

TIME

WHEN WALLS CAME DOWN

Thirty years after the dawn of a new era, the world is raising new barriers

BY MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

A member of the U.S. military chisels pieces of the Berlin Wall days after its fall in November 1989

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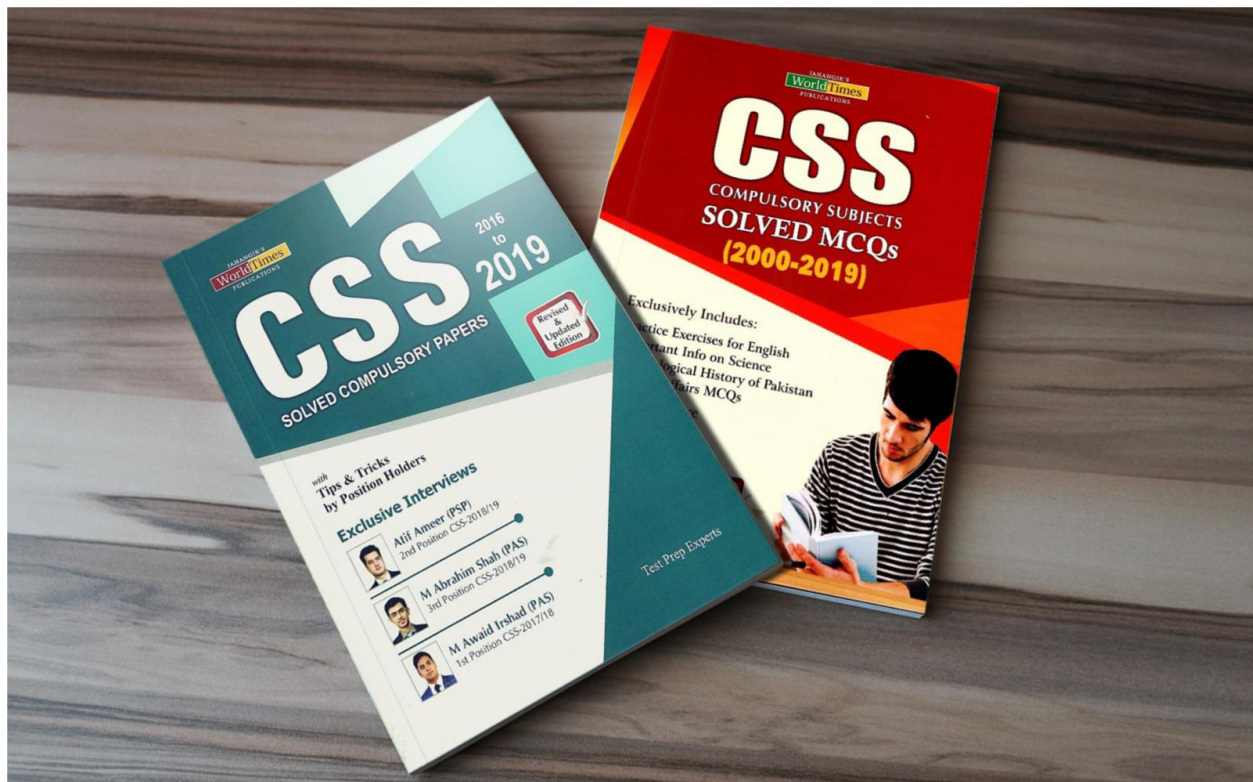
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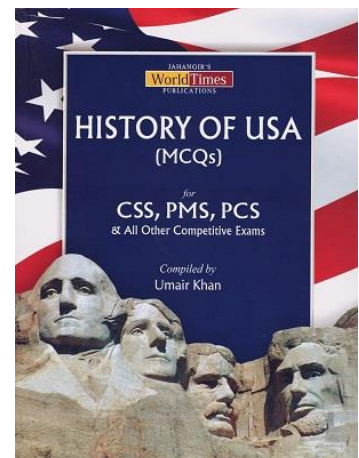
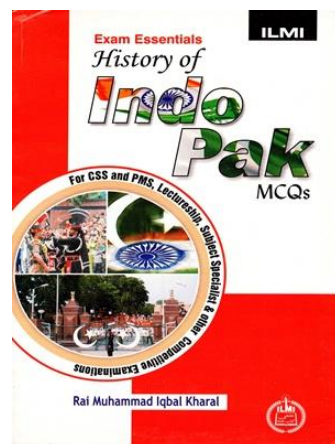
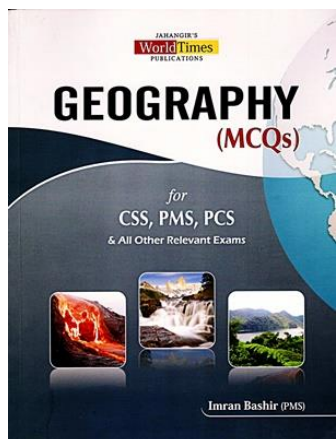
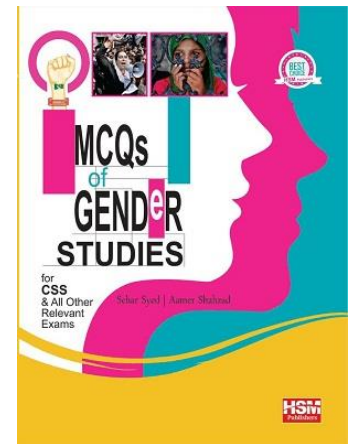
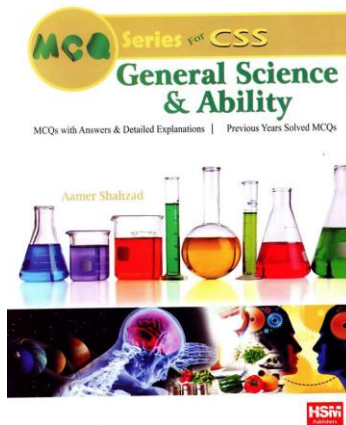
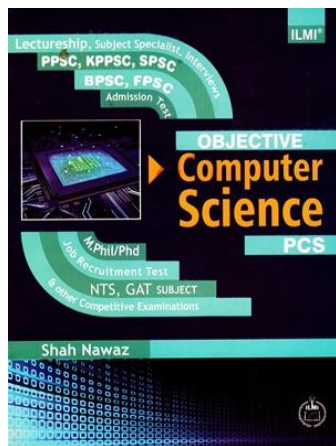
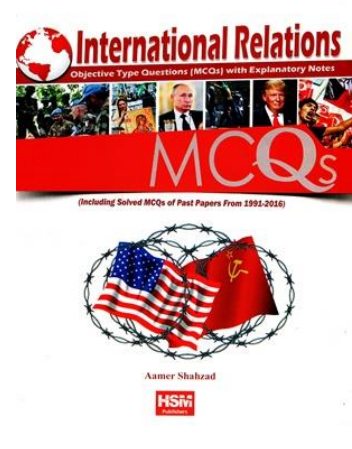
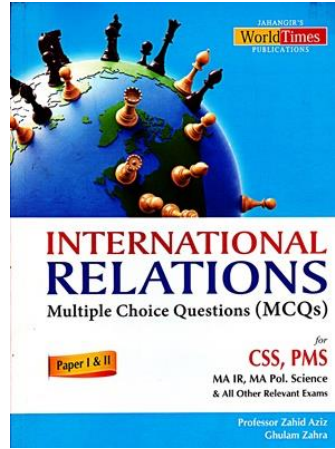
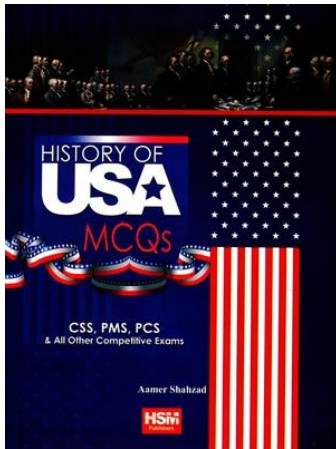
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TIME

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2 | Conversation
4 | For the Record

The Brief

News from the U.S.
and around the world

5 | The stories
behind **al-Baghdadi**

9 | **Big Tech**
makes a local play

10 | In Paris,
Leonardo still
draws crowds

12 | New life for an
Alzheimer's drug

14 | TIME with ...
actor **Willem Dafoe**

16 | California
ablaze, again

The View

Ideas, opinion,
innovations

19 | Charlotte
Alter on the fall
of a **millennial**
Congresswoman

21 | Ian Bremmer on
populism's return to
Argentina

21 | **Nintendo**
chief Shuntaro
Furukawa on the
entertainment
company's future

Features

Mr. Fix-It

Rudy Giuliani used his perch as the
President's lawyer for money and
power. What will it cost his client?

By Vera Bergengruen
and Brian Bennett **22**

Viewpoint: When Hizzoner
had some By Tom Robbins **29**

When the Berlin Wall Fell

Ten East Germans remember
what the West held for them
By Malcolm Jack **30**

Plus: Our vision of hope
and peace is in peril
By Mikhail Gorbachev **36**

Till Debt Do Us Part

The rise of financial therapy
for married couples

By Belinda Luscombe **38**

Time Off

What to watch, read,
see and do

43 | Martin
Scorsese's
masterwork,
The Irishman

46 | Movies:
A disintegrating
Marriage Story;
an ambitious
Motherless
Brooklyn; and an
iconic **Harriet**

48 | TV: A-listers in
The Morning Show;
live at **The Apollo**;
and a lively **His**
Dark Materials

50 | Books:
Exploding twins
and a fantasy epic

52 | 8 Questions for
playwright **David**
Henry Hwang

^
In their home in
Taucha, Germany,
Nora plays with
the Barbie that
her mother Susan
Penquitt went west
to buy in 1989

Photograph by
Nanna Heitmann—
Magnum Photos
for TIME

ON THE COVER:
Photograph
by Hans Peter
Stiebing—
Ullstein Bild/
Getty Images

Conversation

AYATOLLAH MACHIAVELLI

RE “THE RESISTANCE” [Oct. 14]: Your article’s notion that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is willing to subject Iranians “to indefinite economic hardship rather than hold his nose, swallow his pride and do a deal with the U.S.” is totally absurd. The idea that Iran should try to strike another deal with a likely one-term American President, who has proved himself untrustworthy and intransigent, and who is about to be impeached, does not make any sense at all.

Joseph Hannon,
BOSTON

THREE YEARS AGO, MY WIFE and I visited Iran. When the immigration officer at the Tehran airport gave us our U.S. passports back, he did so with a smile and said, “Welcome to my country, I hope you have a good time.” My blonde wife and I stood out like sore thumbs and were constantly stopped in the street and asked where we were from. The Iranians were very interested in life in America, and never have we been so warmly welcomed and treated so well. It is despotic zealots like Khamenei and his even more notorious predecessor who are harming an entire nation and threatening the safety and security of the whole world. Economic sanctions such as those im-

posed by President Trump are the safest way to bring Khamenei and his ilk to heel.

Peter Volny,
FOUNTAIN HILLS, ARIZ.

MODERATE APPEAL

RE “FINDING KAMALA Harris” [Oct. 14]: Political wisdom has it that elections are won in the center. Rational moderates, however, are finding themselves facing an increasingly emotion-driven American electorate that has been drawn to the fringes by a flood of fantasies, compounded by social media and truly fake news, as well as by populists. As your article says, Kamala Harris appeals to voters in the middle who like her pragmatism along with her solid experience and keen sense of justice. That base should then support her and not be distracted by radical trends.

Alan Benson,
BERLIN

CANCER STORIES

RE “THE OVERLOOKED” [Oct. 14]: Thank you for your article regarding metastatic breast cancer. I am entering my seventh year of the disease, and family and friends are always asking me about research and new treatments. I generally respond that the focus of most research is on the original cancer, as opposed to when it has metastasized. Thank you for the

confirmation. Not only have I had to deal with cancer and chemotherapy, but the worst thing has been having to deal with a medical profession that wants to continually write me off, but here I am. My life wasn’t ruined because my cancer metastasized, and no doctor should feel he has the right to tell me my life is over.

Susan Crosser,
WILSON, WYO.

NOT TO TAKE ANYTHING away from these women, but the truly overlooked with breast cancer are the men. While far fewer men get the disease, they face the same issues once diagnosed. Help get the word out.

William Sykes,
XENIA, OHIO

JOHNSON’S FOLLY

RE “JOHNSON RALLIES BASE as Scandals Loom” [Oct. 14]:

It is sad to see the U.K. in disarray over Brexit, and the willingness of so many to support the current Prime Minister is equally disappointing. When Boris Johnson had the opportunity to show leadership after the referendum, he dodged the media and ducked Brexit responsibility, leaving it to Theresa May. As her successor, he has thrown those who disagree with him out of the parliamentary party and suspended Parliament unlawfully. Had May adopted this attitude, Johnson would no longer be a member of his parliamentary party. It is sobering to think that a majority of Conservative Party members elected a leader with such a questionable record, reportedly because they thought he could win a general election.

David Roberts,
SALZGITTER,
GERMANY



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U.S. downloads of Chinese-owned social-media app TikTok, per an Oct. 23 letter in which two Senators called it “a potential counterintelligence threat”; the private company denied Chinese state influence

‘Not only did we win, but we’re changing history.’

CLAUDIA LÓPEZ, after becoming the first woman elected mayor of Bogotá; López, who is gay, took more than a third of votes in the Oct. 27 election

Steak
Legendary NYC steak house Peter Luger got a zero-star *New York Times* review



Burgers
Burger King reported sales up 10%, partly because of the meatless Impossible Whopper

\$26.6 million

Price at auction on Oct. 27 of a 13th century painting that had been found in a Frenchwoman’s kitchen

‘Free speech and paid speech are not the same thing.’

A LETTER FROM MORE THAN 250 FACEBOOK EMPLOYEES

to founder Mark Zuckerberg and top executives, criticizing their decision to allow politicians to make false claims in political ads on the site, according to an Oct. 28 report in the *New York Times*

‘Y’all... the sandwich is back.’

POPEYES, announcing on Oct. 28 that its chicken sandwich would return to stores on Nov. 3, more than two months after the chain sold out of the popular meal



780

Days the U.S. Air Force’s mysterious, unmanned X-37B space plane spent in orbit; it landed on Oct. 27

‘WE MUST EMBRACE CHANGE.’

MICHAEL V. DRAKE, chair of the NCAA board of governors and president of the Ohio State University, announcing on Oct. 29 that the board had voted to allow college athletes to be paid for the use of their image



‘WE’LL FOREVER REMEMBER THE 11 LIVES THAT WERE LOST, BUT WE WILL GO FORWARD.’

BARB FEIGE, executive director of Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue, one year after the temple became the site of the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME

The Brief

“IT WAS HIM”
President Trump
announces from
the White House
on Oct. 27 that
ISIS leader Abu
Bakr al-Baghdadi
had been killed



INSIDE

SEATTLE ELECTIONS TEST
BIG TECH'S INFLUENCE

THE LOUVRE MARKS 500 YEARS
SINCE DA VINCI'S DEATH

A DRUG TRIAL OFFERS NEW
HOPE FOR ALZHEIMER'S

PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO

TERRORISM

The world after al-Baghdadi

By Karl Vick and W.J. Hennigan

THE DEATH OF ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI MAY not change the world. Nevertheless, how it came about says a fair amount about the world he has departed.

In the chain of events that led to the Oct. 26 demise of the ISIS leader, every link tells a story. But even as it crystallizes what the war on terrorism looks like 18 years after 9/11, al-Baghdadi's death may mark the beginning of an uncertain new chapter.

The first link begins with the government of Iraq, which in September arrested one of al-Baghdadi's wives and a courier. Intelligence pointed to Syria, where the CIA was already working with the Kurdish militia. Both Iraq and the Kurds are committed enemies of ISIS. Iraqis suffered tens of thousands of casualties pushing ISIS out of their country from 2014 to 2017, and Kurdish militias lost some 11,000 fighters finishing the job in Syria, where the group's claim of a caliphate was erased.

Their involvement underscores that this is a global fight: the U.S. is not going it alone. The people actually prosecuting the war on terror are overwhelmingly local and Muslim—in Iraq and Syria, but also in Libya, Niger, Chad, Mali, Somalia, southern Yemen and much of Afghanistan, where more than 58,000 Afghan national military and police forces lost their lives through 2018. Typically the U.S. military role in these missions is restricted to half a dozen or more special-operations commandos working with local forces by providing intelligence, training and air cover. The local forces are mostly Muslim.

Kurdish fighters in Iraq and Syria continued to battle ISIS and hunted al-Baghdadi even after American forces retreated from those countries. On Oct. 6, Trump ordered U.S. troops to pull back from territory held by the Kurds, who were left alone to face an attack by Turkey. "I don't think we could have done this without the help we got from the Syrian and Iraqi Kurds," a U.S. official told TIME, speaking of the operation against the ISIS leader. The official quickly added that Iraq military and intelligence officers "kicked the whole thing off."

Al-Baghdadi's trail led east. He appeared to have gone to ground not near the lush Euphrates valley where ISIS fighters made their last stand in Syria—and where his fighters still mount ambushes and suicide attacks—but in Idlib province, the last large section of Syria still controlled by rebel militias, which in turn are dominated by an affiliate of al-Qaeda. That's the next link in the war on terrorism: it's far from over. Militant Islam may hold scant appeal to the overwhelming majority of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims (a 2015 Pew Center survey found almost no more support for ISIS in Lebanon than in Israel), but a terrorist attack does not require great numbers, and



^
The ISIS leader had gone to ground near the Turkish border, in an area known for smugglers and al-Qaeda

chaos gives extremism both oxygen and maneuvering room. Not by chance are ISIS, al-Qaeda and their offshoots found in the globe's least-governed locations.

Like Syria. During its eight-year civil war, the country was a proving ground for jihadists, many drawn by the sectarian nature the conflict quickly assumed. The Damascus government of Bashar Assad is dominated by Alawites, a heterodox religious minority. Assad's brutal answer to peaceful Arab Spring protests by Syria's Sunni Muslim majority was answered by a range of armed groups, including extremists who dominated the rebel battlefield. ISIS was a latecomer, having begun across the desert border as al-Qaeda in Iraq. There ISIS fought the U.S. occupation while slaughtering Shi'ite Muslims and religious minorities.

AL-BAGHDADI, BORN Ibrahim Awad Ibrahim Ali al-Badri 48 years ago in a village in central Iraq, took his nom de guerre from the capital city, where he got a Ph.D. in Quranic studies. He was swept up in arrests by U.S. forces in 2004



and, during almost a year in custody, turned his prison tent into an incubator of extremism. After release he joined the armed group he would in 2010 come to lead. All three of the leaders who preceded him, including the notorious Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, were killed by U.S. forces in tandem with the Iraqi government.

That collaboration formed the next link in the chain that led to al-Baghdadi's death. This story is one of professional cooperation, shared goals and keeping everyone on the same page. By doctrine and training, U.S. special-operations forces work jointly with others, from the CIA to the Iraqi military and intelligence and the Syrian Kurds who dispatched agents along the routes al-Baghdadi was thought to use, tracing him to a compound near the Turkish border.

The Kurds had a man on the inside, their general Mazloum Abdi told reporters afterward. Abdi said a member of al-Baghdadi's security detail smuggled out soiled underwear, and even a blood sample, for DNA testing that confirmed the ISIS leader's presence. The agent also described the layout of the compound

in detail, including a tunnel. (The reward for information leading the U.S. to al-Baghdadi was \$25 million.) Planning began for a capture-or-kill operation carried out by the Army's elite Delta Force and Ranger Regiment troops. The mission was named in part for Kayla Mueller, the U.S. aid worker kidnapped by ISIS in 2013 and raped by al-Baghdadi.

On Oct. 26, the operation went off without incident, commandos flying from Iraq in eight CH-47 Chinooks and other helicopters, breaching a high wall surrounding the compound and pursuing al-Baghdadi into the tunnel, a dead end where he detonated a suicide vest, killing the two children he'd taken with him. President Donald Trump watched the video feeds in the White House Situation Room "like a movie," he said in an announcement the next morning.

BUT TRUMP HIMSELF had disrupted planning. His abrupt announcement that the U.S. was leaving Kurdish territory in Syria infuriated the U.S. partners in the operation. As the U.S. retreated, and the Kurds scrambled for their lives while under attack by Turkey, raid planners scrambled to coordinate logistics, air power and other military assets required for the operation against al-Baghdadi.

And so the impact of al-Baghdadi's elimination (and the data recovered from his compound) is not the only question left looming in the aftermath of the raid.

ISIS has operated as an insurgency, a militia, a government and, perhaps most dangerously, as a movement, inspiring followers despite its astonishing brutality. "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's death—welcome and important though it may be—is not a catastrophic blow to the quality of leadership in ISIS," says Michael Nagata, who retired in August as Army lieutenant general and strategy director from the National Counterterrorism Center. Nagata, who served in the Middle East as a special-operations commander in 2014

when the counter-ISIS campaign began, says ISIS now has a cadre of young, battle-hardened leaders who are climbing its echelons and in the terrorist group's global network. "ISIS isn't a crippled organization because Baghdadi's gone," he says. "The depth and breadth of ISIS leadership, in my judgment, is unprecedented for this type of terrorist group."

Nor does killing al-Baghdadi reverse Trump's betrayal of the Kurds. The decision has raised doubts even in Iraq, where the U.S. lost thousands of troops and spent \$1 trillion. "The staying power of the United States is being questioned in a very, very serious way," the President of Iraq, Barham Salih, told Axios in an interview. "And allies of the United States are worried about the dependability of the United States."

Iraq declared that troops Trump ordered out of Syria can't stay there, opening the question of how the U.S. will suppress an ISIS that "is stronger today than its predecessor al-Qaeda in Iraq was in 2011, when the U.S. withdrew from Iraq," as the Institute for the Study of War wrote in a June report. "ISIS's insurgency will grow because areas it has lost in Iraq and Syria are still neither stable nor secure."

After Russian and Turkish forces took

over territory once held by the Kurds and Americans, Trump ordered a rump U.S. force to protect nearby oil fields. The move underscored the betrayal of the Kurds and reinforced perceptions that the West cares most about resources—never a good outcome in a contest for hearts and minds. After al-Baghdadi, there can be no question such a contest matters.

"It's good to take out the leader, but it's not just a terrorist group—it's an ideology as well," says Aki Peritz, a former CIA counterterrorism analyst. "Stamping out the idea of the Islamic State will prove to be much more difficult than one successful military-intelligence operation." —*With reporting by* JOHN WALCOTT/WASHINGTON



An ISIS video released in April gave the world its first glimpse of al-Baghdadi in five years

THE BULLETIN

GM union members return to work, but worries are far from over

AFTER 40 DAYS ON THE PICKET LINE, General Motors autoworkers voted Oct. 25 to accept a new contract that offers salary increases and other concessions. The agreement may offer relief for more than 48,000 United Auto Workers (UAW) members after the longest nationwide strike against GM in nearly 50 years, but the standoff cost both the company and its workers dearly.

CHANGING GEARS The new contract scraps the company's bisected salary structure, under which workers hired after 2007 were paid less and had no way to reach the top salaries of longer-serving employees. The company will also invest \$7.7 billion in U.S. factories, including \$3 billion at a Detroit plant that had been scheduled to close in early 2020. But not all workers came out ahead. The agreement allows GM to close three other plants—including one in Lordsburg, Ohio, that was the focus of a 2017 promise from President Trump that workers' jobs would be saved.

SLOW GOING The Detroit automaker is paying a hefty toll for the strike, with nearly \$3 billion in lost earnings for 2019. The past weeks have been no picnic for workers either, with their families living on meager strike pay. Some worry that local economic repercussions may still linger, especially in Michigan, where GM is the state's largest employer.

THE ROAD AHEAD GM continues to face stiff competition from foreign manufacturers, many of which operate U.S. plants that pay nonunion workers substantially less. And the future may be tough for autoworkers even if GM makes new gains. The company has announced plans to transition to producing electric cars, which are simpler to manufacture than gas-powered cars and trucks. Union analysts believe that means job cuts, but the larger forces behind the shift are unlikely to reverse. Even with a deal in hand, another fight awaits.

—ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA



RALLY ROUND An antigovernment demonstrator waves Lebanon's flag over a pile of broken tents, as protesters returned to Martyrs' Square in Beirut after Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned on Oct. 29. An Oct. 16 proposal for new taxes had prompted hundreds of thousands of people from across sectarian divides to come together and voice discontent at corruption and economic mismanagement; marchers welcomed the news of Hariri's resignation but remained on the streets.

NEWS TICKER

Boeing CEO testifies on 'mistakes'

Dennis Muilenburg, CEO of Boeing, testified before Congress on Oct. 29, **his first such appearance since two Boeing 737 Max aircraft crashed** and killed 346 people. He acknowledged that flight-control software was involved in the accidents, and said the company "made mistakes."

39 found dead in U.K. truck

On Oct. 23, the bodies of eight women and 31 men were **found in a refrigerated truck in Essex, east of London**. U.K. police have not named the victims but initially believed they were Chinese nationals who had been smuggled into the country. The driver was charged on Oct. 26 with manslaughter and conspiracy to traffic people.

VA fails to establish accountability

The Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection is **actually endangering whistleblowers**, an Inspector General's report found on Oct. 24. Established in 2017 under the Trump Administration, the office was meant to improve accountability in a department previously beset by scandal.



BUSINESS

A beta test for Big Tech's clout

By Alana Semuels

NAME A POLICY SUPPORTED BY A DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL candidate this year and odds are good it's been passed into law in Seattle. The Emerald City has approved a \$15 minimum wage (which Elizabeth Warren calls for); unveiled a domestic workers' bill of rights (like the one Kamala Harris wants); and voted to tax the rich (a Bernie Sanders-backed plan), though that's tied up in court.

But Seattle's business leaders are pushing back, pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into an upcoming election in an effort to unseat the city's progressive leadership in favor of contenders who, while still Democrats, take more moderate positions on fiscal issues. "There's a basic feeling that [the city council] isn't doing a good job, and we don't want them to take actions that are going to hurt the one thing that is going well in our town: the economy," says Heather Redman, a venture capitalist and the chair of the Washington Technology Industry Association, whose membership includes Amazon and Microsoft.

With an unprecedented seven of nine city-council seats up for grabs on Nov. 5, the election offers local business leaders a rare opportunity to hit Seattle's political reset button. "The Chamber [of Commerce] sees this election as a way to take control of the council," says Knute Berger, a columnist for *Seattle* magazine. The outcome is likely to resonate nationally, as cities across the country get caught up in the struggle between progressive politicians and corporate interests.

Seattle's left-leaning council members, like Teresa Mosqueda, say their policies have helped, not hurt, the city's economy. The Seattle metro area has a 3.6% unemployment

rate, compared with the state average of 4.6%, and taxable retail sales in Seattle have grown 42% since 2014, according to state data. Last year *Forbes* named Seattle the best place in the country for business and careers. Tech companies in particular have boomed. "I think part of what has made this economy so good is the fact that we've invested in workers," says Mosqueda.

THE TECH SECTOR DISAGREES. Amazon has given around \$1.5 million to a political action committee (PAC) sponsored by Seattle's Chamber of Commerce that has endorsed nonincumbents for all but one seat. Amazon executives have given the maximum \$500 to many of the candidates running against incumbents and the maximum \$5,000 to a PAC that says it wants a "pragmatic" council. Amazon donated to the chamber's PAC "because we care about the economic health of Seattle and the region," a spokesperson says. Other companies that donated to the PAC this year include Expedia (\$50,000) and Boeing (\$30,000).

How might tech's big money affect the upcoming election? Last year, amid a mounting homelessness crisis, Seattle passed a \$275-per-employee tax on big businesses to pay for housing and related programs. After the vote, businesses spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to try to send the tax to a ballot referendum. In the face of intense corporate pressure, many of the council members who voted in favor of the tax went back and voted to repeal it. The embarrassing do-over was a big win for Seattle's business community, at the cost of a major progressive achievement.

As cities become more liberal nationwide, tensions between business leaders and elected officials are likely only to rise. Around 62% of registered voters in urban counties identified as Democrats in 2017, according to Pew, up from 55% in 1998. Seattle's election may be a test of whether businesses' significant money will be able to sway these increasingly liberal urbanites, either now or in the future. "If they do this here," says Heather Weiner, a Seattle political consultant, "they'll be doing it around the country." □

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Amazon and other tech companies have put millions into Seattle's election

NEWS TICKER

New TB vaccine could save millions

An experimental vaccine against tuberculosis, the world's deadliest infectious disease, **could save millions of lives, according to a study published Oct. 29.** The vaccine has about a 50% success rate, which bodes well for at least some of the 1.6 million people who die of TB each year.

DeVos fined for contempt of court

A federal judge fined Education Secretary Betsy DeVos \$100,000 for contempt of court on Oct. 24, saying her department **violated an order to halt debt collection from victims** defrauded by since-shuttered Corinthian Colleges. The for-profit chain was found to have misled recruits and lied about graduate employment.

China imposes new morality rules

The Chinese Communist Party unveiled a sweeping list of new morality guidelines on Oct. 27, **instructing citizens in "national etiquette" to "defend China's honor" abroad.** The diktat comes as China faces months of protests in Hong Kong against its authoritarian rule.

POSTCARD

Leonardo da Vinci still sells out in Paris 500 years on

LEONARDO DA VINCI WAS NO STRANGER TO France. He spent his final three years in the country, dying at 67 in a Loire Valley château exactly 500 years ago. His *Mona Lisa*, which has hung in the Louvre Museum since the French Revolution, virtually defines Paris as a city of art treasures.

And so it is Paris—not, to the irritation of many Italians, Leonardo's native Florence—that's marking that anniversary by hosting the largest collection of his work ever shown. After all, the Louvre already owns five of his 15 paintings that remain.

"Leonardo da Vinci," which opened Oct. 24 and runs for four months, is a runaway hit, with more than 410,000 advance tickets sold by day five.

Walking through the dark rooms, one can see why. The nearly 120 works range from notebook sketches to spectacularly spotlighted paintings, like the *Benoit Madonna* and *St. John the Baptist*, as well as infrared reflectographs, all capturing one man's relentless inquiry into biology, architecture, mechanics, light and texture.

Staging it was not easy. The Louvre spent a decade cajoling museums, including several in the U.S., to lend their Leonardos. Even so, the celebrated *Vitruvian Man* drawing arrived

from Venice just days before the opening after a bitter court battle in Italy over whether it was too fragile to travel. And no amount of begging could bring to Paris the *Salvator Mundi* painting that sold in 2017 for a record \$450.3 million, reportedly to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Also absent: the *Mona Lisa*, which remains in its regular spot in the Louvre, where more than 30,000 people a day snake past its recessed glass case, jostling for selfies. The Louvre did not want that obsession to

overwhelm its Leonardo exhibition, which requires a separate ticket and instead includes a virtual-reality *Mona Lisa* experience. "If the *Mona Lisa* was there, there would be no more exhibition," Louis Frank, one of the exhibition's curators, tells TIME. "It is the most venerated work in the museum."

The *Mona Lisa* also, some Louvre workers say, creates a

circus. In May, museum staff went on strike, saying the 10.2 million annual visitors were turning the Louvre into a "cultural Disneyland," making their work untenable. "The Louvre is suffocating," their union stated.

This blockbuster Leonardo exhibition will do little to ease the crush. But given that all tickets must be prebooked, it will at least be a more orderly experience, potentially drawing Parisians who typically steer clear of the overrun Louvre. "People want to see works that they know, that they recognize," Frank says. And France, after all, is no stranger to Leonardo. —VIVIENNE WALT/PARIS



The *Mona Lisa* is kept separate

SPACE

Down to earth

A device used by Samsung to launch a selfie of model Cara Delevingne into space (*below*) crashed on Oct. 26 in a Michigan backyard. Here, other satellite setbacks. —Rachael Bunyan

LOGJAM

A California farmer found a satellite's fuel tank lodged in a tree in his walnut orchard in October 2018. The satellite's owner, Iridium, was unable to say how the debris survived its journey back to earth.



LOST IN SPACE

Russia lost track of a \$45 million weather satellite in November 2017 because the rocket that carried it into space had been programmed using coordinates belonging to the wrong launch site.

BLASTOFF

American company Swarm Technologies launched four tiny SpaceBEE satellites on an Indian rocket in January 2018 without U.S. government approval, which earned the company a \$900,000 FCC fine.

Milestones

DIED

Kay Hagan, who served one term as a Senator from North Carolina, on Oct. 28, at 66.

> **Robert Evans**, producer of *Chinatown* and *The Godfather*, on Oct. 26, at 89.

AGREED

U.K. lawmakers, to **allow a general election** on Dec. 12, after the E.U. granted Boris Johnson's request to delay Brexit until January.

CHANGED

The name of the **Vatican Secret Archive** to the less mysterious-sounding Vatican Apostolic Archive, by Pope Francis, on Oct. 28. He said the former name had negative connotations.

BLOCKED

North Carolina, from using congressional districts that showed **"extreme partisan gerrymandering"** to favor Republicans in the 2020 election, by a panel of state judges, on Oct. 28.

ATTACKED

More than **2,000 websites in the country of Georgia**, on Oct. 28. Affected sites showed a photo of former President Mikheil Saakashvili and the phrase "I'll be back!"

APPOINTED

Sophie Wilmès, to be the first female Prime Minister of Belgium, by King Philippe, on Oct. 27.

PLEADED

Guilty, by Jarrod Ramos, on Oct. 28, to the June 2018 **Capital Gazette shooting** in Annapolis, Md., which killed five people.



Visitors on Uluru on Oct. 10; attendance soared at Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park in the months before the climbing ban took effect

CLOSED

Uluru

Australia's sacred summit

WHEN ASKED WHY HE WAS CLIMBING MOUNT EVEREST, George Mallory famously answered, "Because it's there." Australians, when asked why they don't climb their land's most notable natural feature, might answer, "Because it's theirs." On Oct. 26, Uluru, the brutal red inselberg almost smack bang in the center of the continent, was officially closed to climbers, marking the end of a long campaign to honor the wishes of its original custodians.

One of Australia's most iconic tourist spots—and the only reason anyone would linger in the Great Sandy Desert—Uluru, known for decades as Ayers Rock, has been withdrawn from public consumption slowly. In 1985, Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park was returned to the Anangu people, who leased it to the parks department. Signs and brochures began to ask visitors not to climb, and the proportion who defied that request has been below 20% for nearly a decade. So many former visitors returned pieces of Uluru they'd taken—a sort of repatriation by mail—that the fragments became known as "sorry rocks."

Australia is a firmly secular nation, but the sacredness of Uluru has been hard to miss. The novelist Thomas Keneally described it as a continental belly button, where "the ancestor-heroes ... cut the umbilical cord that connected earth to heaven." An Anangu elder wrote that if photo-taking tourists could shoot an image of the being inside the rock, they'd throw away their cameras. What visitors usually capture instead is the almost mystical transition from pink to fiery red as the rock mirrors the passing day. For Uluru and its people, it's dawn again. —BELINDA LUSCOMBE

DIED

John Conyers Jr. Long-serving legislator

WHEN JOHN CONYERS JR. arrived on Capitol Hill in 1965, there were just five other African Americans serving in the U.S. Congress. As the size of that group expanded (to 56 today), so did its influence—in no small part because of legislators like Conyers. The former Michigan Congressman, who died on Oct. 27 at 90, was the longest-serving African-American lawmaker in history.

A founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Conyers used his seniority to carry forward the values of the civil rights movement. He battled to make Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a national holiday and regularly introduced reparations bills. "The fights John Conyers fought will be remembered for generations," said fellow Michigan Representative Debbie Dingell.

But in 2017, he was mired in controversy over sexual-harassment allegations. Although he denied the claims, he resigned amid pressure from colleagues. "I hope," he said in a statement when he stepped down, "that my retirement will be viewed in the larger perspective of my record." History will determine whether his wish comes true. —ALANA ABRAMSON



How a discontinued Alzheimer's drug study got a second life

By Alice Park

“MY FIRST REACTION WAS TO BE ANGRY,” SAYS JOANN Wooding. “I’ve gotten over that, and *frustration* is more the word right now.” Wooding’s husband Peter, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2016, was among the more than 3,200 people with the disease who volunteered to test a promising drug called aducanumab. In earlier study results released the same year, the drug, developed by Biogen, a U.S. biotech company, and Eisai, a Japanese pharmaceutical manufacturer, seemed to accomplish a number of firsts for people with Alzheimer’s. It appeared to shrink deposits of the protein amyloid accumulating in the brains of patients and, perhaps more important, also slow the cognitive decline resulting from their buildup. No drug for the disease had shown such dramatic effects before. The study in which Peter was participating was one of two follow-up trials designed to confirm that early promise and, patients and doctors hoped, lead to the first approved treatment that could actually slow the progression of the neurodegenerative disease.

But last March, Biogen, after an early review of its data involving half the patients, decided the results were not promising enough to continue exposing patients to possible side effects and terminated the trial. Peter and the other volunteers stopped receiving infusions, and the company began a more in-depth analysis.

The resulting full report, which included all 3,285 patients, revealed a rosier picture. After 18 months of taking aducanumab, people in one of the studies showed anywhere from 15% to 27% less cognitive decline, as measured by standard tests of memory and cognitive ability, compared with those receiving a placebo. The cognitive protection was most pronounced in those getting the highest dose of the drug. On the basis of these results, the company plans to ask the Food and Drug Administration to approve aducanumab for the treatment of early Alzheimer’s disease.

“In retrospect, the . . . analysis [last spring] was incorrect,” says Dr. Alfred Sandrock, chief medical officer at Biogen. “But based on the data we had at the time, we followed the science and made the decision to terminate the studies. With the additional data and the additional analysis, we now know the drug has efficacy.” The news is bittersweet for the Woodings, who feel they have lost precious time in holding off the disease ravaging Peter’s brain. After being randomly assigned to receive either aducanumab or a placebo once a month for 18 months, all the volunteers were then given the opportunity to receive the drug for at least two years. Peter had completed his 18-month test period and had received his fifth infusion of the active drug when Biogen pulled the plug.

“When he was off the drug, there were some changes, with his short-term memory being the most affected,” says JoAnn. “Over time I could see a difference without the drug.”



▲
Peter Wooding, with wife JoAnn, volunteered for the Alzheimer's drug study that was discontinued in March

How could two different reviews of the data lead to such startlingly different conclusions? “As a scientist, I was completely confused,” says Samantha Budd Haerberlein, head of Biogen’s late-stage clinical development for Alzheimer’s. “How could it be, when we had such clear data from the [early] clinical trial, such compelling data? The scientist in me was really irritated—what the hell happened?”

WHEN SHE AND A TEAM of statisticians and programmers looked at the entirety of the data, one of the studies showed a clearly positive trend in reducing cognitive decline, while the other did not show much change in cognitive functions at all. The two studies were identical in terms of the types of patients enrolled and how they were randomly assigned to receive aducanumab or the



placebo. The only distinction was that one study began earlier than the other.

That made a difference, Haeberlein believes, since Biogen changed protocols of the study after patients began enrolling. Importantly, the very first people to volunteer were given much lower doses of the drug if they had a mutation of the ApoE gene that raises a person's risk for Alzheimer's—and also seemed to raise the risk of experiencing brain inflammation as a side effect of aducanumab. About two-thirds of the people who participated in the studies carried this high-risk gene.

New data that became available after these patients began receiving their infusions, however, revealed that slightly higher doses did not actually result in a marked increase in side effects. So these patients were then given higher doses. But many had either not yet or

'This is the very first time in the field that we have had the type of positive news that could be transformational.'

MARIA CARRILLO,
chief science officer,
Alzheimer's Association

just begun their new doses when the company analyzed its data on the first half of patients last spring and decided to end the study.

Over the summer, after seeing the positive results from all the participants, Haeberlein grew skeptical. She dug deeper, breaking out how the patients receiving the lower doses fared on their cognitive tests. Those people showed some improvements—more than the placebo group but not as great as those at the higher doses. “That was when we as a team said, ‘Holy cow!’” She walked across the Biogen campus “on wobbly knees” and pulled Sandrock out of a meeting, saying, “We’ve got to talk.”

Other data supported the positive effect of aducanumab. For example, brain scans measuring changes in the amount of amyloid buildup showed declines in the plaques among people getting the highest doses of the drug. “Patients can’t influence the proteins in their brain,” says Haeberlein. “These wonderful readouts gave us further confidence that what we were looking at was very strong.”

BIOGEN IS NOW WORKING with its study sites and the FDA to launch a new trial, in which the original study participants would be invited back to receive aducanumab (with no placebo group). The news is providing much-needed hope for the Alzheimer's field, which has been battered by a series of failed drug trials over the past decade. “There are lots of implications for these results,” says Maria Carrillo, chief science officer of the Alzheimer's Association. “This is the very first time in the field that we have had the type of positive news that could be transformational.”

After his study was stopped in the spring, Peter joined another trial testing a different type of experimental treatment. To join Biogen's new study, he will have to wait for it to be launched and then for the drug he is currently testing to wash out of his system, which could take months. Even with those hurdles, would he start taking aducanumab again? “I would, I would,” he says. “Hopefully we can make a difference with this disease. We have to stick with it and make a touchdown.” □

Actor **Willem Dafoe** works constantly, but is happiest when he's making 'contact'

By **Stephanie Zacharek**

WILLEM DAFOE—A MAN WHO HAS PLAYED A *Spider-Man* villain, Vincent van Gogh and Jesus—is charming even before you meet him. In advance of our interview, his publicist suggested meeting in Abingdon Square Park, a small triangle of green space in New York's West Village. "He's not in New York often," she wrote in an email, "but walking around the park/city is something he truly cherishes about it."

The idea of cherishing anything seems almost quaintly Victorian in an age when we spend more time staring at the mini computers we keep in our pockets than looking at the world around us. But having a walk in the park—or even just sitting on a bench for an hour, with the sounds of city alive all around—is just one of the ways Dafoe lives in the moment. It's also part of the joyful discipline he brings to his work, a vocation he's been building upon since he helped start an experimental-theater company, the Wooster Group, in the 1970s. "The job is always different, and you're always calibrating in relationship to the people, to how you're feeling. It's for that reason that I'll never tire of performing," Dafoe says, once we've settled onto our park bench. "People say, 'Don't you want to direct?' It's like, Hell no! Because I'm not through with that performance stuff."

Dafoe has some 120 film credits to his name, and the number grows every year. And if you try to draw any sort of thematic thread from one role to the next—good luck. Dafoe has worked with big-name directors, like Martin Scorsese, and on big-budget pictures, like last year's *Aquaman*. But he also works frequently with cult filmmaker Abel Ferrara, and he seeks out emerging directors too: that's how he found his way to *The Lighthouse*, a mystical thriller by Robert Eggers (director of the 2015 indie-horror hit *The Witch*), one of two movies featuring Dafoe being released this autumn. In the other, Edward Norton's *Motherless Brooklyn*—adapted from Jonathan Lethem's innovative 1999 detective novel—he plays the retreating sibling of a big New York power broker, a figure who represents the supremacy of love over ambition. The point, maybe, is that Dafoe chooses roles based on what's interesting to him—and what's interesting to him is impossible to strictly define, perhaps because he's always chasing after what he doesn't know. He revels in helping create something new.

DAFOE QUICK FACTS

Not his real name

His given name is William, after his father, but he didn't want to be a Billy or a William Jr. A childhood friend started calling him Willem, and the nickname stuck.

A romantic proposal

He married actor and director Giada Colagrande in 2005. The two had met a year earlier; one day over lunch Dafoe asked her, "Do you want to get married tomorrow?" And so they did.

Body and soul

He's a vegetarian and a longtime practitioner of Ashtanga yoga.

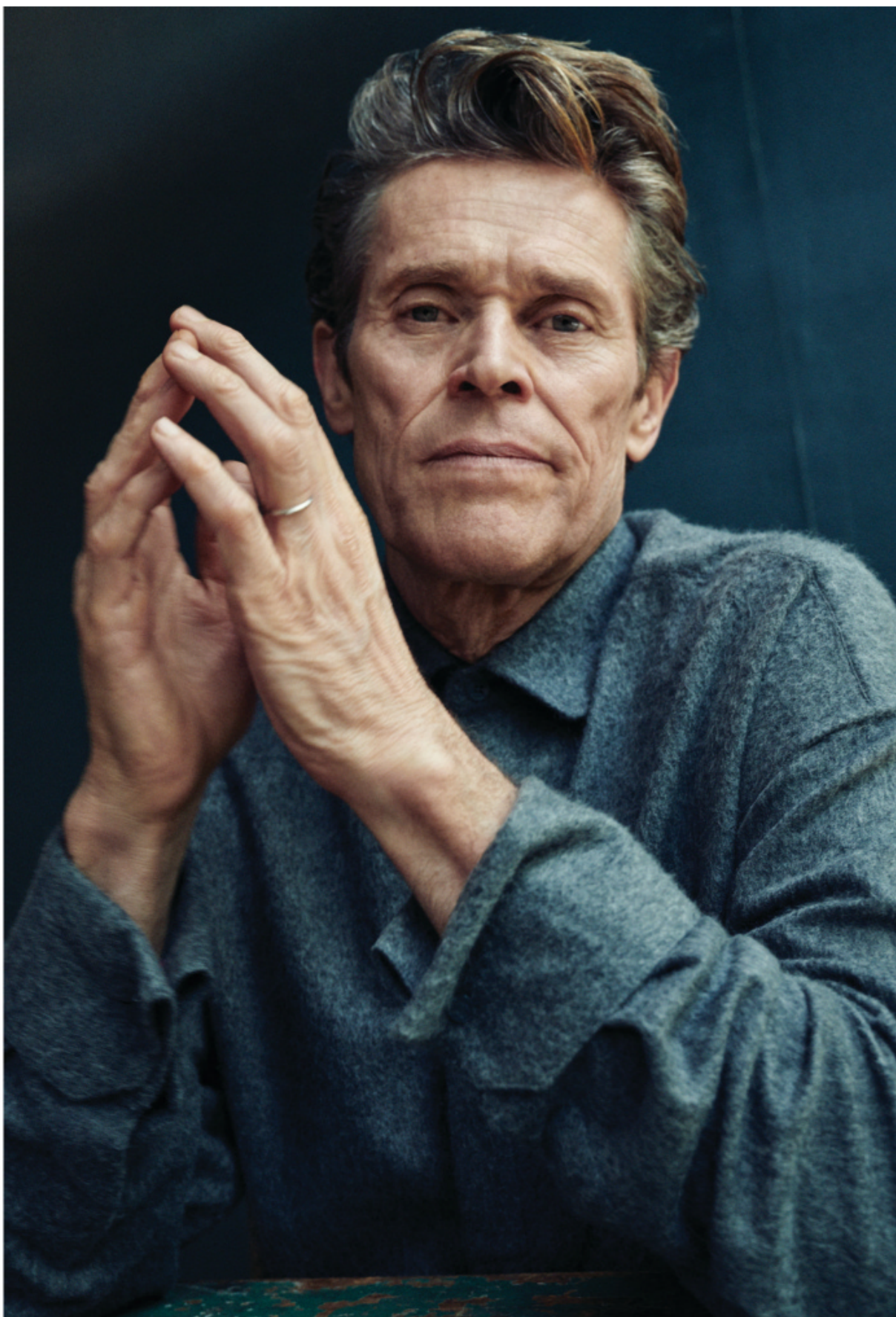
"If you're going to make something, make something that doesn't point to anything," he says. "I'm attracted to people who are self-starters. Ferrara is a big self-starter. He gets no help, he makes his stuff out of nothing, so you really feel contact with making something. There's no buffer. You feel that every inch of the way, and that's a nice feeling. When you're really in the process, you don't worry about anything. You don't worry about money, about the reception—any of that stuff. I don't, as an actor. I'm happy, I got my plate full, I'm chewing away, and I feel alive."

That helps explain why every Dafoe performance, even the smallest one, is its own discrete, original entity. When you consider how distinctive his face is, it's astonishing that he has melted so gracefully into so many roles. His cheekbones, Adonis-like when he was younger, have been chiseled further over the years, like a rock formation that's welcomed whatever wind and rain nature can dish out. (He's now 64.) He's got the gloriously imperfect teeth of a theater actor rather than a movie star. You notice them especially when he laughs, which is often. He cackled when he forced me to admit, after a few seconds of stammering, that I admired *The Lighthouse* more than I actively liked it: "You didn't dig it! You didn't dig it!"

He found this hilarious, but he also accepted my explanation of how much I enjoyed the performances: Dafoe plays a crusty, flatulent New England lighthouse keeper, breaking in newbie Robert Pattinson. He was drawn, he says, to the specificity of Eggers' script and his vision. "On one level, it's a very simple story: two guys, trapped in a lighthouse, they run out of food, they start to drink, they go crazy, they get aggressive with each other. The end. But it's also about identity, it's about belief. So I think it has deep roots. They're articulated in the images and in the actions, which are very specific. I just find it really beautiful."

DAFOE WAS BORN in Appleton, Wis., and moved to New York in the mid-1970s. His first film job was in Michael Cimino's 1980 *Heaven's Gate*, though Cimino fired him for laughing at a crew member's joke on set—but if you're going to be fired by a finicky auteur, you may as well go out chuckling. Dafoe earned a Best Supporting Actor Academy Award nomination for one of his first breakthrough roles, in Oliver Stone's 1986 *Platoon*, and has been nominated three times since: in 2001, for E. Elias Merhige's *Shadow of the Vampire*; in 2018, for his supporting role in Sean Baker's *The Florida Project*; and in 2019, for his Van Gogh, in Julian Schnabel's *At Eternity's Gate*.

Dafoe has been working for so long, and has earned so much respect along the way, that he can afford to follow his heart, and his instincts. He's



happiest when he's working with people who, like Ferrara, Eggers and *Motherless Brooklyn's* Norton, need to make something, as opposed to directors who are simply being paid to do it. "There's more possibility. They have to make this thing, they have to find something out. I think that inquiry, using film to find that thing that they need, is real contact. And I think that's the heart of great movies." The key word here is *movies*, because Dafoe has done very little work in television and confesses a preference for the former—though he's also quick to add, "Believe me, if I could only find work in TV, I'd be right there. I'm not a snob."

That goes without saying, especially when Dafoe admits, a beat later, that as much as he believes movies ought to be watched on the

'To be involved with people intimately that way is strange. And it's sort of powerful.'

WILLEM DAFOE,
after taking a photo
with a fan on the street

big screen, he, like just about everyone else, sometimes catches up with them on airplanes. He works so much that he spends plenty of time on them: he'll go where the work takes him, and the locales aren't always glamorous. *The Lighthouse* was filmed on a rocky peninsula in Nova Scotia, a stand-in for New England, and the shoot was demanding. "When it whipped up, the wind was so strong that someone my size could get blown into the water—off the land, into the water."

Dafoe could be on easy street, if he wanted it. Why subject himself to weeks of shooting on a peninsula in Nova Scotia? He answers the question as you'd expect him to. "But I love it! Not because I'm a masochist—I'm not. For me it's all about waking up, all about beating the lockstep. Not just changing things up for the sheer sake of variety. But really, do things that don't let you decide definitively who you are and the way things are."

So much of what we do, Dafoe says, is predicated on an idea of ourselves that we're trying to protect. And when you're an actor, you have a public face as well. If he's serious about being an actor, he seems even more serious about just being a person, which is, perhaps, why he has such a particular fondness for just walking around New York, even the New York of today, which he recognizes is highly gentrified. He tells a story about a woman who recently approached him for a selfie. "She came up to me and she said, 'Hey, how are you? We took a picture 10 years ago together and I had no hair because I had cancer. And shortly after that I started getting better, and I was free of cancer. And just recently, I found out it's back. Can we take a picture?'"

Dafoe, of course, said yes. "To be involved with people intimately that way is strange. And it's sort of powerful. I don't think it's an egotistical thing. You just feel the reach of what you do. Because they don't know me—it's not about me. But that woman is a stranger that I have a relationship to. I don't want to overstate that—but it's interesting, no?" It couldn't have happened if Dafoe hadn't been walking around, present in all ways, cherishing a city he doesn't get to spend enough time in. □

LightBox

Up in flames

The Getty Fire, seen near the 405 Freeway in Los Angeles on Oct. 28, is just one of several California infernos that, as of that day, had forced some 200,000 people from their homes. As the state grapples with the aftermath of a drought that ended in 2017, warmer temperatures driven by climate change have turned dry forests into furnaces. Utilities shut off electricity for more than 2 million people to reduce the risk of sparking equipment. But officials warn that fires like the Getty—which preliminary findings indicate was started by a branch falling on a power line—are still likely to spread. “It only takes one ember,” Ralph Terrazas, chief of the L.A. Fire Department, said on Oct. 29.

Photograph by Kyle Grillot—The New York Times/Redux
▶ For more of our best photography, visit time.com/lightbox





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EXCEPT FOR BELLY RUBS.



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**SAVE
THEM
ALL**

The View

POLITICS

A TEST CASE FOR YOUNG LEADERS

By Charlotte Alter

Millennials are swiftly gaining political power: enter Katie Hill. Millennials are also navigating a volatile new landscape of technology, sex and power: exit Katie Hill. The California Congresswoman, who stepped down on Oct. 27 over nude photos, may be the first millennial lawmaker to leave office for that reason, but she won't be the last. ▶

INSIDE

J.K. ROWLING'S CAMPAIGN
AGAINST ORPHANAGES

ARGENTINA TRIES THE SAME
REFORM AGAIN

NINTENDO'S PRESIDENT ON
THE COMPANY'S FUTURE

The View Opener

In the election last November, Hill was one of 20 millennials who won seats in Congress, increasing the generation's representation six-fold and giving voice to the second largest bloc of eligible voters. Now, after nude photos of her "throuple" relationship with a female former campaign staffer were released without her consent, and after she came under a House ethics investigation for an alleged relationship with a male legislative aide, she has resigned.

Hill's case lands smack in the middle of the three-way intersection of tech, sex and power: technology has changed sex; sex has changed power; and power is newly vulnerable to strains of disgrace that didn't exist a decade ago. Sexual encounters are now documented in ways that create new ammunition in the war of public opinion.

(Hill, who is bisexual, admits to a relationship with the campaign staffer. She denies one with the legislative aide and has accused her estranged husband of orchestrating the smear campaign amid their divorce.)

Since millennials live much of their lives online, it's only natural that their sex lives have gone digital as well. One 2015 study of adults between the ages of 18 and 82 found that 88% had sexted in their lifetimes. But those sexual messages can be easily weaponized: a 2016 study from the journal *Data & Society* found that 1 in 25 Americans—roughly 10.4 million people—have had photos posted without their consent or had someone threaten to do so. For younger women, that figure rose to 1 in 10.

THE WEAPONIZATION of nude images is a 21st century sex crime that elected officials have done little to address. Hill's photos were leaked to a conservative blog and then to a tabloid, forcing Hill to admit to the affair and apologize. But in the modern age, leaked photos may soon become ubiquitous. "The only person who seems to have a gripe is @repKatieHill's soon-to-be ex," tweeted Representative Matt Gaetz, a millennial Republican who opposes Hill on most issues but served with her on the Armed Services Committee. "Who among us would look perfect if

every ex leaked every photo/text?"

Hill's case also illuminates the tricky nuances of workplace relationships in the #MeToo era. According to the new code of ethics, consent is impossible when there is a power imbalance involved. But it's worth noting that in Hill's case, there is no allegation of coercion, harassment or abuse. If it weren't for the photos, Hill would likely have been able to ride this out.

Of course, that raises other questions. Is a relationship problematic even if neither party says it is? Is the power imbalance alone enough to make it wrong? It's against House rules to have sexual relationships with staffers, which is why Hill faced an ethics probe into the alleged relationship with the male aide. Would she have suffered the same humiliation if she were a man? Would she have

won the same sympathy? "We would never be allowed to take the victim card the way she's taken it," said one Congressman.

"This doesn't pass the 'shoe on the other foot' test."

Hill was considered a rising star in the Democratic Party. She pushed for action on climate change and student debt and

was elected without the help of corporate PACs. She used social media both to promote her issues and needle her opponents. She and New York Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez teamed up during the government shutdown in January to track down Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell by launching the hashtag #WheresMitch.

But Hill's premature departure also hints at a peril that is heightened for digital natives. "I never claimed to be perfect," she said in a teary video to supporters. "But I never thought my imperfections would be weaponized and used to try to destroy me." And yet the weaponization of imperfection is the defining threat for millennials in public life. So much has been documented online, and therefore so much can be dug up. All of it—nudes, texts, old Halloween costumes, tasteless college jokes—is just waiting to be deployed. Hill's was a uniquely millennial rise, before a uniquely millennial fall. □



Elected in 2018, Hill resigned from her California congressional seat on Oct. 27

SHORT READS

► Highlights from stories on [time.com/ideas](https://www.time.com/ideas)

A voice for the voiceless

J.K. Rowling has a message for those who donate to or volunteer at orphanages: stop. **"We understand that institutionalization is one of the worst things that you can possibly do to a child,"** she said at the launch of #HelpingNotHelping, a campaign led by her children's charity Lumos to educate young people about orphanage tourism and volunteerism.

Surmounting struggles

Kevin Wilson, author of *Nothing to See Here*, used to worry that his anxiety would prevent him from being a good father. His sons changed his thinking. **"I can become slightly stronger to protect the people who need me," he writes, "even when I feel like bursting into flames."**

Impossible advice

Women are often told to just be authentic, but that guidance can be a dangerous dare, according to Alicia Menendez, author of *The Likeability Trap*. **"'Be yourself' is only a safe declaration for those who are assumed to be competent, qualified and powerful," she writes.**

THE RISK REPORT

Argentina gambles on all-too-familiar faces

By Ian Bremmer



IT'S NEVER A GOOD sign when a country's central bank tightens capital controls just hours after a national election. But when that country is Argentina, it's not exactly surprising, either.

One in 10 Argentines today can't find work. More than one-third are impoverished. In a country not generally known for fiscal discipline, reform-minded President Mauricio Macri had good intentions to fix the country's finances but lacked the political support to do so. He was eventually forced to seek a major \$57 billion aid package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but that was mismanaged, aggravating the country's already dire economic situation; just 40% of Argentines voted to re-elect him. Alberto Fernández—his leftist opponent, who received 48% of the vote—will replace him on Dec. 10. He will be accompanied by his vice-presidential running mate, former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (CFK).

When her second presidential term ended in 2015, CFK was presiding over a country with rampant political corruption and an economic situation pointing seriously south, but one that had yet to fully develop into a crisis. She remains beloved by millions for her generous welfare policies (which the country was ultimately unable to afford). Fernández served as CFK's chief of the Cabinet of Ministers for her first seven months in office but was always considered the more practical politician of the two. Following CFK's presidency, they headed separate wings of their Peronist movement, refusing even to talk to each other. Then CFK approached Fernández with a deal—if he would run for the country's presidency, she would serve as his VP, delivering the votes he

needed to unseat Macri.

It was a bargain Fernández couldn't refuse. Now comes the hard part. Fernández has two distinct challenges ahead of him; the first is the country's looming credit crunch, which if left unaddressed would lead to its ninth sovereign-debt default. To avoid that fate, Fernández has to play ball with the IMF, an institution widely reviled in Argentina given its history of demanding austerity measures in exchange for financial lifelines, and which Fernández criticized on the campaign trail. But Fernández doesn't have many good options. Without support from the

IMF, no foreign investors would touch the country, especially now as there's talk of trimmed repayments—a so-called haircut—on existing Argentine bonds. Macri cut public spending in order to bring the country's finances in line with IMF demands; Fernández just vowed to increase public spending.

THE SECOND CONCERN is the person who propelled Fernández

to the presidency. CFK, who currently faces multiple charges of corruption, is one of the most divisive political figures in Argentina. While her presence on the ticket secured the presidency for Fernández, he underperformed relative to polls, which may be explained by voters' wariness of re-electing CFK to a position of power. (Fernández was also unable to secure a majority in the lower house of parliament.) More concerning still, Kirchner has her own political base and influence network, which could complicate Fernández's ability to govern if he doesn't manage the relationship properly.

Fed up with the past four years of economic struggle, Argentine voters made their decision. Macri should take heart—in Argentine politics, there is such a thing as second chances. It remains to be seen what Fernández and CFK will do with theirs. □

Kirchner has her own political base and influence network, which could complicate Fernández's ability to govern

QUICK TALK

Shuntaro Furukawa

Nintendo's sixth president, Shuntaro Furukawa, is overseeing a transformational time for the 130-year-old company as it invests in theme parks, movies and more. His plan: to get Nintendo's creations in front of as many people as possible.

What's your philosophy toward creating games and other products?

Giving our teams the freedom to experiment with new ideas is something I strongly agree with. Expansion can't happen without the freedom to try something new and the courage to step into unfamiliar territory.

How is Nintendo preparing for the next generation of video gaming?

Any kind of new technology, whether that is going to be appealing to the consumer or not, really depends on the quality of the experience that we can provide.

In expanding to movies, theme parks and so on, is Nintendo trying to emulate Disney?

We've never tried to imitate any other company ... the idea of using our [intellectual property] in things like theme parks or movies is an extension of the philosophy we've had all along.

—Alex Fitzpatrick



Nintendo wants new ways to profit from iconic characters like Mario

Nation

RUDY CASHES IN

What Giuliani's quest for money and power has cost Trump

BY VERA BERGENGRUEN AND BRIAN BENNETT

ILLUSTRATION BY EDEL RODRIGUEZ FOR TIME





IN THE STORIED CAREER OF AMERICA'S most famous mayor, the last five weeks have been quite a chapter. During a shouting match on CNN on Sept. 19, Rudy Giuliani denied and then, 30 seconds later, admitted to playing a central role in President Donald Trump's efforts to get a foreign country to investigate his top 2020 rival, Joe Biden. Five days later, Giuliani went nuclear on a radio host during a joint TV appearance, shouting, "Shut up, moron, shut up!" as he tried to drown out accusations that he was making things up. Trump's personal lawyer capped it off on Oct. 16 by pocket-dialing a reporter for NBC News and inadvertently leaving a lengthy message as he talked to an unidentified partner about potentially lucrative business in Turkey and Bahrain.

Some people were worried. Giuliani's longtime associate Bernard Kerik says he keeps getting asked, "Is he O.K.?" Walter Mack, who ran an organized-crime unit for Giuliani back when they were prosecutors in Manhattan in the 1980s, says he wonders the same. Mack says if he saw him now, "I would talk to him as a friend and a fellow prosecutor, and just be certain he was getting good advice and that he was not losing sight of his own standards and morals." Kerik, who was Giuliani's top cop in New York and later served three years in federal prison for tax fraud and other crimes, talks regularly with his old friend. Giuliani, he says, is just "vocal" now that he doesn't have to worry about "running for office."

But it's a bewildering turn of events for a person who at one point in his career had been among the most admired public figures in the country. Giuliani was always colorful. As mayor, he was a New York archetype come to life: the fast-talking, Bronx-accented wheeler-dealer, complete with mistresses, sharp suits and primo seats at Yankee Stadium. And many loved him for being an iconoclast. He was the law-and-order mayor who cleaned up Times Square, a Republican who

believed in gun control and gay rights, a self-described pro-choice Republican as at home at the city's glimmering galas as at the televised perp walk of a criminal. With exuberant F-you energy, he seemed to embody the city itself. And for the brief post-9/11 moment when Americans were all New Yorkers, the whole country became Giuliani's constituents too.

His latest brush with history is revealing a darker side, something that suggests not just Giuliani unbound, but untethered from the values he once espoused. And as the House impeachment inquiry accelerates, and witness after witness describes Giuliani as the prime enabler behind what Democrats say are impeachable offenses committed by Trump, Giuliani's behavior may end up having historic consequences.

So what is going on with him? Interviews with those close to the former mayor, and those who have crossed paths with him in his work for Trump, say Giuliani's transformation has a simple source: over the past 18 months, he has violated that unwritten rule of American public life that you can pursue money or political power, but not both at once.

There's nothing particularly exceptional about riding the revolving door from having power to making money and back again, and for years Giuliani has pursued both with relish. After leaving the mayoralty, Giuliani cashed in with book deals; high-priced speaking engagements; and a lucrative, if murky, consulting business that counted Qatar, Purdue Pharma and a range of controversial foreign personalities as top clients. After a brief and failed attempt to get back into power as a candidate for President in 2008, he returned to the money game. By 2018, he was making between \$5 million and \$10 million a year.

What's different now is that Giuliani is doing both at the same time. In the 18 months since Trump hired him as his personal lawyer in April 2018, Giuliani has become a kind of shadow Secretary of State even as he has maintained



his foreign consulting business. He has often been treated as a de facto envoy of the U.S. government while abroad, at the same time receiving lucrative consulting and speaking fees from foreign officials and businessmen.

His quest has been enabled by Trump, who entrusted Giuliani with Cabinet-level influence. When Energy Secretary Rick Perry pushed Trump in May to meet with Ukraine's new President, for example, Trump told him to "visit with Rudy," according to an interview Perry gave the *Wall Street Journal*. And an aide to former National Security Adviser John Bolton told congressional impeachment investigators that Giuliani was running a parallel foreign policy, outside the normal channels of U.S. diplomacy. Meanwhile, as Trump's cable-news defender and

then his personal lawyer, Giuliani remained technically a private citizen, unencumbered by longstanding ethics rules designed to prevent officials from using public service for personal gain.

AS HE JETTED AROUND, WHOSE INTERESTS WAS HE SERVING? AMERICA'S? TRUMP'S? HIS OWN?



CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT

Trump and Giuliani at Trump's golf club in Bedminster, N.J., on Nov. 20, 2016

And gain he did: where the salary of the actual Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, was \$210,700 last year, until the past few years Giuliani seemed to enjoy a lavish, approximately \$230,000-a-month lifestyle that includes six homes, access to private jets and 11 country-club memberships, according to his recent divorce-court filings published by the *New York Times*.

Giuliani says there's nothing wrong with continuing his consulting for foreign clients while at the same time representing the President. "Of course I don't mix the two things," he told TIME in a phone interview. He said people pay him as a lawyer and security expert, and because he has "done some remarkable things that nobody else has ever done." "Everything I'm doing now is similar to what I did in the past," Giuliani says.

His critics say that is exactly the problem. As he jetted around mixing his access to Trump with his personal business, they began asking, Whose interests was he serving? America's? Trump's? His own? Much of the work that Giuliani has done remains undisclosed—few know

which foreign interests are paying him, how much they're paying or what exactly they're getting in return.

But amid the many self-dealing scandals besetting the Trump Administration, Giuliani's adventures went largely ignored, at first. And he might have happily continued his money power play but for one thing: Ukraine.

Things began going wrong around April, when special counsel Robert Mueller's probe was drawing to a close. Fighting Mueller had been job one for Giuliani and had brought him closer than ever to the President. Serendipitously, Giuliani now says, he had uncovered another scandal. This one involved a series of conspiracy theories in Ukraine, including a search for dirt on Joe Biden's son Hunter, who had been paid to sit on the board of a Ukrainian energy company when Biden was Vice President. This new scandal would come to obsess the President as he prepared to run for re-election.

It was while working to substantiate

these conspiracy theories that Giuliani appears to have gotten himself into trouble. In August 2018, he had gone into business with two Soviet-born émigrés who have since been arrested on charges that they illegally funneled foreign money to political campaigns in the U.S. Their lawyer resisted a request for documents from the House impeachment inquiry in part on the grounds they have assisted Giuliani in other work for Trump.

Now Giuliani's successors in the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan are looking into his own business dealings in Ukraine, including meetings he held with government officials there, according to reports in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*.

How much damage will come from Giuliani's 18-month romp through the swamps of money and power is now the question of the Trump presidency. Current and former senior Administration officials worry that he has been putting unsubstantiated Ukrainian conspiracy theories into Trump's head and that Trump doesn't know or understand that Giuliani has business interests that may be served by some of the advice he is giving the President. Most of all, they blame Giuliani for Trump's push during a July 25 phone call to get the Ukrainian President to investigate Biden, a 2020 political rival.

But Giuliani is confident Trump won't turn on him: "He's 100% in my corner and loyal to me as I am to him." And for now, Trump doesn't seem to be aware of, or at least worried about, what Giuliani's murky mix of business and diplomacy may have gotten him into. "Rudy Giuliani's a great crime fighter," Trump said on Oct. 28 in response to a question from TIME. "He's always looking for corruption, which is what more people should be doing. He's a good man."

At some point soon, Trump may face the reality of a trial in the Senate over charges he abused his office. Some of those allegations will be linked to Giuliani's efforts in Ukraine. Giuliani's increasingly erratic behavior suggests that his gravy train of easy deals tied to political power may come to an ugly end. The question is what else will come to an end with it.

NO ONE BELIEVED HIM. It was October 2018, and Giuliani had just stepped out of a three-car motorcade into a light

Nation

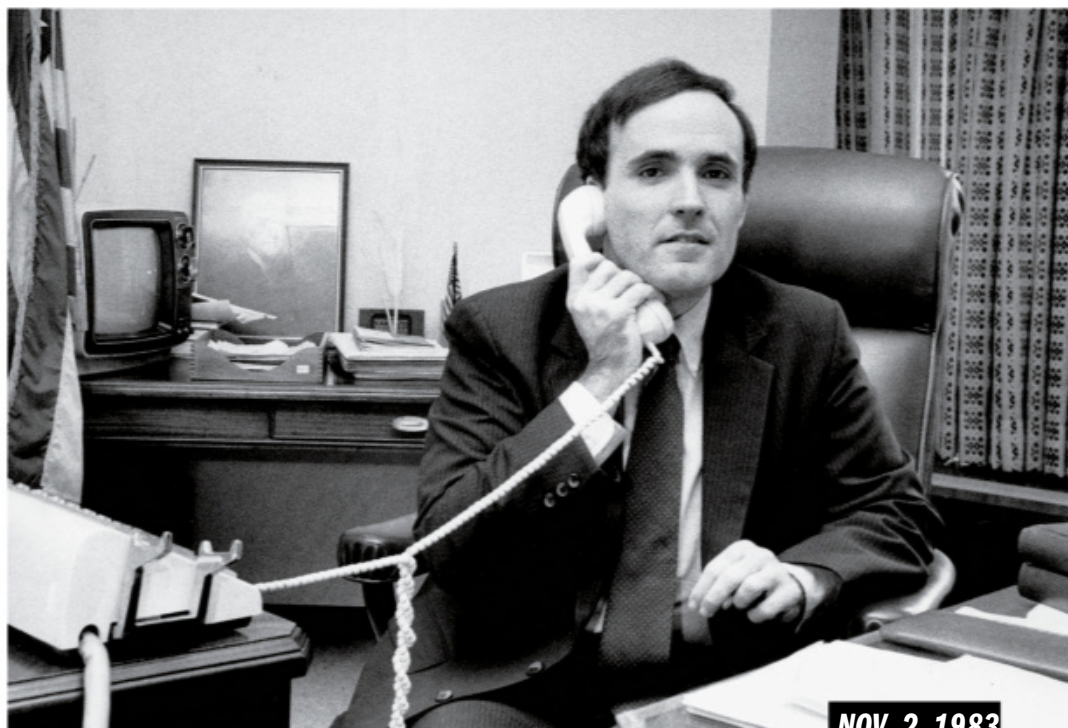
drizzle in the Armenian capital of Yerevan. An eager gaggle of government officials in dark suits deferentially escorted him as he walked toward a memorial to the Armenian genocide, while reporters live-streaming his visit asked questions about U.S. foreign policy. “I am not here in my capacity as a private lawyer to President Trump,” Giuliani said, “I am here as a private citizen.”

It was clear that no one intended to treat him like one, and that was just fine with Giuliani. Although he was there to speak about cybersecurity at a Russian-led trade conference, his trip had all the trappings of an official visit. Armenia’s Defense Minister briefed him in private, and the government released a formal readout of the meeting. News reports identifying Giuliani as a White House envoy scrutinized his answers on whether the U.S. would formally recognize the Armenian genocide. Sharing the stage with Sergey Glazyev, a longtime adviser of President Vladimir Putin who has been under U.S. sanctions since Russia’s 2014 invasion of Ukraine, Giuliani dangled potential U.S. cooperation on cybersecurity with a Russian-led trade bloc. One Armenian who met with the former mayor said, “He may be the contact person between Yerevan and Washington.”

Giuliani told TIME his paid speech was “perfectly appropriate” and one of “over 1,000 speeches” he has given for a fee, but refused to discuss details. Giuliani has been known to charge as much as \$200,000 for a public speech and up to \$175,000 a month to be retained for security consulting.

Giuliani’s foray in Armenia is just one of his many gigs. Around the same time that he traveled to Yerevan, he was paid by a global consulting firm to send a letter calling for changes to Romania’s anti-corruption program, a position that contradicted the U.S. State Department’s stance. He attended an event by Congolese lobbyists that left them with the impression he would work with them on the Trump Administration’s position on sanctions on the country. His firm secured a \$1.6 million deal to do security work in a Brazilian province in the Amazon.

After joining Trump’s inner circle, his dealings became more freewheeling. He regularly conducted business on his cell



Giuliani cultivated a reputation as a no-nonsense crime fighter

phone while holding court at upscale cigar clubs in New York and Washington, and after nearly two decades of work abroad, foreign officials, businessmen and journalists knew where to reach him.

But even as he has become an increasingly ubiquitous public figure, much of his work remains undisclosed. Even top government officials are often grasping for signs. White House officials were surprised, for example, when Trump seemed receptive to the possible extradition of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric who lives in the U.S. and is a political opponent of the current Turkish leadership, according to the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Giuliani told TIME he spoke to Administration officials about Gulen, but in relation to a client in a separate matter.

Giuliani says that the questions about his business dealings are “insulting.” He maintains that he is paid only for his expertise—not for representing foreigners or lobbying the Trump Administration, which would force him to register as a foreign agent. He left his law firm Greenberg Traurig in May 2018, and touted that he was working for the President for free out of patriotic duty.

Friends defend his business endeavors. “He’s always wanted to make money since he left as mayor, so what?” says Jon Sale, a former Watergate prosecutor who knew Giuliani when they both worked as federal prosecutors in Manhattan. “In a lot of circles, Rudy’s stature is not what it was. But I’ve been with him in some places and

some parts of the country where people still continue to revere him. People come up to take a picture with him and for autographs and say, ‘Thank you Mr. Mayor for what you’ve done.’”

AFTER WINNING ELECTION as mayor in 1993, Giuliani cracked down on crime, using often controversial tactics to “clean up” the largest city in America. But it was his response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that made him an international celebrity. The destruction of the World Trade Centers terrified America, and his reassuring presence on the streets of the city made him an icon of resilience. In 2001, TIME named the “mayor of the world” the Person of the Year.

But if a successful political career had led him to the peak of power in his hometown, a lifetime of government salaries hadn’t made him rich. In June 2001, his divorce lawyer famously declared from the steps of a Manhattan courthouse that the then mayor had only \$7,000 to his name.

After he left office, he cashed in on his fame. First he wrote a best-selling book, *Leadership*, and lined up hundreds of high-priced speaking engagements. In one period from 2006 to 2007, Giuliani made more than \$16 million, \$10 million of which came from delivering 108 paid speeches around the globe about leadership and security.

Giuliani also went to work for a variety of high-paying but controversial clients both as a lawyer and as a security consultant. His consulting firm signed a contract

FROM LEFT: PAT CARROLL—NEW YORK DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; ROBERT F. BUKATY—AP; ARAM ROSTON—REUTERS



SEPT. 12, 2001

Giuliani became a figure of resilience after the Sept. 11 attacks



SEPT. 20, 2019

Giuliani and his client Lev Parnas on Sept. 20 at the Trump hotel in D.C.

with Qatar around 2005 at a time when the Gulf state's security forces were under scrutiny for letting the Sept. 11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed slip away from the FBI in 1996.

Buoyed by the wave of goodwill and his celebrity, he launched a bid for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination. He quickly cemented himself as the early front runner, with 34% of likely Republican voters saying they would vote for him in a March 2007 poll. But his run imploded in the wake of questions about his foreign lobbying and liberal positions on social issues. His abrasive style and fixation on terrorism didn't help, leading Biden to deliver the now famous line that there were only three things Giuliani ever mentioned in a sentence: "A noun, a verb and 9/11."

After his run for the ultimate position of power failed, he seemed to fade from the headlines and turned back to making money. In his business as an international security consultant, he again took on controversial clients, including a Turkish gold trader accused of laundering Iranian money. He took several trips to Russia and former Soviet countries through TriGlobal Strategic Ventures, a secretive international consulting company that has provided image consulting to Russian oligarchs and others close to the Kremlin.

HAVING FAILED TO WIN the White House himself, Giuliani may have been as surprised as anyone when his old friend

Donald Trump's unexpected election offered him proximity to Oval Office. Giuliani and Trump knew each other for decades. Both were raised in the outer boroughs of New York City, made their names in Manhattan, sought the limelight early in their careers and became regulars in New York's gossip pages.

In 2000, at the Inner Circle dinner, a rollicking convention of big names and comedians, Giuliani wore a lavender dress and blond wig for a spoof video in which Trump leers at Giuliani and says, "You know, you're really beautiful." When Giuliani sprays perfume on his chest, Trump rubs his face in it. "Oh you dirty boy," Giuliani says in a high-pitched voice, and slaps him.

Giuliani did not publicly endorse Trump until two weeks before the New York State Republican primary. But when he did, he was all in. It was Giuliani who went on all five Sunday-morning shows to defend Trump after the Oct. 7, 2016, release of a recording of Trump talking about grabbing women by their genitals.

Ironically his current position as unofficial envoy of the President came about only when he didn't get the Administration job he had hoped for. After Trump's election, Giuliani turned down top spots at the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security, hoping instead to be named Trump's Secretary of State. Giuliani lobbied hard for the position, touting as credentials his 150 foreign trips to more than 80 countries as a globetrotting consultant. But Trump and

his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, were concerned that Giuliani's celebrity would make him unmanageable at State. When it became clear Giuliani wasn't going to get the job, he withdrew from consideration, saying he "could play a better role being on the outside and continuing to be his close friend and adviser."

That role was a boon for Giuliani financially, but he still had the itch for real power. He saw an opportunity in Trump's frustration with his legal team's failure to protect him in the Russia investigation. For more than a year, Trump had been fuming, "I don't have a lawyer," invoking the memory of Roy Cohn, the notoriously ruthless New York attorney and power broker, according to the Mueller report. Trump said he wanted "someone who got things done." In Giuliani, who had taken to television news shows to repeatedly attack Mueller, he found his Roy Cohn.

For months, Giuliani had a good run under Trump. Even while many close to the President warned that relying on Giuliani could be his downfall, the former mayor was able to carry out both his free-wheeling deals and Trump's wishes without restraints. As White House advisers came and went in a steady stream of firings and resignations, Giuliani endured. But it was ultimately his full-throttle pursuit of the thinly sourced Ukraine scandal that may have historic consequences for him, the President and the country.

In August 2018, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, a pair of Soviet émigrés based

in Florida, entered Giuliani's life. Parnas paid Giuliani a \$500,000 retainer for what he said was legal and business advice for his fraud-prevention firm. Up until then, Parnas and Fruman had been unknown and unconnected. But soon enough, they were able to get access to prominent Republican circles, in part by flaunting their association with Giuliani.

They posted photos of themselves enjoying dinner at the White House, including photos with Trump. They shared photos of their breakfast with Trump's son Don Jr. and drinks "celebrating" after the conclusion of the Mueller probe with the White House legal team. As they jetted around the world, they boasted of political connections that could open doors. "They told us they would bring Mayor Giuliani to the dinner with them if we honored them," Farley Weiss, the president of the National Council of Young Israel, an umbrella group for a network of Orthodox synagogues, told TIME in an email. The group honored the two with an award in March.

Their lucky streak didn't last for long. In early October, Parnas and Fruman were arrested at Dulles airport outside Washington after they bought one-way tickets to Vienna. They were charged with the federal crime of scheming to buy U.S. political influence by funneling foreign donations to politicians. Court filings alleged they distributed \$675,500 in campaign contributions to at least 14 Republican candidates.

Unfortunately for Giuliani, the pair's arrest shone a spotlight on their other dealings with him as well. Parnas and Fruman had been serving as middlemen between Giuliani and Ukrainian officials in Giuliani's quest to dig up politically damaging information on Democrats for Trump. Prosecutors said they had lobbied then Texas Representative Pete Sessions to push for the ouster of the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, whom Giuliani considered an obstacle to investigating the Bidens. When the former mayor had to cancel his trip to Ukraine in May amid accusations of political meddling, Parnas reportedly went to Kiev presenting himself as a representative of Giuliani to seek out information about the Bidens.

And then there's the question of the half million dollars Giuliani received from Parnas' fraud-prevention firm. He



OLD PALS

Giuliani and Trump, joking in 1999, met on New York's celebrity circuit

has claimed he knows "exactly" where it came from. "I've seen the wires," he told the *Washington Post*. (The money was reportedly briefly in Fruman's account.) But it's unclear how Parnas and Fruman had access to those kinds of funds. A TIME review of Florida court filings show that since the mid-2000s, they left a trail of bankruptcies, failed businesses, evictions and lawsuits for failing to pay back loans.

ALL THIS HAS PUT GIULIANI in the sights of the same prosecutor's office he once led. An investigation by the U.S. Attorney's office in the Southern District of New York has been scrutinizing his connection to Parnas and Fruman, as well as his bank records and meetings with Ukrainian officials, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Giuliani has denied any wrongdoing and said that prosecutors "can look at my Ukraine business all they want." Giuliani insisted to TIME he is not in any legal jeopardy.

"I have to presume they're innocent," he told the *New York Times* about Parnas and Fruman. "None of those facts that I see there make any sense to me, so I don't know what they mean."

How consequential this particular aspect of the multifaceted Ukraine scandal will prove remains unclear. Testimony by multiple nonpartisan Trump Administration officials has shown that Giuliani was the main driver behind Trump's efforts to force Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. To strengthen the case for doing so, Giuliani has touted an affidavit from a former Ukrainian prosecutor alleging he

was fired in March 2016 for investigating the gas firm that employed Biden's son. That document, TIME reported in October, was produced by the legal team for a Ukrainian billionaire currently living in Vienna who is fighting extradition to the U.S. This summer, his American lawyers hired Parnas as their translator.

One thing that's clear is that Giuliani is already feeling the financial consequences of the Ukraine scandal. And he's not happy about it. In his accidental voicemail to NBC News, Giuliani can be heard saying, "The problem is we need some money." After a pause, he says, "We need a few hundred thousand." The intense scrutiny of the House investigation has forced Giuliani to pull out of lucrative opportunities. He had been planning to return to Armenia this year for the same Kremlin-backed trade conference he had attended with great fanfare in October 2018.

But when word leaked out about his travel plans just days after the whistleblower complaint implicated him in pressuring Ukraine, it caused a public backlash. Just hours after confirming the paid speech, he reversed himself and announced he wouldn't be going back to Yerevan after all. —*With reporting by TARA LAW and SANYA MANSOOR/NEW YORK; SIMON SHUSTER/KIEV; and MOLLY BALL, TESSA BERENSON and ABBY VESOULIS/WASHINGTON* ▣

VIEWPOINT

WHEN RUDY WAS THE PEOPLE'S LAWYER

By Tom Robbins

For those who have watched him over the years, it is now hard to find even a faint echo of the man Rudy Giuliani once was. But that man can be glimpsed in the men and women now daring to testify to congressional committees about presidential wrongdoing, both in their fierce defiance of their boss's efforts to silence them and in their insistence on speaking truth to power.

The example that stands out came in the summer of 1988 in a federal courtroom in Manhattan where a long and complicated trial was coming to a close. In the dock sat a popular Democratic Congressman and several other men. All stood accused of using bribes and extortion to turn a Bronx defense contractor into an instrument for their own greed and profit. Those headline-grabbing charges had been brought by Giuliani, then the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. It was one of the many corruption cases he brought in that era, prosecutions that lanced the seamy side of New York's political establishment and justly earned him his racket-busting reputation.

Making his charges stick, however, was sometimes an uphill battle. In the case of the Bronx contractor, the defendants' canny lawyers were pounding away with an argument to the jury that Giuliani's prosecutors struggled to refute. A key culprit in whatever schemes took place, the defense lawyers repeatedly insisted, wasn't in the courtroom at all. He was in Washington, D.C. He was a Republican named Edwin Meese, and he was the Attorney General of the United States and Giuliani's top boss. They laid out compelling evidence that Meese, who had also served as counselor to President Reagan, along with several of his friends, had been the real enablers of corruption at Wedtech, as the firm was called.

For the prosecution, the problem with this argument was that it appeared to be true. Meese had interceded with the Pentagon on Wedtech's behalf, and he had also invested thousands of dollars with one of the company's directors. An

independent prosecutor was examining those actions. So how to persuade the jurors to separate their rightful resentment of that high-level finagling from the defendants' own crimes? The prosecutors' solution, with a thumbs-up from Giuliani, was to call out Meese, the nation's top law-enforcement officer, in open court.

Meese, Assistant U.S. Attorney Ed Little told the jury, "was a sleaze." To make sure they heard him the first time, he said it again: "Meese was a sleaze, too."

In Washington, a spokesperson for the Justice Department responded with fury. The comments about the Attorney General were "inappropriate, unprofessional" and "flatly wrong." Meese's own lawyer called them "beneath contempt."

But Giuliani proudly owned them. "All his arguments and comments were authorized and approved by me in advance," he told a press conference after the jury convicted the Congressman and all but one defendant. "Any criticism," he added, "should be directed against me."

AFTER GIULIANI TOOK OFFICE as mayor in 1994, that moment of courage soon seemed a distant memory. The changes were quickly apparent: Rudy the politician now made deals with those Rudy the prosecutor might once have investigated. The kind of crass political patronage and favor trading he had once viewed as telltale markers of corruption were now the coins of his realm. Rather than dishonest officials, his targets were as likely to be welfare recipients and the homeless, along with those who dissented from his often angry rhetoric. Even as he helped quell the city's high crime rates, he seemed most concerned

with making sure credit accrued to him alone. If the city grew increasingly divided along racial lines, he seemed not to notice or care. When an unarmed young black man who worked as a security guard was shot to death by an undercover cop, Giuliani released his juvenile record, stating he was "no altar boy." Actually, he had been an altar boy.

Giuliani's valiant efforts to rally a city staggered by 9/11 helped New Yorkers forget that sort of shrill bullying. Yet that two-fisted style is likely one of the things that attracted Donald Trump to hire him as his lawyer. He is the latest in a long line of attorneys who, in the best tradition of Trump mentor Roy Cohn, prefer pounding the table to making legal arguments and who are willing to push the envelope, in and out of court, to see what they can get away with. It's a role Giuliani has taken to with alacrity.

On Oct. 9, two of Giuliani's associates—men who were allegedly helping him in his effort to persuade Ukrainian officials to investigate Joe and Hunter Biden—were arrested at Dulles airport and charged with scheming to pump foreign money into domestic political campaigns. The charges were brought by his old office, the Southern District of New York. There, Giuliani is reportedly also under investigation.

That same week at the White House, Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to a man he called an "absolute titan of American law ... an inspiration to liberty-loving citizens everywhere." Edwin Meese, stooped and aging, smiled and thanked the President for the honor.

Robbins, who has covered Giuliani since the 1980s, teaches investigative reporting at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY

EVEN AS HE HELPED QUELL THE CITY'S HIGH CRIME RATES, HE SEEMED MOST CONCERNED WITH MAKING SURE CREDIT ACCRUED TO HIM ALONE



WHEN THE WALL CAME





DOWN

Thirty years ago, as barriers fell, East Germans surged into a new world. They were welcomed with cash
By Malcolm Jack



Crowds atop the Berlin Wall on the morning after it fell, Nov. 10, 1989

Peter Keup can still remember how it felt to hold deutsche marks in his hand.

“It was special to even touch this money,” he recalls. “It felt solid. The East German mark was thinner, flimsier.” As a boy growing up in East Germany, he was sometimes sent West German currency by his grandparents on the other side of the border, be it as a birthday gift or a reward for good school grades. Keup pored obsessively over the notes, minted with the mysterious-sounding titles and images of unknown cities and historical figures. “Names from behind the Iron Curtain, an invisible world,” he reflects. Their worth to him was far more than simply financial.

In any case, there was only so much the 16 million citizens of the communist German Democratic Republic (G.D.R.) could buy in a sealed-off country of scarcity, shortages and joyless austerity. Tantalizing tastes of Western consumer goods could be obtained on the black market and at state-run “Intershops,” which only accepted hard currency, like dollars or deutsche marks (DM). Cigarettes, coffee, chocolate and pop records were on offer to those who could afford them. Others had to find their pleasures where they could. “I loved the smell of Persil and Ariel detergent in the clothes,” reminisces Nicole Hartmann, of receiving packages of hand-me-downs from relatives in the West as a young girl. “I always wanted to keep them unwashed.”

WHEN THE BERLIN WALL FELL in November 1989, followed by the inner German border that ran from Czechoslovakia to the Baltic Sea, the gates to the West were opened to all, as well as the bounties and temptations that lay beyond. By foot and by row upon row of Trabant and Wartburg cars, the “Ossis” (as East Germans were known) began to pour across what had been one of the most secure borders in the world. Were that not all reason enough to feel euphoric, there was more awaiting them on the other side: free money.

Since 1970, East Germans arriving to the Federal Republic of Germany by whatever means were paid a grant, initially of 30 DM twice a year, later rising to 100 DM once a year, under a program

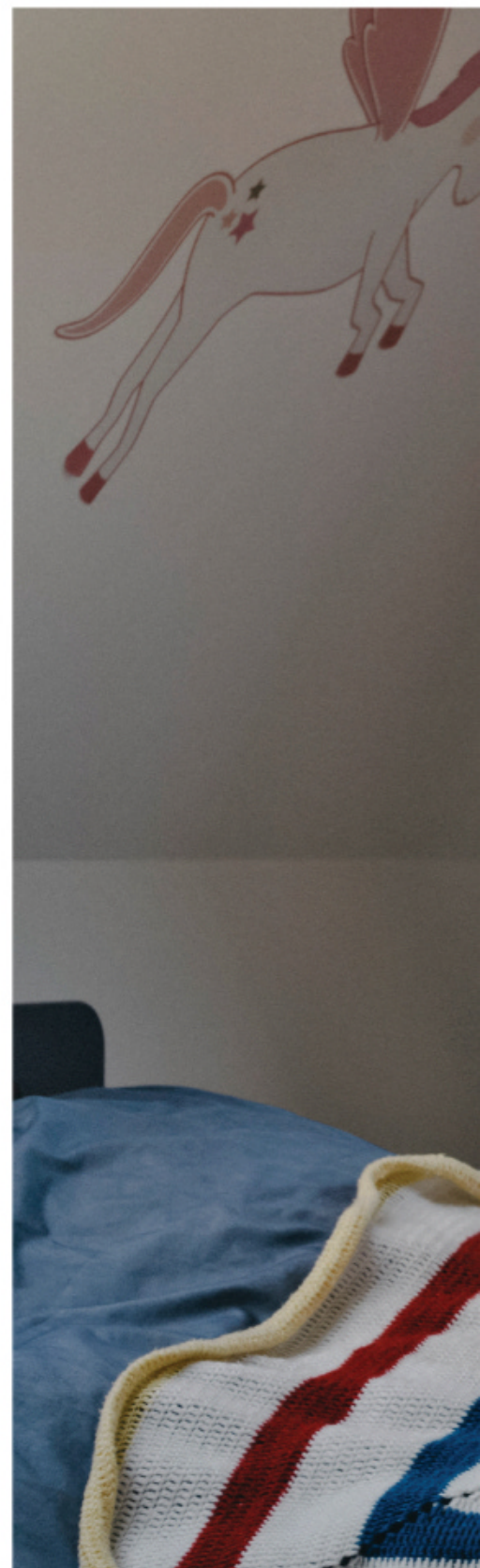
known as *Begrüßungsgeld* or “welcome money.” Under Chancellor Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik policy of peaceful rapprochement, the measure was intended to help the few people who did manage to depart the G.D.R., legally or otherwise, to pay for food or travel. The amount is equivalent to about \$100 in today’s money.

After the abrupt and entirely unforeseen rupture of the Berlin Wall, demand for welcome money surged—and the West German authorities stuck to their promise. As word spread like wildfire among arriving Ossis, long queues began to form outside banks and building societies. The state-sanctioned handout triggered a colossal spending spree across Berlin’s River Spree. It was a commercial revolution, and a moment of mass transactional transference from socialism into capitalism and the material world. Considered a gift by some and a bribe by others, it helped set the tone for full and swift reunification by October 1990, firmly on West German terms.

No official statistics exist as to exactly how much was claimed in all, but by the time payments were halted on Dec. 29, 1989, replaced by a foreign currency fund that both German states contributed to, it’s estimated that at least 4 billion DM had been paid out in a matter of just seven weeks. “I think over 95% [of East Germans] got this money,” speculates Sören Marotz, historian at the DDR Museum of East Germany’s history. “Some people found ways to claim the money more than once.”

On West Berlin’s glittering technicolor shopping boulevard, the Kurfürstendamm, the famous KaDeWe department store was a first port of call for many—to spend or simply to stare in awe at its luxurious abundance. In supermarkets in the borderlands of West Germany, witnesses remember seeing shelves stripped bare. Almost everyone claimed their 100 DM, from the current Chancellor Angela Merkel, then a 35-year-old physicist living in East Berlin, to sports stars, doctors, artists, political dissidents, musicians, families, pensioners and Stasi agents. Even babies were eligible for a payout.

Cash injections to the former G.D.R. have in some ways never ceased. Since 1991, Germans have paid a so-called solidarity



Penquitt and her daughter Nora play with the Barbie she bought in 1989



THE ALL-AMERICAN DOLL

surcharge, a fee on income, capital gains and corporate taxes currently set at 5.5%, in order to help the former communist east. Yet despite receiving €243 billion in “Soli” taxes since 1995, the economy in the country’s East continues to lag far behind the West’s. Unemployment is higher, wages are lower, and the population of the former G.D.R.’s territory has dropped to its lowest level in 114 years. It has given rise among some to what is known as “Ostalgia,” a longing for the simplicity and cradle-to-grave comforts of life in the G.D.R. Political disaffection has seen parts of the former East become a heartland for populist parties; in the eastern state of Thuringia on Oct. 27, the far-right antimigrant Alternative for Germany party finished ahead of Merkel’s center-right party in local elections.

What East Germans decided to buy when the Wall fell says a lot about that moment in our history, 30 years ago—about the true value of money, about competing economic systems, and about the hopes, freedoms and tensions of reunifying a country. Each purchase tells its own story. Here are 10 of them:

“There was a long row of cars in the middle of the night,” Susan Penquitt remembers vividly, despite being just 8 years old when her family drove across the border into West Germany for the first time. The road led to the city of Fulda in Hesse, about 65 miles east of Frankfurt, and the toy section of a department store, a sight the little girl had barely dreamed of. “When I saw the Barbie on the shelf, you know, that was it. I don’t remember any

other toy in that shop.” Lovingly looked after for three decades, the iconic American doll today belongs to Penquitt’s eldest daughter Nora, 8, in their home outside of Leipzig. It’s a happy token of what was not always a happy time. Like millions of East Germans working in largely state-owned industries, both of Penquitt’s parents lost their jobs following reunification. “They never had so many sorrows, really,” she says.

A GRAND SCHEME FOR A PIANO

The bohemian East Berlin performance artists Else Gabriel and Ulf Wrede celebrated their first days and nights in the West like many Germans did: together in a beer-soaked haze. “We gave pieces of the Wall to people in bars and they gave us drinks,” 57-year-old Gabriel recalls. “Everyone was so out of control. It felt like you could do anything; there were two systems just collapsing into each other.” By ripping out pages from their passports to remove collection stamps, they say between them they claimed their *Begrüßungsgeld* multiple times. “I spent 27 years of my life in f-cking East Germany,” Gabriel says. “There was no guilt about [taking] a few hundred deutsche marks.” Gabriel had been permitted to leave the G.D.R. just days before the Wall fell, and had earned some deutsche marks there already. The couple combined their funds left over after the revelries and changed it all back to Eastern currency, taking advantage of a black market exchange rate to convert around 2,000 DM into around 10,000 Eastern marks. After smuggling it back into East Germany in Wrede’s socks (“It stank when we pulled the money out,” Gabriel laughs), the pair used their haul to pay off a loan on a Bösendorfer grand piano. In his Neukölln studio apartment today, Wrede, 51, still plays the dusty black keyboard, now worth many times the price he paid for it 30 years ago. “Best deal ever,” Gabriel grins proudly.

Gabriel, left, and Wrede with their Bösendorfer piano



BLACK ADIDAS, WHITE STRIPES

At the time the Wall fell, Andreas Thom was already living a privileged life. At 24, he had played 51 matches for the East German national soccer team, and won the G.D.R. Premier League five times with Dynamo Berlin. Surely Thom had no need for his *Begrüßungsgeld*? “Of course I got the money,” he says. “Everybody got the money!” On a shopping trip to the KaDeWe, he purchased a pair of soccer shoes: “Adidas

Samba Spezial, black with white stripes.” Just 37 days after reunification, Thom made history as the first East German player to sign for a West German club, when he moved to Bayern Leverkusen for a fee of 2.5 million DM. He thinks back to his debut game in February 1990 vs. FC Homburg. “Everybody was watching [as if] I had four arms, two heads, four legs,” he says. “But I scored, and everything was O.K.”

AN EXOTIC FEAST OF RARE FOODS

Dissident photographer Harald Hauswald’s evocative black-and-white street scenes from behind the Wall were published in West German magazines as well as in a controversial book, making him a person of interest to the hated state security police. Hauswald escaped serious imprisonment only because of his connections to influential Western



Tasso with an Edding marker pen like the one he bought in 1989

READING MATERIAL FOR THE RUNWAY

On a gray day in November 1988, 23-year-old fashion model and designer Grit Seymour was given four hours to leave the G.D.R. Her exit-visa application had been unexpectedly approved. “I had to speed-pack,” she says. “My mother walked me to say goodbye. Of course, we shed a lot of tears.” She stepped penniless into West Berlin, but remembers feeling instantly liberated. “It was like this huge block of concrete had fallen off my body.” With her *Begrüßungsgeld* she bought a copy of fashion magazine *Vogue Italia*, a window into a glamorous new world. On the night the Wall fell, Seymour was already modeling for Gianni Versace in Milan. She returned as fast as she could to Berlin to be reunited with family and friends. “It was like a dream coming true,” she says.

A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS FOR GRANDMA

“It set me free,” says Peter Keup, of how ballroom dancing made him feel while growing up in Dresden. He excelled at it competitively in partnership with his sister Uta, and in 1981 they were offered the chance to represent the G.D.R. internationally—but only if their family first withdrew a long-standing exit-visa application. They refused. “That’s when I took the decision to escape,” he says. In 1981, at just 19, Keup set out for Czechoslovakia with a plan to swim across the River Danube from Hungary into Austria. He had 80 DM from his grandparents hidden in the seam of his jeans, which he hoped would pay his way to freedom. Instead he was caught on a train to Bratislava, arrested for currency smuggling and returned to the G.D.R. After a confession extracted under brutal interrogation, he was jailed by the Stasi for 10 months, spending long periods in solitary confinement. Keup’s grandparents’ lawyer helped convince the West German government to pay a \$55,000 ransom, and suddenly he really was free. “For the first time it made me feel like an independent human being,” he says, of receiving his *Begrüßungsgeld*. The yellows and violets of the bouquet of freesia flowers he bought for his grandmother Anna remain bright in his mind. Keup boarded a train for the West German city of Essen and a new life. Years later, the Wall fell, and he and his sister danced together again.

journalists, who would help him smuggle his film reels out. Shooting sometimes literally from the hip, he wielded his camera like a weapon. “I felt so trapped by the Wall,” says the 65-year-old. “Taking photographs was the work I did to fight against that feeling.” Hauswald and his friends bought a victory feast of foods unavailable in the East with their welcome money. “Kiwi and radicchio, that kind of stuff,” he says. “Today I know my way around exotic fruits better than many Westerners. And I still love to cook.”

A PEN UNLIKE ALL THE OTHERS

Jens Müller, a.k.a. graffiti artist Tasso, owns many black Edding 850 marker pens today, but he is pretty sure that jumbled somewhere among them in his warehouse studio in Meerane is the one that changed his life. “For me it was the first time I had seen graffiti tags, on every corner in every place,” he says, of driving with friends around Kreuzberg in West Berlin as a 23-year-old. “I was wondering, ‘How have they done this?’ And then I see

it must be a pen, a marker, and so I said, ‘I want to have this marker.’” He found one in a Karstadt department store that cost 10 of his 100 DM. “That was a lot. My friends thought I was crazy.” He worked in construction following reunification, eventually becoming a freelance artist. Today his tag is recognized around the world. He has visited 32 different countries to make, exhibit and promote his work.

NOTHING: "I WAS NOT A BEGGAR."

Bernd Roth, a former major in the feared Stasi, is adamant he never claimed his *Begrüßungsgeld*. "I was not a beggar," he says. Today Roth, 68, rejects the system that he served, yet is unapologetic about his own actions, which led to the known arrests of 14 people, including a CIA spy. "Why should we be pressured to have a bad [conscience]?" he asks. "We didn't build concentration camps." His love of music helped him preserve his individuality, he says. He thought nothing of singing along to "Born

in the U.S.A." at a Bruce Springsteen concert in East Berlin in 1988. "It was just music!" he laughs. Roth still lives in the same town in Thuringia where he grew up. The West has never held any appeal for him, he says. "I found it overwhelming and oppressive. I think oversaturated consumption is harmful." Was there really nothing that he wanted there? "I might have bought myself some Grundig speakers," he admits. "That was really just about being able to enjoy a better sound."

LEGOS, A RADIO AND A TRIP

Cornelia Guenther first entered the West at Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie, the infamous Cold War crossing point. Then 29, and a single mother working as a translator, she gingerly stepped across the border in late-November 1989. "I looked at my foot," she says, as she crossed the military checkpoint that she had overlooked every day from her office window. "I thought, 'Now I'm walking on West Berlin soil; how amazing is this?'" Having collected their 200 DM, she and her son Christian, 6, bought carefully selected spoils at the KaDeWe: a backpack, some Legos, a radio for the kitchen. The rest of the cash they put toward a trip to England a few months later. "Buying experience was much more important to me than material things," says Guenther.

A COMPUTER, AND A FUTURE

When the Wall fell, Gordon von Godin was a 19-year-old newly discharged from national service in the East German army. He put his welcome money toward an Amiga computer so he could play *Tetris* and Formula 1 games. Today, he is director of Berlin's DDR Museum of East German history, and qualified to bust some popular myths about *Begrüßungsgeld*. Is it true, for instance, that many people bought ... bananas? "This is really a cliché, 100%," he replies. "Because bananas we knew. We didn't know, for example, kiwi fruit." He believes the money helped establish a lasting hierarchy between West and East in a reunited Germany that still endures today. "I learned in school that in capitalism, nothing is for free," Von Godin says. "You have to pay for everything sooner or later."

VIEWPOINT

In 1989, the world chose peace; we need that vision today

By Mikhail Gorbachev

THE BERLIN WALL, WHICH FOR DECADES HAD DIVIDED NOT just a city but a country, and all of Europe, fell in November 1989, and history accelerated its march. Such moments test the responsibility and wisdom of statesmen.

The long overdue changes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had received a powerful impetus from the democratic process already under way in the Soviet Union. The demands of the people were getting increasingly urgent and radical.

In the fall of 1989 the situation in East Germany—the G.D.R.—became explosive. Large groups of people were leaving the country; people were fleeing en masse through Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which had opened their western borders. In major cities, people took to the streets, protesting peacefully, but violence with consequences beyond anyone's control could not be ruled out.

In October 1989, I attended the festivities in East Berlin marking the 40th anniversary of the G.D.R. As I stood on the rostrum, greeting the columns of participants in the parade, I felt almost physically the people's discontent. We knew that they had been carefully pre-selected, which made their behavior even more striking. They were chanting: *Perestroika! Gorbachev, help!*

Subsequent events confirmed that the G.D.R. regime was rapidly losing ground. The protests and the political demands—from freedom of emigration to freedom of speech and the dissolution of government bodies to the reunification of Germany—were gaining momentum.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was therefore not a surprise for us. The fact that it happened on Nov. 9, 1989, was the result of specific circumstances and the evolution of popular mood.

In those conditions, the Soviet leadership's first step was to rule out military force by the Soviet troops stationed in the G.D.R. At the same time, we did our utmost to make sure that the process moved along peaceful lines, without infringing on the vital interests of our country or undermining peace in Europe.

That was extremely important, because after the fall of the Wall the developments in the G.D.R. became increasingly turbulent. Reunification of Germany was now on the agenda, and this was bound to cause concern among Soviet citizens, many of whom were alarmed.

Their concern was understandable, both historically and psychologically. We had to reckon with the people's memory of the war, of its horrors and victims. Of course the Germans had changed; they had learned the lessons of Hitler's reign and World War II. But there are things that cannot be erased from history. I told Chancellor Kohl, it is important for the



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Gorbachev attends a rally in East Berlin celebrating the 40th anniversary of the G.D.R. in October 1989

Germans, in managing unification, to respect the feelings of other peoples as well as their own interests.

We were not alone in our concerns. The Federal Republic of Germany's (F.R.G.) NATO allies—France, Great Britain, Italy—did not want a quick reunification. I understood that from my talks with their leaders. In each of the countries that had suffered from aggression, there were fears—as though in their very genes—that the unification of F.R.G. and G.D.R. would increase Germany's power. They had serious, though unspoken, historic and political reasons for such fears.

I think that NATO's European members would not have been averse to using Gorbachev to put a brake on unification. But I understood that resisting a process that was objectively inevitable and, even more so, to use force in any form could lead to unpredictable consequences: an explosion in the center of Europe, a resumption of the Cold War, and who knows what else! It was the duty of all of us to avoid that.

TODAY, READING SOME COMMENTS and reminiscences of that time, one might get the impression that the process of reunification was a cakewalk, that everything came like manna from heaven, or that it all happened as a result of happy chance or even naiveté of some parties. But that was not the case.

The two plus four negotiations involving the two German states, the Soviet Union, the U.S., France and Britain could not be an easy ride. There were contentious discussions and clashes of opinion, and it sometimes seemed that misunderstanding

would doom the negotiations.

But they ended in success, because the parties to this complex diplomatic process showed foresight as well courage and a sense of high responsibility.

Yet, when I am asked who I regard as the main hero of that time of drama and turmoil, I always reply: the people. I am not denying the role of the politicians. They were very important. But it was the people—two peoples—who mattered the most. The Germans, who declared their will for national unity decisively and,

most importantly, in a peaceful way. And of course the Russians, who understood the Germans' aspirations, who believed that Germany had indeed changed and supported the will of the German people.

Russians and Germans can be proud that after the war's tragic bloodshed they understood each other. Had they not, the Soviet government would not have

been able to act the way it did.

We drew a final line under the Cold War. Our goal was a new Europe: a Europe without dividing lines. The leaders who succeeded us have failed to achieve that goal. A modern security architecture, a strong mechanism for preventing and resolving conflicts have not been created in Europe. Hence the painful problems and conflicts that beset our continent today. I urge world leaders to face up to those problems and resume dialogue for the sake of the future.

Gorbachev, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was the only President of the Soviet Union

When asked who I regard as the main hero of that time of drama and turmoil, I always reply: the people

MONEY TALKS

When couples struggle with money, they need either a financial planner or a therapist. Or is it both?

BY BELINDA LUSCOMBE

BRITTANY WYATT, WHO GOES BY BEE, AND HER husband Kevin had been living together for a few years when they had the fight that nearly finished them. Bee needed to buy a car, but her credit had been demolished by her divorce, so she asked then boyfriend Kevin to guarantee the loan. He declined. She took this as a sign that he didn't trust her. To Kevin, however, it was just a sign that he didn't believe in loans. He'd never taken one out.

Even after he agreed to be a guarantor, the Melbourne, Fla., couple still had money squabbles. "We couldn't match up with money," says Bee, 33. They combined bank accounts when they married but have often differed over how their funds should be used.

In early 2018, they decided to watch a video of a seminar called Money & Marriage, a three-hour event that is half couples therapy and half financial advice. None of the information it conveyed was revolutionary (communicate, budget together, don't blame, be grateful, plan). For the Wyatts, however, it was transformative. "We'd been talking about everything that they spoke about for a year or more," says Kevin, 32. "But for some reason, once you sat down and watched it, like, 'Oh, man, this totally makes sense. We're doing this wrong.'"

Money & Marriage is organized by Ramsey Solutions, a faith-based financial-advice group started in

1992 by the wildly popular Dave Ramsey, who looks upon debt as approvingly as NASA engineers look upon oxygen leaks. In the first half, psychologist Les Parrott offers couples' bonding skills and exercises. In the second, Rachel Cruze, Ramsey's middle child, shares financial advice. Nearly all 20 of these seminars that have taken place since 2017 have sold out, she tells TIME. "The two comments we've been getting for over 25 years is 'How do I get my spouse on board?' and 'Why didn't they teach me this in high school?'" says Cruze. "We just always knew that there was a tension within people's marriages when it comes to money."

Ramsey Solutions is not alone in combining cash and coupling tips. There is a small but growing group of advisers who believe it is impossible to address people's financial difficulties and personal struggles separately and who are trying to carve out a new field that addresses both at once. Academic institutions, including Kansas State University, the University of Georgia and Creighton University in Nebraska, are beginning to offer training and graduate certificates specifically in financial therapy, while others, like Florida State, have elective courses as part of a social-work degree. The Financial Therapy Association, a professional group formed in 2009 that puts out a peer-reviewed journal, now has 300 members,

ILLUSTRATION BY MARCO GORAN ROMANO FOR TIME

FINAL
NOTICE

PAST
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Society

a 33% jump in the past year. It announced its first set of certification requirements in May.

Although the discipline deals with all the ways people's relationship with money affects their lives, businesses have become particularly interested in the couples space. The online finance company SoFi has teamed up with the wedding planner Zola. Northwestern Mutual has partnered with the Knot. John Hancock, the insurance giant, has an app for couples, known as Twine, to communicate about and plan their finances together, and there is a slew of smaller versions, including Honeydue, Honeyfi and Zeta.

Some of this activity may simply be an opportunistic search for new markets: marriage is increasingly becoming a habit largely practiced by the wealthy, and young couples are at a financial inflection point. But there is also a growing understanding that feuding about finances is one of the most common shoals upon which marriages founder. "Money does seem to be qualitatively a different topic that couples fight over than chores and in-laws," says Jeffrey P. Dew, an associate professor in the School of Family Life at Brigham Young University. Partly, he says, that's because of the different roles money plays in people's lives. For some it means security, while for others it means adventure. "You get two individuals, and these meanings conflict," says Dew.

MONEY HAS ALWAYS BEEN the unsightly toad that lurks in the marshiest parts of the marital-advice swamp. Sex and parenting are considered respectable subtopics to consult specialists about, but fiscal conflicts remain taboo. "Going to someone specifically for financial therapy is still a difficult boundary to cross," says Ed Coombs, a financial planner who trained as a marriage and family therapist after he noticed couples coming to him for help with budgeting but lacking the "relational strength" to execute their plans. In fact, he too hid debt from his wife. "The patterns of dysfunction around finances are very similar to the way sexual intimacy may leverage or break down a couple," he says, "because of the role pleasure and pain play out around money."

And yet a longitudinal study in 2012 found that marriages in which money was the biggest point of friction were more likely to dissolve than marriages in which other issues loomed larger. Some analyses suggest that spending spats are the most common issue couples have. Other research disputes that but reports them to be the most repetitive and hardest to resolve. In March, a study in the scientific journal *PLOS One* found that perceived unfairness in the sharing of finances has a worse effect on marital harmony—and sexual frequency—than perceived unfairness in the sharing of housework. That makes sense, says Gretchen Peterson, a sociology professor at the University of Memphis and one of the study's co-authors, because while couples don't compare

26%

Percentage of married American women who are the primary breadwinners in their family

\$42K

Average debt of Americans ages 25 to 34

27%

Percentage of married people who kept a financial secret from their partner

notes on money with others, they do have hard data. "You know how much money each person makes," she says. "It's harder to make that seem fair when in absolute numbers it's not."

It's not just who's making the money but who's spending it that is often a sore spot. In Coombs' practice, near Charlotte, N.C., couples usually adhere to the traditional model of a man providing the money and a woman disbursing it. Often, he says, the breadwinners feel taken advantage of and the caregivers feel criticized. "Too often, [money habits] are associated with personality and not with role responsibility," Coombs says. "If you're in the home, your job is to buy the groceries and the kids' clothes. Does that make you inherently a spender, or is that a function of the role you are performing in your family? You have to help people tease through that." Caregivers also feel exploited for free labor, he added, without appreciating that they have more control over their time than breadwinners.

EVEN AS GENDER ROLES SHIFT and there's less income inequality within marriages, money remains a thorny issue. The increasing economic power of women—26% are the primary breadwinners among heterosexual American couples in which both partners are in the labor force—can chip away at the self-worth of young men who grew up with the model of a male-provider family. Studies have found that men whose wives outearned them were more likely to take erectile-dysfunction medication or have an affair, both of which researchers ascribed to a response to a perceived loss of status. Even when that doesn't happen, financial stress can have a traumatic effect on couples. Bee married her first husband when she was 18. They bought a house in June 2007, just before the financial crash. The ensuing fiscal nightmare, she says, saw them fighting and declaring bankruptcy.

She also remembers standing in the grocery store as a child while her parents used a calculator to figure out what they could afford. So money, or the lack of it, provokes a strong emotion in her. "I think Kevin would feel like I was challenging him as a man, saying he wasn't a good provider," when they couldn't pay bills, says Bee. As a result, she says, she would hide purchases from him, a subterfuge some financial advisers call "financial infidelity."

The difficulties young people are having accumulating wealth might be another factor in the emergence of relationship-specific financial counseling. Household-debt balances have risen every quarter for five years, and delinquencies for student loans are higher than for any other type of debt. Sharp increases in house prices have put home buying in the too-hard basket. And the erosion of the manufacturing sector has left many young men struggling to find meaningful and remunerative work.

As people marry later in life, they're unused



“to having someone looking over their shoulder” at their spending habits, says Steve Dorval, CEO of Twine and head of innovation at John Hancock. The company’s app allows couples to share as much information as they desire, so they can, as Dorval puts it, “tiptoe into” transparency. On the app Honeydue, couples can use social-media-like comments, including emojis, to ask each other about recent expenses, perhaps to lighten any tension around the subject.

OF COURSE, THE IDEA that partners might have financial discord isn’t completely new; it’s been a topic in premarital courses offered by churches for years. But as young people move away from religion, other entities are picking up the slack. In April, Zola, the wedding-registry company, paired with online financier SoFi to offer newlyweds financial advice; the ability to open joint investment accounts; and the option to allow guests who aren’t feeling the napkin rings on the registry to pay down college debt or throw some cash toward other financial goals.

This trend inspired financial planner Richard Davey to co-create Marriage Money Bootcamp, an online lecture course for couples who want to figure out their finances without the faith stuff. The site, which launched in 2018, has a widget that lets people ask questions in real time, and the team has noticed that couples sometimes use it when they are clearly in the middle of a fight. Davey is now thinking of getting certified as a therapist as well. “Personal

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“We were very opposite, Kevin having no debt, and me having debt, and we definitely fought a lot,” Bee Wyatt says of their relationship

financial planning is not very complex. It’s the relationship piece that is tough,” he says.

The rationality of financial planning and the intuition of therapy aren’t necessarily a natural fit. But for couples who need a more human touch than an app can provide, a specialist in both might be what gets them to book an office visit. “In general, we’ve had more resistance from the therapy industry than we have from the financial advisers,” says Kristy Archuleta, who co-founded the financial-therapy certification course at Kansas State and is now an associate professor in financial planning, housing and consumer economics at the University of Georgia. “According to research, this may be because therapists tend to be money-avoidant themselves and they have very little training in it.”

Couples who are put off by an in-office therapy visit can opt for the revival-meeting style of the Ramsey events, which are full of brio and breaking into discussion groups and carefully chosen statistics. “When you agree on your money, you’re agreeing on more than just money. You’re agreeing on the goals and your fears and your dreams,” says Cruze.

Bee and Kevin were so thrilled to find a way to talk through their issues—and to budget—that they are taking their church’s offer of marital counseling more seriously. “By the end of December, we should be debt-free,” says Bee. “You know, we still disagree about what money gets allocated to what thing,” says Kevin. “But we work that out. I wouldn’t say there’s fights now. It’s just more of a heated talk.” □

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Time Off

AS YOU WERE
Joe Pesci and
Robert De Niro
technologically
de-aged in Martin
Scorsese's Mob
masterpiece
The Irishman



INSIDE

REAL STARS AND REAL FEELING
IN MARRIAGE STORY

APPLE'S MARQUEE SERIES
THE MORNING SHOW

THE STORIED HISTORY OF
THE APOLLO THEATER

MOVIES

The older and wiser guy

By Stephanie Zacharek

EVEN WITHOUT THE NOW ALMOST UBIQUITOUS modifier *toxic* in front of it, *masculinity* has become a dirty word. That's as true in the world of film as anywhere else. White male directors—Who needs them? White male stars? Ditto. *Old* white male directors and stars? Let's not even go there.

The stories of white men have been told to death. And here comes Martin Scorsese with yet another film about gangsters obsessed with guns and status, a story in which women are mostly relegated to the sidelines. *The Irishman* may be the last thing you want to see right now.

Yet even if *The Irishman* takes place almost completely in a world of men, it's all about the limits of that world—and about how even the most thoughtless and ruthless men somehow long for women's approval, even if they can't, or won't, admit it. Scorsese has never bought into facile readings of masculinity: In *Taxi Driver*, a loner's fantasies of heroic vigilantism push him beyond his limits. *The Wolf of Wall Street* is a burlesque of American male greed. *The Aviator* shows us a dashing, ambitious capitalist whose eccentricities morph over time into crackpot paranoia. Scorsese's 25th narrative feature inches into even subtler realms. *The Irishman* is a late-career masterpiece, a picture that couldn't have been made by a young man, or by anyone without Scorsese's range of experience as a filmmaker. It's an antidote to men's insistence on their own superiority and power, and a reminder that old age, if we're lucky enough to see it, eventually brings us all to our knees. *The Irishman* is about everything life can take out of a man—even one who thinks he has everything.

SCORSESE AND SCREENWRITER Steven Zaillian adapted *The Irishman* from Charles Brandt's 2004 potboiler *I Heard You Paint Houses*, about a lower-tier Mafia figure, Frank Sheeran, who claims he killed Jimmy Hoffa, the onetime Teamster president who went missing in 1975 and was finally declared dead in 1982, though his body was never found. (The book's title refers to alleged Mafia code for discreetly approaching a man who's willing to kill, for a price.) The picture unites three actors who have worked together before in various permutations, though never all in the same film. Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci—all in superb, layered performances—play characters whose arc spans the 1950s to the early 2000s, which means their faces, appropriately weathered in real life, required extensive digital de-aging. In their younger guises, the artificial marble smoothness of their skin is distracting at first, but you learn not to notice it. These actors, de-aged, don't even fully look like their younger selves; their faces are semi-new creations, more like sketches made from memory than images we can fact-check by revisiting old movies.



▲
The Irishman opens in limited theaters Nov. 1 before arriving on Netflix worldwide Nov. 27

The Irishman opens in the early 2000s, as an aged Frank, played by De Niro, begins recounting, from his nursing-home wheelchair, either the truth as it happened or a series of tall tales. He flashes back to 1975, and then further back, to the mid-1950s, when, as a delivery-truck driver, he meets Russell Bufalino (Pesci), the boss of a small but mighty Northeastern Pennsylvania crime family. Pinched and miserable, Russell commands rather than earns respect. With his creased brow and perpetual scowl, he could be a tortured gremlin out of Dante's *Inferno*. He takes Frank under his wing and launches him in a new line of work: rubbing guys out.

Frank accepts these jobs with more equanimity than bluster, but they do give him power and a sense of purpose. And in the course of his work—a career packed with colorful, crooked men, most of whom end up prematurely dead—he eventually meets Hoffa (Pacino), an affable guy who thinks in big loops and speaks in even bigger gestures—the air around him vibrates with his big-boss energy. He'll get the job done, whatever it takes, consorting



with mobsters as needed.

Frank becomes Hoffa's unofficial sometime bodyguard and a close friend: each man is welcomed into the other's family, absorbed into whatever warmth is there. It's not until the movie's end that you understand how golden this time was, for both of them. If women mostly drift around the periphery of *The Irishman*—Hoffa's wife Josephine is played by Welker White; Frank's wife Irene by Stephanie Kurtzuba—they're also the near-invisible network that keeps the men going. And the most defiant force in *The Irishman*, one that pits the three male characters in a stubborn and destructive triangle, is a woman, Frank's daughter Peggy, played as a girl by Lucy Gallina and as a teenager and grown woman by Anna Paquin.

Peggy is a sensitive soul who knows what a bully her father is; she keeps her distance, and it pains him. But if Peggy despises her father, she recoils from Pesci's Russell. With no kids of his own, Russell longs to earn her affection: in one of the movie's most searing scenes, he presents the young Peggy with a Christmas gift—ice skates, plus a generous chunk of cash—that repulses rather

Not-so-good fellas

The faces behind the grim story of *The Irishman*



FRANK SHEERAN

Sheeran (**De Niro**), whose nickname gives the movie its title, was a Teamsters official and Philly Mob associate. When interviewed for the book, he offered confessions to a string of Mafia-related murders, including Hoffa's, the veracity of which remains in question.



RUSSELL BUFALINO

Known as "the quiet don," Bufalino (**Pesci**) was allegedly recruited by the CIA to spy on Cuba before the Bay of Pigs landings. He was convicted in 1982 of conspiracy to kill a witness.



JIMMY HOFFA

Hoffa (**Pacino**), longtime president of the Teamsters union, spent four years in jail for crimes including mail fraud and bribery before being pardoned by President Nixon. He disappeared in 1975, and his death remains one of the most famous unsolved mysteries.

—Alejandro de la Garza

than delights her. Her disdain crushes him, only reinforcing the one behavior that works for him: bullying. His life has no meaning unless he's in control.

Hoffa, garrulous and avuncular and gruffly kind, also adores Peggy, and she loves him back, seeing him, with at least partial accuracy, as a champion of the little guy—not as the kind of man who, like Frank or Russell, might crush that guy under his boot. Paquin is wonderful here: she turns Peggy's disgust and revulsion into a kind of bristly radiance. No wonder she's one of the most powerful characters in the movie, albeit one with relatively few lines. Both Frank and Russell see how easily Hoffa's charm works on her; how could they not resent it? What's coming is a betrayal of Shakespearean proportions, and it's a daughter's love—or withholding of that love—that helps set off its destructive vibrations.

FOR THE FIRST 2½ hours of its 3½-hour runtime, *The Irishman* is clever and entertaining, to the point where you may think that's all it's going to be. But its last half hour is moving in a way that creeps up on you, and it's then that you see what Scorsese was working toward all along: a mini-history of late-20th century America—and its machismo—as filtered through the eyes of a small-time guy who needs to believe in his own importance and capacity for decency.

The Irishman is a ghost twin to another Scorsese movie, one that also featured De Niro and Pesci: the 1990 *Goodfellas*. In places it has the same freewheeling jauntiness, though not nearly as much macho swagger. Guys like the ones we meet in *Goodfellas* live in the bluntness of their present. Today's virile, angry energy is all that matters. Who cares what happens tomorrow?

But *The Irishman*, digging deep into strata of betrayal and regret and loss, is affecting in a way *Goodfellas* is not. An old man couldn't have made that movie, just as a younger one couldn't have made this one. *The Irishman* is all about the tomorrow that a young man with power never has to think about, a tomorrow that's here before you know it. The world is his—until it isn't. □



REVIEW

Scenes from a marriage, and the scars left behind

By Stephanie Zacharek

IN THE DAYS WHEN MOVIE STARS USED TO APPEAR IN MAINSTREAM melodramas made for grownups—when we used to have mainstream melodramas made for grownups—it meant something to watch suffering play out on a deeply familiar face. Joan Crawford, James Stewart, Barbara Stanwyck: surely, with their charisma and their carriage, these people couldn't be as susceptible to emotional torment as we mere mortals are. But then you'd see their hearts being broken or their spirits being crushed, and the sting was acute. They reminded you that no one is too beautiful to feel pain.

That's the effect of watching Scarlett Johansson and Adam Driver, two of our own most appealing modern movie stars, in writer-director Noah Baumbach's devastating *Marriage Story*. Johansson and Driver play Nicole and Charlie, the two halves of a disintegrating couple: He's a smart, modestly successful theater director about to debut his first show on Broadway. She's his star actor, enormously gifted but overshadowed by her husband's ambition and outsize confidence.

Nicole and Charlie have a son together, Henry (Azhy Robertson), whom they clearly adore. But things have gone jaggedly wrong between them. Nicole is about to leave the family's home in New York for Los Angeles, where she'll be filming a TV pilot—it's a big deal for her, though she senses Charlie looks down on the project. (He kind of does.) She'll be taking Henry with her, and although the understanding is that the two will return to New York after her work is done, the act of dissolving the marriage is already in progress.

Nicole and Charlie have made it clear to each other and to everyone else that their split is going to be friendly, with minimal impact on Henry. But once Nicole reaches Los Angeles, the proceedings escalate. She connects with an almost diabolically shrewd divorce lawyer (Laura Dern, in a performance as cleanly chiseled as her collarbones). And before long, Nicole and Charlie are barely speaking, with Henry's future the fulcrum between them.

IF BAUMBACH HAS, until this point, merely signaled that these two characters will inflict great pain upon each other, this is where he really opens the floodgates. Nicole and Charlie spar and claw at one another, drawing figurative blood if not the real kind. (At one point, Charlie semi-inadvertently slices into one of his own veins.) Their mutual antagonism is wrenching to watch because they, and Baumbach, have already shown us what things were like in better times. Both Baumbach's script and his direction are achingly perceptive. He never attempts to explain why this marriage fell apart, perhaps because he knows that no one outside a marriage can know the truth of it.

And his actors, living that secret out loud for us, are astonishing. Driver's features are rubbery, agile, insanely likable—he's got the kind of nose babies love to grab. To see Charlie close down—to see his face as swollen as a thundercloud with anguish and anger—is to see a movie star channel the very things we've all, at one time or another, struggled to suppress. Johansson's mode is different but no less affecting. She sends feeling out in packets of light—one minute she bathes you in a pale, reassuring night-light glow; the next might be a power-surge flash, as if some unseen, wrathful goddess were sending lightning bolts to earth through her fingertips. But mostly, Nicole guards her feelings more closely than Charlie does. Her subterranean vulnerability is like a heartbeat you can see. There's no winner at the end of *Marriage Story*—only two people who have lost. Torn asunder, they leave us, too, feeling bereft.

▲
Johansson, Robertson and Driver: a family forever, even after a marriage dies

MARRIAGE STORY opens in limited theaters Nov. 6 before streaming on Netflix Dec. 6



Norton in *Motherless Brooklyn*:
Child of a Lethem god

REVIEW

Motherless adopted

Fans of Jonathan Lethem's inventive 1999 detective novel *Motherless Brooklyn* will find Edward Norton's film adaptation almost completely unrecognizable. That's because Norton—who also wrote, produced and stars in the film—jettisoned most of the plot and made up his own, moving the action from 1990s Brooklyn to the 1950s.

But there's something to be said for grand ambition, and Norton goes for broke here. He does preserve the most important element of Lethem's book, the hero: Lionel Essrog (played, in a deft performance, by Norton himself) is a gumshoe who suffers from Tourette's syndrome—seemingly incongruous phrases and sentences tumble from his mouth, unbidden, in a jazzy word salad. The plot—a labyrinthine mystery involving a housing-rights activist (the marvelous Gugu Mbatha-Raw) and a power-mad bureaucrat modeled on infamous master builder Robert Moses (played, with delightful huffiness, by Alec Baldwin)—is cluttered. But if you can forgive Norton that, his re-creation of 1950s New York is a joy to behold. He even brings the old Penn Station back from the dead—which may be the go-big-or-go-home gesture of 2019. —S.Z.

MOTHERLESS BROOKLYN
opens in theaters Nov. 1

REVIEW

Courting danger en route to freedom

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO CONCEIVE of awe-inspiring historical figures like abolitionist hero Harriet Tubman as living, breathing people. But a single visual cue can make a difference: a recently discovered photograph shows a younger Tubman, a contemplative, vibrant-looking woman in a stylish dress. That's the Tubman director Kasi Lemmons brings to life in her carefully observed biographical film *Harriet*: it's as if Tubman walks among us, melting away the years between her life and ours.

Cynthia Erivo plays Tubman, whom we first meet as a slave—her birth name is Araminta Ross—on a farm in Bucktown, Md., circa 1849. She's married to a free black man and yearns for freedom herself, at least partly to escape the sinister advances of her master's son (an oily Joe Alwyn). Araminta pulls off a daring escape, even leaping from a bridge when she finds herself cornered by the dogs and men on horseback who are quite literally hunting her. She makes her way, at great risk, to Philadelphia, building

a new life for herself with the help of a sophisticated businesswoman and adviser (played, with glittering vitality, by Janelle Monáe). But the woman who now calls herself Harriet Tubman can't forget those she left behind. She returns again and again to Maryland's Eastern Shore, often in disguise, to guide

other slaves to freedom. The dangers increase with each trip.

Lemmons—who has directed some splendid pictures over the years, among them *Eve's Bayou* and *The Caveman's Valentine*—is fully alive to both the danger and beauty of the landscape of the American South—even the shape of a tree, craggy and twisted or lush with leaves,

could be either a warning or a welcome. Erivo shines through it all, giving us a glimpse into the mind of a steadfast woman of purpose. Her Tubman is as bold and alive as the woman staring at us from that photograph. The directness of her gaze is the ultimate challenge. —S.Z.

'She's about 5'1", but she has the presence of a 7'2" basketball player.'

OMAR J. DORSEY,
actor, in *Entertainment Weekly*, on *Harriet* star Cynthia Erivo

HARRIET opens in theaters Nov. 1



Tubman (Erivo) is a heroine for the ages



REVIEW

Jennifer minus Steve in the morning

By Judy Berman

ON NOV. 29, 2017, SAVANNAH GUTHRIE AND HODA KOTB greeted *Today* viewers with the news that NBC had fired their co-host Matt Lauer amid reports of sexual misconduct. “We are heartbroken,” said Guthrie, in a speech that expressed sympathy for Lauer’s alleged victims as well as sorrow over the loss of a colleague. Both women appeared to be fighting tears.

It was an arresting moment, one that felt raw and brave enough to cut through the daily onslaught of #MeToo revelations in the fall of 2017. But, as genuine as Guthrie and Kotb might’ve been, the announcement also functioned as a savvy attempt to reinstall trust in a news organization that had apparently failed to protect its staff from chilling abuses of power. That uncomfortable mix of real emotion and calculated crisis PR is a subject of fascination for *The Morning Show*, which enlists Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon and Steve Carell in the flagship offering from Apple TV+.

The most polished of a handful of series debuting with the Nov. 1 launch of Apple’s streaming service, the drama follows the cutthroat cast and crew of a *Today*-like show. The project, based on media reporter Brian Stelter’s 2013 nonfiction book *Top of the Morning*, was greenlighted before the Lauer bombshell dropped. But its creative team (which includes executive producers Aniston and Witherspoon) made drastic changes in response to #MeToo, hiring a female showrunner, *Friday Night Lights* vet Kerry Ehrin, and shifting the story’s focus to a sexual-misconduct scandal involving a male anchor (Carell’s Mitch Kessler). In the premiere, Aniston, who plays Mitch’s longtime co-host Alex Levy, gives a mono-

◀ When #MeToo comes for Mitch (Carell), Alex (Aniston) is left without a co-host

logue clearly inspired by Guthrie’s. What Alex’s viewers don’t know is that her performance is, in large part, a woman’s desperate ploy to save her job—and that her feelings about Mitch are actually quite complicated.

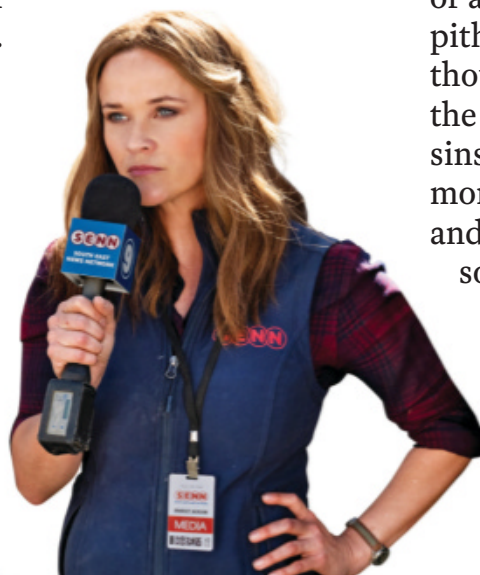
As she jockeys for an advantage in contract negotiations with suits who see her as an over-the-hill ice queen, a new face appears at the office: local-news reporter Bradley Jackson (Witherspoon, in an impressive 180-degree pivot from her officious *Big Little Lies* character), a smart, blunt libertarian with a quick temper and a working-class mom and brother who rely on her support. Bradley’s politics and personality have cost her plenty of jobs—making her both an unlikely *Morning Show* hire and an ideal foil for Alex, whose poised veneer conceals years of simmering rage.

YOU CAN SEE WHY Apple is leading with *The Morning Show*: it’s a sophisticated drama with A-list stars that capitalizes on hot topics and hot gossip. It goes all-in on prestige-TV signifiers, investing in a dream supporting cast (Mark Duplass, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Billy Crudup, Néstor Carbonell, Bel Powley) and music from Oscar nominee Carter Burwell. If it takes a while to get a feel for most characters, Alex and Bradley come off as logical extensions of Aniston’s girls’-girl relatability and Witherspoon’s intensity.

Yet the show doesn’t have the same depth or experimental spirit as the top tier of TV in 2019. Rather, it resembles a more muted Shonda Rhimes serial or a less smug Aaron Sorkin joint—it’s pithy and easy to watch but rarely as thought-provoking as you’d hope, given the topic. Mitch’s murky, sub-Lauer sins and Carell’s operatic tears hint at moral ambiguity without confronting it, and Ehrin adds little (in the three episodes sent to critics) to the #MeToo discourse. *The Morning Show* could make a great core program for Apple TV+, if only its scripts had the courage of its lead characters.

THE MORNING SHOW premieres Nov. 1 on Apple TV+

With cameras rolling, Bradley (Witherspoon) speaks her mind





REVIEW

Live at the Apollo

When Barack Obama spoke at the Apollo Theater in 2012, he opened by singing a few bars of Al Green's "Let's Stay Together." It was a gesture of deference from America's first black President to a living monument to African-American art—an acknowledgment that when you take the stage at the Apollo, no matter who you are, you'd better put on a show.

The clip makes a lovely denouement to *The Apollo*, a long-overdue documentary on the 85-year-old Harlem landmark. In tracing a history that mirrors the struggles and triumphs of black life through the decades, director Roger Ross Williams (*Life, Animated*) demonstrates the venue's singular impact on icons from Billie Holiday to James Brown to Lauryn Hill. Luminaries like Patti LaBelle offer gossip from backstage. Amateur Night gets its due; in one amusing scene, Williams observes a staffer warning novice performers that they might get booed. Most fascinating are glimpses—too rare though they are—behind the curtain of the now-nonprofit theater in the present, as a board that refuses to let the Apollo become a dusty museum works to keep fostering the future of black art. —J.B.

THE APOLLO airs Nov. 6 on HBO

REVIEW

Coming of age in an alternate reality

TWELVE IS A TOUGH AGE. HOW'S A KID supposed to focus on school when it's only a matter of time before her life-long anthropomorphic animal companion stops shape-shifting and settles into its permanent form—which could be a lion or a bird or, how mortifying, a cockroach? Caught between childhood and the inscrutable world of adults, a girl might need a female mentor to, say, teach her how to use a contraband device called an alethiometer that works kind of like an omniscient, cosmic Google.

O.K., so maybe those aren't common preteen experiences in our reality. But in the alternate universe of *His Dark Materials*, a TV adaptation of Philip Pullman's beloved fantasy trilogy, talking-animal sidekicks known as daemons are the norm. And 12-year-old hero Lyra (Dafne Keen)—a scrappy orphan growing up in the halls of Oxford as her explorer uncle (James McAvoy) travels north in search of parallel realms—really could use a woman in her life. It's just a shame that the one who finally spirits her away is Mrs. Coulter (Ruth Wilson, playing it coy), a mysterious visitor who chooses Lyra as a protégé.

In less rarefied corners of this slantwise Britain, where planes and

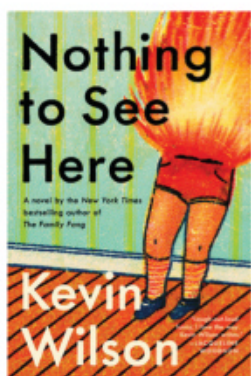
computers don't exist but airships and apparently mass-produced clothing do, children are being kidnapped. A society of canal-dwelling nomads, the Gyptians, have been hit hardest. And the state's theocratic overlords don't seem to care. With Lyra's buddy Roger (Lewin Lloyd) missing and the help of a warrior polar bear, a somewhat miscast Lin-Manuel Miranda and an alethiometer that only she can read, a rescue quest takes shape.

It's a wonderful story, rendered with the liveliness—and the budget—Pullman's books deserve. Keen's Lyra has tomboy charm for miles, and her frustration that everyone seems to know more than she does about who she is captures a feeling that, in more abstract form, is universal to her age. Yet the show's world-building can be messy, as early episodes struggle to establish the conventions of this reality. Coulter's Art Deco apartment, a *Harry Potter*-ish Oxford and an arctic outpost straight out of the 19th century Yukon don't add up to a coherent aesthetic. *His Dark Materials* doesn't transcend its genre—but if you love fantasy, it'll cast a spell. —J.B.

HIS DARK MATERIALS premieres Nov. 4 on HBO



Lyra (Keen) consults with her daemon



FICTION

Little fires everywhere

Twenty-eight-year-old Lillian is unmotivated and down on her luck when her old friend Madison offers her an intriguing job opportunity—to be the governess of her twin stepkids for the summer. In Kevin Wilson’s *Nothing to See Here*, the twins’ mother has just died and they’re living with their father, a Senator, for the first time in years. Madison doesn’t have time to look after the 10-year-olds because her husband’s career is taking off. And there’s another problem: the twins keep spontaneously bursting into flames.

If that gives you pause, it shouldn’t. The book would be incomplete without this bizarre element. As in Wilson’s other novels (*Perfect Little World*, *The Family Fang*), absurdity quickly gives way to a darkly funny yet quietly devastating story. Lillian is entrusted with keeping the twins out of the public eye as their father gains prominence as a public official. They live in the guesthouse, keep to swimming in the backyard and are hardly ever invited to eat meals with the rest of their family.

Lillian quickly learns the importance of being present with the twins and, in doing so, is disheartened by the powerful people who have left them behind. As things get thorny—the twins want to see the outside world, and Lillian yearns to let them—Wilson crafts a stunning portrait of the push and pull of parenthood.

—A.G.

FICTION

Magic behind closed doors

By Annabel Gutterman

“A BOY AT THE BEGINNING OF A STORY has no way of knowing that the story has begun.” So writes Erin Morgenstern early on in her latest fantasy epic, *The Starless Sea*, when her protagonist decides not to open a very special door. The door, with a golden knob and intricately painted carvings, has mysteriously materialized on a wall in the New Orleans alley that Zachary Ezra Rawlins always cuts through on his walk home from school. Though the young boy is captivated by its perplexing appearance, he decides to move along, and the next day the door is gone.

The Starless Sea soon flashes forward to years later and finds Zachary, now a graduate student, in his university library. There, he discovers an authorless book, which has documented in spookily accurate detail his experience of seeing but not opening that mesmerizing door. Baffled by the book and its specificity, Zachary sets off to discover where it came from, how someone could have known so much about a small moment from his childhood and, naturally, what could possibly have been behind that door.

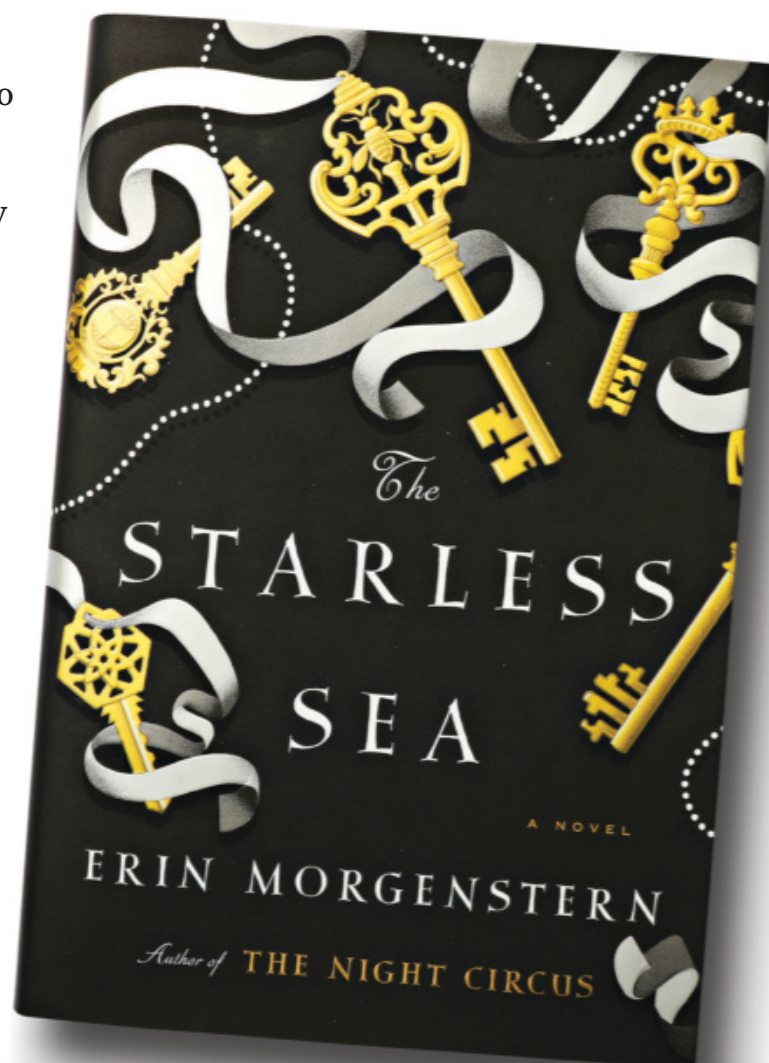
Morgenstern, known for her 2011 best-selling debut *The Night Circus*, which has sold more than 3 million copies, launches Zachary on a mystical adventure in an enchanted universe as he searches for answers. Eventually his quest leads him to an underground library—a space wafting with secrets and magic—where he meets a cast of characters ready to help him.

But the novel is not simply a quest narrative—it’s also a meta-examination of stories that demands the

reader’s patience—and then rewards it. Morgenstern intersperses Zachary’s journey with fables and myths from more books he finds along the way. There are pirates and ships, painters and princesses and long-lost lovers—characters and worlds that at first appear to bear no relation to Zachary or to one another.

Morgenstern’s elegant, poetic prose keeps the pages turning as she begins to draw connections within a web of tales that reads like an ode to stories, themselves, and celebrates the distinct pleasure that comes from engaging with a text. For Zachary, that pleasure outweighs any temptation he might have to return to school and his regular life. It leads, instead, to a journey of sacrifice and self-discovery as he unearths his own place in the puzzling book’s narrative. For everyone else, the thrill comes from watching him on the ride. □

A quest narrative and an ode to storytelling





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8 Questions

David Henry Hwang The playwright on growing up Asian American, learning from Sam Shepard and his new play *Soft Power*

Your plays *Soft Power* and *M. Butterfly* are extensions of *The King and I* and *Madame Butterfly*, respectively. What interests you about creating work in dialogue with classics? When I was an Asian kid in America in the '60s, and whenever there was any TV show or movie with an Asian character, I would go out of my way not to watch it because I just assumed it was horrible. I've come to realize, maybe from working on *Soft Power*, that as a kid I felt oppressed by American popular culture. Therefore a lot of my adult life has been about trying to gain access to the levers of that culture.

Do you still feel like American pop culture is oppressive? I think American pop culture is still pretty oppressive. Hollywood has begun to realize that diversity is more than just a suggestion—it's really economics. As the writer Jeff Yang puts it, racism is no longer a viable business model. That potentially means that things are getting better. But it's not hard to find examples of American pop culture now that recycle tropes that are racist and sexist.

***Soft Power* explores the differences between the Chinese and American approaches to creating art. Are the two fundamentally different?** They are and they aren't. People who are making art in China are subject to content restrictions. But one could argue that in the West, you're also working under content restrictions—they're just capitalist. However, I think there is probably an inherent contradiction between China's desire for soft power and its top-down control of artists.

What can Americans learn from the Chinese perspective? In terms of civil society, China's lack of freedom is a problem. But the communal understanding and care for one another—that feels like something America, in its hyperindividualism and runaway capitalism, could learn from.

“I NEVER EXPERIENCED OVERT RACISM, BUT YOU ALWAYS KNEW THAT YOU WERE NOT COMPLETELY ACCEPTED”



How have the increased geopolitical tensions between China and the U.S. complicated your identity as an Asian American? It reminds me more of when I was a kid. I never experienced overt racism, but you always knew that you were not completely accepted. And at that point, the United States had been at war with practically every Asian country. So having this face means that you kind of look like the enemy, in history or in current events or in movies.

You were almost killed when you were stabbed in New York in 2015. Has it been difficult to regain a basic trust in the world? Not so much. I think I repressed the whole thing sufficiently that I was able to just go about my business. But that anxiety has to go someplace—and it went into this play.

Do you think classic plays with problematic elements—like *The King and I* or *Porgy and Bess*—should be retired? I don't advocate the retirement of plays. I feel like there are wonderful things, craft-wise, about a lot of these works. I think it's quite possible some of these works will be retired as they outlive their usefulness. But in the meantime, it's fine to be aware of what we're seeing—and be rigorous about understanding the context in which they were made.

You studied playwriting with Sam Shepard. What's the most enduring thing you learned from him? He was really rigorous about work that feels honest, as opposed to something that feels contrived for effect. I certainly write things that are contrived for effect—in this show I manipulate musical-theater tropes or white-savior tropes. But I think the root of *Soft Power* comes from a very personal and honest investigation of what it means to be Asian American, and therefore, what my relationship is to China.

—ANDREW R. CHOW



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