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## The distance from chaos to stability

Katherine Miller

### OPINION

The past month has been overwhelming to live through — it can feel as if a person's mind is getting stretched and flattened by what's happening in American politics and the world. One unbelievable event follows another, culminating in Joe Biden's decision to withdraw from the presidential race.

Things have been changing so fast that no one can really make sense of the time we're living in and what this chaos means: Are things breaking apart, or is this a difficult period that precedes more stability?

We can see the fragility in the systems that govern our lives. A man was killed and Donald Trump nearly killed on stage — the latest horrific event in a decade's worth of grinding, destabilizing political violence and mass shootings. If a 20-year-old with a gun can

get this close to a U.S. presidential candidate surrounded by Secret Service agents and cameras, in an era of militarized security and preparation, there's an unavoidable tenuousness to everything in our society. And in the aftermath of that shock, there was no firm foundation to fall back on. We are still in a month when a software update crashed systems around the world and the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a ruling that granted the presidency a set of powers unchallengeable by criminal prosecution — and people are still trying to piece together how much that might or might not reshape the future of American politics.

Few things recently have been more of a strain to live through than the uncertainty surrounding Mr. Biden's presidency and the nature of presidential power. The June 27 debate clarified that Mr. Biden's age had gotten away from him, and from a lot of people — that the situation hadn't been entirely understood or appreciated, in the accounts of unevenness and the bad moments that followed. It was a collective experience, either affirmation of people's fears and worries, or a shock to the system.

It has been destabilizing to realize over the past decade how much individual decisions affect America's political institutions. Nobody could persuade Ruth Bader Ginsburg to retire from the Supreme Court if she didn't want to. Nearly every day of Mr. Trump's presidency was like this, a

MILLER, PAGE 11

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

# All eyes on the vice president



Vice President Kamala Harris at a campaign event this month. She has emerged as the front-runner to replace President Biden as the Democratic nominee in November's election.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

## Promise and peril ahead if Harris is selected as the Democratic nominee

BY SHANE GOLDMACHER

Vice President Kamala Harris swiftly established herself as the Democratic front-runner to take on Donald J. Trump within hours of President Biden's exit on Sunday, fundamentally rewiring the U.S. presidential contest at warp speed.

Now the race has been transformed into an abbreviated 106-day sprint that more closely resembles the snap elections of Europe than the drawn-out American contests. The tight timeline will magnify any missteps Ms. Harris might make but also minimize the chances for a stumble.

And in a race that Mr. Trump had been on a trajectory to win, Ms. Harris immediately becomes the ultimate X-factor.

Mr. Biden quickly endorsed Ms. Harris, who would be a barrier-breaking nominee as the first woman, the first Black woman and the first person of South Asian descent to serve as president. As the Democratic Party rallies behind her — the loudest voices of dissent were simply those not publicly endorsing her — here are six ways her candidacy holds both promise and peril.

During the Republican primaries, Nikki Haley warned everyone who would listen that the first party to swap out its octogenarian candidate — Mr. Trump will turn 80 while in office if elected to a second term — would win.

She was making the argument for herself, but the logic applies to Ms. Harris, too.

Unlike the 81-year-old Mr. Biden, Ms. HARRIS, PAGE 7

## Venezuela's election may bring an exodus

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

### Losing hope, many vow to leave the country if its authoritarian leader wins

BY JULIE TURKEWITZ

A young opposition activist planning to trek through seven countries and a perilous jungle to reach the United States. A journalist ready to abandon everything to build a new life abroad. A lawyer in her 60s, fearful that her last daughter is about to leave.

For thousands of Venezuelans, the decision to remain or flee their homeland depends on a single date: July 28. On that day, the country will vote in a high-stakes presidential election.

If the country's authoritarian leader, Nicolás Maduro, declares victory, they say they will go.

If the opposition candidate wins, they will stay.

"Everyone says the same thing," said Leonela Colmenares, 28, the opposition activist. "If Maduro wins, they are leaving."

Roughly a quarter of Venezuela's population has already left, with almost eight million people living in other countries, according to the United Nations, forming one of the world's busiest routes for migrants moving north.

So far, Mr. Maduro has shown little interest in relinquishing power, no matter what the vote shows. This week at a campaign event, he warned that Venezuela would fall "into a blood bath, into a fratricidal civil war" if he didn't win.

In recent years, Venezuela's exodus has torn apart families and stripped the country of its talent — and created an enormous challenge for President Biden, who has had to contend with record levels of migration from Venezuela and other countries during his administration.

Overall, U.S. crossings are down in recent months over last year, amid efforts by the Biden administration to discourage people from seeking asylum at the southern border.

But August, September and October have traditionally been the most heavily traveled months through the Darién Gap, the dangerous jungle straddling Colombia and Panama that has become one of the world's busiest routes for migrants moving north.

Not all Venezuelans will head to the United States, and not all who go to the United States will seek entry at the southern border.

Venezuelans arriving in the United States in recent years have filled shelters in New York and stretched budgets in cities like Denver. But the exodus has been felt just as deeply, if not more so, inside Venezuela, which has lost teachers, doctors and engineers — and seen families scattered across the globe.

Some Venezuelans who have stayed behind did so because they thought they

could promote change or serve their country from within. Now, after years of protests, an unyielding autocratic government and rounds of opposition leaders who have promised to push out Mr. Maduro — only to fail — many say they see this election as their last hope.

It's not just a grinding economic crisis — driven by government mismanagement and exacerbated by U.S. sanctions — that has lasted nearly a decade. In recent months, the government has also ramped up detentions of people it perceives as dissidents, leading to fears of further persecution if Mr. Maduro stays in power.

Nearly 300 political prisoners are in government custody, according to a watchdog group, Criminal Forum.

"I did everything I could for my country," said Jesús Zambrano, 32, a journalist who is considering leaving for Germany. "But I'm not ready to go to prison for doing my job."

One private poll by the company ORC VENEZUELA, PAGE 5



President Biden announced his decision to discontinue his re-election campaign on Sunday. He endorsed Ms. Harris.

PREPARING TO STEP IN Vice President Kamala Harris faces urgent questions if she is to become her party's standard-bearer. PAGE 6

THE WEEKEND OF DECISION President Biden did not tell most of his staff until a minute before making his announcement to the world. PAGE 7

## Buried book helps Ukraine preserve its culture

KHARKIV, UKRAINE

### Writer's personal account of Russia's occupation surfaced after his death

BY ANDREW E. KRAMER AND MARIA VARENKIKOVA

After Russian forces took control of his village in 2022, Volodymyr Vakulenko, a well-known Ukrainian author, sensed he might soon be arrested. So he buried his new handwritten manuscript in his backyard, under a cherry tree.

Best known in Ukraine for his cheerful and lyrical children's books, Mr. Vakulenko was seething with anger at Moscow's occupying forces. As his village lost cellphone service and news from the outside world dried up, he filled his new work with reflective, sometimes morose, descriptions of life under Russian control: people neglecting their flower beds, cooking on campfires as



Volodymyr Vakulenko, whose son, the Ukrainian writer of the same name, was arrested and killed by Russian forces in 2022. His son had written a book about the occupation.

utilities failed and even fraternizing with the Russians.

Soon enough, Russian soldiers indeed arrested Mr. Vakulenko, and his body later turned up in a mass grave.

Six months later, a fellow Ukrainian author, Viktoriya Amelina, learned of the buried book, dug it up, wrote a foreword and sent it to a publisher. But she too was killed, in a missile strike on a pizza restaurant.

In May, in a final blow, Russian missiles blew up the printing plant in Kharkiv that had published the work. That strike killed seven employees, wounded 22 others and took out about a third of Ukraine's overall book-printing capacity.

Despite the anguish that accompanied it, the book, "I Transform: A Diary of Occupation and Selected Poems," ended up on shelves of Ukrainian bookstores and is on sale today. Rescued from the dirt, the book stands as a symbol of an enduring Ukrainian literary life.

The deaths of Mr. Vakulenko and Ms. UKRAINE, PAGE 2

The New York Times

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The tribulations.  
The twists.

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## PAGE TWO

## Powerful leader transformed Vietnam

NGUYEN PHU TRONG  
1944-2024

BY SUI-LEE WEE

Nguyen Phu Trong, the hard-line general secretary of Vietnam's Communist Party, who presided over his country's economic and geopolitical transformation and reshaped its leadership with his "blazing furnace" anticorruption campaign, died on Friday in Hanoi. He was 80.

His death, in a hospital, was announced by the official Nhan Dan newspaper, which said that Mr. Trong had died of "old age" and an unspecified serious illness.

Speculation had swirled in January about Mr. Trong's health after he skipped meetings with several foreign leaders. The seriousness of his illness became clear on Thursday, when the party announced that he would step back from his duties to focus on his health, and that President To Lam, a former security minister, would take over his responsibilities.

For 12 years, Mr. Trong sat at the apex of power in Vietnam's Communist hierarchy. He served an unprecedented three terms as party chief and nearly three decades in the Politburo. He consolidated power in one of the world's few remaining Communist dictatorships, significantly weakening the collective form of leadership that had characterized the country's Communist Party.

His death leaves no obvious successor.

"He was the most powerful leader in Vietnam after the Vietnam War," said Nguyen Khac Giang, a visiting fellow at the ISEAS — Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. "I think anyone who will be chosen as the next leader of Vietnam will face an uphill battle in having the same kind of authority that Nguyen Phu Trong had."



Nguyen Phu Trong led one of the world's few remaining Communist dictatorships.

Mr. Trong represented a conservative Marxist-Leninist faction within the party, which includes another faction that is seen as more pragmatic and moderate. His death is likely to raise hopes in the West that a less doctrinaire leader could emerge. Mr. Trong, the only one in the 18-member Politburo who grew up during the Vietnam War, was a generation older than many of his peers.

A conservative ideologue who viewed corruption as a threat to the party's survival, he began a wide-reaching anticorruption campaign in 2011 that has accelerated in recent years, investigating thousands of people and prompting the dismissal of several top ministers. The results have been mixed: The campaign created a fairer business environment but has also instilled fear in many officials and paralyzed decision-making.

Mr. Trong led the harshest crackdown on dissent in decades. During his rule, the space for civil society — never abundant in a nation of roughly 100 million people — shrunk further. Vietnam has the second-highest number of political prisoners in Southeast Asia, with more than 160 people currently detained for exercising basic rights, according to Human Rights Watch.

At home, Mr. Trong was viewed as a frugal leader who, unusual in Vietnam,

did not abuse his power to enrich himself or his family. His official vehicle was a two-decade-old Toyota Crown, according to a 2022 article in Vietnamnet, an online newspaper in Vietnam affiliated with the Ministry of Information and Communications. He refused to have new suits made.

Mr. Trong oversaw one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. During his term, the world's major superpowers courted the country aggressively.

Mr. Trong was adept at balancing relations with the United States and China, a strategy he termed "bamboo diplomacy" ("Strong roots, stout trunk and flexible branches"). He cultivated close ties with Xi Jinping, China's top leader, who visited Vietnam in December for the third time.

Three months before that, President Biden had been in Vietnam cementing a new strategic relationship with Mr. Trong.

"He was a master of hedging," said Alexander Vuving, a professor and Vietnam specialist at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu.

Mr. Trong was born in Hanoi into a farming family on April 4, 1944.

In 1981, after joining Vietnam's Communist Party, he traveled to the Soviet Union, where he earned a postgraduate history degree in 1983. From 1991 to 1996, he was editor in chief of the Communist Review, the mouthpiece of Vietnam's Communist Party.

Mr. Trong was never seen as a strong candidate for party chief because he lacked extensive experience in government and economics. From January 2000 to June 2006, he was secretary of the party's Executive Committee of Hanoi, the provincial capital. From 2006 to 2011, he was chairman of Vietnam's National Assembly.

Vietnam's principle of leadership is a collective one, and unlike China it has long resisted having a supreme figure at the top. Mr. Trong's low-key manner made him a suitable compromise candidate for differing factions in the country's Communist Party, and at 68 he was not expected to have a long term. He was elected general secretary in 2011.

Mr. Trong's first term was notable for a sharp rise in anti-China sentiment, after China moved an oil rig into contested waters near Vietnam's coast in 2014. That led to protests in Vietnam and sent relations between the two nations to their lowest level in three decades.

Mr. Vuving, of the Inouye center, said the oil rig incident had shifted Mr. Trong's view of the West. Few countries spoke up publicly for Vietnam, except for Japan and the United States.

In 2015, Mr. Trong became the first Vietnamese Communist Party chief to travel to the United States. During his visit, Mr. Trong was asked about Vietnam's human rights situation.

"Vietnamese people have never lived in a democratic atmosphere like today," he responded, but added that "it is also important to see that individual rights must be placed in the context of the common interests of the community."

"The two sides' understandings are still different," he said, "so the best way, in my opinion, is to increase dialogue. But we should not let human rights issues hinder our relations."

In 2016, Mr. Trong agreed that Vietnam would sign on to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, President Barack Obama's trade initiative, which would entail Vietnam's changing its laws to legalize independent unions and allow workers to strike.

He is survived by his wife, Ngo Thi Man. The Vietnamese government does not disclose details about the children of party officials, but it is believed that he is also survived by a son and a daughter.

While Mr. Trong was happy to open up Vietnam to the West, he remained suspicious of Western democracy.

"Behind the multiparty system in reality is still the tyranny of capitalist corporations," he wrote in a 2022 book.



Volodymyr Vakulenko showing the spot where his son had buried his secret diary of the Russian occupation. After learning of it, a fellow writer dug it up and sent it to a publisher.

## Buried book aids culture revival

UKRAINE, FROM PAGE 1

Amelina, and the scene of the destroyed plant — with burned bodies and books strewn about — have galvanized Ukraine's publishing community.

"Now, under shelling, there's an experience of creating under pressure," said Olena Rybka, an editor at Vivat, the publishing house that printed Mr. Vakulenko's book. She compared the burst of creativity with an earlier era when Ukrainian authors risked Soviet repression to publish their works.

"Even people who were bored by it in school are interested now," she said of Ukrainian literature, in an interview at a book reading in Kharkiv, held in a basement for safety.

The demand for books in Ukrainian has persisted, even increased, since the war started, Ms. Rybka and others said. New Ukrainian fiction, nonfiction about the war, translations of global best sellers, popular history and self-help books have all done well, said Serhiy Politychyi, the founder of Vivat and owner of the damaged printing plant.

Vivat published 279 new Ukrainian-language titles last year, up from 198 in 2021, the year before the invasion. During the war, while other businesses shuttered, new bookstores opened in Kyiv, the capital, and other Ukrainian cities.

Last month, a book fair in Kyiv drew overflowing crowds and included a display of burned books from the printing plant strike in Kharkiv. The Literary Museum in that city runs two writers' residency programs, which have been filled throughout the war.

But unfortunately for Ukraine's book market, the hub of both publishing and printing is in Kharkiv, only about 25 miles (40 kilometers) from the Russian border and at risk now from bombardments and a nearby front line. Some in the literary community believe Russia attacked the printing plant as a means to erode Ukrainian culture.

Serhiy Politychyi's plant printed about 40 percent of the country's school textbooks. Textbooks in particular, he said, were a likely target for Russia, which has been sharply critical of Ukraine's history curriculum in schools.

The tale of how Mr. Vakulenko's work made it to stores underscores the resolve of Ukraine's book industry — and the perseverance of Ms. Amelina.



Works by and a photograph of Mr. Vakulenko. The writer who sent the book to a publisher was later killed in a missile strike.

Deeply troubled by Mr. Vakulenko's disappearance, Ms. Amelina became fixated on his fate, agitating for rights groups to ascertain if he was in Russian captivity.

Ms. Amelina found the manuscript by chance after the Ukrainian Army reclaimed Mr. Vakulenko's village, Kapitolivka, southeast of Kharkiv, in September 2022. She visited the author's father, Volodymyr, to document the writer's abduction. The father told her of the buried manuscript, and the two dug it up together.

In her foreword, Ms. Amelina described looking at the bundle of papers in a plastic bag and thinking of Ukrainian writers murdered in a Soviet crackdown in the 1930s. Those rounded up in mass arrests and killed in gulags became known as Ukraine's executed renaissance.

Before the invasion began in February 2022, Mr. Vakulenko had written children's books like "The Sun's Family" and "Three Snow Stories." He also published poems, some for children. His buried manuscript, "I Transform," chronicled the arrival of Russian soldiers in his village at the outset of the invasion. The title refers to a poem he wrote before the invasion foreseeing his work as "doomed" by the war that would sweep over his country.

Living with his father and his young autistic son in a brick house with a shady backyard, he had watched the Russian soldiers rumble into the village, setting up checkpoints, looting abandoned houses and arresting anyone suspected of pro-Ukrainian views.

Throughout the book, he wrote of the hardships and trauma of war for regular Ukrainians, who had to deal with the Russian occupation on top of the challenges and vulnerabilities of their everyday lives.

Mr. Vakulenko tried to help the Ukrainian Army. He wrote of walking to Ukrainian lines together with his son, when this was still possible, to hand out cigarettes and food.

Later, he worried about being arrested for his pro-Ukrainian views, despite efforts to keep them secret. "In case I get taken prisoner: I don't know anything, my telephone has been wiped and I don't discuss these topics on social media with anyone," he wrote.

But he worried about the fate of his new work, "I Transform."

"I realize that these manuscripts may end up in the hands of the F.S.B.," he wrote, referring to the Russian intelligence agency.

Soldiers questioned Mr. Vakulenko after a fellow villager informed on him, the father said. Worried they would find his



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manuscript and destroy it, or rewrite it and use it as Russian propaganda, he buried it under the cherry tree.

Mr. Vakulenko was arrested on March 24, 2022. That May, a villager found his body in a forest, his father said. The Russian occupation authorities eventually retrieved it and put his body, along with more than 400 others from the area, in a site of mass and unmarked graves in the eastern town of Izium.

After the Ukrainian Army drove the Russians out of the region, war crimes investigators excavated the site and found Mr. Vakulenko in a grave marked No.319. His remains were identified by DNA analysis. An autopsy found that he had been shot at close range with a pistol and that bullets had hit his left arm and torso, according to a report by the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's office.

Later that fall, after ensuring "I Transform" was published, Ms. Amelina was mortally wounded in a missile strike on the pizza restaurant in Kramatorsk, in eastern Ukraine, while guiding Colombian writers on a tour of frontline areas. She died later in a hospital.

Mr. Vakulenko's father is grateful that Ukrainians can read his son's book, but acknowledged his pride was tempered by the string of tragedies that led to its publication.

"I read it and cried," he said.

## On your mark, get set, serve: Waiters race through London

LONDON

BY AMELIA NIERENBERG

An expert waiter is both gymnast and poet. One's a fast talker with fancy footwork and a steel-trap memory. Another can dodge a pushed-back chair, martini high overhead, without spilling a drop.

On Sunday, about 50 professional servers gathered from around London to compete in an annual waiters' race through the heart of Soho.

This was no ordinary footrace. Speed mattered. But panache, pizzazz and an essential and ineffable waiterliness mattered much more.

"This is about style as much as it is about going fast," said the organizer, Takashi O'Rourke.

The waiters had to get around a course lined with drunk and (for the most part) orderly crowds as quickly as they could. But they also had to look the part, which meant wearing waiterly — or at least waiterly adjacent — outfits and carrying trays, each laden with an ashtray, a napkin, a wine glass and a bottle of fizz.

And, oh, did we mention the one-handed thing?

"This is a special race to test your skill as a waiter," the rules decree, "not just your skill as a runner."

There are, of course, many paths to greatness.

Minutes before the start, some contestants were stretching and squat-jumping, while others were finishing their final pre-race cigarettes.

"I'm making sure I'm loose and ready to go," said Marco Selver, 40, pumping his thighs. "It's the Olympics for us waiters."

Some who work in pubs lamented their disadvantage: They do not carry trays at work. "The more you look at the tray, the more it wobbles," said Alex Ilies, 34, who works at the Glassblower, a London pub, and said he came in second last year.

The race was hosted by the Soho Society, a charity, and there was cash at stake: The first-place prize was 100 pounds (about \$130). Cheating — two-handed the tray, say, or using adhesive — was grounds for disqualification. So was breaking anything on a tray during the race.

The contestants — who compete as individuals but also represent their restaurants — were looking to dethrone Ronnie Scott's, a jazz club. But the real



"It's the Olympics for us," one participant said of the annual waiters' race in London.

competition was Dean Street Townhouse, a hotel-restaurant in the Soho House extended multiverse. The restaurant at Soho House had a not-so-secret weapon: Endri Bombai, 32.

Mr. Bombai won in both 2021 and 2022. (He missed last year, when he was on vacation.)

His strategy is not really much of a strategy at all: Start fast and stay fast. "It gives me confidence," he explained.

The race — a version of which has been run most years since at least the mid-1950s — is not just for Soho glory. The contestants' eyes are on an old London rival, Paris, which resuscitated its

own waiters' race this year for the first time in over a decade.

"This is where the real waiters' race is," Mr. O'Rourke said to the assembled foot soldiers in a pre-race briefing. "Not Paris."

That footrace, he insists, is far too long: 1.2 miles (about two kilometers) compared with London's smaller loop. ("Ridiculous.") Their trays, he says, are child's play. ("They had just a glass of water and a croissant. What is that?")

Soho is known for its originality. Once a center of the sex industry and gay bars, it is still a gastronomic and nightlife hub. So, naturally, there's always a "Best Dressed" award, too.

Traditional waiters' outfits are welcome, Mr. O'Rourke said, but anything "Soho traditional" will also do just fine.

Black tie?

Of course, he said.

Black bikini and a bow tie?

"Perfect. That is what people think of a Soho waiter."

A T-shirt and an apron?

"That's cool."

It's not just about the aesthetics: The race is meant to celebrate an often low-paying and overlooked profession that has struggled even more since Britain withdrew from the European Union.

The organizers also want to celebrate Soho, where rising rents and short-term tourist rentals are crowding out some residents.

"We're trying to assert character and individuality in an increasingly bland and generic world of city centers," said Tim Lord, the head of the Soho Society.

On Sunday, as the waiters jog-sprinted, their bottles wobbling and their forearms burning from the strain, the crowd whooped and filmed. The servers careened around the final corner, some shattering glasses. Then, they popped their corks, Daytona-style.

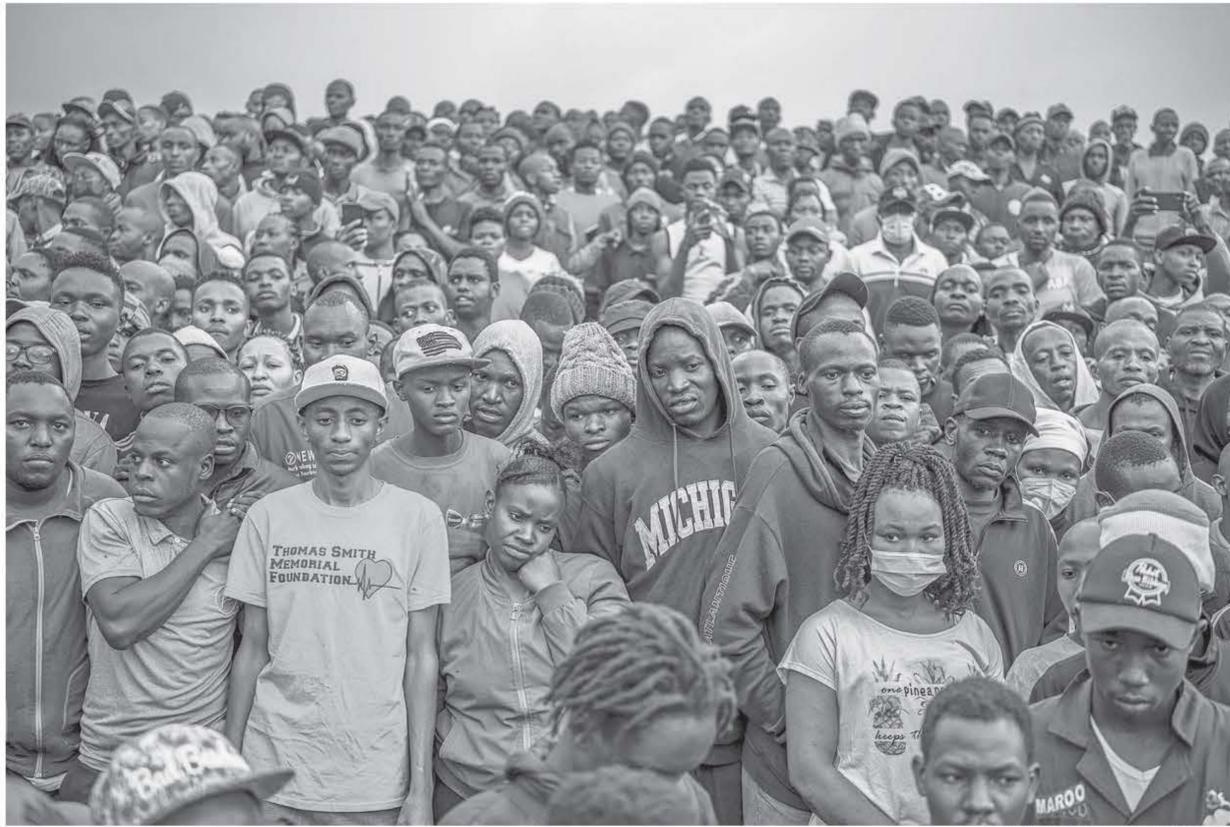
Waiters, gasping for breath, chugged hard-won Prosecco. Then, the prizes came down.

Best Dressed went to a neon-outfitted group described by one member as "80s and one rat" from a restaurant named Doppo.

In the women's category, the winner was Natalia Diniz, 17, who works part time, front-of-house, as she finishes high school. "I practiced in my living room," she said.

And Mr. Bombai, to no one's surprise, finished way ahead. His simple strategy worked yet again: "I started fast, and I kept through to the end," he said, gasping for air but victorious.

# World



People on Wednesday at the dump in Nairobi, Kenya, where the body parts of missing women were recently found. The discovery has brought intense scrutiny of the Kenyan police.

## 42 deaths, 1 curious confession

NAIROBI, KENYA

A man in Kenya admitted to killing dozens of women. But some doubt the case.

BY ABDI LATIF DAHIR

A 26-year-old hair braider named Josephine Owino disappeared one morning last month in the sprawling shantytown of Mukuru Kwa Njenga in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, after going out suddenly to see someone who had just phoned.

Ms. Owino's younger sister, Peris Keya, was desperate to find her and went to three police stations, pleading for help. But nothing happened until Ms. Keya said she had a startling dream one night: Her sister appeared, led her up a hill and begged her to search in a pool of water.

Since then, at least 10 sacks with body parts have been fished from an abandoned quarry filled with a thick bed of floating trash, according to the police and human rights activists. The dump was searched only because Ms. Keya, 24, beseeched some local men to help, paying them for the grisly task.

Last week, the Kenyan police announced that they had arrested a suspected serial killer, who they said had confessed to killing 42 women, including his own wife, in the past two years, and throwing them into the dump.

The suspect's lawyer accused the police of using torture to extract a confession. And the speed with which the police made the arrest left many Kenyans suspicious. But the police said they had traced their way to the suspect, Collins Jumaisi Khalusha, 33, after doing a forensic analysis of a cellphone belonging to one of the victims.

The discovery of the body parts in the dump — located across the street from a police station — has shocked Kenyans, spreading fear and rumors about who could have committed such grisly murders.

It has also brought intense scrutiny of the Kenyan police, raising questions about how they could have failed to detect or investigate the disappearance of so many women.

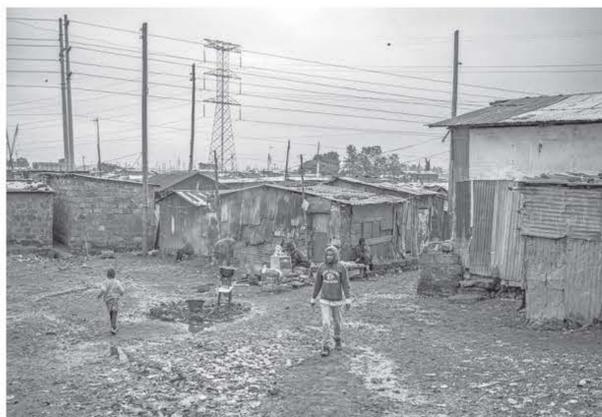
Two families in addition to Ms. Keya told The New York Times that for a month, they had been telling the police in Nairobi that their female relatives were missing but got no help.

"They felt nothing for us," Ms. Keya said of her pleas to the police to look for her sister. As she sat at various police stations for hours, cradling her sister's toddler, who was crying for his mother, "I was shaking with anger," she said.

An epidemic of gender-based violence and murders of women set off widespread protests in Kenya this year.

The criticism of the police intensified in recent weeks after they were accused of using live bullets to put down even larger demonstrations against tax increases introduced by President William Ruto. At least 50 people were killed in those demonstrations, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights said. The police have also been accused of conducting brutal abductions of outspoken activists and last week, of a journalist.

The country's inspector general of police resigned this month after the uproar over the killings of protesters. The Kenyan police — who have been deployed to bring order to gang-ravaged Haiti —



Top, Peris Keya, 24, carried a photograph of her missing sister, Josephine Owino, 26, from one police station to another, asking for help finding her. Above, the shantytown of Mukuru Kwa Njenga in Nairobi, where a man who the police say confessed to murdering 42 women, including his own wife, lived in close quarters with his neighbors.



have a long history of impunity, using excessive force and carrying out extrajudicial killings.

Kenya's police did not respond to repeated requests for comment about the case.

At the dump site in Mukuru, the rancid smell of garbage mixed with the choking smoke from burning trash. Just over 100 yards (90 meters) away, past an empty field and down a muddy alley, the suspect, Mr. Khalusha, had rented one room in a decrepit hovel, residents said.

Neighbors say he mostly kept to himself and sold SIM cards at the nearby market. They said they saw women visiting him, some of whom stayed over the weekend and socialized with other

**"The police are incompetent in the manner in which they treat complaints from members of the public."**

neighbors. But they never witnessed him abusing the women or heard any screams or loud noises from his room.

Vincent Oloo, a neighbor in the building who had known the suspect for almost a year, said it would have been impossible that he could have killed 42 women in such close quarters and gotten away with it.

"Everyone here knows about everyone else's business," Mr. Oloo said.

In the frantic search for her sister, Ms. Keya said that at first, she went from one police station to another, sharing her sister's phone number and identity card.

Days later, the breakthrough came after Ms. Keya's dream, according to accounts from two of her family members as well as the police. Ms. Keya said she dreamed that after her sister led her up the hill, she said, "Please get me out. Please find me and bury me."

The next day, Ms. Keya walked to the only hill nearby, overlooking the disused quarry. A day later, she returned with a friend and asked several young men near the site if they could help find a body. The men demanded money, and she agreed to pay them about \$15.

Hours later, the men found a sack with a mutilated body inside but demanded more money to lift it out. Ms. Keya, hop-

ing that the body might be her sister, darted to the police station opposite the dump site. After explaining her ordeal yet again, she returned with several police officers, who watched the young men lift the sack out of the dump site.

Three days later, in Mr. Khalusha's room near the site, the police said they found smartphones, women's underwear, a machete and a pink handbag, among other things. Two other people are also being held, the police said, with one found in possession of the phone of one of the slain women and the other said to have sold it.

Most of the sacks recovered from the dump site contained amputated limbs and torsos, according to a government pathologist, Dr. Johansen Oduor. Only one intact body was recovered, Mr. Oduor said. All the identified bodies are women.

The bodies were at various levels of decomposition, making it hard to identify the cause of death for some, Mr. Oduor said. None of the corpses had bullet wounds, he said, but one had been strangled to death. Pathologists have so far identified two bodies through DNA.

They have not yet matched any of the remains to Ms. Keya's sister.

Police officers at the station closest to the dump site were transferred last week, said Douglas Kanja, the acting inspector general of police. In addition, Kenya's independent police watchdog said it was investigating whether there was "any police involvement in the deaths, or failure to act to prevent" the murders.

"The police are incompetent in the manner in which they treat complaints from members of the public," said Hussein Khalid, a lawyer and veteran human rights activist.

The suspect's lawyer, John Maina Ndegwa, said in an interview that the police had strangled and tortured his client into giving a confession. When he first met him, he said, his client was writhing in pain and needed urgent medical care. When Mr. Ndegwa tried to meet his client on Thursday, he said police officers had blocked him.

"Anybody fearing for his or her life would say whatever his oppressors want to hear," Mr. Ndegwa said of the confession. The whole case, he said, "negates common sense."

Families of women who have gone missing say they are awaiting justice and a chance to bury their loved ones properly.

This includes the family of Roseline Akoth Ogongo, a 24-year-old who moved to Nairobi three months ago and worked as a casual laborer. Ms. Ogongo's brother, Emmanuel Ogongo, said his sister was happy and outgoing and loved posting videos on TikTok. On the morning of June 28, she left home, never to be seen again.

When bodies began surfacing at the dump site, the family rushed to the morgue to see if she was among them. As they viewed the mutilated bodies, they recognized a yellow T-shirt she loved to wear. Only her torso lay on the metal table, Mr. Ogongo said.

Later, as the police showed them photos of evidence found in the suspect's home, Mr. Ogongo said they recognized another item: the pink handbag.

"I couldn't believe I was looking at it," Mr. Ogongo said in an interview.

He kept staring at a photo on his phone of his sister's mutilated body. Every few minutes, he flipped to watch the video of her dancing in the same yellow T-shirt.

"I really miss her," he said.

## A court concession to Bangladesh fury

NEWS ANALYSIS  
NEW DELHI

Ruling opens up jobs previously out of reach because of quota system

BY ANUPREETA DAS

The video, taken this month, shows a Bangladeshi protester wearing a black T-shirt and standing on one side of an empty street. His arms are outstretched, and he is holding a stick in one hand.

Across the street stand several police officers, wearing bulletproof vests and helmets and pointing their guns at him. He does not move, daring the officers to shoot. They begin to fire.

As Bangladesh was going through one of its worst bouts of violence since it gained independence in 1971, the video — verified by the news agency Storyful and carried by multiple television channels in the country — came to symbolize the helplessness and defiance of student protesters demanding the reform of a system of preferential treatment for coveted government jobs.

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina responded to the escalating protests by deploying ever greater force. Officials shut down the internet. Paramilitary troops were called in. A curfew was declared. Protesters were beaten, and more than 100 were killed. Late on Friday, the government declared a nationwide curfew and brought the army in to restore order. On Saturday alone, the police reported that 12 people had died.

On Sunday, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh stepped in with a ruling that was a significant concession to the protesters — and one that could open up job opportunities for thousands of students.

The streets of Dhaka, the Bangladeshi capital, were mostly empty after the verdict. A few protests were still going on, and helicopters were circling overhead. Some students said that they would continue to protest until the bill supporting the ruling was formally passed.

The protests erupted out of students' anger at a quota system for public-sector jobs that benefited certain groups, including the families of war veterans. Collectively, the quotas accounted for 56 percent of all government jobs.

Under the Supreme Court's orders, Bangladesh will now reserve only 7 percent of those posts.

The children and grandchildren of those who fought for the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971 will have a quota of 5 percent, down from 30 percent. The ruling abolishes quotas for women and for those from certain districts. It also cuts the quota of jobs for ethnic minorities to 1 percent, from 5 percent, but leaves in place the reservation of 1 percent of jobs for people with disabilities.

Analysts say the weeklong revolt reflected a broader resentment over the uneven distribution of wealth and opportunity in an economy that has begun to wobble after years of rapid growth.

The protests expressed the "frustration many people feel about how economic growth has been uneven, and there is huge inequality and corruption," said Pierre Prakash, director of the Asia Program at the International Crisis Group. "The quota protest is just the manifestation of a widespread malaise that's not just about quotas but also economic and political."

In recent decades, Bangladesh's economy has lifted millions out of poverty on the back of a robust garment-export industry. But the coronavirus pandemic hit hard, with consumers around the world cutting back on clothing purchases and remittances from the diaspora falling. At the same time, consumers endured an inflationary burst, with food and fuel costs rising sharply.

Inflation remains high at 10 percent, and the pace of job creation has slowed. As of 2022, the youth unemployment rate, at 16.1 percent, was about triple the overall rate.

Public-sector jobs are desirable because they are stable and prestigious, and they come with generous benefits. But they are tough to obtain. Every year,

roughly 4,000 government positions open up, and more than 300,000 students compete for them.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country's founding leader and father of the current prime minister, Ms. Hasina, created the quota system in 1972 to ensure that the men and women who had fought in the war of independence from Pakistan would be taken care of.

The quota was extended in 1997 and in 2010 to include the children and then grandchildren of war veterans, leading to the perpetuation of a favored class that many deemed unfair.

Ferdie Hossain, 34, an alumnus of the University of Dhaka, where the protests started, said the idea of quotas for those known as freedom fighters made sense as a reward at the time. People were even willing to tolerate the extension of those quotas for the offspring of those fighters, said Mr. Hossain, who left Dhaka in 2009 and now works as a financial analyst in Wales. "If it's the family and children, it's fine," he said.

But the anger began building after the quota was extended to the freedom fighters' grandchildren in 2010, Mr. Hossain noted.

Over time, guaranteed government jobs created a "political class" and a hierarchy, as well as a class of wealthy people, said Saad Hammadi, a policy and advocacy manager at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Ontario. That, along with the rising cost of living and clampdowns on free expression, brought Bangladeshis to this moment, Mr. Hammadi added.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh. Her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was the country's founding leader.

"It was a volcanic eruption of all the frustrations people had been living with," he said.

Other factors fueled the anger, including corruption. Last year, Bangladesh was ranked No. 149 out of 180 countries on an annual corruption index released by Transparency International, a global nonprofit organization.

Students and analysts said it was not unusual for someone to bribe an official to obtain a government post or the questions on an exam. Local papers recently reported on a long-running scheme to leak exam question papers, including those for the Bangladesh Civil Service exam, which is the qualifying test for government jobs.

Protests against the quotas have erupted many times in the past two decades. The most recent demonstrations had their roots in a student movement that started in 2018 and that led Ms. Hasina to abolish the system. But after a lawsuit by the descendants of some freedom fighters, a court in June reinstated the quotas, which set off protests.

Initially peaceful, the demonstrations intensified after a news conference in which Ms. Hasina called the protesters "razakars" — a derogatory term for those who supported Pakistan during Bangladesh's independence war.

"We demanded rights, but we got called 'razakar,'" students chanted for days on the streets of Dhaka. As their cries faded amid the government's crackdown, some Bangladeshi emigrants took up the cause. Last week, around 1,000 protesters gathered in Times Square in New York, chanting, "We want justice."

Mr. Hammadi, who is from Bangladesh, said he had felt helpless and heartbroken, especially when he saw the video clip of the student with his arms outstretched.

"It could be a heroic representation of a student protest for justice," he said.

Saif Hasnat contributed reporting from Bangladesh.



A cordon of police patrolling in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Protesters have been demanding reforms to a system of preferential treatment for government jobs.



Far left, the Venezuelan opposition leaders María Corina Machado, front right, and Edmundo González, front left, during a rally this month. Left, supporters of President Nicolás Maduro in Caracas this month.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA LOUREIRO FERNANDEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

## Venezuela's election may bring a new exodus

VENEZUELA, FROM PAGE 1

Consultants, conducted in June, suggests that as many as one-third of Venezuelans are considering the possibility of migrating if the current government remains in power. Half of those said they would leave in the six-month period after the July 28 vote.

Some analysts are skeptical that the exodus would be that large, or that sudden.

Nevertheless, migration is one issue that cuts across Venezuela's socioeconomic and political lines, uniting a people severed by distance in a collective longing for reunification.

And it has become a key issue in this month's election.

The country's main opposition leader is María Corina Machado, an energetic former legislator whose central message is a promise to bring Venezuelans home by restoring democracy and getting the economy back on track.

"This fight is so that you return!" Ms. Machado shouted at a rally in the eastern city of Maturín, where a woman in the crowd had held up a cellphone connected to her daughter in a far-off country.

Banned by Mr. Maduro's government from running in the election, Ms. Machado is not actually on the ballot. Instead, her coalition has put a surrogate on the ticket, a former diplomat named Edmundo González.

Ms. Machado has gone on the campaign trail for Mr. González and has sought to cultivate a nearly religious presence. She often appears dressed in white, a cross swinging from her neck, embracing supporters who shout "María! María!" everywhere she goes.

The González-Machado campaign has promoted videos of Venezuelans overcome with emotion, desperate for them to win and bring their families back.

"They've all gone! All of my relatives!" shouted one young woman at a camera at a recent opposition event, her voice cracking in pain.

"Where is your family?" the camera man asked.

"In the United States," she gulped. "Peru. Ecuador. Colombia. I'm so tired of it."

In recent years, photos of weary Venezuelans hiking through the treacherous Darién jungle and up to the U.S. border have made the troubles inside the country all the more real for the rest of the world.

Mr. Maduro has long blamed U.S. sanctions for the country's mass migration. The most severe of the sanctions



"Everyone says the same thing," said Leonela Colmenares, 28, above, an opposition activist. "If Maduro wins, they are leaving." Right, Zuleika Meneses, 33, said the election on July 28 represents her last hope for political change in the country.

were placed on the oil industry in 2019.

Facing a serious electoral challenge, he has started mentioning the diaspora more often — and not simply accusing the United States of causing the mass flight. He is also appealing to citizens to come home.

On his television show last month, he claimed that a new program, called the Grand Mission Return to the Homeland, would offer returnees "comprehensive socioeconomic protection that only the humanist, Christian Bolivarian revolution of Venezuela can give." (The "Bolivarian revolution" is his socialist movement.) But he did not offer concrete details.

"Venezuela is back in style!" he asserted.

Ms. Colmenares, 28, the opposition activist, has been advocating for a change of government since she was 15. She helped to found a political party called Popular Will and spent years protesting issues as varied as failing public services and the jailing of her activist colleagues.

She has been in and out of university, often unable to afford tuition, and tried migrating to neighboring Colombia, where she worked as a waitress and said that she made only enough to eat.

Now Ms. Colmenares is the primary breadwinner for her mother and father,



who have health problems. She works as a university administrator and also sells pastries and drives her friends around in her car-turned-taxi.

Still, she cannot afford her mother's medication.

Like many young people, Ms. Colmenares is pouring all her energy into supporting the González-Machado campaign. But if Mr. Maduro wins another six-year term, she plans to travel to Colombia, then through the Darién, Central America and Mexico, to the U.S. border, where she will seek asylum.

Ms. Colmenares has considered applying for a legal entry program known as parole, but would need someone in the United States to sponsor her. She knows no one who could do that, she said. And even if she did, acceptance could take months or years, or never arrive.

Zuleika Meneses, 33, a friend of Ms. Colmenares, is also planning to leave Venezuela if the Maduro government keeps its hold on power. Ms. Meneses, who is also a founding member of Popular Will, said she had been an activist since she was 14.

**The government has ramped up detentions of people it perceives as dissidents, leading to fears of further persecution.**

"I don't want to leave my country," she said. "I dream of being a legislator, of being a governor, of being the president of Venezuela."

Marisol Ríos, 62, is a lawyer with three daughters. Two have already left the country: One is in the United States, another in Colombia. At her home in the state of Táchira, on the country's western edge, she said her youngest and only remaining daughter, María Paulina, 24, was now considering her own exit.

María Paulina's boyfriend, a violin teacher, cried softly in the background as Ms. Ríos cried, pondering the idea of spending the rest of her life without her children.

"It would be very painful if Paulina left, because she is my right hand," Ms. Ríos said. "But I am not in a position to clip her wings — because she has a right to live."

Reporting was contributed by Isayen Herrera and María Victoria Fermín from Caracas, Venezuela; Nayrobis Rodríguez from Sucre, Venezuela; and Lorena Bornaecelly from Táchira, Venezuela.

## In the grip of heat waves, Egypt often lacks air-conditioning

CAIRO

BY VIVIAN YEE AND EMAD MEKAY

Egyptian summers have always been hot. But it has not always been this hot.

Temperatures have barely dipped below 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) in Cairo since May, testing tempers and massaging houseplants.

And it has never been this hot at a time when the government has imposed power cuts on most of the country for more than a year, plunging millions into sweaty, un-air-conditioned misery for hours each day.

Since last summer, when energy shortages forced the government to impose the daily power cuts, the blackouts have become such a fact of life that local media has taken to publishing regular tips for what to do if stranded in an elevator as the power goes off. At least nine people have died under such circumstances, according to local media reports.

"Pound on the door and don't panic," suggested a recent headline in Al Masry Al Youm, one news outlet. But it had little advice for fish sellers who struggle to refrigerate their wares, farmers whose chickens are dying en masse, people with little cash to fix shorted-out appliances or students studying for all-important college entrance exams by flashlight.

After importing several emergency cargoes of natural gas, the government

said the blackouts would stop, starting this past Sunday, until mid-September, when it said they might be reinstated.

Yet social media users were still reporting power cuts on Sunday, and a government-affiliated news site, Cairo24, quoted a spokesman for the Electricity Ministry, Ayman Hamza, acknowledging that breakdowns and repairs had caused some unplanned power failures.

In a year when soaring prices, subsidy cuts and the currency's steep decline have already left people gasping, Egyptians have little patience with official statements blaming relentless heat waves for the crisis — even if it is true that Egypt is heating up at one of the world's fastest rates.

"We've reached the point where no matter how much we lose, we know full well the government won't do anything for us," said Ahmed al-Hawari, 50, an electrical appliance technician in a Cairo suburb who said he often arrived at his repair shop, only to turn around and leave when he found the power out. "We have to fend for ourselves."

He said he was losing business, even though more customers were bringing in fans and kettles damaged by the electrical cuts.

Ahmed Rabea, 28, a freelance graphic designer in a village south of Alexandria, resorted to working from his rooftop after losing customers who had grown exasperated with his blackout-induced delays. There, he could at least catch a wireless internet signal from the



A shop in Alexandria selling candles, widely used as backup lighting as heat strains Egypt's electrical grid. The government has been imposing daily power cuts.

cell towers in an industrial zone nearby. The problem is, the roof is hot. Very hot.

"Let's hope they'll actually end them as announced," he said of the power cuts.

Few Egyptians can afford such disruptions these days. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine destabilized Egypt's already fragile economy, the prices of things as varied as groceries and school fees have made eye-popping leaps.

Overall inflation has slowed in recent months, yet food prices have continued to increase.

Although international lenders poured \$57 billion into Egypt's coffers this year to steady a country seen as crucial to regional stability, government finances remain shaky, reflecting a malaise that analysts warn will continue unless Cairo gets serious about economic reforms.

Attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia on

shipping in the Red Sea have drained crucial revenue from Egypt's Suez Canal. And with domestic gas output declining, the government, which in 2022 was flush enough with natural gas that it aimed to supply a needy Europe with its excess, plans to spend some \$1.8 billion on energy imports to stop the blackouts by year's end. It also plans to increase renewable energy production, though experts say Egypt has neither the infrastructure nor the regulatory framework to do so quickly.

And it is not clear that Egyptian leaders can keep public discontent from spilling over in ways that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, when President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi enjoyed widespread, though far from universal, support, and his authoritarian grip reduced criticism to a whisper.

A digital advertising screen on a busy street in Giza recently caused a stir when it started flashing images portraying Mr. el-Sisi as a murderer and a thief, a rare spectacle of defiance that quickly went viral.

Rolling blackouts that undermined faith in his predecessor helped bring Mr. el-Sisi to power in a 2013 military takeover that promised competence and stability. But these days, the blackouts strike Egyptians not only as a reflection of government ineptitude, but also as unfair favoritism: Wealthy beach resorts were spared the cuts, while parts of Upper Egypt reported cuts lasting more than 10 hours.

"Seriously, I avoid speaking or deal-

ing with my family or my son during the power cut hours because I lose my temper so quickly," said Fatma Hassan, 28, who lives in Aswan, Egypt's southernmost city, where the temperature hit 121 degrees Fahrenheit (49 degrees Celsius) on June 6. In the shade.

While some areas experienced no disruptions, she noted, her in-laws lost power for three hours a day. When she visits, the family puts her 10-month-old son in a bucket of water to cool him.

Still, there is little to suggest that the government is losing control. The authorities quickly arrested a technician over the onscreen portrayal of Mr. el-Sisi as a killer, saying the suspect had been acting on the orders of an Islamist opposition group that Egypt has branded a terrorist organization. They also arrested more than 100 people accused of calling for a day of protest this month, rights groups say.

But the complaints go on. "Sunday is too late already" to end the cuts, said Yehiya Ezzat, 38, a poultry wholesaler in Assiut, four hours south of Cairo. He said farmers were losing tens of thousands of baby chickens after less than an hour without ventilation and air-conditioning.

Not knowing what else to do, Mr. Ezzat recently put some of the chickens that had died during a blackout in a dumpster, he said. He was promptly fined more than \$500.

Hossam Abdelatif contributed reporting from Aswan, Egypt.

## WORLD



A Miami-based rap duo known as Trump Latinos at a Trump rally in New York. Polling suggests that support for Donald J. Trump has increased among Black and Latino voters.

## Cultivating a 'gangster' image

The Trump campaign uses hip-hop and rap to appeal to Black and Latino voters

BY JENNIFER MEDINA

Amber Rose, an OnlyFans model, influencer and former girlfriend to rappers, took the stage at the Republican National Convention on Monday night sporting her platinum buzz cut and face tattoo.

Ms. Rose, the author of a book titled "How to Be a Bad Bitch," told the overwhelmingly white crowd that she had once believed "left-wing propaganda that Donald Trump was a racist." But now, she said, she had "put the red hat on, too."

"These are my people," she said. "This is where I belong."

As if to underscore the point, Ms. Rose appeared on the giant screens at the convention hall again the next night. This time it was in a music video for "Trump Trump Baby," a remix of Vanilla Ice's 1990s hit, "Ice Ice Baby," performed by Forgiato Blow, a self-described MAGA rapper. Ms. Rose wore a hefty gold chain with a medallion of Mr. Trump's face.

At the four-day Trump party last week, Ms. Rose was the embodiment of an increasingly public, and some say offensive, Trump campaign strategy: using hip-hop and rap to sell Mr. Trump to Black and Latino voters.

Mr. Trump and his allies have steadily adopted street slang, music and style, including \$400 golden sneakers, blasting hip-hop at rallies, inviting conservative artists to Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump's private club and residence in Palm Beach, Fla., and even welcoming rappers accused of murder onstage at a rally.

He has played up a macho invincibility and swagger in his messaging, railing against his felony convictions and casting himself as an outlaw. After Mr. Trump was booked at an Atlanta jail last year, his campaign spokesman posted a video of the former president's motorcade on X, with the message: "Gang gang bitches."

Surviving the assassination attempt this month has fueled the effort. In the hours after Mr. Trump was shot in the ear at a rally, the rapper 50 Cent posted an image of his "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" album cover with Mr. Trump's head superimposed on his body.

DJ Akademiks, a rap commentator, watched a video of the shooting as he recorded his talk show on Rumble, reacting with glee when a bloodied Mr. Trump pumped his fist in the air.

"Trump gangster," he said. "It has tapped into a well of distrust — of both the justice system and the Democratic establishment — shared by many young men of color. And there have been signs, in polling and public endorsements from figures like Ms. Rose, that it has had an impact."

Bakari Kitwana, who has chronicled hip-hop and politics for decades, called the Trump campaign's efforts an "insidious play on racial stereotypes."

"It severely underestimates the Black community, but it also shows that neither Democrats nor Republicans have appealed to the hip-hop community in a serious way," Mr. Kitwana said. "Instead, they want to get people up there with him and get the people who are their fans, but it's not any kind of substantive conversation."

Yet Mr. Trump has been seeking to exploit a real political shift. Polling suggests that Black voters and Latino voters have been supporting his campaign at levels once considered out of reach for



Above, the rapper Forgiato Blow, wearing a Trump-inspired chain, left, and Mr. Trump's \$400 golden sneakers, right. Mr. Trump has relished his new image. Below, the rappers Sheff G, right, and Sleepy Hollow, center, alongside Mr. Trump at one of his rallies.



Republicans. Young Latino and Black men had been some of those most unhappy with President Biden's candidacy, a factor for many Democrats who pushed to get him out of the race.

Mr. Trump has remained broadly unpopular with Black voters, and much of the new support has come from people who have not been paying close attention to politics. But even micro-movements in his direction could have an impact in a close race.

The Trump campaign said its outreach to influencers and celebrities has been more effective than traditional door knocking. "This is a totally different election and a different campaign," said Danielle Alvarez, a spokeswoman for the campaign.

**Supporting the former president has become "normalized and acceptable" in communities where it was once taboo.**

Few political observers believe that TikTok videos from rappers have been directly driving Mr. Trump's apparent bump among Black and Latino voters. But they do think the endorsements matter: Supporting Mr. Trump has become "normalized and acceptable" in communities where it was once taboo, said Kevin Powell, a civil rights activist and hip-hop historian.

That has, in part, been a result of the lack of enthusiasm for Mr. Biden, compared with four years ago, he said. "In 2024, there is no mass movement happening like there was in 2020," he said.

Mr. Trump's stock has risen most in the corners that have long celebrated outlaws — artists who rap about crimi-

grimage to Trump Tower shortly after the election, he was regarded as an outlier. He would now be part of a trend. Lil Pump, a rapper from Miami, declared Mr. Trump the "greatest president who ever lived" and had the former president's mug shot tattooed on his thigh.

Snoop Dogg, who in 2020 said he could not "stand to see this punk in office one more year," has reversed his views.

"I have nothing but love and respect for Donald Trump," he told The Sunday Times of London this year, adding, "He ain't done nothing wrong to me. He has done only great things for me." He praised the former president for pardoning Michael Harris, a founder of Death Row Records who was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder.

Mr. Trump's pardons for Mr. Harris and several other hip-hop figures have been part of the turnabout. Just days before leaving office in 2021, Mr. Trump pardoned Lil Wayne and granted a commutation for Kodak Black, who had been facing gun-related convictions.

"Once he started getting Black people out of jail and giving people that free money, aw, baby, we love Trump," Sexy Red, a popular rapper, said on a podcast last fall. He is bold and funny, she added. "We need people like him," she said. (She declined to be interviewed for this article, but later said on X that the comment was not an endorsement.)

Mr. Trump has relished this new image. Last month, Sheff G and Sleepy Hollow, whose real names are Michael Williams and Tegan Chambers, came to Mr. Trump's side in New York and called to "Make America great again." Both men have been charged in a conspiracy that prosecutors say led to 12 shootings, and Mr. Williams also faces two counts of attempted murder. They both pleaded not guilty and were released on bail.

Mr. Trump has also encouraged a stable of rappers who write political lyrics, post videos online, travel to his rallies and visit Mar-a-Lago. The group includes Forgiato Blow, whose video aired at the Republican National Convention, and a Miami-based duo known as Trump Latinos. (Sample verse: "Made me relate when they hit you with the RICO / Now the whole 'hood is screaming 'Free Trumpito.'")

When the two men attended Mr. Trump's rally in New York, Black and Latino teenage boys huddled around them and posed for pictures, watching them as they appeared to freestyle. One of the duo sported a large MAGA tattoo on his neck, which he flashed frequently. Both men declined to give their real names.

"Trump was a playboy mack daddy, you know, and all that, and guys wanted to be like Trump because he was a millionaire," said Andres Hernandez, 54, a construction worker from Brooklyn who attended the rally and sounded like a lot of Trump supporters — drawn to Mr. Trump's cultivated image of the rich entrepreneur.

Former President Barack Obama sounded alarms that Mr. Trump's appeal could catch on in communities where Democrats have long dominated. There is an allure of "wealth, power, frankly, greed," Mr. Obama said in 2020, after Mr. Trump had made gains with both Black and Latino voters in that election.

"If there are some in the hip-hop community who are constantly rapping about bling and depicting women in a certain way, and then they hear Donald Trump basically delivering the same version of it, they might say, 'Yeah, that guy, that's what I want. That's what I want to be,'" he said.

Mr. Trump has long had a connection to hip-hop. In the 1990s, his name was byword for flashy wealth. (A Tribe Called Quest in 1991: "Beeper's going off like Don Trump gets checks"; Master P in 1994: "Put more cash in my pockets than Donald Trump"; Ice Cube in 1998: "I'm just tryin' to get rich like Trump.")

In 2016, when Kanye West made a pil-

grimage to Trump Tower shortly after the election, he was regarded as an outlier. He would now be part of a trend. Lil Pump, a rapper from Miami, declared Mr. Trump the "greatest president who ever lived" and had the former president's mug shot tattooed on his thigh.

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Former President Barack Obama sounded alarms that Mr. Trump's appeal could catch on in communities where Democrats have long dominated. There is an allure of "wealth, power, frankly, greed," Mr. Obama said in 2020, after Mr. Trump had made gains with both Black and Latino voters in that election.

"If there are some in the hip-hop community who are constantly rapping about bling and depicting women in a certain way, and then they hear Donald Trump basically delivering the same version of it, they might say, 'Yeah, that guy, that's what I want. That's what I want to be,'" he said.

Mr. Trump has long had a connection to hip-hop. In the 1990s, his name was byword for flashy wealth. (A Tribe Called Quest in 1991: "Beeper's going off like Don Trump gets checks"; Master P in 1994: "Put more cash in my pockets than Donald Trump"; Ice Cube in 1998: "I'm just tryin' to get rich like Trump.")

In 2016, when Kanye West made a pil-

## How the vice president is preparing to step in

BY ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS, ERICA L. GREEN AND NICHOLAS NEHAMAS

President Biden endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to lead the Democratic presidential ticket after ending his re-election campaign on Sunday, raising the chance that she could be the first Black woman and the first person of Indian descent to be president of the United States.

Ms. Harris in many ways has been preparing for this moment for the past year, as she emerged as one of the Biden campaign's more aggressive voices on abortion rights and in attacks on former President Donald J. Trump. Mr. Biden spoke to Ms. Harris on Sunday morning before he posted a letter online informing the world that he would be stepping down as the Democratic nominee.

In another post soon after, he endorsed Ms. Harris, who quickly issued a statement saying she intended to "earn and win this nomination."

But as the details of the nominating process remain unclear, there are many questions Ms. Harris and her team will face in the days ahead.

### HER CAMPAIGN

Ms. Harris will need to take over the vast infrastructure of Mr. Biden's campaign, which has roughly 1,300 staff members and dozens of offices around the nation. There are signs that is already happening.

On a call with the Biden campaign staff on Sunday, Jen O'Malley Dillon, the Biden campaign chairwoman, and Julie Chavez Rodriguez, the Biden campaign manager, informed the staff members that they were all now working for Harris for President, according to two people who listened to the call. "We're all going to do it the same," Ms. Chavez Rodriguez said.

Ms. Harris already has connections to Ms. Chavez Rodriguez, who served as Ms. Harris's state director when she was in the Senate. Ms. Chavez Rodriguez later worked on her unsuccessful 2020 campaign for president.

The vice president has ramped up her own campaign team in the past year — although they maintained it was just to support her as Mr. Biden's No. 2. Her advisers for her campaign team include Brian Fallon, the communications director, who also worked for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign, and Sheila Nix, the chief of staff, who held the same position in Jill Biden's office when Mr. Biden was vice president.

### THE VICE-PRESIDENTIAL PICK

Well aware of the cold reality of identity politics, Democrats assumed that if Ms. Harris, the first Black and Asian American woman to be vice president, were nominated for the presidency, she would most likely balance her ticket with a white man.

One emerging favorite is Gov. Roy Cooper of North Carolina, a Southern moderate who works with a Republican legislature and has joined Ms. Harris in attacking Republicans over abortion rights restrictions. Ms. Harris got to know Mr. Cooper when they were both attorneys general of their states. The vice president traveled to North Carolina on Thursday to hold a campaign rally with Mr. Cooper.

Another candidate mentioned is Gov. Andy Beshear of Kentucky, who won a second term in a conservative state last year. Gov. Josh Shapiro of Pennsylvania could theoretically help Democrats capture a swing state critical to victory in November. Gov. JB Pritzker of Illinois, a billionaire who could provide substantial financing for the campaign, is another possibility.

Democrats have also floated Senator Mark Kelly, Democrat of Arizona and a former astronaut known as a pragmatist representing a border state. Mr. Kelly endorsed Ms. Harris on Sunday.

If Ms. Harris wants to make history and roll the dice, she could select Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, which would test whether America is ready for two women in the White House.

### HER ADVISERS

After a series of stilted appearances when the new vice president showed little command of policy, Ms. Harris shooed up her team of senior aides and in 2022 brought veteran political operatives into her inner circle.

Ms. Harris elevated Lorraine Voles, who served as director of communications for Vice President Al Gore, to be her chief of staff. Ms. Voles, a crisis communications expert, had previously advised Ms. Harris on communications and had worked on the presidential campaigns of Michael Dukakis in 1988 and Walter Mondale in 1984.

Ms. Harris has also promoted Kirsten Allen, who worked on Ms. Harris's short-lived 2020 presidential campaign, from press secretary to communications director. Stephanie Young joined Ms. Harris's staff last year as a senior adviser focused on outreach and messaging from her role working with a voting rights organization founded by Michelle Obama.

### MONEY AND DELEGATES

Mr. Biden made clear on Sunday that Ms. Harris would take control of at least part of his campaign apparatus when he posted a link to what was his "Biden-Harris" donation page. Now it states: "Donate to Elect Kamala Harris."

Ms. Harris will most likely have no in-

terruption in taking control of the \$96 million the Biden-Harris campaign held as of June 30. The money is held in the campaign accounts, and therefore Ms. Harris would be able to use it to face Mr. Trump in November. This has been the thrust of her support from donors, who have rallied behind her in recent weeks.

Mr. Biden also gave Ms. Harris an advantage by endorsing her. But while the endorsement will provide some influence on the Democratic convention delegates, Ms. Harris does not automatically receive their votes and Mr. Biden cannot force them to follow his lead.

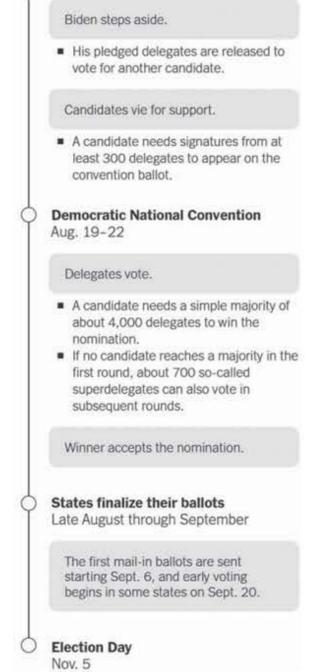
### PARTY SUPPORT

Ms. Harris drew endorsements from a group of influential Democrats on Sunday, including former President Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton and the Congressional Black Caucus.

But there are other prominent Democrats, such as Representative Nancy Pelosi, the former House speaker, who said before Sunday that they would favor an open-primary contest, in which Ms. Harris would compete with other potential nominees. It is unclear whether Ms. Pelosi will continue to favor such a contest and whether any potential candidates will be willing to challenge Ms. Harris and create more uncertainty in the party.

Notably, in a statement issued on Sunday after Mr. Biden's decision to drop out, former President Barack Obama did not endorse Ms. Harris. "We will be navigating uncharted waters in the days ahead," Mr. Obama said. "But I have extraordinary confidence that the leaders of our party will be able to create a process from which an outstanding nominee emerges."

### What happens next?



A person familiar with Mr. Obama's thinking said later on Sunday that the former president was following the same policy of neutrality he adopted during the 2020 Democratic primaries, when Mr. Biden faced a field of competitors, and wanted to help unite the party once there was an official nominee.

But Representative Robert Garcia, Democrat of California, said in an interview that there would not be an open convention and that the Democratic Party would unite around Ms. Harris. He was a co-chairman for Ms. Harris's 2020 campaign, and she swore him in as mayor of Long Beach, Calif.

"It's not happening," Mr. Garcia said. "There will be no open convention. A lot of folks are going to take their cues from the president."

Ms. Harris also received the endorsement of Representative James E. Clyburn, an influential South Carolina Democrat who helped revive Mr. Biden's campaign in 2020. "I echo the good judgment he demonstrated in selecting Vice President Harris to lead this nation alongside him, and I am proud to follow his lead in support of her candidacy to succeed him as the Democratic Party's 2024 nominee for president," Mr. Clyburn said in a statement.

Ms. Harris wasted no time in building support for her candidacy on Sunday. She called Representative Steven Horsford, Democrat of Nevada and the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, and said she would "run and earn it and win it," according to a congressional official familiar with the discussion.

Jaime Harrison, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, issued a statement saying that the next steps on the nomination process would be coming "in short order."

"The work that we must do now, while unprecedented, is clear," Mr. Harrison said. "In the coming days, the party will undertake a transparent and orderly process to move forward as a united Democratic Party with a candidate who can defeat Donald Trump in November."

Katie Rogers, Peter Baker and Kate Kelly contributed reporting.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

# The weekend when Biden decided to withdraw

WASHINGTON

The president did not tell most of his staff until right before the announcement

BY KATIE ROGERS,  
MICHAEL D. SHEAR,  
PETER BAKER  
AND ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS

"I need you and Mike at the house," President Biden said late Saturday afternoon.

Mr. Biden was on the phone from his vacation home in Rehoboth, Del., with Steve Ricchetti, a counselor to the president and one of his closest advisers. He was referring to Mike Donilon, his chief strategist and longtime speechwriter. Soon, both men were in Rehoboth, socially distanced from the president, who was recovering from Covid.

From that afternoon and far into the night, the three worked on one of the most important and historic letters of Mr. Biden's presidency — the announcement of his decision to withdraw from his re-election campaign after top Democrats, donors, close allies and friends had pressured him relentlessly to get out.

He would not tell most of his staff until a minute before making the historic announcement to the world on social media on Sunday. Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Mr. Biden went on to endorse, spoke to him earlier on Sunday morning, as did Jeff Zients, his chief of staff, and Jen O'Malley Dillon, his campaign chief. A handful of senior advisers at the White House heard directly from the president on a Zoom call. Others in the West Wing learned when they saw it pop on social media.

"I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down," he wrote, "and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term."

The concession was stunning, and discordant with the steady drumbeat of furious denials in recent days from Mr. Biden's campaign. It underscored how the president has kept information tightly controlled among a tiny circle of friends, longtime advisers and family members — something that has been true throughout his presidency, but especially during the crisis that has engulfed him since last month's debate.

From the time the president arrived in Delaware with Covid late Wednesday night, telling reporters "I am doing well," there have been two political realities: One was a sprawling campaign infrastructure on autopilot, determined to march ahead by continuing to champion Mr. Biden.

The other was playing out inside the home with a sign over the front door paying tribute to the president's son who died in 2015: "Beau's gift."

Almost no one outside of the house knew what Mr. Biden was thinking until he posted his statement on social media on Sunday. Until that moment, Mr. Biden's allies had no choice but to assume that he was all in, until he made clear that he was out.

This account is based on interviews with people close to Mr. Biden, including lawmakers, donors, friends and family who were familiar with the president's thinking as he made what may be the



From right to left, the Biden advisers Mike Donilon, Steve Ricchetti and Jen O'Malley Dillon leaving a meeting with Senate Democrats in Washington this month.

most difficult political decision of his career.

## "ABSOLUTELY IN IT!"

Ms. O'Malley Dillon could not say it more plainly as she appeared on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" program to defend Mr. Biden.

"Absolutely, the president's in this race," she said Friday morning, a trace of exasperation in her voice. She added: "He's absolutely in it. He's got to show that he is fighting for the American people. He's done that day in and day out since the debate."

Like other confidants, Ms. O'Malley Dillon was determined to keep the faith in public. At the campaign and at the White House, aides directed reporters to her comments as they insisted that the president was not wavering.

But it was getting harder to ignore the panicking donors and the elected Democrats who were turning on him in public. Over the course of the day on Friday, about a dozen more lawmakers called for the president to step aside and let someone else run. The quotes were damning.

Representative Seth Moulton, Democrat of Massachusetts, said that Mr. Biden, "a mentor and friend" who had helped him get elected in 2014, "didn't seem to recognize me" when they met at the D-Day anniversary commemoration in France last month.

Throughout the day, there was no public word from Mr. Biden, who was hunkered down with his wife, Jill Biden;

Mr. Ricchetti; Annie Tomasini, his deputy chief of staff; and Anthony Bernal, the first lady's senior adviser.

People close to the president said they could sense that the seriousness of the moment was weighing on him. But if he knew he was going to drop out at that point, it was not clear, even to the small number of the people around him.

By the evening, some people very close to the president could sense that something was coming, telling others that the end of Mr. Biden's campaign seemed inevitable. But others were hearing a different message from the president himself.

Ron Klain, who served as Mr. Biden's first chief of staff in the White House and has continued to advise the president, called Mr. Biden on Friday night to pass along words of encouragement.

Mr. Klain had received messages of support for Mr. Biden from Senator Elizabeth Warren, Democrat of Massachusetts, as well as Faiz Shakir, a senior adviser to Senator Bernie Sanders, independent of Vermont.

"Stay in," Mr. Klain said he told Mr. Biden.

"That's my intention," Mr. Biden responded. "That's what I'm going to do."

## "STILL ON THE PLAYING FIELD"

The national co-chairs of Mr. Biden's campaign gathered on their regular call on Saturday morning, bracing for what they thought could be big news about Mr. Biden's future.

The call was hosted by Ms. O'Malley

Dillon and included Jeffrey Katzenberg, the Hollywood mogul and donor, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, Representative Jim Clyburn of South Carolina and several other high-profile figures who had been early endorsers of Mr. Biden's bid for a second term.

Given everything that had happened just the day before, they expected dire news.

But the group was stunned when staff members simply began a rote description of the latest details on door-knocking and social media. After about a half-hour, two or three of the exasperated co-chairs interrupted, saying they needed to talk about the elephant in the room.

## "I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties."

An anguished discussion followed, but there was no resolution.

Cedric Richmond, a former Democratic member of Congress and a longtime friend of the president's, got on the call late but insisted that Mr. Biden's supporters were still behind him, especially those who benefit from his policy goals like child care and diversity.

"Joe Biden is still on the playing field, so I will wear that Team Biden jersey until the last bell rings," he said after the call ended. Asked if he thought Mr. Biden could withstand the flurry of nega-

tive news in recent days, Mr. Richmond said: "I sure hope so."

A week earlier, Senator Chuck Schumer, the New York Democrat and majority leader, who is one of Mr. Biden's strongest allies, had delivered a grim message to his face. He told the president that most members of Congress were ready to turn the page on his candidacy, and he urged him to consider three things: the risks to his personal legacy, the future of the country and the impact on Congress if Democrats were to take steep losses in November's elections.

"I need another week," Mr. Biden responded, according to a person with knowledge of the 35-minute meeting on July 13.

Once that week was up, and Mr. Biden was inching toward his decision, some of his closest allies — including Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, a co-chair of the Biden-Harris campaign — were spending days at two national security forums at the Aspen Institute. While they debated the future of Ukraine, the challenge of China and the impact of new technologies, they were calling into meetings meant to divine Mr. Biden's intentions.

Mr. Coons, a close friend of Mr. Biden's, called in from Aspen. To reporters, he issued a vociferous defense, saying that Mr. Biden "deserves the respect" to make his decision in private.

## THREE PHONE CALLS

Mr. Biden seemed to show signs of a change of mind on Saturday in a conver-

# All eyes on a new candidate in a campaign transformed

HARRIS, FROM PAGE 1

Harris, 59, is not old — and that fact alone neutralizes what had been one of the most potent Trump lines of attack.

Within minutes of Mr. Biden's quitting, Democrats and anti-Trump Republicans were questioning Mr. Trump's capacity to govern into his 80s.

It was a daring attempt to reframe an age debate that has been so damaging to Democrats.

"She can make the issue of age and fitness a liability for Trump," Erin Wilson, Ms. Harris's deputy chief of staff, said on a call on Sunday with the group Win With Black Women.

Ms. Harris has often been at her best politically when she has taken on the role of prosecutor-in-chief, whether on the debate stage when she first bore into Mr. Biden in June 2019 or as a senator on the Judiciary Committee where her intensive cross-examinations went viral.

When she ran for president, among her tag lines — and her struggling campaign cycled through a few catchphrases — was that she would "prosecute the case" against Mr. Trump.

Now she will have the chance to do so in the same year in which an actual prosecutor in New York scored 34 felony convictions against him — and Mr. Trump still faces more than one criminal trial in the future.

People who have worked with Ms. Harris believe that framework could allow her to play to some of her strengths — and expose some of Mr. Trump's weaknesses.

Polls have shown a noteworthy share of voters think Mr. Trump has committed crimes, yet were still planning to vote for him.

If Mr. Biden was widely considered too elderly to lead, he had other advantages built up over 50 years in the public spotlight. Namely, he has long been viewed as a more moderate Democrat who pushed back against the more ex-

treme elements of his party. It helped him appeal to the political middle.

"Do I look like a radical socialist with a soft spot for rioters?" he fumed at one point in the 2020 race. His image was such that at times Republicans opted to attack him by suggesting he was being directed by other forces. Ms. Harris does not have that advantage.

Instead, Ms. Harris got her start in politics as the district attorney of San Francisco, one of the United States' most liberal cities, before winning statewide in California, one of the nation's most liberal states. (Mr. Trump, notably, was among her donors then.)

## The Trump team has already signaled that it plans to attack the vice president on the issue of immigration in particular.

And while Ms. Harris did not carve out a reputation in California as an outspoken progressive — her tagline as D.A. was about being "smart on crime" — when she ran for president in 2020 she regularly staked out positions to Mr. Biden's left, including embracing a "Medicare for all" system that he had avoided.

As Mr. Biden's partner for the last three-and-a-half years, Ms. Harris faces the added burden of supporting the agenda of a president who has become deeply unpopular.

The Trump team has already signaled that it plans to attack her on immigration in particular. The question is whether Ms. Harris can successfully find a way to campaign on some of the Biden-Harris administration's most popular accomplishments without the current unpopularity of the man who previously led the ticket.

Mr. Trump and his advisers had not been looking to shake up a race he was



Vice President Kamala Harris and President Biden in March. She now has just over 100 days to consolidate support from Democrats.

winning by almost every metric. As Republicans gathered last week in Milwaukee, they were downright jubilant about the direction of 2024, regarding Mr. Trump as almost a candidate of destiny, days after he had survived an assassination attempt.

Now his team must shift to run a very different race against a very different candidate. Ms. Harris has the ability to potentially energize the Democratic base — especially some of the core constituencies who had felt alienated — in

ways Mr. Biden no longer seemed capable of. The president had struggled, compared with his 2020 performance, among Black voters and younger voters in particular, constituencies that Ms. Harris's historic potential candidacy might attract.

In an early sign of the Democratic appetite for a change, donors contributed more than \$60 million online on Sunday.

In the 2020 primary, Democratic voters wrestled for months with the question of who would be the strongest can-

didate against Mr. Trump. They wondered, often aloud, about the idea of nominating a woman.

Mr. Trump, after all, had just defied expectations and defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016. The party ultimately selected an older white man in Mr. Biden.

For much of the Trump presidency and beyond, Democrats have benefited from a gender gap. Women voted for Democrats by a bigger margin than men favored Republicans. But Mr. Trump has swelled his advantage among men so

sation joined by Mr. Ricchetti, Ms. Tomasini and Mr. Bernal. Mr. Donilon, summoned by the president, arrived around 4 p.m.

The president had tried for weeks to flip the attention from his listless and at times incoherent debate performance last month back to his Republican opponent, Donald J. Trump.

But nothing seemed to work. Still sick and raspy, the president opted to announce his decision by letter rather than on camera, and worked on drafting it with Mr. Donilon, the author of many of the president's public words, while Mr. Ricchetti focused on next steps, like when to inform the staff, how to do it and who else would need to be notified.

The letter was completed Sunday, even as unaware White House officials and the president's allies were still pressing reporters with comments about how determined the president was to stay in the race, defeat Mr. Trump and serve another term.

Just after 11 a.m., even as Mr. Biden was preparing his exit, Mr. Richmond — one of the president's top campaign surrogates — was on CBS's "Face the Nation" program saying, "I want to be crystal clear, he's made a decision. And that decision is to accept the nomination and run for re-election, win re-election."

The first three to hear the truth were Ms. Harris, Mr. Zients and Ms. O'Malley Dillon, each in separate phone calls from Mr. Biden, according to several people familiar with the notifications.

At 1:45 p.m. on Sunday — a minute before Mr. Biden posted his letter of withdrawal to the world — the president told several of his advisers, including Anita Dunn, who manages communications strategy. He read the letter to them and thanked his staff for their service.

"Come to me with the work, and let's get it done," the president told them.

Mr. Zients then held a call with other White House officials to confirm that it was true and thank them for all their hard work, followed by a similar call he held with members of his cabinet, who were not aware until the posting went online. Mr. Biden spent part of the day making phone calls to congressional leaders and other allies.

He decided to announce the end of his candidacy on X, according to people familiar with the decision, because it gave him the ability to do it "his way," avoiding the intrigue and leaks that have plagued his campaign in recent weeks.

The posting on X went out at 1:46 p.m.

## A CHORUS OF EMOTIONS

In the ranks of the White House, some were in shock. Others were crying. And others were relieved, at least, to know that a decision had been made and the campaign could move forward.

Many statements of praise soon followed, from politicians, friends and family.

"For my entire life, I've looked at my dad in awe," his son, Hunter, wrote. "How could he suffer so much heartache and yet give so much of whatever remained of his heart to others?"

He added: "I'm so lucky every night I get to tell him I love him, and to thank him. I ask all Americans to join me tonight in doing the same. Thank you, Mr. President. I love you, Dad."

David E. Sanger, Erica L. Green, Carl Hulse and Kenneth P. Vogel contributed reporting.

# Business



Drew Miller at Fortitude Ranch in northern Nevada, one of five such properties he has opened around the United States. "We want to be an affordable survival option," he said.

## Capitalizing on doomsday

Survivalist compounds cater to people worried about the end of the world

BY ALEXANDER NAZARYAN

When it comes to surviving the apocalypse, you could do a lot worse than the West Virginia branch of Fortitude Ranch, a constellation of five survivalist compounds across the United States and one of a growing number of businesses aiming to seize on Americans' deepening anxieties about the future.

Set on a rise above the lush valley cradling the Lost River in eastern West Virginia, about two hours from Washington, D.C., the 50-acre (20-hectare) property backs up against the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. A handsome guesthouse, built of dark timber slats, anchors the property. Two large, boxy dormitories, also timber but more rustic, as well as a bare-bones bunker, are designed to house more than 100 members. Each is expected to pay \$2,000 to \$20,000 (depending on the level of accommodation) to join Fortitude Ranch, and another \$1,000 per year per person in dues to call this a "home fort," meaning each of them will head there when catastrophe strikes.

Some of the rooms, which vary in size and luxury, are stocked with plastic bins and duffel bags, as if awaiting a college student. But there is a more serious purpose at work here: survival. A spacious underground shelter protected by layers of concrete, steel and wood connects the two residential buildings, its walls lined with cans of coffee and tuna, as well as enormous buckets of ready-to-eat meals. (There are also underground living and meeting rooms.) Inside a locked armory, assault rifles and crossbows repose on wall pegs. On a tabletop sits a 50-caliber rifle, which could be used to take out the engine block of an approaching vehicle. An inert radiation detector is positioned nearby. (There are two at each compound.) Guard towers ring the property. The dormitories have balconies with clear, continuous sightlines along the edge of the forest.

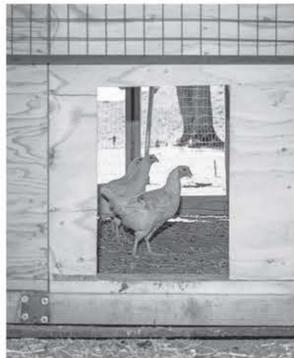
Outside, pens hold chickens, sheep and rabbits. Their meat and eggs are intended to supplement the 2,000-calorie-per-day diet that all members are guaranteed for at least a year. "We'll be eating a lot of kebabs," said Steve Rene, who manages the West Virginia compound and also serves as the company's chief security officer; he is one of three workers who currently live on the property.

Fortitude Ranch is the brainchild of Drew Miller, a retired Air Force colonel who runs the five compounds through his corporation and is seeking to expand the business through franchising. He is one of dozens of entrepreneurs who have seized on what might be called the doomsday economy, fueled by the growing "prepper" movement.

Its adherents take steps of varying magnitude — whether stocking several days' supply of food and water or erecting concrete bunkers — for the mass disaster they believe is coming. You may recognize some of them as the subjects of the reality series "Doomsday Preppers." When that program premiered on the National Geographic network in 2012, many reviewers dismissed it as comic relief. In the dozen years since, however, growing evidence of climate change, deepening political divisions and anxiety about artificial intelligence



The living room at the Fortitude Ranch in Nevada provides a communal area for members. The meat and eggs from chicken, sheep and rabbits, below, are intended to supplement the 2,000-calorie-per-day diet that all members are guaranteed for at least a year.



have made those apocalyptic fantasies somewhat less fantastical.

"Things are changing," said John Ramey, the founder of the popular prepping website The Prepared. The coming presidential election has a majority of Americans fearing violence; the recent hit film "Civil War," in which the present-day United States buckles under the tank treads of competing domestic armies, played into that narrative, which seemed outlandish when "Doomsday Preppers" first aired.

The companies that have staked their claim in the doomsday economy include American Reserves, which offers prepper essentials like a 12-month supply of

**"If anybody comes to hassle us, or give us any trouble, there's a group of people here that we can band together."**

food (\$2,799.99) and an emergency crank radio (\$59.99); Fieldcraft Survival, which offers classes (\$250) across the country on "traditional bushcraft and modern survival skills," including setting traps and tying knots; and those offering luxury bunkers, such as the Vivos xPoint complex outside of Edgemont, South Dakota, where membership goes for \$55,000.

Almost 20 million Americans, or about 7 percent of all households, now identify as "preppers," based on a recent analysis of FEMA data. According to the results of last year's National Household Survey on Disaster Preparedness, 57 percent of Americans had taken three or more steps to prepare for disaster.



There had been a 15 percent increase in the share of respondents who "assembled or updated supplies" from the year before, FEMA found.

Although they probably would not identify themselves as preppers, some wealthy Americans, particularly those who made their fortunes in Silicon Valley, have begun to build lavish survivalist compounds of their own. The rapper Rick Ross announced this year that he was building a luxury bunker; Mark Zuckerberg, the chief executive of Meta, is developing a \$100 million, 1,400-acre (570-hectare) compound on the Hawaiian island of Kauai that according to an investigation by Wired, includes a "huge underground bunker" of 5,000 square feet (460 square meters) that will come with "its own energy and food supplies."

Mr. Miller sees a Fortitude Ranch membership as being more within economic reach for the average American. (A "spartan" accommodation offers little more than a bunk bed in a hallway; a "luxury" membership can house a family of five in a more private space, complete with a private toilet.) "We want to be an affordable survival option for the middle class," he said.

For Mr. Miller, Fortitude Ranch is the culmination of convictions he has held for decades. He grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the 1960s. Since 1948, Offutt Air Force Base, 50 miles (80 kilometers) away, had served as home to Strategic Air Command, a potential target if the Cold War turned hot. "I'm just going to get myself killed here," Mr. Miller said he thought at the time.

Mr. Miller graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1980, and then earned

a Ph.D. from Harvard in public policy in 1985. His dissertation was titled, fittingly enough, "Fortifications and Underground Nuclear Defense Shelters for NATO Troops."

After Harvard, Mr. Miller returned to Nebraska to work as an intelligence officer before leaving active service in 1987. He then worked as a planning analyst for Conagra, as well as an independent business consultant, while also continuing to serve as an intelligence officer in the Air National Guard and, later, as an Air Force reserve. Several developments convinced him that the end of the Cold War was not going to usher in an era of global peace: 2001's Dark Winter simulation, in which the United States was attacked with smallpox; a blue-ribbon commission that issued a report in 2004 about the danger of electromagnetic pulses, which, it said, could "produce a catastrophic impact on our society" by taking down the electric grid; the 2011 riots in Britain that began as a peaceful protest against the killing of a Black man but devolved into mass unrest.

"People behave badly; people of all colors, all races, all nationalities," Mr. Miller said.

With his military and academic credentials, he is eager to separate himself from fringe groups with outlandish beliefs. He is particularly dismissive of "Doomsday Preppers," which, in his view, robs survivalism of legitimacy. "The only people who would go on that show were idiots," Mr. Miller said. "They set back the prepper industry for years. I couldn't raise capital, couldn't do a damn thing."

Mr. Miller started Fortitude Ranch about a decade ago, when the prepping movement was still in its cultural infancy. To blunt the challenges of starting a business, Mr. Miller looked for properties that could double as vacation rentals, or perhaps had already been used for that purpose by a previous owner.

Today, the nearly 800 members of Fortitude Ranch can use any of its five compounds in West Virginia, Nevada, Wisconsin, Colorado and Texas for recreational purposes for up to two weeks per year, a model similar to that of timeshares. "Prepare for the Worst, Enjoy the Present," is the Fortitude Ranch motto. Mr. Miller said his company employed 20 people and was profitable, albeit only narrowly so. "We will have about \$2 million in revenues this year, and a gross profit of around \$400,000," Mr. Miller wrote in an email, later showing a spreadsheet of his financials over a Zoom video call.

A dozen potential franchisees are interested in opening Fortitude Ranch outlets of their own, Mr. Miller said, but only two are currently working on franchise compounds. One is Chad Myers, who spent his career in sales and project management. He decided to open a Fortitude Ranch franchise in Tennessee after he heard Mr. Miller in an interview with Tim Pool, a video journalist and podcaster. The other is Frank Welte, a retired marine engineer who is converting a barn in the Catskill Mountains in New York into a Fortitude Ranch. Franchisees are expected to pay a one-time fee \$40,000 that covers training and consulting on design, construction and regulatory standards. Beyond that initial payment, the corporation then collects 10 to 15 percent of member down payments and quarterly dues.

"They need sufficient cash to build capacity for at least 100 members," Mr. Miller said of his prospective franchisees.

## New Corvettes buck decline in sports cars

After a big design change, worldwide sales soar. Can it thrive in an E.V. era?

BY LAWRENCE ULRICH

Sales of sports cars have been steadily declining for about three decades, but there has been one exception to that trend. The Chevrolet Corvette has recently stormed back to near-record popularity.

Like the company that makes it, General Motors, the Corvette must now slalom around a trickier obstacle: transitioning to an electrified lineup, even as most sports-car buyers insist they have no interest in switching from gas pumps to plugs.

G.M. sold 53,785 of the eighth-generation Corvettes, or C8s, worldwide last year, just 22 shy of its top sales year in 1979. Americans bought about 34,000 of those, including Stingray coupes that start from \$66,000, nearly twice as many Corvettes as they bought in 2019.

The car's revival has been driven by a change that may not seem a big deal to the average commuter. After seven decades as a classic front-engine two-seater, Chevrolet moved its V-8 behind the passengers, a mid-engine design typically associated with supercars from Ferrari or Lamborghini. Engineers at G.M. chose the \$250,000 Ferrari 458 Italia as a target in performance and technology.

Alexander Edwards, president of Strategic Vision, a marketing research company, said the Corvette's more exotic recent design, relatively affordable prices and unapologetic attitude had driven its success.

"They delivered an authentic sports car, and that authenticity is such an important part of the purchase decision," Mr. Edwards said.

The Corvette's recent sales gains have bucked a broad trend of American drivers moving away from cars, especially sports cars and coupes, and toward sport-utility vehicles. Two-door cars like the Audi TT and the Mercedes SLK have disappeared. Toyota's reborn Supra sold fewer than 2,700 cars last year. Sales of what the industry calls "enthusiast cars" have fallen by half since 2020, to 223,000 last year, according to Motor Intelligence.

Even relatively affordable sports cars have struggled. The Ford Mustang, which racked up sales of 120,000 in 2015, managed fewer than 59,000 last year. G.M. has retired the Chevrolet Camaro and Stellantis has done away with the Dodge Challenger. Daniel Pund, editor in chief of Road and Track magazine, said many consumers drawn to fast, fashionable cars had shifted to luxury sport-utility vehicles or electric vehicles. Some potential buyers "are scared to drive a small, low car when everything else is a tall S.U.V.," Mr. Pund said. Corvette appears to have avoided that fate in large part because of its decision to move the engine.

Tadge Juechter, who is retiring as the fifth Corvette chief engineer since the car's 1953 unveiling, said the median age of its buyer had been rising by roughly one year each year, topping out around 64. He knew that was unsustainable.

"It was a comfortable car for our traditional customers, but you're not going to sell a significant number to 100-year-olds," Mr. Juechter said.

A mid-engine Corvette, which some G.M. engineers and executives had considered since the 1960s, was meant to shake things up, including a design that could support future hybrid and electric versions. But some people at G.M. got cold feet. Mr. Juechter recalled "a strong push" to offer both the existing C7 and redesigned Corvette C8s in showrooms to keep its Bowling Green, Ky., factory humming and avoid alienating loyalists.

Executives eventually realized that when G.M. offered the C8, "we won't sell any of those old ones," Mr. Juechter said. "The mid-engine car was highly controversial, but in hindsight it looks brilliant," he added.

Brad Franz, Chevrolet's director of car and crossover marketing, said the C8 continued to attract boomers, while pulling a demographic coup: The median age of a Corvette buyer has fallen to 55 from 64 over the last six years.



The 2024 Corvette E-Ray is the first hybrid version of the model and one of the first mass-produced sports cars. The electric motor and the V-8 give it 655 horsepower.

Mr. Pund recently met fanatical 'Vette owners during a driving tour from Bowling Green, where a Corvette museum sits near the factory, to North Carolina. He said G.M. had underestimated its customers' willingness to evolve with the car.

"Those owners don't think of the C8 as something radical," Mr. Pund said. "They just think of it as a new Corvette."

G.M. hopes to build on that momentum with an expanded lineup that now includes the 2024 Corvette E-Ray, the first hybrid version of the model and one of the first among mass-produced sports cars; Porsche will follow by year's end with a hybrid version of its 911 model.

Mr. Franz said G.M.'s early sales data suggested that the hybrid Corvette was attracting more college-educated, higher-income buyers.

I recently test drove the E-Ray in the Berkshires, in western Massachusetts. Moving the engine — a 495-horsepower V-8 — behind the seats improves acceleration and handling, by keeping more weight in the car's center. It also clears room below the hood for an electric motor that sends 160 horsepower to front wheels, for a total 655-horsepower and an unfair fight against strictly gasoline-powered cars.

The result is the fastest-accelerating Corvette yet with a zero to 60 miles-per-hour time of 2.5 seconds. Its electric helping hand allows the E-Ray to run its engine in four-cylinder mode more often, bringing highway fuel efficiency to a federally rated 24 miles per gallon, versus 25 for a standard Stingray with 160 fewer horsepower.

A tiny hybrid battery slots into the center tunnel between the driver and passenger. And while the E-Ray requires no plug, the car's battery never runs dry because the car can fully recharge it in two to three miles of normal driving simply by recapturing braking energy.

**Over the last six years, the median age of a Corvette buyer has fallen to 55 from 64.**

Mr. Edwards said luring buyers to electrified Corvettes, or any two-seater, is not about a green pitch. "You talk about added performance, innovation or value," he said. "You don't call it an environmentally friendly sports car."

A fully electric Corvette might be next. G.M.'s president, Mark Reuss, said on LinkedIn in 2022 that the company would offer an electric Corvette "in the future," but the company has declined to provide any details.

Sports cars appear to be the final frontier for electrification. Most car enthusiasts became wedded to the signature sounds and driving character of favorite models of internal-combustion engine cars from an early age, Mr. Juechter said. Many are skeptical that electric versions can reproduce or replace them, despite any advantage in straight-line acceleration. A key objection is batteries that add too much weight, dulling the handling of what are supposed to be featherweight and agile cars. Finding enough space in compact cars for batteries large enough to deliver satisfactory range is another challenge.

No automaker is mass-producing an electric two-seat sports car for the United States or Europe, although Porsche intends to replace its slow-selling gasoline-powered Boxster and Cayman models with electric versions next year. Ferrari says it will come out with its first electric car in 2026.

A survey of American car owners by Strategic Vision this year found that 56 percent were "absolutely not interested" in an electric vehicle, up from 51 percent in 2023. That rises to 60 percent for Corvette owners. Mr. Edwards said Chevrolet appears wise to keep offering gas, hybrid and, eventually, electric Corvettes.

"If you say pure E.V., a lot of Corvette people are going to walk away," he said. G.M. will "have an easier road if they have a balanced portfolio."

Mr. Edwards added that while G.M.'s electric cars were often impressive, the company had often fumbled their introductions. And G.M. hasn't done enough to persuade many of its customers to consider the new technology.

# Some seniors step back readily. Some don't.

Researchers are studying varying approaches to the idea of retirement

BY PAULA SPAN

Beth Bergmans liked working as a project manager for an online university based in Minnesota. “We are offering opportunities for people to advance in life — that brought some satisfaction,” she said. “And the people I work with are awesome.”

Ms. Bergmans, 63, planned to stay on the job for two years, until she qualified for Medicare. But in recent months, something shifted, subtly. In her fast-paced workplace, she began to find it harder to recall the details of recent meetings, to retrieve words and to filter out distractions. She took short breaks at her desk to recharge.

“You find ways to adapt,” she said. “You use Post-it notes and whiteboards, and you spend more time prepping before a meeting.” Nobody complained or even seemed to notice, but Ms. Bergmans worried.

“People don’t really talk about this, the fear that you’re starting to slip professionally,” she said. “The last thing I want is to crash and burn at the end because I didn’t recognize that it was time to stop.”

So a couple of weeks ago, Ms. Bergmans told her manager that she would retire at the end of the year.

Sometimes it works this way: People engaged in and proud of their careers, intending to continue past typical retirement ages, encounter internal or external difficulties and step aside, even if no one is urging them to resign or retire.

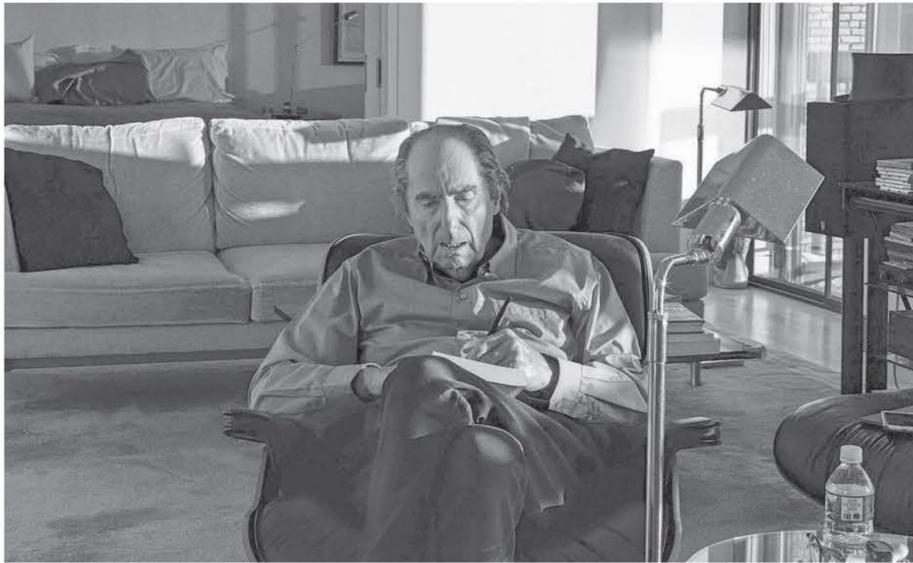
And sometimes, even if lots of people are urging them to, they Just Say No.

President Biden (81 and, until Sunday afternoon, unbowed by doubts about his age and abilities) and former President Donald J. Trump (78 and unbowed by his felony convictions and other legal challenges) are the latest personifications of this response, but hardly among the first.

Consider Dianne Feinstein, a six-term senator from California, who faced questions about her competence while growing increasingly frail and confused. She agreed to not seek re-election after her term ended in 2025, but refused to resign.

When she died in office last fall, she was the Senate’s oldest member, at 90. (Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, who resisted similar entreaties, retired at 100 and died shortly afterward.)

Consider Sumner Redstone, who held



PHILIP MONTGOMERY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

onto the leadership of his \$40 billion media empire, including Viacom and CBS, despite pressure from investors and analysts. When an interviewer asked about his succession, he replied, “I’m not going to die.”

After facing a lawsuit that portrayed him as mentally incompetent, Mr. Redstone resigned from CBS at 92 and Viacom at 93, inciting legal battles over control of the companies. He died in 2020 at 97.

“People who have more authority and status and control over their jobs are much less likely than others to retire voluntarily,” said Teresa Ghilarducci, an

**“Very few people have the luxury of working because they love their jobs and want to continue.”**

economist at the New School for Social Research and a longtime retirement researcher.

“People with authority in the workplace actually have less stress,” she added. “Having a boss at older ages is deleterious to your health, but being a boss is good for you.”

Only a fraction of older Americans fall into this category, in which good health enables extended careers while financial security makes further employment unnecessary.

Dr. Ghilarducci’s analysis of data from

the national Health and Retirement Study shows that only a third of those working at ages 62 to 70 can afford to retire but choose not to. Most who are still employed at that age are working because of financial need.

In 2022, almost 40 percent of U.S. households were at risk of being unable to maintain their standard of living in retirement, according to the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College.

“This is a rare bird,” said Lisa Berkman, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health who has written about longer careers. “Very few people have the luxury of working because they love their jobs and want to continue.”

Those who work only because they want to tend to be well off and well educated, she added, with flexible workplaces and physically undemanding jobs.

Most older workers are more like Rob Belgeri, 70, a labor union field representative in Redding, Calif. He intended to retire in his mid-60s, but after coronary bypass surgery at 54, he found his demanding job to be more of a struggle, “like getting stuck in neutral — not being able to get in gear.”

He said he would awaken at night fearing he had missed some crucial deadline, though he never did, and his managers had no complaints.

Still, Mr. Belgeri stayed on the job for another six years until, with relief, he

could collect a union pension at 60.

Or they are like Myrna Cozen, 74, an epidemiologist in El Cerrito, Calif., who was abruptly laid off in May along with dozens of co-workers. She wants to keep working, but “I’ve put in 30 applications and not gotten a single positive response,” she said. “Just like we do in the political arena, we make assumptions about people based on age.”

Why not hand over the reins when doubts surface — either one’s own or those of others — about continuing? Retirement can be attractive, after all. Most retired adults reported feeling “free” (59 percent) and “relaxed” (72 percent) in a survey by AARP, an advocacy group for people over 50. And an international meta-analysis found that retirement was associated with a reduced risk for depression.

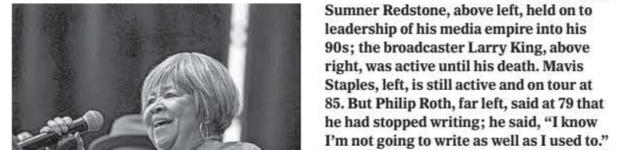
Popular culture tends to extol this phase of life: Notice all those older couples dancing on beaches and cruise ships in television commercials.

Yet “the reality is that retirement can be a very challenging time,” said Teresa Amabile, a psychologist at Harvard Business School and a co-author of the forthcoming book “Retiring: Creating a Life That Works for You.”

After a decade of research into the retirement trajectories of professionals and executives, her team found that detaching from work can prove difficult, a phase often lasting two to three years before retirees settle into new routines.



FRED PROSENER/REUTERS



ANDER GILLENHA/AF — GETTY IMAGES

Sumner Redstone, above left, held on to leadership of his media empire into his 90s; the broadcaster Larry King, above right, was active until his death. Mavis Staples, left, is still active and on tour at 85. But Philip Roth, far left, said at 79 that he had stopped writing; he said, “I know I’m not going to write as well as I used to.”

The difference between people who step aside and those who don’t, though not a well-researched topic, may come down to self-awareness, Dr. Amabile said.

When Benedict XVI, 85, became the first pope in six centuries to resign, his strength had deteriorated so much that he “had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me,” he said.

Philip Roth announced at 79 that he had stopped writing fiction because, he said, “I know I’m not going to write as well as I used to.”

On the other hand, some onetime admirers are still angry with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a cancer survivor several times over, who remained on the Supreme Court until her death at 87. She ignored pleas to resign before former President Barack Obama left office, not because of concerns about her competence, but so that he could nominate her successor.

Beth Bergmans’s work life has been much shorter, but she considers herself “one of the lucky ones,” she said. “I get a choice.” In January, one of her first post-retirement acts will be to stop multitasking while listening to audiobooks.

At her home in Nowthen, Minn., she said, “I’m going to sit down in a chair with a real book in my hand and read the words on the page.”

Teddy Rosenbluth contributed research.



EMILY MAJERA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Fortitude Ranch in northern Nevada aims to offer survival training grounds.

## Planning for a future in the doomsday economy

DOOMSDAY, FROM PAGE 8

chisees. “With 200, they should be comfortably profitable with positive cash flow.” He estimated that it might cost about \$1 million to turn a property into a Fortitude Ranch, though he stressed that local conditions, and regulations, could alter that figure.

The recreational aspect of the business is meant to sustain it during disaster-free stretches by providing potential members with a membership incentive beyond survival. (Mr. Miller used to rent to vacationing nonmembers, and while he no longer does so, he said new franchisees would have that option.)

“I’ve decided to spend my summer here because I like it so much,” said Ray, a Fortitude Ranch member who declined to give his last name. At the moment, he was enjoying the solitude of the remote Fortitude Ranch compound in Nevada. After retiring from a career in the aerospace industry, Ray decided to travel around the country in a recreational vehicle. He liked that Fortitude Ranch had memberships tailored to R.V. users and that the compounds provided him safe harbors across the country. He has a 10-year R.V. Fortitude Ranch membership, which cost him \$7,000.

And though he now uses Fortitude Ranch solely as a vacation getaway, Ray is sold on the premise that it can one day protect him and his fellow preppers against a catastrophe. “If anybody comes to hassle us, or give us any trouble, there’s a group of people here that we can band together, fend for ourselves,” Ray said.

Most preppers share a similarly dim view of what the future may bring. And they have no faith that government will keep ordinary people safe. “The normal state of humanity is one of borderline starvation, disease, war, famine, all the horses of the apocalypse,” said Mr. Myers, the franchisee in Tennessee.

Mr. Ramey, the founder of The Prepared — which, now under different ownership, offers a “prepping for beginners” checklist and advice on “how to build your own survival pantry” — said he was bullish on Mr. Miller’s prospects. “Fortitude Ranch can be successful,” he said. “The market for preparedness will continue to grow as the world continues on the wrong trajectory.”

But Mr. Miller is cautious about licensing franchises too quickly. “We are not a McDonald’s,” his franchising disclosure document declares. It is a blunt assertion, one meant to dispel the notion that every franchise must, like the golden arches, have thousands of uniform outlets across the country.

“The vast majority of franchise systems have under 200 locations,” said Benjamin Litalien, who oversaw franchising for the energy giant Exxon Mobil and now teaches at Georgetown University. “The goal isn’t always to be the next McDonald’s when you use the franchise model,” he explained, adding that Mr. Miller’s business plan “affords him a tremendous amount of control.”

But Mr. Litalien also added a note of caution: “Anything can be franchised,” he said. “That doesn’t mean you should, necessarily.”

## Unexpectedly, ‘Barbie’ changes little

It seemed a revolution, a movie about women, but men still run shows

BY NICOLE SPERLING

When “Barbie” was released in 2023, it quickly became a phenomenon. It was the top box office film of the year, earning \$1.4 billion worldwide, and it became Warner Bros.’s highest-grossing film ever, outpacing both “Dark Knight” movies, “Wonder Woman” and every chapter in the “Harry Potter” franchise.

It was a DayGlo-pink rebuttal to decades of conventional Hollywood thinking, and its success seemed to herald a new paradigm for the film industry. Movies written and directed by women and focused on female protagonists could attract enormous audiences to multiplexes around the world.

Yet in the 12 months since the movie’s release, little has changed in Hollywood. Buffeted by dual labor strikes that went on for months and a general retrenchment by entertainment companies trying to navigate the economics of the streaming era, the industry has retreated to its accustomed ways of doing business.

The box office is down 17 percent from last year at this time, and studios spooked by a fickle audience (yes to “Twisters,” no to “Fall Guy”) are again questioning the reliability of the theatrical marketplace. Films released in 2023 featured the same number of girls or women in leading roles as in 2010, according to a report from the University of Southern California’s Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. Ask around Hollywood and the consensus seems to be that “Barbie” is a singular success, a gargantuan feat governed by particular talents — the writer-director Greta Gerwig and the star Margot Robbie. Translation: Don’t expect a lot of movies like that in theaters anytime soon.

“Barbie” had no effect,” said Stacy L. Smith, the founder of the inclusion initiative, which studies inequality in Hollywood. “It’s perceived cognitively as a one-off. They have individuated the Margot Robbie, Greta Gerwig success and haven’t thought about how their own decision-making could be different and inclusive to create a new path forward.”

“Like most things with this industry, they’re like, ‘Oh, this is neat and shiny,’ and then they go right back to the way they’ve always been.”

The making of “Barbie” was anything but traditional. The toy company Mattel gave Ms. Gerwig — who wrote the film

with her husband, Noah Baumbach — free rein to imagine a narrative based on the titular doll, which has had plenty of detractors over the decades. The result was a \$150 million film that poked fun at Barbie’s persona and the company itself. Mattel’s chief executive, Ynon Kreiz, said he was asked most frequently, “How did you let this happen?”

Warner Bros. went all in on promoting the film, aiming to make it the highest-grossing movie based on female intellectual property. They exceeded those goals with an expansive campaign that made “Barbie” inescapable. “The job was, how do we defy people’s expectations of what a Barbie movie could be,” said Josh Goldstone, the studio’s president of worldwide marketing.

Nothing in Hollywood happens quickly, of course, and a movie can often take years to complete. Mattel now has 16 projects in development, including a reimaging of “Barney,” with Daniel Kaluuya, and “Polly Pocket,” which is set to star Lily Collins as the doll. Lena Dunham, who wrote the script for “Polly Pocket,” dropped out of the directing job, telling The New Yorker she didn’t think she could replicate Ms. Gerwig’s success. She described “Barbie” as “candy to so many different kinds of people and was perfectly and divinely Greta.”

“We know not every movie will be the next ‘Barbie,’ but we are taking the same approach,” Mr. Kriez said.

Since the release of “Barbie,” Warner Bros., now led by Pamela Abdy and Michael De Luca, has produced two live-action films starring women and with female directors: Ishana Shyamalan’s “The Watchers,” which flopped when it

opened in theaters this summer, and Maggie Gyllenhaal’s “The Bride!” starring Jessie Buckley and Christian Bale, which will be released next year. The studio has three more live-action films starring women from female directors, including Olivia Wilde, in active development. (Also, the coming 2027 animated movie “Bad Fairies,” with a female character in the lead, is being directed by Megan Nicole Dong.)

Warner Bros. said it would love to explore another “Barbie” film if Ms. Gerwig and Ms. Robbie were interested. The duo’s contracts for the original film did not have them on the hook to make a sequel.

**“With this industry, they’re like, ‘Oh, this is neat and shiny,’ and then they go right back to the way they’ve always been.”**

Ms. Abdy and Mr. De Luca, who started at the studio after “Barbie” was greenlit by the previous president, Toby Emmerich, did sign an overall deal with Ms. Robbie’s production company, LuckyChap, which she runs with her husband, Tom Ackerley, and Josey McNamara. They even gave the trio an original key to the studio, resurrecting a tradition started by Jack Warner, one of the founders of Warner Bros.

Ms. Robbie, who also produced 2023’s “Saltburn,” from the director Emerald Fennell, said she thought the biggest hurdle with studios would be persuading them that films with women in the starring role can appeal to all audiences.



MARCO ANZILONI/REUTERS

Greta Gerwig, left, and Margot Robbie receiving the Best Comedy Award for “Barbie,” during the Critics Choice Awards in January.

# Opinion

## Biden made a courageous choice. Democrats must seize the opportunity.

The U.S. president has placed the national interest above his own pride and ambition.

### The Editorial Board

President Biden's decision to exit the 2024 presidential election is a fitting coda for a man whose life has been devoted to public service. Mr. Biden has served the nation well as its president. By agreeing to step down when his term ends in January, he is greatly increasing the chance that his party is able to protect the nation from the dangers of returning Donald Trump to the presidency.

Majorities of Americans have consistently said they did not believe Mr. Biden could lead the nation for another term, citing longstanding fears about his age and fitness that have only grown in recent months. Had he remained at the top of the ticket, he would have greatly increased the likelihood of Mr. Trump retaking the presidency and potentially controlling both houses of Congress as well. Mr. Biden himself has consistently warned that specter presents a profound threat to the nation and its democratic traditions.

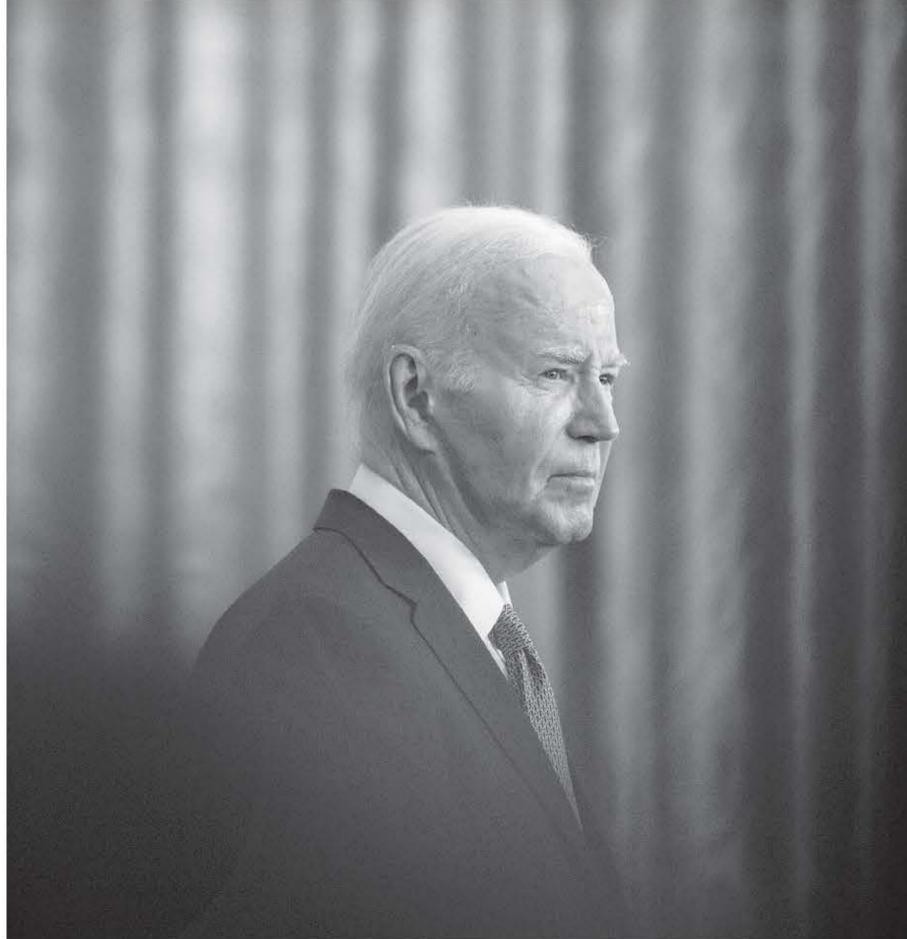
Mr. Biden has now done what Mr. Trump never will: He has placed the national interest above his own pride and ambition.

Mr. Biden's departure gives Democrats an opportunity to refocus public attention from questions about the president's fitness to the manifest moral and temperamental unfitness of Mr. Trump — and to the dangers of re-arming him with the considerable powers of the presidency.

Mr. Trump is a felon who flouts the law and the Constitution, an inveterate liar beholden to no higher cause than his self-interest and a reckless policymaker indifferent to the well-being of the American people. His term in office did lasting damage to the people and the project of America and to its reputation around the world. In a second term he would operate with fewer restraints and more willing enablers, and he and his emboldened advisers have made clear they intend to exercise power ruthlessly.

Yet it's not enough to describe all the harm Mr. Trump would do to the United States: The Democratic Party needs to offer the American people a road map to a better future. The new presidential and vice-presidential nominees will represent a fresh chance to remind voters of longstanding differences between the two parties.

This election will determine whether the United States, as it has under Mr. Biden, stands up to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. It will determine whether the federal government keeps fighting to protect the reproductive rights of women and continues the Biden administration's nascent, ur-



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

gently necessary work to address climate change by shifting the economy to renewable energy. Under Mr. Biden, economic inequality has begun to decline, and this election will help to determine whether workers are able to maintain a claim on a larger share of the nation's prosperity.

In a letter to the nation announcing his decision, Mr. Biden was correct in saying the nation has made great progress since his term began, particularly in areas such as foreign policy, climate, infrastructure and the welfare of American workers. His campaign has also described plans that the new Democratic nominee ought to adopt and build on. While the president is personally unpopular, his proposals to further these goals enjoy broad public support.

In other areas, Mr. Biden's departure offers a fresh chance to address voters' concerns with better policies.

The next Democratic nominee should acknowledge and offer solutions for the pain and disruptions caused by uncontrolled immigration. America needs immigrants. The nation also needs better policies for controlling their flow into the country.

Voters are angry about the cost of living. Democrats particularly need to offer better ideas for addressing the biggest line item in most household budgets: the high cost of housing.

And Mr. Biden's successor needs to engage with the American people. Mr. Biden has had fewer unscripted interactions with the public and the news media than any other president in recent

decades, often leaving voters with a sense that he was hiding from the public. A new presidential candidate should demonstrate exactly the opposite tendency, showing both a willingness to be open about plans for the future and a real interest in what voters have to say in return.

In a social media post on Sunday afternoon, Mr. Biden said he was endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris to take his place at the top of the ticket. She is an accomplished leader and a forceful and eloquent campaigner and is likely to be a far more persuasive candidate than Mr. Biden. She would hold Mr. Trump to account for his lies and destructive policies in a way that Mr. Biden's infirmities have left him unable to do.

Choosing Ms. Harris would be a reasonable path for Democrats to take; she has been Mr. Biden's running mate, and while no votes were cast for her as a presidential candidate in primaries, the president's voters expected her to be on the ticket in November.

Nonetheless, party delegates should have a voice in a decision of this consequence. There are other qualified Democrats who could take on Mr. Trump and win, and picking a candidate without a real contest is how the party got into a position of anointing a standard-bearer that large majorities of Democrats and independents had profound concerns about. While the hour is late, there is still time to put leading candidates through a process of public scrutiny before the party's nominating convention begins on Aug. 19, to inform the choice of a nominee and to build public support.

Whether the party chooses Ms. Harris or another Democrat, the nominee should convince voters that he or she will emulate Mr. Biden's approach to working with Congress. In an era of intense polarization, Mr. Biden eschewed the satisfactions of principled stands in favor of the compromises necessary to make tangible progress. He engaged respectfully and honorably with Republicans.

The resulting victories included major investments in improving infrastructure and reducing inequality, as well as laws addressing gun violence, modernizing the air traffic control system, protecting same-sex marriage and investing in semiconductor manufacturing. Similar compromises are needed to rewrite the nation's immigration laws, to craft an equitable replacement for Mr. Trump's 2017 tax cuts and to pass laws helping working parents.

Most of all, as president, Mr. Biden has stood on the side of the values that have long defined America: a commitment to freedom, a respect for the rule of law and a belief that pluralism is a fundamental source of the nation's strength. His administration, the most diverse in American history, embodies those values. It has worked to improve the lives of all Americans and to give Americans the opportunity to build better lives.

When Mr. Biden began his campaign in 2019, he told supporters that Mr. Trump would be defeated and that history would come to regard Mr. Trump's four years in office as an "aberrant moment." Mr. Biden has played his part, but the democratic project is never complete. That work now passes to the next generation of political leaders and to the American people.

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## A misguided fascination with tariffs from 1896

Trump talks about how great William McKinley was for raising tariffs, but what worked in his era isn't what works in 2024.

### Peter Coy

As the Republican Party repositions itself as the party of working men and women, William McKinley is having a moment. (I'm surprised, too.) McKinley, who served as president from 1897 to 1901, was such a champion of tariffs that he was happy to be called the Napoleon of Protection.

For years, Donald Trump has cited McKinley as a role model on tariffs — taxes on imports — which he sees as a means of protecting the jobs of American workers from foreign competition. He did it again recently in an interview with Bloomberg Businessweek, saying, "McKinley made this country rich," and calling him the most underrated president. "I can't believe how many people are negative on tariffs that are actually smart," Mr. Trump said.

Before Mr. Trump picked him as his running mate, Senator JD Vance of Ohio told my colleague Ross Douthat that "the economics profession is fundamentally wrong about both immigration and about tariffs." Restricting immigration and imports has the effect of forcing American companies to "do more with your domestic labor force," which has "positive dynamic effects," Mr. Vance said.

I get what Mr. Trump and Mr. Vance are trying to do as they emerge from the Republican National Convention into the general election, and I get why McKinley is getting a second look from their party. A lot of society's ills relate to the disappearance of good jobs in vast swaths of the country, and it's tempting to think that cutting off cheap imports would bring some manufacturing jobs back.

Karl Rove, who was President George W. Bush's top political strategist, burnished McKinley's image with his 2015 book, "The Triumph of William McKinley: Why the Election of 1896 Still Mat-

ters." Mr. Rove observed that McKinley served in Congress and the White House when the United States was fast becoming a world power because of its growing industrial strength. Tariffs allowed American companies to gain strength until they could compete on an equal footing with British and German industry.

But what worked in 1896 isn't what works in 2024.

The United States is no longer an up-and-comer that can hide behind a tariff wall. As a commercial superpower, it has special obligations to preserve and expand the rules-based international trading system. If the United States raises barriers to trade, it's harder for it to argue that others — China, in particular — should lower theirs.

Trade between willing partners is a good thing, for the most part anyway. It encourages specialization and increases global prosperity. A country that limits trade with others ends up poorer, saddled with inefficient and corrupt domestic producers that have no incentive to improve.

In McKinley's day, tariffs still accounted for about half of the federal government's revenue. McKinley, a Republican, favored high tariffs partly to fund an activist, energetic government (as Rove pointed out). It was the Democrats who wanted low taxes and small government.

Clearly, funding an activist government is no longer a Republican rationale for high tariffs. One of Mr. Trump's wilder ideas is to wind back the clock and once again rely on tariffs in place of taxes to fund the government. Could that work? "Simply put, no," the Peterson Institute for International Economics concluded last month. The federal government was much smaller in 1896. There was no Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid, and the military was smaller (although big enough for the United States to defeat Spain in the "splendid little war" of 1898).

There are, to be sure, some good

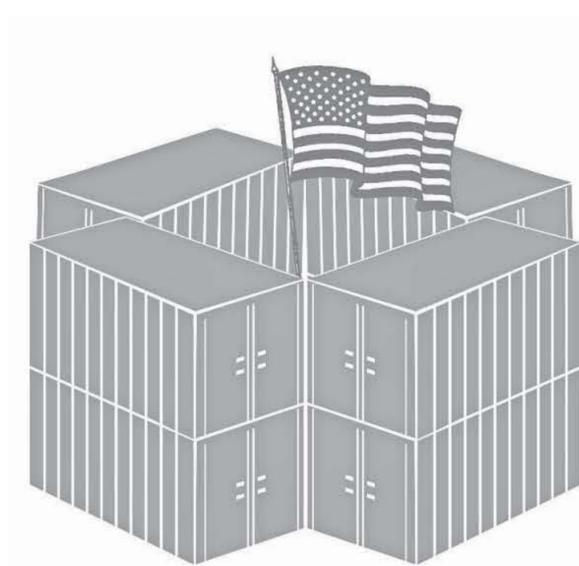


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reasons to restrict trade. One easy case is national security. The United States obviously shouldn't ship advanced weaponry to China or Russia. A trickier case is raising barriers as a negotiating tactic to get other countries to lower theirs. Trickier because temporary measures can end up becoming permanent or, worse, provoking targeted trading partners to raise rather than lower their barriers.

The Biden administration has kept some of the tariffs that Mr. Trump put in place when he was president, and it has imposed some domestic-purchasing rules that rattle trading partners. But its main strategy for rebuilding America's productive capacity has been more

positive: investment in green energy projects, infrastructure, chip making and other key sectors.

Reciprocity in trade has been a tradition since the earliest days of the Republic, Douglas Irwin, an economist at Dartmouth College, told me. The difference is that some presidents use it in a positive way: If you cut your barriers, we'll cut ours. Others use it in a negative way: If you don't lower your barriers, we'll raise ours. He said Mr. Trump is the latter type.

I asked Mr. Irwin what he would tell Mr. Trump if he had the chance. He said that McKinley's life "was tragically cut short just as he was thinking about reciprocity in a very different way." He

no longer seemed to view high tariffs as good in themselves, Mr. Irwin said. One reason is that the U.S. economy had gotten so strong that it benefited from getting other countries to open up their markets, so it had to open up its own as well.

I looked up a speech that Mr. Irwin referred to that McKinley gave in Buffalo on Sept. 5, 1901, early in his second term. He didn't sound much like the author of the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890, which raised taxes on imports to the highest they had ever been.

"God and man have linked the nations together," McKinley said, according to a transcript. He added, "We must not repose in fancied security that we can forever sell everything and buy little or nothing. If such a thing were possible, it would not be best for us or for those with whom we deal."

"Commercial wars are unprofitable," McKinley said. "If perchance some of our tariffs are no longer needed," he continued, "for revenue or to encourage and protect our industries at home, why should they not be employed to extend and promote our markets abroad?" In other words, he was saying the country should raise tariffs temporarily as bargaining chips in trade negotiations, not for revenue or protection.

McKinley was shot by an anarchist the next day and died on Sept. 14, so we'll never know how serious he was about that pivot. What we can say is that his final public utterance was correct. Tariffs and other barriers to trade may be necessary in certain times and places, but they should be regarded as marks of failure, not of success.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

"What starts out here as a mass movement ends up as a racket, a cult or a corporation."

— Eric Hoffer, "The Temper of Our Time" (1967)

PETER COY is a writer in Opinion.

# The New York Times

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## Kamala Harris can continue a legacy in Black America

Al Sharpton

Joe Biden is more than this moment.

The crisis the president has struggled with for the past month should not erase his some 50 years of near-continuous service to the American people. Among other things, he has delivered time and again for Black America. That will be Mr. Biden's legacy.

It's for that reason that Democrats must now support the woman who has stood alongside him throughout his presidency. In the 2020 election, more than 81 million Americans voted for her to lead in the event that the president could not. We should give her the support she deserves in this moment. The attacks on her, as the highest elected Black woman in American history, will be unlike anything we've ever seen.

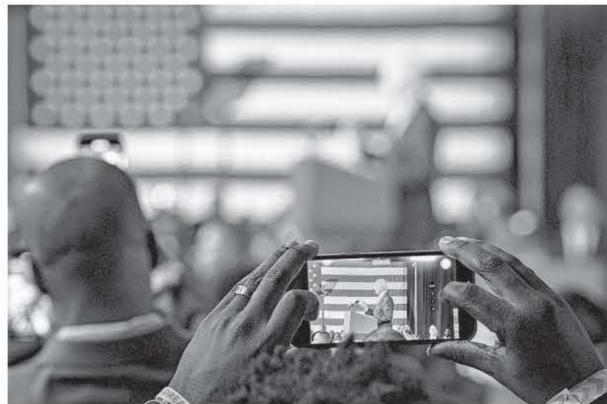
I have been thinking in recent days about a conversation I had with Mr. Biden when he was running four years ago. He told me in private he decided to come out of a well-deserved retirement because of what he saw in Charlottesville in 2017. A violent parade of neo-Nazis and Klansmen taking over the streets, and a spineless president who could not muster the courage to denounce racism, disgusted him enough that in his late 70s, he decided to put himself and his family through the ringer to save the soul of our nation.

**History will remember what Joe Biden, the former lion of the Senate, accomplished from the West Wing to improve Black communities across the U.S.**

His fierce commitment to delivering on promises has made him an incredibly effective president in just one term. He made a pledge during the campaign to select the first female vice president. He did. He vowed to Representative Jim Clyburn that he would put a Black woman on the Supreme Court. He delivered us Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. He promised me executive action on police accountability. I stood alongside him and the family of George Floyd as he signed an executive order to strengthen accountability in federal law enforcement agencies.

History will remember what this former lion of the Senate accomplished from the West Wing to improve Black communities across the United States. Just look at the American Rescue Plan, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. These are giant accomplishments for any president, all packed into less than a full term. America will feel the impact of these legislative actions for generations to come.

At the National Action Network's M.L.K. Day Legislative Breakfast last year, President Biden translated what this means for Black America. Our children and grandchildren will no longer drink water from pipes riddled with lead. Many will not have to struggle with student loan payments thanks to the billions of dollars in debt canceled by the administration. Medicare recipients won't have to sacrifice food over insulin payments, thanks to a cap on medicine costs. Black unemployment is very low because the White House created 2.6 million jobs for Black workers in President Biden's first three years in office. Black wealth is on the rise as a result of these efforts, which will set us up to finally close the financial and employment equity gaps and control our own future.



HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

I have never shied away from calling out an elected official, from the local dog catcher to the leader of the free world. President Biden has not been immune to my loud mouth over the last 40 years. I disagreed with him on the Clarence Thomas hearings. I marched against the omnibus crime bill in 1994. Two years later, I opposed the Welfare Reform Act. But each time I have spoke up, he's listened and then acted.

Not getting behind the woman Joe Biden trusted over the past four years would put at risk these victories and the momentum to finish the job. Vice President Kamala Harris's fingerprints are on every one of these legislative wins for Black America. I know because I have been as blunt with her as I have with the president. And, like him, she's always listened and come back with solutions.

Every president leaves office wishing they had done more — one more bill passed, one more executive order or one more day in office. President Biden has been committed to seeing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement and the George Floyd Justice in Policing acts passed. He reaffirmed that promise when he addressed the National Action Network's annual convention this April. Vice President Harris has made the same promise to see these essential pieces of legislation enacted into law.

The best way to preserve President Biden's legacy is to continue fighting for his agenda. Kamala Harris is our best hope for that. Black America and all Democrats must stand behind her in this moment because of what is at stake for the future of this nation.

Questions have already arisen from within the Democratic Party on whether Vice President Harris is the best person to beat Donald Trump come November. The answer is simple. She will bring new energy to Americans who have seen voting rights eroded, affirmative action gutted and women's rights ripped away. Vice President Harris can mobilize those who were most bruised by four years of Mr. Trump, just as Barack Obama did for those pressed into the margins over eight years of George W. Bush. My question back to them would be: Who else can do that right now?

The attacks from Mr. Trump and the G.O.P. awaiting her will be fierce. Black women have always been America's favorite punching bag. Get ready to see ugly stereotypes, questions about her record and verbal attacks taken to the next level. To sit idly by and allow this to happen unchallenged will put us all at risk.

Now the fracas of the past month is finally ebbing, Democrats have a duty to get back on track. The party is proving true the old proverb that Democrats fall in love, but Republicans fall in line. The G.O.P. is united right now to get Donald Trump back into the White House, despite his unfitness for office. Doing so would usher in Project 2025, which if fully implemented could upend democracy in America.

President Biden was committed to staying in this race because he understands what is at stake. Now, we must support his ally of the past four years to ensure these G.O.P. proposals don't become policy.

The night he won the presidency, President Biden quoted a line from the poet Seamus Heaney: "The longed-for tidal wave of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme." Hope and history indeed synced over the past four years. It is on all of us to keep the rhythm going.

**THE REV. AL SHARPTON is a civil rights leader and the founder of the National Action Network.**

## These teenagers needed help. What they got was a nightmare.

Maia Szalavitz  
Contributing Writer

Sadie Sutton was first hospitalized for depression when she was 13. She grew up in the Bay Area and had access to all the medical professionals she might need but began to feel worthless and suicidal as she moved through adolescence. (Sutton is her middle name. She requested that I not disclose her last name to protect her family's privacy.)

At 15, after four hospitalizations and outpatient therapy at Stanford University, she was sent to an inpatient program at McLean Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School. There, she completed 14 weeks of dialectical behavior therapy (also known as D.B.T.), a science-backed approach that teaches people to regulate overwhelming emotions.

But afterward, her parents were afraid that living at home would threaten her recovery. They sent her to Chrysalis, a so-called therapeutic boarding school in Montana, part of what is known as the "troubled teen" industry, which also includes wilderness programs and other residential facilities that claim to treat everything from youthful misbehavior and drug problems to severe depression. They were told she'd receive more D.B.T. and other evidence-based care. Unfortunately, that wasn't what she got. She said her stay there was "the worst year of my life."

When even well-informed parents can't distinguish between excellent and inappropriate care, the system is broken. As the United States faces a post-pandemic mental health emergency, we need immediate reform. As with medications, behavioral health treatments for teenagers must be required to be proved safe and effective before they can be marketed.

At McLean, Ms. Sutton's therapy was rigorous and emphasized autonomy: She worked collaboratively with the therapists, rather than simply being told what to do. She could call her parents anytime.

Ms. Sutton described the setting at Chrysalis — which was recently sued after a staff member was alleged to have sexually abused students — as "chaos." "You had to 'earn' the privilege of talking to your parents" outside of therapy sessions, she said, which took months and even then was only a monitored, five-minute weekly call. At first, she just sobbed.

As for the therapy, because she'd already had D.B.T., she didn't think she was being treated with it. "There was really no structure," she said. Groups involved giving "feedback" to other girls about their behavior, which often turned into bullying. Because Ms. Sutton was determined to get better, she complied. Only later did she recognize that her experience had been traumatic. (Chrysalis didn't respond to a request for comment.)

Troubled-teen programs are receiving new scrutiny thanks to activism by Paris Hilton, who was sent to several facilities, and the Netflix documentary series "The Program," which exposed abuse in a network of sites that claimed to have treated 40,000 children. (I appear in the series as an expert.)

One key issue is that with few exceptions, it's nearly impossible for parents to know for certain what treatment their children will receive. Perhaps the most offensive fact is that even though fees per child can range from \$110,000 to more than \$400,000 per year, in some facilities, kids get just a few hours a week of professional

therapy, and other places provide none at all. When such care can be a matter of life and death, that is outrageous.

Residential centers should not be allowed to promote themselves as treatments for adolescent mental illnesses or addictions unless they can show that the child has a diagnosis and that their methods meet the standard of care for it. The only way to stop widespread harm is to ensure that abusive practices cannot be disguised

The report looked at programs that receive government funds via Medicaid or the child welfare system — although the same programs often serve privately insured or self-pay customers as well. It documents widespread taxpayer-funded "sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, unsafe and unsanitary conditions, and inadequate provision of behavioral health treatment." It describes systemic, "routine" harms that "are the direct causal result of a business model that

mitigating fear and shows parents that emergencies can typically be managed at home via continuing support. New Jersey's approach cut the use of residential care nearly in half between 2016 and 2023, while closing 10 juvenile detention centers and improving stability in foster care. The state has long had one of the lowest youth suicide rates in the country.

One key to its success is that New Jersey has been able to direct Medicaid funding toward home- and commu-



TALLULAH FONTAINE

as therapy or hidden from oversight.

Pharmaceutical companies need to prove to the Food and Drug Administration that risky psychiatric medications are safe and effective before marketing them. The same should be true for residential therapy regimens for kids. We need an agency, or at least a set of federal rules, that acts as an

**We need a safer, more effective approach to treating troubled teenagers.**

F.D.A. for the treatment of troubled children. Congress is paying attention. On June 12, Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, a Democrat who chairs the finance committee, held a hearing and released a report from a two-year investigation of existing residential programs. At any given time, an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 teenagers are in the facilities operated by the companies examined in the investigation, though because of lack of regulation, the exact numbers are unknown. In just the past year, two chains that were investigated were ordered to pay over \$1 billion in damages related to the rape of minors.

has incentive to treat children as payouts and provide less than adequate safety and behavioral health treatment in order to maximize operations and profit margin." Basically, these centers can either maximize profits or provide appropriate care — not both.

Finding alternatives, however, is difficult. Many parents have genuine concerns that their children will hurt themselves or others if not confined to a controlled setting. They also tend to assume that since residential treatment is expensive, it must be better. Experts, however, say that home- or community-based care is almost always more effective, and inpatient care should be used only for the most extreme cases (active psychosis, suicidal or homicidal behavior) and for the shortest time possible.

New Jersey's system of care approach offers a way forward. At any time, 24/7, parents with a child in crisis from drugs, mental illness or other behavioral problems can call a hotline. Within an hour, if needed, a trained team will arrive and develop a plan at no cost that provides ongoing treatment, regardless of ability to pay. This rapid response is essential to

nity-based services, while many other states prioritize residential care. When residential care can't be avoided, New Jersey uses tightly regulated programs that are close enough for frequent parental visits. This not only helps children but also provides oversight of conditions. Most for-profit youth residential programs no longer operate in New Jersey, while nonprofits have expanded.

Reflecting increasing bipartisan consensus, Senator Mike Crapo, Republican of Idaho, said during the hearing that "children are best served when they can receive care within their own homes and communities." Other states should take their cues from New Jersey and create similar systems of care. Federal legislation should be passed to bolster these systems, ban harmful tactics, create and enforce standards and end perverse incentives that favor Medicaid funding of residential programs. The cheaper approach will also be safer, kinder and more effective.

**MAIA SZALAVITZ is the author of "Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids."**

## The distance between chaos and stability

MILLER, FROM PAGE 1

battle between individuals who reshaped politics and American life, but especially in the aftermath of the 2020 election when he could not accept that he had lost. The smooth transfer of power depended, actually, on the person relinquishing it — and the entire country has suffered for that, every day since.

This is one reason Mr. Trump's promises of retribution over the last year — the realization of how much one individual's decision can matter — have worried so many people about a second term.

The original point of Mr. Biden's candidacy for president in 2020 was keeping Mr. Trump from a second term: The campaign began with the idea of winning, and by extension, restoring American civil institutions in a wrecked, surreal world. Because Mr. Biden was such a known quantity to voters, and because he was clearly entering the final era of his political career, even if his age carried risk, there was also the suggestion that he would do nothing extreme. His presidency would be, then, about things

being normal — a moral kind of response to what had happened during the Trump years that began with winning and ended with stability.

The world still often seems wrecked and surreal, in ways in and out of Mr. Biden's control. When bad things happen — the worst, most destabilizing things — a lot of people's understandable expectation is that the overall landscape will only deteriorate and break more. Over the last decade, that's how it has often felt like, where something unexpected and extreme might

**The world still often seems wrecked and surreal, in ways in and out of Mr. Biden's control.**

begin, from pandemics to wars, and even if a person is somehow unaffected by the nature, the fractured and polarized event of the politics around them will make life that much more intense and confusing to live through.

As Mr. Biden's position became more difficult, and it became more clear that this was another instance where only one person could decide, a few people,

like Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, made reasonable cases about the uncertainties of a post-Biden landscape — that his support would not be transferable to another candidate, that there might not really be a plan for what would happen next. That things might break and deteriorate more.

And yet, sometimes, chaotic and fast-moving situations can produce more stable outcomes. Four years ago, many leading candidates dropped out of the Democratic race and endorsed Mr. Biden in a period of days. That resulted in a more stable election and presidency (until recently) than anyone might have predicted. During the month last year when support for the House speaker, Kevin McCarthy, collapsed, it would have been hard to predict that Mike Johnson would end up speaker — let alone that his speakership would be more stable than Mr. McCarthy's was. Things could get worse, but nobody actually knows — things could also get better.

As draining and painful as Mr. Biden's decision process was, it did reflect the original premise of his candidacy — that the country could see



DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES

potential problems up ahead and make a responsible choice, and that the people in power would respond in kind.

**KATHERINE MILLER is a staff writer and editor in Opinion.**

# Sports

## Euro 2024 memories, and Copa América issues

### On Soccer

BY RORY SMITH

As promised, this week's newsletter has been designed as a monument to late-stage capitalism, in that the writing of it has largely been outsourced, but I am still taking credit for it. There are two issues, however, that arose perhaps a little too late in soccer's month of festivities but which nevertheless warrant our attention.

The first is the departure of Gareth Southgate after eight years as England manager, a period in which he not only achieved the sort of success that would have looked like a golden age to most of his predecessors, but managed to do so while also largely embracing the absurd political and social expectations the country places on the role.

One aspect that has been missing from much of the coverage of Southgate's departure is that of boredom. There had been (understandable) pressure on Southgate because of the soccer he played. There was (unwarranted) pressure on him because of his perceived social stances. But there was also pressure on him because he had been around for so long, and people like change.

England is not used to having a successful national team. England is not, in fact, used to having a national team not dogged by scandal and outrage. Southgate's tenure was, essentially, a quiet one.

The team worked. The players enjoyed it. But the lack of drama was a source of frustration, too, building a sense that England was just not interesting enough. Problems were not imagined, but they were probably exaggerated, by both the news media and the fans, because England without noise is alien and unsettling and somehow unfulfilling.

The second issue, the much more serious one, comes in the form of the appalling scenes from the final of the Copa América, a match that was delayed after what appeared to be the complete breakdown of security outside Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens in Florida. It was a fitting end to a tournament that was, organizationally, a disgrace.

The immediate, predictable response of the authorities was to suggest that the problems were caused by thousands of ticketless fans who had rushed the gates, breaking and entering and had ruined the experience for some fans who had paid thousands of dollars to attend. This is a playbook soccer has seen many times, and it is to be resisted.

The responsibility for the safe staging of an event is on those who have



The Copa América final was delayed after an apparent breakdown of security outside Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens. Organizationally, the tournament really was a disgrace.

organized it. Why were so many people without tickets — if that is what happened — allowed to get so close to the stadium? Why were they in a position to rush the gates? Why did the authorities respond to this by allowing anyone in, and then blocking the gates to everyone?

There will always be people who wish to attend a game and do not have the right to do so. It is the job of the authorities to filter them out. That is the case at every other major event. Soccer should not be considered different.

And with that, we open the mailbag. How do you think Euro 2024 will be remembered? — Bracken Godfrey

Well, there's a very good chance it will be mentioned on an almost daily basis in England for the next half-century or so. But plenty of other nations will have cause to remember it fondly: Slovenia, after playing the first knockout game in its history; Georgia, which thrived at its first major tournament appearance; Turkey, Romania, Albania for the sheer exuberance (and numbers) of their fans.

More broadly, though, my guess is that Euro 2024 will come to be seen as the start of something, the tournament at which the outline of soccer's immediate future was drawn. The soccer was not always thrilling, in truth, but it was the stage on which Kobbie Mainoo, Arda Güler and, particularly, Lamine Yamal confirmed that they are the sport's coming things.

This year's Euros have been a bit of a letdown, outside of a few matches involving Turkey and Georgia. The top players seem a step slower when summer rolls around. Is it time to rethink tradition and advocate midyear tournaments and breaks? — Bob Leon

That fatigue has been an issue in both the European Championship and the Copa América is not in doubt, but whether there is anything that can be done about it is a little more complex. Most major leagues in Europe do have

some sort of winter break but, Germany aside, it is hardly enough to make up for the demands placed on the players before and after.

My feeling has always been that soccer benefits from taking one of every two summers off, granting the players a fallow spell in those years that do not bring a continental championship or a World Cup. That, though, appears to be a thing of the past — there's a Club World Cup next summer — and the expanded Champions League will only add to the burden.

Staging these big international tournaments in the middle of the season had not occurred to me, but it does make sense: It was a factor in what made the 2022 World Cup so compelling. As a rule, the leagues themselves would not countenance it on a regular basis, but they will doubtless make an exception for Saudi Arabia 2034.

At a time when the Copa América and the Euros are going on, I would expect you to write something about the

Copa. I haven't seen much, other than a discussion of Marcelo Bielsa's philosophy. — Pablo Echeverri

This is, sadly, an accurate depiction of my coverage, and for that I can only apologize. I would point out, however, that I am just one person, and a person who has been in Germany, rather than at the Copa, at that.

But this question does raise a significant issue: the somewhat unilateral relationship European soccer has with everyone else. The Copa América has never made an especially large imprint on the other side of the Atlantic. Some of that, of course, is unavoidable: The games kick off in the middle of the night, meaning that only the most tenacious fans are likely to watch.

That said, scheduling the semifinals and finals of the Copa to coincide with the conclusion of the European Championship seemed like a misstep. There would have been a European audience for Argentina against Colombia; a

niche one, but still an audience.

I was born and raised in Asia before moving to the U.S., but it's truly surprising how many people here seem to overestimate the allure of coaching the U.S. national team. It is an attractive job for some, but it is by no means one of the premier job opportunities in international soccer. — Walid Neaz

This is almost certainly true, and only partially because it is true of every nation. Elite managers are incredibly reluctant to move to international management — most prize the cut-and-thrust of working with players daily — until they reach the autumn of their careers.

But, and this is important, living and working (and building a brand) in the United States is something that people in soccer take extremely seriously. It may not appeal to everyone. It would not, for example, tempt Pep Guardiola or Mikel Arteta at this point. But there are advantages that if leveraged correctly, would make the job more appealing than the team's world ranking might suggest.

I'd like to see the final of any competition, especially the World Cup, settled by a final goal scored, no matter how many minutes it takes. — Peter Thorp

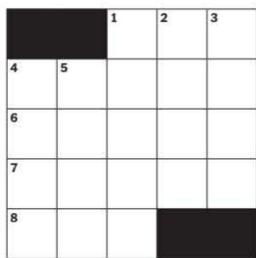
This newsletter has been running for five years, I think. In that time, we have had countless suggestions for ways to tweak soccer. I cannot remember any that have been as good as this. Yes: In finals, and finals only, we should 100 percent abandon penalties and make it next goal wins. I am wholly, absolutely, enthusiastically on board.

The final question goes to Ben Grant, who somehow managed to capture in words the most pressing issue facing all of soccer in the year 2024. Ben, channeling humanity as a whole, asked: What historical polity would have the best soccer team if we were to take historical borders and apply them to today's player pool?

By way of example, Ben mentioned the Hapsburg empire of Philip II, which included Iberia, the Low Countries, Southern Italy and all of South America; the "brief unification of the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburg possessions with Iberia and most of Central Europe"; Rome, under the Emperor Trajan, stretching from the Levant to Northumbria; and the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne.

The answer, to me, seems reasonably obvious. If Philip II's territory still held today, it would have Alisson Becker in goal; a defense built around Virgil van Dijk; Rodri patrolling the midfield; the artistry of Kevin De Bruyne; the wizardry of Lionel Messi; and the searing pace of Vinícius Júnior. Even with all of that, though, I am confident in saying that Cristiano Ronaldo would still be taking the free kicks.

### The Mini Crossword



7/23/2024 BY JOEL FAGLIANO EDITED BY SAM EZERSKY

- ACROSS**
- Food that fills both blanks of "\_\_\_ce of \_\_\_"
  - Wide display
  - Quintessentially boring color
  - Founder of Amazon
  - Type of beer

- DOWN**
- Game show contestant's hope
  - "Othello" villain
  - They're never open 24/7
  - "Mamma Mia!" group
  - Film spool

#### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



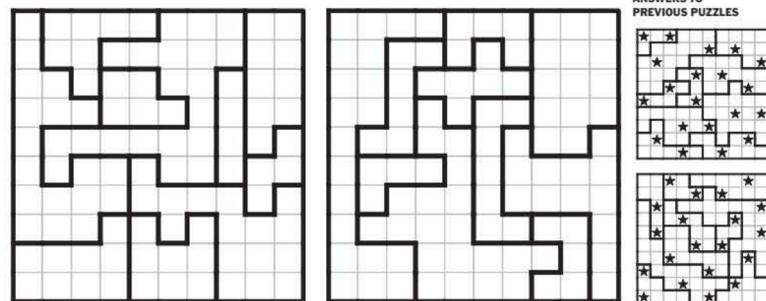
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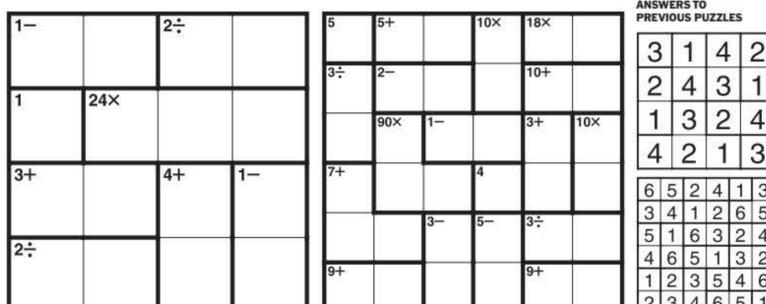
### Cryptogram

IYCD OY NHTKZL DQKT HX QYHFFHXO, JDJJK NVBF  
NBQ CVHOHXBZZL PKBXI IC JK IYVKK-THPKXQHCXBZ  
NBZZFBFKV.

PUZZLE BY BEN BASS

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER Albany, Annapolis, Atlanta, Augusta, Austin

### KenKen



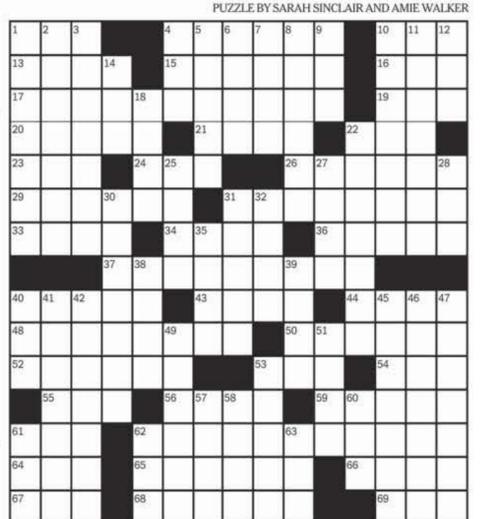
Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For more games: www.nytimes.com/games

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### Crossword Edited by Joel Fagliano

- ACROSS**
- "City/highway/combined" stat
  - Pampering place for purring pets
  - Article that Ohio State University surprisingly managed to trademark in 2022
  - Greek god often depicted with a helmet and shield
  - Imperfect
  - Alley- (basketball pass)
  - Role for which James Gandolfini won three Emmys
  - GPS approximation
  - Hearty steakhouse option
  - Start of an online address
  - Common deg. for a professor
  - Kind of lane marked with a diamond
  - "\_\_\_ Twist, Scientist" (kids' book)
  - Out of the country
  - Cipher machine of W.W. II



7/23/24

#### ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE



- DOWN**
- Actor Macfadyen of "Succession"
  - Like some free legal work
  - Fictional country in "The Princess Diaries"
  - Corp. money manager
  - Dominant wolf in a pack
  - Fruit-filled pastry
  - Give a thwack
  - What a best friend from camp might become
  - Hullabaloo
  - Rock climber's notch
  - Promising romantic encounter
  - Clean air org.
  - Thesaurus entry: Abbr.
  - Layer of coal
  - Wide-open grassland
  - Title for Julie Andrews or Maggie Smith
  - \_\_\_ chic (fashion style)
  - Cinco menos tres
  - Pickle, to a Brit
  - Shawarma holders
  - Guinness of "Star Wars"
  - Grasshoppers' foes in "A Bug's Life"
  - General feeling
  - "Hard pass"
  - Word in the name of many design colleges
  - "Sc adorbs!"
  - One getting bent out of shape at work?
  - Where to ride ATVs and dirt bikes
  - Simone Biles' squad
  - Length from fingertip to fingertip, perhaps
  - Reason to carry an inhaler
  - Used, as a doorbell
  - Tangle
  - Hillsboro \_\_\_, minor-league baseball team with a mascot named Barley
  - Opera solo
  - Fearsome Middle-earth creature
  - Do some snooping
  - Pup + otter :: \_\_\_ : bear
  - Permit

# Culture

## Leaving Childish things behind

Donald Glover bids goodbye to his rap persona as his ambitions ripen

BY REGGIE UGWU

Donald Glover had been walking a New York street only a moment when a man, perhaps in his early 20s, called out to him from several yards away.

“Yo, Donald Glover, bro, I love you, man!”

Glover nodded and said thank you.

“I listen to Childish Gambino like every day,” he continued.

“I appreciate it,” Glover replied.

“You’re seriously my favorite, bro,” the man shouted, seemingly struggling for something else to say. Finally, he added, “Since I was a little kid!”

Glover chuckled to himself. “A ‘little kid’?” he said, after a beat. “That doesn’t make me feel old; I just know that I am old.”

Time comes for everyone. It has mostly been kind to Glover, the multiple Emmy- and Grammy-winning actor, musician, writer and director, who turned 40 in September. He has been in the public eye for nearly 20 years, since his college sketch comedy troupe, Derrick, found an audience on early YouTube in 2006. And he has been famous for 15, since starring in the hit NBC comedy series “Community.”

Childish Gambino, his rap alter ego, caught the attention of the hip-hop blogosphere in 2010, making it old enough to be sent off to high school. And now, after the release of his sixth album, “Bando Stone & the New World,” on Friday, he’s officially retiring the moniker.

“It really was just like, ‘Oh, it’s done,’” he said, describing the moment of realization. “It’s not fulfilling. And I just felt like I didn’t need to build in this way anymore.”

Childish Gambino has always been the rawest expression of Glover’s art. His work as a television creator, most notably “Atlanta,” tends toward the cerebral and abstract. And his biggest film roles have come as a cog in enormous franchise machines (“Solo: A Star Wars Story,” “The Lion King,” various Spider-Man vehicles). But his early Gambino mixtapes, “I Am Just a Rapper,” “I Am Just a Rapper 2” and “Culdesac,” were gleefully unfiltered, exposing the id of a talented but embittered outsider determined to vault his way onto the A-list.

Glover’s early themes on those projects, and his debut album, “Camp,” seemed to win him fans and critics in equal measure. Raised as Jehovah’s Witness in a suburb of Atlanta and sent to a majority-white high school, he needed preconceptions about cultural Blackness, lashing out at unnamed critics who called him an “Oreo” for failing to present as Black enough. As if to provoke the issue, he wrenched himself in totems of 2010s white hipsterdom, commandeering tracks from Pitchfork darlings (Sleigh Bells, Grizzly Bear, Yeasayer), declaring his preference for A.P.C. jeans and Sperry Top-Siders and deploying a nasal and overly articulate vocal style — Lil Wayne with a wedge.

“I think that kid really wanted a home,” Glover said in a restaurant in the TriBeCa neighborhood in the first of three conversations this month, flecks of gray spotting his beard. “I grew up in the ‘80s and ‘90s. There was Oprah, Michael Jordan, Eddie Murphy — not a lot of alternatives” for Black people.

Before the internet, he said, it was hard for him to find a like-minded community. “Baduizm” comes out and I go, “Where are these people?” he recalled, referring to Erykah Badu’s 1997 album. “I remember going to an N.E.R.D. show with my girlfriend and we were the only

two Black people there. I feel like I was just looking around like: ‘Where is everyone? Am I an alien?’”

Glover’s sense of isolation was exacerbated by his experiences in network television comedy; on “Community” and in his first job, as a writer on “30 Rock,” he was often the only Black voice in the room. The music industry was hardly more accommodating. Glover said he clashed with Daniel Glass, the head of his former record label, Glassnote Records, over the marketing and promotion of his first three albums. (In 2019, he and the label settled a legal dispute over royalties.)

“I used to get so mad at what he was doing that I would have stress dreams where I went into his record company with a bat and just bashed all the windows,” he said.

“Atlanta,” set in a fictionalized version

of his hometown and partly inspired by his frustrations with the music business, became a ballast. Glover hired a team of fellow young Black creatives — including his brother, Stephen — and negotiated unusual creative control from FX. As the show flourished, becoming a critical darling and a breakout ratings success, his music as Gambino got looser and more inventive. His third album, the Parliament-Funkadelic-inspired “Awaken My Love,” released during the show’s first season in 2016, spawned the surprise radio hit “Redbone,” which won Glover his first Grammy, for best traditional R&B performance.

The single “This Is America,” released two years later with an allegorically loaded video directed by his frequent collaborator Hiro Murai, became a protest anthem and won four Grammys — including record and song of the

year — beating out Kendrick Lamar, Drake and Lady Gaga. In the same period, Glover experienced transformative change in his personal life. His father, Donald Sr., died in November 2018, months after the arrival of Glover’s second son (a third was born in 2020). Becoming a parent and losing his own father made him further reconsider where he was devoting his energy.

“I’m not 25 anymore, standing in front of a boulder like, ‘This has to move,’” he said. “You give what you can, but there’s beauty everywhere in every moment. You don’t have to build it. You don’t have to search for it.”

“Bando Stone & the New World” coalesced around a feature film idea he had years ago, about a musician recording his masterpiece on a remote island when a global calamity strikes. Glover made both the film and the album, os-

tensibly its soundtrack, after “Atlanta” wrapped its final season in 2022. Telling a story about the potential end of the world was a way for him to explore ideas about character and the meaning of work.

“I thought there was a really great journey in somebody making music and not knowing what the purpose of it was,” he said. “I feel like everybody goes through that, not just artists. That feeling of like, ‘What is any of this for?’”

Making the album forced Glover to answer those questions for himself. One factor in his decision to retire Childish Gambino was the increasing logistical difficulty of making any album — let alone one that lived up to his standards — amid multiplying obligations, including to his family, his film and television projects, and a new creative incubator and production company called Gilga.



ASHLEY McLEAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Donald Glover’s sixth, and final, album as his rap alter ego, Childish Gambino, came out Friday.

The same was true for many of his collaborators, including the producer Ludwig Göransson, who has been his key creative partner on every album since “Camp” but appears on only a few songs on “Bando.”

And then there were the macro challenges facing every popular musician today — the continued decline of album consumption, disruptions in the touring business and the difficulty of capturing a mass audience in a heavily fractured media environment. Rather than trying to reclaim the chart positions of “Redbone” and “This Is America,” Glover defined success for his new album in more personal terms.

“Success to me is, honestly, being able to put out a wide-scale album that I would listen to,” he said. “For this album, I really wanted to be able to play big rooms and have big, anthemic songs that fill those rooms, so that people feel a sense of togetherness.”

“Bando” plays like a curated archive of the Childish Gambino experience — stylistically promiscuous, aesthetically astute, lyrically provocative — with an added dose of grown-up equanimity. Its first single, “Lithonia,” channels Rivers Cuomo in the ‘90s for a barroom sing-along tuned for the end times; the opener “Hearts Are Meant to Fly” is an electro-punk battle cry pitched between Kanye West’s “Yeezus” and the Prodigy; and the shape-shifting soul/funk standout “No Excuse” skillfully marries Marvin Gaye and Fela Kuti.

**“I’m not 25 anymore, standing in front of a boulder like, ‘This has to move.’ You give what you can, but there’s beauty everywhere.”**

Fam Udeorji, Glover’s longtime co-manager, said their ambition was to create a body of work that would live with fans for the long term, citing SZA’s “SOS” as an example. “If people listen to this album and it becomes a part of their identity, if they look back a year later and are reminded of how much they listened to it and what that felt like in the summer of ‘24 — that kind of real estate is way more valuable to me” than chart metrics, he said.

Guests on the album include a farm team of rising young R&B and rap artists, among them Amaarae, Jorja Smith, Fousheé, Flo Milli and Yeat. Michael Uzowuru, a producer and composer who worked closely on the project with Glover, said the vibe in the studio was more rec room than rock star.

“We’d get there around 11 a.m. and we’d all have our Erewhon Hailey Bieber smoothies and immunity shots,” Uzowuru said. “Amaarae came in one time and she was a bit bewildered, like: ‘Y’all don’t get lit in here? Where the hoes at?’”

The wholesome energy extends to the music, which features several references to children and fatherhood, and a memorable performance from Glover’s eldest son, Legend, on the poignant two-hander “Can You Feel Me?”

Glover said that some who were around for the making of the album questioned its more tender or earnest moments. But he ultimately overruled them. At 40, there is no one left for him to be his self.

“I think grace is undervalued in the world,” he said. “When I put my son on my shoulders, I feel deep joy. That’s real. No one on their deathbed is going to look back and say, ‘Thank God I avoided being cringe.’”

## Stegosaurus fossil brings record \$44.6 million

In the contentious trade, scientists fear becoming priced out of the market

BY ZACHARY SMALL AND JULIA JACOBS

Sotheby’s has sold an unusually complete stegosaurus fossil at auction for a staggering \$44.6 million, topping the record fossil price that had previously been set by the king of the dinosaur world, the Tyrannosaurus rex.

The unexpectedly high price fetched last Wednesday — more than 10 times the low estimate — shows that the market for prehistoric specimens is continuing to explode, which concerns paleontologists who fear that scientists could be priced out of the market.

With its trademark back plates and cavernous rib cage, this stegosaurus, which is said to have walked the Earth about 150 million years ago in what is present-day Colorado, was nicknamed Apex because of its exceptional quality. It was the subject of a 15-minute bidding war with seven bidders from around the world on the phone.

The winning bidder was Kenneth Griffin, the hedge fund billionaire, according to a person familiar with the sale who was not authorized to discuss



SAKAIH YENESIL/EPFL, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

it. The Wall Street Journal first reported that Griffin, who has donated millions of dollars to dinosaur exhibits at the Field Museum in Chicago, purchased the stegosaurus.

The auction house declined to name

the winning bidder, but said that the buyer intended to “explore loaning the specimen to a U.S. institution.”

Four years ago, the commercial fossil market was jolted by the sale of a T. rex skeleton called Stan that fetched a

record \$31.8 million, setting off a gold rush for dinosaur fossils in the American West and alarm bells for academics who fear that the spiking prices could push fossils out of the reach of museums and universities wishing to study them.

Apex, the stegosaurus fossil that topped the record fossil price, was bought by an American whom a person familiar with the sale identified as Kenneth Griffin, the hedge fund billionaire.

The \$44.6 million sale of the stegosaurus fossil, which includes buyer’s fees, eclipsed the record set by Stan, which ended up at a developing natural history museum in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. Apex, which stands 11 feet tall and 27 feet long (roughly 3.4 by 8.2 meters), is among the largest of its kind.

“I’m amazed at how much it went for,” said Jim Kirkland, the state paleontologist of Utah, who was invited to examine the specimen but declined because he did not want to promote a fossil that could be sold to a private owner.

Kirkland said that from the photographs he saw of the specimen, it could be scientifically valuable because of its completeness. (It contains 254 fossil bone elements out of an approximate total of 319, the auction house said.) He said he hoped that whoever bought it would fully document it and make the data available to researchers. “The whole thing should go through a CT scan,” Kirkland said.

Jason Cooper, a commercial paleontologist, discovered Apex in 2022 when he was walking around his property — which is near the Colorado town of Dinosaur — and found a bit of femur protruding from rock. He and his colleagues excavated it the next year.

Most of the high-profile dinosaurs sold at auction have been Tyranno-

saurus rexes, the most publicly recognizable and beloved dinosaur species. Sotheby’s sold a T. rex fossil named Sue at auction for \$8.4 million in 1997, helping usher in a boom in the market for old bones. But it was the 2020 sale by Christie’s of the T. rex Stan that triggered the most recent flood of fossils in the market.

In 2022, a Deinonychus antirrhopus (the inspiration for the Velociraptor depicted in the film “Jurassic Park”) sold for \$12.4 million and a Gorgosaurus fetched \$6.1 million. That same year, Sotheby’s sold a single T. rex tooth for more than \$100,000.

But there were also signs that sellers were overestimating the value of their offerings.

Sotheby’s estimated that a T. rex skull it was auctioning in 2022 would fetch between \$15 million and \$20 million, but it sold for only \$6.1 million.

Christie’s withdrew a T. rex named Shen with a high estimate of \$25 million from a 2022 auction after scientists said data about its completeness was misleading.

Jingmai O’Connor, a paleontologist at the Field Museum in Chicago, was conducting research in Montana when she heard the news of the Apex sale. “\$44.6 million for a stegosaurus?” she said. “Sorry, the paleontologists around me are laughing.”

## CULTURE

## Focusing on stars, fancams find film love

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Creators of online clips devoted to actors make cinephilia communal

BY ESTHER ZUCKERMAN

When I first saw "Anatomy of a Fall" back at the Cannes Film Festival in 2023, I expected that the courtroom drama would be critically acclaimed. I could even imagine an Oscar win. What I did not foresee was the fancams.

These vertical video edits of clips focus on a celebrity or character, usually set to pop music. If you want to nitpick, you can also call them fan edits, especially if they involve multiple people onscreen. The fancam phenomenon grew out of the world of K-pop, where enthusiasts often make videos focusing solely on one member of a large band.

These days, my feeds are full of film and TV fancams, which I have come to love and seek out. But perhaps the most notable one was from last year and focused on Swann Arlaud in his role as the defense attorney Vincent Renzi in "Anatomy of a Fall." To the background of Rina Sawayama's song "Comme Des Garçons (Like the Boys)," he runs his fingers through his hair, he lights a cigarette, he stares intensely, he sighs. The music is timed to begin on the lyric "I'm so confident," thus signaling that Vincent is a bit of a badass. Suddenly, through a savvy bit of editing, a character actor in a serious French drama got the same treatment as a pop heartthrob.

There are other "Anatomy of a Fall" fancams, including ones dedicated to Sandra Hüller, who plays the author on trial for the death of her husband, and the sassy prosecutor trying to convict her. But there's something, dare I say, brilliant about the Arlaud fancam. For one, it's a little subversive in the way it applies the language of pop music to art cinema. It's also just an example of good editing in the way it matches Arlaud's glances and movements to the beat of the song, the lyrics of which further present him as a swaggering star — with a touch of irony, given that he's a humble, often stressed-out lawyer in the context of the movie.

The best fancams have at least some of these qualities. They feature clever, surprising uses of music, highlight films or stars you wouldn't necessarily expect to get this kind of treatment, and are energetically put together. In that way, the fancam itself has become its own art form and a great platform for cinephiles to show their ardent devotion.

The Parisian creator of the Arlaud fancam, who goes by @ginafancam and asked not to share her full name, told me over email: "It's my way to pay tribute to the film. Some prefer to tell their love of cinema by writing a review, for example, but I prefer to do it by editing." She added that she was happy that her creation "encouraged



At left, the filmmaker Justine Triet, wearing sunglasses, in Cannes in 2023 flanked by her stars Swann Arlaud and Sandra Hüller. Fancams have since been created about both. Below, Mike Faist, left, and Josh O'Connor in "Challengers." They have also inspired fancam makers.



METRO GOLDWYN MAYER PICTURES

people from all over the world to watch a French auteur film."

Sure, there's a baser impulse at the heart of some fancams: physical attraction. (The Arlaud one made note of his sex appeal.) They are the modern-day equivalent of putting a poster on a bedroom wall or filling a scrapbook with cutouts from teen magazines. If fancams had been popular when I was

a kid, I would have been making them featuring Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

For a recent example of fancams as hubba-hubba content, look to the Disney+ "Star Wars" series "The Acolyte." As soon as it was revealed that Manny Jacinto's character, Qimir, was a hunky Sith with bulging arms, my "For You" page on X started flooding with Qimir

cams highlighting his smoldering villainy.

The lust quotient is why a film like Luca Guadagnino's "Challengers" exploded in the fancam realm with its sweaty threesome of lusty tennis pros played by Zendaya, Josh O'Connor and Mike Faist. There are edits focusing entirely on Zendaya's Tashi, others devoted to O'Connor's Patrick, and more for Faist's Art, plus various combinations of the three.

Still, the most impressive videos are those with a bit of creative spark, like one that set clips of the thinly veiled sexual tension between Patrick and Art to the sounds of Tinashe's hit "Nasty." After Tinashe sings, "Is somebody gonna match my nasty," we see Art dropping a piece of gum he's been chewing into Patrick's hand. Question answered.

Perhaps my favorite "Challengers" cam, however, is dedicated to Patrick, and is scored to a Lana Del Rey ballad. Her lyrics about a "man-child" are perfectly matched to Patrick's scruffy immaturity. Linking that song, about choosing an emotionally stunted man, with O'Connor's longing eyes makes perfect sense, and yet is somehow not the obvious choice. "Why wait for the best when I could have you" could

have been a line uttered by Tashi herself, but is instead purred by Del Rey. A more rote choice would have been the Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross score from the film, which has been done, but instead Del Rey's warble elevates the material as O'Connor peers into Guadagnino's dreamy lens.

This is why the best fancams are the ones that feel delightfully random. I get giggles thinking about an edit of Bill Hader in the HBO series "Barry" set to the Olivia Rodrigo song "Brutal." There's a wonderful absurdity in pairing the malaise of a middle-aged hit man and wannabe actor with Rodrigo's punky ode to teenage angst. Meanwhile, Charli XCX's acclaimed new album, "Brat," has offered a lot of fodder for fancam makers. I thought there was great ingenuity in syncing her "Mean Girls" to images of Robert Downey Jr., Benny Safdie and Dane DeHaan, who all play opponents of the title character in "Oppenheimer."

Lauren Vinton, an 18-year-old from Ventura County, Calif., paired "365," Charli XCX's frantic song about a party girl lifestyle, with Tom Cruise's frantic behavior in "Jerry Maguire."

"His character in that movie is having a full-on mental breakdown," she said in a phone interview. "He's all

over the place, and Charli XCX, her music is all over the place, and I want to bring those two together and try to make something funny out of it, give people a little chuckle."

Vinton is a big Tom Cruise fan who has created multiple edits centering on him, but he's not her only focus. She recently posted a fancam dedicated to Austin Butler in "The Bikeriders." She's also an aspiring filmmaker who, as of now, hopes to become a professional editor. "I think making fancams has paved that way for me," she said.

Vinton explained that fancams were both fun for her and an act of film advocacy. They can persuade her peers to see the movie she's celebrating. "I have this thing where it's like, if I like a movie, I want everyone else to like the movie," she said.

It's a sentiment that I find heartwarming. Because while I enjoy fancams in part for their silliness, they are also a touching way of expressing affection for the art of film and television. It takes time and dedication to make a good fancam, meaning their creators are poring over footage, finding just the right moment to use, analyzing each frame. They are proof that cinephilia isn't dead, it has just morphed.

## When gangland was Jewish

BOOK REVIEW

**The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum: The Rise and Fall of an Organized-Crime Boss**  
By Margalit Fox. Random House. 336 pp. \$32.

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

BY DEBBY APPLIGATE

One hundred years ago, New York City was in the midst of what newspapers decried as "a Jewish crime wave." The causes were complex, but most observers at the time laid the blame on Prohibition, which created a lucrative black market for alcohol overnight.

"Shifty-eyed boys of the slums," a reporter noted in 1922, "suddenly began to wear \$200 suits of clothes, to flash five-carat diamonds, to drive high-powered cars, to shoot craps for \$100 a throw." Led by Arnold Rothstein (nickname: "the Brain") and fueled by the phenomenal profits of the bootleg booze trade, Jews by the mid-1920s dominated the illicit industries of gambling, narcotics, labor racketeering and loan-sharking in the city.

The sordid but riveting history of the Jewish contribution to organized crime is told in two exuberant new true-crime books, "The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum," by Margalit Fox, and "The Incurruptibles," by Dan Slater. Together these books chronicle the heyday of the Jewish underworld on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, from the Gilded Age, when Jews began challenging Irish control of gangland, through the Jazz Age, when the Italian mob began to wrest away power.

Fox and Slater, each a seasoned journalist and author, write in a breezy,

fast-paced style. They revel in the Dickensian details of the demimonde — the colorful lingo, intricate professional techniques and social snobberies of the criminal classes — looping through decades of political and economic history that spills over into chatty footnotes. We learn how to blow a safe, poison a horse, manipulate a stock, bribe a cop and shoplift a bolt of silk. Who knew that the floor managers at Macy's doubled as pimps who enticed shopgirls into the sex trade or that hatpins could be wielded as weapons?

"The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum" serves up a platonic ideal of the criminal mastermind. Fredericka Mandelbaum was a clever 25-year-old in 1850 when she arrived in the United States from Germany. Her husband, Wolf, worked as a peddler, and Mandelbaum began her career the same way, hawking lace door-to-door on the Lower East Side. By 30, she had established herself as a reliable "fence," a receiver and seller of stolen goods. Converting plunder into clean cash is critical in any underground economy. But Mandelbaum had grander ambitions. She began cultivating her own army of skilled pickpockets, shoplifters, housebreakers, bank robbers, safecrackers, metalsmiths and black-market vendors, aided by scores of unscrupulous policemen, magistrates and politicians.

Soon Mandelbaum was commissioning major heists. In 1869 she pulled off what was then the largest bank burglary in American history, stealing nearly \$1 million (close to \$20 million today). By the mid-1880s an estimated \$10 million worth of goods had passed through her hands (approximately \$300 million now).

In 1884, the police finally mustered enough evidence — and gumption — to arrest her. But when they released her on bail, she fled to Canada, taking nearly \$1 million worth of loot with her. She died in exile, still running a small



Two murderers, Harry "Gyp the Blood" Horowitz (seated, left) and Louis "Lefty Louie" Rosenberg (seated, right), in 1912.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

fencing operation in Ontario.

"The Incurruptibles" picks up the narrative where Fox leaves off, in the 1890s, as immigrants from Russia, Poland and Hungary began flooding into New York.

Slater offers a more panoramic view of the underworld, framing his story as an epic battle between the gangsters, with their co-conspirators in law enforcement, and a small cadre of Jewish reformers — "the Incurruptibles" — who are determined to clean

up the Lower East Side.

Many of these villains, like Big Jack Zelig, Louis "Lefty Louie" Rosenberg and Mother Rosie Hertz, are longtime legends. Slater gives center stage to Arnold Rothstein, the infamous dean of gangland, who was accused of fixing the 1919 World Series and inspired F. Scott Fitzgerald to write "The Great Gatsby." In the mode of Mrs. Mandelbaum, Rothstein was a criminal visionary who commanded a national network of bookmakers, bootleggers,

blackmailers, drug dealers, con artists and corrupt lawmen. His murder in 1928 marked the beginning of the end for Jewish dominance of the underworld.

Both Fox and Slater stress that organized crime depends on organized corruption: the crooked cops, judges and politicians who serve as the "Bureau for the Prevention of Conviction," to borrow a phrase from one former police chief. Unfortunately, the men in blue rarely come alive on the page the

way their criminal colleagues do. But Slater finds an exception in the character of Abraham Shoenfeld, an undercover investigator, vigilante and chronicler of the twilight world. He is the rare moral crusader who is as fascinating as his foes. Six feet tall, with beefy forearms, a booming voice and an air of "Hungarian arrogance," Shoenfeld was a brilliant autodidact who left school after ninth grade to fight crime in his community. "I was, plainly, very angry; maybe this is an understatement of my feelings," he recalled. "I keenly felt the shame and disgrace that the men and women [of the underworld] were heaping on the body of law-abiding and respectable Jews."

Yet Shoenfeld was no outsider like Nick Carraway, gaping at the gaudy gangsters. He was one of them, a childhood pal of Lefty Louie and former lover of Tony the Tough, a prostitute turned labor union *shtarker* (a thug hired to beat up scabs) turned vigilante. When Judah Magnes, the rabbi at the wealthy uptown German synagogue Temple Emanu-El, expressed shock that Jews were involved in the sex trade, Shoenfeld was unfazed. "If it is any consolation, sir, there is no Jewish way of being a whore," he replied.

No one understood the shadowy world of the Lower East Side better, in all its perverse ingenuity. If we know more about the Jewish demimonde than we do about the Italian or the Irish, it is not because the Jews were any more criminal than their neighbors. It is because the Italians and the Irish did not produce their own Abe Shoenfeld, whose candid, firsthand reports from the heart of the ghetto remain unrivaled.

Debbi Applegate is the author of "The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher," for which she won a Pulitzer Prize, and, most recently, "Madam: The Biography of Polly Adler, Icon of the Jazz Age."

## TRAVEL

## Retracing the classic route of the Orient Express

Book the legendary ride for a fraction of the cost, with a little improvising

BY MICHAEL HARMON

Mention the Orient Express to most people, and you're likely to conjure up visions of the private five-star luxury train — Belmond's Venice Simplon-Orient-Express — whose meticulously restored coaches feature every conceivable Belle Époque bell and whistle: long stretches of mirror-finish mahogany, sophisticated silver service, a pianist taking after-dinner requests at the lounge car's baby grand.

That train primarily runs overnight excursions between Paris and Venice. For two travelers sharing a sleeper, prices start at 3,530 British pounds, or around \$4,500 per person — but once a year, the V.S.O.E. takes five nights to retrace the classic route from Paris to Istanbul. For a solo traveler, the cost of admission is £35,000 — and that's for the smallest cabin.

Thanks to Europe's night train renaissance, though, it's now possible, for the first time in years, to travel from Paris to Istanbul on regularly scheduled sleepers, with just two planned changes of trains, in Vienna and Bucharest.

Not only can you book this improvised Orient Express online, you can also reserve private sleeping compartments for the entire trip for less than \$1,000.

It was a trip I had always wanted to take. And so, one balmy evening last July, I found myself under the soaring glass canopy of the Gare de l'Est in Paris — from which the first Orient Express had departed 140 years earlier — with tickets in my pocket for a trip 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) east to the shores of the Bosphorus, on an unbroken ribbon of rail.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES



THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sure, there'd be no pianist in the lounge car — nor a piano, nor a lounge car. And the trip takes at least four days, with two lengthy layovers. But not even a surprise downgrade to third class (that would come later) could have lessened my excitement when "Wien" flashed onto the digital departure board. I spotted the rake of blue sleeper cars across the station and lit out for Track 5 and the far edge of Europe.

#### THE NIGHTJET

The Austrian Railways (ÖBB) Nightjet train to Vienna left with little fanfare: just a blast of the whistle and we were off.

The sun was streaming into my compartment as we picked up speed through the outskirts of Paris, and there was a laid-back camaraderie on the train as everyone settled in for the 15-hour journey ahead. In the corridor, I met a music student on his way back to school in Vienna and an Austrian couple heading home to Linz, a reminder that overland travel in Europe is a fact of life, rather than a novelty or an exercise in nostalgia.

That said, this train does have a claim to the Orient Express name. Between Belmond's V.S.O.E. and Accor's ultra-luxe rival starting next year, it's easy to forget that the real Orient Express trundled on for decades past its interwar heyday: After its final Paris-Istanbul run in 1977, the train was cut back to Paris-Bucharest, then Paris-Budapest, then Paris-Vienna, before fading from the timetable altogether in 2009. Since then, ÖBB has led the charge of reviving Europe's night trains, adding Paris to its expanding Nightjet sleeper network in 2021.

For this trip, I'd sprung for the top-of-the-line single deluxe sleeper with an en suite toilet and, sensationally, a shower.

"Breakfast will be around 8 o'clock," said our sleeping-car attendant, Melanie, stopping by to take my order. The scenery had opened up, and our train was blasting through the French countryside as I tucked into the Algerian mhadjeb wrap I'd bought at the Belleville street market in Paris. (While the Nightjet does have a room service dinner menu, it lacks a communal restaurant car.)

An unplanned stop at Châlons-en-Champagne gave me a chance to talk to some fellow overlanders, as we stretched our legs on the platform waiting for a freight train to pass. One

Clockwise from top: the Dacia Train from Vienna to Bucharest; a map of the do-it-yourself Orient Express; Austrian Railways's Nightjet, which has comfortable compartments with seats that fold down and make room for beds; the Bosphorus Express, which passes through the countryside on its way to Dimitrovgrad, Bulgaria; and the town of Sighisoara, in the Transylvania region of Romania, one of the stops on the Dacia Train.

young man, grounded from flying by an ear condition, had come by train and ferry all the way from Ireland; a couple from London, grounded by Daisy the cockapoo, were en route to Croatia.

We stood marveling at the fiery sunset until the whistle called us back onboard, and after the wobbly thrill of showering on a speeding train, I climbed into bed, catching a glimpse of the Big Dipper before the electric whine of the Nightjet lulled me to sleep.

#### THE DACIA EXPRESS

The next morning in Vienna, I stepped out of the train and into a July heat wave, which melted away most of my grand ambitions for the 10-hour Viennese layover the journey requires. Catching a tram to the city center, I decided, in the spirit of the trip, to stay on until the end of the line in leafy Nussdorf, where the stately old terminal now houses a restaurant; its back garden beckoned me to fully embrace "slow travel" and linger over a long lunch with a book and some ice-cold white wine.

I was back at the station by 7 p.m., armed with a schnitzel sandwich for dinner — I had read there would be no dining car on this train, either (nor the next one, for that matter). Eventually, after an hour's delay (they'd been looking for a driver), the night train to Bucharest barreled in, its sky-blue sleeping cars, emblazoned with VAGON DE DORMIT and the logo of CFR Calatori, the passenger division of Romanian Railways, giving it an exotic air of having come from far away.

The Dacia Express takes more than 18 hours to travel from Vienna to Bucharest, where it arrives in the afternoon.

Taking advantage of the fact that the Dacia passes through Transylvania, I opted to further break up my trip with two nights in the preserved medieval citadel of Sighisoara, about six hours



up the line from Romania's capital.

It's luck of the draw if you'll land a sleeper with an en suite bathroom on the Dacia, which like most night trains has shared toilets and showers at the end of each car; mine had only a wash basin, but my compartment was clean, cool and spacious.

It felt great to be on the move again, and as we hurtled toward Hungary I poked my head through the open door of my neighbors' compartment and asked cheerily where they were going.

"Istanbul!" answered Sabine Mader, 57, traveling with her son Josef, 17, on a rail adventure from Berlin. "At least, we are trying to! We hope to get tickets as soon as we arrive in Bucharest."

The direct Bucharest-Istanbul service, reintroduced in 2022, is in fact a single Turkish Railways couchette car (a notch below a proper sleeper, with padded bunks rather than real beds) carried relay-race style by three connecting Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish trains.

Called the Bosphorus Express, it's a multinational effort that can be elusive in online timetables (and requires picking up a physical ticket), but it can be reserved online, news which delighted my neighbors.

With tickets secured through Josef's phone, Sabine opened a bottle of sparkling wine to toast our success. Sitting in their compartment swapping

stories felt like the Platonic ideal of night train travel, and the Dacia had more in store: a stop at Budapest's breathtaking Keleti station, bathed in yellow lamplight, followed by the sleeper train ritual of middle-of-the-night passport checks in one's pajamas.

The next morning, I hopped off in Sighisoara for some medieval R&R, catching the Dacia again two days later for the daytime ride through the Carpathian Mountains and finally into Bucharest's bustling Gara di Nord, where I picked up my ticket for the next train to Istanbul.

#### THE BOSPORUS EXPRESS

"Where's the Turkish car?"

I stared, slack-jawed, at Train 461. The Turkish couchette car was nowhere in sight. In its place was a forlorn-looking two-car Romanian train — the one the couchette car should have been attached to — and a vague explanation from a Romanian conductor that yes, the Turkish car was "broken," so yes, this was today's train to Istanbul.

My heart sank. I climbed onboard, and before my disappointment could turn to panic (the two cars were "sitters," not sleepers, and Istanbul was a 19-hour ride away), a whistle blew and I flopped into a seat next to three young men

speaking quietly to one another in French.

"Istanbul, right?" I asked anxiously.

"Yes, we hope!" Our train had just lurched forward, so this was mildly reassuring.

Eliaz Bourez, Adrien Godefroy and Yann Berthier, all 24 and traveling across Europe on Interrail passes, were riding the rails to Istanbul because it's "as far as you can go," Mr. Godefroy said. "And we've been dreaming about this train the whole trip."

Mr. Berthier jumped in: "With the plate on the side saying 'Istanbul!' framing it with his hands. 'But where is it?' I was so ready to take that photo!"

We were all a little nervous about what lay ahead, a question the entire train car was soon pondering in a scene that would have made Agatha Christie proud. We reasoned we would have to catch the three successive trains that normally haul the couchette car to Istanbul, but one question loomed large: whether the Turkish sleeper from Sofia, our final train, would have beds for us for the overnight leg of our odyssey.

Mr. Bourez shrugged hopefully. "We have to roll with it."

And we did. Six hours, two passport checks, and one locomotive swap later, after rolling through sunflower fields

and clattering across the enormous "Friendship Bridge" over the mighty Danube, we reached the Bulgarian junction town of Gorna Oryahovitsa, where we apprehensively eyed our next ride.

Baking in the 90-degree heat two platforms over, the Gorna-Dimitrovgrad train's two graffitied coaches made our Romanian railcar look like the V.S.O.E. Its wide-open windows confirmed our worst fears — no air-conditioning — as we hoisted ourselves onboard. I slumped into a stuffy sitting compartment with Jan Géhant, another young Interrailer, and our French friends.

"How long are we on this one?" Mr. Géhant, 19, wondered aloud. The group turned toward me; I had studied the timetable.

"Five hours."

They groaned. "But," I added, "it should be a scenic ride."

It was magnificent. As we climbed slowly into the mountains along the snaking single-track line, the jointed rail clack-clacking beneath us, a staggering panorama unfolded, each S-turn revealing a more spectacular gorge or lushly green peak than the last.

I drank in the deliciously cool air and considered my luck. Had it been a normal day on the Bosphorus Express, ensconced in a private air-conditioned couchette, I couldn't have stuck my head out the window like a golden retriever, or flung open the manual doors at every remote alpine halt to wave to the uniformed stationmasters. I might have missed the invigorating chill of each tunnel lit up by sparks flying off our locomotive or the joy of a picnic with new friends as we descended the mountain pass.

And we certainly wouldn't have arrived in the humid purgatory of Dimitrovgrad euphoric to find that the sleeper from Sofia, just by luck, had exactly enough spare beds for everyone.

Bunking with Mr. Géhant in an immaculately clean two-bed compartment, I spotted the Turkish crescent on the window and broke into a huge grin.

A few hours after midnight, we reached the suburban station of Halkali, the current end of the line for international trains to Istanbul. There, I caught the Marmaray — the world's only intercontinental commuter train — for the short ride to its last stop in Europe.

Six days after leaving Paris, I was in Istanbul. The trip had stayed true to the myth of the train that inspired it: comfortable, convivial — and a genuine adventure.

#### IF YOU GO

For planning a train trip across Europe (or anywhere), Mark Smith's website *The Man in Seat 61* is an indispensable resource. Check for the latest timetables and booking instructions.

I paid 371 euros, about \$398, on the Nightjet and €253 on the Dacia, for top-end, private sleeping compartments; choosing a shared sleeper or couchette cuts the cost considerably. Both trains run year-round and can be booked through ÖBB, while the summer-only Bosphorus Express can be reserved through CFR.

In Istanbul, until the classic line to Sirkeci reopens to international trains, buy a reloadable Istanbulkart at Halkali to ride the Marmaray. For maximum historical accuracy, continue to the Pera Palace hotel.