his passenger. The crash happened a half hour after Franklin was dead; there was no emergency to rush to. Harteau had been in office less than a year.

All of this argued for taking the investigation away from the Minneapolis Police Department.

"I don't believe there's a major agency

in the country left that investigates their own shootings. They just don't do it," says Rich Stanek, who in 2013 was the Hennepin County sheriff. His department investigated police-involved shootings for all but one of Hennepin's 44 municipal departments. The exception was Minneapolis; it declined Stanek's offer to handle the Franklin inquiry.

"They didn't want that level of scrutiny," Stanek says. "I mean, I'm convinced of it. Others are convinced of it. It's just the way it was."

Months later, the Minneapolis police chief would relent. Beginning in 2014, she said, officer-involved shootings in the city would be investigated by an outside agency—not the sheriff's office, but the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, or BCA, a state agency that reports to the Commissioner of Public Safety. Franklin's death would be the last Minneapolis police shooting investigated by Minneapolis police.

When the SWAT officers finally were interviewed, all five—Peterson, Michael Meath, Ricardo Muro, Mark Durand and Andrew Stender—laid out the same scenario. Their statements varied mostly in vividness. The police dog, they said, had found Franklin in the small, crowded

basement, squeezed behind a hot-water heater near a staircase. The dog had latched onto the sleeve of the robe and possibly Franklin's leg, but Franklin did not budge. Nor did he respond to a punch in the face or a blow from a flashlight, both delivered by Stender.

"I watched in amazement as the suspect appeared to have no reaction," Peterson declared. Meath said: "I remember the suspect had a blank stare on his face, and his eyes appeared to be blank."

At this point, all five SWAT officers, a dog and the suspect were crammed into an extremely cluttered space measuring perhaps 4 by 6 ft. As the officers told it, Meath was kneeling Franklin in the chest when Franklin lunged "like a football player" and knocked Meath across the room. Then he punched Peterson in the face, freed himself from Peterson's grip and knocked down Durand, who was wearing the MP5 submachine gun—the trigger of which, Durand says, Franklin managed to reach and pull twice while the two of them were falling.

They landed on the floor in an adjacent laundry room, according to the officers' accounts. Peterson said Franklin now "had control of" both Durand and the submachine gun. In an almost cinematic



# Nation

blow-by-blow, Peterson described how, in the dark room, the flashlight attached to the barrel of the MP5 had been turned on.

“I remember seeing it travel up my uniform shirt, and it began to track up toward my head,” Peterson said. He threw himself onto the upraised barrel: “I used myself and my vest essentially as a body bunker for the officers behind me and to prevent the suspect from shooting me in the head.” Then, groping for Franklin’s head, Peterson said, he felt dreadlocks and fired several rounds into the skull—by chance, at the same instant the wounded Meath also fired.

It was a thrilling story and, for the Minneapolis Police Department, satisfying. Eight days after the shooting, the SWAT officers had replaced the German shepherd at the center of the police narrative when the *Star Tribune* quoted unnamed police sources as saying that Franklin had grabbed the gun Durand wore strapped to his body by a nylon sling. A few months later, the same newspaper was leaked crime lab results that detected Franklin’s DNA on the trigger. The officers’ interlocking accounts served to seal the case when they were released in a 228-page bundle of police reports, memos and transcripts made public on Sept. 24, 2013.

The reports contained no mention of any attack on the police dog, or of the surveillance footage that showed Smulski scampering to kick Franklin’s car. Several officers had, however, made note of the on-air allegation that Franklin had tried to run her down. One officer wrote: “At approximately 1416 hours Channel 3 broadcasted [sic] that the Black male who attempted to run over the Minneapolis Police officer was in a bike store ...” Durand, in a van carrying the SWAT team to the manhunt, heard the report and called it out to the officers seated further back in the van. Later, asked under oath if the report of an attempt of an officer’s life had made him angry, Durand replied, “It didn’t make me happy.”

Other contradictions in the mass of documents went unremarked: Meath said he saw Franklin sitting on the ground with Peterson “directly on top of him,” but also described Franklin “going limp against Officer Peterson.” It was not explained how Durand, who was said to have been beneath Franklin, was not drenched in



▲  
*Ashley Martin, Franklin’s  
ex-girlfriend, and their 13-year-old  
son Nehemiah*

blood from Franklin’s wounds. Crime-scene technicians found no blood at all on the MP5, a detail noted by the federal judge who denied the city’s motion to dismiss the family’s lawsuit. And Franklin’s hands, alleged to have twice fired an officer’s weapon, were never tested for gunshot residue.

Ed Felien, a former city-council member who publishes the monthly *Southside Pride* community newspaper,

noted another puzzle: the autopsy report said all the bullets entered Franklin’s head from the right. If the right-handed Peterson was on top of Franklin and facing him, as Meath said, his bullets should have entered Franklin’s left side. “It didn’t pass the smell test,” says Felien.



Still, the state's major news outlets repeated the police narrative, and the county attorney defended it. The department showcased its report hours after prosecutor Freeman announced that a grand jury, summoned as a matter of course after a police shooting, had cleared the officers.

"The criminal process is now complete," Freeman declared.

**JIMMY GAINES NEVER HEARD** from the police. Three weeks after the shooting, the Franklin family's attorney, Padden, held a news conference calling attention to the video and to the racial epithets he said were audible on it. By then, police had downloaded the video from YouTube, where Gaines had posted it right after the shooting. They could not make out much, but on the YouTube version, there's not much to hear. To make room for the billions of videos uploaded to the platform, YouTube routinely pares them down, diluting their quality. The YouTube version of the Gaines video was 7% the size of the file on Gaines' iPod Touch.

The police could have learned this by obtaining the original, or consulting an expert. They did neither. Nor did prosecutors, who ostensibly were running quality control on the department's investigation into itself.

"Their job is to make sure that the investigation was done," says Stanek, who estimates his office investigated eight to 12 police shootings a year when he was sheriff. "Usually in an investigation like this, into a shooting, a homicide, an officer-involved shooting, you would get what we call a wish list back from the county attorney saying you need to further look into this. You need to do another interview. You need to take this evidence and redo the DNA. You need to take that tape and get it enhanced and break it down, the syntax and what exactly it says."

The job instead fell to the Franklin family. Padden hired a local private investigator named R. Steven Rogers, who listened to the recording again and again. With headphones, Rogers says he heard a lot, and even more after shell-ing out \$200 for a device known as a DragonFly that bypassed his computer's sound card. The more Rogers heard, the more he believed he understood why Minneapolis police had so little interest in the recording.

The audio does not reveal precisely what happened in the basement. But it appears to reveal what did not: Franklin could hardly have been killed in a brief struggle for a gun if there's evidence he was still alive on the recording. Gaines, after all, says he did not begin recording until he'd heard two booms, which would have been the shots that hit Muro and Meath. "Officer shot!" may be the plainest words on the video, shouted by an officer nine seconds into the recording. But that officer is passing on what he's already heard; Rogers' review of police radio traffic found that the first alert ("We got shots fired") had been broadcast 24 seconds earlier. If there had been a struggle that Peterson said lasted "no longer than seconds," Franklin would have been dead.

**'Our team decided  
that the most  
likely thing that  
happened was  
they pulled him  
up by the hair.  
Boom. 1-2-3 BAM.'**

**—Steve Rogers,  
private investigator**

Yet someone was shouting: "My name is Mookie!" Ed Primeau, the forensic audio expert hired by the family, heard it at his computer console in suburban Detroit. A onetime probation officer, Primeau first made his name in 1979 by recovering audio for the FBI in a sting operation against Detroit judges. He has examined the flight recordings of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, the airplane that disappeared in 2014, and confirmed a viral video of a Chicago police shooting as a fake.

At his "acoustically perfect" office, Primeau first established the Gaines video as authentic (no signs of tampering), then prepared to listen. He says he insisted that neither Padden nor Rogers tell him what they had heard. In order to testify as an independent expert, Primeau

says he makes a point of listening with virgin ears. Running the 62-second recording through commercially available software, he lifted out the extraneous to isolate the specific, especially voices. As he worked, he watched a graphic readout of the sounds he was detecting.

"I like to explain it as like peeling an onion," Primeau says. "You do layer by layer. You apply some filtering and then you listen."

Primeau did not confirm everything Rogers had heard, but that does not mean the language is not there, he says. "We all have different sound perception," Primeau says. "And when anybody were to listen to that recording, they would perceive the events a little bit different."

Still, the snippets documented in his final report—"My name is Mookie!" "Get out of here ..." "Damn freakin' ..." "Let me go!" "Stand up!" "Come out ..." "... Put those hands up now"—appeared damning.

The recording not only undercut the police account, it offered the outline of an alternative narrative that was put forward in the family's lawsuit: that Durand had accidentally fired his own gun, injuring Muro and Meath, and that his fellow officers had killed Franklin and claimed self-defense to cover up the blunder.

The accidental-discharge scenario could explain Durand's ambiguous statements to uninvolved officers directly after the shootings: "It was my gun, Sarge," he told one. Another recalled that when Durand handed over his weapon, "He said something to me which at the time didn't make any sense. I believe what he said was: 'This is the gun that caused the injuries.'" The actions of that same officer could explain how Franklin's DNA ended up on the trigger: the officer had placed his fingers on Franklin's neck and arm, checking for a pulse, and then been handed the MP5, possibly leaving what's known as "touch DNA" from Franklin on the weapon. (Later, the officer would say he had worn gloves when he touched Franklin—something he said he'd not mentioned in his initial report—and removed them before handling the weapon.)

But the most troubling evidence was not on the tape. Padden hired an expert in firearm forensics, Richard Ernest of Fort Worth, who with Rogers reconstructed Franklin's shooting in the actual



basement. All of the bullets had been mapped and recovered by crime-scene investigators, and the medical examiner had traced their paths as they penetrated Franklin. Working backward, Ernest and Rogers created a 3-D model of the shooting that brought Rogers “to the realization that this could very well have been not only wildly different than what the official report said, but something much darker.” A crime-scene photo showed two slugs, a 9 mm and a 45 mm, passed side by side through a door, not an inch apart. Peterson used a 9 mm that day, Meath a 0.45. “You’re not going to have two random shots wind up next to each other like that,” Rogers says. “They had to have been fired essentially at the same time.” Evidence photos also showed a dreadlock on the floor, next to where Franklin fell dead. Rogers speculates it was left there as an enraged officer yanked Franklin’s head in preparation to kill him. “Our team decided that the most likely thing that happened was they pulled him up by the hair. Boom. 1-2-3 BAM,” he says.

That was the story Padden was preparing in the summer of 2019 to lay before a federal jury. Years had passed since the shooting, most spent waiting for courts to make rulings. In 2016, a federal judge had refused to dismiss the wrongful-death suit against the city, stating that the Gaines video and other evidence raised questions “regarding the sequence of events leading to the use of deadly force against Franklin, as well as the existence and nature of any threat posed by Franklin when the officers shot him.” The city appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, but in 2018, the Justices refused to hear the case.

**THE CITY HAD LIKEWISE** been disappointed by its own forensic experts, the outside digital-audio specialists who neither police nor prosecutors had sought out to plumb the Gaines tape. Confronted with a lawsuit based on what the tape contained, the city’s lawyers retained a pair of respected former FBI audio specialists who do business as BEK-TEK. Their 14-page report did not dispute Primeau’s findings of what could be heard on the Gaines recording. Forensically, the best BEK-TEK could do for the city was opine that none of what’s

audible could have originated from beneath the house, because their firm had tried and failed to duplicate the recording. Primeau had tried too, traveling to the basement and having people shout and fire blanks while recording on an iPod Touch from exactly where Gaines had stood. All was in vain. “In this particular case, the sounds from across the street—it almost seems impossible that this device could pick up all the activity that it did,” Primeau says.

Yet it had.

As the trial date approached, the city faced a decision. Its attorneys would have to account for Peterson’s record of excessive force and falsehood and a troubling ballistic report from the family’s firearms expert. The parking-lot video was clear. The passages on the Gaines

**‘Justice to me would look like the officers being prosecuted.’**

—Ashley Martin

recording that seemed to be most audible to most listeners and to potential jurors (especially using headphones and a transcript) were chilling: “Don’t go putting those hands up now” and the *N* word.

Minneapolis elected to settle. On Feb. 14, 2020, the city council voted to pay Franklin’s estate \$795,000. Afterward, council president Lisa Bender sounded an optimistic note: “I think our policy changes in the police department, leadership changes, have really created a scenario where this is unlikely to happen again.”

George Floyd was murdered three months later. Police initially said his death was “a medical incident”; a witness’ cell-phone video showed otherwise.

“George Floyd, when that happened to him, it just reopened a whole thing for me,” Walter Franklin says. “It took me—it took me back to where I could hear my son crying out for his life in that basement. Each bullet wound as his body took, I heard that with my own ears.”

Franklin’s survivors say they do not equate the settlement with justice, especially after the conviction of Chauvin. “Justice to me would look like the officers being prosecuted,” says Ashley Martin.

It could still happen. The prosecutor has moved to reopen the case. The reversal has not been previously reported and was made during the course of TIME’s reporting for this article, as well as the circulation of Padden’s book on the case, *Blue Code of Silence*, self-published in October 2020. “Our office reviewed the new evidence that was not available to us at the time we took the case to the grand jury,” a spokesperson said in a June 22 email. “As a result, we sent a letter in early May to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension suggesting they should consider doing a new investigation. The BCA was not the original investigating agency so they would be taking an outside, independent look.”

Freeman’s May 4 letter to BCA Superintendent Drew Evans references the Franklin family’s lawsuit at length, highlighting the tape, Primeau’s findings and the possible explanation for Franklin’s DNA on the weapon. “There is a great deal more information in the lawsuit papers,” Freeman concludes. “My question to you is, has anyone made you aware of this information, either in 2013 or more recently? I understand that the BCA’s newly created Use-of-Force Unit is willing to review cases that were not originally investigated by the BCA. This might be an appropriate case for the unit to review.”

A BCA spokesperson said, “We are currently evaluating what our involvement in the case would be, if any.”

Minneapolis police referred all questions to the city attorney’s office, which did not respond to questions from TIME.

All five officers remain on the force. Peterson’s LinkedIn profile identifies him as trainer coordinator for the SWAT team. —With reporting by LESLIE DICKSTEIN and MARIAH ESPADA □





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World







TO  
MAKE  
THE  
WORLD  
LISTEN

Dozens of women accused  
renowned scholar Andrés  
Roemer of sexual abuse—  
and found that there is  
power in numbers

BY MEAGHAN BEATLEY

*Mariana Flores, Itzel  
Schnaas and two  
anonymous women  
who have also accused  
Roemer, photographed in  
Mexico City on May 24*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TANIA  
FRANCO KLEIN FOR TIME



## For Itzel Schnaas, a 31-year-old professional ballet dancer in Mexico City, going public was her insurance policy.

If the plan worked, she believed a world-famous public intellectual, with ties to Mexico's government and major media conglomerates, would be exposed as a sex offender, and she could be protected from him and his powerful friends. They couldn't go after her if the world was watching, especially if other women came forward too. On Feb. 15, she posted a nearly seven-minute YouTube video excoriating the man: "It turns out that I had barely been born when you started violating women and sowing fear to obtain their silence, you miserable a--hole," she says in Spanish. "You ought to be scared of us. Because I am certain that many other women are going to add their accusations to this one."

They did.

Since then, 36 women have publicly accused Andrés Roemer, leveling charges of sexual harassment, abuse and rape on social media and in the press. At least six have formally accused the 57-year-old before the Mexico City prosecutor's office, Mexico City's attorney general confirmed on May 24. In February, UNESCO stripped him of his goodwill-ambassador title, and Columbia University, where he was a visiting scholar, cut ties with him. On May 5, amid reports that Roemer was in Israel, a Mexico City judge issued a warrant for his arrest for rape. His assets were frozen the same day. On May 21, Mexico City's attorney general announced a second warrant for Roemer's arrest, and on June 14, she requested that Israel arrest him to allow for quicker extradition. In a three-page letter sent to TIME via a lawyer on June 7, Roemer denied the accusations, concluding: "I have never raped anyone. I have never had sex without consensus. I have never locked a woman in a room. I have never threatened a woman to obtain silence from her. I have never used force to have a sexual encounter. I have never promised work on television or any other project in exchange for sex."

"Itzel Schnaas' video changed everything," says María Scherer, a journalist who started investigating rumors about abuse by Roemer years ago when, she says, it was still an open secret. Roemer's alleged crimes are comparable in scope and style to those of Harvey Weinstein. As with the former film producer, Roemer's power and status—cemented by friendships with the likes of former Mexican President Vicente Fox and billionaire Ricardo Salinas Pliego, both witnesses at his 2018 wedding—helped ensure his alleged victims' silence. He also benefited from a legal system that practically guarantees impunity: according to one study, only 5% of sexual-abuse or rape cases in Mexico end in a sentence. "It's very hard to get proof like a video, medical evidence or something that proves the aggression," says Viridiana Valgañón, a lawyer with Equis, a Mexican women's-rights organization. "You come face to face with the machinery of patriarchal justice, because your word, as a female victim, is doubted at every turn."

For years, Roemer's accusers chipped away at the wall of silence that protects men, and especially powerful men, in a country where neither feminism nor the movement against gender violence had yet gone mainstream. When Schnaas roared her accusation, it was amplified by their efforts, and taken up on social media and WhatsApp to create a community of previously siloed victims. Now, an open secret has become an international political scandal.

**FOR ROEMER**, the beginning of the end started with his flagship project. La Ciudad de las Ideas—known in English as the Festival of Brilliant Minds, a conference similar to TED Talks—has been held nearly every November since 2008 in Puebla, in east-central Mexico. (The 2020 festival was pushed to December by COVID-19.) For four days, some of the world's most innovative thinkers, including Michio Kaku, Christopher Hitchens, Werner Herzog and Alain de Botton, would debate ideas before an audience of thousands. It's become a cultural touchstone, into which the state of Puebla has injected at least \$17 million since 2007. Roemer, the festival's founder, is constantly on the move, dashing across the whale-shaped dome that hosts the event to moderate a panel or to emcee. He is the literal face of the festival: in a three-minute 2020 promotional video, Roemer appears at least 17 times.

In her own video, and in interviews with TIME, Schnaas set out her account of her dealings with Roemer—one sharply disputed by Roemer himself. As Schnaas describes it, they met in 2019 backstage at the festival, where Mexico's upper crust—including Salinas, the owner of media conglomerate Grupo Salinas, which sponsors the event—milled about eating canapés. Schnaas' father is an architect and a judge for the Mexican Sailing Federation, an elite club whose members include some of Mexico's wealthiest citizens. This was a familiar world to her, albeit one she regards with a degree of ironic detachment. (At 18, as a rising star in Mexican ballet, she tossed her tutus aside in favor of contemporary dance and a philosophy degree.) Schnaas and Roemer exchanged numbers to discuss a potential artistic collaboration for the following year's festival. They set a date to meet later that month.

According to Schnaas, Roemer changed their meeting's location at the last minute from a restaurant to a place he did not disclose as his home. After Schnaas arrived at a large stone house in the Mexico City neighborhood of Roma, a domestic worker ushered her into a room whose function seemed to fall somewhere between library, movie theater and lounge. When Roemer entered, what Schnaas had expected to be a professional meeting soon devolved into farce. She says Roemer incessantly interrupted to comment on her physique, how





sexy he found dancers and how much he wished he'd married one. She felt shock and repulsion when, she says, he stroked her legs and masturbated, finally pulling out cash and instructing her to buy an expensive dress “for the next time.”

When he let her out of the house, Schnaas says, she tore away on her motorcycle in a fury. She was well versed in handling and deflecting men's unwanted advances. “I was a girl who grew up in a world of dance where, when you were 10 or 15 years old, choreographers would tell you that until you had a certain amount of sexual experience, you wouldn't be an artist,” she says. But something about Roemer's brazenness—and a strong suspicion she was not the first, nor the worst treated—compelled her to take action. “It was clear to me. I knew he was a f-cking rapist.

▲  
*Schnaas, who posted a video alleging abuse, has become a leader among a growing group of accusers*

I didn't know what I was going to do yet, but I knew I was going to do it,” she says.

Since Grupo Salinas sponsored the Festival of Brilliant Minds and Roemer hosted his own show on the company's network, it made sense to strike there. She told her father's friend who worked there what had happened, and asked for his help to get the word out. But when the pandemic hit Mexico in March 2020, her grievance took a backseat. She persisted until finally, in November 2020, Schnaas says the company's Gender Unit—an office created a year earlier to address reports of sexual harassment and violence—

agreed to open a case. Schnaas says that during an in-person meeting in December 2020, the director of the unit described Roemer as a “serial aggressor,” but said that since Schnaas was not an employee at Grupo Salinas, they could not take legal steps. The director of the Gender Unit declined to comment to TIME. The director of editorial strategy at Grupo Salinas confirmed that the Gender Unit was made aware of Schnaas' case and no investigation was carried out.

So Schnaas turned to a feminist collective, the United Mexican Journalists (PUM), which had spearheaded a #MeToo campaign in Mexican media in March 2019. She was starting to doubt whether her experience even warranted her efforts, but her resolve returned when the collective informed her that they'd named Roemer in accusations published on Twitter. They were only three among 242 total #MeToo accusations PUM had posted at the time, and did not include the names of the accusers, but reading them, Schnaas could hardly believe how close they hewed to her own experience: Business meetings meant to take place in a public setting and then, at the last minute, moved to Roemer's home. His promises to jump-start their careers. She was heartbroken by one in particular, in which a young woman claimed Roemer had raped her in 2017 after pulling the same moves. PUM suggested Schnaas write a fourth accusation. She wanted to film a video instead. And she wanted to publish it in February. “I wanted this to be a f-cking bomb for March 8,” she says.

The 2020 International Women's Day in Mexico City—weeks before lockdown measures halted public life—had been the largest protest in Mexico in recent memory. The women's-rights movement, centering on demands to address a skyrocketing femicide epidemic, had rapidly bloomed in Mexico, and Schnaas wanted to capitalize on the momentum.

On Feb. 9, she posted on Facebook: “Last year I denounced Dr. Roemer, Andrés Isaac Roemer Slomianski is an abuser.” Two days later, Schnaas received a WhatsApp message from a woman named Lidia Camacho, a friend of Roemer's who asked Schnaas to meet with Roemer to talk it out.

On the morning of Feb. 14, Schnaas and Roemer met in a café with witnesses



# World

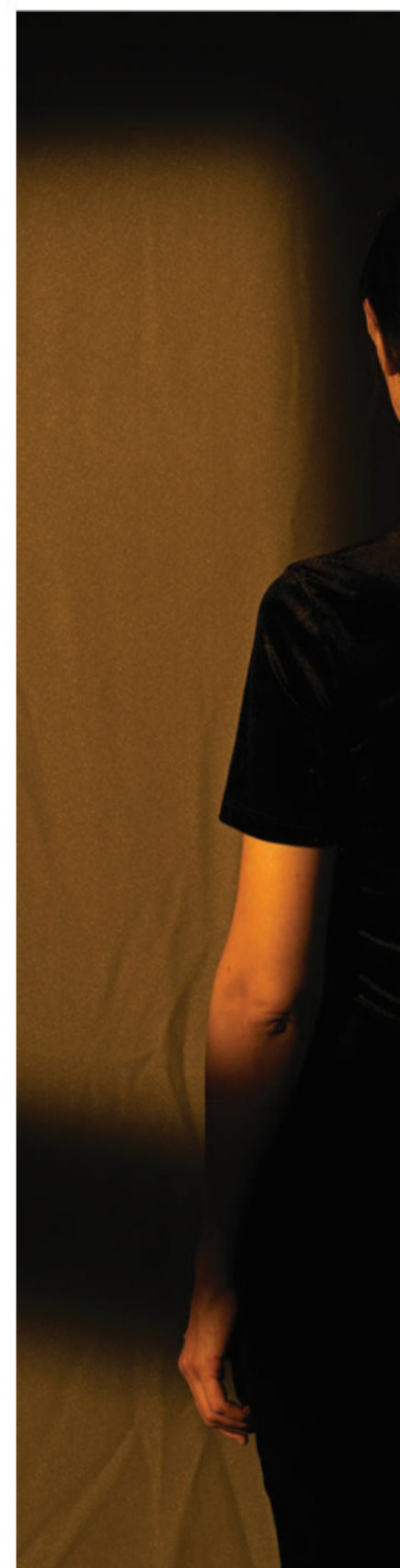
in tow: Camacho and Javier Contreras, Schnaas' friend and a choreographer at Mexico's National Institute of Fine Arts and Literature. Schnaas read Roemer the script she'd written for the video accusation she planned to make. She wore the same pale blue collared dress she'd worn two years earlier, the first time they'd met—she liked the symmetry. Contreras, Schnaas' witness, says Roemer pleaded with her not to post the video and argued that “different kinds of narratives may exist for the same event,” citing as an example the 1950 film *Rashomon*, which questions the notion of a single truth. Roemer then gave Schnaas a set of books, including *The Secret Lives of Men and Women*—a compilation of postcards containing racy musings such as “I sit in meetings and imagine who likes it rough.”

Roemer's account of his dealings with Schnaas is quite different. In a later tweet, he wrote he “seriously” denied the abuse allegation and said he and Schnaas talked it out during their Feb. 14 meeting.

For Schnaas, nothing was resolved. Meeting over, she says she raced to the home of her longtime friend Ricardo Encinas and told him to grab his camera and start rolling. In a furious but steady voice, she read the same text she had just delivered to Roemer. She says it felt like she was still reading to him. She posted the video the next day, and the messages started pouring in.

Women across Mexico and as far as San Francisco and New York contacted Schnaas via Facebook and Instagram, most with stories about Roemer. They'd exchange numbers and call. “I'm talking about two-hour-long calls late at night, crying, total catharsis,” Schnaas says. Over a month and a half, Schnaas says, she fielded 80 calls from women. Most simply wanted to talk and weren't sure about going public with their stories. But a few, like Talia Margolis, were ready.

**MARGOLIS, 32**, says she met Roemer in 2009 while volunteering at a Jewish community center, helping teens attend the Brilliant Minds festival. A few weeks after seeing Roemer give a talk, she was out with a friend when she spotted him seated at a café and said hello. After a brief chat, Roemer proposed that she drop by his house to interview for a position with the festival. Margolis thought this was a



golden opportunity. Meeting in his home did not strike her as odd; he was a trusted member of the Jewish community and she felt safe. On the day of the interview, she sat in the entertainment room as Roemer asked about her studies. Then—out of the blue, as she recalls it—he complimented her on her breasts, and later asked if she was clean-shaven in her pubic area. She cut the meeting short and left, feeling utterly humiliated. She never heard back about the job.

In 2019, when #MeToo hit, Margolis decided to publicly share her experience and got in touch with Scherer, the journalist, who was investigating Roemer for a podcast on his alleged behavior. She sat for an interview, but Scherer had to drop the project after other women backed out, and Margolis was left without an outlet until she saw Schnaas' video on Feb. 15. She reached out to Schnaas, and they talked about what they should do next. “I told myself, ‘This can't end here,’” Margolis says. On Feb. 18, when she had PUM publish her own statement, Margolis became the fifth person to publicly accuse Roemer, after Schnaas and the three anonymous women from 2019. That same day, Monserrat Ortiz came forward.

Ortiz, a 27-year-old journalist, had

Two women who accused Roemer of abuse but fear coming forward publicly, photographed anonymously in Mexico City

been working for TV Azteca, Grupo Salinas' flagship media company, as a reporter for six months in 2017 when she was assigned to interview Roemer about the festival. A few days later, Roemer messaged her on Facebook with a work proposal and suggested he make a reservation somewhere for them to discuss it. Ortiz figured the writing gig could open doors, plus it paid. But on the day of the meeting, she says, Roemer instead sent a chauffeur to drive her to a new location, which ended up being his house. After she was ushered into the entertainment room, she says, Roemer locked the door behind them. Then, she says, while staring at her legs, he came out with a completely different job proposal: game-show hostess. She said she wasn't interested, and tried to steer the conversation back to the original writing offer. But without warning, she says, he started masturbating and then raped her. When he was done, she says he pulled out some cash and told her to buy an expensive dress for their next meeting. She also says he told her that if





she uttered a word about that evening, he would make sure she never got hired in media again. Afraid Roemer would make good on his threat, Ortiz kept quiet about the incident. (Roemer told *El País* he denies Ortiz's rape allegation and said he does not know her.)

In March 2019, when PUM started publishing #MeToo accusations on Twitter, Ortiz wrote a statement about the alleged assault and asked the collective to post it anonymously. (She was still working for TV Azteca.) It was the statement that, nearly two years later, persuaded Schnaas to make her video. Ortiz spotted it while scrolling through her social media feeds on Feb. 18. "She described things that were so similar to what happened to me. I told myself, 'Now is the time,'" Ortiz says, and wrote another, more detailed statement and asked PUM to publish it, this time with her name. Then she wrote Schnaas.

Suddenly headline news across Mexico, Margolis, Schnaas and Ortiz created a WhatsApp group to be in touch through the media storm and to collectively manage the flood of messages they were now all receiving from other women claiming to have been abused by Roemer. Most were still afraid to come out publicly. But they got a push from an unlikely place.

On Feb. 20, Roemer posted his own video. Sitting before a bookshelf, he claims to have information that will clear up his and Schnaas' now public dispute. He then airs a four-minute clip of a recording he took of their Feb. 14 meeting. In it, Schnaas can be heard telling Roemer she had defended his professional credentials to the two men at Grupo Salinas who were friends of her father and who had it out for Roemer. Roemer said this proved that Schnaas had been pushed to make sexual-misconduct allegations to help "the interests of two people who do not belong to the women's-rights movement." (Schnaas told *TIME* that she defended Roemer professionally only to make it clear she was *not* part of a politically motivated conspiracy.)

But Roemer's video backfired. "That's when he dug his own grave," says Diana Murrieta, the president and founder of *Nostras Para Ellas*, an NGO providing free assistance to victims of gender-based violence. "It created a collective fury." Murrieta says that a few of Roemer's alleged victims reached out to her organization after Schnaas' video, but that those numbers soared after Roemer posted his own.

On Twitter, PUM started publishing daily, sometimes twice daily, statements by women accusing Roemer of sexual misconduct. Mariana Flores, a 33-year-old contractor who also says Roemer lured her to his house under the guise of a work offer in 2011, then touched and kissed her against her will, was one of the women pushed over the edge by Roemer's denial. She sent PUM her statement on Feb. 20 and asked them to publish it with her name. "I had two options. Either I resigned myself to the fact that this was going to be my life, that I was going to have to endure this kind of behavior, or I joined this group of women who said we could build a different world. I told myself, I'm with them," Flores says.

Soon the WhatsApp group included over a dozen women. It was a refuge, where they felt heard after years of being silenced. (Emails shared with *TIME* show that in 2019, Roemer was reported for sexual harassment to the UNESCO director-general, but that requests for an investigation were ignored. UNESCO declined to comment on the emails.) Together, their boldness paid off: on Feb. 23, in an extremely rare move, the Mexico City

prosecutor's office opened an investigation into Roemer, based on the news reports of his alleged crimes. (The prosecutor's office did not respond to requests for comment.) Finally, years after the initial accusations, a legal path was open for the women to pursue Roemer. The next day, he deleted his Twitter account.

The number of Roemer's accusers kept growing, bringing actors, academics, public servants and hotel maids to a common front. On March 2, some finally met for the first time when they recorded Scherer's podcast. In the days before March 8, Roemer barricaded his house: large black boards covered the first and second stories. They didn't stop women who, as Schnaas had hoped, gathered before Roemer's house on International Women's Day, tore down one of the boards to scale the second floor, and—in pink and purple spray paint—wrote *RAPIST* and *ABUSER* next to a large French window.

"We're creating a monster against this man," Ortiz says.

On May 7, several survivors of Roemer's alleged abuse wrote a letter to the Israeli ambassador in Mexico, asking for cooperation in Roemer's extradition. "We want to make sure no more women suffer the horrors we live with," they wrote.

**THE ORIGINAL WHATSAPP GROUP** eventually splintered. Some of the women opted out of legal action, fearing possible fallout on their families or careers. Others formed smaller groups around the different lawyers they chose to represent them.

All of that is understandable to the women who first pushed the case into the public square. Schnaas says some days she wakes up feeling certain more women will join them in formally accusing Roemer. Other days feel so taxing, she can't believe anyone else would put themselves through it. She reminds herself that the united front they created outed him to the world. "We're already a huge case," she says.

While they await justice, the support of the sisterhood has fortified the first accusers. Flores found the courage to tell her therapist about her experience with Roemer, which she says she had not done in five years of therapy. Ortiz overcame the panic attacks she'd been suffering. Now she's focusing on her work: writing about gender-based violence. —*With reporting* by MARIAH ESPADA □



Health

1. Joe Biden's  
army of vaccine  
volunteers

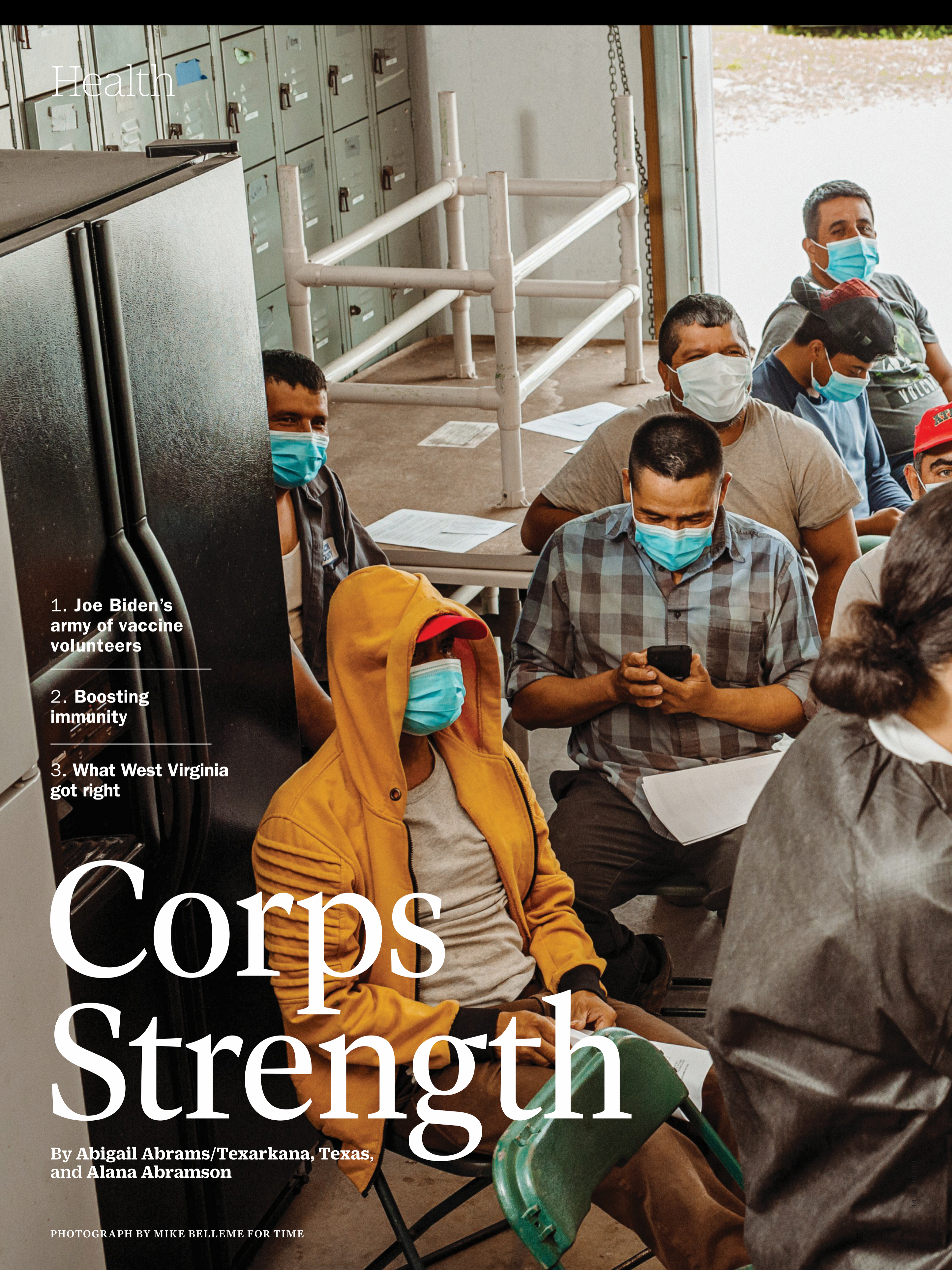
2. Boosting  
immunity

3. What West Virginia  
got right

# Corps Strength

By Abigail Abrams/Texarkana, Texas,  
and Alana Abramson

PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE BELLEME FOR TIME







*Tennessee health department staff vaccinate workers at Jones and Church Farms on June 1*



**C**ODY HOWARD IS STANDING at a makeshift pulpit under an overpass preaching about the COVID-19 vaccine. The pastor of a congregation he calls Church Under the Bridge, which serves the homeless of Texarkana, Texas, Howard delivers a crucial message: he got the shot. He admits that science and the authorities aren't yet 100% sure about "the long-term effects of this thing," and emphasizes that every person can make up their own mind. But he says his own decision to get vaccinated was a response to a question posed by a core tenet of Christianity: "Will it help my neighbor?"

Plenty of the three dozen or so attendees on this rainy June morning are skeptical. "When [COVID-19] first started spreading, they said it's like a high-powered flu or pneumonia," says Tony Wood, referring to comments like those made by former President Donald Trump, "and I've had pneumonia." Others appear supportive, but none act on the pastor's sermon. Howard, undeterred, gestures to a mobile vaccine bus parked nearby from the Christus St. Michael Health System, a local hospital group, his long hair, lanky build and red T-shirt evoking a casual Christ-like figure leading his flock.

What Howard's listeners don't know is that he is carrying a message from a less divine source: the federal government, or more specifically the White House. The Christus health system is a member of the Catholic Health Association of the U.S. (CHA), which is part of the COVID-19 Community Corps, a Biden Administration effort to persuade hesitant Americans like Wood to get vaccinated. The corps is a loose network of more than 4,000 organizations meeting regularly with the White House to share information on vaccines. The faith leaders, community groups and physicians who make up the corps receive data, tool kits and talking points from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and tailor them to specific communities across the country.

The experiment may be the Biden Administration's best hope to beat COVID-19. The U.S. must fully vaccinate at least 70% of its population to contain the virus,

public-health experts say. As of June 21, CDC data show that even among those eligible for a vaccine, the country remains 17 percentage points short of that goal, which experts believe will bring what is known as herd immunity. As some Americans resist getting the shot, average daily vaccinations have slowed from a high of 3.4 million in early April to slightly over 850,000 in mid-June. With new strains emerging around the globe, including the faster-spreading Delta variant, millions of American lives are potentially at risk, says Dr. Krishna Udayakumar, director of the Duke Global Health Innovation Center. "We're going to have to increase the rate of vaccinations in the U.S. in order to avoid another surge," he says.

Biden has staked the success of his first year on getting enough people vaccinated to reopen society, saying this spring he wanted 70% of the adult population to have at least one shot by July 4. He has also declared the larger goal of showing Americans that the federal government can be a powerful force for good. The COVID-19 Community Corps sits at the uneasy crux of those two objectives: How can the federal government persuade people who don't trust the federal government to get vaccinated? Through the corps, the Administration thinks it has found a way, by filtering a federal message through trusted local sources. But building trust is hard. Howard, for instance, says he has to avoid emphasizing any ties to Washington. "The more that we put that out there," he says, "the more distrustful they are."

Person by person, the corps is trying to chip away at bitter politics and entrenched resistance to federal intervention. While polling shows that vaccine hesitancy has declined since Biden took office, it's difficult to quantify how much can be

attributed to the corps. But if the program works, it could save lives and usher in a post-pandemic reality where Americans have a rebuilt faith in federal leadership. "You can lead in government by being at the forefront and being the loudest voice in the room," says Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. "But you can also lead by supporting leaders and communities and giving them the tools and resources, information and support that they need."

**LESS THAN A WEEK** before the Inauguration, when vaccines were still restricted to the most vulnerable, and even they were frantically refreshing their computer browsers to find appointments, Biden's COVID-19 response team was planning for the days when there would be too many vaccines.

Courtney Rowe and Ben Wakana, the officials in charge of the White House's COVID-19 communications



Howard says getting the COVID-19 shot is a Christian duty



strategy, knew that by spring, a surplus of shots would make hesitancy the biggest barrier to vaccination. Research they conducted during the presidential transition showed they needed local leaders from churches, social-service agencies and hospitals to mitigate the problem. But they also needed unified, top-down messaging to counter disinformation about the vaccines.

They decided these two strategies could work in tandem. The White House could recruit grassroots organizations to persuade hesitant Americans and arm them with information from the federal government. It was a risk, says Wakana. “The government hasn’t really played this role before.”

Wakana and Rowe spent the winter monitoring polls about hesitancy. They found minority, rural and evangelical communities were the most skeptical, and they began drawing up lists of recruits, from the NAACP, NASCAR and the American Red Cross to the National Association of Evangelicals, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Black Women’s Roundtable. By March 27, they had more than 200 names. Administration officials designed invitations on White House letterhead asking them to be founding members of a corps that would “share science-based information directly with community leaders and organizations across the country,” according to a copy reviewed by TIME. Wakana thought they would receive 50 positive responses. They ended up with over 275 founding members.

Walter Kim, head of the National Association of Evangelicals, was among those who immediately signed on. He was impressed by the Administration’s desire to engage evangelical Christians, even though three-quarters of them had voted for Trump in the 2020 election, according to exit polls. “I’ve appreciated in this Administration the recognition that we are going to have to partner with a lot of different types of people, regardless of their political affiliations,” he says. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation’s latest tracking poll, 27% of Republicans say they will “definitely not” get vaccinated, compared with 3% of Democrats.

On April 13, the two-week-old corps faced its first big test. As states expanded vaccine eligibility to all adults over

age 16, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC temporarily paused the use of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine after six women who had taken it developed severe blood clots. Local health officials, especially those in rural areas where J&J’s single dose held particular appeal, were afraid that the news would stoke hesitancy. Within hours of the pause, the Administration mobilized the corps. Murthy convened more than 1,000 members for a Zoom call led by Dr. Anthony Fauci, and circulated a letter explaining that the blood clots were incredibly rare and that the pause embodied the Administration’s careful approach.

For corps members like the CHA, having quick access to answers from the CDC and the FDA was crucial. Brian Reardon, vice president of communications and marketing at the CHA, had already been working with a group of about 50 other Catholic organizations to share COVID-19 vaccine talking points, and soon after the J&J pause, he sent them several links to reliable, updated information. “It’s a matter of organizing our communication and being consistent,” he says.

In late April, when corps members told the White House that some in their community were worried about the vaccines’ quick production, Murthy organized a Zoom call with Kizzmekia Corbett, an immunologist at the NIH who helped develop the Moderna vaccine, to explain how the mRNA technology in the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna shots had been in the works for over two decades. When the FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for emergency use in adolescents, Murthy gathered hundreds of parents, youth-group leaders, pediatricians and educators on a May 19 virtual roundtable to talk about the change.

“When we thought about the Community Corps,” says Murthy, “we always in the beginning thought of it as a bidirectional channel, a place where not only would we have information to share but also where we would have the ability to learn from people and they would also have the ability to teach each other.”

And in some places, it has worked.

**RENEA JONES ROGERS** knew her livelihood depended on getting more than just herself vaccinated. This spring, the second-generation co-owner of a

## VACCINES

# The world might need a booster shot

By Alice Park

**AS THE U.S. FOCUSES** on vaccinating 70% of American adults with at least one dose of a COVID-19 shot, scientists say we may need another, booster dose to maintain protection against new virus variants.

That means the U.S. government—which is picking up the bill for the current round of vaccinations and has provided billions of dollars to public-health departments, community health centers, hospitals and pharmacies to get shots into arms—may have to keep those efforts running for months or even years. In addition, globally a booster dose could further widen the gap between vaccinated and unvaccinated countries, as some experts estimate it will take a year or more for the world to complete even a first round of vaccinations.

It will be a few more months yet before health authorities know whether an additional dose will be needed. Scientists are still comparing levels of virus-fighting antibodies generated by people who are getting an additional dose with levels in those who are not. They’re also keeping a close eye on any protection the extra dose could provide against the fast-growing SARS-CoV-2 variants that contribute to its quicker spread.

So far, early studies show that people vaccinated with the initially recommended doses have strong protection from COVID-19 for at least six months and likely longer. And those studies also suggest that the immunity is broad enough to protect against different variants of the virus. It’s all about timing. We’re currently locked in a sort of arms race with the virus, but if more people are protected by vaccines, the virus will have fewer chances to infect people and generate new variants. A booster dose could increase the levels of virus-fighting immune cells in the bodies of those vaccinated—possibly going a long way toward tipping the balance in our favor and getting the pandemic better under control.





▲  
*The Christus St. Michael mobile health unit gives out COVID-19 vaccines*

600-acre tomato farm in Unicoi, Tenn., started receiving newsletters, emails and social media updates about the COVID-19 vaccines from the American Farm Bureau, a founding Community Corps member. Jones Rogers, who is her county's local farm bureau president, had already been vaccinated, but most of her employees, who come from Mexico using the guest-worker program each year, do not speak English and aren't familiar with the U.S. health care system. If they didn't get vaccinated, that could mean close to 200 people on her farm still vulnerable to COVID-19, potentially spreading it among themselves and in the small town nearby.

In April, Jones Rogers contacted her regional health department to bring vaccines to her farm, and so far every one of this summer's roughly 80 workers has been vaccinated. Arturo Gamiño was one. He doesn't like needles, but he had seen people die "very ugly deaths" from COVID-19 last year, he says through an interpreter. After he received a Spanish-language printout from the CDC explaining how mRNA

vaccines work, he rolled up the sleeve of his white work shirt one morning in June to get his shot.

But Jones Rogers' story may be more the exception than the rule. With just 36% of its residents fully vaccinated, Tennessee is still in the bottom 10 states in the country by that metric. And other Community Corps-aided efforts are moving much more slowly.

Back in Texarkana, the Christus health system faces its own obstacles. Just 25% of people over age 12 in Bowie County, where Texarkana is located, have been vaccinated. Christus' doctors and faith leaders adapt information from federal officials for the heavily religious community. But they had to close their mass-vaccination site by the first week of May because interest was drying up. That was one reason they partnered with local leaders like Cody Howard, the street preacher who is also the executive director of Mission

Texarkana, which serves the small city's poor and homeless community.

After Howard's rainy June church service, the Christus vaccine bus heads over to a nearby homeless shelter. There, James Hunt ambles up to the bus. He says he is excited to get the vaccine so he can stop wearing a mask when he stays in the shelter. The team answers his questions, and he leaves the vaccine bus with his packet of CDC-approved information, a lollipop and a grin, mask around his chin.

But for all of the preaching and educating and mobilizing, a half-day of effort in Texarkana has resulted in vaccinations for just six people. Wood, the skeptical worshipper from the morning's service, isn't among them. "I know just about everybody from the mission, and they're all wonderful people," Wood says. But he's still wary that he could get sick from the COVID-19 shot itself, despite the day's assurances that it is safe. "I know some people who took it, and they had no problems with it, but ..." he trails off. "I don't want to take the shot." —*With reporting by* ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA □



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Health

# The Home Stretch

**Lessons for a better public health care system from the successful vaccination rollout in Kanawha County, West Virginia**

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**By Jamie Ducharme/Charleston, W.Va. Photographs by Rebecca Kiger for TIME**



*With demand for  
COVID-19 vaccines  
slowing, health officials  
in Kanawha County,  
West Virginia, have been  
making house calls*





“Hi, sweetie,” Dr. Sherri Young says to the 13-year-old rolling up her sleeve and giggling nervously, who also happens to be her daughter. “Are you ready?”

Young uncaps a syringe and pokes it into her daughter’s waiting arm. It’s May 14, only a few days after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration greenlighted the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for 12-to-15-year-olds, and Young is trying to set an example. As health officer and executive director of West Virginia’s Kanawha-Charleston Health Department (KCHD), she wants other families to bring their children to community vaccine clinics like this one, a drive-through set up in a church parking lot a few miles outside downtown Charleston.

Throughout the day, dozens of cars—ranging from a battle-tested garbage truck to a brand-new Mercedes sedan—roll in to the drive-through clinic. KCHD is relying on these smaller-scale pop-up clinics to bring in people who were unable or unwilling to visit Charleston’s 17 mass-vaccination events held throughout the winter and spring. In the early months of the vaccine rollout, those larger clinics attracted up to 5,000 people a day, but as time went on and most vaccine-eager people got their shots, Young and her staff had to get creative. “There are people who just can’t or won’t travel,” Young says. “Even getting out of the city two miles makes a difference.”

As West Virginia’s most populous county, with about 180,000 residents living across roughly 900 sq. mi., Kanawha has logically reported the state’s highest raw numbers of COVID-19 cases (15,624) and deaths (318), but its case rate is much lower than those in many nearby counties. Since the start of the pandemic, about 8,700 of every 100,000 Kanawha residents caught COVID-19, whereas in tiny Pleasants County (pop. 7,460), that rate stands at more than 12,800. Kanawha County has also been remarkably successful at vaccinating quickly and broadly. As of June 22, almost 47% of Kanawha County residents (and 54% of those 12 or older) had been fully vaccinated. By June 21, only 29% of U.S. counties—more than a dozen of them in West Virginia—had vaccinated at least 40% of their people, according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data. Just 8% had topped 50%, a threshold not far out of Kanawha County’s grasp.

Young knows her county’s success will surprise many.

47%

Share of **KANAWHA COUNTY** residents who have been fully vaccinated

40%

Share of **WEST VIRGINIANS** who have been fully vaccinated

45%

Share of people in the **U.S.** who have been fully vaccinated

Pre-pandemic, West Virginia ranked first in health metrics no one would want to brag about: prevalence of poor physical and mental health, cardiovascular disease, obesity. Poverty and addiction are rampant, and access to health care can be limited outside the Charleston urban area. None of that screams “national success story.”

Kanawha is the exception to numerous trends. Rachel Garfield, who tracks county-level COVID-19 data at the Kaiser Family Foundation, says areas with high rates of poverty, uninsured people and residents of color tend to lag behind their neighbors in the U.S. vaccine rollout. Highly educated populations, as well as those that skew Democratic, tend to be more open to vaccination.

While Kanawha County is about 90% white (well above the national rate of 60%), about 16% of its residents fall below the poverty line (compared with a national rate of 10.5%), and about 8% don’t have health insurance (below the national average of 9.2%). Only about a quarter have a college degree, and 56% voted for Donald Trump in 2020. And yet, Kanawha has succeeded where other counties haven’t. “There could be some on-the-ground factors that are hard to measure,” Garfield says. “It could be that this is really a tight-knit community where people have trust in the system or trust in each other.”

Indeed, Kanawha County officials’ collaborative health-delivery model, intimate understanding of their community and willingness to meet people where they are could help rewrite the textbook for public health in the post-pandemic age. If that model is followed, the big business of health care may turn into something smaller, more localized—and hopefully better equipped to keep us all well.

**PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN** wanted 70% of U.S. adults to have gotten at least one vaccine dose by the Fourth of July. Sixty-five percent have received one as of June 22, but Biden will be lucky to reach his target. By mid-June, 850,000 people in the U.S. were getting a shot on an average day, down from an April peak of more than 3 million. States including Ohio, New York and Oregon have resorted to six-figure lottery drawings to



drum up interest, and many are struggling to use supplies before they expire.

In Kanawha County, Young and her colleagues are trying to get a shot into every willing arm through any means possible. In addition to pop-up clinics, they personally make house calls to people who request a shot, a strategy also used in states like New York and New Jersey. On one Friday afternoon in mid-May, Young gives a grand total of four vaccine doses during house calls. “The thing to take home is not always the numbers,” she says; every person vaccinated is, in her mind, a small victory.

States that have adopted a similar approach have often been successful. Alaska has vaccinated more than half of its residents older than 12, in part because Alaska Native tribes were active in vaccinating their own members. Alaska state health officials have administered shots on airport tarmacs and in grocery stores, transporting them by sled and snowmobile if necessary. New Hampshire, another state that has vaccinated more than half of its residents, made sure every person could access a shot within 10 miles of their home. In California, where about half the population is fully vaccinated, walk-in clinics have popped up in predominantly Latino neighborhoods. In Michigan, which counts 51% of people 12 and older fully protected, mobile vaccine units have brought shots directly to people in need, from farmers to homebound seniors.

One of the problems with early vaccination efforts, says Dr. Alicia Fernandez, a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, was that people were expected to track down mass vaccine sites or hospitals offering the shots. That meant many people without trust in or access to the traditional health system were left out. Taking vaccines and other health care into neighborhoods that need it most, she says, is the best way to achieve equitable and effective coverage.

That’s only possible, of course, if you know where people are and what they need—and in that respect, Kanawha County was prepared. In March 2020, when it became clear that no part of the country would escape COVID-19, Young, county manager Jennifer Herrald

Oakley and ambulance authority deputy director Monica Mason pulled together a “health command” made up of people from every county department that touched health and safety, from the sheriff’s office and fire department to the local homeland-security division.

At first, the health command focused on identifying those who had contact with people who tested positive for the virus. As soon as testing became widely available, they set about swabbing nursing-home staff and residents and standing up free testing centers all over the county. When vaccines were first authorized in December, the health command used that same community-health approach to begin distributing shots.

All of this has been a team effort. The homeland-security division and other county officials lent logistical know-how, while the sheriff’s office provided security. The ambulance authority helped with contact tracing, and their medics (along with those from the fire department) distributed vaccines and tests. When asked why Kanawha County has fared so well during the pandemic, health command leaders Young, Herrald Oakley and Mason all give the same answer: relationships and collaboration.

Those things won’t go away when the pandemic ends; they’ll just look a bit different. Kanawha County is already offering HIV screening and care in at-risk areas, and Young also envisions delivering routine vaccinations, medical services for the homeless and perhaps addiction care in community settings, partially inspired by the pop-up testing and vaccine clinics that emerged during the pandemic.

Historically, areas with solid community-health programs have good outcomes. Ethiopia implemented one in 2004, training thousands of people to become health workers and sending them out to deliver care. Since the program launched, mortality among kids under 5 has dropped by half and childhood immunization rates have soared. In the U.S., Texas was the first state to formally recognize community-health workers, in 1999, and since then has excelled with programs that use such workers to connect immigrants and people from underserved populations with the wider health care system.

Of course, any program ultimately needs money to work. Federal funding has made it possible for Kanawha County and others to go to great lengths to distribute vaccines during the pandemic. But what happens after that money runs out?

**IN KANAWHA COUNTY**, as in many parts of the U.S., public-health funding was progressively cut before the pandemic. In 2017, West Virginia slashed a quarter of its budget for local health departments—a loss of about \$4 million—and counties have since struggled to make it up. Federally, the CDC’s budget declined by about 10% from fiscal year 2010 to 2019, after accounting for inflation. But on the bright side, 43 states and Washington, D.C., increased or maintained funding for their public-health programs in fiscal year 2020—a step toward a national system that prioritizes community health after years of “chronic underfunding,” according to a May 2021 report from the nonprofit health-policy group Trust for America’s Health.

Kanawha County has shown what’s possible when a small but dedicated group of people come together to deliver community-centered care. But it has taken a toll. On a dry-erase board in the health department, employees track how long the health command has been fighting COVID-19. The tally is now approaching 500 days. Young, Herrald Oakley, Mason and their teams have worked the vast majority of those days, often grabbing only a few hours of sleep between vaccine clinics. One of the department’s epidemiologists got married during lunch—then returned to work.

Young knows this isn’t sustainable, at least not without institutional support. If the pandemic has shown nothing else, it is that the U.S. public-health system needs more money, more people, more resources. Whether elected officials will listen is uncertain, but Young and her colleagues are prepared to visit as many homes, churches and community centers as it takes to get Kanawha County out of the pandemic and on the path to a healthier future.

“We have to go where people are,” Young says. “That is something that needs to be in the history books. If we do this again, this is the way you do it.” □



# Health



## **A day in the life**

*Clockwise from top left: Dr. Sherri Young gathers vaccine doses at the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department on June 4; Captain Doug Beasley, one of the sheriff's department employees who provides security for Young after threats on health officers around the country during the pandemic, makes preparations for the day's house calls; Young vaccinates Urena Thompson later that day during a home visit in Charleston; Allison Bungard helps her son Andrew, 13, who has cerebral palsy and Factor V Leiden thrombophilia, receive his shot at a vaccine clinic in Charleston; Dana Campbell plays the harmonica before being vaccinated in his home in Elkview*









# Health

*Cheridan Quigly  
of Saint Albans  
is vaccinated at  
Charleston's Bible  
Center Church on  
June 4*







JUNE 9, 2021  
President Moon  
Jae-in in his  
official residence

World

# *THE PEACEMAKER'S PROGRESS*

South Korea's President Moon Jae-in makes  
one last push to heal his homeland

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL





PHOTOGRAPH BY HONG JANG HYUN FOR TIME



## M

MOON JAE-IN CAN STILL HEAR THE roar today. South Korea's President had been seated next to Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang's May Day Stadium on Sept. 19, 2018, for the close of the Mass Games when North Korea's leader beckoned him up to the dais. Beneath a vast collage calling for Korea to "unite the strength of the entire people," Moon urged the 150,000-strong crowd to "hasten a future of common prosperity and reunification," while revelers brandished white flags with powder blue outlines of a unified Korean Peninsula. For Moon, it was a transformative experience. The North Koreans' "eyes and attitudes" showed that they "strongly aspire for peace," he tells TIME. "I could see for myself that North Korea has completely changed ... and is doing everything possible to develop."

That speech was the first by a South Korean leader in North Korea and the high point of a long, often agonizing process of engagement that Moon had charted since his election in May 2017. Odds were strongly against him at the outset: Moon's arrival into Seoul's presidential Blue House was bookmarked by North Korean weapons tests, including three long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and a purported hydrogen bomb, prompting then U.S. President Donald Trump to dispatch a U.S. Navy carrier group and threaten "little rocket man" with "fire and fury" in riposte. There had been no official dialogue between North and South since 2013, and caught between an irascible dictator and a geopolitical neophyte, Moon feared the worst: "We were actually on the brink of war."

Moon helped guide the world back from the abyss. Reconciliation kicked off with Kim agreeing to Moon's invitation to send a delegation to the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Soon after, Kim and Moon met at the Korean demilitarized zone that has separated its communist North from its capitalist South since an armistice effectively

ended the 1950–53 Korean War. Over an 18-month period, diplomacy ramped up with astonishing speed: Kim held three summits with Moon, five with Chinese President Xi Jinping, one with Russian President Vladimir Putin and three with Trump. Kim even gifted Moon a pair of snow white Pungsan hunting dogs—Gomi and Songgang—to symbolize their flourishing accord. Following a historic summit with Kim in Singapore in 2018, the first between the leaders of these existential foes, Trump declared: "We fell in love."

Then things fell apart. A follow-up summit in Hanoi in February 2019 ended without progress. Key issues papered over by Trump in Singapore, like what vague terms like *denuclearization* actually meant, returned to the fore. Trump was fixated on the congressional testimony of his former lawyer Michael Cohen, taking place back in Washington. The U.S.–South Korea alliance was in trouble too, with Trump reportedly demanding a fivefold increase on the roughly \$1 billion that Seoul contributes annually to hosting 28,500 U.S. troops. In June 2020, North Korea blew up a joint liaison office near the border town of Kaesong. Nine months later, it resumed solid-fuel, short-range missile tests. In January, Kim told the Workers' Party congress that the U.S. was the "biggest obstacle for our revolution and our biggest enemy ... no matter who is in power."

Moon traveled to Washington in May to attempt to persuade the new occupant of the White House to re-energize a stalled peace process. South Korea elects a new President in March, and since Moon is ineligible to serve more than one term, he knows that time is running out to heal his riven homeland.

The divide has stayed much the same since the civil war: North Korea and China on one side; the U.S., South Korea and their allies on the other. Kim says he's not giving up anything until there are unilateral concessions like relief from the U.N., U.S. and E.U. sanctions that restrict the export of coal, miner-

als, seafood and other cash-cow goods, which is a nonstarter for Joe Biden. The pandemic and deteriorating Sino-U.S. relations have complicated an already thorny picture. Biden has more urgent issues crowding his in tray: the pandemic, global warming and, crucially, China's rise.

North Korea may not rank as urgent, but it is a truly grave peril. Although Trump triumphantly tweeted, "There is no longer a Nuclear Threat from North Korea," in June 2018, he left office without a single warhead decommissioned. Best estimates are that Pyongyang has up to 60 nuclear weapons, as well as ICBMs and submarine launch missiles that could deliver them to any U.S. city. In February, it restarted parts of its main nuclear fuel production plant,

and it is developing multiple warhead missiles to outfox U.S. defense systems. "It's very dangerous," says Sue Mi Terry, a former CIA senior analyst on Korea currently with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "They're making incredible progress."

After the caprice of Trump, Moon hopes the more statesmanlike Biden can finish the job through slow, calibrated, practical headway. Moon, more

than anyone, knows the scale of the challenge—but also that the fate of billions may hang in the balance. "I know that I don't have much time myself," Moon says. "The peace we have right now is a very fragile one; it can be shaken at any time."

**THERE COMES A MOMENT** when every leader turns to their legacy. For Moon, however, it has guided his every step long before he won his nation's highest office. Moon's parents and eldest sister fled North Korea on Dec. 23, 1950, aboard the S.S. *Meredith Victory*. This U.N. supply ship was designed for 12 passengers but carried 14,000 civilians to safety. The boat docked at South Korea's Geoje Island, where Moon was born two years later. Today, the refugee camp his family called home has been turned into a memorial park; diorama displays surround rusting

'North Korea has completely changed ... and is doing everything possible to develop.'

President Moon Jae-in





planes and tanks, an enormous concrete flyover looming overhead. The scars of this tumultuous background guided Moon into student activism, human-rights legal work and ultimately the Blue House, where TIME’s photographers found him in a jubilant mood on June 9, greeting all with smiles and fist bumps (This reporter joined by video chat.)

The summit with Moon was Biden’s second, after his meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, spotlighting America’s renewed focus on East Asian alliances. A six-year deal on South Korea’s contribution to funding U.S. troops, for one, was inked less than seven weeks after Biden’s Inauguration. While Moon was vigilant in our interview not to criticize Trump, he was full of praise for Biden, whose “support for inter-Korean dialogue, engagement and cooperation” was plain, he says. “The world is welcoming America’s return,”

SEPT. 18, 2018  
*Moon lunches with Kim Jong Un  
 during a visit to Pyongyang*

Moon said following the summit. A joint statement agreed “to coordinate our approaches to the DPRK in lockstep.”

The statement’s use of North Korea’s official title, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and preferred phrasing of “denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” are details that will please Pyongyang. Although Biden has reversed many of his predecessor’s foreign policy decisions, he endorsed the vague agreements from the Trump era as a bedrock for future talks. Biden appointed a special envoy on North Korea, veteran negotiator and former ambassador to South Korea Sung Kim. On June 13, North Korea’s state media quoted its Supreme Leader telling a Workers’ Party meet-

ing to “get prepared for both dialogue and confrontation.” General Vincent K. Brooks, the former commander of the U.S. Forces Korea, says Pyongyang may spy a “window of opportunity” while there are “two progressive administrations, both in the U.S. and South Korea, which doesn’t happen that frequently.”

Moon has more reasons to hope for a breakthrough. Following Trump’s short-lived bromance with Kim, the bar for a meeting is lower and politically safer, given that few Republicans could mount a serious objection. COVID-19 has also spotlighted the irrelevance of sanctions. Consumed by paranoia about the rampaging virus, North Korea completely sequestered itself from the world, even turning down food aid. Foreign trade has plummeted 80% year on year—a self-inflicted shock worse than any time since the fall of the Soviet Union. Kim has repeatedly



spoken about the need to economically develop, but regime security always comes first. “It is difficult to see how sanctions alone can bring North Korea to its knees,” says Cheong Seong-chang, senior fellow at the Sejong Institute, a Seoul think tank.

Moon’s pitch is that a continuous “cycle of denuclearization and sanctions relief” will eventually bring Pyongyang’s most deadly assets, like nuclear warheads and ICBMs, onto the table. But persuading the U.S. to abandon its best leverage will be a tall ask, given North Korea’s record of noncompliance. For negotiations to go straight to sanctions relief “would be a mistake,” says Brooks.

Pyongyang has signed five denuclearization agreements in the past but reneged on all. Kim has proved himself as adept at brinkmanship as his illustrious father and grandfather. In his latest annual threat assessment, the U.S. director of national intelligence said Kim “believes that over time he will gain international acceptance and respect as a nuclear power,” as Pakistan did.

Many other hurdles persist. Biden’s recently completed North Korea policy review can be best described as a “holding action,” says Terry. In the press conference following the summit, Biden played down a no-strings meeting with Kim so as not to provide him “international recognition as legitimate.” Apart from a dig at Trump, the clear implication that Kim is illegitimate is a problematic starting point for diplomacy. South Korea also removed limits on its missile development capabilities, which North Korea slammed as evidence of Washington’s “shameful double-dealing.”

Mixed messages aren’t so surprising. The common perception in Washington is that Biden is happy to support Moon’s efforts to restart North Korean negotiations, given that Kim is not picking up the phone. In exchange, Biden has secured Moon’s backing for multiple measures against his true focus: China. South Korean companies committed to

invest nearly \$40 billion in innovative technologies in the U.S.—such as semiconductors, AI, electric-vehicle batteries, 5G and 6G—that are vital for Biden’s ambitious plans to extricate sensitive supply chains from Beijing while building infrastructure to “win the future.”

Moon has also indicated willingness to engage more in the U.S.-led Indo-Pacific Strategy and so-called Quad Plus security apparatus. In a joint statement, Moon even emphasized the importance of “peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait,” provoking the inevitable rebuke from Beijing. “The Biden Administration is far more concerned about what’s going on with China, and the diplomatic effort and energy they have is going to be focused on dealing with a serious threat from Beijing,” says Robert King, U.S. special envoy for North Korea human-rights issues from 2009 to 2017.

As ever, economic dependence means Beijing holds considerable sway over North Korea. In March, Xi sent a message to Kim that he would “continue to support a political solution of issues on the Korean Peninsula.”

The next month, he appointed Liu Xiaoming, former Chinese ambassador to the DPRK and the U.K., as a special envoy on Korean Peninsula affairs, a post that had been vacant for some two years. The posting, says Cheong, “underscores Beijing’s de-

termination to mediate issues on the Korean Peninsula.”

Despite Beijing’s steadfast support for the Kim regime, Moon praises China’s adherence to U.N. sanctions and says it “is also on the same page when it comes to denuclearization.” But even if the two Koreas were to move closer together, their chief sponsors are still moving in opposite directions.

**MOON HAS PAID** a high price of his own. His political opponents are aghast that a former human-rights lawyer, imprisoned as a student activist for opposing South Korea’s own military dictatorship, could buddy up to a man like Kim. Moon insists Kim somberly told him that “he wants to

‘Moon would like a serious diplomatic win ... otherwise he will be viewed as a failed President.’

*Sean O’Malley,  
Dongseo University*



pass down a better future for his children, and that he did not want them to carry the burden of nuclear weapons.”

Asked about Kim’s character, Moon found him “very honest ... very enthusiastic [and] one with strong determination” who has “a good idea of what is going on around the world.” But lest we forget, this is the same man who murdered his uncle and half brother in cold blood and, according to a landmark 2014 U.N. Commission of Inquiry, presides over “crimes against humanity” including extermination, torture, rape and causing prolonged starvation.

For many North Korea watchers, Moon’s steadfast defense of Kim is verging on delusional. Those Mass Games that he addressed in 2018, for one, have been





OCT. 28, 2020  
 Opposition lawmakers protest  
 against Moon's leadership outside  
 South Korea's National Assembly

condemned by human-rights groups for forced child labor. Desperate to maintain momentum, Moon has long urged for the easing of sanctions and explored workarounds, such as donations through the World Food Programme and a now nixed plan to exchange South Korean sugar for North Korean liquor. After Moon banned activists from sending propaganda balloons into the North, a bipartisan group of 13 former U.S. officials accused his government of “undermining North Korea’s human-rights movement” in an open

letter. “There are people in senior positions in the U.S. government who think that what he’s doing is counterproductive and harmful in the long run,” says King. The question is no longer whether his own principles have been sacrificed in pursuit of reconciliation, but whether any success is rendered moot.

“President Moon would like a serious diplomatic win with North Korea before he leaves office,” says Sean O’Malley, a professor and political scientist at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea. “Otherwise he will be viewed as a failed President. And I’m pretty sure he thinks so too.”

Moon is so invested in rapprochement and consumed by a waning legacy that he has lost support from those who

put him in power in the first place. His domestic approval rating plummeted to just 35% in early May owing to scandals like a corrupt housing scheme—the average price of a modest apartment in Seoul has increased from \$590,000 to \$1.06 million over his term—while an epidemic of sexual harassment has led to a string of high-profile suicides.

And despite early success controlling the coronavirus, South Korea is now flagging badly on vaccinations, with only 6% of the population fully immunized by mid-June. In April, Moon’s Democratic Party suffered crushing defeats in the mayoral elections in South Korea’s two largest cities. “South Korean voters are focused on very internal issues,” says John Delury, a professor and East Asia expert at South Korea’s Yonsei University. “Moon himself is focused on North Korea.”

On that score too, Moon may be part of the problem. According to one formerly high-ranking North Korean defector based in Seoul, Kim felt utterly betrayed by Moon for siding with the U.S. after Hanoi, as well as by his purchase of 40 U.S. stealth fighter jets, and sees little point in negotiating with an administration on its last legs. After all, the denuclearization deal signed by Clinton in 2000 was effectively ripped up soon after, when Bush included North Korea in his “axis of evil.” Likewise, a 2007 joint declaration between South Korea and North Korea was walked back by incoming President Lee Myung-bak a year later. “There’s no chance of another summit with Kim Jong Un within Moon’s term,” the defector tells TIME. Moon, however, disagrees, saying that “constant dialogue and communication” with Kim have led to “mutual trust,” and suggests vaccine diplomacy as a means of bringing North Korea back to the table.

Certainly there are few original ideas on how to break this cycle: engagement, negotiation, provocation, estrangement, rapprochement. The next attempt, when it comes, will be clouded by the inevitable sigh of ennui. “There’s no real solution to this problem,” says Terry. “It’s been like this for over 30 years.” That might, after all, be Moon’s true legacy—the grim realization that if he couldn’t fix things, perhaps nobody can. —With reporting by STEPHEN KIM and SANGSUK SYLVIA KANG/SEOUL □



“

‘If we can’t have these hard conversations, how can we possibly expect our children to?’

**SHEMIA REESE**  
with her family  
at Babler  
Elementary in  
Glencoe, Mo.,  
on June 18







Nation

# PAST

Critical race theory is the new front in a long-running fight over how to teach America's story to the next generation

BY OLIVIA B. WAXMAN/ST. LOUIS

# TENSE

DURING THE 15-MINUTE OBSERVATION PERIOD AFTER RECEIVING his COVID-19 shot this March, Terry Harris pulled out his phone. There in the Vashon High School gymnasium, during a vaccination drive for St. Louis–area teachers, the executive director of student services at the suburban Rockwood school district in Missouri noticed an email addressed to himself and district superintendent Mark Miles. The subject line stood out: “Protect your people.”

A parent had forwarded screenshots from a Facebook group called Concerned Parents of the Rockwood School District. Commenters called Harris, who is Black, “the most racist guy towards white people you’ll ever meet” and said he “has to be the one that goes first.” Harris saw a photo had been posted of him and his daughter, and the worst panic attack of his life began. “I tried to get up, and I stumbled,” he says. Sitting in his St. Louis living room 2½ months later, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the word LOVE, Harris, 39, recalls being so shaken that a National Guardsman came over to offer him water.

At a moment when Eastern European historians of the Holocaust are under threat from nationalist governments and countries with colonial pasts are pulling down statues and renaming streets, the debate over how to teach the history of race in America is entangling local school boards and engulfing national politics. It’s a conversation that predates the tumult of 2020: the *New York Times*’ 1619 Project, released to mark the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Virginia, aimed to reframe America’s origin story around the legacy of slavery; the project helped push scholarly conversations about the impact of racism on U.S. history into the mainstream.

It has also galvanized those who worry applying that lens will teach children to hate America or divide the nation by emphasizing our differences. This viewpoint has come to the fore amid a surge of controversy over critical race theory (CRT), a decades-old academic framework that scholars use to interrogate how legal systems—as well as other elements of society—perpetuate racism and exclusion. Opponents of CRT now invoke it as a catchall term for any discussion



of systemic racism. All of a sudden, this once obscure bit of pedagogy is the hottest topic in conservative politics. In recent weeks, Republican governors in Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas have signed bills designed to restrict the way history is taught or ban the use of CRT. In a legally binding opinion, Montana's attorney general called critical race theory and antiracism training "discriminatory" and illegal "in many instances." On June 10, the Florida board of education approved a rule that instruction "may not define American history as something other than the creation of a new nation based largely on universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence." At least 25 states have proposed or taken actions designed to restrict how teachers discuss racism and sexism, according to *Education Week*. One group in Nevada is calling for teachers to wear body cameras; under a bill that was proposed in Arizona, teachers could have been fined \$5,000 for teaching students to feel "guilt" over their race.

All this is no accident. Conservative advocacy groups, legal organizations and state legislatures have mounted a campaign to weaponize the teaching of critical race theory, driven by a belief that fighting it will be a winning electoral message. It's hard to predict the issue's potency at the ballot box. But a June *Economist/YouGov* poll showed that although only about a third of respondents had a good idea of what CRT was, most people who knew about it had an unfavorable opinion.

In short, "Make America Great Again" has evolved into "Teach America's Great Again." Candidates for local school boards, which tend to wield power over questions like which textbooks are used, are being grilled about where they stand on historical facts. Like nearly all controversies involving race in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, Americans are joining Team 1776 or Team 1619 along partisan lines. Last fall, the American Historical Association and Fairleigh Dickinson University, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, conducted a national survey on what Americans think about history. In preliminary results shared with TIME, they found that 70% of Democrats said the study of history should "question" the past, while 84% of Republican respondents said the goal was to celebrate it.

It's a debate between people who think children shouldn't be burdened with the past, and those who want kids to learn how the legacy of that past shapes American society today. Is our national history merely a tool to inspire patriotism, or is it, as historians argue, a valuable lesson in the good, the bad and the ugly? As this new front in the culture wars shows, our understanding of the past is a key factor in how we envision our future. This is a story about the story—and the myths—America tells about itself.

**LIKE MANY COMMUNITIES** where critical race theory has been a subject of fierce debate, the Rockwood

school district does not even teach it. Actual critical race theory is rarely taught below the graduate level. Yet educators like Harris are under fire for their increasing efforts to ensure schools teach a more diverse curriculum, with an emphasis on equity. That afternoon in March, the school district filed a police report and looped in the FBI. A security guard was sent to Harris' home and the nearby home of his colleague Brittany Hogan, who is also Black and served as the school district's director of educational equity and diversity, a title created for the 2020–2021 academic year. The district has since filed three police reports because of social media posts concerning staff members; at least four staff members and one incoming assistant principal—all but one of whom are Black—have received threatening voice mails, emails or social media posts.

Harris is undaunted. "We have to talk about the fact that race and racism is real, and is as much of the fabric of America as apple pie or the Fourth of July or the Second Amendment," he says. "Just because that's where we are doesn't mean that's where we have to be."

But not looking back is also an American tradition. "We have it in our power," Thomas Paine wrote in his 1776 pamphlet *Common Sense*, "to begin the world over again." In that spirit, New England towns perpetuated a myth that Native Americans had died out, as Native American historian Jean O'Brien has tracked. John Burk's three-volume history of Virginia, published in the early 19th century, largely left out slavery. "There were no bigger revisionist historians than the founding generation themselves," argues historian Michael Hattem, author of *Past and Prologue: Politics and Memory in the American Revolution*. Worried about children reading "long-legged Yankee lies" in textbooks written up North after the Civil War, the United Daughters of the Confederacy played a key role in propagating the "Lost Cause" myth that the South fought nobly for states' rights, not for slavery.

As history education in American K-12 schools was formalized in the late 19th century, during a period of nativism and nostalgia, the idea that such classes should inspire patriotism became more widespread. During World War I, a New York State law banned public schools from using textbooks containing material "disloyal to the United States." In the 1920s, during a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, Oregon barred public schools from teaching from any textbook that "speaks slightly of the founders of the republic." Amid heightened fears of communism in the 1930s and 1950s, some states required teachers to take loyalty oaths. "There's always a connection between the flare-up of conservative anger or fear of what's going on in schools and larger political unrest," says historian Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, author of *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture*.

62%

Percentage of Americans who believe that our understanding of history should change over time, according to an American Historical Association/Fairleigh Dickinson University poll





“We have to talk about the fact that race and racism is real.”

**TERRY HARRIS,**  
Rockwood's  
executive  
director of  
student services

Since the Supreme Court ruled in 1962 that mandatory school prayer is unconstitutional, the battle has only intensified, thanks in large part to conservative activists who worry public schools are a breeding ground for societal change. In 1969, California Governor Ronald Reagan's moral-guidelines committee warned that people who conduct “sensitivity training” are “aligned with revolutionary groups” that “intend to use the schools to destroy American culture and traditions.” The roar grew louder as school integration programs ramped up in the 1970s, and continued into the 21st century through fights over everything from Title IX and Common Core to bathroom bills and COVID-19 closures.

“You can trace a decades-long agenda on the part of conservative think tanks to undermine public education whether via vouchers or charter schools or attacks on teacher unions,” says Sumi Cho, director

of strategic initiatives at the African American Policy Forum, who taught critical race theory for over 25 years at DePaul University College of Law. “Critical race theory is simply the latest bogeyman.”

**BUT THE LATEST ROUND** of the battle does contain a new element: Donald Trump. On Constitution Day last September, the then President announced at the Library of Congress that he was creating a “1776 Commission” to “promote patriotic education.”

Trump sensed an issue gaining steam on the right. His announcement followed a Sept. 1 *Tucker Carlson Tonight* appearance by Christopher Rufo, 36, now a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, who is credited with catalyzing much of the uproar. Rufo began last summer to openly make the case that inclusion efforts at publicly funded institutions were going too far by teaching participants to apply what he



called “critical race theory” to their lives. After that appearance on Carlson’s show, Rufo says, Trump’s chief of staff, Mark Meadows, reached out to talk. Soon the Trump Administration banned the use of CRT in federal offices. The President’s Advisory 1776 Commission came right after, and the movement against CRT began to expand its focus beyond corporate diversity trainings and into the classroom.

Released on Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year—Trump’s penultimate day in office—the 1776 Commission’s report did not have any power to compel school districts to do anything. Nor was it especially concerned with historical accuracy; an American Historical Association statement signed by 47 academic organizations condemned it as “a simplistic interpretation that relies on falsehoods, inaccuracies, omissions, and misleading statements” and “a screed against a half-century of historical scholarship.” But the document was an early peek at how the right would attempt to rally its base on the subject. It called for focusing classroom discussions of the U.S. founding era on the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and not on “fashionable ideologies” like “claims of systemic racism” that threaten national unity.

The 1776 Commission was short-lived. One of President Joe Biden’s first acts on Inauguration Day was to terminate it. The move only spurred conservatives on. “By abolishing the commission, I think that actually helped the contribution of this report because it brought attention to it,” says Matthew Spalding, the 1776 Commission’s executive director.

Less than 12 hours after Trump left office, Rufo announced he had company in his quest. “The conservative legal movement and a network of private attorneys are gearing up for war against critical race theory,” he tweeted. “We will fight and we will win.”

Adam Waldeck was one of the people who saw Biden’s decision to nix the 1776 Commission as “a major slap in the face.” Waldeck, a 36-year-old former South Carolina state director and coalitions director for Newt Gingrich, works for a new issue-advocacy group called 1776 Action. It grew out of a conservative organization called the American Legacy Center, affiliated with Ben Carson, Trump’s former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. “We as conservatives are losing perhaps the most fundamental cultural battle in our nation,” Carson wrote in a March 15 email to conservative donors and activists. “In classrooms in all 50 states, our kids and grandkids are the victims of a coordinated attack on our history, our heroes, and our very inheritance.”

On April 6, the group released an online video and paid radio ad supporting a New Hampshire house bill prohibiting the teaching of “divisive concepts” in schools. “Last year, radicals destroyed statues and burned cities. Now in many New Hampshire schools they’re brainwashing our children to hate America and each other,” the narration intones. Aspects of

the bill became part of the proposed New Hampshire budget, which as of June 23 says teachers can’t instruct students that anyone’s identity makes them inherently oppressive, even unconsciously, although they are welcome to teach the “historical existence” of that idea. (Foes of such a rule might argue that while identity does not determine whether an individual is biased, it’s important for kids to understand how some groups as a whole benefit from discriminatory systems that are very much alive and well.)

The group also launched “The 1776 Pledge to Save Our Schools,” asking candidates for office to vow to “restore honest, patriotic education that cultivates in our children a profound love for our country.” Just as Grover Norquist’s Taxpayer Protection Pledge has shaped conservative doctrine for decades, Waldeck hopes the oath will become a litmus test for political hopefuls. (South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem, who is running for re-election in 2022 and viewed as a potential presidential candidate, has announced that she backs it.) But Waldeck, who is white, also envisions a society in which 1619 vs. 1776 becomes a political issue as fundamental as gun or abortion rights. “We want it to be something that ultimately people vote on,” he says.

On April 19, a public-comment period opened for an Education Department proposal that would prioritize grant funding to American History and Civics Education projects that incorporate diversity and inclusion, including curriculums that “take into account systemic marginalization, biases, inequities, and discriminatory policy and practice in American history.” This relatively obscure proposal sparked a national conflagration. In Washington, D.C., Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell spoke out against it. In Idaho, on April 28, GOP governor Brad Little signed a bill designed to deter schools from applying for the grants. The next month, Idaho’s Republican lieutenant governor Janice McGeachin announced her run for governor in 2022, after launching a “Task Force to Examine Indoctrination in Idaho Education Based on Critical Race Theory, Socialism, Communism, and Marxism.”

Even the anti-CRT bills that have failed have served a purpose, authors say. “I think the ultimate success is making parents aware that this is something that is not just taking place on the West Coast or the East Coast,” says Arkansas state Representative Mark Lowery, who introduced two bills to restrict curriculums in the state. He ended up withdrawing both, but still counts them as a PR win. “It’s actually coming to your local school district.”

**THE CONCERNED PARENTS** of the Rockwood school district were swept up in this trend. Like many others worried about critical race theory, Rockwood parents reached out to two of the main organizations trying to mobilize families nationwide to speak out

15%

Share of Americans who see political agendas as a driver of changing views about the past



about diversity initiatives in school: the Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR) and Parents Defending Education, both of which formed in January and launched publicly in March.

Parents Defending Education invites people to anonymously submit material they find concerning, says Erika Sanzi, its director of outreach—links to slide decks from teacher trainings; screenshots of assignments; emails that suggest “activism in the classroom.” The group then uses the tip line to file complaints with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, as it did based on one school district’s invite to a Zoom meeting that was described, in the aftermath of the March 16 shootings at Atlanta-area spas, as “a safe space for our Asian/Asian-American and Students of Color, \*not\* for students who identify only as White.” (The invitation noted that white students could still talk to the event’s organizers.) Sanzi said the group has been “bombarded” with submissions.

Nicole Neily, the group’s founder, says the goal is not to keep certain topics out of the classroom, but rather to change the way the conversation takes place. “I’m a libertarian; the word *ban* gives me hives,” Neily says. But her grandparents met in a Japanese-American incarceration camp, she adds, and she is sensitive to exercises that emphasize the differences between people. “It’s when we start to separate kids and make them feel bad and write down all the different ways that you have privilege—you’re straight, you’re white, you’re female,” she says. “To me, that’s compelling speech, and you’re treating children differently. It’s the implementation that concerns me, not the actual content of the lesson.”

FAIR, meanwhile, says it has more than 40 chapters nationwide, including one in the St. Louis area. “I don’t think it’s the school’s place to teach our children to be race-conscious,” explains FAIR co-founder Bion Bartning.

Both FAIR and Parents Defending Education are structured as nonprofits, and are therefore not required to publicly disclose their donors. Because they were formed only recently, there are no tax returns available. But an analysis of public documents does provide some insight into the power behind the scenes. Former Fox News host Megyn Kelly, who has blasted her kids’ elite Manhattan schools as “far left,” and Alexander Lloyd, a venture capitalist and Republican donor, sit with Rufo on FAIR’s board of advisers. Neily, the founder of Parents Defending Education, is a former staffer at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank co-founded by prominent Republican donor Charles Koch, and the president of Speech First, a nonprofit organization that supports free speech on campus through litigation and advocacy. Two of that group’s highest-paid independent contractors in 2018, according to tax filings, were Consovoy McCarthy, whose founding partner, Wil-

liam Consovoy, was Trump’s attorney, and CRC Public Relations, a well-connected advocate for conservative causes.

The former President is still in on the action too. In a June 18 op-ed on RealClearPolitics, Trump called for a 1776 Commission in every state, the establishment of a patriotic-education corps à la Teach for America, and a voucher program to move kids out of schools teaching CRT.

These tactics mark a new chapter in the culture wars over education, experts say. “Conservative activists have always worried that innocent white American children might be harmed by a traumatic exposure to ideas about race, class and American exceptionalism,” explains historian Adam Laats, author of *The Other School Reformers: Conservative Activism in American Education*. “But in the 20th century they did not accuse progressives of teaching racist ideas.”

They haven’t really needed to. For more than a century, patriotic education has largely prevailed. Students, for the most part, do not get an in-depth history of systemic racism unless they go to college. According to research by the Southern Poverty Law Center, only 8% of high school seniors in 2018 could identify slavery as the primary cause of the Civil War. While some educators do teach the topic in innovative or controversial ways, they are not the majority—although that may be changing, as social media enables the sharing of resources to help teachers field questions from students who are watching the news.

Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist*, finds the idea that classroom explorations of racism are divisive to be ironic. “If we’re not teaching students that the reason why racial inequity exists is because of racism, then what are they going to conclude as to why racial inequity exists? They’re going to conclude that it must be because those Black people must have less because they are less,” Kendi says. “That’s the only other conclusion. Not teaching our kids about racism is actually divisive.”

**ROCKWOOD WAS RIPE** for a culture clash. It’s suburban and 75% white, with some of the best public schools in Missouri. While most of the district is in St. Louis County, which voted overwhelmingly for Biden, it also includes parts of Jefferson County, which voted overwhelmingly for Trump. Nearby St. Louis regularly appears on lists of the most segregated cities in America, and Rockwood is the largest participant in the area’s school-integration busing program, which is in the process of being phased out.

Lauren Pickett, 18, just graduated from Rockwood’s Marquette High School and covered the school’s diversity curriculum for the student newspaper over the past year. She says local divisions began to bubble up into conflict during Black Lives

**77%**  
Percentage of Americans who say it is acceptable to teach painful history, even when it makes people uncomfortable



“I just think [critical race theory] disregards the idea that all people are created equal.”

**SHAUNA POGGIO,**  
Rockwood  
parent, with  
her family



Matter protests last summer, which is when she perceived an unwillingness among white residents to hear about Black people’s negative experiences with police. “It’s actually more divisive to not want to be aware of anyone else’s history that’s different from your own,” says Pickett, who is Black. “I was very afraid when I first heard about legislation trying to ban teaching on critical race theory and take away teaching on slavery and racism, because it seems as though it’s erasing who I am and my history.”

When the Concerned Parents of the Rockwood School District Facebook group formed in July 2020 to discuss COVID-19 safety protocols, its members were at first an ideologically mixed group. But the tenor turned to the right, especially after Trump lost the 2020 election. The same forces that split citizens who were for and against masks split those for and against the idea of CRT being taught in schools—regardless of whether it was actually happening.

When Shauna Poggio saw the chatter on Facebook about a bill in Missouri’s legislature that would ban the 1619 Project, the 46-year-old school psychologist decided it was time to speak up. Her ninth-grade son, who attends Lafayette High School in Wildwood, Mo., had started complaining about discussions of cultural identity in his English Language Arts class. Poggio shared with TIME photos of a homework exercise that asked him to think about “assumptions that people make about people in the different groups you belong to.” (In the assignment, Poggio’s son described himself as being

a white Republican who plays golf, and said people on the “far left” would probably assume that he is racist.) Poggio had heard about CRT in the news—she listens to Tucker Carlson’s podcast—but it hadn’t seemed relevant to her. Now, however, she was on alert.

On April 18, Poggio became one of at least a dozen Rockwood parents to submit a public comment in support of a 1619 Project ban, arguing that “this ideology has already infiltrated our district and created immense racial and political division.” Twelve days later, she attended an info session on CRT held at Brookdale Farms, an events venue with a BACK THE BLUE sign at the entrance. It was organized by Kenneth Rosa, a local activist associated with the Fathers’ Rights Movement, an organization that advocates against systems the group sees as privileging mothers over fathers. Although some present spoke in favor of a curriculum that emphasizes inclusivity, a video went viral of a choked-up mother saying that “just because I do not want critical race theory taught to my children in school does not mean that I’m a racist, dammit.” (It’s racked up nearly a million views on Twitter since it was posted May 1.)

“My understanding of critical race theory is it kind of comes down to, ‘White people founded this country for slavery, and they’re the oppressors,’” Poggio says of her takeaway from that meeting. “‘And if you’re Black, then you’re oppressed, you’re the victim,’ and it kind of just leaves everybody stuck in that place where that’s the end of the story.” Poggio starts





“I’ve never voted in a school-board election in my life until this year because there wasn’t the urgency.”

**JOEL VANDERHEYDEN, Rockwood parent, with his family**

to tear up as she considers that kids aren’t learning about the national ideals that her grandfathers fought for in World War II. “I just think it disregards the idea that all people are created equal and in the image of God, and we can make our own destiny.”

The 1619 Project draws attention to how white veterans of World War II got to buy homes under the GI Bill while many of their Black counterparts were denied the opportunity to do so—a fact that has contributed to the persistence of the racial wealth gap today. But Poggio says she believes it’s more important to focus on teaching children that while injustice does linger—for people of all races—in America it’s still possible to overcome obstacles if you work hard.

**AS THE SPRING** dragged on, the district grew further embroiled in a war that went beyond group texts and Facebook comments. In the local school-board race in April, candidate Jackie Koerner got multiple emails asking her where she stood on CRT. (Incumbent candidates, who were not anti-CRT, won by a slim margin.) An April 22 email from a district literacy speech coordinator, Natalie Fallert, who is white, advised teachers how to avoid drawing the attention of parents hunting for “CRT” materials. It was leaked to the conservative news site the Daily Wire. About a month later, Fallert, who no longer works for the district, received a death threat calling her “anti-American.” Terry Harris, the administrator who had received the warning back in March, began switching up his work schedule as a safety precaution.

At one meeting, a white parent of three boys who attend Rockwood schools called critical race theory “psychological child abuse.” Another white parent read a letter from her daughter, a senior at Eureka High School, calling for an updated history curriculum that is “not just the dramatization of white people’s successes,” calling it “tragic” that she had to wait until AP U.S. History “to learn the truth.” When the school board met on May 6, a group of parents stood outside, holding signs thanking teachers for their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. Joel Vanderheyden, 40, held one that said UNDERSTANDING INEQUITY IS NECESSARY TO CREATE EQUITY. Diversity issues in schools had never been something he paid much attention to before, but now he was glued to school-board-candidate debates. “I’ve never voted in a school-board election in my life until this year because there wasn’t the urgency,” he says. Next year, Vanderheyden will be the co-coordinator of DEI at his son’s elementary school.

On the very last day of the school year, a confrontation took place in the Eureka High School cafeteria. Some students had come with Trump and “thin blue line” flags; others had rainbow ones to celebrate Pride Month. The two groups began the morning merely displaying their allegiances, but before long the standoff morphed into something more confrontational. By the end of the day, Eureka High’s assistant principal George Calhoun, who is Black, was receiving threatening voice mails falsely accusing him of confiscating an American flag, the district said.





“My biggest concern about CRT [is] ... that it will divide our youth instead of unite them.”

**AMY SVOLOPOULOS,**  
parent from  
Ballwin, Mo.

While Concerned Parents of Rockwood represents those who think efforts to make the curriculum more inclusive have gone overboard, parents in groups like Rockwood REAL, Rockwood Ahead and MO Equity Education Support Group believe inclusive curriculum initiatives are exactly what’s necessary for their kids to understand American society. Shemia Reese, 39, one of the leaders of Rockwood REAL, grew up being bused into a nearby school district in the 1990s, and now her own kids are as well. She’s fed up with how much hasn’t changed since then. Her kids still tell her that they hear the *N* word at school. “As a parent, I’m doing the best that I can to make sure that they get the best education, and statistics show that Rockwood is where the best education is in Missouri,” she says. “As adults, if we can’t have these hard conversations, how can we possibly expect our children to?”

**ON THE FIRST WEEKEND** of June, Rockwood parents gathered at the Pillar Foundation in Ellisville, Mo., for a meeting called “Critical Race Theory Exposed.” Before the presentation, attendees took copies of handouts telling them they could identify CRT by the use of terms like *racial justice* and *disrupt*, and directing them to a site for Rufo’s anti-CRT outreach efforts.

The event’s organizer, Bev Ehlen, the state director for the Concerned Women for America of Missouri, opened with a prayer for the U.S. to turn back to God. Then, during a presentation that stretched over two hours, Mary Byrne of the Heartland Institute, a major conservative think tank that opposed Common Core, told more than 100 attendees that diversity trainings in educational settings are “iterations from Maoist struggle sessions” and that Black Lives Matter was a form of “Marxist indoctrination.” (There is a long history of smearing Black civil rights activists as communists.) “There are very few people who are honest about history,” Byrne said.

“Think of the public-school system as the *Titanic* going to hit an iceberg,” Zina Hackworth, 56, who is Black, shouted out as the presentation ended. “Get your children off of the *Titanic!*”

Amy Svolopoulos, 44, of Ballwin, Mo., sat in the front row, too overwhelmed to take notes. A white parent of three, she went into the meeting believing there should be nothing controversial about the idea that Black Lives Matter. She began crying at the end as she shared her worries that people with ulterior motives are using BLM to “deceive” kids. Now she is worried, she says, that critical race theory will “divide our youth instead of unite them.”

Not everyone had the same takeaway. Amy Ryan, 44, who was adopted from South Korea into a white family and experienced anti-Asian racism growing up in Indiana, watched from the back. What she heard, she said, reflected white Americans’ “fear that they are going to be treated how people treat marginalized groups.” After going to countless school-board meetings and community forums this year, Ryan wants to run for state office “to help slow down the madness that we’re in right now.”

Terry Harris remains optimistic that a divided Rockwood can come together. “I think the next steps are to really figure out where we are as a district, almost like, let’s do an equity audit,” he says. “How comfortable are you talking about some of these tough situations?” The students often have a better grasp of the stakes than their parents, he notes. They may not agree on everything, but they want to know the truth about how the U.S. got to where it is today.

When the students return in the fall, ready to hear America’s story again, superintendent Miles won’t be with them. He’s resigning after just two years in the job, citing the impact of the parent uprising over critical race theory on top of running a school district during a global pandemic. “I’m concerned as a fellow citizen that some have lost the ability to truly consider the perspective of another,” the 50-year-old former social-studies teacher says. “That is the mark of an educated citizenry.” — *With reporting by ALANA ABRAMSON/WASHINGTON, D.C., and ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA/NEW YORK* □





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# Building A Better Simone Biles

HOW THE GREATEST GYMNAST  
OF ALL TIME GOT EVEN GREATER  
BY ALICE PARK





PHOTOGRAPH BY LIONEL BONAVENTURE

**W**HEN YOU'VE WON SEVEN NATIONAL championships, 19 world titles, five Olympic medals (four of them gold), and your leotards are already decorated with a rhinestone goat (a nod to Greatest of All Time status), is there anything left to prove?

For most people, the answer is no. But Simone Biles is not like most people, or even most Olympians. The 4 ft. 8 in. 24-year-old from Spring, Texas, is not only the most dominant gymnast of her time—she is likely the greatest in history. With an unmatched blend of skill, power and daring—and more than a splash of charisma—Biles has won every all-around national, world and Olympic competition she has entered since 2013. Her record haul of 25 World Championship medals is five more than that of her closest rival—who retired in 2004. Biles has four gymnastics skills named after her, an honor reserved for the first competitor to execute a new move in a major international competition. And she has a fifth that she is likely to unleash in Tokyo—a gravity-defying vault that only male gymnasts have completed on the Olympic stage.

“She is superhuman,” says Jordyn Wieber, a member of the gold-medal-winning 2012 U.S. Olympic team and the head women’s gymnastics coach at the University of Arkansas. “She could be doing the exact same routines [she did] in Rio and still win. Yet she is challenging herself, constantly competing against herself, which is only elevating our sport and pushing the rest of the athletes to step up.”

That determination was tested after her soaring performance in Rio in 2016. Biles took a year off following the Games, never once setting a foot in the gym, to rest her body, prepare mentally for another Olympic cycle and reckon with the challenges of her newfound fame (not to mention move out of her parents’ house and learn how to run a dishwasher).

In early 2018, Biles revealed that she is among the hundreds of athletes who were abused by the convicted sexual predator Larry Nassar, the former USA Gymnastics (USAG) team doctor. Among the survivors, she is the only one who is still a competing member of the national team—adding yet more for her to carry alongside the sky-high expectations.



Speaking out was liberating, Biles says, but made preparing for Tokyo, particularly with the COVID-19 delay, that much more challenging. The gym, which had always been a sanctuary of sorts for Biles, became a constant reminder of the abuse. “And I don’t think the extra year helped with that, since it was, ‘Ugh, another year dealing with [USA Gymnastics], another year dealing with this,’” she says. “How much can I take before I had enough?”

In addition, for the first time since she was 6, Biles had new coaches: the married couple Cecile and Laurent Landi. Before agreeing to train her, they wanted to be sure Biles was pursuing a second Olympics for the right reason. “She wanted a chance to see how far she could go,” says Cecile. “We saw it was coming from her heart.” Biles admitted to them that she had been operating on a sort of autopilot, doing what was expected of her but not particularly enjoying it. That may well have been enough to win, but she knew she had more in her.

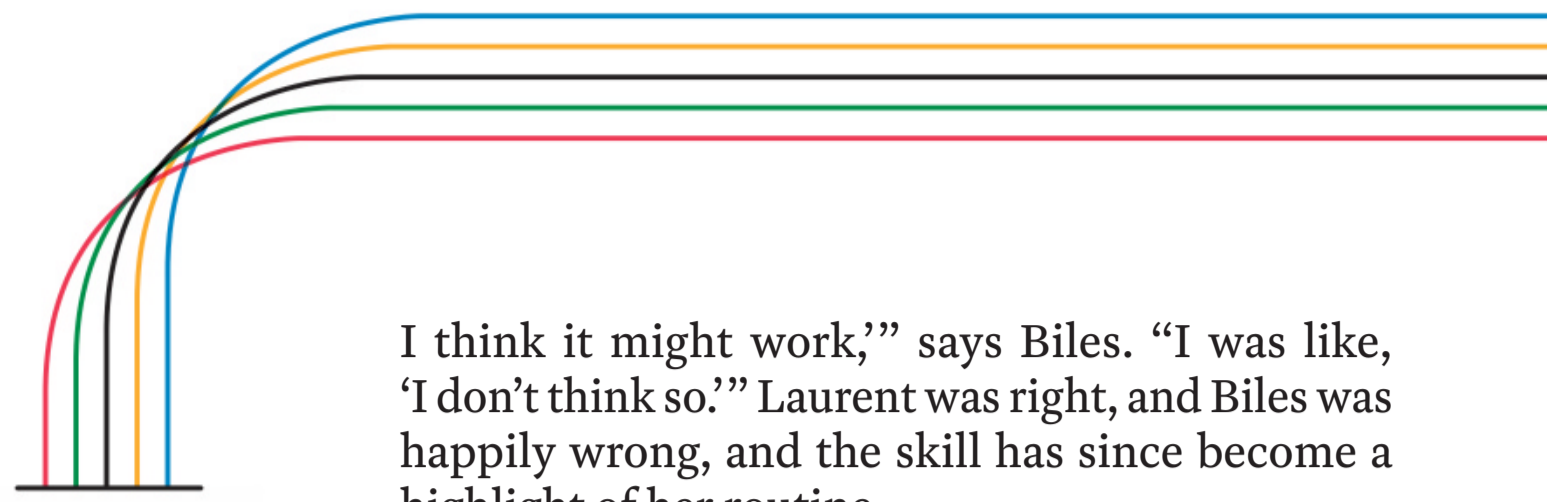
Biles didn’t want to one day wonder what if. “Now I can look back like at least I tried,” Biles tells *TIME* in mid-June from Spring. “I still love the sport, and that’s why I’m doing it.”

When the Tokyo Olympics finally kick off on July 23, this relentless drive to be better, combined with a different training regimen, unparalleled talent and an unwavering resolve should conspire to make the greatest of all time somehow even greater. Now, Biles says, “We talk about Simone 2.0.”

**FOR NEARLY 18 YEARS**, Biles knew what to expect at the gym. But when her longtime coach Aimee Boorman took another job during Biles’ year off, she and her family saw an opportunity for a new approach. The Landis, both former gymnasts on the French national team, made the case that they could make Biles even better. “They start with the basics, and focus on the root basics before the big skills, which I never really did before,” says Biles. “I had stopped working on the basics. But it went smoother than I thought it would.”

Laurent Landi’s first task was to build Biles’ confidence on uneven bars, her weakest event, by making her swings and catch-and-release skills more consistent. “I definitely don’t hate bars anymore,” she says. “And I trust myself a little bit more.”

He also pushed her to try the triple twisting double salto on floor exercise—that’s two backward flips while simultaneously twisting three times before becoming earthbound—after she mentioned that she used to try the move for fun knowing she could land in the safety of the foam pit. “He said, ‘I think you can do another twist—just try it and let’s play with it, and in a few months,



**BILES’ BEST**

The GOAT has five signature moves



**BILES II (FLOOR)**

Triple-double (triple twisting double backflip)



**BILES (FLOOR)**

Double layout with a half twist



**BILES (BEAM)**

Double twisting double backflip dismount



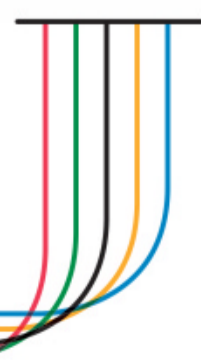
**BILES (VAULT)**

Roundoff back handspring, half turn, stretched somersault with two twists



**YURCHENKO DOUBLE PIKE**

Roundoff back handspring, double flip in pike position



I think it might work,’” says Biles. “I was like, ‘I don’t think so.’” Laurent was right, and Biles was happily wrong, and the skill has since become a highlight of her routine.

Twists, flips, turns, the evolution of a skill—these are the things that get Simone Biles excited. Ask about her motivation, her mindset, her feelings and, well, the conversation is likely to be much shorter than if you had asked her to explain the Amanar vault. But speaking out against Nassar and USA Gymnastics has helped her both confront her own trauma and embrace the power that can come from sharing it. “There were days I broke down—I couldn’t do it,” she says. “I had to leave the gym to take mental-health days.”

Therapy was critical—even if Biles resisted it at first. “I personally took her to her therapy sessions,” says her mother Nellie. “It was something she needed, but she couldn’t drag herself to therapy. So I made her trips with her, and waited outside. Let me tell you, it took years of therapy until she got a better grasp on what happened and could feel it was not her fault.”

Biles also came to understand her growing clout. She has demanded accountability from USA Gymnastics, the sport’s governing body in the U.S., continuing to press for more clarity on how Nassar remained in a position to abuse gymnasts, even after a report was filed about his behavior to the organization. (USAG did not respond to *TIME*’s requests for comment.) And it was only after she said in a letter posted to social media that she did not want to return to the training site where Nassar abused the gymnasts on a regular basis that USAG shut down the facility. “Nobody wants to go back where something tragic happened,” Biles says, “and that was truly how I felt in my heart.”

With that letter, Biles started to find her footing as an advocate for the teammates who had survived Nassar’s abuse, as well as for future athletes. “I feel like I am the voice from the inside,” she says. “And they can’t shut us out if there is a remaining survivor speaking out for change.”

It helped that Biles’ team knew how to be supportive. The Landis had coached Madison Kocian, Biles’ 2016 Olympics teammate and a survivor of Nassar’s abuse, and they helped ease her back into the rigor—mental as well as physical—of elite training. When Biles prepared to speak out about Nassar, “we told her we’ll be there—tell us what we need to do,” says Cecile Landi. “If you want us to say something, or just be in the background, we will support you whatever you decide to do.”

It also mattered that Nellie and her husband Ron own the gym near Houston where Biles trains. Their daughter, says Nellie, was returning to “the family gym. She had the support of us, and her coaches who understood what she was going through.”





**THE FOUNDATION** on which Biles, her family and the Landis built “Simone 2.0” set her up to land unheard-of skills—and influence. Biles sprung onto fans a new tumbling run at the 2019 world championships with that mind-blowing triple-double. At the same competition, Biles also tested the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) with a daring dismount off the beam—a backward double twisting double tucked salto. FIG didn’t give the skill as high a value as many, including Biles, expected because of the danger involved.

A year later, as questions mounted about how the one-year delay had affected her Olympics preparation, Biles answered with another stunner in her first competition following the postponement—a Yurchenko double pike vault. It requires explosive power pushing off the vault—backward, no less, after a roundoff and back handspring—to flip twice, with the legs in a pike position, before

▲  
**BILES WAVES  
 AFTER WINNING  
 HER SEVENTH U.S.  
 CHAMPIONSHIP,  
 IN JUNE**

**‘THERE WERE DAYS I BROKE  
 DOWN—I COULDN’T DO IT.’**

landing. Which is not to say that the past 12 months haven’t taken a toll. “It was definitely a bit of a struggle mentally and physically because [gymnastics] is very taxing on your body,” Biles says. “I feel like last year my body didn’t hurt this much. If I had my body from last year, I would be blessed.”

Yet the GOAT presses on, motivated less by scores than the pursuit of her own physical and mental limits. “She is constantly pushing the envelope, pushing herself to do insanely hard skills that I can’t even fathom,” says Wieber.

Biles makes no effort to hide that ambition. Indeed, she embraces it. And that is a key part of her greatness, particularly in a sport with historically few Black women at its highest level. “She is unabashedly Simone in her energy and personality,” says Reuben May, a professor of sociology at University of Illinois who studies sports, society and race. “She has shown that you can be you and still be effective in a world that is unlike you.”

Legacy is not yet on Biles’ mind—Tokyo comes first. But she does welcome being a role model. “I hope I let kids know that it’s O.K. to say you’re good at something,” she says. “And that it’s O.K. to be the GOAT.” □



Society

# A Pandemic Parent's Best Friend

**HOW DR. BECKY BECAME AN INSTAGRAM OBSESSION FOR ANXIOUS MILLENNIALS WITH KIDS**

By Doree Shafrir

*Becky Kennedy, pictured on Manhattan's Upper West Side, lives in New York City with her husband and three young children*

PHOTOGRAPH BY TONJE THILESEN FOR TIME









IF YOU ARE A PARENT OF A CHILD under the age of, say, 10, it's unlikely that you made it through the pandemic without coming across Dr. Becky. The clinical psychologist has become the parenting expert of the moment, an attractive 38-year-old Manhattan mom of three who is a fount of easily digestible advice about what to do when your kid won't go to bed or throws a tantrum when it's time to leave the playground or is in Zoom kindergarten for six hours a day, or when your in-laws visit and can't stop criticizing your parenting. She counsels mostly on Instagram, via videos that she records with her iPhone against a wall in her apartment, and she does it all while reassuring parents that they are, in fact, doing a good job. Because if there is anything that parents who have been cooped up with their children for more than a year need to hear, it's that even if they yell, even if they collapse with frustration at the end of yet another seemingly endless day, they've got this.

These mostly millennial parents flock to Dr. Becky not just because they want to be better parents but because they want to understand how the way they were raised impacts the way they're raising their own kids—which, for many of them, means rejecting the highly anxious, carrot-and-stick reward-and-punishment style of suburban American middle-class boomer parenting that they grew up with. These are parents who were born in the '80s and early '90s, a time when the milk they poured in their cereal came from cartons plastered with the faces of missing children, when so-called helicopter parenting—the idea that you could literally not be too involved in your children's lives—came into vogue, leading to a generation of children whose parents thought it was totally fine to contest a college term-paper grade.

In a 2012 paper in the *Journal of Adolescence* reflecting on the trend of helicopter parenting, authors Laura Padilla-Walker and Larry Nelson described “a form of parenting that includes intrusive and unnecessary micromanagement of a child's independent activities, and strong affection in the absence of child distress or need for comforting,” which research in the '90s and early 2000s repeatedly found leads to anxiety-related problems, social withdrawal and peer difficulties in young children. “Given that involvement, protection, affection, etc., tend to be aspects of ‘good’ parenting,” wrote Padilla-Walker and Nelson, “it leads to the question of when and whether a parent can give too much of a ‘good’ thing.” Indeed, a 2019 Blue Cross Blue Shield study of millennials' mental health found that millennials are experiencing depression and other behavioral-health issues at a much higher rate than Gen Xers did when they were the same age—and some experts connect that trend with the helicopter parenting that was common when millennials were growing up. Is it really any surprise that this generation now wants to break that fear-anxiety cycle in their own families?

But the helicopter parenting of millennial childhoods was merely replaced with a new source of anxiety: raising a kid in the era of competitive social media, when it seems as if every other parent on Instagram has a perfectly arranged playroom of wooden Montessori toys. Their guide through all of this has surfaced as the wise yet relatable Dr. Becky, a kind of Dr. Spock in a T-shirt, with highlights.

**‘OUR KIDS ARE WATCHING US AND LEARNING ABOUT HOW TO RESPOND TO STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY. LET’S WIRE OUR KIDS FOR RESILIENCE, NOT PANIC. HOW? SCROLL FOR SOME TIPS.’**

DR. BECKY'S viral post from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic

**UNTIL FEBRUARY 2020**, Becky Kennedy, Ph.D., didn't even have an Instagram account. Now she has more than 600,000 followers on the platform, 95% of whom are women and 78% of whom are ages 25 to 44. She has sold more than 35,000 workshops—on topics ranging from potty training to how to deal with “deeply feeling kids”—at \$54 each or up to \$275 for a “bundle,” meaning that, conservatively, she has brought in more than \$1.8 million in a year from her workshops alone. Her podcast, *Good Inside With Dr. Becky*, immediately went to No. 1 on the Apple Podcasts Kids & Family chart when it launched in April; she publishes a weekly newsletter; and, very soon, you will be able to preorder her forthcoming book. You can also, if you're a mental-health professional, apply to be certified in the Dr. Becky method. What you cannot do, if you are a millennial parent, it seems, is get too much of Dr. Becky.

“How much was I encouraged to be my own person? Not an extension, not a convenience, not ‘good,’ but my own person?” Kennedy, herself a millennial, asks about her own childhood when we talk via Zoom. She's in her apartment, up against the very same wall where she records her videos. She is petite, with blond hair in a ponytail, and is wearing a T-shirt and, seemingly, no makeup. “A lot of millennial parents, when we reflect on that, we're like, Not really! Only when it worked out for everyone, which probably means when it was convenient.” Now, she says, “we're learning to raise our kids and separate from our parents.” Cloaked in a cozy blanket of tantrum tips, Kennedy's real Instagram advice is not about kids. It's about the person buried inside each parent. Soothe the adult, she reasons, and the child follows.

Junette Sheen, a mom of a 4-year-old, who lives in Pasadena, Calif., has been following Dr. Becky for the past few months and felt similarly about the contrast between her parenting and the way she was raised. “I think in my parents' generation, they raised us a lot through fear—their fear and then our fear,” Sheen says. “I think it was effective in some ways, but I see some things in me that I'm like, Oh, O.K., had that been handled differently, maybe I wouldn't have anxiety about this or fear about





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Aubrey Sabala, who follows Dr. Becky's parenting advice, cuddles her daughter in Atlanta on May 25

that.” Kennedy’s methods don’t contrast helicopter parenting with a hands-off approach; instead, she contrasts the micromanaging and expectations-based approach of helicopter parenting with setting emotional boundaries, fostering resilience and empathy, and the idea that “both things can be true”—your kid can be upset that she has to leave the park, and you can acknowledge and respect that and still leave the park.

Now millennial parents are also grappling with issues that their parents didn’t face, like climate change and a global pandemic, that can also lead to feelings of helplessness and despair. Having someone like Kennedy tell you, straight up, not just that you’re doing a good job, but also here’s exactly what to say to your kid who refuses to put on his shoes every morning, offers just a small bit of control over a world that can seem very out of our control.

Indeed, for Solnaz Firoz, a 37-year-old New Jersey mom of two, part of

Kennedy’s appeal lies in her approach—and being on Instagram. “She talks in bite-size snippets,” says Firoz. “It’s easy to digest. The ‘Here’s what you can say’ or ‘Here’s what this would look like; here’s how I approach it in my house’ really helps. She speaks to our generation.” If one of the truisms of connection is to meet people where they are, then Kennedy has it down.

**THERE’S A STORY** that Kennedy likes to tell—that she has told in workshops, on her Instagram and while she was talking to me—about being on a plane with turbulence. “I think about these three announcements and which one we’d all want to hear,” she says. “The first announcement is like, ‘STOP YELLING! YOU’RE RUINING MY FOCUS!

YOU’RE THE WORST PASSENGERS EVER!’ Another version that would feel awful is somebody being like, ‘I don’t know what you’re freaking out about. This is a perfectly fine flight. You have nothing to worry about.’ The pilot I would want would be someone who says, ‘I know what I’m doing, I’ve done this before, there is turbulence, it’s scary, and I know where we’re going and where we’re gonna land.’”

This, of course, is an allegory. One of the most important things parents can do, Kennedy says, is behave like the third pilot—keep calm, and keep their boundaries. “There’s such a sturdy boundary in there of saying, like, That’s your feeling and I can recognize it in

TIPS FROM DR. BECKY

DURING YOUR CHILD’S TANTRUM, IT IS NOT YOUR JOB TO CALM YOUR CHILD DOWN.

Your job is to calm yourself and keep your child safe.

you, but it’s not contagious to me. When kids feel like their feelings are contagious to their parents, it’s just double dysregulation.”

The first word you learn as a Dr. Becky devotee is *dysregulation*, a term first used by UC Berkeley professors Mary Main and Erik Hesse in 1990 to describe “frightening” or “aggressive” maternal behaviors. Now it’s more often used to describe children’s behaviors that are emotionally disproportional—if, say, you tell your child to put on her shoes and she responds by screaming, throwing herself on the floor and crying until she’s red in the face. (*Dysregulation* isn’t the only psych term with a checkered past definition that Kennedy uses in a lighter, more evolved way. The concept of “reparenting,” which Kennedy uses in terms of parents reassessing their own



# Society

childhoods and unlearning problematic behaviors, once referenced a controversial form of therapy that blamed mental illness on bad parenting.)

One of the foundations of her approach is that parents are constantly triggered by their children—because their children bring up issues from their own childhood that are unresolved. For Kennedy, that means constantly examining the perfectionist impulses in her family of origin. “I was an intense kid,” she says. “I was very perfectionistic. I feel like my parents were like, ‘You put more pressure on yourself than any adult ever overtly did,’ but I think probably I internalized this role of being really good and perfect.” She grew up in Westchester County, New York, the middle of three children of a commodities trader and a social worker turned stay-at-home parent.

## TIPS FROM DR. BECKY

### I JUST YELLED AT MY KIDS. NOW WHAT?

First, repair with yourself: “I’m a good parent who is having a hard time. I didn’t mess up my kids forever.”

Then, repair with your kids: “I’m sorry. I’m sure that felt scary. I’m working on staying calm when I have big feelings. I love you.”

In examining her own childhood, she says, she’s wondered “if I never felt like it was O.K., growing up, in my early wiring, to not have my paper done yet for English class? To sit on the couch and say, ‘Actually, I don’t want to do whatever activity the family was doing?’” Her family, she says, liked to joke that if you’re not 10 minutes early, you’re late. She majored in psychology at Duke and immediately went to grad school at Columbia for her Ph.D. in clinical psychology, then entered private practice and started parenting-guidance groups.

The Instagram account came about almost by accident. For two years, Kennedy had been developing a “sleep button” with a friend, Solange Schipani, who

has a background in product design. The idea was that parents could record themselves saying soothing messages, and a child who had trouble falling asleep could just press the button and hear their parents’ voices. It was something Kennedy had MacGyvered for her own daughter, now 6, when she was having sleep issues.

“I was not even on Instagram,” Kennedy says. “I didn’t even know what a Story was.” But her younger sister encouraged her to start an account to promote the product. “She was like, You love talking about this; you used to love writing when you were getting your Ph.D.” Kennedy started waking up at 4:45 every morning to write content for Instagram. Then, when it came time to actually start production on the button, “we realized that the button itself wasn’t the true product people wanted,” Schipani says. They scrapped it. “Really, Becky herself and access to her and her ideas was the real product that was so powerful and got people engaged and excited. The comfort button was just a vehicle to convey some of those thoughts and strategies.”

**ON MARCH 11, 2020**, exactly two weeks after she had launched her Instagram account, the day that the NBA announced that the rest of the 2020 season would be canceled and Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson revealed they had COVID-19, Kennedy put up a post that read, “Most young kids will remember how their family home felt during the coronavirus panic more than anything specific about the virus. Our kids are watching us and learning about how to respond to stress and uncertainty. Let’s wire our kids for resilience, not panic. How? Scroll for some tips.” The post went viral, spreading far beyond her then 200 followers. By the summer, her following had grown into the thousands, then the tens of thousands. Kennedy’s timing—right when already anxious parents were hunkering down with their children as schools closed in the midst of a global pandemic—turned out to have been perfect. If there had been an interest in parenting advice before, the pandemic increased it a hundredfold.

As her online fame has grown, Kennedy has at times struggled with maintaining the connection with the patients in her private practice. Some of her longtime clients have told her that they can’t follow

her on social media. “They’re like, Ugh, there you go popping up in my friend’s feed or some random person I follow, and it feels intrusive,” she says. “So, understandably, this has not been [all] positive, and if I was in their position, that’s how it would feel for me too.” (Kennedy says that her practice was at full capacity before she started her Instagram account, so she is not accepting new clients, and that she hasn’t actually lost any clients since starting it.)

The field she was entering—an approach that could loosely be described as respectful parenting—was crowded. There was the grande dame of this approach, Janet Lansbury, whose podcast *Unruffled* and books like *No Bad Kids*, published in 2014, have been touchstones for parents interested in moving away from a so-called behavioral approach to parenting. (Classical behavioral theory tries to eliminate “bad” behaviors through punishment and encourage “good” behaviors through rewards. Commonly used behavioral approaches are sticker charts and time-outs.) There were academics like Daniel Siegel, and there were long-standing classics like Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish’s 1996 *How to Talk so Kids Will Listen & Listen so Kids Will Talk*. In the past few years, a veritable cottage industry of respectful-parenting experts has emerged on social media, with Instagram accounts like Big Little Feelings (1.7 million followers), Curious Parenting (437,000 followers) and the Workspace for Children (169,000 followers), all espousing similar philosophies and strategies.

But even though Kennedy may have fewer followers than an account like Big Little Feelings, there’s something about her delivery that connects more with parents in this moment. Kennedy’s not surprised by this; she sees only adults in her private practice, not children. (The experts behind the other accounts listed all have backgrounds specifically in child or developmental psychology or education.) Her ability to get into the psyche of parents and understand their specific anxieties—and to speak to them as a parent herself—comes across as uniquely relatable and reassuring. She often role-plays and gives parents word-by-word guidelines to follow.

Aubrey Sabala, a 44-year-old single





mom in Atlanta with a 2-year-old daughter, says Kennedy feels to her like the aforementioned confident airplane pilot. “I’m doing this by myself with very little help,” she says. “I’m flying blind in a lot of ways, and I’m raising my daughter differently from how I was raised. Dr. Becky is very digestible.”

“I’ve unfollowed pretty much everyone except for her, just because her scripts speak to me,” says Samantha Raddatz Clark, a 34-year-old mom of two in Washington, D.C., who works for the government. “The things that she talks about are the things that I struggle with. And her scripts are just really simple and easy to follow, and she gives concrete examples. You don’t have to be this super creative thinker who comes up with all these games—I feel like some of the other accounts are adding to your workload.”

**JUST AS PARENTING ADVICE** did not start with Kennedy, it certainly will not end with her. “Child-rearing advice as a genre of text really first developed in

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*Kennedy checks her 16-month-old Instagram account, which has brought in more than \$1.8 million*

early 19th century Britain,” says Dara Regaignon, a historian at New York University and the author of *Writing Maternity: Medicine, Anxiety, Rhetoric, and Genre*. “Along with some other factors, this gives rise to a new kind of association or particular kind of ‘good’ mothering and worry, or anxiety—partly because of the way these advice books, in order to sell, are targeting ignorant, inexperienced and often young maternal readers who don’t have recourse to anyone else to know what to do.”

It’s easy to see a direct through line from the guidebooks of the early 19th century to today’s experts. “This idea started then and has certainly persisted—we’re living in its wake—that you’re sort of not doing your job as a mother if you’re not worrying,” Regaignon says. (Which is borne out

TIPS FROM DR. BECKY

LET’S CHANGE THE NARRATIVE ABOUT EMOTIONS.

Our emotions tell us what we want, what we need, what we value.

Emotions are our source of strength, not weakness.

by the gender of Kennedy’s followers.)

As Amanda Montei recently argued in *Vox*, this idea has only been exacerbated by the current crop of mom blogs, influencers and experts. Many—like Kennedy—have capitalized on their content. Montei writes that Kennedy and accounts like hers “have monetized the illusion of ‘winning’ at parenting while acknowledging the work is ‘tough.’”

And yet, as Kennedy herself might say, perhaps both things can be true: yes, she is monetizing how to be a better parent, but she also distributes much of her content for free, and she seems to deeply believe in the mission she has set out for herself, which is no less than teaching this generation to be more balanced people and parents, and thereby raise kids who are not quite as messed up as every generation that came before them. She envisions taking everything she’s learned in her years of private practice and her own experience raising three kids, and applying it to helping parents. “What if we could wire kids in ways that help them adapt now and continue to help them thrive later on?” she says. “That’s the gift I hope to give my kids.”

Raddatz Clark, the D.C. government worker, is starting to see how that works. “I yelled at my kid,” Raddatz Clark says. “He’s 4. He was really upset and crying. I went and apologized to him. I used her script: I told him I was struggling and moms make mistakes too. He seemed to kind of get it and was like, O.K., Mom still loves me. I’m not a bad kid.” —*With reporting by SIMMONE SHAH*

*Shafir is an author, most recently of Thanks for Waiting: The Joy (& Weirdness) of Being a Late Bloomer, out June 29*



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# Time Off

DEATH OF  
THE GIRLBOSS  
Capitalist feminism  
has dominated  
the modern era.  
Is the culture ready  
to move on?



## INSIDE

A VIRAL TWITTER THREAD  
COMES TO LIFE ONSCREEN

ALL THE BEST BOOKS HITTING  
SHELVES IN JULY

LIL DICKY TAPS A K-POP  
SUPERSTAR FOR HIS SHOW DAVE

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH RENSTROM

*Time Off* is reported by Simmone Shah



ESSAY

## What comes after the pop-culture girlboss?

By Judy Berman

**P**HYSICAL, A NEW BLACK-COMEDY SERIES FROM Apple TV+, chronicles the rise of a '60s radical turned '80s workout-video queen. Played with gritted-teeth intensity by Rose Byrne, Sheila Rubin is a frustrated San Diego housewife with a Berkeley degree, a young daughter, an eating disorder and a relentlessly critical inner monologue. When her husband Danny (Rory Scovel), a philandering hippie academic, loses his job and proposes that they use their savings to fund a state assembly campaign, she panics—because she has already spent it all on her elaborate binge-and-purge rituals.

Instead of coming clean, Sheila discovers aerobics. And the deeper she gets into exercise, the less miserable she seems. This sounds like a redemption arc. It might well have formed the basis for one half a decade ago, when Shonda Rhimes dominated prime time with hit dramas about glamorous, powerful women who did awful things in the name of success. But it isn't. Yes, *Physical* is the story of an unhappy woman who finds her calling. But it's also the story of a spiteful person who cheats, steals and worse to achieve selfish ends.

Although it's set four decades in the past and works best as an allegory for how flower children grew up to be hypercapitalist yuppies, *Physical* also feels like a sign of our transitioning times. In the pre-Trump 2010s, a suspiciously corporate strain of feminism—one predicated on the achievements of individual women—dominated pop culture. This was the era of what we now, often pejoratively, call the girlboss: an unabashedly dominant yet feminine woman defined by boundless ambition. The archetype was aspirational. Even if she harmed other women in the course of her quest for self-actualization, her triumphs were understood to be a credit to all womankind.

But much has changed in years bracketed by presidential elections and capped with a pandemic. A young generation that's more critical of capitalism has turned *girlboss* into a joke, a meme, something hopelessly "cheugy"—to use Gen Z's term for *passé*. Movies and TV have begun to reflect that trend, questioning a feminism that glorifies narcissism, greed, exploitation. Instead, pop culture is finally moving toward a fuller picture of female power.

"**MAYBE GIRLBOSS IS A NEW WORD for feminism,**" entrepreneur Sophia Amoruso, who popularized the term with her 2014 memoir *#Girldress*, once mused. In fact, the roots of para-feminist girlbossery run deeper. Sheila's real '80s counterparts—*Working Girl*, shoulder pads, Madonna—were proto-girlbosses, as were power-brunching *Sex and the City* types at the turn of the millennium.

But it wasn't until a decade later that the girlboss truly took over pop culture. Millennial women steeped in the



**THE GIRLBOSS GOES TO WASHINGTON:**  
Olivia Pope,  
*Scandal*



**THE DYSTOPIAN GIRLBOSS:**  
June Osborne,  
*The Handmaid's Tale*



*Don't be fooled by Sheila's nostalgic workout gear: beneath that '80s leotard beats a heart of stone*



*Harry Potter* franchise entered the workplace with its girlbossy self-made witch character, Hermione Granger, as a role model. Sheryl Sandberg acolytes leaned in, Beyoncé performed "Run the World (Girls)" in front of a giant FEMINIST sign, and Hillary Clinton fans donned NASTY WOMAN T-shirts. Ruth Bader Ginsburg was rebranded as the Notorious RBG. A new cohort of pop-star businesswomen—Beyoncé, but also Taylor Swift, Rihanna, Nicki Minaj and Lady Gaga—raised on the cautionary tale of Britney sold female empowerment. On the big screen, girls could be astronauts (*Gravity*) or *Star Wars* stars or, controversially, CIA geniuses like Jessica Chastain in *Zero Dark Thirty*.

It was Rhimes' work that most embodied the trend on TV, leveling up from the striving surgeons of *Grey's Anatomy* to *Scandal*'s cutthroat White House fixer Olivia Pope (Kerry Washington) and imperious law professor Annalise Keating (Viola Davis) in *How to Get Away With Murder*. But viewers stanned girlbosses in every genre, from *Parks and Recreation*'s idealistic bureaucrat Leslie Knope to *Game of Thrones*' colonizer Khaleesi, Daenerys Targaryen. Reality-TV stars like *Real Housewives*' Bethenny Frankel and those enterprising Kardashians girlbossed their way

THE HANDMAID'S TALE: HULU; MUG: SHUTTERSTOCK; SCANDAL: WALT DISNEY TELEVISION/GETTY IMAGES; GAME OF THRONES: HBO; HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER: WALT DISNEY TELEVISION/GETTY IMAGES; NOTEBOOK: SHUTTERSTOCK; GIRLBOSS: NETFLIX; PHYSICAL: APPLE TV+





**GIRLBOSS, MOTHER OF DRAGONS:**  
Daenerys,  
*Game of Thrones*



**PROFESSOR GIRLBOSS:**  
Annalise Keating,  
*How to Get Away With Murder*



**THE LIGHTLY FICTIONALIZED GIRLBOSS:**  
Sophia Marlowe,  
*Girlboss*



to the top of lucrative lifestyle brands that promised to let fans achieve their founders' high-maintenance good looks—and, in turn, helped launch the proudly materialistic influencer economy. Even *Broad City* did its part for the girlboss cause, with its slacker besties squealing their way through a guest appearance from candidate Clinton.

Then Hillary lost and #MeToo came for Dem donor Harvey Weinstein, clearing up any confusion over who still ran the world (predatory boys). Meanwhile, a number of “SheEO” types fell from grace. Amoruso left her fast-fashion brand Nasty Gal after it went bankrupt. Miki Agrawal, who founded body-positive period-underwear empire Thinx, faced sexual-harassment allegations, which she denied (the parties later settled). Ivanka Trump became a ubiquitous reminder that you could be a girlboss without demonstrating any allegiance to feminism. And as the archetype wavered, its pop-culture avatars got weird. *Vanity Fair* anointed a short-lived TV adaptation of *#Girlboss*, which followed an obnoxious but ostensibly cool young Sophia, “Netflix’s first truly terrible show.” Hulu extended the story of *The Handmaid’s Tale* by remaking its enslaved heroine as a quippy caricature.

While people have been pronouncing the girlboss dead since at least 2017, it might’ve taken the nightmare that was 2020 to bury her mythos, as a pandemic that disproportionately took women out of the workforce made the precariousness of even relatively rich, college-educated women impossible to ignore. At the same time, a post-#MeToo reckoning came for bosses who presided over hostile workplaces. Amid many male names, some prominent women, like Ellen DeGeneres and Audrey Gelman, founder of women’s social club the Wing, got called out and announced their exits. (Others, like Anna Wintour, got called out and closed ranks.) “We’re still sold a dazzlingly unrealistic image of a superwoman—or in 2020, a girlboss,” Gelman wrote.

**IT CAN BE HARD** to talk about what’s wrong with the girlboss, real or fictional, without seeming to scold women for embodying traditionally male traits. I suspect that’s a feature, not a bug, for those who benefit from the conflation of women’s empowerment with their own success. But art isn’t just about morality;

it’s about imagination, novelty, nuance, diversity. And the primacy of the girlboss made for some pretty boring years in pop-culture feminism.

So it’s been gratifying, recently, to see scripts that chip away at the girlboss facade. Before Sheila, there was *Succession*’s exasperating Shiv Roy, who uses her progressive cred as leverage with her right-wing media-titan dad. *Promising Young Woman* dismantled many tired empowerment tropes, from the rape-revenge narrative to the female superhero who is stronger, faster and more heroic than any human male. In reality, systemic oppression is tenacious. A woman who takes on the patriarchy—even one of exceptional abilities, like Carey Mulligan’s character—is likely to destroy herself in the process.

Not that all post-girlboss stories have been, or should be, pessimistic. Some of the best recent shows and movies explore the bonds among women who thrive in collaborating and caring for one another. The skaters of *Betty* unite to hold space in a male-dominated scene. On Peacock’s *We Are Lady Parts*, anxious Amina Hussain (Anjana Vasani) aspires

**‘We’re still sold a dazzlingly unrealistic image of a superwoman—or in 2020, a girlboss.’**

**AUDREY GELMAN**, former CEO of the Wing, in an essay for *Fast Company*

to be the perfect student and wife before finding a more authentic self while playing punk with other Muslim women. And though they compete onstage, the trans women of *Pose* and the sex workers of *P-Valley* are each other’s lifelines in a world that marginalizes them.

It should be possible, by now, to discuss women in pop culture as more than a binary of positive or negative representations. In the case of the girlboss, what we saw, for years, were sunny representations of destructive characters. The stories emerging to take their place aren’t all aspirational. And that’s the point. For every Olivia Pope striding through the halls of power there is a Sheila Rubin betraying her allies and an Amina Hussain detouring from a traditional path to success to connect with other women. We’ll know pop culture is tilting toward equality when its portraits of every type of woman look less like propaganda and more like honesty. □



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◀ Keough and Paige square off on the dance floor

## REVIEW

### A stripper's odyssey, written in tweets

By Stephanie Zacharek

BECAUSE HUMANKIND WILL NEVER STOP INVENTING NEW forms for old stories, it was only a matter of time before we got a movie adapted from a Twitter thread. In *Zola*, directed and co-written by Janicza Bravo, a young waitstaffer at a Hooters-style restaurant makes a new friend who cajoles her into taking a weekend road trip to Florida. The goal is to make some quick money dancing at strip clubs, which seems forthright enough. But the ensuing adventure involves guns, sex work, a menacing pimp and a lovelorn boyfriend's suicide attempt. And all of it really happened—or sort of happened—as recorded by a young woman named A'Ziah “Zola” King in a series of 148 tweets posted in October 2015. Each installment was a nail-biter rendered in 140 characters or less. Unsurprisingly, this prose poem of stripper life went viral.

With *Zola*, Bravo captures the brashness of King's voice and turns it into a movie that works against all odds, a black comedy and crime drama that begins as a strippers' lark and evolves into a NSFW saga of violence and sex trafficking. But *Zola* is also a story about platonic attraction between women. Sometimes we befriend women who are all wrong for us. We're as susceptible to feminine magnetism as men are, even if the game doesn't end in bed.

**YOU CAN ALMOST HEAR** the click when Zola (Taylour Paige, recently seen in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*) and Stefani (Riley Keough) meet in that restaurant: Stefani appraises Zola—and her winsome cleavage—with her hard little kitty-cat eyes.

She's both predatory and alluring, and Zola senses that she might be trouble. But who isn't occasionally seduced by the thrill of the new? When Stefani, her hapless boyfriend Derrek (Nicholas Braun) and her so-called roommate (Colman Domingo) swing by Zola's apartment to pick her up, she steps out to meet them, her stripper garb packed neatly into coordinating tote bags. Stefani, meanwhile, is all saucer-size hoop earrings and glitter eye shadow, a trailer-park siren who tearfully swears that everything she does is for her baby, an infant who may or may not exist.

Zola quickly susses out that Stefani's “roommate” is really her pimp, and he plans to put the two women on the market together. Zola nixes that idea quickly, but she also gives Stefani some tips on how she can make more money from turning tricks. More enduring friendships have been built on less.

*Zola's* comic absurdities are entwined with its horrors in a way that almost shouldn't work. But Bravo—who co-wrote the script with actor and playwright Jeremy O. Harris—shows a lightness of touch in navigating the story's quicksilver tone shifts, and the movie's two leads bring their best: the calculations Stefani runs perpetually in her brain are a substitute for a heartbeat, and Keough, a wondrous actor, puts that energy onscreen in Starburst colors.

But the movie belongs to Paige, as a writer-in-training who probably doesn't know she'll eventually wreak her revenge in a tweetstorm, but who's taking mental notes even so. At the club where she and Stefani dance on their first night of the weekend, a scrawny white hillbilly paws at her with his eyes while tossing her his idea of a compliment: “You look a lot like Whoopi Goldberg.” Zola fixes him with a blank velvet gaze, but there's steel behind it. This is the face of a woman who's writing her future even as she's stuck in a temporary bummer of a present. She'll have the last laugh, and its sound will echo long after the last tweet earns its millionth like. □

**‘It reads like Spring Breakers meets Pulp Fiction, as told by Nicki Minaj.’**

**DAVID KUSHNER,**  
*Rolling Stone*  
journalist, on A'Ziah “Zola” King's 2015 Twitter epic



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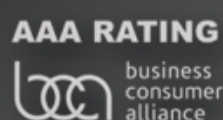
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Boys in love: Voisin and Lefebvre

## REVIEW

### First love in a cruel Summer

French filmmaker François Ozon is so prolific that his style isn't always easy to characterize. A twisted thriller here, a romance set in post-World War I Germany there: Who knows what he'll try next? But he does have a taste for dramatic, doomed romance, stories brushed with an aura of Baudelairean decay, like roses that are singed and ragged at the edges. That's the vibe of Ozon's *Summer of 85*. Even though it's set in sunny coastal Normandy, it gives off a heady, late-August perfume.

When teenage Alexis (Félix Lefebvre) needs to be rescued after a boating mishap, the dashing swain David (Benjamin Voisin) speeds to his rescue. Their class differences should divide them: Alexis comes from a working-class family; David helps his mother (Valeria Bruni Tedeschi) run the family's seaside boating-goods shop. But the two fall passionately in love—it's Alexis' first time—and make a vow that will unite them beyond death. (The script is adapted from Aidan Chambers' queer young-adult novel *Dance on My Grave*.) *Summer of 85* flirts with murder-mystery elements, but mostly it's a moody and meditative reflection on the nature of first love—as cruel and beautiful as the tide receding from the shore.

—Stephanie Zacharek

## REVIEW

### Cars go vroom, again, in *F9*

JUST AS THE DESSERT TOPPING YOU scoop out of a tub may contain only trace amounts of actual cream, the ninth installment in the *Fast & Furious* franchise, *F9: The Fast Saga*, isn't so much a movie as an entertainment product. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as you know what you're getting, and there are even some pluses. If you can't remember a thing about any of the previous *Fast & Furious* movies—or if you've never seen them—you won't feel any more or less lost than if you'd committed every rapid-fire frame to memory. And while none of these films require much heavy lifting in the brain-muscle department, *F9* may be the most impressionistically block-headed yet. You could map its dimensions on a handful of flashcards: Cars go vroom. Vin Diesel loves family. Gravity means nothing.

The plot goes something like this: Dominic Toretto (Diesel) and his childhood-sweetheart wife, former amnesiac Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), are drawn out of their hiding spot in the country for a job they can't refuse. That job requires driving, fast. Other people who will also end up driving fast include Roman (Tyrese Gibson), Tej (Ludacris) and Ramsey (Nathalie

Emmanuel). Meanwhile, the villainous Cipher (Charlize Theron) glowers from inside a plexiglass box. Also, Dominic has a long-lost brother, Jakob (John Cena), who has gone over to the dark side. Like his brother, Jakob is a very good driver and thus will also find many opportunities to drive, fast.

In between all that driving and the crackups and explosions that come with it, characters express their deepest feelings, generally in sentences of three words or less. Diesel occasionally utters some cornpone bromide about the importance of family: when he does so, his mouth gets all tiny, evidence of the conviction behind his words.

*F9* is much better when no one is talking. Director Justin Lin has steered four *Fast & Furious* movies to the finish line (including one of the most entertaining, the 2006 *Tokyo Drift*). Here, he orchestrates all manner of don't-try-this-at-home action sequences, including one in which a vehicle speeds smoothly off a cliff and straight into—well, let's not spoil it. Strung together, these scenes constitute something more like a very long trailer than an actual movie. But if that's enough to put a tiger in your tank, then go for it. —s.z.



*F9*'s Diesel in a rare moment of contemplation



NONFICTION

## An unlikely friendship

By Annabel Gutterman

SEVERAL CENTURIES AGO, VOLTAIRE DECLARED that a dog is man's best friend. At least, that's what people remember best from his famous quote about the furry companion. But in her new memoir, biologist Catherine Raven reminds us that we often take the French philosopher's words out of context: he comes to the conclusion only after citing how protective and faithful a dog is. "Voltaire has low standards for a famous guy," Raven writes. "Defense and loyalty? A best friend should give you something money can't buy."

Raven dwells on this saying because her best friend, for several years, was a wild fox she met while living in an isolated cottage in Montana—and unlike a domesticated dog, this fox chose *her*. For some time, as she describes in her book *Fox & I*, the fox (whom she often calls Fox) would show up on her property each afternoon, and she would watch him from a distance. Then, one day, she decided to engage by pulling out a copy of *The Little Prince* and reading aloud. This became a regular routine between Raven and Fox, so much so that she knew the average length of time the creature would sit and the exact time he would arrive. (Eighteen minutes and 4:15 p.m., respectively.)

Their friendship doesn't spiral into an adventure narrative or journey of self-discovery, like Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*. There are no cliff-hangers or shocking turns. Instead, the book is an unnerving, contemplative look at solitude and the connections we make with the outside world. For the reader, there's a palpable sense of dread that keeps the pages moving: Fox won't live forever. Yet Raven, who knows that well, writes with a refreshingly unsentimental hand. Her main concern isn't the expiration date of their time together, but how she categorizes and comes to terms with the animal's presence in her life.

Raven's not afraid to call herself a loner—she's been on her own since she was 15, after leaving behind an abusive father and an absent mother—but she is hesitant to refer to herself, at least in public, as Fox's friend. Over the course of *Fox & I*, Raven teaches remotely and leads wildlife classes at Yellowstone National Park. In the car on a drive to the park, she practices announcing that Fox is her friend. When she eventually tells her students, they are confused.

But Raven wants to respect Fox. She says, "I could have denied his existence or our relationship,



Raven has worked as a ranger in national parks across the U.S.

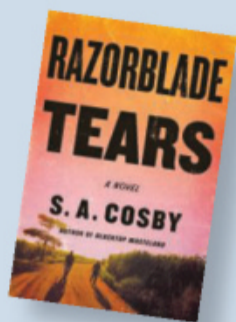
but what if the knowledge that his friend was a person was a source of pride for the Fox?"

**READERS MAY BE TEMPTED** to skip over the details in *Fox & I* that seem irrelevant: the lengthy history of a weed; sentences spent describing Fox lying out on his favorite boulder. But Raven is at her best here, demanding our patience and rewarding those who pay attention with lush prose that coalesces into a dreamy portrait of wildlife. She conjures an image of a yellow sweet clover: "Tissue-thin petals responded to mist or dew by twisting themselves into unrecognizable clumps that no subsequent amount of sunshine could reverse."

There's an obvious line to make between Raven's fixation on the natural world and what many of us have gone through over the past year. In isolation, our surroundings became everything. The walls of an apartment, the people we lived with, the pets that kept us company—they all took on newfound meaning. Yes, Fox does give Raven a sense of purpose. When he enters her life, she's recently decided to live out on her remote land full-time and is content to keep to herself. He forces her to examine the minute details of life, and shows her that though she is alone, she does not have to be lonely. More crucially, he shows her that there is no fixed definition of friendship. For a person who has always found solace in nature, this proves to be all the assurance Raven needs. □



## More July must-reads



### RAZORBLADE TEARS S.A. COSBY

Two ex-cons come together to seek revenge after both of their sons, a married couple, are murdered. The result is a harrowing portrait of two fathers grappling with their messy pasts amid a violent present in the American South.



### GHOST FOREST PIK-SHUEN FUNG

At the center of this intricately plotted debut is a daughter with questions about her father after his death. Her search, both complex and devastating, yields revelations about family, grief and the durability of love.



### SEEK YOU

KRISTEN RADTKE  
Combining history, personal narrative, cultural analysis and more, Radtke takes a comprehensive look at loneliness and how we interact with each other in her latest work of graphic nonfiction. —A.G.

## FICTION

# Possession—and revenge

By Cady Lang

FEMALE BODIES HAVE LONG SERVED as metaphor when we talk about colonization, often standing in for land or the body politic, but rarely are they given the space to seek retribution for the oppressive horrors inflicted on them. That's not the case in *Build Your House Around My Body*, Violet Kupersmith's haunting historical-fiction novel, where the mysterious but linked disappearances of two young women, 25 years apart in Vietnam, set the stage for a tale of vengeance—not only for each of them, but also for their land and their people.

To tell this story, Kupersmith, who also wrote the short-story collection *The Frangipani Hotel*, delves deep into Vietnamese folklore and history. She combines the two with magical realism to create a sensual world that is familiar yet supernatural, populated with a dense web of time-traveling characters—from an aimless biracial Vietnamese-American expatriate, who has come to Saigon to teach English, to the foreboding fortune teller who performs exorcisms—who each hunt for freedom from their dark histories, both personal and political, over the course of a century in Vietnam. There is no shortage of nuanced story lines that delve into the strange or the spooky in this book. In fact, this might be the book's biggest shortcoming: Kupersmith's interconnected spheres are complex and intensely visceral at their best, but often confusing in their sheer number and vastness.

In spite of this, Kupersmith's knack for drawing

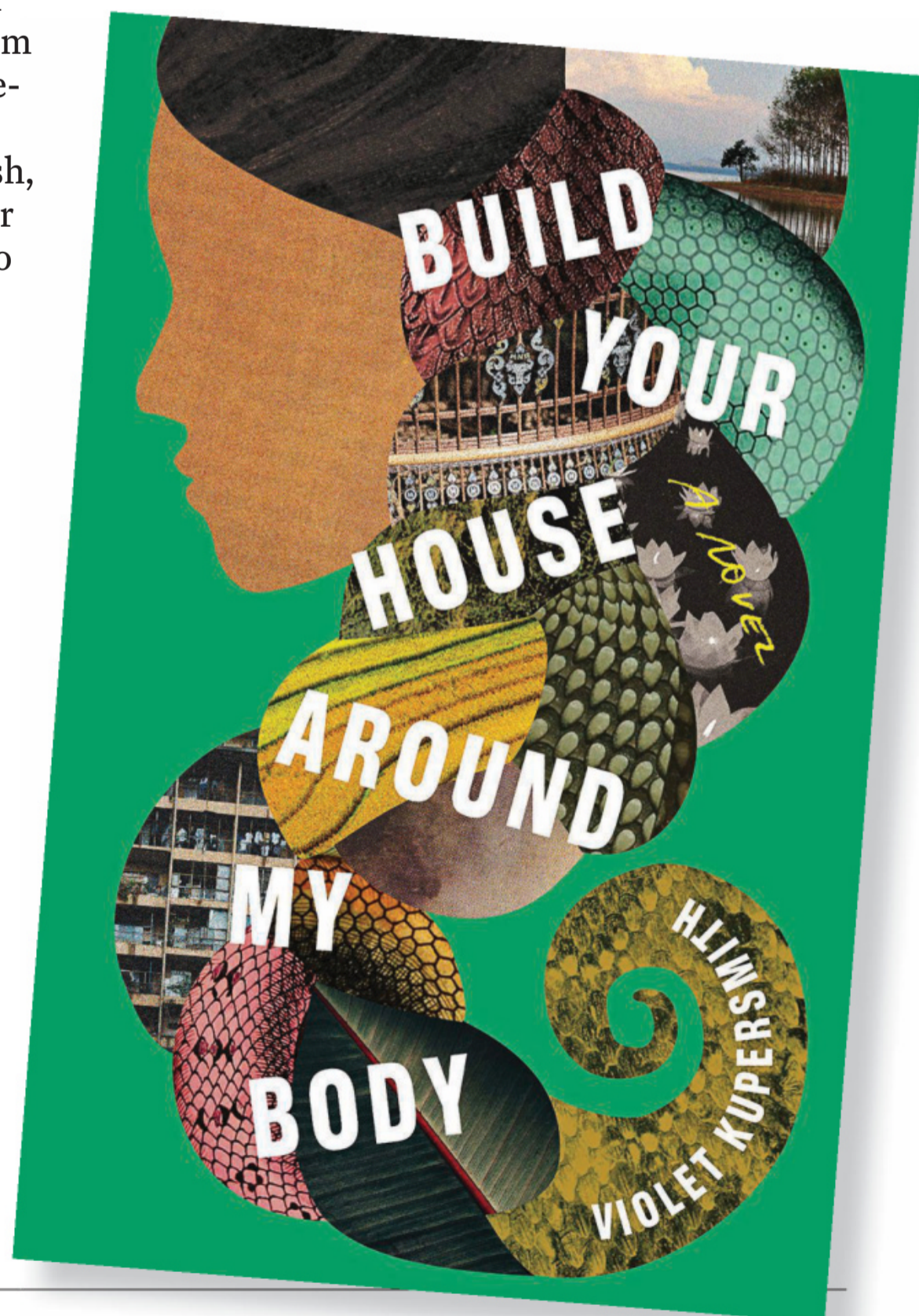
readers into the fantastical is readily apparent, as is her ability to deftly navigate the subtleties of a country's complicated history, rife with violence and generational trauma in the wake of French colonization.

Perhaps the most cogent examples of this are the haunted beings Kupersmith conjures to tell her tale of agency and autonomy stolen and then reclaimed.

Bodies are possessed and otherworldly creatures abound—among them a fearsome smoke monster and a two-headed cobra (those with ophidiophobia may find themselves squirming for much of the book)—but Kupersmith's dexterous, sensitive storytelling

ensures that readers understand clearly that the real monsters of this tale are those who seek to take by force what does not belong to them. □

**A strange and satisfying tale of vengeance, told over a century in Vietnam**



➤  
Kupersmith returns with haunting historical fiction



## K-pop, through a Western lens

By Andrew R. Chow

SONGS DON'T GET MUCH MORE OFFENSIVE THAN Lil Dicky's "Korea," which made its debut on the rapper's FXX sitcom *Dave* on June 16. The song's music video shows him defecating in the middle of downtown Seoul and dancing cheesily with a group of women who spin South Korean flag umbrellas, as a vaguely Asian flute whistles in the background.

But the scene's tastelessness is intentional. In *Dave*, the comedian and rapper born Dave Burd plays an exaggeratedly clueless version of himself as a way to make sharp observations about the absurdities embedded in pop culture, race and millennial relationships. In the show's latest episode, Burd's character sets his sights on conquering the K-pop industry. Along the way, he exemplifies the craven attitude that some American superstars and labels have taken in scrambling to grab a piece of a rapidly growing market share.

"Every single song that comes out of this country gets like 5 million, billion views in a day," Dave explains to his perturbed intern Dan. He's determined to capitalize on the popularity of K-pop. "It's the best idea I've ever had—it's a cheat code."

Burd's character epitomizes the exact way *not* to approach K-pop. Yet the episode—written by Lee Sung Jin and featuring an extensive cameo from the K-pop megastar CL—is actually the product of a meticulous cross-cultural collaboration emphasizing sensitivity and attention to detail. "He was very aware—he did his homework and studied everything," CL says of Burd's approach to getting K-pop culture right. "I think this episode is putting a stamp to Western culture that K-pop existed when we look back."

**OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS**, K-pop's global success has reached the point that Western superstars—from Halsey to Lady Gaga to Diplo—have crossed over "in the other direction" to appear on K-pop songs. Burd hoped to make fun of this trend by creating a K-pop knockoff song that blatantly treated the genre as a marketing strategy as opposed to an autonomous culture. ("I got kimchi, I got it all ... Kimbap that ass on the wall," goes one of his inane lyrics on "Korea.")

To do so, Burd tapped Lee, a *Dave* writer and co-executive producer, to build an episode out of the concept. Lee spent his childhood in Korea and is a self-professed huge K-pop fan; he remembers growing up on artists such as Seo Taiji and the



▲  
*New friends: on an episode of Dave, the eponymous rapper teams up with K-pop superstar CL*

Boys, H.O.T. and Fin.K.L. Lee also conducted research by interviewing several K-pop artists and executives, who highlighted two key trends with regard to working with Western artists: "We found there were a lot of people either leeching off K-pop's momentum or finding ways to hate on it," Lee says.

Burd and Lee then laid out an episode that would explore both sides, with the song "Korea" exemplifying the first part—the leeching. The second part of this dynamic is revealed midway through the episode, as Dave and his team jump to conclusions about "the dark side of K-pop" and the ways in which K-pop artists like CL, who plays herself, might be controlled by their managers or even the mob. It's a canny parody of how Western media has focused on these concerns amid claims that K-pop stars have grueling training schedules, are forbidden to date, and face exacting pressure from their labels and rabid fans alike. The anxieties aren't unfounded: in recent years, several K-pop idols, including Sulli, Goo Hara and Jonghyun, have died by suicide.

Yet these topics are thorny not just for their subject matter but also because K-pop fans on social media are fiercely loyal; they've been known to use their collective power to shout down media they feel portrays K-pop in an unfair light. Some Western outlets now avoid these topics altogether for fear of incurring the ire of fandoms so organized, they famously helped derail a Trump



rally in 2020 by reserving thousands of tickets and then failing to show up.

Ultimately, the *Dave* team decided it was important to talk about both sides of the K-pop phenomenon. “You don’t want to ignore subjects out of fear, because how will we ever actually examine them together?” Lee says. “There’s always danger in this Twitter age that things will be taken out of context. We had a constant discussion of what our intention is and how to walk that line.”

“If you want to address something that is rarely addressed, you need to take the risk,” CL says. “I would like to tell my fans and whoever’s watching it to look at it with more layers.”

**LEE WASN’T INVOLVED** in *Dave*’s first season, and at first, he says he was skeptical of the show based on its billboards, in which Burd appeared as a phallic symbol. But last year, Lee got a text from the actor Steven Yeun, who stars in Lee’s upcoming Netflix series *Beef*. “He said, ‘You have to watch—it’s my favorite sitcom out,’” Lee recalls. “I finished it in a couple days, and my mind was blown. Every step of the way bent my expectations.”

Lee says he’s had a similarly positive experience in the writers’ room, especially compared with his experiences over the past decade: he says Hollywood has had a knack for disempowering young writers of color. “There’s always the worry you’re gonna write something and it’s gonna turn into something else somewhere in the pipeline,” he says. But *Dave*, he says, had the most Asian writers of any writers’ room in which he’s worked, which led to more nuanced discussions and characters; he says Burd also gave him creative power every step of the way. “From writing to shooting to editing, he’s made me feel superinvolved in every microdecision,” Lee says. “That makes you feel like it’s also your show, which makes a huge difference.”

CL says she was more than happy to fly from Korea to Los Angeles—which, ironically, subbed in for Seoul because of COVID protocols—to be a part of the episode. “It’s one of my biggest passions to represent K-pop, and I’m a big fan of his show,” she says. “It was definitely worth the two-week quarantine.” □

## DID YOU FILE A CLAIM AGAINST PURDUE PHARMA AS PART OF ITS BANKRUPTCY PROCEEDING? DO YOU HAVE A CLAIM AGAINST PURDUE PHARMA’S OWNERS?

### A Hearing to Consider Confirmation of the Chapter 11 Plan May Affect Your Rights.

#### CONFIRMATION HEARING AUGUST 9, 2021

##### WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?

On June 3, 2021, as part of Purdue Pharma L.P.’s bankruptcy proceedings, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York entered an order called the “**Disclosure Statement Order**” that:

(a) Authorized Purdue Pharma L.P. and its affiliated debtors and debtors in possession to solicit acceptances of the *Fifth Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization of Purdue Pharma L.P. and Its Affiliated Debtors*, which includes (a) releases of any actual or potential claims against Sackler family members, and certain other individuals and related entities, relating to Purdue Pharma L.P. and its affiliated debtors (including Purdue prescription opioids, like OxyContin, or other prescription opioids manufactured or sold by Purdue); and (b) an injunction requiring that certain claims against the released parties be asserted only against trusts established under the plan;

(b) Approved the *Disclosure Statement for Fifth Amended Joint Chapter 11 Plan for Purdue Pharma L.P. and Its Affiliated Debtors* as containing “**adequate information**” pursuant to section 1125 of the Bankruptcy Code;

(c) Approved the solicitation materials and documents to be included in solicitation packages; and

(d) Approved procedures for soliciting, receiving, and tabulating votes on the plan and for filing objections to the plan.

The Court will consider confirmation of the plan at the Confirmation Hearing.

##### WHEN IS THE HEARING?

The Confirmation Hearing will be held on **August 9, 2021, at 10 a.m., prevailing Eastern Time**, before the Honorable Robert D. Drain, in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, located at 300 Quarropas Street, White Plains, New York 10601-4140. The hearing will be conducted via **Zoom videoconference** for those who will be participating in the Confirmation Hearing<sup>1</sup> if General Order M-543 is still in effect or unless otherwise ordered by the Bankruptcy Court.

The Confirmation Hearing may be extended and rescheduled by the Court or the Debtors **without further notice** by an agenda filed with the Court, and/or by a Notice of Adjournment filed with the Court and delivered to all parties who are entitled to notice.

##### WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

**Vote on the Plan:** Your vote must be submitted so it is actually received on or before **July 14, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time**. Detailed instructions on how to vote are available at [PurduePharmaClaims.com](https://PurduePharmaClaims.com) or by calling **(844) 217-0912 (toll free)** or **(347) 859-8093 (international)**. Failure to follow instructions properly may disqualify your vote.

**Object to the Plan:** An objection must be submitted so that it is actually received on or before **July 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time**. Detailed instructions on how to file an objection are available at [PurduePharmaClaims.com](https://PurduePharmaClaims.com) or by calling **(844) 217-0912 (toll free)** or **(347) 859-8093 (international)**.

**Allowance Request:** If you believe that you hold a claim against Purdue Pharma L.P. that is not currently entitled to vote but that you believe should be entitled to vote, you can request the allowance of such claim for voting purposes. To do so, you must file a motion with the Court on or before **July 19, 2021, at 4:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time**. Detailed instructions on how to file an allowance request are available at [PurduePharmaClaims.com](https://PurduePharmaClaims.com) or by calling **(844) 217-0912 (toll free)** or **(347) 859-8093 (international)**.

**If the plan is confirmed, anyone with an actual or potential claim against Purdue Pharma L.P. or any of its affiliated debtors, or with an actual or potential claim against Sackler family members, and certain other individuals and related entities, relating to Purdue Pharma L.P. and its affiliated debtors (including Purdue prescription opioids, like OxyContin, or other prescription opioids manufactured or sold by Purdue), will be bound by the terms of the plan, including the releases and injunctions contained therein.**

#### THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY. FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Call:** (844) 217-0912 (toll free) or (347) 859-8093 (international)

**Visit:** [PurduePharmaClaims.com](https://PurduePharmaClaims.com)

**Write:** Purdue Pharma Ballot Processing, c/o Prime Clerk LLC  
One Grand Central Place, 60 East 42nd Street, Suite 1440  
New York, NY 10165

**Email:** [purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com](mailto:purduepharmainfo@primeclerk.com)

Please be advised that Prime Clerk LLC is authorized to answer questions about, and provide additional copies of, solicitation materials, but may **not** advise you as to whether you should vote to accept or reject the plan or provide any legal advice.

<sup>1</sup> Parties or members of the public who wish to participate in the Confirmation Hearing should consult the Court’s calendar with respect to the day of the Confirmation Hearing at <https://www.nysb.uscourts.gov/calendars/rdd.html> for information regarding how to be added as a participant. Members of the public who wish to listen to, but not participate in, the Confirmation Hearing free of charge may do so telephonically at a number to be provided on the Debtors’ case website at: [PurduePharmaClaims.com](https://PurduePharmaClaims.com).



# 7 Questions

**Questlove** The *Summer of Soul* director talks about Stevie Wonder's drum techniques, Black erasure and an infamous 2021 Oscars moment

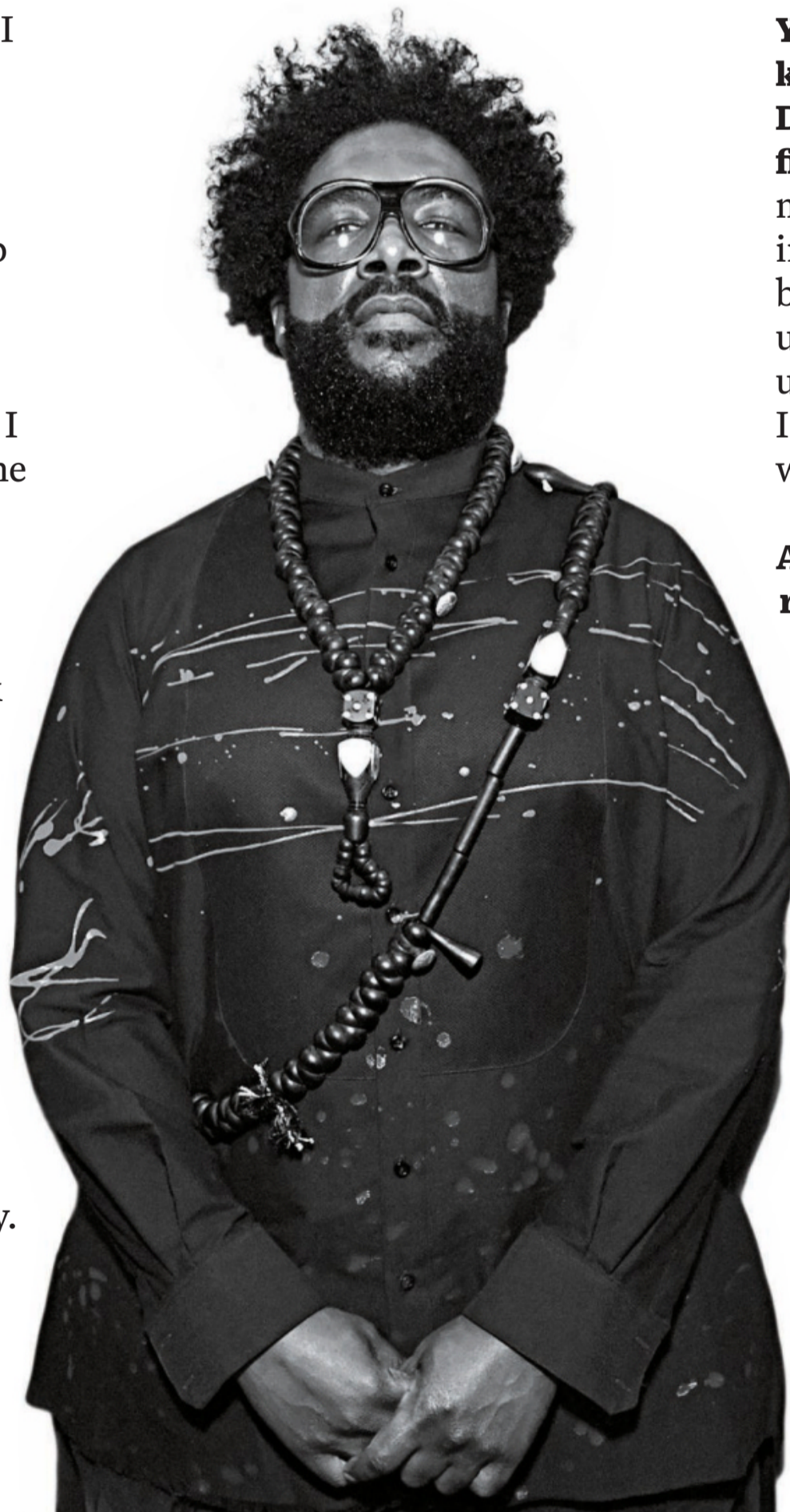
**S**ummer of Soul, your documentary about the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival, starts with an epic Stevie Wonder drum solo. As a drummer yourself, what have you taken from his work? Only three drummers really speak to me in their cymbal work. Tony Williams, who drummed with Miles Davis, has a beautiful, violent use of them. John Bonham of Led Zepelin: all of his cymbal work is like exclamations. And with Stevie Wonder, you hear his excitement in his cymbal and high-hat work, which is kind of weird to say, because the cymbals are like the condiments, not the burger. I wanted to start this film with something that just absolutely grabs you by the collar—and when I saw the Stevie Wonder footage, I knew that was it instantly.

**How did you cull the 40 hours of concert footage to create a feature-length film?** I compiled a 24-hour loop on my hard drive and then kept it on in my living room, kitchen, bathroom, studio, office and at *The Tonight Show* for five months. I even kept it on when I was asleep, and if something startled me awake, I jotted it down.

**Why do you think the Harlem Cultural Festival was buried in our collective memory for so long?** Black erasure is a real thing, and we're just having the conversation about it now. Imagine how embarrassed I was to learn that 300,000 people in Harlem saw musical acts that I know like the back of my hand. Even down to content creators on TikTok, and how easy it is for people not to be properly credited for their innovations. I definitely knew this film was much bigger than my directorial debut—that it was my chance to correct history.

**What piece of history are you most excited to share with the world?** 1969 was the year we planted the seeds of what we call “Black joy.” The idea of seeing ourselves in a beautiful

**“I KNEW THIS FILM WAS MUCH BIGGER THAN MY DIRECTORIAL DEBUT—IT WAS MY CHANCE TO CORRECT HISTORY.”**



light, learning to love ourselves. Because previously, all indications pointed to the self-hate we've been going through since the days of slavery and Jim Crow. I was reading Prince's autobiography as I was working on this film, and he wrote about how his father taking him to see *Woodstock* was his “come to Jesus” moment with music. The *Woodstock* film did more for our ideas of what we think the '60s were than what they actually were. I wondered: What if a film like this was created and held in the same light? What could that have been for us? So for me, it was important to really deal with the issues of Black erasure, activism and be politically on point.

**You've been collecting cultural knowledge and history for decades. Do you find your memory hard drive filling up?** It's so funny you say that. For me, the real joy of this film was looking through the production notes: the backline, the types of microphones they used. And then I realized that the more useless information I take in, the more I'm going to forget other things, like what my middle name is.

**As one of the world's foremost record collectors, what's a recent acquisition you're excited about?** There's a story many people don't know about when it comes to Sly and the Family Stone's “Stand!”: it initially had a really cheesy Las Vegas ending, but at the last minute, Sly told Clive Davis to destroy the test pressings and then redid the ending. Somehow, my pals at *The Tonight Show* found the Las Vegas ending, and I was just like, “You found it! Not even Sly had it!” I was elated.

**You were the musical director of this year's Oscars. Did you script that Glenn Close “Da Butt” moment?** It was unscripted. She kind of knows what's up.

—ANDREW R. CHOW



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