

Donald and Me / Is Apple the Next Yahoo?

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08.19.2016 / VOL. 167 / NO. 06



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WHOLE LAVA LOVE:
Seventh grade science students at the Harlem Village Academy Charter School in New York City react to a demonstration re-creating the effects of a volcano.

20 Terrorism
Manna From Hitler

NEW WORLD

42 Innovation
Glasses Half Full

44 Business
Been There, Gonna Do That...

46 Autism
One Big Mystery, Many Autisms

50 Memory
Memories Aren't Made of This

DOWNTIME

54 Swimwear
Itsy-Bitsy, Teeny-Weeny Outrage

57 Los Angeles
You're 100% Wrong About Driving in L.A.

58 Journalism
When Red Pencils Ruled the Earth

60 Holocaust
The Long Crawl to Freedom

64 Rewind
50 Years



FOR MORE HEADLINES,
GO TO NEWSWEEK.COM

FEATURES

22 The New American Cop

America's police officers are better trained, better educated and more diverse than their predecessors. But in the era of social media, Black Lives Matter and targeted killings, they've never felt more despised. *by Max Kutner*

32 Goin' Old School

The nationwide school reform movement has stalled—and that may be a good thing. *by Alexander Nazaryan*

COVER CREDIT: ILLUSTRATION BY ALVARO DOMINGUEZ

DEPARTMENTS

BIG SHOTS

- 4 **Rio de Janeiro**
Game On
- 6 **Istanbul**
Post-Coup Bounce
- 8 **Tokyo**
Time to Go?
- 10 **Sirte, Libya**
Target ISIS

PAGE ONE

- 12 **Politics**
The Patriot Act
- 18 **China**
A Chinese *Midnight Express*?

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HOW WORLD CLASS WHISKY IS MADE IN TAIWAN

SPAIN IS FAMED for its fiery chorizo, finest Rioja and Tempranillo wines, and fleshy olives and oils. But for Kavalan Whisky, the country's sherry casks are the big prize.

In March this year, the Kavalan Solist Amontillado Sherry was named the World Whiskies Awards' (WWA) "World's Best Single Cask Single Malt Whisky." In June, Kavalan's Solist Moscatel Sherry won a "Best in Show" award from the San Francisco World Spirits Competition.

Both have been carefully matured by Kavalan over the past few years in Spanish sherry casks used previously for Amontillado and Moscatel. Another two whiskies aged in Manzanilla and Pedro Ximenez casks will also be available in the US in autumn.

MATURATION INTENSIFIED

BUT A FEW years for maturation? Not the usual 10 years?

That question has intrigued experts since 2010, the year that Kavalan leapt onto the world stage. That year, at just a few years old, the Taiwanese distillery came from nowhere to win a Times of London blind taste testing. It also won its first international awards and was included in Ian Buxton's 101 Whiskies to Try Before You Die.

Then, no one could believe a new whisky could achieve the depths of a much older whisky. Today, after more than 190 gold medals, the whisky world is gradually shifting its view.

Kavalan's key is Taiwan's humidity and heat, which intensify the whisky's extraction of the oak barrels. The result is accelerated maturation.

CASK STRENGTH

FROM THERE, what makes Kavalan different is its breadth and depth of flavour. Last year, Kavalan's Solist Vinho Barrique, matured in charred red and white wine barrels, was crowned the best single malt on Earth by the WWA. To capture its flavour range, judges depicted a harvest of prunes, fruit cake, clove, chilli, dry cinnamon, walnut, hazelnut, caramel, coffee-vanilla, fudge, and even marzipan.

But how exactly does Kavalan achieve these flavours? Kavalan founder Mr YT Lee says it's all down to the cask and Kavalan's charring techniques: "Casks influence up to 70% of the liquor's quality, aroma and flavour," says Mr Lee. "That's why the oak of the cask and the type of the cask are very important."

While the whisky breathes and sleeps in barrels over successive summers and winters, it is capable of a kind of magic, transferring a whole spectrum of delicious vanillas, caramels and woody flavours from the wood into the liquor.

During the hotter months of April to September, Kavalan closes the windows of its two maturation warehouses to keep the heat in and speed up this extraction. For the rest of the year, windows are thrown

open to let in the cold winter air in from Siberia, allowing the casks to breathe again and aid oxidation.

DIVERSITY AND COMPLEXITY

AT THE YILAN distillery, Kavalan's 60,000 aging barrels feature ex-bourbon, sherry, brandy, port and other red and white wine casks. Kavalan's wood of choice is American oak, which has fewer tannins compared to European oak.

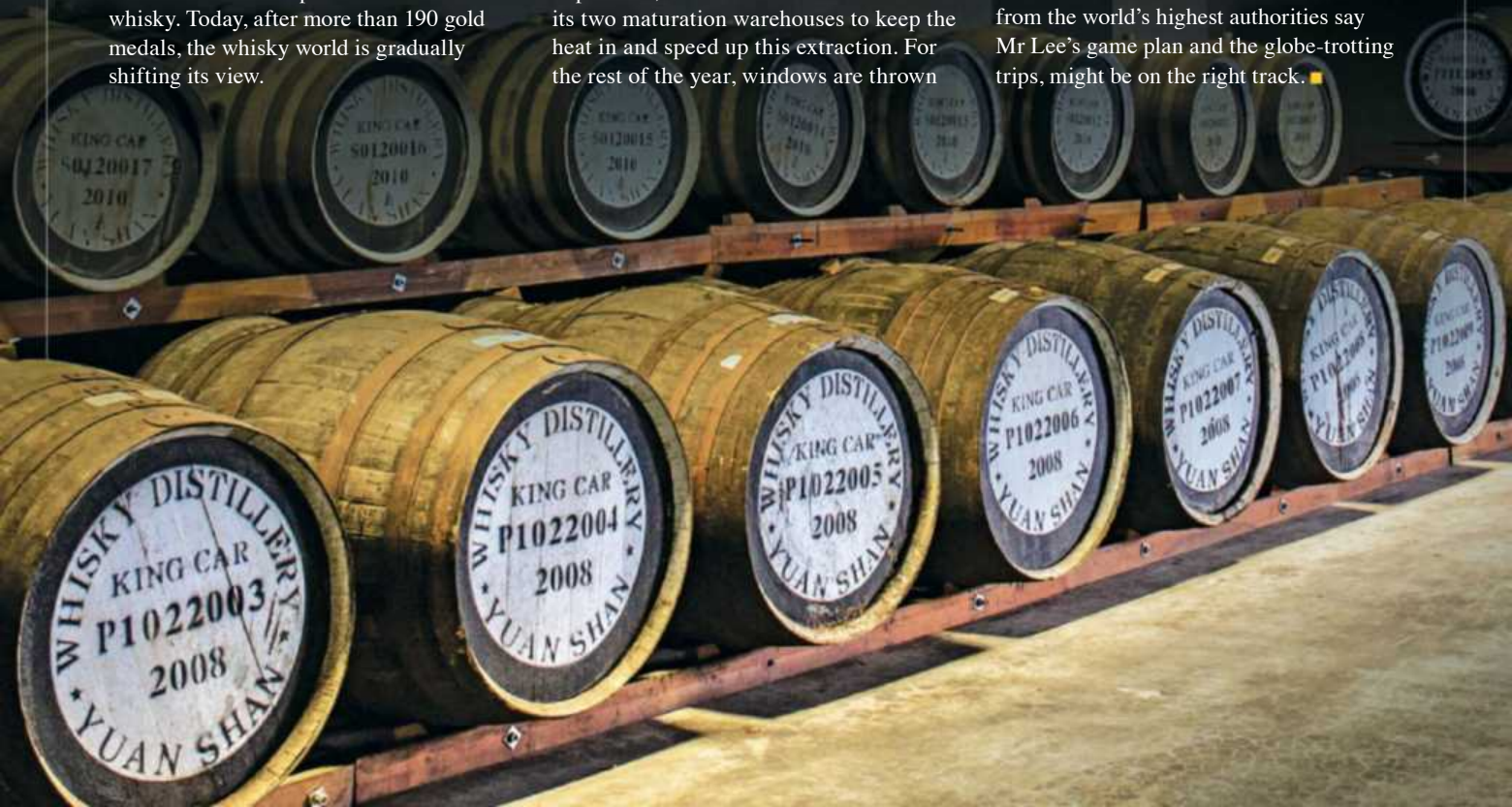
"Mr Lee likes us to use as many casks as possible to diversify the character and complexity of Kavalan's whisky," says Kavalan master blender Ian Chang. With a bigger array of casks, a blender can offer a whole world of flavours across his portfolio of whiskies.

And so, Spain happens to be just one of the countries on Kavalan's annual itinerary. Pit stops are also made in America, France, South Africa and Portugal, with award-winning barrels not limited to Spain. In July, Portuguese port casks netted the Kavalan Solist Port a highly acclaimed "Gold Outstanding" award from the International Wine and Spirit Competition.

SYMPHONY PERFORMANCE

MR LEE likes to say his "Solist" single cask whiskies – based on the word "soloist" -- are like single musical notes. Together they form a growing warehouse that makes up a symphony orchestra.

Kavalan still has time on its hands to develop its orchestra. But 190 gold medals from the world's highest authorities say Mr Lee's game plan and the globe-trotting trips, might be on the right track. ■





BIG SHOTS

BRAZIL

Game On

Rio de Janeiro—Fireworks explode over Maracanã Stadium, with the Mangueira favela community in the foreground, during the opening ceremony for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games on August 5. The games have been plagued by problems, from delays and corruption in construction to the Zika virus. On the first day of the competition, fans were kept waiting for hours at security checkpoints, and a string of violent criminal incidents kept visitors on edge. The opening ceremony was relatively simple compared with its predecessors, perhaps a reflection of Brazil's economic crisis, which has left some in Rio's poor neighborhoods questioning the massive spending on the games.



MARIO TAMA



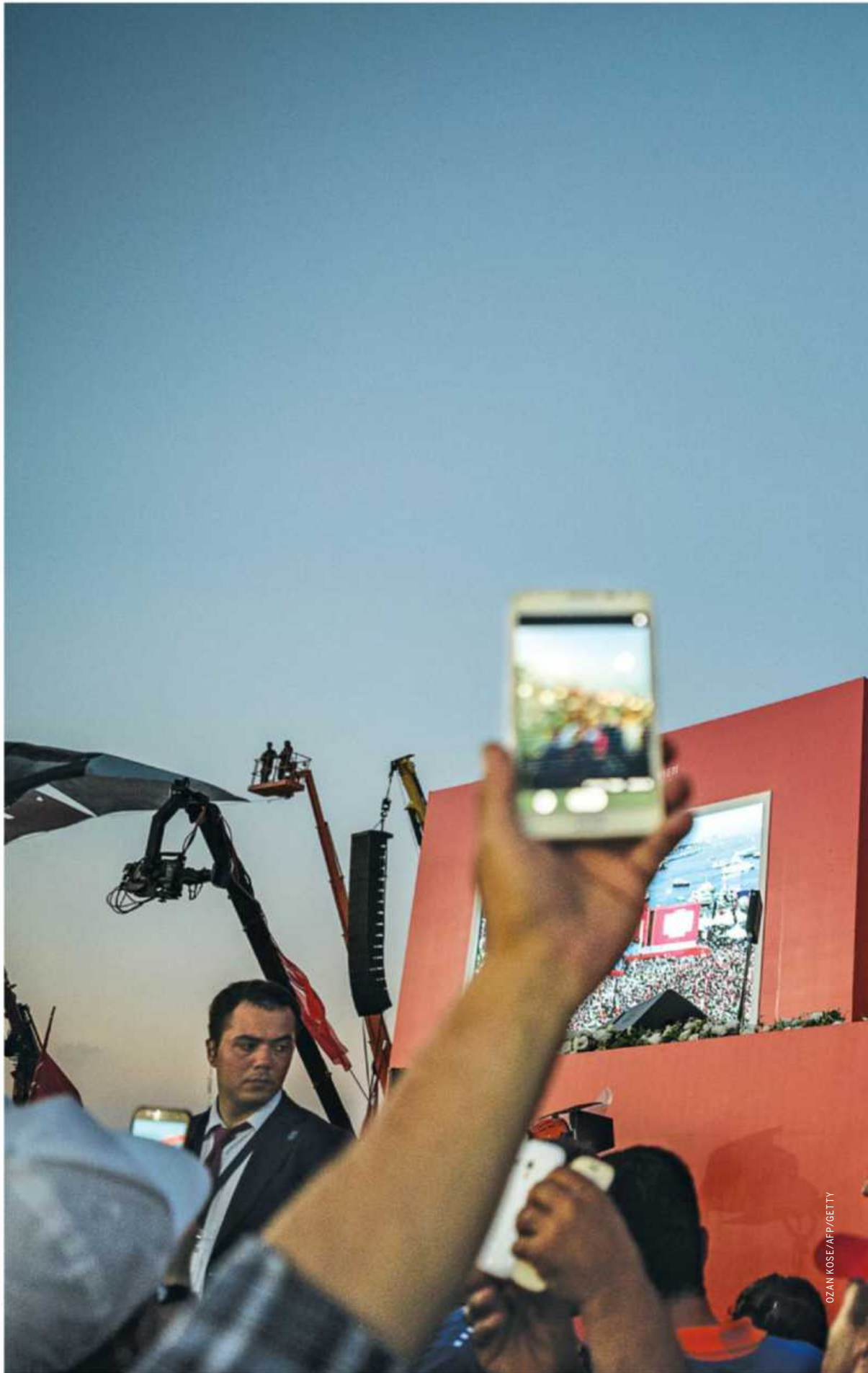
TURKEY

Post-Coup Bounce

Istanbul—Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses supporters on August 7 at a massive rally against last month's failed military coup. According to Reuters, the crowd at the rally was too big to be contained in a parade ground designed to hold more than a million people. Erdogan, whose Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002 on a platform of moderate Islamism, has used the attempted coup to cement his power and clamp down on opposition, purging thousands from the military and judiciary and arresting dozens of journalists.



OZAN KOSE



OZAN KOSE/AFP/GETTY



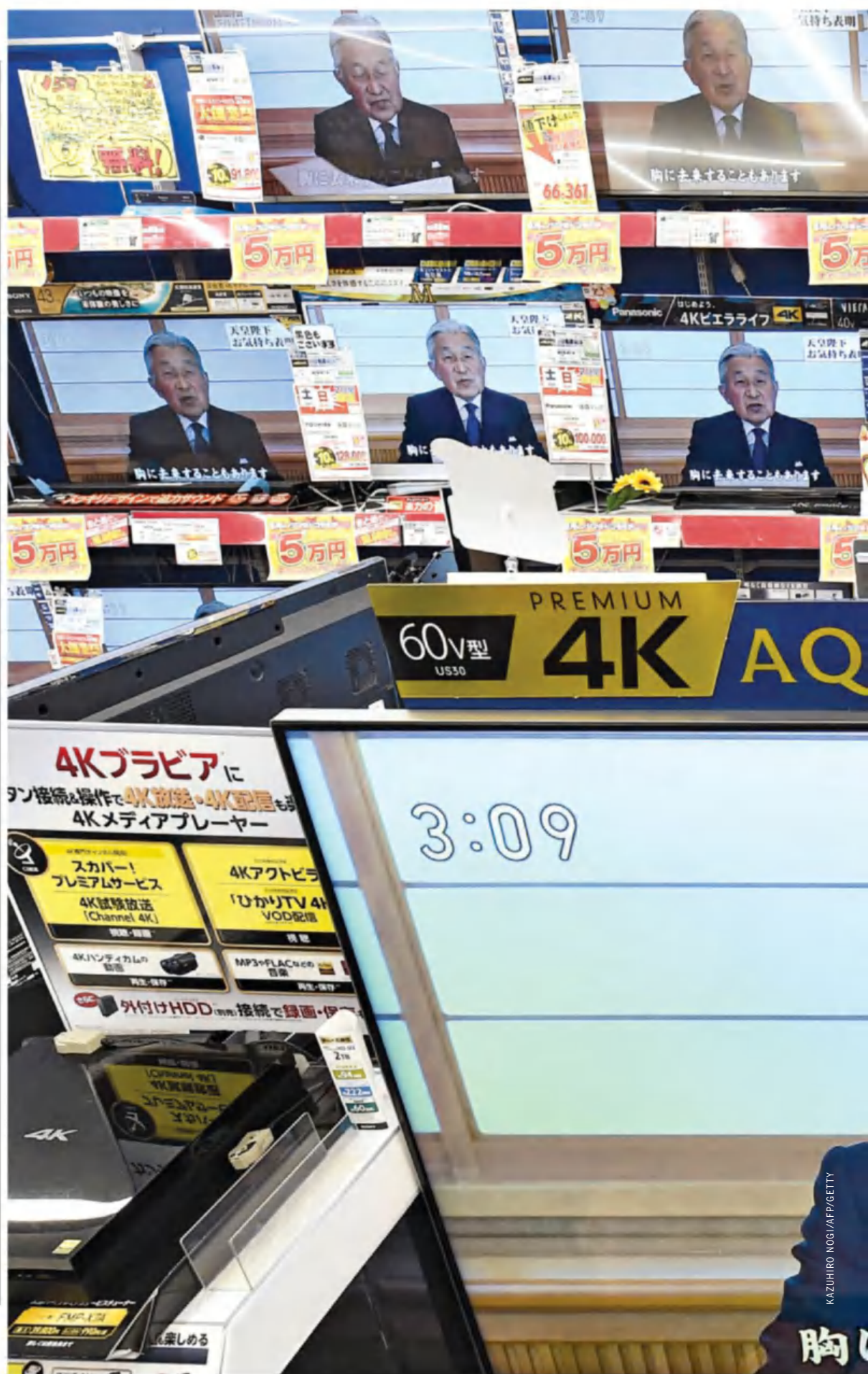
BIG SHOTS

JAPAN

Time to Go?

Tokyo—Japanese Emperor Akihito makes a rare speech to the nation on August 8, saying his advanced age and poor health mean he may not be able to carry out his duties. The 82-year-old emperor, who has had heart surgery and prostate cancer, appeared to be suggesting he wants to abdicate, which would be an unprecedented move in modern Japan and require a change in the law.

KAZUHIRO NOGI



KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY

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LIBYA

**Target
ISIS**

Sirte, Libya—Libyan forces allied with the U.N.-backed government fire a rocket at Islamic State fighters on August 4. The United States launched airstrikes against ISIS targets there in early August at the request of the government, which has been trying since May to take back the city seized by militants in early 2015. The U.S. intervention marked an expansion of its fight against ISIS, which has built up a powerful network in Libya from its stronghold in the coastal city of Sirte, which was Muammar el-Qaddafi's hometown.



GORAN TOMASEVIC



P A G E O N E

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CHINA

MIGRANTS

CRIME

BUSINESS

THE SCOOP

THE PATRIOT ACT

An open letter to House Speaker Paul Ryan explaining why he must denounce Donald Trump

MR. SPEAKER,

History rarely presents the opportunity to prove our character. Usually, we stumble through an election year, caught up in petty bickering and the occasional raging controversy that soon fades from public consciousness. Few people today can identify Quemoy and Matsu, even though they were major issues in the Kennedy-Nixon presidential race of 1960. What about the Guaranteed Access Plan? Debategate? Or list any of the other bursts of fire that streak across the firmament every four years, issues that seem so important but soon burn out and are forgotten.

This is not one of those years, Mr. Speaker. These are dangerous times for America and the world. What America does in this election will affect our allies, our enemies, our children.

As youths, many of us read in history books about people who stood by and allowed horrors to unfold, and assured ourselves we would have challenged demagogues, regardless of the consequences. Now we are adults and face our first real chance to prove that. And so, Mr. Speaker, I

ask you—in the first of a series of open letters to you over the next few weeks about the dangers posed by Donald Trump and his many secrets—to do what you know you must: Condemn your party's presidential candidate. Condemn Trump as someone who does not represent the values of the Republican Party nor America. Condemn him as a danger to the United States.

Would doing this cost you your seat in Congress? Probably. But others have sacrificed far more—those crippled while fighting tyrants overseas, those who died at the hands of racists at home while pursuing justice.

Imagine how history will view you for staying silent. If Trump is elected president, you—as the most prominent leader in the Republican Party—will be responsible for his actions. You will not be able to control him, no more than his campaign team, nor his bankers, nor his business partners could control him. As someone who first covered Trump's business dealings decades ago, I assure you that the petty bully

BY
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ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY

+
CASTING A PAUL:
People who know
Trump say Ryan
is delusional if
he thinks he can
control Trump or
even mitigate the
damage he'd do
as president.

HE WON'T HAVE YOUR BACK: People who have covered Trump's business career for decades say that he has always been reckless with investors' money, and the truth.

ANDREW HARRER / BLOOMBERG/GETTY



who mocked the family of an Army vet killed in battle is not a political novice who needs only to educate himself. That hate-filled man is the real Donald Trump, the one business reporters have known for over 40 years—reckless, narcissistic, lacking all self-awareness, eager to lash out at anyone who tells him what he does not want to hear. No intervention will help; you cannot transform a wild bull into a gazelle with conversation. His business strategy—proclaim his greatness, declare that he would create the greatest and the best and the most profitable, never explain how and ultimately fail, strewing wreckage that destroys everyone who believed him—is the same one he is following on the campaign trail. And would pursue in the White House.

In decades to come, your children and grandchildren will ask, “Why didn’t you do something?” Some conservatives of character, like Erick Erickson, Jonah Goldberg, Max Boot, Lindsey Graham and Mitt Romney, have denounced Trump. They would rather their party lose the White House in 2016 than turn America’s future over to an unstable man who could well gain access to the nuclear codes. Speaker Ryan, you and other Republicans who care about conservatism, who care about America, must set aside the petty differences that separate our nation’s great parties and join all those fighting to stop this man. Patriotism must trump tribalism.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE PROFLIGACY

“The thing you don’t understand about Donald Trump is that he’s mentally ill.”

One of Trump’s most senior executives said those words to me in the summer of 1990. I knew this person was not qualified to make a clinical diagnosis, but it was disturbing that one of the developer’s lieutenants would say such a thing to a reporter and clearly mean it. A few days earlier, I had written a piece for *The New York Times* that lampooned Trump—who had just agreed to cut back his personal spending to *only* \$450,000 a month as part of an agreement with his panicking lenders—and he seemed to have no idea how he came off in the story. Another billionaire was quoted saying such profligacy was incomprehensible, but what made Trump sound truly nutty was that even though the world knew his finances were collapsing, the revelation of his astonishing extravagance did not embarrass him.

“A little more moderation would be good,” Trump said about his \$450,000-a-month limit. “Of course, my life hasn’t exactly been one of moderation.”

The oddness of Trump’s behavior, as well as his lack of awareness that the country was making fun of him, didn’t surprise me. It fit right in with all the other odd behavior he had proudly displayed to me and other reporters. I first interviewed Trump in October 1987, and it didn’t take long for me to conclude there was something wrong with him. At the time, I was a novice reporter, having started on the business news section of the *Times* three days before. I contacted

YOU CANNOT TRANSFORM A WILD BULL INTO A GAZELLE WITH CONVERSATION.

Trump’s office about a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) he had made regarding his plans to purchase more stock in Alexander’s Inc., then a prominent department store chain. At that point, Trump owned almost 1 million shares of Alexander’s, so this signaled a possible takeover battle, and the stock had moved up accordingly. It was a small story, and I assumed my call would be relegated to some press flunky for a standard “no comment.”

I was stunned when the man himself answered the phone, all schmoozy and complimentary, telling me how much he admired my work (which was strange, since there wasn’t much of it to read back then). I wondered why he was bothering to butter me up as he bounced between declaring himself on the record and on background. He told me of the greatness of Alexander’s future, the greatness of its shares, the greatness of his plans, the greatness of the American stock market and his expectations for its continued growth. He talked about the “losers” who were opposing his efforts to shake things up at Alexander’s. On background, he talked about the financial benefits he stood to gain from the department store deal and instructed me to identify him in the story as “an analyst.” Not knowing any better, I let him misrepresent himself that way in the story.

But it was the call Trump placed days later that convinced me the man was bizarre. That morning, the *Times* had published a puff piece about him written by Fox Butterfield—a talented journalist who made his name as a foreign correspondent in China. It was the kind of throwaway story most reporters write on occasion and then look back on in embarrassment. Now Trump was calling me, a 26-year-old kid, crowing about the article like a proud child showing Daddy the picture he had just drawn.

Butterfield, he told me, was the greatest journalist in America.

Trump asked what I thought of the piece, and I said a few complimentary things. I didn't want to tell him I thought the story was ridiculous, full of what I now know are Trump's typical "I am superhuman" stories, such as how he barely needed sleep. It also quoted him saying he hated wasting time speaking to the press because he was so busy with business, a particularly odd comment since he was now speaking to me for no clear reason. Then there was Butterfield's suggestion that the real estate developer could run for president someday. Nonsense, I thought.

As Trump and I chatted about the article, I tried to ask him a question about Alexander's, but he immediately lost interest and said goodbye. It was one of the strangest phone calls of my career. His hyperactive tone, his impulsiveness in phoning me, his obvious aching need for praise from a nobody like me—at that moment, I came to believe there was something seriously wrong with Trump, something that I have never seen in another of the hundreds of business executives I have met and interviewed.

Less than two weeks after that strange call, the stock market crashed, and every reporter in my section was thrown into covering the biggest business story in decades. A few days later, I was scanning *The Washington Post*, and I saw Trump had told a reporter there he had known the market crash was coming and had sold all of his stocks for \$200 million in profits. I was stunned. I knew he was lying.

Just days before, he had told me how great the stock market was, how it was going to rise. I looked up his holdings in Alexander's—he still owned 917,967 shares. Trump lied to make everyone think he was smarter than other investors. Maybe he had sold some stocks to raise cash to buy more Alexander's stock—he had filed a document with the SEC saying he planned to do just that—but this was no "Trump's a genius" moment.

I went to an editor who was busy with an article covering the aftermath of the crash and told him that, without question, Trump was lying about his investments. The editor didn't even glance up. "Dog bites man," he said. "Donald Trump lies."

Over the next few years, my fellow business reporters and I marveled at the numbskullery in the Trump financial frolics, as banks and junk bond investors threw him billions of dollars in loans so he could buy up businesses he knew nothing about—casinos, an airline and the like. Financial analysis gave way to irrational exuberance for Trump, based on little more than his many pronouncements of his greatness. When the inevitable occurred and Trump could not even pay the interest on his billions of dollars in debt, his lenders found themselves in an impossible position—if they demanded he make good on all the debt he had personally guaranteed, he would file for personal bankruptcy, and the

"THE THING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT TRUMP," HE TOLD ME, "IS THAT HE'S MENTALLY ILL."

financial institutions that doled out the cash to him would go under. Trump and his lenders were standing in a basement filled with gasoline, and if either lit a match, they would both burn to death. Trump did not "outsmart" his banks, as he likes to say now. He and they had been so reckless that they *had* to save him to save themselves.

As his sprawling business empire fell apart in the early 1990s, other reporters at the *Times* had more dealings with him than I did. I always knew when Richard Hylton, who sat across from me, was speaking with Trump, because he would roll his eyes. Soon after he hung up the phone, Hylton would tell me Trump's latest whopper. But for me, the words that best summed up the financial nonsense that led to the bankruptcy



LITTLE BIG MAN: Trump's behavior often harks back to the schoolyard; he's both the bully and the boy willing to say anything to get Daddy's approval.

of Trump's businesses were uttered in the early 1990s by the dean of financial journalists, Floyd Norris. He said that someday we all would have to explain to our children and grandchildren the bizarre story of Donald Trump, how so many banks behaved so recklessly to benefit a man who was obviously little more than a carnival barker. The answer, Floyd said, was: "You just had to be there. It can't be explained rationally."

Somehow, Mr. Speaker, we are again having to explain the success of the carnival barker,

only now he is much more dangerous. Rather than being just someone who could put legions of banks out of business, he could become president of the United States and cause incomprehensible harm. Plenty of people—including members of your own party and even psychiatrists—are saying Trump exhibits signs of mental illness, as his lieutenant told me decades ago.

It is not too late to do the right thing. Condemn Donald Trump. Don't be on the wrong side of history. ■



SPY TALK

A CHINESE MIDNIGHT EXPRESS?

For four years, Beijing has kept an American jailed without a verdict. Now his mother fears he will die behind bars

ANY DAY NOW, Mark Swidan will find out how much more time he will spend in a Chinese jail. Or maybe not.

The 41-year-old Houstonian, a roving artist, photographer and aspiring businessman, was picked up in southern China four years ago on suspicion of being involved in a methamphetamine drug conspiracy. He was confined without bail for a year before being tried in a case in which the evidence against him was circumstantial at best, his advocates say. Now three years have passed, with judges repeatedly postponing a verdict—a possible sign, some close observers say, that the authorities may be troubled by the case. “The evidence against him is very flimsy,” says John Kamm, who runs a San Francisco foundation that focuses on human rights violations in China. “In my opinion, Mark Swidan is the victim of a terrible miscarriage of justice.”

Until his case is resolved, Swidan’s home will stay a detention center in Jiangmen in Guangdong province, near the Vietnam border, where summertime temperatures regularly top 110 degrees and many inmates “are forced to make silk flowers with harsh chemicals” for export, he’s told his mother. Katherine Swidan says her son, once a stocky high school wrestler, has lost nearly half his 220 pounds. Adding to his woes are mounting health problems, such as high blood pressure and skin infections, he says, and “lumps” that recently appeared on his neck that he fears might be



cancerous because of his family’s medical history.

All this has led him into a spiral of deep depression, she says. During a visit from an American consular official on July 25, the once-effervescent Swidan appeared “energetic,”

BY
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BEHIND CHINESE WALLS: The State Department says around 90 Americans are being held in Chinese jails.

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according to the official's later report, but said he'd tried to commit suicide once and planned to try again, "rather than admit to a crime he insists he had nothing to do with."

"Mark said he is still planning to kill himself," the consular official told Swidan's mother in an email that she shared with *Newsweek*. "We are asking the jail to please continue taking extra caution to ensure his safety and make sure they are aware and take very seriously his threats to commit suicide."

A "flimsy" case, no due process—this makes Swidan's mother wonder why U.S. officials haven't been more vocal on her son's behalf, as they have been for some American citizens arrested in China, North Korea, Cuba and Iran. There have been no statements from the White House or pointed remarks about Swidan and China in the State Department's daily briefing, as was the case with several other Americans held overseas. Some of them even had the support of Secretary of State John Kerry and the White House. In contrast, a State Department official speaking on terms of anonymity would say only that the U.S. is "concerned about Mr. Swidan's welfare and his lengthy detention without sentencing." His statement added, "We urge China to resolve this case expeditiously and to ensure that Mr. Swidan is afforded full due process of law."

Swidan's mother says her son was in China because he got "hooked on Asia travel" after attending a wedding in Vietnam a few years ago. Financed by a bequest from his late father, he also visited Taiwan and Japan, where he met a Filipino woman, fell in love with her and proposed. With marriage in the offing, he went to China to buy furnishings for a house his mother had deeded to him, but he was also looking for a Chinese source of helium for a friend's company back home, she says.

On November 14, 2012, he was detained in Dongguan, an industrial city on the Pearl River a little over an hour's train ride from Hong Kong. According to the subsequent indictment, he had conspired with a mixed group of Mexican and Chinese criminals to make and sell drugs and pick a factory where meth was produced.

Kamm, who has studied the case closely, says the only "evidence" against him is that Swidan once visited a factory where Chinese authorities allege the meth was manufactured, and that he had been in a room rented by another person where drugs were found. There is "no forensic evidence—no fingerprints, no DNA, no drugs in his system," Kamm says. "Nor has evidence been presented of his 'coordinating' role—no emails, no logs of calls, etc.," he adds. "I am

convinced that Mr. Swidan is innocent."

State Department officials say there is little they can say or do to influence the outcome of Swidan's case since it is in the hands of Chinese officials and proceeding under Chinese law.

About 90 Americans are being held in Chinese jails, the department says. One of the most prominent, Sandy Phan-Gillis, also from Houston, has been charged with violating Chinese national security laws in an indictment that has not yet been made public, according to two sources who asked that their names not be published because of the case's sensitivity. Phan-Gillis, a naturalized American from Vietnam who had become a prominent figure in U.S.-China business circles, was leading a Houston business delegation to China in March 2015 when she was detained by security agents. China has not yet made public any evidence of her guilt.

In July, the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention criticized China for not formally charging Phan-Gillis and providing her legal

HIS MOTHER SAYS HER SON, ONCE A STOCKY HIGH SCHOOL WRESTLER, HAS LOST NEARLY HALF HIS 220 POUNDS.

assistance. Chinese authorities told the group that she is being charged with "assisting external parties to steal national intelligence," according to the Associated Press.

Back in Houston, Katherine Swidan spends much of her days grieving and pleading for help for her son on her Facebook page. In late July, she sent letters to her local congressman, Texas's two senators (Republicans Ted Cruz and John Cornyn), the co-chairs of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and Secretary of State Kerry. As of publication time, she has yet to receive a response.

"I have written to you and many others numerous times, and I have either received a lukewarm response or none at all," she wrote. "Please show me that you consider Mark worthy of the same attention or consideration that you pay to other U.S. citizen cases in China."

"He is my son," she added. "He is a U.S. citizen. Don't let my son die in a Chinese prison. Help me bring Mark Swidan home." ■

MANNA FROM HITLER

ISIS is digging up Nazi land mines in Egypt's western desert and using them to wreak havoc across the country

EVEN AT the height of summer, when the upper crust of Cairo descends on the nearby Mediterranean coast, the world's largest open-air armory is a bleak place. With up to 17 million land mines buried in the sands of northwest Egypt, no one can set foot beyond the carefully demarcated boundaries. Home to what's likely the world's largest unexploded minefield, the area is an eerie reminder of the ferocity of World War II. It saw serious action in the early 1940s as the British sought to stymie the advance of Nazis, and the German, British and Italian armies buried millions of tons of explosives as they battled one another across North Africa. But until recently, the minefields of the Sahara posed a problem mainly for local Bedouins, who are among the few who live in the area; since 2006, they've suffered more than 150 casualties.

Recently, however, as the Islamic State and other jihadi groups have grown throughout the region, a few have realized the potential power of this massive cache of explosives. Military and civilian officials in Cairo say ISIS and other groups have already MacGyvered these decades-old mines, using their components for bombs and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). "We've had at least 10 reports from the military of terrorists using old mines," says Fathy el-Shazly, a former ambassador to Saudi Arabia who until recently served as Egypt's land mine clearance czar.

The phenomenon, he says, began in 2004,

when extremists killed 34 people in the Sinai resort of Taba with seven bombs crafted from old munitions, and has become relatively common practice as security has devolved in parts of Egypt, especially since Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, the country's most prolific homegrown jihadi group, pledged allegiance to ISIS in late 2014.

Given the large number of modern munitions available in the region, it might seem unusual that some extremist groups and criminal gangs have taken an interest in the debris of a distant conflict. From Saudi Arabia, the world's second largest arms importer, to Libya, whose tiny army once boasted at least as many guns as the British military, the Middle East and North Africa are awash with advanced weaponry.

But for groups like ISIS's fledgling affiliate that operates in Egypt's vast interior as well as in Libya, a bomb is a bomb. With periodic supply problems, the temptation to pilfer the relics of Hitler's war has proved too tantalizing to resist.

Most recently, in March, a jihadi IED attack on an army convoy near Egypt's Red Sea coast that killed five soldiers was blamed on explosives purloined from old mines. Military officials, who recently received a delivery of more than 700 mine-resistant vehicles from the U.S. to help them combat an insurgency in North Sinai, are trying to ward off the threat, with mixed results.

Digging up these mines is a task fraught with danger. But residents of villages around Marsa

BY
**PETER
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A DIRTY JOB: Egyptian authorities say they have cleared 3 million mines since 1981, making safe 600,000 acres of land. The government aims to clear the rest within the next three years.

Matruh, 130 miles east of the Libyan border, are poor—the thick cordon of explosives that surrounds the area for 2.5 miles in three directions has hurt development—so for some, the risk of uncovering these mines is worth the reward. “They do this because they have nothing else to live on,” says Abdul Moneim Waer, who lost three fingers to a mine when he was young and now campaigns for land mine awareness in El Alamein.

Egypt is not the only country in the region where World War II armaments have found their way back onto the market. Weapons investigators in Iraq recently documented a 1942 Lee-Enfield rifle that Kurdish *peshmerga* captured from ISIS in the northern town of Tuz Khurmatu. In Mali, authorities have dug up an array of deadly arms, including a stockpile of more than 10,000 old European guns. Video footage from Syria suggests that a rebel group has at least one operational howitzer dating from the 1940s.

And then there’s lawless Libya, where arms researchers have found an ample supply of Allied and Axis weaponry. “We’ve seen several dozen British Webley revolvers previously or presently for sale, and then some Italian cavalry carbines, some Mausers, Bren guns,” says N.R. Jenzen-Jones of Armament Research Services, an independent arms consultancy, who is working on a report about “legacy” arms in modern wars.

But what makes Egypt’s minefields so problematic—aside from their sheer volume—is that

they protect smugglers and jihadis penetrating inland from the Libyan border. By hiring local guides, SUV convoys carefully pick their way through stretches of the country strewn with land mines. Because they have no fear of stumbling on army patrols, who won’t stray into contaminated areas, “it’s become a refuge for them,” Shazly says.

For security reasons, as well as to free up sizable oil reserves reputed to lie beneath the area, Egyptian authorities say they’ve accelerated clearance efforts. Three million mines have been removed since 1981, and the government says the rest will be disposed of within three years.

For desert residents, none of this can come soon enough. They’ve seen American and Croatian oil workers kidnapped and killed over the past two years—at a time when jihadis launched several large and deadly attacks on the Egyptian military.

The government’s actions have sometimes compounded the problem. Eight Mexican tourists were killed last year when an army helicopter mistook them for jihadis and opened fire with rockets and a machine gun. A few months earlier, a gas exploration crew from a French com-

THE TEMPTATION TO PILFER THE RELICS OF HITLER’S WAR HAS PROVED TOO TANTALIZING TO RESIST.


pany narrowly avoided a similar fate, an American oil worker tells *Newsweek* on the condition of anonymity. Since then, energy companies fly colored flags from their jeeps when in restricted areas.

For most Bedouin, however, their real ire is reserved for those who planted these killing devices so long ago. Ahmed Amer, head of the Land Mine Survivors Association in Marsa Matruh, which lobbies for victims’ rights, blames the European powers that were responsible for laying most of the munitions. “They can’t just come here and then go away,” he says. “They must clean this up.”




AMMER

BY MAX KUTNER

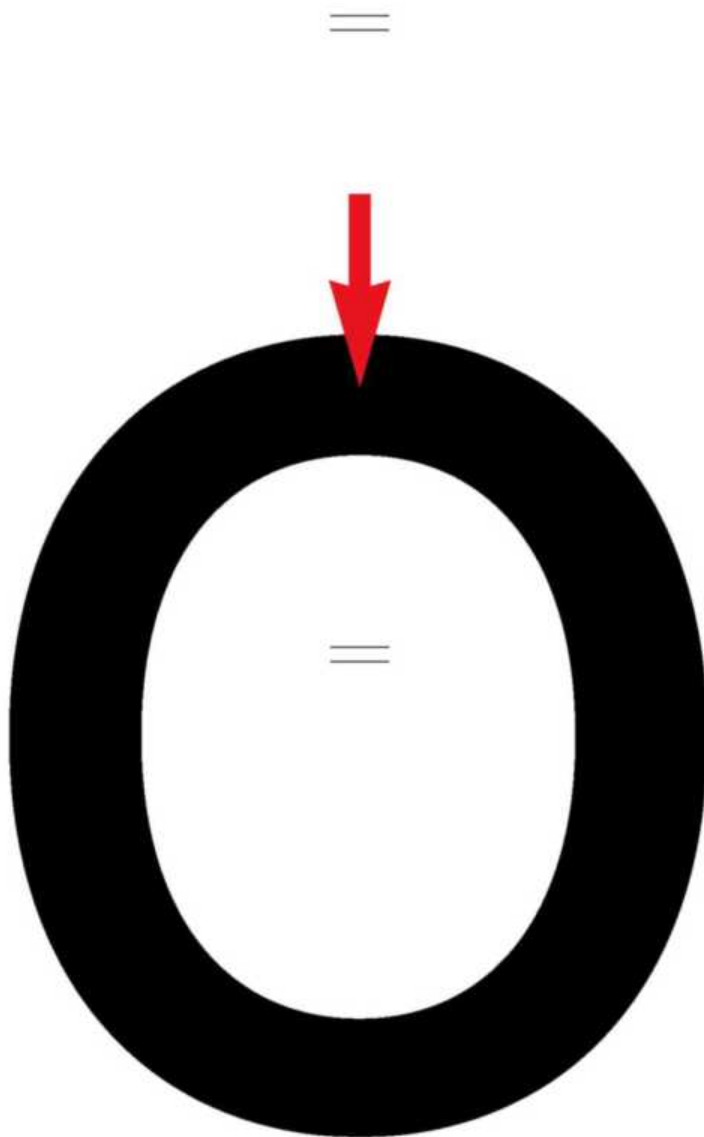


AMERICA'S POLICE OFFICERS ARE BETTER TRAINED, BETTER EDUCATED AND MORE DIVERSE THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS. BUT IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA, BLACK LIVES MATTER AND TARGETED KILLINGS, THEY'VE NEVER FELT MORE DESPISED



**THE
NEW
AMERICAN
COP**





ON JULY 6, Nakia Jones, a police officer in Warrensville Heights, Ohio, was awakened by her teenage son bursting into her room, on the verge of tears. “Did you see the shooting?” he asked. The day before, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, someone had filmed two police officers tackling and then shooting to death a black man named Alton Sterling. The video showed in bloody detail how quickly an officer can take a life at point-blank range. The clip left Jones’s son, a straight-A student and captain of the school band, sad and confused. “Mom, not only am I afraid of being shot by another black male,” she recalls him saying. “Do I also have to be afraid of somebody who wears the same uniform as you do?”

Jones says she is the first black woman to serve on her town’s force, and she understands the split-second decision officers have to make when they face a threat (her husband is also a cop). But as a mother of four girls and two boys, she also knows that the next young black man killed by police could be one of her sons. As she watched the Sterling video, she felt torn in a way that she hadn’t before, despite similar incidents. Other police killings seemed justified, she had told her children, but this one

made her feel different, as if she had “half of my body in a uniform and half of my body in civilian clothes.”

Jones was so upset she recorded a video on Facebook Live. “How dare you stand next to me in the same uniform and murder somebody!” she said, her voice growing louder as she lambasted racist cops. Her eyes filled with tears as she asked people to support good police officers and take a stand against the bad ones. The video now has 8 million views.

The next few days were hard on Jones. First, an officer in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, shot and killed a black man—Philando Castile—after pulling him over for a traffic stop, another act caught on camera. Then came the retaliation: five Dallas police officers shot dead by a black gunman and former soldier who officials said had targeted white cops. Ten days later, another gunman, a former Marine, killed three officers in Baton Rouge.

“It’s almost like a nightmare,” Jones says. “My heart goes out to the families of Alton Sterling and the other man that was killed.... But then, at the same token, these are my brothers and sisters in blue. Now they’re families have lost [loved ones].

“It feels,” she adds, “like I’m torn on both sides.”

Minority Report

IN POLICE DEPARTMENTS across the country, a growing number of officers have more in common with Jones than with those who make headlines for killing black men. Although sometimes portrayed as a white occupying army at war with black civilians, American law enforcement has never been so diverse. In 2013, around 27 percent of the country’s 477,000 sworn local police officers were racial or ethnic minorities, up from 15 percent in 1987, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. There are now more female cops than there were decades ago—around 12 percent of local police—and more openly gay, lesbian and transgender officers as well.

Today’s police are also entering the force with higher levels of education and more special abilities, such as foreign language skills and technological expertise. Once they join a department, they often receive better training and equipment than at any other time in history. And regardless of what the public has seen in shocking videos of shootings, today’s cops have been trained to act with more sensitivity and restraint than previous generations of officers. The common refrain among those on the force is that they are guardians, not warriors.

And yet the tension between law enforcement and large swaths of citizens has not been this high since the 1960s and ’70s, when riots and targeted cop killings were common. Many Americans feel the country’s 18,000 police departments need major reform, especially when it comes to the use of deadly force. Last



“HOW DARE YOU STAND NEXT TO ME IN THE SAME UNIFORM AND MURDER SOMEBODY!”

summer, a Gallup Poll found that confidence in the police was at its lowest level since the beating of motorist Rodney King in 1991 led to massive riots in Los Angeles. That incident was when filming police using excessive force emerged as a new phenomenon.

What's angered many is the spate of high-profile homicides by police of unarmed African-Americans. Since Ferguson, Missouri, police officer Darren Wilson fatally shot Michael Brown in 2014, American police have killed nearly 3,000 people, whether justified or not, according to Fatal Encounters, a website that tracks deaths caused by law enforcement. A July report by the Center for Policing Equity, a think tank at UCLA, said

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WAR ZONES: Cops in Baton Rouge killed a man pinned on the ground in July; later that month, a former Marine shot and killed three police officers there in an ambush.

police departments tend to use 3.6 times more force on black residents than on white residents. Police reform advocates decry the fines and fees municipalities make defendants pay for less serious crimes, sometimes in order to raise revenue, which can put poor offenders in debt or behind bars if they don't have the money. Advocates also criticize the billions in Defense Department equipment that now make many local cops look as if they're about to invade Fallujah.

The murders of officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge are part of another troubling trend that has some political commentators claiming there's now a "war on cops." A July report by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a nonprofit that maintains the national monument to fallen officers in Washington, D.C., showed a 78 percent spike in firearms-related officer

fatalities this year compared with 2015, with 32 shooting deaths of police since January 1 and a 300 percent jump in ambush killings. Demonstrators have upended or trampled squad cars in Ferguson and Baltimore, and in New York City they have chanted, “What do we want? Dead cops! When do we want them? Now!”

Not only are police increasingly having to protect people who despise them, but their jobs have expanded too. As social services in the United States fail and threats such as terrorism and mass shootings grow, officers are having to step into new roles, whether they’re prepared for them or not. “This is the most challenging time I can remember,” says Santa Barbara County, California, Undersheriff Bernard Melekian, a law enforcement veteran of four decades. “The public demand and the public scrutiny are more than I’ve ever seen.”

It’s no wonder fewer people want the job—departments are reporting low numbers of applicants. “We’re hiring idealistic young men and women who want to protect the good people from the bad people,” says Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn. “Right now, they are being portrayed as faceless others. Automatons. *Star Wars* stormtroopers.”

Jones has to deal with these conflicts and contradictions every day. Her 6-year-old daughter has started kissing her and begging her to come home safe before she leaves for her shift each night. “The tension is so high between the community and the police,” she says. “It’s like we have no middle ground.... Both of us feel like there’s a target on our backs.”

Dead Bodies and Broken Windows

ON A HOT, overcast day in August, New York City Police Department Commissioner William Bratton stood beneath a portrait of Alexander Hamilton at New York’s City Hall and announced he would soon resign. Bratton, dressed in a pin-stripe suit and tie, his white hair neatly combed, projected confidence and optimism despite protests that morning from reform advocates (who called for his resignation) and his own officers (who are demanding better pay)—as well as a growing controversy over recent allegations that the NYPD roughed up a black state assemblyman.

“This department will have a seamless transition, and there has never been a time in American policing history when that is more important than now,” Bratton said as he announced his successor, current NYPD Chief of Department James O’Neill. “As we go forward and face the crises of race in America, crime in America, fear of terrorism, and in the midst of the turmoil

**COPS “ARE BEING
PORTRAYED AS FACELESS
OTHERS. AUTOMATONS.
STAR WARS STORM-
TROOPERS.”**

of this presidential election, there is no police department in America that will be better prepared.”

In recent decades, few cops have been as influential—and controversial—as Bratton. He joined the Boston Police Department in 1970 and climbed the ranks to commissioner, a position he held from 1992 to 1993. But it was his first stint as the NYPD’s top cop, starting in 1994, that made him legendary, or notorious, depending on whom you ask. Building on the work of social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling, Bratton popularized the “broken windows” style of policing, which considers no crime too small to fight, from turnstile jumping to public urination. The idea is that minor offenses can snowball and create an atmosphere of lawlessness and disorder.

During Bratton’s first tour as NYPD commissioner, New York began to transform itself from a place where



people were afraid to ride the subway at night to one of the safest, most desirable major cities in the world. In the five years after his appointment, crime fell by one-half, and murders dropped by two-thirds.

Bratton’s detractors decried his methods, saying that the correlation between “broken windows” and crime was never clear and that his tactics disproportionately targeted minorities. Though Bratton left his post in 1996, his crime-fighting philosophy stuck, and distrust between the NYPD and minorities continued to grow thanks to the department’s stop-and-frisk policy, which permitted officers to temporarily question and search people for weapons.



+ CUFFED LINKS: In his two stints as New York's top cop, Bratton brought crime down but drew ire for his "broken window" crime-fighting philosophy and stop-and-frisk tactics.

The backlash grew to such an extent that the current mayor, Bill de Blasio, made police reform one of the central tenets of his 2013 campaign. A year later, the day after he took office, he brought Bratton back as commissioner to keep the crime rate low, as well as to repair the damage to community relations. This included scaling back stop-and-frisk after a judge declared it unconstitutional. Bratton also set out to implement some new strategies he had picked up in his almost two decades away, including while leading the Los Angeles Police Department and consulting for

the police in Oakland, California.

Days before he announced his resignation, the New York police commissioner sat down with *Newsweek* in what his team calls the command center, a windowless room in the police department's downtown Manhattan headquarters. The 200 monitors lining the walls show CompStat maps and statistics, 911 calls and surveillance footage from a network of 8,000 cameras.

"If we're having a demonstration, I can zoom in on all the cameras in that area," Bratton explains. He can monitor his officers too: Using GPS, he says, he can "basically see where any [squad] car in the city is at any time, who's assigned to it, what their call is."

During the interview, Bratton stresses the importance of coupling high-tech strategies with building



on-the-ground neighborhood relations. He now advocates “precision policing,” which he likens to zapping cancerous cells with a laser instead of using surgery to cut out large chunks of tissue. He also recently announced the department is spending \$1.9 billion on improvements to facilities, training and equipment, including bulletproof squad car doors, stronger pepper spray and heavy-duty helmets and vests capable of stopping rounds fired from automatic weapons like those that felled the Dallas and Baton Rouge officers. But he still hasn’t budged on his “broken windows” philosophy. Going after quality-of-life crimes “is very important and I still believe an essential component of what we do,” he says. “If we stopped dealing with minor crime, we’re going to lose the trust of the public.... The vast majority of calls are coming from inner-city neighborhoods,” he adds, stressing that ending “broken windows” would hurt minorities the most.

Yet as Bratton steps down and O’Neill takes over, some police reform advocates say Bratton’s algorithms, fancy command center and RoboCop-like armor have done little to repair the rift between New York City’s police and the communities they serve. “There’s a change in face, but I think we also want to see some change in policy,” says Jose Lopez, a lead organizer with Make the Road New York, a Latino and working-class community action group, and a member of President Barack Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

What’s really broken, reform advocates say, is “broken windows” itself.

+ **HANDS UP:** The recent spate of shootings by police revived the Black Lives Matter movement, and activists all over the country are protesting police brutality.

Bad Apples in Many Colors

ONE IMPORTANT change implemented by Bratton this time around (along with his predecessor, Ray Kelly) was to ensure that the NYPD is more diverse. It’s a trend in police departments nationwide. Across America, more and more officers reflect the communities they serve. Monica Only, a black female officer and recruiter for the police department in Orlando, Florida, says she hasn’t had any race-related problems with her colleagues. Jim Ritter, a gay officer in Seattle, says he feels comfortable being out. His police chief, Kathleen O’Toole, says she hasn’t faced

**“IT DOESN’T TAKE
BREAKING THE LAW TO
BE A GOOD OFFICER.”**

any insurmountable obstacles due to her gender.

Several large departments today are even majority-minority, including those in New York, Detroit, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Adding women to the force has lagged, and much of the diversity has taken place only in bigger cities, but experts say the nearly all-white, all-male departments of the 1950s and '60s are fast becoming a relic.

And that's a very good thing, for the police and the communities they serve. Evidence suggests that diversity can improve the overall department, says David Sklansky, a Stanford Law School professor who first wrote about police demographics a decade ago. Having a more diverse agency can help break down the rigid mentality that often develops among officers and makes it easier to implement reforms. "Fifty years ago, there was one way, basically, to be a police officer, one way to think like a police officer," he says. "That's not true anymore."

For instance, diversity advocates argue that female cops are

"WE ARE THE ONLY ORGANIZATION IN SOCIETY WHOSE MEMBERS GET KILLED PROTECTING BLACK LIVES."

Policing, points to untested rape kits (there are an estimated 400,000) as evidence that some men with badges do not take women's issues as seriously as a woman will.

Perhaps, but reform advocates say hiring more women and minorities isn't a panacea, and some police chiefs use Benetton-like diversity to mask the need for greater reform. Female or minority officers can still "do stupid things," says David Klinger, a criminology professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and a former Los Angeles cop. Rather than focus on race or gender quotas, he says, "the issue is, Am I getting sound policing?"

Newark, New Jersey, has a mostly minority police force, but in 2014 the Justice Department found evidence of widespread police misconduct, including unjustified stops and arrests, excessive use of force and officer thefts. Cops "do not have to break the law or violate the Constitution to be a good police officer," says Anthony Ambrose, a former police chief who returned in January as

public safety director to try to repair the department.

Federal investigations in other cities suggest police misconduct is systemic, regardless of race. In Cleveland and Seattle, the Justice Department found patterns of excessive force; in Ferguson, it exposed how cops targeted minorities with fines to generate revenue. Lawsuits have turned up similar abuses.

"It's not just bad apples," says Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. She points to the case of Eric Garner, a black man NYPD officers confronted in 2014 for allegedly



+ DON'T SHOOT: Chicago's police chief was fired in 2015 after a teen was shot 16 times, and in early August cops there shot an unarmed suspected car thief in the back.

better with domestic violence calls, which are the largest category of 911 calls in the U.S. One study found that 40 percent of police officers surveyed admitted they had "behaved violently against their spouse and children" in the previous six months. Kathy Spillar, a founder of the National Center for Women and

selling loose cigarettes; he died after an officer put him in a chokehold. “You had several officers on the scene,” she says, “and nobody, not a single one of them, did anything to de-escalate that situation. That’s a culture where blue loyalty is valued more than morality.”

Free Hot Dogs and Inflatable Slides

NEW YORK CITY’S 75th police precinct has a reputation, and it’s not for balloon animals, bouncy castles and clown noses. One writer recently described the area, home to Brooklyn’s East New York neighborhood, as “sicker, sadder, more dysfunctional, more isolated, harsher, frailer, madder, toxic—broken through and through everywhere.” There were 15 murders there this year through the end of July, making it the deadliest precinct in the city. That’s part of what makes the Seven-Five a surprising place for National Night Out, an annual event across the country in which police throw parties for their communities.

The event, which is held in a local park hours after Bratton announced his departure on August 2, offers free hot dogs, an inflatable slide, a face-painting station and a DJ playing Beyoncé and other popular artists. At one point, children from a drum line march through the crowd, with six dancers in

NO ONE WANTS TO BECOME THE NEXT DARREN WILSON.

black track pants and shimmering blue tank tops in the lead, followed by drummers in wrinkled blue uniforms and blue hats with yellow on top. Locals trail behind them, dancing and wielding camera phones.

Officer Marcus Johnson, who is black and handles community affairs for the precinct, seems almost hurt when asked about the crime rate in his precinct. “We’re all out to have a good time and support the community,” he says. “And likewise, the community comes out to support us.” A trio of older black women interrupts so they can get a photo with him. Later, another woman approaches and gives him a hug.

Taking pictures with people or giving them hugs isn’t everyone’s idea of policing. But the type of cop America needs is always evolving. It may no longer be the officer at a diner counter chatting with a young runaway, as in the iconic Norman Rockwell cover of *The Saturday Evening Post*; it could be a cop passing out hot dogs or balloons. It could be an officer disarming a mass shooter or stepping in when social services have failed a family.

In recent decades, many of America’s social problems have only grown worse, as the institutions charged with taking care of those in need have been decimated by budget cuts. The number of Americans on food stamps is now 16 times what it was in 1969, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Nationally, there are more than 200,000 fewer public housing units available than in the 1990s, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities recently reported. And if police find themselves confronting more people suffering from mental health crises, it’s likely because, according to one estimate, 95 percent of the public psychiatric beds available in 1955 are gone.

Police officials in some of America’s largest cities tell *Newsweek* the same thing—that all of these social problems fall on their officers’ shoulders. Police chiefs estimate that three-quarters of their job now involves playing social worker or surrogate parent, especially in poor communities. The hundreds or even thousands of people killed in officer-involved incidents each year, they point out, are a fraction of the estimated 40 million people 16 or older who have contact with law enforcement annually.

“If there was not a single police shooting,” says Charles Ramsey, a former police chief in Washington, D.C., and police commissioner of Philadelphia, “we’d still have about 13,000 murders” nationally per year. And those murders affect African-Americans at a higher rate than other groups. Which is one of the reasons why police find the anti-cop rhetoric so frustrating. As Flynn, the Milwaukee police chief, puts it: “We are the only organization in society whose members get killed protecting black lives.”

‘We’re Hiring’

LONG BEFORE four of its men (plus a transit cop) were gunned down in July, the Dallas Police Department was facing an officer shortage and plummeting morale. Low pay and poor management were part of the problem, but given how hard policing has become, the tension between cops and the people they’re sworn to protect, and the ubiquity of camera phones and how they subject every stop or



GRANGER WILSON FOR NEWSWEEK



+ **THE THIN RAINBOW LINE: Diversity is steadily coming to law enforcement nationwide, led by the big cities; Newark has a mostly minority police force.**

arrest to scrutiny, it's no wonder fewer people are signing up for the force. In many municipalities, there's been a "cop crunch" for at least a decade. In 2002, 61,000 people entered police training. In 2013, the number was 45,000.

Jeremy Wilson, a criminal justice professor at Michigan State University and founder of the Police Consolidation and Shared Services program, blames changing generational preferences (millennials don't want to work such bad hours) and competition from related industries, like private security. But the anti-police rhetoric and high-profile killings by law enforcement have likely discouraged people too, he says. No one wants to become the next Darren Wilson.

Yet some police chiefs hope to find new recruits in an unlikely place: among their staunchest critics, such as those who support Black Lives Matter. "We're hiring," Dallas Police Chief David Brown said after the July 7 slayings. "Get off that protest line and put an application in, and we'll put you in your neighborhood, and we will help you resolve some of the problems you're protesting about."

The Dallas Police received 467 applications in the 12 days following the shooting, a 243 percent increase over the same period in June. Similar upticks occurred in Baton Rouge and Orlando after the recent tragedies in those places.

One person who heard Brown's call was Jaiston Sawyer, a 30-year-old African-American Navy veteran who lives in Denton, Texas, about an hour and a half north of Dallas. He works as a security guard and had often complained on social media about police brutality. When Brown issued that challenge, Sawyer says, "it was like he was talking to me." Posting about police brutality on Facebook, he says, "you get a few likes and a few people agree with you, but after a couple of days that post is dead and nothing was accomplished. I have three sons, so instead of hoping my sons don't run into a bad cop, I can be the cop out there patrolling the community that I grew up in." He applied to take the civil service exam in Denton and will likely apply in Dallas too.

Sawyer is hopeful for the future cops of America. So is Nakia Jones, the officer who made the viral video. Her son, the one who showed her the Alton Sterling clip, wants to be a neurosurgeon. But her 6-year-old daughter—the one who now tells her each night to come home safe—has long talked about becoming a police officer—and still does. "I want to be a police officer just like you and Daddy," she tells her mother. "I want to protect people." ■

GO IN,



OLD SCHOOL

THE NATIONWIDE SCHOOL REFORM MOVEMENT HAS STALLED—AND THAT MAY BE A GOOD THING

BY ALEXANDER NAZARYAN



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VERYONE

likes to think her job is challenging, but Carmen Fariña's is close to impossible: She is the chancellor of New York City's Department of Education. There are 1.1 million students in that city's five boroughs, which is more than the population of all but nine American cities. There are 1,800 schools; Chicago has 500. Brooklyn Technical High School has more students (5,400) than Princeton does undergraduates (5,200).

The budget for the department Fariña manages is \$27.6 billion, which exceeds the gross domestic product of El Salvador. There are 76,000 teachers in New York City, five times as many as in all of Idaho. The quantity of No. 2 pencils used each year is unknown but, most likely, vast enough to denude several forests.

The woman who presides over this pedagogical empire is a 73-year-old *abuela* (as *The New York Times* once called her) from Brooklyn who has been in public education for all of her four-decade-long professional life. Nearly three years ago, Fariña was appointed to the chancellorship by the newly elected mayor, Bill de Blasio, a selection that surprised some who had hoped for a more radical break with the past. De Blasio, after all, is a self-styled progressive who promised "transcendent" change. Fariña, meanwhile, was coaxed out of retirement. De Blasio is now more than halfway through his term, as is Fariña. Neither is especially popular. Fariña's smallest decisions attract scrutiny. Her biggest often invite fury. Some see her as a defender of teachers, others as the pawn of teachers unions. Is she merely a supporter of big public schools, or does she harbor a visceral antipathy toward charter schools? Is she resistant to evaluating teachers and testing students or just suspicious of how easily data can be misunderstood and misused?

These are questions that matter not only to P.S. 75 in the Bronx but also to an elementary school in Tulsa and a high school in Seattle. Much like the New York City Police Depart-

ment, the New York City Department of Education often instructs the rest of the country in how to do things—and, sometimes, how not to do them.

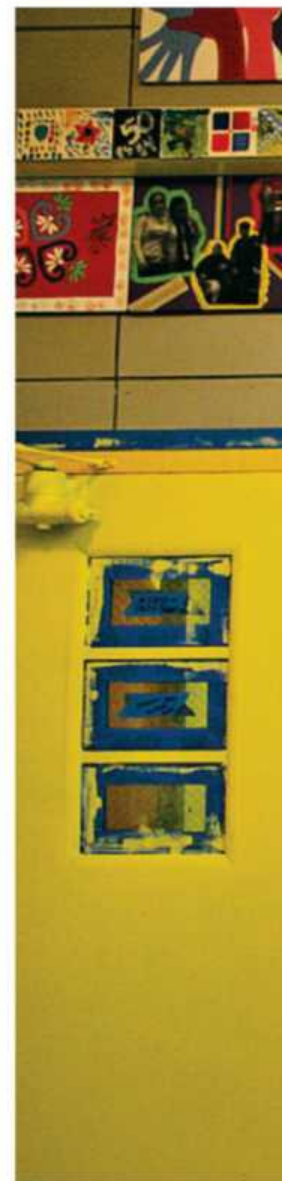
Fariña's answers to the above questions have been starkly different from those proffered by her predecessor, Joel Klein. With the blessing of Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Klein embraced teacher evaluations and standardized exams, spurned unions and built charter schools. The efforts of Klein and like-minded reformers were chronicled in the 2010 documentary *Waiting for Superman*, which demonized traditional public schools as snake pits of union cronyism and chronic failure.

Superman, though, remains busy elsewhere. Federal programs like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top left plenty of children well below the summit, while teacher evaluations and standardized tests remain imperfect measures of teaching and learning. "It's hard to see any good news for reformers," says Diane Ravitch, a New York University professor who is a vociferous supporter of traditional public schools. As evidence, she offers the declining popularity of Teach for America, the alternative certification program frequently viewed as a challenge to union power; the inability of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to make an appreciable difference with his \$100 million gift to the public schools of Newark, New Jersey; and the shortcomings of Tennessee's Achievement School District, which took over some of that state's most troubled schools. "The reform team is in decline," Ravitch tells me.

Fariña is a symbol of the traditional team newly in ascent—and not only in New York. Los Angeles has handed its school district to a veteran educator after its disastrous flirtation with reform; Newark also booted its reformer.

THERE ARE 76,000 TEACHERS IN NEW YORK CITY, FIVE TIMES AS MANY AS IN ALL OF IDAHO.

The return of establishment educators is an acknowledgement that school reform is about more than just giving students iPads. Maybe the people who know the system best really do know best. "I consider myself a reformer," Fariña says, "except reforming in a different way." She used the phrase "student achievement" three or four times during our conversation, but she also spoke about arts education and students' emotional well-being. Neither was among Klein's top concerns.





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WET WORK: An eighth grader works in the hallway of her school as part of an after-school program to give at-risk students a marketable skill, in this case, commercial painting.

But anxiety about Fariña remains. Earlier this year, an op-ed in the conservative *New York Post* called for her resignation. That came days after the city's principals union head charged that de Blasio and Fariña had "lost their focus on kids."

Paradox alert: The people who know our public school system better than anyone, the ones who suddenly have it back in their hands, were the very ones who allowed American schools to sink into mediocrity, so much so that the most powerful nation in the world does markedly worse than Slovenia in educating its young. The reform movement, after all, would have been unnecessary if previous generations of public educators had done their jobs.

A MESSIANIC QUALITY

THOUGH HER New York accent is strong, it is not native: Fariña was born in Spain and came to New York City as a child. After attending New York University, she went to teach in Brooklyn, at P.S. 29, where she was noted for her dedication to students. Later, she became principal at P.S. 6 on the Upper East Side, a

difficult assignment because it involved managing the neighborhood's wealthy parents, who tend to bristle at any suggestion that their progeny is not a Nobel laureate in the making. Here, she is said to have honed the style she deploys today, earning her teachers' loyalty but pushing out those she deemed unfit for the job.

In 2000, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani appointed Harold Levy to head the public schools. Shortly thereafter, Fariña came to Levy's attention, probably, he remembers, through parents' favorable word-of-mouth. "P.S. 6 was pretty phenomenal," he tells me. Plucking Fariña from the Upper East Side, Levy appointed her to head Brooklyn's District 15, which includes both parts of brownstone Brooklyn and immigrant areas. Later, after New



STEEP LEARNING CURVE: Klein (standing) and Bloomberg (center) pushed charter schools, busted up some big schools that were failing and shuttered others, but all that effort and money got them no better than a passing grade.

Yorkers elected Bloomberg mayor and he chose Klein, an antitrust lawyer, to head the school system, Fariña came to work for him as the deputy chancellor for teaching and learning.

Around this time, my fortunes became intertwined Fariña's. In the mid-aughts, I was a young teacher at a middle school in Brooklyn, struggling mostly to get butts into seats and discovering that the poetry of Robert Frost would find little purchase with seventh-graders recently arrived from Kazakhstan and Michoacán.

Like thousands of other young professionals, I became an educator through the New York City Teaching Fellows, a rapid-certification program. There was a messianic quality to the Teaching Fellows: Many of us had degrees from expensive private colleges and had not entered teaching as a means into the middle class, as teachers of Fariña's generation had. Nor were we escaping a military draft. My colleagues left investment banks and production companies, looking for fulfillment, for social change. I'm ashamed to admit that we frequently derided teachers of Fariña's cut, older ethnic whites who were proud of their union membership and spoke knowledgeably of the Yankees bullpen.

They had broken the schools. We were going to fix them.

It did not work out that way. Despite promises that he would be the "education mayor," Bloomberg will far more likely be remembered for greening the city (with both native plantings and foreign cash) than for what he did with the schools. He ended "social promotion," the practice of pushing students into the next grade even if they aren't ready. He closed big failing schools because he believed smaller ones could be more nimble. He pushed for tougher teacher evaluations. He gave schools grades. He welcomed charters. He often said "no" to the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), an enormously powerful voting bloc that always expects City Hall to say "yes."

And after 12 years, what did he have to show for it? Not much. As a Brooklyn College education professor told the *Daily News*, "They threw everything they had at the problem, but the levels of learning are about the same as they were before. It's amazing how small the improvements are." By the time de Blasio was elected, Fariña had been out of education for years. Known for demanding that his staff adhere to his narrow version of progressivism, de Blasio reportedly had trouble finding a chancellor. Fariña may have been a good choice, but there was also a feeling that the mayor had settled on her. "It was always strange to me," says Rick Hess of the American Enterprise Institute, "that a

FROM LEFT: SCOTT WINTROW/GETTY; CHRIS HONDROS/GETTY

mayor seeking to put a fresh face on radical 21st-century progressivism would've turned the Department of Education over to an apparatchik of the old order."

SHUT IT DOWN

TO FULLY grasp the Bloomberg-Klein legacy on education, take the F train to 169th Street in Queens. Exiting the subway station, you will find yourself in a bustling, low-rise neighborhood that is part suburb and part city. It is populated by African-Americans, East Asians and Latinos. People here are poor, but the feeling on the streets is more of striving than despair.

From the subway station, it's just a short walk to Jamaica High School, a bulky but graceful building that suggests the power and promise of public education. Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould went there, as did film director Francis Ford Coppola. Jamaica High stands proudly astride a hill, seemingly immune to the forces endlessly remaking the streets below. But that is not the case. In the late 20th century, the school went into decline, as did pretty much every other public institution in New York City. When the rest of the city recovered, Jamaica High didn't. By the late aughts, its graduation rate was only 50 percent.

THEY HAD BROKEN THE SCHOOLS. WE WERE GOING TO FIX THEM.

In 2011, Bloomberg and Klein vowed to shut down Jamaica and 21 other schools, citing poor performance and low enrollment. This was in keeping with their school-busting policy, which held that breaking up a broken big school into several smaller ones was preferable to fixing it. In all, Bloomberg closed 157 schools, angering many communities that saw such closures as existential rebukes. Appeals to numbers rarely allayed such concerns.

Another contentious artifact of the Bloomberg-Klein tenure can be glimpsed down the road from Jamaica High School, at 132-55 Ridgedale Street. Here stands the modernist box that used to belong to I.S. 59, a middling middle school. Today, I.S. 59 shares its building with a branch of the Success Academy, a network of high-achieving charter schools founded by Eva Moskowitz, a former member of the City Council.

Like standardized tests and teacher evaluations, charter schools—which take public funds but operate outside some of the rules that bind traditional public schools—are both a state and city matter. But the mayor and his chancellor can set a tone, and the one Bloomberg and Klein set could hardly have been more welcoming. Bloomberg presided over the opening of 166 charter schools, often “co-locating” them in the buildings of traditional public schools, like I.S. 59. This angered some community members, who saw charter schools as usurp-

ers. Moskowitz, a wealthy, white Manhattanite, became a convenient scapegoat for all charter-related complaints. Her sometimes harsh, uncompromising tone did not help.

Among those who sought to curb Moskowitz's ambitions was Fariña, who in 2011 protested the placement of a Success Academy branch in a public school building in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. It is unlikely that she imagined herself, at the time, ever returning to education, let alone taking the helm of the Education Department.

'STOP BEING RIDICULOUS'

SHE WAS going to be nicer: That was the first impression New York City had of its new schools chancellor. “True change happens not through mandates and top-down decision-making but through communication, collaboration and celebrating the successes along the way,” Fariña said upon her appointment by de Blasio.

Fariña said sensible things—that she wanted to return a little fun to the classroom and earn the teachers' trust (a generous new contract with the United Federation of Teachers has helped). But she never issued a promise to students, teachers and parents about what the schools would look like when her term was through. You could have disagreed with Bloomberg and Klein, with their emphasis on data-driven accountability, but you knew exactly what you were disagreeing with. It is harder to say what passes for a Carmen Fariña vision of public education. “She has not articulated one, that's for



sure,” says Patrick Sullivan, who until recently sat on the city’s Panel for Educational Policy and was also a frequent critic of Klein.

Fariña told me her vision is “equity and excellence.” She added that “we can’t have lower expectations because of poverty,” echoing the reformers’ refusal to blame social ills for poor outcomes. “For me, it’s all about student achievement,” Fariña says—again and again.

De Blasio’s signature campaign promise had been universal prekindergarten, and early in her tenure, Fariña appeared to devote considerable time to that program’s creation. But a troubling note sounded in the summer of 2014, when she announced her support of “balanced literacy,” an English curriculum that emphasizes free reading and writing at the expense of teacher-led instruction. Many educators have concluded that balanced literacy does not work, but a prominent booster of the method is Fariña’s friend and mentor, Lucy Calkins. You could say (as I did, in a *New York Times* column) that rigor was forfeited for loyalty—something Klein would have never done.

Several months later, Fariña decided schools would no longer receive a letter grade, thus putting an end to a signature Bloomberg-Klein innovation. The school grades may have been confusing and leaned too heavily on test scores, but they also sought to answer a question every involved parent asks: Does my child attend a good school? “Revisiting old failed policies and putting a new name on them is not a way to success,” one parent said, a charge that has stuck to

Fariña—that she is a revanchist disguised as a reformer. These suspicions had newfound evidence when, sometime after the abolition of school grades, she took away the autonomy many school principals enjoyed under Bloomberg, making them answer to regional superintendents.

“Principals need support, but they also need supervision.” Fariña said in a talk at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education in the spring of 2015, defending the reintroduction of “strong superintendents.” Yet this came across as patronizing, not to mention at odds with the gentler touch Fariña suggested she’d wanted to employ.

Sullivan concedes that Fariña “blunted the worst of the excessive use of data and testing.” The state continues to tweak teacher evaluations, and while Fariña supports the federal Common

“FOR TOO LONG, WE HAVE GRADUATED STUDENTS WHO ARE SILENT, WHO ARE NOT THINKERS.”

Core standards, she sees these as more than just test preparation guidelines. At the same time, Sullivan suspects she remains an “old-school principal who wants to control everything.”

Her “old-school” tendencies are also responsible, I suspect, for an outsized antipathy to charter schools, which she shares with the mayor. Charters are public schools, and Fariña could have embraced them as a small but critical component of the education system. She treated them like pariahs. She and de Blasio were especially adamant about stopping the spread of Success Academy, but Moskowitz had more friends in Albany than they did. Neither rails against charter schools anymore. At the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, Fariña visited a Bronx charter school and proclaimed, “We have a lot to learn from each other.” This counts as progress.

Moskowitz isn’t convinced. She believes City Hall remains “very hostile to charters.”

While the fight over charters was draining, the question of failing schools is confounding. If you’re not going to shut down a school, you have to fix it. De Blasio named 94 troubled institutions in his Renewal Schools initiative; these would be converted into “community schools,” social service centers wrapped around a core educational mission, as opposed to just buildings full of classrooms that shut down at dusk (86 remain as of this writing, with eight having been “closed or consolidated,” according to a Department of Education spokeswoman). De Blasio’s model was Cincinnati, though the implementation of community schools there has not yielded encouraging results. Shutting down schools may have been contentious, but it was decisive. The Renewal Schools plan looks to detractors like a litany of bromides, all carrot and no stick.

The Renewal Schools presented Fariña with the biggest crisis of her chancellorship; the 2016-17 school year will be the last full one before the next mayoral election, and hence the administration’s final chance to quiet critics. This past December,



FROM LEFT: BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP; JAMES KEIVOM/GETTY



NEEDS A TUNE-UP: DiBlasio and Fariña on a look-see at Automotive High School, one of his administration's attempts to establish 94 "Renewal Schools" that are supposed to be more community-oriented than the failing schools they supplanted.

Merryl Tisch, the outgoing head of the state's Board of Regents, alluded to a report in Chalkbeat New York that one school in the Renewal program was given three years to boost student reading by .01, from 2.14 to 2.15 on a 0-to-4 scale. "At some point, everyone has to stop being ridiculous," Tisch said.

Later that month, in what appeared to be a tacit acknowledgement that some schools were beyond saving, the Department of Education decided to shut down three (two in the Renewal program). Fariña may be reluctant to use this strategy, but an MDRC study found that small schools—the kind Klein opened after shutting down big ones—do a better job of getting poor kids of color into college than their larger counterparts.

This past December a *Washington Post* editorial declared that the Renewal Schools program has been remarkably unambitious and noted that a report from StudentsFirstNY (a nonprofit that advocates for charter schools and school reform) found "rampant grade inflation."

Then came a striking missive from the head of the city's principals union, an unambiguous sign of mutiny. "Sadly, in the timeworn tradition of the D.O.E., there are so many cooks running around in the kitchen, the chefs don't know what kind

of dish they're concocting," said the column, according to *The New York Times*. "All we have is a recipe for disaster."

When I asked Fariña about Renewal Schools, she argued that social services were necessary, pointing to one school that had more than 150 students living in temporary housing. She also says she replaced principals at 36 of those schools (seven more have since gotten new principals), and though she is loath to close schools, she has done it and, if necessary, will do it again.

Meanwhile, she also presides over what has been called the most racially and economically segregated school system in the United States, a microcosm of the "tale of two cities" narrative deployed by de Blasio to win the mayoral election. But as *The New York Times* noted last month, "no comprehensive plans have emerged" to integrate the city's schools.

A couple of weeks after that dispiriting progress report, the paper said "academic progress is hard to see" at Renewal Schools, where, "dwindling enrollment and internal conflicts make the prospect that they will succeed seem



remote.” Public education is an inextricably political affair, and while City Hall can—and has—dismissed the *Post* as right-wing propaganda, it can’t wave off the *Times*.

One of Fariña’s top deputies, Josh Wallack, disputes the notion that Fariña is content with the status quo. “This chancellor does not shy away from making the tough calls on personnel,” he tells me. In any case, Klein proved that firing teachers and principals does not necessarily result in better schools or a more equitable school system.

Also complicating matters is the fact that there isn’t a universally accepted definition of a good school. When we spoke, Fariña talked about training more nurses and vocational workers, sensible aspirations that might not make it into a feel-good documentary but may well secure jobs for children in neighborhoods like Jamaica and East Harlem. And she talked with passion about the arts, which have steadily disappeared from classrooms. “For too long, we have graduated students who are silent,” she says. “We have graduated students who are not thinkers.”

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CHALK AND AWE: Despite her many critics, Fariña has the full support of the mayor. She can point to rising graduation rates and falling dropout rates under her watch, and students have showed some gains in math and reading scores.

THE WAY OF THE BROOM

NOBODY HAS ever mistaken Michelle Rhee for an abuela. A graduate of Cornell and Harvard, she was not yet 40 when she was chosen to head the troubled schools of Washington, D.C., in 2007. An acolyte of Klein’s, she preached accountability and demanded excellence, firing even the principal of the high-performing school her children attended.

In 2008, *Time* magazine put Rhee on the cover. “How to Fix America’s Schools,” the cover line said. The accompanying image showed Rhee grasping a broom. Two years later, she was in *Time* again, after the mayor who appointed her lost in that city’s 2010 Democratic primary. The magazine predicted that Rhee’s likely departure would be a “blow to education reform.” She resigned shortly thereafter.

Rhee’s resignation suggested a shift toward school reform, a weariness with the way of the broom. Bloomberg, reportedly unhappy with Klein, pushed him out a month after Rhee’s exit in Washington. His replacement was Cathie Black, a Hearst magazine executive with no experience in education. She lasted three months, whereupon the Department of Education

BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP; MIKE GROLL/AP

was handed over to a middle-of-the-road reformer.

Other districts too have reverted to traditional educators after seeing the grandiose promises of reformers dissolve. John Deasy's tenure in Los Angeles was marked by a disastrous attempt to introduce iPads into classrooms, as well as what has been described as an "uneasy relationship with the teachers union." He was replaced by Michelle King, a veteran of the Fariña model. She, like Fariña, will have to confront the expansion of charter schools, which is even more aggressive in Los Angeles than it has been in New York.

Cami Anderson was supposed to fix Newark's schools; she left last year, to the joy of many residents. San Francisco has doubled down on Richard Carranza, a longtime educator, instead of seeking a Michelle Rhee of its own (as this article was heading to press, Carranza announced he was heading to Houston, where he will lead one of the largest school districts in the country).

Hess, the American Enterprise Institute scholar, says it is too simplistic to say the school reform movement is over. He divides reformers into two camps: engineers and gardeners. The engineers (Klein and Rhee) see improvement as "a matter of pulling this lever and imposing that requirement": more frequent tests, tougher teacher evaluations. This drive for reform has "stalled out," he argues. But there are also the gardeners, who harbor the "conviction that all policy can really do is foster the conditions under which good things are more likely to happen." The gardeners, he suggests, continue to thrive.

I spoke to Randi Weingarten, who was my union president when I was a teacher. She left New York and the UFT for Washington, to head the American Federation of Teachers, and was treated roughly in *Waiting for Superman*, which portrayed her

as a craven labor boss with no concern for the children her union members were supposed to be educating. Weingarten told me reformers like Anderson, Klein and Rhee "created tremendous turmoil and tension.... Their view was the system itself was the problem." Like Hess, she sees reform as a nuanced business, and it hurts her that only those with grandiose visions of accountability and Big Data earn the coveted "reformer" label. She thinks that "two decades of test-and-sanction" are coming to an end and that chancellors like Fariña can restore confidence in teachers while also making sure they do their jobs.

As for Fariña, her job is safe as the 2016-17

SMALL SCHOOLS DO A BETTER JOB OF GETTING POOR KIDS OF COLOR INTO COLLEGE THAN THEIR LARGER COUNTERPARTS.

school year begins. Austin Finan, a spokesman for the mayor, told me de Blasio stands behind her "100 percent. When you change the status quo, you're going to have critics along the way," he says. Noting rising graduation rates and falling dropout rates in New York City public schools, Finan added that "under Chancellor Fariña, our schools are moving in the right direction." State test results released last month showed New York City's public school students making gains in both math and reading, bolstering the case for Fariña's leadership.

Everyone wants to return to that golden age when the American school was the launchpad of upward mobility, when public education was a matter of national pride and international envy. Only we all have different maps, with different cardinal points. One day, charter schools are the north star; the next day, it is language immersion programs. We need more standardized tests but also more art classes. Respect teachers but measure their work relentlessly.

This state of affairs is unfortunate but not surprising. We are not a small, monocultural nation like South Korea, or an autocracy like Russia, where a history textbook can fall victim to Kremlin diktat. In America, school reform will always be a Hegelian contest between clashing visions, frequently maddening, infrequently productive. It is the only way we know. ■





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**ORANGE-TINTED
SPECTACLES:** Many
travelers know
that exposure to
morning sun can
help them adjust
to jet lag.



NEW WORLD



AUTISM

BUSINESS

INNOVATION

ANIMALS

ENVIRONMENT

MEMORY

GOOD SCIENCE

GLASSES HALF FULL

Blue-blocking lenses may help treat bipolar disorder, promote sleep

COULD ORANGE glasses that block blue light help treat mental illness and insomnia? New research suggests the answer is yes.

Blue light is a major component of sunlight, and exposure to it in the morning resets the body's clock. Likewise, the darkness following sundown helps induce sleep. This worked well for our ancestors, but many electronic devices also emit blue light. Nighttime exposure to these can confuse the body, interrupting sleep. This can increase the risk of developing various mental illnesses. In a small Norwegian study of 23 people hospitalized for bipolar disorder, scientists assigned 12 to wear "blue-blocking" amber glasses for a week, while another 11 patients didn't wear glasses.

The paper found an enormous difference between the two groups. Those wearing the amber-tinted glasses for only one week scored on average 14 points lower on a test used to measure mania, more than twice what doctors consider to be a "clinically significant difference," according to the study, published in the journal *Bipolar Disorders*. Improvements were noticeable after only

three nights of wearing the glasses.

"I was surprised by the magnitude of changes and the rapid onset of improvement," says one of the study's authors, Tone Henriksen of the University of Bergen and Valen Hospital in Norway. Even drug treatments don't usually lead to such quick and significant turnarounds, she adds.

The paper builds on a growing body of research showing how important light is for controlling not only circadian rhythms but also mood and many other aspects of physical and mental health. One 2009 study in *Chronobiology International* found that 50 percent of 20 bipolar patients experiencing insomnia had significant improvements in sleep after wearing blue-blocking glasses.

Studies so far have been small, but some experts are ready to recommend wide use of blue-blocking glasses. Among them is Dr. James Phelps, a researcher and psychiatrist with Samaritan Health Services in Corvallis, Oregon, who wasn't involved in the study. "When you have a low-risk, almost no-cost treatment with high efficacy," he says, "it's time to just use it." ■

BY
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SIMON THOMAS

DISRUPTIVE

BEEN THERE, GONNA DO THAT...

How the fates of Yahoo, Apple and Amazon predict your future

IF YOU TRAVELED back 10 years and told people what was going to happen to three of digital technology's most famous companies—Yahoo, Apple and Amazon—they'd think you were bonkers. They reshuffled their relative positions of power at least once since 2006 and now seem about to do it again. How this turns out will say a great deal about where technology is heading.

Yahoo, after years of trying to recapture former glory, is getting bought by Verizon for \$5 billion, an amount that will no doubt soon seem generous. Apple, everybody's darling for the past decade, looks stalled, reporting declining profits and iPhone sales. Amazon—a company the same age as Yahoo—has meanwhile ginned up a surprising second life because of its Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud computing juggernaut and even seems poised to build a third great business around its Alexa artificial intelligence system. Amazon just reported quarterly numbers that were all rainbows and ponies.

Yahoo is our past, though it may foreshadow Apple's future. Technology is almost always a winner-take-most industry. As my co-authors and I detailed in our book, *Play Bigger: How Pirates, Dreamers and Innovators Create and Dominate Markets*, the great tech companies define and develop a new category of business that never existed before, and those companies tend to devour the vast majority of the money and attention in that market, often for years or even decades. In the 1990s, Yahoo did this. It defined, developed and dominated the previously unheard-of category



of “web portal.” And at that category’s peak in the late 1990s, Yahoo was worth \$128 billion. Remember when web portals were hot? That was when we needed a way into the often confusing web—a single screen that guided us to news and services and email and whatever else was popping up that might interest us. As usually happens,

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lots of others tried to barge into the business, like Excite and AOL. But Yahoo reigned supreme.

And then, in the early 2000s, Google showed up. Google made search our entry point for the web. We didn't need a guide—Google took us exactly where we wanted to go. The web as a curiosity was over, and it became a tool. The portal got demoted like an aging shortstop, replaced by a rookie category of search. Yahoo remained king of a declining category, so Yahoo itself declined. By then, it owned lots of operations such as news, chat and email that were me-too offerings, not category-dominating businesses. Me-toos can be decent businesses, but they're not businesses that make investors swoon.

This is why Marissa Mayer has never had much of a chance. She was brought in as Yahoo's CEO in 2012 to return it to its era of conquest. When she arrived, employees put up "Hope" posters that echoed the Barack Obama presidential campaign posters from 2008. She even said she would "bring an iconic company back to greatness." To do that, she would've had to invent and then dominate a new category as significant as web portals were in the '90s. And that was an almost impossible task. A fraction of 1 percent of the thousands of venture-backed startups ever create an important category. Giant incumbent companies almost never do—unless they have a rare and extraordinary leader.

Which brings us to Apple. When Steve Jobs returned to that company in 1997, it was like the sputtering version of Yahoo, living on an outmoded past and constantly failing to reinvent itself. Apple was nearly sold to Sun Microsystems. And then Jobs did the miraculous. He created one major new category after another: first the iPod-iTunes business in 2001, then the iPhone in 2007 and iPad in 2010. Apple under Jobs defined these categories and dominated them. Today, while high-powered mobile devices are consumers' digital drug of choice, investors have made Apple the most valuable company on Earth.

This is why Tim Cook is probably in for the kind of rough treatment Mayer has endured. While we unquestionably love our smartphones and tablets, and while tens of millions of people will buy them this year, the best days of those categories will soon slide by. The chances of Apple again inventing and dominating significant new categories of business are, to be blunt, near nothin'. If we expect Cook to pull that rabbit out of his wherever, as Donald Trump might say, we'll be disappointed. It is more realistic to expect Cook's Apple to milk every bit of profit out of these solid but aging categories and keep things interesting with some new stuff around the edges, like the Apple Watch.

Apple could become a tech Procter & Gamble, but it might never again be Steve Jobs's Apple.

That leads us to Amazon. For 20 years, it defined and dominated the category of online retail. If it had never created another monster category, we might be talking about Amazon the way we are now talking about Yahoo or Apple. But the Jeff Bezos-led Amazon seems to have that rare category-creation gene. Over the past decade, it built the explosive cloud computing services category, and AWS is crushing it. Over the past year, AWS revenue was four times greater than that of second-place Microsoft, growing 72 percent year-over-year. In Amazon's last quarter, AWS accounted for 40 percent of the company's overall profits. That's the power of category creation.

AWS says a lot about where we're all going. We moved past Yahoo's era of PCs and the web, and now we're moving through the era of smartphones and apps. In tech's next generation, almost every function or service and all of our digital stuff will be in the cloud, accessible through an ever-expanding array of less smart, more

YAHOO IS OUR PAST, THOUGH IT MAY FORESHADOW APPLE'S FUTURE.

focused devices, whether that's a connected car or a networked toilet. We won't have to carry a Swiss-army-knife high-performance phone—the power will be in the air and devices around us. And it will run on AWS and its me-too competitors.

Amazon seems to be creating yet another category with its Echo devices and Alexa software. Something like this will be the successor to the smartphone—the front-end technology that will let us talk to a watch or car or loo and make sure the device will understand who we are, what we want and how to get it done. It's a little early to declare Amazon the ultimate monarch of this new category of consumer AI, but it's in the lead. And if Amazon can become the king of the front end and king of the back end—well, that spooks Google, Facebook, Microsoft.

If you do figure out how to travel back a decade, don't bother explaining all this to anyone. Just short Yahoo and invest in Apple and Amazon for me, so I can lounge on a boat all day and not have to write these damn columns. ■

WATCH APPLE: Investors made Apple the most valuable company on Earth, but without Jobs it's struggling to invent a new category to keep it leading the tech world.

SIMON DAWSON/BLOOMBERG/GETTY





ONE BIG MYSTERY, MANY AUTISMS

There's no such thing as typical when it comes to this neurodevelopmental disorder

IF YOU'VE SEEN one person with autism, you've seen one person with autism. It's a common refrain among doctors who treat the neurodevelopmental disorder, which manifests differently in almost every case, even among the most closely related individuals.

People with autism engage in repetitive or obsessive actions and interests, struggle to communicate and have difficulty relating to others and to the world around them. But the exact features of the disorder, as well as its severity, can vary significantly. That's why autism, now diagnosed in one in every 68 children in the United States, is no longer considered one condition but rather a spectrum of related but distinct disorders.

At one end of the autism spectrum is 26-year-old Taylor Newsum. He has difficulty picking up on certain social cues, but even so, each day he takes the train from his parents' home in Brooklyn to midtown Manhattan, where he works as an administrative assistant in a psychologist's office. He plans to become a social worker. At the other end of the spectrum is his sister, Savannah Newsum. Compared with Taylor, Savannah, 21, has much more limited verbal skills and social skills, and it is difficult for her to maneuver through the world without assistance.

"Taylor is very independent, highly functioning and will one day live on his own. Savannah will always require someone in her life to help her get through her day," says their mother, Darnell Newsum.

That no single feature is present in all—or

even a majority of—people with autism is a major roadblock not only in meeting the many different needs of those on the autism spectrum but also in understanding why the disorder develops in the first place. Now scientists are turning to families like the Newsums to search for clues where it begins: in our DNA.

A new study called SPARK—Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge—seeks to pinpoint genetics and other risk factors of autism by studying 50,000 individuals with autism and their family members. It's the largest study of the disorder to date, built on an effort to sequence the exome—the sliver of the genome that accounts for almost 85 percent of the glitches known to cause human diseases—and dig through patient medical histories to identify certain genetic underpinnings of autism.

In the short term, this will allow researchers to begin to identify genetically defined subtypes of autism. Grouping and comparing individuals with similar genetic changes could yield clues about a person's future prognosis and the health complications, such as seizures, gastrointestinal problems and schizophrenia, that are associated with certain subtypes. In the longer term, says the study's leader, Wendy Chung, director of Columbia University's clinical genetics program, SPARK's findings could lead to individualized treatment options, from medicines to behavioral interventions, that take into account the disorder's genetics.

"Do I need to keep seizures on my radar for any

BY
AIMEE SWARTZ
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LIFE LESSONS: Some adults on the spectrum can learn how to be self-sufficient. This man with a severe form of autism is now able to walk, eat and go the bathroom without help.

one patient? Can we predict what challenges families might need to prepare for down the road? Answering these types of questions will make a big difference for patients because we will better understand how to help them,” Chung says.

TEASING OUT THE GENETIC ROOTS

A long history of studying families affected by autism has confirmed its strong genetic basis. In families with one child with autism, for example, the risk of a second child having the condition can be as high as 20 percent; in families with more than one child with autism, the risk jumps even higher. And identical twins, who share the same genome, or complete set of genes, and fraternal twins, who share about half of their genetic code, are far more likely to develop autism than are different-aged siblings.

Genome sequencing has already ferreted out mutations in 65 genes that increase the risk of developing autism, and hundreds of others will likely be implicated as well. Some are passed from the DNA of the mother, the father or, sometimes, from both parents to the child. Others

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“A GENETIC MUTATION THAT ONLY OCCURS IN ONE IN EVERY 500 PATIENTS COULD EASILY BE OVERLOOKED.”
 —

arise spontaneously, meaning they aren’t present in either parent’s genetic makeup.

To date, genetic causes have been pinpointed in only about 20 percent of autism cases, usually those that are associated with certain rare diseases, such as Fragile X syndrome, Phelan-McDermid syndrome or Williams syndrome. But there’s no smoking gun for the remaining cases. It’s still largely unknown which genes drive the development of the disorder. The number of genetic mutations that contribute to autism is manifold, on the order of several hundreds, perhaps even a thousand. That means the likelihood

that any two patients will have a mutation in the same gene is very low. In fact, the most commonly mutated gene in autism—a gene called CHD8—is so rare it’s seen in only about 0.1 percent of people with the disorder.

And, Chung points out, even among those who do share the same genetic mutations, it’s not unusual for their outcomes to be wildly divergent. In some cases, the same change can cause severe disabilities in one individual but only mild behavioral problems in another. “In a way, you’re looking at many, many rare disorders,” Chung says.

Of course, genes alone aren’t to blame. The same family studies that demonstrate autism’s genetic basis also confirm that factors other than genetics, collectively referred to as “the environment,” play a role. “If genetics were the only factor that determined whether a child develops autism, two identical twins, who share the exact same DNA, would always either both have autism or both not have autism,” says Raphael Bernier, an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Washington in Seattle. He says autism is caused by a combination

of genetics and a “vast array” of environmental factors—from a child’s exposure to certain toxins to overweight parents.

“Our best guess is that in many individuals, autism is caused by genes interacting with not only other genes but with an unknown number of potential environmental factors too,” says Bernier, whose clinic is participating in SPARK. But which environmental factors actually contribute to autism and by how much remain a hotly debated question SPARK hopes to answer.

The study’s success hinges on its ability to amass an army of patients and family members to capture not only the full breadth of autism’s genetic diversity but also the different and unique challenges of each individual with autism. A data set of this massive caliber is also necessary, says Bernier, to see patterns they may not otherwise see in a small group of patients. “A genetic mutation that only occurs in one in every 500 patients could easily be overlooked; in 50,000 patients, that same mutation would crop up 100 times,” he says.

“Imagine that all families in SPARK report

FAMILY VALUES: Matthew Kolen, left, who was diagnosed with Asperger’s at age 8, hugs his brother Russell after blowing out the candles on his 13th birthday cake.



on the nature of their child's communication struggles, and then we aggregate these reports and cross-reference them with genetic profiles. Finding genetic commonalities in experiences and how different families manage specific challenges could lead to real improvements," says Pamela Feliciano, scientific director of SPARK and the mother of an adult child with autism.

Only about 5 percent of children with autism participate in clinical trials, compared with more than 90 percent of children with cancer, for example. In an effort to make study enrollment as easy as possible, SPARK investigators designed the study to enable people with autism and their families to enroll online via a smartphone, tablet or computer, in addition to enrolling study participants at a doctor's office or clinic. The Newsoms—Taylor, Savannah and their parents—were among the first to raise their hand as study volunteers. Each contributed a small vial of saliva to the research project and filled out a medical questionnaire. Eventually, SPARK will return sequencing data and any actionable findings to the health care providers of participants who want such information.

The project's success will rely on crowdsourcing the painstaking task of analyzing the tsunami of data that's starting to come in. Investigators from 21 medical schools and autism research centers across the U.S. have already joined the project, and de-identified data will be made available via a web-based portal to qualified researchers from the scientific community at large.

"There could be a brilliant mathematician who has the ability to see patterns and associations that others don't," says Chung. "We don't presume that only investigators who happen to call themselves autism researchers are the only ones who have something to teach us about autism."

SPARK is not the only study that is examining genomic data for a large number of patients with autism. MSSNG—named for the "missing" information about autism—was launched in 2014 by the research and advocacy organization Autism Speaks, in partnership with Google and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. The project aims to mine the DNA of 10,000 people with autism and their family members, and it's on pace to reach that goal later this summer. MSSNG goes beyond SPARK's plan of sequencing the exome—it will look at all 3.2 billion letters of genetic code in the human genome to get a more "holistic" view of the genetic



underpinnings of autism, says Mathew Pletcher, interim chief scientific officer at Autism Speaks.

With more than 5,000 genomes already fully sequenced, the MSSNG data set has allowed scientists to discover new parts of the genome involved in autism that were previously missed, using techniques that look at only parts of the DNA. "It also revealed that the disorder's genetic underpinnings are way more complex than previously thought," Pletcher says.

Using MSSNG data, a team at the Hospital for Sick Children sequenced, in their entirety, the genomes of 340 people from 85 families, each of

“AUTISM IS CAUSED BY GENES INTERACTING WITH NOT ONLY OTHER GENES BUT WITH AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS.”

which had at least two children diagnosed with autism. The research showed that most siblings who have the disorder have little to no overlap in the same autism-associated genes, turning on its head the long-held belief that siblings with autism had inherited the same autism-predisposing genes from their parents. "In many cases, they have different 'forms' of autism, which begins to explain why siblings with autism so often have such different features and why they require distinct approaches to help them manage the disorder," says Pletcher.

Once complete, MSSNG will host its data, along with a suite of data analysis tools, on the Google Cloud platform, Pletcher says, where it will be accessible to "anyone, anywhere."

"The goal is to ask and answer as many questions as possible, make as many discoveries as possible and help people on the autism spectrum do a lot better," he says. ■



MEMORIES AREN'T MADE OF THIS

A child's first recollections are often beautiful, ephemeral and wrong. Scientists want to know why

A WEIRD THING happens to kids around kindergarten. Ask a 5-year-old about his visit to the aquarium a year prior, and there's a good chance he'll tell you all sorts of details: the color of the reef, what was in the touch tank. But ask him about the same trip when he's 7, and it's likely he won't remember a thing.

That's backed up by research: In one major study, Emory University psychologist Patricia Bauer and a colleague invited a bunch of 3-year-olds into her lab and interviewed the children about events in the previous three months, like trips to the zoo or birthday parties. The researchers then brought back some of the children

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two years later and again six years later. Both times, they asked the kids to recall events they described as 3-year-olds. They found that the children remembered about 60 percent of the events during their second interview (when they were about 5) but much, much less in the third (when they were around 8)—a deterioration of memory greater than the usual. “Something was happening at age 7,” says Bauer.

People have been aware of this sort of childhood amnesia at least since Sigmund Freud coined the phrase at the turn of the 20th century, but it’s only recently that advanced imaging has been combined with long-term behavioral studies to allow scientists to start to really understand how childhood memory fundamentally differs from the adult version. As kids’ brains develop and add connections, they lose more memories than they create—and at the same time, early memories tend to be partial and therefore more likely to erode.

Paul Frankland, a researcher at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, knew that in order for a memory to be planted in our brains for good, it first needs to get stored in the hippocampus—which connects related simultaneous memories from different sensory regions of the brain, forming them into a single episode. Frankland and his lab collaborators wanted to find out how new neuron production in the brain—neurogenesis—affects memories already stored in the hippocampus. To do that, they gave animals drugs that made their brains create new neurons, then tested their ability to remember a bit of training. The researchers found that the animals forgot the experience quickly: Neurogenesis caused rats to lose memories faster. Frankland explains it this way: If a system suddenly adds a bunch of new connections and complexity, the entire setup may go sideways for a while until things are sorted out.

This work led Frankland to look at infancy, when neurogenesis happens at much higher rates than adulthood (a human infant’s brain generates 2,100 to 2,800 new neurons each day compared with about 700 for adults). Frankland and his colleagues trained baby and adult animals in memory tasks, like learning to fear an area where they received small shocks, and tested them a few weeks later. As expected, the baby animals lost the memories. But when they were given drugs that reduced the new connections in the brain, the baby animals retained the memories at a much higher rate. “We’re convinced that neurogenesis is one of the major factors that leads to forgetting in both adults and infants,” says Frankland. And the fact that it happens at such high rates in small children might explain why so

many of their memories seem to disappear.

Frankland has worked on neurogenesis for the past five years, and he’s also watched his daughter age from 2 to 7. Early on, they took a trip to the zoo, where the toddler had a traumatic experience: A goose ran at the little girl, scaring her. Afterward, Frankland and his wife quizzed her on the adventure every couple of months, and every time, she’d tell the same story about the scary bird—until one day the memory was gone. As he researched infantile amnesia, he was also watching it happen: “It just underscores the idea that as the brain develops, the ability to make memories of episodes of events develops,” says Frankland. “But after a certain stage, it’s the ability to keep the memory around that’s the problem.”

Bauer says that while age 7 isn’t a magic cutoff, two complementary processes happen then that make it an interesting turning point. While memories are being formed throughout

AS KIDS’ BRAINS DEVELOP AND ADD CONNECTIONS, THEY LOSE MORE MEMORIES THAN THEY CREATE.

development, from about 3 to 7, more memories slip away than get fixed into long-term storage, resulting in a net loss.

Second, the quality of memories improves around age 7 because the brain is closer structurally to an adult brain, which makes memories created after that age more likely to be accessible. Think of these early memories as partial fragments: a young child may remember who but not what, when, where or why. Getting all those pieces together makes a memory more likely to be sticky.

The things that tend to stick around have a clear pattern. When Carole Peterson was starting out as a researcher at Memorial University

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BRAIN CHANGE:
A human infant’s brain generates 2,100 to 2,800 new neurons a day compared with about 700 for adults, which may help explain why kids’ memories seem to disappear.



of Newfoundland in St. John's, in the 1980s, she had read studies showing children's memories in preschool weren't very good, but she didn't believe it. "I thought they weren't asking children about the right events," she says, explaining that most studies tried to get children to recall ordinary, everyday events like last weekend at Grandma's. Peterson believed it made more sense to test memories of highly emotional events, because those, she thought, were more likely to be remembered.

She set off to do a series of unusual experiments, sending graduate students to camp in the waiting room of the emergency room at the Janeway Children's Health and Rehabilitation Centre in St. John's. There, they recruited young kids with injuries for interviews after their hospital release. The idea was to test how accurately they remembered the emergency that landed them in the hospital—and compare the differences in the precision of those memories at various ages, from 2 to 13. Peterson and her students also interviewed adult eyewitnesses for each event for some baseline details. Later, the researchers brought those kids back—some six to 12 months later, and others five or 10 years later—to ask about the same events.

"We were staggered by the accuracy," recalls Peterson. During the first interview, the 5-year-old kids had an accuracy level at 97 percent compared with the description of the event by adult eyewitnesses; five years later, it was 91 percent. Even 10 years later, they had remarkable recall: Accuracy dropped to a still quite high 85 percent. What's more, as the years went by, the kids began fleshing out the memories with novel—and 100 percent correct—pieces of additional data. "If the first time they were interviewed, the child said, 'The event happened at my nan's, then years later, they would say that 'it happened at my nan's down by the hole in the fence,'" says Peterson.

The point is that while children are not great at storing the mundane—Peterson pointed out that kids' memories of being in the hospital

were pretty dim—they have a fantastic memory for emotionally salient events.

It's unclear whether all those other early memory fragments are completely gone or just inaccessible. It's a question that Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher Susumu Tonegawa and colleagues are trying to answer, using lab mice genetically engineered so that their memory-forming brain cells are sensitive to light. In a recent project, the mice first received a small shock on their feet while exploring a box. Immediately, that traumatic memory was encoded into those cells, which were tagged with a special light-sensitive protein. Tonegawa used a technique called optogenetics in which a laser sends blue light pulses to selectively turn on or off the brain cells. When the laser stimulated the brain cells, the mouse froze in fear of the shock, despite not experiencing any pain.

Scientists made mice depressed by wrapping them in plastic wrap for 40 minutes a day over a period of 10 days—making the mice so stressed they didn't even enjoy their usually beloved

CHILDREN ARE NOT GREAT AT STORING THE MUNDANE, BUT THEY HAVE A FANTASTIC MEMORY FOR EMOTIONALLY SALIENT EVENTS.

sugar water—then they were able to reverse the symptoms by artificially activating happy memories formed before the onset of depression. The researchers say the work has implications for potential treatments for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and Alzheimer's disease.

While the technology is promising, it's controversial and has yet to be tested in humans. And there are simpler ways to get kids to keep early memories accessible, without breaking a leg or using light in the brain: talking with them. Researchers have shown that kids of parents who talk in elaborative ways—asking open-ended questions, encouraging follow-ups and adding new information when talking through a memory—actually retain more memories and have earlier memories than kids whose parents don't talk in this way. By reminiscing together, parents and kids can weave the threads of memory pieces into a sturdy cloth, which could help kids to understand their pasts—and improve their futures. ▣

TAKE



A

STAND



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ITSY-BITSY, TEENY-WEENY OUTRAGE

The year's hottest swimsuit—and its most controversial—leaves a lot more to the imagination

+ **BARE NECESSITIES:** The designer of the burkini says wearing one is not just a religious issue: "Not all of us like to be naked."

AH, SUMMER...long days, blistering heat, cool dips in the pool. And the burkini. Yes, the burkini—a portmanteau for *burqa*, a robe-like garment popular with some Muslim women, and *bikini*, a two-piece bathing suit that first appeared 70 years ago.

Like its predecessor, the burkini is a two-piece suit for women. But unlike the bikini, which scandalized for showing too much skin when it first appeared in 1946, the burkini consists of a long-sleeve top and full-length pants that cover the entire body, except for the hands, face and feet.

While the skin quotient of the two swimsuits could not be at further ends of the spectrum, both let women decide just how much skin they want to show. And both suits were met with similarly strong reactions: fury, derision and bans.

Yet the burkini, like its once-scandalous cousin, is gaining traction with a wide cross-section of women—not just Muslims but also women of other religious faiths, as well as those who simply wish to avoid a sunburn or ogling by passersby.

British retailer Marks & Spencer, which this year went mainstream with a line of burkinis in two shades—blue and black—tells *Newsweek* it's already out of stock. Spokeswoman Emily Dimmock says the retailer is selling them "in many of the 58 countries in which we operate, including the Middle East, China and Hong Kong."

The popularity of the burkini, however, hasn't stopped many from objecting on grounds ranging from the violation of personal freedom to social irresponsibility to hygiene. In early July, the Austrian town of Hainfeld was the latest to ban the burkini at its public pool. Peter Terzer, a town councillor and member of Austria's anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim Freedom Party, claimed the burkini is "unsanitary." This would have been hard to believe, had it not already happened in June, when the German town of Neutraubling imposed a similar ban, also citing hygiene fears.

The mayors of both towns vociferously defended the bans, citing complaints from



swimmers and fears that burkinis in the pool area might taint the waters. Burkinis have also been banned in parts of France, Italy and Morocco.

Shabana Mir, a London-born Muslim who teaches cultural anthropology at American Islamic College in Chicago, says she finds the argument over hygiene laughable, since burkinis are made from ordinary swimsuit fabrics and cover most of the body, which would presumably reduce direct contact with the water and other swimmers. She noted in an online piece, “The Deadly Burkini, or, What Exactly Is an ‘Islamic Swimsuit’?” that “it’s extremely unfair and sexist to require women to dress in such attire” as bikinis or one-piece suits if it leaves them feeling overexposed.

The burkini crackdowns echo the resistance to the bikini, initially banned along the French coastline, as well as in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Australia and parts of the U.S., and finally denounced by Pope Pius XII in the 1950s as sinful.

This summer, France’s women’s rights minister, Laurence Rossignol, condemned retailers like M&S and high-end labels like DKNY and Dolce & Gabbana for offering full-coverage swimsuits and glamorous head-to-toe Islamic haute couture. She said they are not “socially responsible” and promote “the shutting away of women’s bodies.”

When the interviewer pointed out that some women choose to cover up, she likened Muslims wearing burkinis to “American negroes who were in favor of slavery.” The minister’s remarks drew demands for her resignation. Rossignol later apologized for use of the word “negro” but has maintained her position.

It is highly unlikely the grandstanding will have much effect, because—boom!—math. Islamic fashion is one of haute couture’s hottest niches, with spending expected to skyrocket an estimated 82 percent from 2013 to 2019, reaching \$484 billion, according to researcher DinarStandard.

Mir, who does not wear a burkini—instead favoring something more akin to a feminine surf suit—takes issue with the idea that a Muslim wearing a burkini is any different from nun wearing a habit or a woman wearing high heels. With the exception of women forced to wear Islamic garb against their will (which she says is very un-Islamic), it’s all about personal choice. “I

have to go to work wearing this uncomfortable clothing, but it’s our culture!” she says, adding that she grew up wearing a burqa but now wears typical business attire to work, like many Americans. “Somebody else wears high heels—they embrace it. It’s uncomfortable. It’s painful. It’s expensive.... People can easily see it as offensive and oppressive.... To say the burkini limits a woman’s freedom is to forget that freedom is, first and foremost, about choice.”

Does the burkini mean a loss of freedom? *Newsweek* caught up with the inventor of the burkini to find out. Aheda Zanetti, a Lebanese Muslim woman who lives in Bankstown, Australia, near Sydney, says she began working on designs for the burkini after watching her 11-year-old niece struggling to play sports in a long, flowing hijab, or head scarf. “She looked like a tomato, her face was so red wearing all that clothing,” she recalls.

She searched for Muslim swimsuits and sportswear online and found nothing. “I realized that we didn’t really swim or play sports when I was growing up, not because we didn’t want to but because we just didn’t have the clothing!” she says. “So we never really enjoyed the summer life, the sports lifestyle Australia has to offer.”

She launched her company, Ahiida Burqini Swimwear, 12 years ago. “People went absolutely

SHE LIKENED MUSLIMS WEARING BURKINIS TO “AMERICAN NEGROES IN FAVOR OF SLAVERY.”

crazy,” she says. “I wasn’t prepared for it. Now we have sales all over the world, and whenever they ban it, people just buy more of them.”

Zanetti says she and her two teen daughters wear burkinis, but 35 to 45 percent of her market is non-Muslim. “I have a lot of people who like them because they want the UV protection or prefer to cover more of themselves,” she says. “Not all of us like to be naked. As for Muslims, wearing comfortable and flexible clothing is not something we are used to! Now we have Muslim women competing in swimming and marathons and becoming a lot more confident.”

That said, Zanetti has detractors. “One Italian man wrote to me to say, ‘I enjoy watching women in a bikini—why are doing this to us?’ And I wrote back, ‘Use your imagination!’” ■



YOU'RE 100% WRONG ABOUT
Driving in L.A.

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE
NOT OWNING A CAR IN LOS ANGELES

I'VE NEVER been good with cars. I can't change a tire or replace a spark plug. I've backed into my parents' garage door and once put diesel in my father's minivan. (It took regular, and we had to drain the gas tank.)

For 11 years, however, I didn't have to worry about driving. I lived in New York. But last summer, I moved to Los Angeles, a city where an enema is considered a meal and a car is considered a second home.

The Greater L.A. area is clogged with cars, and the average Angeleno wasted 81 hours in gridlock in 2015, according to Inrix, a company that studies traffic. Mortified by the prospect of being imprisoned in a Prius, listening to "California Love" until I'm filled with hate, I held off on buying a car. I'm still holding out, and I've discovered something surprising: You don't need a car in L.A. Since mid-2013, the city has installed more than 45 miles of bike lanes and finished the new Expo Line, which now connects downtown to the

Santa Monica Pier (yes, L.A. has a subway). Los Angeles also has many more Uber drivers than it did three years ago.

Every day, I walk, use public transit, bike and pay strangers to drive me around. Like a growing number of people, according to a survey from Los Angeles County, I work from home, which makes being carless much easier. My neighborhood, Santa Monica, is incredibly walkable. Plus, ride sharing is fast and cheap (sometimes disturbingly so).

Freed from the burden of owning my own car, I never have to worry about potential DUIs or finding parking. Lyft is my limo. I get around for roughly \$400 a month, or \$4,800 a year, less than half of what the average sedan owner pays annually to own and operate a car.

I have been tempted to lease a white BMW, like everyone else in Santa Monica. Not out of necessity but for respect. Even with the growing number of East Coast transplants—

who tend to define status more by who you know or what you wear—not having a car carries a terrible stigma. It's such an important status symbol that people talk about it on Tinder: "If you drive a Prius, swipe left," one woman wrote. We didn't match.

Which is why I was nervous last December when I met a young woman in a downtown. It was our first date, and I didn't want to tell her about my, ahem, problem. But as we tried to find a restaurant, she turned to me, obviously concerned.

"I have something to tell you."

My mind raced: Does she have a gluten allergy? Has she pledged fealty to Islamic State (ISIS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi?

"I..." she stammered.


This is bad, I thought.

Finally, she blurted it out.

"I don't have a car!"

I smiled. "Have you ever accidentally put diesel in a Chevy Venture?"

No, she said.

It was a Nissan Sentra. 



WHEN RED PENCILS RULED THE EARTH

Getting high on good drugs, great companions and even better prose in *The Accidental Life* of Terry McDonell

TERRY MCDONELL is almost certainly the only editor in the history of American magazines to have played golf with Hunter S. Thompson while tripping on acid, edited the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue and had one of his ideas called “really stupid” by Steve Jobs—all in a career that also involved friendships and collaborations with some of the foremost cultural figures of postwar America, from novelist Richard Ford to actress Margot Kidder.

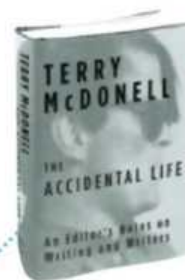
Ford, a self-exiled Southerner given to manly pursuits, never got around to taking McDonell hunting, which seems to be a sore point, but McDonell’s new memoir, *The Accidental Life*, is otherwise free of score settling, vitriol and self-aggrandizement. As an editor who worked at seemingly every great magazine in print other than *Cat Fancy*, he mainly wants to run his fingers along the fine grains of the editing life, which might involve tracking down Edward Abbey in a rural Utah bar or fielding a complaint from Spike Lee about an *Esquire* headline.

The recounting of so many deadlines barely met and so much sobriety frequently squandered doesn’t make McDonell a nostalgist. When he sat down across from me in a lower Manhattan fish joint one recent afternoon, he wanted at once to know if I used WhatsApp, the encrypted messaging service over which he communicates with his son Nick, a journalist and novelist living in Baghdad. “All the people overseas use that,”

McDonell says, sounding like a digitally besotted millennial who doesn’t know the difference between an issue of *The American Scholar* and the Victoria’s Secret catalog.

McDonell’s zeal for the new goes beyond messaging apps. He is one of the founders of Literary Hub, a popular digital-only literary magazine he started with Grove Atlantic’s Morgan Entrekin. And though clearly aware of the grim realities facing the printed word—books, magazines and newspapers—he insists that “this is a great time to be an editor,” while picking at a complex oyster concoction set in a giant bowl of ice. “There’s just so much to do.”

The Accidental Life is about what he has done, which is pretty much everything one could have hoped to in the magazine world of late 20th-century America. He edited and befriended most of the alpha males of a muscular brand of journalism that flowed from the American West to midtown Manhattan. He was also chummy with Helen Gurley Brown, the legendary editor of *Cosmopolitan*, who always took the M10 bus down Central Park West to her office in order to stay in touch with her readers. He hung out with the crime novelist Richard Price, rafted down the Salmon River in Idaho with *Rolling Stone* founder Jann Wenner and frequented the literary clubhouse that was Elaine’s restaurant on the Upper East Side. Seemingly every major writer floats through these pages, with the exception of Thomas Pynchon.



BY
ALEXANDER NAZARYAN
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+
YOU CALL THAT WORK? McDonell makes the life of a great magazine editor sound like the world's best party, one in which every person there can deliver a great line and then do a few lines.

The number of major magazines at which McDonell served as editor in the past four decades is astonishing; it would take far too much space to list them all here. His past employers include *Outside*, *Rolling Stone*, *Newsweek*, *Esquire* and *Sports Illustrated*. Though he frequently stayed in a gig for only a couple of years, McDonell always knew he wanted to edit magazines, to work with writers like Jim Harrison, Thomas McGuane, Susan Orlean and, most surprisingly of all, Jimmy Buffett, who wrote for McDonell at *Outside* and *Sports Illustrated*, composing a song, "Getting the Picture," for the latter's swimsuit issue.

The printed word was being challenged by television but had not yet been defeated by the internet, and to be a magazine journalist then was not yet some *recherché* occupation, like Civil War recreation. It was damn fun too, as when he assigned budding Republican humorist P.J.

O'Rourke a *Rolling Stone* piece that would come to be titled "Cocaine Etiquette." "Cocaine and etiquette," O'Rourke wrote, "are inseparable; they go together like cocaine and, well, more cocaine." That kind of thing, kids, they don't teach you at Columbia Journalism School.

It's surprising McDonell remembers much of anything, given the drugs and booze that seemed easier to find in a newsroom than a working pen. McDonell says he and his friends drank so much, they called themselves the

TO BE A MAGAZINE JOURNALIST THEN WAS NOT YET SOME RECHERCHÉ OCCUPATION, LIKE CIVIL WAR RECREATION. IT WAS DAMN FUN TOO.

Society of Functioning Alcoholics. In this time of smaller and smaller newsrooms, his tales of media-world excesses are amusing, a dispatch from a distant planet. "An editor I knew at *People* joked one Christmas about expensing \$20,000 of veal picatta that year," he writes. "Writers would hear about such high-handed excess and complain to their editor, who would likely take them out for some veal picatta, and that would be that." Now we take our lunches at Chipotle, counting both calories and quarters.

In his *Accidental Life*, McDonell acknowledges mistakes, as well as the shortcomings of the magazine industry. For example, there was the *Esquire* story titled "Spike Lee Hates Your Cracker Ass." McDonell now says his headline was "hate-mongering" and recalls with embarrassment the call he got from the upset film director. "I'm still ashamed of it," he says. He also points out that few women are the top editors at major magazines (one exception, he notes, is *Mother Jones*, edited by Clara Jeffery). People of color remain all too rare on the mastheads of our finest magazines.

In both writing and conversation, McDonell displays an optimism rare for his industry, where a pose of resigned gloom has become as fashionable as renting a "cottage" in the Hamptons. "Editors," he writes, "have to be optimistic, ever hopeful that the next issue will come together not quite as badly as the last one." ■



THE LONG CRAWL TO FREEDOM

The discovery of the tunnel dug by Jews to escape extermination by the Nazis raises hopes—and disturbing questions

THE DIARY OF Kazimierz Sakowicz opens with his description of a pleasant summer day in the Ponar forest, outside the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius: “July 11: Quite nice weather, warm, white clouds, windy, some shots from the forest. Probably exercises.”

The shots were not exercises, as Sakowicz would very quickly discover. The year was 1941, and the Baltics had been overrun by the Nazi war machine that June. Now the occupiers—with eager help from Lithuanians—were emptying Vilnius of its vibrant Jewish population, which had turned the dense, medieval city into the “Jerusalem of the North.”

The previous year, the Soviets had dug several large pits in the Ponar forest along a rail line leading out of Vilnius. The plan had been to install fuel tanks and build an airfield, but then Hitler broke the nonaggression pact he had signed with Stalin, invading the Soviet Union through Poland. The pits were abandoned, and the Soviets scrambled to prepare for battle against the Wehrmacht.

The Germans, now working with their Lithuanian collaborators, came up with new plans for the Ponar site.

It took only a day for Sakowicz to understand what was happening in the forest next to the cabin where he lived with his family. “A large group of Jews,” he wrote, “was taken to the forest, about 300 people, mainly intelligentsia,

with suitcases, beautifully dressed, known for their good economic situation, etc. An hour later the volleys began.”

EVERY ONE of the Nazi killing sites had its own morbid efficiency; though the machinery of death at Ponar could never rival that of Auschwitz-Birkenau or Treblinka, by 1944 the Germans and Lithuanians had managed to slaughter 70,000 Jews and perhaps 30,000 other perceived enemies of the Thousand-Year Reich, including Soviets and Gypsies.

Their method was simple. Most prisoners came by train right to the precipice of what would be their grave. Some thought they’d been selected for a work detail; some knew otherwise. The condemned were told to leave their possessions and disrobe; both their belongings and their clothes would soon be picked over by the Lithuanian populace, as at a rummage sale. They were then marched down trenches into the pits and, at some point, blindfolded. Now they stood among the dead, whom they would soon join. Above, a firing squad prepared to do its work.

“Lithuanians shot us,” said survivor Shalom Shorenson, “not Germans.” The bloody work was overseen by Einsatzkommando 9 of the SS, but it was performed by the Ypatingasis burys, a Lithuanian outfit. Shorenson survived by falling right before the shots were fired. Sandwiched between corpses, he eluded notice and thus

BY
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+
ACCOMMODATING HOSTS: Once Germany occupied Lithuania, locals helped the Nazis round up Jews.

became one of the few survivors of Ponar.

The slaughter in the forest continued for about three years. But by 1943, after defeats at Stalingrad and elsewhere, Berlin was coming to understand that the dream of Aryan purity across the Continent was going to conclude with courtrooms and gallows, and so began the many attempts to conceal the Final Solution. In that Lithuanian forest, 80 Jewish prisoners were brought from Stutthof, a nearby concentration camp, to form a Leichenkommando “corpse unit.” Its mission: burn the bodies in the pits, thus turning evidence of Nazi war crimes into inscrutable ash.

Like the Sonderkommando who removed the bodies of the dead from the gas chambers of Auschwitz, the Leichenkommando grasped that they were some horrible combination of witness, victim and unwilling perpetrator. They knew, also, that no cover-up could be complete without their own deaths. And so they started to plot an escape, collecting spoons by day as they per-

**THEY KNEW THAT
NO COVER-UP COULD
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formed their grim task, then digging a tunnel at night, from the pit where they were housed into the forest beyond.

The Jews of the corpse unit spent two and a half months digging that tunnel out of Ponar: 100 feet long and 2 feet wide, at its deepest about 15 feet below the ground.

In a novelistic turn, the Leichenkommando chose to flee on the final night of Passover in 1944, April 15, when there would be scant light in the sky. But the escape was not noiseless, and

the Germans quickly arrived on the scene. Of the 80 prisoners in that pit, only 12 made it to freedom. Eleven survived the war.

THE EXISTENCE of the tunnel was not a secret, but it long languished in some shadow world between myth and fact. Situated in a thick coniferous forest outside of Vilnius, Ponar, known today as Paneriai, is now a memorial site, but it is also a mass grave, one that can't be easily disturbed. In 2004, a Lithuanian archaeologist found the mouth of the tunnel but wasn't able to conduct further investigations.

Eleven years later, a group of researchers were working on the remains of the Great Synagogue in Vilnius, which was damaged during the war and demolished by the Soviets, who in the postwar years became increasingly suspicious of Jewish culture. Although part of the synagogue was now under a school, the mostly

American team did not need to disturb the ground because their ground-penetrating radar and electrical resistivity tomography—technology borrowed in part from the oil industry—allowed them to create an image of what was below them without pulling out their shovels.

Richard Freund, an archaeologist at the University of Hartford, says that when the team was done mapping the Great Synagogue, he posed a simple question to the Lithuanians: “What would you like us to look for?”

Ponar, the Lithuanians replied. They wanted him to find the tunnel.

IMET FREUND on a humid afternoon on the University of Hartford campus, in a small room off the main library floor that functions as a museum of Jewish history. It also is, in large part, a repository of the many discoveries made by Freund, including an extensive chronicle of the Jewish

KILLING EFFICIENTLY: Pits the Russians dug for fuel tanks were used by the Nazis as mass graves for Jews who were marched to the edge and then shot.

EDDIE GERALD/MOMENT OPEN/GETTY





quarter on the Greek island of Rhodes, which he and his students had mapped out.

A stocky, mustachioed man of middle age, Freund is both funnier and more loquacious than you might think an archaeologist could be, especially one whose primary occupation is Jewish history, with all its varieties of tragedy. Freund is from Long Island, and his strong New York accent leavens discussion of the Holocaust, giving even the most somber topics a gentle Woody Allen quality. His connection to Ponar is more than academic. His great-grandfather, Nathan Ginzburg, left Vilnius for the United States. "There were moments in that Ponary forest this June that I realized: 'But for the grace of God, I might have ended up here,'" he tells me in an email, using an alternate spelling for the site.

Educated at Queens College and in Israel, Freund is a pioneer of techno-archaeology. If traditional archaeology is like a biopsy, what Freund does is closer to an MRI, using electromagnetic waves to create images of structures that have been buried for decades, if not centuries. That is especially attractive in unstable regions like the Middle East, where extended digs may be politically unfeasible. In many places, digging is impossible for another reason: There's enough of a built environment aboveground to make ventures belowground too inconvenient to attempt.

Archaeologists are not a particularly shy breed: They want to find things, and they want the world to know what they have found. Quests for lost treasures of the ancient world, like Agamemnon's purported funeral mask or the remnants of Troy, captivated Victorian imaginations—and still play well on the History Channel.

Freund shares some of this showmanship with his predecessors. Several years ago, he touted a discovery in a Spanish marsh as possibly the mythical city of Atlantis. The search for Atlantis became a National Geographic Channel documentary; similarly, the discovery of the Ponary tunnel will be featured in a PBS film scheduled to air in early 2017.

The publicity, though, shouldn't obscure the hard work of finding the tunnel—and Freund makes clear that that work has been done thoroughly, with parcels systematically mapped one by one until a full picture emerged. In addition to the tunnel, Freund and his fellow researchers found a 12th burial pit.

But what happens next isn't up to him, or any of the researchers from the United States, Lithuania or Israel who were part of the discovery. Because the soil is sandy, the tunnel has probably collapsed in places; excavation could further damage what remains. It's a cruel irony that, to remain in exist-

tence, the tunnel may also have to remain unseen.

Freund, though, believes the risk of excavation is worth it. "I think the Lithuanians should do this," he tells me. "It's their site, their history."

.....
IN THE SUMMER of 2011, a memorial at Ponar was defaced with a swastika and the words, spray-painted in red, "Hitler was right." Writing about the vandalism for *The New York Review of Books*, Yale historian Timothy Snyder noted that although Lithuanians had been generally tolerant of the thousands of Jews living in their midst, "the Germans had no trouble finding Lithuanians willing to kill Jews," so that 10 percent of the prewar population survived the Holocaust. As

"LITHUANIANS SHOT US, NOT GERMANS."

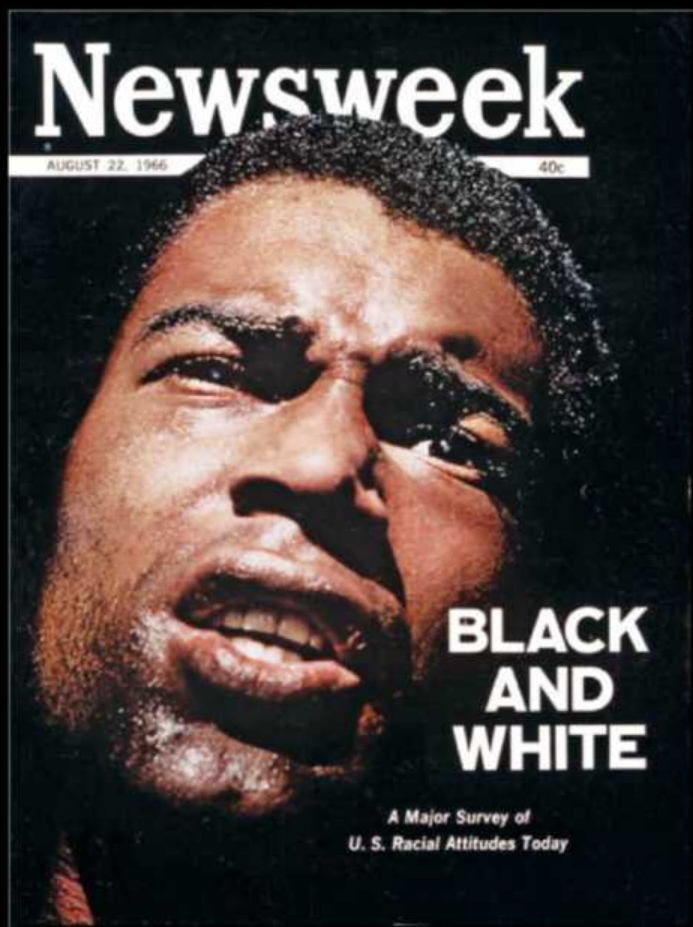
for the desecration at Ponary, Snyder pointed to Lithuanians' refusal to fully acknowledge their complicity in the Final Solution. "The Lithuanian government tends to focus on the Lithuanian victims of the Soviet occupation," downplaying culpability while claiming victimhood.

In the five years since the vandalism at Ponar, Lithuania has retreated ever further from historical realities. As Daniel Brook wrote in *Slate* last year, there are not even 5,000 Jews in Lithuania today, which makes it easy to minimize the extent of the crimes committed against them. He described the country as less economically successful than many of its European peers and thus more susceptible to misguided historical narratives that trigger feelings of self-pity and injustice. "The Nazis were bad; the Soviets were worse," one young Lithuanian told him.

Ponar is a powerful, visceral rebuke to this revisionism, which is likely why it was targeted by neo-Hitlerian thugs. It is more than that too, a place that challenges the notion of Jewish naïveté in the face of annihilation. Says Freund, "Jews did not go like sheep to the slaughter." ■

REWIND

50
YEARS



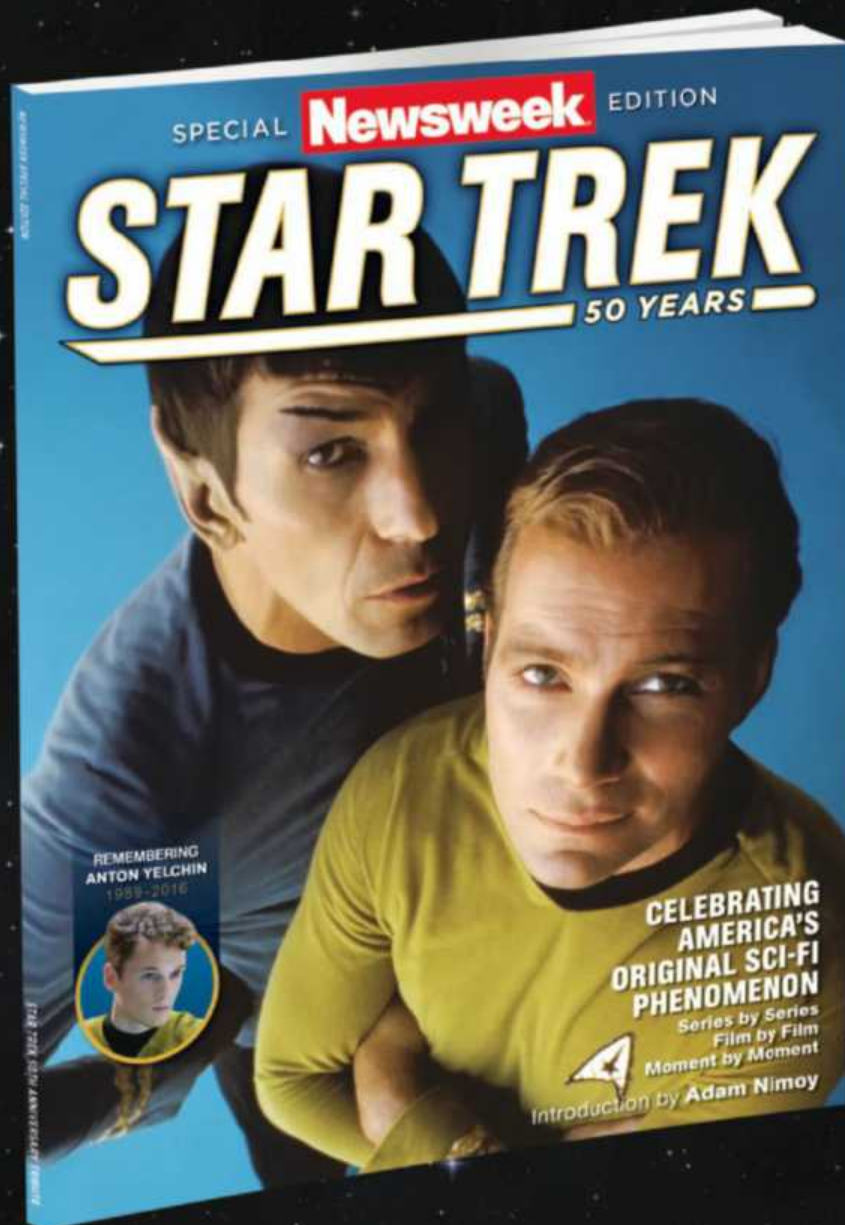
AUGUST 22, 1966

COLUMNIST EMMET JOHN HUGHES
DERIDES RICHARD NIXON BY COMPARING
HIM TO A WHITE SOUND MACHINE

“To tranquilize
the daily life of
Americans, there
is available on the
market a compact
bedside machine
that encourages
relaxation and sleep.
It makes a delicate
music to blur
distracting sounds
from neighbor or

traffic, and it hums forth a scientific blend
of soothing rhythms advertised as 'white
sound.' And to anesthetize the political life
of Americans, there is no one still to match
Nixon's ability to blur disconcerting facts,
hum a plausible blend of simplifications and
generate the 'white sound' that can lull a
nation into sleepy, soothing fantasy.”

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