

## Dry Hydrants Doomed Battle With Maui Fire

### Town's System Strained by Drought in Region

This article is by **Mike Baker, Kellen Browning and Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs.**

LAHAINA, Hawaii — During the frantic moments on Tuesday after a wildfire jumped containment near a residential neighborhood in Lahaina, Hawaii, firefighters rushing to slow the spread were distressed to find that their hydrants were starting to run dry.

Hoping to control the blaze as it took root among homes along the hillside nearly a mile above the center of town, fire crews encountered water pressure that was increasingly feeble, with the wind turning the streams into mist. Then, as the inferno stoked by hurricane-force gusts grew, roaring further toward the historic center of town on the island of Maui, the hydrants sputtered and became largely useless.

"There was just no water in the hydrants," said Keahi Ho, one of the firefighters who was on duty in Lahaina.

The collapse of the town's water system, described to The New York Times by several people on scene, is yet another disastrous factor in a confluence that ended up producing what is now the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than 100 years. The lack of water forced firefighters into an extraordinary rush to save lives by risking their own, and it has left people searching for answers about how the community can better prepare for a world of fiercer winds and drier lands.

Edwin Lindsey III, who goes by Ekolu, a Lahaina resident who lost his home and also sits on the county's Board of Water Supply, said he spoke with a firefighter who said it had been demoralizing for crews to watch the advance of the fire with little ability to slow it. He said he hoped that the water issues, one of a number of challenges the community faced — including a struggle to evacuate all residents

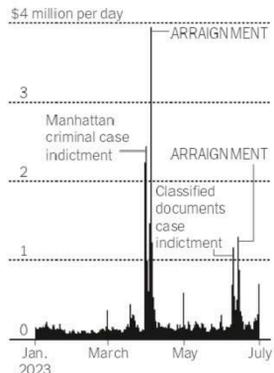
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MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

After former President Donald J. Trump was first indicted, the conservative movement and its media ecosystem rallied behind him.

### Online donations to Donald J. Trump



Source: Federal Election Commission | Notes: Data is through June 30. Fund-raising totals include money raised for Donald J. Trump for President 2024 and Trump Save America J.F.C. via WinRed.

ANDREW FISCHER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Indictments Became a Political Asset for Trump

This article is by **Jonathan Swan, Ruth Igielnik, Shane Goldmacher and Maggie Haberman.**

Early on March 18, former President Donald J. Trump hit send on a social media post saying he would be "arrested on Tuesday of next week."

"Protest," he wrote on his Truth Social website. "Take our nation back!"

Mr. Trump's prediction was based on media reports, according to his lawyers, and his timing was off by two weeks.

Yet the statement set in motion events that profoundly altered the course of the Republican nominating contest. Donors sent checks. Fox News changed its tune. The party apparatus rushed to defend Mr. Trump. And the polls went up

### Fund-Raising Windfall and Bump in Polling After the Charges

— and up.

These series of falling dominoes — call it the indictment effect — can be measured in ways that reveal much about the state of the Republican Party. To examine the phenomenon, The New York Times reviewed national and early state polls, interviewed Republican primary voters, examined federal campaign finance records, analyzed hundreds of party emails, scrutinized the shifts in conservative media coverage and talked to operatives in-

side the campaigns of Mr. Trump's rivals.

The analysis highlights Mr. Trump's dominance over the party, revealing the years of conditioning of millions of Republican voters who view Mr. Trump's legal troubles as a proxy attack on them. And it displays an upside-down reality where criminal charges act as political assets — at least for the purpose of winning the Republican nomination.

"The rally around the flag is not a new phenomenon in American politics, but Donald Trump has certainly taken it to a new level."

Continued on Page A10

**ROUGH TRIP** Gov. Ron DeSantis was taunted and overshadowed at the Iowa State Fair. PAGE A9

## The Story of an Enslaved Youth Emerges From Behind the Paint

By **ALEXANDRA EATON**

For many years, a 19th-century painting of three white children in a Louisiana landscape held a secret. Beneath a layer of overpaint meant to look like the sky: the figure of an enslaved youth.

Covered up for reasons that remain unspecified, the image of the young man of African descent was erased from the work around the turn of the last century and languished for decades in attics and a museum basement.

But a 2005 restoration revealed him, and now the painting has a new, very prominent home at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"I've been wanting to add such a work to the Met's collection for the past 10 years," said Betsy Kornhauser, the curator for American paintings and sculpture who

handled the acquisition, "and this is the extraordinary work that appeared."

Kornhauser said the museum acquired the work, known as "Bélizaire and the Frey Children," this year, as part of its larger effort to reframe how it tells the story of American art. The painting, attributed to Jacques Amans, a French portraitist of Louisiana's elite, will hang in the American Wing this fall and again next year during the wing's centennial celebration.

One reason "Bélizaire and the Frey Children" has drawn attention is the naturalistic depiction of Bélizaire, the young man of African descent who occupies the highest position in the painting,

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ELLIOT DEBRUYN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Metropolitan Museum of Art bought the portrait known as "Bélizaire and the Frey Children."

## INSIDE THE EFFORT BY TRUMP TO FLIP THE GEORGIA VOTE

### MAJOR CASE MAY LOOM

### Two Months of Tactics in a Crucial State After the 2020 Election

By **DANNY HAKIM  
and RICHARD FAUSSET**

ATLANTA — When President Donald J. Trump's eldest son took the stage outside the Georgia Republican Party headquarters two days after the 2020 election, he likened what lay ahead to mortal combat.

"Americans need to know this is not a banana republic!" Donald Trump Jr. shouted, claiming that Georgia and other swing states had been overrun by wild electoral shenanigans. He described tens of thousands of ballots that had "magically" shown up around the country, all marked for Joseph R. Biden Jr., and others dumped by Democratic officials into "one big box" so their authenticity could not be verified.

Mr. Trump told his father's supporters at the news conference — who broke into chants of "Stop the steal!" and "Fraud! Fraud!" — that "the number one thing that Donald Trump can do in this election is fight each and every one of these battles, to the death!"

Over the two months that followed, a vast effort unfolded on behalf of the lame-duck president to overturn the election results in swing states across the country. But perhaps nowhere were there as many attempts to intervene as in Georgia, where Fani T. Willis, the district attorney of Fulton County, is now poised to bring an indictment for a series of brazen moves made on behalf of Mr. Trump in the state after his loss and for lies that the president and his allies circulated about the election there.

Mr. Trump has already been indicted three times this year, most recently in a federal case brought by the special prosecutor Jack Smith that is also related to election interference. But the Georgia case may prove the most expansive legal challenge to Mr. Trump's attempts to cling to power, with nearly 20 people informed that they could face charges.

It could also prove the most enduring: While Mr. Trump could try to pardon himself from a federal conviction if he were re-elected, presidents cannot pardon state crimes.

Perhaps above all, the Georgia case assembled by Ms. Willis offers a vivid reminder of the extraordinary lengths taken by Mr. Trump and his allies to exert pressure on local officials to overturn the election — an up-close portrait of American democracy tested to its limits.

There was the infamous call that the former president made to Brad Raffensperger, Georgia's Republican secretary of state, during which Mr. Trump said he wanted to "find" nearly 12,000 votes, or enough to overturn his narrow loss there. Mr. Trump and his allies harassed and defamed rank-

Continued on Page A10

## Making Counteroffensive Work, Minus Air Cover

By **LARA JAKES**

Ukraine's counteroffensive began two months ago, but in many ways its forces have been preparing for it for years by learning how to fight like NATO militaries, with a mix of infantry, artillery, armored vehicles and air power.

But the Biden administration waited more than a year before letting NATO countries send F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine. By the time

### F-16s Would Help, but Kyiv Does Without

pilots are trained on the advanced aircraft, it will be too late for them to assist and protect ground forces slogging through this phase of fighting.

All of which has raised a question: Without significant air

power — a pillar of the warfare tactics that the West has urged Ukraine to adopt — can the counteroffensive prevail?

The answer appears to be yes, as current and former officials in Ukraine, the United States and Europe, as well as Western defense analysts, said in interviews last week as the counteroffensive ground on, with volleys of artillery fire and drone strikes but no major

Continued on Page A5

## Fast Life's Lure: F.B.I. Spy Hunter's Rise and Fall

This article is by **Michael Rothfeld, Adam Goldman and William K. Rashbaum.**

By the time he reached middle age, Charlie McGonigal was living a comfortable suburban life.

He had married and raised two children in a tidy Maryland neighborhood near the Capital Beltway. He coached his co-workers on an office softball team and went to church on Sundays. In his den, he

### Connection to Oligarch Leads to an Arrest

hung posters celebrating sports teams from his native Ohio; in his home office, a sign above a doorway announced in flowing script his devotion to his job.

"I want to thank the Good Lord," it read, "for making me a F.B.I.

Agent."

But Charles Franklin McGonigal was no ordinary agent. As the chief of counterintelligence for the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York, he was tasked with rooting out foreign efforts to steal vital national security and economic secrets in one of the world's most fertile cities for spying.

Apart from his outward image as a wholesome and responsible

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**Senegal Migrant Tragedy**  
Patrol vessels were pursuing a fishing boat bound for Spain when it struck rocks, killing at least 16 people. PAGE A4

**Mixing Worship and Protest**  
Iranians are using Ashura, a ritual celebrating Shiite identity, to express their anger at the government. PAGE A6

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### Slashing Medicaid Rolls

Since a Covid-era policy requiring states to keep people on the program ended, Texas has dropped more than 500,000 recipients. PAGE A9

### On High Shark Alert

A monitoring effort has been intensified in New York City after a rare attack at a popular beach. PAGE A16

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### Lyricist for 'The Fantasticks'

Tom Jones was half of the team behind a musical that began modestly but ran for a record 42 years. He was 95. PAGE B6



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Claire Simon, directing a movie about a Paris hospital, found out she had cancer. So she put herself in the film. PAGE C1

### A High-Profile Love Story

Filmmakers didn't want to disappoint fans of the novel about a U.S. president's son and a British prince. PAGE C1

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### China Cracks Down on Grief

By withholding information about national tragedies and censoring displays of mourning, the Chinese government represses public grief and tells history the way it wants it told. PAGE B1

### Worries About Press Freedoms

The local police force and county sheriff's deputies' search of The Marion County Record in Kansas led to the seizure of computers and cellphones of reporters and editors. PAGE B1

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**Esau McCaulley** PAGE A14



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### Uganda's in It for the Long Run

Led by a duo of world-record holders, distance runners from Mount Elgon are challenging decades of Kenyan and Ethiopian dominance. PAGE D1



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# Inside The Times

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## The Newspaper and Beyond

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### VIDEO

Lisa Lerer, a national political correspondent for The New York Times, traveled to the Iowa State Fair and spoke to voters about their options in the 2024 presidential election. Many of them were less than keen on a rematch between President Biden and Donald Trump. [nytimes.com/video](https://nytimes.com/video).

### AUDIO

In "Whalefall," a new thriller by Daniel Kraus, a teenage scuba diver is swallowed alive by a 60-ton sperm whale. The Times's Sarah Lyall reviewed the book, and on "The Book Review Podcast," she discussed its charms with the host Gilbert Cruz. [nytimes.com/tbrpodcast](https://nytimes.com/tbrpodcast).

### LEARNING NETWORK

Submissions are open for the final week of The Learning Network's summer reading contest, and the prompt is simple: What got your attention in The New York Times recently? Why? Students should write their responses in the comments section of an article found at [nytimes.com/learning](https://nytimes.com/learning).

## Quote of the Day

"He wants to eliminate the history by eliminating the collective memory."

**SONG YONGYI**, a historian, speaking about Xi Jinping, China's current leader, who has carried forward the government's practice of silencing the discussion of public tragedies. Page B1.

## The Story Behind The Story



MELISSA GOLDEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Group outings can help new bird-watchers develop their skills and contribute to a citizen-science project organized by The New York Times.

## Learning to See the Birds With My Bare Eyes

By **JIM COLGAN**

Jim Colgan, an events programmer at The Times, began birding this summer. He recently saw a hairy woodpecker.

Even with field guides and online encyclopedias, or an app that can instantly identify birds from a few chirps, bird-watching can be hard.

Roughly half of the 30,000 readers who signed up to join the New York Times birding project we launched this summer indicated that they were new to birding. Count me among them. I've honed the reflex to whip out the Merlin app to identify bird calls when I'm between work calls or on daily dog walks, yet I still struggle to remember what bird it was when I hear the melody again. Never mind the dots that fleet overhead, which experienced birders manage to name in seconds. Maybe, I thought, it was time to learn from people who have been doing it a while.

Recently we urged birding-project participants to join a local group outing. BirdLife International coordinated several walks in support of the Times project — one in Manhattan, one in Singapore and another in Nairobi, Kenya (more on those below). Where I live, in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Golden Gate Audubon Society organized outings, too; I joined two of them.

One started in the parking lot of a protected wildlife area called the Dotson Family Marsh, in Richmond, Calif. The group leader, David Mostardi, had barely introduced himself when he pointed a scope at an American kestrel that had perched on a nearby pylon. Two ospreys appeared overhead, and soon after we saw egrets flying close to the shore. All the while, Mr. Mostardi apologized for the lack of bird species compared to winter.

On the walk, we spotted a lone long-billed curlew by the water, about a dozen killdeer scurrying between shrubs and dozens of Canada geese, among other species. Fumbling with my binoculars, I struggled to see the various birds that people were calling out — that is, until someone advised me to first look closely with "bare eyes." It worked.

The second outing was in Blake Garden, a public garden in Kensington, Calif., that boasts more than 80 documented bird species. The group leader, Sonja Raub, urged silence as we listened to what she said were California towhees, then lesser goldfinches, then spotted towhees. Next she directed our attention, and our binoculars, to the redwood tree in front of us. "If you see the tree bark moving, it's probably a brown creeper," Ms. Raub said. But we were distracted by a Nuttall's woodpecker that was hard to miss.

A nearby acacia tree offered more towhees, woodpeckers and — I'm pretty sure — a Pacific-slope flycatcher. Another tree supposedly housed a nest of Cooper's hawks, but none were seen. Ms. Raub noted that raptors don't usually emerge until the day warms up, and sometime after 9 a.m. we saw a red-tailed hawk sparring with a turkey vulture high above; a few minutes later, a red-shouldered hawk flew over.

I cast my binoculars between distant branches and then noted aloud, with some pride, that I could see a song sparrow sunning itself in a patch on the ground below. My fellow birders asked me how to find it, and for the first time in my birding career, I didn't feel clueless.

This article first appeared in the Science Times newsletter; subscribe at [nytimes.com/newsletters](https://nytimes.com/newsletters). To sign up for The Times's birding project, visit [nytimes.com/birds](https://nytimes.com/birds).

## Birding With The Times

So far, more than 5,000 Times readers have installed eBird, Cornell's smartphone app for reporting what you've seen during your birding efforts, and more than 10,000 of you have downloaded the Merlin app, designed to help beginning birders identify what you've seen or heard.

Of the eBird users, 1,866 have used the #NYT tag to indicate that they're participating in this project, and those people have been prolifically going out, watching and submitting 65,014 checklists, or 35 checklists each. Most of the checklists were concentrated in the Northeast, but others have come from around the United States and the world, including southern Africa, Madagascar, the Caribbean and India.

Some #NYT birders were already using eBird — and they have been more active this summer, submitting 36 percent more checklists in July compared to July last year.

The numbers highlight just how popular birding has become and how quickly it continues to grow. In July there were 119,780 active eBird users worldwide, just over half of them in the United States — a 22.7 percent increase compared with July of last year. Merlin has 3.6 million users worldwide, including 2.2 million in the United States — doubling last year's numbers on both counts.

"This is mostly organic word-of-mouth growth," Drew Webster, the project manager for Merlin at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, said in an email. About 30,000 new users download Merlin on an average day.

## Today's Top Trending Headlines

▶ **The Clean Energy Future Is Arriving Faster Than You Think** In Sunday's newspaper, The Times published the first article in a three-part series examining the speed, challenges and politics of the American economy moving toward clean energy. The pace of change is surprising even experts. By 2025, renewable energy is expected to surpass coal as the largest source of electricity on the globe.

▶ **K2 Climbers Criticized Over Continuing Ascent After Finding Dying Porter** Kristin Harila, a Norwegian climber, defended her decision to continue a record-breaking series of climbs last month after encountering an injured porter who later died during her ascent of K2, the second-highest mountain in the world. Two other climbers who were on the mountain on that day, July 27, said that Ms. Harila and other climbers ignored the injured porter because they wanted to reach the summit instead of abandoning their pursuit.

▶ **Opinion | The Lost Boys of the American Right** David French, a Times Opinion writer, described the pull toward extremes among young right-wing men in America today. "Hatred, combined with masculine insecurity and cowardice," is leading these men toward positions of "outright bigotry and prejudice," he wrote.

▶ **Texas Revamps Houston Schools, Closing Libraries and Angering Parents** This spring, the state of Texas took over of Houston public schools, following years of poor performance at some schools. David J. Goodman, who is based in Houston for The Times, reported on the contentious changes introduced by the new superintendent.

## A Headline From History

### GRAF, STILL NEAR TOP OF TENNIS, LEAVES IT BEHIND

**August 14, 1999.** Steffi Graf abruptly retired from Tennis at the age of 30, The Times reported. From her home in Heidelberg, Germany, Graf said that after losing the Wimbledon final in July, she lacked her usual resolve to prepare for the hard court season. "For the first time in my career, I didn't feel like going to a tournament," she said. Graf, who won 22 major singles titles, was one of the sport's most dominant forces. She is the only player, male or female, to have won all four majors at least four times and is the only player to win the so-called Golden Slam, all four majors and the Olympic Gold Medal in the same year, which she achieved in 1988. She had a career singles winning percentage of 89 percent, compared to Serena Williams's 85 percent. "With her decision, Graf joined a Hall of Fame roster of 1999 retirees that includes Michael Jordan in basketball, John Elway in football and Wayne Gretzky in hockey," The Times wrote.

**Facts of Interest**

In China, Xi Jinping's government is expanding the city of Xiong'an to serve as an alternate national capital.

*When Tragedy Strikes in China, The Government Represses Grief B1*

Oil patterns in bowling lanes dictate how much the ball will hook. "House shot," an oil pattern used by most recreational bowling lanes, provides a larger margin of error and usually leads to higher scores.

*Studying the Limits Of Human Perfection, Through Darts D4*

Ashura, Shiite Islam's most sacred ritual, grieves for Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad who was beheaded in the year 680 in the battle of Karbala.

*Religious Ritual Turns Political, Extending Protests in Iran A6*

Kenya has produced six of the 10 fastest male marathoners in history, and five of the 10 fastest women.

*In Uganda, Renaissance For Distance Running D1*

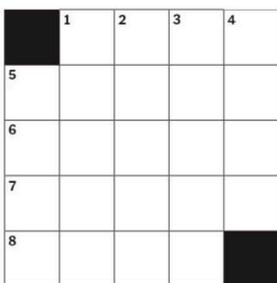
The policy that barred states from removing people from Medicaid during the coronavirus pandemic has ended, and the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that more than 15 million people will be dropped from Medicaid.

*Texas Becomes the Center Of Dropped Medicaid Coverage A9*

Israel has controlled all of Jerusalem since 1967 and declared the city as its undivided capital, but Palestinians hope that at least part of it will one day serve as the capital of a Palestinian state.

*Seeking Ties, Saudi Arabia Names Envoy to West Bank A6*

**The Mini Crossword**



8/14/2023 BY JOEL FAGLIANO

- ACROSS**
- 1 Chief god on Mount Olympus
  - 5 Digital payment app
  - 6 Head of a group of monks
  - 7 Shoes that can be decorated with charms known as Jibbitz
  - 8 Aggressively sell
- DOWN**
- 1 Each one has a unique stripe pattern
  - 2 Where your "funny bone" is located
  - 3 One way to secure a bike
  - 4 Tennis match divisions
  - 5 Comic actor Galifianakis

**ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**

C	R	U	M	B
H	O	N	E	Y
E	M	C	E	E
S	E	A	T	
T	O	P		

**Reader Corner**

**Tiny Love Stories**

Tiny Love Stories, a Modern Love project, asks contributors to share their epic love stories in 100 words or less. Read one edited Tiny Love Story below.



"Take a bath with me?" he asked. I wasn't the "hop-into-the-tub-on-the-first-date type," even if over the phone with 75 miles between us. I protested. He persisted. "Let's say we do meet," he said, "and we do hit it off, and we actually end up together for a long time — maybe even forever. Wouldn't this make a great story?" I poured a glass of wine and stepped into the tub. He broke out in song: "Rub-a-dub, just relaxing in the tub." We married 14 years ago. On our wedding table: Bride and groom rubber ducks.  
AMY PATUREL



JONATHAN DJOB NKONDO

**What to Watch in Politics**

**Key Takeaways From Washington and Across the Nation**



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Former President Donald. J. Trump could face another indictment in Fulton County, Ga.

A district attorney in Atlanta is expected to present a grand jury this week with findings from an investigation into 2020 election interference by Donald J. Trump and his allies, raising the possibility of a fourth indictment. The investigation centers on a handful of events, including Mr. Trump's call to the Georgia secretary of state asking him to "find" enough votes to reverse his 2020 loss there. In recent legal filings, Mr. Trump's lawyers have described an indictment in Georgia as a foregone conclusion. Nick Corasaniti, a politics reporter at The Times, explains more.

Fani T. Willis, the district attorney in Fulton County, Ga., has pursued the case for two and a half years and has indicated in the past that she would seek indictments from a grand jury in the first half of August. Mr. Trump, anticipating charges, has begun to attack Ms. Willis during his campaign events, referring to the district attorney, who is Black, as "racist."

The charges would come at a pivotal point in the Republican presidential primary. Mr. Trump holds a commanding lead in polls, but with the first Republican debate just over a week away, new legal trouble for him could provide more fodder for his opponents onstage.

Signs of an imminent indictment began to appear in Atlanta last week. Security barriers were recently erected in front of the downtown courthouse, and more than a dozen law enforcement vehicles were parked around the perimeter.

Indictments, however, have done little to hamper his dominance of the Republican primary. A recent New York Times/Siena College poll, released after the first two indictments, found that 71 percent of Republican voters said he had not committed serious federal crimes and that Republicans needed to stand behind him.

For more politics news, visit [nytimes.com/politics](https://nytimes.com/politics).

**Here to Help**

**The Benefits of Morning Meditation**

There are some things we all know we're supposed to do to feel better: drink more water, take more walks, go on fewer tequila benders. Meditation is another — research has shown it to help with everything from anxiety and depression to better sleep, lower stress levels and chronic pain relief.

But if you're new to meditating, it can be hard to know where to start. So start small — with five minutes of breathing exercises to calm and focus the mind every morning. Here's how to kick off your day — every day — with a quick and simple meditation.  
HOLLY BURNS

**Decide where and when you'll meditate.** Alma Ivanovic, the owner of Sun and Moon Meditation studio in Chicago, meditates every morning after she wakes up, sitting on the floor against her bed frame. Designating a specific spot helps with consistency, she said, because "it's like a pattern. When you see that space, it's like 'OK, that's what we do there.'"

**Set a timer.** Even if your mornings are chaotic, research suggests that just five minutes of meditation can decrease stress and anxiety the rest of the day. Ms. Ivanovic likes to use an hourglass so she can gaze at the moving sand, but a digital alarm on your phone works too, she said — "just make it something gentle, like a chime or a bell."

**Focus on your senses.** Next, bring your attention to your body. Notice any morning



LORENZO GRITTI

noises or smells, the quality of the light, even a lingering taste in your mouth. After a minute or so of this, "my favorite practice that feels useful is just watching your breath," said Aditi Shah, a meditation instructor for the fitness company Peloton.

**Correct yourself compassionately.** Meditation can feel intimidating because "we don't have a clear picture of what success looks like," Ms. Shah said. When she first started meditating, she often felt like "a bad meditator" when she got distracted.

Despite your best efforts, stray thoughts will often creep in. The key is not to see this as a failure.

"No matter how experienced you are, your mind is going to wander," Ms. Ivanovic said. When it does, gently redirect yourself back to your breath. Use the patient, forgiving tone you'd take with a child or pet, she added.

Well has articles that help you move. [nytimes.com/well](https://nytimes.com/well).



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# International

The New York Times

## Patrol to Stop Migrants Leads to a Deadly Boat Wreck Off Senegal

### Critics Say Border Tactics Make Perilous Trip Worse

By DIONNE SEARCEY  
and MADY CAMARA

DAKAR, Senegal — When a fisherman showed up for work on a recent morning at a popular beach in Dakar, the capital of the West African country of Senegal, he found a horrifying scene: Dead bodies splayed across the sand and a painted wooden boat bobbing unattended.

He plunged into the water to help search for survivors. The pirogue, a wooden fishing boat, had been loaded with migrants hoping to reach Spain, but instead it struck a ring of underwater rocks early on July 24.

At least 16 bodies were recovered, the latest in a string of tragedies to befall people risking the treacherous ocean route to Europe.

This boat, however, was being chased by patrol vessels from Spain and Senegal in near-total darkness when it hit the rocks, according to a witness who was on the beach and the leader of a local aid group who has spoken with survivors. The deputy mayor for the area also said in an interview that the boat was being pursued.

“This could have been avoided,” said the fisherman, Pape Djibril Samb, who was among the lifeguards, exercisers and other fishermen who are regulars on the beach but helped retrieve bodies.

Senegalese officials said they were investigating and declined to comment. A spokesman for Spain’s Interior Ministry, who declined to be named in keeping with the ministry’s policy, denied in an email that a Spanish patrol vessel pursued the pirogue, saying their patrol boat alerted the Senegalese authorities on land that a boat was sinking after it ran aground.

The tragedy at a beach beloved by runners and fishmongers, at the foot of the towering Mosque of the Divinity, shocked a nation accustomed to hearing about deadly events involving boats leaving Senegal packed with people heading for Spain, often via the Spanish Canary Islands. In just June and July, at least 547 people died in boats that left from Senegal, according to a tally from the Spanish aid group Walking Borders.

Patrols on the water have been rising in recent months, said local aid groups. They worry that new resources devoted to stopping migration will lead to more dangerous situations.

The accident raises difficult questions about how best to respond to the increasingly deadly crisis of irregular migration and shows how some aggressive efforts to curb arrivals can backfire.

European countries are stepping up efforts to intercept migrants long before they get near their own shorelines, and Senegal, which restricts migration by boat, is part of the effort. On Aug. 4, the E.U.’s ambassador to Senegal joined Senegal’s interior minister to inaugurate a new headquarters for Senegal’s air and border police — part of a nine million euro, or \$9.9 million, effort with Spain and France to help stop illegal migration.

Other resources from Europe have already arrived, including training and high-tech equipment for the Senegalese border police.

Senegal has yet to decide whether to accept a 2022 proposal from the European Commission to deploy Frontex, the E.U. border control agency. The plan would flood the area with more resources to combat illegal migration but has been denounced by local groups that demand more legal pathways for moving abroad.

The successes of recent crackdowns are on display across Senegalese government social media accounts, where officials boast of their busts of migrant boats leaving Senegal.

For the migrants on the pirogue off Dakar, the terror unfolded in the early-morning darkness not more than 50 yards from shore.

The witness said he was on the beach when he heard screaming. He could not be identified by name because he fears angering the Senegalese authorities. The New York Times talked to workers on the beach who said he had told them the same version of events that morning.

The witness said he rushed to find bod-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARMEN ABD ALI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Above and left, the remnants of a fishing boat that was loaded with migrants last month when it hit a chain of rocks while being chased by patrol ships from Spain and Senegal. At least 16 people were killed.



### ‘They could have avoided this situation by not chasing the boat.’

CHEIKH AHMADOU BAMBA FALL, president of Village du Migrant, an organization that helps families searching for missing migrants.

ies in the water and a rocking pirogue, with two navy vessels behind it shining floodlights on the scene and trying to pull aboard struggling people.

At the same time, the man said, dozens of people made it to shore and began running away.

He said he immediately phoned the police, who told him the pirogue in the water was the same boat that both Senegalese and Spanish ships had been pursuing. He stayed at the beach to pull in bodies. He also talked with one of the survivors, whose legs and feet were covered in sea urchin spines. He needed medical attention, and the police eventually took him to a hospital.

He said the survivor told him that pa-

trol vessels had been pursuing their fishing boat, and that the captain had been hurriedly trying to navigate to the beach so everyone could escape by land, rather than face arrest.

The witness said that a white man speaking Spanish into his mobile phone arrived at the beach that morning in a four-by-four vehicle and immediately approached the police at the scene.

The small bay where the episode unfolded is lined by a ring of volcanic rocks well known to the fishermen who work there, but nearly impossible to see at night. The water is deep where the boat spilled; people who helped recover bodies say the dead most likely could not swim.

Samba Kandji, deputy mayor of the area where the accident happened, was at the beach following the episode and said the police told him the boat had been pursued. He did not know which country the patrol vessels came from.

On the morning of the deaths, Village du Migrant, a local organization that helps families searching for missing migrants, posted on Facebook offering to help identify the dead, urging families to send photos and descriptions of their loved ones to a phone number provided by the organization.

Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Fall, the president of the group, said that survivors who had run away called in, and they reported that the boat had been pur-

sued by Spanish and Senegalese vessels. “They could have avoided this situation by not chasing the boat,” Mr. Fall said of the patrols.

Two survivors who remained on the beach were treated for their injuries and are in police custody, he said. Other survivors told Mr. Fall they were scared of being jailed like the two survivors found on the beach and declined interviews with The New York Times.

Mr. Fall said the increase in patrols had prompted more Europe-bound boats to embark from less commonly used points along the shoreline, hoping to evade detection. These launch points are sometimes more dangerous than well-known ones, he said.

Mr. Fall said the survivors he spoke with told him that their boat, packed with people, left from Thiaroye, a suburb of Dakar.

The Spanish Interior Ministry spokesman pointed to data collected as of July 31 that showed a decrease of 3.3 percent in illegal arrivals to Spain in the last year. He attributed the decline to the bilateral cooperation between Senegal and Spain.

However, as climate change shrivels crops and rising sea temperatures threaten fish stocks, the many Senegalese who make their livings farming and fishing may consider fleeing.

The pirogue that hit the rocks in Dakar, painted in swirls of reds, yellows and blues, hung in the water for days after the accident, a haunting, half-submerged reminder of a potential outcome of migrating by sea.

Ibrahim Pape Ndour, a fisherman, sat with his crewmen on that beach on a recent afternoon in a cabana mending their turquoise net, which had been severed by a giant trawler. Their work yields much less fish than in the past, Mr. Ndour said, blaming overfishing and plastic in the ocean.

He had helped to search for bodies from the pirogue that hit the rocks. But even he has dreams of Europe.

“Bring a boat right now, you’ll see. We’d all go,” he said, pointing to his crew. “Death is easy.”



# Kyiv Makes Its Counteroffensive Work, Minus Help From Fighter Jets

From Page A1

breakthroughs.

But it is likely to be far more difficult without the jets.

“It will have to happen without the F-16,” said Philip M. Breedlove, a retired United States Air Force general and former NATO commander, “but I believe they can.”

A former F-16 pilot, Mr. Breedlove said there was “great benefit” for Ukraine’s forces to learn and deploy the so-called combined arms tactics that are the backbone of modern ground warfare, given that they “are going to be applicable in many different phases of what you do, no matter what.”

Nevertheless, he added, “If you expect Ukraine to fight like we fight, then they have to have the tools that we have, and we have not given them those tools.”

Gen. Valery Zaluzhny, the top Ukrainian commander, has made the same point with considerable frustration.

Some experts said the dearth of air power had put Ukraine at a disadvantage this summer against Russian attack helicopters that have picked off Ukrainian tanks and armored vehicles. At least some of the helicopters are equipped with anti-tank missiles that are shot either too far or too low to be intercepted by Ukraine’s air defenses, according to Britain’s Defense Ministry.

Col. Markus Reischer, who oversees force development at Austria’s main military training academy, said that with more warplanes, Ukraine could better defend its ground troops from those attacks.

“This is what it is actually intended for,” said Colonel Reischer, a trained intelligence officer. “Military logic tells you, you have to have air superiority to conduct successful land operations.”

He added: “Some American generals, they say, ‘Well, it’s not what the Ukrainians need at the moment.’ I think this is a political statement, it’s not a military logical statement.”

Neither Ukraine nor Russia — despite its seemingly overwhelming advantage — has managed to achieve air superiority since the war began in February 2022.

Back then, Russia had 10 times as many fighter aircraft as Ukraine — 772 to 69 — including some that were far more technologically advanced, according to the Global Firepower Index,

Eric Schmitt contributed reporting.



PIROSHKA VAN DE WOUW/REUTERS

F-16 combat jets, part of the Netherlands Air Force. NATO countries can now send them to Ukraine, but pilot training on the advanced aircraft will take at least a year.

which ranks conventional war-making capabilities. Yet in the 18 months since, both sides have relied on artillery, drones and long-range missiles to attack.

That is because both Ukraine, with Patriot missiles, among other weapons, and Russia with its S-400 air defense systems, have formidable air defenses that have largely deterred each other from launching airstrikes near or behind the front lines with piloted warplanes.

For the most part, Ukrainian pilots currently flying their Soviet-era MiG and Sukhoi fighter jets take care not to get too close to their targets or to stay in the air for too long, to avoid becoming targets themselves. They get as close as they dare and then fire missiles, including long-range missiles recently provided by Britain and France, at fuel and ammunition depots and other military targets

before darting away.

In view of those limitations, a Biden administration official said in an interview last week that it was unclear whether Ukraine’s forces would be able to provide support to ground troops even if they had the F-16s. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss an issue that has become a sore point to the Ukrainians.

After Ukraine suffered heavy losses early in the counteroffensive by trying to follow the combined-arms approach, some commanders decided to abandon the effort and return to the tactics they know best — firing artillery and missiles to degrade Russia’s fighting capability in a war of attrition.

That was not a complete surprise to military experts, who said the problems went well beyond the absence of air power. Retired Col. Steve Boylan, a trained U.S. Army aviator and a former

spokesman for the Army’s Combined Arms Center in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., said it had taken years for American forces to learn “how to do it effectively — and not in the middle of a fight.”

As its name suggests, the modern fighting method combines infantry troops, armored tanks, artillery ground fire and air power in an effort to dominate ground warfare. Mr. Boylan said the tactics were developed as a better way to fight after the bloody trench warfare of World War I, but it was not until the 1990-91 Persian Gulf war that American troops fought in the combined arms units as they are deployed today.

Fighting without one of the elements — like air power, in Ukraine’s case — may force units to adjust, but “I would suspect that they would take our instruction, training and tactics as a baseline and modify it to what works best

for them,” Mr. Boylan said.

Yet for all that air power can bring to a battle, he said, “until you get troops on the ground, and actually take it, you don’t own it. And you can’t hold it.”

As it is, Mr. Breedlove said, Ukraine’s military is already one of the best-equipped and most battle-tested in Europe. Last week, President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said that plans for obtaining Western warplanes were moving forward, adding, “I have no doubt that F-16s will be in our skies.”

But that will require a lengthy training period, beginning for many with language lessons. American officials have said that Ukraine has identified only eight combat pilots — less than a single squadron — who speak English well enough to start at least a year of training. About 20 others are being sent to Britain this month to

learn English.

Sending just a handful of F-16s into battle would not make much difference in the war, said Douglas Barrie, a military aerospace expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. “It’s got to be adequate, it’s got to be up to the task,” he said.

If Ukraine had multiple properly trained and equipped squadrons of F-16s, Mr. Barrie said, “would it have helped in the counteroffensive? It’s a theoretical question, but the theoretical answer is yes.”

He said that Ukraine’s forces “were never going to be in a position” to launch a Western-style combined-arms offensive without air power.

Then again, he added, “If they hadn’t had any of this training, would we now be trying to figure out how to get the Russians out of Kyiv?”

## Ceaseless Shelling by Russians Kills 7 In Already Battered Kherson Region

By CASSANDRA VINOGRAD

Russian shelling ripped into homes in the Kherson region of southern Ukraine on Sunday morning, officials said, an assault that killed at least seven people, including a family of four, in an area that had already borne a heavy toll from relentless Russian bombardment.

A couple, their 23-year-old daughter, Sofia, and their 12-year-old son, Artem, were killed when a strike hit their yard in the village of Shyroka Balka at around 10 a.m., the Kherson regional military administration said. Another resident of the village also died and 13 people in the region were wounded, according to officials, as the local health authorities issued an urgent call for blood donors.

Calling it “another tragic day” for the region, Oleksandr Prokudin, the head of the regional military administration, said that shelling also killed two men — including the 67-year-old local pastor — in the village of Stanislav.

“Today, the Kherson region shook with terrible news,” Mr. Prokudin said in a statement, adding that Monday would be a day of mourning.

President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine condemned how Russian forces had “brutally attacked” the region, saying in his overnight address that there had been 17 reports of shelling by 6 p.m. local time.

Details about the attacks in the Kherson region on Sunday could not be independently verified, and Russia’s Ministry of Defense did not immediately comment. But the region has been under non-stop shelling since November, when Russian forces retreated from the regional capital, the city of Kherson, across the Dnipro River.

Mr. Prokudin said in a separate statement before the latest attacks that Russian forces had fired 365 shells at the region over the previous 24 hours, injuring three people.

The strikes come as Ukrainian forces continue to wage a counteroffensive to recapture Russian-occupied territory in the country’s south. The campaign, which began more than two months ago, has been slow and bloody.

Natalia Yermak and Natalia Novosolova contributed reporting.

Even as Ukrainian soldiers battle in trenches and on the field, the campaign to sever Russian supply lines continues, with Ukraine increasingly targeting places far from the front lines. In recent weeks, Moscow has repeatedly accused Kyiv of launching attack drones at sites inside Russia, including at the capital.

On Sunday, Russia’s Ministry of Defense said it had shot down five Ukrainian drones in border regions — four over the Belgorod region and one over the Kursk region. The claims could not be independently verified.

There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian officials, who typically avoid claiming responsibility for attacks on Russian soil but in recent weeks have indicated that the war’s devastation would not be limited to Ukrainian territory.

One repeated target of Ukrainian strikes far from the front lines has been the Kerch Strait Bridge,

### A local pastor and a weeks-old baby were among the victims.

a vital Russian link to the occupied Crimean Peninsula that Kyiv has vowed to keep striking until the structure is unusable. Mr. Zelensky mentioned the bridge in his overnight address on Sunday, saying that “there is not a single day” that Ukrainian forces were not retaliating against Russian aggression. That, he said, includes destroying equipment and “the very eloquent smoke on Kerch bridge and more — all this proves that will not leave any of Russia’s crimes unanswered.”

His remarks were an apparent reference to an incident the previous day, when Russia’s Ministry of Defense said on Saturday that it had downed a Ukrainian missile targeting the bridge and that there was no damage. Video broadcast on the Russian and Ukrainian state news media showed smoke billowing over the span, though the Russian-installed authorities in Crimea said it was just a smoke screen intended to protect the bridge. The claims could not be verified.

Maria Zakharova, the spokeswoman for Russia’s foreign min-

istry, condemned the attack and threatened retaliation against Ukraine, saying it “will not remain without a response,” the Russian state news agency Tass reported on Saturday.

Despised by Ukrainians as a symbol of Russian occupation — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia ordered it built after illegally annexing Crimea in 2014 — the Kerch bridge has been a target since the war began. Ukraine has already hit it twice. Beyond its symbolic value, the 12-mile span is a critical strategic asset, allowing Moscow to move troops and equipment from Russia to its bases in Crimea and then onto the battlefield in southern Ukraine.

On Sunday, the spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force, Yuriy Ihnat, was asked about the previous day’s explosions around the bridge and said it was “not clear” what had occurred.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said on Sunday that one of its patrols in the Black Sea had fired warning shots at a cargo vessel that had failed to stop for inspection.

It said the cargo ship stopped after the “warning fire” and Russian servicemen boarded to carry out an inspection, then allowed the vessel to continue its journey to the Ukrainian port of Izmail on the Danube River.

The defense ministry’s claims could not be independently verified. They come amid heightened tensions in the Black Sea following Moscow’s decision last month to withdraw from a U.N.-brokered deal ensuring the safe passage of Ukrainian grain exports and warn that any vessels attempting to reach Ukraine would be treated as hostile.

Since then, Russian forces have bombarded Ukrainian ports — including Izmail — in what Ukrainian officials said were strikes specifically targeting the country’s ability to ship grain.

Ukraine retaliated last week with two strikes on Russian ships on consecutive days. It also issued its own warning that six Russian Black Sea ports and the approaches to them would be considered areas of “war risk” until further notice.

Mykhailo Podolyak, a senior adviser to Mr. Zelensky, said that Sunday’s “forced inspection” of the cargo ship was “a clear violation of the international law of the sea” and an “act of piracy.”

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# Religious Ritual Turns Political, Extending Protests in Iran

By FARNAZ FASSIHI

The large crowd of men congregated at the center of a mosque in the central city of Yazd, clad in black and beating their chests rhythmically in unison. They were commemorating Ashura, Shiite Islam's most sacred ritual, showcased annually with great fanfare in Iran as a testament to the Shiite theocracy's power and strength.

But this year Ashura looked different. The mourners who gathered in Yazd last month and in many other cities across Iran diverged unexpectedly from the script to target the clerical rulers of Iran, turning religious ballads into protest songs about the suffering of Iranians.

"For a city in ruins, for all of us held hostage, for the grieving mothers, for the tears of the marginalized," the men sang, according to videos. "We are mourning thousands of innocent lives, we are ashamed of this raging fire. Oh rain, oh storm, come. They have set fire to our tent."

In Kermanshah, a Kurdish city in western Iran, a religious vocalist known as a maddah stood on the street, microphone in hand, singing about officials "stealing and devouring" resources away from desolate people.

And in Dezful, a small conservative city in the southwest, a similar vocalist delivered a scathing sermon against the government as the crowd marched in a ritual procession.

"Oh, my country, do you know why I'm grieving? Their only concern is hijab. They don't see the blood, the poverty. They are stealing the public's money," serenaded the vocalist, Ibrahim Nassrollahi. "Fathers are ashamed, mothers are suffering. I wish they would see our poverty."

Instead of the traditional chant that describes an ancient tale of grief, the crowd shouted back: "Iran, Iran, Iran!"

It was a surprising tone for the period of religious mourning known as Muharram, which lasts for a little over a month in Iran. This year it will end on Sept. 6, with another big public ritual called Arbāeen that is expected to also become a platform for protest.

Ashura, which marks the 10th day of the mourning period, grieves for Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, who was beheaded in the year 680 in the battle of Karbala. Imam Hussein led an uprising against the succession of Islam's new caliph, Yazid, on the basis that his rule was corruption and unjust, and in Karbala his small force was confronted by Yazid's massive army and slaughtered.

For centuries Ashura has been more than just a religious ritual. From Iran, to Iraq, Afghanistan, Lebanon and beyond, it has served as a celebration of Shiite Muslim identity. Even some secular people participate in its stylized rituals, ranging from street processions to theatrical re-enactments and food handouts organized by neighborhood committees.

Social and political movements in the Muslim world have long been fueled and inspired by the narrative of Ashura, of the oppressed rising up against an oppressor. In Iran during the 1979 revolution that toppled the monarchy, a huge protest on Ashura became a turning point against the Shah. During the country's

## Denouncing Clerical Rulers During Annual Ashura Ceremonies



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARASH KHAMOUSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Top and above, gatherings for Ashura, Shiite Islam's most sacred ritual. Right, a re-enactment of the 680 battle of Karbala, where Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, was killed.

'They don't see the blood, the poverty,' one vocalist sang.

Green Movement in 2009, protesters, mostly young and upper middle class, took to the streets on Ashura to contest presidential election results.

Under Saddam Hussein's rule, Iraqi Shiites were banned from publicly commemorating their mourning holidays. The Taliban government in Afghanistan recently announced a similar ban.

In previous years, maddahs in Iran occasionally delivered sermons with mild and indirect criticism of the government. This year, some of the ceremonies were the traditional grand spectacles and religious processions.

But the widespread and re-



markable politicization of Ashura directly targeting the leaders of the Islamic Republic rattled the authorities, who warned that the protest tone was "making our enemies happy." There were reports on social media of the brief detention of some of the leading vocalists and demands from the government that they tone down their rhetoric.

"The enemy had unpleasant dreams for Muharram this year," Mohammad Mehdi Esmali, Iran's minister of Islamic guidance and culture, said on Monday. "They

wanted to turn Muharram into the latest battlefield, but our people did not listen at all."

But analysts said that instead of issuing fanciful denials, the government must reckon with the stark reality that opposition to it has now spread to some devoutly religious Iranians, who were once considered a loyal power base. The rebellion on display presents yet another challenge to the legitimacy of a theocracy that views itself as the global spiritual leader of Shiite Muslims.

Mohamad Ali Ahangaran, a

conservative analyst of religion and the son of a prominent maddah who performs at government events, said in an interview from Tehran that many Iranians were using every opportunity, including Ashura, to voice their opposition to the status quo.

"This year we saw the religious sermons and songs become more protest-driven than previous years, targeting the way the leaders are governing Iran, the widespread corruption in the Islamic Republic, the political obstacles we face," Mr. Ahangaran said.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has repeatedly encouraged Muharram ceremonies to be more political and take sides, but he never envisioned that in doing so it would one day turn "against the entire leadership" of Iran, including himself, said Mr. Ahangaran.

Nearly a year ago, Iranians took to the streets in nationwide protests demanding an end to the clerical government. The uprising was set off by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police, who had detained her on allegations of violating the mandatory hijab law. The government responded with violence, killing over 500 people, including children, arresting tens of thousands and executing seven protesters.

"We saw the story of Ashura unfold in the streets with our own eyes as they slaughtered our youth last year," said Maryam, 55, a mother of two in Tehran, who asked that her last name not be used, fearing retribution. "As a religious person, I want to completely separate myself from any ceremony connected to the regime."

Maryam said her mother hosted a mourning ceremony at home early this month for nearly 200 guests. She adorned the salon with black Ashura flags with Imam Hussein's name and placed a picture of a killed protester next to each flag. "They are our new martyrs," she said.

The 33-year-old son of a senior cleric in the religious city of Qom said that he was boycotting the Muharram ceremonies because of his opposition to the government and its violence. His relatives, he said, searched for ceremonies that either were not political or took on the regime. He also requested anonymity, fearing for his safety.

Some Iranians wore white, in defiance of the customary black attire, and trekked to cemeteries to pay homage to killed protesters. In the northern city of Amol, a religious marching band dressed in white went to the home of Ghazalleh Chelavi, 33, a female athlete shot in the head during protests last September, videos showed. Her mother wailed by the door.

In Yazd, the maddah led the crowd in singing a famous poem that honors protesters killed by governments: "From the blood of our country's youth, tulips grow."

Then, comparing the authorities in power to wheels, they continued, "Oh, wheel, how you have derailed, how you misbehave, how you take revenge. Oh, wheel, you have no religion and no principles."

Ms. Amini's mother posted a video on Instagram of her daughter's grave illuminated by candlelight at night on Ashura. A woman's voice could be heard singing the same poem.

# Seeking Ties, Saudi Arabia Names Envoy To West Bank

By PATRICK KINGSLEY

JERUSALEM — Saudi Arabia has appointed its first envoy to the Palestinian administration in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, a move widely seen as linked to efforts led by the United States to forge diplomatic ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

The Saudi envoy to Jordan, Nayef Al-Sudairi, will now concurrently serve as a "nonresident ambassador to the State of Palestine," the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Saturday in a brief statement. Saudi Arabia recognizes Palestinian statehood across the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, territories that Israel captured during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967.

The announcement came amid escalating efforts by the United States to establish formal relations for the first time between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

It also followed speculation in Israel that Saudi Arabia — which has long opposed enacting formal ties until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been resolved — might now be prepared to do so without Israel's providing the Palestinians with greater autonomy.

"It's sort of a check box," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel said in an interview broadcast last week. "You have to check it to say you're doing it."

But Saudi and Palestinian analysts said that the appointment of Ambassador Al-Sudairi showed that Riyadh was serious about securing better treatment for the Palestinians.

"This is the Saudi way of com-

## A way to set up formal relations between Israel and Riyadh.

municating something," said Abdulaziz Alghashian, a Saudi expert on Riyadh's relationship with Israel. "They're saying that this is a bit more than a check in a box."

The Saudi ambassador to Jordan has long informally overseen the Palestinian file, in practice if not in name. The formal acknowledgment of that dual role is "a reaction to the perception in Israeli circles that the Saudis don't really care about the Palestinians," said Mr. Alghashian, who is based in Riyadh.

If a deal is reached in the coming year, it is expected to involve a three-way agreement in which the United States provides Riyadh with greater military support and help for a civil nuclear program, and Israel offers the Palestinians some kind of concession.

On Sunday, the Israeli government, which is dominated by lawmakers opposed to Palestinian sovereignty, continued to downplay the relevance of the Palestinian component of the negotiations.

Eli Cohen, the Israeli foreign minister, said on Sunday in a radio interview that the announcement was largely symbolic. "The Saudis want to convey a message to the Palestinians that they were not forgotten," Mr. Cohen said. But in reality, "the Palestinian issue is not the main issue within the talks," he added.

But Palestinians took heart from the announcement — particularly its assertion that the ambassador would also serve, at least in name, as consul general in Jerusalem. Israel has controlled all of Jerusalem since 1967 and declared the city as its undivided capital, but Palestinians hope that at least part of it will one day serve as the capital of a Palestinian state.

The appointment of a consul there is seen as support for those Palestinian aspirations, said Ibrahim Dalalsha, director of the Horizon Center, a Palestinian research group in Ramallah, West Bank.

"On a deeper level, it's seen from a Palestinian perspective as a message that the Saudis will not abandon the Palestinians in their consultations with the U.S. and Israel on a possible normalization deal," he said.

But Mr. Cohen, the Israeli foreign minister, said Israel would not permit Saudi Arabia to open a consulate to the Palestinians in Jerusalem.

"We do not allow countries to open consulates" to the Palestinians in Jerusalem, he said. "This is not compatible with us."

Israel established diplomatic relations in 2020 with three Arab countries, including the United Arab Emirates, ending years of isolation in the Arab world and leading to speculation that Saudi Arabia would be next. The Biden administration has now made Saudi-Israeli relations one of its key foreign-policy goals.

# Italy Pays Tribute to Author and Activist

By ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

ROME — Since bursting onto the scene nearly two decades ago with her first novel about her experience working in a call center, a novel that later inspired a popular film, Michela Murgia had become a public persona — and a lightning rod for political debate in Italy.

A novelist, intellectual and civil rights campaigner, she was an outspoken critic of the country's rightward shift at a time when its left-wing parties appeared to have lost their voice, and a feminist and civil rights champion urging acceptance of nontraditional family models in a country in which the governing parties have promoted a more conservative vision.

Before she died, on Thursday at age 51, she told her friends that she wanted her funeral to be open to everyone.

Many hundreds heeded her invitation.

They came from all walks of life — a retired banker, a hotel employee, a translator, students — to honor "a symbol of freedom and feminism whose words should be transformed into action," said Maria Luisa Celani, who works in the arts and was one of many gathered outside the Basilica of Santa Maria in Montesanto, known as "the church of the artists," in Rome's central Piazza del Popolo, for the funeral.

Ms. Murgia had inspired them through her novels and public debates, and had moved them in chronicling her dying days on social media: After announcing that she had stage-four kidney cancer in an interview in May in Corriere

della Sera, the Milan newspaper, Ms. Murgia spoke openly of her illness and the importance of living life to the full, fearlessly.

Some in attendance carried rainbow flags or rainbow umbrellas, a nod to Ms. Murgia's campaigning for L.G.B.T.Q. rights. Others carried dog-eared copies of her books. Many in the crowd, which clogged the streets leading to the square and prompted the police to divert traffic, watched the funeral on their cellphones as Ita-

## A life spent defying the patriarchy rooted in church and state.

ly's main newspapers broadcast it live online. Condolences and accolades also swamped social media.

"She was a special person and merited a special send-off," said Patrizia Mosca, a newly retired civil servant who said that she didn't typically attend public funerals — "not even for the popes." But Ms. Murgia was different. "For this beautiful person, I wanted to be here," she said.

Even some who opposed the writer's views offered tributes, including Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, whose party traces its roots to the wreckage of fascism. Writing on the social platform X, formerly Twitter, she hailed Ms. Murgia as "a woman who fought to defend her ideas, albeit notori-

ously different from mine, for which I have great respect."

Ms. Murgia had often called out several of the current government's policies, which she denounced as indicators of a "fascist regime."

In July, she announced that she had married Lorenzo Terenzi, an actor and director, "in articulo mortis," Latin for "at the point of death," out of legal considerations. Under Italian law, her blood relatives would have inherited her property and been responsible for decisions about her unpublished work and her legacy. Although she was not in conflict with her family, marrying Mr. Terenzi ensured that her will would be observed, friends said.

"Had there been another way to guarantee each other's rights, we would never have resorted to such a patriarchal and limited instrument," Ms. Murgia wrote on Instagram.

Days later, Vogue Italia posted photos of the wedding party, which was celebrated among Ms. Murgia's closest friends. She also posted photos of the celebration on Instagram.

In a long video interview with Italian Vanity Fair in May, she described the "traditional family" based on blood ties as a patriarchal residue. Her idea of family was "hybrid," a social pact of people who chose to live together. She called it a "queer family," which in her case included four young men she considered sons, and a handful of friends.

In this sense, said Alessandro Giammei, a member of that family



ALESSANDRO VARGIU/MONDADORI PORTFOLIO/SIPA USA, VIA REUTERS

who teaches at Yale, "Queering is overcoming what heterosexuality as a paradigm, as the only option, does to the entirety of society and to the entirety of the stories that we tell." It was a model that Ms. Murgia explored in her short stories and novels.

For the wedding, the bust of the bride's dress — designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri, the artistic director of Dior women's wear, as part of a "special project" — was emblazoned with the slogan "God Save the Queen." That is also the title of a 2022 book by Ms. Murgia that broached the question of whether it was possible to be a feminist within the patriarchal Roman Catholic Church.

Ms. Murgia never lost her faith in that notion: "As a Christian, I trust that faith also needs a feminist and queer perspective," she wrote.

On Saturday, Avvenire, the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference, paid homage to Ms. Murgia, calling her a "talented

Hundreds gathered in Rome on Saturday for the funeral for Michela Murgia, a novelist and civil rights campaigner.

writer and restless believer."

Yet she was arguably best known for her political activism.

A native of Sardinia, Ms. Murgia ran an unsuccessful campaign in 2014 to become governor of the region, but her political commitment continued. Four years later, she wrote "How to Be a Fascist: A Manual," a satire on contemporary right-wing politics.

At her funeral on Saturday, Luciano Capponi, a bank employee, said that Ms. Murgia's campaigning "in favor of those who are different" was necessary "in a country like ours."

In her final book, "Tre Ciotole" (Three Bowls), a compilation of short stories woven into a novel, Ms. Murgia wrote about illness.

"She decided to make her death not just a literary gesture but a political gesture," Aldo Cazzullo, the Corriere della Sera journalist who interviewed Ms. Murgia in May, said in a telephone interview.

"Probably the majority of Italians didn't agree with everything she said," Mr. Cazzullo said, "but somehow this cry of hers to claim freedom to love did not fall on deaf ears. It is a flag that will be taken up by the new generation."

At the presentation of her last book, in Turin in May, Ms. Murgia said that she was living a moment of great freedom. "I don't have limitations anymore," she said, adding, "What are they going to do, fire me?"

And she had a word of advice: "Don't wait to have cancer to do the same thing."

## National

The New York Times



PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Unloading aid brought to Lahaina, Hawaii, by private boat on Saturday. Officials said Maui's remoteness and the scale of the destruction made response challenging, and promised help was on the way.

## Maui Residents Say They've Been Left to Fend for Themselves

### Local Volunteers Set Up Supply Lines for People Without Homes, Power or Food After the Wildfire

By **KELLEN BROWNING** and **MITCH SMITH**

**NAPILI-HONOKOWAI, Hawaii** — Days after the deadliest American wildfire in more than a century ignited in West Maui, killing dozens and leveling more than 2,200 buildings, increasingly frustrated residents said that they were receiving far more help from an ad hoc network of volunteers than they were from the government.

After the fire destroyed the town of Lahaina, hundreds of local residents — a group that includes evacuees along with nearby residents who found themselves cut off from power and internet service — remained affected in West Maui, miles beyond highway checkpoints. Some evacuees slept in parks; others stayed in their homes that survived the disaster or with friends in the wider community of that part of the island.

They have been searching desperately for gasoline, phone reception and hot food — power outages have rendered refrigerators and microwaves useless. In many cases, they have leaned on church groups, community organizations and volunteers to track down missing relatives, get rides to shelters or gain access to supplies brought in on private boats and airplanes.

"Where are the county officials? Nobody has internet — I just found out you can't drink the water," said Josh Masson, who was sitting on a hill by the remote Kapalua Airport on Friday night trying to get cellphone service. "The communication has been nil."

The death toll from the fire continued to rise — to at least 93 on Saturday — with more expected. While life in most other parts of Maui seems to have continued with little interruption, West Maui has felt like an island unto itself.

Residents and evacuees have been particularly desperate for gasoline to fuel their vehicles and run generators. They also have welcomed the home-cooked meals coming from sympathetic residents elsewhere in Maui, the rice dishes and the cans of Spam that are island favorites. Too little of it has been coming from government agencies, West Maui residents said.

"We need some help here," Rolando Advincula said as he loaded diapers for his nephews into the back of his car.

Local, federal and state officials have had a presence in West Maui since the fires erupted on Tuesday. County firefighters confronted the inferno, Coast

Guard members rescued people from the water and state officials distributed supplies and organized temporary housing. Many West Maui residents relocated to government-run shelters in other parts of the island days ago.

On Saturday, Gov. Josh Green, a Democrat, and Deanne Criswell, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, were among the officials from all levels of government who surveyed the destruction in Lahaina, a former capital of the Hawaiian kingdom, and pledged to help rebuild.

Still, residents complained that the official response has been remarkably lacking, describing the scattered fire warnings on Tuesday as insufficient and the response since as a failure that has not met overwhelming, urgent needs.

Maui's remoteness and the scale of the destruction — the fire in Lahaina surpassed the once-unfathomable Camp fire of 2018 in California as the deadliest in the United States in more than a century — has made the response more challenging, officials said Saturday. They promised that more help was on the way.

"We said, 'If something ever happened here, we're 72 hours away from help ever coming,'" Chief John Pelletier of the



MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A volunteer pilot, Ron Gess, prepared to fly cases of Spam — an island favorite — from Kahului to West Maui. Residents operate distribution centers.

Maui Police Department said. "And I think we proved that that's probably pretty accurate."

The chief described an emergency response that was far from complete. He said that canine teams searching for bodies began working only on Saturday and had so far searched only about 3 percent of the impacted area. Officials said they

expected to find more bodies.

Of the people known to have died, Chief Pelletier said that only two had been identified. He urged people searching for loved ones to take a DNA test that could help identify the remains.

"The remains we're finding is through a fire that melted metal," he said. "We have to do rapid DNA to identify."



MAX WHITTAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Filling up gasoline containers in Napili-Honokowai to be given away. The fuel is needed for vehicles and generators.

As the search continued, people who stayed behind in West Maui said they heard little directly from the government and did not know what forms of official aid were available.

"Nobody knows what's going on out here," said Cord Cuniberti, who was driving a supply of Spam to a drop-off site with his friend. "We're just relaying stuff — coconut wireless," he said, using a local term meaning word of mouth and rumors.

In Napili Park, north of Lahaina, local residents set up one of many makeshift distribution centers under a canopy. They handed out mounds of canned goods, pallets of water, diapers and other supplies to those in need. People stretched out to rest on blankets in the shade as children played football and helped to unload boxes of goods.

Paul Romero, who owns a gym in Kihei, more than 20 miles southeast of the hardest-hit area, and led several supply runs to West Maui, said he was heartened to see so many people rush to the aid of their neighbors up the coast.

But he echoed the concerns of many evacuees: They had not heard anything from the government, had received no aid other than from private volunteers and felt left in the dark.

"It's an incredible dichotomy," Mr. Romero said on Saturday. "There is an outpouring of local support, boots on the ground, depleting our personal resources to support our Ohana in just the most basic ways," he said, using a Hawaiian word for family. But "the response from our well-funded, tax-paid government is incredibly pathetic. We can't even understand what they did, what they didn't do, what they're still not doing."

Even as conditions for evacuees have slowly improved, with gas arriving in trucks and power returning to some homes late Friday night, residents said they continued to need hot food, fuel and up-to-date information.

The fact that local residents and groups stepped up to help, said Mayor Richard T. Bissen Jr. of Maui County, was a testament to the character of Maui's people. But he said it did not mean the government was not helping, too.

"Government probably does move slower than a private citizen who runs the store, buys something and drops it off," said Mr. Bissen, who said he saw officials and volunteers working together to help those stuck in West Maui.

But inside the roadblocks separating West Maui from the rest of the island, many of those who stayed behind were deeply unimpressed with the official response.

On Saturday night, at a gasoline fill-up party in Napili-Honokowai, about seven miles north of Lahaina, local residents blasted music and filled dozens of cans of gas to pass out to people.

"This is from our own pockets," Ashlee Yap said. "Where is the government?"

Kellen Browning reported from Napili-Honokowai and Kapalua, Hawaii; and Mitch Smith from Wailuku and Kahului, Hawaii. Orlando Mayorquin contributed reporting.



GO NAKAMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Andre Fehlmann spraying water to put out hot spots where his house used to stand. During the fire, crews encountered increasingly feeble water pressure that hindered their ability to fight the blaze.

## Dry Hydrants Doomed the Battle Against Wildfires on Maui

From Page A1

— would be part of a larger discussion about lessons from the fire.

“What do we learn from this?” he said.

The water system in Lahaina relies on both surface water from a creek and groundwater pumped from wells. Persistent drought conditions combined with population growth have already led officials at the state and local level to explore ways to shore up water supplies, and they broke ground on a new well two months ago to increase capacity.

On the day the fire tore through Lahaina, the fight was complicated by winds in excess of 70 miles per hour, stoked by a hurricane offshore. Not only did the wind fuel the blaze, it made it impossible during much of the day to launch helicopters that could have carried in and dropped water from the ocean.

Early that day, as winds knocked out power to thousands of people, county officials urged people to conserve water, saying that “power outages are impacting the ability to pump water.”

John Stufflebean, the county’s director of water supply, said backup generators allowed the system to maintain sufficient overall supply throughout the fire. But he said that as the fire began moving down the hillside, turning homes into rubble, many properties were damaged so badly that water was spewing out of their melting pipes, depressurizing the network that also supplies the hydrants.

“The water was leaking out of the system,” he said.

One firefighter described how his truck tapped into a hydrant to try to contain a blaze that had taken root in a cluster of homes, only to find water pressure so weak that the fire promptly jumped be-

Quincy Dein and Ivan Penn contributed reporting.



GO NAKAMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Members of Honolulu’s Fire Department on Friday in the destroyed historic town of Lahaina. About 1,500 residential buildings burned, displacing thousands.



PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The melted windshield of a car in the path of the raging inferno. Eventually, the only thing that stopped the fire was running out of fuel at the ocean.

yond their efforts to contain it. Another firefighter who arrived after the fire was already raging said he encountered a scene of chaos and soon was told that there was no water to put the fires out. Crews were forced to focus on evacuations, he said, picking up people who were stranded and pointing others toward the fastest routes to safety.

These two firefighters spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the emergency effort.

With an estimated 60 to 70 firefighters on duty at any one time on Maui, according to the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, the firefighting crews were stretched thin as they battled three different conflagrations on the island.

The fire took hold early at a residence in Lahaina, Mr. Ho said, and his crew began to set up to fight the flames while evacuating several people from inside and getting them into the truck. But the fire was spreading further, and

they moved down to another nearby house, where they set up again and rescued an elderly woman, also giving her refuge in the truck. Every time they set up to suppress the fire in one area, the blaze would spread and they would find themselves scrambling to stay ahead of it. The water pressure was a continuing problem, he said.

At one point, the crew found a hydrant further north that seemed to have more water, and they doused a commercial building. But the water soon ran dry again.

“I thought it had a chance,” Mr. Ho said. “But I guess it didn’t because that whole building was burned down.”

Mr. Ho said downed power lines made navigation treacherous. The wind was so intense that firefighters found themselves crawling at times. Thick smoke made it difficult to breathe, but they often had to remove their masks to communicate evacuation orders to people still in the area.

In the end, the fire stopped only when it ran out of fuel at the ocean. The extent of the damage is still coming into focus, but it is already huge: some 1,500 residential buildings destroyed, thousands of people displaced, nearly 100 found dead so far, and the heart of a community that has long been a gem of Hawaiian history is reduced to ashes.

The state attorney general has begun a review of how previous decision-making and policies might have affected the fire and the county’s ability to fight it. The problems with water availability were compounded by others, as many residents said they were never given evacuation orders, and sirens set up to warn of such emergencies never sounded.

Charles Jennings, an associate professor who specializes in fire and emergency management issues at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said he was not aware of other cases in which burned pipes were losing so much

water that it affected the overall water supply. He said it is common in big fires for firefighters to find themselves tapping the same main line, somewhat weakening their individual flows.

Some communities, he said, have put in place designs that limit the possibility of these competing demands, such as systems with multiple main lines. But those alterations can be costly.

Most medium and large-size water agencies have generators that can keep water moving even when the power goes out, said Gary Sturdivan, an expert in emergency preparedness in the water supply industry. But if the fire reaches and engulfs the generators themselves, they will quickly become worthless, he said.

West Maui’s water system relies on electrical power to pump water through the network and deliver it to fire hydrants, and officials at Hawaiian Electric, the state’s main electrical utility, have said that the need to maintain this

pumping capability has made it difficult to shut off power when high winds pose a fire risk.

Mr. Stufflebean said that crews in recent days have been going through the Lahaina rubble to shut off water valves, and that has helped re-pressurize the system. But Lahaina was not the only place the breakdown occurred.

Across the island in Kula, which has a water system separate from Lahaina’s, 16 structures were destroyed. Ross Hart, one of the homeowners whose property was leveled, said he and others fought their fire for hours, sometimes alone with hoses, other times with the aid of firefighters. But he said that as the night wore on, there was no water in the hoses.

“Then the fire just grew,” he said. “The sparks started blowing over, and we couldn’t keep up with our buckets to put out the little spot fires.”

“You can’t fight fire when you don’t have water,” he said. “Just throwing dirt on it doesn’t cut it.”

## A Haven for Hawaii’s Endangered Birds Is Threatened by Fast-Moving Wildfires

By CATRIN EINHORN

Jennifer Pribble was asleep when the power line fell in the forest. She heard the generator kick in but didn’t think much of it. High winds sometimes led to electricity failures. It was normal enough. Wildfires were not even on her radar.

Ms. Pribble lives at the Maui Bird Conservation Center, where she helps care for some of the most critically endangered birds in the world. Hawaii’s native birds have been decimated by disease fueled by climate change and by introduced predators like rats. The center keeps some 80 birds in enclosures in an effort to prevent their extinction and, one day, hopefully, return them or their descendants to the wild.

On Monday night, Ms. Pribble was the only staff member at the center, one of two in Hawaii managed by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. As she slept, the

downed line appears to have started a fire in the pine forest nearby.

Several hours later, at about 3 a.m., Ms. Pribble awoke again, this time to the thud of a large branch hitting the roof. Still unaware of the fire, she worried it might have damaged the building and went onto the back porch to check.

“The sky was orange and there was smoke in the air, like out in the forest,” Ms. Pribble said. She went outside to see what was happening, and saw flames about 150 feet from the edge of the property. She called 911, and was told the Fire Department knew about the blaze and was assessing.

The center houses about 40 ‘akikiki, a native songbird, and about 40 ‘alala, also known as the Hawaiian crow. ‘Alala are extinct in the wild, and only about five ‘akikiki are known to remain there. The only other members of

these species live at the center’s sister facility on the Big Island, said Emily Senninger, a spokeswoman for the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. The birds are divided between both places to insure against disasters such as this one. But until now, they thought volcanic eruptions and hurricanes were the biggest dangers.

As Ms. Pribble watched the fire in the distance, she felt reassured that it was in the forest, where a bed of thick pine needles seemed to be making it hard for the flames to spread. For a time, they actually reduced in size. But she grew increasingly worried as fire approached grasses closer to a road. If it crossed, she thought, the grasses on the 46-acre property would provide ample fuel.

“It’s pretty dry,” she said. Rising temperatures appear to be contributing to reduced rain in Hawaii, climatologists say, and more than a third of Maui County is in



SAN DIEGO ZOO WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

moderate or severe drought.

A neighbor came over to see what was going on, and while he was there, the fire started climbing the hillside toward them.

“All of a sudden, basically, the fire jumped the road and it was on our property,” she said.

Ms. Pribble ran inside to get two

fire extinguishers to douse the flames, but she worried it would happen again. She raced back in for more extinguishers and a garden hose. She texted the forest manager saying she needed assistance.

“We just went out and kept it under control the best that we

could, just so it didn’t cross back over the road, until the state firefighters could arrive.”

She didn’t think about how the birds she was protecting were among the last of their kind, she said. She just acted, doing all she could to keep the facility safe.

State firefighters arrived about 40 minutes later — as fast as possible, she said, given the distance involved — and have remained there since.

The forest is still smoldering, and occasionally flames will rekindle. But firefighters have it contained, she said. Luckily the smoke mostly blew away from the birds, which were moved to the safest enclosures and appear to have escaped any harm.

“I’m just in shock that all this happened,” Ms. Pribble said. “Now that we see the scale of things on the island of Maui, we’re very lucky that it wasn’t any worse.”

# Texas Becomes the Center of Dropped Medicaid Coverage

By NOAH WEILAND

HOUSTON — Juliette Vasquez gave birth to her daughter in June with the help of Medicaid, which she said had covered the prenatal medications and checkups that kept her pregnancy on track.

But as she cradled her daughter, Imani, in southwest Houston one afternoon this month, she described her fear of going without the health insurance that helped her deliver her baby.

This month, Ms. Vasquez, 27, joined the growing ranks of Americans whose lives have been disrupted by the unwinding of a policy that barred states from removing people from Medicaid during the coronavirus pandemic in exchange for additional federal funding.

Since the policy lifted at the beginning of April, over half a million people in Texas have been dropped from the program, more than any other state has reported removing so far, according to KFF, a health policy research organization. Health experts and state advocacy groups say that many of those in Texas who have lost coverage are young mothers like Ms. Vasquez or children who have few alternatives, if any, for obtaining affordable insurance.

Ms. Vasquez said that she needed to stay healthy while breastfeeding and be able to see a doctor if she falls ill. “When you are taking care of someone else, it’s very different,” she said of needing health insurance as a new parent.

Enrollment in Medicaid, a joint federal-state health insurance program for low-income people, soared to record levels while the pandemic-era policy was in place, and the nation’s uninsured rate fell to a record low early this year. But since the so-called unwinding began, states have reported dropping more than 4.5 million people from Medicaid, according to KFF.

That number will climb in the coming months. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that more than 15 million people will be dropped from Medicaid over a year and a half and that more than six million of them will end up uninsured.

While some people like Ms. Vasquez are losing their coverage because they no longer meet the eligibility criteria, many others are being dropped for procedural reasons, suggesting that some people may be losing their insurance even though they still qualify for it.

The upheaval is especially acute in Texas and nine other states that have not adopted the Affordable Care Act’s expansion of Medicaid, all of which have state governments either partly or fully controlled by Republicans. Under the health law, states can expand their Medicaid programs to cover adults who earn up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$41,000 for a family of four.

But in Texas, which had the highest uninsured rate of any state in 2021, the Medicaid program is far more restrictive. Many of those with coverage are children, pregnant women or people with disabilities.

The ongoing unwinding has renewed concerns about the so-called coverage gap, in which some people in states that have not expanded Medicaid have incomes that are too high for the program but too low for subsidized coverage through the Affordable Care Act’s marketplaces.

“It’s going to lay bare the need



Juliette Vasquez, above, lost her Medicaid coverage two months after giving birth to her daughter.



Luz Amaya, left, attending a Medicaid event in Houston to re-enroll her children. Perla Brown, right, recently lost coverage and is worried about being able to afford her autistic son’s therapist.



for expansion, particularly when we see these very poor parents become uninsured and fall into the coverage gap and have nowhere to go,” said Joan Alker, the executive director of the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

Texas’ Medicaid program grew substantially during the pandemic when the state was barred from removing people from it. At the start of the unwinding, nearly six million Texans were enrolled in the program, or roughly one in five people in the state, up from nearly four million before the pandemic.

Now the program is shrinking significantly. Legacy Community Health, a network of clinics in and around Houston that offer low-cost health care to the uninsured, has been swamped in recent weeks by panicked parents whose children suddenly lost Medicaid coverage, said Adrian Buentello, a Legacy employee who helps patients with their health insurance eligibility forms.

“Moms are frantic,” he said. “They’re in distress. They want their child to have immunizations that are required, these annual exams that schools require.”

Texans are losing Medicaid for a variety of reasons. Some people now have incomes too high for their children to qualify, or they

now earn too much to keep their own coverage. Some young adults have aged out of the program.

Some new mothers like Ms. Vasquez are losing coverage because they are two months out from having given birth, a stricter cutoff than in most states. Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, recently signed legislation extending postpartum coverage to a year, which would bring Texas in line with most of the country. But

## The result of the end of guaranteed Covid-era coverage.

the new rule is not expected to go into effect until next year.

Kayla Montano, who gave birth in March, said she suffered from an umbilical hernia and pelvic pain from her pregnancy and was set to lose coverage at the end of this month, most likely falling into the coverage gap. A mother of three in Mission, Texas, Ms. Montano said she was working only part time so she could take care of her young children, a schedule that had left her ineligible to receive insurance from her employ-

er. “My health will be on hold until I start working full time again,” she said.

Health experts are particularly worried about the many Texans who are losing Medicaid coverage for procedural reasons, such as not returning paperwork to confirm their eligibility, even if they may still qualify for the program.

Of the 560,000 people whom Texas has reported removing from Medicaid during the first months of eligibility checks, about 450,000, or roughly 80 percent, were dropped for procedural reasons. Nationwide, in states where data is available, three-quarters of those who have lost Medicaid during the unwinding were removed from the program on procedural grounds, according to KFF.

In a statement, Tiffany Young, a spokeswoman for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which is overseeing the state’s unwinding process, said that Texas had prioritized conducting eligibility checks for those most likely to no longer be eligible for the program. She said the agency was using a range of tactics to try to reach people, including text messages, robocalls and community events.

Ms. Young said the first few months of eligibility checks had generally gone as expected,

though she said the state was aware of some instances in which people had been wrongly removed from the program. “We’re working to reinstate coverage for those individuals as soon as possible,” she said.

Adrienne Lloyd, the health policy manager at the Texas branch of the Children’s Defense Fund, an advocacy group, said that because of its size and rural expanse, Texas was an especially difficult state for outreach to people whose coverage may be at risk.

Many rural residents lack steady internet access or nearby health department offices where they can seek help re-enrolling in Medicaid in person, Ms. Lloyd said, while a state hotline could have long wait times. Others, she said, might not be comfortable using technology to renew their coverage or could struggle to fill out paper forms.

The work required for those who do not enroll online or over the phone can be challenging. Early this month, Luz Amaya drove roughly 30 minutes to a branch of the Houston Food Bank for help filling out an application to re-enroll her children in Medicaid. Her arthritis had left her hands impaired, making the drive difficult, she said.

Ms. Amaya was among dozens of parents who visited the food bank for an event sponsored in part by the state that offered help with enrollment.

Ms. Amaya grew emotional at the event when she learned that her oldest daughter would soon age out of Medicaid and might no longer be able to get the therapy she needs. Ms. Amaya said she was there in part to confirm coverage for another daughter who needed therapy.

Another attendee, Mario Delgado, said he had come to re-enroll in Medicaid after he and his wife suddenly lost coverage around the beginning of the state’s unwinding. Both are disabled and cannot work, he said. With money tight, they have scraped together payments for medications.

His wife needs back surgery, he said, and he needs medication to keep up with his diabetes, which makes his hands swollen. “If you cry, the pain stays the same,” he said, describing the resignation they have felt struggling to afford health care.

He soon received good news. He and his wife were back on Medicaid. “I’ll sleep better,” he said as he exited the building into the scorching Texas summer heat.

Health experts have warned that many of those losing coverage in the unwinding may not realize their fate until they are informed by a health provider or billed for a medical service.

Perla Brown, the mother of a boy with autism, came to the food bank event soon after her son’s therapist told her that her child had lost Medicaid, she said. She soon discovered letters in the mail she had missed that had warned her of the imminent loss of his coverage. She said she was worried about paying the bill for the therapy appointment.

Ms. Vasquez, the new mother, said that having a child “just opens up your heart in a very different way.” She had learned to enjoy switching out her daughter’s blankets once they accrued too much spit.

But the joy of her parenting, she said, had been dimmed by morbid thoughts about losing her Medicaid. Health care, she said, “is always about the cost.”

# In Chicago, New Leader Of the Police Is Announced

By JULIE BOSMAN

Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago announced on Sunday that he had chosen Larry Snelling, chief of the bureau of counterterrorism for the Chicago Police Department, as its new police superintendent, perhaps the most consequential appointment of Mr. Johnson’s new administration as the city continues to grapple with violent crime.

“Chief Snelling is a proven leader who has the experience and the respect of his peers to help ensure the safety and well-being of city residents, and address the complex challenges we all face related to community safety,” Mr. Johnson, a Democrat, said in a statement.

The announcement ended a monthslong process conducted in large part by a public commission, whose members winnowed down candidates and listened to input from Chicago residents at community meetings in an effort to bring transparency to the selection.

Mr. Snelling, 54, will preside over a sprawling department that includes more than 11,700 sworn officers, according to city data, at a time when morale among the rank and file is low and reforms to policing have, in the eyes of many Chicagoans, still fallen short.

In choosing Mr. Snelling, a veteran of the Chicago Police Department and an expert in use-of-force tactics who began his career as a



Larry Snelling, 54, will preside over a department that has more than 11,700 officers.

patrol officer in 1992, Mr. Johnson is promoting a known leader who is already well regarded within the department. He served as the commander of the Seventh District in Englewood, a neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago that has one of the highest rates of violent crime in the city.

During his mayoral campaign, Mr. Johnson, who was elected in April, said that he hoped a new superintendent would earn the trust of Chicago residents. Mr. Johnson has also said that the superintendent must be willing to work with newly elected councils of residents that were created to provide feedback on law enforcement in each of the city’s police districts.

“It’s important that the city of Chicago has confidence in the superintendent,” Mr. Johnson said in an interview in May. “That’s someone who understands constitutional policing, but someone who also understands that public safety is an overall goal that cannot be confined to policing.”

The Chicago Police remains under a federal consent decree, an agreement in which an independent monitor oversees reforms: A report in 2017 from the Justice Department described rampant civil rights violations of Black and Hispanic residents, excessive force and inadequate officer training.

Sharon R. Fairley, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School who teaches criminal procedure and policing, said that the new superintendent faced a host of challenges, including reducing violent crime and instituting those reforms.

“The person coming into this job really does need to redo the organization to deliver the vision that he sees going forward,” she said. “I believe people are really frustrated with the lack of change. We’ve had this consent decree in place for four years now, and there doesn’t seem to be a lot of progress being made.”

The Chicago Police Department has cycled through several superintendents in the past decade. After the 2014 killing of Laquan McDonald, a Black teenager who was shot 16 times by a white officer, the public uproar led Mayor Rahm Emanuel to fire Garry F. McCarthy, the police superintendent at the time.

Eddie Johnson, a veteran of the department who took over as superintendent in 2016, was fired by Mayor Lori Lightfoot, a Democrat, in 2019. Charlie Beck, the leader of the Los Angeles Police Department for close to a decade, served as interim superintendent in Chicago after Mr. Johnson’s departure.

David Brown, the superintendent selected by Ms. Lightfoot in 2020, resigned after she lost reelection this year, leaving the department under interim leadership.

# Heckled and Trolled at Iowa State Fair, DeSantis Is Struggling to Gain Traction

By NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

It’s been said that a bad day at the fair is always better than a good day at work. For Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, those two ideas collided on Saturday in Iowa.

Mr. DeSantis, who has been struggling to gain ground on former President Donald J. Trump and is counting on making his mark in the state’s first nominating contest, suffered a series of moments — all beyond his control — that would be enough for any candidate to question his place in the political universe, especially before a near face-to-face encounter with the front-runner at the Iowa State Fair.

Ahead of the Florida governor’s appearance with Gov. Kim Reynolds of Iowa at a “fair-side chat,” a plane flew overhead with a banner that read “Be likable, Ron!” Although it wasn’t immediately clear who was responsible for the stunt, the joke was a reference to advice given to Mr. DeSantis before a 2018 debate during his first run for Florida governor.

Then, during the interview, a small group of liberal protesters with cowbells and whistles sought to interrupt the conversation with Ms. Reynolds, who reminded the crowd to be “Iowa Nice.” Several of the protesters were removed

Angali Huynh contributed reporting.

from the event by the Iowa State Patrol. For other candidates, Ms. Reynolds’s interviews have been a safe space with softball questions and few unpredictable moments. Not so for Mr. DeSantis.

But drawing scorn from the left has always been part of the Florida governor’s brand. And Mr. DeSantis’s appearances on Saturday with two of Iowa’s top Republicans — in addition to the interview with Ms. Reynolds, the governor and his family rode the Ferris wheel with Senator Joni Ernst — reflected the attention his campaign is showering on Iowa, where he has pledged to visit all 99 counties.

Mr. DeSantis leaned into his Iowa-centric approach, criticizing Mr. Trump for his attacks on Ms. Reynolds, which the governor called “totally out of bounds” as he spoke briefly with reporters. “She’s never done anything to him,” Mr. DeSantis said of Ms. Reynolds, who is staying neutral in the caucuses. “But that’s just how he operates, to attack one of the best governors in the country.”

Accompanied by his wife, Casey, and their three small children, Mr. DeSantis walked through crowds of fairgoers to join Ms. Ernst and Representative Zach Nunn, also a Republican, for a session at the grill flipping burgers and pork chops. Donning a red Iowa Pork Producers Association apron, Mr. DeSantis dove into the retail politics demanded at the busy state fair.

But Mr. Trump, who also visited the fair on Saturday, proved impossible to escape, although the paths of the two candidates never directly intersected.

Mr. DeSantis was trailed for much of the day by Trump supporters with placards trumpeting Mr. Trump as a “back-to-back Iowa champ” in 2016 and 2020. Mr. Trump of course did not win the 2016 Iowa caucuses, placing second to Senator Ted Cruz of Texas. He never conceded defeat.

And while the Trump Team handed out anti-DeSantis fliers before the former president’s speech at the Steer N’ Stein, the trolling was not limited to the fairgrounds, it seems. As Mr. DeSantis finished flipping pork chops, Mr. Trump’s plane appeared overhead, circling the fairgrounds in what Iowa locals say is a non-standard flight path into Des Moines International Airport, and prompting chants of “We love Trump” from supporters in the crowd.

Mr. DeSantis’s tour through the state fair also exposed him to the kind of unscripted interactions his campaign usually avoids. Some people shouted positive encouragement as he and his family walked by (“We love you, Governor!” “Go get ‘em, Ron!”), to which Mr. DeSantis often responded with a smile or a wave.

Others — on both the left and the right — jeered him with cries of “Loser!” “Fascist!” or “DeSanc-



Gov. Ron DeSantis was joined by Gov. Kim Reynolds of Iowa at the Knoxville Nationals car race in Iowa on Saturday.

tionious” (a favored insult of Mr. Trump’s), which Mr. DeSantis ignored. One woman hurled an expletive at him as he carried his young daughter on his shoulders.

All the while, Mr. DeSantis and his family reaped a prize bounty at the fair games, including a milk jug toss and balloon popping. They walked away with at least two oversize Pikachu stuffed animals and what appeared to be a giant koala.

Mr. Trump’s decisive grip on the Republican Party was further emphasized on Saturday night, when Mr. DeSantis joined Ms. Reynolds at the Knoxville Nationals, a major sprint car race an hour outside

of Des Moines. Roughly 25,000 people attended the event — and many seemed to be from Mr. Trump’s wing of the party.

The crowd’s reaction was decidedly mixed, as both governors gave brief remarks from inside the oval dirt racetrack. A smattering of boos rang out when Ms. Reynolds spoke, growing into a chorus when it was Mr. DeSantis’s turn.

“Go back to Florida,” one man bellowed from the bleachers, as Mr. DeSantis sought God’s blessing for the state of Iowa and the nation, as Ms. Reynolds looked on. “If you win, take her with you,” another person shouted.

# Inside Trump's Extensive Effort to Flip the Georgia Vote

From Page A1

and-file election workers with false accusations of ballot stuffing, leading to so many vicious threats against one of them that she was forced into hiding.

They deployed fake local electors to certify that Mr. Trump had won the election. Within even the Justice Department, an obscure government lawyer secretly plotted with the president to help him overturn the state's results.

And on the same day that Mr. Biden's victory was certified by Congress, Trump allies infiltrated a rural Georgia county's election office, copying sensitive software used in voting machines throughout the state in their fruitless hunt for ballot fraud.

The Georgia investigation has encompassed an array of high-profile allies, from the lawyers Rudolph W. Giuliani, Kenneth Chesebro and John Eastman, to Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff at the time of the election. But it has also scrutinized lesser-known players like a Georgia bail bondsman and a publicist who once worked for Ye, the rapper formerly known as Kanye West.

As soon as Monday, there could be charges from a Fulton County grand jury after Ms. Willis presents her case to them. The number of people indicted could be large: A separate special grand jury that investigated the matter in an advisory capacity last year recommended more than a dozen people for indictment, and the forewoman of the grand jury has strongly hinted that the former president was among them.

If an indictment lands and the case goes to trial, a regular jury and the American public will hear a story that centers on nine weeks from Election Day through early January in which a host of people all tried to push one lie: that Mr. Trump had secured victory in Georgia. The question before the jurors would be whether some of those accused went so far that they broke the law.

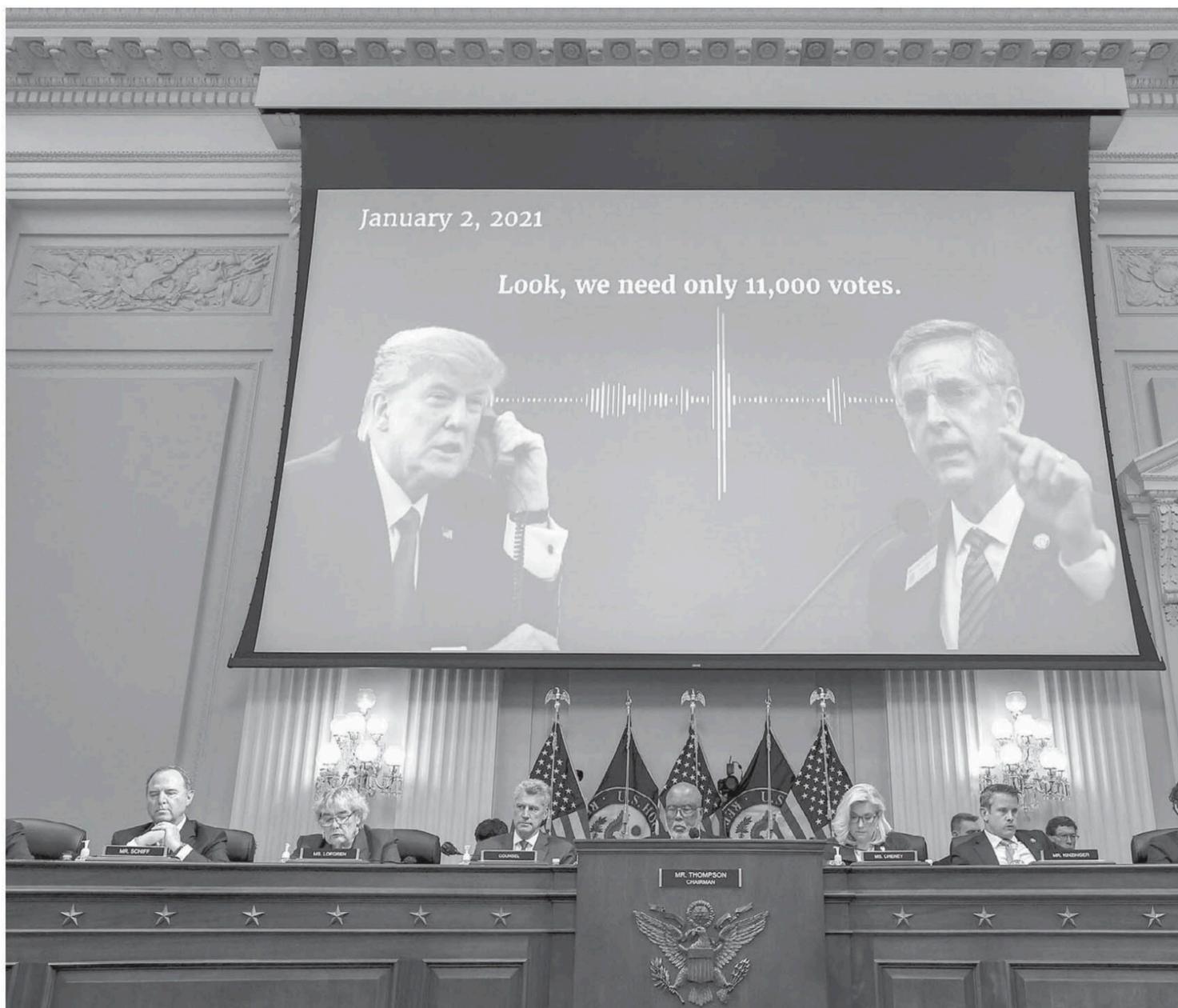
## Fueling 'Hate and Fury'

It did not take long for the gloves to come off.

During the Nov. 5 visit by Donald Trump Jr., the Georgia Republican Party was already fracturing. Some officials believed they should focus on defending the seats of the state's two Republican senators, Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue, who were weeks away from runoff elections, rather than fighting a losing presidential candidate's battles.

But according to testimony before the Jan. 6 committee by one of the Trump campaign's local staffers, Mr. Trump's son was threatening to "tank" those Senate races if there was not total support for his father's effort. (A spokesman for Donald Trump Jr. disputed that characterization, noting that the former president's son later appeared in ads for the Senate candidates.)

Four days later, the two senators called for Mr. Raffensperger's



**KEY CALL** A conversation between President Donald J. Trump and Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, was played last year at a hearing on the Capitol riot.

resignation. The Raffensperger family was soon barraged with threats, leading his wife, Tricia, to confront Ms. Loeffler in a text message: "Never did I think you were the kind of person to unleash such hate and fury."

Four other battleground states had also flipped to Mr. Biden, but losing Georgia, the only Deep South state among them, seemed particularly untenable for Mr. Trump. His margin of defeat there was one of the smallest in the nation. Republicans controlled the state, and as he would note repeatedly in the aftermath, his campaign rallies in Georgia had drawn big, boisterous crowds.

By the end of November, Mr. Trump's Twitter feed had become a font of misinformation. "Every-

body knows it was rigged" he wrote in a tweet on Nov. 29. And on Dec. 1: "Do something @BrianKempGA," he wrote, referring to Gov. Brian Kemp of Georgia, a Republican. "You allowed your state to be scammed."

But these efforts were not gaining traction. Mr. Raffensperger and Mr. Kemp were not bending. And on Dec. 1, Mr. Trump's attorney general, William P. Barr, announced that the Department of Justice had found no evidence of voting fraud "on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

## A Show for Lawmakers

It was time to turn up the volume. Mr. Giuliani was on the road,

traveling to Phoenix and Lansing, Mich., to meet with lawmakers to convince them of fraud in their states, both lost by Mr. Trump. Now, he was in Atlanta.

Even though Mr. Trump's loss in Georgia had been upheld by a state audit, Mr. Giuliani made fantastical claims at a hearing in front of the State Senate, the first of three legislative hearings in December 2020.

He repeatedly asserted that machines made by Dominion Voting Systems had flipped votes from Mr. Trump to Mr. Biden and changed the election outcome — false claims that became part of Dominion defamation suits against Fox News, Mr. Giuliani and a number of others.

Mr. Giuliani, then Mr. Trump's

personal lawyer, also played a video that he said showed election workers pulling suitcases of suspicious ballots from under a table to be secretly counted after Republican poll watchers had left for the night.

He accused two workers, a Black mother and daughter named Ruby Freeman and Wandra Moss, of passing a suspicious USB drive between them "like vials of heroin or cocaine." Investigators later determined that they were passing a mint; Mr. Giuliani recently admitted in a civil suit that he had made false statements about the two women.

Other Trump allies also made false claims at the hearing with no evidence to back them up, including that thousands of convicted

felons, dead people and others unqualified to vote in Georgia had done so.

John Eastman, a lawyer advising the Trump campaign, claimed that "the number of underage individuals who were allowed to register" in the state "amounts allegedly up to approximately 66,000 people."

That was not remotely true. During an interview last year, Mr. Eastman said that he had relied on a consultant who had made an error, and there were in fact about 2,000 voters who "were only 16 when they registered."

But a review of the data he was using found that Mr. Eastman was referring to the total number of Georgians since the 1920s who were recorded as having regis-

# Indictments Became a Political Asset for the Trump Campaign

From Page A1

said Tony Fabrizio, a Republican pollster who works for Mr. Trump's super PAC. "With Trump the rally around the flag happens to be about him personally."

## 'A Solar Eclipse-Like Event'

For nearly two years, Fox News and Rupert Murdoch's broader empire had been weaning itself off Mr. Trump and elevating Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida. As a New York Post headline celebrating his 20-point re-election win put it, Mr. DeSantis was "DeFUTURE" of the Republican Party.

Mr. DeSantis's office closely coordinated with Fox producers to create flattering segments, according to emails obtained by The Tampa Bay Times. His achievements in Florida — especially his handling of Covid — were heralded as heroic acts of governance in the face of leftist opposition. Fox programming centered on themes and villains that Mr. DeSantis had built his brand on fighting: transgender athletes, Dr. Anthony Fauci and all things "woke."

But after Mr. Trump's first indictment, the priorities of the conservative movement and its media ecosystem shifted.

Influential conservative talk radio hosts rallied behind Mr. Trump. Even commentators who liked Mr. DeSantis, such as Mark Levin, took on the indictments as a personal mission that seemed to override other priorities. Another right-wing personality, Glenn Beck, who used to warn about the dangers of Mr. Trump, went on Tucker Carlson's now-canceled show on Fox, put on a MAGA hat and declared that "the America that we knew, the fundamental transformation that started in



The former president en route to Georgia after his loss. He may face a fourth indictment there.

2008, is finished."

Programming across conservative media centered on the idea that Mr. Trump was the victim of a justice system hijacked by Democrats. Mr. DeSantis's fight against "wokeness" became passé — a matter of small stakes when set against Mr. Trump's potential incarceration.

Mr. Trump's indictments didn't just occupy a 24-hour news cycle; the cases consumed whole weeks on both mainstream and conservative media, each following a pattern. There was the week of rumors ahead of the indictments, and then indictment day, arraignment day and the post-arraignment analysis.

Mr. Trump and his team have deliberately sought to maximize live news coverage of his criminal

arraignments. They treat court appearances exactly as they would campaign events — choreographing visuals down to minute details and working with all the networks, including those Mr. Trump has pilloried as "fake news," such as CNN.

The Trump team has invited reporters into its motorcade, whose black S.U.V.s have been tracked live on television news. The campaign has briefed the networks ahead of time so that cameras can be set up at multiple locations on arraignment days to get the best shots — including along the motorcade route and as the Trump plane lands and takes off.

"What did the other candidates do today? Do we know? We know where Trump was," Steven Cheung, Mr. Trump's spokesman, said

the evening of the Florida arraignment. "There's no oxygen for the other candidates."

For the most recent arraignment in Washington, the Trump team ensured a camera was stationed within the motorcade — shooting out of the windshield to give network audiences a ride-along effect as the former president was driven from the courthouse to Reagan National Airport. On arraignment days, Trump advisers were thrilled as every news screen fixed on the former president — with some aides posting photos of the wall-to-wall coverage on social media.

It quickly became apparent to Mr. DeSantis and other rivals that during the indictment fever they would be responding to the news on Mr. Trump's terms.

An adviser to one of Mr. Trump's rivals, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said Mr. Trump's legal travails had repeatedly forced his candidate's campaign to reschedule policy announcements and redo its calendar, describing the indictments as "a solar eclipse-like event."

## Commanding the Party Apparatus

It wasn't just Mr. Trump's rivals and his acolytes on Capitol Hill who snapped to attention after his criminal charges — it was the entire official structure of the Republican Party.

Before Mr. Trump announced his 2024 candidacy, the official party committees had routinely spammed voters with Trump-centric fund-raising emails. Just the mention of his name in a subject line drew attention, and they had become dependent on him to goose small-dollar donations.

But when Mr. Trump announced he was running for president on Nov. 15, top officials at the Republican National Committee knew they needed to stop pumping out the Trump emails. They wanted to avoid giving the appearance that they were playing favorites in the G.O.P. primary and therefore risk compromising their official neutrality. An analysis of the past 10 months of fund-raising emails from an online archive shows that between Mr. Trump's announcement on Nov. 15 and late March the R.N.C. sent only one email that mentioned Mr. Trump in its subject line.

But on March 29, when rumors were swirling that the former president would soon be indicted in Manhattan, the R.N.C. ended its moratorium.

Over the next week alone, the R.N.C. sent at least a dozen emails to Republican voters expressing outrage over the indictment of Mr. Trump — and channeling that anger into requests for personal data

and donations. Shortly after midnight in the early hours of April 4, the R.N.C. emailed its list a massive digital countdown clock to "President Trump arrest" — displaying hours, minutes and seconds.

R.N.C. emails included polls asking people to vote on whether Mr. Trump was innocent or guilty. And the party sent out a message from its chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, with the subject line "Dark times for America" — urging people to donate money to "stand with the Republican Party at this critical moment in our nation's history."

Ms. McDaniel has appeared frequently on Fox to defend the former president. So have two House leaders, Representatives Kevin McCarthy and Elise Stefanik, who have at times seemed to compete to see who can defend Mr. Trump more vigorously.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee, the party's campaign arm for the Senate, followed the same playbook as the R.N.C. And while these tactics were self-interested — online fund-raisers ride whatever dominates the news cycle, and nothing sells like Mr. Trump's indictments — the messages of support from the official party apparatus also sent a clear signal. This was Mr. Trump's party. Not defending him was not an option.

## An Online Gold Mine

The former president had been struggling to raise campaign cash until it became clear, in mid-March, that he would face criminal charges in Manhattan.

That first indictment poured rocket fuel into Mr. Trump's online fund-raising machine. Mr. Trump had been averaging \$129,000 raised per day in 2023 until that point, according to federal records. In the next three weeks he averaged more than \$778,000

Reporting was contributed by Ashley Wu, Camille Baker, Karen Yourish and Kennedy Elliott.



ALEX WONG/GETTY IMAGES

have the state's election results overturned. Mr. Trump pressured Mr. Kemp to compel lawmakers to come back into session and brush aside the will of the state's voters. Mr. Kemp, who during his campaign for governor had toted a rifle and threatened to "round up illegals" in an ad that seemed a homage to Mr. Trump, rebuffed the idea.

Two days later, Mr. Trump called David Ralston, the speaker of the Georgia House, with a similar pitch. But Mr. Ralston, who died last year, "basically cut the president off," a member of the special grand jury in Atlanta who heard his testimony later told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "He just basically took the wind out of the sails."

By Dec. 7, Georgia had completed its third vote count, yet again affirming Mr. Biden's victory. But Trump allies in the legislature were hatching a new plan to defy the election laws that have long been pillars of American democracy: They wanted to call a special session and pick new electors who would cast votes for Mr. Trump.

Never mind that Georgia lawmakers had already approved representatives to the Electoral College reflecting Biden's win in the state, part of the constitutionally prescribed process for formalizing the election of a new president. The Trump allies hoped that the fake electors and the votes they cast would be used to pressure Vice President Mike Pence not to certify the election results on Jan. 6.

Mr. Kemp issued a statement warning them off: "Doing this in order to select a separate slate of presidential electors is not an option that is allowed under state or federal law."

### The Fake Electors Meet

Rather than back down, Mr. Trump was deeply involved in the emerging plan to enlist slates of bogus electors.

Mr. Trump called Ronna McDaniel, the head of the Republican National Committee, to enlist her help, according to Ms. McDaniel's House testimony. By Dec. 13, as the Supreme Court of Georgia rejected an election challenge from the Trump campaign, Robert Sinners, the Trump campaign's local director of Election Day operations, emailed the 16 fake electors, directing them to quietly meet in the capitol building in Atlanta the next day.

Mr. Trump's top campaign lawyers were so troubled by the plan that they refused to take part. Still, the president tried to keep up the pressure using his Twitter account. "What a fool Governor @BrianKempGA of Georgia is," he wrote in a post just after midnight on Dec. 14, adding, "Demand this clown call a Special Session."

Later that day, the bogus electors met at the Statehouse. They signed documents that claimed they were Georgia's "duly elected and qualified electors," even though they were not.

In the end, their effort was rebuffed by Mr. Pence.

In his testimony to House investigators, Mr. Sinners later reflected on what took place: "I felt ashamed," he said.

### Moves in the White House

With other efforts failing, the White House chief of staff, Mark Meadows, got personally involved. Just before Christmas, he traveled to suburban Cobb County, Ga., during its audit of signatures on mail-in absentee ballots, which had been requested by Mr. Kemp.

Mr. Meadows tried to get into the room where state investigators were verifying the signatures. He was turned away. But he did meet with Jordan Fuchs, Georgia's deputy secretary of state, to discuss the audit process.

During the visit, Mr. Meadows put Mr. Trump on the phone with the lead investigator for the secretary of state's office, Frances Watson. "I won Georgia by a lot, and the people know it," Mr. Trump told her. "Something bad happened."

Byung J. Pak, the U.S. attorney in Atlanta at the time, believed that Mr. Meadows's visit was "highly unusual," adding in his House testimony, "I don't recall that ever happening in the history of the U.S."

In Washington, meanwhile, a strange plot was emerging within the Justice Department to help Mr. Trump.

Mr. Barr, one of the most senior administration officials to dismiss the claims of fraud, had stepped down as attorney general, and jockeying for power began. Jeffrey Clark, an unassuming lawyer who had been running the Justice Department's environmental division, attempted to go around the department's leadership by meeting with Mr. Trump and pitching a plan to help keep him in office.

Mr. Clark drafted a letter to lawmakers in Georgia, dated Dec. 28, falsely claiming that the Justice Department had "identified significant concerns" regarding the state's results. He urged the lawmakers to convene a special session — a dramatic intervention.

Richard Donoghue, who was serving as acting deputy attorney general, later testified that he was so alarmed when he saw the draft letter that he had to read it "twice to make sure I really understood what he was proposing, because it was so extreme."

The letter was never sent.

### One Last Call

Still, Mr. Trump refused to give up. It was time to reach the man who was in charge of election oversight: Mr. Raffensperger, Georgia's secretary of state.

On Jan. 2, he called Mr. Raffensperger and asked him to recalculate the vote. It was the call that he would later repeatedly defend as "perfect," an hourlong mostly one-sided conversation during which Mr. Raffensperger politely but firmly rejected his en-



REBECCA WRIGHT/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAWYER Rudolph W. Giuliani has been one focus of the inquiry.



ERIK S. LESSER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

SON Donald Trump Jr. said his father would fight "to the death."



AL DRAGO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

R.N.C. CHIEF Ronna McDaniel testified that she was asked to help.

quiries.

"You know what they did and you're not reporting it," the president warned, adding, "you know, that's a criminal — that's a criminal offense. And you know, you can't let that happen. That's a big risk to you."

Mr. Raffensperger was staggered. He later wrote that "for the office of the secretary of state to 'recalculate' would mean we would somehow have to fudge the numbers. The president was asking me to do something that I knew was wrong, and I was not going to do that."

Mr. Trump seemed particularly intent on incriminating the Black women working for the county elections office, telling Mr. Raf-

fensperger that Ruby Freeman — whom he mentioned 18 times during the call — was "a professional vote-scammer and hustler."

"She's one of the hot items on the internet, Brad," Mr. Trump said of the viral misinformation circulating about Ms. Freeman, which had already been debunked by Mr. Raffensperger's aides and federal investigators.

Trump-fueled conspiracy theories about Ms. Freeman and her daughter, Ms. Moss, were indeed proliferating. In testimony to the Jan. 6 committee last year, Ms. Moss recounted Trump supporters forcing their way into her grandmother's home, claiming they were there to make a citizen's arrest of her granddaughter; Ms.

Freeman said that she no longer went to the grocery store.

Then, on Jan. 4, Ms. Freeman received an unusual overture.

Trevian Kutti, a Trump supporter from Chicago who had once worked as a publicist for Ye, persuaded Ms. Freeman to meet her at a police station outside Atlanta. Ms. Freeman later said that Ms. Kutti — who told her that "crisis is my thing," according to a video of the encounter — had tried to pressure her into saying she had committed voter fraud.

"There is nowhere I feel safe. Nowhere," Ms. Freeman said in her testimony, adding, "Do you know how it feels to have the president of the United States target you?"

### 'Every Freaking Ballot'

On Jan. 7, despite the fake electors and the rest of the pressure campaign, Mr. Pence certified the election results for Mr. Biden. The bloody, chaotic attack on the Capitol the day before did not stop the final certification of Biden's victory, but in Georgia, the machinations continued.

In a quiet, rural county in the southeastern part of the state, Trump allies gave their mission one more extraordinary try.

A few hours after the certification, a small group working on Mr. Trump's behalf traveled to Coffee County, about 200 miles from Atlanta. A lawyer advising Mr. Trump had hired a company called SullivanStrickler to scour voting systems in Georgia and other states for evidence of fraud or miscounts; some of its employees joined several Trump allies on the expedition.

"We scanned every freaking ballot," Scott Hall, an Atlanta-area Trump supporter and bail bondsman who traveled to Coffee County with employees of the company on Jan. 7, recalled in a recorded phone conversation. Mr. Hall said that with the blessing of the Coffee County elections board, the team had "scanned all the equipment" and "imaged all the hard drives" that had been used on Election Day.

A law firm hired by SullivanStrickler would later release a statement saying of the company, "Knowing everything they know now, they would not take on any further work of this kind."

Others would have their regrets, too. While Mr. Trump still pushes his conspiracy theories, some of those who worked for him now reject the claims of rigged voting machines and mysterious ballot-stuffed suitcases. As Mr. Sinners, the Trump campaign official, put it in his testimony to the Jan. 6 committee last summer, "It was just complete hot garbage."

By then, Ms. Willis's investigation was well underway.

"An investigation is like an onion," she said in an interview soon after her inquiry began. "You never know. You pull something back, and then you find something else."

tered before they were allowed. Even that number was heavily inflated due to data-entry errors common in large government databases.

The truth: Only about a dozen Georgia residents were recorded as being 16 when they registered to vote in 2020, and those appeared to be another data-entry glitch.

### The President Calling

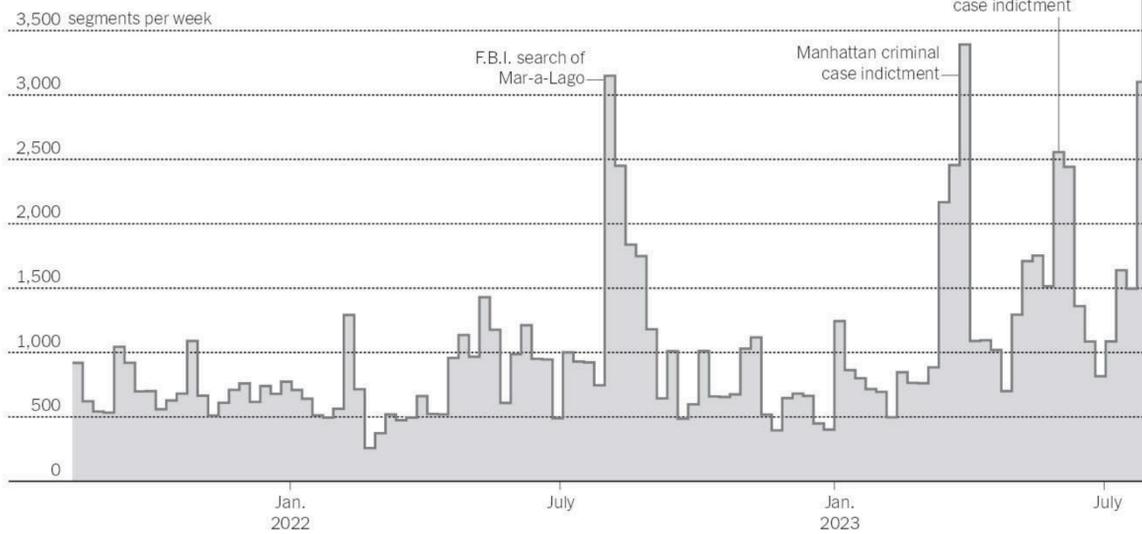
In the meantime, Mr. Trump was working the phones, trying to directly persuade Georgia Republican leaders to reject Mr. Biden's win.

He called Governor Kemp on Dec. 5, a day after the Trump campaign filed a lawsuit seeking to

## For Trump, Any Publicity Has Been Good Publicity

Donald J. Trump has seen sharp upticks in coverage on Fox News immediately after being charged in criminal indictments.

Number of 15-second Fox News segments each week that mention "Trump" at least once



Source: GDELT, Internet Archive | Notes: Data is from Aug. 8, 2021, to Aug. 5, 2023.

ASHLEY WU/THE NEW YORK TIMES

51-year-old Trump supporter from California, Kentucky. "They've weaponized our entire government against people like us. Every time he gets indicted, it's driving tens of thousands more of us to the polls."

More than half of Republicans — including 77 percent of self-identified MAGA Republicans — said the indictments and investigations against Mr. Trump were an attack on people like them, according to a CBS News/YouGov poll taken soon after the most recent indictment. And 86 percent of Republicans felt the indictments were an attempt to stop Mr. Trump from campaigning.

For some Republicans, the mere fact that Democrats were investigating and charging Mr. Trump with crimes was added reason to support him. And the fact that Mr. Trump's rivals have not been indicted was a cause of suspicion.

"Any time you have a pack of dogs chasing you down and you're willing to stand firm and fight, you're going to get my vote," said Mallory Butler, 39, who lives in Polk County, Fla., and supports Mr. Trump. "DeSantis doesn't have a pack of dogs hunting him down, and that tells me that somebody's probably backing him, or he's in somebody's pocket at this

point. And Trump doesn't have that."

Mr. DeSantis's advisers have gone back and forth over how to defend Mr. Trump enough to satisfy the Republican base but not so much as to render him a supplicant. There were sharp internal debates among Mr. DeSantis's senior staff about whether the governor should promise to pardon Mr. Trump if he were elected.

Mr. DeSantis initially refused to go that far — only saying that he would consider a pardon. But more recently he has strongly hinted that he would. And because of the intense Republican anger around Mr. Trump's first indict-

ment, the DeSantis team fast-tracked the rollout of its policy to confront a "weaponized" Justice Department, according to a person close to the campaign.

Mr. DeSantis's communications director, Andrew Romeo, responded that the Florida governor was "the only candidate in this race who can beat Joe Biden and end the weaponization of the federal government once and for all."

And Mr. Cheung, Mr. Trump's communications director, described the indictments as a "battle between good and evil." He accused Mr. DeSantis of taking "the cowardly path" and predicted voters would "not forget his disloyal-

ty."

Mr. Trump's rise in the polls could be tied to multiple dynamics beyond his indictments. The initial spike in support predated his first indictment, and the polling increases coincided with a spate of negative headlines and stumbles from Mr. DeSantis.

Mr. Trump's second indictment led to a much smaller polling bump, and it remains too early to estimate the polling effect of his third and most recent indictment.

For many of Mr. Trump's supporters, the details of each successive indictment have blended together into a generic attack on the former president, creating something of a background noise they are largely tuning out.

"The indictments have no impact on my support for Trump," said Sean Roh, 39, who described himself as a reluctant Trump supporter from Lynnwood, Wash. "In the past I'd followed them in the news, but now I don't care to read the details."

Seven in 10 Republican primary voters said Republicans needed to stand behind Mr. Trump in the face of investigations, including nearly half of voters who are planning to support a candidate other than the former president, according to the latest New York Times/Siena College poll, which was taken before the most recent indictment. And more than 80 percent of Republicans said the charges in the most recent indictment were politically motivated, according to an ABC News/Ipsos poll.

The indictment cycle could begin anew as soon as this week, when Mr. Trump could face a fourth indictment in Georgia.

On the morning of his most recent arraignment, the former president joked about what it would take for him to secure victory.

"I need," he said, "one more indictment to ensure my election!"

# Lure of Fast Living: The Rise and Fall of an F.B.I. Spy Hunter

From Page A1

G-man, however, there was another, less visible side to Mr. McGonigal, federal prosecutors and his former colleagues say. He held off-the-books meetings with foreign politicians and businessmen and accepted illicit payments while doing favors for associates, according to federal indictments filed against him in two states earlier this year.

Mr. McGonigal's arrest, in part based on accusations that he had worked for a Russian oligarch, came at a time when U.S.-Russia relations had reached their lowest point since the Cold War, leading to questions about whether one of the country's most trusted spy hunters had become a spy himself. But a close look at Mr. McGonigal's life and career reveals an arc that appears to have little or nothing to do with espionage and international intrigue. Instead, it seems to be a quintessentially American story about greed.

Smooth and politic while navigating an upward trajectory through the F.B.I.'s bureaucracy, he was a different man with subordinates, flashing his temper at the smallest provocation, former associates say. An expert in Russian counterintelligence, he spoke publicly of international security threats. At the same time, prosecutors say, he was privately courting the oligarch, Oleg V. Deripaska, who figured prominently in the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Now, Mr. McGonigal, 55, appears set to become one of the highest-ranking F.B.I. agents ever to be convicted of a crime. He is scheduled to appear in federal court in New York on Tuesday for a possible guilty plea in the case involving Mr. Deripaska, and is in talks to resolve an indictment brought by federal prosecutors in Washington. Until any deal is finalized, it could still fall apart, and Mr. McGonigal, who has so far pleaded not guilty, could go to trial.

The case has raised unsettling questions about the F.B.I.'s ability to detect corruption within its ranks. Prosecutors suggested that Mr. McGonigal traveled extensively while at the bureau, meeting with foreign officials and businesspeople who, on the surface, had nothing to do with his job. Agents are required to report such contacts and certain financial transactions and to take lie-detector tests, but the bureau relies heavily on the integrity of the people it has placed in positions of trust.

Over more than three years, the investigation has so far produced no evidence that Mr. McGonigal provided national security secrets to the Russians or to anyone else, according to American officials who requested anonymity to discuss ongoing cases. Although the officials said Mr. McGonigal appears to have been engaged in simple graft, his actions stunned many in the F.B.I., where a core tenet is drilled into every agent: "Never embarrass the bureau."

The F.B.I.'s director, Christopher A. Wray, said the charges demonstrated "the F.B.I.'s willingness as an organization to shine a bright light on conduct that is totally unacceptable, including when it happens from one of our own people, and to hold those people accountable."

Peter J. Lapp, a former F.B.I. agent who once worked for Mr. McGonigal, said that the openness with which he seems to have crossed legal lines — "doing it right in front of everyone" — took audacity. But the charges did not explain what he called "the great mystery."

"Why did he need so much money?"

While investigators have described brazen attempts to profit from his F.B.I. career, the actual crimes Mr. McGonigal is charged with are technical. Between the two indictments, he is accused of concealing details of his finances and activities overseas, violating U.S. sanctions and laundering money. Some charges carry potential prison sentences of up to 20 years, but a judge could impose far less.

Seth D. DuCharme, Mr. McGonigal's lawyer, said at a recent hearing in New York that the indictment was more dramatic than the case actually seemed to be.

"Every time I hear the government describe this as a small white-collar case, I feel a little more comforted," he said.

And the Washington prosecution, Mr. DuCharme has said, is basically "about some omissions on government forms."

What most shocked former colleagues was Mr. McGonigal's boldness. He had behaved in ways that he most likely knew would get him caught. In 2020, two years after his retirement, he spoke on a panel about the corruption of the Federal Security Service, or F.S.B., Russia's counterpart to the F.B.I., including its agents' participation in money laundering and acting as "private contractors" for



Before Charles McGonigal retired from the F.B.I. in 2018, he and his wife had raised two children in a quiet suburb of Washington.



Mr. McGonigal was accused of working for Oleg Deripaska, shown here greeting Vladimir V. Putin.

businessmen and criminals. "It has really become an organization that is rogue, in my opinion, and is at the behest of those who can pay for the services they offer," he said.

By then, prosecutors said, Mr. McGonigal had already accepted cash from a former Albanian intelligence officer — and had begun working with Mr. Deripaska.

## An Unpolished Edge

In the Cleveland suburbs where he grew up, one of four siblings in a family of modest means, Mr. McGonigal went by "Chuck," studied martial arts and liked to drive fast cars and party on weekends, according to his high school yearbook.

After graduating from Kent State University, and working briefly for the National Bank of Canada in New York City, Mr. McGonigal joined the F.B.I. Assigned to investigations into the crash of TWA Flight 800 off Long Island and the Sept. 11 attacks, he gradually climbed the ranks, eventually supervising a counterespionage squad at the agency's Washington field office. He was aided by a gift for "briefing up" — impressing superiors with analysis and presentations.

"He was a very hard-working, intelligent, nice guy — always,

"Yes, sir. No, sir," said another colleague, Clay Lemme, who worked as special agent in charge of counterintelligence, two levels above Mr. McGonigal, at the F.B.I.'s Washington field office.

He revealed a less polished side, though, when underlings displeased him, erupting in tirades while spraying spit. Mr. Lapp, his former employee, said it became a running joke: Offending agents got a second shower — "the McGonigal hot wash" — when he yelled at them.

Mr. McGonigal and his wife, Pamela, who had been a year behind him at Kent State, bought a red brick rambler in hilly North Chevy Chase, Md., where they raised their son and daughter. He joined Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, a nearby Catholic church. He registered to vote as a Republican and coached the Washington field office's softball squad. His den became a man cave, its walls covered in posters paying homage to the Ohio State Buckeyes, the Cleveland Browns and other teams.

Though Mr. McGonigal took pride in his home state, he also played down his humble roots, leaving Kent State off his official bio and accentuating the graduate degree he later earned at Johns Hopkins University.

All the while, he had access to

some of the F.B.I.'s most sensitive and important information, even helping to lead the investigation in 2012 into the compromise of C.I.A. informants in China.

By early 2016, Mr. McGonigal was running the bureau's Cyber-Counterintelligence Coordination Section in Washington, where agents analyzed Russian and Chinese hacking and other foreign intelligence activities.

In that senior position, Mr. McGonigal became aware of the initial criminal referral that led to the investigation known as Crossfire Hurricane — an inquiry into whether Donald J. Trump's presidential campaign and associates were coordinating with Russia.

That October, then-director James B. Comey appointed Mr. McGonigal special agent in charge of counterintelligence in New York, overseeing hundreds of agents and support staff. It was a return to where Mr. McGonigal had gotten his start, but in a vastly more important role.

The job would be the culmination of Mr. McGonigal's law enforcement career.

"If you want to learn and work counterintelligence, New York City is the pre-eminent field office," Mr. McGonigal told a gathering at the Foreign Policy Association seven months after his appointment, adding that audience

members who traveled overseas should expect to be under surveillance by foreign intelligence agencies.

Despite urging caution, it seems that Mr. McGonigal had already thrown it aside in his own life.

He had left his family in Maryland, and, soon after moving to New York, begun an affair with a woman who socialized in law-enforcement circles.

Mr. McGonigal met the woman, Allison Guerriero, 49, of Florham Park, N.J., through her work volunteering at a nonprofit organization called the Federal Enforcement Homeland Security Foundation, which says it raises money for the families of federal agents injured or killed in the line of duty — in part by hosting galas and golf outings with celebrities such as the "Law & Order" creator Dick Wolf and the actor Stephen Baldwin.

Ms. Guerriero, who has been publicly critical of Mr. McGonigal since his arrest, has said he led her to believe his marriage was dead, only to end their affair after he retired from the F.B.I. in 2018. In the aftermath, Pamela McGonigal, citing harassment, obtained a restraining order against Ms. Guerriero, who has acknowledged overstepping during periods of alcohol abuse.

Ms. Guerriero has said that, in her anger, she drunkenly sent an email to the head of the F.B.I.'s New York office suggesting he investigate Mr. McGonigal, which has led some to suspect that his marital indiscretion was what ultimately led to the federal inquiry that resulted in his arrest.

During their 18-month relationship, Ms. Guerriero said, she and Mr. McGonigal sometimes stayed at a Brooklyn apartment and enjoyed the swirl of the city. He loved Sparks Steak House and other upscale restaurants and was fastidious about his appearance.

"Suits, shoes, expensive ties," Ms. Guerriero said. "If he went out, he would have to be dressed to the nines."

Over dinner in Manhattan one evening in 2017, Mr. McGonigal was introduced to a man who would figure heavily into his undoing: Agron Neza, an Albanian-born businessman living in Leonia, N.J., who is labeled "Person A" in the Washington indictment.

As a young man, Mr. Neza had worked for the Albanian State Intelligence Service before moving to the United States. Now, balding

and bearded, Mr. Neza was brokering deals overseas.

In August 2017, according to prosecutors, Mr. McGonigal proposed the men make their own deal, in which Mr. Neza would lend him \$225,000 in cash.

## The Vienna Client

Prosecutors have not said why Mr. McGonigal needed that money or what he may have agreed to do in return. But over the next several months, they said, he injected himself into foreign political and business affairs, apparently while trading on his F.B.I. position, in dealings that would culminate in his arrest.

He befriended the prime minister of Albania, Edi Rama, and used his position to drum up foreign business for his associates, according to the indictment filed against him in Washington.

On one occasion, Mr. McGonigal opened an F.B.I. investigation into a lobbyist for the Albanian prime minister's main political rival, the prosecutors said. On another, prosecutors said, he helped secure an oil drilling license benefiting Mr. Neza and others.

Along the way, there was some indication that the F.B.I. was aware of his dealings with the Albanians. According to two people who spoke with him, Mr. McGonigal said the F.B.I. had authorized him to approach U.S. contractors about working with Mr. Rama to help reform the Albanian government, which had long been plagued by corruption and inefficiency.

Perhaps none of Mr. McGonigal's associations was as alarming as the one prosecutors said he had with the Russian oligarch, Mr. Deripaska. A billionaire metals magnate seen as shrewd and ruthless, Mr. Deripaska built his fortune after the fall of the Soviet Union, as state resources were taken over by businessmen with close ties to the Kremlin. He also cultivated ties to the West, hosting parties in Europe, courting politicians and hiring lawyers and lobbyists to look after his interests.

He did business with Paul Manafort, a lobbyist and political adviser who later served as chairman of Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign. F.B.I. agents attempted to recruit Mr. Deripaska as an informant, in part to find out whether Mr. Manafort had been a link to the Kremlin, which Mr. Deripaska denied.

In April 2018, the Treasury Department added Mr. Deripaska to its sanctions list, citing his ties to the Kremlin and accusations that he laundered money and threatened rivals, among other things. Before the sanctions were made public, Mr. McGonigal reviewed a list with Mr. Deripaska's name on it, the New York indictment said.

By late 2018, prosecutors suggested, he was laying the groundwork for a future business relationship with Mr. Deripaska.

Mr. McGonigal is accused of setting up an internship at the New York Police Department for the daughter of an unnamed aide to the oligarch — a reference to the Russian businessman Evgeny Fokin, according to people familiar with the case. (A senior police official said that the woman received a multiday "V.I.P.-type" tour of specialized units, not an internship.) Mr. McGonigal had been introduced to Mr. Fokin by a former Russian diplomat who had become an interpreter for U.S. courts, prosecutors said.

After retiring from the bureau in late 2018, and taking a job as vice president for security at the real estate firm Brookfield Properties, Mr. McGonigal began working for Mr. Deripaska, prosecutors said. He and the former diplomat connected the oligarch with an American law firm, Kobre & Kim, in 2019 to aid in getting the sanctions lifted.

They referred to Mr. Deripaska as "the individual" or "the Vienna client" in electronic communications, and Mr. McGonigal met with Mr. Deripaska and others in London and in Vienna, prosecutors said.

Mr. McGonigal was paid \$25,000 per month by the law firm for the sanctions-related work, using Mr. Deripaska's money, prosecutors said.

In August 2021, Mr. Fokin retained Mr. McGonigal and the former Russian diplomat for a new brief: investigating a rival oligarch with whom Mr. Deripaska was involved in a business dispute. The two men were paid \$218,000, until F.B.I. agents seized their devices that November, prosecutors said.

Last year, federal prosecutors in New York charged Mr. Deripaska and others with scheming to evade sanctions by engaging in real-estate deals.

In January, F.B.I. agents met Mr. McGonigal at Kennedy Airport and arrested him as he returned from an unrelated business trip to Sri Lanka. He had lost his job at the real-estate firm, but in the following months, the wholesome Midwesterner became a celebrity in Albania, where Mr. Rama's opponents and the media took to short-handing the scandal in a particular way.

They called it "the McGonigal affair."



Mr. McGonigal's ties to Prime Minister Edi Rama of Albania caused a scandal there, with protesters carrying effigies of the two men.

# Story of Enslaved Youth Emerges From Behind the Paint

From Page A1

leaning against a tree just behind the Frey children. Although he remains separated from the white children, Amans painted him in a powerful stance, with blushing cheeks and a kind of interiority that is unusual for the time.

Since the Black Lives Matter movement, the Met and other museums have responded to calls to reckon with the presentation of Black figures. When the European Galleries reopened in 2020, the museum included wall texts to highlight the presence of African people in Europe and to call attention to issues of racism, previously unmentioned. In the American Wing, which had presented “a romanticized history of American art,” Kornhauser said, a presidential portrait was recast with the consciousness of the present: John Trumbull’s 1780 portrait of George Washington and his enslaved servant William Lee, identified only the former President until 2020, when Lee’s name was added to the title. However, unlike Bézizaire, Lee is depicted at the margins, lacking in any emotion or humanity.

Jeremy K. Simien, an art collector from Baton Rouge, spent years trying to find the painting with the enslaved youth after seeing an image of it online in 2014, following its restoration, that featured all four figures. Intrigued, he kept searching and found an earlier image from 2005, after the painting had been deaccessioned by the New Orleans Museum of Art and was listed for auction by Christie’s. It was the same painting, but the young Black man was missing. He had been painted out.

“The fact that he was covered up haunted me,” Simien said in an interview.

For years, Simien looked for the painting in old auction records, catalogs and photo archives. He asked friends if anyone had seen it and someone had, in an antiques shop in Virginia. From there Simien tracked the painting to a private collection in Washington and eventually purchased it for an undisclosed amount.

At the time, he didn’t know who any of the people in the portrait were. But he was drawn to the story of the Black youth and the attempt to erase him.

“We knew we needed to find out who he was, as a son of Louisiana,” said Simien, “and as somebody who is worthy of being remembered or known.”

Simien hired Katy Morlas Shannon, a Louisiana historian who researches the lives of enslaved individuals. She figured out the

## Museums respond to calls to reckon with the presentation of Black figures.

identities of everyone in the portrait and used property and census records to land on a name for the young man who had been covered up: Bézizaire.

From there, Shannon pieced together the details of Bézizaire’s life. He was born in 1822 in the French Quarter. His mother was named Sallie. His father is unknown. Bézizaire had other brothers and sisters — all but one were sold away.

When he was six, Bézizaire and his mother were sold to Frederick Frey, a banker and merchant who, with his wife, Coralie, and their family, lived in a large French Quarter home on Royal Street, and owned a number of enslaved people.

Bézizaire is listed as a domestic and his mother as a cook, roles that would have kept them in proximity to the family.

Records suggest the portrait was painted around 1837, when Bézizaire was 15. He was the only person in the painting to survive to adulthood. Two Frey sisters, Elizabeth and Léontine, died the same year, likely of yellow fever. Their brother Frederick died a few years later.

Nearly 20 years later, after the elder Frederick Frey’s businesses had faltered and he died, his widow sold Bézizaire to Evergreen Plantation. Shannon, who was employed by the plantation at the time of her research, said he is the only enslaved person at the plantation for whom there is an image.

Bézizaire was listed on inventories until 1861, when the Civil War began. Soon after, New Orleans fell to the Union Army.

“Did he survive past the Civil War and live long enough to experience freedom?” Shannon said. “We don’t know because the trail stops.”

The portrait remained in the Frey family for more than a century. It is unclear when Bézizaire was painted out, but Craig Crawford, a conservator who did additional restoration work last year, estimates that based on the crackle pattern, the cover-up likely happened sometime around 1900.



SELINA MCKANE



CHRISTIE'S

Who did it and why are unknown, but segregation is known to have deepened in turn of the century New Orleans. Shannon said about the era, “No white person of any social standing in New Orleans at that time would have wanted a Black person portrayed with their family on their wall.”

In the 1950s, Eugene Grasser, Coralie Frey’s great-great-grandson, remembers picking the painting up from the attic of an elderly aunt with his father and strapping it to the roof of their car (along with another family portrait later identified as the work of Jacques Amans). They stored it in a garage behind his parents’ house.

In 1971, Eugene’s mother offered him the work, but the painting did not fit with his modernist décor. So it was donated to the New Orleans Museum of Art.

Photographs of the painting, then called “Three Children in a Landscape,” show a fourth figure ghosting through. According to museum documents, the portrait contained “the slave who took care of the children.”

The New Orleans museum did not clean or restore the painting

and put it into storage for 32 years until the museum deaccessioned the work.

The former director of the museum, John Bullard, said the decision to sell the painting came at a time when the children were unidentified and the artist was unknown.

“It was not in exhibitable condition,” he added, “so the museum

would have had to invest a certain amount of money to have it totally reconditioned.”

“I think in hindsight it was a mistake,” he acknowledged. “Mistakes happen.”

At auction, the painting sold for \$6,000 to an antiques dealer from Virginia who was interested in what might be under the over-paint. He asked a conservator,



BRON MONT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Katy Morlas Shannon, a Louisiana historian, used property and census records to find a name for the youth who was covered up.

## 5 Are Killed By Explosion In a Suburb Of Pittsburgh

By EDUARDO MEDINA and AMANDA HOLPUCH

Five people died and three others were injured after a house explosion on a suburban street in Pennsylvania on Saturday spread flames to several nearby homes, shattering windows and causing walls to crumble, the authorities said.

The police responded to a report of a house explosion around 10 a.m. in Plum, a borough in Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania just east of Pittsburgh.

Three homes on Rustic Ridge Drive were leveled by the explosion, and about a dozen others were damaged, county officials said at a news conference Saturday night.

Lanny Conley, the chief of the Plum Borough Police Department, said at a news conference Sunday afternoon that four adults and one adolescent had died and been recovered from the scene.

He did not release the names or ages of the victims.

Steve Imbarlina, the assistant chief for Allegheny County emergency services, said that two of

## Three homes are destroyed, dozens are damaged and 57 firefighters are hurt.

the injured people had been released from the hospital and a third was in critical condition on Sunday afternoon.

Emergency medical workers treated 57 firefighters for minor issues while they responded to the explosion and fire, Chief Imbarlina said.

“That could have been anything from a strain sprain to heat-related issues,” he said. “They were treated on scene and returned back to duty and re-entered the effort.”

Chief Imbarlina said that officials were investigating a cause for the explosion and that it would require extensive testing.

“This investigation may last for months, if not years,” he said.

Officials had shut off electricity and gas in the affected neighborhood “out of an abundance of caution” and were working to restore it, Chief Imbarlina said.

Michael Huwar, the president of Peoples Natural Gas, the company that provides gas service to the neighborhood, said its system was operating “as designed.”

He said that gas workers arrived in the neighborhood 15 minutes after they received an emergency call about the explosion and immediately began to check for leaks in the area.

Photos and videos of the scene showed a row of splintered homes emitting smoke. Firefighters walked through piles of wood and ash.

Officials said on Sunday that they did not know how many homes might have been affected.

“With an explosion like that, there is bound to be other collateral damage,” the president of the Plum Borough Council, Mike Doyle, said. “I was walking away yesterday and I saw a Jeep with a back window blown out, so it’s not just houses.”

In footage obtained by WTAE, a local news station, the explosion can be heard piercing the quiet of a nearby baseball game. In another clip, a doorbell camera appeared to capture the moment of the explosion, which sent a plume of fire and smoke into the sky.

George Emanuele, who lives three houses from where the explosion happened, said that he could feel the blast in his chest, The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported.

He said that his house shook, parts of his ceiling fell and one of his garage doors bent and would not open when he tried to get out of the house. Mr. Emanuele said he was able to exit through another door and he and a neighbor pulled a burned man away from a house that was on fire.

“The house was gone,” Mr. Emanuele said. “It was just debris and soot everywhere.”

Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania said on the X platform, formerly known as Twitter, that his administration and the state’s emergency management agency were “coordinating with and supporting county and local emergency responders.”

Amanda Holpuch contributed reporting.

More National news appears on Page A16.

# Opinion

The New York Times

## Time Is a Hidden Currency of Incalculable Worth

Esau McCaulley

A contributing Opinion writer and the author of the forthcoming book "How Far to the Promised Land: One Black Family's Story of Hope and Survival in the American South."

**P**OVERTY is the great thief of time, robbing parents of hours spent with their children. It takes them away from sporting events, choir concerts, ballet recitals, afternoon homework and watching Saturday morning cartoons, snuggled on the couch in pajamas. Despite the indestructible myth of the poor as lazy, many heads of struggling families endure long, unpredictable hours for little pay to provide for their offspring.

Scholars call this time poverty. It may seem unconventional to describe a lack of seconds, minutes and hours as a form of destitution. But poverty is a scarcity that extends to every aspect of life.

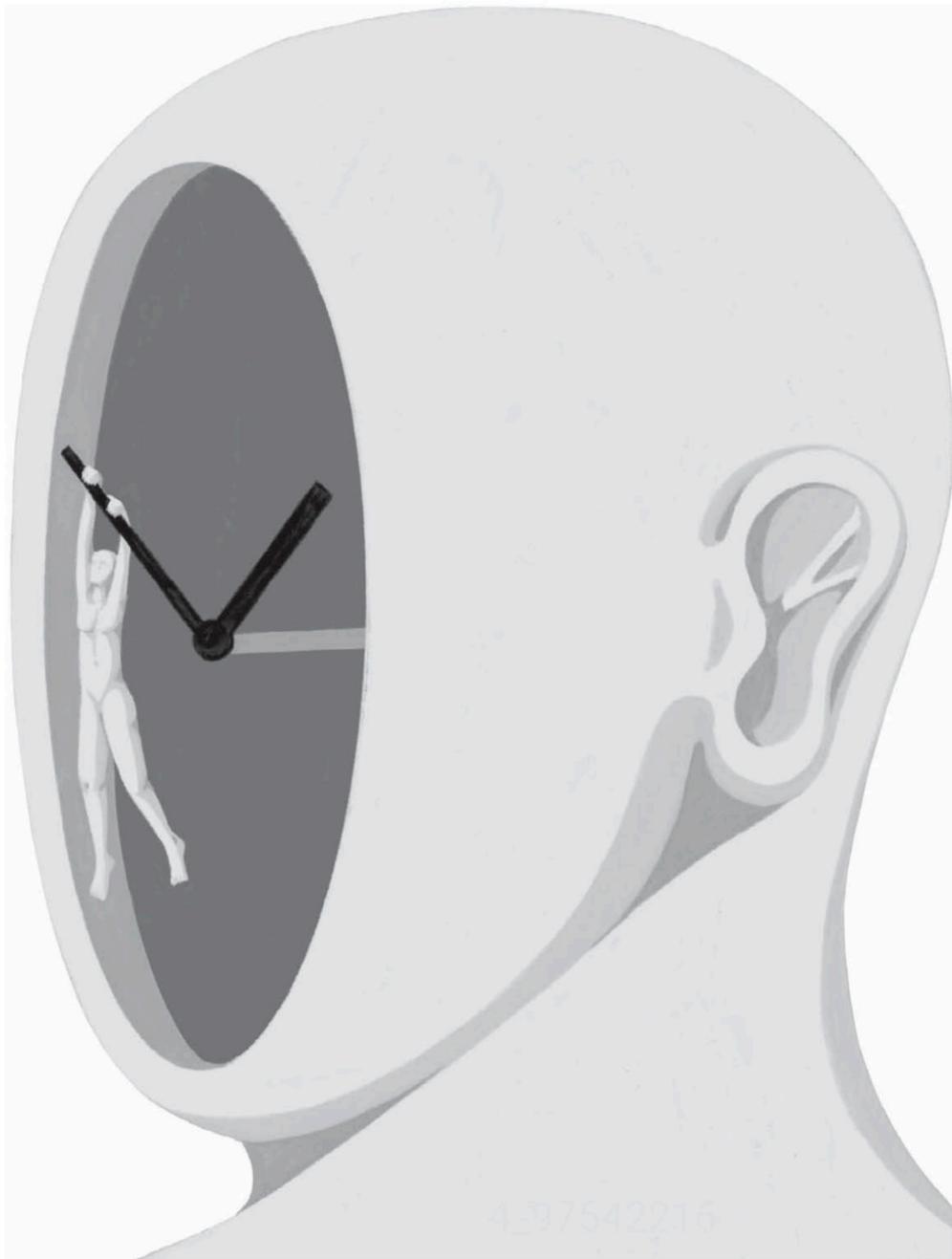
For years, my mother was among those working the late shift at a Chrysler plant — from 2 to 12 p.m., six days a week. Sunday was her day off, and regardless of her fatigue, she carried us to church. Those few hours gave her a chance to lift her entreaties to God, pleading that he might be a source of protection because she could not always be there to watch over us.

Friends and neighbors drove my siblings and me to and from school. When available, aunts, cousins and grandmothers babysat us in the evenings. That no one parents alone is a truism, and this is especially the case for the poor. Oversight of children is patched together, and favors are bartered to get through each week. When I was growing up, none of this struck me as odd, because all the children we knew were often left to their own devices.

What I felt most strongly were material signs of poverty. No one in my neighborhood commented on my periodically absent mother, but some did note the lack of a Nike emblem on my sneakers. There was a kind of soul-crushing mockery at school. You lived in difficult circumstances at home and went to the place where you might make a better life for yourself, and the other kids made fun of your suffering. We were all both victim and persecutor in equal measure.

When I dreamed of my future, I never said that I wanted to be time wealthy. Instead, I longed for tangible things that I'd be able to give to a family of my own. I wanted to put a financial barrier around my kids' self-esteem. I looked forward to a moment when they wouldn't stare nervously into their closet trying to pick a passable outfit. I didn't want them to be hesitant to invite friends over, uncertain of what might be seen. The joy they felt at Christmas and birthdays would be genuine and not performative. Poor kids quickly learn how to fake enthusiasm to avoid exacerbating their parents' guilt over their meager offerings. We smile after receiving presents that do little more than remind us of what we do not have.

How do we get to that better future? Once again, it is about time. Climbing the economic ladder requires long days to make the grades to get into college and perhaps graduate school. Then come extended hours to get ahead in our careers. Unlike our parents, many of us are not trading time for survival.



FLO MEISSNER

**Poverty often means long days but fewer hours for family and leisure.**

We sacrifice time for money because we saw that modeled. And no one taught us how to stop. How do we know when we should give up that payday for time? There will always be a better home, a supposedly higher-quality school district.

Everything in the culture tells us to keep going, stay with the grind, develop a side hustle. The signs of that success are visible. My kids can have the shoes I couldn't afford. They live in the kind of neighborhood that was closed to me.

We cannot show off time; it is a hidden currency, but it is of incalculable worth. Most studies show that the time parents spend with children has an outside impact on their emotional health. Kids are better adjusted and perform better in school when parents are more involved.

Though we know time is important, we seem to have trouble finding it. It keeps going missing. And time with our children during their youth is a nonrenewable resource; it only diminishes.

## How to Make Sure Federal Climate Money Helps Everyone

Farah Stockman

A member of the editorial board.

**A**FTER President Biden signed the Inflation Reduction Act one year ago, Teslas began popping up everywhere in Cambridge, Mass., where I live. More solar panels appeared on my neighbors' roofs. Mini split units that heat and cool became all the rage. In wealthy places, the tax credits that have been rolling out because of that landmark law nudged people who were on the fence to make big purchases that will reduce greenhouse gases.

But in the neighborhood in Detroit where I'm renovating a rental house with my cousin, I have yet to spot a Tesla. People seem more focused on keeping a roof over their head than affixing solar panels to it. A contractor tried to talk us out of installing a mini split. "Gas is cheaper than electricity," he said. We installed one anyway, but it doesn't look likely that we'll get a tax credit for it: Only owner-occupied residences are eligible, my tax preparer told me, and we don't live in the house. That's a hangover from the past, when tax credits aimed at encouraging energy efficiency largely excluded landlords and renters.

The result is that more than half of Detroiters — and most New Yorkers, for that matter — can't take advantage of this particular provision. Landlords, who could play a big role in retrofitting old buildings with insulation and low-carbon technology, might be eligible for other kinds of tax credits and programs in the law. But it's a headache to figure out how to participate. I suspect most landlords won't even try. Landlords don't typically pay heating bills; tenants do.

It's an example of how the Inflation Reduction Act, which Mr. Biden called the "biggest step forward on climate ever," can advantage those who already have advantages and leave the poorest out in the cold. The law, which passed by the skin of its teeth last summer, might one day be spoken of in the same breath as the Great Society or the New Deal. But if we are not careful, its enormous benefits could bypass those who are most in need.

To be clear, there's a lot to love about the Inflation Reduction Act, despite its flaws. It is projected to reduce greenhouse gases by 42

**Leaders can ensure Inflation Reduction Act funds get to those most in need.**

percent by 2030, from a 2005 baseline, compared with the roughly 27 percent reduction that was projected without it. That gets the country closer to the Biden administration's goal of cutting emissions in half by that date.

The law is enormous in scope and ambition. It addresses deep-rooted issues by providing billions of dollars to assist communities that have suffered from environmental harm. (It also authorizes the U.S. government to negotiate some Medicare prescription drug prices. At long last!)

It offers incentives for companies that manufacture new, green technologies on U.S. soil — like the Form Energy factory in Weirton, W.Va., which will make batteries that store solar and wind power for electrical grids. It makes it possible for low-income communities to harness renewable energy in ways that can generate a steady stream of income in the future, like the wind farm planned in North Dakota at the Standing Rock reservation, which is expected to nearly double the annual revenue of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

But this is not your grandma's environmental protection law. To pass, it had to be all carrots and no sticks. It contains almost no restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, it's a mind-bogglingly vast basket of incentives for corporations and households, big cities and rural towns, nonprofit organizations and utility companies.

The goal is to create a coalition of the willing that will transform the way energy is produced and consumed. That puts the onus on communities and individuals to organize themselves to take advantage of this law, which polls show the general public doesn't understand very well. For low-income places, making use of this law is an even heavier lift. Wealthier places with grant writers and planning commissions have a leg up on much of this funding.

To the Biden administration's credit, a lot of smart people have put in a lot of long hours trying to unlock the law's benefits for the non-Tesla set. For the first time, a tax credit is available for used electric vehicles. The Environmental Protection Agency is spending billions on setting up a green bank to make borrowing money to buy solar pan-

els as easy as getting a car loan. The Inflation Reduction Act changes the rules starting in January so that consumers qualify for electric vehicle tax credits on the front end — when purchasing a qualifying vehicle from a dealer.

"Your general observation that a place like Cambridge might have been able to jump on this from the get-go is a point well taken," John Podesta, who oversees the implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act, told me. "But I think we are doing everything we can to ensure that the benefits of these programs are reaching moderate- and low-income communities."

He said programs are being rolled out right now to help renters and renters benefit from the law in other ways, including jobs created from all this new support for clean energy, declining energy costs and lowering emissions overall.

There are a lot of tools tucked in the nooks and crannies of this law that could help low-income communities that want to make the green energy transition. But they are complicated, and to make the most of them, it is up to leaders and activists to identify them, organize around them and turn them into reality.

Stephanie Gidigbi Jenkins, the vice president for strategy for Communities First, an alliance that helps underserved groups unlock federal funds, told me that the administration has gone the extra mile to reach out to communities that don't normally get access to federal funds, even setting up a special network that provides technical support. But the jury is still out about whether it will be enough to move the needle in places like Detroit.

"It will take a generation to really understand what these investments will mean," Ms. Jenkins told me.

This whole-of-government push on climate change has led to an atmosphere of innovation beyond the new law. One of the most creative ideas is the notion that — instead of building a gazillion power plants to meet peak demand when all our cars have gone electric — we should pay communities for the energy generated by their solar panels or pay them to conserve energy by doing small things, like turning off their hot water

I recognized there was a problem in my own family after our then-7-year-old daughter kept asking me, "Dad, do you have to work again today? Do you have to go out of town again?"

At first, I pushed away her inquiries, thinking she didn't understand the complexities of adulthood. The sacrifices were for her and her siblings, weren't they?

The forced smile that she gave me when I explained I was busy reminded me of the lying smile I put on for my mother when she gave me a sweater for Christmas I could never wear in public.

I asked my 12-year-old daughter, "Would you rather have 20 percent more stuff or 20 percent more time?" She replied quickly, "With you? Time. Where would I put all that stuff, anyway?"

Their words persuaded me to make another midcourse parenting correction common to those learning as we go. That meant taking a hard look at my travel schedule and reducing the speaking engagements that I accepted. But it is more than just travel. For writers, there is the ever-present specter of brand building. We have to be creating content and engaging. But social media isn't just a time eater; it is also an energy destroyer and a mood shaper. I couldn't be commenting on everything happening everywhere and be emotionally present with my children.

How do we know when we have enough money? How does one discern when the cost-benefit analysis tips in favor of time? This is a question my mother never had to ask.

I am not arguing for a better work-life balance, although it involves that. I am speaking about recognizing that the rabbit of more wealth we are chasing is always a bit ahead of us, and we can lose sight of our children while seeking it.

Thinking about this may seem like the dilemma of the privileged who have the luxury to ponder existential questions. That criticism is fair but possibly shortsighted. We cannot value things for others that we do not value for ourselves. If money isn't sufficient to make the wealthy good parents, increasing cash flow is not enough for struggling families. Time and material aid need not be in competition. We need to start thinking about policies aimed at freeing up time for impoverished families as a form of aid.

We could begin by defining a healthy society as one in which everyone has a place to stay, food to eat and time to enjoy the fruits of their labor with those for whom they labor. A living wage should be one in which there is space for something beyond work.

Too many Americans believe that poverty isn't enough. That we need to punish the poor — assuming that if we make it difficult enough, they will work harder to get out of poverty. We treat callousness as an act of love. The poor, so the logic goes, do not deserve such luxuries as leisure. But my mother did work hard caring for us with what little reserves she had. Expanding that reservoir of time would be a boon to the children in our midst, and by extension, it might point to a healthier way of being for us all.

heaters for a few hours. This concept, called virtual power plants, has been championed by the Department of Energy.

It has sparked the imagination of J. Phillip Thompson, a former deputy mayor of New York who is also a professor of urban planning at M.I.T. He is trying to establish a virtual power plant in eastern Brooklyn that he hopes will create an income stream for residents, including renters. He sees the potential to fight and mitigate not only climate change but also poverty and inequality.

"We have to figure out how to use it," he told me. "Because if we don't, wealthy communities will go green, and low-income communities will stay brown. Unless we do something intentionally to make sure that it is fair, it will bypass poor communities."

This past spring, Mr. Thompson teamed up with Elisabeth Reynolds, a former Biden administration official, to teach a class at M.I.T. that sent students to work with local officials across the country to identify federal funds they might be eligible for and help them apply for them.

The students were both inspired by the once-in-a-generation potential for transformation that lay in front of them and unnerved by the speed with which the money was being disbursed.

"The scale and volume is unbelievable, unfathomable," Dylan Cohen, a graduate student at M.I.T., told me. But some of the deadlines came up so quickly that it was virtually impossible for places that weren't already shovel-ready to apply.

There are good reasons to allocate the money quickly. Fighting climate change is a race against time. It also might be a race against Republicans who want to claw the money back. The students' experiences still prompted some soul searching, about the trade-offs that take place every day as this enormous, contested American investment unfolds.

"What does it mean to have all this money and to have it not go out equitably?" Mr. Cohen asked.

Good question. Will the I.R.A. be remembered as a gift to the rich? Or a law that lifted up the least of us?

That depends on what we do with it, right now. In other words, it depends on us.

# Make Shakespeare Dirty Again

Drew Lichtenberg

A lecturer at Yale University and the resident dramaturg at the Shakespeare Theater Company in Washington, D.C.

IT SEEMED, for a moment, that Shakespeare was being canceled. Last week, school district officials in Hillsborough County, Fla., said that they were preparing high school lessons for the new academic year with some of William Shakespeare's works taught only with excerpts, partly in keeping with Gov. Ron DeSantis's legislation about what students can or can't be exposed to.

I'm here to say: Good. Cancel Shakespeare. It's about time.

Anyone who spends a lot of time reading Shakespeare (or working on his plays, as I have for most of my professional career) understands that he couldn't have been less interested in puritanical notions of respectability. Given how he's become an exalted landmark on the high road of culture, it's easy to forget that there's always been a secret smugglers' path to a more salacious and subversive Shakespeare, one well known and beloved by artists and theater people. The Bard has long been a patron saint to rebel poets and social outcasts, queer nonconformists and punk provocateurs.

Yes, Shakespeare is ribald, salacious, even shocking. But to understand his genius — and his indelible legacy on literature — students need to be exposed to the whole of his work, even, perhaps especially, the naughty bits.

The closing lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 20, addressed to the poem's male subject, are among the dirtiest — and hottest — of the 16th century. "But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure, / Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure." A favorite trick of Shakespeare's was to play with word order, especially when he wanted to disclose something too daring to be said in a more straightforward way, such as the love that dared not speak its name. The untangled meaning here: Your love ultimately belongs to me, sir, even if women (sometimes) enjoy your prick. Or, from the neck up you are as beautiful as a woman, and from the waist down you are all man.

Sex is one thing. The plays are also astoundingly gory. The bloody climax of "King Lear" so horrified the playwright Nahum Tate that he felt compelled to rewrite its ending. Tate's sanitized version of "King Lear," premiering in 1681, held the stage until 1838. In the 18th century, Voltaire called "Hamlet" the apparent product of a "drunken savage"

who wrote without "the slightest spark of good taste" — which didn't stop Voltaire, who also recognized Shakespeare's "genius," from openly borrowing from the Bard for one of his own plays.

In 1872 in "The Birth of Tragedy," Friedrich Nietzsche praised this savagery. To him, Shakespeare contained the ne plus ultra of grisly truths. Hamlet, he wrote, "sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence." Nietzsche being Nietzsche, he considered this a good thing. Art,

and teachings of queer poets such as W.H. Auden and Allen Ginsberg suggests they saw themselves in Shakespeare's works, as did anti-racist writers from James Baldwin to Lorraine Hansberry and Ann Petry.

Where the avant-garde led, pop culture followed. Shakespeare's plays have always lent themselves to all manner of interpretations and they found new life in the postwar era, with landmark works like Basil Dearden's "All Night Long," a neo-noir film from 1962, which set "Othello" in a British jazz soiree. Franco Zeffirelli's "Romeo and Juliet" in 1968 plugged into a different cultural zeitgeist, capturing onscreen the summer of love, while Roman Polanski's film version of "Macbeth" in 1971 feels like an encomium for the dying utopian dreams of the sixties.

In the transgressive '90s, Shakespeare was everywhere: taboo, art house, alternative and cool. Gus Van Sant's "My Own Private Idaho" reimagined Prince Hal and Hotspur as gay grunge gods and Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo + Juliet" featured Leonardo DiCaprio at the peak of his androgynous allure. Even "Shakespeare in Love," a relatively middlebrow Oscar winner, presented a vision of the brooding, bearded, sexy Shakespeare, as embodied by Joseph Fiennes.

In many other cultures, the bawdy lowbrow and the poetic highbrow are often personified by separate champions: In France, it's Rabelais and Racine; in Spain, Cervantes and Calderón. In English literature Shakespeare has always combined both brows into something rich, special and strange. In "A Midsummer Night's Dream," one of Shakespeare's most magical and sensual plays, Bottom — a man with the head of a donkey — spends the night in bed next to the fairy queen. He wakes up having had something close to a religious experience. Every play in the canon features something similarly subversive and transcendent — and all of them are essential.

One can no more take out the dirty parts of Shakespeare than one can take out the poetry. It's all intertwined, so that Shakespeare seems almost purposefully designed to confound those who want to segregate the smutty from the sublime. His work is proof that profundity can live next to, and even be found in, the pornographic, the viscerally violent and the existentially horrifying. So if you're looking for sex, gore and the unspeakable absurdity of existence in Shakespeare, you will definitely find it. That's the genius of Shakespeare. And it's precisely what makes his work worth studying.

## Florida educators are looking for the Bard's salacious bits. They're there for a reason.

wrote Nietzsche, transforms "these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live."

In light of Nietzsche's counterintuitive epiphany, the notion of Shakespeare-the-hipster caught fire. Hamlet, uniquely among male roles in the classical canon, became an aspirational part for female theatrical stars looking to prove their bona fides and upend gender preconceptions: Sarah Bernhardt most famously, but also the great Danish actor Asta Nielsen. Shakespeare's sonnets were a source of succor to decadent aesthetes such as Oscar Wilde, just as they had been to Charles Baudelaire. The writings



TOMI UEMURA

COLUMNIST | DAVID FRENCH

# The Lost Boys of the American Right

IT KEEPS HAPPENING. Since the ascendance of Donald Trump, with depressing regularity, right-wing men have been outed for using the most vile rhetoric. In private chats and sometimes in full view of the public on social media, they'll engage in blatantly racist, sexist and homophobic speech, flirt with fascist imagery and then often disavow their words and actions the instant they're caught.

The examples are legion, and they're not coming from fringe outlets on the American right. For example, last month, the Ron DeSantis campaign parted ways with a young speechwriter named Nate Hochman who reportedly inserted a Nazi Sonnenrad symbol into a pro-DeSantis video online. Hochman was previously under fire for telling Nick Fuentes, a notorious white supremacist, that Fuentes was "probably a better influence" than the conservative political commentator Ben Shapiro "on young men who might otherwise be conservative."

In comments about the conversation, Hochman responded, "I said some really stupid things, which I don't actually believe, that signaled agreement with Fuentes, even though I couldn't disagree more with his vision of the world." Roughly a year after that incident, according to Axios, he created the Sonnenrad video.

Was Hochman fringe? Hardly. Before he joined the DeSantis campaign, he worked as a staff writer at National Review and interned at The Dispatch, where I worked as a senior editor before joining The New York Times. He even once wrote for The Times.

Hochman is not alone. In June the right-wing publication Breitbart published group chats and private messages from Pedro Gonzalez, a popular online influencer and DeSantis supporter, which included comments like "Whites are the only hope nonwhites have of living civilized lives" and "The only tactical consideration of Jews is screening them for movements," along with a host of other comments not suitable for a family publication.

This month HuffPost reported that Richard Hanania, an influential anti-woke writer, published a series of pseudonymous posts at racist publications in the late 2000s and early 2010s. In a Substack post he rejected his old comments, but close observers of his contemporary work were hardly surprised by the revelations. Just this past May, he posted in a thread on crime that America needs "more policing, incarceration, and surveillance of Black people."

The September issue of The Atlantic contains Graeme Wood's fascinating and disturbing profile of a man named Costin Alamaru, better known online as Bronze Age Pervert, who has a cult following among the young right. Alamaru argues, writes Wood, "that the natural and desirable condition of life is the domination of the weak and ugly by the strong and noble. He considers American cities a 'wasteland' run by Jews and Black people, though the words he uses to denote these groups are considerably less genteel than

these." (Alamaru has claimed to be Jewish, and Hochman was raised Jewish as well.)

Terrible stuff. And even more terrible is the realization that I could fill this entire column with other examples of right-wing bigotry, from Christian nationalists, a former Trump speechwriter, a former Daily Caller editor and one of Tucker Carlson's former top writers. And this is hardly a complete list. The problem is so widespread that Aaron Sibarium, a rising star reporter for The Washington Free Beacon, recently posted, "Whenever I'm on a career advice panel for young conservatives, I tell them to avoid group chats that use the N-word or otherwise blur the line between edgelord and earnest bigotry."

What is going on? Why are parts of the right — especially the young right — so infested with outright racists and bigots?

Some readers might respond to my question with a question: Why am I surprised? The right has always been infested with racists and bigots, you might argue. Yet while I freely acknowledge that there was more racism on the right than I was willing or able to see before the rise of Trump, there has been a distinct change in young right-wing culture. It is dramatically different from what it was when I was in college, in law school and starting my legal career.

As I survey the right — especially the young, so-called new right — I see a movement in the grip of some rather simple but powerful cultural forces. Hatred, combined with masculine insecurity and cowardice, is herding young right-wing men into outright bigotry and prejudice. Contrary to their self-conception, they're not strong or tough or courageous. They're timid sheep in wolves' clothing, moving exactly where the loudest and most aggressive voices tell them to.

To understand the cultural dynamic, I want to introduce you to an obscure online concept, no enemies to the right. A tiny fringe adopts this mind-set as a conscious ethos, but for a much larger group, it is simply their cultural reality. In their minds, the left is so evil — and represents such an existential threat — that any accommodation of it (or any criticism of the right) undermines the forces of light in their great battle against the forces of darkness. Attack the left in the most searing terms, and you'll enjoy the thunderous applause of your peers. Criticize the new right, and you can experience a vicious backlash. The result is a relentless pull to the extremes.

In fact, one of their prime reproofs of what they might call the zombie right, the Reagan right of their parents' generation, is that it was simply too accommodating. As they see it, classical liberal politics, which prioritize free speech and robust debate, emboldened and empowered the left. Compromise, in their view, ran only one way, and conservatism conserved nothing. The left, in their mind, is winning the culture war in a rout.

And here's where masculine insecurity enters the equation. To the new right, their op-

position to the left is so obviously correct that only moral cowardice or financial opportunism ("grifting") can explain any compromise. To fight on the right — mainly by trolling on social media or embracing authoritarianism as the based alternative to weak-kneed classical liberalism — is seen as strong, courageous and cool. It's a sign of a fierce and independent mind.

Thus, the troll isn't just a troll; he's a man. He's a warrior. But what happens if you disagree? What happens if you ask: Wait, are we going too far? Well, then, you're weak and small. You become the grifter. You don't know what time it is. All of the social sanctions you inflicted on others come crashing down on you. And if the new right is good at anything, it's good at bullying its critics. It's a core aspect of the entire movement.

Worse, even when one initially embraces bigotry "only" as a form of social transgression, marinating in that environment soon turns trolling into conviction. In contrite comments to The Washington Free Beacon after additional revelations of his private messages, Gonzalez said, "What starts off as joking can very quickly become unironically internalized as an actual belief."

How true, especially when dissent is constantly characterized as weakness or cowardice. So in the name of strength, these young men capitulate until their minds and hearts are warped beyond recognition. It's difficult to break the hold of bigotry and fury on the online right, but as is so often the case, the solution to online evil can be found in offline relationships, the family and friends who keep us grounded to the real. Indeed, in his mea culpa, Gonzalez credits "fatherhood and learning to live for my kids" with pulling him back from his darkest thoughts. Time will tell whether he has truly changed or if he's experiencing the fake sorrow of the freshly shamed, but it remains true that encountering people in full, rather than as mere online avatars for hated ideas, can indeed soften hearts and change minds.

In the meantime, these angry online sheep can still bite. They're using their platforms to whip countless Americans into their own frenzy of fear. We should expect more bigotry and more revelations. Dark words spoken in secret will spill out into the public square. The lost boys of the American right corrupt our culture. Full of fury against their opponents and afraid of running afoul of their "friends," they poison our politics and damage their own souls.

## Hatred and masculine insecurity are steering some young men to bigotry.

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LETTERS

## Portland's Decriminalization of Drug Use

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "A Drug User's 'Paradise'" (Science Times, Aug. 1):

Portland, Ore., is not a drug user's paradise. The people who are struggling with addiction, homelessness and mental illness in Portland and other cities in America are barely surviving, and more will die without access to treatment services, affordable housing, and medical and mental health care.

The citizens of Portland who voted in favor of Measure 110 understood this to be an approach that would decriminalize the possession of small amounts of drugs and direct revenue from marijuana sales to fund drug treatment and recovery services. This is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough.

Drug treatment is not a "soft" option. It is a rigorous, structured process that addresses the underlying issues of a person's addiction, including trauma, mental illness and medical concerns. When operated by trained staff, with the provision of medication-assisted treatment, primary health care services, and connections to jobs and housing, treatment is the most effective solution.

Compared with the cost of lives lost and the increased burdens on police, prison systems, emergency health care and other essential services, treatment is also an investment at a bargain price that we cannot afford to pass up.

I urge the city of Portland and other cities in America to invest in comprehensive drug treatment and recovery services. Treatment is proven to be the only sustainable way to effectively address addiction and save lives.

PETER PROVET, NEW YORK

The writer is president and C.E.O. of Odyssey House.

TO THE EDITOR:

This in-depth description of life on the street for fentanyl users should dispel any notions that people with substance use disorder are enjoying their drugs and just looking to get high.

Your article reveals the tragic lives of people whose brains and psyches have been hijacked by fentanyl, xylazine and high-grade methamphetamine.

Our task at the national, state and community levels is to provide evidence-based harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services and opportunities.

DON MATHIS  
HAVRE DE GRACE, MD.

The writer is a peer recovery specialist at Voices of Hope Maryland.

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "The Hard-Drug Decriminalization Disaster," by Bret Stephens (column, Aug. 2):

Mr. Stephens is to be commended for a balanced view of the effects of decriminalization

of some drug use in Portland. It would certainly be possible to indulge in greater gloating over what appears to be a failed "liberal" policy. But his discussion leads to a way of thinking about the issue that does not require the liberal/conservative dichotomy — considering approaches to drug abatement as "experiments" in social policy.

It seems clear that the "experiment" with draconian police action has not worked and has had some disastrous side effects. It seems that the policy of providing methadone in situations with medical control has had some degree of success. It seems that harm reduction (provision of clean needles), while still intensely debated, has had a salubrious effect. It seems that drug treatment programs are of value, but scaling up is a problem. And finally, it seems that the version of decriminalization that Portland chose was a failed "experiment."

The point is that we have not run out of "experiments." In view of the extraordinary morbidity and mortality associated with (currently) illegal drug use, and its role as a money magnet, we should stop pretending that we know what to do, and actually find out.

RICHARD ROTHENBERG  
ATLANTA

The writer is professor emeritus at the School of Public Health, Georgia State University, and the Emory University School of Medicine.

TO THE EDITOR:

Bret Stephens conflates Oregon's acute problems since drug decriminalization with recent challenges faced by Portugal to argue that decriminalization is a failed concept as a general policy measure.

The United States can only wish that it were facing Portugal's "problems." There were 109,680 drug overdose deaths in the U.S. in 2022. In 2021, the most recent year for which official data are available, Portugal reported 74 overdose fatalities.

Portugal successfully decriminalized drugs over two decades ago. Its approach differs significantly from Oregon's. Focusing on effective treatment, training, and social and professional integration, Portugal emphasizes police involvement with escalating civil consequences and legal sanctions for recidivism and noncompliance with law enforcement citations to participate in dissuasion procedures.

As the U.S. suffers through the worst overdose epidemic in its history, all sides should look to Portugal with a sense of humility rather than twisting data points to support ideological agendas.

MIGUEL MONIZ  
BRANDON DEL POZO  
TRACI GREEN  
JOSHIAH RICH

The writers conduct medical and policy research on opioid overdose and addiction in the U.S. and Portugal.

## In Tune With Nature, Among the Butterflies

TO THE EDITOR:

In "It Was Never Just About the Butterflies" (Opinion guest essay, Aug. 2), Lewis Hyde gave us the gift of increased attention to "nature's hidden treasures."

He proposes that simply carrying the tools we use to find our subjects produces a state of mind that results in a heightened acuity for our environment generally. This seems to be true for me. Taking a flashlight out at night to search for caterpillars opens up a rich animal life that happens while we sleep.

Over the decades, the best tool of all has been a camera slung around my neck. To this day, the minute I put the camera on, as with the author and his net, I feel a change in my alertness and notice all kinds of behaviors and other details in my surroundings: for example, a monarch laying a tiny egg on the underside of a milkweed leaf, or a cabbage butterfly seemingly learning to extract nectar from flowers.

My hobby became a rewarding passion and eventually a career. Thus can the lives of amateur and professional naturalists alike be enriched.

ALCINDA C. LEWIS  
BOULDER, COLO.

The writer is a retired animal behaviorist.

TO THE EDITOR:

Lewis Hyde gave readers a lyrical self-portrait of "walking with the net." Today, he walks observantly in nature, often catching and releasing butter-

flies, rather than making a collection of dead insects as he'd done in the past.

Growing up in Connecticut in the 1950s and '60s, I too was interested in catching and killing in manner of Lepidoptera, and had many mounted collections; one in a home-made frame was destroyed by the family cat.

What Mr. Lewis does not mention is the decimation of butterfly populations in the Northeast over the decades. Sure, I still see butterflies like tiger swallowtails and silver-spotted skippers on my bee balm, but only a small fraction of those I avidly pursued in yesteryear.

PENelope ROSS  
WESTPORT, CONN.

## U.S. Stakes in Ukraine

TO THE EDITOR:

The strategic interests of the United States in seeing Ukraine win are slight; the strategic interests of the United States in seeing Russia lose are huge. What this means is that it is not a serious problem for the United States that the anticipated Ukraine offensive has not advanced quickly.

What counts is that Russia is depleting its resources to the point that it will not be an international threat. A drawn-out stalemate, while creating misery in Ukraine, should not be equated with a defeat for the United States.

DAVID M. DORSEN, WASHINGTON

# After Queens Shark Bite, Drones Monitor Beaches

By HURUBIE MEKO

The sky was clear over Rockaway Beach in Queens early Saturday afternoon. Lifeguards scanned the still waters, dotted by a few swimmers, and occasionally blew whistles to warn those who ventured too far into the ocean.

It was a tranquil scene along the same stretch of beach where, just days earlier, a shark bit a 65-year-old woman, alarming many New Yorkers during the height of summer.

The woman, Tatyana Koltunuk, had been swimming alone near Beach 59th Street when she was bitten on the left leg, officials said. Lifeguards who heard her screaming for help rescued her, and she was taken to Jamaica Hospital, where she was in “serious but stable” condition as of Tuesday, the police said. The beach was closed for swimming and surfing on Tuesday.

Jose Velez, 64, was at Beach 59th Street on Saturday with his wife, brother, sister-in-law and nieces and nephews. The family comes to the beach every year, he said, and had “never, never, never” heard of such an attack.

Olivia Bensimon and Sadeef Ali Kully contributed reporting.

Shark attacks are very rare, according to experts. The Rockaway Beach attack appeared to be the first confirmed shark bite in New York City waters in decades. While beachgoers seemed mostly unfazed, the encounter prompted city officials to deploy more drones, boats and helicopters to monitor the city’s beaches.

Such a mobilization to spot sharks is not new in New York State. More sightings in recent years led to increased shark patrols along more than 100 miles of Long Island beaches last year.

But the city seemed to be expanding its efforts in response to the attack on Monday. On Wednesday, officials from the city’s Parks Department, Fire Department and Police Department said they were working together to keep watch over all the city’s beaches — from 9 a.m. through dusk every day — through the end of the summer.

Every morning, before the beaches open, the agencies will fly drones above the water, while boats scan below, Joseph Pfeifer, first deputy commissioner with the Fire Department, said. The drones will also fly throughout the day, Mr. Pfeifer said.

The Police Department will



YUVRAJ KHANNA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

monitor the waters at Rockaway Beach, Coney Island in Brooklyn, Orchard Beach in the Bronx, and South Beach in Staten Island, said Inspector Frank DiGiacomo, the commanding officer of the department’s Technical Assistance Response Unit, at a separate news conference on Friday. If a shark is spotted, the agencies will not necessarily shut down an entire beach but will close it to swimming, he said.

For Michael Bradford, 45, and Liz Randolph, 44, of Queens, the news of the shark attack was not cause for much concern, though they said they were staying close to shore while swimming at Beach 59th Street.

“We noticed there was a drone earlier, and that afforded some reassurance,” Mr. Bradford said af-

ter emerging from the water, adding, “There’s a part of me that actually wants to see a shark, believe it or not.”

The kind of attack that Ms. Koltunuk suffered is “the rarest of the rare,” Hans Walters, a field scientist with the Wildlife Conservation Society’s New York Aquarium, said.

Mr. Walters said the biting did not signify the start of a wave of shark attacks and was not a reason to abandon beach days. Rather, he said, the attack was a reminder to beachgoers to always be aware of their surroundings.

“I really think it’s up to us to realize that the ocean is not a bathtub or a swimming pool — it’s a wilderness area,” he said.

However, his team of researchers, as well as other scien-

tists, is looking into an uptick in recent years in the number of reported shark sightings and encounters in New York waters, specifically on Long Island, he said.

At other New York City beaches on Saturday, any fear of sharks was not keeping people out of the water. “We’re scared, but we’re going in,” said Sebastian Jimenez, 31, of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, who was swimming with friends at Beach 60th Street. “We’re keeping it in mind, but we’re still going in.”

At Coney Island, Stephanie Lazo, 30, said that her family already stayed close to the sand when swimming.

“I have a fear of the kids’ drowning more than the chances of a shark attack, which are really, re-

Rockaway Beach on Saturday, days after a shark bit a 65-year-old woman who was swimming alone.

ally slim,” she said.

And at Beach 67th Street, about half a mile from where Monday’s attack occurred, surfers said they were used to sharing the water.

“I’ve been surfing here for 27 years,” said Clarence Tobias, 45, a surf instructor and co-owner of the surf shop Breakwater Surf Co. “We see sharks all the time. You run into them all the time.”

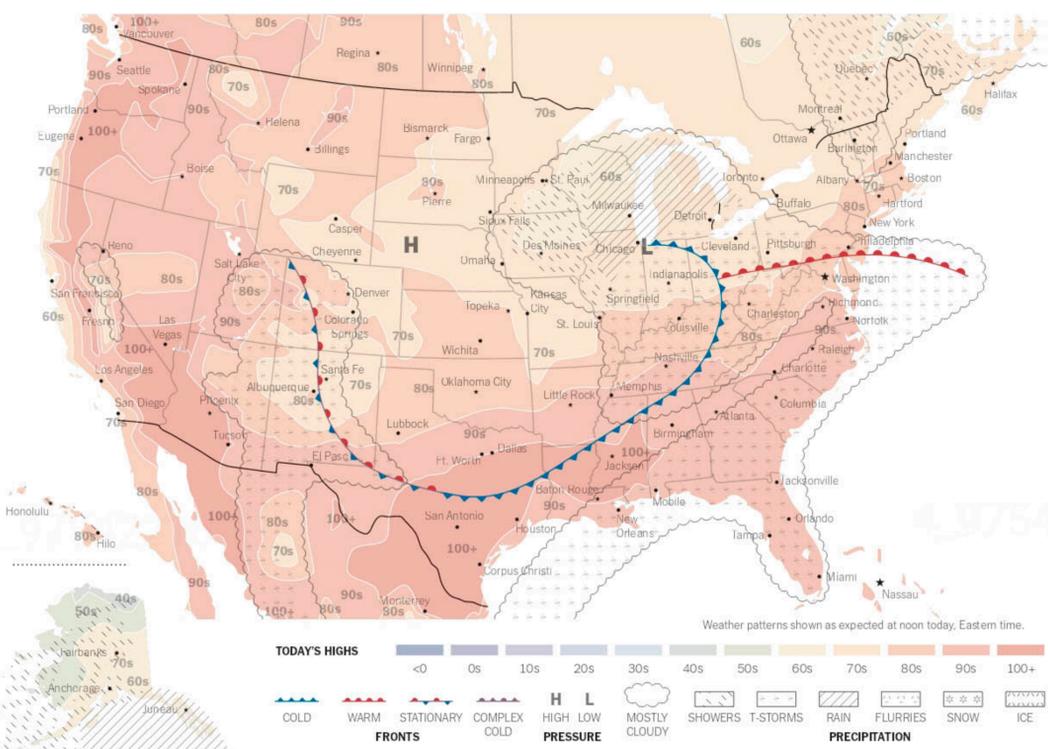
Shark bites are usually a case of “mistaken identity,” said Scott Curatolo-Wagemann, fisheries director with the Cornell Cooperative Extension in Suffolk County, N.Y., and an investigator for the Global Shark Attack File, an unofficial database of shark encounters. Sharks have always been in New York’s waters, said Mr. Curatolo-Wagemann — who was himself bitten by a shark in the Bahamas in 1994 — but increased monitoring means people are more aware of the animals’ presence.

To stay safe, beachgoers need to take some precautions, he said: Swim in groups, and avoid areas where there are a lot of bait fish and where birds are diving into the water.

On Saturday, it wasn’t a shark sighting that cleared the sand at Beach 59th Street. Shortly before 3 p.m., there was a clap of thunder, and the wind picked up.

# Weather Report

Meteorology by AccuWeather



## Highlight: Severe Weather Threat in Mid-Atlantic

Severe weather is on tap for the Ohio Valley and the Mid-Atlantic States today through this evening. Any thunderstorm that forms in the corridor from Nashville to Philadelphia and north into Cleveland could turn severe with flooding downpours, damaging wind gusts and even a few isolated tornadoes.



## National Forecast

Severe thunderstorms will extend today from north-central Tennessee through much of Ohio, as well as from southern New Jersey to the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Storms may deliver intense downpours, damaging wind gusts and a few tornadoes.

Farther north, showers will move across far northern New England, mainly early. Thunderstorms will also build in eastern sections of the Southeast as a cold front crosses the region, with storms expected across much of the central and eastern Gulf Coast. Hours of rain, some heavy, could cause flooding from Minnesota into southern Wisconsin.

In the West, storms will affect the Four Corners region as heat pushes across the Pacific Northwest.

## Metropolitan Forecast

**TODAY** .....Increasing cloudiness High 84. It will be dry throughout the day, but with high pressure departing, clouds will move in.

**TONIGHT** .....Heavy rain, thunderstorms Low 71. As an area of low pressure approaches, rain and thunderstorms will move in overnight. Some thunderstorms may be heavy and lead to areas of flooding. Temperatures will be near average.

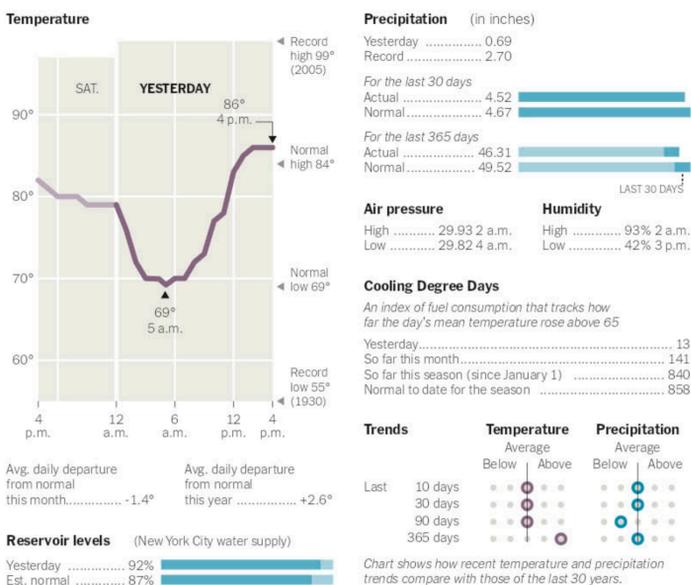
**TOMORROW** .....Showers, thunderstorms High 81. Low pressure will lead to a mostly cloudy sky and a couple of showers and thunderstorms during the day. A breeze will also be in place.

**WEDNESDAY** .....Partly sunny Dry conditions will return, with high pressure regaining control across the region. A blend of clouds and sunshine is expected, with near-average temperatures. High 83.

**THURSDAY** .....Partly sunny sky and mild conditions. High 87. An approaching cold front may bring clouds and thunderstorms on Friday. High 84.

## Metropolitan Almanac

In Central Park, for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday.



## Recreational Forecast

Table with columns for Sun, Moon and Planets (New, First Quarter, Full, Last Quarter) and Reservoir levels (Yesterday, Est. normal).

## Beach and Ocean Temperatures

Table listing beach and ocean temperatures for various locations like Kennebunkport, Cape Cod, L.I. North Shore, etc., including today's forecast and color-coded water temperature bands.

## Cities

High/low temperatures for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday, Eastern time, and precipitation (in inches) for the 16 hours ended at 4 p.m. yesterday. Expected conditions for today and tomorrow.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including N.Y.C. region, United States, and international locations like London, Paris, etc.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, etc.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including New Delhi, Riyadh, Seoul, Shanghai, etc.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin, Brussels, etc.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including Acapulco, Bermuda, Edmonton, etc.

Table listing weather conditions for various cities including Buenos Aires, Caracas, Lima, Quito, etc.

The drama between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg over a 'cage fight' seemed to end with a whimper.



The rich are still buying submersibles after the Titan tragedy — that is, as long as their yachts are big enough.



Although not illegal, 'skiplagging,' or staying at a layover, is a practice strictly prohibited by airlines.

# Business

## The New York Times

By suppressing details and cracking down on displays of mourning, a nation tells history the way it wants it told.



RAN ZHENG

# When Tragedy Strikes in China, The Government Represses Grief

Li Yuan

THE NEW NEW WORLD

Many innocent lives were lost to tragic events in China in the past month. So far we haven't learned a single name of any of them from China's government or its official media. Nor have we seen news interviews of family members talking about their loved ones.

Those victims would include a coach and 10 members of a middle-school girls

volleyball team who were killed in late July when the roof caved in on a gymnasium near the Siberian border. Despite an outpouring of public grief and anger around the country, the government never released their names. Social media posts sharing their names and tributes to their lives were censored.

Then there were the people — probably dozens, possibly hundreds — who died in severe flooding in northern and northeastern China in recent weeks. It was the most serious flooding in the country in decades. Posts about the casualties, and

the hardships people endured, were censored.

In 2015, it was the 442 people who perished when a cruise ship sank on the Yangtze River, and last year, the 132 who died in a plane crash in southwestern China. And of course the many, many people who have died from Covid and remain unaccounted for.

In the past decade or so, the Chinese government has tightly controlled how tragedy is reported by the news media and portrayed on social media. Official media seldom discloses victims' names.

Family members run into trouble with the authorities if they mourn the dead publicly or loudly. This kind of emotional repression on a mass scale reflects the party's expectation of the Chinese people: to play only one role, that of the obedient and grateful subject, no matter what happens to them.

"After every tragedy, we always hope to find the names of all the victims so we can silently read them in our hearts and spread them in public," an online commentator wrote about the deaths of the volley-

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

## For the Young, Help Paves A Way to Buying a Home

By JESSICA FU

Last year, while Whitney Buehler was in Croatia on her honeymoon, the back of her mind was home in Atlanta gearing up for a summer of house hunting.

Ms. Buehler, 25, and her husband, Joey, 27, didn't like renting, and had discussed the idea of buying a home for two years before getting married.

Throughout the pandemic, they had put aside around \$40,000 in savings and kept an eye on the chaotic housing market. With their wedding out of the way, they finally had the time and energy to dive into their search head-on. After touring 15 houses, the Buehlers placed three offers before one was accepted.

The property was a fixer-upper in the Ormewood Park neighborhood of Atlanta's Eastside. It cost \$389,000 and ticked all of their boxes. It was right off the Belt-Line, a network of trails that Mr. Buehler uses to bike safely to work. It had a verdant yard filled with tulip poplars and three majestic oaks. It had two bathrooms. The couple moved in last August.

The Buehlers are part of an en-

viable cohort of young adults who manage to become homeowners before the age of 30. Reaching such a milestone can feel like a tall order these days. The typical age of a first-time home buyer is 36, according to a recent survey from the National Association of Realtors. When the survey was first taken in 1981, the median age for first-time buyers was 29. Home prices surged in the first two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in recent months fell only slightly from those peaks.

The cost of renting has skyrocketed in many cities, eroding the ability of tenants to save. Add other forces — like high student loan debt and wages that haven't kept up with inflation — and it's no surprise that young adults appear to be renting for longer and becoming homeowners later, if ever. But against these odds, many are still making it happen. Twenty-nine percent of adults between the ages of 18 and 29 owned their homes in 2021, the Federal Reserve found.

Good old-fashioned saving is generally not enough to afford a

CONTINUED ON PAGE B2



BRIAN LAU FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Brian Chu, 27, poured his savings into the purchase of a condo in Los Angeles, covering around 5 percent of the cost; his father put up the rest.

## Police Raid Challenges Press Rights

By STEVEN LEE MYERS and BENJAMIN MULLIN

A small town in Kansas has become a battleground over the First Amendment, after the local police force and county sheriff's deputies raided the office of The Marion County Record.

Raids of news organizations are exceedingly rare in the United States, with its long history of legal protections for journalists. At The Record, a family-owned paper with a circulation of about 4,000, the police seized computers, servers and cellphones of reporters and editors. They also searched the home of the publication's owner and semiretired editor as well as the home of a city councilwoman.

The searches, conducted on Friday, appeared to be linked to an investigation into how a document containing information about a local restaurateur found its way to the local newspaper — and whether the restaurant owner's privacy was violated in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE B3

## In Sweden, Fighting Lies From Russia

By STEVEN LEE MYERS

STOCKHOLM — Facing a tsunami of disinformation about the treatment of Muslims that has in recent months fueled protests from Stockholm to Baghdad, Sweden decided it needed to fight back.

It turned to the Psychological Defense Agency, a part of the Ministry of Defense that its government created last year. The agency has become the first line of defense for a country facing a sustained information attack from abroad.

The country's leaders are borrowing from an old Cold War strategy to steel the country's 10 million people for the possibility of "total war" with the Soviet Union. Today's main threat — though not the only one — is the Soviet Union's successor state, Russia. According to the agency's officials, the Kremlin has targeted Sweden with a concerted online campaign on social media and elsewhere to discredit the country and undermine its bid to join NATO.

CONTINUED ON PAGE B4

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

# For Some in Their 20s, Help Paves the Way to Buying a Home

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE  
home in your 20s. That is especially true for young people just starting out in their careers. Those who do manage to buy before 30 often get help from family or have high-paying jobs. But some are finding other paths to homeownership by settling down in lower-cost-of-living areas or tapping into programs that help reduce down payment costs for qualifying buyers.

For Ms. Buehler, becoming a young homeowner was made possible in large part because of a \$40,000 inheritance from her great-grandfather. It was earmarked for college tuition, but because she paid her way through school with scholarships and part-time work, most of that money went untouched.

The inheritance covered half of the down payment. Ms. Buehler and her husband split the rest, prorating their contributions according to income. Her husband is studying for a doctorate in biochemistry, cell and developmental biology, and Ms. Buehler is an engineer for the Environmental Protection Agency. Her salary alone covers their monthly mortgage payments and bills.

## A Way to Build Wealth

For renters, housing costs can fluctuate wildly from year to year, especially in places where landlords can increase rent without limits. Homeowners often opt for fixed-rate mortgages, which effectively lock in their cost of housing for decades and can insulate them from volatile economic cycles, said Jung Choi, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute, a think tank.

People who buy their first home before they're 35 accumulate significantly more wealth by the age of 60 than those who do so afterward, a 2018 analysis by the institute found. "At an age near retirement, you actually have built your wealth for a longer period of time," Ms. Choi said. The earlier you buy your home, the more time it has to appreciate in value, and the more time you have to pay down mortgage debt.

Homeownership as an engine for wealth-building is what Desiree Gaeta had in mind when she bought her first house at 27, in the summer of 2020. At the time, Ms. Gaeta, who was working as a nurse, gleaned what she could about the power of homeownership through her colleagues. Her parents hadn't become homeowners until middle age, so she wondered if she could do so in her 20s.

A nurse who also worked as a real estate agent explained to Ms. Gaeta how to estimate what she could afford. For years, Ms. Gaeta had been putting money in a savings account and was surprised to learn that she had enough for a down payment on a house in Charlotte, N.C. As a first-time home buyer, she qualified for a Federal Housing Administration loan, a government-insured mortgage that required Ms. Gaeta to put only 3.5 percent down, based on her credit score.

She bought a newly built four-bedroom, two-and-a-half-bathroom starter home for \$290,000. The house is now valued at over \$400,000, she said, thanks in part to a hot housing market.

Ms. Gaeta left her job as a nurse and is now a real estate broker who shares advice on TikTok to younger buyers.

"A lot of people want a dream home," she said. "I see it as a steppingstone — a way to create generational wealth for my family."

## Home Buying as an Investment

Brian Chu, 27, wasn't planning to become a homeowner until a chance to invest came along. In 2020, he moved to Los Angeles to work as an administrative assistant at a private school for children with learning differences. The job initially included free housing, but after a year, Mr. Chu had to find his own place. His father made a generous suggestion: What if he bought his son a condominium so he could avoid paying high Los Angeles rents?

At first, Mr. Chu hesitated. His career was just getting started, and there was a possibility that he might have to relocate as his employer expanded. He wasn't sure about buying property in a city he might not live in long-term. But he realized a condo could be turned into a source of rental income.

The father-son pair ended up buying a two-bedroom condo in the Sherman Oaks neighborhood for \$600,000. Mr. Chu poured his savings into the purchase, covering around 5 percent of the cost; his father put up the rest. They then used delayed financing to get a mortgage, a process that allows buyers to get a loan on their new home after already paying for it. (The buyers can make cash offers — which are more attractive for sellers — and then get that money back to have on hand.) The condo's mortgage payment is around \$1,100 a month, and Mr. Chu is re-



PEYTON FULFORD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Whitney Buehler, 25, and her husband, Joey, 27, at their home in Atlanta, above, and their home pictured at left. The Buehlers were able to become homeowners before the age of 30, in large part because of a family inheritance. Ms. Buehler with her grandfather, far left, who helped with covering some repairs.



PEYTON FULFORD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

**'I was able to do this because my parents helped me out a lot.'**

Brian Chu, who was not planning to become a homeowner.

sponsible for covering it.

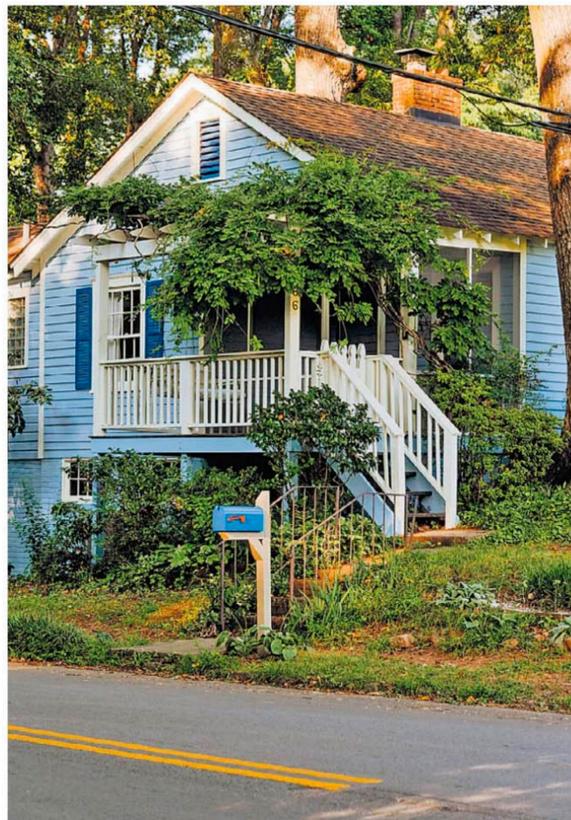
The way Mr. Chu sees it, the past plays an enormous role in the lucky position he occupies in the present. His grandparents owned textile businesses in Hong Kong between the 1950s and 1970s, when the city underwent high economic growth. That success allowed them to help Mr. Chu's parents emigrate to the United States, where they built successful careers of their own in the medicine and software fields.

"When it comes to cold, hard numbers, I think it is really helpful to be transparent," Mr. Chu said. "I was able to do this because my parents helped me out a lot. And then they were able to do that because of their parents."

Eventually Mr. Chu moved to Seattle, where his employer opened another school. He's now simultaneously a renter and a landlord. The rent his tenants pay for the Sherman Oaks condo covers his mortgage and homeowner association fees, leaving him with around \$1,500 in supplemental income a month, which helps him keep up with the high cost of living in Seattle.

## Aid for Low-Income Families

While homeownership is a wealth-building tool, it's not accessible to all Americans. Racial chasms in homeownership per-



PEYTON FULFORD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

sist in large part because of the long-tail effects of racially exclusionary housing policies, like redlining and predatory lending. Black households on average have significantly less wealth than white ones, which translates into less money that families can pass down to support younger members in buying a home.

Ms. Gaeta, the real estate agent in North Carolina, paid for the initial down payment without any help from her family. "It's not that they didn't want to," she said. "It's that they couldn't."

Ms. Choi, from the Urban Institute, wants to see policies level the playing field to make it easier for renters to become homeowners. "Homeownership cannot be separated out from its investment side," she said. "And as the investment side of the pie grows, that's absolutely going to exacerbate inequality."

In recent years, local governments and nonprofits have introduced a range of initiatives aimed at helping low-income residents buy their first home.

Two years ago, Akirah Pressley, then 29, accomplished her goal of becoming a homeowner. Born and raised in Philadelphia, Ms. Pressley moved around a lot as a child, frequently shuffled from one guardian to another. When she became a young mother, she dreamed about owning a house and giving her children the stability she never had.

She lived in rental homes for about a decade, receiving monthly assistance from the federal housing voucher program known as Section 8. Through the city's housing authority, she got in touch with a financial adviser, who told her about various funds that could help set her up for homeownership.

One program, for example, offers grants of up to \$10,000 for low-income first-time home buyers, and another encourages people to save by providing a \$2 match for every dollar saved up to \$2,000. Eventually, with the help of these resources, Ms. Pressley saved \$16,000 for a down payment.

In 2021, she bought a three-bedroom, one-bathroom house in the Lawncrest neighborhood of Northeast Philadelphia for \$160,000. It's a step up from her old rental in almost every way: A library, a supermarket, a park and a community center are all within walking distance.

"It was an overwhelming feeling," Ms. Pressley said about the moment she signed the papers and became a homeowner. "It was also relief. It was excitement. It was heavy tears. It was amazement." She considers that milestone "the greatest achievement in my life."



HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"It was an overwhelming feeling," Akirah Pressley, above with her daughters, said about becoming a homeowner in Philadelphia. A program for first-time home buyers helped her.

## MEDIA | SOCIAL MEDIA

# Police Raid on Paper In Kansas Gives Rise To Free Press Worries

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

process. The editor of the newspaper said the raids may have had more to do with tensions between the paper and officials in Marion, a town of about 2,000 north of Wichita, over prior coverage.

The raid is one of several recent cases of local authorities taking aggressive actions against news organizations — some of which are part of a dwindling cohort left in their area to hold governments to account. And it fits a pattern of pressure being applied to local newsrooms. One recent example is the 2019 police raid of the home of Bryan Carmody, a freelance journalist in San Francisco, who was reporting on the death of Jeff Adachi, a longtime public defender.

“There’s a lot of healthy tension between the government and newspapers, but this?” Emily Bradbury, the executive director of the Kansas Press Association, said in an interview about the raid in Marion. She warned that the raid was a dangerous attack on press freedom in the country.

“This is not right, this is wrong, this cannot be allowed to stand,” she said.

The newspaper’s owner and editor, Eric Meyer, said in an interview that the newspaper had done nothing wrong. The newspaper did not publish an article about the government record, though Mr. Meyer said that it had received a copy from a confidential source and that one of its reporters had verified its authenticity using the state’s records available online.

In an email, Marion’s chief of police, Gideon Cody, defended the raid, which was earlier reported online by The Marion County Record and by Kansas Reflector, a nonprofit news organization.

“I believe when the rest of the story is available to the public, the judicial system that is being questioned will be vindicated,” Mr. Cody said. He declined to discuss the investigation in detail.

On Sunday, more than 30 news organizations and press freedom advocates, including The New York Times, The Washington Post and Dow Jones, the publisher of The Wall Street Journal, signed a letter from the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press to Mr. Cody condemning the raid.

The Marion County Record is uncommonly aggressive for its size. Mr. Meyer said that the newspaper, which has seven employees, has stoked the ire of some local leaders for its vigorous reporting on Marion County officials, including asking questions about Mr. Cody’s employment history.

The paper is overseen by Mr. Meyer, who is 69 and has had a

**‘If we don’t fight back and we don’t win in fighting back, it’s going to silence everybody.’**

Eric Meyer, owner and editor of The Marion County Record.

long career in journalism, working as a reporter for the Milwaukee Journal and a professor at the University of Illinois. He also has a family connection to The Marion County Record: His father, Bill, worked there for half a century beginning in 1948, rising to be its top editor.

In 1998, his family bought the newspaper and two others nearby — the Hillsboro Star-Journal and Peabody Gazette-Bulletin — from the previous publisher, the Hoch family, who had owned them for 124 years.

The dispute over the government record that led to the raid might not have become an issue if not for a tip that came after a meet-and-greet held on Aug. 2 for the local congressman, Jake LaTurner, at Kari’s Kitchen, an establishment owned by Kari Newell, a local restaurateur.

Ms. Newell asked the police chief to remove Mr. Meyer and a reporter, Phyllis Zorn, from the event, saying that she did not want them to attend.

After the newspaper published an article about the episode, Ms. Zorn received a private message on Facebook, Mr. Meyer said, from someone who shared a letter to Ms. Newell from the Kansas Department of Revenue. The letter detailed the steps she needed to take to restore her driver’s license, which had been suspended after a drunken driving citation in 2008, according to the newspaper.

Last Monday, Ms. Newell appeared at a City Council meeting seeking approval to operate a liquor-serving establishment. She accused the newspaper at the meeting of illegally obtaining the letter and giving it to a councilwoman, Ruth Herbel. Ms. Herbel, whose home was also searched on Friday, did not respond to a request for comment.

Mr. Meyer said that the newspaper had not shared the document with Ms. Herbel. He added that Ms. Newell had later told the newspaper that the release of the information might have been related to her ongoing divorce proceedings.

A search warrant for the raid, issued by a judge roughly an hour before the search on Friday morning, mentions Ms. Newell and cited potential violations of laws involving identity theft and the il-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHASE CASTOR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



The Marion County Record’s office in Marion, Kan., above. The town’s police raided the office on Friday morning. Eric Meyer, left, is the owner and editor of The Marion County Record, which is published weekly on Wednesdays.

legal use of a computer. The latter, among other things, forbids using a computer “with the intent to defraud or to obtain money, property, services or any other thing of value by means of false or fraudulent pretense or representation.”

A spokesperson for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, which aids criminal justice agencies statewide, said on Saturday that the Marion police approached the bureau to help with an investigation into “illegal access and dissemination of confidential criminal justice information.” In a statement on Sunday, the bureau noted the importance of a free press, but added, “No one is above the law, whether a public official or a representative of the media.”

Although news organizations

are sometimes the targets of legal actions by government officials, including subpoenas seeking interview notes and other records, the search and seizure of the tools to produce journalism are rare.

Seth Stern, advocacy director at Freedom of the Press Foundation, a nonprofit that advocates for the rights of journalists and whistleblowers, said federal law allowed the police to search journalists when the authorities have probable cause to believe the journalists had committed a crime unrelated to their journalism. That exception does not apply, however, in a case where the alleged crime is gathering the news, he said. When journalists are suspected of committing crimes as part of news gathering, the government’s op-

tion is to serve a subpoena, which can be challenged in court before it is enforced.

“You can’t say, ‘I’m allowed to raid the newsroom because I’m investigating a crime,’ if the crime you’re investigating is journalism,” he added.

The police chief, Mr. Cody, who started in the job this spring, and Ms. Newell argued that journalists are subject to search if they themselves are suspects in the offense being investigated. Ms. Newell said that someone had unlawfully used her identity to obtain private information about her online.

In a phone interview, Ms. Newell framed the dispute as a straightforward violation of her privacy by the newspaper rather

than a First Amendment battle.

“There’s a huge difference between vindictive and vindication,” Ms. Newell said. “I firmly believe that this was a vindictive move, full of malice. And I hope in the end, I receive vindication.”

The newspaper, which publishes weekly on Wednesdays, is scrambling to put out the next edition without most of its computers and servers, which contained articles as well as ads and public notices.

Mr. Meyer said he had never experienced government pressure like this.

“If we don’t fight back and we don’t win in fighting back, it’s going to silence everybody,” he said.

He had returned full time to Marion during the Covid-19 pandemic and stayed on, retiring from his university post and spending more time writing and editing for the newspaper, and living with his 98-year-old mother. He said he does not receive a salary, though he receives an annual bonus if the company turns a profit at the end of the year.

On Saturday, his mother died. In an article published online on Saturday evening, the newspaper connected Joan Meyer’s death to the search, writing that it had made her “stressed beyond her limits.” The headline: “Illegal raids contribute to death of newspaper co-owner.”

Jack Begg contributed research.

# Zuckerberg Plans to ‘Move On’ From ‘Cage Fight’ With Musk

By ROB COPELAND

The will-they-or-won’t-they drama between Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg over a potential “cage fight” appeared on Sunday to end with a whimper, as Mr. Zuckerberg said that Mr. Musk’s delays and excuses had rendered the discussion moot.

In a post to his nascent social-networking platform, Threads, Mr. Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Meta, wrote, “I think we can all agree Elon isn’t serious.”



Mark Zuckerberg, left, said of his cage fight with Elon Musk, “I think we can all agree Elon isn’t serious.”



Mr. Musk had previously said the date of the fight was “in flux” because he needed an M.R.I. scan of his neck and back.

and it’s time to move on.” He included the hint of a taunt, “If Elon ever gets serious about a real date and official event, he knows how to reach me.”

Mr. Zuckerberg’s message seemingly ended the suspense around a stranger-than-fiction summer of tensions between the technology titans. Less than two months ago, Mr. Musk matched that he was “up for a cage match.” That was just before Instagram, owned by Meta, introduced Threads as a

competitor to Mr. Musk’s Twitter (now renamed “X”).

Whether or not he was serious at the time, intermediaries between the men began sketching out the contours of a match. Both executives continued to fan the flames; Mr. Zuckerberg posted photographs of himself shirtless in training, and Mr. Musk said in posts on X that the event could happen in Italy.

As is common with Mr. Musk — who has a history of public pronouncements that don’t come to fruition — momentum toward a match came in spurts. In posts, Mr. Musk said the date of the fight was “in flux” because he needed an M.R.I. scan of his neck and back.

On Friday, Mr. Musk posted that the fight would be managed by the two men’s foundations, and that he had spoken to the Italian government about a location. He did not list a date, saying only that he needed “minor surgery” to address his shoulder and ribs that he said would involve a recovery of several months.

Before Mr. Zuckerberg’s remarks on Sunday, Mr. Musk posted to X a screengrab that he said was a conversation between the two men, showing Mr. Zuckerberg pressing Mr. Musk to commit.

Mr. Zuckerberg, in his Sunday post on Threads, nodded to the delays, writing, “Elon won’t confirm a date, then says he needs surgery and now asks to do a practice round in my backyard instead.”

He added, “I’m going to focus on competing with people who take the sport seriously.”

# CBS News President Steps Down After a 2-Year Stint

By ROB COPELAND

The CBS News president Neeraj Khemlani stepped down on Sunday after a little more than two years in his post, the latest executive reshuffling in a tumultuous period for television news.

Mr. Khemlani had been in charge of flagship programs such as “CBS Evening News,” and “60 Minutes.” He will remain at CBS in a different capacity, he told staff in an internal email. He has signed a multiyear deal to develop content for the conglomerate, including documentaries, series and books.

“It’s an opportunity that will al-

**The executive’s successor was not immediately named.**

low me to write, report and develop stories that I’ve long wanted to pursue,” Mr. Khemlani said in the email.

His replacement was not immediately named. He had been co-head of the news division with the local news veteran Wendy McMahon, who will remain in her role.

Mr. Khemlani’s departure was earlier reported by The New York Post.

In a note to the staff on Sunday, the CBS chief executive, George Cheeks, wrote that Mr. Khemlani, a former executive at Hearst, should be credited with putting “new business plans in place to drive more revenue, which is essential in a challenging envi-

ronment for all media companies.”

CBS has mostly eluded the spotlight shone on rivals in recent months. Just this year, Chris Licht was fired as CNN’s chief after 13 months on the job, while Fox News was roiled by a nearly \$800 million settlement in a defamation lawsuit over the station’s promotion of misinformation after the 2020 election.

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE**

In re: **PROTERA INC., et al.**, Chapter 11 Case No. 23-11120 (BLS) Debtors. (Jointly Administrated)

**NOTICE OF (I) DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN HOLDERS OF COMMON STOCK OR OPTIONS, (II) DISCLOSURE PROCEDURES FOR CERTAIN TRANSFERS OF AND DECLARATIONS OF WORTHLESSNESS WITH RESPECT TO COMMON STOCK, AND (III) FINAL HEARING ON THE APPLICATION THEREOF**

**TO: ALL ENTITIES (AS DEFINED BY SECTION 101(15) OF THE BANKRUPTCY CODE) THAT MAY HOLD BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF COMMON STOCK OF PROTERA INC. (THE “COMMON STOCK”):** Establishing Notification and Hearing Procedures for Certain Transfers of and Declarations of Worthlessness with Respect to Common Stock of Protera Inc. and Claims Against Debtors and (ii) Granting Related Relief (Docket No. 5) (the “Motion”).

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that on August 7, 2023 (the “Petition Date”), the above-captioned debtors and debtors in possession (collectively, the “Debtors”) filed petitions with the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware (the “Court”) under chapter 11 of title 11 of the United States Code (the “Bankruptcy Code”). Subject to certain exceptions, section 362 of the Bankruptcy Code operates as a stay of any act to obtain possession of property of or from the Debtors’ estates or to exercise control over property of or from the Debtors’ estates.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that on the Petition Date, the Debtors filed the Debtors’ Motion for Entry of Interim and Final Orders (i) Establishing Notification and Hearing Procedures for Certain Transfers of and Declarations of Worthlessness with Respect to Common Stock of Protera Inc. and (ii) Granting Related Relief (Docket No. 5) (the “Motion”).

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that on August 10, 2023, the Court entered the Interim Order (i) Establishing Notification and Hearing Procedures for Certain Transfers of and Declarations of Worthlessness with Respect to Common Stock of Protera Inc. and (ii) Granting Related Relief (Docket No. 5) (the “Order”).

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that, pursuant to the Order, a Substantial Shareholder or person that may become a Substantial Shareholder may not consummate any purchase, sale, or other transfer of Common Stock or Beneficial Ownership of Common Stock in violation of the Procedures, any such transaction in violation of the Procedures shall be null and void ab initio, and the 50% Shareholder shall be required to file an amended tax return revoking such proposed deduction.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that, pursuant to the Order, the Procedures shall apply to the holding and transfer of Common Stock or any Beneficial Ownership therein by a Substantial Shareholder or someone who may become a Substantial Shareholder.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that upon the request of any entity, the proposed notice, solicitation, and claims agent for the Debtors, Kurtzman Carson Consultants LLC, will provide a copy of the Order and a form of each of the declarations required to be filed by the Procedures in a reasonable period of time. The Order and such declarations are also available via PACER on the Court’s website at <https://ecf.dlb.uscourts.gov/> for a fee, or at no charge by accessing the Debtors’ restructuring website at [kccdc.net/jprotera](https://kccdc.net/jprotera).

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the final hearing (the “Final Hearing”) on the Motion shall be held on September 7, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., prevailing Eastern Time. Any objections or responses to entry of a final order on the Motion must be filed with the Court on or before 4:00 p.m., prevailing Eastern Time, on August 31, 2023. If no objections to entry of a final order on the Motion are timely received, the Court may enter such final order without need for the final hearing.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** THAT FAILURE TO FOLLOW THE PROCEDURES SET FORTH IN THE ORDER SHALL CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE ORDER IS PROHIBITED AND SHALL BE NULL AND VOID AB INITIO AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS AS THIS COURT MAY DETERMINE.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** THAT ANY PROHIBITED PURCHASE, SALE, OTHER TRANSFER OF, OR DECLARATION OF WORTHLESSNESS WITH RESPECT TO COMMON STOCK OR BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP THEREIN IN VIOLATION OF THE ORDER IS PROHIBITED AND SHALL BE NULL AND VOID AB INITIO AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS AS THIS COURT MAY DETERMINE.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the requirements set forth in the Order are in addition to the requirements of applicable law and do not excuse compliance therewith.

Dated: August 11, 2023, Wilmington, Delaware.

Respectfully submitted, **YOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT & TAYLOR, LLP**, *By* **Sheila Borovinskaya**, *Pauline K. Morgan* (No. 3650), **Andrew L. Magaziner** (No. 5426), **Sheila Borovinskaya** (No. 6758), **Rodney Square**, 1000 North King Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19801. Telephone: (302) 571-6600, Facsimile: (302) 571-7253. Email: [pmorgan@yccst.com](mailto:pmorgan@yccst.com), [amagaziner@yccst.com](mailto:amagaziner@yccst.com), [sborovinskaya@yccst.com](mailto:sborovinskaya@yccst.com) and **PAUL WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON & GARRISON LLP**, *By* **Paul M. Basta** (admitted pro hac vice), **Michael J. Calorossi** (admitted pro hac vice), 1285 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10019, Tel: (212) 373-3000, Fax: (212) 757-3990. Email: [pabasta@paulweiss.com](mailto:pabasta@paulweiss.com), [briffon@paulweiss.com](mailto:briffon@paulweiss.com), [mcalorossi@paulweiss.com](mailto:mcalorossi@paulweiss.com), [ProposedCounseltotheDebtorsandDebtorsinPossession](mailto:ProposedCounseltotheDebtorsandDebtorsinPossession)

<sup>1</sup> The Debtors in these chapter 11 cases, along with the last four digits of each Debtor’s federal tax identification number, are as follows: Protera Inc. (9565); and Protera Operating Company, Inc. (8459). The location of the Debtors’ service address is: 1815 Rollins Road, Burlingame, California 94010.

<sup>2</sup> Capitalized terms used but not otherwise defined herein have the meanings ascribed to them in the Motion or the Order, as applicable.

## UCC Public Sale Notice

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that DOF II-Bloom Mezz LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (the “Secured Party”) offers for sale at public auction on October 11, 2023 at 10:00 a.m., prevailing Eastern Time and conducted both via Zoom (or a similar online platform) and in-person in front of the New York Supreme Court, New York County Courthouse, located at 60 Centre Street, New York, New York 10007, in connection with a Uniform Commercial Code sale, all rights, title, and interest of Hudson 888 Holdco LLC, having an address c/o KIN Development Group International, Inc., 150 East 52nd Street, Suite 6002, New York, New York 10022 (the “Debtor”) in 100% of the limited liability company membership interests (the “Interests”) in Hudson 888 Owner LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (the “Mortgage Borrower”), which is the sole owner of the property located at 502 West 45th Street a/k/a 615 Tenth Avenue, New York, New York 10018 (the “Premises”) and certain rights and property related thereto pledged by the Debtor under that certain Pledge and Security Agreement, made by the Debtor in favor of CG45 Funding LLC (the “Original Lender”), dated as of January 12, 2021 (the “Pledge Agreement”), as more fully set forth in the Pledge Agreement. Original Lender was granted a security interest in the Interests to secure a loan to the Debtor (the “Mezzanine Loan”). Original Lender subsequently assigned all its right, title and interest in and to the Mezzanine Loan and its security interest in the Interests to the Secured Party. Copies of the Pledge Agreement and documents evidencing the assignment of the Mezzanine Loan to Secured Party are available for inspection as hereinafter described. The Secured Party is offering the Interests for sale in connection with the foreclosure on the pledge of such Interests.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the Mezzanine Loan is subordinate to a first mortgage loan and other obligations and liabilities of the Mortgage Borrower secured by or otherwise affecting the Premises (the “Mortgage Loan”). It is the understanding of Secured Party (but without representation or warranty of any kind by Secured Party as to the accuracy of the following) that the principal assets of the Mortgage Borrower are the Premises and certain related rights. It should be noted that Secured Party is affiliated with the holder of the Mortgage Loan and that the holder of the Mortgage Loan has delivered a notice of the occurrence of a default under the Mortgage Loan to the Mortgage Borrower, which default constituted an event of default thereunder. An event of default under the Mortgage Loan Agreement constitutes an event of default under the Mezzanine Loan Agreement. The sale of the Interests will be subject to all applicable third party consents and regulatory approvals, if any.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that at such public auction, the Interests will be offered as a single asset and not in parts or as separate assets. All interested prospective purchasers that meet the qualifications for bidding are invited to attend and bid at the auction, and will have the option to attend either via Zoom (or similar online platform) or in-person. The Interests are being offered as a single lot, “as-is, where-is” with no express or implied warranties, representations, statements or conditions of any kind made by the Secured Party or any person acting for or on behalf of the Secured Party, with-

out any recourse whatsoever to the Secured Party or any other person acting for or on behalf of the Secured Party and each bidder must make its own inquiry regarding the Interests. The winning bidder shall be responsible for the payment of all transfer taxes, stamp duties and similar taxes incurred in connection with the purchase of the Interests.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that, without limitation to the foregoing, there are specific requirements for any potential successful bidder in connection with obtaining information and bidding on the Interests, including but not limited to: (i) that each bidder must comply with the restrictions applicable to the sale of the Interests under the Intercreditor Agreement dated as of January 12, 2021, by and among the Secured Party and the holder of the Mortgage Loan (the “Intercreditor Agreement”), including that such bidder is a “Qualified Transferee” (as defined in the Intercreditor Agreement), has obtained the consent of the holder of the Mortgage Loan or will repay the Mortgage Loan prior to the sale of the Interests and (ii) that each bidder must deliver such documents and pay such amounts as required by the Intercreditor Agreement and the applicable governing documents relating to the Interests. A copy of the Intercreditor Agreement is available for inspection as hereinafter described.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the Secured Party reserves the right to credit bid, set a minimum reserve price, reject all bids (including without limitation any bid that it deems to have been made by a bidder that is unable to satisfy the requirements imposed by the Secured Party upon prospective bidders in connection with the sale or to whom the Secured Party’s sole judgment a sale may not lawfully be made) and terminate or adjourn the sale to another time, without further notice. The Secured Party further reserves the right to restrict prospective bidders to those who will represent that they are purchasing the Interests for their own account for investment not with a view to the distribution or resale of such Interests, to verify that each certificate for the Interests to be sold bears a legend substantially to the effect that such Interests have not been registered under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the “Securities Act”), and may not be disposed of in violation of the provisions of the Securities Act and to impose such other limitations or conditions in connection with the sale of the Interests as the Secured Party deems necessary or advisable in order to comply with the Securities Act or any other applicable law.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that all bids (other than credit bids of the Secured Party) must be for cash, and the successful bidder must be prepared to deliver immediately available good funds within 24 hours after the sale and otherwise comply with the bidding requirements.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the full terms and conditions of the sale, copies of the relevant agreements, information for attending the auction, and other information may be obtained by contacting Brett Rosenberg at Jones Lang LaSalle Americas, Inc., 330 Madison Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, New York 10017. Telephone No.: (212) 812-5926. Email: [brett.rosenberg@jll.com](mailto:brett.rosenberg@jll.com). In the event of any conflict between the terms herein and all full terms of public sale, the full terms of public sale shall govern. For further information, please visit the following website: [www.500w45thuccsale.com](http://www.500w45thuccsale.com).

## INTERNATIONAL

## Sweden Is Fighting Misinformation Flowing In From the Kremlin

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

After working quietly behind the scenes, the agency has now explicitly accused Russia of exploiting recent protests by immigrants and others in Sweden that have included burning copies of the Quran, an act of desecration that is deeply offensive to Muslims. The outrage has already had an impact: delaying Sweden's accession to NATO because of objections by another member, Turkey.

"They were on a level that we'd never seen before," Mikael Tofvesson, the agency's director of operations, said in an interview, referring specifically to Russian efforts to amplify global reaction online to a protest outside Stockholm's largest mosque on June 28.

Other countries have scrambled in recent years to counter foreign influence operations, including France, which has created a similar agency, but Sweden is now on the front lines of a fight over the country's security, its social cohesion and even its democratic foundations. Russia's invasion of Ukraine — and Sweden's subsequent decision to seek NATO membership — have put the country in the Russian cross hairs.

The work of the Psychological Defense Agency could become a model for how democratic governments can fight back — or a symbol of how ineffective they are against determined authoritarian adversaries.

Sweden's prime minister, Ulf Kristersson, who has led a coalition government since elections last fall, said that "states and statelike actors" were "actively exploiting" the protests in Sweden. In a statement with Denmark's leader late last month, he said that Sweden faced "the most serious security situation since the Second World War."

In Sweden the question of what to do in the face of an information onslaught has become increasingly fraught, pitting traditions of tolerance for free speech against the dangers that malicious information online poses.

In the United States, the debate has become increasingly partisan, with Republicans accusing the federal government of stifling critics at home. Last year, an effort to create a disinformation advisory board at the Department of Homeland Security was scuttled amid fierce opposition.

The Psychological Defense Agency also raised political concerns when it was proposed, but its leaders have emphasized that mandate allows it to address only foreign sources of disinformation, not content generated in Sweden.

The challenge is one facing all democracies that, as a matter of principle, decline to enforce official ideologies, allowing divergent points of view of what is true.

"The government can't control the truth if it's going to be a democracy," said Hanna Linderstål, the founder of Earhart Business Protection Agency, a cybersecurity firm in Stockholm, and an adviser to the International Telecommunication Union, part of the United Nations.

The Psychological Defense Agency began operations in January 2022, but some of its functions previously fell to a civilian department in the Civil Contingencies



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FELIX ODELL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



Russia has targeted Sweden with an online campaign to discredit the country and undermine its bid to join NATO. Clockwise from top: members of the Psychological Defense Agency, which could become a model for how democracies can fight disinformation; campaign signs for the group; Magnus Hjort, its acting director general; and flags in Stockholm. The agency borrows from a Cold War strategy to steel its citizens for the possibility of "total war" with Russia.

Agency. Its roots extend further back, to 1953, when Sweden, though neutral, feared Soviet domination in the ideological struggle between the West and Communism.

The decision to revive the country's capacity to combat information war came after Russia's seizure of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, beginning a military intervention that has been characterized by waves of disinformation. Officials in Sweden, as elsewhere, have expressed concern that the propaganda has succeeded in sowing confusion and doubt among European electorates, undermining government policies to counter Russia's aggression.

"When it comes to information war," said Pär Norén, a senior analyst who conducts training sessions for the agency, "it is the

brain that is the battle space."

From the agency's inception, Sweden faced intensive disinformation campaigns. They began in late 2021 with posts on Twitter and other social media platforms expressing anger over the plight of an Iraqi immigrant in Sweden whose children were removed from his custody by the country's child protection services.

The accusations metastasized into false accusations that Sweden was kidnapping Muslim children and forcing them to eat pork or otherwise violate Islamic traditions, which spread online in Arabic-speaking countries, including Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon, as well as Turkey.

The immigrant was not, in fact, Muslim, but Mandaean Sabian, an adherent of an ancient monotheistic faith in southern Iraq that

reverses John the Baptist, among other prophets.

The accusations have persisted online, including on a YouTube channel with nearly one million subscribers that first circulated them. One of Russia's state television networks followed this year with a similar report involving an ethnically Russian immigrant family from Latvia, saying Sweden would not allow the children to speak Russian, which is not true.

The controversies over social services gave prominence to a new political party, Nyans, or Nuance, that has built support among the country's immigrant voters. The party's leader, Mikail Yüksel, acknowledged that the accusations of state kidnappings were false but nevertheless criticized the government for its poli-

cies.

"Sweden is an anti-Islamist country," Mr. Yüksel, who emigrated from Turkey, said. "This is not disinformation. This is the truth."

The government was slow to respond to the accusations about social services, but the new government under Mr. Kristersson announced a series of measures this year in response, including bringing on more staff members at the Psychological Defense Agency, which now has 55 employees.

The agency's headquarters is in Karlstad and it has an office in Solna, a suburb of Stockholm. There, it occupies an inconspicuous yellow building on the campus of the Karolinska University Hospital, which has opened its doors for refugees and casualties from the war in Ukraine.

"What we see now is a full-

blown, full-scale war in Europe," said the agency's director general, Magnus Hjort, a former historian who wrote a report proposing the reconstitution of a department devoted to psychological defense. "And Sweden is not neutral."

According to the agency, Russian state media and online accounts have also amplified a series of protests that have featured the burnings of the Quran over the past two years — in Russian and in Arabic across the Middle East. Some of the sources, it found, were the same ones circulating false reports about kidnapping Muslim children. Other researchers have suggested that Russians were involved in helping to instigate the protests.

One of the first protests involved Rasmus Paludan, a far-right politician in Denmark who also has Swedish citizenship, who burned a copy of the Quran in Jönköping in 2002. He did it again in January in front of the Turkish Embassy in Stockholm, prompting outrage in Turkey that has helped stall approval of Sweden's application to join NATO.

The cost of the permit for Mr. Paludan's protest in January — 320 krona, or about \$30 — was paid for by a Swedish journalist who had previously worked for Russian media, Chang Johannes Frick. Mr. Paludan, however, denied any association with Russia, saying in an email that he opposed Russia's invasion and that he had staged the protest to draw attention to Turkey's position.

"I wanted to send a signal to Erdogan that he should not interfere with freedom of expression in Sweden," he wrote, referring to Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Another protester, Salwan Momika, has held a series of small demonstrations desecrating the Quran, twice setting off demonstrations in Iraq that resulted in attacks on Sweden's embassy in the capital, Baghdad. Mr. Momika, an Iraqi Christian who immigrated in 2017, initially agreed by email to answer questions about his motivations, but he did not respond when asked about his connections to Russia.

Mr. Hjort and other agency officials declined to detail the evidence of Russia's involvement, and so far the agency has produced few public reports about foreign disinformation campaigns. Much of its work involves advising other government agencies behind the scenes to raise awareness of the threat of foreign interference. That included training sessions for municipal departments handling child welfare cases among immigrants. It did conduct a public service campaign — in Swedish, Arabic and English — ahead of last fall's elections that used humorous posters to warn of the falsehoods lurking online.

Mr. Hjort said that the agency was regularly in touch with the social media platforms but that it did not ask for the removal of accounts. Only once has it publicly called out a source of disinformation — Shoun Islamiya, the YouTube channel in Egypt that brought international attention to the false accusation of kidnapping children — but it remains online.

## When Tragedy Hits China, Its Leaders Repress Grief

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE

ball team. "Unfortunately, this humble wish is often difficult for us to fulfill." The article was censored on a news portal subject to Beijing's rules.

There's a reason for the enforced omission and silence. In the view of the Chinese Communist Party, its rule should be celebrated no matter the circumstances. Victims of public tragedies are inconvenient facts highlighting that not everything under the party's watch is glorious. Their deaths are testimony of its failure.

The government's determination to silence discussion of public tragedies dates to Mao Zedong. Xi Jinping, China's current paramount leader, has carried the practice forward.

"He wants to eliminate the history by eliminating the collective memory," said Song Yongyi, a Los Angeles historian who specializes in the study of the Cultural Revolution.

The Communist Party has never been candid about the truth of its rule. It never disclosed how many people died during the Great Famine from 1959 to 1961; historians have found evidence that the number ranged from millions to tens of millions. It is not known exactly how many were killed in the bloody crackdown on Tiananmen Square protesters in 1989, though estimates of the number of deaths ranged from hundreds to several thousand.

Members of an organization of relatives of Tiananmen victims, called "the Tiananmen Mothers," were harassed, surveilled and detained. At the top of their demands was "the right to mourn peacefully in public."

The party relaxed its control somewhat in the 1990s and 2000s, and people

like the investigative journalist Zhang Wenmin, who is known by her pen name, Jiang Xue, did their best to humanize their disaster coverage.

After the earthquake in Sichuan on May 12, 2008, in which more than 69,000 people died, Ms. Zhang and many other journalists, artists and activists tried to record the names and life stories of the dead. They produced some of China's best journalistic and artistic works in recent memory despite occasional censorship.

"The Chinese public used to be referred to as nameless 'masses' in the party media outlets," Ms. Zhang said. "Now they're back to the 'masses' again with neither name nor face in the media."

But even the limited freedom of expression that was afforded during that period has been eliminated under Mr. Xi, who has tightened the state's control of information and how the past is remembered.

"Xi Jinping has made control of history one of his signature policies — because he sees counter-history as an existential threat," Ian Johnson, an author who has covered China for decades, wrote in his new book, "Sparks: China's Underground Historians and their Battle for the Future."

Mr. Xi has turned the screws extra tight since the Covid pandemic. In April 2020, relatives of Wuhan residents who died were followed by minders when they picked up the ashes of their loved ones.

The government ignored a citizen demand to make Feb. 6 a nationwide day of mourning to mark the death of Dr. Li Wenliang, the whistle-blower who



WANG HE/GETTY IMAGES

had warned the public of the coronavirus.

"We have always known that our speech is not free, our voice is not free. Yet we do not realize until today that even sorrow and mourning do not belong to us," Ms. Zhang, the independent journalist, wrote in an article that was widely circulated on WeChat and other social media platforms before it was censored.

A recent video of the bereaved father of a volleyball player killed in the gymnasium collapse in Qiqihar highlighted the cruel reality faced by family members in public tragedies: Their grief, in the eyes of the government, makes them potential threats to social stability.

In the six-minute video, the father remained perternaturally composed as he tried to reason with the police, doctors and government officials at a hospital. He and other family members wanted to be allowed to identify the bodies of their daughters.

The father said he understood why

the police were at the hospital. "We didn't cause any troubles," he said. He said he understood why no officials bothered to talk to them. "That's fine," he said.

Many people said online and in interviews that they cried watching the video because they recognized his "heart-wrenching restraint" and knew why he behaved that way.

"What happens if he didn't hold back his anger?" asked an author in an article posted on social media. "As a father who has suffered such immense pain, why did he have to reason with such restraint and humility?"

As usual, the censorship machine went into high gear. Social media posts containing names of the victims and celebrating their lives and friendships were deleted. So were photos and videos showing the entrance of their school, where the public sent numerous flower bouquets, yogurt, milk tea and canned peaches, which is a comfort food for children in northeastern China.

A memorial marked the 10-year anniversary of the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, China, in which tens of thousands died, left. Such displays are often censored.

The most recent example of how the government tries to hide the mass suffering of the Chinese people is the flooding in northern China.

Areas in Hebei Province near Beijing were hit the hardest because the authorities opened spillways to partly protect Xiong'an, a city that is being expanded to serve as an alternate national capital. It is one of Mr. Xi's pet projects. The Hebei government said on Thursday that 29 people died and 16 were missing in the flooding. On the social media platform Weibo, some commentators said the government was lying about the casualties; on some posts, the comment function was disabled.

Some social media posts and first-person accounts of the flooding were censored. Among the blocked posts were complaints from people who said that government officials were nowhere to be seen when they needed help, and only showed up after the flood receded.

On the home page of the Chinese central government, the top article is a story from the official Xinhua News Agency.

The headline reads: "Under the strong and resolute leadership of Comrade Xi Jinping, the Central Committee of the Party commands and directs the flood control, disaster relief and emergency response efforts in Hebei Province."

Nearly 4,990 words, the article listed many things the government had done, including the number of text alerts it had sent. It did not mention how many people died or were missing or homeless. They would be the nameless "masses" who were, of course, grateful for the government's rescue.

## TRAVEL | TOURISM

# What's 'Skiplagging'? Staying at a Layover. Airlines Are Not Fans.

By CHRISTINE CHUNG

On the last day of June, American Airlines agents at Gainesville Regional Airport in Florida canceled a North Carolina teenager's flight after realizing that he had used a booking tactic called "skiplagging" or "hidden-city travel," forbidden by airlines but used by some travelers to net flight bargains.

The teen's father, Hunter Parsons, said it was his 17-year-old's first time flying unaccompanied and that both the timing and price of the booking made it appealing — for \$150, his son was to fly from Gainesville to Charlotte, and not continue on the second flight to New York, a cost savings of roughly \$300 if the family had simply purchased a direct flight to Charlotte. But Mr. Parsons's son didn't even make it past the check-in counter in Gainesville, where the airline agents questioned why the teen would fly to New York when his layover was in his hometown, Charlotte. He was forced to pay for a direct flight.

Skiplagging is buying a ticket for a connecting flight, with a layover in the city that's the real destination for the traveler. Flyers disembark after the first leg and simply fail to board the second. Often the fare is cheaper than if they'd actually bought a direct flight to their desired destination. At least two websites now help unearth these deals for consumers.

Though it is not illegal, the practice is strictly prohibited by airlines in their contracts of carriage. And carriers have shown an erratic but heavy hand in administering punishment for those caught, eliminating a skiplagger's frequent flier miles in one instance and suing a passenger in another. Mr. Parsons said that American barred his son from traveling with the carrier for three years.

Experts say that travelers have flown this way for decades and that detecting improper use of connections is tricky, making enforcement a challenge for airlines. Here's what to know about this open secret of flying.

## How does it work?

Airline ticket costs are deter-

mined by many factors, such as energy prices, passenger demand for certain routes and competition from other airlines. They aren't merely a reflection of travel distance. For travelers, this means that it can occasionally be more affordable to book a flight with a layover along a more competitive route and get off there, rather than booking a nonstop flight to the desired location.

For instance, a traveler in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., wants to fly to San Francisco. A recent search turned up a flight from Fort Lauderdale to Portland, Ore., with a stop in San Francisco, for about \$124. A nonstop flight from Fort Lauderdale to San Francisco would cost about \$220.

Skiplagged and Kiwi facilitate searching for and booking these kinds of deals.

But it requires staying undetected. You can't check a bag or link a frequent flier account to collect the mileage. And travelers who show patterns — flying the same routes repeatedly and missing the last leg of a flight — are more likely to be caught.

## Why is it gaining in popularity?

Short answer: the cost of airfare, which has soared in recent years.

Mary Cropper, a travel specialist with Boston-based Audley Travel, called airfare pricing a "perfect storm." Rising fares, in addition to fees for everything from beverages to printing boarding passes, have made skiplagging more enticing to passengers. While she doesn't advise her clients to book this way, she said she understood the motivation.

"Why wouldn't someone want to save 50 percent on an airline ticket, something that's just so expensive these days?" Ms. Cropper asked.

Aktarer Zaman, Skiplagged's founder and chief executive, emphasized that his website has "empowered people to make their own decisions" by digging up alternatives to current airline pricing practices, which he described as "price gouging."

## What are the risks?

Upon purchasing a ticket, travelers agree to a contract of car-



DANI PENDERGAST

riage with the airline, which is a set of rules passengers agree to comply with. These cover everything from how a carrier will handle oversold flights to requirements regarding passengers' clothing and behavior. These terms and conditions also often explicitly forbid hidden-city ticketing and lay out a raft of consequences should travelers circumvent the rules.

United Airlines reserves the right to permanently ban travelers who don't complete their trip. They also say they can revoke status and wipe out accrued mileage. Alaska Airlines mentions that it can take legal action against passengers who violate their policies.

American says in its fine print that it has the right to a number of actions, such as canceling any unused portion of the ticket, refusing to let the passenger fly and billing the customer for what the intended route would have cost.

Curtis Blessing, a spokesman for American, called this type of travel an "all-around bad outcome" that could cause issues with checked bags and also prevent other customers, who

might have urgent travel needs, from booking seats.

Airlines have mostly taken aim at the online providers, in past years filing a handful of lawsuits against Skiplagged and Kiwi. Earlier this summer, American sued Kiwi in federal court in Texas, claiming that the "rogue online travel agent" had repeatedly engaged in "abusive ticketing practices," including booking hidden city fares for its customers, according to court documents.

So far, litigation has been unsuccessful in blocking this travel hack. One lawsuit filed in 2014 by United against Skiplagged was dismissed, while in 2021, Southwest Airlines sued Skiplagged for using the carrier's data. Skiplagged argued that they were not the ones actually distributing Southwest tickets; they showed flights but directed users to other websites for booking. Both parties later agreed to drop the lawsuit, Mr. Zaman said.

In 2018, Lufthansa sued a passenger who had booked a round-trip flight from Oslo to Seattle but then stayed in Frankfurt, the flight's layover city. The airline later dropped the lawsuit.

However, there are plentiful anecdotes online of passengers who say they've been threatened with lifetime bans and with the loss of all their frequent flier mileage.

## Is it an ethical way to travel? How much of an issue is it for airlines anyway?

"The question is whether you think it has any impact on the provider and whether you care," said Robert Mann, an aviation analyst and a former American executive. Airlines say that exploitation of hidden-city fares results in empty seats that could have been booked by others.

In its lawsuit against Kiwi, American also said that passenger no-shows can delay flights by triggering searches for the traveler and any luggage involved, and waste fuel that is calculated by passenger count.

Others say that these fares are a loophole of an airline's own making, and a reflection of their pricing priorities. By law, airlines can set whatever prices and routes they want.

"It can be argued charging much higher prices for shorter distances is unfair and especially

penalizes frequent fliers to hub cities," where high demand generally means costlier airfare, said Paul Hudson, the founder of a passengers rights advocacy group called Flyers Rights.

## What can you do if you're penalized for skiplagging?

Very little. Bart Banino, an attorney at Condon & Forsyth, a firm specializing in aviation law, emphasized that passengers are obligated to adhere to the airline's terms and conditions — that contract of carriage — whether that means traveling on the route they've purchased, or paying a fare difference when they're caught breaking the rules.

Mr. Hudson cited a past Supreme Court ruling that found that carriers have the right to claw back frequent flier miles, for whatever reason.

*Follow New York Times Travel on Instagram and sign up for our weekly Travel Dispatch newsletter to get expert tips on traveling smarter and inspiration for your next vacation. Dreaming up a future getaway or just armchair traveling? Check out our 52 Places to Go in 2023.*

# Wealthy Enthusiasts Continue to Buy Submersibles Even After Titan Tragedy

By Ephrat Livni, Sarah Kessler and Michael J. de la Merced

Charles Kohnen, co-founder of the submersible manufacturer SEAmagine HydroSpace, estimates that there are 200 manned vessels worldwide. Some are used by scientific institutions, others for tourism. But a growing number belong to a select group of yacht owners.

While a ticket aboard a submersible tour, like the one that ended in tragedy this year en route to the Titanic shipwreck, is too pricey for most people, owning a submersible requires another level of wealth and boating infrastructure.

Only sufficiently large yachts — at least 120 feet — can hold a sub, which typically costs between \$2 million to \$7 million (not including the cost of a crane to lower the sub, the speedboat needed to board, and services like mapmaking and guides that can run about \$15,000 per day).

"It's not like a fancy car," Kohnen said. "It's more like a \$5 million spacecraft."

Just as having a helicopter and launchpad on a yacht was hot in the 1980s, Kohnen said, getting a personal submersible is increasingly a thing for the wealthy.

Ofer Ketter, whose company, SubMerge, caters to personal submersibles, sees a similar trend. "You have a mega-yacht, a super yacht — a submersible has become the next thing to have," he said.

## Deep-sea explorations have a growing fan base among the elite.

The filmmaker James Cameron and the billionaire investor Ray Dalio have both donated vessels to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and invested in the submersible manufacturer Triton Submarines. Dalio said it was about discovery. "The ocean is the greatest resource we have," he said. "It's twice the size of all continents combined — and underexplored."

Some submersible owners lend out their vessels for documentaries and scientific research, while others are in search of never-before-seen species or want to explore shipwrecks. And there is a kind of mixed-use model that is versatile for everything from an underwater wedding to cocktails on the reef, dinner or a poker game, said Craig Barnett, Triton's director of sales and marketing.

## The personal submersibles industry has grown with the size of yachts.

When SEAmagine started in 1995, mostly robots were used for deep-sea scientific work because lowering submersibles into the ocean with people inside was unwieldy, Kohnen said. The company built a model that could be boarded from the water, and this relaunched an era of manned submersibles for science and tourism. Around 2005, SEAmagine got its first yacht commission — and competition. Another submersible manufacturer, U-Boat Worx, started operations in the Netherlands, and Triton soon followed. Yachts were becoming bigger, but, Kohnen said, people were also starting to value experience-seeking over luxury.

## Making 'the moment.'

Where to dive and how long an expedition lasts depends, but an adventure can take months of planning to scout, map and set up. SubMerge has coordinated five expeditions with three different private clients this year, Ketter said, and the company works with about six luxury travel firms, including submersible manufacturers.

A typical day "in a good spot" usually involves a few dives that last about an hour or two, with breaks for meals, Kohnen said. "Even after a thousand dives, it never stops being exciting."

## What about the implosion of the Titan?

The fatal OceanGate tour shined



TRITON SUBMARINES

Only sufficiently large yachts — at least 120 feet — can hold a sub, which typically costs between \$2 million to \$7 million. The industry is still growing.

a harsh spotlight on deep-sea adventure. But Kohnen said the craft involved was an "outlier" that was not built to specifications and had been a cause of concern in the submersible community for years.

Ketter said that his company had not had any cancellations since the accident. Triton likewise said that it had no cancellations, that it was building five submersibles and experiencing "remarkable demand" from private owners and tourism companies.

Although private submersibles are gaining momentum, Barnett said, the number of scientific institutions using them was "regrettably low." Dalio said he thought filming the ocean from private craft would spur more investment and exploration. "It's very underfunded, but it's picking up," he said.

## Here's What's Happening

### THE FED COULD SOON PAUSE INTEREST RATE RISES.

Consumer prices rose moderately in July, according to Consumer Price Index data released this week, and consumers expect inflation to slow over the next

year, a closely watched University of Michigan survey showed. The wild card is volatile food and fuel prices, which could add to inflationary pressures.

### GOLDMAN SACHS'S LONGTIME CHIEF STEPS ASIDE.

DealBook reported that John Rogers, the bank's longtime chief of staff, would start handing over some of his responsibilities to Russell Horwitz, a former deputy. The shake-up occurs as Goldman's C.E.O., David Solomon, conducts an overhaul of the bank, which has seen prominent executives leave.

### DISNEY DOESN'T RULE OUT SELLING TV BUSINESS.

The entertainment giant's C.E.O., Bob Iger, said subscription-price increases for Disney+ and Hulu would go into effect in the fall. And, like Netflix, it will crack down on password sharing. Wall Street is getting impatient as Disney's streaming losses have ballooned to more than \$11 billion since 2019.

### ZOOM'S A.I. DATA POLICY SPARKS BACKLASH.

The popular videoconferencing platform issued a clarification

this week that it would seek customers' consent before using their audio, video or chat data to train artificial intelligence models. Digital rights' advocates, however, worry that may not be enough to protect unsuspecting Zoom users as privacy concerns multiply alongside the explosion in popularity of A.I. tools like the ChatGPT and Bard chatbots.

### A Kennedy bets on start-ups that serve the disabled.

The Kennedy family has for decades made advocacy for the disabled one of its signature causes, from Senator Ted Kennedy sponsoring the Americans With Disabilities Act to Eunice Kennedy Shriver founding the Special Olympics.

Now, a scion of the political dynasty, Christopher McKelvy, has teamed up with Judd Olanoff, a former JPMorgan Chase banker, to approach disabilities in a new way: by starting a venture capital firm focused on the community.

### Meet K. Ventures.

McKelvy — a grandson of Patricia Kennedy Lawford and a former tech executive — and Olanoff initially worked together on public policy advocacy for people with disabilities and their families at the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. (McKelvy is a trustee at the foundation.)

They realized that the start-up sector offered both new services for the disabled and viable business models that could scale because of developments like Medicaid reimbursements. McKelvy and Olanoff left the foundation last year to start their firm. Its backers include Brian Jacobs, a longtime investor who runs Moai Capital, who told DealBook that the founders' connections "are definitely unique and valuable."

"My family's hope," McKelvy told DealBook, "is that K Ventures will be the next chapter" of our work on behalf of the disabled.

## DealBook

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### The firm is a bet on the growing market for disability services.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that up to 27 percent of the country's population has some kind of disability. The agency also found in 2020 that one in 36 children has been diagnosed with autism, up from one in 44 in 2018, thanks to better recognition of symptoms.

Olanoff said big companies were also starting to invest in providing disability services and benefits, presenting an opportunity for start-ups.

### K. Ventures has made three investments.

Including Juno, which provides cash benefits to parents if their children become severely injured or disabled; Juniper, which automates billing for behavioral health services providers; and NeuroNav, which helps adults with developmental disabilities in California devise their own customized help services.

Major investment firms have also started to take notice of the opportunity: Andreessen Horowitz and Y Combinator have backed Juniper, while Pear VC has invested in NeuroNav.

### McKelvy and Olanoff are using the Kennedy name and resources.

Including by bringing in advice and networking opportunities from relatives like Tim Shriver, the chairman of the Special Olympics, and Patrick Kennedy, the former congressman. For the past two years, it has also hosted a forum for disability start-ups at the Kennedy compound in Massachusetts.

# Tom Jones, 'Fantasticks' Lyricist Behind Record 42-Year Run, Dies at 95

By NEIL GENZLINGER

Tom Jones, who wrote the book and lyrics for a modest musical called "The Fantasticks" that opened in 1960 in Greenwich Village and ran for an astonishing 42 years, propelled in part by its wistful opening song, "Try to Remember," died on Friday at his home in Sharon, Conn. He was 95.

His son Michael said the cause was cancer.

Mr. Jones and his frequent collaborator, Harvey Schmidt, first worked together when they were students at the University of Texas — Mr. Jones in the drama department's directing program, Mr. Schmidt studying art but indulging his musical inclinations on the side.

They kept in touch after graduating, writing songs together by mail after they were drafted during the Korean War. Mr. Jones got out first and tried his luck in New York, failing to find work as a director but writing for the revues being staged by the impresario Julius Monk and fiddling with a musical with another composer, John Donald Robb.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Robb called that show, which was loosely based on a comedy by the French playwright Edmond Rostand, "Joy Comes to Deadhorse," and in 1956 they staged it at the University of New Mexico, where Mr. Robb was a dean. It was a big-cast production that included a small squadron of dancers.

The two men had different reactions to their production. "I felt it was basically wrong," Mr. Jones wrote in an unpublished memoir. "He felt it was basically right. So we split."

Mr. Jones kept working on the piece, now with Mr. Schmidt, who had arrived in New York after leaving the military and was having some success as a commercial artist. They were still envisioning it as a big Broadway musical, but in 1959, when a friend was looking for a one-act musical for a summer festival at Barnard College, they did a radical revision. Instead of trying to imitate Rodgers and Hammerstein, Mr. Jones wrote, "we decided to break all the rules."

"We didn't understand them anyway," he added.

Their pared-down musical, about two young lovers and their seemingly feuding fathers, used a narrator, minimalist staging and other touches that bucked the formula of a big Broadway musical.

Among those who saw it at Barnard was the producer Lore Noto, who brought it to the Sullivan Street Playhouse in Greenwich Village, where it opened in May 1960. The cast included Jerry Orbach, early in his storied career, as El Gallo, the narrator, who delivers "Try to Remember."

It also included, in a smaller role, one Thomas Bruce — who was actually Mr. Jones. He said he didn't use his own name because he wanted to head off accusations that "The Fantasticks" was a vanity production.

Mr. Jones wrote that the opening-night performance, attended by critics, was rocky, and at the after-party all involved awaited the



WALTER McBRIDE/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Tom Jones in 2011. "The Fantasticks" closed in 2002 as the longest-running musical in history.



RAY FISHER/GETTY IMAGES



EVENING STANDARD/HULTON ARCHIVE, VIA GETTY IMAGES



BETTMANN, VIA GETTY IMAGES

The original cast of "The Fantasticks" included Jerry Orbach, top. Mr. Jones, far left, with Harvey Schmidt and the actress Stephanie Voss, promoted the show in 1961. Mr. Schmidt, top far left, and Mr. Jones collaborated frequently.

reviews with trepidation. They came in around midnight; Word Baker, the director, related them to the assembled group, beginning with the mixed review from Brooks Atkinson in *The New York Times*.

"All we could hear, any of us, were the bad parts," Mr. Jones wrote.

Walter Kerr of *The New York*

*Herald Tribune* also said both positive and negative things, while some of the other *New York* papers raved.

In any case, the show had a resilience that no one back then could have predicted. It continued to run at Sullivan Street for more than 17,000 performances, finally closing in 2002 as the longest-running musical in history. ("The

*Mousetrap*," the Agatha Christie play, has been running longer in London, but not continuously in the same theater.)

Mr. Jones and Mr. Schmidt, who died in 2018, went on to collaborate on other shows. Mr. Jones wrote the lyrics for Mr. Schmidt's music for "110 in the Shade," which opened on Broadway in 1963 and ran for 330 performances, and he

wrote the book and lyrics for "I Do! I Do!," another collaboration with Mr. Schmidt, which ran for a year and a half on Broadway in the mid-1960s.

Each of those shows earned the men Tony Award nominations. Ed Ames's version of "My Cup Runneth Over," a song from "I Do! I Do!," peaked at No. 8 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 in 1967 and received Grammy Award nominations.

But "The Fantasticks" overshadowed everything else. After its initial long run, a revival that opened in 2006 in Midtown Manhattan ran for more than 4,300 performances, with Mr. Jones again in the opening-night cast, in the same secondary role. As in the original production, actors cycled through the various roles in the revival, which continued for more than a decade. In 2010, Mr. Jones, then 82, returned to the cast briefly to mark the 50th anniversary of the original show's opening.

In 2006, an interviewer for *American Theater Wing*, introducing Mr. Jones, described "The Fantasticks" as "the longest-running musical in the universe."

"I don't know about Saturn," Mr. Jones replied.

Thomas Collins Jones was born on Feb. 17, 1928, in Littlefield, Texas. His father, William, was a turkey farmer, and his mother, Jessie (Bellomy) Jones, was a homemaker.

He grew up in Coleman, Texas, where he got a job as an usher at a movie theater. That job morphed into a role as master of ceremonies for a weekly talent show held on Wednesday nights between features.

As Mr. Jones put it in his memoir, "Sometime during my sophomore year at Coleman High School, I became a 'character'" — wearing bow ties and a straw hat to school, smoking a pipe, signing his articles for the school newspaper "T. Collins Jones, Esquire."

"Even now, nearly 70 years later, I can't help but stop and wonder what the hell I thought I was doing," he wrote. "Even more, I wonder at the fact that the other kids — farmers mostly, and ranchers and 4-H girls — took it all in their stride."

In 1945, when he enrolled in the drama department at the University of Texas, "for the first time, there were other people actually like me," he wrote. "Here, marvel of marvels, everybody was T. Collins Jones, Esquire."

He earned a bachelor's degree and, in 1951, a master's degree at the university, and was drafted soon after. By happenstance — and passing a typing test — he managed to avoid being sent to fight in Korea; instead he was assigned to administrative work in a counterintelligence unit.

There, he proposed that he write a manual on how to conduct covert operations. ("The Army loves manuals," he wrote in the memoir. "More than machine guns. More than medals.") Superiors liked the idea, and he worked on that until he was discharged after the war ended in 1953.

In the *American Theater Wing* interview, Mr. Jones recounted

the story of "Try to Remember," the signature song from "The Fantasticks." Mr. Schmidt had come up with the music in just a few minutes during an idle moment in a rehearsal hall. Mr. Jones heard an opportunity.

"I thought, well, it would be fun to take this simple, long-line song and then play with lots of assonance and near sounds and near rhymes and inner rhymes and sort of enrust it verbally on top of this flowing, basically folklike, simple melody," he said. "That took me weeks to do. It took him 20 seconds and me three weeks."

His lyrics still echo across the decades:

*Try to remember the kind of September*

*When life was slow and oh, so mellow.*

*Try to remember the kind of September*

*When grass was green and grain was yellow.*

*Try to remember the kind of September*

*When you were a tender and callow fellow.*

*Try to remember and if you remember*

*Then follow, follow.*

Mr. Jones's first marriage, to Eleanor Wright, ended in divorce. His second marriage was to the choreographer Janet Watson, who died in 2016. Michael Jones and another son from that marriage, Sam, survive him.

Mr. Jones and Mr. Schmidt seemed to have a knack for long runs. "I Do! I Do!" has had countless other productions since it was on Broadway, including one in Minneapolis that ran from 1971 to

**A modest musical that went on to have over 17,000 performances.**

1993, with the same two actors, David Anders and Susan Goepfinger, in the same roles the whole time.

Among the other shows on which Mr. Jones and Mr. Schmidt collaborated was "Celebration," which ran for three months on Broadway in 1969, and which Mr. Jones also directed. They created a musical version of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," but when Mary Martin, who had originated the female role in "I Do! I Do!" on Broadway and was to star, became ill, the project was derailed.

In a 2002 interview with *The Times*, Mr. Jones said that though he wasn't displeased that "The Fantasticks" had dominated his career, he regretted that it overshadowed some of the other work he and Mr. Schmidt had done.

"It's nice to be remembered for anything," he said. "I do hope and believe that there is going to come a time, probably after we're dead, when someone will say, 'What are these other weirdo titles?' and they'll say, 'This is strange; this is interesting stuff.'"

## Keith Waldrop, 90, a Poet and Professor Acclaimed for His Vivid 'Verbal Collages'

By NEIL GENZLINGER

Keith Waldrop, whose first poetry collection was a finalist for a National Book Award in 1969 and who won the award 40 years later with his "Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy," died on July 27. He was 90.

Brown University, where he taught for more than 40 years, posted news of his death. It did not say where he died or state the cause.

Professor Waldrop was far more than a poet. He was a well-regarded translator of French poetry and prose, as well as an artist whose collages were exhibited in solo and group shows. He also ran a small press with his wife, the poet Rosmarie Waldrop.

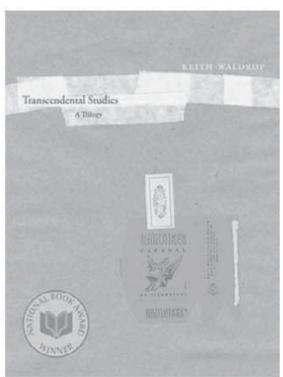
As a poet, he had dozens of published volumes to his credit. His poetry, as the Brown posting put it, "was infused with an emotional and intellectual undercurrent that could astonish the reader in its capacity to bridge disparate thought with, if not logic, then perhaps something deeper, richer."

The judges who awarded him the 2009 prize had high praise for his use of language.

"If transcendental immanence were possible," their citation said, "it would be because Keith Waldrop had invented it; he's the only one who could; and, in 'Transcendental Studies,' he has."

The three linked series of poems in that volume, they said, "achieve a fusion arcing from the Romantic to the postmodern that demonstrates language's capacity to go to extremes — and to haul daily lived experience right along with it."

He worked in vivid imagery that was often as unsettling as it was beautiful. A segment of "My Notebook for December," from "Selected Poems" (2016), read:



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Mr. Waldrop's prizewinning 2009 volume, "Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy."

**Teaching at Brown for years, and winning a National Book Award.**

*The world — and if ever there was a self-evident proposition, here it is — the world is a big fish. I've caught it in my net. And now, long into the winter nights, wearily, I study my net. The fish stinks.*

And later in the poem:

*An open door is plain and simple, like a wall. A closed door is an invitation. But if the knob is turning . . . ?*

In a 2009 interview with the radio program "Close Listening," Professor Waldrop talked about how some of his poems, including

those in his prizewinning volume, were assembled similarly to the collages he made as an artist, although these were two distinct creative processes.

"I've never felt that they quite go together, the verbal collages that I do and the visual collages," he said. "But I enjoy doing both of them, so I do them."

Bernard Keith Waldrop was born on Dec. 11, 1932, in Emporia, Kan. His father, Arthur, was a railroad worker, and his mother, Opal (Mohler) Waldrop, taught piano.

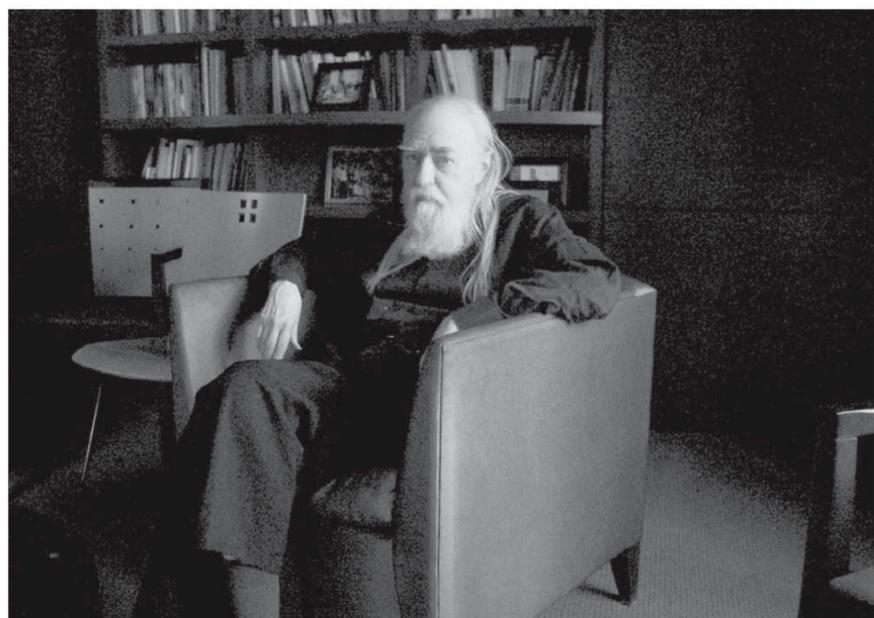
His parents' marriage did not last, and he was raised largely by his mother. In a prose work, "Light While There Is Light" (1993), which he described as a memoir written as a novel, he recalled one formative moment with his father.

He took Keith, then in middle school, to Topeka, Kan., to see a play often described as "G.I. Hamlet." It was a version of Shakespeare originally intended to be performed by soldiers in World War II, and it was being given a few productions just after the war in the Midwest.

"People who should know (older people) have since told me that it was nothing exceptional," Professor Waldrop wrote, "mediocre acting of a badly cut text — and I remember the Edwardian costumes — but for me it was a view into another realm, a realm infinitely appealing and, most surprisingly, available to me. I was, I think, different from that day on."

It sparked a lifelong interest in theater. As a graduate student at the University of Michigan and later as a faculty member at Brown, Professor Waldrop was involved in creating theater groups that gave small performances.

Just as impactful was that his mother, who was passionately re-



AMISH TRIVEDI

Keith Waldrop in 2010. He was also an artist and a highly regarded translator of French literature.

ligious, spent years searching for the "right" fundamentalist congregation, moving Keith and his siblings around the Midwest and the South.

"Until I went to high school, I think basically I read almost nothing but comic books and the Bible," he said in the "Close Listening" interview. At a fundamentalist high school in South Carolina, he first started reading and trying to write poetry.

"I remember writing a narrative poem about the universal flood," he said. "I hope no trace of it remains."

He enrolled at Kansas State Teachers College, but his studies were interrupted when he was drafted into the Army near the end of the Korean War. He served in West Germany, where he met his future wife; in 1955 he returned to the teachers college and

earned his bachelor's degree. He then earned a master's degree at the University of Michigan in 1958 and a Ph.D. in comparative literature there in 1964.

With two others, he founded *Burning Deck*, a literary journal, in the early 1960s, but within a few issues his partners had dropped out and his wife had joined him as co-editor.

Soon the journal morphed into a press. The Waldrops used an old letterpress printer purchased for \$175 and took it with them when they moved from Michigan to Connecticut in 1964. Professor Waldrop joined the Brown faculty in 1968. He retired in 2011.

Ben Lerner, a poet and novelist, wrote in *The New Yorker* in 2013 about taking a class from Professor Waldrop at Brown. It was, he wrote, "a class composed, on the one hand, of young writers eager

to listen to one of the best-read humans on the planet talk about literature, and, on the other, of sleeping athletes who knew Waldrop pretty much gave everybody an A."

Professor Waldrop, whose wife survives him, published his first poetry volume, "A Windmill Near Calvary," in 1968; it was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1969. When he finally won the award four decades later, he and his wife were low-key about it. They traveled to New York for the ceremony, but his wife went to the opera instead of the presentation.

"I almost went to the opera myself," Professor Waldrop told *The Christian Science Monitor*.

More obituaries appear on Page D7.

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Approaching sex scenes in 'Passages.' BY THOMAS ROGERS

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Serial killers and the pain left in their wake. BY MAYA SALAM



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The showman Geoff Sobelle plays with his food for yucks. BY HOUMAN BAREKAT

NEWS | CRITICISM

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2023 C1

# Arts

The New York Times

## The Focus Of a Film Becomes Personal

Claire Simon's 'Our Body' looks at a Paris hospital. She became a patient midshoot.

By BEATRICE LOAYZA

Midway through filming "Our Body," a sprawling documentary about the gynecological ward of a Paris hospital, the movie's director, Claire Simon, received some medical news of her own: She had breast cancer.

Four weeks into the shoot, Simon had discovered a lump beneath her armpit. But rather than cease production, she decided to improvise and turn the camera on herself.

"I had to film a lot of naked women," Simon in a recent video interview. "Then I was naked, too, and I was just like them. This changed my point of view entirely; it helped me cope and be calm in the face of my own sickness."

Motivated by the desire to show what she called the body's "hidden truth," Simon is but one patient among dozens in her documentary's celebration of the body, depicted in all its wondrous and terrible iterations. "Our Body" — which played in this year's Berlin International Film Festival and is showing at Film Forum in New York through Thursday — assembles intimate patient-doctor consultations and surgical procedures into something like a volume of short stories. The subjects include abortion, artificial insemination, birth, gender transitioning, menopause and, eventually, disease and death.

CONTINUED ON PAGE C5

"How does our civilization treat the female body?" is the sort of question Claire Simon asks in her documentary "Our Body."



ELIZABETH WEINBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

SETH COLTER WALLS | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

## At Darmstadt, Rivaling Wagner's Best



KRISTOF LEMP

In between the four operas of the 'Ring,' a critic traveled to take in world premieres by Jennifer Walshe and Anthony Braxton.

DARMSTADT, GERMANY — It's not a typical week in Germany when a staging of Wagner's "Götterdämmerung" on the composer's own turf at the Bayreuth Festival finds itself outdone for world-consuming sadness, rage and the possibility of redemption.

But that's what I experienced recently when I traveled among the four operas of the "Ring" at the festival and the Darmstadt Summer Course here, a hotbed of avant-garde works since 1946.

Jennifer Walshe, second from right, performing the premiere of "Minor Characters" at the Darmstadt Summer Course.

On Wednesday in Darmstadt — during a day off between "Siegfried" and "Götterdämmerung" in Bayreuth — Ensemble Nickel backed the Irish experimental singer and composer Jennifer Walshe in the world premiere of the complete song cycle "Minor Characters," which she wrote with Matthew Shlomowitz.

The morning after "Minor Characters," I traveled back to Bayreuth for "Götterdämmerung."

CONTINUED ON PAGE C6

## BookTok Sensation Hits Screens

'Red, White & Royal Blue' imagines romance between a prince and a president's son.

By ASHLEY SPENCER

On most Fridays, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London closes at 10 p.m. sharp. But one night last summer, after all of the tourists had spilled back onto the streets of South Kensington, two men slow-danced among the Berninis and Rodins until the sun rose the next morning. A cover of "Can't Help Falling in Love" by the indie-pop singer Perfume Genius echoed through the hall, soundtracking their tender moment.

The nocturnal scene was a scripted one from "Red, White & Royal Blue," the film adaptation of the 2019 novel by Casey McQuiston. The two men under the dimmed lights were the actors Taylor Zakhar Perez and Nicholas Galitzine, and they swayed until the director, Matthew López, called "Cut!" around 2 a.m. for a lunch break.

"It was just the three of us and our crew," said López, who's also the film's co-writer. "It made for an incredibly intimate, really special night."

CONTINUED ON PAGE C5

# Pondering the Sex in a Post #MeToo Movie

The three stars of ‘Passages’ discuss the film’s approach to sexuality and intimacy.

By THOMAS ROGERS

When Ira Sachs’s movie “Passages” premiered at the Sundance Film Festival this year, critics couldn’t stop talking about the sex scenes. The movie, a drama set in Paris about a film director who leaves his long-time boyfriend for a young woman, featured an all-star European art-house cast — Franz Rogowski (“Transit,” “Great Freedom”), Ben Whishaw (“The Lobster,” “Little Joe”) and Adèle Exarchopoulos (“Blue Is the Warmest Color”) — negotiating infidelity and betrayal. And having graphic sex.

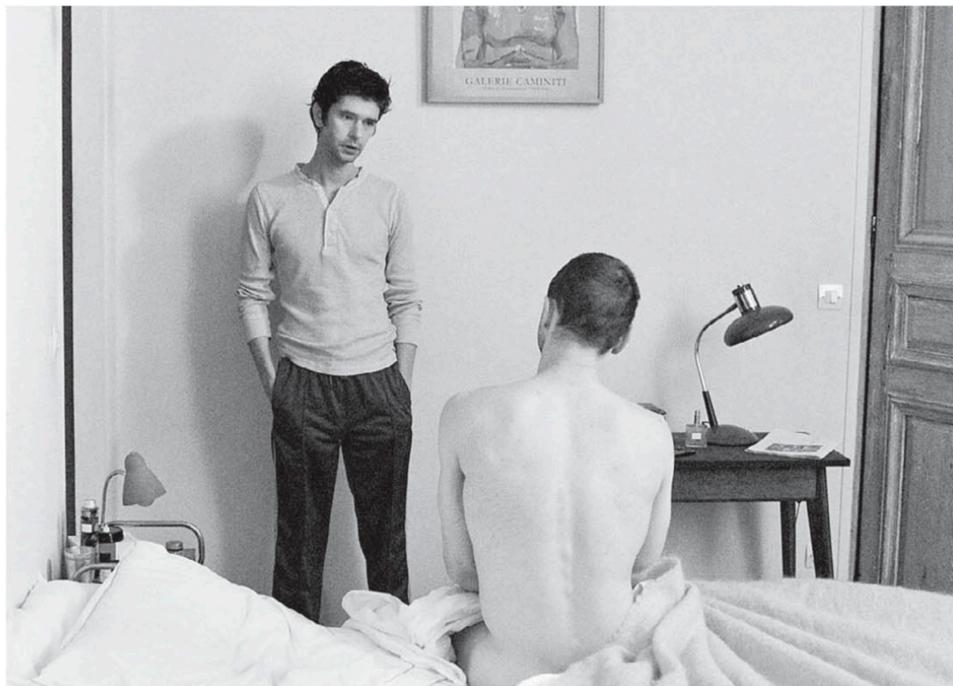
Those scenes led the Motion Picture Association to give the film a surprise NC-17 rating. The filmmakers opted to release the film in the United States without such a classification, a move that may limit the number of theaters willing to show the film, which came out this month.

There has been fierce debate in recent years about the role of sex scenes in movies. Following the #MeToo movement’s reckoning with gender inequality and sexual misbehavior, some have asked whether it is still possible to film such intimate acts without putting performers into precarious situations. More recently, some Gen-Z social media users have argued that sex scenes are unnecessary and should be excised from cinema more broadly.

In two joint video interviews, between Whishaw and Rogowski, and Rogowski and Exarchopoulos, the actors discussed their experiences making the movie and its approach to sexuality and intimacy. (The interview with Whishaw, a SAG-AFTRA member, was conducted before the actors’ strike began.)

Exarchopoulos noted that her career had been shaped early on by the depiction of sex onscreen. One of her first films, “Blue Is the Warmest Color,” a portrait of a lesbian relationship that won the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013, faced pushback from some critics who argued that its graphic sex scenes objectified its stars. Exarchopoulos and her co-star, Léa Seydoux, later said that the director’s treatment of them during the shoot had made them feel uncomfortable and disrespected.

Nevertheless, Exarchopoulos said she believed that sex scenes — and those of “Passages” in particular — were often crucial to movies for depicting relationships. “Sex is a huge part of a character’s life,” she said. “Blue Is the Warmest Color” had taught her “how having sex, or not having sex, and your relationship with your body, is a conversation and says a lot about who you are and who you are trying to be,” she said.



SBS PRODUCTIONS



MUBI



MUBI

From top, Ben Whishaw, left, plays Martin, who is abandoned by Franz Rogowski’s character (Tomas); Rogowski and Adèle Exarchopoulos; Tomas’s headstrong nature is reflected in his fashion choices.

Her character in “Passages” — a schoolteacher named Agathe who embarks on an affair with Tomas (Rogowski), after meeting him at a wrap party for his film — wants to “test her limits,” she said. As an actress, the biggest challenge was finding new ways of depicting intimacy onscreen, given her early performance in “Blue Is the Warmest Color” and its emphasis on sex: “I don’t want to bore people, showing myself the same way,” she said.

Rogowski is also no stranger to revealing roles: He said he had felt pressured into appearing naked in previous film and theater projects to add what he described as an “edgy” element to a production. He felt am-

bivalent about those experiences, he said. “The problem wasn’t the sex scene; it was that these movies were pretentious and flat, and you can’t turn it into something real just by taking off your underwear.”

Perhaps the most talked about sex scene in “Passages” occurs when Martin, Whishaw’s character, and Tomas end up in bed together after a series of betrayals. Rogowski said that the sequence was notable beyond its graphic nature, for its emotional depiction of two long-term partners negotiating power and pain through sex.

“It’s a couple having sex, it’s someone in a position of a victim taking over,” Rogowski said. “I think if someone only sees the film’s sex scenes as just explicit scenes of intercourse, then they should just watch another movie.”

In recent years, Whishaw said, the more widespread use of intimacy coordinators — experts who help performers negotiate their potential discomfort during sex

scenes — has created a healthier atmosphere for actors, including himself. Before “this development, the actors were sort of left to do it for themselves, because the director was embarrassed, or didn’t know how to talk about it.”

For “Passages,” he added, the cast opted not to use such a coach. “I think it’s OK if the group of people filming a scene are cool with doing it among themselves,” he said. “It’s about respect and trust and sharing creative goals.”

The film is also notable for the unremarkable way it treats Tomas’s apparent bisexuality as he negotiates relationships with Agathe and Martin. That approach, Ex-

**‘A moral code is a kind of costume, and it’s interesting to change this costume.’**

FRANZ ROGOWSKI

archopoulos said, played a large part in attracting her to the part. “It’s very normal in my own life and circles,” she said, for people to have relationships with either sex. Rogowski added that such love affairs were also commonplace in Berlin, where he lives. “I know it’s a cliché about Berlin, but some clichés are true,” he said.

Rogowski’s character, a tyrannical film director prone to on-set outbursts who frequently manipulates others to suit his own needs, reminded Exarchopoulos of colleagues she had encountered on movie sets, she said. “During the shoot, people in the production can sometimes be childish and have an ego, because they have power,” she said. “I have a lot of empathy for them.”

At first, Rogowski said, he struggled to identify with Tomas. “When I read the script, I thought, ‘This is a tough one, how am I going to justify his behavior?’” he said, adding that he eventually found the character’s lack of conventional morality to be liberating.

“A moral code is a kind of costume, and it’s interesting to change this costume,” Rogowski said. “For me personally, morality is a shady friend. It is related to religion and power structures, and it is, in many ways, a way of avoiding having your own opinion and exploring life.”

Rogowski said he believed that the notion of labeling film directors or actors as egocentric, or narcissists, is often a way of dismissing the value of their work. “Most of us have lost our relationships with ourselves, and don’t have enough time to be inspired by ourselves,” he said. “Most of us should be a bit more narcissistic.”

He added that Tomas’s headstrong nature is reflected in his character’s fashion choices, which include some of the more memorable looks in recent art house cinema. Rogowski said was pleasantly surprised by his high-fashion outfits — which include a see-through sweater, a snakeskin jacket and a sheer crop-top — chosen by the film’s costume designer, Khadija Zeggai. “I still have some of those items in my wardrobe,” he said.

The crop-top makes a particularly memorable appearance in a tense scene midway through the film, when Agathe invites her button-down, middle-class parents to meet her new boyfriend — a meal that grows increasingly disastrous by each passing minute. “It’s a nightmare,” Rogowski said. “I would have put on the most heteronormative T-shirt I could have found, just to make sure they are happy.”

Whishaw chimed in: “But what a wonderful thing that he does that.” Even though “there is a lot of pain in the film, there is joy underneath,” he said. “Everything is mixed up in this intricate way, and I think that’s what gives the film its soul.”

## PLAYLIST

# Olivia Rodrigo’s Sassy Pop-Rock Banger and More New Songs

Pop critics for *The New York Times* weigh in on notable new tracks.

## Olivia Rodrigo

BAD IDEA RIGHT?

The 20-year-old pop phenom Olivia Rodrigo extends her winning streak on “Bad Idea Right?,” the latest reason to be very excited about her second album, “Guts,” due Sept. 8. Departing from the sound of its first single, the rock-operatic “Vampire,” “Bad Idea Right?” is a bright, kaleidoscopic head-rush of a pop song that inhales a dizzying array of influences — the chatty call-and-response hooks of ‘60s girl groups, the gum-smacking sass of Toni Basil’s “Mickey,” the chugging guitars and elastic bass lines of early aughts pop-punk — and spits them all out in Rodrigo’s singularly conversational voice. “Seeing you tonight,” she sings of an ex, “It’s a bad idea, right?” Then she shrugs, mutters an expletive with sharp comic timing, and dives back into the mess. It’s a playful track, but there’s something invitingly intimate about the way she puts the rush of her thoughts and feelings on display. (“My brain goes ‘ahhhhh,’” sings a multi-tracked chorus.) A girl’s got to make her own mistakes, after all.

But if the listener is able to eavesdrop on her internal dialogue, she’s never completely alone.

LINDSAY ZOLADZ

## Fred again... featuring Obongjayar

ADORE U

Sheer affection courses through “Adore U.” The prolific dance-music producer Fred again.. surrounds and destabilizes the house thump with shimmering electronic syncopations, airborne sustained lines, choppy chords and looped vocal interjections. It’s a dizzying backdrop for the Nigerian-British singer Obongjayar, who croons his praises — “You walk through life just like a dancer” — in a tremulous falsetto; he sounds awe-struck.

JON PARELES

## Noname

NAMESAKE

The Chicago-based rapper Noname — Fatimah Nyeema Warner — wraps contentious positions in smooth grooves and high-speed, rhythmically adept wordplay on her first album, “Sundial,” her first since 2018. “The whole world is culpable/Why complacency

float the boat the most?” she asks in “Namesake.” The song also gleefully attacks headliners of Super Bowl halftime shows as “propaganda for the military.” With a smile in her voice, Noname raps, “Go Rihanna go — watch the fighter jet fly high/War machine gets glamorized.” But then she calls herself out for playing Coachella this year: “I said I wouldn’t perform for them/And somehow I still fell in line,” she admits. Careers are complicated.

JON PARELES

## Kelsea Ballerini

HOW DO I DO THIS

“I haven’t been on a date since I was 22,” Kelsea Ballerini sings in “How Do I Do This” — an arena-country song, with programmed drums and reverberating chords, about starting over even though she’s “scared of looking stupid.” It elevates the awkward, in-between moments, then stops dead just as something might begin.

JON PARELES

## Faith Healer

I’M A DOG

On “I’m a Dog,” the latest single from the Canadian dream-pop duo

Faith Healer’s forthcoming album “The Hand that Fits the Glove,” Jessica Jalbert wryly confesses her baser animal instincts in an incongruously serene voice. “You can try to wash me if I’m dirty in the yard,” she sings as the song proceeds at a stately, parade-like tempo, “I’ll get into the kitchen and I’ll rip the trash apart.”

LINDSAY ZOLADZ

## Miguel, featuring Lil Yachty

NUMBER 9

Miguel builds a monumental enigma in “Number 9.” Over a stark, triumphal electronic march, he overdubs his voice into anti-phonical choirs, trading lyrics like “In the gun a kiss/Let it blow your mind/Till the dust returns/To the number nine.” Lil Yachty arrives midway through to announce “I am the grim reaper.” Neither sounds daunted by mortality.

JON PARELES

## Ian Sweet

YOUR SPIT

A crush-struck Jill Medford — who records as Ian Sweet — crafts an infectious, slightly grookey on her latest single, which will



ZAMAR VELEZ

Olivia Rodrigo’s second album, “Guts,” will be out next month.

appear on her upcoming album “Sucker”: “Kiss me like you mean it, kiss me like you’re leaving,” she sings. “Your spit tastes different.” Medford’s dreamy, sing-songy vocals dance atop the song’s driving electronic beat and squelching synths, giddily evoking fresh infatuation.

LINDSAY ZOLADZ

## Ora Cogan

KATIE CRUEL

The Canadian songwriter Ora Cogan revisits an eerie Celtic traditional song, “Katie Cruel,” about a woman scorned as her beauty fades. “When I first came to town/They called me the roving jewel,” she sings. “Now they’ve changed their tune/They call me Katie Cruel.” The melody is entwined with modal guitar curlicues and distant vocals, yet somehow she sounds more alone than ever.

JON PARELES

## thanks for coming

LOOP

Rachel Brown, half of the duo Water From Your Eyes, has been recording solo since high school as thanks for coming. “Loop” is from an EP due in September. There’s more than one loop in “Loop,” a waltz that resigns itself to an obsessive, unequal romance: “I like you better/But you are never mine,” Brown sings. The track is an ever-thickening tangle of guitar, bass, piano and vocal lines over a stubbornly off-kilter drum loop. Brown knows recognizing a pattern doesn’t break free of it.

JON PARELES

MAYA SALAM | STREAMING TRUE CRIME

# Stories on Killers That Go Beyond The Monsters

Four picks across TV, documentaries and podcasts, with a shift to the victims and the scrutiny of investigations.

DECADES BEFORE TRUE CRIME crept in from the margins and inundated pop culture, I found a humble paperback buried in the stacks of my parents' bookshelf about America's most notorious serial killers. Perhaps inadvisable for a 10-year-old, I read and reread about the horrors inflicted by, among others, Ed Gein, John Wayne Gacy and Ted Bundy. Though I was already aware that terrible things happened in general, this was different: specific, personal and intimately chilling.

Lately, and fortunately, the tired approach of centering these monsters by rehashing their personal struggles and the details of their deeds has been falling out of favor. Interest has shifted instead to elevating the stories of those affected and to understanding the mood of the eras and the societal circumstances in which these crimes took place. This shift was reflected to some degree in July when a man was arrested in the Gilgo Beach serial killings on Long Island. Profiles of the suspect abounded, but from the start, there was demand for information about the victims as well as scrutiny of the investigation.

This is the first in a series of streaming lists about true-crime films, shows and podcasts. And while I won't dwell on these types of murderers in the future, the topic does feel like the appropriate place to start. Here are four picks that offer more than the usual glorification of madness.

DOCUMENTARY MINI-SERIES

**'Last Call: When a Serial Killer Stalked Queer New York'**

No series in recent memory has so successfully, thoughtfully and deliberately contextualized a serial killing spree like this four-part Max series, based on a book by Elon Green. In the early 1990s, amid the AIDS crisis and rising hate crimes against L.G.B.T.Q. people, gay men were being stalked in Manhattan piano bars — murdered and dismembered, their bodies found discarded around New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. But the killer's identity, almost remarkably, is not front of mind as the episodes proceed.

Instead, through interviews with family members, friends, lovers, and members and allies of the queer community, the victims are powerfully, heartbreakingly humanized, while viewers are plunged into the New York City of the time. Instead of simply alluding to the problems of bias and bigotry by those entrusted to solve these crimes, this series boldly addresses the ways in which the New York Police Department and the city's politicians treated the murdered men, the community as a whole and those pleading for action as second-class citizens. The final episode ran on July 30.



From top: "Last Call: When a Serial Killer Stalked Queer New York"; "Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer"; and "Mindhunter."



NETFLIX



NETFLIX

**'Night Stalker: The Hunt for a Serial Killer'**

This four-part Netflix series about the search for Richard Ramirez, who terrorized California with a brutal and unpredictable rampage that lasted just over a year in the mid-1980s, is about much more than who he was and what he did. It's instead anchored in the recollections of survivors, victims' families, journalists who worked on the case, and primarily Gil Carrillo and Frank Salerno, detectives who devoted themselves tirelessly to hunting for Ramirez.

While this series, from 2021, doesn't minimize the horrors of the crimes (be warned, there is crime-scene footage), it, like "Last

Call," conveys an uncanny sense of time and place, highlighting the mentality of the day in the communities affected and the shortcomings of the available technology. Be prepared to be stunned by mistakes made by law enforcement and by political leaders who jeopardized the frantic search.

PODCAST

**'This Is Actually Happening,' Episode 259: 'What If You Survived a Serial Killer?'**

I have listened to dozens of episodes of this podcast, in which regular people simply tell the stories of staggering, often wrenching, events that have altered the course of their

lives. It epitomizes my favorite format across true crime: stripped-down, no-frills first-person accounts that leave space for the gravity of the story to hit hard. And the stories explored on "This Is Actually Happening" run the gamut, which means there's a good chance it will make another appearance on this list.

This 2022 episode features Jane Boroski, the only known survivor of the Connecticut River Valley killer, whose identity is still unknown. He murdered at least seven women over a decade starting in the late 1970s, but in this podcast, the details of his crimes are put to the side in favor of giving Boroski — who was attacked when she was 22 years old and seven months pregnant, after she'd stopped for a soda on the way home from a county fair — room to discuss who she was before, during and after the attack, and who she is now.

Also, thoughtfully, this podcast includes highly specific warnings in the show notes of each episode page to ensure that listeners are aware of what sensitive topics will be discussed.

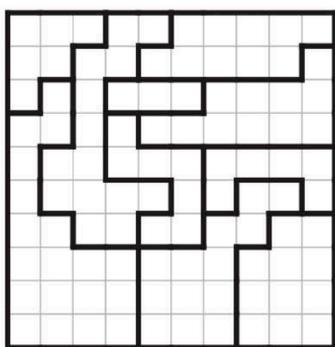
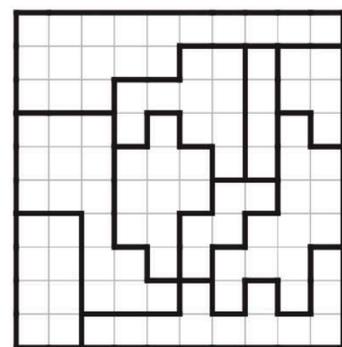
TELEVISION

**'Mindhunter'**

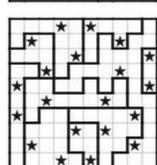
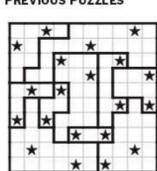
This gripping and moody Netflix drama — executive-produced by its creator, Joe Penhall, along with David Fincher and Charlize Theron — sadly won't see a third season, Fincher confirmed this year, but the first two are more than worth the price of admission (that being a slice of your sense of security). Based on the memoir "Mindhunter: Inside the F.B.I.'s Elite Serial Crime Unit," the show dramatizes the creation of the F.B.I.'s real Behavioral Science Unit, where the concept of a serial killer began. And while the three central characters — Holden Ford (Jonathan Groff), an F.B.I. hostage negotiator increasingly unsettled by the emergence of a disturbing theme; the behavioral-science specialist Bill Tench (Holt McCallany); and the psychologist Wendy Carr (Anna Torv) — are fictional, the serial killers that appear are all based on real people, with casting that is eerily true to life.

It starts in 1977, with David Berkowitz (Oliver Cooper), who was known as the Son of Sam, and moves on to, among others, Ed Kemper, the "Coed Killer" (Cameron Britton, who was nominated for an Emmy for the role), and the killer known as B.T.K., Dennis Rader (Sonny Valicenti, still only listed as an A.D.T. serviceman in the credits). The genius of "Mindhunter," though, is that it's — as James Poniewozik, chief television critic for The New York Times, put it when the first season came out in 2017 — "more academic than sensationalistic," with the stomach-turning events rarely spelled out in blood, but instead explored through hushed conversations.

## Two Not Touch



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

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## Brain Tickler

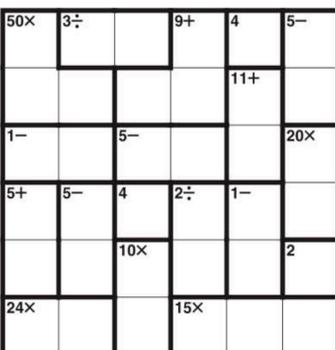
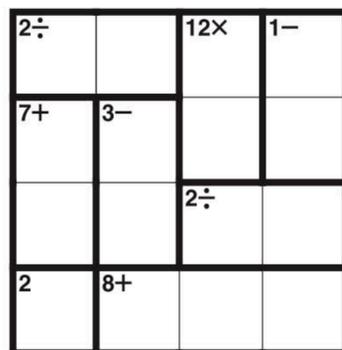
Put three letters after STR- to complete a common six-letter word. Then reverse those letters and place them in the first blank to complete a common two-word phrase.

STR \_\_\_\_\_

PUZZLE BY WILL SHORTZ

SATURDAY'S ANSWER Luster, rustle, result, ulster

## KenKen



ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES



Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

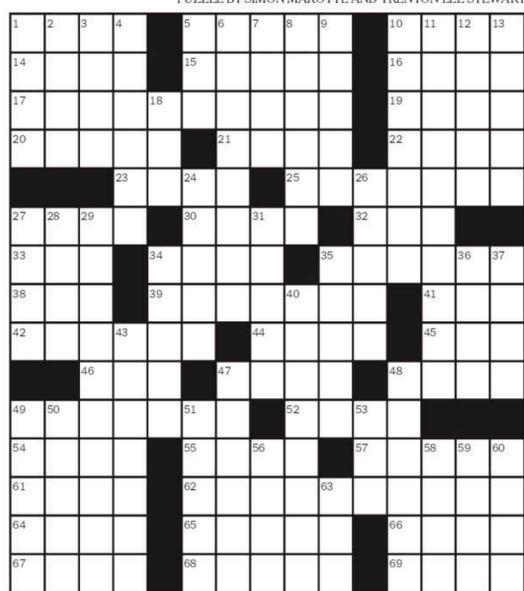
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## Crossword Edited by Will Shortz

PUZZLE BY SIMON MAROTTE AND TRENTON LEE STEWART

- ACROSS**
- 1 Drinks like a dog
  - 5 Always ordering others around
  - 10 Word with potato or poker
  - 14 The "Iliad," for one
  - 15 Paperless request to attend a party
  - 16 Peru's capital
  - 17 Step 1: Exceed the limit à la Spinal Tap
  - 19 Improves with time, like wine
  - 20 Fire starter
  - 21 Engrossed
  - 22 "Could you repeat that?"
  - 23 Diamond with gold and platinum certifications
  - 25 Step 2: Partygoer's guest
  - 27 Rodents led away by the Pied Piper of Hamelin
  - 30 Part of a sawfish that's shaped like a chain saw
  - 32 Support grp. for a candidate
  - 33 Cigarette residue
  - 34 Resident of Edinburgh
  - 35 Something to boil water in
  - 38 \_\_\_ for the course
  - 39 Step 3: Go on a brief break
  - 41 Archer's asset
  - 42 Church toppers
  - 44 Make repairs to
  - 45 Soccer player's target
  - 46 Longtime "Dancing With the Stars" judge Goodman
  - 47 "By Jove!"
  - 48 Admit it, with "up"
  - 49 Step 4: Hefty sales discount
  - 52 Baby's first word, often
  - 54 Farm unit
  - 55 Yearn (for)
  - 57 Cattle breed
  - 61 Mix with a spoon
  - 62 Never to be repeated ... or an apt pronunciation after following the instructions sequentially in 17-, 25-, 39- and 49-Across?
  - 64 Connection point
  - 65 Texas historical site to "remember"
  - 66 "Consider the job done!"



8/14/23

- 67 You could tell how old it is if you saw it!
- 68 Used a keyboard
- 69 Citi Field team
- 10 Tries to scratch, as a cat might
- 11 Like "93" but not "89" gasoline
- 12 "Uh ... well ..."
- 13 Ctrl+V command
- 18 \_\_\_ out a living
- 24 Early Peruvians
- 26 Flip over
- 27 Emulates Cardi B or Pusha T
- 28 "Right away!"
- 29 Roller coaster, e.g.
- 31 Derives (from)
- 34 Courtroom recorder
- 35 Neighbor of Tanzania
- 36 "The check is in the mail" and "The dog ate my homework," famously
- 37 CPR experts
- 40 Baseball or football, but not boxing
- 43 Professional dressed in black and white
- 47 "I wish!"
- 48 Group of obsessive followers, as of a TV show
- 49 "\_\_\_ it occurred to you ...?"
- 50 Best supporting \_\_\_ (Academy Awards category)
- 51 Parade vehicle
- 53 Fuming
- 56 Kind of tide
- 58 Vanished
- 59 The "U" of C.P.U.
- 60 Matching bundles
- 63 Drift (off)

**DOWN**

- 1 Parts of a relay
- 2 Per item
- 3 Bread served from a halal cart
- 4 Derides
- 5 "The Fresh Prince of \_\_\_-Air"
- 6 Stopping point along a scenic drive
- 7 One of Hinduism's principal deities
- 8 Eurasian plain
- 9 1983 title role for Barbra Streisand

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



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# This Week on TV

A SELECTION OF SHOWS, SPECIALS AND MOVIES. BY SHIVANI GONZALEZ



The Weeknd's November 2022 concert in Los Angeles, including a light show and some of his best-known songs, is the focus of "The Weeknd: Live at SoFi Stadium."

## Monday

**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE** (1940) 4 p.m. on TCM. Before we were introduced to Colin Firth or Matthew Macfadyen as the moody but endlessly charming Mr. Darcy, there was Laurence Olivier in the role. The story, based on the Jane Austen novel, follows members of the Bennet family, who are excited by the prospect of two wealthy and eligible bachelors coming to town. Upon meeting, Elizabeth Bennet (Greer Garson) and Mr. Darcy fall into one of the most memorable enemies-to-lovers arcs of all time.

## Tuesday

**THE LOVE EXPERIMENT** 10 p.m. on MTV. If you're not attracted to the many dating reality shows that already exist (see: "Love Island," "Love Is Blind," "The Ultimatum," "Are You the One?," "Bachelor in Paradise"), MTV has a new one. This show is as if you were in a dating app and all the men are actually ready for relationships: The three best friends Marcia, Paige and Tamara (who are in their 20s and 30s) are put in a "dating utopia," where they go on dates, test compatibility and do some challenges to try to find their lifelong partners.

## Wednesday

**GORDON RAMSAY'S FOOD STARS** 9 p.m. on Fox. On this show you can't just be good at cooking — you also have to be an entrepreneur in the making. As the season wraps up, the three final contestants compete for Gordon Ramsay to make a personal \$250,000 investment. Who knows, the person who wins this season could also have six restaurants in Las Vegas, just like Ramsay.

**TEMPTATION ISLAND: SECRETS REVEALED** 9 p.m. on USA. Just like "Love Island" has its "unseen bits" episode and "Big Brother" lets you watch livestreams inside the house even when episodes aren't running, "Temptation Island" is releasing its version of stealth viewing. The finale of the fifth season will run later this month, but before then, on offer are bloopers and interesting moments between couples that were left out of the show's final edit.

**THE WONDER YEARS** 9:30 p.m. on ABC. This remake of the classic sitcom centers on a Black middle-class family in Montgomery, Ala., and is wrapping up its second season. The hourlong finale has a birthday celebration, a trip to Florida and family squabbles.

## Thursday

**THE WEEKND: LIVE AT SOFI STADIUM** (2023) 8 p.m. on HBO. On Netflix you see Taylor Swift's "Reputation" tour. On Disney+, you can watch the BTS "Permission to Dance" concert. And now, The Weeknd has joined the ranks of many artists before him who have released televised versions of their concerts. Filmed in Los Angeles in November 2022, his set includes an intense light show and performances of some of his most famous songs.

## Friday

**PRAY FOR PETEY** 10 p.m. on Freeform. This show could be "Schitt's Creek" in an alternate, cartoon universe. In this show, Petey (below, at left) learns that she has inherited a small town from her dead father, but it turns out he is still alive and running a cult in the town.

The kicker is that both shows star Annie Murphy. The cartoon is wrapping up its first season and has not yet been renewed for a second.



# 'Big Brother' Contestant Is Expelled for Using Racial Slur



"Well, I'm in trouble now," said Luke Valentine after making an insensitive comment on the CBS reality show "Big Brother."

By MAYA SALAM

"Big Brother," CBS's long-running reality competition, has expelled a contestant for using a racial slur.

The contestant, Luke Valentine, used a slur for Black people last week while chatting with other men in the compound where houseguests are filmed 24 hours a day as they compete for a large cash prize. Valentine is white, and one of the other men in the conversation is Black.

The incident, broadcast during the show's live online feed, was addressed on Thursday's episode, in which highlights from the feed were interspersed with contestants' reflections on recent events in the house.

"It's been an emotional 24 hours in the 'Big Brother' house as the houseguests learned that one of their own broke the 'Big Brother' code of conduct and was removed

from the game," the show's longtime host, Julie Chen Moonves, said during the episode.

After Valentine, an illustrator from Florida, used the slur, he immediately apologized to the three other men in the room and tried to backtrack. Clearly shocked, two of the men quickly left. Jared Fields, who is Black, mostly stayed quiet but responded to Valentine by saying that the slur can make white people more uncomfortable than Black people.

"Well, I'm in trouble now," Valentine said to Fields.

In an interview shown on Thursday's episode, Fields said: "My nonreaction in the moment, being the only Black male in this house, I don't know what to say. Anything I say or do can come across wrong or aggressive."

"I don't associate ignorance with malice," he later added.

On an Instagram account that is followed by verified accounts of other "Big Brother" contestants, Valentine posted an apology, along with a photo of himself and a prayer hands emoji. "Luke made a big mistake," it read, "please forgive him."

Andy Herren, the show's Season 15 winner, said CBS did the right thing by expelling Valentine. "YEARS of problematic behavior and language in the Big Brother house going unpunished led to fans and former houseguests speaking up," Herren posted on X, formerly known as Twitter. He added, "This is huge and will change things moving forward!"

"Big Brother," in its 25th season, has a history of racism among its contestants.

In 2019, shortly before winning Season 21, Jackson Michie was asked on live television to answer for accusations that some of his behavior during the season had been racist and sexist. He defended himself in the mo-

ment but later apologized. Aaryn Gries, a Season 15 contestant, was questioned by Chen Moonves after being filmed making racist and homophobic remarks.

Black contestants have also struggled to advance on "Big Brother," often getting voted out early. The show's first Black winner, Xavier Prather, was not crowned until Season 23. The next season featured the show's first Black female winner, Taylor Hale.

"It was something I was cognizant of," Prather told The New York Times this year. "I am a 6-2, 200-pound athletic Black man — I can't approach the game the same way that a slim, 5-10 white man can because we're perceived differently."

"To assume that I could approach the game the same way would be to assume that I could approach life the same way," he continued. "'Big Brother' is literally a reflection of our society."

## THEATER DIRECTORY

Your daily guide to theater

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## JEOPARDY!

CLUE OF THE DAY

### STREETS OF AMERICA

THIS MAN MADE SALT LAKE CITY'S DOWNTOWN STREETS WIDE SO A WAGON TEAM COULD TURN AROUND WITHOUT HITTING SIDEWALKS OR USING PROFANITY

FOR THE CORRECT RESPONSE, WATCH JEOPARDY! TONIGHT OR LOOK IN THIS SPACE TOMORROW IN THE TIMES.

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# A BookTok Sensation Hits the Screen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

The romantic comedy follows Alex Claremont-Diaz, the bisexual son of the first female U.S. president (played by Uma Thurman, with a thick Southern drawl), and Prince Henry, the younger brother of the heir to the British throne who has long known that he's "gay as a maypole." What starts as a simmering rivalry between the impulsive American (Zakhar Perez) and the buttoned-up Brit (Galitzine) soon develops into a clandestine relationship. Neither is publicly out, and their secret love complicates things, especially for Henry.

Amazon Studios and Berlanti Productions secured the film rights to McQuiston's novel at auction ahead of its May 2019 release, and the book has since spent more than 20 weeks as a New York Times best seller.

But best-seller lists don't fully convey the adoration that "Red, White & Royal Blue" has garnered on BookTok — the literature-loving corner of TikTok — where fans have shared their obsession with the escapist love story en masse, and videos tagged #redwhiteandroyalblue have received more than 500 million views.

Jacob Demlow, who frequently posts about "Red, White & Royal Blue" on his "A Very Queer Book Club" account, said he flung his copy across the room in delight when he first encountered it.

"I couldn't believe what I was reading," said Demlow, who estimated that he'd read the novel at least a dozen times. "It was all these amazing tropes that romance lovers have loved forever, but there was a couple in it who looked like a couple I would be in. I grew up watching movies about the girl falling in love with the prince, but I'd never seen that through a queer lens before. It was kind of earth-shattering in ways I still don't fully know if I can comprehend."

The film, which premiered Friday on Amazon Prime Video, hopes to re-create that excitement onscreen, and represents the directorial debut of López, a Tony-winning playwright known for "The Inheritance," as well as for writing (with Amber Ruffin) the musical adaptation "Some Like It Hot." López was working on those projects in 2020 when his agent first floated the idea of turning "Red, White & Royal Blue" into a stage musical.

"I read it and said: 'Yeah, sure, maybe. But let's talk about the movie,'" López recalled. "I knew I wanted to be the person who made this film by, like, Page 50."

After pleading his case to the producers Greg Berlanti and Sarah Schechter, López signed on to direct and did a second pass on an original script by Ted Malawer. He cast two lead actors who had cut their teeth on Netflix romances: Zakhar Perez, 31, who starred as Marco in "The Kissing Booth" sequels; and Galitzine, 28, who appeared in the streamer's military romance "Purple Hearts." Galitzine also played the prince in Amazon's Camila Cabello-led "Cinderella."

For both Zakhar Perez and the director, the character Alex's biracial identity was particularly meaningful. López grew up in Panama City, Fla., with his Puerto Rican father and Polish Russian mother, while Zakhar Perez is of Mexican, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean descent and was raised in northwest Indiana, where he said there



JONATHAN PRIME/AMAZON

was only one other Mexican family.

"Matthew and I talked a lot about the mestizo journey," Zakhar Perez said in a video call before SAG-AFTRA, the actor's union, went on strike. "Being part Mexican, part lots of other things, I don't want to say you're forgotten, but in today's world, it's like, you're either this or you're that. There's nothing in between. I'm kind of a cultural chameleon."

"As a young Latiné queer man, I never read something that centered someone like Alex," López said, echoing his star. "If I had been presented with this character when I was in my late teens, early 20s, it may have changed how I thought about myself."

During the audition process, Zakhar Perez and Galitzine did their chemistry reads via video and did not meet in person until rehearsals began in London. But the nature of the script meant they would need to quickly become comfortable shooting a variety of passionate scenes, which were overseen by the intimacy coordinator Robbie Taylor Hunt.

"Nick and I trusted each other quite quickly," Zakhar Perez said of Galitzine. "We had to build a sexual tension from dislike to like to love, and we wanted to show that journey through the choreographed, intimate moments."

Taylor Zakhar Perez, left, and Nicholas Galitzine in a romantic moment at the British Museum in "Red, White & Royal Blue."

The script is based on Casey McQuiston's best-selling novel.

In the book, McQuiston described Alex and Henry's amorous bedroom — and tack room and hotel room — scenes in great detail, and López said he "never, ever shied away from the sexuality" onscreen.

"At times, it's extremely hungry and at times, it's really tender," Galitzine said in a separate prestrike call. "Matthew was always adamant that he wanted to portray gay sex in an accurate way, which he felt maybe hadn't been the case in other L.G.B.T.Q.+ movies."

While the only lingering sex scene is a carefully cropped, emotional moment, and the only nudity is the flash of a naked buttocks, "Red, White & Royal Blue" received an R rating from the Motion Picture Association.

López was surprised: "If we had put six bullets into the prince, we probably would have still gotten PG-13," he said, and added, "If it had been a man and a woman, I question whether or not it would have gotten an R rating."

(The filmmaker Ira Sachs recently expressed similar confusion over the NC-17 rating for his new film, "Passages," which also features gay sex. The Motion Picture Association said in a statement to The Associated Press, "The sexual orientation of a

character or characters is not considered as part of the rating process.")

In the weeks leading up to the movie's release, anticipation continued to build among fans, coupled with fears that it might not capture the magic of the book. Some worried about the casting choices, the elimination of several supporting characters or the switch from a fictional queen of England to a fictional king, played in a single scene by Stephen Fry.

"I was never going to entirely fulfill the image of this book that the millions of people who love it individually have in their heads," López said. "I knew from the beginning," he also emphasized, "that this movie would succeed or fail based in part on the fans' belief that one of them has made this film. I am one of them."

Broader critiques take issue with the premise of the story itself and the fact that it's yet another queer romance that involves the mistress of coming out. But Demlow of A Very Queer Book Club sees it differently.

"There are so many coming-out stories that need to be heard, and we also need more stories that aren't coming-out stories," he said. "It's not that we need less of something. It's that we need more of everything."



CINEMA GUILD

## The Focus of a Film Becomes Personal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

The veteran French filmmaker, a prolific creator of documentaries and fictional narratives that blur the boundaries between those two modes, has made a career out of turning the experiences of ordinary people into epic tapestries of human life.

Often, she begins with a place. A Paris train station provides the setting for two films: "Gare du Nord," (2013) an ensemble drama about briefly intersecting lives, and "Human Geography" (2013), a documentary composed of interviews with the station's inhabitants.

"If you dive into pockets of everyday life, the world becomes very large," Simon said. In "Our Body," she added, she was concerned by questions like "How does our civilization treat the female body?" and "What is the relationship between the body and words?"

By capturing long, uninterrupted scenes of patients speaking with their doctors, "Our Body," underscores the alienating nature of medical jargon. Yet these observational scenes also create room for the kind of bracingly personal testimonies that have long characterized Simon's work. See, for instance, her 2018 documentary "Young Solitude," a series of frank discussions with suburban high schoolers; or "Mimi" (2003), a kind of hangout movie in which Simon's gregarious friend Mimi relates her life story as she drifts through Nice, France, her hometown.



ELIZABETH WEINBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Simon was also raised in southern France (though she was born in Britain) by a family of painters and writers. She studied Arabic and anthropology in Algeria before teaching herself how to edit and use a camera. In the 1980s, she began making narrative shorts and eventually received a scholarship to attend a prestigious documentary workshop led by Jean Rouch, known as the father of cinéma vérité.

It was around this time that Simon dis-

'I had to film a lot of naked women. Then I was naked, too, and I was just like them.'

CLAIRE SIMON  
DIRECTOR OF 'OUR BODY'

covered some of her most crucial inspirations, like Raymond Depardon, Robert Kramer and Frederick Wiseman — "my great master," she said. Wiseman's influence is apparent in Simon's fascination with public spaces and lengthy conversations. "The Competition" (2016), a study of the admissions process for La Fémis, France's most prestigious film school, seems to take up his mantle — Simon herself has described the film as "Wiseman-esque."

According to Abby Sun, the director of artists' programs at the International Documentary Association, Simon's work nevertheless represents a significant departure from Wiseman's detached and unobtrusive style.

Simon's movies are "metatextual, and they exhibit a knowing, personal touch. They show her as part of the fabric of the place or situation she's filming," Sun said, citing as examples a series of films Simon had made about her daughter, the philosopher Manon Garcia.

The relationship between Simon and her subjects helps determine the shape of the film. This connection is key to her form of auteurism.

"There's a clear sense that there's something collaborative going on, that there's been a dialogue between the filmmaker and the subject," said Eric Hynes, a film curator at the Museum of the Moving Image.

"Nowadays, we're constantly asking: 'Where's the consent? How do we know that the subject feels comfortable with what's being filmed?,'" he added. "Claire has been at the vanguard of what we consider a responsible way of making documentaries for 20-plus years now."

Simon said although she considered herself a sloppy camera operator, she refuses to give the job to anyone else. Looking through the viewfinder allowed her to connect more organically with what she's filming, she said.

"If I'm holding the camera, I'm able to improvise and change my mind and I don't have to bother with justifying myself," she said. "As a woman, it's a huge relief."

Having successfully undergone cancer treatment, Simon isn't just relieved, she's energized. Toward the end of the interview in late July, Simon gleefully announced that it was her birthday that day. She had just turned 68. "I feel that I have many, many more films to make," she said.

"Mr. Wiseman is 93, and he's made another beautiful one this year, like he does every year," she added. "That means I've got a little time yet."

Claire Simon this month in Los Angeles, right, and as a cancer patient, above, in her documentary "Our Body." "I feel that I have many, many more films to make," she said.

SETH COLTER WALLS | CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK



KRISTOF LEMP

## At Darmstadt, Rivaling Wagner's 'Ring'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

merung" as staged (to much polarization) by Valentin Schwarz. Experiencing both back to back, I had the feeling that the song cycle had managed to steal the fire of the "Ring" cycle.

I had expected "Minor Characters" to have a keyed-up, smash-cut musical aesthetic. Shlomowitz's "Popular Contexts" series, for piano and "sampler keyboard," after all, uses snatches of vocal growls, drooping water sources and Ping-Pong volleys — and piano and beat-work — to create a disorientating, groovy effect; then nervier piano marches, alarming synths and distorted guitar samples.

Walshe's compositional practice often revolves around her wide range of vocal inflections. Her approach incorporates extended technique experimentalism and free improvisation in addition to composed elements.

But also many, many accents. In a 2020 profile, the critic Alex Ross of The New Yorker celebrated Walshe's ability to channel "Irish bard" and "California surfer girl" alike — a style that reaches a high state of refinement on solo efforts like "All the Many Peoples."

"Minor Characters" hits a new level of development for Walshe and Shlomowitz. He seems to pull her a bit closer toward more typical song forms; she puts some critical distance between his synths and the way they can seem to self-consciously emulate Muzak. And they put to use, through the piece's dramatic interrogation of the pleasures and ills of our too-online present, the ferocious chops of Ensemble Nickel — a group made up of a percussionist, guitarist, saxophonist and keyboardist.

Walshe's text moves fast, and the music moves at the speed of thought. One moment, her vocals may seem to be celebrating internet memes — or the "minor charac-

ters" who become "main characters" for a day on social media. But before long, she's chiding the world, or herself, for ignoring weightier matters. The music rockets back and forth between amiable, unhurried rhythms and black-metal blast beasts; between ad-jingle saxophone riffs and free-jazz skronk; between even-keeled, Eddie Van Halen-style finger-tapped motifs on electric guitar and less orderly plumes of distorted noise.

She toys with audience expectations, too. Early on, she begins in a confessional mode, relating a #MeToo-style narrative involving a professor luring one of his students down to his basement. But before long, Walshe leaves the audience there, narratively, with no resolution and the professor screaming to no one in particular, in perpetuity.

Instead, "Minor Characters" pivots to new fascinations and horrors — an exorcism in a rural country field, reports on a burning planet — as online life tends to do. When Walshe gave wild voice to lines like "they knew, we all knew, and we did nothing about it," her self-implicating understanding of the climate crisis had a Brünnhilde-like edge — with traces of grace and good humor leavening her grave understanding, similar to Wotan in the "Ring," of a world order's undoing by its own designs.

Walshe has a wide range of literary inspiration, Wagner included; her contributions to the liner notes for "Peopls" refer to "certain sections from 'Watt' by Samuel Beckett," the rapper KRS-One and "the cast of Lohengrin." That Wagnerian citation is no joke. "I don't do anything ironically," Walshe said in a brief interview after the performance of "Minor Characters." "I don't like any music ironically. But it has to mean something. There has to be something at stake."

"Minor Characters" seems to ask: If everyone is distracted online, following their

own taste, how do we solve problems together? Even though the show feels complete, there is no true resolution.

It felt more satisfying, even, than the "Götterdämmerung" in Bayreuth. Schwarz's risky staging seems to run aground in the final opera. He has interesting ideas in the lead-up: making Wotan an even bigger cheater than usual; depicting Fafner's dragon form as a hospice patient at home, sitting on the hoard of gold as a member of the gerontocracy.

And Schwarz offers bleak humor, such as in Mime trying to teach Siegfried fear by introducing him to sex through pornography. But by "Götterdämmerung" none of that seems to have mattered as the opera's telling sputters in its final moments.

Still, there was much fine singing and orchestral playing. The bass-baritone Tomasz Konieczny's Wotan had some of Walshe's gloriously unhinged energy. In both "Die Walküre" and "Siegfried," during moments of self-pity, he would crumple to the ground, offering aspirated whimpers; the next moment he would be raging, spurred on by a just as quickly extinguished explosion from the orchestra, led with fire by Pietari Inkinen.

And Inkinen's way with quieter textures provided a ravishing experience of Bayreuth's fabled acoustics: He and the orchestra produced soft-grained marvel after marvel in the second, contemplative act of "Walküre," then, as if with whip in hand, he blazed through the final act of that opera and the first act of "Siegfried" with what seemed like one complete surge of momentum.

In between those two shows, I traveled to Darmstadt for another world premiere: the debut of American saxophonist-composer Anthony Braxton's new "Thunder Music" system, which came courtesy of a performance, led by him, of his Composition No. 443.

While not strictly dramatic, "Thunder Music" suggested a stagelike feel. In this new category of his compositional practice, individual musicians are responsible for making choices about how to merge their own sound with prerecorded sounds of thunder and nature.

At Darmstadt, the musicians in this chamber ensemble — including singers, woodwinds, brasses, an accordion and two double basses — prerecorded a take on No. 443 the day before the concert. Then, at the show, the performers could control the extent to which their own prerecorded material was mixed with thunderstorms or swarms of birds (controlled through an app designed for their phones). Simultaneously, they played Composition No. 443 again — live, this time with the ability to network with other musicians in improvisations, or interpolations of past Braxton pieces.

At one point, when the saxophonist James Fei and the trombonist Roland Dahinden collaborated on the theme of Braxton's Composition No. 131 — in which frenetic riffs are capped with a sashaying figure that seems to wink at listeners — they put a jolt of Braxton's bebop-tinged catalog into what had been an airy stretch of No. 443.

Braxton has in the past declared himself "a complete fool for the music of Richard Wagner" — something that you can sense in operas like "Trillium X," which I reviewed earlier this month from Prague. But you can also sense Braxton's affection in the way he encourages musicians to layer his various compositions during the same moment in performance. That bit of No. 131 that cropped up during No. 443? Call it a Braxtonian leitmotif for Charlie Parker.

The saxophonist-composer Anthony Braxton, above left, whose "Thunder Music" system debuted at Darmstadt. James Fei, far right, on the saxophone.

HOUMAN BAREKAT | THEATER REVIEW

## A Dinner Party Served as Spectacle

Silliness is part of Geoff Sobelle's absurdist one-man show.

EDINBURGH — In an auditorium in Scotland, the American theater artist Geoff Sobelle is hosting a dinner party. The stage is taken up by an enormous square table, laid out with plates and cutlery. Around three of its sides sit 24 audience members. At the center of the fourth is the waistcoated figure of Sobelle, who brings wine, hands out menus and takes orders.

When one lady requests a baked potato,

### Food

Through Aug. 27 at the Studio in Edinburgh; eif.co.uk.

he produces a bucket full of earth and empties it out onto the table; he plants a seed in the mound, waters it and waits awhile before reaching in to pull out a large spud.

After several skits in this vein, Sobelle withdraws into himself and proceeds to binge silently: He eats one apple, then another, and then another and another, followed by a bowl of cherry tomatoes, a few radishes and carrots, a concerning quantity of ranch dressing, numerous raw eggs, an entire onion and some bank notes.

Sobelle's one-man show "Food," at the Studio here through Aug. 27 as part of the

Edinburgh International Festival, is billed as "a meditation on how and why we eat." But, aside from a short preamble about the primordial nature of our relationship with grub, there is little attempt to intellectualize.

Audiences primed to look for meaning will find none here: Silliness is the end in itself; the enjoyment is in the buildup of nervous energy in the room as Sobelle carries out his buffoonery with the focused determination of a doctor performing lifesaving surgery.

Sobelle trained as a magician, and then as a clown, before turning to absurdist theater. In an artistic mission statement on his website, he declares that he sees his body of work as "a colossal practical joke." This checks out.

Midway through the show, Sobelle carefully gathers the guests' wine glasses, then returns to his seat and violently pulls away the tablecloth, amid much clattering of plates. Underneath, it turns out, is not a table, but a field of dirt: The set is transformed into one big muddy landscape. A remote-control tractor trundles across this terrain, and sheaves of wheat sprout upward in its wake. The trappings of modern civilization materialize; toy trucks are handed to the diners and passed around the



PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAIN MASTERTON



Geoff Sobelle, left and below, has trained as a magician and a clown, which comes through in his performance of "Food."

perimeter of the dining-table-turned-landscape.

Sobelle clammers onto the scenery, sticks his hand in it and strikes oil; tall buildings start popping up here and there. We begin to suspect there may be someone underneath the table.

Audience members were bewildered but charmed, and for 90 minutes reduced to a state of childlike wonder, reveling in the frisson of anticipation, awkwardness and unease. The immersive setup produced some amusing unscripted moments, like when a theatergoer's cellphone was swept away as Sobelle removed the tablecloth; his demeanor as he handed it back was a picture of dumb officiousness, both apologetic and vaguely affronted.

Sobelle's comedy of affable idiocy may be witless but it is also timeless — every bit as primal, one suspects, as our love of eating. (There's a reason "Mr. Bean" is still so popular around the world.) In drawing much of its mirth from sheer ridiculousness or grotesquerie, "Food" channels a comic sensibility from less exalted sectors of the entertainment world — think provincial circus troupes or competitive eating championships.

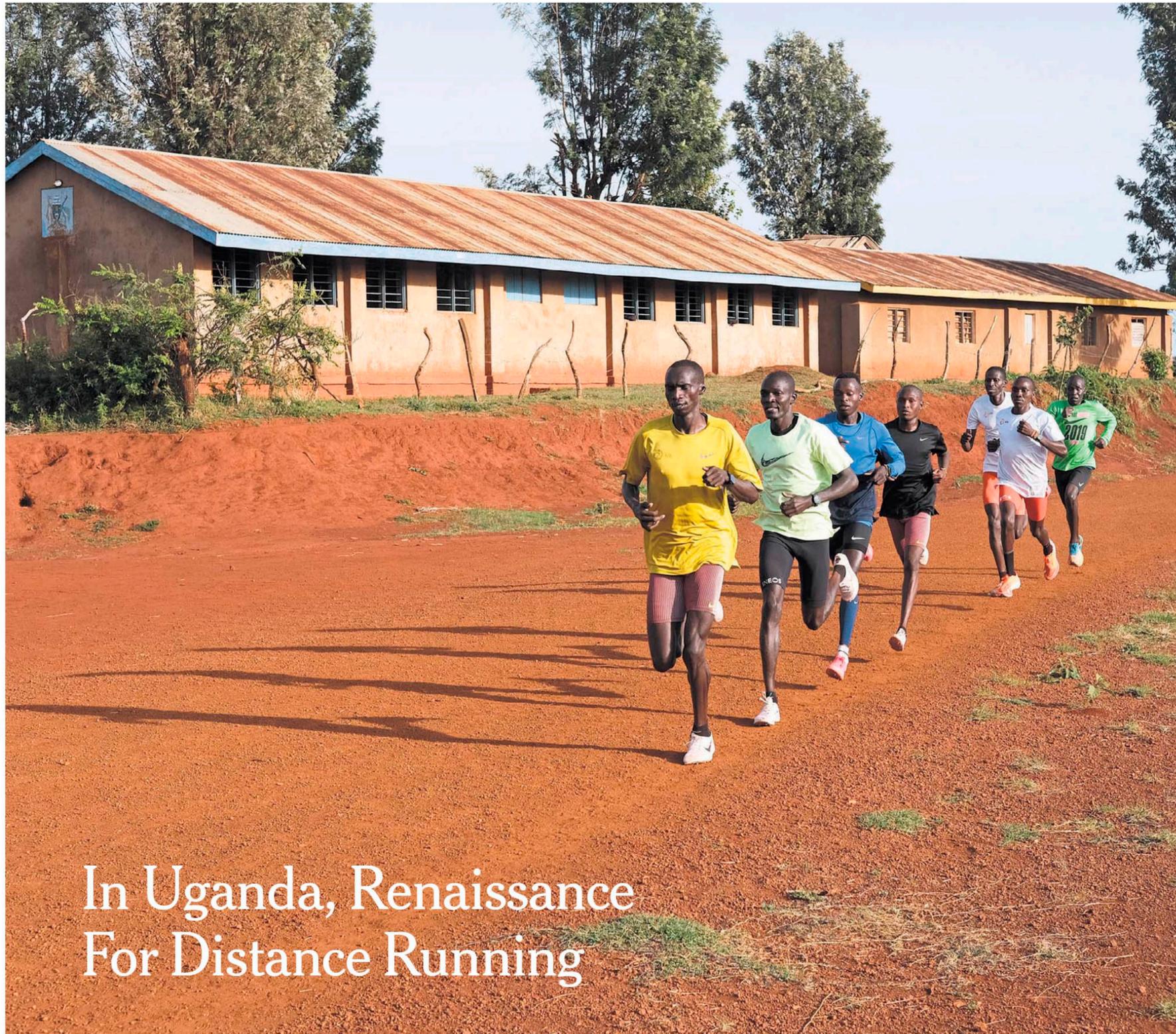
In the comparatively rarefied environs of the Edinburgh International Festival, the show's sensibility feels like an ironic curio. I was reminded of Freddie Mercury's line about wanting to bring opera to the masses: Sobelle, it seems, is doing the inverse, bringing low culture to the cosmopolitan elite. A perverse kind of altruism, perhaps.

We've removed the ball in photos from the round of 16. Guess where it was.



Explaining why athletes always seem to get better is a moving target.

RUNNING



## In Uganda, Renaissance For Distance Running

JONATHAN W. ROSEN

Joshua Cheptegei, the 5,000- and 10,000-meter world-record holder, leading a workout at his training camp in the Kween District. He is trying to build up and showcase Uganda's distance runners.

Two world-record holders lead athletes from Mount Elgon to challenge Kenyan and Ethiopian dominance.



Kapchorwa, halfway up the 14,000-foot Mount Elgon, provides training versatility.

By JONATHAN W. ROSEN

KAPCHORWA, Uganda — With a mile to go in the 2017 World Cross Country Championships, Joshua Cheptegei had one thing on his mind: win gold for his country on home soil.

It was a balmy afternoon in the Ugandan capital of Kampala, and against a field of far more seasoned athletes, he was closing in on his goal. Halfway through the biennial event, in which the world's top distance runners compete over 10 kilometers of grass, mud and occasional barriers, he had gapped the field with a surge so elegant that it looked like he was floating.

Two hours earlier, his compatriot Jacob Kiplimo had hoisted the red, black, gold and gray-crowned crane of the Ugandan flag after winning the under-20 race. The raucous crowd, which included the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, expected Cheptegei to do the same.

Now he was hanging on for dear life, determined to prove that Uganda, long overlooked in the distance running world, could hold its own against the sport's powerhouses, Kenya and Ethiopia. But the storybook ending, on this day, would not come to pass: In the final half-mile, as his body fended off dehydration, Cheptegei's engine sputtered. He slowed to an agonizing shuffle, coming in 30th out of 136 finishers. Cheptegei's near-triumph would nonetheless prove to be a prelude to a Ugandan running renaissance. Two years later, he won the 2019 World Cross Country Championships in Denmark. Uganda's men took the team title.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cheptegei, left, won the gold medal in the 10,000 meters at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon last year, and his fellow Ugandan Jacob Kiplimo won bronze. Kiplimo holds the half-marathon world record.

Since then, Cheptegei has secured his place on the list of distance running's greats, with an Olympic gold medal and two World Championship titles on the track, as well as world records in the 5,000 and 10,000 meters. Kiplimo, who dethroned Cheptegei as the current World Cross Country champion in February, now holds the half-marathon world record. In 2019, Halimah Nakaayi won the World Champi-

onship title in the 800 meters, and, in 2021, Peruth Chemutai won the Olympic gold medal in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. In and around Kapchorwa, a small town in the foothills of Mount Elgon, a 14,000-foot extinct volcano that straddles the Kenyan border, hundreds of youngsters are hitting the roads with dreams of future glory. Though Uganda's volume of talent still lags behind that of Kenya and Ethiopia, the

magnitude of its rise has been remarkable.

"Every year, as a country, we're getting better and better," Cheptegei said on an April afternoon, as he prepared to defend his 10,000-meter title at this month's World Athletics Championships in Budapest. "The Mount Elgon region has always been home to running talent, and we're only just be-

Continued on Page D6

BASKETBALL

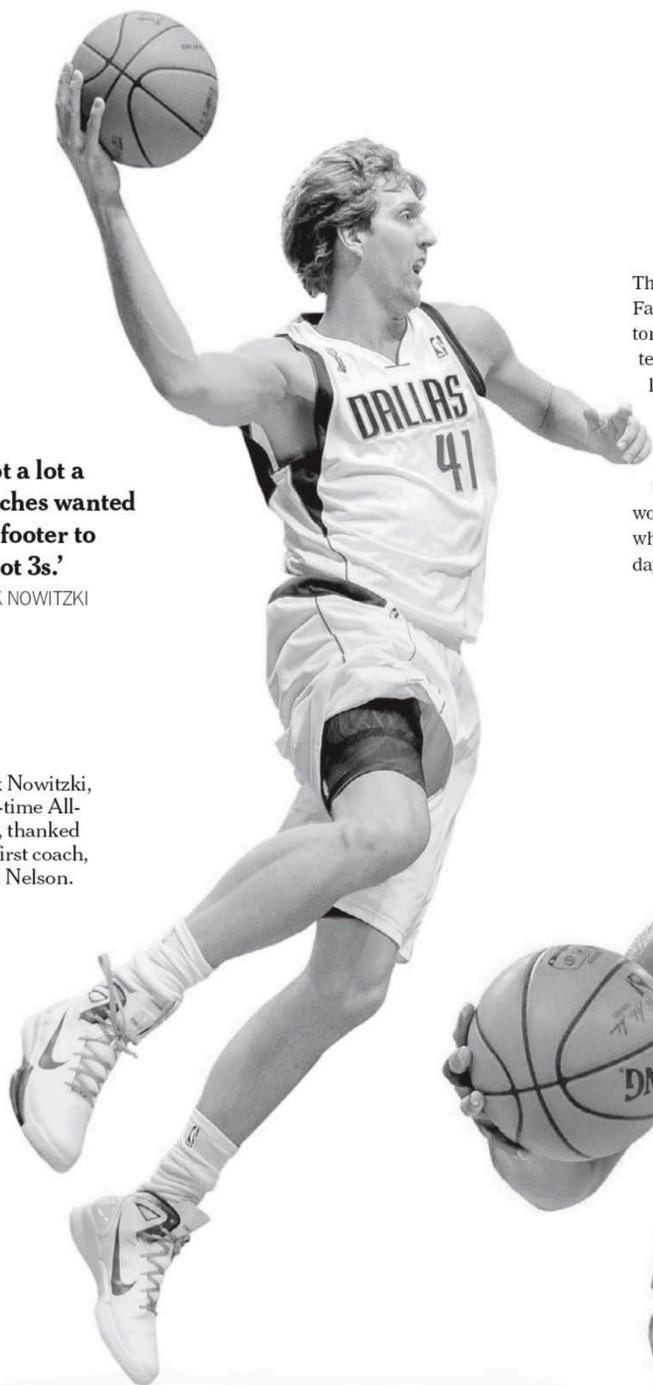
# Hall of Fame Adds Greats To Its Roster

The latest Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame class includes a wide swath of the game's history: the leading characters of the defining N.B.A. teams in the 2000s and 2010s; a college coach who led an improbable championship run and has continued to provide inspiration through fundraising for cancer research in his memory; and an Olympic team credited with laying the foundation for the next generation of American women's basketball. Here are the inductees and what they had to say during their ceremony Saturday in Springfield, Mass. **EVAN EASTERLING**

**'Not a lot of coaches wanted a 7-footer to shoot 3s.'**

DIRK NOWITZKI

Dirk Nowitzki, a 14-time All-Star, thanked his first coach, Don Nelson.

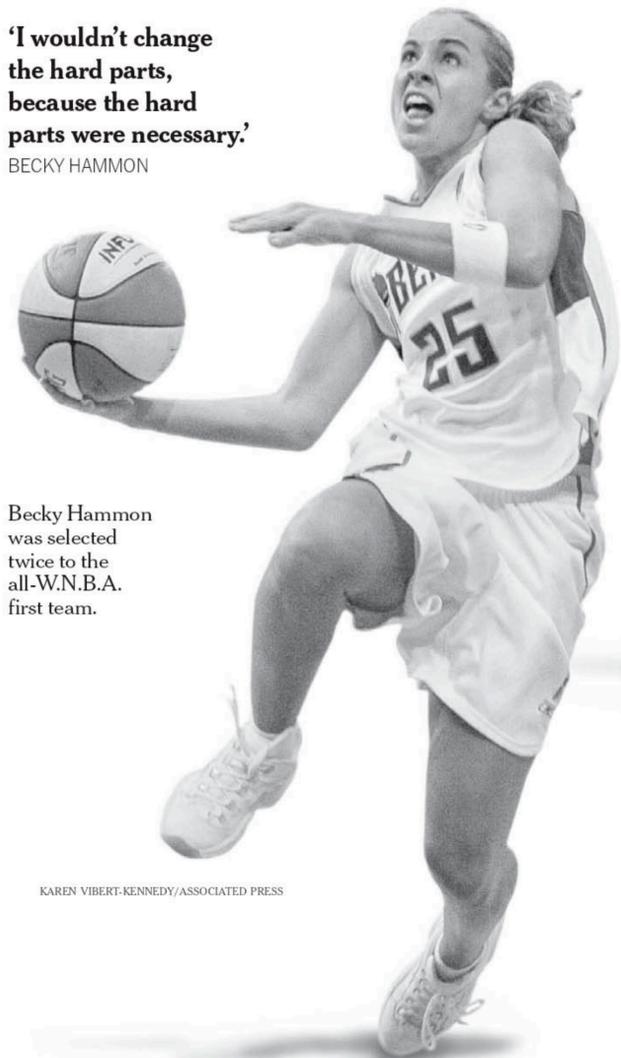


LARRY W. SMITH/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

**'I wouldn't change the hard parts, because the hard parts were necessary.'**

BECKY HAMMON

Becky Hammon was selected twice to the all-W.N.B.A. first team.



KAREN VIBERT-KENNEDY/ASSOCIATED PRESS



NICOLE SWEET/ASSOCIATED PRESS

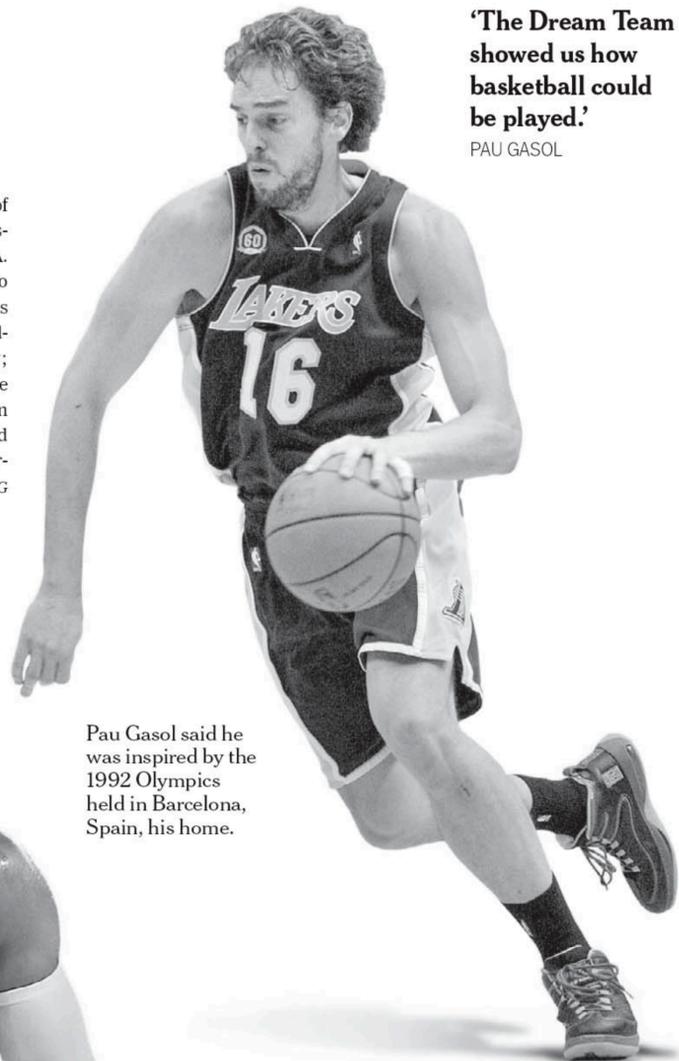
Dwyane Wade won three N.B.A. championships and was a 13-time All-Star.

**'Michael Jordan captured my imagination.'**

DWYANE WADE

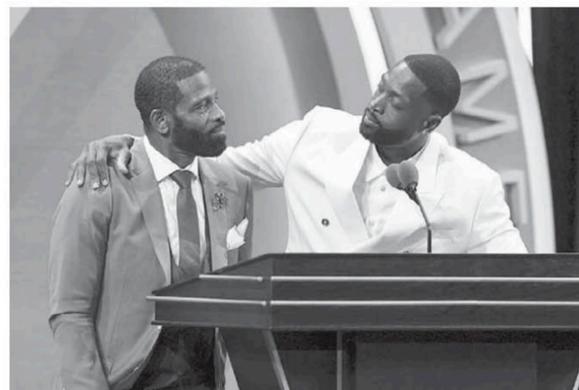
**'The Dream Team showed us how basketball could be played.'**

PAU GASOL



Pau Gasol said he was inspired by the 1992 Olympics held in Barcelona, Spain, his home.

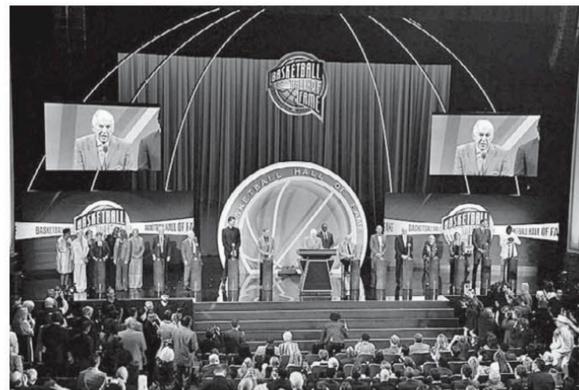
JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES



MIKE LAWRIE/GETTY IMAGES



MIKE LAWRIE/GETTY IMAGES



ERIC CANHA/USA TODAY SPORTS VIA REUTERS.COM

From top, Dwyane Wade speaking onstage with his father, Dwyane Wade Sr.; Gregg Popovich shaking hands with his fellow inductee and former player Tony Parker; and the 2023 Basketball Hall of Fame class in Springfield, Mass., on Saturday.

### OTHER INDUCTEES



JAMES A. FINLEY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gene Bess coached at Three Rivers College in Missouri and guided the team to 1,300 wins.



MORRY GASH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gary Blair coached the Texas A&M women's team and won a national title in 2011.



JOHN AMIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

David Hixon made an impact at Amherst College, where he coached for 42 seasons.



ANDY MANIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gene Keady led the Purdue men's team to 17 N.C.A.A. tournaments in his tenure.



BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

The 1976 United States Olympic women's basketball team won the silver medal.



LEONARD IGNELZI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jim Valvano, a broadcaster and coach, created the V Foundation for Cancer Research.

**Women's World Cup**

**Spot the Ball From Matches in the Round of 16, Eight Are Missing**

By The New York Times | The Women's World Cup is now in the knockout phase. In these photographs from the round of 16, we've eliminated the ball. See if you can guess where it was. *Answers, Page D8.*

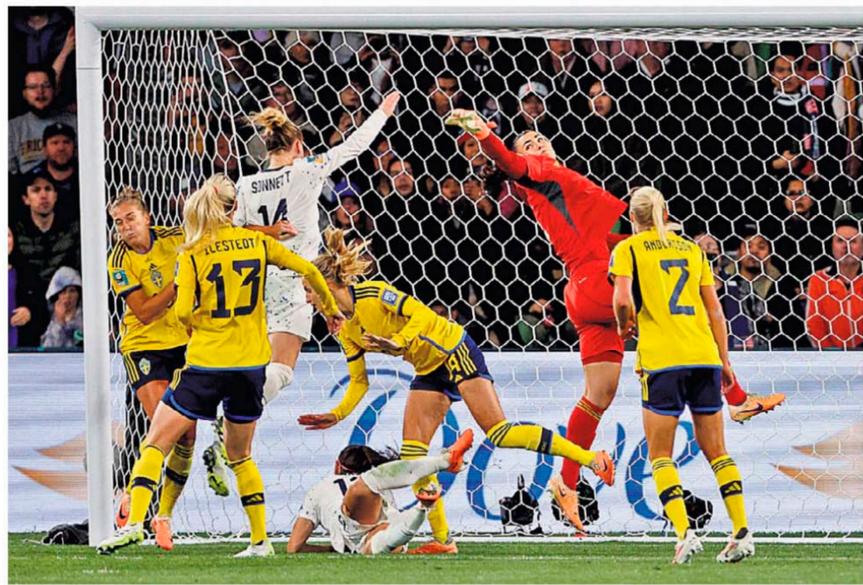


ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTOGRAPH BY HAMISH BLAIR/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Sweden vs. United States**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTOGRAPH BY SAIED KHAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

**Spain vs. Switzerland**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTOGRAPH BY BRENTON EDWARDS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

**France vs. Morocco**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN HIMBRECHTS/EPA-EFE, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

**Denmark vs. Australia**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; MARTY MELVILLE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

**Japan vs. Norway**

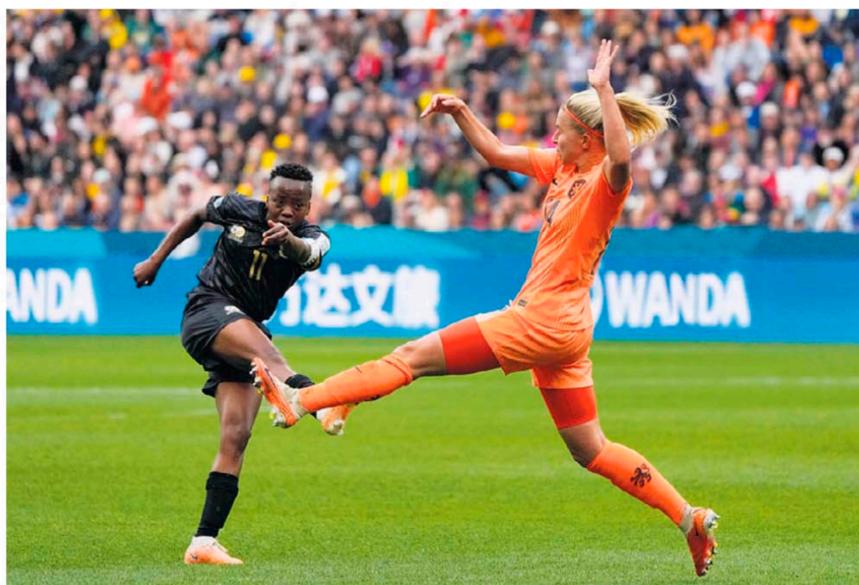


ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; MARK BAKER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**South Africa vs. The Netherlands**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

**Colombia vs. Jamaica**



ILLUSTRATION BY THE NEW YORK TIMES; BRADLEY KANARIS/GETTY IMAGES

**Nigeria vs. England**

SEMIFINAL  
**Spain vs. Sweden**  
Tuesday, 4 a.m. Eastern  
AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND  
TV: Fox (English), Peacock (Spanish), Telemundo (Spanish)



MARTY MELVILLE/AFP — GETTY IMAGES  
Salma Paralluelo's late goal lifted Spain into the semis.



BUDA MENDES/GETTY IMAGES  
Filippa Angedal helped Sweden upset Japan.



ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE/REUTERS  
Cortnee Vine had Australia's winning penalty kick.



DAVID GRAY/AFP — GETTY IMAGES  
Alessia Russo scored the game-winner for England.

SEMIFINAL  
**Australia vs. England**  
Wednesday, 6 a.m. Eastern  
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
TV: Fox (English), Peacock (Spanish), Telemundo (Spanish)

## DARTS

# Studying the Limits of Human Perfection, Through Darts

Why do athletes seem to be getting better and better, generation after generation? It's not always for the reasons you might think.

By **BEN BLATT**  
Graphics by **COURTNEY COX**

Michael Smith, the world's No. 1-ranked darts player, has won the equivalent of \$1.5 million since the start of 2022. In January, he won the World Darts Championship in London, where he achieved the rare feat of nine perfect throws in a row. He says he hasn't reached the peak of his abilities and is "getting better every year."

But of course, he isn't always perfect, or even close to it. When Smith aims for the triple 20 — the highest-value subsection of the board, but smaller than half a square inch — he hits it less than half the time.

Professional darts is far from the most popular sport in the world, but it is a useful study of progress toward perfection. Its top professional players, on average, post higher scores today than their counterparts did a generation ago. These gains can be seen in other sports, too: Whether it's hitting the bull's-eye in archery, nailing a kick between the uprights in football or sinking a free throw in basketball, the world's top players have improved their rates of precision meaningfully in the last four decades.

Keith Deller won his 1983 championship title in darts by hitting the triple-20 section 37 percent of the time that he aimed at it. Smith hit the same section 46 percent of the time in his 2023 championship final. The best throwers have gotten a little closer to perfection, even if perfection is very far away.

What explains these improvements in darts and other sports? Why do athletes always seem to get better, generation by generation? And what happens if they get too good?

## Making the Game Easier

Today's athletes may be more skilled than their predecessors. But they are often playing with better equipment or technology that can boost their scores. Darts is no exception.

The darts themselves have improved. They've become thinner, making it less likely that previously thrown darts will crowd out the board.

But the triple-20 region has also grown in size, because of a change in the construction of the board. In the early 1990s, the wires that separate the scoring sections were as thick as 1.8 millimeters in diameter, according to Lee Huxtable, a production designer at Winmau, a board manufacturer. But they are now closer to 0.6 millimeters wide.

These small changes have increased the height of the triple-20 region to roughly 9.4 millimeters from 8 millimeters. In addition, the wires are now less rounded and angled toward the target. This means darts are less likely to bounce off the board and more likely to be directed toward the triple-scoring segments.

Scores have improved since the days of the old boards. Thirty years ago, John Lowe won the world championship with a three-dart average — the standard metric for tracking player performance — of 84. Smith had a three-dart average of 101 when he won this year's championship.

It's hard to ascertain how much of the improvement is because of the boards and how much credit should go to the athletes themselves. "I know that the players from the '90s, like Eric Bristow, John Lowe, Dennis Priestley and Jocky Wilson, would have 100 percent competed with the players of today," said Phil Taylor, who won 16 world championships from 1990 to 2013.

## Tougher Tests

In other sports, the challenges have gotten tougher. A standard outdoor competition in recurve archery — using the traditional bows without wheels or pulleys — included targets as close as 30 meters until the early 1990s. Now archers shoot from 70 meters. If the 30-meter round were still held today, it would "be kind of boring," said Brady Ellison, a three-time Olympic medalist for the United States. The top archers would essentially never miss.

## 'I don't think players will improve a great deal more over the next 20 years.'

PHIL TAYLOR, 16-time world darts champion.



EMILY RHYNE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Today's top professional darts players post higher scores than their counterparts did a generation ago, but skill is only one contributing factor to explain the increase.

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Top scores from recent Olympics at 70 meters are comparable to the best scores at 30 meters half a century ago. If today's archers were shooting at 30 meters, they might score 358, 359 or even a perfect 360, Ellison said.

(Part of the improvement can be credited to technology: The arrows are thinner, so they are less affected by the wind, and made from machined aluminum instead of wood.)

Professional bowling has also opted to set conditions that make perfection harder, so much so that the good league bowlers at your local lanes generally score higher than the pros on tour, said Tom Clark, the commissioner of the Professional Bowlers Association. It's because of the differences in how oil is applied to the wooden surfaces of the lanes.

Although virtually invisible, oil patterns in bowling are immensely important and dictate how much the ball will hook.

"House shot," an oil pattern used by most recreational bowling lanes, provides a larger margin of error and usually leads to higher scores. Since the late 1970s, the P.B.A. has used oil patterns called "sport shot," which make the game fairer because they are standardized — but also make it more difficult because they are less forgiving.

Still, average scores have increased since the first P.B.A. Tournament of Champions. Clark believes "the bowler has gotten better" over the decades.

## Expanding the Player Pool

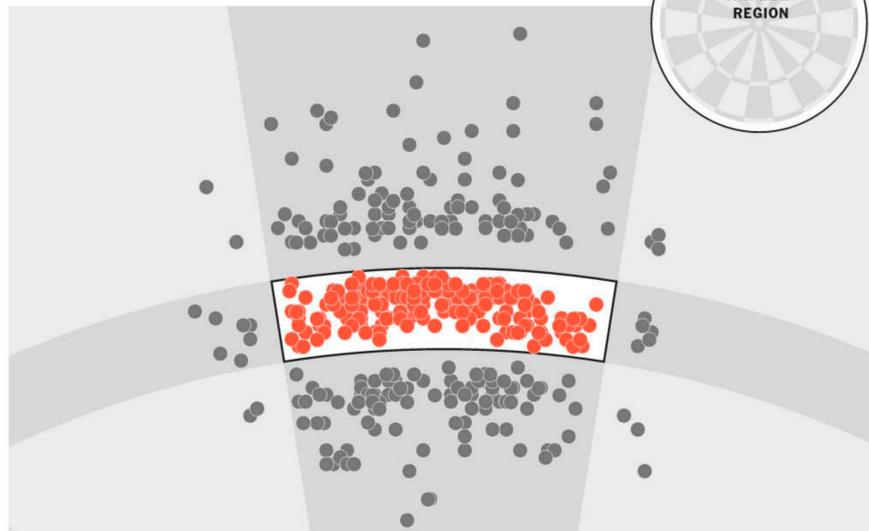
If not for technology, why are today's players better? One reason is that more people play. If the money available in a sport increases, it may attract more people who were born to play the game — who are at the high end of the innate ability distribution.

In 1993, the nation's largest women's professional basketball league, the W.B.A., had just six teams and paid players \$50 a game. Robelyn Garcia, a four-time W.B.A. all-star, said in an email that she had teammates who quit because it was impossible to hold down a full-time job while playing in the league.

When the W.N.B.A. started play in 1997, it had eight teams and an annual salary range of \$15,000 to \$50,000. That season,

## Precision of a Champion

In a world championship final this year, Michael Smith hit the triple-20 region 46 percent of the time he aimed at it.



The data shown is from the 2023 P.D.C. World Championship. Only darts targeted at the triple-20 region are shown. Data manually plotted from a television broadcast.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

its best 10 free-throw shooters sank 83.8 percent of their attempts on average. By 2000, the top 10 players averaged 88.7 percent, and in 2019 the top 10 reached 92.4 percent. There are now 12 teams with salaries ranging from about \$62,000 to \$235,000, more than doubling the 1997 pay scale after accounting for inflation.

Professional darts has also grown significantly. In 1978 the top prize for winning the B.D.O. World Darts Championship, the biggest tournament of its time, was 3,000 British pounds (about \$26,800 in 2023 dollars). In 2023, the P.D.C. World Darts Championship awarded £500,000 (about \$629,000) for its top prize.

Roughly 40 to 70 people consider themselves full-time dart players on the P.D.C. tour. But of the top 50 players in the world rankings, only two are from outside Europe, and 19 are from outside Britain or Ireland. This implies that many of the potentially great dart players in the world have never played the game, at least outside of a bar.

While anyone can join the tour, it is hard to make a living as an outsider. Jim Long, a former factory worker from Ontario, started competing professionally in 2017 — at age 50. In a recent exhibition at Madison Square Garden, he beat Smith, the world No. 1. It was the highlight of his career, he said.

But it would be difficult for someone like Long, based in North America, to make a living in the P.D.C., the biggest darts organization in the world. Just to have a shot at a six-figure income he would need to travel around Europe dozens of weekends a year.

If the sport continues to expand its prize money, especially in smaller tournaments outside Europe, the number of full-time competitors could grow, raising the likelihood of the next great player committing to a career in darts.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

Of course, the best players in basketball, darts and other sports may also be getting better through improved training or natural talent — but where is the limit?

Antonia Zaferiou, an assistant professor at the Stevens Institute of Technology, has studied muscle and body movement in performers ranging from ballerinas to golfers. In her research, she has found that average people may perform a motion (like shooting a basketball) by attempting to move their muscles



EMILY RHYNE/THE NEW YORK TIMES

At the World Darts Championship, Michael Smith hit the triple-20 section nine times in a row. He's the world's top-ranked player and feels as if he hasn't yet reached the peak of his abilities.

## DARTS

## Approaching Perfection

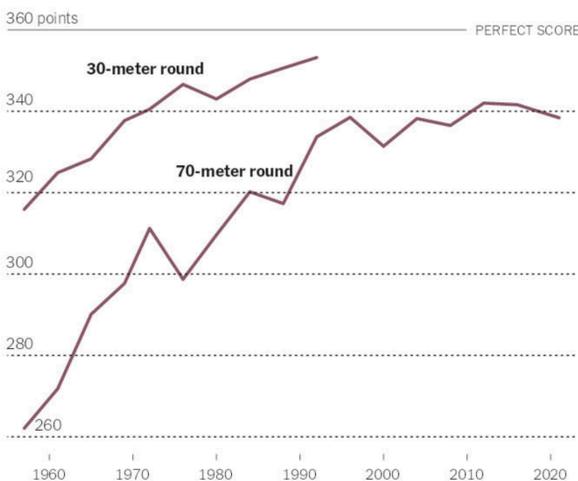
The world's top players have improved their precision meaningfully in the last four decades. But perfection remains out of reach.

Top Dart Throwers' Three-Dart Average, 1978-2023



The maximum average points per round is 167. The data shown is the average of players' three-dart averages in the final three rounds in the B.D.O. World Championship (1978-1993) or P.D.C. World Darts Championship (1994-2023).

Top Archers' Average Scores, 1957-2021



1957-1969 scores are from World Championships; 1972-2021 scores are from Olympic Games. The data shown is the average of the top 10 men's scorers in qualification rounds of outdoor recurve archery competitions.

Top Bowlers' Average Scores, 1968-2017



The data shown is the average of the top 10 players' scores in the qualifying round of the P.B.A. Tournament of Champions. The maximum score is 300. Data not available for all years.

Top Free-Throw Shooters, 1950-2022



The data shown is the average percentage of the top 10 free-throw shooters each season who made over 50 free throws (W.N.B.A.) or over 125 free throws (N.B.A.). N.B.A. seasons are shown in the year they began.

Sources: MasterCall.com (darts); WorldArchery.sport, Sports Reference via the Internet Archive (archery); PBA.com via the Internet Archive (bowling); Basketball Reference (basketball)

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with the same force and angles every time, but practiced athletes are better at performing "closed loop movement," taking in feedback during the course of motion to adjust for factors such as their own fatigue.

She cited the example of Elena Delle Donne of the Washington Mystics, holder of the highest career free-throw percentage in W.N.B.A. history, who intentionally practices free throws after she gets tired. In theory, this type of training increases the range of conditions her body is

prepared for.

Dozens of academic papers have studied factors that might affect free-throw shooting, including compression shorts and jet lag, but it has been unclear which findings will prove useful for all athletic disciplines. That's partly why Zaferiou believes that the limit of consistency in athletic tasks is an open question, with no consensus answer in her academic field.

In darts, the results may depend on the paths of a few individuals and the eccentricities of

the game. Taylor, the 16-time world champion, improved over the course of his career, staying ahead of his competitors, who also got better. He recorded his highest world championship average score at age 50. But he doesn't predict much more improvement.

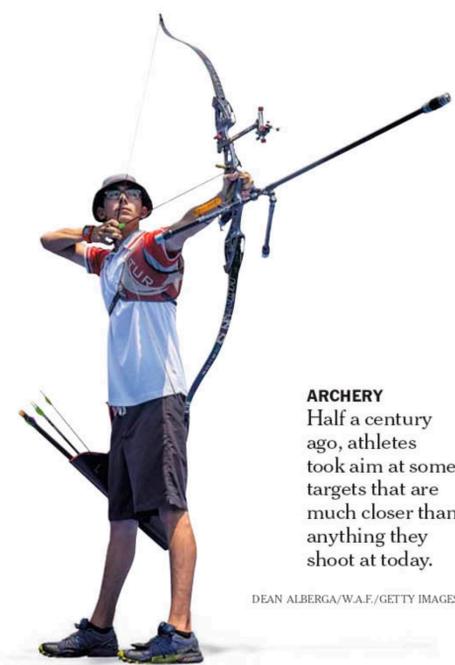
"I don't think players will improve a great deal more over the next 20 years," he said in an email.

But don't count this generation out. Smith, the current world No. 1, is just 32.



**DARTS**  
Equipment modifications may explain why three-dart averages for the top players have risen.

EMILY RHYNE/THE NEW YORK TIMES



**ARCHERY**  
Half a century ago, athletes took aim at some targets that are much closer than anything they shoot at today.

DEAN ALBERGA/W.A.F./GETTY IMAGES



**BOWLING**  
The patterns of the oil that is applied to the lanes can make the sport more difficult, so a good recreational bowler can score as high as pros on tour.

BOB LEVEY/GETTY IMAGES FOR PBA



**BASKETBALL**  
Practiced athletes excel at "closed loop movement," because they adjust to factors such as fatigue.

MARTA LAVANDIER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

## HOCKEY



JEROME MIRON/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

Hockey romance fans on TikTok have made videos blurring lines between fictional players and real ones, like Alex Wennberg (21).

## A Messy Relationship With Romance Novels

By AMANDA HOLPUCH

The niche world of hockey romance novels is getting mainstream attention after the wife of an N.H.L. player criticized book fans who she said had made comments and videos on social media about her husband that were "predatory and exploiting."

Here's what happened when the worlds of professional sports, romance novels and TikTok collided.

## First, there was BookTok.

On TikTok, people share book recommendations and reviews under the hashtag #BookTok, and the community has become a powerful force in publishing: More than 100 authors with large BookTok followings drove \$760 million in sales in 2022, a 60 percent increase from 2021, according to Circana BookScan, which tracks print sales.

Romance is a big part of the BookTok universe, as is its popular subgenre hockey romance, which falls under the broader sports-romance category.

Recent hits have included Anna Zabo and L.A. Witt's "Scoreless Game," a love story between two longtime friends who are players on the fictional Pittsburgh Griffins. In "Overnight Sensation," by Sarina Bowen, an office intern for the fictional Brooklyn Bruisers moves in with a player after leaving the condo she lives in with her father, the hockey league's commissioner.

The success of these books has been credited with driving interest among readers in ice hockey, and some professional and collegiate teams have embraced this new audience.

In Australia, where ice hockey is not particularly popular, professional teams have credited BookTok with increasing game attendance and fan interest.

Sarah Bricknall, the events and media manager for the Melbourne Mustangs, told The Hills Shire Times, a Sydney newspaper, that 15 to 30 BookTok fans had been at every home game since the team joined TikTok in May.

## How did things go wrong?

On the internet, the lines between fictional players and real-life ones can blur, especially when teams use BookTok to promote themselves.

A video posted to the Seattle Kraken's official TikTok account that has since been archived showed Alex Wennberg, a center for the team, walking down a hallway in a suit with the text "when you accidentally become a booktok account & now that's all you can post."

Other posts by romance fans on BookTok have talked about a specific player as a stand-in for a favorite fictional hockey player or showed game footage overlaid with quotes from hockey romance books. A segment of these posts are sexually explicit, and some fans have posted explicit comments on players' personal social media accounts.

Emily Rath, the author of "Pucking Around," a romance best seller on Amazon, said on TikTok that some fans had raised concerns about inappropriate behavior directed at players earlier this year.

"True hockey romance readers have been here before," Ms. Rath

said on TikTok. "We watched it all unfold in April, we were ringing the alarm bells, we were asking that it stop."

## The conflict peaked when an N.H.L. player's wife got involved.

The issue started to attract attention from outside the romance world in July, when Felicia Wennberg, the wife of Alex Wennberg, said that some posts about her husband had gone too far.

Ms. Wennberg said on Instagram Stories that while she had initially joked about some of the videos and comments, they had since "crossed the line of what it means to fancy someone and when it actually sounds pretty predatory and exploiting."

Her statement described what she considered acceptable, such as positive comments about her husband's looks, and what she did not, such as chanting "krak my back" at players at games. She asked people to "think twice" about their posts.

In response, her Instagram account was flooded with harassing messages.

Mr. Wennberg then issued a statement on social media about the "vile comments."

"We can all take a joke and funny comments but when it turns personal and into something bigger that affects our family, we need to tell you that we've had enough," he wrote. "Enough of sexual harassment, and harassment of our character and our relationship."

The Kraken has since removed its TikTok posts about BookTok.

## How did TikTok creators respond?

The sexually explicit posts were made by a small sliver of the BookTok community.

One creator, Kierra Lewis, had made a video that Ms. Wennberg cited as an example of inappropriate behavior, and Ms. Lewis has since posted a handful of videos responding to the situation.

Ms. Lewis, who has 1.1 million followers on TikTok, had been flown out to a Kraken game earlier this year after she posted videos featuring explicit comments about N.H.L. players, including Mr. Wennberg.

She said that she had privately messaged Ms. Wennberg on Instagram to apologize. Ms. Lewis said that the Kraken TikTok account had unfollowed her, leaving her "confused and upset."

In her videos responding to the controversy, Ms. Lewis expressed frustration with the team for backing away after it encouraged her, and with Ms. Wennberg for using one of Ms. Lewis's posts as an example. She defended her videos by saying that TikTok is for "entertainment."

Ms. Lewis did not respond to a request for comment.

The Kraken said in a statement that they had originally engaged with BookTok to connect with new audiences, but were reminded by this situation "that unintended consequences may arise."

"It is disappointing that a small percentage of online commenters crossed a line," the statement said. "We consider this a learning moment for the organization and have taken appropriate action."



STEPH CHAMBERS/GETTY IMAGES

Felicia Wennberg, far right, said in July that explicit social media posts about her husband, Alex, left, had "crossed the line."

## RUNNING

# In Uganda, Record-Holders Build a Distance-Running Renaissance

From Page D1

gunning to showcase it.”

Uganda’s ascent, in many ways, is an outgrowth of longstanding success in Kenya. Since 1964, that country has won 105 Olympic medals in running events from 400 meters to the marathon; Kenya has also produced six of the 10 fastest male marathoners in history, and five of the 10 fastest women.

These exploits have been mainly concentrated among the Kalenjin, a community of nine closely related tribes descended from pastoralists that migrated south over the past few thousand years from the Nile River Valley. Most of the seven million Kalenjin today live in Kenya’s western

**A watershed moment came with Kiprotich’s upset win in the 2012 Olympics marathon.**

highlands, where altitudes from 6,000 to 9,000 feet help them develop more oxygen-carrying red blood cells and greater lung capacities. Research has also shown that Kalenjin, on average, have especially thin lower legs and a high leg-length-to-torso ratio, which facilitates greater running economy, or the ability to make more efficient use of oxygen.

There are Kalenjin in Uganda, too, and if it weren’t for the quirks of colonial history, there would be more: The original borders of Britain’s Uganda Protectorate, hashed out by mustachioed bureaucrats in 1894, encompassed the bulk of the Kalenjin territory that is part of Kenya today.

Adjustments to the boundary in 1902, driven by the desire to unify administration of a railway from the coast, unwittingly paved the way for Kenya’s future running triumphs. Yet the new line, which cut through the crest of Elgon, severed one Kalenjin tribe, the Sabaot, in two. The descendants of those left in Uganda, who number roughly 300,000, live primarily in three districts on Elgon’s western flanks — an area of striking natural beauty known for its waterfalls, sweeping vistas and alpine forests.

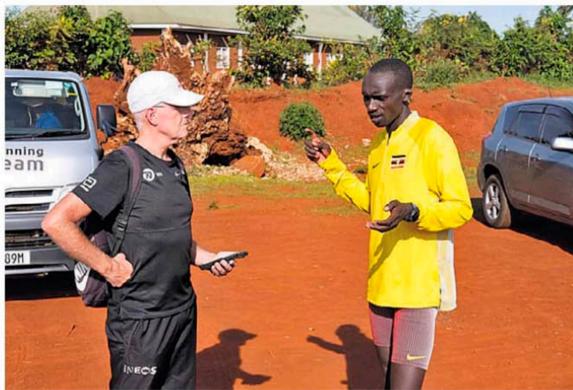
It is here that Ugandan running is now thriving, though the region’s talent took time to develop. While Kenya enjoyed relative stability in the decades after it gained independence in 1963, Uganda was at war for much of the 1970s and 1980s. Lawlessness pervaded the Mount Elgon region until the turn of the century: Bandits from neighboring tribes would sweep in at night and conduct raids on cattle, often killing locals in the process.

The area was also slow to modernize. Until the 1990s, the ancestors of many current athletes, including Cheptegei, Kiplimo and Chemutai, lived inside the forests of Elgon’s upper belt, part of a



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JONATHAN W. ROSEN

A dirt road in the Kween District of Uganda leads to the upper slopes of Mount Elgon, where the grandparents of many current athletes hunted antelope and buffalo.



Addy Ruiters, above left, a former triathlete, moved from the Netherlands to Uganda to coach runners with Joshua Cheptegei. Right, Peruth Chemutai, second from left, won a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.



small group of Sabaot that subsisted on milk, honey and meat from antelope and buffalo they hunted. Here, 9,000 feet up, there were no roads or schools, and no pipeline into competitive athletics. But according to Moses Kiptala, an elder who grew up in this community, endurance was of great value: The group’s method of persistence hunting involved chasing animals for hours until they overheated.

Kiplimo, who comes from a family of runners and had planned to contest the 5,000 and 10,000 meters in Budapest before being sidelined by an injured hamstring, is of particularly distinguished stock. Kiptala recalls Kiplimo’s grandfather being such a prolific hunter that the community called him Simba, or Lion.

Much had changed by the time today’s stars were born: In 1983, Uganda’s government began resettling the group, known as the Mosopisiek, downslope from the forest to make way for a national park. Most are now small-scale farmers. The resettlement process, Kiptala said, was traumatic, but it also helped unlock running talent. Through school, children could access competitions, and by the early 2000s, athletes from the Elgon region were beginning to appear in World Championship and Olympic finals.

Uganda’s first champion of this period was a runner from the country’s north, Dorcus Inzikuru, who won the 3,000-meter steeplechase at the 2005 World Championships in Helsinki. Elgon’s watershed moment came seven years later, when the Kapchorwa native Stephen Kiprotich notched an upset win in the 2012 London Olympics marathon — the country’s first Olympic gold since 1972. He doubled down with a marathon title the following year in Moscow.

“Many Kenyans were saying London was a fluke, so I had to prove them wrong,” Kiprotich said.

Among the legions inspired by those performances was a teenage Cheptegei, who had also grown up in Kapchorwa with dreams of running glory. His parents, who insisted that he enroll in college, were skeptical. But his progress, highlighted by a 10,000-meter world junior title, was so impressive that even President Museveni urged him to drop the books and focus full-time on athletics.

Like many Ugandan runners before him, Cheptegei left for Kenya, where there were more elites to train with and more sophisticated coaching. In 2016, determined to raise the sport’s profile at home, he persuaded his management, the Netherlands-based Global Sports Communication, to establish an elite group in Kapchorwa.

Seven years later, Cheptegei is not only a national icon, he’s also a force for talent development. Along with coach Addy Ruiters, he’s pieced together a squad of two dozen globally competitive athletes, who live together in a stone-and-brick facility known as the Joshua Cheptegei Training Center, on the slopes above the town. An affiliated camp for up-and-coming junior athletes is a short drive away in Kween, a neighboring district.

Other management groups, including Kiplimo’s Italy-based Rosa & Associati, have opened camps in the area as well, drawn both to the concentration of talent

and the training environment. Though Kapchorwa sits at a slightly lower altitude than the main training hubs in Kenya and Ethiopia, the town’s location halfway up a mountain enables greater versatility. Ruiters, a 60-year-old former triathlete who left a desk job at Ikea to move here from the Netherlands in 2019, said his athletes benefit from long runs that reach as high as 10,000 feet, as well as faster sessions at altitudes as low as 3,500 feet.

While a structure for continued success is now in place, Ruiters was quick to stress that the size of Uganda’s talent pool will never quite measure up to Kenya’s or Ethiopia’s. He also described Cheptegei and Kiplimo as “once-in-a-generation talents” and said it could be a while before Uganda sees another athlete of their caliber. Eventually, though, he believes more champions from Mount Elgon will emerge.

Other roadblocks could still manifest. In recent years, Kenya’s running pre-eminence has been marred by the specter of doping: As of Aug. 9, there were 64 Kenyan athletes ineligible to compete in World Athletics events because of drug-related violations. There were no Ugandans on the list, though earlier this month, Janet Chemusto, a 1,500-meter runner who trains in the Cheptegei camp, was provisionally suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit, which investigates doping in the sport. In a statement, Erik van Leeuwen of Global Sports Communication said Chemusto would be defending her case but offered no further comment.

For Cheptegei, the focus is now on the World Championships in Budapest: He’s expected to contend for the 10,000-meter title on Aug. 20 and may double back to vie for the podium in the 5,000 meters as well. And in December, he

will make his marathon debut in Valencia — the same city where he set his 10,000-meter record in 2020. Kiplimo has plans to eventually move up to the marathon, too, where the money is greater and new record-breaking opportunities await.

On that day in April, as he spoke from inside his camp after the day’s training session, Cheptegei said he was simply grateful for the journey that he and his country had taken so far — even the rare occasions when things hadn’t quite worked out.

“It’s one of those incidents that built me mentally,” he said of the 2017 race in Kampala. “I had two options: Allow it to break me; or gather myself together and build an inspirational story.”

More Sports news appears on Page D8.



The Joshua Cheptegei Training Center, above the town of Kapchorwa at an altitude of 8,200 feet, hosts two dozen elite runners.

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VIA JOHN BARRETT SALON



SUZANNE DeCHILLO/THE NEW YORK TIMES



VIA JOHN BARRETT SALON

Mr. Barrett, with Martha Stewart this year, left, and with Geena Davis in 2014, right, was among the first stylists to offer a one-stop beauty shop, with manicures, pedicures and makeup services.

## John Barrett, New York Hairdresser the Stars Flocked to See, Dies at 66

By CLAY RISEN

John Barrett, a hairdresser whose relaxed wit, scissor-sharp style and long line of A-list clients put him literally on top of the luxury fashion world, with a salon spanning the penthouse level of the Bergdorf Goodman department store, died on Wednesday in Manhattan. He was 66.

The death, at NYU Langone hospital, was confirmed by Jeffrey Seller, a close friend, who said the cause was complications of blood cancer.

New York has no shortage of places where clients can spend \$200 or more on a snip and a blow dry. But for more than 20 years — from 1996, when Mr. Barrett opened at Bergdorf, to 2019, when he left to open his own salon — his aerie overlooking Central Park

### A salon that spanned the penthouse level of Bergdorf Goodman.

was the destination of choice for the fashionable elite, whether they walked over from Park Avenue or flew in from Miami, Los Angeles or London.

He did hair for attendees of the annual Met Gala, the leading ladies of the British stage and all three female leads of the television show “Friends.” Princess Diana, Ethel Kennedy and Hillary Clinton were regulars. He was the unofficial stylist for the staff of Vogue magazine; as a welcome gift, the editors would buy new hires a makeover at Mr. Barrett’s salon.

Mr. Barrett was at his height in the mid-2000s, when the power-blond look cultivated by the uptown salons helped define Upper East Side fashion.

“Madison Avenue and Fifth Avenue were just lined with these power salons from the most major hairstyling stars in the world,” Sarah Brown, a former editor at Vogue who is now an executive director at the beauty retailer Violet Grey, said in a phone interview. “And John Barrett was at the top of the heap.”

A visit to Mr. Barrett’s salon was more than just a hair appointment. He was among the first stylists to offer a one-stop beauty shop, with manicures, pedicures and makeup services — and all of them were the best in town.

What might be a visit of an hour,

tops, at another salon could stretch into a half day at Mr. Barrett’s, which, with its relaxed atmosphere and foamy cappuccinos, could at times feel more like a highbrow social gathering than a beauty parlor.

“When you were there, you felt like you’ve been on vacation,” Julianne Jaffe, a close friend and a longtime regular, said by phone.

Friends were made, gossip was traded, interviews were conducted. You might find yourself seated between the columnist Peggy Noonan and the homemaking expert Martha Stewart — though a few sensitive regulars, like Mrs. Clinton, might opt for the semi-privacy of wheel-mounted screens.

Plum Sykes, a writer, recalled being sent to Mr. Barrett’s salon on assignment soon after arriving in New York from Britain to work at Vogue.

“It was there that I learned about all the kinds of ins and outs of being New York perfect,” she said in an interview. She later memorialized that look in the title of her 2004 novel, “Bergdorf Blondes.”

Though his name was gold among the city’s fashionable elite, Mr. Barrett eschewed what he considered the domineering, ego-driven salon culture of the 1980s and ’90s. And though he had firm opinions about style, he offered a laid-back, even minimalist approach to cutting hair.

“If anything, people think I haven’t changed them enough,” he told the British newspaper The Independent in 1998. “But I can give them the best cut in the world and it will last longer than the one they had.”

John Francis Barrett was born on Jan. 10, 1957, in Limerick, Ireland, the son of John Barrett, a laborer, and Philomena (Maroney) Barrett, a homemaker.

He was one of 10 siblings growing up in desperate poverty, and when he was about 13 he moved to London to find work. For the first few years he scraped by selling souvenirs from a stall along Oxford Street, a major commercial thoroughfare.

“When I was 14, I didn’t know where I was going to sleep at night,” he told The Irish Times in 2002. “It was absolute luck that I didn’t get involved in a criminal life.”

He found his calling after answering a want ad for an assistant at Michael John, a relatively new salon whose regulars already included Mick Jagger and Liza Minnelli.



DINA LITOVSKY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

John Barrett in 2019. His clients also included Princess Diana, Ethel Kennedy and Hillary Clinton.

By the mid-1970s he was a full-fledged stylist. As he liked to tell the story, one day Elizabeth Taylor came by without an appointment, asking for another stylist, also named John. He wasn’t there, but John Barrett was. She said he would do, and she was so happy with the results that she made him her regular hair dresser.

He moved to Los Angeles for several years in the 1980s, then back to London for a period before settling in New York in the early 1990s.

Mr. Barrett struggled with alcoholism in the 1980s and became sober in 1987, an experience he was quite open about. He organized charity salon events to raise

money and awareness for sobriety, and he personally counseled dozens of people, including bold-face celebrities, through their own alcoholism.

In New York he found a job with Frédéric Fekkai, another celebrity hairdresser. In a story he related to Fashion Week Daily in 2019, one day a woman came in and

asked if he could comb out her hair for a party.

“You know,” he said, “I don’t think it’s quite right. I need to cut it.”

She said she didn’t have time, but he insisted — it would only take two minutes.

The next day she came back. “I don’t know what you did,” she told him, “but it’s what people are talking about.”

The woman was Dawn Mello, the president of Bergdorf Goodman. The store was looking for a hairdresser to set up shop in its penthouse, a former residence of Andrew Goodman, one of its founders. Ms. Mello had offered it to Mr. Fekkai, but he had too many obligations. Mr. Barrett got the space instead.

Though his base skewed conventional and older, Mr. Barrett could also grab onto trends, or even start them. When ponytails and braids seemed about to have a moment, he opened a “ponytail bar” and a “braid bar,” offering his own twists on the styles.

He traveled around the country to make house visits for some of his most high-end clients, and between 2014 and 2016 had a satellite salon in Palm Beach, Fla.

Mr. Barrett is survived by five brothers, Gerry, Pat, Michael, Eddie and Joe, and a sister, Kathleen Dillane. Two brothers, Jimmy and Christopher, and a sister, Peggy Tierney, died before him.

After more than two decades with Bergdorf, he left in 2019 to open his own 6,400-square-foot salon nearby, on East 57th Street between Madison and Park Avenues. He filled it with books and art from his own collection, and with light fare from Bouchon Bakery.

The pandemic hit the salon industry especially hard, and Mr. Barrett was forced to declare bankruptcy. But he emerged quickly, without having laid off his employees.

And, despite health issues, he continued to cut hair for the many clients, rich and famous — or just rich — who came through his doors.

One day in April, Ms. Stewart, disappointed after her flight to Britain was canceled, decided to drop by his salon for a pick-me-up, an experience she later gushed about on social media.

“I used the newly found time to get a manicure pedicure by Luda and a haircut by the maestro himself @johnbarrettnyc,” she wrote on Instagram. “The new do is refreshing and lovely! Thanks John!!!”

#### Deaths

Cohane, Marion  
Davidson, Joan

Dreyfus, Marion  
Flowers, Mary  
Schinderman, Sheila

**COHANE—Marion**, (nee Duffy), 92, of Mount Kisco, NY passed away peacefully on August 9, 2023, in the loving presence of her family. A woman of enormous grace, kindness, and devotion to others, when asked what message she would want to leave behind, Marion responded, “Love one another.” Marion is predeceased by her husband Frank and is survived by their six children: Frank (Kathleen (dec.)), Tom (Michele), Kevin (Kate), Brian (Lori), Katherine (Andrew) and Chris (Jacqueline). Predeceased by her sister Ann Marie Ivers, she is also survived by her siblings Jack, Duffy and Eileen Conroy, as well as fourteen grandchildren, a great-grandchild and

many cherished nieces and nephews. Her most cherished times were family gatherings. Marion had a true genius for hospitality and for bringing out the best in her sprawling, vibrant and not to mention Irish, clan. Warmth, fun and acceptance were her virtues, and she fostered these generously in others. As so many have said “To know her was to love her.” Mass 10am, Tuesday, August 15th, 2023, at Holy Rosary Church, Hawthorne, NY. Visiting 4-8pm, Monday, August 14th, 2023, Ballard-Durand Funeral Home, Hawthorne, NY. (914-769-4404). In lieu of flowers, memorials to St. Cabrini Nursing Home, 115 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry.

#### Deaths

**DAVIDSON—Joan K.**, The Board and Staff of The New York Landmarks Conservancy celebrate the life and enormous contributions of Joan K. Davidson. Her vision and funding enabled us to initiate our Sacred Sites Program 37 years ago. Since then, more than 870 religious institutions of all denominations across New York State have received technical help and more than \$15 million in total grants to restore their historic buildings. Joan remained a touchstone for us and for numerous organizations who benefitted from her wisdom and support. She was one of the all time great New Yorkers.  
Richard A. Garvey, Chair  
Peg Breen, President

**DAVIDSON—Joan K.**, The Board and Staff of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) celebrate the life and deeply mourn the loss of Joan K. Davidson. She was one of NRDC’s earliest board members and a committed and generous environmentalist. For decades she remained a close friend and supporter of NRDC.  
**DREYFUS—Marion**, a dear friend, poet, journalist, (arts and science), world traveler, calligrapher, graphologist, actress, wit, and quintessential Dame About Town died on August 10, 2023. She will be sorely missed.

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**FLOWERS—Mary Kathryn Torrey**, 79, of Manhattan and Norfolk, CT, died at home in NYC on August 10, 2023 after a long struggle with achalasia, COPD and heart issues. She is survived by William, her husband of 58 years; and by two married sons, Michael (Patricia) and Matthew’s two children, Madeline (6) and Malcolm (1). Mary Kay was predeceased by her brothers Clifford and Bill, and is survived by sisters Barbara, Paula and Michele. Born in Casper, WY on September 5, 1943, she grew up largely in North Dakota. She moved with her family to La Mesa, CA in her teens and graduated from San Diego State College. She subsequently earned a Masters and a Ph.D. in political science from New York University. Before NYU, she taught elementary and junior high school in Nashville and Little Rock and worked for the Bedford Stuyvesant Redevelopment Corporation. After NYU, she taught at Mercy College, the University of New Haven and John Jay

College. Once her children reached school age, she devoted her skills to parent participation in the administration of the children’s schools, Corlears School and The Cathedral School. An avid birder, she taught birding to grade school children in New York City schools under the aegis of New York State Audubon’s “For the Birds” program. She also devoted much time to the Ballet Guild of New York City Ballet. Mary Kay loved cooking, authoring a cookbook with her sisters; she loved gardening, the opera, ballet and theater. International travel was a favorite. She also loved reading, participating in two monthly book groups in Chelsea and the West Village for the last 25 years. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to New York City Ballet or to the For the Birds program of NYS Audubon Society. Given the wide geographical dispersion of her family and friends, and in an effort to avoid a COVID event, there will be a Zoom conference call in lieu of a memorial service. Details will be emailed to interested persons. Burial will be at a private family service in Norfolk, CT.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS OF DEATHS MAY BE TELEPHONED FROM WITHIN NYC TO 212-556-3900. OR OUTSIDE NYC TOLL FREE 1-800-458-5522. OR SENT BY EMAIL TO NYTIMES@CLASSIFIEDPLUS.COM FOR THE FOLLOWING EDITIONS:**  
Until 4:00 PM the day before for Tuesday through Saturday editions, until 4:00 PM on Friday for Sunday’s national edition, until 12:45 PM Saturday for Sunday’s New York and late national editions, until 2:00 PM Sunday for Monday’s editions. Photos must be submitted by noon the day prior to publication Tuesday through Friday.

**SCHINDERMAN—Sheila**, on August 12, 2023 at her home in Jupiter, FL. Beloved wife of Marc Schinderman, devoted mother of Alan and Warren, dear sister of Elaine, loving grandmother of Connor, Hayden and Danielle. A memorial service will be held 2pm, today, Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at Gutterman & Musicant Jewish Funeral Directors, 402 Park St, Hockensack, NJ. Memorial contributions can be made to the American Cancer Society.  
**In Memoriam**  
**GORE—Chester A.** 8/14/1918 - 4/19/1997  
As we celebrate your 105th birthday, we miss your spirit, insight, wit, creativity, and love. You have been gone so long, but still we think: “What would Chet do?” We love and miss you always.  
Eloise & Allen

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**Sweden vs. United States** Goalkeeper Zecira Musovic, second from right, made a save for Sweden, which won on penalty kicks to deal the U.S., the two-time-defending champ, its earliest ouster.



**Spain vs. Switzerland** Laia Codina of Spain, left, tried to control the ball against Coumba Sow of Switzerland. Codina scored a goal and gave one to the Swiss in Spain's 5-1 victory.



**France vs. Morocco** France's goalkeeper, Pauline Peyraud-Magnin, during one of her few busy moments in a 4-0 victory that ended Morocco's surprise run to the round of 16.



**Denmark vs. Australia** From left, Karen Holmggaard of Denmark and Caitlin Foord of Australia battled for the ball. Foord had a goal in a 2-0 victory for Australia, one of the host countries.



**Japan vs. Norway** Forward Sophie Roman Haug of Norway cleared the ball during an offensive onslaught by Japan, which gave up its first goal of the tournament but advanced, 3-1.



**South Africa vs. The Netherlands** South Africa's Thembi Kgatlana, left, and Netherlands' Jackie Groenen vied for the ball as South Africa fell, 2-0, in its first appearance in the round of 16.



**Colombia vs. Jamaica** Leicy Santos of Colombia, left, and Allyson Swaby of Jamaica chased the ball during a stop-start match that saw Catalina Usme of Colombia score the only goal.



**Nigeria vs. England** Lucy Bronze of England, left, and Rasheedat Ajibade of Nigeria tussled, and England overcame the ejection of the star forward Lauren James to win on penalty kicks, 4-2.

**By the Numbers Through the Quarterfinals (60 Matches)**

154

GOALS

1,500

ATTEMPTS  
AT GOAL

95

ASSISTS

25

PENALTIES  
AWARDED

19

PENALTIES  
SCORED

1,536

GOALKEEPER GOAL  
PREVENTIONS

572

CORNERS

105

YELLOW CARDS

6

RED CARDS