



# The New York Times

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## For America, Biden must leave the race

### The Editorial Board

#### OPINION

President Biden has repeatedly and rightfully described the stakes in this November's presidential election as nothing less than the future of American democracy.

Donald Trump has proved himself to be a significant jeopardy to that democracy — an erratic and self-interested figure unworthy of the public trust. He systematically attempted to undermine the integrity of elections. His supporters have described, publicly, a 2025 agenda that would give him the power to carry out the most extreme of his promises and threats. If he is returned to office, he has vowed to be a different kind of president, unrestrained by the checks on power built into the American political system.

Mr. Biden has said that he is the candidate with the best chance of taking on this threat of tyranny and defeating it. His argument rests largely on the fact that he beat Mr. Trump in 2020. That is no longer a sufficient rationale for why Mr. Biden

Someone more capable must stand in his place in November to defeat Trump.

should be the Democratic nominee this year.

At Thursday's debate, the president needed to convince the American public that he was equal to the formidable demands of the office he is seeking to hold for another term. Voters, however, cannot be expected to ignore what was instead plain to see: Mr. Biden is not the man he was four years ago.

The president appeared on Thursday night as the shadow of a great public servant. He struggled to explain what he would accomplish in a second term. He struggled to respond to Mr. Trump's provocations. He struggled to hold Mr. Trump accountable for his lies, his failures and his chilling plans. More than once, he struggled to make it to the end of a sentence.

Mr. Biden has been an admirable president. Under his leadership, the nation has prospered and begun to address a range of long-term challenges, and the wounds ripped open by Mr. Trump have begun to heal. But the greatest public service Mr. Biden can now perform is to announce that he will not continue to run for re-election.

As it stands, the president is engaged in a reckless gamble. There are Democratic leaders better equipped to present clear, compelling and energetic alternatives to a second Trump presidency. **EDITORIAL, PAGE 8**

The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.



Mary Ann Domingo at the tombs of her partner and son in the Philippines. They were killed by the police in 2016 soon after Rodrigo Duterte became the country's president.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA ACAYAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## A ruthless drug war's legacy

### MANILA

### In Philippines, long search for justice after a leader's vow unleashed violence

BY SUI-LEE WEE AND CAMILLE ELEMIA

When Rodrigo Duterte was running for president of the Philippines eight years ago, he vowed to order the police and the military to find drug users and traffickers to kill them, promising immunity for such killings. In the months after, police officers and vigilantes mercilessly gunned down tens of thousands of people in summary executions.

Even now, two years after Mr. Duterte left office, there has been little legal reckoning with the wave of killings: Only eight police officers have been given prison sentences, in connection with just four cases, with one verdict that came in June. And though rights groups say that there have been fewer such killings since Mr. Duterte left, and far fewer involving agents of the government, a culture of violence and impunity has maintained a troubling hold in the Philippines.

In recent months, the legacy of Mr.



Relatives of drug war victims last month outside the Philippine courthouse where Ms. Domingo was hearing the verdict in the homicide case against the officers involved.

Duterte's so-called war on drugs has slowly begun to get more official attention. Lawmakers are holding several public hearings into the violence. Senior police officers spoke at the congressional hearing, as did victims' relatives, who relived their horrors and again pleaded for justice.

When Mr. Duterte left office, his ad-

ministration said 6,252 people had been killed by security forces — all described by officials as "drug suspects." Rights groups say the overall death toll stands at roughly 30,000.

Mr. Duterte is unlikely to face any consequences from the congressional hearings; last week he was asked to testify before the panel but through a



THE NEW YORK TIMES

spokesman declined to do so, invoking his constitutional right against self-incrimination. That has left many looking overseas, to the International Criminal Court, which is investigating the drug war and is expected to be hearing some action against Mr. Duterte.

Reymie Bayunon's 7-year-old son, Jefferson, was fatally shot in the city of Caloocan in April 2019 after, Ms. Bayunon said, he witnessed a killing in their neighborhood. She sued the police but said she skipped the court hearings after being threatened by a group of officers.

PHILIPPINES, PAGE 2

## Biden team scrambles to salvage campaign

Even before debate ended, aides began frantic effort to control the damage

BY LISA LERER, SHANE GOLDMACHER AND KATIE ROGERS

In the wee hours of Friday morning, just hours after President Biden had walked off the stage from a disastrous debate performance, his campaign chair, Jen O'Malley Dillon, acknowledged in a series of private calls with prominent supporters that the night had gone poorly but urged them not to overreact.

Later on Friday, top White House aides worked the phones, with Mr. Biden's chief of staff, Jeff Zients, calling the Democratic leader of the Senate, Chuck Schumer, to check in, according to a person familiar with the call. And by the afternoon, the Biden campaign had transformed its weekly all-staff call into a virtual pep talk to dispel any doubts creeping into the campaign offices in Wilmington, Del., and beyond.

"Nothing fundamentally changed about this election last night," said Quentin Fulks, Mr. Biden's deputy campaign manager, according to a recording of the all-staff meeting. "We're going to get punched. We're going to punch back. We're going to get up when we get punched."

The 48 hours after the debate were a frenzied campaign within a campaign to save Mr. Biden's suddenly teetering candidacy, a multiday damage-control effort to pressure and plead with anxious Democratic lawmakers, surrogates, activists and donors to stand by the president and the presumptive nominee.

After a frenetic run of seven campaign events across four states since the debate, Mr. Biden himself is taking a pause for a preplanned family gathering at Camp David. He arrived late on Saturday and will be joined by his wife, Jill Biden, the first lady, as well as the Biden children and grandchildren, according to two people familiar with the scheduling.

The gathering, for a family photo shoot, was scheduled in the spring, according to those people. But the timing and circumstances of Mr. Biden's being surrounded by the very family members who have been crucial in his past decisions to run for the presidency — or to sit out a race — have heightened the stakes and scrutiny surrounding the Camp David retreat.

For now, the divide between the party's most active supporters and its voters, who for more than a year have voiced concerns about the 81-year-old president's fitness for another term, remains as large as ever. Some Democrats are bracing for a drop in polling after his shaky debate performance that could, they say, reignite calls to replace Mr. Biden.

BIDEN, PAGE 6



ERIK TANNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Reflections about fleeing for his creative freedom

### Baryshnikov on escaping the U.S.S.R. and challenges facing Russian artists today

BY JAVIER C. HERNÁNDEZ

On the night of June 29, 1974, after a performance with a touring Bolshoi Ballet troupe in downtown Toronto, Mikhail Baryshnikov made his way out a stage door, past a throng of fans and began to run.

Baryshnikov, then 26 and already one of ballet's brightest stars, had made the momentous decision to defect from the Soviet Union and build a career in the West. On that rainy night, he had to evade K.G.B. agents — and audience members seeking autographs — as he rushed to meet a group of Canadian and American friends waiting in a car a few blocks away. "That car took me to the free world,"

Baryshnikov, 76, recalled in a recent interview. "It was the start of a new life."

His cloak-and-dagger escape helped to make him a cultural celebrity. "Soviet Dancer in Canada Defects on Bolshoi Tour," The New York Times declared on its front page.

But the focus on his decision to leave the Soviet Union has sometimes made Baryshnikov uneasy. He said he did not like how the term "defector" sounded in English, conjuring an image of a traitor who has committed high treason.

"I'm not a defector — I'm a selector," he said. "That was my choice. I selected this life."

Baryshnikov was born in Riga, the capital of Soviet-ruled Latvia, and moved to Leningrad, now St. Petersburg, in 1964, when he was 16, to study with the renowned teacher Alexander Pushkin. When he was 19, he joined the **BARYSHNIKOV, PAGE 2**

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## PAGE TWO

## A dancer's reflections on fleeing the Soviet Union

BARYSHNIKOV, FROM PAGE 1

Kirov Ballet, now known as the Mariinsky, and quickly became a star on the Russian ballet scene.

After his defection, he moved to New York and joined American Ballet Theater (which he later ran as artistic director) and then New York City Ballet. The pre-eminent male dancer of the 1970s and '80s, his star power helped elevate ballet in popular culture. He has worked as an actor, appearing onstage and in several films, including "The Turning Point," as well as the television series "Sex and the City." And in 2005, he founded the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York City, which presents dance, music and other programming.

In recent years, Baryshnikov, who has American and Latvian citizenship, has become more vocal about politics. He has criticized former President Donald J. Trump, likening him to the "dangerous totalitarian opportunists" of his youth. He has also spoken out against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, accusing Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, of creating a "world of fear." He is a founder of True Russia, a foundation to support Ukrainian refugees.

In an interview, Baryshnikov reflected on the 50th anniversary of his defection; the father he left behind in the Soviet Union (his mother died when he was 12); the pain he feels over the war in Ukraine; and the challenges facing Russian artists today. These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

#### What memories do you have of that June day in Toronto?

I remember feeling a sense of comfort and security after seeing some very friendly faces in the getaway car. But I also felt fear that it might turn out another way — that at any second, it could fall apart and become like a bad police movie. I was beginning a new life, something totally unknown, and it was my decision and my responsibility. It was time for me to grow up.

#### You have described your defection as artistic, not political, saying you wanted more creative freedom and the chance to more frequently work abroad, which the Soviet authorities would not permit.

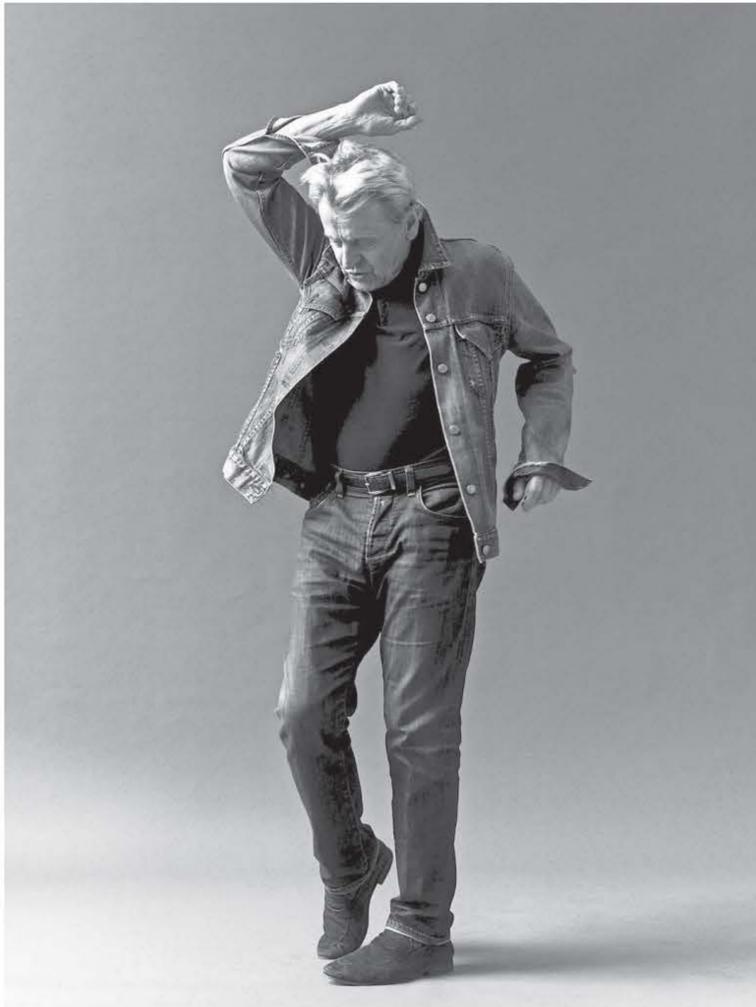
Of course it was a political decision, from a distance. But I really wanted to be an artist and my main concern was my dance. I was 26. That's middle age for a classical dancer. I wanted to learn from Western choreographers. Time was running out.

#### Back then you said: "What I have done is called a crime in Russia. But my life is my art, and I realized it would be a greater crime to destroy that."

Did I say it that eloquently? I don't believe it. Maybe somebody corrected it with the proper grammar. But I still agree with that. I realized early on that I'm a capable dancer — that's what I could do, and that's about it.

#### You worried that your defection might endanger your father, who was a military officer in Riga and taught military topography at the air force academy.

I knew the K.G.B. services would be interviewing him and asking him if he was involved, and if he would write me a letter or something. He did nothing. I



Mikhail Baryshnikov's cloak-and-dagger defection from the Soviet Union in 1974 helped to make him a cultural celebrity. However, he likes to say: "I'm not a defector — I'm a selector. That was my choice. I selected this life."

must say, "Thank you, Papa. Thank you for not bending over." He refused to send me a letter, asking me to please come back.

#### Did you communicate with him again?

I sent him two or three letters saying, "Don't worry about me, I'm fine, I hope everybody's healthy at home." He never responded. And then he passed away quite soon after, in 1980.

#### You began studying dance at 7, and enrolled at the Riga School of Choreography, the state ballet academy, a few years later. What did your parents think of your dancing?

They were amused that at 10 or 11 years old I belonged to some kind of professional school. But my father always said, "You'll have to go to a real school and study arithmetic and literature, and get good marks." I was a really bad student. He said, "If you won't succeed in a real school, I'll send you to military school, like Suvorov, and they will straighten you up." He was bluffing of course. I was already deeply, deeply, deeply in love with theater. I was in love with the atmos-

phere — the idea that I belonged to this big beautiful circus.

#### Did you feel you had to forge a new identity when you came to the West?

I felt an enormous sense of freedom. When you don't have authority over you, you start to have crazy ideas about yourself: "Oh, I'm like Tarzan in the jungle now." But it was enough. I told myself: "You have to be a grown-up man already. You have to do something serious." I knew I could dance and I already had some repertoire in my luggage.

#### Are you still dancing?

Dancing is maybe a loud word, but theater directors sometimes ask, "Are you comfortable if I ask you to move?" I say absolutely. I welcome that. But I don't miss being in a dancer's costume.

#### You have avoided politics for much of your career, but you've recently weighed in on a variety of issues, including the war in Ukraine. Why speak up now?

Ukraine is a different story. Ukraine is our friend. I danced Ukrainian dances, listened to Ukrainian music and sing-

ers. I know Ukrainian ballets like "The Forest Song," and I have performed in Kyiv. I am a pacifist and an antifascist, that is for sure. And that's why I'm on this side of the war.

#### You were born eight years after Latvia was forcibly annexed to the Soviet Union; your father was one of the Russian workers sent there to teach. How does your experience growing up there affect how you see this war?

I spent the first 16 years of my life in Soviet Latvia, and I know the other side of the coin. I was the son of an occupier. I knew that experience of living under the occupation. The Russians treated it like their territory and their land, and they said the Latvian language is garbage.

I don't want Putin and his army to enter Riga. Finally Latvia has real independence, and they're doing pretty good. My mother is buried there. I feel when I'm coming to Riga, I'm coming back to my home.

#### You wrote an open letter to Putin in 2022, saying he had created a "world of fear."

He's a true imperialist with a totally bizarre sense of power. Yes, he speaks with the tongue of my mother, the same way she spoke. But he does not represent the true Russia.

#### How have you changed since leaving the Soviet Union 50 years ago?

I am a very lucky person. I don't really know. I want to compose a nice kind of sentence. But it's not exactly the time for nice sentences, when a person like Aleksei Navalny was sent to prison and destroyed for his honest life.

#### Would you ever go back to Russia?

No, I don't think so.

#### Why not?

The idea never even comes to my mind. I have no answer for you.

#### I imagine you sometimes think or dream about your time there.

Of course. Occasionally I speak Russian, and quite often I read Russian literature. This is the language of my mother. She was a really simple woman from Kstovo, near the Volga River. I learned my first Russian words from her. I remember her voice, the specific

Volga region kind of music. Her sounds. Her "o." Her vowels.

#### Some Russian artists, like the Bolshoi Ballet star Olga Smirnova, who is now at the Dutch National Ballet, have left Russia because of the war.

I saw her dance in New York and met her after the show. She's a wonderful dancer, a lovely woman, and very, very brave. It's a big change to go to the Netherlands after being a principal soloist at the Bolshoi. And yet she was in great shape and showed great pride to perform with a company that adopted her. I am rooting for her.

#### Are you surprised to see artists once again leaving Russia because of concerns about politics and repression?

There is a word in Russian that refers to refugees and people who run: *bezidentsy*. This applies to people who are running from the bullets, from the bombs, in this war. There are some Russians — dancers and maybe athletes — who run more gracefully than others. In my very small way, I am trying to support them. In the end, we all run from somebody.

## Ruthless drug war's legacy: Violence and impunity

PHILIPPINES, FROM PAGE 1

Ms. Bayunon has a simple message for the Philippine authorities: "I call on you to cooperate with the I.C.C. because this is the only chance we have to attain justice," she said.

While Mr. Duterte has taken full responsibility for the drug war, he has maintained that he would never be tried in an international court. He has said that there are three million drug addicts in the Philippines, adding: "I'd be happy to slaughter them."

Six years ago, he ordered the withdrawal of the Philippines from the International Criminal Court, which declined

#### "This is the only chance we have to attain justice."

to comment on its inquiry into Mr. Duterte. It is unclear whether the Philippine government would force Mr. Duterte to surrender if he faced an I.C.C. warrant. The court cannot try defendants in absentia.

Mr. Duterte's successor, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., has seemed at times to backtrack from an earlier pledge to shield him from an international inquiry. In December, Mr. Marcos's government allowed I.C.C. officials investigating Mr. Duterte to enter the Philippines to pursue their work, according to an official familiar with the proceedings.

Among the cases the International Criminal Court is expected to be following is another complaint against the police in Calocan, north of Manila. Less than three months after Mr. Duterte was inaugurated in 2016, a group of policemen barged into Mary Ann Domingo's tiny apartment and ushered most of the family out.

The last time she saw her partner,

Luis Bonifacio, alive, he was kneeling on the floor with his arms raised. Her son Gabriel, 19, stayed inside to plead for his father's life and was also shot dead. Later, Ms. Domingo saw their bodies at the hospital.

Since 2017, she has pursued a complaint against the officers with the national ombudsman.

On June 18, a judge ruled that the four police officers who participated in the operation were guilty of homicide.

The court noted the findings of a forensic pathologist, Dr. Raquel Fortun, who had examined the remains of the Bonifacios and told the court that she had found multiple gunshot wounds.

When the verdict was read, Ms. Domingo wept on the shoulder of one of her sons. Standing beside her were the four officers, who looked down at the floor.

"I am thankful to the judge because finally I feel there can be justice," Ms. Domingo said after the ruling. But she added: "The I.C.C. is still needed because we need justice for every victim of the drug war."

In the backdrop are tensions between Mr. Duterte and Mr. Marcos. The current president rose to power after making an alliance with Mr. Duterte's daughter Sara Duterte. But in the months since, things have changed. Last month, Ms. Duterte resigned from her post as education secretary in Mr. Marcos's cabinet. Mr. Marcos and his allies, the Dutertes contend without evidence, want the president to extend his grip on power by amending the Constitution. The two men have traded barbs about the other using drugs.

Mr. Duterte burnished his law-and-order credentials as the mayor of Davao, a city in the south where hundreds are thought to have been killed by gunmen linked to the authorities, acts that the International Criminal Court is also investigating.



Below left, the police officers accused in the killing of Mary Ann Domingo's partner and son, in a Philippine court last month. Left, Ms. Domingo and other relatives of drug war victims reacting to the guilty verdicts in the case against the officers.

Within days of Mr. Duterte's becoming president, people like Vincent Go, a freelance news photographer, detected a change. Mr. Go, who worked nights in the Manila region, was getting notified of 10 to 20 crime scenes a night, an astronomical increase in violence. Mr. Go kept seeing the same kind of settings: dead-end alleys, often with no security cameras or witnesses. Rusty guns were frequently left next to the bodies.

The government's narrative for such cases was almost always the same: Facing arrest, suspected drug users fought back, and officers had to shoot in self-defense.

Mr. Go ended up documenting more than 900 crime scenes during Mr. Duterte's presidency. He shared photographs of corpses with handcuff marks and others with multiple gunshot wounds.

Dr. Fortun has examined 109 bodies exhumed at the behest of a Catholic priest, the Rev. Flaviano Villanueva, and victims' families. She said she had repeatedly seen multiple shots in the head and the torso.

"In other words, they were shot to be killed," said Dr. Fortun, the only pathologist in the Philippines who has examined the remains of those killed during the drug war.

Tens of thousands were arrested on drug charges during Mr. Duterte's campaign. He had promised to go after kingpins and other high-level dealers. But among the dead, rights group say, were many poor and working-class men and boys.

The Duterte camp has reiterated that the International Criminal Court lacks jurisdiction in the Philippines because the prosecutor conducted its investigation only after Mr. Duterte, in 2019, withdrew his country from the treaty that established the court. Mr. Marcos's views are unclear.

On a recent Thursday, Dr. Fortun was trying to piece together what could have happened to Jay-Ar Jumola, a 21-year-old construction worker killed by unidentified men in an alleyway in the city of Navotas in June 2019.

Pointing to a hole in Mr. Jumola's skull, she said: "That is suspicious of an entrance wound. Another thing that catches my eye is this staining, the green stain of the inner surface of the skull. It suggests oxidation from something metallic."

Mr. Go, the photographer, covered Mr. Jumola's death and tracked down a witness, who told him that Mr. Jumola was on his knees when he was shot.

"He saw the blood gushing out, and how Jay-Ar was begging for his life," Mr. Go said. "And the police didn't care and just shot him."

Two of Mr. Jumola's half brothers met a similar fate. In February 2017, Anthony Ocdin, 23, was also killed by unidentified men in Navotas. He was found with masking tape around his head and a sign on his body that said, "Don't imitate me, I'm a drug pusher." Nearly five years later, Angelo Ocdin, 28, was shot in the back by four men in Manila's Tondo district.

Cristina Jumola, her mother, said she now feared for her surviving children.

Referring to Mr. Duterte, she said, "We want him to be jailed because he ordered the killings of innocent people."

Marlise Simons contributed reporting from Paris.

# World



Claudia Sheinbaum, who has strong ties to the United States dating to when she was an academic in California, was elected last month to be the first female president of Mexico.

## Before she won the presidency

MEXICO CITY

### Mexican leader's years of living in U.S. offer clues to her approach

BY NATALIE KITROEFF

In the early 1990s, a young scientist named Claudia Sheinbaum moved with her family from Mexico City to Northern California, where she studied at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

She lived in housing provided by Stanford University with her two small children and her husband, who was pursuing a Ph.D. there. For four years, Ms. Sheinbaum immersed herself in a new life as an immigrant academic in the United States.

She audited a class taught by a future Mexican foreign minister. She landed on the front page of The Stanford Daily student newspaper for protesting the North American Free Trade Agreement. She found friends who missed Mexico as much as she did. And to people who knew her, she seemed entirely at ease in California, navigating the world of American academia.

"They could have been professors, they could have made their lives here," said Alma González, a close friend of Ms. Sheinbaum's in California. "But they decided to return."

Now, three decades later, she has been elected the next president of Mexico, and is on the verge of becoming the first woman to lead the country. She takes office in October. The next month, Americans will vote to either keep a president who has stabilized relations with Mexico, or return to office a leader who has threatened and disparaged the country.

At such a decisive moment, Ms. Sheinbaum's time in the United States and her dealings with American officials throughout her career offer crucial clues about how she will handle the biggest issues in Mexico's relationship with Washington.

Here are five things to know.

#### COMFORTABLE LIFE IN CALIFORNIA

From 1991 to 1994, Ms. Sheinbaum lived in the San Francisco Bay Area doing research on energy use in Mexico. She, her husband and their two children lived in a modest home, where their neighbors were students from various countries, according to Ms. Sheinbaum's biographer and two people who knew her at the time.

"She told me it was a beautiful time in her life," said Arturo Cano, a journalist who wrote a biography of Ms. Sheinbaum. "Her back doors opened onto a common area and her kids played with kids from all over the world."

At the time, Mexican leftists like Ms. Sheinbaum had reasons to be wary of the United States. The George H.W. Bush administration had just invaded Panama, part of a history of U.S. interventions in Latin America. Mr. Bush also backed the Mexican president Carlos Salinas de Gortari, who was widely accused of fraud in his 1988 election victory over a leftist challenger.

But the lab was just up the hill from the campus at Berkeley, an institution known for its social activism, giving Ms. Sheinbaum a window into a different side of American life.

"Being at Berkeley — it's being at the place where the free speech movement



IVAN PIERRE AGUIRRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



AL GREEN/THE STANFORD DAILY

begin," said Harley Shaiken, who was head of the Center for Latin American Studies at Berkeley from 1998 to 2021. "She appreciates aspects of U.S. culture that have shown the side of popular participation and social movements."

#### SHE PROTESTED NAFTA

While at the lab, Ms. Sheinbaum audited a class at the University of California, Berkeley, on U.S.-Mexican relations, according to Jorge Castañeda, who taught the course. Mr. Castañeda later became foreign minister in the center-right government of President Vicente Fox, but said that at the time, he was close to Ms. Sheinbaum and her husband.

"They enjoyed the Bay Area," Mr. Castañeda said in an interview. "At the same time, they were typical Mexican leftists who were not happy with the United States."

In class, Ms. Sheinbaum and her fellow students examined the "tensions,

"I think it weighed on her that people had to come here to work."

differences and conflicts" as well as the "tightening of economic links" between the two countries, according to a copy of the syllabus provided by Mr. Castañeda.

The most pressing controversy of the moment was the negotiation of NAFTA, which was criticized by Mexican leftists because they believed "it would bring an end to Mexican industry and agriculture," Mr. Castañeda said.

When Mr. Salinas de Gortari gave a speech at Stanford, the university's newspaper published a photograph of

Left, the border between Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and El Paso. Below left, in the early 1990s, Ms. Sheinbaum was photographed at Stanford University protesting the North American Free Trade Agreement, a pact that it appears she will preserve after she takes office in October.

think it weighed on her that people had to come here to work and couldn't go back to see their families."

The two lamented "the policies that don't exist to allow people to come and go legally," Ms. González said, "that we could have if it was a priority for both countries."

The experience may be part of why Ms. Sheinbaum "sees the fate of Mexican migrants in the United States as the most important migration issue that she needs to deal with," said Andrew Selee, the president of the Migration Policy Institute, a Washington-based nonpartisan research organization.

#### "CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM" ON SECURITY

In recent years, criminal groups in Mexico have expanded their dominance across the country, experts say, smuggling large quantities of synthetic opioids across the U.S. border while killing Mexicans at will.

American officials say privately that they believe security coordination could improve with Ms. Sheinbaum. As mayor of Mexico City, she took an approach different from Mr. López Obrador's, pouring money into the civilian police force, while he relied heavily on the military.

She raised police salaries, and her administration collaborated well with U.S. law enforcement agencies to confront criminal groups, according to American officials and experts. Homicides and other crimes declined precipitously.

"They have, in fact, cooperated very well with U.S. agencies in terms of security in Mexico City," said Lila Abed, the acting director of the Wilson Center's Mexico Institute, who said there was "cautious optimism" about Ms. Sheinbaum's strategy for combating violence.

Juan Ramón de la Fuente, who was just named foreign minister in Ms. Sheinbaum's future administration, said in an interview that he saw a potential for more security collaboration with the United States under Ms. Sheinbaum.

"We all acknowledge that we need to collaborate and we need to work together more effectively," Mr. de la Fuente said.

#### SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH

When Ms. Sheinbaum took her first call with President Biden last month, the translator unexpectedly dropped off the line, according to two officials with knowledge of the call who were not authorized to speak publicly.

So Ms. Sheinbaum decided to address Mr. Biden in English — and from then on the two leaders spoke directly, without relying on translation.

It was a notable departure from her mentor, Mr. López Obrador. A nationalistic leader, Mr. López Obrador developed a smooth working relationship with President Donald J. Trump and with Mr. Biden largely because of his help securing the border.

But Mr. López Obrador has also relied on interpreters to communicate with U.S. officials, traveled abroad infrequently and bashed Washington's "interventionist" foreign policy.

Emiliano Rodríguez Mega contributed reporting. Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

## Trifling wagers beget a national scandal

LEEDS, ENGLAND

### U.K.'s Conservative Party embroiled in investigation of bets before election call

BY RORY SMITH

Rishi Sunak's gamble was a considerable one. Five weeks ago, the British prime minister bet the house on his belief that a summer election might offer his Conservative Party a better chance of holding onto power than waiting until the fall.

Calling a snap election served as Mr. Sunak's last roll of the dice. But it has since emerged that in the days before he stood forlornly in the pouring rain on May 22 and told the country he was going to the polls, a number of colleagues and underlings were placing bets of the more literal kind.

Reviewing data from the week before Mr. Sunak's announcement, bookmakers noticed a spike in bets being placed on the election date. The amounts being staked were small — totaling just a few thousand pounds — but the sudden frenzy of activity was enough to warrant further investigation.

The question of whether these bets were being made by political officials, using insider knowledge of Mr. Sunak's intentions to make a quick profit, has come to dominate what could be the Conservatives' final days in power. It also encapsulates how some parts of the electorate perceive the party that has governed Britain for 14 years.

"The whole thing has reinforced the public's prior concerns," said Luke Tryl, executive director of More in Common, a research group. "It gets right to the heart of it: 'One rule for them, and one rule for everyone else.'"

Craig Williams, one of Mr. Sunak's key parliamentary aides and a Conservative candidate running for office, was the first to come under scrutiny after The Guardian reported that he had placed a bet on a July election on May 19, three days before the prime minister's announcement. Now suspended from the campaign, he has admitted to an "error of judgment," but insisted he had not committed a criminal offense.

As the Gambling Commission, the regulator that oversees Britain's rich and varied betting industry, extended its inquiry, a number of other senior Conservative staffers were named as being under investigation.

They included Tony Lee, the party's director of campaigns, and his wife, Laura Saunders, who was a Conservative candidate in the forthcoming election but who has since been suspended by the party. Nick Mason, the Conservatives' director of data, has taken a leave of absence after being informed that he, too, is under investigation. Rumors are swirling that a number of other Conservative staff members may soon be identified by the inquiry.

One of the officers protecting Mr. Sunak, meanwhile, has been arrested over allegations that he had also made bets on the timing of the election, and the Metropolitan Police has confirmed it is investigating a number of other law enforcement officials.

The scandal is yet another blow for Mr. Sunak as he campaigns less to win the election, scheduled for Thursday, than to staunch his party's potential losses. He had already caused an uproar after he left the 80th anniversary of D-Day commemorations early to sit for a television interview, a decision he later apologized for profusely. He then faced widespread mockery after claiming that he had known hardship as a child because his parents had not allowed him to have satellite television.

The gambling allegations have compounded that damage, polling experts said, adding to a sense of an out-of-touch party that appeared to consider itself above ethical concerns.

What was potentially most corrosive was "the perception that we operate outside the rules we set for others," Michael Gove, one of the Conservatives' highest profile lawmakers, told The Sunday Times. "That was damaging at the time of Partygate," he said, referring to the scandal over lockdown-breaking parties held inside Boris Johnson's Downing



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of Britain has faced several setbacks since he called a snap election, including a betting scandal and ridicule over comments made to the press.

Street during the pandemic, "And it is damaging here."

Political betting is a growing industry — more than \$1.5 billion was staked on the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, making it possibly the biggest single gambling event ever — but markets on when elections might be called are, insiders say, inherently niche.

They are run, effectively, as novelties, designed to attract publicity and hopefully new customers, according to a longstanding political betting expert, who asked to remain anonymous because of the sensitivity of the industry.

They are not designed, he said, to generate vast returns. Bookmakers aim simply not to lose money on them, working on the assumption that there will be people — not just lawmakers but various party apparatchiks — who have access to better information than they have. To restrict their losses, they limit the amount of money anyone can stake on the market.

The bets made in the days just before Mr. Sunak's announcement fit that bill. Mr. Williams, for example, is accused of wagering just £100 (\$125), for winnings that would have stretched to just a few hundred pounds. "They are not life-changing sums for senior figures in politics," said Joe Twyman, a director of Deltapoll, a public opinion consultancy.

Indeed, the small size of the market is what may have alerted the authorities to unusual activity in the first place: The spike would most likely not be noticed in a market like horse racing or soccer.

Britain has a curious relationship with betting, perhaps best illustrated by its place within sport. In soccer, for example, as in baseball, players are forbidden from betting on their own sport.

Last year, the England striker Ivan Toney was banned for several months for gambling on games. Lucas Paquetá, a Brazilian midfielder player, could be banned for life if he is found guilty of gambling on games in which he was a participant. He has strenuously denied the allegations.

"It gets right to the heart of it: 'One rule for them, and one rule for everyone else.'"

Both Mr. Toney and Mr. Paquetá, though, play for club teams — Brentford and West Ham, respectively — that were sponsored last season by gambling companies. They play in stadiums plastered with the logos of betting shops. And Brentford's owner, Matthew Benham, bought the club with money he made in his hugely successful career as a professional sports gambler.

That sort of cognitive dissonance around gambling is familiar in Britain. If gambling takes place in one of the thousands of bookmakers' shops on the country's high streets, it is viewed as a social blight, a troubling and pernicious addiction. If it takes place at Royal Ascot, and you are wearing a nice hat, it is the social event of the season.

The election scandal has resonated with voters not because they disapprove of all gambling, experts said, but because of what it suggested about the ethics of the governing party.

"It encapsulates what everyone was already thinking," said Mr. Twyman. "It reinforces an existing narrative that was built around the historic issues from Partygate. And it has an opportunity cost: People are talking about this, rather than what the Conservatives want them to be talking about."

The extent to which it has cut through to ordinary people is breathtaking, according to Mr. Tryl of More in Common. Its data suggests that the betting scandal, along with Mr. Sunak's "gaffes" around D-Day and his comments about cable TV, have become the defining topics of the campaign.

The allegations have not made much difference in the polls, but that should be scant relief for the Conservatives, Mr. Tryl said, because it did not reflect how little the public cares, but how much of the electorate had already turned against his party. "A lot of people had already gone," he said.

That, certainly, is the bookmakers' view: The Conservatives last week were 70/1 to retain power on Thursday.

## WORLD

## U.S. presses to avert wider Mideast conflict

WASHINGTON

## Diplomacy aims to prevent full-on war between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon

BY MICHAEL CROWLEY,  
JULIAN E. BARNES  
AND AARON BOXERMAN

The United States is in the midst of an intense diplomatic push to prevent full-on war between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon, as the risks rise that either side could initiate a broader regional fight.

In recent days, U.S. officials have pressed their Israeli counterparts and passed messages to Hezbollah's leaders with the goal of averting a wider regional conflict that they fear could draw in both Iran and the United States.

In a post on X late Friday, Iran's mission to the United Nations threatened an "obliterating war" if Israel undertook a full-scale attack in Lebanon, and said that "all options," including the involvement of Iran-backed armed groups across the Middle East, were "on the table."

Israel's defense minister, Yoav Gallant, met with several Biden administration officials in Washington last week, in large measure to discuss the escalating tensions along Israel's northern border with Lebanon. That visit followed one the week before by Israel's national security adviser, Tzachi Hanegbi, and its minister of strategic affairs, Ron Dermer.

Also last month, a senior White House official, Amos Hochstein, who has assumed an informal diplomatic role mediating between the two sides, visited Israel and Lebanon. Mr. Hochstein warned Hezbollah, which is supported by Iran, that the United States would not be able to restrain Israel, should it commit to an all-out war with the militia group.

Archrivals for decades, Israel and Hezbollah have frequently exchanged fire along Israel's northern border. After the Hamas-led attacks on Oct. 7 let to a blistering Israeli assault in Gaza, Hezbollah began firing at Israel, mainly against Israeli military targets in northern Israel to show solidarity with Hamas, which is also backed by Iran.

The fighting has intensified in recent weeks, and Israel's reduced combat operations in Gaza, where it has greatly weakened Hamas, have freed up more of its forces for a possible offensive in the north.

The nightmare scenario for U.S. officials would be an escalation in which, for a second time, Iran and Israel directly exchange blows. In another such round, the United States might not be able to control the escalatory tit-for-tat as it did in April.

For now, U.S. officials believe that both Israel and Hezbollah would prefer to reach a diplomatic solution.

During his visit to Washington, Mr. Gallant told officials in the Biden administration that Israel did not want a full-



DIEGO IBARRA SANCHEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

scale war with Hezbollah but that it was prepared to hit the group hard if provoked much further.

Among the officials who met with Mr. Gallant were Mr. Hochstein, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and the Central Intelligence Agency director, William J. Burns.

"The U.S. priority is de-escalation," said David Schenker, a former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs in the Trump administration. "Neither side wants a war."

Hezbollah was formed with help from Iran to fight the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon after Israel invaded the country in 1982. A much more formidable fighting force than Hamas, Hezbollah has amassed thousands of rockets capable of devastating Israeli cities.

American intelligence agencies assess that Hezbollah is intent on showing support for Hamas by striking across the border but has been trying to avoid giving Israel an excuse to undertake a cross-border incursion.

U.S. officials believe the Israeli government is divided over the wisdom of opening a bigger front in the north. Some Israeli officials, including Mr. Gallant, have argued that after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks Israel should have responded by trying to destroy both Ha-



HAIYUN JIANG / THE NEW YORK TIMES

mas and Hezbollah. Mr. Gallant's position has since shifted, according to American officials. He now says opening a new front would be ill-advised, the officials said.

But U.S. officials and analysts say the risk that the war might spread remains dangerously high.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel is facing growing political pres-

sure to re-establish security in northern Israel, from which some 60,000 residents have been evacuated. Many are hoping to return to the area before the new school year begins in September, but most say they will not feel safe enough to go back as long as Hezbollah's attacks continue.

Adding to the risk is uncertainty among the United States, Israel, Hezb-

A U.N. vehicle, above, driving through the heavily damaged village of Kfar Kila, in southern Lebanon, last month. At left, Amos Hochstein, right, a White House official who has warned Hezbollah that the U.S. would not be able to restrain Israel in an all-out war with the group.

lah and Iran about one another's true intentions.

"There is a possibility of pulling this latest escalation and expansion of the conflict back from the brink," warned Suzanne Maloney, director of the foreign policy program at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "But there are four actors engaged in a dangerous game of chicken, and the prospect for miscalculation is high."

"Many in Washington and elsewhere have underestimated the risk tolerance of the current Iranian leadership," she added.

U.S. officials do not have direct contact with Hezbollah because the United States considers it a terrorist group. Mr. Hochstein delivers his messages to its leaders through Shiite Lebanese politicians informally aligned with the group.

"He carried a very strong message, which is that if you think that we can dictate what they do or not, you're wrong,"

said Ed Gabriel, president of the American Task Force on Lebanon, a nonprofit organization that supports democracy in Lebanon and U.S.-Lebanon ties. "You have to understand that America does not have the leverage to stop Israel."

Mr. Gabriel, a former U.S. ambassador to Morocco, said he had direct knowledge of the communication. A U.S. official confirmed that Mr. Hochstein had delivered the message.

In addition to urging both sides to show restraint, Mr. Hochstein has been trying to persuade Hezbollah to withdraw its forces farther back from Israel's border, as required by a United Nations Security Council resolution passed after a 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah.

On June 23, Mr. Netanyahu said in a televised interview that Israel was demanding "the physical distancing of Hezbollah" from the border to remove the threat posed by the armed group.

**"There are four actors engaged in a dangerous game of chicken, and the prospect for miscalculation is high."**

"I hope we are not forced to do so militarily, but if we are — we will be up to the task," he said.

A larger clash between Israel and Lebanon could be devastating for both sides. Israel inflicted so much damage on Lebanon in 2006 that the group's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, said he would not have conducted the operation that led to the war, if he had known the damage that would result. But Israel would emerge bloodied as well. Hezbollah claims it could launch 3,000 rockets and missiles a day, a barrage with the potential to overwhelm Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system.

And even if Iran did not become directly involved, its other proxy forces, including Shiite militias in Iraq and Houthi militants in Yemen, could step up their attacks on Israel and U.S. interests.

Analysts and officials say that a halt to the fighting in Gaza would be the surest way to defuse the friction between Israel and Hezbollah. But a recent plan to stop the fighting endorsed by Mr. Biden and the Security Council is in doubt, following added demands by Hamas and equivocal statements by Mr. Netanyahu.

Mr. Hanegbi, Israel's national security adviser, said Mr. Hochstein was optimistic that Israel's plan to transition to lower-intensity fighting in Gaza after ending its offensive in Rafah could open a diplomatic window for a truce with Hezbollah.

"He believes that this will provide Hezbollah with a ladder with which it can climb down from its daily solidarity with the battle in Gaza," Mr. Hanegbi said on Tuesday during a discussion at Reichman University in Herzliya. "And that means it will be possible to talk about a settlement in the north."

Michael Crowley and Julian E. Barnes reported from Washington, and Aaron Boxerman from Jerusalem.

## Reformist reaches runoff in Iranian presidential election

## Voting sets up a contest with an ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator

BY FARNAZ FASSIHI,  
ALISSA J. RUBIN  
AND RUSSELL GOLDMAN

A reformist candidate critical of many of the Iranian government's policies, including the mandatory head scarf law, will compete this week against a hard-line conservative in a runoff election for the country's presidency, Iran's interior ministry announced on Saturday. The runoff follows a special vote called after the death in May of the previous leader, Ebrahim Raisi, in a helicopter crash.

A second round of voting, which will pit the reformist, Masoud Pezeshkian, against Saeed Jalili, an ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator, will take place on Friday. The runoff was in part the result of low voter turnout and a field of three main candidates, two of whom competed for the conservative vote. Iranian law requires a winner to receive more than 50 percent of all votes cast.

The majority of Iranians, 60 percent, according to the interior ministry, did not vote on Friday, in what analysts and aides to the candidates said was largely an act of protest against the government for its ignoring their demands for meaningful change.

A prominent Iranian economist, Siamak Ghassemi, said on social media that the voters were sending a clear message. "In one of the most competitive presidential elections, where reformists and conservatives came to the field with all their might, a 60 percent majority of Iranians are through with reformist and conservatives."

Iran is facing multiple challenges, both domestic turmoil and international tensions. Its economy is cratering under punishing Western sanctions, its citizens' freedoms are increasingly curtailed and its foreign policy is largely shaped by hard-line leaders.

The campaign, which initially included six candidates — five conservatives and one reformist — was notable for



Saeed Jalili, an ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator, left, and Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist candidate, will face each other in a runoff election for Iran's presidency.

how candidly those issues were discussed and a public willingness to attack the status quo. In speeches, televised debates and round-table discussions, the candidates criticized government policies and ridiculed rosy official assessments of Iran's economic prospects as harmful delusions.

Public doubt of any new president's ability to bring change was reflected in the paltry turnout, a historic low for presidential elections and even less than the reported level of 41 percent in parliamentary elections this year. The low totals will be a blow to the country's governing clerics, who made voter participation a marker of the vote's perceived legitimacy and had hoped to achieve a 50 percent turnout.

In the official results announced on Saturday, Dr. Pezeshkian led with 10.4 million votes (42.4 percent), followed by Mr. Jalili at 9.4 million (38.6 percent). A third conservative candidate, Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf, the current speaker of Parliament and former mayor of Tehran, was a distant third at 3.3 million (13.8 percent).

It remains unclear whether a runoff between two candidates representing different ends of the political spectrum

will inspire more voters to come out, when large numbers of Iranians see the candidates as part of a system they want to reject wholesale.

"This is going to be a very difficult and challenging week," Mohammad Mobin, an analyst in Tehran who worked on the campaign of Dr. Pezeshkian, said on Saturday. "To get voters out we have to be strategic."

Simple math would seem to indicate that Mr. Jalili would surpass 50 percent if he picked up Mr. Ghalibaf's votes. But in earlier polling, many of those voting

**Public doubts about any president's ability to bring change was reflected in the turnout.**

for Mr. Ghalibaf said they would not support Mr. Jalili. And Dr. Pezeshkian might pick up votes from those dreading the prospect of a Jalili presidency.

In a neighborhood in north Tehran on Saturday, a group of men discussed the election results, and the prospects for the runoff, over coffee. One of them, Farzad Jafari, 36, predicted a higher turnout in the next vote. He and others



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARASH KHAMOUSHI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

also debated whether Mr. Jalili would be able to unite the conservative vote in a head-to-head contest, or if even more voters would emerge to back the reformist option offered by Dr. Pezeshkian.

Mr. Jafari said he thought many of those who, like him, sat out Friday's voting might well be drawn back for the runoff. "I did not want to vote at all because they excluded those who should've been in the race — they were mostly reformers," he said. "But more people will vote next time in the next round, and those who cast a blank vote, or who didn't vote will come."

Besides domestic pressures, Iran's leaders are also facing an especially volatile time in the region: Israel's war in Gaza against Hamas, an Iranian-backed militant group and an escalation in skirmishes between Israel and Hezbollah pit two of Iran's proxy forces against Israel, its sworn enemy.

Despite the critical rhetoric of the campaign, the candidates were all members of the Iranian political establishment, approved to run by a committee of Islamic clerics and jurists. All but one, Dr. Pezeshkian, were considered conservatives close to the country's su-

preme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Mr. Jalili is probably the candidate closest to Mr. Khamenei. He leads the ultra-right-wing Paydari party and represents the country's most hard-line ideological views in domestic and foreign policy. Mr. Jalili has said he does not believe Iran needs to negotiate with the United States for economic success.

Dr. Pezeshkian is a cardiac surgeon and veteran of the Iran-Iraq war who served in Parliament and as Iran's health minister. After his wife died in a car accident, he raised his children as a single father and never remarried. This and his identity as an Azeri, one of Iran's ethnic minorities, have endeared him to many voters.

Dr. Pezeshkian was endorsed by a former reformist president, Mohammad Khatami, and he has expressed openness to nuclear negotiations with the West, framing the debate as an economic issue with the ultimate aim of escaping economic sanctions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

After a bitter public spat, Mr. Ghalibaf issued a statement on Saturday endorsing Mr. Jalili and asked his voters to do the same to ensure victory for the conservative camp.

By stacking the deck to increase the chances of a conservative's victory, Mr. Khamenei signaled his desire for a second in command whose outlook mirrored his own and who would continue the hard-line agenda of Mr. Raisi.

The low voter turnout reflected widespread apathy among Iranians, whose frustration has been intensified by the government's violent crackdowns on protesters demanding change and its inadequate response to the toll that decades of sanctions have wreaked on the country's economy, shrinking Iranians' purchasing power.

Although a new president could soften the enforcement of the head scarf mandate, as Mr. Khatami and a moderate president, Hassan Rouhani, did in their terms in office, it is unlikely that the law would be annulled.

That is largely because Iran is a theocracy with parallel systems of governance, in which elected bodies are supervised by appointed councils made up of Islamic clerics and jurists. And major state policies on nuclear, military and foreign affairs are decided by the country's supreme leader, Mr. Khamenei.

The president's role is focused on domestic policy and economic matters, but it is still an influential position.

In Gaza, the war between Israel, a U.S. ally, and Hamas has drawn the United States, Iran and Israel's foreign proxies into closer conflict. Iran sees its use of these groups as a way of extending its power, but many citizens, particularly in the cities, see little value in their leaders' strategy and believe the economy will recover only through sustained diplomacy and the lifting of sanctions. "We are in a Third World country and we are sitting on top of so much wealth," said Vahid Arafati, 38, a coffee shop owner in Tehran, after he voted on Friday. "For instance the Arab states are getting benefits from their wealth, but with our politics we cannot get anything."

Asked why he voted if he did not expect much change, he said, "Maybe I have a little hope." After a pause, he added: "Isn't it good to have a little hope?"

Lily Nikounazar contributed reporting.

# She needed an abortion; doctors flew her away

In U.S. states with bans, hospitals struggle to treat women with health risks

BY KATE ZERNIKE

Nicole Miller had gone to the emergency room in Boise, Idaho, after waking up with heavy bleeding in her 20th week of pregnancy. By afternoon, she was still leaking amniotic fluid and hemorrhaging and, now in a panic, struggling to understand why the doctor was telling her that she needed to leave the state to be treated.

"If I need saving, you're not going to help me?" she recalls asking. She remembers his answer vividly: "He told me he wasn't willing to risk his 20-year career."

Instead, that evening, hospital workers at St. Luke's Boise Medical Center put Ms. Miller on a small plane to Utah, where she said she gripped her husband's hand — scared of flying but more terrified that she would never see her young daughters again. "I just need to stay alive so I can be around for my two other kids," nurses reported her saying as she arrived at the hospital in Salt Lake City, 14 hours after she had arrived in the Idaho emergency room.

Only when she woke up the next morning did she understand, because a nurse told her, that she had been airlifted so she could have an abortion.

"I couldn't comprehend: I'm standing in front of doctors who know exactly what to do and how to help, and they're refusing to do it," Ms. Miller said in an interview, her first since going through the ordeal last fall.

On Thursday, the United States Supreme Court declined to decide whether states that ban abortions, like Idaho, must comply with a federal law that requires emergency room doctors to provide abortions necessary to protect the health of a pregnant woman.

The justices sent the question back to the lower courts for trial, and in the meantime reinstated a lower-court order saying that the federal law, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, did apply.

Abortion opponents accuse the Biden administration of trying to use the federal law to turn emergency rooms into "abortion havens." Exceptions to abortion bans, they say, already give doctors the same leeway to provide abortions in true medical emergencies.

The Biden administration's push to apply the law "is a P.R. stunt to spread the lie that pro-life laws prevent women from receiving emergency care," Katie Daniel, the state policy director for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, said after the court ruling on Thursday.

But doctors in Idaho and other states with near-total bans say that even with the renewed protection of federal law, they have little clarity about what medical emergencies are covered, and little reassurance that they will not face



"I couldn't comprehend: I'm standing in front of doctors who know exactly what to do and how to help, and they're refusing to do it."

Nicole and Michael Miller in Meridian, Idaho. When Ms. Miller began hemorrhaging, she was flown to Utah because Idaho has a ban on abortion and doctors were afraid to treat her. Above right, an ultrasound of the Miller's son.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATALIE BEHRING FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

charges, jail time, large fines and loss of their medical licenses if they provide care that a prosecutor later says was not necessary.

"The transfers and the difficulty finding OB-GYNs who are willing to do the care are going to continue," said Dr. Alison Haddock, the president-elect of the American College of Emergency Physicians, who left her job in Houston last week for a position in the Pacific Northwest, in part because of the difficulty of working under Texas' abortion ban.

Ms. Miller's case illustrates the struggle for doctors. When she arrived at the emergency room at St. Luke's in Boise just before 6 a.m. on Sept. 11, the federal law was in effect, because of the lower court ruling.

According to her account, which was

verified by The New York Times, she had placental abruption and her water had broken prematurely, but doctors at St. Luke's said they could not legally give her the care she needed. By the time they put her on the plane to Utah, they estimated she had lost a liter of blood.

Doctors at St. Luke's, Idaho's largest hospital system and biggest employer, say there was even more uncertainty after the Supreme Court temporarily suspended the law in January. In the four months after that, the hospital airlifted six pregnant women to other states for care; the previous year, there had been just one, presumably Ms. Miller. (The hospital declined to discuss her case specifically, citing privacy laws.)

Raúl Labrador, Idaho's attorney gen-

eral, a Republican, has questioned those numbers, noting that the doctors were not under oath when they provided them. "I would hate to think that St. Luke's or any other hospital is trying to do something like this just to make a political statement," he said after the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case in April.

Ms. Miller, now 39, will tell her story under oath this fall, as a fact witness in a lawsuit brought against the state by the Center for Reproductive Rights. "I want people to know that this can happen to anyone, it can happen to your sister, your wife or your daughter," she said. "I never expected this to happen to me."

She and her husband, Michael, had debated whether to have a third child. It took longer than expected, but they



were thrilled when she became pregnant by intrauterine insemination, and even more excited when they found out they were having a boy.

They had already named him — Maddox David — when Ms. Miller started spotting at around 17 weeks of pregnancy. Her obstetrician could see from ultrasounds that she was leaking amniotic fluid and suggested a maternal fetal medicine specialist.

Before Ms. Miller could see the specialist, she began hemorrhaging. She got her mother to watch her girls, then she and Mr. Miller went to the emergency room.

Ms. Miller said that doctors told her that the fetus still had a heartbeat and that she would need to leave Idaho for care. They transferred her first to a labor and delivery triage unit, where doctors said the fetus was in danger. As the doctor told Ms. Miller that he could not risk his career to give her the care she needed, the medical student standing next to him cried. "I'm assuming that was because she was in shock as well as to what was happening," Ms. Miller said.

No one mentioned abortion, or termination, she said. "It was, 'We need to get you to a place where you have all of your options.'"

Ms. Miller knew little at the time about the Idaho law that bans abortion except to prevent the death of a pregnant woman, for some nonviable pregnancies, or in some cases of rape and incest.

Looking back, she can see that the law placed the doctor in a difficult position. "They have a lot of risk as well," she said. "But it doesn't take away from how it traumatized me to be in a hospital where you are supposed to be taken care of — and to be told, 'We can't do anything for you.'"

She was taken by ambulance to the plane with her husband, a nurse and a paramedic. The nurse "just kept looking at me and shaking his head that I was going to be OK and that he had me, because he could physically see how terrified I was," Ms. Miller said. "He really was the first person that day that

showed any kind of compassion."

Ms. Miller's mother and daughters raced by car to meet them in Salt Lake City, a five-hour drive.

In Salt Lake City, the procedure, a dilation and evacuation, went smoothly. Ms. Miller was discharged two days later; she and her husband returned days after that to get the remains of the fetus.

Doctors and hospitals in Idaho say they, too, have been on what the chief executive of the state's medical association, Susie Pouliot Keller, called a "roller coaster" since the overturning two years ago of Roe v. Wade, which had guaranteed the right to abortion, led to Idaho's ban.

The state has lost nearly a quarter of its OB-GYNs and more than half its maternal-fetal medicine specialists since abortion bans took effect two years ago, many citing the uncertainty and difficulty of providing necessary care under the ban.

The Supreme Court's decision last week offered some relief, said Dr. Duncan Harmon, an OB-GYN at St. Luke's. Still, he said, there are cases where the law does not make clear if an abortion is allowed.

He has to consider the threat of criminal penalties and jail time, for himself and his family. "I want to work in the best way I can to care for my patients, but my top priority is to my family," he said. "I would love to be a martyr for my job, but not all of us can do so."

Ms. Miller has seen a maternal fetal medicine specialist to discuss trying again for a third child.

The doctor told her that the risk of placental abruption, while low, was slightly higher for women who had experienced it before.

"It's something that I struggle with every day," Ms. Miller said. "Because as much as I want to try again to have another baby, I also have two little girls that need me."

She added: "If I were to end up in that situation again, it could go in any direction. The fact that I don't have someone here that I could fully trust to help me, it seems like an impossible decision."

# Rulings sharply curtail environmental agency's power

It has been a prime target for conservative activists fighting rules on pollution

BY CORAL DAVENPORT

A spate of decisions over the past two years by the U.S. Supreme Court has significantly impaired the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to limit pollution in the air and water, regulate the use of toxic chemicals and reduce the greenhouse gases that are heating the planet.

This term, the court's conservative supermajority handed down several rulings that chip away at the power of many federal agencies.

But the environmental agency has been under particular fire, the result of a series of cases brought since 2022 by conservative activists who say that E.P.A. regulations have driven up costs for industries as varied as electric utilities and home building. Those arguments have resonated among justices skeptical of government regulation.

On Friday, the court ended the use of what is known as the Chevron doctrine, a cornerstone of administrative law for 40 years that said courts should defer to government agencies to interpret unclear laws. That decision threatens the authority of many federal agencies to regulate the environment and also health care, workplace safety, telecommunications, the financial sector and more.

But more remarkable have been several decisions by the court to intervene to stop environmental regulations before they were decided by lower courts or even before they were implemented by the executive branch.

On Thursday, the court said the E.P.A. could not limit smokestack pollution that blows across state borders under a measure known as the "good neighbor rule." In that case, the court took the surprising step of weighing in while litigation was still pending at the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

The court also acted in an unusually preliminary fashion last year when it struck down a proposed E.P.A. rule known as Waters of the United States



A coal-fired power plant in Texas. One court ruling cut the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's authority on smokestack pollution.

that was designed to protect millions of acres of wetlands from pollution, acting before the regulation had even been made final.

Similarly, in a 2022 challenge to an E.P.A. climate proposal known as the Clean Power Plan, the court sharply limited the agency's ability to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, even though that rule had not yet taken effect.

That kind of intervention has little in the way of precedent. Usually, the Supreme Court is the last venue to hear a case, after arguments have been made and opinions have been rendered by lower courts.

"This court has shown an interest in making law in this area and not having the patience to wait for the cases to first come up through the courts," said Kevin Minoli, a lawyer who worked in the E.P.A.'s office of general counsel from

the Clinton through the Trump administrations. "They've been aggressive on ruling. It's like, we're going to tell you the answer before you even ask the question."

Collectively, those decisions now not only endanger many existing environmental rules but may prevent future administrations from writing new ones, experts say.

"These are among the worst environmental law rulings that the Supreme Court will ever issue," said Ian Fein, a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group. "They all cut sharply against the federal government's ability to enforce laws that protect us from polluters."

The march of environmental cases is not over: The court has agreed to hear a case next term that could limit the reach of National Environmental Policy Act, the 1970 law that requires federal agen-

cies to analyze whether their proposed projects have environmental consequences. Businesses and industries have long complained that the reviews can take years, inflate costs and be used by community groups to block projects.

For a coalition of industries, conservative advocacy groups and Republican attorneys general and their campaign donors, the recent decisions are a victory in a multiyear strategy to use the judicial system to influence environmental policy.

Many of the petitioners on the cases overlap: Participants include the Republican attorneys general from at least 18 states, the National Mining Association, the American Petroleum Institute and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The lead plaintiff on last year's wetlands protection case, the Pacific Legal Foundation, is part of the network of conservative research organizations

that have received funding from the billionaire Charles Koch, who is chairman of the petrochemical company Koch Industries and a champion of anti-regulatory causes.

"You see much more coordination now than you used to — coalitions of states and trade groups to change administrative law," said Damien M. Schiff, a lawyer with the Pacific Legal Foundation. "Trade groups, the chamber, P.L.F., we very consciously take cases that we hope will win in a precedent-setting way. The strategy, the tactics are the same. It's coordinated internally."

The Supreme Court has "shown a greater willingness to exercise its authority earlier in the litigation process," Mr. Schiff said.

The plaintiffs are also formulating strategies for the future.

President Biden has pledged that the United States will cut its carbon dioxide pollution in half by 2030 and eliminate it by 2050, which scientists say all major economies must do if the world is to avoid the most deadly and costly impacts of climate change. This year, the E.P.A. has rushed to complete new rules to slash pollution from cars, trucks and power plants and from methane leaks at oil and gas wells.

If he wins a second term, Mr. Biden wants to cut emissions from steel, cement and other heavy industries that have never been required to reduce their planet-warming emissions.

But the string of recent losses before the Supreme Court could make it difficult for the E.P.A. to follow through on those plans.

"There has been a steady erosion of environmental law," said Patrick Parienteau, an expert on environmental law at Vermont Law School. "These decisions mean that Biden, if he gets a second term, is not going to be able to do much else on the environment, particularly on climate."

Christine Todd Whitman, a onetime Republican and former governor of New Jersey who served as the administrator of the E.P.A. during the George W. Bush administration, said that environmental regulations sometimes could go too far and needed to be tempered by courts. But she said she considered the Supreme Court's recent decisions alarming.

"What this activist conservative court is now doing, which really upsets me, is trying to implement a political agenda," Ms. Whitman said. "They are looking for an opportunity to make a statement."

Carrie Severino, president of the Judicial Crisis Network, said in a statement that the legal decisions properly shift authority over decisions with great economic impact from the executive to the legislative branch.

"For too long, unaccountable bureaucrats in D.C. have been imposing destructive regulations that harm farmers, fishermen and countless small business owners who are already struggling to survive in our global economy, and the Supreme Court has an opportunity to restore accountability to that process by putting power back in the hands of Congress, where it belongs," she said.

"It's like, we're going to tell you the answer before you even ask the question."

On that last point, environmentalists and conservatives say they agree: If the federal government wants to protect the environment, Congress should update existing laws and pass new legislation.

The nation's bedrock environmental laws, the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act, were both written more than 50 years ago.

Since then, Congress has passed one major law to address climate change, the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act. It includes more than \$370 billion in incentives for clean energy technologies, including wind and solar power and electric vehicles. Climate experts call it a strong first step in cutting the nation's emissions, but say that far more is needed to eliminate them entirely in the next 25 years.

"The agencies for more than 30 years have needed to use old, existing laws to deal with new environmental problems," said Michael Gerrard, director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. "And this new court is now making that extraordinarily difficult. Unless Congress is extremely specific, agencies can't act. But since Congress is largely immobilized, this in turn freezes what they can do."

## WORLD



President Biden, with his wife, Jill, arriving in New York on Saturday for a campaign reception. His campaign has been in battle mode to reassure donors and supporters.

## Panic after the debate

BIDEN, FROM PAGE 6

The all-hands efforts, from Wilmington to Washington, showed the depths of the damage Mr. Biden did to his re-election campaign in a mere 90 minutes. His campaign has been criticized as insular and insistent, so the burst of activity signaled that the debate fallout had turned into a real crisis that spun those in his orbit into a frantic battle mode.

Former President Barack Obama came off the sidelines to offer words of encouragement. Mr. Biden made a mea culpa of sorts on the stump in North Carolina at a proof-of-life rally. And prominent surrogates, including those on many wish lists of replacements, made the case for Mr. Biden on cable news. Some of the most intense advocacy unfolded behind closed doors, at private fund-raisers and in a flurry of late-night and early-morning conversations.

By Saturday, their efforts appeared to have successfully slowed the tide of prominent Democrats calling for Mr. Biden to step aside. The president, for his part, grabbed microphones at campaign events, telling supporters and deep-pocketed donors that he knew he had flubbed the debate. And he repeatedly tried to flip the focus back onto Donald J. Trump's performance.

"I didn't have a great night," Mr. Biden told a group of donors in East Hampton on Saturday. "But neither did he."

### SELLING A "COMEBACK KID"

Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey, who hosted a private fund-raising dinner for the president at his home on Saturday evening, was among those receiving a call from a senior White House official.

"It was acknowledging that they had a tough night and also acknowledging that we've got to remember that this has been a heck of a run the past four years, and we've got to keep it going," he said in an interview, adding, "They have to hit the gas pedal hard."

At his event, which raised \$3.7 million for the campaign, Mr. Murphy introduced the president as "America's comeback kid."

As some Democrats dreamed up ways to draft another candidate on private text chains and in quiet conversations, top Biden officials told nearly everyone that there was no viable alternative and Democrats needed to stay focused on the threat posed by Mr. Trump.

Among those making the case were Mr. Biden's top White House advisers — Mr. Zients, Bruce Reed, Anita Dunn and Steve Ricchetti — who dialed up a list of legislative leaders, top donors and others, according to multiple people familiar with the calls. Top campaign aides said Mr. Biden would need to prove that he could be vigorous enough for the rigors of campaigning. But they reassured their allies that they believed he would be.

At a fund-raiser for House Democrats with Mr. Obama on Friday evening in New York, the overwhelming topics of discussion were Mr. Biden's failure on the debate stage and how the party should respond. Along with Representative Hakeem Jeffries, the House minority leader, Mr. Obama told donors the debate had been a tough night, but he emphasized the urgent task of defeating Mr. Trump, two attendees said.

Some attendees blamed Mr. Biden's aides for the debacle, arguing they should have never agreed to the format or to such a late start time. Representative Gregory W. Meeks of New York said many donors urged the elected officials in attendance to pressure Mr. Biden to end his run for re-election. Mr. Meeks said he counseled donors to calm down.

"I agree that it was a terrible, terrible night," he said, suggesting that some of that was because Mr. Biden tried to



On his way to meet with a billionaire donor in the Hamptons, N.Y., Mr. Biden passed signs urging him to drop out of the race.

cram too much information into his answers.

"Donors are very concerned," Mr. Meeks said. "I had a number of them come and said that they were panicked, to be quite honest with you, that we had to do something, we had to do something now. And others who came up to me and said it would be a mess to do something now."

As Mr. Obama was trying to reassure donors, they were buzzing among themselves about an editorial posted online around the time of the event by The New York Times editorial board calling for Mr. Biden to step aside, according to two attendees. It followed other such calls from media figures Mr. Biden follows, including MSNBC's Joe Scarborough and The Times columnist Thomas Friedman.

For months, Democrats have, mostly quietly, worried about Mr. Biden's capacity for campaigning at his current age and governing until age 86 if he wins a second term. A full 45 percent of Democrats did not want him to be the nomi-

**"Donors are very concerned. I had a number of them come and said that they were panicked."**

nee in the days before the debate, according to the latest poll by The Times and Siena College, worries that were most likely only deepened by his performance.

Democratic officials were awaiting what the first wave of post-debate polls would show. For now, there seemed to be a sense among top Democrats that there was little they could do.

One of Mr. Biden's top advisers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preserve relationships, said the idea that a younger candidate could replace Mr. Biden and still beat Mr. Trump in November was akin to a "D.C. parlor fantasy." The adviser compared that hope to the speculation that Nikki Haley or other Republicans could have knocked Mr. Trump off the Republican ticket.

Several advisers said a second debate, scheduled for September, should still happen. They said the president

should focus on asserting himself against Mr. Trump, rather than trying to explain the full Biden agenda.

### THE FIRST 24 HOURS

The effort to stop Democrats from fleeing the campaign started before Mr. Biden had even finished his performance on the debate stage on Thursday night. Campaign war rooms established in Wilmington and Atlanta began pushing messages to reporters and surrogates, among them that Mr. Biden had no intention of leaving the race.

The next morning, Ms. O'Malley Dillon, the campaign chief, marched through the lobby of the Ritz-Carlton in Atlanta, flanked by Mr. Fulks and the campaign manager, Julie Chavez Rodriguez, to debrief some of the campaign's most loyal donors.

Later in North Carolina, Mr. Biden closed a rally with an acknowledgment of his age and limitations, transforming a scheduled rally in Raleigh into a performance that could be clipped and blasted across social media.

"I don't walk as easy as I used to. I don't speak as smoothly as I used to," Mr. Biden said at the rally. But, he added, "I would not be running again if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul I can do this job."

At 2:36 p.m. Friday, the Biden team got one of its most important boosts: A supportive message from Mr. Obama. "Bad debate nights happen. Trust me, I know," Mr. Obama wrote on social media.

"That statement was huge," said Representative Ro Khanna of California, a member of Mr. Biden's national advisory board.

At the all-staff meeting on Friday afternoon, top campaign officials — Ms. O'Malley Dillon, Ms. Chavez Rodriguez, Mr. Fulks and Rob Flaherty, another deputy campaign manager — told the staff that they understood they were facing a deluge of concern and criticism from friends, family and fellow supporters.

"We're not asking you guys to pull the wool over your eyes about what you saw," said Mr. Fulks, according to the recording.

Kelley Robinson, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said Biden aides

called after the debate with members who needed to be reminded the stakes of this election. She joined the president at an annual LGBTQ+ gala on Friday night in New York City.

### "I DIDN'T HAVE A GREAT NIGHT"

The next afternoon, at a Saturday webinar organized to reassure Democratic National Committee members, the party's national chairman, Jaime Harrison, spoke of the party's field operation and the \$27 million the Biden campaign had raised since the debate. He did not take questions, according to multiple participants, who said the committee's views on Mr. Biden's future remained mixed.

Throughout the weekend, the Biden operation was eager to present a picture of a unified party — maybe too eager.

On Saturday afternoon, the Biden team sent out a fund-raising solicitation from James Carville, the Democratic strategist who has argued that Mr. Biden shouldn't be the party's nominee.

"What really just set me into orbit was the day after his excuse for not doing well is that he's old. Well, that's the whole point," Mr. Carville said in an interview, adding an expletive. "It is safe to say there is a pushback, rally-around-the-flag moment here. But we'll see."

As Mr. Biden swung through the Hamptons to gobble up cash at the home of the billionaire hedge-fund manager Barry Rosenstein, he addressed his shortfalls onstage. "I understand the concern about the debate — I get it," he said. "I didn't have a great night." On his way there, his motorcade passed a group of people holding signs that read, "Please drop out for U.S.," and "We love you but it's time."

By Saturday evening, Ms. O'Malley Dillon wrote a memo accusing "the beltway class" of counting on Mr. Biden prematurely. "If we do see changes in polling in the coming weeks, it will not be the first time that overblown media narratives have driven temporary dips in the polls," she wrote.

She made no mention of the more than 50 million Americans who watched Mr. Biden's sputtering performance in real time.

Kate Kelly, Katie Glueck and Kenneth P. Vogel contributed reporting.

## Money talks for those vying for Trump ticket

Hopefuls try to convince candidate that their donors could help him win again

BY MICHAEL C. BENDER AND THEODORE SCHLEIFER

During his 2016 campaign, Donald J. Trump orchestrated a takeover of the Republican Party in part by blasting wealthy political donors as the root of corruption and delivering a populist message that appealed to working-class voters.

Eight years later, one of his key decision points in choosing a running mate is connections to the superrich.

As the end of the selection process approaches, with an announcement expected in the next two weeks after months of suggestion and misdirection, Republican hopefuls are looking to convince Mr. Trump that they have the financial backing behind them that could help swing the race.

There are other factors that could make for a good match. Mr. Trump is said to be considering candidates with discipline on the campaign trail, who will not steal his precious spotlight and would fare well in a debate with Vice President Kamala Harris.

But the money definitely matters — and some Republican donors with direct access to Mr. Trump have left unmistakable fingerprints on his process. Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, for example, became a top contender late in the selection process after persistent lobbying from Steve Wynn, the billionaire former casino mogul who is close to Mr. Trump. Mr. Wynn has also played a role in persuading some other donors, such as Elon Musk, to be more supportive of the campaign.

Many vice-presidential hopefuls, including some outside contenders wise to the financial dynamic, have responded, boasting — and sometimes exaggerating — the amount they could raise for the ticket. The posturing, in some cases, has drawn sneers from some Republican donors, who feel like they are being used as pawns in internecine warfare.

But the most successful financial jockeying has come from the three contenders who are, as of now, viewed as the top candidates for the job: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida.

Mr. Burgum, a former software executive who sold a company to Microsoft, has an estimated net worth of at least \$100 million, according to Forbes, suggesting he could inject some of his fortune into the race. He spent more than \$10 million on his own short-lived, long-shot presidential bid last year.

He has also sought to demonstrate his fund-raising potential for Mr. Trump by luring wealthy first-time donors to the president's corner. On Tuesday, Mr. Burgum hosted a video conference with donors where the campaign charged \$10,000 merely to join the call, and \$25,000 to participate in a question-and-answer session, according to a copy of the invitation.

Tom Siebel, a billionaire tech investor, wrote his first check to Mr. Trump — for \$500,000 — because Mr. Burgum was in

the mix for the Republican ticket. Dick Boyce, a longtime Republican fundraiser in Silicon Valley who is a former chairman for both Burger King and Del Monte Foods, said he had also made his second donation to Mr. Trump — a \$100,000 contribution — in part owing to his consideration of Mr. Burgum, who was a classmate at Stanford Business School.

"I'm inclined to do more with Doug in the V.P. position, and the complimentary nature of him and Trump would give confidence to a lot more people, too," Mr. Boyce, a former partner at Bain & Company, said in an interview. "The vice president is someone who you could picture being president, not someone who might deliver a certain state, and sometimes that gets lost."

Then there is Mr. Vance. A former venture capitalist, Mr. Vance organized a \$12 million fund-raising event last month in Silicon Valley, part of an attempt to show his ability to draw tech industry donations.

Despite those efforts and Mr. Vance's rise in Trumpworld, Mr. Vance's single biggest donor remains a glaring holdout: the Silicon Valley megadonor Peter Thiel.

Mr. Thiel, who put \$15 million into an effort to elect Mr. Vance to the Senate in 2022 and used to employ him, said definitively on Thursday, for the first time, that he would not be a major financial supporter of Mr. Trump, as he had been in 2016. And it didn't sound as if naming Mr. Vance to the ticket would change that.

"If you hold a gun to my head, I will vote for Trump," Mr. Thiel said at the Aspen Ideas Festival. "I'm not going to give any money to his super PAC."

Mr. Rubio, who built a formidable fund-raising operation for his own presidential bid in 2016, could be an attractive option for the Republican donors and groups who helped plow more than \$146 million into an effort to nominate former Gov. Nikki Haley of South Carolina, who was Mr. Trump's last remaining primary opponent this year.

And then there are outside contenders like Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, who has aggressively sought to position himself as a darling of the donor class, claiming support from people including Mr. Singer and Larry Ellison, the Oracle founder.

Just over a week ago in Washington, Mr. Scott hosted a gathering for supporters of his new policy group that, three attendees say, had little subtlety as to its purpose.

The event, in their view, was an overt show of his support among well-heeled Republican donors. Speakers included billionaires like the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen, the billionaire investor Bill Ackman, the oil developer Tim Dunn and Marc Rowan, the chief executive of the investment firm Apollo Global Management.

Some donors tied to the event have bristled at the way the Scott team has implicitly positioned them in the media as endorsers of a Trump-Scott ticket, according to a person close to these donors.

And though he drew big potential donors, many big Scott supporters say privately they are pessimistic about his chances.



PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



DOUG MILLS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Among the contenders to be on the Republican ticket with former President Donald J. Trump are Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, top, and Gov. Doug Burgum of North Dakota. Mr. Trump is expected to name his running mate in the coming weeks.

### CORRECTIONS

• An article on Wednesday about the prosecution in Russia of a playwright and a director misspelled the surname of a former art director of a Moscow literary festival.

He is Mikhail Durnenkov, not Dyurenkov.

• An article in the Saturday-Sunday edition about a new library in Manhattan that contains affordable housing units misidentified a river near which several towers will be built. They will be built near the Hudson and Harlem Rivers, not the Hudson and East Rivers.

# Opinion

## The West Bank is ready to explode

The war in Gaza could be winding down. Another crisis is brewing.



Nicholas Kristof

**QUSRA, WEST BANK** The West Bank village of Qusra was smoldering as I arrived. Clouds of black smoke swirled from a field where rampaging Israeli settlers had lit it on fire, while also setting fire to Palestinian homes and vehicles, according to Qusra residents.

"At any moment, we expect settlers to attack," said Abdel-Majeed Hassan, a salt-of-the-earth farmer in his 70s. He showed me the blackened ground where his car had been set on fire, the latest of four cars belonging to his family that he said settlers had destroyed.

Six residents of this village have been killed in such attacks since October, when the Israeli government responded to the Hamas terror attack from Gaza by imposing far harsher rule in the West Bank — more checkpoints, more raids, more Israeli settlements — and by giving armed settlers freer rein to attack Palestinian farmers. The result is a despair and fury that every Palestinian I spoke to predicted would lead to a bloody uprising.

I met Hassan in 2015, on one of my many trips here over the years. Despite enduring repeated attacks by settlers who coveted his land, he thought then that he could hang on to his family farm.

Now he's not so sure. His wife argues for abandoning their house for fear that settlers will firebomb it. After settlers smashed all their windows, the family installed heavy steel screens and shutters, but last month settlers still tried to force their way inside while his granddaughter was visiting. So now he tells his grandchildren not to visit, and he or his son stands watch all night, every night.

A few days before my visit, Hassan said, settlers set fire to his barn with his sheep inside. Hassan ran and extinguished the fire as settlers hurled stones: "Rocks were falling on my head like rain," he said. Others in the village confirmed his account.

That is life for Palestinians in the West Bank today.

There are places in the world with significantly worse oppression and killing, including in Arab countries like Sudan, Syria and Yemen that draw less attention or protest. But Israel's "state-backed settler violence," as Amnesty International describes it, is enforced by American weapons provided to Israel. When armed settlers terrorize Palestinians and force them off their land, as has happened to 18 communities since October, they sometimes carry American M16 rifles. Sometimes they are escorted by Israeli troops.

With Israel possibly winding down the most intensive phase of its war in Gaza, we should be paying much more attention to the crisis building in the more populous West Bank. The United Nations reports that 536 Palestinians, including 130 children, in the West Bank have been killed by Israeli forces or settlers in the last eight months. During the same period, seven Israeli soldiers and five settlers have been killed here by Palestinians.

One way of thinking of it: An average of about 60 Palestinians have been

killed each month in the West Bank since early October, in an area nominally at peace — six times the pace at which American soldiers were killed on average during the war in Afghanistan.

It could get much worse. Hassan warned that the West Bank is seething with so much frustration that "a big explosion is coming." Others predicted that this wouldn't be an organized rebellion but more of a spontaneous uprising, perhaps magnified by the possible collapse of the Palestinian Authority.

"There's a war in Gaza, but the big war will be here in the West Bank," Muamar Orabi, managing director of a West Bank news organization called Wattan, told me. Including East Jerusalem, the West Bank is home to three million Palestinians and 720,000 Jewish settlers.

Historically, Palestinians had few firearms, but that is changing. Military weapons are being smuggled into the West Bank, apparently mostly from

terror attack by Israeli extremist settlers." But Israel's far-right national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, suggested the killer "should get a medal of honor."

Older Palestinians like Hassan mostly don't want confrontation. I asked him what he does when settlers periodically cut down the trees in his olive orchard, and he smiled sadly.

"I replant," he said. "I do my best to calm this new generation," he said. "But I fear that one day they will no longer listen to me."

Again and again, I encountered that dynamic. Abdul Hakim Wadi, 53, preaches patience even after his brother, a chemist, and his nephew, a lawyer, were shot dead while in a funeral procession mourning four other Qusra residents killed the previous day. "We have been preventing the youth from doing anything," Wadi told me. But his 18-year-old son, Omar, thinks his dad is deluded.

"I have lost hope," Omar told me. The only thing Israelis understand, he



NICHOLAS KRISTOF/THE NEW YORK TIMES



TANYA HARBOUTA

Israel, and are sold on the black market.

"People think that the only path left is armed resistance," one young Palestinian man told me.

Extremists in the Israeli government are pressing ahead. When settlers invaded the farming village of Burqa in the West Bank last summer and shot dead a 19-year-old man, the U.S. State Department called it a "ter-

ror attack," his father told me, "because he says, 'your generation has ruined our lives.'"

**HANI OUDA, 70, THE MAYOR** of Qusra, believes in peace. "It's impossible for them to get rid of all Palestinians, and it's impossible for us to get rid of all Israelis," he told me. "The only solution is for us to live side by side."

But the hope seems beaten out of him. He wanted to show me his orchards, so he took me to a road and pointed to his land that he can no longer set foot on.

"If we go beyond here, we could get shot or arrested," he said. Then he took me to the community hall, built with German aid money but now burned and unusable. Some 200 settlers set fire to it this spring, when they also burned six homes and a bus, Ouda said. And now, he warned, "we are coming to horrible days" with "lots of bloodshed."

I don't know how to assess the risk. I see deep anger and frustration among West Bank Palestinians but also great fear and recognition that an uprising could be suicidal. Over the decades, I've often heard predictions of upheavals that never come to pass, while others, like the Tiananmen Square or Arab Spring movements, erupted with little warning.

What is clear is the deterioration in freedom and well-being in the West Bank since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel. The heightened repression feels partly opportunistic — a land grab — but it is also shaped by a determination that Israel will never again be vulnerable to massacres.

Israelis do have legitimate reason to be fearful, and Palestinians do throw rocks at settlers and occasionally kill or injure them. While on average fewer than one settler has been killed a month since Oct. 7, that's partly because settlers have guns, high walls and soldiers protecting them. Polls show growing support for Hamas on the West Bank, and many Israelis conclude that their survival depends on crushing Palestinians, not trusting them.

The village of Qusra has about 5,000

inhabitants, while the nearby Jewish settlement of Migdalim has about 600. One angry Qusra resident told me that it might take 2,000 Palestinian attackers, but they probably could overrun Migdalim if it came to that. So Migdalim settlers have a right to be nervous, but it's also true that settlers have earned the loathing directed at them.

Settlers in Migdalim did not respond to my requests for comment, but Shmuel Junger, who works with an organization that supports settlements, said in an email that it is the people of Qusra who have attacked Migdalim, not the other way around.

"After everything we witnessed on Oct. 7, do you still believe that Israelis shouldn't do everything in their power to protect their homes?" Junger asked.

That attitude reflects the tragic symmetry of the Middle East today. Israelis and Palestinians largely agree on just one point: The other side is untrustworthy, inhumane, illegitimate and extremist.

The final element of this symmetry is that each denies that there is any symmetry at all.

**THE ANGER ABOUT LAND THEFT** and settler violence is compounded by a growing economic crisis. The World Bank estimates that about 300,000 people in the West Bank have lost their jobs since Oct. 7.

The economic difficulties were compounded in May when a far-right Israeli cabinet minister, Bezalel Smotrich, began withholding Palestinian tax revenue from the Palestinian Authority. Along with other punitive financial measures taken by Israel, there are growing fears that the authority could collapse, but Smotrich is not concerned.

"If this causes the collapse of the P.A., let it collapse," he reportedly said.

The Biden administration, though, is alarmed. "If you saw the Palestinian Authority collapse and instability

spread across the West Bank, it's not just a problem for the Palestinians," said Matthew Miller, the State Department spokesman. "It is also a massive security threat for the state of Israel."

If the Palestinian Authority collapses, its security forces would no longer be there to gather intelligence and prevent attacks, and it's not clear what would happen to their guns.

President Biden and leaders of other Group of 7 nations called on Israel last month to release the tax funds. "Actions that weaken the Palestinian Authority must stop," the leaders said in their communiqué.

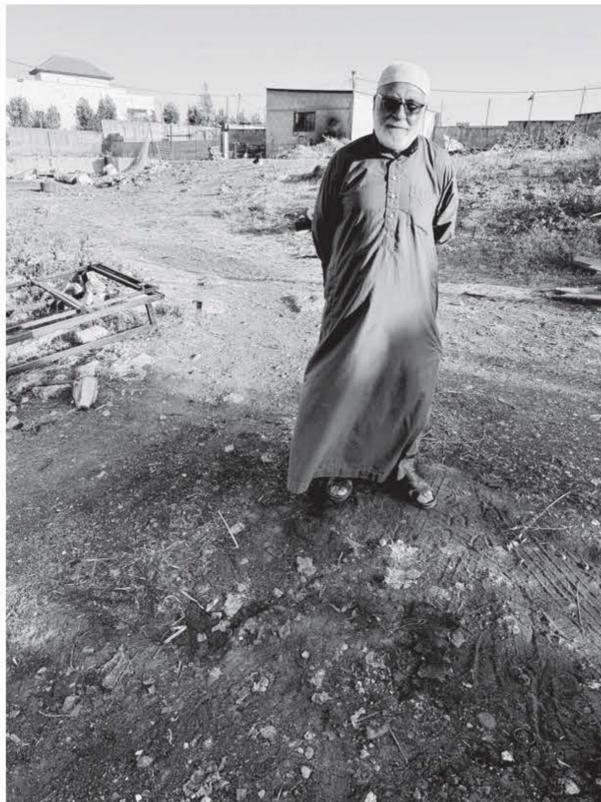
Palestinians believe that the Israeli right would like to provoke an explosion of violence and use it as an excuse for an ethnic cleansing.

For my part, I think a simpler explanation is more likely: Israel is once again acting shortsightedly, against its own security interests. To paraphrase what the former Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban said of Palestinians, the Israeli right never misses an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

Policy to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is immensely complex, with infinite room for nuance. I've focused here on the security dimension, for I believe it's in American and Israeli interests to create a Palestinian state. But one more thing must be said: The seizure and occupation of other people's land is *wrong*. And it is not wrong in a complicated, finely balanced way; it is simply, straightforwardly *wrong*.

**THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION** has spoken out against Israel's abuses in the West Bank, imposed financial sanctions on some violent settlers and withheld delivery of thousands of M16 rifles for fear that they would be handed out to settlers. Those steps are useful but inadequate. Biden didn't respond forcefully even when Israel in March announced one of the largest seizures of Palestinian land in the West Bank since the 1993 Oslo Accords.

I'm afraid that Biden's refusal to stand up more firmly to Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, **KRISTOF, PAGE 9**



NICHOLAS KRISTOF/THE NEW YORK TIMES

**From top, fields smoldering in Qusra, in the West Bank; Hani Ouda, the mayor of Qusra. Below, Abdel-Majeed Hassan, a Palestinian farmer, on the charred ground where he said his car was set on fire recently. His burned sheep shed is behind him.**

## OPINION

## The New York Times

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## How to make Russia pay for Ukraine? Take its cash.

Peter Coy

"To modern eyes, 19th-century wars protected commerce and finance to a degree that is almost unbelievably generous," the Cornell historian Nicholas Mulder wrote in his 2022 book, "The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War." During the Crimean War (1853-56), the British and Russians dutifully paid interest to the other on old debts even as they slaughtered each other on the battlefields. For civilized nations, a British government minister said, it was simply obvious that "public debts should be paid to an enemy during war."

Attitudes, practices and legal theories have clearly changed in the last 170 years. The question is, how much? How far will nations go today in using economic sanctions to punish their enemies? I'm interested in the case of, once again, Russia. It appears that the United States is willing to hit Russia over its invasion of Ukraine a lot harder than the Europeans are. That's putting stress on Western alliances.

Last week I interviewed Wally Adeyemo, the deputy Treasury secretary, who is the department's point person on economic sanctions. Mr.

**U.S. and E.U. leaders are divided over how far to go in the economic war against Putin.**

Adeyemo, who immigrated from Nigeria as a child with his family, has a law degree from Yale and a broad remit that includes national security as well as economic inequality. "Frankly, we're trying to put sand in the gears" of Russia's war machine, Adeyemo told me. "Early on, the president told us to focus on, what can we do to create the greatest cost for Russia and minimize the cost to others? I think we've done a fairly good job of doing both of those."

He acknowledged that Russia has partly evaded the sanctions placed on it since the war began in February 2022. It is trading more with China, India and Turkey and much less with Europe than before. It has put together a shadow fleet of oil tankers to export crude oil at prices above the cap that Ukraine's allies have attempted to impose. The International Monetary Fund predicts that Russia's economy will grow 3.2 percent this year — strikingly strong considering how many working-age men have left the country, are in military service or have been killed or wounded.

Mr. Adeyemo said that Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen regularly meets with him and other top officials to dream up new ways to hinder Russia. Electronic devices have to be left outside the door of the secure conference room where the meetings are held, he said, "so our friends in Russia don't know what we're thinking."

I asked him what should happen to about \$200 billion worth of Russian assets that are frozen in Euroclear, a Belgium-based institution that processes financial transactions. Under Euroclear's policies, Russia isn't entitled to interest earned on money that's trapped in its system. But what about the principal? Can that legally be seized to aid in the war effort?

In contrast to the gentlemanly practices followed during the Crimean War, it's accepted today that combatants are

entitled to grab assets belonging to the other side. The complication is that neither Euroclear nor Belgium nor any of the Group of 7 nations is at war with Russia. Only Ukraine is.

Grab the money anyway, some Americans say. Last year, Laurence Tribe, a Harvard professor emeritus of law, and four other scholars wrote that "any country that currently holds Russian assets should transfer them to Ukraine." Their 199-page report contended that "repurposing Russia's frozen reserves in that manner fully comports with existing legal authorities."

The G7 has said the assets will remain frozen until Russia ends its invasion and pays reparations for the damage it has inflicted on Ukraine. But Ukraine is in a fight for its life and needs money now, not after the damage is done.

Leaving the money in Euroclear runs the risk that Russia will demand it back as a condition for ending the fight, and it would be politically difficult for the West to resist that demand, which would essentially pit money against lives, Lee C. Buchheit, an American lawyer, and Paul Stephan, a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law, have argued. "We believe that it would be more prudent to remove this piece from the chessboard now before the politicians are compelled to face that cruel choice," they wrote last year.

I asked Mr. Stephan if the right to seize Russia's assets was a gray area in international law. "International law has nothing but gray areas," he said.

To the Europeans, the existence of legal gray areas is ample justification for taking things slowly. Veerle Colaert, a professor at Belgium's KU Leuven University, told me that "there are a lot of divergent opinions" on the lawfulness of an asset seizure. "The fear is that it would mean an escalation" and undermine the confidence of other nations in the security of the funds they move through Euroclear, she said. "The European Union wants to be on the safe side, mainly for political reasons," she said. "Euroclear have promoted themselves as being neutral."

Mr. Adeyemo and Ms. Yellen realize that they can push their allies only so hard. In the G7 summit in Apulia, Italy, last month, a tentative compromise was struck: A group of allies would collectively lend \$50 billion to Ukraine for the war effort, and the loan would be repaid with income from the Russian assets. That skates close to taking control of (some of) the assets without legally doing so.

"We're now implementing" that agreement and have instructions from G7 leaders to lock it down before the end of the year, Mr. Adeyemo told me. "That may seem like a while, but there's a lot of work that we need to do."

To me it's absurd that Russia and Britain paid interest to each other during the Crimean War, and only slightly less absurd today that Western nations are being so fastidious about respecting the property rights of Russia even as it pulverizes Ukraine.

I get that the Europeans want their institutions to be seen as reliable places to keep money, but the solution is for the G7 to present a united front. If all G7 members act together to seize Russian assets, Russia and other would-be evildoers won't be able to play one nation off against another. This is no time for diffidence.

PETER COY is a writer in Opinion.

## Take heart, Democrats: The contest for president is still winnable

Stuart Stevens

As a former Republican who spent decades pointing out flaws in the Democratic Party, I watch the current Democratic panic over President Biden's debate performance with a mix of bafflement and nostalgia.

It's baffling that so many Democrats are failing to rally around a wildly successful president after one bad night. But it does remind me of why Republicans defeated Democrats in so many races Republicans should have lost.

Donald Trump has won one presidential election. He did so with about 46 percent of the popular vote. (Mitt Romney lost with about 47 percent.) The Republican Party lost its mind and decided that this one victory negated everything we know about politics. But it didn't.

One debate does not change the structure of this presidential campaign. For all the talk of Mr. Biden's off night, what is lost is that Mr. Trump missed a great opportunity to reset his candidacy and greatly strengthen his position.

Mr. Trump lost the popular vote by a margin of seven million and needs new customers. He could have laid out a positive economic plan to appeal to middle-class voters feeling economic pressure. Instead, he celebrated his tax cuts for billionaires.

He could have reassured voters who are horrified, in the wake of Roe v. Wade's demise, by the stories of young girls who become pregnant by rape and then must endure extremist politicians eager to criminalize what was a constitutional right for two generations. But Mr. Trump bizarrely asserted that a majority pro-abortion-rights country hated Roe v. Wade and celebrated his role in replacing individual choice with the heavy hand of government.

He could have said he would accept the outcome of the next presidential election. He refused.

For 90 minutes, Mr. Trump unleashed a virulent anti-American rant. The America he lives in is a postapocalyptic hellscape of violence, with people "dying all over the place" — more "Mad Max" than "morning in America."

Is this how Americans see themselves? When we watch the American flag carried at the Olympics in Paris, are we to feel ashamed, not proud? When Ronald Reagan was president, he believed that to be born in America was to win life's lottery. Now, in Trump's America, are we victims, chumps, losers?



A watch party in San Francisco for the U.S. presidential election debate last Thursday.

JOSH EDELSON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

I don't think so. Mr. Trump has difficulty expanding his base because most Americans are still proud to be Americans. Most Americans do not wake up mad at the world, fearful to go outside their homes. What is it that you are supposed to hate the most — the record-high stock market or low unemployment?

At the Lincoln Project, we found that one of the most effective weapons against MAGA was asking voters, "Is this who you are?" Hold up a picture of Marjorie Taylor Greene, red-faced and screaming. Is this how you see yourself? Do you want to be the guy in the "Camp Auschwitz" sweatshirt storming the Capitol? Do you want your kids to think that being found liable for sexual abuse and being a felon are presidential qualities?

The Republican Party is at war with the modern world, and it is losing. What happened when Republicans

attacked Nike for its endorsement deal with Colin Kaepernick? Nike made a fortune. How is it possible to get in a fight with Disney, the happiness company?

This is a party that thought it was a good idea to go after Taylor Swift when it was already suffering from problems with female voters over the death of Roe. Seriously?

Before Thursday's debate, the presidential race was about the past versus the future. After the debate, it is about the past versus the future. And so it will be on Nov. 5.

A bad night for Mr. Biden doesn't change the fact that Mr. Trump opposes any mandatory vaccines for public school students. Do Americans really want to live through more polio, measles and whooping cough epidemics?

It's easy to be for your guy on good nights, but it doesn't mean much. The test is on bad nights.

Of all the Democratic pearl clutchers, the most disappointing and offensive are the Barack Obama insiders who can't bring themselves to do what Mr. Biden did for their old boss: cover

his back and fight. For them, politics is "Love Story," that one true and pure love when they were young and the future stretched out before them in glorious possibility. Every non-Obama candidate will forever be like a fourth marriage, regrettable and unsatisfying.

Gov. Gavin Newsom of California showed Democrats how to fight after the debate: "You don't turn your back because of one performance. What kind of party does that?"

Unfortunately, for the moment, it's much of the Democratic Party establishment. Many of the same people wrote off Mr. Biden in the 2020 Democratic primaries after he was crushed in Iowa and New Hampshire. Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina refused to panic, stuck by Mr. Biden and helped save the campaign. Let his courage and steadiness be a model. My one plea to my new friends abandoning Mr. Biden is simple: Suck it up and fight. It's not supposed to be easy.

STUART STEVENS is a former Republican political consultant who is now an adviser to the Lincoln Project.

## To serve his country, Biden must leave the race

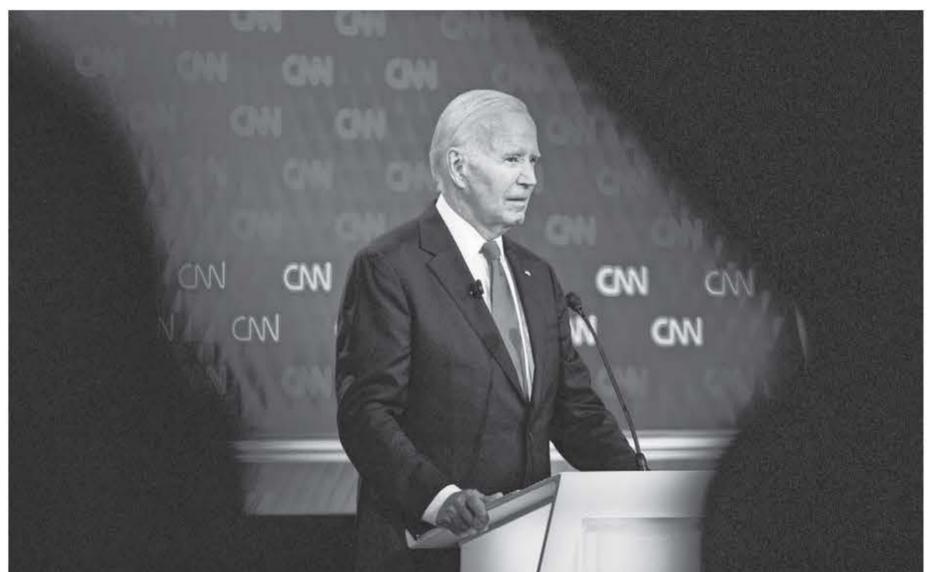
EDITORIAL, FROM PAGE 1

dency. There is no reason for the party to risk the stability and security of the country by forcing voters to choose between Mr. Trump's deficiencies and those of Mr. Biden. It's too big a bet to simply hope Americans will overlook or discount Mr. Biden's age and infirmity that they see with their own eyes.

If the race comes down to a choice between Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, the sitting president would be this board's unequivocal pick. That is how much of a danger Mr. Trump poses. But given that very danger, the stakes for the country and the uneven abilities of Mr. Biden, the United States needs a stronger opponent to the presumptive Republican nominee. To make a call for a new Democratic nominee this late in a campaign is a decision not taken lightly, but it reflects the scale and seriousness of Mr. Trump's challenge to the values and institutions of the country and the inadequacy of Mr. Biden to confront him.

Ending his candidacy would be against all of Mr. Biden's personal and political instincts. He has picked himself up from tragedies and setbacks in the past and clearly believes he can do so again. Supporters of the president are already explaining away Thursday's debate as one data point compared with three years of accomplishments. But the president's performance cannot be written off as a bad night or blamed on a supposed cold, because it affirmed concerns that have been mounting for months or even years. Even when Mr. Biden tried to lay out his policy proposals, he stumbled. It cannot be outweighed by other public appearances because he has limited and carefully controlled his public appearances.

It should be remembered that Mr. Biden challenged Mr. Trump to this verbal duel. He set the rules, and he insisted on a date months earlier than any previous general election debate. He understood that he needed to address longstanding public concerns about his mental acuity and that he needed to do so as soon as possible. The truth Mr. Biden needs to con-



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

front now is that he failed his own test.

In polls and interviews, voters say they are seeking fresh voices to take on Mr. Trump. And the consolation for Mr. Biden and his supporters is that there is still time to rally behind a different candidate. While Americans are conditioned to the long slog of multiyear presidential elections, in many democracies, campaigns are staged in the space of a few months.

It is a tragedy that Republicans themselves are not engaged in deeper soul-searching after Thursday's debate. Mr. Trump's own performance ought to be regarded as disqualifying. He lied brazenly and repeatedly about his own actions, his record as president and his opponent. He described plans that would harm the American economy, undermine civil liberties and fray America's relationships with other nations. He refused to promise that he would accept defeat, returning instead

to the kind of rhetoric that incited the Jan. 6 attack on Congress.

The Republican Party, however, has been co-opted by Mr. Trump's ambitions. The burden rests on the Democratic Party to put the interests of the nation above the ambitions of a single man.

Democrats who have deferred to Mr. Biden must now find the courage to speak plain truths to the party's leader. The confidants and aides who have encouraged the president's candidacy and who sheltered him from unscripted appearances in public should recognize the damage to Mr. Biden's standing and the unlikelihood that he can repair it.

Mr. Biden answered an urgent question on Thursday night. It was not the answer that he and his supporters were hoping for. But if the risk of a second Trump term is as great as he says it is — and we agree with him that

the danger is enormous — then his dedication to this country leaves him and his party only one choice.

The clearest path for Democrats to defeat a candidate defined by his lies is to deal truthfully with the American public: acknowledge that Mr. Biden can't continue his race, and create a process to select someone more capable to stand in his place to defeat Mr. Trump in November.

It is the best chance to protect the soul of the nation — the cause that drew Mr. Biden to run for the presidency in 2019 — from the malign warping of Mr. Trump. And it is the best service that Mr. Biden can provide to a country that he has nobly served for so long.

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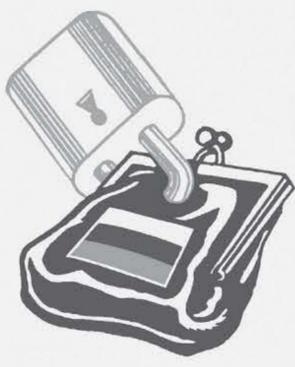


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# How some countries are helping people eat less junk food

Kat Morgan  
Mark Bittman

Whether you shop for food in a traditional grocery store, a big-box store, a bodega or a gas station, you'll have to contend with the reality that many if not most of your options are junk — highly processed foods often loaded with sugar, salt and chemical additives.

You'll also have to contend with a haze of aggressive marketing — words like “low fat,” “gluten-free,” “paleo,” “keto-friendly” and “a good source of fiber” — that doesn't answer the fundamental question: Is this food good for me? An orange is a simple enough choice, but a frozen dinner? There is little reliable guidance available for people who don't have the time, patience or skill to analyze the dense nutrition labels on food packaging.

What could help is a system giving consumers important nutrition information at a glance on the front of a package: a warning sign that a high-sugar soda or breakfast cereal product, for example, is an unhealthy choice. The bold move here would be to steer people away from food that's bad for them.

These kinds of labels, of course, are the last thing most large food manufacturers want on their products. But a few countries mostly in Latin America have begun to require or encourage such labeling, and there's some early evidence that it's already having a positive effect on the way people eat.

With some 60 percent of the American diet coming from processed foods — foods that have been linked to an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease and some cancers in the United States — it's time for our government to update our labels with warnings, too.

Not so long ago, the United States was a world leader in informative food labeling: In the 1960s, Congress passed legislation to mandate that food companies place ingredient lists on all products in interstate commerce. About seven years later, nutrition labeling was expanded for some foods to include the number of calories and amounts of protein, carbohydrates, fat and certain micronutrients. In 1990, the Nutrition Labeling and

Education Act, a response to the growing number of confusing nutritional claims on packages, required food companies to make consistent claims and include a standardized nutrition fact panel on their products.

But as a concession to industry Congress also allowed food producers, with approval from the Food and Drug Administration, to print claims about reduced disease risk on certain food labels. Oats, for example, could claim to “reduce cholesterol”; foods could be labeled “heart healthy” or indicate that they contain “antioxidants” that “help the immune system,” even though these assertions are overly simplistic.

Chile, Mexico, Brazil and dozens of other countries have worked to change food labeling. Research has suggested that these labels can help people understand nutritional quality and change their purchasing habits. Ultimately, the goal of the labels is to improve nutrition and reduce the consumption of ultra-processed foods.

**It's time to use warning labels to steer people away from food that's bad for them.**

After Chile adopted several regulations in 2016 that included advertising restrictions on unhealthy food, a ban on junk food and beverages in schools and warning labels, researchers found that the consumption of drinks high in things like sugar and sodium declined by nearly 25 percent. Researchers have also observed that warning labels led to reductions of sugar, sodium and saturated fat in the food supply. In Uruguay, a survey published in 2020 assessing the early effects of nutritional warnings found that 58 percent of participants who noticed the warning changed their decision about buying a product. Of those who changed their decision, 17 percent said they opted for a similar product with fewer warnings and 18 percent decided not to buy a similar product at all.

Chile and many other countries with front-of-package labels have a constitutional right to health. This helps give authorities the ability not just to implement warning labels but also to ban certain health claims and codify advertising restrictions. (Mexico's Supreme Court recently upheld its front-of-package labeling regulations in part because of the right to health.)



SEAN SUCHARA

In the United States, new labeling laws will be much more challenging to enact. But there's reason to believe that we might be ready for a change: In 2022, the White House announced that the F.D.A. would conduct research and propose a standardized system displaying nutrition information to

complement the nutrition facts label on food packages. The F.D.A. hosted a public meeting and focus groups soon thereafter, and its proposal is forthcoming. And last December Representative Jan Schakowsky of Illinois and Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut introduced legislation to direct

the F.D.A. to develop warning labels for unhealthy foods and beverages.

As you might expect, food manufacturers will surely go to the mat to stop warning labels from going into effect. They already are arguing that these plans would be costly and that those costs will be passed on to consumers.

But research conducted soon after Chile's food labeling and advertising law passed showed no effects on aggregate employment and negligible effects on wages and profit margins of the food and beverage sectors, even as consumer consumption of unhealthy foods declined.

Of course, these companies may still choose to fight new food labels in the courts. In many respects, corporations are viewed as people under U.S. law and have protected rights to freedom of speech, but there are ways around that. If the F.D.A. proposes a label that relies on designs with shapes or colors to signal that a product is too caloric or unhealthy, the courts may well rule that it does not violate free speech.

And as Americans become accustomed to the idea of more aggressive labeling, the F.D.A. may be able to get more creative and slap warning labels highlighting added sugar, sodium and fat on all highly processed foods.

A 2019 study estimated that warning labels on sugary beverages alone could reduce obesity prevalence among adults in the United States by 3.1 percentage points in five years. That figure may sound insignificant, but according to the study this would equate to more than five million fewer adults with obesity.

And in the long run, the food industry may simply choose to reformulate food products to reduce their harm without being forced — to preserve their profit margins. Processing isn't inherently bad; take peanut butter, a product that counts as “processed” when it contains only peanuts and salt. (It becomes ultra-processed when companies add ingredients like high fructose corn syrup and emulsifiers.) In Chile and other countries, warning label policies have already incentivized manufacturers to reformulate products to avoid cautionary symbols.

To be clear, this is just one of many steps toward providing all people with a healthy diet. But intuitive front-of-package labeling is one of the best levers available to policymakers, and it is already working in many places. It can work in America, too.

**KAT MORGAN** is a food systems consultant. **MARK BITTMAN** is a former Opinion columnist and the author of “How to Cook Everything,” “Animal Vegetable Junk: A History of Food, From Sustainable to Suicidal” and 30 other books.

## The West Bank is ready to explode

KRISTOF, FROM PAGE 7

enables more extremism and increases the risk of a cataclysm.

Israeli officials are right to despair about the lack of credible Palestinian leadership, but there is a step they could take to address that. Israel could release Marwan Barghouti, the most popular Palestinian leader, from prison. Barghouti has spent more than two decades in prison for murdering Israelis, and Israel regards him as a terrorist. But he favors a two-state solution and has enough legitimacy that he might be able to deliver a peace deal. As a result, some serious Israeli commentators favor his release.

**Israel is acting shortsightedly, against its own security interests.**

“He is the only one who can extricate us from the quagmire we are in,” wrote Alon Liel, a former director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry.

The United States should push for Barghouti's release and also press Israel harder to clamp down on illegal settlements and settler thuggery. For the same reason we oppose Palestinian terrorism, we should stand against Israeli terrorism.

I believe critics of Israel overuse the term “apartheid,” because Arab and Druze citizens of Israel have sat in the Knesset, held cabinet posts and, in 2007, briefly served as acting president. But the West Bank? Yes, that is apartheid.

“The entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River is organized under a single principle: advancing and cementing the suprem-

acy of one group — Jews — over another — Palestinians,” says B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization.

The occupation is as toxic to Israelis as it is to Palestinians. “We are losing our identity as people, as Jews and as human beings,” Ami Ayalon, the former head of Shin Bet, the Israeli security agency, told the journalist Christiane Amanpour.

Americans should call for Israel to grant Palestinians in the West Bank the same rights — including voting rights — that it gives settlers in the West Bank. That's a way of reminding Israel that it cannot simply occupy land decade after decade.

The United States is already in the thick of the West Bank conflict. Many settlers have American accents and draw financial support from donors in the United States. Meanwhile, some of the West Bank Palestinians on the other side of the fences also have American accents.

“I'm an American citizen, but if they attack me here, what can I do?” said Sayel Kanan, an engineer who lived in New Jersey for a dozen years and is now mayor of Burqa. “They can break my gate; they can kill me.”

Kanan put up a high wall around his home for protection from settlers (just as settlers put up high walls around their homes for protection from Palestinians), but he says he still fears for himself and for his son, a doctor who is also an American citizen. Settlers recently burned Kanan's olive orchard and previously destroyed two of his vehicles, he said.

“I love America as a land of opportunity, but its foreign policy?” He paused. “I have lots of questions.” So should we all.



JAAPAR ASHTYEV/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The view from Qusra, early last year, of the Migdalim settlement.

### FROM READERS

**Biden vs. Trump: A wrenching debate**

For viewers hoping for a forward-looking, uplifting and edifying debate, they did not get it. Instead, with a few exceptions, what was on display was an embarrassing, concerning, nasty and petty (dueling golf handicaps, really?) 90 minutes of incessant personal attacks, charges and countercharges between two men, a shockingly befuddled and enervated current president, and a breathtakingly mendacious and caustic former president.

Both clearly exhibited a visceral enmity for each other and failed time and time again to speak to the issues of concern to the American people in a compelling manner befitting the occasion.

The mutually problematic performances validate the unpopularity of these two candidates among voters. The reality is that neither man is fit to serve as commander in chief for very different reasons, and this is the sad and stark reality confronting the nation.

MARK GODES  
CHELSEA, MASS.

The morning after we seemed to be asking the wrong question: “Who won the debate?”

The question to ask is, who lost? The answer: *We, the people*, lost. We lost hope.

Clearly, we need to cut our losses. Now. For very different reasons, neither of the men on the stage Thursday night are fit to lead this nation through the current global complexities, through the dawning A.I. era, through the imminent perils of climate change or through 2028.

PETER KEATING  
CHARLESTOWN, R.I.

Watching the presidential debate, I remembered my elementary teacher telling our class that “anyone can become president.” Watching the two gentlemen Thursday night, I realized she was right.

ROBERT BLUME  
ALEXANDRIA, VA.

For those who missed it for some reason, the 2024 presidential election was held on Thursday, June 27, in Atlanta. God help us all.

MIKE BARRETT  
ASHBURN, VA.

Regarding your presidential “debate.” Just a view from here in Scotland . . . OMG America — are you kidding me???

AMANDA BAKER  
EDINBURGH

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# WIMBLEDON

## It's all about the grass

Fewer events are held on the surface, which can be tricky and difficult

BY CINDY SHMERLER

For Debbie Jevans, a seat on Centre Court at Wimbledon requires no more than a left turn out of her office, then a right turn past the trophies honoring past champions. A few short steps further, the same steps taken by the competitors on finals day, and Jevans finds herself on hallowed grass.

"Centre Court is such a special place," said Jevans, the first female chair of the All England Club, by video call last month. "The court is pristine, the flowers look amazing, the overviews of St. Mary's Church in the background. I feel an enormous sense of pride and thanks to the hundreds of people who have got us to this point."

Seeing the elegance and lush lawns on opening day at Wimbledon is, for players and fans, like stepping back in time. One of the biggest reasons is because professional play on grass is as elusive as a Wimbledon title itself.

Iga Swiatek has played 23 WTA grass-court singles matches out of almost 400 total in her career. Swiatek, the world No. 1, has not advanced beyond the quarterfinals at Wimbledon.

Jannik Sinner, the newly named world No. 1 in men's tennis, enters Wimbledon having played just one ATP grass-court tournament this year — which he won over Hubert Hurkacz in Halle, Germany, on June 23 — and only nine in his career. One of those matches was a five-set Wimbledon quarterfinal loss to Novak Djokovic in 2022.

Carlos Alcaraz won 12 straight matches on grass last year, including titles at Queen's Club and Wimbledon, but was upset in the round of 16 at Queen's Club about two weeks ago by Jack Draper. At Wimbledon last year, Alcaraz beat Djokovic in five sets. He also won the 2022 U.S. Open on hardcourts. When he won this year's French Open on clay he became the youngest man to win three majors on three different surfaces.

"Every time I step on a grass court I have to learn how to move better, how to play better," Alcaraz said after his first-round win at Queen's Club in June. "So I feel like I'm still learning."

The grass-court tennis season is precariously short. This year there are only eight ATP tournaments and seven WTA events, spread over a few weeks.

In 2025, with the dissolution of the Hall of Fame Open in Newport, R.I., there will be one less ATP week on grass. Pro tennis has been played on grass at the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport virtually every year since the first U.S. National Lawn Tennis Championships, precursor to the U.S. Open, began there in 1881. The Hall of Fame Open is the only ATP grass-court tournament left in the United States.

By comparison, there are 40 hard-court tournaments out of 70 total on the ATP Tour this year and 22 clay-court tournaments, including the Paris Olympics. The WTA has 56 tour-level events this season, 36 of which are on hardcourts and 13 on clay. The numbers are similar for 2025.

Grass is an inherently tricky surface to maintain and to master. The groundskeepers at Wimbledon spend the majority of the year cultivating and sodding the perfect blades. They even employ the England-based company STRI, which was founded in 1929 to help golf's St. Andrews in Scotland improve its greens, to make sure that the grass is as playable as it is pristine.

The upkeep of grass courts, which quickly become treacherous during frequent London rain — Frances Tiafoe, Dan Evans and the defending Wimbledon women's champion Marketa Vondrousova all took nasty falls during a tournament in June, putting their Wimbledon chances in jeopardy — is a challenge, but they also require a different skill set for the players.

When Martina Navratilova won Wimbledon nine times from 1978 to 1990 and Pete Sampras captured seven titles from 1993 to 2000, the grass was slicker, rewarding those with a potent slice backhand and the ability to serve and volley. Then, in 2001, the tennis club changed the surface from a rye mixture to all rye grass, which allows the ground underneath to remain dry and firm, making the court play a little more like a hardcourt. But, given that it is still a soft



PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEBASTIEN BOZZON/AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

surface, it can be kinder on the players' bodies than the constant pounding they take on pavement.

"It would be nice to have more tournaments on grass," Navratilova said. "Just for the longevity of the bodies to stay on those natural surfaces more."

Current players agree. "There's something pure about the grass at Wimbledon," said Christopher Eubanks, who won his only ATP title on grass in Majorca last year and then reached the quarterfinals at Wimbledon. "Players who like to have clean ball striking, who like to have effectiveness on the serve, are rewarded on grass. If you're into ripping the ball or like to have some variety on the slice, it takes those well too."

The issue for players is the constant change of surfaces throughout the year and that so few tournaments are played on grass. Two major championships, the French Open on clay and Wimbledon on grass, are also contested just three weeks apart. It's all part of the game, Eubanks said.

"We all know when we embark on a career in pro tennis that there are seasons," he said. "You start on the hardcourts, transition to clay, then to grass and then the rest of the year is on hardcourts. We understand that we're only going to get four, maybe five weeks on the grass, so it's important to maximize them as best we can. The varying surfaces is one of the things that makes tennis so cool."

This year the tour schedule adds another wrinkle in that the Paris Olympics are being staged on red clay at Roland Garros a few weeks after Wimbledon ends. That means abandoning the sometimes-staccato movements needed on grass and readjusting to sliding on clay.

For some, the schizophrenic scheduling comes at a cost. While natural claycourters like Alcaraz, Swiatek and the 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal cherish the chance to go for gold on clay, others, like Tiafoe, Aryna Sabalenka, Ons Jabeur, Ben Shelton, Sebastian Korda, Madison Keys and Emma Raducanu, have said that the potential for injury simply isn't worth the risk and are passing on the Olympics.

Fifty years ago, three of the four majors — the Australian Open at the Kooyong Lawn Tennis Club in Melbourne, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open at the West Side Tennis Club in the Forest Hills neighborhood of Queens, N.Y. — were all played on grass. Then, in 1975, the U.S. Open shifted first to green clay and then, when the tournament moved to the U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows in 1978, to hard-

courts. The Australian Open transitioned to hardcourts in 1988.

For many, the allure of Wimbledon is that it is still played on grass.

"No tournament makes you feel more like a champion than Wimbledon," Navratilova said. "Most kids dream about

winning that more than any other tournament. You feel the history when you walk in there. And the grass courts are part of that history."

When asked whether Wimbledon would ever alter its surface to play on hardcourts, Jevans, a former tour player who still finds time to hit on the grass

courts, didn't take a breath before responding.

"No," she said as she gazed out the window of her office overlooking the All England Club grounds. "That's my answer. Wimbledon is Wimbledon."

### Slip and slide

Carlos Alcaraz slipped on Wimbledon's Centre Court during last year's men's final. "Every time I step on a grass court I have to learn how to move better, how to play better," he said.

### Constant care

Wimbledon groundskeepers work most of the year to maintain the rye grass courts, which allows the ground underneath to remain dry and firm.



CENTRE COURT



CARLOS ALCARAZ



ROGER FEDERER



COCO GAUFF

# Facing a final call at Wimbledon

## ANALYSIS

Battling injury and age, will Andy Murray move on to life after tennis?

BY CHRISTOPHER CLAREY

"I guess I'll just need to win Wimbledon to shut everyone up." — Andy Murray to The Daily Telegraph in June 2004

Mission accomplished, although it took nearly a decade for Murray to manage it. He had to scrap and scream through all sorts of tennis trouble before finally putting a halt to all the annual chatter about when a British man might finally win Wimbledon again.

Now, at 37 and at the end of his career — win or lose (or forced to withdraw because of recent back surgery) — he is saying goodbye to a tournament he conquered not once, but twice. Three years elapsed between his first victory in 2013 and his second in 2016, when his proud country rewarded Murray with a knighthood. In that same year, he won his second Olympic gold.

For more than 70 years, the hope that a British man would win Wimbledon had become a tradition in a country that still likes its tradition: a part of the landscape at the well-tended All England Club where Fred Perry had won the men's singles in 1936, but had long gone without a British successor.

Tim Henman was still the local focal point when Murray emerged in 2005. Henman had reached four singles semifinals by rushing the net, but had always fallen short, handling each setback with a firm handshake and a dignified demeanor.

Murray — a scruffy shock-absorbing baseliner from Scotland — managed the pressure and the project quite differently: muttering, moaning and sometimes swearing between points. But above all, he embraced the challenge as he trundled about the grass with a heavy gait only to move with astonishing quickness once the ball was in play. He was a prodigy who first played in



KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/ASSOCIATED PRESS

the Wimbledon junior tournament at age 15 and first played in the main event at age 18, immediately becoming a star by reaching the third round in that 2005 debut.

Murray declared his intentions. He wanted to win Wimbledon, and watching him chase it each summer you could feel how much he wanted to win it. There was no masking the raw ambition and no stopping the tears when in 2012, with his complete game coming together, he lost in the final in four sets to Roger Federer.

"All right, I'm going to try this, and it's not going to be easy," Murray said to the crowd after he lost, his voice cracking with microphone in hand.

He did not have to speak again for

about 35 seconds as the fans roared their support. When he resumed, he managed a joke about Federer being pretty good for a 30-year-old, thanked his team and family and then broke down again when mentioning the crowd.

"Everybody always talks about the pressure of playing at Wimbledon, how tough it is," Murray said. "But it's not the people watching. They make it so much easier to play. The support has been incredible, so thank you."

Murray did not know it quite yet, but he had turned a corner. Just a few weeks later, on the same patch of grass and dirt, he routed Federer in straight sets to win the 2012 Olympic gold medal.

"The biggest win of my life," he said. It was not quite Wimbledon, but it was

an extraordinary achievement in a very familiar place.

"The similarity is that it's at the All England Club, and that it's against Roger, but other than that, it's a very different dynamic," Paul Annacone, a Federer coach, said after that Olympic win. "When Wimbledon is happening, the country stops. But when the Olympics are happening, there are four million other things going on. It's a different level of expectation, a different level of pressure in my amateur psychologist's opinion. But I also think Andy is playing every big match better, and I think this victory will help him."

That proved true. He won his first Grand Slam title at the U.S. Open later that summer, defeating Novak Djokovic,

his former junior rival and doubles partner, in five grueling sets.

When Murray returned to Wimbledon in 2013, he was ready for the real deal.

"I think both of them obviously will have helped me in different ways," he said of the Olympic gold and U.S. Open title. "But the Wimbledon final last year was also important for me. There are some shots I would have liked to have changed, but I went for it and kind of lost the match on my terms. I felt I didn't just sit back and sort of wait. I think that's maybe why I managed to recover from that defeat well."

With history on the line in 2013, Murray beat Djokovic in straight sets in the final to end Britain's 77-year men's singles drought.

"You needed a tough gritty kid to do it," Pat Cash, a former Wimbledon champion from Australia, said after Murray won.

Andy and his older brother, Jamie, were coached by their mother, Judy, who had spent a short time on the pro tour. Andy would become No. 1 in the world in singles and Jamie No. 1 in doubles. But her sons might not have had pro careers at all. In March 1996, a gunman and former scout leader shot and killed 16 students and a teacher at the gymnasium of their primary school in Dunblane, Scotland. According to Judy Murray, Andy's class was on its way to the gym before being turned away.

"At the time you have no idea how tough something like that is," Andy Murray told the BBC in 2013. "It wasn't until a few years ago that I started to actually research it and look into it a lot because I didn't really want to know."

By the end, Sir Andy's body started to break down. He had arthroscopic hip surgery in 2018 and then, more radically, hip resurfacing surgery in 2019, breaking new ground for singles players by returning to the tour after that procedure. He has been competitive if rarely triumphant, winning just one singles title, in Antwerp, in 2019.

His tennis legacy was secure more than a decade ago, but perhaps sooner rather than later, the chattering classes at the All England Club will resume wondering when the next British man will win Wimbledon.

## End game?

Andy Murray of Britain acknowledged the crowd on June 19 as he retired because of an injury from his match against Jordan Thompson of Australia during their men's singles match at the Queen's Club tennis tournament, in London.

# A title for her family

Marketa Vondrousova had a memorable celebration after winning last year

BY CINDY SHMERLER

It was past dusk when Marketa Vondrousova and her coach, Jan Hernych, made it back to their rented house near the Southfields Underground Station, almost a mile from the All England Lawn Tennis Club. Hours earlier, Vondrousova had beaten Ons Jabeur, 6-4, 6-4, to become the first unseeded player in the Open era to win the Wimbledon women's singles title.

Waiting for Vondrousova at the house were family members, coaches and close friends. Many of them were inebriated from a combination of champagne and beer, including Hernych.

"I just went for the press and after two hours I came back and they were all drunk," said Vondrousova during a phone interview in late May. It is her fondest memory of that Wimbledon win and what she thinks about most often as she begins the defense of her title on Centre Court this Tuesday.

"I always think about my family and the celebration with my box," said Vondrousova, who marked the occasion by adding a tattoo of the numbers 150723, the date of the final, to a body already dotted with tattoo artistry. "That was the main thing that I wanted to do since I was playing in the final."

Vondrousova's career has been a series of spirals. The Czech, who turned 25 last week, was the top-ranked junior in the world and won her first career title, in Biel, Switzerland, when she was 17. She also reached the final of the 2019 French Open, losing to Ashleigh Barty, 6-1, 6-3, and captured a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

Vondrousova has also been injured. She has had two wrist surgeries that sidelined her for more than six months shortly after her 2019 run at the French Open.

Ranked No. 42 entering Wimbledon last year, Vondrousova called her run to the title "crazy," partly because, going in, she had won just one match in four previous attempts there. The defining match was a comeback victory over Jessica Pegula, who led their quarterfinal 4-1 in the third set before Vondrousova won five consecutive games.

"She can play on any surface," Hernych said. "She's very aggressive, but she has variety and can hit a lot of shots that other players cannot do. She has unbelievable touch and very good reaction time."

Weeks before Vondrousova won Wimbledon, her close friend Karolina Muchova reached the French Open final, before losing to Iga Swiatek in three sets. The loss made Vondrousova cry.



ADRIAN DENNIS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

An admitted sentimentalist, Vondrousova also felt sad for Jabeur after beating her at Wimbledon.

"It was actually very tough to watch Ons cry because I knew how much she wanted it," said Vondrousova, who is now ranked No. 6. "I felt the same in Paris and then in Tokyo, so I know the feeling. But that's tennis."

Much has happened to Vondrousova in the last 12 months. At the start of this season she suffered from a mysterious virus that made her feel like her body was "falling apart," she said. In March, her grandfather died, forcing her to pull out of the Miami Open and return to Prague. More recently, her marriage to Stepan Simek, whom she wed in 2022, dissolved. In ways, Vondrousova said, the adversity has bolstered her.

"Even if you are OK you can feel it on the court sometimes," said Vondrousova, who retired midmatch with a right hip injury during a tournament in Berlin on June 20. "But tennis can help you to be better and stronger, too."

It was her loss to Barty at the French Open that taught Vondrousova to enjoy the moment instead of worrying about the outcome. She was determined to do that at Wimbledon last year. But will she be able to follow her own advice again this year?

"This year of course she will feel more pressure as the defending champion," Hernych said. "Last year she was relaxed because she didn't expect much."

Vondrousova said it was going to be stressful to go back to Centre Court.

"I can just say to myself to be calm and that you won so you have nothing to prove," she said. "I just want to enjoy it, and we'll see what's going to happen."

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# Business

## Eking out a living on a star-lined boulevard

LOS ANGELES

Street vendor restrictions in Hollywood are eased, but other struggles remain

BY KURTIS LEE AND ANA FACIO-KRAJICER

Growing up in Guatemala, Ruth Monrroy often spent time at her mother's restaurant watching in awe at the way she connected with customers.

"I knew I wanted to have my own business," Mrs. Monrroy said on a recent weekday afternoon on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles, where her childhood wish has come true.

Mrs. Monrroy, 44, parks her metal cart in front of the TCL Chinese Theater six days a week, selling items including fruit salad, hot dogs and energy drinks.

"Mango, water, soda, Gatorade, hot dog!" she calls out to the crowds traipsing over Hollywood Walk of Fame stars dedicated to Bruce Willis and Billy Crystal.

Street vending is a quintessential California job — whether from pickup trucks selling cartons of strawberries next to fields near Fresno or the pop-up stands offering carne asada tacos along thoroughfares in Oakland. In Los Angeles alone, an estimated 10,000 street vendors sell food.

Until recently, vendors along Hollywood Boulevard were operating outside the law. And while that legal cloud has lifted, eking out a living remains a challenge. Cost-conscious tourists sometimes scoff at the prices, even if sellers struggle to break even. And while long-time street vendors respect and recognize the turf of other regulars, there are more sellers working in the area, and competition has increased.

Most days, after walking her daughter to the school bus, Mrs. Monrroy heads out around 7:30 a.m. to buy fresh produce from a wholesale market in downtown Los Angeles. Her husband works as an electrician, but when he doesn't have enough gigs, he helps her sell food in Hollywood. By 9:30 a.m., Mrs. Monrroy is usually set up in her spot and preparing fruit salads.

As Mrs. Monrroy tidied up her cart that day, the insides of her arms exposed two tattoos in black ink. On her right arm is the name of her daughter, Katherine, who died of lymphoma at the age of 6 in 2011. On the other is the name of her 11-year-old daughter, Abigail, who is in remission from bone marrow cancer.

Before Abigail's illness was diagnosed, Mrs. Monrroy spent 15 years working at the restaurant chain Carl's Jr., but she needed more flexibility in her schedule to care for her daughter. So in 2018, she turned to street vending.

Amid inflation, her prices have increased in recent years.

A man walking by asked in Spanish how much the mango salad cost and she told him \$10. He walked off. "If he only knew how expensive everything is," Mrs. Monrroy says. "A box of six mangoes costs \$20. I can't charge less."

### "WE WERE HARASSED EVERY DAY"

For decades, the predominantly Latino and immigrant work force of street vendors operated in a kind of legal limbo. The work was illegal across Los Angeles, and many vendors faced misdemeanor charges.

In 2017, the City Council decriminal-



Top row, from left: Ruth Monrroy, who, needing flexibility to care for an ill daughter, turned to street vending in 2018; and some of the fruit salads she sells in front of the TCL Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. Bottom row, from left: the Hollywood Walk of Fame; and Yovani Martinez, packing up after a day of work on the boulevard.



ized street vending in response to a planned increase in deportations of undocumented immigrants with criminal records under the Trump administration. A year later, California lawmakers passed a measure decriminalizing the work statewide but gave local jurisdictions some latitude to maintain their own rules.

The City Council in Los Angeles passed an ordinance banning vendors at popular tourist sites, including the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the Hollywood Bowl, the downtown area around what is now Crypto.com Arena and the Memorial Coliseum.

Blocking access at those locations — some of the venues with high foot traffic in a region known for cars and sprawl — left vendors to settle for less busy spots or risk the stress and fines that came with working in no-sale

zones. Mrs. Monrroy said she and other vendors often spent shifts looking over their shoulders and rushing to pack up and leave if they spotted investigators from the Bureau of Street Services. The agency can dole out citations totaling hundreds of dollars.

"We were harassed every day by the city," she said.

In the years that followed, the Covid-19 pandemic temporarily shuttered many of those sites, and tourism collapsed.

But in late 2022, as travel rebounded, a coalition of community-based organizations and street vendors filed a lawsuit against the city, arguing that its ordinance violated state law and led to persistent harassment. The vendors are asking to be reimbursed for the fines they paid and for citations to be cleared from their records. (Mrs. Monrroy is



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM PEREZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

among the plaintiffs; a trial has been set for this month.)

In February, after the lawsuit was filed, the council voted to end the ban on vending at key tourist sites, including the Walk of Fame — "the highest opportunity areas," said City Councilman

**"When government allows these conditions to persist unchecked, everybody loses."**

Hugo Soto-Martinez, whose district includes parts of Hollywood.

Mr. Soto-Martinez, whose parents worked as street vendors for years, campaigned on reassessing the issue. The ban, he said, was an attack on Angelenos who often live in the shadows. While the city's original regulations

included an exhaustive list of no-vending zones — popular tourist sites, but also any other locations selected by the Board of Public Works — the new rules are far less restrictive.

They list a handful of requirements: keep the cart clean, don't block the flow of pedestrians or traffic, keep produce bagged and maintain the proper permits. (The city permit fee, due once a year, is \$291. On Friday, however, the City Council voted to lower the fee to \$27.51, effective this month.) The rules also include a few caveats, including no vending in medians or near bus stops, keeping a few feet away from the nearest vendor and not setting up directly outside a store's entrance.

But despite the loosened rules, some say enforcement is lacking.

Steve Nissen, president of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, said that

street vending itself wasn't the issue, but that the city still didn't enforce the existing rules, including ensuring that people have up-to-date permits.

"The concern is that street vending is largely unregulated, disorderly and often unsafe," he said.

"When government allows these conditions to persist unchecked, everybody loses," Mr. Nissen said. "From the vendors and brick and mortar businesses on the boulevard, to the residents who call Hollywood home, to the tourists who come to experience the Hollywood mystique and help drive our local economy."

He would like to see more efforts from the city, like creating a work force development program that helps street vendors eventually start larger businesses that offer more stable hours and pay.

### HOPING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

In front of a star for Bing Crosby, Martha Soto was several hours into her vending shift.

She lives two blocks from the corner, where she sells hot dogs five days a week, pushing her small cart to and from her eight-hour shifts.

At a bustling corner nearby, a performer dressed as Cowgirl Barbie took long drags from her rolled cigarette on a sunny afternoon, and a man in a Mickey Mouse costume and a sorcerer's hat posed for pictures with a group of teenage tourists who moved on without leaving a tip.

Mrs. Soto, 49, and her husband, Angel Luis Camargo, 48, are from the Mexican state of Hidalgo. For a time, after coming to Los Angeles, she worked in a dry cleaning business and he at a carwash.

Then they turned to street vending, working at sites across Los Angeles and often taking along their son, Vidal. They settled mostly on Hollywood Boulevard, and the city's vote to roll back its restrictions, Mrs. Soto said, was an immense relief. When she is working alone, she enlists Lance Ray Brown, who came to the area from Chicago six years ago and lives in his car, to help her haul the cart two blocks to the corner where she works. She pays him \$10 in each direction.

In the preceding five years, she amassed around 100 citations, she said, and has paid several hundred dollars that she hopes will be refunded as part of the pending lawsuit.

Last year, Mrs. Soto's husband began getting weekly kidney dialysis, and Mrs. Soto took a bit of time off in March to recuperate from a hysterectomy. While she and her husband could not work, a group of vendors pooled their earnings and gave the couple \$3,000 to help them make ends meet.

Although she's back at work, Mrs. Soto said business was lagging.

"After the pandemic, everything changed," she said. "It's not as easy as it was before. It's the economy. Now it's very slow. People are complaining about money, about the taxes they have to pay. They don't spend as much as before."

She hasn't made \$900 in a week since last summer, Mrs. Soto said, and during one week in May she brought in only \$360 in five days. It's difficult to keep up with the \$2,000-a-month rent on their one-bedroom apartment, she said.

Her 19-year-old son works at a nearby shoe store to help cover the costs, she said, and she may soon look for another job she can work in the mornings before setting up to sell hot dogs.

"The situation is very, very bad," she said.

## The building superintendent is an A.I. chatbot

Technology is changing the way tenants pay rent and how units are leased

BY JULIE WEED

The new maintenance coordinator at an apartment complex in Dallas has been getting kudos from tenants and colleagues for good work and late-night assistance. Previously, the eight people on the property's staff, managing the buildings' 814 apartments and town homes, were overworked and putting in more hours than they wanted.

Besides working overtime, the new staff member at the complex, the District at Cypress Waters, is available 24/7 to schedule repair requests and doesn't take any time off.

That's because the maintenance coordinator is an artificial intelligence bot that the property manager, Jason Busboom, began using last year. The bot, which sends text messages using the name Matt, takes requests and manages appointments.

The team also has Lisa, the leasing bot that answers questions from prospective tenants, and Hunter, the bot that reminds people to pay rent. Mr. Busboom chose the personalities he wanted for each A.I. assistant: Lisa is professional and informative; Matt is friendly and helpful; and Hunter is stern, needing to sound authoritative when reminding tenants to pay rent.

The technology has freed up valuable time for Mr. Busboom's human staff, he said, and everyone is now much happier

on the job. Before, "when someone took vacation, it was very stressful," he added.

Chatbots — as well as other A.I. tools that can track the use of common areas, monitor energy use, aid construction management and perform other tasks — are becoming more commonplace in property management. The money and time saved by the new technologies could generate \$110 billion or more in value for the real estate industry, according to a report released in 2023 by McKinsey Global Institute. But A.I.'s advances and its catapult into public consciousness have also stirred up questions about whether tenants should be informed when they're interacting with an A.I. bot.

Ray Weng, a software programmer, learned he was dealing with A.I. leasing agents while searching for an apartment in New York last year, when agents in two buildings used the same name and gave the same answers for his questions.

"I'd rather deal with a person," he said. "It's a big commitment to sign a lease."

Some of the apartment tours he took were self-guided, Mr. Weng said, "and if it's all automated, it feels like they don't care enough to have a real person talk to me."

EliseAI, a software company based in New York whose virtual assistants are used by owners of nearly 2.5 million apartments across the United States, including some operated by the property management company Greystar, is focused on making its assistants as humanlike as possible, said Minna Song,

the chief executive of EliseAI. Aside from being available through chat, text and email, the bots can interact with tenants via voice and can have different accents.

The virtual assistants that help with maintenance requests can ask follow-up questions like verifying which sink

needs to be fixed in case a tenant isn't available when the repair is being done, Ms. Song said. And some of the bots help renters troubleshoot maintenance issues on their own.

Tenants with leaky toilets may receive messages with a video showing where the water shut-off valve is and



LUCY ENGELMAN

how to use it while waiting for a plumber.

The technology is so good at carrying on a conversation and asking follow-up questions that tenants often mistake the A.I. assistant for a human. "People come to the leasing office and ask for Elise by name," Ms. Song said, adding that tenants have texted the chatbot to meet for coffee, told managers that Elise deserved a raise and even dropped off gift cards for the chatbot.

Not telling customers that they've been interacting with a bot is risky. Duri Long, an assistant professor of communication studies at Northwestern University, said it could make some people lose trust in the company using the technology.

Alex John London, a professor of ethics and computational technologies at Carnegie Mellon University, said people could view the deception as disrespectful.

"All things considered, it is better to have your bot announce at the beginning that it is a computer assistant," Dr. London said.

Ms. Song said it was up to each company to monitor evolving legal standards and be thoughtful about what it told consumers. Most U.S. states do not have laws that require the disclosure of the use of A.I. in communicating with a human, and the laws that do exist primarily relate to influencing voting and sales. A bot used for scheduling maintenance or reminding tenants to pay rent wouldn't have to be disclosed to customers. (The District at Cypress Waters does not tell tenants and prospective tenants that they're interacting with an A.I. bot.)

Another risk involves the information

that the A.I. is generating. Milena Petrova, an associate professor who teaches real estate and corporate finance at Syracuse University, said humans needed to be "involved to be able to critically analyze any results," especially for any interaction outside the most simple and common ones.

Sandeep Dave, chief digital and technology officer of CBRE, a real estate services firm, said it didn't help that the A.I. "comes across as very confident, so people will tend to believe it."

Marshall Davis, who manages real estate and a real estate technology consulting company, monitors the A.I. system he created to help his two office workers answer the 30 to 50 calls they receive daily at a 160-apartment complex in Houston. The chatbot is good at answering straightforward questions, like those about rent payment procedures or details about available apartments, Mr. Davis said. But on more complicated issues, the system can "answer how it thinks it should and not necessarily how you want it to," he said.

Mr. Davis records most calls, runs them through another A.I. tool to summarize them and then listens to the ones that seem problematic — like "when the A.I. says, 'Customer voiced frustration,'" he said — to understand how to improve the system.

Some tenants aren't completely sold. Jillian Pendergast interacted with bots last year while searching for an apartment in San Diego. "They're fine for booking appointments," she said, but dealing with A.I. assistants instead of humans can get frustrating when they start repeating responses.

# Turmoil lurks beneath market's calm waters

Traders see an opportunity for using derivatives to bet index volatility remains low

BY JOE RENNISON

In the stock market, all is not quite as it seems.

A slowdown in inflation has lifted investor confidence in the economy this year and, combined with an intense fervor for artificial intelligence, provided the backdrop to a rally that has beaten all expectations.

The S&P 500 climbed about 15 percent in the first half of 2024, rising into record territory.

The gains have been remarkably steady, with the index only once rising or falling more than 2 percent in a single day. (It rose.) A widely tracked measure of bets on more volatility to come is close to its lowest-ever level.

But a look beneath the surface reveals much greater turbulence. Nvidia, for example, whose rising stock price helped it become the most valuable public company in America last month, is up more than 150 percent this year. The price has also repeatedly had deep plunges in the last six months, shaving billions of dollars of market value each time.

As of Thursday, more than 200 companies, or roughly 40 percent of the stocks in the index, were at least 10 percent below their highest level this year. Almost 300 companies, or roughly 60 percent of the index, were more than 10 percent above their low for the year. And each group included 65 companies that had actually swung both ways.

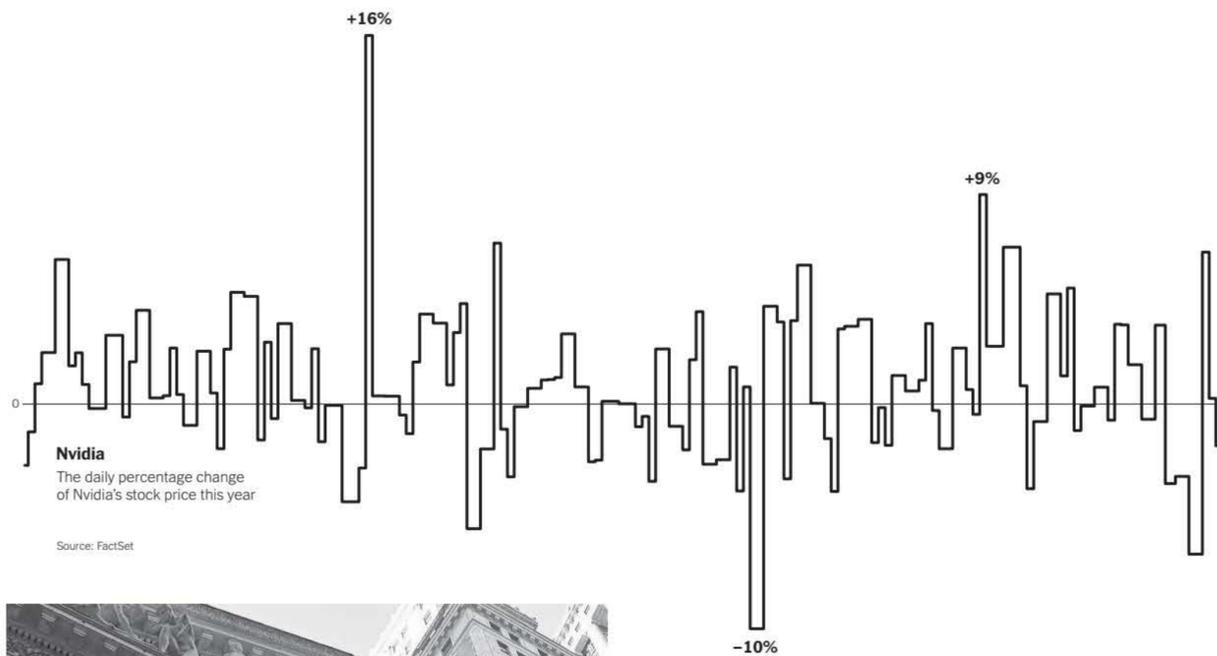
Traders say this lack of correlated movement — known as dispersion — among individual stocks is at historic extremes, undermining the idea that markets have been blanketed by tranquility.

One measure of this, an index from the exchange operator Cboe Global Markets, shows that dispersion rose after the coronavirus pandemic, as tech stocks soared while shares of other companies suffered. It has stayed high, in part because of the staggering appreciation of a select few stocks on A.I.'s cutting edge, analysts say.

This is presenting an opportunity for Wall Street, as investment funds and trading desks pile into dispersion trading, a strategy that typically uses derivatives to bet that index volatility will remain low while turbulence in individual stocks will stay high.

"It's everywhere," said Stephen Crewe, a longtime dispersion trader and partner at Fulcrum Asset Management. He believes these dynamics have surpassed even the most hotly anticipated economic data in terms of their importance to financial markets. "It almost doesn't matter about G.D.P. or inflation data at the moment," he added.

The risk to investors is that stocks will again begin to move in the same direction, all at once — most likely because of a spark that ignites widespread selling. When that happens, some fear, the role of complex volatility trades could reverse and, rather than dampen the appearance of turbulence, exacerbate it.



Source: FactSet

SOURCE: FACTSET, BY THE NEW YORK TIMES



If S&P 500 volatility is jolted because a stock like Nvidia tumbles, but the damage is contained to tech or A.I. sectors, an asymmetric outcome may punish dispersion trades.

## THE DISPERSION TRADE

Estimating the total size of this type of trading is challenging, even for those embedded in the market, in part because there are multiple ways to make such a bet. Even in its most basic form, dispersion trading can include several different financial products that are bought and sold for multiple other reasons, too.

Just how big is it? "That's a million-dollar question," Mr. Crewe said.

But there are some clues. The options market has ballooned — the number of contracts traded is set to exceed 12 billion this year, according to Cboe, up from 7.5 billion in 2020 — and while there have always been specialists with wonky derivatives strategies, now more mainstream fund managers are said to be piling in.

Assets in mutual funds and exchange-traded funds that trade options, including trading dispersion, swelled to more than \$80 billion this year, from around \$20 billion at the end of 2019, according to Morningstar Direct. And bankers who are offering clients a way to replicate sophisticated trades, but without the specialist knowledge, say they have seen a groundswell of interest in dispersion trading.

Though its scope can't be fully known,

this perceived influx of funds has raised comparisons to the last time volatility trading became popular, in the years leading up to 2018.

Back then, investors had crowded into options and leveraged exchange-traded products that boasted big returns in muted markets but were highly susceptible to sharp sell-offs that increase volatility. These trades were explicitly "short volatility," meaning they benefited when volatility fell but lost heavily when the market became turbulent.

So when calm markets suddenly erupted and the S&P 500 fell 4.1 percent in one day in February 2018, some funds were wiped out.

While that dynamic persists, analysts say that it is much less significant and that the advent of popular dispersion strategies is fundamentally different.

Because the trade seeks to profit from the difference between low index volatility and sizable swings in single stocks, even in a violent sell-off the result is usually more balanced, with one part likely to increase in value while the other decreases.

But even this generalization is dependent on how the trade was executed, and there are circumstances that could still run investors into trouble. That po-

tential outcome is part of the reason dispersion trading is getting so much attention at the moment — all could be fine, but it is very hard to know for sure, and what if it isn't?

"The firewood is very, very dry," said Matt Smith, a fund manager at Ruffer, a London-based asset manager. "And there is a lot going on in the world, so the weather is hot."

## THE UNWIND COULD BE UGLY

Crucially, the very biggest companies in the market are also dispersed. Microsoft, a beneficiary of A.I. enthusiasm, has risen about 20 percent this year. Tesla has fallen about 20 percent. Nvidia remains the outlier, with staggering gains.

So even on a day like last Monday, when Nvidia slumped 6.7 percent, the S&P 500 dropped only 0.3 percent. The broad index was buttressed by other stocks, especially other mammoth technology companies like Microsoft and Alphabet.

Calm seemed to prevail, despite the sharp drop in one of the index's biggest components.

When the very large stocks all start to tumble in concert, as they did in 2022, the result could be painful. Dispersion trading could make it all worse.

As of Thursday, roughly 40 percent of the stocks in the index were at least 10 percent below their highest level this year.

If volatility of the S&P 500 is jolted higher because a stock like Nvidia tumbles, but the damage is contained to tech or A.I. specific sectors, an asymmetric outcome would punish many dispersion trades, according to industry specialists. The losses could spiral as traders looking to cut their losses make trades that exacerbate the volatility.

This possibility is hypothetical. Nvidia has yet to state demand for its chips, and its earnings continue to skyrocket. Dispersion could continue for some time given these unusual market dynamics, said bankers and traders.

But for some specialist investors more experienced with the complexities of trading dispersion, the trade has lost its luster as it has been pushed to ever more extreme levels.

Naren Karanam, one of the largest dispersion traders in the market, who plies his trade at the hedge fund Millennium Management, has scaled back his activity, seeing less opportunity for profit, people with knowledge of his decision said. A rival hedge fund, Citadel, lost its head dispersion trader in January and opted not to replace the person.

Even some who remain in the market say the extreme current dynamic, with volatility at the index level so low and the dispersion of individual stocks so high, leaves them with little appetite to increase their trading. Others have begun taking the opposite side of the trade, hedging themselves against a tumultuous sell-off.

"Dispersion can't go much higher, and volatility can't go much lower," said Henry Schwartz, global head of client engagement at Cboe. "There is a limit."

# How to invest in an election year? Just as in any other.

## Strategies

BY JEFF SOMMER

The first debate is over, and President Biden's faltering performance prompted much hand-wringing among Democrats. How likely is it that former President Donald J. Trump will win the November election?

As a U.S. citizen and as a voter, I care about this question. But as an investor, I'm indifferent — or at least I'm trying to be.

Fundamentally, the markets don't care who wins. Stocks rose early Friday after a favorable inflation report, only to give up a little ground later, while the odds of another Democrat's replacing Mr. Biden jumped on Prediction, an election prediction market. Even with this turmoil, financial markets seem utterly unflinched by political developments.

Momentous as this election may be, stocks did well under President Trump and they are doing well under President Biden — not necessarily because of any of their policies.

The harsh truth is that the market is amoral and largely apolitical. Most people have been better off financially if they disregarded politics entirely.

## STAYING IN THE MARKET

Considering three hypothetical investors with different views about politics and finance, in a study by Jeff DeMaso, editor of The Independent Vanguard Adviser, a newsletter focused on Vanguard funds.

Each investor started with \$10,000 at the beginning of 1977. All were free to move their money between the Vanguard 500 stock index fund and the Vanguard Cash Reserves Federal Money Market fund.

One person held the Vanguard stock fund only when a Democrat was in the White House. Another trusted the

stock fund only during Republican administrations. The third was apolitical in her investing life and held the Vanguard 500 fund at all times.

Here are the results for each portfolio from January 1977 through May 2024:

- The Democratic-only portfolio, \$849,016.
- The Republican-only portfolio, \$162,578.
- The utterly apolitical portfolio, \$1.6 million.

Note that during that period, Democrats and Republicans held the presidency almost the same number of years: 24 for Republicans vs. 23.5 years (and counting) for Democrats. So someone who invested only during Republican presidencies had a slight time advantage.

**The harsh truth is that the market is amoral and largely apolitical.**

But the market has done better under Democratic presidents than Republicans — not just since 1976 but all the way back to 1900. Don't make too much of that. There haven't been enough presidencies to make of a statistically valid conclusion. What is clear is that stocks prospered under both political parties and that by staying in the market through 12 presidential terms, the apolitical investor benefited from the marvelous effects of compound returns with reinvested dividends in a generally rising market.

But remaining in the market isn't always easy. Despite the market's upward tendency, big declines happen with disturbing regularity, but at unpredictable times. It doesn't seem to matter who the president is.

For example, from Oct. 13, 2007, until March 13, 2009, during the financial crisis spanning the Bush and Obama administrations, the S&P 500 lost about half of its value. In February and March 2020, at the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in the last year of the Trump administration, the S&P 500

fund fell more than 30 percent. And in the nine months through September 2022, as the Federal Reserve raised interest rates to combat inflation in the current, Biden administration, the S&P 500 fund lost about 24 percent.

Sometimes, the S&P 500 ended up lower during a presidential administration than when it started. That happened in the Nixon, George W. Bush and Hoover administrations. Avoiding stocks during those entire presidencies would have been a good move, but then you would also have had to know when to get back into the market. Alas, no one knows in advance when the market will rise or fall, especially not the Wall Street gurus who make predictions every year.

## AND YET

There are many other valid ways of investing in an election year. I don't recommend them, but I follow them.

I'd place most of them under the rubric of market timing — investing jargon for buying and selling at opportune moments — a practice that can be immensely profitable for those capable of doing it reliably. Most people, including market professionals, can't manage that feat consistently, however. I certainly can't.

Even so, there's an enormous cottage industry on Wall Street devoted to predicting whether the overall market, or particular sectors, will rise or fall.

Here's a thumbnail summary of the current wisdom, such as it is. It's based on the assumption that the two current candidates continue their campaigns.

The consensus is that as long as there's no landslide victory for either party — so neither controls the White House and both houses of Congress — the markets will be fine.

Still, under those circumstances, if there's a Trump victory: Expect more and higher tariffs, which could disrupt trade and be inflationary, and hurt "the consumer discretionary, industrials, and information technology sectors," in the view of UBS, the financial services company. Mr. Trump would probably



Last week's presidential debate on screens at a pub in Washington. The markets don't care who wins the presidency: It's done well through opposing parties' governments.

manage to lower taxes and increase the budget deficit, stimulating the economy but, again, increasing inflation — which could lead to higher interest rates. There is likely to be less regulation, with sectors like fossil-fuel energy and financial services benefiting.

If Mr. Biden is re-elected but Democrats don't control Congress, the status quo continues. Expect greater regulation (though the Supreme Court on Friday limited the executive branch's regulatory powers) and higher taxes for wealthy people and companies than under Mr. Trump, along with executive orders aiding "companies within industrials, materials, and utilities focused on renewables and energy efficiency," according to UBS.

A landslide giving control of both the White House and Congress for either party would be unexpected and could disrupt the markets. Mr. Biden might be able to achieve legislative feats that have been out of reach. The probability of tax increases on the rich and on

corporations rises. The chance of positive outcomes for clean energy companies increases, while banks and fossil-fuel companies will have a tougher time, or so the Wall Street thinking goes.

A Trump landslide would be the most unsettling outcome from a purely financial standpoint because he could impose policies that might radically change the way business has been done, and life has been run, in the United States. The New York Times is covering the plans underway for a second Trump administration. I won't get into details here.

Neither a Trump landslide — or a Democratic one — has "been priced into the markets," Anthony Saglimbene, chief market strategist for Ameriprise Financial, said in a briefing for journalists. "If we wake up on Nov. 6 and it looks like we have a one-party kind of control of Congress, I would expect volatility to increase." But, he added, the markets are likely to recover rapidly. The market, he said,

would quickly refocus on interest rates and corporate profits.

What if another Democrat runs and wins? The same logic holds. Some policies will change, the markets may initially be flustered, but the search for profits will triumph in the end.

## A CAVEAT

"This time is different" is rarely true in investing. But every so often, things really are different.

My assumptions about the markets and investing are based on a central premise: that the legal, economic, social and political system that has prevailed until now will continue, with some evolution but without a major break, well into the future. Mr. Trump has promised to "undo foundations of American democracy and to rule as authoritarianism in other countries have," as my colleague David Leonhardt has written.

Hedging against that possibility isn't merely a financial issue, of course. Holding some gold, which I don't do now, might be wise if the foundations of American democracy are shaken. Holding stocks and bonds from other countries in low-cost index funds, which I always do to further diversify my portfolio, might be urgent in a U.S. crisis. Holding extra cash might be a smart move.

But, oddly, because the United States is so important globally, past crises here have shaken up foreign markets, too, and in times of trouble, where are you going to go for safety? Invariably, since World War II, it's been the United States, strengthening U.S. Treasuries and the dollar, not weakening them.

Up to a point, that dynamic can be expected again. But only up to a point. I'm hoping we won't find out where that point is.

So I'm not claiming that it makes no difference who wins. It matters a great deal. Vote, by all means.

But tuning out politics when you turn to investing. You are likely to end up wealthier than if you base your financial decisions on political convictions.

# Culture

## Retirement simply didn't suit her

CHICAGO

Mavis Staples tried to quit performing, but the studio and the road won out

BY GRAYSON HAVER CURRIN

On a rainy April day in Chicago, Mavis Staples sat in the restaurant of the towering downtown Chicago building where she has lived for four years. For two hours, she talked about the civil rights movement and faith. And finally, she mentioned her old flame Bob Dylan.

The singer-songwriter proposed to Staples after a kiss at the 1963 Newport Folk Festival; she hid from him during a show at the Apollo decades later, fearing he'd ask again. They've remained friends, even taking daily strolls during a 2016 tour together. She'd heard rumors he would soon retire, finally wrapping his fabled Never Ending Tour. Staples knew he would hate it.

"Oh, Bobby: He gotta keep on singing," Staples said. "I could handle it more than him. I will call him and say, 'Don't retire, Bobby. You don't know what you're doing.'"

Staples speaks from experience: Late in the summer of 2023, soon after turning 84, she told her manager she was done. She'd been on the road for 76 years, ever since her father, Roebuck Staples, known as Pops, assembled a family band when she was 8. The Staple Singers became a gospel fulcrum of the civil rights movement and, later, a force for bending genres — mixing funk, rock and soul inside their spiritual mission, an all-American alchemy. The band's mightiest singer and sole survivor since the death of her sister Yvonne in 2018 and brother, Pervis, in 2021, Mavis remained in high demand, a historical treasure commanding a thunderous contralto.

**"Just because I'm 85, they think I can't do it? I'll show 'em," she says, shaking with laughter. "That made me feel really good."**

"Being an American and not believing in royalty, meeting her was the closest I'd ever felt," said Jeff Tweedy of Wilco, who marveled at her while watching "The Last Waltz" decades before he produced a string of her poignant albums. "I felt the same way when I met Johnny Cash, like meeting a dollar bill or bald eagle."

A seemingly indomitable extrovert, Staples had deeply resented being homebound during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. So she returned to the road with gusto, playing more than 50 shows last summer. But in July, she missed the end of a moving walkway in Germany and fell on her face. Was this, she wondered, the life she wanted? She'd previously mentioned retirement, but now she insisted.

Her team planned a small string of extravagant farewells. What first felt like relaxation for Staples soon morphed into tedium. She loved watching "Shark Tank" and "Judge Judy," with whom she'd exchanged adoring video messages, but this wouldn't satisfy her forever. Her balance was precarious, and she didn't like using her Lucite cane. "I would cry, man," she said, her voice cracking. "I was losing it. I would get so sad, because I got nothing to do."

Early that year, Staples had recorded a self-affirmation anthem called "Worthy" with a team including the electro artist MNDR. She decided to follow it with "Human Mind," a demo her friends Hozier and Allison Russell dispatched a year earlier. Its lines about enduring and overcoming cruelty suggested her life's thesis, so she thought it might be her finale. But the producer Brad Cook enjoyed the session so much he prepared more instrumentals.

Those songs — by Tom Waits and Frank Ocean, Sparklehorse and Kevin Morby — were weird, she joked, their structures strange. But she relished the challenge, her voice having broadened and softened, like a steel sculpture pilloved with velvet. "Just because I'm 85, they think I can't do it? I'll show 'em," she said, shaking with laughter. "That made me feel really good."

She plans to release her first album since 2019 next year. What's more, one of her best friends, Bonnie Raitt, reminded her that people needed to see her. Staples decided to return to the road, not only for a star-studded 85th birthday celebration and two weeks in Europe, but also a July 4 rendezvous with Dylan in New Jersey. "I told Mavis it's what we're supposed to be here to do," Raitt said in an interview. "We were given this calling."

Staples recognizes she is a living bridge between the United States' past struggles and present ones, having faced more of the country's challenges than most of her living contemporaries, especially as a Black woman. Her father played music nearly until he died in 2000, days before turning 86; she has resolved to share her stories at least that long.

"My voice is my gift from God," she said, a small golden cross dangling above a sunbeam-yellow sweater. "If I don't use it, I'm abusing my gift."



For over 70 years, Mavis Staples has traversed several genres of music — gospel, soul, funk and rock. "My voice is my gift from God," she says. "If I don't use it, I'm abusing my gift."

STAPLES DOES NOT like to be sad or tired in public. When she is down, the singer Nathaniel Rateliff noted in an interview, she will slip backstage long enough to recover. When she sighs, as when discussing presidential candidates or voting rights, she does so from the bottom of her lungs, as if she's been saving it.

"I try not to be around people, because they can sense that something is wrong with Mavis when I'm not having fun or cracking jokes," she said. "I hate for them to keep asking me, 'What's wrong?' I can't tell you what's wrong, because it's within me. I've got to sit it out."

Staples has seemed so overwhelmingly positive for so long that her mother, Oceaola, called her "Bubbles";

she considers it her middle name. She now takes bottles of bubbles on airplanes to entertain any children she encounters. Ticked by her own nickname, she bestows one upon most everyone she knows — Raitt is "Bonnie-Boo," Rateliff is "Montana," her stand-in for a longer expletive. Her smile commanders her entire face, and her laugh shakes her five-foot frame.

"Because her voice is so distinctive, we tend to forget there's an elegance and lightness in Mavis Staples," said the War and Treaty's Michael Trotter Jr., during a phone interview. "I marvel at how she's maintained herself. She's here to drag us all along, when we're tired, weak, want to complain."

Tanya Trotter, his wife and bandmate,

compared meeting Staples to encountering the civil rights pioneer John Lewis, especially how both still believed in right no matter how much wrong they'd encountered in their decades of public service. "Our eyes haven't seen what her eyes have seen," she said. "For her to still have hope, even though it looks really bad, it gives me hope."

Indeed, Staples has transubstantiated grief and pain into often-joyous music and a story of perseverance her entire career. Her father, a Mississippi native who went to Chicago amid the Great Migration and toiled in slaughterhouses and construction, steadily committed his family band to the civil rights and peace movements of the '60s, becoming a confidant and friend to the Rev. Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr. They toured relentlessly through the Jim Crow South, the whole lot once arrested outside Memphis after they fled a gas station where the towering attendant hurled racist epithets at Mavis and attacked Pops with a crowbar.

The Staple Singers didn't relent, and she remains proud of that commitment, especially when peers shirked social justice for celebrity. "I would always wish that my friends would join me singing these songs," she said. "If you could have gotten Smokey Robinson, the Temptations, Gladys Knight to sing some freedom songs, that would have helped immensely."

Soon after Dylan's proposal, Staples instead married a Chicago mortician; it

was a quarrelsome relationship that ended when she changed their apartment locks. "I married an undertaker, and that was the worst. They don't have no feelings," she said, deadpan. Their problems became the basis for "Only the Lonely," her tenderhearted but defiant testimonial from 1970.

She fell in love only once more, "shacking" with a North Carolina bassist through the '70s but never remarrying. One of her true regrets, she said, was never having children. But she has long found delight in her role as Auntie Mavis for Pervis's five children.

And while working with Tweedy, she became a surrogate mother to his wife, Susie, and grandmother to their kids, Spencer and Sammy. A drummer who has played on multiple Staples albums, Spencer finds inspiration in the way she loves her job.

"It brings her a huge amount of joy and fulfillment to do the thing of music — make somebody's life better," he said in an interview. "She's more gifted at that than pretty much anyone."

Still, her own losses have mounted. Alongside her family, many of her closest collaborators and friends — Pops's pal Curtis Mayfield, their neighborhood crosby Sam Cooke, her singing mentor Mahalia Jackson and her occasional rival Aretha Franklin — are gone.

The 2016 death of Prince hit especially hard. In 1987, at the height of his power, Prince became a Staples devotee, asking to meet at a Los Angeles show. Her popularity had flagged, but he wanted to write for her. Though the albums they made became mired in record-label turmoil, they proved that Staples was a chameleonic singer and personality, capable of more than her legacy suggested. It presaged collaborations with Gorillaz, Run the Jewels and Arcade Fire, plus albums with Tweedy, M. Ward and Ben Harper.

Pervis broke the news of Prince's death when she arrived to perform at Coachella. She wanted to go home, and cried until her set the next day. She delivered an ebullient monologue onstage, calling him "the most beautiful spirit that I have ever met" before teasing a bit of "Purple Rain," the crowd clapping the rhythm. "It helped," she said. "I have had a lot of hard times, good times, but I make it through. Things don't seem as hard as they used to."

**"It brings her a huge amount of joy and fulfillment to do the thing of music — make somebody's life better."**

She meant this only for herself. Though many conditions have improved since the days of "Why? (Am I Treated So Bad)" or "Respect Yourself," she lamented that progress was not linear. She scowled about the end of Roe v. Wade, was vexed by a string of women recently sucker-punched in Manhattan, and lamented the Black mother and daughter in Georgia accused of voter fraud. She once thought singing could change the world, but she now believes that's naïve.

"I'm singing for me, too, to set my soul free and to feel better about how I'm living," she said in a rush. "If y'all don't want to hear it, get you some earmuffs. I'm going to sing for as long as the Lord allows me. I ain't coming easy."

IN A CROWDED BACKSTAGE room at the Los Angeles-area venue YouTube Theater in mid-April, Staples hovered above a birthday cake emblazoned with her face, wielding a chef's knife. For three hours, a dozen stars — including Raitt, Jackson Browne, Norah Jones, Chris Stapleton and Michael McDonald — had paraded onto the stage, mixing Staples's songs with stories about her. Though she won't turn 85 until July 10, her team had planned this birthday fête when retirement appeared imminent. She'd had some cognac, so she was holding court. "Eight-five might be the new 35," she said. "But I tell you, I'm having more fun than I've ever had in my life. I got work to do, and I'll take all of y'all with me."

She started talking about her parents and how they'd picked cotton near Mound Bayou, Miss. When a voice echoed that tiny town's name, she knew it was Taj Mahal, the blues legend seated feet away in a wheelchair. They began flirting, singing childhood love songs back and forth and talking about getting spanked with switches. Staples and Mahal are two in a diminishing pool of performers still working in their 80s. The acolytes watched in stunned silence.

"This has been the best birthday out of all of my birthdays," Staples said when the reverie broke. "And right now, I will cut this cake."

She cut until the theater's staff took the knife, then started passing out slices, never taking a whole piece for herself. Staples stayed until 1 a.m., until everyone had been thanked, fed and blessed. A few weeks later, at home between shows, she was musing on the upcoming presidential election when she remembered that moment.

"I felt so much love in there. I thought about my family, this 8-year-old girl singing with her father on the living room floor," she said, voice quivering. "And here I am in this great auditorium. These are the things that keep me going. You have to stay hopeful and have faith that things are going to get better."



Left, the Staple Singers became a gospel fulcrum of the civil rights movement. Right, Staples with Jeff Tweedy at her 85th birthday concert in April.



Taylor Hill/Getty Images

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

# Bloomsday's 24 hours, performed in under 3

THEATER REVIEW  
ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, N.Y.

A staging of 'Ulysses' makes at least brief visits to each of its 18 episodes

BY JESSE GREEN

Looking at the stage as you enter the Luma theater, the smaller of the auditoriums at Bard College's Fisher Center, you might think your ticket had been switched with one for a zoning board meeting. Enjoy the splendor of chairs lined up behind three conjoined conference tables! Admire the care with which pens, stacks of paper and wee bottles of water have been laid like dinner settings! Warily consult the large clock on the upstage wall that offers the real time — at least at first.

And wonder whether this thing called "Ulysses" can possibly capture, in a reading, the richness of Joyce's gargantuan novel about everything under the sun and also in the dark.

With caveats, it can. The Elevator Repair Service production, playing at Bard through July 14, somehow manages to reduce the novel's more than 260,000 words to 2 hours and 40 minutes with much of its humor, pathos and bawdiness intact. It's not the complete text, of course; for that you must spend 24 hours at a Bloomsday marathon, during which even the readers may fall asleep.

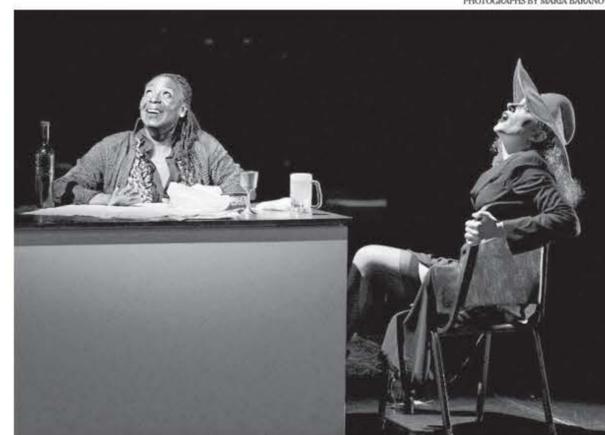
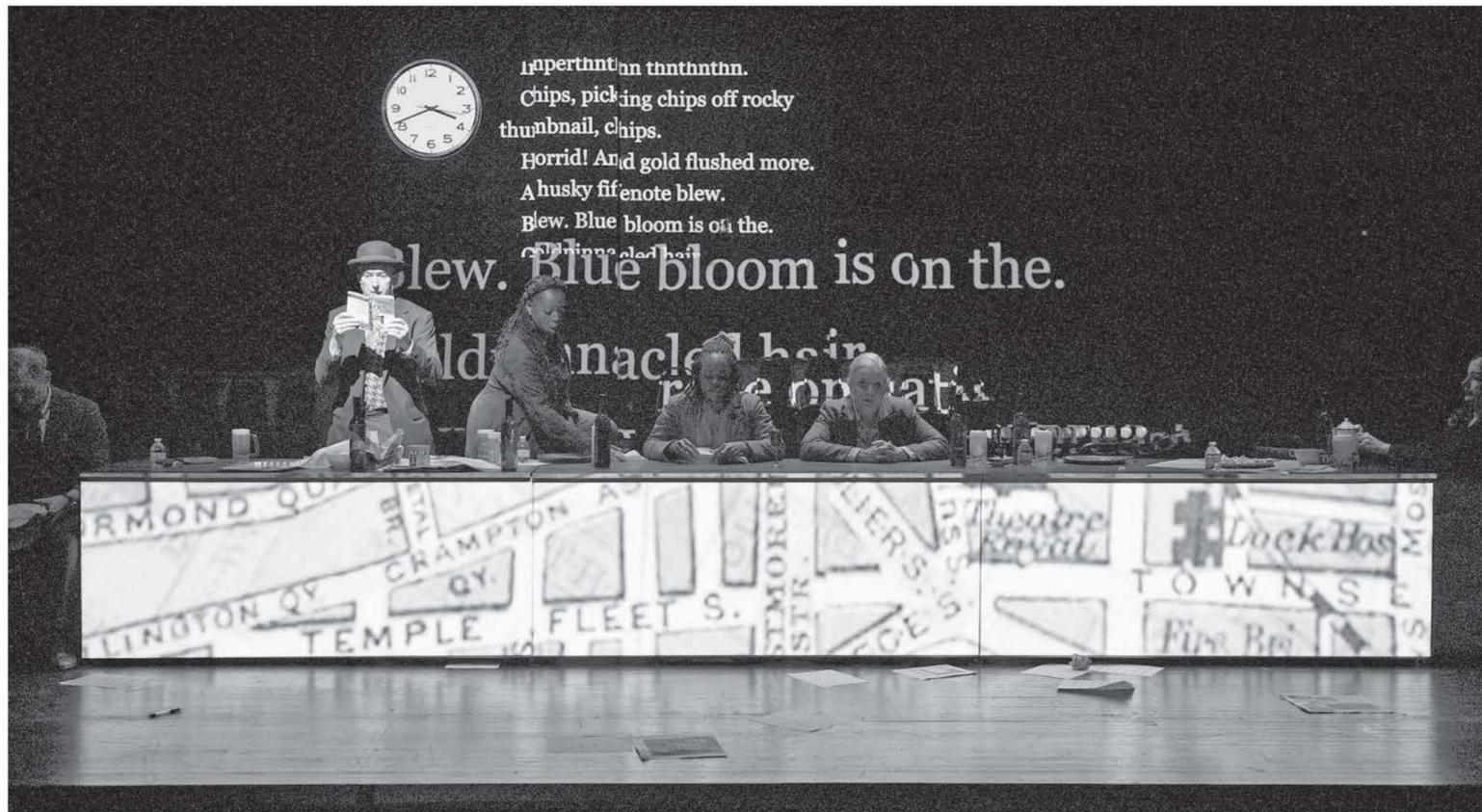
Instead, the edition used here, though verbatim, is highly intermittent. When each of its hundreds of cuts occurs, we hear the squeal of sped-up tape, and we see the seven cast members blown back in their chairs as if by a strong wind of gibberish.

Still, this redacted "Ulysses" manages to touch down for at least a brief visit in each of the novel's 18 episodes. These are roughly modeled on the ones in Homer's "Odyssey" — Ulysses being the Latin name for Odysseus. But instead of tracing the watery wanderings of that Trojan War hero on his 10-year journey home to faithful Penelope, Joyce traces the bibulous wanderings of a Dublin ad canvasser named Leopold Bloom on a daylong journey back to his cheating wife, Molly.

Bloom (Vin Knight) is our sad, proud hero: a cuckolded lonely-heart Jew in a gossipy, antisemitic town. Eight in the morning finds him uxoriously making tea for Molly (Maggie Hoffman) and delivering a letter from her lover; by 11 in the evening, after a day of work and bumbling bonhomie, he seeks coarser comfort from the prostitutes of Nighttown. In between, each time shift resets that magic clock, whether forward or, as I occasionally noted with dread, back toward morning.

I need not have dreaded; under the direction of John Collins and Scott Shepherd, the day moves fast, with few longueurs. Still, it's hard to know how long a short version of "Ulysses" should be; unable to encompass everything, perhaps this one should have contented itself with less, especially in the busier, thinner first act.

Once the principal story takes over, though, the artistry of the principal cast keeps us riveted. Knight's face always shows what the narration tells us is happening behind it; Hoffman turns Molly's moral, sexual and scato-



Top, Vin Knight, left, as Leopold Bloom in a staged reading of James Joyce's "Ulysses" presented at Bard College in New York State by the theater ensemble Elevator Repair Service. At left, Christopher-Rashee Stevenson, front, who plays both Stephen Dedalus and Bloom's cat. At the desk, left to right: Dee Beasnael, Knight, Kate Benson and Maggie Hoffman. Above, Beasnael, left, and Hoffman, who plays Molly Bloom.

logical squirming into a comic symphony of complaint.

The secondary roles are almost tertiary in this edit, but sharply incised. Playing both Stephen Dedalus, stuck teaching history to uninterested boys, and Bloom's sharp-tongued cat, Christopher-Rashee Stevenson embodies their surprising commonality.

"Stately, plump" Buck Mulligan is, in Shepherd's sketch, a familiar, odious blowhard; as Molly's lover Blazes

Boylan, loping lasciviously with the loosely strung limbs of a marionette, he's an especially awful and marvelous roué. Only the narration, though beautifully spoken — often by Stephanie Weeks, Dee Beasnael and Kate Benson when they aren't shape-shifting into various Dubliners — feels as yet underdramatized.

The slack is taken up by the physical production, which pushes Elevator Repair Service's minimalistic maximal-

ism, made famous 14 years ago by its eight-hour "Gatz," to even further extremes. Scenes are efficiently set with just a prop or two: Dedalus's noxious classroom is suggested by a fleet of paper airplanes. The lighting (by Marika Kent) and sound (by Ben Jalosa Williams) function as a kind of chorus, amplifying the small world the characters live in, and even the poker-faced set (by the design collective dots) eventually reveals its hand.

But it may be Enver Chakartash's costumes that best express the company's ethos — and Joyce's. At first, when the actors appear at that bland conference table, and we see them only from the solar plexus up, they seem to be wearing unremarkable suits, evoking probity. But as they rise and move, the image transforms. Dedalus is wearing shorts, Bloom a full skirt with complex pleats. Molly's jacket parts to reveal a lacy camisole, and the large red flower

on her lapel metastasizes into a wreath of blooms in her hair.

This is what this "Ulysses" shows us: that however conventional the face we present to the world, lower down or an inch beneath we are all hungry bodies. Sucklers, defecators, perverts, we wander lost within our grossest needs and float on our effusions — not on Homer's wine-dark sea but Joyce's "snotgreen" one. hilariously, we are heroes just the same.

# A Day-Glo city where artists could afford the rent

BOOK REVIEW

Do Something:  
Coming of Age Amid the Glitter  
and Doom of '70s New York  
By Guy Trebay. Knopf. 256 pp. \$29.

BY ANDREW O'HAGAN

Among the skills that can get a writer out of trouble, a sense of smell should not be underestimated. Stuck for an escape, cornered by the rats of cliché and sentimentality, today's autofictionists are wont to brandish their anxiety, consort with their inner demons, flash their self-loathing and blame late capitalism — yet a nimble response might simply be to sniff for fresh air and head for the door.

These days, it is often the memoirist (Noé Álvarez, Jane Bertch) who seems more powerfully attached to the idea of sensual delight as a point of departure. This general upgrade in the importance of the five senses may have Proustian bearings, but for some life-writers the question is really about how to survive what we recall.

Guy Trebay, a cultural critic and a reporter for the Style section of The New York Times, happens to be a sensualist so native to the task that his expertly perfumed memoir might have been sponsored by Guerlain.

We learn that at suppertime in his Long Island childhood, his mother would routinely dab herself with Shalimar before his father got home from work. In a slightly later part of the author's life, whirling in otherness amid the beautiful freaks, dropouts and freedom-chasers in late-1960s Manhattan, he would occasionally fetch up at

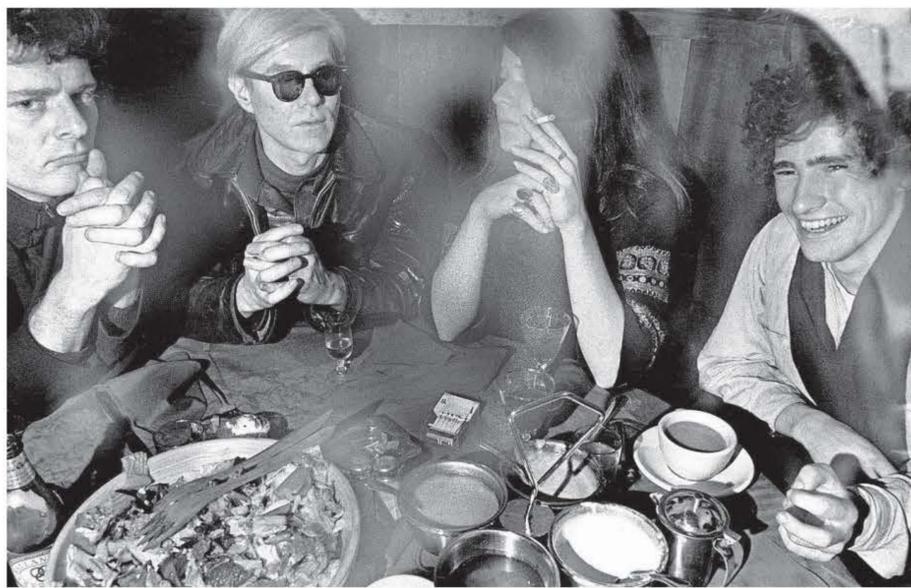
the Chelsea Hotel suite of the designer Charles James, a man of style and squalor who would cover the reek caused by his incontinent beagle with frequent spritzes of Habit Rouge.

Trebay has always been a slave to what we might call the olfactory sublime, and with good reason: His father enjoyed a short-lived success as the inventor of a "groovy" men's cologne called Hawaiian Surf, "for the use of manly descendants in spirit, of a special breed of adventurer."

In the era of Old Spice and Hai Karate — "a cologne so primitive in its approach to seduction" that "it came with printed instructions for fighting off women driven mad by the scent" — his glamorous father seemed to Trebay both fantastical and absent. As the son elegantly tells it, the whole family was wrapped in invention, going way back, existing "as little more than a collection of scattered genetic puzzle pieces."

Searching for photographs, he learns that the big house his grandparents had appeared to own in upstate New York was actually a place in which they'd worked as servants. Images survive of them posing in fancy cars, then of his handsome parents, on the North Shore, appearing for a time fully occupied by their own happiness.

"Fortified by a seemingly invincible glamour," he writes, "they had somehow failed to envision situations in which things did not work out." In this Gatsbyesque picture of bright delusion, it is understandable that Trebay began to dream of his own life in Manhattan, a place at that time where the chosen, star-struck few could float with detachment on the Warholian ether.



At Max's Kansas City, where Guy Trebay was once a busboy: from left, Paul Morrissey, Andy Warhol, Janis Joplin and Tim Buckley.

Advertised as a coming-of-age story, Trebay's beautiful book is more like a coming-to-terms story about his own fugitive needs. His New York of the 1970s was a place of raggickers and performers, a Polaroid world of masquerade before AIDS, but also a period of seeming innocence before Reaganism changed the meaning of self-improvement.

Trebay brings those rather blurry times into focus, recalling "the imaginative, cinematic way in which people like Candy Darling experienced themselves in the special New York I am describing." Everyone wanted to metamorphose, and the author, too, "without knowing into quite what." He met with the writer Anita Loos and looked around Midtown for Greta Garbo,

seemingly obsessed, quite naturally, with the essence of old photographs. Trebay is an efficient and pleasingly wide-eyed guide to "the teeming microecology of downtown New York." We hear of the Halston crowd, the Antonio Lopez gang, the Calvin Klein coterie, the Peter Hujar mob, the male model fraternity and a fading procession of no-hopers still hoping. It was a

different time in America, "when qualifying for welfare was like winning a MacArthur Prize."

Along the way, he nails a point that you won't find in any tourist brochure. Great cities are not just myths, they are zones of actual experience. "Looking back," he writes, "I see that there is something about the broke and crippled city that makes it hospitable to talent."

Such subtleties may be altogether lost in today's Darwinian melee, but Trebay's people, the people of the 1970s and 1980s who characterized their Day-Glo city, were powerfully of their time, and many were what he calls "foremothers of renegade queerness." It is perceptions like these that make Trebay's book a bit of a summer treat, a memoir that, for all its fictive energy, returns a little political realism to the pre-election miasma.

Trebay had a ton of jobs — handbag designer, busboy at Max's Kansas City, model, juice-bar guy, writer for The Village Voice — but his enduring task, revealed here, may have been to do something for those he left behind, his family, his friends.

Untethered, unfathered, Trebay made his own life, wrote his own kind of journalism, seeing what's in front of him while sniffing the air for a sense of what is past. And the story he now tells was there all along, out from the mansions of the North Shore, where the little boats were said to beat on against the current. In fertile imaginations, those vessels sail on to other oceans and distant adventures, finally at one with the Hawaiian Surf.

Andrew O'Hagan's new novel is "Caledonian Road."

# Sports

## Seeing the upside in a coach who's a blank slate

EL SEGUNDO, CALIF.

JJ Redick was impressive in his introductory news conference as Lakers leader

BY JOVAN BUHA  
THE ATHLETIC

During his opening statement at his introductory news conference last week, JJ Redick, the Los Angeles Lakers' new coach, paused to address the purple-and-gold elephant in the room.

"I have never coached in the N.B.A. before," Redick deadpanned before smirking. "I don't know if you guys have heard that."

Redick, 40, acknowledged his novice status as a coach while emphasizing his immense basketball experience as a college superstar, N.B.A. starter, broadcaster and podcaster. He shared details about his yearlong quest to become an N.B.A. head coach, from picking the brains of other coaches and general managers to journaling and visualizing himself doing the job. He embraced tough questions about the Lakers' annual championship-or-bust expectations, being the No. 2 choice behind Connecticut Coach Dan Hurley and whether his podcast and friendship with LeBron James helped him land the gig.

Most important, though, Redick was finally able to share his coaching philosophies, which largely aligned with what the Lakers needed last season and with what they were looking for during their coaching search.

"When I think about the N.B.A. today, the game is evolving, and it's evolving fast," Redick said. "And one of the things in coaching that I think you have to be is adaptable. You have to be adaptable to your roster. You have to be adaptable in game-planning against your opponent. And that's one of the things I really will strive to be."

The adaptability starts with knowing his strengths and limitations. Redick admitted that he did not know his blind spots as a coach yet. He may coach the Lakers' summer league team in Las Vegas, to start to accrue in-game experience, but will, at a minimum, be heavily involved with the team.

He pointed out areas where he wants the Lakers to be better next season: offensive rebounding, 3-point attempts, turnovers and defensive schematics. It was both an acknowledgment of the shortcomings of the previous staff and also a sign of Redick's maniacal attention to detail and thirst to solve problems.

"A big thing for me is, you have to look at your roster, and then you have to figure out how you can create margins with that roster," Redick said. "The team was 29th in offensive rebounding percentage. If you look at the trends of the



JJ Redick, above, joked at his introductory news conference about his novice status as a head coach. But he has plans to improve the Los Angeles Lakers by getting more three-pointers from LeBron James, at right, and a bigger role for Anthony Davis.

N.B.A. right now, teams that really value possessions are sending guys from the corner. They're not worried about getting three guys back."

A big point of emphasis was shooting more 3-pointers, which Redick referenced multiple times. A 15-year N.B.A. veteran, Redick shot 41.5 percent from deep for his career. Last season, the Lakers ranked 28th in 3-point attempts per game. They have never ranked higher than 17th with James and Anthony Davis. They have ranked in the bottom seven in three of their five seasons together. For Los Angeles to truly contend again, it must reverse its 3-point aversion.

Redick plans on collaborating with the team's analytics department to optimize the team's shot quality. He is already the most numbers-friendly coach in Lakers history.

"I'm going to use math," Redick said. A week ago, Redick connected with Davis over the phone, with the two discussing his role and schematics on both

sides of the ball. Redick wants to find ways to use Davis more near the elbows and top of the 3-point arc, similar to how Denver uses Nikola Jokic and Sacramento uses Domantas Sabonis.

"One of the things I brought up with him is just the idea of him as a hub," Redick said. "There's a bunch of guys at the 5 position in the N.B.A. that sort of operate in that way. I don't know that he's been used in that way and sort of maximized all of his abilities. That's the simple thing with him."

Redick said he would like James to shoot more 3s after a career-best shooting campaign and to play off the ball more to conserve his energy (but he would like to hear James's ideas as well).

"Him and I have joked about this, but he shot over 40 percent from 3 this year," Redick said. "Like, I want him shooting 3s. He's going to have his three or four bursts every game where he gets out in transition and does things that no one at



BILL STRECHER/USA TODAY SPORTS, VIA REUTERS

his age should ever be able to do, but he does it. It's really just figuring out in the half-court. Putting him in different spots, both as a scorer and a facilitator."

Rob Pelinka, the team's general manager, and Redick named Austin Reaves, Rui Hachimura, Max Christie, Jalen

Hood-Schifino and Maxwell Lewis as notable young players. (D'Angelo Russell and Jarred Vanderbilt, who are similar in age to Reaves and Hachimura, were not named.)

Regarding Hachimura, Redick highlighted Hachimura's shooting, athleti-

cism and size as attributes the Lakers want to unleash more in their revamped offensive scheme.

"I want him shooting more 3s," Redick said. "So that's a big part of it. I brought up the offensive rebounding, I think he can really become an elite offensive rebounder."

The phrase of the day was "player development," with Redick and Pelinka continually mentioning the need to draft and develop young talent under the N.B.A.'s new stricter collective bargaining agreement.

The Lakers are enlisting Redick to lead both the short- and long-term visions of the franchise, which includes figuring out a sustainable plan for success once James retires (or leaves).

Pelinka said that the franchise was considering designing a phone app for Redick to share strategy, plays and concepts with his players, with the goal of appealing more to Gen Z players who learn in a different manner.

"JJ and I have had some really robust conversations around innovation and sort of even gamifying player development," Pelinka said. "We've talked about how do we translate Coach Redick's offensive system to app-based or a phone-based deliverable where players can be buying into a philosophy and learning it in a way that meets today's young player. And I think innovation has got to be at the core of that."

Redick has been compared to Golden State Coach Steve Kerr, who also made the jump from the broadcast booth to coaching in 2014, and he preached a Kerrism in the need for a joyful daily atmosphere.

Redick put the onus on himself to generate that type of environment.

"The pursuit of greatness can't be miserable," Redick said. "Every day that somebody walks in this building, they have to enjoy it. I think part of being a coach, right, is, like, 'Can I maximize each player?' That helps maximize the group. And does everybody in the building, not just the players and staff, does everybody in the building enjoy coming to work every day? That's sort of on me to create that culture."

Redick begins his N.B.A. coaching career as a blank slate. Though he has played for notable coaches such as Mike Krzyzewski, Doc Rivers, Rick Carlisle and Stan Van Gundy, he is not a descendant of a particular coaching tree, as many first-time N.B.A. coaches are. The beauty in that lack of history, at least from Redick and the Lakers' perspective, is it allows him to approach his coaching debut with a rare open-mindedness.

"I consider myself to be someone who has a high level of curiosity and a love of learning," Redick said. "I'm not going to be perfect. I know that. The pursuit of perfect, which I've tried for my whole life, I recognize that you're never going to get there. So giving myself a little bit of grace is going to be important."

## From pinball wizard to a humble hitting savant

CLEVELAND

Cleveland's Steven Kwan credits the machines for his ability to smack a baseball

BY ZACK MEISEL  
THE ATHLETIC

Steven Kwan's path to hitting prominence started in his grandmother's garage, where he fiddled with a rickety pinball machine that had an outer space theme. Because of his expert timing on the controls, the game could last all afternoon.

The root of Kwan's rise to prominence in the batter's box for the Cleveland Guardians is his hand-eye coordination, a trait mastered through childhood summers full of pinball.

Two decades later, Kwan is flirting with a .400 batting average and blazing a trail to the All-Star Game. He is leaving those in his dugout saying wow and leaving those in the opposing one asking how.

How could this 5-foot-9, 170-pound chess champion who was never a high-profile prospect, who figured his rotten freshman year at Oregon State was his baseball journey's death knell, reside in the same stratosphere as the sport's slugging behemoths?

Kwan is the lone soul uninterested in the hype. His father floods his phone with jarring statistics, but Kwan responds by urging him to ditch social media. He will entertain those facts after the season. He cannot be bothered with adoration. The instant he allows his focus to stray, he says, he will not be prepared to keep this going.

This surge, though, has put Kwan on the national radar, even if he will not indulge. When he turns on an inside fastball and yanks it off the foul pole, he credits his "shorter limbs," not his unparalleled contact ability. He explains every hit as a lucky bloop or the byproduct of fortunate placement.

"He's the humble king," Guardians outfielder Will Brennan said.



Cleveland's Steven Kwan after a home run. He is up there with Aaron Judge and Shohei Ohtani in his on-base plus slugging percentage.

That attitude has guided Kwan to this point, in which he rivals the league's luminaries on every leaderboard. So have a rigid commitment to mental preparation, a determination to prove his mother wrong and, of course, pinball.

When he was 4, Kwan told his mother he wanted to be a baseball player. Jane Kwan told him maybe it would be better to focus on something else.

She was playing the odds, and he still teases her about it. She never intended to doubt him. She just wanted to offer a dose of reality. But he understood her position.

"Small kid," he said. "Barely any athleticism in our family."

But he refused to ponder the future or shore up a plan to enter the business world once the baseball dream fizzled.

He entered what he described as survival mode, a one-year-at-a-time approach to an athletic career that figured to slam into a dead end before long.

In his first college game, he was 0 for 3 with two strikeouts, a missed sign, a botched bunt and a misplayed ball in the outfield. He was convinced he had no future on the diamond. But, he said, he would not quit "until someone rips the cleats off me." That never happened, and Kwan adopted his mother's more realistic approach as he pushed forward.

He did not expect to break camp with the Guardians in 2022, especially with a shorter audition because of the lockout. But he started in right field on opening day. He was certain he would head to Class AAA once Josh Naylor returned from injury. He has not been back to Co-

lumbus, aside from a rehabilitation assignment. Kwan and Naylor are now pivotal players in Cleveland's lineup.

But, no, he will not get caught up in the hysteria surrounding his average, which was .371 through Saturday, in 247 plate appearances, not quite enough to qualify for the American League batting title race. But he is gaining on that number (3.1 plate appearances per scheduled game).

"Hitting like this just isn't very common," he said, "so I've never really thought about something like this."

Scott Barlow, pitching for the Kansas City Royals, allowed Kwan's first major league hit, in 2022. When the two became teammates this season, Barlow had Kwan sign a bat for him. It rests in the back of the reliever's locker.

Barlow was the first of many who have struggled to unearth a formula to quiet Kwan's bat. The best tactic is not some 98-mile-per-hour heater or wipe-out slider. It is prayer.

When Kwan swung and missed for his 15th strikeout of the season one day recently — for perspective, Reds shortstop Elly De La Cruz has over 100 — Manager Stephen Vogt and his bench coach, Craig Albernaz, looked at each other and gasped.

"It's like a glitch," catcher Austin Hedges said.

Vogt remembers game-planning for Kwan last year as Seattle's bullpen coach. The strategy was to throw it down the middle and let him slap a single somewhere or, ideally, shoot it toward a fielder. There was no use in wasting pitches against a guy who has a better handle on the strike zone than the umpires.

"His ability to make an adjustment in the middle of a pitch and time it up," Barlow said, "whether it's to foul it off or rife a line drive off you real quick, it's crazy."

Kwan ranks at the top of the leaderboard in strikeout rate and whiff rate, and he rarely chases pitches out of the zone. If he does, it is for one of those short-limb-driven fastballs that he converts into a souvenir.

Kwan spent his winter seeking ways to hit the ball with more authority. More muscle and better bat speed were not the remedies. No, the key was in his approach. He stepped into a Chicago batting cage and practiced swinging and missing more. He needed to reach a point of acceptance. He would stand in, spot the ball, take a healthy hack and if he missed — which goes against every cell in his body — he had to learn to shrug it off.

The plan was to take more chances in advantageous counts when a whiff would be less detrimental than weak contact. He strove to alter his bat angle and to elevate a pitch he knew he could damage, to target the outfield gap or the fans in the third row.

A week ago Sunday, Kwan turned on another fastball and pulled it into the right-field seats. Through last Thursday,

he had hit a career-high seven home runs, in a third of the plate appearances of a normal season.

Kwan is jockeying with Shohei Ohtani for second place behind Aaron Judge in the league's slugging ranks. But do not tell him any of these facts until after the season.

When Kwan showers after a game, he watches the shampoo, soap and water funnel down the drain. In his mind, everything that occurred on the field goes with it. Every day is a clean slate.

"A lot of us can learn from that," Brennan said.

Most mornings, Kwan meditates for 10 to 15 minutes. It centers him and helps him dismiss any intrusive thoughts, though he admits that has been more difficult lately, given the increased attention on his every swing.

Hedges took Kwan under his wing in 2022 and said it was the easiest mentorship he has forged. Kwan was curious and caring, eager to learn how to stick in the majors and how to foster a healthy clubhouse culture. Hedges has watched him blossom into a leader — he is the Guardians' union rep at age 26. Now he finds himself learning from Kwan and marveling at his influence on a first-place team.

Kwan's parents are savoring every moment, too. Most nights, they schedule dinner around the Guardians' first pitch. On the West Coast, that often means a 4 p.m. meal. They would not dare miss the game's most lethal leadoff hitter take his first cuts.

Through Saturday, Kwan owned a .969 on-base plus slugging percentage, and he had more walks (20) than strikeouts (18).

And it all traces back to that pinball prowess. Kwan's parents met while playing pinball in the 1980s. Kwan remembers asking for their permission to use the family computer so he could play a pinball game. Little did he know that he was also cultivating the skills that would make him one of baseball's most imposing hitters.

"It feels lazy to be like: 'It's baseball. It's lucky,'" Kwan said. "But I think sometimes, it has to just come down to that."

SPORTS



Woven around Biles's tumbling passes is a story of growth and continued dominance.

# The story behind Simone Biles's new floor routine

FORT WORTH

BY TESS DEMEYER  
THE ATHLETIC

Aside from shouts of "C'mon, Simone," fans at the U.S. national gymnastics championships a month ago in Fort Worth were quiet when Simone Biles raised her right fist and knocked downward three times against an invisible barrier.

Seconds later, the crowd roared back to life when Biles nailed the landing of her third tumbling pass. Amid the difficult skills packed into her floor routine, the knocking movement was easy to overlook.

But that brief moment, the move's creator said, captures the narrative behind the floor routine Biles used at the U.S. Olympic gymnastics trials this weekend in Minneapolis and, what she will use at the Paris Games this summer if selected for the U.S. Olympic team.

Grégory Milan, the French choreographer behind the routine, said the mimed knocks are meant to convey the renewed emergence Biles, a four-time Olympic champion, is making on her journey to a third Summer Games.

"I am breaking my aquarium, I am taking my freedom, and I am not letting anyone hurt me anymore," Milan said through an interpreter. "I am breaking out of my cage, in a sense. Breaking out to finally be free."

Woven around Biles's four challenging tumbling passes is an artistic story of her growth and continued dominance of the sport. Her appearance at these Olympic trials is the latest, and biggest, step on her comeback tour after her stunning withdrawal from multiple events during the Tokyo Games in 2021 because of a mental block that prevented her from safely executing twisting skills.

Since then, she has spoken about the immense pressure she felt entering those Games and the public backlash she faced after pulling out.

"I'm just more nervous when I do gymnastics," she told reporters after the team finals in 2021. "I feel like I'm also not having as much fun." She added: "I wanted it to be for myself. I'm still doing it for other people."

Her floor exercise for 2024, through its movements and music, is intended to embody her journey. At 27, Biles is no longer the teenager she was in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, when four gold medals turned her into a global sensation. She and Milan, who lives in Vincennes, France, and studied at the Paris Opera's school of dance, worked together at Biles's Texas gym over four days in April on a routine that blends modernity with classic inspiration.

And it all starts with Taylor Swift. The idea to use the heavy thumping beats of Swift's "... Ready for It?" to open the floor music came from Biles's agent, who suggested incorporating Swift's



"I wanted her to appear noble with something very pure, with her magnificent arms, the look in her eyes," said Grégory Milan, the French choreographer behind the routine.

music in the performance. The mix also includes "Delresto (Echoes)," by Travis Scott and Beyoncé.

Shortly after winning the title on floor at the U.S. championships June 2 with two scores over 15,000, Biles said that learning a new routine with new music was her least favorite step in the process.

"But I do love Taylor Swift, and I do love Beyoncé," she said. "Those are my girls."

Milan, meanwhile, pulled inspiration from the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, a modern dance company founded by its namesake in 1958. Ailey focused his work on the Black American experience and gained international acclaim with his signature ballet, "Revelations," in 1960. The troupe embodies a blend of different styles and techniques, resulting in an artistic fluidity that Milan wanted to infuse into Biles's routine.

"I just wanted to have an Alvin Ailey mind-set just because of what they represented," he said. "At the beginning, I had in mind that she would do something that shows she's emerging, that she's breaking the barriers a bit of gym-

nastics to say: 'It's over now, I'm not a little girl anymore. After everything I've gone through, I'm now a businesswoman, I'm a married woman, I'm a happy woman.'"

The Ailey influence is particularly noticeable after Biles's leap pass midway through her routine. For about 12 seconds, the routine turns into an expressive dance fit for a stage.

**The simplicity of the choreography is intentional, to show Biles does not have to be over the top to impose her presence.**

At one point, she stands to strike an invisible wall three times and drops to the floor to prepare for a double wolf turn. It is frenetic and restrained all at once — with a touch of elegance and femininity befitting a 27-year-old still at the top of her game.

"I wanted her to appear noble with something very pure, with her magnificent arms, the look in her eyes," Milan said.

The simplicity of the choreography is intentional, a choice Milan made to show Biles does not have to be over the top to impose her presence. He felt too many complex movements would clutter her story of breaking free.

"Sometimes you don't need too much, just a look, a way to position your arm, the way you carry a movement, and that's what Simone succeeded in doing," he said. "We feel she's at peace, she's happy, she's calm — so that when she heads to the corner to do her big tumbling passes, she needs to feel grounded, feel strong, feel safe to start her tumbling pass."

Those big tumbling passes are, of course, a huge part of Biles's routine. She does not hold back any of her skills entering her third Olympic trials. Her coach, Laurent Landi, said the goal is a difficulty score of 7.1, which is the highest in the world.

To hit that, she completes nine flips and six and a half twists. She begins with a triple-twisting double back tuck, also known as the Biles II, that is so challenging no other female gymnast has attempted it in competition. Next is a full-

twisting front layout that connects through to a double-twisting double back tuck.

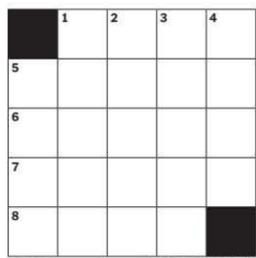
The Biles I, a double back layout with a half twist that became her first eponymous skill, in 2013, makes an appearance as the third pass right after the knocking choreography.

Her final tumbling pass is a double back layout, a skill that most gymnasts perform early in their routines when they have the strength and stamina to safely complete two flips in a straight body position. That has never been an issue for Biles.

She caps the routine by hitting a pose just as her music ends with an "oh!" sound effect. It has become a signature over her illustrious career and also served as the conclusion to the 2016 routine that propelled her to Olympic glory in Rio. It is an ode to her past that ends a routine that, in so many other ways, is about her present and future.

Milan said: "I wanted something that represents her, meaning: 'I am the big boss of gymnastics, and I want to show you that I am a woman. I am the American dream who made it.'"

## The Mini Crossword



7/1/2024  
BY CHRISTINA IVERSON  
EDITED BY SAM EZERSKY

- ACROSS**
- [How disappointing]
  - Larger relative of a kayak
  - Fire-starting crime
  - Dust \_\_\_ (tiny pests)
  - "Golly!" ... or 1-Across, in pig Latin
- DOWN**
- Wrapped Indian garments
  - App with a camera in its logo, informally
  - Like the texture of a roasted marshmallow
  - They're often laying around a farm
  - Top worn for layering, for short

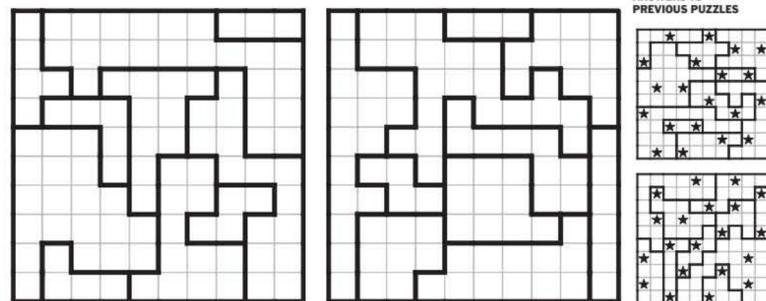
ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

T	E	M	P			
C	O	L	O	R	S	
A	W	E	S	O	M	E
K	E	G	T	I	A	
E	R	A	S	E	R	S
S	N	E	A	K	Y	
T	O	M	S			

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## Two Not Touch



Put two stars in each row, column and region of the grid. No two stars may touch, not even diagonally.

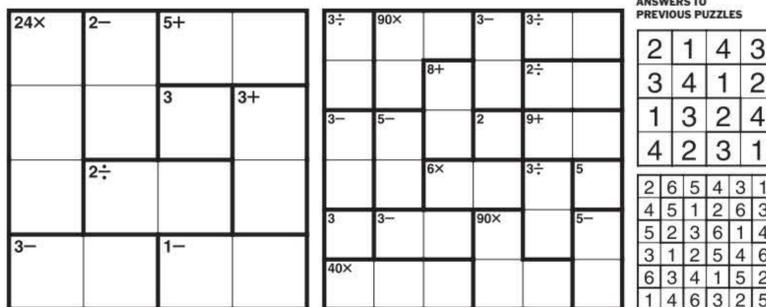
## Brain Tickler

"Brunch" is a portmanteau for "breakfast" and "lunch" ... though it also sounds like a portmanteau for what famous TV family?

PUZZLE BY SAM EZERSKY

SATURDAY'S ANSWER: Cadre's, scared, sacred

## KenKen



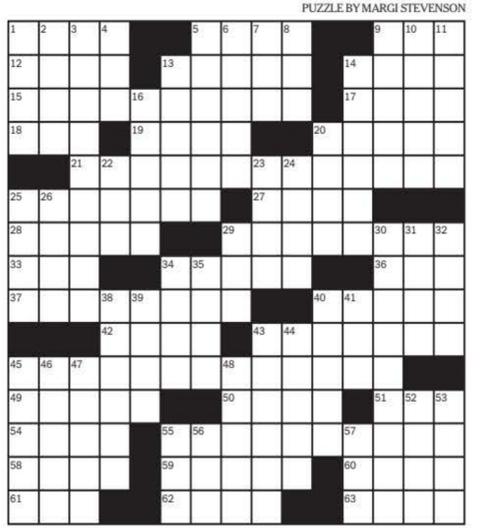
Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: [www.nytimes.com/games](http://www.nytimes.com/games)

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## Crossword | Edited by Joel Fagliano

- ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
- ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS PUZZLES
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 4 |
| 3 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| 1 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 5 |
- ACROSS**
- "That's hilarious!" in text shorthand
  - San Francisco Bay has a "golden" one
  - Delivery co. with a brown-and-yellow logo
  - Cruise stopover
  - Eagle's claw
  - Give off
  - Author on behalf of someone else
  - \_\_\_-pedi (spa treatment)
  - \_\_\_ Paulo, Brazil
  - Onetime rival of Volvo
  - Defective car
  - Bat mitzvah, for example
  - "Oh yeah? Give me an example"
  - "RuPaul's \_\_\_ Race"
  - Glorify
  - Title in Italian nobility
  - Ctrl-\_\_\_-Del
  - Symbols on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
  - Big beer order
  - Hold back
  - River alongside many German vineyards
  - Next in line?
  - Customers
  - One half of a noted aviation team
  - Like Bigfoot and Chewbacca
  - Othello's treacherous "friend"
  - The "I" of T.G.I.F.
  - Irish dances
  - Straight to the point ... or, homophonically, what this answer is relative to this puzzle?
  - "Sure thing, boss"
  - Baby bird's sound
  - Flightless bird of South America
  - Monogram in French fashion
  - Joins in marriage
  - Lots and lots
- DOWN**
- Predetermines the outcome of
  - Workplace welfare org.
  - Parts of a car's interior that can be removed and cleaned
  - "\_\_\_ Misérables"
  - Park place?
  - Excuse that might be airtight
  - Youngster
  - Opposite of WSW
  - Savory flavor
  - \_\_\_ noir (wine)
  - "Goosebumps" author R.L. \_\_\_
  - Mark of literary distinction
  - Come out from hiding
  - Letter-shaped opening for a bolt
  - Aspiring attorney's exam, for short
  - Slithery swimmer
  - Foul smell
  - Remains containers
  - Close by
  - Wheel rotator
  - Aluminum recyclable
  - Like wetsuits and leotards
  - Emailed, e.g.
  - 70 to 79, for septuagenarians
  - Mark of literary distinction
  - Go yachting
  - Michelin product
  - Strong desire
  - Depend (on)
  - Opposite of laxness
  - Sneaky laugh
  - Shipping containers
  - Word that can follow flash or flood
  - Sarcastic "Well, this should be fun"
  - Comes down in buckets, say
  - Candlelight ceremony
  - Highly caffeinated
  - Comedian \_\_\_ Von
  - Suffix with Kazakh
  - "Victory is mine!" in text shorthand
  - The "o" of i.o.u.
  - Radio host Glass or Flatow



7/1/24

- ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | A | P | E | T | S | P | I | N | T | A |   |   |
| E | I | D | A | L | A | D | H | A | A | W | O | R | D |
| S | N | O | W | A | N | G | E | L | T | O | T | E | D |
| S | T | R | E | S | S | E | A | T | N | E | M | O |   |
| U | S | E | D | T | O | I | T | W | A | T | S | O | N |
| P | O | D | U | N | E | V | E | N | B | A | R | S |   |
| B | O | T | R | I | B | T | I | P | S |   |   |   |   |
| P | O | P | A | D | A | S | T | P |   |   |   |   |   |
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| R | U | S | S | I | A | N | S | P | Y | O | R | B |   |
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## TRAVEL

To celebrate the celestial event, the ropes came down at the ancient British monument

# Marking the solstice at Stonehenge

BY LISA LUCAS

In the predawn darkness, a procession of druid priests in white robes carry banners by the monoliths of Stonehenge, the ancient British archaeological site.

There is an aroma of burning sage; a bagpipe calls in the distance. As dawn approaches, fever-pitched drumming mounts. If you hadn't already felt the power in the stones at this summer solstice celebration, there is no denying the physical vibration as the sun rises in alignment with the stone circle.

Most of the time, visiting Stonehenge — which is owned by the British crown and managed by English Heritage, a nonprofit that oversees more than 400 of the country's historic sites — requires purchasing tickets and keeping far away from the stones, which are normally cordoned off by ropes.

But since 2000, four times a year, on the solstices and equinoxes, the ropes come down and visitors are invited to wander the stone circle, staying overnight and past sunrise if they wish.

On June 20, to mark this year's summer solstice, the monument opened at 7 p.m., as visitors began arriving on shuttle buses from nearby Salisbury, a trip that took most of an hour in traffic. The rules were strict: Blankets for picnics and warmth are allowed, but no camping equipment or chairs. Snacks are OK. Alcohol is prohibited.

The crowd ebbed and flowed, with an evening wave of tourists who came to picnic, then left before nightfall.

People staying overnight faced evening temperatures of about 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius) without shelter. Those who stayed drummed, chanted and communed with the stones, which were lit by a nearly full moon and purple floodlights. Flower crowns topped many heads.

The intensity built through the night



About 15,000 people visited the Stonehenge monument for the summer solstice, when visitors are allowed to wander among the stones and even stay overnight to greet the dawn. Below, from left: Arthur Pendragon, 70, a modern druid, or Celtic priest, called the stones "a cathedral"; visitors were allowed to bring in blankets for picnics and warmth; and many visitors communed with the stones, as though to draw power from them.



and picked up with faster drumming and chanting when the sky lightened just before 4 a.m.

There were also food trucks offering wood-fired pizzas, loaded fries, curries and doughnuts, and a merch tent for souvenirs.

Arthur Pendragon, 70, a modern druid (the ancient druids were Celtic priests), wore white robes with an embroidered red dragon, chunky silver rings and a silver dragon crown. He called the stones "a cathedral." Charlotte Pulver, 45, an apothecary from Hastings who specializes in natural remedies, has been coming to the site for 12 years. She said it feels "special to gather in community to honor these

tides and alignments of the earth." Some American tourists in the U.K. to see Taylor Swift's Eras Tour had "decided to swing by." In all, about 15,000 people visited.

Crowds walked the interior of the circle, touching the sarsens (sarsen refers to the type of sandstone used at Stonehenge) placed here around 4,500 years ago. Some held ceremonies, welcoming the new season with chants of "heart to heart and hand to hand." Some placed their hands on the stones and closed their eyes, seeming to draw power from them. The surfaces are gray and uneven, scarred with graffiti from the Bronze Age and, on one, a carved signature from Christopher Wren, the archi-

tect of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. The orange powder sprayed on them in a climate protest the day before had already been washed away.

The monument has been credited to various groups over its history, including Phoenicians, druids and Romans. Jennifer Wexler, a historian for English Heritage who specializes in prehistoric sites, said that the archaeological consensus is that Stonehenge was built in stages and used differently over thousands of years, from the late Neolithic period to the early Bronze Age, or between about 3000 B.C. and 1500 B.C.

The druid link is hazy but is undoubtedly part of Stonehenge's modern identity. In the 17th century, one of the early

excavators suggested that the druids were the likely builders. Even after this was disproved (the earliest known references to the druids date to the 4th century B.C., well after research suggests Stonehenge was built), the idea stuck.

It's fitting that a modern group, inspired by the past, has co-opted Stonehenge for its own use. As the archaeologist Jacquetta Hawkes wrote in a 1967 essay titled "God in the Machine": "Every age has the Stonehenge it deserves — or desires." The poet William Blake called it a "building of eternal death."

Appreciation of the sun and the solstice echoes down the centuries in Britain, with references in Anglo-Saxon literature and ties to the Medieval mys-

tery plays. Of course, there's also Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

Britain's relatively northern position means there is less than six hours of light in midwinter, but at the solstice the sun rises before 5 a.m. and doesn't set until almost 9:30 a.m.

Dr. Wexler, the English Heritage historian, said the solstice alignment is at the center of Stonehenge's design. This is perhaps not surprising given how prominent the sky and seasonal rhythms would have been in the late Neolithic period: the movement of the sun and the stars dominated life.

Chris Park, 51, a druid and member of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids

from Oxfordshire, is an artist and beekeeper. He said he sees the solstice as something that transcends religions and nationalities because it is accessible to all and therefore "can unify us in meaningful moments of peace and celebration."

At 4:52 a.m. on that June day, standing in a field on Salisbury Plain, with druids in white robes and tourists wrapped in blankets, we were all looking in one direction at the same time (albeit some of us through phone screens). This collective attention to the sun was a link to each other and to those who stood in this place 5,000 years ago to gaze at the sun from the same angle — appreciating darkness giving way to light.

## Random acts of kindness that saved the trip

BY LAUREN SLOSS

Because of a rental car mishap, it was well after dark by the time Catherine Dupree and her father arrived in Canakkale, a city in northwestern Turkey, during a vacation in 2006.

As they drove around the city, trying in vain to navigate to their hotel (this was well before the days of reliable mapping apps, like Waze), Ms. Dupree's father spotted a man walking his dog and asked him for help.

"He somehow communicated to us that he had to bring the dog home and then could show us the way," said Ms. Dupree, now 51 and living in Los Angeles.

The man did, indeed, gesture for them to follow him to his home where, the dog secured, he got into his own car and led the pair a long distance, winding through the city's streets, until he jubilantly pointed out his window to their hotel and then disappeared into the night.

"Our bafflement turned to incredulity turned to gratitude," Ms. Dupree said of the experience.

"My dad passed away in 2020, and he always wished he could have thanked this man for his help."

As we dive into summer travel, it can be easy to get caught up in the frustrations that often accompany what promises to be another hot, crowded, potentially turbulent season. And yes, there will be flight delays, packed attractions and inevitable inconveniences. But it's also an opportunity to consider what's possible when you're out exploring the

world: the kindness of strangers.

Late last year, we asked you to share the memorable acts of kindness that you have experienced while traveling.

Your stories are reminders that sometimes, the most memorable and joyful parts of travel can arise from challenging moments.

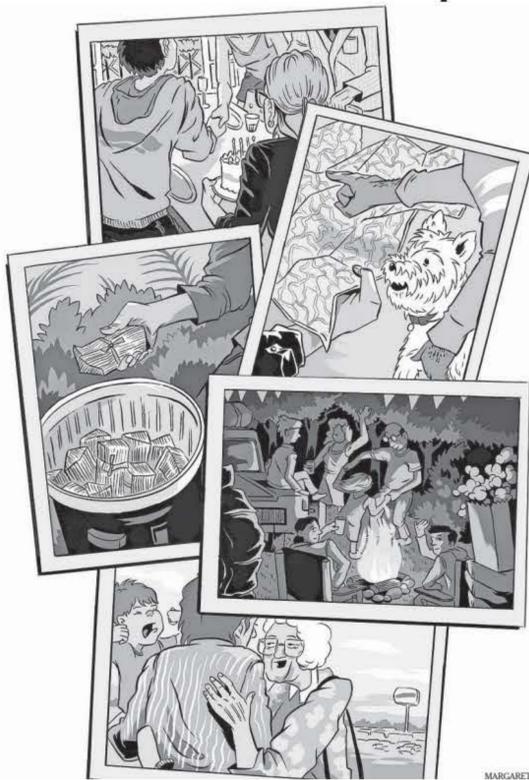
### A BIRTHDAY CAKE IN MILAN

When Clark Peters was in his early 20s, he and a college friend were backpacking through Europe when disaster struck: They woke up on an overnight train in Italy to find that their cash, checks, Eurail train passes and his friend's passport had been stolen. Even worse, it was Mr. Peters's birthday. The two friends disembarked in Milan to re-group, and headed first to the U.S. Consulate to replace the passport and then to an American Express office to replace their stolen traveler's checks. There, they encountered a family from Ohio, Mr. Peters's home state, whose daughter was studying abroad in the city.

"They insisted that we stay with them and treated us to a wonderful home-cooked meal, surprising me with a birthday cake," Mr. Peters, who is now 58 and lives in Columbus, Mo., recalled. "The day turned from disaster to the best experience of our trip, and I've never forgotten the family's immense generosity."

### MAKING POPCORN IN PATAGONIA

While plans can, and often do, go awry, sometimes a lack of proper planning can lead to surprisingly delightful results. A few years ago, Carolyn Rose Friedman



was hitchhiking from Chile to Argentina through Patagonia, where national parks are linked by a nonintegrated border — meaning border facilities for each country are about 20 miles (32 kilometers) apart.

Some pandemic restrictions were still in place, strictly limiting the number of vehicles that could cross the border, though Ms. Friedman, traveling with a group of women, managed to get a ride across on a truck. But when the truck stopped just before the Argentine side of the border, the driver demanded that hitchhikers get out of the vehicle. After a two-hour wait, the women finally had their passports stamped and crossed into Argentina, where they ran into yet another hurdle.

"Underprepared and exhausted, we had not realized we would also have to find somebody to help us get from the border to the nearest town, a good 15 kilometers away," said Ms. Friedman, who is now 25 and living in Bogotá, Colombia. As they lugged their heavy packs, they spotted a vehicle tucked into the woods just off the road. They detoured to investigate, and happened on a family gathered to celebrate a granddaughter's fifth birthday. After listening to their pleas for help, family members said that they'd be happy to give them a ride, as long as they didn't mind staying through the celebration.

"We pulled out our camping stove and made popcorn for the birthday girl, and over shared maté, despite the three languages between us, spent the next several hours building a beautiful and unexpected friendship," she said. "If we'd

done our research properly, we never would have met them."

### THE BIG IMPACT OF A SIMPLE ACT

Sometimes it's the simplest acts that can turn a travel nightmare into a fond memory. Several years ago, Briana Boston, 42, was traveling home from a road trip with her three young boys when she stopped for a bite in Lakeland, Fla. The children were tired, hungry and not on their best behavior. When an older woman approached her, Ms. Boston, who lives in Central Florida, braced herself for a snide comment or worse.

"Instead, she kindly patted my arm and said, 'It's long days and short years when raising kids. Enjoy them now when they're young, and don't worry what anybody else thinks. You're doing great.'" Ms. Boston burst into tears. "I've never forgotten her words of kindness," she said.

### A ROADSIDE ASSISTANT

Of course, going out of your way to be kind to someone comes with its own reward. But sometimes, those good intentions can lead to even more benefits. Yana Mihailuka, 39, was driving back from a winter hike at Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks in California when people at a car on the side of the road flagged her down. Thinking that they needed help, she pulled over.

"It was snowing, and we thought their car had broken down," said Ms. Mihailuka, who lives in Paris. "It turns out this wonderful family had made too many tamales and wanted to share with us! It was so touching and wonderful."

MARGARET FLATLEY