



Wilmington Examiner

Trump Before and After

Post-shooting, we may be seeing a different side

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The Oasis at Death Valley

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Biden's worst idea yet

It is hard to tell which is more pathetic, President Joe Biden's lurch left in a desperate attempt to keep the base of the Democratic Party from kicking off the ticket or his descent into complete incoherence.

Speaking to the NAACP National Convention in Las Vegas on July 16, Biden said he would combat high housing costs by capping the amount corporate landlords could raise rent by to \$55 a month. It is hard to tell from the video if Biden failed to see the teleprompter or just failed to comprehend what was on it, but the actual policy released by the White House later that day was for a 5% cap on monthly rent hikes by corporate landlords, not \$55.

Either way, \$55 or 5%, rent controls of any kind have a long history of proven failure. As tempting as it is for politicians to make voters happy by freezing their housing costs, rent controls only discourage investment in new housing construction, thus preventing increased supply from meeting demand. The result is higher housing costs for everyone, even those in rent-controlled units, who eventually look for new options as their life changes only to find everything is much more expensive than what they are stuck in.

Contrast Biden's rent-control solution to housing costs with former President Donald Trump's. Asked what he would do to lower housing costs, Trump told reporters, "So 50% of the housing costs today and in certain areas like, you know, a lot of these crazy places is environmental, is bookkeeping, is all of those restrictions: building permits, tremendous restriction, your permits, your permitting process, your zoning. I went through years of zoning. Zoning is like ... it's a killer. But we'll be doing that, and we'll be bringing the price of housing down."

Trump is right. The problem with

housing affordability isn't corporate greed but environmentalism run amok. Permitting, zoning, and regulations are the top drivers of higher housing costs. Just compare California, which is burdened by the California Environmental Quality Act, to Texas, which does not have a law that empowers environmental

“As tempting as it is for politicians to make voters happy by freezing their housing costs, rent controls only discourage investment in new housing construction, thus preventing increased supply from meeting demand.”

activists to sue and stall every construction project in state court.

Thanks to a friendlier regulatory environment, one study found that Texas's three biggest metropolitan areas (Dallas, Houston, and Austin) out-built California's three biggest metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland, and San Diego) by 300%. Another study found that the city of Austin is out-building San Francisco by a factor of 10. As a direct result of Texas's willingness to prioritize new construction over excessive environmentalism, housing costs are far lower than they are in California, and hundreds of thousands of Californians flee their Democratic-run state for the Republican-run Texas every year.

In theory, Biden would need Congress to pass a new law to implement his new rent-control scheme. But he has a record of not letting the Constitution or courts get in his way. When the Supreme Court struck down one of his plainly illegal college debt amnesties, Biden just tweaked it and passed another illegal amnesty. There is no reason to think he wouldn't try another illegal work-around on rent control.

Californians frustrated by high housing costs are lucky they can escape to Republican-controlled states such as Texas. If Biden wins, the same bad housing policies that make California unlivable will be forced on people nationally. ★



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What else Democrats are lying about, Part 3: Climate

As Hurricane Beryl was bearing down on Houston, President Joe Biden told a crowd at the Washington, D.C., Emergency Operations Center that “extreme heat is the No. 1 weather-related killer in the United States.” He went on to blame “extreme weather events” such as hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes on climate change before concluding that ignoring it is “deadly and dangerous and irresponsible.”

Hyping the harms of climate change has been a scare tactic of the Democratic Party for decades, helping to make Generation Z the most depressed and least

optimistic generation ever. But almost everything Democrats say about climate change is a lie, which is why it is the perfect topic for Part 3 in our series, inspired by the lies Democrats told about Biden’s mental condition, “What else are the Democrats lying about?”

Climate change is real. The world’s average temperature is rising. It is just not rising as fast as Democrats claim and is not causing the damage Democrats say it is.

Take Biden’s statement about heat, deaths, and extreme weather events. Not one claim in that paragraph is true. In the U.S., extreme cold kills twice the number

of people as extreme heat. Internationally, the numbers are even more stark, with extreme cold claiming nine times as many victims as extreme heat.

Turning to “extreme weather events,” hurricane frequency and intensity have not increased since 1900. Floods have not increased in frequency or intensity since 1950, and tornadoes have not increased in frequency or intensity since 1950 either.

When then-University of Colorado professor Roger Pielke testified to these facts before Congress in 2015, Democrats tried to do to him what they did to anyone who dared speak the truth about Biden’s mental condition before his disastrous debate against former President Donald Trump. They bullied and harassed him, even trying to get him fired. But Pielke had science to back him up, and Democrats eventually gave up their witch hunt against him.

The Democratic Party’s lies about climate change don’t end there. In 2009, former Vice President Al Gore predicted that the polar ice cap over the Arctic Ocean would melt by 2014. He was wrong. The ice cap is still there. In 2009, the Obama administration predicted that the glaciers in Montana’s Glacier National Park would disappear entirely by 2020. Guess what? Obama was wrong. The glaciers are still there.

Democrats and their media allies have been predicting environmental doom for more than 50 years. As early as the 1960s, Stanford University professor Paul Ehrlich was predicting famine, drought, and dead oceans within a decade. He, too, was famously wrong.

The real mystery isn’t why Democrats keep lying about the climate — they lie because it gives them an excuse to exert more government control over all of us — but why so many voters keep believing them.

Considering that those voters most likely to fall for the Democrats’ climate lies are also the youngest voters, it is possible that they simply have not been around long enough to know that nothing Democrats say about climate change ever comes true. If only there was a way for all of us to speed up the learning process. ★



An overwhelmed resident surveys the damage following flooding caused by the remnants of Hurricane Beryl on July 11 in Plainfield, Vermont.

DMITRY BELYAKOV/VIAP



Washington Examiner

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There is death, and political death

America is on a journey without maps. No one has been here before.

Not one agent on former President Donald Trump's Secret Service detail had ever leapt between a would-be assassin and a once-and-possibly-future president. They've trained for such incidents, but no one now in the agency has ever experienced one until now. The last attempted presidential assassination was when a madman, John Hinckley Jr., shot Ronald Reagan as he was leaving the Washington Hilton 43 years ago.

On a much bigger scale, the whole nation is in the middle of events it hasn't seen before. It is uncharted political territory, or perhaps a more suitable label would be Hamlet's "undiscovered country."

For it involves death — political death and actual death.

Trump was less than an inch from being killed. Standing on a rally stage in Butler, Pennsylvania, he turned his head to look at data on a screen. If he had turned it less, Thomas Matthew Crooks's bullet would have shattered the back of his head. If he had turned it more, it would have smashed the front of his head. Instead, the bullet ran exactly parallel to the side of his head and wounded only his ear.

The incident, and Trump's rising bloodied from the floor to wave a defiant fist salute to the crowd, has transformed him from a nominee to a leader of almost mythical status. Courage is perhaps the most compelling quality in a leader, and even many former Trump skeptics have rallied to him. They were already doing so after President Joe Biden's debate implosion last month, but the slide toward Trump has accelerated. The Republican Party is utterly his.

But while Republicans are coalescing around a leader who escaped death in such a manner as to breathe extra life into his candidacy and widen his lead over his opponent in polls, Democrats are trying to mount a putsch that, if successful, will mean the death of Biden's political career.

The Trump assassination attempt appears only briefly to have let the air out of Democratic efforts, led by former President Barack Obama and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), to throw Biden off the ticket and replace him with someone younger, less feeble, and more capable of winning the election in November.

They are doing this because Biden looks close not simply to political death but possibly also to the end of his life. He can hardly speak, he whispers incoherently, he cannot maintain a train of thought, he gets unattractively testy when journalists ask him questions about his condition, he is now ill with COVID-19, and his staff "call a lid" on his public appearances before 10 in the morning. He is obviously incapable of leading the country for the next week, let alone for the next four years.

So the party in power is trying to unseat the incumbent president whom its members and apologists are trying to pretend has been a great statesman rather than a hapless incompetent. They are doing this even though this might mean elevating his equally hapless sidekick, Vice President Kamala Harris, to the presidency.

And the party out of executive power is turning back again to the champion it picked eight and four years ago.

What are normal politics these days? The time is out of joint. ★

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Your Land



Despite the Republican National Convention bringing approximately 50,000 people to Milwaukee for the week, areas just outside of the convention seem deserted.

The Sad Side of the City

GRAEME JENNINGS/WASHINGTON EXAMINER

MILWAUKEE

The Republican National Convention brought about 50,000 people to this city for a week in mid-July. But of those, only one columnist ended up at County Clare Irish Pub on the night of July 16.

“Shitty,” was how bartender Patrick described business that night. “It’s been

bad all week.”

County Clare is a 20-minute walk from Fiserv Forum, where the delegates, guests, politicians, and lobbyists all gathered, accompanied by hundreds of police, reporters, and vendors.

Businesses all over the city thought this influx would mean customers. Bars and restaurants in and near the Deer

District — the new dining and drinking neighborhood around the arena, where the Bucks play basketball — certainly did rake it in. Hotels all around the region filled up. But many of the coffee shops, bars, and bookstores just outside the shadow of the convention saw none of this action. They saw less than normal.

“Anyone outside of that area is really f***ed,” said Josh, who tends bar at the Riverside Theater. “There are some people who are helped. Most people around here are hurt.”

Local businessman Daniel Cruz told *BizTimes* that it's "the people well-connected with this convention that seem to be the beneficiaries as opposed to the neighborhood businesses and the local businesses that I'm seeing."

The Historic Third Ward of Milwaukee, anchored by the Public Market, is usually a main destination for locals and visitors. A few television crews showed up at the Public Market Wednesday morning to do segments on "Real Milwaukee," but not many other folks did.

I asked the barista at Anodyne Coffee inside the market whether they're getting more business because of the convention.

"Less, actually. Much less," she replied. They had expected a boom. "We even staffed extra," she says. One on-duty barista idly played on her MacBook at the end of the bar.

Patrick's regulars didn't show up at County Clare because "They're all out of town" he said. Josh said that getting around the city is made harder by the security and closures, and so locals stayed home.

The security is the biggest problem. Entering the convention area requires standing in lengthy lines (often in the sun) and passing through metal detectors. Anyone who makes it inside the security perimeter is loath to leave until it's time go to bed. Because that bed might

be in Pewaukee, in Waukesha County, the delegates and reporters have to hop on buses — which leaves no time for wandering to the neighborhood joints.

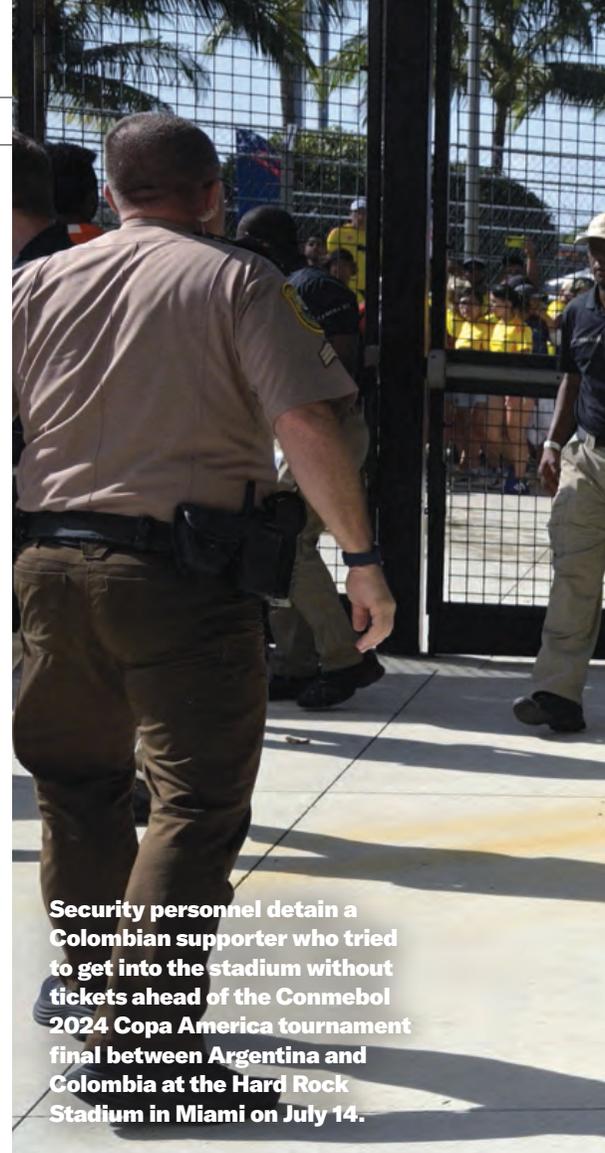
Even Airbnb operators struggled, the *BizTimes* reported, because the summer weddings they normally rely on weren't happening on the two weekends around the convention.

The politicians' visit here provided a perfect metaphor for what happens whenever government shows up: the well-connected guys win, and the little guy loses.

—By Timothy P. Carney

Illegal Immigrants Storm Border, Then Soccer Game

On March 24, 2022, Elkin Mayorga, a migrant from Colombia, illegally crossed the southern border and was arrested by Border Patrol near Yuma, Arizona. As was President Joe Biden's policy at the time, instead of being detained or returned to Mexico, Mayorga was enrolled in Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Alternatives to Detention program, the same program Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) wants to use to release all migrants into the country.

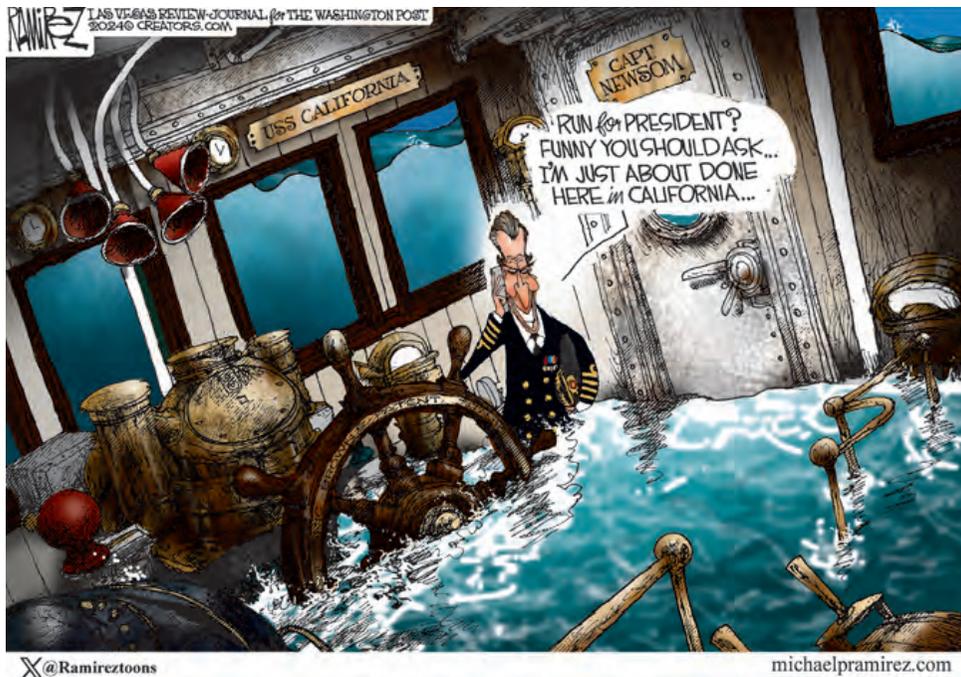


Security personnel detain a Colombian supporter who tried to get into the stadium without tickets ahead of the Conmebol 2024 Copa America tournament final between Argentina and Colombia at the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami on July 14.

As part of ICE's ATD program, Mayorga was fitted with an ankle bracelet, a device he still should be wearing today. Except Mayorga removed the bracelet just a month after being released into the country and, as is Biden's policy, ICE then did nothing to track him down.

Then on Sunday, July 13, 2024, Mayorga again found himself outside a place he had no right to be in. This time it was Hard Rock Stadium in Miami, Florida, where at 8 p.m. that evening, Mayorga's home nation of Colombia was facing off against Argentina in the Copa America final.

Unable to secure legal entrance into the stadium, Mayorga treated Hard Rock Stadium the same way he treated the borders of the United States. He jumped the turnstiles and attempted to watch the game without paying. Confronted by police, Mayorga attempted to assault arresting officers before he was taken into custody. He has since been charged with battery on a law enforcement officer, trespassing, disorderly intoxication, and





Chicago Plays 'Hide the Homeless'

It's time to play "Hide the Homeless," the Democratic Party game where you take homeless people you have allowed to camp in public and shove them into a closet when a major event comes to town.

This time the player is Chicago, which is in the process of clearing out a homeless encampment near where the Democratic National Convention will be held next month. The homeless people at the encampment are being whisked away to a former restaurant converted into a homeless shelter so that they are not an eyesore when the eyes of the country turn toward the Democratic Party's presidential convention.

"This is really a part of our unsheltered strategy," the commissioner for the city's Department of Family and Support Services said. "Our goal is to be thoughtful, be trauma-informed, and help people along their journey."

That is, as long as Chicago is helping them along their journey to somewhere away from all those media cameras that would remind the country just how poorly the city is run. Wouldn't want

resisting an officer with violence.

Mayorga's story wouldn't be noteworthy except for the fact that there

★★★

"It was a really dangerous situation. A lot of destruction of property, some people got hurt, I saw some kids firsthand that were properly spooked, crying. It was a real bad scene. It kinda felt like the end of Titanic a little bit — everyone's panicking and trying to find their way. It was real bad."

—Mike Ryan Ruiz, sports commentator

were hundreds of Colombian fans trying to enter the stadium illegally, and a riot almost broke out.

"It was a really dangerous situation," sports commentator Mike Ryan Ruiz later said. "A lot of destruction of property, some people got hurt, I saw some kids firsthand that were properly spooked, crying. It was a real bad scene. It kinda felt like the end of Titanic a little bit — everyone's panicking and trying to find their way. It was real bad."

A total of 55 people were eventually ejected from the stadium by police that night, and another 27 were arrested. Of those 27 that were arrested, at least 11, including Mayorga, turned out to be illegal immigrants.

If we don't enforce our nation's immigration laws, if we keep releasing illegal immigrants into the country like Biden is still doing, then the rule of law in this nation will only deteriorate further, and we can only expect more near-riots at sporting events to come.

—By Conn Carroll

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YOUR LAND

everyone to see what Chicago looks like normally, now would we?

This is normal for the Democratic Party, though. Los Angeles leadership is the best at this game, having played it for the Super Bowl and the Oscars. Sacramento, the capital city of California, is also well-versed. Now, Chicago gets to try and put its name on the leaderboard, showing Democratic leaders in other cities just how good the Windy City is at sweeping away homeless people for cameras.

There is nothing to worry about, though. The encampment will probably be brought back at some point after the national attention leaves. After all, like most big-city Democrats, Chicago leaders think that all the normal residents should have to deal with homeless encampments on their streets and sidewalks, just not the elites that arrive for events such as the DNC.

—By Zachary Faria

JD Vance and the Vice President Elegy

I was not sold on Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) when former President Donald Trump announced him as his running mate. I thought there were better choices available that would have been staunch



Vice Presidential Nominee Sen. JD Vance (R-OH) speaks during the Republican National Convention on July 17 in Milwaukee.

supporters of Trump’s platform and ideology while also appealing to undecided voters that could help Trump win reelection. My feelings were reinforced and predicated mainly on Vance’s earlier comments about being a Never Trumper. However, his speech during the Republican National Convention on Wednesday helped sway me a little bit.

I wouldn’t categorize myself as being completely on board with Vance yet. However, the fact that he rose from poverty, and the socioeconomic challenges that come with that, is an experience I can personally relate to. The fact that he enlisted in the Marine Corps after high school, served in Iraq, and then went to Yale Law School is quite admirable, and

it has all the workings for a success story that is arguably as American as apple pie. It exemplifies picking oneself up by one’s bootstraps, an integral component of the American spirit.

His stories about his mother and grandmother, who Vance affectionately called his “Mamaw,” were charming and endearing. Vance’s heartfelt description of his “Mamaw,” while categorizing her feistiness, devotion to God, guns, and the F-word, made him relatable in a way to the working class that makes up much of the country and the Rust Belt. His devotion to his family also transcended political ideologies. It was warm, heartfelt, and revealed many extraordinary qualities that made up the American nuclear family of yesteryear.

Simply put, I could now see the appeal of Vance.

Moreover, given Trump’s political slogan of “Make America Great Again,” Vance also hit on various political issues that many people could find relatable. Hammering away at Democratic policies and pushing for electric vehicles was an excellent start to his vice presidential candidacy as Trump’s running mate. He touted his love for the country and provided hope, inspiration, and a vision for others to return to the American dream, the dream that made our country great. And he did it by demonstrating why he was arguably the right choice for Trump to make.

“President Trump represents America’s last best hope to restore what, if lost, may never be found again,” Vance said, “a country where a working-class boy born far from the halls of power can stand on this stage as the next vice president of the United States of America.”

—By Christopher Tremoglie

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The Week That Was

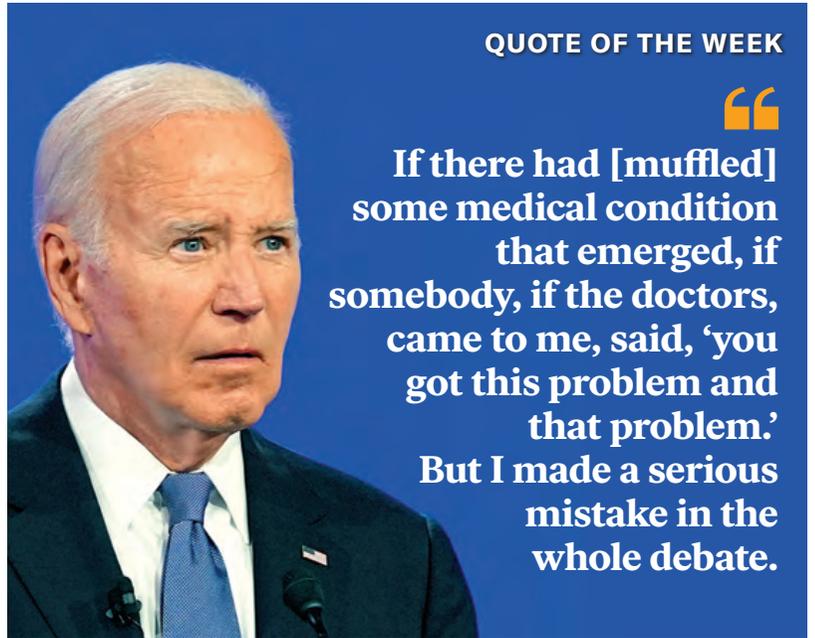
STAT OF THE WEEK

12



A 2-year-old who died after being **left in a hot car** in New York on July 16 is the **12th case in 2024**. Kids and Car Safety has recorded at least 1,083 hot car deaths from 1990 through 2023, with 29 deaths last year and 36 deaths in 2022. Experts say all hot car deaths are preventable and remind drivers to **never leave a child or pet unattended in a vehicle** during summer months.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“
If there had [muffled] some medical condition that emerged, if somebody, if the doctors, came to me, said, ‘you got this problem and that problem.’
But I made a serious mistake in the whole debate.”

— **President Joe Biden** to BET’s Ed Gordon during an interview in Las Vegas last week after being asked if there was anything that would make him re-evaluate staying in the race.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK // GRAEME JENNINGS / WASHINGTON EXAMINER



Babydog Justice sits in a chair next to West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice as he gave his address at the **Republican National Convention** on July 17, 2024.

The US military ethos and its enemies

There is a war on the martial virtues essential to effective service

Mackubin Owens

Over the past few years, public confidence in the U.S. military, which has been extraordinarily high for decades, has fallen precipitously. In a poll of attitudes toward the military, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute found that the percentage of people expressing a great deal of trust and confidence in that institution had fallen from 70% in 2018 to 45% in 2021. There is at least anecdotal evidence to suggest that this fall from grace is related to the perception that the military, like Esau, has sold its birthright for a mess of pottage, that it has squandered its standing as a profession, becoming just another self-interested bureaucracy.

People join the military for a variety of reasons. Economic circumstances play a role, but so do patriotism and the search

for adventure. In my own experience, the people who have traditionally joined the military have been people who recognize the inherent dignity and necessity of the martial virtues: a military “ethos” that underpins unit cohesion and thereby military effectiveness. This ethos, which has served the republic well, is the foundation of trust among soldiers, between superiors and subordinates, and at the societal level between soldiers on the one hand and citizens on the other.

This mutual trust and the acceptance of a distinct military ethos is necessary in order for the military to carry out what Samuel Huntington in his classic study of U.S. civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, called its *functional* imperative, the ability to deter war or win it if it comes. This is the basis of military effectiveness.

It has long been an article of faith that to execute its functional imperative on behalf of the nation, the military of necessity must maintain an ethos distinct from

that of liberal society. Indeed, a democratic republic faces a paradox when it comes to the relationship between the military and society at large: the former cannot govern itself in accordance with the democratic principles of that society.

If the military fails, the society it protects may not survive. And long experience has taught us that certain kinds of behavior are destructive to good order, discipline, and morale, without which a military organization will certainly fail. The goal of military policy must be victory on the battlefield, a purpose that cannot be in competition with any other, including the provision of entitlements, “equal opportunity,” or diversity. Indeed, the battlefield mocks “diversity.” Unfortunately, many of those in positions of responsibility, including far too many senior members of the military itself, seem to have forgotten this imperative.

This attitude is the result of another set of social forces that Huntington called the *societal* imperative, “the social forc-

es, ideologies, and institutions dominant within the society.” He identified two components of the societal imperative: 1) the U.S. constitutional structure, the legal institutional framework that guides American politics and military affairs, and 2) the dominant ideology shaping political affairs, which Huntington identified as *liberalism*, “the gravest domestic threat to American military security,” due to its anti-military character. The problem for Huntington was that, in the long run, the social imperative would prevail over the functional imperative, undermining the military virtues necessary to ensure military effectiveness.

Huntington continued that America’s anti-military liberal ideology tended to produce two outcomes. When the external threat was low, liberal ideology sought “extirpation,” the virtual elimination of military forces. When the external threat was higher, liberal ideology pursued a policy of “transmutation,” refashioning the military along liberal lines by stripping it of its “particularly military characteristics.” Today, with the military’s submission to the ideology of “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” we have transmutation on steroids.

Indeed, diversity now trumps military effectiveness as a goal of military policy. But attempts by the military to address an alleged lack of “diversity” in the ranks can actually make things worse by pushing “identity politics,” which, by suggesting that justice is a function of attributes such as sex and skin color rather than one’s individual excellence, tends to divide people rather than unify them. Identity politics undermines military effectiveness, which depends on cohesion born of trust among those who operate together. DEI may be new, but the seeds of the problem were sowed years ago.

THE MILITARY ‘ETHOS’ AND ITS ENEMIES

Since war has been mainly a masculine realm, the military ethos has traditionally been masculine as well. Indeed, the glue of the military *ethos* has been what the Greeks called *philia*: friendship, comradeship, or brotherly love. *Philia*, the bond among disparate people who have nothing in common but facing death and misery together, is the source of the unit cohesion that all research has shown to be critical to battlefield success. *Philia* is described by J. Glenn Gray in *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*.

Numberless soldiers have died, more or less willingly, not for country or honor or religious faith or for any other abstract good but because they realized that by fleeing their posts and rescuing themselves, they would expose their companions to greater danger. Such loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale. The commander who can preserve and strengthen it knows that all other physical and psychological factors are little in comparison. The feeling of loyalty, it is clear, is the result, not the cause, of comradeship. Comrades are loyal to one another spontaneously and without any need for reasons.

Given its undeniably masculine foundations, it is not surprising that the earliest and most sustained attack on the traditional military ethos came from feminists and their ideological allies, who argued that the military ethos excludes women by stressing aggression, male bonding, and other “macho” attitudes.

These purported characteristics led Madeleine Morris of the Duke University School of Law, a former adviser to Bill Clinton’s secretary of the Army, to criticize the U.S. military ethos as “masculinist” and to call for the U.S. military to embrace an “ungendered vision” in which unit cohesion is achieved by compassion and idealism rather than by “macho posturing.” Morris decried the dominant “masculinist military construct” that favored the “hypermasculine male,” writing in her article “By Force of Arms: Rape, War, and Military Culture” for the February 1996 issue of the *Duke Law Journal* that there was much to be gained and little to be lost by “changing this aspect of military culture from a masculinist vision of unalloyed



The goal of military policy must be victory on the battlefield, a purpose that cannot be in competition with any other, including the provision of entitlements, ‘equal opportunity,’ or diversity. Indeed, the battlefield mocks ‘diversity.’

aggressivity to an ungendered vision.”

Morris’s comments are typical of a civilian elite that sees the military ethos not as a valuable contribution to military effectiveness but as a problem to be eradicated in the name of DEI, sexual politics, and the politics of “sexual orientation.” At a minimum, elite opinion contends that the military is obligated to adapt to contemporary liberal values, patterns of behavior, and social mores, no matter how adversely they might affect the military’s ability to carry out its functional imperative. This is the essence of Huntington’s transmutation.

THE RADICAL FEMINIST ASSAULT ON THE MILITARY ETHOS

In the 2000 book *Real Politics: At the Center of Everyday Life*, the late American political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain identified what she described as the two poles of modern radical feminism: the “repressive androgynists,” who contend that there are no real differences between men and women, indeed that the idea that there are differences is an illusion fostered by a repressive patriarchy, and the “feminist victimization wing,” which paints the relations between the sexes as a continuous train of abuses by men who victimize women on a daily basis.

For decades, these wings of feminist ideology have worked in tandem to sustain an attack on the culture of the U.S. military, culminating in the inevitable decision by the Pentagon to open infantry and special operations to women. In light of the argument that women are as capable of performing these elite missions as men, it is indeed ironic that the wedge issues driving the military toward this end have come from the *victimization wing*, stretching from the “Tailhook” episode in 1991 to the current charge of rampant sexual assault in the military.

If feminists had really been concerned about merely opening the infantry and special operations forces to women, they would have stressed the ability of women to meet the high physical and mental standards necessary to survive in the demanding environment of close-in ground combat. Instead, they focused on the alleged vulnerability of women to male, though not female, sexual predators, illustrating that military culture is their real target.

One of the ironies of the focus on sexual assault in the military is that it has served to objectify women, not as sexu-



al objects but as weaklings who have no place in the military. It diminishes the significant contributions that women have made to the nation's defense, serving honorably, competently, and bravely during both peace and war. The fact is that the vast majority of women in today's armed forces are extremely professional and want nothing to do with Elshain's two wings of feminism. Yet they have essentially been infantilized by the Pentagon's focus on the alleged victimization of women in the military.

When the U.S. military insisted on opening infantry and special operations forces to women, the focus should have been on upholding high standards, no matter the outcome. Instead, those who wanted to open these heretofore restricted military specialties to women insisted on stigmatizing males as sexual predators and women as childlike victims whose only protection is to charge sexual assault. The result has been a less effective military, rent by dissension.

THE CASE AGAINST WOMEN IN GROUND COMBAT

One of the most important factors in war is what the Prussian "philosopher of war" Carl von Clausewitz called "friction ... the only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper." "Everything in war is simple," he wrote, "but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of friction that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war. ... The military machine — the army and everything related to it — is basically very simple and therefore seems easy to

manage. But we should keep in mind that none of its components is of one piece: each part is composed of individuals ... the least important of whom may chance to delay things or somehow make them go wrong. ... This tremendous friction, which cannot, as in mechanics, be reduced to a few points, is everywhere in contact with chance, and brings about effects that cannot be measured, just because they are largely due to chance."

Friction appears to be intrinsic to war, reflecting the disproportionately large effects of the "least important" people in the system and of minor unforeseeable incidents. Unnoticeably small causes can be amplified in war until they produce unanticipated macro-effects.

Military organizations, of course, attempt to reduce friction. According to Clausewitz, friction is countered by such means as training, discipline, regulations, orders, and "the iron will of the commander." Anything that undermines these factors helps to generate friction. Unfortunately, the leaders of the U.S. military, believing their own propaganda about how technological prowess had "changed the very nature of war" by eliminating "the fog of uncertainty," chose to gamble that women in combat units, the success of which depends on unit cohesion, will not generate friction in addition to that arising from the processes of combat itself.

There are three sources of friction generated by women in ground combat: First, there are substantial physical differences between men and women that place the latter at a distinct disadvantage. Second, there is the fact that men treat women dif-

ferently than they treat other men, which can undermine the comradeship upon which the unit cohesion necessary for success on the battlefield depends. And finally, there is the reality that the presence of women inevitably leads to double standards that seriously erode morale and performance. In other words, men and women are not interchangeable.

What are some of the physical differences? A partial catalog includes the following: The average female soldier, sailor, airman, and Marine is about 5 inches shorter than her male counterpart and has half the upper body strength, lower aerobic capacity — at her physical peak between the ages of 20 and 30, the average woman has the aerobic capacity of a 50-year-old male — and 37% less muscle mass. She has a lighter skeleton, which may mean, for instance, that she can't carry heavy loads as well as a male.

The physical differences between men and women have, unfortunately, all too often caused the military to, in effect, discard the very essence of *philia*: fairness and the absence of favoritism. This is the crux of the problem. As former Navy Secretary Jim Webb observed, "In [the military] environment, fairness is not only crucial — it is the coin of the realm." The military ethos is dependent on the understanding that the criteria for allocating danger and recognition, both positive and negative, are essentially objective.

Favoritism and double standards are deadly to *philia* and the associated phenomena — cohesion, morale, discipline — that are critical to the success of a military organization. Not surprisingly, double standards generate resentment on the part of military men, which in turn leads to cynicism about military women in general, including those who have not benefited from a double standard and who perform their duties with distinction.

The military's commitment to the demands of sexual politics has created two types of double standards. The first is based on differing physical requirements. When Obama Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in combat in 2013, retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Charlie Dunlap, a former JAG and the director of the Duke University School of Law Center on Law, Ethics, and National Security, said, "Secretary Panetta's decision to lift the ban on women serving in certain combat roles makes sense so long as there is no lowering of the physical or other standards required for the new positions."

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The trouble is that the desire for equal *opportunity* is, in practice, usually translated into a demand for equal *results*. Consequently, there has been a watering down of standards to accommodate the generally lower physical capabilities of women. This has had two consequences.

First, standards have been reduced so much that, in many cases, service members no longer are being prepared for the strenuous challenges they will face in the fleet or field. Second, and even more destructive of morale and trust, is the fact that when the requirement can't be changed and the test cannot be eliminated, scores are "gender-normed" to conceal the differences between men and women. All the services have lower physical standards for women than for men.

The second type of double standard has been the tendency to allow women, but not men, to take advantage of sexual differences. For instance, morale, trust, and cohesion have suffered from the perception among military men that women can use pregnancy to avoid duty or deployments.

A REALITY CHECK

When the decision was made to lift the ban on women in ground combat, the Marine Corps asked for a delay. The Marines conducted a \$36 million study in 2015 that compared the performance of all-male units to that of sexually integrated units. The study indicated that the former performed better in the field than the latter. The unprecedented study indicated that all-male ground combat squads were faster, stronger, and more lethal in most cases than units that included women, according to news reports. The women also suffered higher injury rates during physically demanding training.

Advocates of integration were quick to respond to the study. In the *Christian Science Monitor*, Anna Mulrine, channeling Morris, penned a hit piece on the Marines ("Why Marines, unlike Army and Navy, are so against women in combat," Sept. 11, 2015), essentially arguing that a form of machismo "has prevented the Marines from taking steps toward integrating women more seamlessly into the force — steps the Army took long ago, such as opening support jobs in combat units to women. ... Within the halls of the Pentagon, the Marine Corps has widely been regarded as foot-dragging on the matter of women in its combat ranks."

She also publicized the arguments of those who attacked the views of retired

Marine Gen. Greg Newbold, who had contended in a previous article for the military blog *War on the Rocks* ("What tempers the steel of an infantry unit," Sept. 9, 2015) that focusing exclusively on the physical side of women in the infantry provides an incomplete picture. Newbold had made the once-uncontroversial point that "the issue we're now debating has to include a recognition of cohesion and the cost of sexual dynamics in a bare-knuckled brawl, amidst primeval mayhem, in which we expect the collective entity to persevere because it has a greater will and fighting spirit, and not because it is bigger, faster, or more agile." The comments on Mulrine's article posted on Facebook included multiple snipes from Army officers, active and retired, at their benighted Marine brethren.

Meanwhile, in an interview with NPR, former Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, a proponent of integration, questioned the integrity of the study, saying the fact that it "started out with a fairly large component of the men thinking this is not a good idea and women will not be able to do this" could quite possibly have had an impact on the results. I cannot imagine any previous secretary of the Navy so gratuitously insulting one of the services that his own department oversees.

THE NEED FOR MORAL COURAGE

National security is serious business. If the military fails, the society it protects may not survive. To avoid failure, the U.S. military has traditionally acted in accord with a military ethos designed to enhance unit cohesion and military effectiveness. This ethos has stressed traditionally masculine virtues. The United States spends billions of dollars each year on defense. Congress debates the needs of each weapon system, often many times, but in recent years, there has been little or no debate about how the opening of ground combat to women affects the relationship between this ethos and military effectiveness.

One reason for this lack of debate is ideology. Advocates of women in combat do not want a public discussion because they do not want their ideological beliefs subjected to the criteria of objective reality. Thus the dismissive attitude toward the Marine study.

The second and more troubling reason for the lack of open debate is fear. Officers of all ranks have been cowed into silence. Indeed, in some quarters, to question the military's gender policy is to engage in

sexual harassment. For most of American history, the military leaders stood up for the military ethos, explaining to fellow citizens why it is critical to military effectiveness. Sometimes they prevailed. Sometimes they lost. It was for this reason that the military has remained one of the most respected institutions in America. But this seems to be changing.

The commitment to "diversity" at all costs is today's party line within the Pentagon. No one wants to be accused of racism or sexism, so too many officers hold their tongues as the rank and file are indoctrinated by DEI and the like. Those who don't can find themselves sacked.

The military claims to be a profession. But all too often, it acts like just another self-interested bureaucracy. Officers owe it to their profession and, more importantly, to the American people to say publicly what most say privately: that bending the military ethos to the demands of gender politics undermines the military ethos and reducing military effectiveness, leading inexorably to a disaster on some future battlefield. If the military wants to reclaim its standing with the people, its leadership needs to display some moral courage.

Some people will respond that the issue of women in ground combat is moot, because 1) some women in fact passed the rigorous standards of the Army's Ranger School and 2) there has been no catastrophic military failure attributable to the presence of women. But the first was called into question when it was revealed that the women who passed had failed the first time and were, unlike men, given a "do over." Regarding the second, the sort of operations that the military has conducted over the past decades in Iraq and Afghanistan have not stressed the military to the extent that a major war against China or Russia would. Our holiday from great power conflict may be coming to an end.

Some will contend that in addition, the issue of women in ground combat has been superseded by DEI. But as suggested earlier, the roots of both are the same: the belief that the military can recruit people for their demographic rather than for their ability to do certain jobs, especially if it relaxes standards to attract more "diverse" candidates. ★

Dr. Mackubin Owens, a retired Marine and former Naval War College professor, is a senior fellow of the Foreign Policy Research Institute.

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TRUMP BEFORE & AFTER

How a would-be assassin's bullet may have changed the former president, if not the race

By Byron York

The Republican National Convention was supposed to mark the transformation of Donald Trump from presumptive GOP nominee to official standard-bearer of the party. But it turned out the real transformation took place 48 hours before the convention began, in a field in rural Pennsylvania, when Trump narrowly escaped an assassin's attempt to blow his head off. In a split second, Trump suffered a bloody wound to his right ear and came away with a different view of his life and the presidential race. The effect on Trump was so pronounced that it seems reasonable to see Trump in two ways — the Trump of before the assassination attempt and after.

Trump had carefully planned the weekend before the convention began, on Monday, July 15, at Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum. He would hold a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, north of Pittsburgh, on Saturday evening, then fly back to his club in Bedminster, New Jersey, for the night, and then fly to Milwaukee late Sunday afternoon to begin the work that would culminate in his acceptance speech on the final night of the convention. I had made plans to travel with Trump from New Jersey to Milwaukee and to do an interview setting the stage for the convention.

The world knows what happened in Butler. In the early hours of Sunday, after Trump had been examined and treated at Butler Memorial Hospital and then returned

to New Jersey, I thought Trump would surely change his plans and the interview would be off. Wouldn't he take at least a day to rest? But the campaign said no, the plans had not changed, and Trump would be heading to Milwaukee as scheduled Sunday afternoon. He wasn't going to let an assassination attempt stop him.



'I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD'

On Trump's customized Boeing 757, colloquially known as Trump Force One, the former president, with a white gauze bandage on his ear that the public had not yet seen, seemed to go back and forth between his old self and a man trying to process what had just happened to him. On the same-old-Trump side, the first thing Trump brought up when I sat down with him was his vice presidential pick. He did not reveal what he was thinking — less than 24 hours later he would announce it was Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) — but Trump always wants to know what's going on: What are people saying about Rubio? What about Burgum? Anybody else?

But then, inevitably, the talk turned to the day before. Trump became a little quieter. He could not stop thinking about, and reliving, the moment the bullet struck.

Trump explained that he normally stands at the podium and faces the crowd as he speaks. If he had been in that position when the shooter pulled the trigger, he would have been killed instantly. But on this evening, Trump had brought a visual aid: a chart with statistics about immigration that was showing on a large screen to Trump's right. As he referenced the information in the chart, Trump turned his head so that he was facing almost directly right. And in that nanosecond, when his head was in that position, the bullet whizzed by, grazing his ear. If Trump had been facing a little more forward, the shot would have been fatal.

Instead, his head happened to be in the precise spot that ensured his survival. How did that happen? "The most incredible thing was that I happened to not only turn but to turn at the exact right time and in just the right amount," Trump told me. "If I only half-turn, it hits the back of the brain. The other way goes right through [the skull]. And because the sign was high, I'm looking up. The chances of my making a perfect turn are probably one-tenth of 1%, so I'm not supposed to be here."

Trump returned to that moment, and the nearness of death, over and over as we talked. "I had to be at the exact right angle," Trump said at another point. "Because the thing was an eighth of an inch away. That I would turn exactly at that second, where he [the gunman] wouldn't stop the shot is pretty amazing. Pretty amazing. I'm really not supposed to be here."

"I mean, I'm supposed to be dead,"



Trump said later. "I'm not supposed to be here."

Trump has a big TV screen in clear view from his regular seat on the plane. As we spoke, a newscast came on, and he watched video of himself being shot. "Look at that, they're showing the bullet — holy s***! — can you believe those crazy pictures?" he exclaimed when the program showed the extraordinary photo of the bullet trail streaking away from him after he was hit.

A CHANGED MAN?

It was clear that Trump felt something very important had changed in his life. How could he not? There has been a lot of research on the effects of near-death experiences, and they are often profound. At the very least, Trump was grappling with all sorts of new and powerful feelings. You could actually see it on his face, both in the plane and when Trump made his first public appearance Monday night at the convention. The public has never seen Trump



Trump points to a chart on immigration moments before shots rang out at a campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13.

TOP: GRAEME JENNINGS/WASHINGTON EXAMINER ; BOTTOM: EVAN VUCCI/AP



Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump arrives at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee on July 15 with a bandage covering his right ear. This was his first public appearance since the assassination attempt on July 13.

look so emotional as when he walked into the Fiserv Forum on that first night.

Some people have cited a quote from Winston Churchill — “Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result” — in describing Trump. And indeed, Trump seemed very happy not to be dead. But his reaction was more subdued than exhilarated. He was, after all, wounded, if not seriously, by the bullet. And the brush with death seemed to leave him in a deeply thoughtful frame of mind.

When I asked Trump whether the assassination attempt would change his campaign, he answered “yes” before I finished the question. In the hours since the shooting, he had been looking back on his nine years in presidential politics, seeing the time as one battle after another. “I’ve been fighting a group of people that I considered very bad people for a long time and they’ve been fighting me, and we’ve put up a very good fight,” Trump said. Now, after the shooting, Trump said

he feels he can’t keep up the same thing “after what I’ve been through.”

Trump said he felt he had to take a different approach to his convention acceptance speech. He couldn’t be the same old Trump because he wasn’t the same old Trump. He explained that before the shooting, he had already prepared the speech, and it was “an unbelievable rip-roarer — it was brutal, really good, really tough.” But after the shooting, he decided to throw it out in favor of a speech that was less tough and “more unifying.”

“Unity” quickly became a buzzword in the campaign and at the convention. Of course, it was true in the sense that the attack on Trump further united Republicans who were already solidly united behind Trump. But the idea was to create a greater unity among those who didn’t support Trump, a national unity behind a former and would-be president. People in Trumpworld did not think he could make that happen with words alone, but if he is elected, the positive results and recovery from President Joe Biden’s various disasters would unite the country behind Trump.

It sounds good, but how does that actually happen? First, it is not clear whether Trump’s change in outlook in the days following the shooting will last. He is a 78-year-old man with a powerful personality that has remained pretty much the same for a very long time. Over the years, a lot of his supporters have hoped that Trump could change this or that aspect of his personality to become a less controversial leader, and they have been disappointed. So we will see what happens in coming months.

And if he is elected, yes, Trump might achieve good results, but he got good results in his first term, and Democrats spent the entire time trying to remove him from office. If he were to be elected again, and if Democrats control at least one house of Congress, it seems likely that that effort would begin again even before Trump is inaugurated. His adversaries will renew their attempt to disqualify Trump via the 25th Amendment, and if Democrats control the House, it seems highly likely they will impeach him on Day 1 based on Jan. 6 and his criminal conviction in New York and who knows what else. Trump would have to fight back, which would be his instinct anyway. The nation’s politics would be as divided as ever. And people would talk about how united the country seemed for about a minute and a half during the summer.



Trump is covered by Secret Service agents after being struck by a bullet on July 13 at a campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania.

EVAN VUCCI/AP



Nebraska delegates cheer during the Republican National Convention on July 15 in Milwaukee.

Still, there was a real contrast between the after-the-shooting Trump I spoke to on the plane on July 14 and the Trump of before the shooting. From my own observation, the contrast was particularly apparent comparing the trip to Milwaukee with a visit with Trump just a month earlier, on June 11, when we talked at dinner in Florida and then headed off on another flight, this one to Washington, D.C.

BEFORE AND AFTER

I had gone to Mar-a-Lago to take a look at what might be called the campaign you don't see. As a former president, Trump no longer has use of the White House and Air Force One. But as a billionaire, he has two reasonable facsimiles: a historic mansion, Mar-a-Lago, and a giant, luxurious airplane, Trump Force One. That allows him to run a sort of White House campaign operation without the actual White House. If you are, say, a Republican member of Congress or part of a trade group or a religious organization or a social media influencer or a state legislator, a visit with Trump at Mar-a-Lago, especially if it includes a ride on the 757,

can seem almost like a presidential event.

Trump makes full use of his assets. The day I visited, he had hosted businesspeople; members of a bitcoin group hoping for favorable treatment in the next administration; a lawmaker, Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-TN); and a YouTube influencer, WWE wrestler and podcaster Logan Paul. He also put in a lot of time on the phone, making fundraising calls and calls to various state officials, plus radio shows and media interviews. On top of that, Trump decided to go to Washington for meetings with House and Senate Republicans, so after dinner, it was off to the plane and a lot more calls. It was all done with little media coverage — another busy day in the campaign you don't see.

A conversation with Trump can go all over the place. At dinner, we talked about his criminal conviction in Manhattan, a week and a half earlier, on 34 felony charges that his supporters, and others as well, believe were politically motivated. Trump told me he was quite surprised to be indicted in the first place after so many legal experts he knew, many of them on television, told him the case had no mer-

it. He was appalled, and then he was surprised again, this time positively.

"I had no idea it would make me more popular," Trump said. "I had no idea it would set fundraising records, numbers like nobody's ever seen before." Politically, he said, "if anything, it has hardened our base. I was a little bit surprised and very pleasantly surprised. When the government goes after you like this, who goes up in the polls?"

Still, it was not hard to see a certain ambivalence. Before I joined Trump for dinner, there was a brief and telling scene when he recorded a podcast with Logan Paul. When they met, Trump gave Paul a MAGA hat and a mug shot T-shirt. "Is this your mug shot?" Paul asked.

"Yeah," Trump said. "Can you believe it?"

"You're a gangster!" Paul said admiringly.

"This is what we're reduced to," Trump said. "Isn't it crazy?" He then noted that Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra both had legendary mug shots, "but we've eclipsed them."

"It is what it is," Trump said. In the en-

tire exchange, there was more wistfulness than swagger in his demeanor. But being Trump, if he had to have a mug shot, it was going to be the best mug shot.

At dinner, Trump then moved on to the debate with Biden, at that time still two weeks in the future. Trump explained his thinking in accepting Biden's debate challenge so quickly. He said he believed Biden didn't really want to debate and made Trump an offer he thought Trump would refuse. It was all for show. Instead, Trump accepted almost instantly, and Biden was locked into a debate that would prove disastrous for him. That led to an extended discussion of Biden and... face-lifts.

"This guy is shot," Trump said of Biden. "He also had really bad plastic surgery. You know, his eyes are round. He had a face-lift. I'll tell you what happened. Outside of the hair, which was very bad, he was sort of a good-looking guy. Bad hair, but he was sort of a good-looking guy, and he was hale and hearty."

"He was very late into the campaign," Trump continued. "And if you saw him when he first came into the campaign, he was a mess. I mean, it was terrible. He had terrible plastic surgery." (In 2019, as the Democratic presidential primary contest got underway, a number of cosmetic surgeons told the *Washington Examiner* that Biden showed signs of having had cosmetic surgery.) "His eyes were round," Trump repeated. "They're like pennies. You know, eyes are supposed to be aligned ... his eyes are absolutely round if you look at him, the skin around his eyes. Whoever did the plastic surgery was terrible. And it took him a while, and now he's much better than he was. I was shocked that he won [the 2020 Democratic nomination] because to me, every time I look at it, it's holy s*** — it's just bad plastic surgery."

It became clear that Trump can discuss plastic surgery at great length. So I asked whether Trump watched Biden very much. "No, as little as possible," he said. "Well, you've got to study him a little?" I said. "Look, I've been studying," Trump answered. "Don't worry about that. I've been studying."

As dinner wound down, Trump said it was time to head to the plane for the trip to Washington Dulles International Airport. Trump was in a good mood. It was a Tuesday night, and there had been several Republican primaries around the country, and Trump's candidates won. He spent a good deal of time making congratulatory

phone calls.

On the plane, Trump's mood seemed lighter, more playful, happier. He loves music and has given himself the de facto role of musical director at Mar-a-Lago, using his iPad to pick songs for the diners. He can flip through songs very fast. On the plane, he gave a tour, a pretty high-volume tour, of some of his favorite music videos on the big TV screen.

He started with Guns N' Roses's "November Rain," a lengthy and elaborate video whose production values Trump discussed in great detail. Next was Sinead O'Connor's "Nothing Compares 2 U," which Trump liked so much he played two different versions. Next was James Brown and Luciano Pavarotti's version of Brown's "It's a Man's Man's Man's World." Trump knows the song is wildly politically incorrect by today's standards, but he is a big fan of both Brown and Pavarotti. He knew the opera singer and paid Pavarotti a great Trumpian compliment: "He was a wild man." Trump bestowed the same honor on Brown, who certainly deserved it, too.

As the videos played, Trump would occasionally stop and talk or take a phone call. Next, he played a video of Brown's legendary performance of "Please, Please, Please" at the 1964 T.A.M.I. Show. Then it was on to Presley's medley of "Dixie" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic." (Trump has been playing more Elvis at his rallies these days, for what it's worth.) The last

video of the evening was one of Trump's favorites, the Rolling Stones's "You Can't Always Get What You Want," which he used to use to close his rallies.

On the flight went, with music, conversation, and phone calls, Trump in the center of it all. It was kind of a small, flying party heading from Florida to Washington, with the host in good spirits, keeping the hits coming. No one knew that a month later, Trump would be in the same place, the same seat, a bandage on his head, eyes on the same big screen, watching videos not of Brown or O'Connor but of a gunman trying to assassinate him. No one knew he would be replaying the experience in his mind, reflecting on how close he came to dying. No one knew he would be wondering why he was allowed to live — "by luck or by God," he said. And no one knew that he would be rethinking his entire campaign, the presidency, and his appeal to the people.

Maybe the 2024 race will return to normal, although it would be hard to say that anything about the race has been normal so far. But something has changed in Trump. Even if he returns to the combative style that has characterized his career in national politics, the assassination attempt has exposed a depth and contemplativeness that voters have never seen in him before. ★

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Trump greets vice presidential pick Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) and Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) on the first night of the Republican National Convention.

The GOP's Bet with Vance

Which voters decide the election will determine whether Trump made the right choice

By W. James Antle III

There are two ways to look at former President Donald Trump's selection of Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) as his running mate. One is that it is a sign of supreme confidence, perhaps overconfidence.

Vance is seen by many as a governing pick rather than someone who helps Trump gain additional voters. Delegates to the Republican National Convention told the *Washington Examiner* that Trump was securing his legacy with the 39-year-old understudy.

The Republican pollster Kristen Soltis Anderson made the provocative (to Trumpworld, at least) comparison to Mitt Romney teaming up with Paul Ryan in 2012. "Ryan was not chosen to appeal to a particular demographic group or geographic region; he simply was someone the candidate liked, who was young and energetic and could carry the torch into the future," she wrote in the *New York Times*. "Vance, similarly, may not necessarily win Trump a new demographic. But he represents a chance for Trump's worldview and posture to be formally handed down to the next gen-

eration of Republican Party leadership."

To continue the comparison to Ryan, Vance represents his particular governing worldview with more coherence and consistency than the top of the ticket. A dozen years ago, Romney was viewed with suspicion by many Republicans. The former Massachusetts governor who would later become Utah senator adopted multiple political personas throughout his various runs for office before settling on gentle Never Trump conservative some years after his failed presidential run.

Trump is not particularly ideological. His skepticism of international trade deals, immigration, and foreign interventionism are all visceral rather than philosophical and subject to negotiation. Trump is always looking to get a better deal and believes he is uniquely qualified to secure one.

Vance comes to his beliefs through experience, too, growing up poor and writing about his life in the bestselling book *Hillbilly Elegy*, for which he was known before running for office. But he has arrived at detailed public policy positions that he can justify at a white-paper level. He has been more consistent on continued Ukraine aid — broadly speaking, he's against it — than Trump, for example. The same could probably

be said for Vance's views on immigration compared to Trump's.

At the most fundamental level, however, the choice of Vance signals that this is not the Republican Party of 2012 or Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan. In his acceptance speech, Vance denounced NAFTA, admitting China to the World Trade Organization, and the Iraq War, cleverly hitting President Joe Biden for his support of each while noting he is much younger than the incumbent. There were no paeans to free trade or entitlement reform. Vance pointedly noted that America is not just an idea.

Some Republicans fear that Trump and Vance are moving the party not just beyond Romney and George W. Bush but beyond Ronald Reagan. The *Washington Post's* Jeff Stein reported he was hearing "alarm" from donors and "Reaganite conservative types." Erick Erickson, the influential conservative radio talk show host, put it more succinctly: "Reaganites are passing the torch to the Buchananites."

It should be noted, however, that Trump has been in national politics for nine years and has been the titular head of the Republican Party for nearly all that time. He is now the Republican presidential nominee for the third straight election. Even Richard Nixon had an



The shift of working-class voters to the GOP is almost complete. This has accentuated the disconnect between the party's elites and its base that only a handful of elected officials besides the former president have attempted to address. One of those few is Vance.



eight-year hiatus between his first and second nominations.

The realignment of working-class voters to the GOP is almost complete. This has accentuated the party's disconnect between its elites and its base that only a handful of elected officials besides the former president have attempted to address. One of those few is Vance. The New Right believes it has the infrastructure to support the Trumps and Vances of the party that it lacked in 2016 and for much of Trump's first term.

That's one piece of why Vance is an expression of confidence from Trump-world. But more fundamentally, choosing someone who will help you govern rather than win suggests a belief that the election is more or less in the bag. Biden has had a terrible few weeks. Republicans and Democrats alike are talking about a possible Trump landslide that would also usher in GOP majorities in Congress, pulling off the trifecta.

At the same time, Trump's lead is down to 2.5 points in the *RealClearPolitics* national polling average. *FiveThirtyEight's* model actually narrowly favors Biden to win. Trump's lead in the battleground states that will determine the Electoral College majority has been consistent, but it is not insurmountable, at least not by historical standards.

Biden's already fragile grip on the Democratic nomination loosened further while Republicans were meeting in Milwaukee. Few Democrats who are not on

the campaign payroll or related to him by blood or marriage seem deeply invested in him, while much of the party is in open rebellion against him. He may be replaced as the nominee, which could totally reset the race in ways unfavorable to Trump.

Yet the addition of Vance to the ticket could also be looked at as a sign that Trump is taking nothing for granted. The campaign has its eyes squarely on the Rust Belt and is not relying solely on Trump's emotional appeal to working-class voters to win them back.

Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin were crucial to Trump's win in 2016. It is not an accident that the GOP convention was in Milwaukee. Biden won all three states in 2020, and his campaign says they are critical to his reelection. Trump is leading in all three now, however narrowly, but if Biden is replaced, a Rust Belt governor could be on the ticket — or, if Democrats get their wish for a complete makeover, could occupy both slots.

Trump could use the reinforcements. Many roll their eyes at the prospect of an Ohioan helping much in Michigan. But Vance has made reaching struggling industrial and rural communities and trying to get policymakers to address their problems his life's work. He can message their concerns with a subtlety and compassion often lacking in Trump's grandiose and often self-aggrandizing oratory.

Either way, it is making a bet on which voters will decide the election. Republicans heard an alternative approach the night before Vance accepted the nomination when Nikki Haley spoke. Her speech was addressed to suburban women and Trump-ambivalent conservatives. But it is possible that, unlike 2020, this election will turn on economically distressed and usually disengaged voters. If so, maybe Vance is the man for the job. ★

W. James Antle III is executive editor of the Washington Examiner magazine.

Too Many Sashas

The trials and tribulations of a makeshift school for Ukrainian refugees in Budapest

By Will Collins

After a busy political season, Budapest's fashionable downtown is still festooned with posters and banners from the recent mayoral elections. Most of the signs refer to local issues, from building playgrounds to improving public safety, that wouldn't be out of place in any major European city. Lurking in the background is the reality that Budapest, a cosmopolitan enclave in an otherwise conservative country and a key economic hub, is often out of step with the rest of Hungary. Since 2019, the position of mayor has been held by the recently reelected Gergely Karácsony, a former academic, possible challenger for the prime ministership, and hate figure on the Hungarian Right. In a political landscape dominated by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's conservative Fidesz party, Karácsony's Budapest is a political and cultural outlier.

From gay rights to urban development, Budapest is often at odds with the rest of the country, a divide that extends even to foreign policy. Befitting his unof-



Quite a few young Ukrainian refugees have ended up in Budapest, where the most immediate concerns are finding a school and restoring a semblance of normality. As the war in Ukraine drags into its third year, these students are still adjusting to life in a foreign capital.

ficial role as leader of the Hungarian opposition, Karácsony has visited Ukraine and repeatedly expressed sympathy for the Ukrainian government's war aims. Orbán, meanwhile, is an outspoken advocate for a negotiated settlement and has

irked NATO and European Union allies with his conciliatory approach to Russia. He also tends to harp on the rights and privileges of a Hungarian-speaking minority in southwestern Ukraine, a major bone of contention between the two governments. On June 1, just as the mayoral contest entered the homestretch, Orbán headlined a peace rally on Budapest's scenic Margaret Island.

Despite its prime minister's strained relationship with the Ukrainian government, Hungary has welcomed hundreds of thousands of refugees since the beginning of the conflict. Many have moved further west in search of jobs or to be with relatives who have already established themselves abroad. Quite a few young Ukrainians, however, have stayed in Budapest, where the most immediate concerns are finding a school and restoring a semblance of normality to lives disrupted by conflict and political upheaval. As the war in Ukraine drags into its third year, these students are still adjusting to life in a foreign capital.

The American International School of Budapest is located in the leafy hills of suburban Buda, far from the campaign rallies and shouty billboards of the capi-

tal's bustling downtown. For the past two years, AISB has been home to a school within a school for refugee Ukrainian students, many from the country's war-torn eastern provinces. Nika Kolomiets is from Uman in central Ukraine but was attending university in Budapest when the fighting broke out. Now she teaches refugee students at AISB, which she says is like a small piece of America dropped into the Hungarian countryside. Much of the campus, from the soccer field to the cafeteria to the art projects and posters on display in the hallways, would be instantly familiar to suburban American teenagers.

The trouble with talking to a passel of Ukrainian students at the end of a long day, aside from the obvious issues of limited English comprehension and general distractedness, is that there are too many Sashas, of both genders, to keep track of. In the fifth grade classroom, the students tend to copy one another when one finds an answer they all like. Although the range of English ability is pretty wide, the fifth graders uniformly describe their language skills as "so-so." Everyone's favorite class is "sport." They keep in touch with friends and family back home on Telegram, Viber, and Discord. When asked if they like Hungary, Illia, one of the more talkative members of the group, says, "Yeah, but Ukraine is the best." His buddies Mykhailo, Roman, and Dani nod enthusiastically.

The students have busy schedules. From 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., they are legally required to attend normal Hungarian schools in Budapest, where they take classes in one of Europe's most difficult languages. On Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, they come to AISB for supplementary lessons with Ukrainian teachers on math and their native language, history, and culture. Most live with family members who have managed to relocate to various neighborhoods in Budapest.

Learning in a foreign language is difficult under any circumstances, but Hungarian presents a unique challenge. Ukrainians and Russians have no trouble communicating with one another, and the students and teachers from central and eastern Ukraine are usually bilingual. Ukrainians in Poland or Slovakia are able to make themselves understood by locals, though they must adjust to using the Latin alphabet. Hungarian, however, is completely unrelated to any neighboring language. Despite attending a Hungarian university, Nika is taking all of her class-



Above, adults at the American International School of Budapest, Hungary, pose with some of the 125 student refugees from Ukraine; below, Ukrainian students Vova, Emilia, and Arsen pose with their artwork in an AISB classroom.



es in English. She sheepishly tells me she stopped taking Hungarian lessons.

The fifth graders are friendly and talkative, but you are occasionally reminded of why they're studying in a foreign country. Nika gently chides one student for saying "thank you" in Russian ("spasibo") instead of the preferred Ukrainian term ("dyakuyu").

The older students are more comfortable expressing themselves in English and more attuned to war's unpleasant realities. Sasha, a high schooler on the

cus of graduation, said she's missing her "prom class" back home in Zaporizhzhia, a city in southeastern Ukraine that has suffered heavily from Russian missile and artillery bombardment. She has also noticed a hardening of attitudes toward Russian culture and language. "Before the war, we used to study Russian," she said. It's no longer part of the curriculum.

Many of the students had their lives upended by the sudden outbreak of war. Nikita, a talkative ninth grader from Kyiv, remembers waking up to the news

of the Russian invasion. “I’m scared, and I said to my mom, ‘I go to school or no?’” He ended up in Budapest, but many of his friends moved to other countries. He keeps in touch with old classmates in Poland and the United Kingdom via the “boys’ chat” on Viber.

Nikita’s friend Yehor was also in Kyiv when the fighting started. He spent two months in Uzhhorod in southwestern Ukraine before moving to Eger, a town in northeastern Hungary, for the summer. Since then, he’s resettled in Budapest.

Many of the students’ friends and family members have been touched by the war. Peter and Pasha, twin ninth graders from the coastal city of Odesa, vividly remember hearing sirens and rocket strikes in the opening months of the conflict. They now live with their mother in Budapest while their father works on a massive container ship somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. The twins hope to attend a technical college for sailors in Odesa and follow in their father’s footsteps, but they are unsure about going back while the fighting rages. They also stay in touch with a 21-year-old friend serving in the Ukrainian military. He has caustically told them, “I will give you an invitation to the war anytime.”

The twins’ friend Bogdan is a 10th grader from the Donbas region in east-

ern Ukraine, now mostly occupied by the Russian military. His father is a major in the Ukrainian army tasked with training new recruits. Bogdan wants to be a lawyer. Like the twins, he is uncertain about continuing his education as the war drags on.

Unsurprisingly, the students have a range of opinions about the course of the war. Nikita, never shy about expressing his views, said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is corrupt. Valerii, an 11th grader from Kyiv with a cross dangling from his left ear, is also pessimistic. He said he worries the country is becoming a dictatorship and that Ukrainian troops are being treated like cannon fodder. Another Sasha, this one an eighth grader from Donbas, said he strongly disagrees. He said young Ukrainians need to go back and rebuild, not talk trash from outside the country.

The teaching staff at the Ukrainian school is stretched thin. The principal, Oksana Matviishyna, was able to find space for her makeshift operation because she worked at an international school in Kyiv before the Russian invasion. Her old principal asked her counterpart at AISB to help Matviishyna and her students shortly after the fighting broke out. The school started classes in March 2022 with about 15 students. Now it has 125, a group that

ranges from first graders to high schoolers on the cusp of graduating.

Many of the adults’ wartime experiences are at least as harrowing as those of their students.

The staff at the Ukrainian school is stretched thin, with only five teachers to handle various classroom and organizational duties. Nika’s mother, Natalia Kolomiiets, also works as a teacher at the school. When the fighting started, she paid \$500 for a car ride from the central Ukrainian city of Uman to the border for her and Nika’s younger sister Sasha. Nika’s father stayed behind. Now he’s stuck in Ukraine because of wartime restrictions on military-aged men leaving the country.

Another teacher, Svitlana Shkrylova, left the Donetsk region on a packed train with her 14-year-old daughter Vlada in March 2022, right after the outbreak of fighting. Her fellow teacher Lana Morozova taught university in Kharkiv, now a war-torn city close to the front lines, before the Russian invasion. Like many Ukrainians, she grew up speaking Russian but said she thinks the war has fundamentally changed people’s attitude toward the language, even in the eastern parts of the country.

Lana said the students are more resilient than the adults, but all of the teachers have noticed behavioral changes since the war started. Natalia said her daughter Sasha developed a stutter after hearing too many sirens and explosions. Another student, a 12-year-old boy from Donetsk, still has trouble remembering anything from class. The teachers are also concerned by an uptick in bad language from the boys. Other students worry about grandmothers and cousins suddenly stranded on the wrong side of the front lines. When the school was first established, Natalia said, the main goal was providing students with psychological support. Lessons were a secondary concern.

AISB isn’t the only school in Budapest that’s opened its doors to Ukrainian refugees. Alla Renska, now a university student in Kyiv, finished her high school career at Kőrösi Csoma Sándor, a bilingual Baptist school in the north Buda suburbs. Her apartment recently lost power in a Russian airstrike, so she’s calling from a local park, where the light is better and she can use a public phone charger.

Despite the circumstances, Alla said she is happy to be back home. Like the Ukrainian teachers and students at AISB, she endured a difficult journey to Hun-



Nika Kolomiiets, a Ukrainian university student who studies in Budapest, Hungary, teaches a lesson in basic Hungarian vocabulary.



Oksana Matviishyna, the founder of the Ukrainian refugee school in Budapest, poses at far right with a group of Ukrainian students on the AISB soccer field.

“**The students are thought to be more resilient than the adults, but all of the teachers have noticed behavioral changes. When the school was first established, Natalia said, the main goal was providing students with psychological support. Lessons were a secondary concern.**”

gary in the early days of the war. She remembers her father pushing her into a packed train from Kyiv to the border town of Chop. Her parents had to stay behind to care for her disabled grandmother.

“Budapest is extremely welcoming to Ukrainians,” said Alla, crediting Karácsony for the city’s friendly atmosphere and refugee assistance services. Her experience in the classroom, however, was often difficult. When she enrolled

in Kőrösi’s international baccalaureate program in the spring of 2022, Alla said, “I was extremely terrified because all the subjects were in English. I had no choice but to communicate in English.”

Meanwhile, Alla still had to finish her Ukrainian high school lessons remotely through the end of May 2022. In the fall of 2022, she enrolled in online classes at Kyiv National University while continuing her IB studies at Kőrösi. Her university stopped offering online classes in September 2023, prompting Alla to return to Kyiv in the spring. She seems happy with her decision. “You can come to Kyiv,” she said brightly over a choppy internet connection. “It is quite safe.”

In the early days of the conflict, downtown Budapest was crowded with refugees and tokens of sympathy for the Ukrainian cause. A few of these are still around. The Ukrainian flag hangs from apartment windows and the balcony of Szimpla Kert, the most popular of Budapest’s famed ruin pubs. A refugee assistance office is open just outside of Deák Ferenc square, a metro station at the heart of the city. But people mostly seem to have moved on from a war that still rages on Hungary’s eastern border. Karácsony may be sympathetic to the Ukrainian cause, but his reelection campaign focused on local issues. The moral clarity of the conflict’s early days has been replaced by skepticism in many quarters about Ukraine’s chances for victory.

This uncertainty extends to the Ukrainians’ own futures. A recurring worry that comes up when talking to students is the grandparents and older relatives they’ve left behind, as well as their own mixed feelings about going back. Nika, who has recently enrolled in a master’s program in Budapest, said, “I feel like my home is here now.” “Kids see their future in other countries,” her colleague Lana said. Nikita and Yehor, the two talkative teenagers, are torn. In Ukraine, “there are not too much possibilities,” Nikita said. When asked if he wants to go back after the war ends, Yehor simply said, “I don’t know.”

The school’s future is equally uncertain. Natalia said the teachers will finish the spring semester, teach summer classes, and then take a well-deserved vacation. She is unsure if the school will have the funds to reopen in the fall.

Despite fears of Russian advances and the school running out of money, not everyone is pessimistic. Lana, the former university professor, still goes back to Kharkiv at least once a month to visit friends and relatives. Alla is grateful for her time in Budapest but happy to be back in Kyiv. “I feel extremely connected to my homeland,” she said. Even while studying in Budapest, “my plan was always to go back to Ukraine.” ★

Will Collins is a lecturer at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, Hungary.

What's Next for Jamaal Bowman?

The ex-congressman could find a lifetime of anti-Israel employment

By Sean Durns

Jamaal Bowman is out. The two-term congressman from New York's 16th Congressional District was defeated in the Democratic primary by George Latimer, a longtime Westchester County pol. But Bowman's new career, that of a professional anti-Israel activist, could be beginning. If so, he would hardly be the first U.S. politician to blame his electoral defeat on a dark and sinister Jewish conspiracy.

Bowman's time in Congress was as stormy as it was brief. The former educator was elected in 2020 after beating Eliot Engel, a 16-term incumbent, in the primary. His election was hailed as a victory for the progressive wing of the party. Bowman identified as part of the so-called Squad, the group of far-left anti-Israel lawmakers that includes Reps. Rashida Tlaib (D-MI), Ilhan Omar (D-MN), Cori Bush (D-MO), and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY), among others.

Bowman's decision to do so was curious.

To say that Bowman's views on Israel did not reflect those of his constituents would be an understatement. The district has a high percentage of Jewish voters. And polls consistently show that a majority of people support the Jewish state — a fact that is true of most people, Jewish or otherwise. Indeed, Engel himself had been a strong supporter of Israel. As chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Engel worked to strengthen the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Bowman chose another path.

During his campaign, Bowman did his best to obfuscate his views on Israel. He pretended to oppose the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement that maligns Israel, only to confirm his support later. And he touted his endorsement by J Street, an organization that bills itself as "pro-Israel" and "pro-peace" but is hypercritical of the Jewish state. As *Commentary* magazine's Seth Mandel observed, "J Street takes lawmakers on trips

to Israel seemingly designed to increase their distrust" of the country. "Bowman entered Congress a skeptic of Israel but a supporter of the two-state solution and the legitimacy of both sides in the conflict" until a 2021 J Street-organized trip "cured him of that."

Bowman told *Politico* that the trip was a "transformational moment" for him and left him believing that Israel, the world's sole Jewish state, should no longer exist in its present form. Suffice it to say, these are views well outside the mainstream of most Americans, Jewish and otherwise.

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas and other Iranian-backed proxies invaded Israel, perpetrating the largest massacre of Jewish civilians since the Holocaust. Terrorists brutally butchered Israelis, proudly filming their crimes.

Bowman, however, was undeterred. While Israel was under missile barrage, he voted against funding the Iron Dome missile defense system. He accused Israel of a "genocide" of Pales-

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Most Americans found Hamas’s crimes, which include murdering children, setting the elderly on fire in their homes, torturing family members in front of one another, and raping and mutilating women, repulsive. Bowman seemed to feel differently, however.

tinian civilians, ignoring both the tremendous steps that the Israel Defense Forces was taking to reduce civilian casualties, including some of the largest mass evacuations of civilians ever undertaken in urban combat, as well as Hamas’s use of human shields.

Polls showed broad American support for Israel in the wake of the attack. Unsurprisingly, most people found Hamas’s crimes, which include murdering children, setting the elderly on fire in their homes, torturing family members in front of one another, and raping and mutilating women, repulsive. Bowman seemed to feel differently, however.

Speaking at an anti-Israel rally in White Plains, New York, on Nov. 17, 2023, Bowman denied that Hamas raped Israeli women, calling it Israeli “propaganda.” The congressman asserted: “There’s still no evidence of behead babies or raped women, but they still keep using the lie.” Yet the evidence of Hamas’s sexual crimes was already well documented and in the public domain.

Weeks later, after a radio listener pressed him on his rape denial, Bowman walked back his remarks. Bowman told WNYC radio that “immediately when the [United Nations] provided additional evidence, I voted to condemn the violence. I apologize for my comments.”

But Bowman couldn’t help himself. In a June interview with Zeteo media, Bowman engaged in victim blaming. Bowman told actress and former New York gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon: “I think this unequivocal support



Above, Jamaal Bowman at a rally in the Bronx, June 22, 2024; inset, George Latimer campaigning in White Plains, New York, June 13, 2024.

of Israel, without any critique, has gotten us to this horrible place.” Bowman said unquestioning support of Israel fuels antisemitism. Yet blaming Jews for the violence perpetrated against them is a staple of antisemitism. It is why, for example, the Nazis forced German Jews to pay for the damages wrought by Kristallnacht, a government-sponsored pogrom. And Bowman’s claim that support for Israel is “unequivocal” is absurd on its face. The Jewish state is singled out for opprobrium and attacked, be it by the U.N. or the

New York Times, far more than any other nation. No other country has its very existence questioned so frequently.

Bowman’s theory that a lack of a Palestinian state fuels antisemitism, while popular on the progressive Left, is ahistorical. As the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis has documented, Arab terrorist groups were attacking and murdering Jews long before Israel was re-created in 1948. Further, for more than half a century, Palestinian leaders have rejected numerous

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offers for statehood, several of them made by Israel, if it meant living in peace next to a Jewish state. Their reasoning, as revealed in their speeches and media, is simple: They consider all of Israel to be an “occupation.” They want every inch of it to be a Palestinian state. “From the river to the sea,” as both Hamas and the Democratic Socialists for America say.

Even if he wouldn’t admit it publicly, Bowman seemed aware that he had an image problem. In the weeks before the 2024 primary election, a leaked text exchange from 2022 showed that Bowman had solicited pictures of himself with a rabbi as part of a bid to improve his standing. “Do you have any pics of us? So, I can show the world that I’m friends with Jewish people,” he texted the rabbi.

Bowman’s problems extended beyond his positions on Israel. In January 2024, it was revealed that he had once maintained a personal blog that he used to share both bad poetry and conspiracy theories about the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Bowman claimed 7 World Trade Center was destroyed in a controlled demolition and that Osama bin Laden was “blamed” as an excuse for America to wage war in Afghanistan.

In September 2023, Bowman attracted both media attention and mockery for pulling a fire alarm in the Cannon House Office Building shortly before Congress was scheduled to vote on a government funding bill. The building was evacuated and the vote delayed. Bowman, a former school principal, claimed he had pulled the fire alarm “by accident.”

This is a lot of controversy for a junior member of Congress, let alone one representing a district like Bowman’s. Indeed, his predecessor, Engel, soft-spoken and diligent, was the precise opposite of a fire starter.

With polls showing an impending loss, Bowman and Ocasio-Cortez gave a last-minute get-out-the-vote rally in the Bronx in which a T-shirt-clad Bowman went into a “profanity-laced tirade more reminiscent of a DJ at a foam party than a U.S. congressman seeking reelection in a tough race,” as News Nation anchor Dan Abrams put it. In her remarks, Ocasio-Cortez framed a vote for Bowman to be a vote to “defeat AIPAC,” the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which works to build bipartisan support for the Jewish state. The Bronx, however, accounts for but a sliver of Bowman’s district. Rather, most of the 16th includes Westchester County. And early returns

suggested a high percentage of early voting by Jewish voters.

Unsurprisingly, Bowman lost, handily defeated by the decidedly uncontroversial Latimer. A centrist, Latimer seems like a better fit for the district than Bowman. J Street, which had pulled its endorsement for Bowman, nonetheless mourned his electoral defeat.

Some of Bowman’s allies have argued that the soon-to-be former congressman



Cynthia McKinney in Beirut, Lebanon, after trying to help a boat run an Israeli blockade of Gaza, December 30, 2008.

“**Former Georgia Representative Cynthia McKinney is perhaps the most infamous example of a disgraced legislator-turned-anti-Israel activist.**”

should next seek to unseat Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY), who is pro-Israel and serves the 15th District. Should Bowman choose to do so, it would be unsurprising. After all, he had spent most of his brief congressional career fixated on attacking the Jewish state instead of representing his constituents. Targeting Torres, who has been outspoken in defending Israel and fighting antisemitism, would be a logical choice.

It remains to be seen whether Bow-

man will primary Torres. But his future career as a professional anti-Israel activist seems assured. Bowman’s radicalism and conspiratorial nature are undeniable. He spent an inordinate amount of time fixated on vilifying Israel. There is little reason to expect him to stop now. Further, his time on the campaign trail suggests this might be the next step.

Bowman and his allies railed against pro-Israel organizations “flooding” the race with “outside money.” Sympathetic media profiles by *New York* magazine, *Politico*, and the *Washington Post* echoed the charge. This, of course, conveniently overlooked the fact that Bowman himself was reliant on outside contributions. And, as Matthew Kassel of *Jewish Insider* noted, “the Congressman’s focus on outside spending has obscured an on-the-ground reality reflected in what Jewish voters describe as their widespread disenchantment with his lack of meaningful outreach both before and after Hamas’s attacks.”

The charge of undue Jewish political influence has been a staple of antisemitism for centuries. Ditto for the notion that Jews have “dual loyalty” and therefore are intrinsically disloyal. Both are inherent to the idea that outside pro-Israel money, be it from AIPAC or elsewhere, won the race. For some reason, it is deemed acceptable for other minority groups to lobby for their own beliefs and interests, yet only when Jews do so is it viewed by some to be problematic. The truth, of course, is less conspiratorial: Bowman did not represent the views of most of his constituents. A politician, the 18th century British parliamentarian Edmund Burke famously noted, owes the voters both his “industry” and his “judgment.” Bowman had neither.

Yet Bowman’s career as a failed politico-turned-professional anti-Israel activist could just be beginning. American history is replete with examples of politicians who have blamed Jews and the Jewish state for their failures.

Among the more recent is Cynthia McKinney, who served as part of Georgia’s congressional delegation from 1993 until 2007. Like Bowman, McKinney began her career as an educator before turning to politics. The two have other things in common, as well.

McKinney lost her reelection bid for Georgia’s 4th District in 2002, only to regain her seat briefly the following cycle. McKinney’s father, himself a Georgia state legislator, knew whom to blame for her defeat. As he told an Atlanta televi-

sion reporter on Aug. 19, 2002: “The Jews have bought everybody.” After that initial loss, McKinney began to push 9/11 conspiracy theories. McKinney’s personal behavior while serving in Congress was also erratic. In 2006, she allegedly assaulted a Capitol Hill police officer. McKinney was not indicted, nor did she face disciplinary action by the House. In 2007, the congresswoman lost her seat in a primary runoff to Hank Johnson, who, like Latimer, was a former county executive and longtime pol.

Once out of office, McKinney became even more radical, attending events with Holocaust deniers and praising antisemitic books that warned of sinister Jewish financial and political influence. McKinney also displayed an affinity for antisemitic autocrats, praising the Islamic Republic of Iran, Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, and others. She took part in anti-Israel propaganda trips, appeared on Iranian state media, and worked to end Israel’s blockade of Gaza — a blockade initiated to prevent the smuggling of weapons to Hamas.

McKinney was more than critical of Israel, however. In 2016, the former congresswoman blamed Israel for terrorist attacks in Germany and France that had been perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. In 2020, she questioned how many Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, posting, “So, the figure wasn’t six million after all? What about those punished and even imprisoned for saying so?” And on June 28, 2021, McKinney posted a meme that implied that “Zionists” were responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. On the 21st anniversary of those attacks, McKinney again took to social media to promote a livestream called, “Can Black People and White People Work Together to Defeat Our Common Enemy?” The graphics featured a Star of David. The two hosts of the livestream were Ayo Kimathi, the author of a book titled *Jews Are the Problem*, and David Duke, a former member of the Ku Klux Klan and noted antisemite.

McKinney is perhaps the most infamous example of a disgraced legislator-turned-anti-Israel activist. But she is far from alone.

In 1982, Republican Rep. Paul Findley of Illinois lost his seat to current Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL). A centrist Republican who had served in Congress since 1960, Findley was opposed by AIPAC, which backed Durbin. Findley blamed

the “pro-Israel lobby” for his defeat, even authoring a book titled *They Dared to Speak Out*, which portrayed AIPAC as all-powerful and hell-bent on silencing critics. But as the *New York Times* wrote in its review, Findley’s book was “the typical reaction of a Congressman who is offended at being challenged seriously for ‘his’ seat, especially if that upstart should go so far as to beat him.” Indeed, as with both McKinney and Bowman, a confluence of factors led to Findley’s defeat. As the journalist Ron Kampeas observed: “Dig a little into the poor performance



Jimmy Carter speaks at a Palestinian protest in east Jerusalem, October 22, 2010,

“**In his 1980 loss to Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter received only 45% of the Jewish vote, and in his diaries and statements, he indicated he believed this contributed to his defeat.**”

of most any Israel-critical candidate, and one finds a lot more going on than Middle East policy.” Nonetheless, Findley spent his subsequent years speaking out about what he portrayed as undue Jewish political influence. Findley authored columns, gave lectures, and wrote books while claiming that sinister outside forces were working to silence him.

In 1984, Sen. Charles Percy of Illinois, a Republican, lost his reelection bid to Paul Simon, a Democrat. In the error-laden book *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, academics Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer portray Percy as a victim of pernicious pro-Israel forces. Yet while Simon did receive support from Jewish and pro-Israel organizations upset with Percy’s voting record, Percy, like Findley, was out of touch with both his base and his constituents. And Percy, like Findley, would spend subsequent years railing against AIPAC.

The same playbook has been repeated on multiple occasions. Adlai Stevenson III, a senator from Illinois and son of the 1952 and 1956 Democratic presidential nominee, would chalk losing his Senate seat to the “Israel lobby.” More recently, Nina Turner, a progressive Democrat from Ohio, lost a 2021 primary bid for a seat in the House. Turner and her supporters attributed her loss to AIPAC and “outside forces.” But like Bowman, McKinney, Findley, and Percy, foreign policy was just one of many factors — and often it wasn’t the preeminent reason.

Perhaps the most famous politician to blame his loss on a pro-Israel lobby is Jimmy Carter. Over the years, the 39th president has offered several reasons for his 1980 loss to Ronald Reagan. Carter received only 45% of the Jewish vote, and in his diaries and statements, the onetime Georgia governor indicated he believed this loss of support contributed to his defeat. It is possible to view portions of Carter’s post-presidency as an attempt to get even.

The former president has libeled Israel as an “apartheid state” and has placed the onus for the lack of peace in the Middle East on the Jewish state. Like others, he has warned of a “Jewish lobby” that seeks to silence his views — views that have been disseminated in error-filled bestselling books, TV appearances, and *New York Times* op-eds.

F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said that “there are no second acts in American lives.” Yet some former politicians seem to have made second careers out of warning of undue Jewish political influence. Bowman could be the latest iteration. He has the resume. ★

Sean Durns is a senior research analyst for CAMERA, the 65,000-member, Boston-based Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis.

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Washington Briefing

CAMPAIGN

JD Vance is ready to rumble

By Jeremy Lott

Republican vice presidential candidate Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) speaks on stage during the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee on July 17.

GRAEME JENNINGS/WASHINGTON EXAMINER

Whether or not he'll get the chance to debate Biden's Vice President Kamala Harris in the traditional VP ruckus remains to be determined

By Jeremy Lott

In the lead-up to the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, GOP nominee Donald Trump said he wanted to keep the vice presidential nomination under wraps as long as possible. The attempt on the former president's life two days before the convention, at a western Pennsylvania rally, likely forced his hand.

On the day Trump was nominated to be the GOP nominee for a second, non-consecutive White House term, July 15, he announced that Sen. James David "J.D." Vance (R-OH) would be his running mate. Trump called Vance "the person best suited to assume the position of Vice President of the United States" on his Truth Social platform.

Vance is a former businessman, a bestselling author, and a relative political neophyte. That part of his biography superficially echoes Trump's own story before he first ran for the Republican nomination in 2016.

Yet Vance's story also diverges from Trump's in important ways. His business was not real estate development and gambling but venture capital, which could give Republicans more sway with Silicon Valley donors.

Unlike Trump, Vance was born poor, to a mother who married several times. He eventually took his last name from his maternal grandparents, who raised him by default. Trump famously got draft deferments. Vance served in the Marines and in Iraq after the draft was no longer an issue.

He's also 39, which is likely one reason for his selection. That is 39 years younger than Trump, 78, and 42 years younger than President Joe Biden, 81, who faces widespread doubts about his



Vice presidential nominee Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) and his wife, Usha Chilukuri Vance, acknowledge the crowd during the Republican National Convention on July 17 in Milwaukee.

mental acuity. Vance's relative youth highlights Biden's octogenarian wobbles.

Vance was once a critic of Trump, going so far as to describe him as "America's Hitler" in private correspondence made public. However, he came around during the Trump presidency and increasingly gravitated toward Trump's more populist wing of the party.

Vance secured the nomination for the Ohio Senate seat in 2022 largely on the strength of Trump's endorsement. He also convinced Trump to visit East Palestine, Ohio, after the famous train derailment there. Trump has called that a turning point in his long march to retake the White House.

The vice presidential nominee has historically been expected to play the role of attack dog. Some vice presidential picks, such as 1996 GOP nominee Bob Dole's running mate Jack Kemp, proved to be not up to the job. In a debate, Vice President Al Gore congratulated Kemp for being one of the few nonracists in the Republican Party. Rather than rebut that smear, Kemp thanked Gore for the compliment. In contrast, Vance has shown he is ready to rumble.

For instance, after Trump's shooting, Vance wrote on X, "Today is not just some isolated incident. The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs. That rhetoric led directly to President Trump's attempted assassination." He also pointed back to a failed effort

by Rep. Bennie Thompson (D-MS) to remove Secret Service protections from convicted felons, calling him an "absolute scumbag" and calling on voters to "kick his ass out of Congress."

Two days prior, the junior senator from Ohio hit the Biden administration with a vicious policy jab. He highlighted the fact that about two-thirds of audits initiated by a newly beefed-up IRS were on taxpayers with incomes below \$200,000 per year. "Remember we were promised the new IRS agents wouldn't go after the middle class," Vance wrote. "Another Biden lie."

Whether or not he'll get the chance to debate Biden's Vice President Kamala Harris, 59, in the traditional vice presidential ruckus remains to be determined. The two campaigns are squabbling over what network should host it and when it will be held.

It would be a disservice to American democracy if that debate does not occur. Of the 45 men who have served as president, 15, fully one-third, were vice president first. Given the advanced age of both presidential nominees, there is a high likelihood that either Vance or Harris will become president sometime in the next four years. Voters deserve the opportunity to watch them clash and size them up as they weigh the heavy choice of which party to send to the White House. ★

Jeremy Lott is the author of The Warm Bucket Brigade: The Story of the American Vice Presidency.



NATIONAL SECURITY

Trump's pick of JD Vance as running mate could seal Ukraine's fate

Ohio senator's hard line against continued funding of the war plays right into Putin's plan

By Jamie McIntyre

Of all the potential candidates former President Donald Trump could have chosen to be his vice president, there are few more adamant about cutting off further military assistance to Ukraine than Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH).

In 2022, while campaigning for his Ohio Senate seat with Trump's blessing, Vance famously told Steve Bannon on his "Real America's Voice" podcast, "I've gotta be honest with you. I don't really

care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other."

Once elected, Vance became the most powerful voice arguing Ukraine had no path to victory, and that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was emboldened to continue a futile and costly war only because he was being egged on and armed by President Joe Biden's administration.

Vance's hardline views were on full display at the Munich Security Conference in February, where alone among the

members of the U.S. congressional delegation, he skipped a meeting with Zelensky and instead argued during a panel discussion that the U.S. problem with Ukraine is "there's no clear endpoint."

At the time House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) was blocking a vote on a \$95 billion foreign aid and border security package that included just over \$60 billion for Ukraine.

"I have to be honest to you, that is not going to fundamentally change the reality on the battlefield, Vance said, arguing the real problem is "not money, it's munitions."

The U.S. simply doesn't have the industrial capacity to keep sending arms and ammunition to Ukraine, especially when a future war with China is becoming a frightening real possibility.

“What is realistic to accomplish in Ukraine? Can we send the level of weaponry we’ve set for the last 18 months for the next 18 months? We simply cannot,” he said.

“I’m not sure he understands what’s going on here,” Zelensky told CNN when asked about Vance’s comments.

“To understand it is to come to the front line to see what’s going on,” Zelensky said insisting the end of U.S. aid would be catastrophic for his people. “He will understand that millions ... will be killed. It’s a fact.”

Vance did not take up the invitation to visit the front lines, pretty much for the same reason he did for not meeting with Zelensky in Munich. “I didn’t think I would learn anything new,” he said.

Vance has argued that the only realistic goal is to push for a negotiated peace, and in an appearance on Fox News just hours after he was formally nominated to be vice president at the just-concluded Republican National Convention, Vance told host Sean Hannity that he has little doubt that Trump, the master dealmaker, can pull it off.

“I think what President Trump has promised to do is go in there, negotiate with the Russians and Ukrainians, bring this thing to a rapid close so that America can focus on the real issue, which is China,” Vance said. “That’s the biggest threat to our country. And we’re completely distracted from it.”

That kind of talk is music to the ears of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who’s hearing a clear message: hang on until November and Trump will force Zelensky, under threat of a cutoff of U.S. aid, to make major territorial concessions at the bargaining table.

“They are celebrating that choice both in Milwaukee tonight and in Moscow,” former Rep. Adam Kinzinger, an implacable Trump critic and one of two Republicans who served on the Jan. 6 Committee, said in an appearance on *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert.

“J.D. Vance is aggressively parroting actual Russian talking points,” added Kinzinger, who represented exurban Chicago and rural Illinois House districts

in the House from 2011 to 2023.

With polls showing Trump leading in the key states that decide a presidential election and riding a wave of goodwill following his narrow escape from an assassin’s bullet, the feeling of foreboding in Kyiv is palpable, even as Zelensky puts on a brave face.

“I am not afraid,” he said when asked if he was worried Trump would curtail or completely cut off military assistance, but he was rattled by reports that a Washington think tank headed by former Trump advisers was drafting a plan to do just that.

“It would be fair if Trump knows how to end this war, he should tell us today, because if there are risks to Ukraine’s independence, there are risks that we will lose statehood, we want to be prepared,” Zelensky told Bloomberg television earlier this month.

“We want to understand whether in November we will have the powerful support of the U.S., or we’ll be all alone.”

Zelensky is adamantly opposed to making a deal with Russia because he says Putin never honors his commitments.

Recall that Ukraine, in 1994, gave up its Soviet-era nuclear weapons in return for assurances from the U.S., the U.K., and Russia its territorial sovereignty would never be violated.

“We must understand that Russia would be using the ceasefire to simply

“**I think what President Trump has promised to do is go in there, negotiate with the Russians and Ukrainians, bring this thing to a rapid close so that America can focus on the real issue, which is China.**

—Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH)

accumulate equipment on the territory, our territory, that they’ve occupied,” Zelensky said. “They can accuse us of breaking or breaking the ceasefire and start another invasion.”

“I think it’s going to be very bad for Ukraine,” former Trump national security adviser John Bolton said on MSNBC after Vance was nominated. “What Vance has said about is wrong in many material respects. I don’t think he appreciates the American national security interests in protecting Ukraine against this unprovoked Russian aggression.”

“There seems to be this idea that we’re doing this out of the goodness of our hearts. It’s an act of charity. We’re nice people,” Bolton said. “Although we are, we’re doing it because there’s an American national security interest in peace and security in Europe.”

“I’m not worried at all. I know J.D. Vance believes in a strong and confident America,” Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) said on CNN. “The thing that J.D. Vance is concerned about, that we should all be concerned about, is that we’ve let our manufacturing base in this country atrophy to the point where we may have to start making hard decisions.”

“He’s concerned, as am I, as are many Republicans, that if we have war in Europe with Ukraine, if we have war in the Middle East with Iran and all of its proxies from Hamas and Hezbollah and outlaw rebels in Yemen, and we have China threatening war in Taiwan, that our current defense industry and our manufacturing base cannot support all of those wars and our defense as well,” Cotton said. “That’s something that we have to fix. It’s something I know that President Trump will fix.”

“It is the case that China is the existential threat this century, but it’s forming an axis with Russia. These conflicts are connected,” Bolton counters. “I think there’s a real disconnect here. But the bottom line is that these are candidates who do not fundamentally understand that a strong American presence in the world is good for us here at home.” ★

Jamie McIntyre is the Washington Examiner’s senior writer on national security.

CONGRESS

In push to expand Supreme Court, Hill Democrats hit snag

The Biden administration has kept legislative efforts to increase its size at arm's length

By Mark Stricherz

Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) used to think the only people who paid close attention to the Supreme Court were ideological activists or political professionals inside the Washington Beltway. The more the congressman hears from voters in his upper Manhattan-based district, the more Espaillat realizes he was wrong.

"I hear about the Supreme Court from constituents all the time," Espaillat said in an interview outside the Capitol on July 11. "They say the court is a run-away train."

Espaillat is bound to stop it. He has co-sponsored legislation that would buck more than 80 years of precedent by adding seats to the nation's highest judicial tribunal, bringing the number of justices who sit on the high court to 13 from nine. The latest version of the bill, the Judiciary Act of 2023, had gone nowhere in the Republican-controlled House. Then on July 1 came the Supreme Court's decision in *Trump v. United States*. Like other high-profile decisions this term, the ruling was 6-3, a reflection of the high court's conservative majority.

Democrats decried the decision as the equivalent of a get-out-of-jail-for-free card to former President Donald Trump, whose supporters rioted at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, while Congress sought to certify the results from the recently concluded presidential election, which Trump lost. Espaillat said after talking with his House Democratic colleagues, he believes more will support the legislative effort to expand the high court.

"There's a feeling that something needs to be done," he said.

Democrats' disaffection with the high court has grown. In 2016, Hill Democrats howled in protest when then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) held up President Barack Obama's nomination of Washington, D.C., Circuit Judge Merrick Garland to fill the seat of the late Antonin Scalia, a conservative, until after the presidential election — an unprecedented delay. When Trump was elected president, nearly all Senate Democrats voted against his three picks for the high court, each of whom was confirmed anyway.

Congressional Democrats continue to be dismayed. They were shocked by the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision in 2022, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, returning the question of the legal status of human embryos and fetuses to the states. They are furious with *Trump v. United States*, which gave presidents after they leave office absolute immunity from legal trouble for official acts



Once they lose control in Washington, Republicans will increase the number of justices to 200. —J.D.

Vance said in a Capitol Hill interview days before Trump, the 2024 Republican presidential nominee, tapped him for the GOP ticket.

related to their constitutional duties and presumed immunity for acts that fall somewhat outside it.

As Espaillat discovered, ordinary Democratic voters, too, are alienated. According to a poll conducted by the *Associated Press* and the National Opinion Research Center last month, 58% of self-identified Democrats said they had "hardly any confidence at all" in the Supreme Court. (By contrast, only 18% of self-identified Republicans said the same.)

Yet widespread Democratic opposition has not hardened into support for expanding the court.

Sixty-three House Democrats signed on as co-sponsors of the Judiciary Act of 2023, only five more that did so in 2021. A similar proposal by Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) has two co-sponsors in the chamber. Nearly all Democratic supporters — like Espaillat, whose district Joe Biden carried with 88% of the vote four years ago, making it one of the most Democratic in the country — hail from the party's progressive wing.

The Biden administration has kept legislative efforts to expand the court at arm's length. When Biden announced his backing for a commission to examine the court's structure, he volunteered that he opposed "packing the court," a reference to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's failed attempt in 1937 to add a new justice each time a sitting justice turned 70 years old and failed to retire after six months.

The Presidential Commission on the Supreme Court of the United States, a 34-member panel Biden created in 2021, was no less welcoming. It avoided taking a position on expanding the court. "Mirroring the broader public debate, there is profound disagreement among commissioners on these issues," its report said.

Indeed, not a single Hill Republican has signed on as a co-sponsor of the Democratic bills to add more justices to the high court. "It's dangerous," Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI) said in an interview. "Democrats are trying to use extra-constitutional means to change the government. When I was a child in school, we were taught that FDR's



Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) speaks at a 2022 press conference on Capitol Hill in Washington.

attempt to pack the Supreme Court was terrible.”

Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH), Trump’s vice presidential running mate, cast doubt even on a successful effort by Democrats to expand the high court. “Once they lose control in Washington, Republicans will increase the number of justices to 200,” he said in a Capitol Hill interview days before Trump, the 2024 Republican presidential nominee, tapped him for the GOP ticket.

With little support to expand the high court, Democrats are considering alternative legislative fixes.

On July 8, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) said he plans to unveil a proposal that would define Trump’s efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election as unofficial acts subject to prosecution. “We’re doing this because we believe that in America, no president should be free to overturn an election against the will of the people, no matter what the conservative justices may believe,” Schumer said.

Democrats have proposed less ideologically loaded legislation as well.

Last year, Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced a bill that would require the high court to adopt rules for their justices and law clerks to disclose income, gifts, and income “at least as rigorous” as those of the House and Senate. Forty-three of his Democratic colleagues signed on as co-sponsors of the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act of 2023. Unlike the House and Senate bills to expand the Supreme Court, Whitehouse’s legislation has added significant support after it was introduced.

The first Democrat to sign up was Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. In an interview on July 11, Blumenthal said expanding the Supreme Court is a bridge too far. “We need to reform and restore confidence in the court first,” he said. “There should

be a code of ethics and rules that the justices abide by.”

Democrats are incensed by the coziness that two conservative justices, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, showed toward wealthy patrons. Few mention that as the *Associated Press* reported last year, taxpayer-funded court staff for progressive Justice Sonia Sotomayor prodded colleges and libraries to buy her memoir and children’s books.

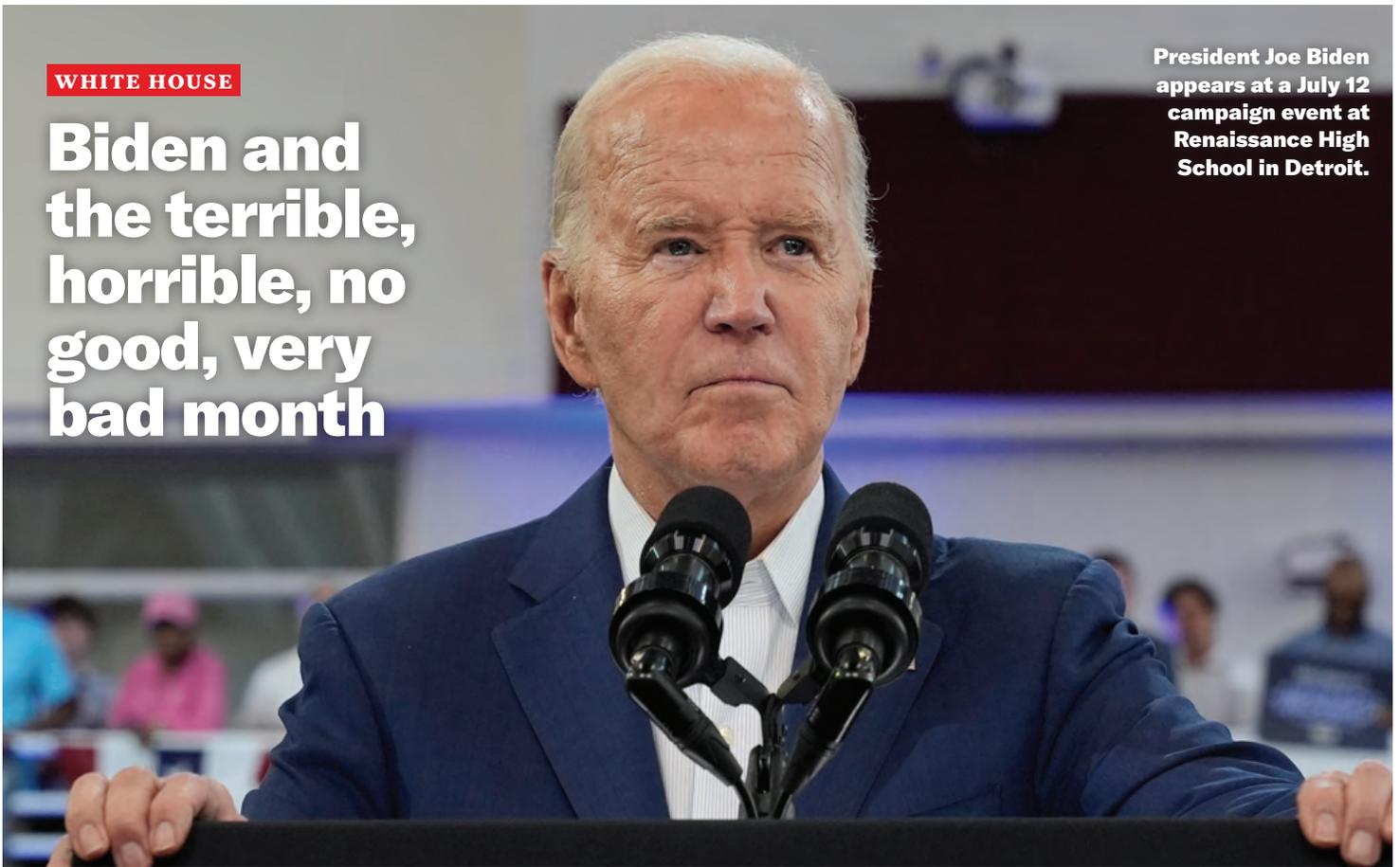
The justices are publicly unaccountable for a reason. The high court lacks a code of conduct, allowing justices to write their own rules. By framing the Supreme Court’s woes in institutional rather than ideological terms, Blumenthal said Congress may be able to address them. “What’s happened now is more Americans don’t have faith in the institution,” he said, “and that’s sad.” ★

Mark Stricherz is a reporter and writer in Washington, D.C.

WHITE HOUSE

Biden and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad month

President Joe Biden appears at a July 12 campaign event at Renaissance High School in Detroit.



President grapples with doubts over his 2024 chances, Trump's perceived grace under fire, and a court ruling favorable to his predecessor

By David Mark

The 2024 presidential election cycle will always include a tragic asterisk in the form of a civilian casualty. Former Pennsylvania firefighter Corey Comperatore, 50, was killed in a July 13 assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump, now the GOP nominee.

The episode, in which a bullet fired by Thomas Matthew Crooks grazed Trump's ear, also instantly changed the nature of the 2024 campaign. How exactly the attempted assassination will affect the Nov. 5 election between Trump and President Joe Biden remains to be seen.

But so far, the Butler, Pennsylvania, violence, in which Crooks, 20, was killed by a Secret Service sniper seconds after firing at Trump, is one of several recent events that has put Biden on the political defensive.

Trump appeared on July 15 before

the Republican National Convention crowd almost exactly 48 hours after the shooting, the first direct assault on a president, former president, or White House candidate since 1981, when President Ronald Reagan was shot by a lone gunman outside of the Washington Hilton. Reagan made a full recovery.

Trump's convention arrival capped a strong nearly monthlong stretch, starting with the first presidential debate on June 27, during which the former president scored multiple crucial victories and Biden, by extension, lost ground in his bid for a second term, after defeating Trump in 2020 reasonably comfortably in the Electoral College, 306-232, with 270 needed to win.

Biden delivered a halting and politically devastating performance at their first debate stage faceoff. The president shuffled onto the stage, and his voice whispered and trailed off. Biden, 81, frequently lost his train of thought in try-

ing to confront Trump, 78, all of which prompted a Democratic Party existential crisis over whether the occupant of the Oval Office should remain the nominee. It's a debate that has not entirely abated. Biden insists he's staying in and, as the winner of Democratic nominating contests earlier this year, has all the leverage to prevent his party from dumping him for a younger, more agile candidate.

Four days after Biden's disastrous debate performance, the Supreme Court ruled that presidents have "absolute" immunity for clearly official acts. The decision along ideological lines of the justices sent Trump's indictment for allegedly trying to subvert the 2020 election back to a lower court, postponing any decision until after November's election.

And on July 15, only hours before the Republican National Convention opened in Milwaukee, U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon dismissed a classified documents case against Trump brought by special counsel Jack Smith. Many legal experts had viewed it as the strongest and most clear-cut of the multiple indictments Trump faces.

Moreover, Trump likely helped him-

self with quick thinking and stagecraft as shots rang out in western Pennsylvania. In defiance, Trump raised his fist in front of an American flag in what instantly became an iconic image. He appeared to yell “Fight, fight, fight!” to the crowd before being ushered offstage. The Trump campaign quickly touted the former president’s reaction as a sign of strength, compared to Biden’s often lethargic public persona.

THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE COULD STILL WIN

There are (thankfully) few data points about how assassination attempts bolster the public standing of presidential candidates or not.

On Oct. 14, 1912, former Milwaukee saloonkeeper John Schrank attempted to assassinate former President Theodore Roosevelt, who made a comeback on the Progressive Party ticket after being denied the Republican nomination in a fight against GOP President William Howard Taft. Roosevelt was campaigning in Milwaukee when a bullet fired by Schrank lodged in Roosevelt’s chest after penetrating the former president’s steel eyeglass case and passing through a 50-page thick (single-folded) copy of his speech. Roosevelt famously went on with his campaign oration before heading to a hospital. But on Election Day, Roosevelt came up short against the Democratic nominee, Woodrow Wilson. Though he did win more electoral votes than his comrade-turned-rival, Taft, and Socialist candidate Eugene V. Debs.

Attempted assassination attempts twice were made at President Gerald Ford in September 1975 during separate visits to Northern California. Ford emerged unscathed but lost his bid for a full presidential term in November 1976 against Democratic rival Jimmy Carter.

And in the aftermath of the March 30, 1981, presidential assassination attempt, Reagan’s Gallup poll approval ratings went up by 8 points over three months. Reagan’s approval rating within three months then fell to their previous level of about 50%. However, public sympathy for the embattled president, who handled the episode with grace and good

humor despite severe wounds, helped him push through Congress his tax-cutting economic plan.

Biden also can, in a political squint, find promising news in poll results that have otherwise been desultory. Several of the surveys show Trump leading Biden in most of the top swing states, including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, with Trump within striking distance of states thought to be safely in the Biden camp, such as Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Virginia.

But a series of YouGov polls released at the start of the Republican National Convention show Democratic Senate candidates leading in Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin by margins ranging from 6 points to 12 points. And Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) leads his Republican rival 53% to 36%, per the YouGov poll.

Voters these days rarely split tickets between presidential candidates and Senate hopefuls. It used to happen with some frequency. Biden was elected to the Senate from Delaware in 1972 by beating an incumbent Republican even as President Richard Nixon scored a 49-state

landslide reelection win. But by 2016, there were no split tickets, and there was only one in the 2020 cycle, when Biden won most of Maine’s electoral votes but Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) still was victorious.

So, the split-ticket data, in theory, give Biden and supporters reason to think all is not lost against Trump — even if the past several weeks have been one news disaster after another.

Mostly, Biden has tried to turn the race back into a conventional presidential campaign. The president responded to the Trump assassination attempt by calling his Republican opponent to express relief that he was not more seriously wounded. Biden also urged voters to “lower the temperature” this campaign season. His campaign suspended television ads and its regular barrage of attack emails. But that pause ended quickly. Once Trump picked Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) as his vice presidential nominee on July 15, the Biden campaign returned to its regularly scheduled political messaging. ★

David Mark is the managing editor of the Washington Examiner magazine.



Former President Donald Trump is seen at the Republican National Convention on July 16, just days after nearly being assassinated.

FOREIGN POLICY

Egypt's pyramid games in the Middle East

The nation, alongside Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, is a full member of BRICS — the economic block dominated by Russia, China, India, and Brazil

By Mark Toth and Jonathan Sweet

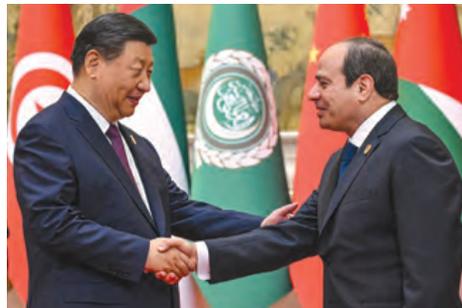
Egypt, under the leadership of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, is becoming quite adept at playing pyramid games across the Middle East and North Africa. Allegorically speaking, Cairo inducing two or more competing governments to invest in the same real estate underpins el-Sisi's core strategy to play allies off one another.

Geostrategically, Egypt's pyramid game has long engulfed the opposing interests of Russia and the United States. For example, despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, el-Sisi is continuing his efforts to balance and deepen economic and military ties with Washington and Moscow.

In July 2022, five months after the start of the war in Ukraine, Russia began construction of Egypt's first nuclear power plant. The \$30 billion facility, located 190 miles west of Alexandria, is being constructed by the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation and financed by Russia at 3% over 22 years.

The U.S. response later that year was to go green. During the 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Sharm El Sheikh, located at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt, the U.S., in partnership with Germany, allocated \$250 million intended to “unlock \$10 billion in commercial investment to support Egypt's clean energy economy.”

Beyond encouraging wind and solar energy development, Washington has consistently invested heavily in Egypt's military capabilities since 1978, the year



Top to bottom: China's President Xi Jinping (left) shakes hands with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ahead of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum in May; President Joe Biden and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi at the COP27 U.N. Climate Summit in 2022; Russian President Vladimir Putin, (right) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi shake hands at the Russia Africa Summit in 2023.

Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Accords. According to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, that now tops \$50 billion to help the country “protect and defend its land and maritime borders and to confront an evolving terrorist threat, including in the Sinai Peninsula.”

Yet, despite U.S. aid, Cairo continues to deepen its close ties with the Russian military, which began during the Soviet era. Gamal Abdel Nasser, then the president of Egypt, turned to the Kremlin to finance and complete the construction of the Aswan Dam — a partnership that quickly evolved into military cooperation.

Notably, this June, the Russian and Egyptian navies conducted joint naval exercises in the Mediterranean Sea near Alexandria. Last year, The Biden administration was forced to threaten Cairo over its plans to sell rockets to Putin in support of his “special military operation” in Ukraine. Instead, Egypt agreed to artillery shells to Kyiv.

Contrast that with the annual U.S. and Egyptian Armed Forces BRIGHT STAR exercise that is conducted each year along with over 30 participating nations at Mohamed Naguib Military Base in Egypt. The BRIGHT STAR 2023 exercise was built upon the decadeslong strategic partnership between the U.S. and Egypt, and it focused “on regional security and cooperation while promoting interoperability in conventional and irregular warfare scenarios.”

Cairo's pyramid game involving the superpowers, however, is not going away. In January, Egypt, alongside Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, became a full member of BRICS — the economic bloc dominated by Russia, China, India, and Brazil.

In May, el-Sisi traveled to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. While in Beijing, the two leaders marked the 10th anniversary of the Egypt-China strategic partnership. In the last two years alone, Beijing has invested nearly \$30 billion in Egypt as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

That includes \$2 billion in the Suez Economic Zone to construct steel and iron plants and a May announcement

**AM I OKAY
TO DRIVE?**

**BUZZED DRIVING
IS DRUNK DRIVING**


NHTSA

ad
COUNCIL

An army zodiac secures the entrance of the new section of the Suez Canal in Ismailia, Egypt in this 2015 photo.



that China's Hutchison Ports is building a 1.6-million-square-meter shipping container terminal at the Ain Sokhna port on the Red Sea. When completed, it will be Egypt's largest.

Regionally, Egypt's pyramid game is at its most insidious in Gaza, and it is an even deeper one involving tunnels between Egypt and the strip. It is also a multilayered complex web that has evolved significantly over the last decade.

Initially, when el-Sisi assumed power in 2014, his regime took a hard line against Hamas in the Gaza Strip and aggressively worked in partnership with Israel to blockade Gaza and undermine Iran's terrorist proxy.

This included, according to Maged Mandour at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Egypt destroying "Hamas' supply chains, particularly the vital tunnels transporting foodstuffs, fuel, construction materials, and medical supplies into the besieged strip." Cairo even tried flooding the tunnels connecting Gaza with Egypt.

Yet, beginning in 2017, faced with a growing Islamic State insurgency kinetic threat in the Sinai, el-Sisi strategically "pivoted to a policy of cooperating with Hamas." The full impact of that change was not fully understood until Oct. 7, 2023 — nor the scope of it until after the Israeli

military discovered what was being transported in those tunnels after it seized the Rafah border crossing in early May.

Until then, Jerusalem was content to use Egypt's growing cooperation with Hamas to ensure it could mediate outbreaks of rocket attacks being launched from Gaza and aimed at southern and central Israel. Mediation, in that narrow vein, helped mitigate against the need for an all-out war against Hamas.

However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu misread the extent to which el-Sisi was playing him. More than just food, medicine, and construction supplies were passing through those tunnels. It is highly likely that so, too, were some of the equipment, arms, and munitions that were used by Hamas to attack Israel on Oct. 7.

According to an *Associated Press* report in January that analyzed 150 videos, Hamas uses "a diverse patchwork arsenal of weapons from around the world," including sniper rifles made in Iran, Chinese and Russian AK-47 assault rifles, and rocket-propelled grenades manufactured in North Korea and Bulgaria. Most were likely smuggled through the Rafah crossing — and the tunnels below reaching into the Sinai.

Israel's decision to seize the strategic 9-mile border crossing, commonly

referred to in the region as the Philadelphi Corridor, was largely due to the continued flow of arms and munitions into Israel after the start of the Israeli military's operations in Gaza. Egypt, wittingly or not, was enabling the arming of Hamas.

Egypt's pyramids were built to last — the Great Pyramid of Giza was constructed roughly 4,600 years ago. Pyramid games are not, and el-Sisi's are beginning to fall apart in the light of day under their weight.

For now, the Suez Canal affords Egypt the leverage and economic cover Cairo needs to continue to play all the competing actors off one another. When you play with fire though, you eventually get burned.

Washington, Moscow, Beijing, and Jerusalem are at bay for now. However, Suez Canal or not, like all investors, they will eventually demand a return on their investments or a return on their capital — and when they do, Egypt and el-Sisi are likely to be caught shorthanded. ★

Mark Toth writes on national security and foreign policy. Col. (Ret.) Jonathan Sweet served 30 years as a military intelligence officer and led the U.S. European Command Intelligence Engagement Division from 2012 to 2014.

Business



FISCAL POLICY

Will the central bank cut interest rates before the election?

President Joe Biden, seeking reelection, would stand to benefit if the apolitical Federal Reserve makes that move

By Zachary Halaschak

The Federal Reserve will meet just two more times between now and the November elections. The big questions are whether the Fed will cut interest rates and how it will affect the presidential showdown.

It has been a year since the Fed changed its interest rate target in any way. In July 2023, the Fed raised rates from 5.25% to 5.50%. The current level is presumably the zenith of the central bank's historic tightening cycle, which began in reaction to the worst inflation in generations, amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

But now, 28 months after interest rates began rising, the Fed is eyeing rate cuts. In one of the most contentious election

years in modern history, rate changes will undoubtedly be looked at through a political lens. President Joe Biden is facing a tough challenge from former President Donald Trump, who has made the public's poor approval of Biden's stewardship of the economy one of the defining issues on the campaign trail.

Lower interest rates are good for consumers. The higher interest rates have, on top of inflation, made things such as buying a car or a home more expensive. They also make it more difficult to pay off credit card debt, so any downward movement in the Fed's interest rate target would be good news for consumers.

"Higher interest makes things more expensive mortgages, loans, things like

that," Peter Loge, director of the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, told the *Washington Examiner*. "And voters, people like you and me, don't like that right now."

Right now, the most likely scenario is that the Fed only conducts one interest rate cut before the November elections, according to sentiment among investors. The Federal Open Market Committee, which controls interest rates, has meetings set for July and September, although most expect the central bank to hold rates steady this week before cutting in September.

Investors, as of July 17, are pricing in about a 95% probability that the Fed will cut interest rates in September, according to the CME Group's FedWatch tool, which calculates the probability using futures contract prices for rates in the short-term market targeted by the Fed. There are about 1-in-20 odds that the Fed conducts two interest rate cuts before the election.

But voters likely won't feel much from just one rate decrease. The Fed will most likely drop rates by only a quarter of a per-

centage point when it decides to finally cut. That just makes a dent for consumers.

“Interest rates took the elevator going up, but they’re going to take the stairs coming down,” Bankrate chief financial analyst Greg McBride told the *Washington Examiner*. “So, you know, with one rate cut, whether it’s a quarter-point or even a larger half-point, that still pales in comparison to how much rates went up in 2022 and 2023.”

McBride said it provides very little immediate relief for borrowers. He also pointed out that years of combined inflation are weighing heavily on voters’ budgets.

“The cumulative price increases that households have felt over the last several years are not going to be reversed,” McBride said. “So even with interest rates coming down, household budget pressures are going to persist until income can fully catch up and restore the buying power households had a few years ago.”

The timing of the rate cuts is also key for the election. If the Fed decides to cut earlier at its July meeting, that would give more time for voters to digest the fact that rates are moving lower, according to Loge.

“If the Fed cuts rates in September, which seems more likely, that’s probably not as good for the president, because by then, more people will have made up their minds about who they are going to vote for,” Loge said.

Loge said that either way, it is more about being able to tell a story to voters.

“Biden wants to tell the story that the economy is getting better, that our border is getting more secure, our markets are going up, wages are going up, and inflation is moving down, and the Fed cutting rates helps tell that story,” Loge said. “The sooner you can tell that story, and the more facts you can have behind that story, the better for President Biden.”

Fed Chairman Jerome Powell has been careful not to speak with any certainty

about what the Fed might do with interest rates, although he has noted that inflation has been gradually returning to earth after peaking at about 9% during Biden’s presidency, according to the consumer price index.

Annual CPI inflation, the most common measure of price growth, has fallen to 3% as of June. That is much lower than its zenith but still a full percentage point above the Fed’s 2% long-run goal.

Powell has also indicated that it might take quite a while for inflation to return to that 2% level, well into the next presidency.

“You know, we don’t see ourselves getting back to 2% inflation this year or next year, well, maybe late next year, but in the year after,” Powell said during a recent event in Portugal. “The main thing is we’re making real progress.” ★

Zachary Halaschak is an economics reporter at the Washington Examiner.

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TIANA'S TAKE

A President Harris economic agenda would be even more radical than Biden's



Republican Gov. Mike DeWine extended Ohio's first-in-the-nation ballot deadline to allow Democrats until September to nominate their presidential candidate this year, solving a filing date technicality that had seemed to threaten President Joe Biden's Buckeye State ballot status. Still, Democratic power brokers have proceeded as though the Democratic National Committee has only until Aug. 7 to formalize their general election ticket.

So even though Biden is polling worse than any Democratic presidential candidate — much less, an incumbent — against a Republican challenger in 20 years, the Democratic Party seems slated to ignore the majority of its voters who wish to replace the president in a fall fight against former President Donald Trump, the 2024 Republican nominee.

In part, this may be a product of the party elders accepting the inevitable. With the worst inflationary crisis since that which made Jimmy Carter a one-term president, as well as Trump's cinematic survival of a heart-stopping assassination attempt, the DNC may simply be resigning itself to the reality that effectively disenfranchising its voters by replacing the candidate they (nominally) selected only to lose to Trump anyway may not be worth it. More realistically, the Democratic defeatism is a product of the potential peril of a presidential candidacy by Vice President Kamala Harris.

The only person who could practically replace the sitting president on the ticket is his vice president, as even if convention delegates allowed the party to leapfrog the first female, first black, and first Asian vice president with a different Democrat, only Harris would be legally allowed to inherit the Biden campaign's quarter-trillion-dollar war chest. And the choice of Harris would cement the explosive exodus of the Silicon Valley and high-dollar



Vice President Kamala Harris

donor class to the GOP under Trump.

President Biden has governed dramatically to the left of the already liberal Vice President Biden when he was in President Barack Obama's administration from 2009-17. And a President Harris would likely push her economic agenda even further leftward than Vice President Harris. Biden, in his desperation to shore up the youth vote, is now pushing a radical national rent control cap that would cap annual rent increases at just 5%. Jason Furman, one of Obama's top economists, rightly blasted such rent control as "disgraced as any economic policy in the toolkit," and judged that the Biden proposal in particular would "make our housing supply problems worse, not better."

But whereas Biden's bluster is likely a mere extinction burst evident of a dying campaign, Harris has historically been a true believer in such macro malarkey going back to the beginning of her career in Congress. As a California senator, Harris endorsed an Oregon rent control law that mimicked the same San Francisco statute that wound up increasing rental prices after housing supply plummeted. And Harris's proposed Rent Relief Act would issue a tax credit to the tens of millions of renters who spend more than 30% of their incomes on rent, an unfunded liability that would work as well as Obama's federalization of the student loan system.

And while Harris would likely favor the same sort of green central planning executed by her boss, she also pledged her support socializing one-fifth of the nation's economy with "Medicare for All" during her failed 2020 bid for the presidency. Although Harris would later pretend otherwise, she fully favored criminalizing private health insurance to achieve a government takeover of the healthcare system.

Most egregiously, Harris was one of the original co-sponsors of the 2019 Green New Deal, which calls for nationalizing not just the healthcare industry but also the entire energy industry, or nearly 30% of the U.S. economy. The plan would also cost between \$52 billion and \$93 trillion in 2019 dollars, according to various estimates at the time.

In the history of her various flip-flops throughout her career, Harris has supported a federal \$15 per hour minimum wage even when the median wage in certain states was lower than that, the elimination of right-to-work laws, and opposed both the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Harris voted against confirming Jerome Powell's chairmanship of the Federal Reserve, instead introducing a law to require that a racially, ethnically, or gender diverse candidate is interviewed for all central bank vacancies.

Harris does not poll much better than Biden in head-to-head matchups against Trump, and historically, she has polled worse than her fellow California Democrats in statewide races and abysmally enough in the 2020 primary to force her withdrawal before Iowa. But her actual legislative wish list is worse than merely incompetent. It is truly radical, and if implemented, would risk accelerating Biden's stagflationary policies into something more Soviet. ★

Tiana Lowe Doescher is an economics columnist for the *Washington Examiner*.

Life & Arts

Sports The glories of the Canadian Football League, P. 54

Film Sympathy for the outlaw in *The Bikeriders*, P. 55

On Culture How to go as fast as a pro racecar for the price of a supercar, P. 57

Also: How Jews fought crime and corruption in the early 1900s ★ A memoir by not that Kevin Hart ★ Murder in the woods ★ The death of the neighborhood joint



**Ayo Edebiri and
Jeremy Allen White in
The Bear Season Three.**

“It surely would be possible to make a dramatized version of *Chef’s Table* that I would enjoy, but that is not what I signed up for with *The Bear*.”

✎ Andrew Bernard, P. 59



BOOKS

Tales of the Immigrant Crime Wave of the Jazz Age

By Diane Scharper

Wearing a yellow skirt that reached just below her knees, a black and white shirt, and a sunbonnet, 15-year-old Amelia Staffeldt planned to pick dandelions. But after she crossed the road to the old Steitz farm, she was attacked and stabbed twice behind her right ear. It looked as if the murderer had also tried to strangle the girl using the strings of her bonnet, according to the *New York Times*.

It was 1907, an era when crime proliferated especially among New York City's politicians and policemen — most of whom were connected to Tammany Hall. The attack in Elmhurst, Long Island, shocked readers and caused outrage. Something had to be done. Thus begins the trajectory of Dan Slater's intriguing social history, *The Incorruptibles: A True Story of Kingpins, Crime Busters, and the Birth of the American Underworld*.

A former journalist for the *Wall Street Journal*, Slater wrote the well-received *Wolf Boys*, a story of two Texas teenagers lured into a Mexican drug cartel and the efforts of an American detective to stop the illegal drug trade from crossing into the United States.

The Incorruptibles is another true crime story, but it is broader in scope. It

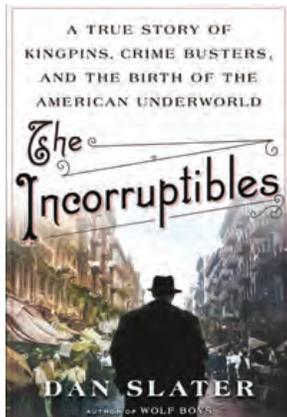
describes the work of several detectives who would not be corrupted, as well as many characters who would: numerous gangsters, gamblers, prostitutes, fences, extortionists, and murderers. The narrative, which focuses on efforts to combat crime in New York City in the early 20th century, begins with police commissioner Theodore Bingham's 1908 article for the *North American Review*.

He blamed immigrant Jews for the high rate of crime in New York, but soon he retracted his claim and insisted that those who had compiled the numbers caused the error, saying that he hadn't meant any prejudice. Nonetheless, wealthy German Jews, who had arrived in America many years earlier, some in the 1600s, formed a Kehillah, a Jewish self-help group, because they were alarmed at the anti-Jewish rhetoric. They worried the story of crime would become a Jewish one, as this history of crime and crime-fighting largely is.

The "Incorruptibles" of the title were part of this group. These mostly Jewish detectives formed a task force promoting social morality. They reported crimes to the police and to some other members

of the Kehillah. They also helped new Jewish arrivals become assimilated. The new immigrants spoke Yiddish and did not understand English. Nor did they have the wherewithal to earn a living. Some were peddlers. Others were menders and tailors. They worked in sweatshops. They sweltered in the summertime even with the windows open. The doors were usually locked, as they were at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in 1911 when 150 garment workers famously died trapped inside in a fire. There were labor strikes and episodes where thugs attacked picketing workers.

The Lower East Side, Slater explains, was considered the world's largest Jewish ghetto and was home to impoverished Eastern European Jews who left Russia, Poland, and Lithuania to escape pogroms and to avoid being conscripted into the army of Czar Nicholas II. Some Jewish boys



The Incorruptibles: A True Story of Kingpins, Crime Busters, and the Birth of the American Underworld
By Dan Slater
Little, Brown and Company
432 pp., \$32.50



A policeman observes the rubble following the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City on March 25, 1911.

as young as 8 were drafted. Their mothers tried to save them by cutting off their sons' fingers.

Jewish families came to America hoping to send money back home. But American streets were covered with muck, not gold. New York was rife with gambling, illegal drugs, burglary, pickpocketing, prostitution, and murder. During Prohibition, some people took up importing and selling booze. In New York's Lower East Side, 3,800 girls went missing every year. Many were Russian Jews who were trafficked.

Two main characters in Slater's book, Herman Rosenthal and his friend Arnold Rothstein, were involved in most of these nefarious activities. Rosenthal was assassinated because he squealed to the newspapers about corruption in the New York City Police Department. Rothstein was killed over a gambling debt in an al-



legedly crooked poker game. Accused of fixing the 1919 World Series, Rothstein was also the inspiration for Meyer Wolfshiem in *The Great Gatsby*.

Rothstein's story somewhat shakily holds together Slater's extensive social history. But it's an uphill battle given the breadth of his narrative, which features a host of mostly unfamiliar characters. A chronology and a list of names with brief bios would help.

Slater includes major Jewish figures such as Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish Supreme Court Justice, as well as Jacob Schiff, a German American banker and philanthropist who financed railroads and helped Russian Jewish immigrants. These elites and others, such as Louis Marshall, Oscar Straus, Mayer Sulzberger, and Cyrus Adler, were part of the American Jewish Committee. They worried that the new Jewish arrivals, many

of whom were uneducated, impoverished serfs, would give Jews a bad name. This would negatively affect Jewish immigration laws in America and hurt those Jews still in Russia who wanted to come to the U.S.

Abe Shoenfeld, Harry Newberger, Joseph Faurot, and Rabbi Judah Magnes were among the good guys. Magnes, a brilliant teacher and inspiring speaker, was one of the founders of the Kehillah. He planned the process of infiltrating criminal groups as well as methods of attacking crime. Schoenfeld, a writer and novelist (*The Joy Peddler*), was among those that Magnes hired. He spied on criminal gangs and sent daily reports to Magnes. Newberger, an honest lawyer, and Faurot, an honest cop, helped Schoenfeld and Magnes.

As he tells the story of crime and prejudice in this period, Slater weaves his

narrative from Central and Eastern Europe to America and Canada. He brings in New York City, the Pale of Settlement, and Bar Harbor, Maine. He covers events affecting Jews from the 17th century to the 20th and even manages to include his own family's story. Though its narrative sags a bit under the weight of too many disparate stories, *The Incorruptibles* is a compelling portrait of a time, not unlike our own, when crime in American cities drives ethnic polarization and a political demand for restricting immigration. It also suggests that there is a way through if enough honest actors expend enough effort working to bust the problem rather than denying it.

Diane Scharper is a regular contributor to the Washington Examiner. She teaches the Memoir Seminar for the Johns Hopkins University Osher program.

BOOKS

Dark-Land: A Memoir Hard to Classify as Anything But Great

By John Wilson

You don't know me, reader, and I don't know you. Nevertheless, I urge you to buy a copy of Kevin Hart's *Dark-Land: Memoir of a Secret Childhood* and read it as soon as you can make time for it. Warning: once you've started, you'll find it very difficult to put down. Such, at least, was my experience.

I am 76 years old, and I've lost count of the memoirs and autobiographies I've read over the decades, going all the way back to the 1950s (I think the first memoir I read was by a missionary, but I can't recall any of the details). Some of these made a lasting impact: Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Hope Against Hope* and *Hope Abandoned* (one massive volume in Russian, but divided into two for the English translation), Thomas Bernhard's *Gathering Evidence* (one volume in English translation, several slim volumes in German), and Anthony Burgess's *Little Wilson and Big God*, to name just a handful. From others, I retain a strong impression, like a distinctive taste. Many more, alas, hardly raise a stir among the neurons.

Of all the memoirs and autobiographies I've ever read — literary or otherwise — *Dark-Land* is among the very best.

The currency of praise is debased these days. I loathe the endless hype that has taken over so much writing about books, as if that were the only way to get readers' attention. But not to acknowledge a genuinely astonishing achievement, out of a fastidious fear of being mistaken for one of the shameless boosters, would be a crime.

So. Telling some bookish friends

about *Dark-Land* when I first read a bound galley, I discovered that the name Kevin Hart, at least not referring to the famous stand-up comedian, didn't ring a bell. (A couple of my friends wondered if he was related to David Bentley Hart.) That's odd, in a way, because he has been widely published; just last year, the splendid University of Chicago Press published *Lands of Likeness: For a Poetics of Contemplation*, based on his Gifford Lectures. He's the author of more than a dozen books of poetry. He is the Edwin B. Kyle Professor of Christian Studies at the University of Virginia. (If you are into phenomenology of the French varieties, you will probably be familiar with him.) "In Fall 2024," I quote from Wikipedia, "Hart will assume the Jo Rae Wright University Distinguished Professorship at Duke Divinity School, with a courtesy appointment in the Duke University Department of English." Neither fish nor fowl, in other words, so it won't come as a great surprise to you to hear that his memoir is *sui generis*.

Hart was born in 1954, the second child of an ill-matched couple who nevertheless stuck together and did their

best. His only sibling — a sister, Pauline — was nearly 10 years older. Like you, I suspect, I have read a fair number of accounts of everyday life in working-class London during this period of grimy austerity. Hart's is the least clichéd I have ever encountered, at once appalling and funny, rich in visceral detail; the same can be said of his memories of family life and (grotesque) early schooling.

But what makes the book most unusual is Hart's account of his inner life. He mentions near the end that he wrote this

memoir over a period of two months(!), often working well into the night. Somehow he managed to reinhabit himself as a young boy and then a teenager. The back cover copy of *Dark-Land* (the title, by the way, alludes to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which entered Hart's imagination when he was a boy and never left) describes it as a "searing, yet at times hilarious, narrative of his first thirteen years."

But that's misleading, even though it accounts for a substantial chunk of the book.

In 1966, when Hart turned 12, his family emigrated to Australia. Page 123 (of 233) finds the Hart family setting out for the series of flights that would take them from London to Sydney. A far from negligible part of *Dark-Land* is devoted to their time as a family Down Under. Later on, we glimpse Hart as an adult in Australia and the United States (he emigrated in 2002, having spent some time in the U.S. earlier). Early in this second part of the book, we get an account of the revelatory experience — in an algebra class! — that changed the trajectory of Hart's inner life and set him on the course for what amounted to a new identity. I won't try to describe that here; you must read it yourself.

If you are a professor teaching about the art of the memoir in general or religious autobiography in particular, add *Dark-Land* to your syllabus. If you are in a book club, nominate this one. Give copies to some of your literary-minded friends. Spread the word.

John Wilson is senior editor of the Marginalia Review of Books.

BOOKS

A High Literary Campfire Story

By Malcolm Forbes

To say that Liz Moore's latest novel, her fourth, was her finest to date may lead those who have never read her to believe that she spent years limbering up and taking cautious steps before finally hitting her stride. This isn't the case at all. Her first three books were not apprentice work. Each was satisfyingly accomplished and rightfully acclaimed. Her vibrant 2007 debut, *The Words of Every Song*, charted the hopes, dreams, and disappointments of various people trying to get ahead in the music industry. *Heft* (2012) was a moving depiction of two lonely, damaged souls — an obese recluse and a self-destructive teenager — negotiating life's hard knocks, while *The Unseen World* (2016) was an ingenious coming-of-age story about a young girl decoding her father's brilliant mind and



hidden past.

But then in 2020 came *Long Bright River*. Taking its title from a snippet of verse in Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters* ("Beneath a heaven dark and holy, / To watch the long bright river drawing slowly"), Moore's novel unfolded beneath the darkest heaven and in a particularly bleak hellscape. The Philadelphia neighborhood of Kensington, a place blighted by catastrophic levels of opioid addiction, became, in Moore's hands, the hunting ground of a serial killer. The book followed a policewoman in her frantic search both to snare a murderer and to find her missing sister, a sex worker and heroin addict, before she ended up the next victim.

Moore, who lives in Philadelphia, drew on her experience with the city's grittier corners and its vulnerable and downtrodden members of society to produce a hard-hitting and at times heart-rending novel that defied its "thriller" classification. In her latest offering, *The God of the Woods*, Moore once again goes beyond the remit of the genre. Two possible crimes lie at the heart of the book, but Moore branches out and brings in other elements, taking creative risks in the process.

The novel opens with a cause for alarm at an Adirondack summer camp. One morning in August 1975, Louise, a counselor at Camp Emerson, notices that 13-year-old Barbara isn't in her bunk. Any camper's absence is worrying, but this girl's disappearance is unthinkable. She is Barbara Van Laar, the daughter of the wealthy family that owns the camp. She isn't the first Van Laar child to go missing: Fourteen years ago, Barbara's brother Bear vanished from the same area and was never found.

T.J. Hewitt, the camp director, assembles the counselors and initiates a search for Barbara. Did she run away? If she ventured out alone into the vast forest and wandered off the main trail, would she remember the most important camp rule that is drummed into all campers — when lost, sit down and yell? There would be another reason to

yell. Barbara's cabinmates liked to spook each other at night with stories of ghosts that haunted their surroundings but also tales about an all-too-real bogeyman. Jacob Sluiter, nicknamed Slitter, was imprisoned for killing 11 people at campgrounds or in remote cabins in the 1960s. Recently he escaped from jail. Has he claimed his 12th victim?

When Barbara still isn't found, a team of investigators arrives on the scene. One of them is young new recruit Judy Lup-tack, the first woman in the New York State Bureau of Criminal Investigation. Determined to prove herself and make headway in the case, Judy must contend with male colleagues getting too close for comfort or not taking her seriously. She is patronized even more when she conducts interviews with members of the Van Laar clan — not least Barbara's grandfather, whose demeanor during one exchange veers quickly from dismissive to aggressive. "Rich people," Judy tells herself afterward, "generally become most enraged when they sense they're about to be held accountable for their wrongs."

To discover what those wrongs might be, Judy casts her net wider and looks into Bear's disappearance in 1961 despite her no-nonsense boss's blunt reminder that the case is closed. As investigators comb the woods, search a lake, and make a breakthrough up a mountain, Judy unearths secrets and lies. Then Sluiter is captured and agrees to talk, but only to a woman. The sole female investigator in the BCI accepts her toughest challenge yet. But can she get a mass murderer to open up and shed light on two missing siblings?

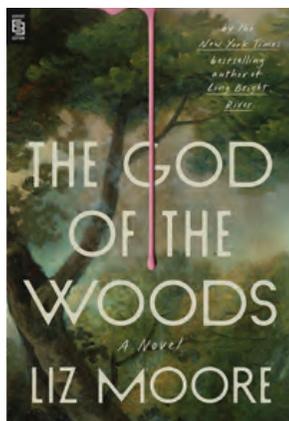
Running to almost 500 pages, *The God of the Woods* is an ambitious work. It combines two genres: police procedural and family drama. A lesser writer might have incorporated too much of the latter at the expense of the former — the result being a baggy, bloated novel with little in the way of crime and all suspense, intrigue, and excitement diluted by accounts of domestic strife. Fortunately, Moore knows exactly what she is doing

and gets the balance just right, keeping her reader gripped by two baffling mysteries and absorbed in the Van Laars with their private tragedies and dysfunctional relationships. "They're a strange family," Judy's mentor informs her. "Too many generations with too much money. It addles the brain."

But to reap the book's considerable benefits, we need to stay focused. Moore tells more than one tale by way of numerous time shifts and multiple character perspectives. Disorienting at first, the layered, nonlinear narrative soon stimulates and allows us to view not just events but also people from different angles. Those people make up a large and varied cast. We meet shy and self-conscious camper Tracy, who has nothing in common with the other girls around her, all affluent New Englanders and Manhattanites, but she comes out of her shell when she finds an ally, and object of affection, in her bunkmate Barbara. There is Alice, Barbara's mother, who depends on pills and booze to numb the pain of losing her son and living with a controlling and unfeeling husband and an angry and rebellious daughter — a daughter she is incapable of loving. And back in the past is Carl, a gardener on the Van Laar estate who joined the search party for Bear and was then framed for the boy's abduction.

Moore constructs an elaborate guessing game. We take stock of characters' evasions and shadowy deeds. Many have something to hide or somewhere illicit to go. What kind of "nocturnal excursions" does Barbara regularly make after the girls in her cabin have turned off the light? Where was her counselor, Louise, on the night she disappeared? We try to make head or tail of scattered anomalies: a carving of a brown bear, an AWOL chef, a coat of pink paint on Barbara's bedroom wall, and blood-spattered clothes in the trunk of a car. And is there any significance to Barbara's confession to Tracy that she is prone to doing bad things? "I have that problem," she reveals. "I think — what would be the worst thing I could do in this moment? And then I do it."

We could take Moore to task for recycling certain tropes from her last novel: missing persons, divided families, two mysteries running parallel, and even a serial killer on the loose. However, it is clear that this writer has not run out of



The God of the Woods: A Novel
By Liz Moore
Riverhead Books
496pp., \$30.00

ideas, nor has she forgotten how to tell a compelling story. As the plot thickens, tension mounts, and components click neatly into place, it seems churlish trying to find fault with a book that has become a riveting, multithemed page-turner.

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SPORTS

An Ode to Canadian Football

By Oliver Bateman

I have a confession to make: For more than a decade, I've been addicted to Canadian football. It's not the slick, polished product you see on Sunday afternoons in the NFL. No, this is a grittier, quirkier version of the game that feels like it was cooked up by a mad scientist. Even though it's July, the CFL season is already in full swing, and if you haven't been paying attention, you're missing out on one of the most entertaining spectacles in sports. With only nine teams in Canada's largest cities, it's incredibly easy to follow the entire league. Games are played Thursday through Sunday. And the best part? It's all free to watch on TSN+. The CFL YouTube channel even posts excellent 10-minute recaps of each game for those of us with short attention spans.

But why should you care about a league that, at least for the better part of the past three decades, seemed perpetually on the brink of extinction? For starters, the games are fascinating. The rouge point, or single, is just one of many funky Canadian rules that exemplify the CFL's charm. It's awarded when a team kicks the ball into or through the opponent's end zone and the receiving team fails to return it out. This rule adds many layers



Winnipeg Blue Bombers quarterback Chris Streveler gets stopped by the Ottawa Redblacks during a Canadian Football League game in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on July 5.

of strategy, especially in the close games that are far more common in the CFL than in the NFL. Imagine a team purposely conceding a single point to gain better field position — it happens more often than you'd think. This is riveting sport: 12 men on the field, lightning-fast pre-snap motion that would make an NFL referee's head spin, and quarterbacks who run like their lives depend on it (because, given the crushing hits they take, they might).

Take Chris Streveler, for instance. The jacked former NFL player is again serving as the short-yardage quarterback for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and he might just be the fastest quarterback in either league. Watching Streveler burst through the line is like seeing a tiger released from its cage. Then there's A.J. Ouellette of the Saskatchewan Roughriders, a hard-running former Ohio University college star whose head-butting of opponents calls to mind the bruising style of former Madden cover

boy Peyton Hillis. And I certainly can't forget Brady Oliveira of the Blue Bombers, who's signed long-term and seems destined to go down in history as the greatest Canadian running back ever.

It's worth noting that Canadian skill position stars are few and far between in the CFL. Teams typically allocate their quota spots to American runners and throwers and use Canadians to fill out the offensive and defensive lines. That's what makes a player like Oliveira so special: He stuck around. Even Nathan Rourke, the best Canadian quarterback since the great Russ Jackson prowled the gridiron for Ottawa in the 1960s, quickly made for the NFL after he had a single successful season in the CFL.

Oliveira's success is noteworthy because what truly sets the CFL apart is its commitment to being unabashedly Canadian. While the NHL can't keep its stars north of the border and the Toronto Raptors are Canada's lone NBA outpost,



the CFL stands as a proud bastion of Canuck job creation. The league has strict rules about the number of Canadian players each team must field. It's a level of populist protectionism in the Great Liberal North that makes the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 look downright cosmopolitan.

This dedication to homegrown talent leads to some fascinating quirks. Counting the aforementioned Rourke, there have been a grand total of three Canadian starting quarterbacks in the past 45 years. It's as if Canada decided to outsource the game's most important position to Americans while insisting that all its linemen grow up on a strict diet of poutine and Tim Hortons.

Quotas aside, the rules of Canadian football create a game that's undeniably faster-paced and more unpredictable than its American counterpart. The field is longer and wider, which means more room for chaos. The goal posts are at the

front of the end zone, turning every field goal attempt into a high-stakes game of "don't hit the big yellow uprights." The three-down system means teams are always in desperation mode, leading to more passing plays and wild scrambles.

In the CFL, a period can't end on a penalty. So even if time expires, a penalty can extend the game. Add in the fact that coaches have only one timeout per half and you've got a recipe for non-stop action. Compare this to the NFL's commercial-laden final minutes, where teams milk the play clock and games often grind to a halt. In the CFL, those last three minutes are a lightning-fast shootout. It's football distilled to its purest, most exciting form — a far cry from the NFL's stop-start war of attrition.

"No Lead Is Safe" is the league's rallying cry. It's like watching a normal football game with the fast-forward button permanently jammed.

But perhaps the most endearing aspect of the CFL is its fan base. Described by some critics as "pale, stale, and male," it's a group that wears its devotion like a badge of honor. These are the Tory diehards who brave subzero temperatures to watch meaningless late-season games in Edmonton and Regina, who can recite obscure Grey Cup facts from the 1950s, and who still argue passionately about whether Doug Flutie or Damon Allen, NFL Hall of Famer Marcus Allen's overlooked little brother, was the better quarterback.

For all its quirks and struggles, the CFL represents something increasingly rare in modern sports: authenticity. It's not trying to be the NFL. It's content to be its own weird, wonderful self. As we dive into the 2024 season, there are plenty of storylines to follow. Will the Montreal Alouettes prove last year's Grey Cup victory wasn't a fluke? And will the storied Hamilton Tiger-Cats ever win another championship — they last hoisted the Grey Cup in 1999 after dominating the 1960s — or are they destined to become the Cleveland Browns of the Great White North?

You might just find yourself becoming one of those pale, stale, male fans who can't imagine autumn without the grace and brutality of three-down football.

Oliver Bateman is a journalist, historian, and co-host of the What's Left? podcast. Visit his website: www.oliverbateman.com.



FILM

Jeff Nichols's Biker Love Letter

By *Graham Hillard*

How to describe *The Bikeriders*, the beautifully formless new film by writer-director Jeff Nichols? An acting showcase, the production moves its characters about but offers little in the way of traditional plotting. A marriage story, it nevertheless encompasses the loss of national innocence and the professionalization of American crime. Perhaps the best thing to say of the new picture is that it is about its subjects: the members of a lightly fictionalized motorcycle club in Vietnam War-era Illinois. Based on a photobook of the same name by Danny Lyon, the film plays like a collection of snapshots. What they add up to is Nichols's best work in years.

The movie stars Austin Butler as Benny Cross, a Chicago bike hound whom we meet on the cusp of an altercation. Wearing his club "colors" in a bar in 1969, Benny attracts the attention of two crosstown rivals boasting murderous expressions. Rather than back down, our young man jaws off, provoking a fight that nearly costs him his life. But isn't that a smirk we see on his face when, about to be jumped, he reaches for his knife?

Nichols has long been fascinated by the promise and perils of masculinity, a connective tissue that holds together an otherwise chaotic oeuvre. In his best film, 2011's *Take Shelter*, a family man visited by apocalyptic dreams builds a storm bunker no one wants. (Spoiler alert: They're wrong.) 2016's *Loving*, meanwhile, celebrates the capacity of marital fidelity to undo grievous wrongs. Even the director's little-seen *Midnight Special*, a sci-fi thriller pitting fatherhood against feds and faith, pulls ostentatiously in this direction. Frequent Nichols collaborator Michael Shannon is a former



cultist on the lam with his supernatural son. A far from perfect figure, he is still the best hope the boy has.

Unsurprisingly, Shannon has a role in *The Bikeriders*. He plays Zipco, a wine-addled burnout who falls in with the film's featured club, the Vandals, after a rejection by his local draft board. Other members have similar stories. Cockroach (Emory Cohen) wants to be a motorcycle cop but can't get out of his own well-intentioned way. Sonny (Norman Reedus, inevitably) wants the club's companionship so badly that he moves across the country to pursue it. In Nichols's hands, these damaged, difficult men are heroes of a sort, bound together in a brotherhood of choice and embracing loyalty as the highest good. "These guys," one character remarks midway through the film, "don't belong nowhere else. So they belong together."

The club's founder, guiding light, and chief is one Johnny Davis (Tom Hardy), a middle-aged bike enthusiast who

starts the Vandals after watching Marlon Brando's *The Wild One* on television. Indeed, there is something of Brando's pinched tenor in Hardy's performance, which, though mannered, is nonetheless the actor's best work since his riveting turn in 2011's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. World-weary but quietly intense, Johnny is the walking representation of the club's smash-the-rules ethos. Unopposed to, say, premeditated arson when honor demands it, Johnny is no saint. Neither, however, is he a killer, in clear contradistinction to the younger toughs already visible on the nation's sociocultural horizon.

Among the film's concerns is the slowly-then-all-at-once process by which Johnny's rule gives way to a harder generation's. Another is Benny's marriage to Kathy Bauer, the movie's sweet but fiery narrator and audience avatar. Played by the wonderful Jodie Comer (*Killing Eve*, *Thirteen*), Kathy bears more than a little resemblance to Karen Hill, the Lorraine

Bracco character in Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas*. At once thrilled and horrified by her husband's outlaw lifestyle, Kathy is all disapproval and worry, at least when she isn't riding along. "I used to be respectable," the young woman sighs, preparing for yet another evening by her reckless husband's side. What is respectability, though, compared to the feeling of the wind in one's hair?

If there is a tension at the heart of *The Bikeriders*, its source is our undeniable knowledge that Benny and company are not really the good guys. Petty criminals and layabouts, our protagonists spend most of the film sitting around, day-drinking, talking motorcycles, and riding. Elsewhere in contemporaneous America, men and women were pioneering the heart transplant and going to the moon. It is absurd, in other words, to feel nostalgia for the Vandals. That we do — that nostalgia is, in fact, the film's roaring engine — is a mark of Nichols's skill.

So, too, is the director's ability to

Jodie Comer and
Austin Butler in
The Bikeriders.



wrest significance from a script that lacks utterly the familiar Aristotelian or Freytagian elements (rising action, climax, et cetera). Instead, *The Bikeriders* is reminiscent of Richard Linklater's *Everybody Wants Some!!* (2016) and deserves to win a similar cult status. In that superb baseball picture, college athletes lie around, get into trouble, shoot the breeze, and attend the occasional practice. Nobody accomplishes much, but, then again, we don't need them to. It's fun just to watch them (fail to) work.

The Bikeriders is pretty much the same movie. Whatever hopes we have that its characters will grow or overcome the odds are dashed right good. It's a cool hang though. Sometimes at the cinema, that's enough.

Graham Hillard is editor at the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal and a Washington Examiner magazine contributing writer.

ON CULTURE

The Le Mans Experience, at a Midlife-Crisis Price

By Jack Baruth

Are you a gentleman of a certain age, looking to spoil yourself with a once-in-a-lifetime car? Your local Porsche dealer will show you the 532-horsepower 911 GTS, priced at \$164,900 and up. This will impress your neighbors, local teenagers, and even your valet. Unfortunately, it will also earn you some gently dismissive smirks from the thousands of amateur race drivers in this country, all of whom know that the Porsche is a paper tiger, a soft and feckless luxury sled suited for nothing more rigorous or sporting than the Saturday morning coffee-shop parking-lot car shows. Faced with this reality, you have two choices. The first is to buy a Porsche anyway and accept whatever derision comes your way from the weekend warriors in their Miatas and McLarens. The second: to leave them all gasping in your wake, courtesy of the Sebeco SPX.

You've never heard of Sebeco, which is fine with them. The Georgia-based firm builds nothing but diminutive race cars of extraordinary capability and relatively modest price. They're not street-legal, and there's room for just one person in their fishbowl-style cockpits. Their top-of-the-line SPX has air conditioning and a radio, although not as you probably know them. The AC sends cold water through a series of tubes in a special shirt that you wear, and the radio can only be tuned to the channel of your pit-side race crew. The engine sits inches from the back of your head, making an absolutely infernal amount of noise. Your 6-foot-2-inch, 250-pound author had no trouble fitting into the car, but it would be claustrophobic for anyone more than a little bit taller or wider. Entry and exit is via a flimsy flip-up fiberglass door of a type familiar to anyone who has raced the prototype class at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

In fact, the entire experience is about what you'd get from the multimillion-

dollar Le Mans prototypes entered by Bentley, Audi, Ferrari, and others, just at a slightly more approachable scale. With that in mind, I tested the Sebeco SPX at Putnam Park Road Course outside Indianapolis, recording complete speed and timing data for the purpose of comparison with an actual "LMP3" racing prototype. It could cost you well over \$1.5 million to own and race an LMP3 for a full American season. Go to Europe, and you can expect to more than double that figure. By contrast, the Sebeco can be run in the U.S.-based, and slightly misnamed, World Racing League for about \$10,000 per weekend, less if you buy the car up front for a price in the \$150,000 range depending on equipment.

Given that exponential difference in cost, you'd expect a similar difference in speed, and it's true that the LMP3 can reach 151 mph on Putnam Park's short front straight, against the Sebeco's peak of 130 mph. After that, however, the balance shifts to favor the lighter, nimbler SPX. At the end of the lap, the difference is just a bit over 2 seconds, in the LMP3's favor. So if you have an extra million dollars in your pocket, you'd want the LMP3. The rest of us will be quite satisfied with the Sebeco. Both cars, of course, are much faster around this track than the Porsche 911 you can get out of a showroom. They're also faster than the track-prepared Porsches used by professional racers at Le Mans, Daytona, and elsewhere.

So far, Sebeco's customers have largely been experienced amateurs who have outgrown the capabilities of their Lamborghinis, Ferraris, and the like. This isn't a machine you master in an afternoon. In that respect, the challenge of Sebeco ownership is like that of golf. The point is to get better over time. And at the new generation of "country club" private racetracks across America, where well-heeled owners swap lurid tales of outrageous speed and derring-do over post-session drinks, owning one of these teardrop-shaped rocket ships is like swinging a driver straight off the PGA Tour.

Sebeco's equivalent to the "teaching pro" in golf would be their partners at Stratus Racing, who in addition to maintaining and repairing your car during a race or practice weekend can provide a credentialed professional to help you get up to speed. For my day in the SPX, I had



Jack Baruth laps the Sebeco SPX at Putnam Park Road Course.

Formula 4 and LMP3 veteran Ben Waddell as a coach. He set a time in the car, and then we worked on getting me closer to that reference time using state-of-the-art data analysis. The process was simple and easy to understand, and my experience of gradually improving in a “two steps forward, one step back” manner will be familiar to anyone trying to learn a new sport as an adult.

Which is an appropriate analogy because SPX ownership is less like buying a new luxury watch and more like buying a set of really high-performance skis. You’re in for an unforgettable time, but it will take some effort on your part to make it happen. Truthfully, it’s too much work for the average luxury sports car buyer who is primarily concerned with making an impression in a parking lot or on the freeway. Happily for Sebeco, there are enough type A competition people out there to keep the order books full and the coaching staff busy.

They’re not alone in this niche, of course. The 800-pound gorilla of the industry is U.K.-based Radical Motorsport, which has sold a few thousand miniature prototypes around the world over the past three decades. I race a Radical SR8, which is more powerful and visceral than the Sebeco but also, with its open-air driving position, continually offers me a chance to get hit in the face with errant debris at 165 mph, something of which my family disapproves. Over on the closed-cockpit, safety-oriented side of things, McLaren, AMG, and other manufacturers sell preassembled, non-street-legal “GT4” race cars, which typically cost more than \$200,000, are ruinously expensive to operate, and often can’t quite match the Sebeco on track pace. A host of firms such as Rush and SCCA Enterprises sell slower and more affordable race cars for people with a lower tolerance for risk, both personal and financial.

With the SPX, Sebeco clearly thinks it has a Goldilocks solution for people who can’t swing the seven figures of a Le Mans Prototype but would also like to go faster than the average supercar driver. After a day on the track with it, I’d be inclined to agree. If IMSA, the professional body for prototype racing in America, is like MLB, this is like playing for the Toledo Mud Hens. It’s just a step away from *The Show*. And if the idea of blasting through turns at triple-digit speeds and lateral forces of 2 g or more doesn’t get your heart racing, well, I’m absolutely certain that Porsche would still love to sell you a 911 GTS, for all of those extra-special trips to Trader Joe’s.

Jack Baruth was born in Brooklyn, New York, and lives in Ohio. He is a pro-am race car driver and a former columnist for Road and Track and Hagerty magazines who writes the Avoidable Contact Forever newsletter.

TV *The Bear* Season Three Gets Lost In the Dream

By Andrew Bernard

There's a line about class that I think about a lot: "There are those who are where they are because they are doing what they are doing, and there are those who are doing what they are doing because they are where they are." That difference between living wherever your employment takes you and having where you live dictate your employment is one of the most precarious divides in American life. Many on one side work their entire lives to get themselves or their children across the divide, while many of those who have made it fear nothing more than backsliding into failure.

The Bear, now in its third season on the confusingly-named FX on Hulu, is about a lot of things, but one of the most intense in an already blood pressure-raising show is the precariousness of that class divide. "I think it's probably better for you to experience what it's like to be poor, they say that leads to empathy," one character tells his boss, who has just lost a fortune in the stock market. In what has to be the most common line of dialogue in *The Bear*, that character is promptly told to "go f*** yourself."

In the first two seasons of the show, the lead, Carmen Berzatto, tries to negotiate his place in that class and labor divide. As an elite chef, he escaped his native Chicago, his alcoholic mother, and the family cult-favorite sandwich shop, only to be ripped back by his brother's suicide and a mountain of loan-sharked debt. In Season One, Carmen (who is also called "Bear," but also there's a bear stalking him in his dreams, and also his restaurant is called *The Bear* — there are a lot of bears in *The Bear*) is trying to get a handle on that chaos one cigarette, panic attack, and Al-Anon meeting at a time. In the second, he tries to get back on a path to greatness by turning the sandwich shop into one of the fancy restaurants he worked in before his brother killed himself.

In the recent third season, which is labeled as "Part III" and ends with "To

be continued," the goal is less clear. Solvency and getting plates to tables are constant worries, but don't provide as much of a narrative arc. Many of the episodes in this season involve reflections on or flashbacks to previous episodes. That was probably unavoidable given that Season Two included perhaps the best episode of television I've ever seen, the Christmas stand alone "Fishes." Everything in that season comes to a head with Carmen destroying his closest relationships while he's trapped in a walk-in refrigerator on opening night.

Class anxiety, panic attacks, debt, suicides — for anyone who has not seen it, know this show is a comedy. Like HBO's *Succession*, which ended last year, *The Bear* bends genres. Is it a comedy with dramatic elements, or a drama with comedic elements? For both shows, the line is somewhat arbitrary, but I think the decision to award almost all of last year's Emmys for drama to *Succession* and almost all of the awards for comedy to *The Bear* is the right way to divvy them up.

The humor in Season Three is less even, however. I laughed hard in places, but there are entire episodes where I did not. To the show's credit, some of those episodes are very good. More death and funerals — apparently even restaurants can have funerals — do not help. Worse is the therapy-speak. "Trauma" is repeatedly and unnecessarily invoked. Of course all of these characters have "trauma" — we've been watching them deal with it and create more of it for three seasons now. We do not need to be told that that trauma might inspire culinary genius.

That's especially so because the show also repeatedly uses the much funnier concept of "haunting." This starts as a gag within the Fak family, played by, among others, Matty Matheson in a more restrained version of his YouTube personality and John Cena in a goofy but winning guest appearance. At one point, the restaurant workers talk about this invented, working-class Chicagoland version of the evil eye over cigarettes and cigars in the universal and class-transcendent language of bullsh***ing.

"Dude! How long did you get haunted for?"

"For like quite a while. Till like eighth grade. He broke my arm."

"He broke your arm?"

"He wasn't there, but I think he caused it."

"What?"

"Yeah, we were at Richie's grandma's house when all of a sudden my arm just broke."

"It just broke randomly?"

"Double bend."

"That's haunted. That's the most haunted."

One of them objects that Sammy (John Cena) is, in fact, still alive, and asks how he could be haunting them. "It's not ghosts, it's serious," one of the Faks replies.

It is both serious and not, as "haunting" here is a metaphor for all of the pain from unaddressed grievances and bad karma accrued in lieu of apology and forgiveness, but also includes Cena pranking his brother over stolen SD cards.

These portions of the show that have nothing to do with Carmen's Sisyphean



Jeremy Allen White in *The Bear* Season Three.

attempt to reinvent the menu every night are frequently the funniest and most enjoyable in this season. The actual restaurant portions of the show lean more into food porn and celebrity chef cameos than I liked. It surely would be possible to make a dramatized version of *Chef's Table* that I would enjoy, but that is not what I signed up for with *The Bear*. Nonetheless, Thomas Keller (the French Laundry, three stars), Rene Redzepi (Noma, three stars), and Daniel Boulud (Daniel, two stars) are among the real-life chefs who are given dialogue and even fictional biographical connections to the characters.

This feels particularly excessive in a bizarre roundtable discussion in the finale wherein less-famous chefs trade (real?) confidential kitchen anecdotes with their fictional counterparts. Foodies might enjoy all this name-dropping and the shots of Carmen repeatedly plating A5 wagyu with cauliflower puree quenelles, but I found myself relieved and more entertained whenever the show cut back to the guys cracking jokes, smoking darts, and slinging hot Italian beef.

Nonetheless, this is still perhaps the best show going. Both the regular cast and guests (Olivia Colman, Jon Bernthal, Josh Hartnett, Joel McHale, and especially Jamie Lee Curtis) are phenomenal. I would happily play the alt-rock-heavy soundtrack of Weezer, the Beastie Boys, Smashing Pumpkins, etc., on a long drive. It's shot beautifully, and the structure of individual episodes, if not the season as a whole, is frequently great. I particularly liked the flashback episode about Tina's (Liza Colón-Zayas) origin, which begins with a frenzied search for work after getting laid off, reaches catharsis over a free cup of coffee and a sandwich, and ends as a character study of what work is like for Americans who get "skipped" by "that dream s***."

The season-ending cliff-hanger, about a make-or-break restaurant review in the *Chicago Tribune*, sets the show up well for a more interesting Season Four. But my hope is that the show's creator, Christopher Storer, realizes that he has made an essential show about class and place and family in America, and not just another glimpse into the elite but ultimately less interesting world of high-end restaurants.

Andrew Bernard is a correspondent for the Jewish News Syndicate.



LONG LIFE

Elegy for the Ideal Restaurant

By Rob Long

If I were asked to construct the ideal restaurant, I'd make sure it had the following crucial features:

In the first place, there would be a long bar just inside the door, long enough so that groups of two or three people could gather over a drink as they wait for their table, with a curve at one end so that solo drinkers and diners could sit quietly with a book and feel that gloriously metropolitan sensation of being alone in a crowd.

The bartenders, of course, would be gruffly professional, but when one of the customers at the bar was overheard saying something ludicrous or stupid, you could catch the eye of the bartender and share a barely perceptible *get a load of that clown* eye raise. And there would be a plainclothes cop or two, who you wouldn't notice until one of them laughed and leaned back from the bar and you'd see the flash of the badge on the belt and maybe the worn leather holster at the hip.

You wouldn't go to my ideal restaurant for the food. The menu would stick to the classics: steaks, broiled fish, sides of buttered broccoli and baked potatoes. There would be a salad, heavy on the iceberg lettuce, with a choice of dressings with names you recognize from the bottles at a high-end grocery store. But, again, you wouldn't go there for the food. You'd go there for the feeling of perching on a bar stool or sliding into a booth and feeling at home, taken care of, briefly safe from whatever chaos or bad news was waiting for you outside. In the world of my ideal restaurant, the heartbreak or bad mood or city fatigue could wait politely on the street as you fortified yourself with prime rib, baked potato (extra butter), and a perfectly unfussy martini.

My ideal restaurant, in other words, would be more than a place to eat and drink. It would be someone's place and

bear the unmistakable imprint of its owner and impresario. The walls would be festooned with pictures of the proprietor with local celebrities and politicians. There would be some family memorabilia, framed testimonial letters, and an American flag somewhere. It wouldn't be decorated. It would be lived.

Here's the good news: My ideal restaurant actually exists. It's called Neary's, and you can find it on 57th Street in Manhattan, between 1st and 2nd avenues. Named after its longtime owner, Jimmy Neary, who died in 2021, the place has been everything you want a restaurant to be and, maybe more importantly, absolutely nothing you don't want a restaurant to be since it opened on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1967.

The gimlet-eyed Jimmy Neary ran the place with charm and laughter. Born in Sligo, Ireland, his life is one of those classic American folk tales — an immigrant story about the big city, hard work, faith, family, and civic pride. The walls are, in fact, festooned with pictures and letters and city proclamations, but the true measure of Neary's accomplishments are the customers who fill the place every night looking for a little cheer in a tough city, looking to get a seat at Neary's welcome table. Oh, and here's a wonderful piece of Neary's atmosphere: Men are asked to wear jackets in the dining room. Trust me — it makes a difference.

That, as I said, is the good news. The bad news is Neary's is closing in a couple of weeks. I'm not sure why, exactly. It's tempting to come up with all sorts of theories about taxes and inflation and COVID-19 and pick-your-favorite-social-ill, but it's also possible that it's just the way it is with family businesses. Neary's has been ably and deftly led by Jimmy Neary's daughter Una and the rest of the family. But you know how it goes: The first-generation immigrant builds a business so the subsequent generations can go to law school and medical school and live a different part of the American dream. Jimmy Neary built a business and a family and a place for New Yorkers to go when they wanted to go home but home was too far away. I'll miss sitting at the corner of the bar — to the right, just inside the door — and tucking into a prime rib and a drink before heading out to face the world.

Rob Long is a television writer and producer, including as screenwriter and executive producer on Cheers, and he is the co-founder of Ricochet.com.

HANNAN

Elegy for the Grand Old Party



There is not a flicker of the old Republican Party left. No embers of fiscal conservatism, global leadership, or moral decency. Reaganism's ashes are stone-cold.

Milwaukee showed us a MAGA movement confident of victory. No previous Republican National Convention has known such vindictiveness, paranoia, and hero-worship.

Sporting bandages on their ears, delegates loudly insisted that their candidate, a convicted felon, was innocent, while simultaneously demanding that President Joe Biden be put on trial. They averred, and seemed genuinely to believe, that Biden was responsible for the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump. Yet they hit the roof when anyone asked how Biden's "bullseye" metaphor measured up against Trump's long list of more overt rhetoric: "knock the crap out of 'em," "there has to be retribution," "stand back and stand by," "we fight like hell," "free the Jan. 6 hostages," etc.

I was invited as part of a delegation from the British Tories. I attended the last three conventions, but I could not face this one. Like Mike Pence, I am too heartbroken at the death of the Grand Old Party to turn my full gaze on what has replaced it.

In consequence, I missed Sean

"If anyone can be said to personify the change in the party, it is Vance."

O'Brien of the Teamsters tearing into business leaders because "their loyalty is to the balance sheet and the stock price at the expense of the American worker."

I missed Amber Rose, glamour model and author of *How to Be a Bad Bitch*, who dedicated a recent podcast to bigging up satanism. I missed Paul Manafort (if you're not indicted, you're not invited).

I missed the tech billionaire David Sacks claiming that Ukraine had been invaded, not because Russian President Vladimir Putin broke a treaty to attack a state that offered him no threat, but because of Biden: "He provoked — yes, provoked — the Russians to invade Ukraine with talk of NATO expansion."

And, of course, I missed the elevation of Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) who, in full socialist-populist mode, tied the Ukraine war to the defense of welfare, claiming that Biden wants to "throw our grandparents into poverty ... so that one of Zelensky's ministers can buy a bigger yacht."

The phrasing here is significant. Straightforward isolationism is a view of the world that I don't share but can respect. "Putin is a bastard, but wake me up when he invades Seattle" has a certain intellectual integrity. But that is not the position of the presumptive vice president, who parrots Russian propaganda — for example, spreading the absurd lie that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's wife had spent \$4.8 million of aid money on buying a rare Bugatti, a claim that originated on a Russian disinformation site and has been comprehensively debunked.

If anyone can be said to personify the change in the party, it is Vance. Accepting the nomination, he repeated the usual Trumpy slogans. NAFTA had "sent countless good jobs to Mexico." Trade with China had "destroyed even more good American middle-class

manufacturing jobs." These claims are as false, and as verifiably false, as the Zelensky Bugatti nonsense. Employment rose, both after NAFTA in 1994 and after China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. The few jobs lost, mainly held by immigrants on the minimum wage, were vastly outnumbered by better-paid jobs created. And this job creation happened most in the sectors most affected.

Jobs become obsolete because of technological advances and automation, not trade. In any case, the Trump/Vance claim that China has hollowed out U.S. industry is another easily provable falsehood. Manufacturing has risen in value from \$1.5 trillion to \$2.5 trillion since China joined the WTO.

Now here's the thing. Vance knows all this. He is a clever man who understands economics. Every commentator has fallen gleefully on his earlier attacks on Trump's character. But the nature of those attacks should be teased out a bit. In an interview on NPR in 2016, Vance declared: "I think that I'm going to vote third party because I can't stomach Trump. I think that he's noxious and is leading the white working class to a very dark place."

By "dark place," he meant thinking that Trump would bring simple solutions to complex problems. "Trump is cultural heroin. He makes some feel better for a bit. But he cannot fix what ails them, and one day they'll realize it."

That critique now applies to MAGA as a whole. The idea that protectionism, isolationism, and welfarism will solve America's problems is precisely such an opioid as Vance identified. Except that he is the one now prescribing it, in full awareness of what he is doing. Yup: a dark place. ★

Daniel Hannan is a member of the House of Lords, and a former Conservative MEP.

GREEN

Trumpism and JD Vance



Don't believe the hype about Donald Trump. There is no personality reboot, no Trump 2.0. Appealing for "unity" at the party convention when the nomination is already sewn up is what nominees do. Trump 1.0, the original '50s banger, is still running. We saw this when he wrestled himself to his feet after being shot in Butler, Pennsylvania. We see it when he muses on why God might have spared him. Most importantly, we feel it.

Populism is about feelings. Government is about institutions. People make policy. This is why "Trumpism" was always an idea in search of an ideology: Making America Great Again is a longing, not a program. It is why Trump, having run against the Washington machine in 2016, struggled to manage the machine as president: There is no button that, once pressed, makes America great again. It is why Trump has chosen Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH) as his running mate now.

Vance is an ideas guy, possibly even an intellectual. Most candidates publish a memoir when they take aim at the presidency. Vance actually wrote *Hillbilly Elegy*, his 2016 lament for the world of his Appalachian upbringing. He makes speeches at think tanks, too. His ideas are coherent, and they add up to an ideology capable of operating the levers of power. To call him Trumpist is to miss the point. Vance is post-Trumpist. As the sci-fi novelist William Gibson said, "The future is already here. It's just not evenly distributed."

The German ideas guy Max Weber divided authority into three kinds: charismatic, rational-legal, and traditional. The British monarch and the pope are the last of the big daddies, the last patriarchs and traditionals. Trump has always operated along

a continuum of charisma with Don Rickles at one end and Rocky Balboa at the other. His response to being shot was pure charisma, not least because he was aware that the world would be watching. But mostly we experience modern government as rational-legal: creaky websites, expensive licenses, bureaucratic procedures, needless paperwork, and passwords we can't remember.

There can be no Trumpism with Trump, because he is not rational-legal. Nor can there be Trumpism without Trump, because he is charismatic. Nor can Trump be traditional. Charisma is a challenge to traditional and rational-legal norms, and anyway, traditional authority has no constitutional footing in America. Of course, people still long for it, but the most the system permits is a rogue candidate such as RFK Jr., a charismatic with a dusty whiff of tradition that, like the ringmaster's top hat, adds a bit of class to the clown show.

Charismatic authority cannot be transferred or faked, so it creates its own succession crisis, especially when there's a two-term limit. No one cares who Napoleon II was. The Third Reich's second Führer is a piece of pub trivia (Adm. Karl Donitz, 24 days de facto, 36 days de jure, but all of them defeated). The Trumpian equivalent would be putting Donald Trump Jr. on the ticket. The post-Trump move is to secure his posterity by picking a rational-legal politician who can drive the popular revolt of 2016 into the institutions. This is why Vance is a smart pick.

We shall see if Vance turns out to be a smarter pick than Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL), who is also very smart and who, unlike Vance, has a proven record of rational-legal achievement as

Florida's governor. Perhaps DeSantis will be offered a Cabinet post in the second Trump administration and help clean the stables. DeSantis will have no choice but to accept: a refusal would sink his chances of securing the Republican nomination in the future. Trump's return and his choice of Vance as running mate show that the Republican Party has changed for good. We shall see if it changes for the better.

Revolutions do not succeed or fail in their initial flush of popular violence. Overthrowing the Bastille and murdering your enemies are only the preliminary festivities. A revolution can only go the distance if it can remake the institutions of government. The Left learned this the hard way in the 20th century. When the workers rejected the revolution at the ballot box, the revolutionaries adopted Antonio Gramsci's "long march through the institutions." The Right has learned this lesson from the Left. "You taught me language," Caliban snarls at Prospero, "and my profit on't / Is I know how to curse."

A couple of observations on the new language of the New Right. The head of the Teamsters, Sean O'Brien, addressed the RNC in Milwaukee on July 15. O'Brien berated big corporations and lobby groups for "waging a war against American workers." This is blunt, but necessary, and congressional Republicans need to hear it. The same goes for Vance taking the realist view that America needs to recalibrate its foreign policy. At home and abroad, the United States needs to prioritize. If you cannot have primacy, you can still put Americans first. ★

Dominic Green is a *Washington Examiner* columnist and a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Find him on Twitter @drdominicgreen.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer, 1928-2024

When sex-talk was harder to find

By Daniel Ross Goodman

Sex-talk is not hard to find these days. There are more podcasts, YouTube channels, TED Talks, and TV series devoted to sex than you could consume in a single lifetime, even if you lived as long as Methuselah. And so many books have now been published about sex that you could stock an entire Library of Alexandria-sized collection with sex-related volumes alone. But there was once a time when reliable, science-based, compassionate discussions about sex were as rare as a snowball in the summer. One woman changed all that, and, in doing so, helped create the guilt-free sex-talk culture that we now take for granted. Her name was Ruth Westheimer — or, as she was known to her millions of grateful fans, “Dr. Ruth.”

Some people are part of history. Others make history. Dr. Ruth, who died on July 12 at the age of 96, was definitely in the latter category — but she also lived through (and participated in) epochal world-historical events. Born as Karola Ruth Siegel in Wiesenfeld, Germany, on June 4, 1928, Ruth grew up in a comfortable German-Jewish household until the advent of Nazism in 1933 began to make Jewish life in Germany progressively more impossible. After Kristallnacht in 1938, when the worst for German Jews was starting to become imaginable, her mother secured a spot for her in one of the Kindertransports, the efforts to rescue Jewish children from Nazi Germany. Most of the approximately 10,000 children who were saved in this manner from deportations to concentration camps were transported to England, while some others, including Ruth, were sent to neutral Switzerland. In this manner she survived the Holocaust; her parents,



whom she never saw again after her transport to Switzerland, were not as fortunate.

Following the war Ruth immigrated to then-British mandate Palestine, where she fought in the 1948 Israel War of Independence as a sniper. After recuperating from a serious leg injury, she moved to Paris to study psychology at the Sorbonne, and then to America in 1956, where she enrolled in a master's program in sociology and, with the help of night classes, earned a doctorate in education. Her trajectory in psychology began to come into greater focus in 1967, when she took a part-time job with Planned Parenthood in Harlem, and crystallized while conducting postdoctoral work on sexuality at New York-Presbyterian Hospital.

Dr. Ruth may have had a quiet, unglamorous life as a sex therapist in private practice if not for Betty Elam, a community affairs manager at the New York radio station WYNY. Intrigued by a talk on sexual well-being that she had happened to hear Dr. Ruth deliver, Elam asked her if she'd be willing to speak about these topics on the radio. These initial WYNY segments, titled *Sexually Speaking*, quickly became immensely popular, despite airing only once a week after midnight. A live call-in radio show (as the program would later become) that provided useful, expert information on sex was

particularly valuable in the pre-internet age when you couldn't just Google “Why won't my wife sleep with me?” or “How long should sex last?”

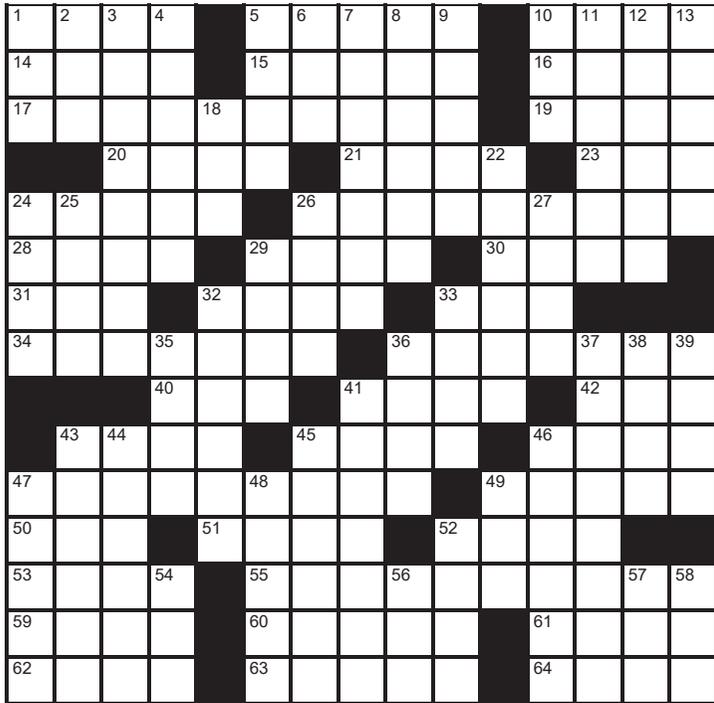
Sexually Speaking led to a full radio show that, by 1983, became the highest-rated radio show in the country's largest media market. From there, like Bruce Wayne becoming Batman, Ruth Westheimer became “Dr. Ruth.” The WYNY radio show led to syndicated columns, book deals, magazine features (including one on the cover of *People*), commercials, an appearance on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson in 1982, and her highly-rated daytime TV show which by 1985 was being watched by as many as 2 million people. American culture had clearly been ready for frank, well-informed, helpful conversations about sexuality — but who could've predicted that it would take a tiny old German woman to get us there?

I'll never forget the time I heard her speak at a New York synagogue. I couldn't get over how this 4-foot-7-inch woman who sounded like a female version of Henry Kissinger and who looked like George Costanza's mother was talking openly and unashamedly about masturbation, orgasms, and sexual fantasies — and in the same sanctuary where we'd just prayed the evening prayer! But if Dr. Ruth was sacrilegious, then so is the Talmud, where discussions about sex are featured in the same sacred pages as those that cover Sabbath rituals and biblical tort laws. What *is* irreligious, taught Dr. Ruth — taking a page from the Talmud — is living without knowing how to fully enjoy one of the few great (and completely free) pleasures that God has given us. ★

Daniel Ross Goodman is a Washington Examiner contributing writer and a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Divinity School. His latest book, Soloveitchik's Children: Irving Greenberg, David Hartman, Jonathan Sacks, and the Future of Jewish Theology in America, was published this summer by the University of Alabama Press.

Stop Running

By Brendan Emmett Quigley



ACROSS

- 1 Shoot up
- 5 Eel, at sushi bars
- 10 Memorable periods
- 14 It's set by a runner
- 15 Fish sticks?
- 16 ___ State (Ohio university)
- 17 Tell fashion designer Herrera to be quiet?
- 19 Frozen waffle brand
- 20 Shakespeare's river
- 21 Cold cuts
- 23 Sticky stuff
- 24 Sat
- 26 Label "Slumdog Millionaire" star Patel as spineless?

- 28 Qatari leader
- 29 Oregon governor Kotek
- 30 La ___ tar pits
- 31 Brian of rock
- 32 Length of a ruler
- 33 ___ few rounds
- 34 Handrail made of an evergreen wood?
- 36 Leave, as a presidential race, or, what the first words of 17-, 26-, 34-, 47-, and 55-Across do literally
- 40 Accomplished
- 41 Give off
- 42 Experienced
- 43 Dirty

- 45 Cinematographer Nykvist
- 46 Petitions
- 47 Most holy?
- 49 Horse fathers
- 50 Furrow maker
- 51 "Feel the ___" (2016 campaign slogan)
- 52 Boy or girl preceder
- 53 Has
- 55 Dial up?
- 59 News source
- 60 Steer clear of
- 61 Team up (with)
- 62 River to the underworld
- 63 Afresh
- 64 Lap dog, for short

- 32 Forensic site in Quantico, Va.
- 33 Sheepish look
- 35 Singer Brickell
- 36 Contacted privately, on social media
- 37 In working order
- 38 Drive
- 39 Get rid of
- 41 As we speak
- 43 "I've heard enough from you!"
- 44 "The Gift of the Magi" author
- 45 Endeavor
- 46 Computer image
- 47 TV Guide listings
- 48 Played over
- 49 Trio after R
- 52 Roddick with a racket
- 54 Census datum
- 56 Yankees pitcher Luis ___
- 57 Member of an order
- 58 Deli bread

DOWN

- 1 Family docs
- 2 Stadium cheer
- 3 Special time
- 4 Actress Sigourney
- 5 "Once ___ a time ..."
- 6 Cambodian leader Lon
- 7 Sustenance
- 8 Swiss city on the Rhône
- 9 "Twisters" director Lee ___ Chung
- 10 Make (out)
- 11 Jamaican music genre
- 12 Wool source
- 13 Prepared to sing the national anthem
- 18 Stick
- 22 As well
- 24 Chick's sound
- 25 Start to potent or present
- 26 Couturier Christian
- 27 "That's a ___!"
- 29 Frog relative

SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD: CON-VENTION



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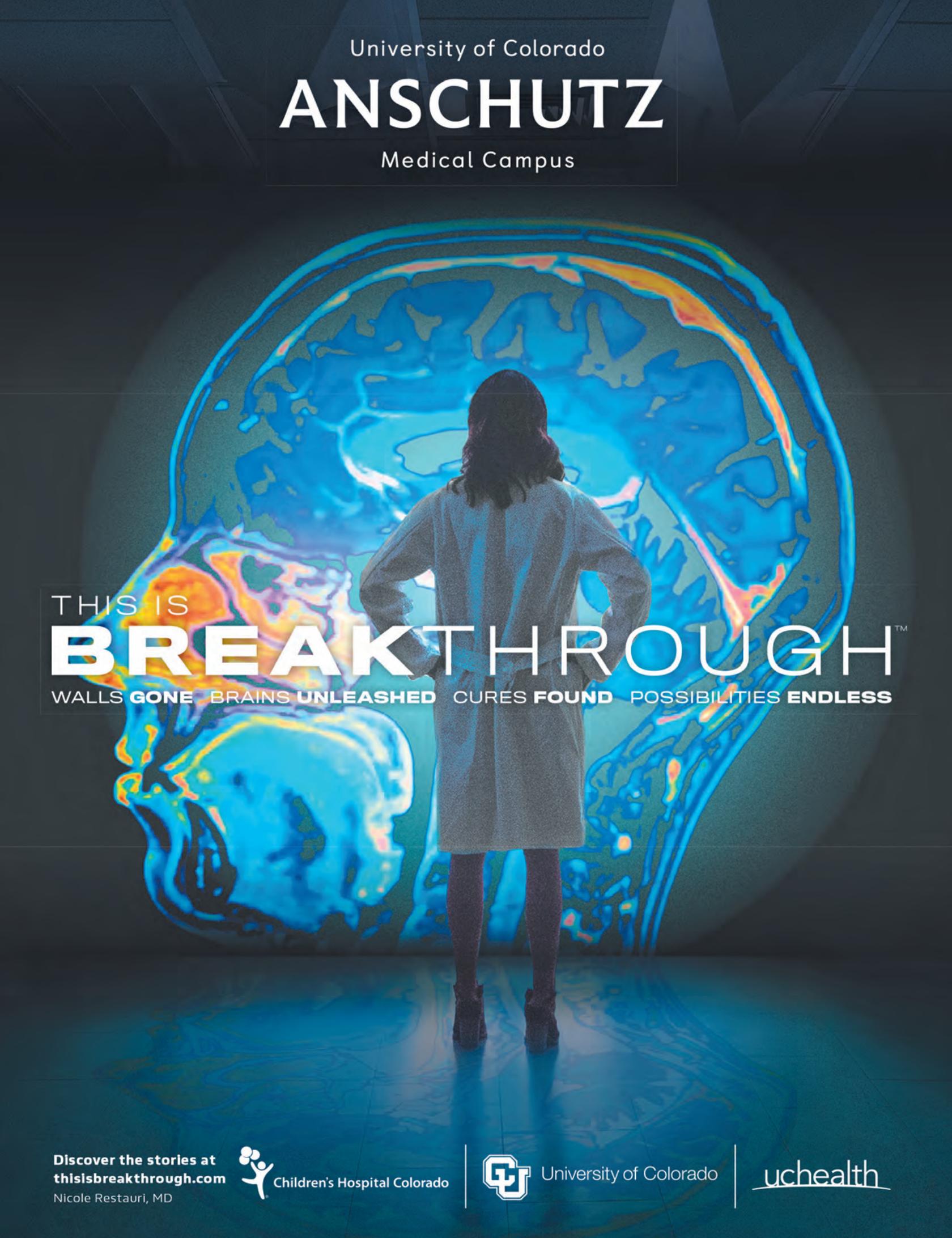
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prevention OM Yoga Reader's Digest
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NYT Book Review Harper's Magazine The Critic Men's Health
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Womens Fitness Better Photography
Architectural Digest Writing Magazine Pratiyogita Darpan

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Wisden Cricket Monthly
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