The American Who Created the Castro Myth

Why Facebook Can't Fix Fake News

Newsweek

12.09.2016

THE ROBOT ECONOMY

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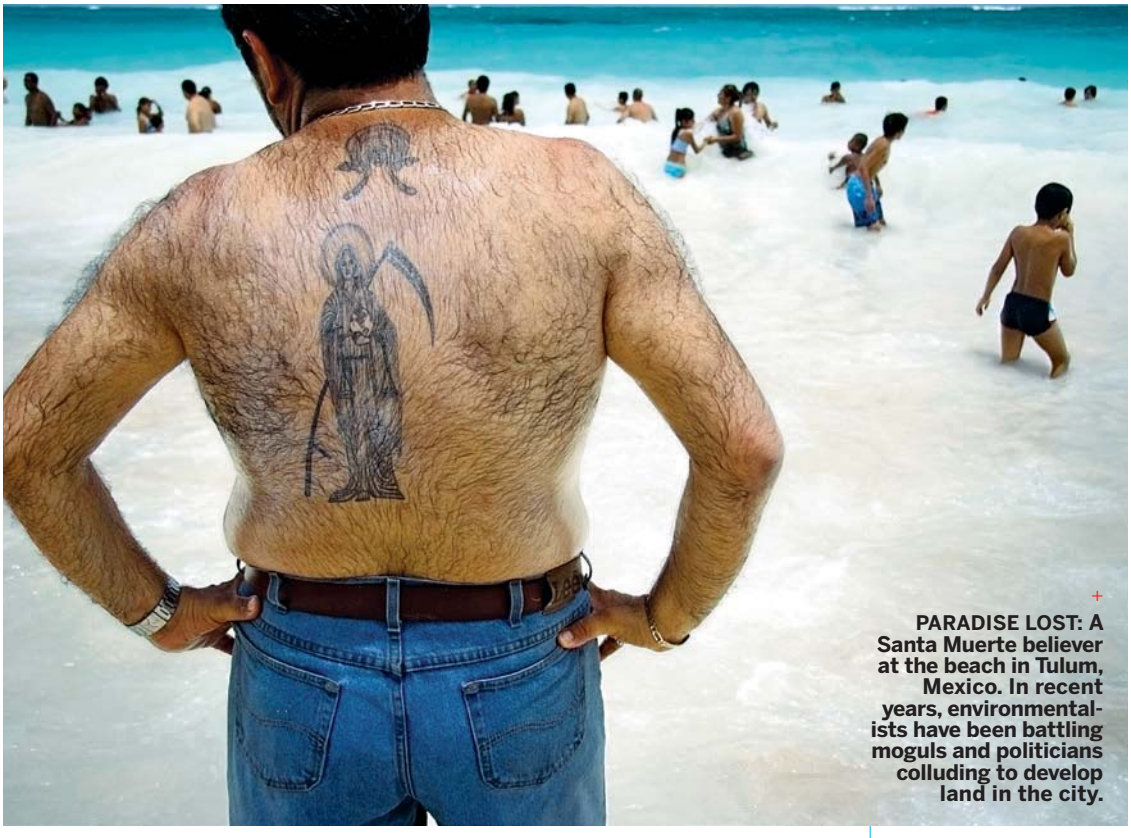

PARADISE LOST: A Santa Muerte believer at the beach in Tulum, Mexico. In recent years, environmentalists have been battling moguls and politicians colluding to develop land in the city.

MYLOUPE/UNIVERSAL IMAGES/GETTY

FEATURES

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ENRIQUE DE LA OSA/REUTERS

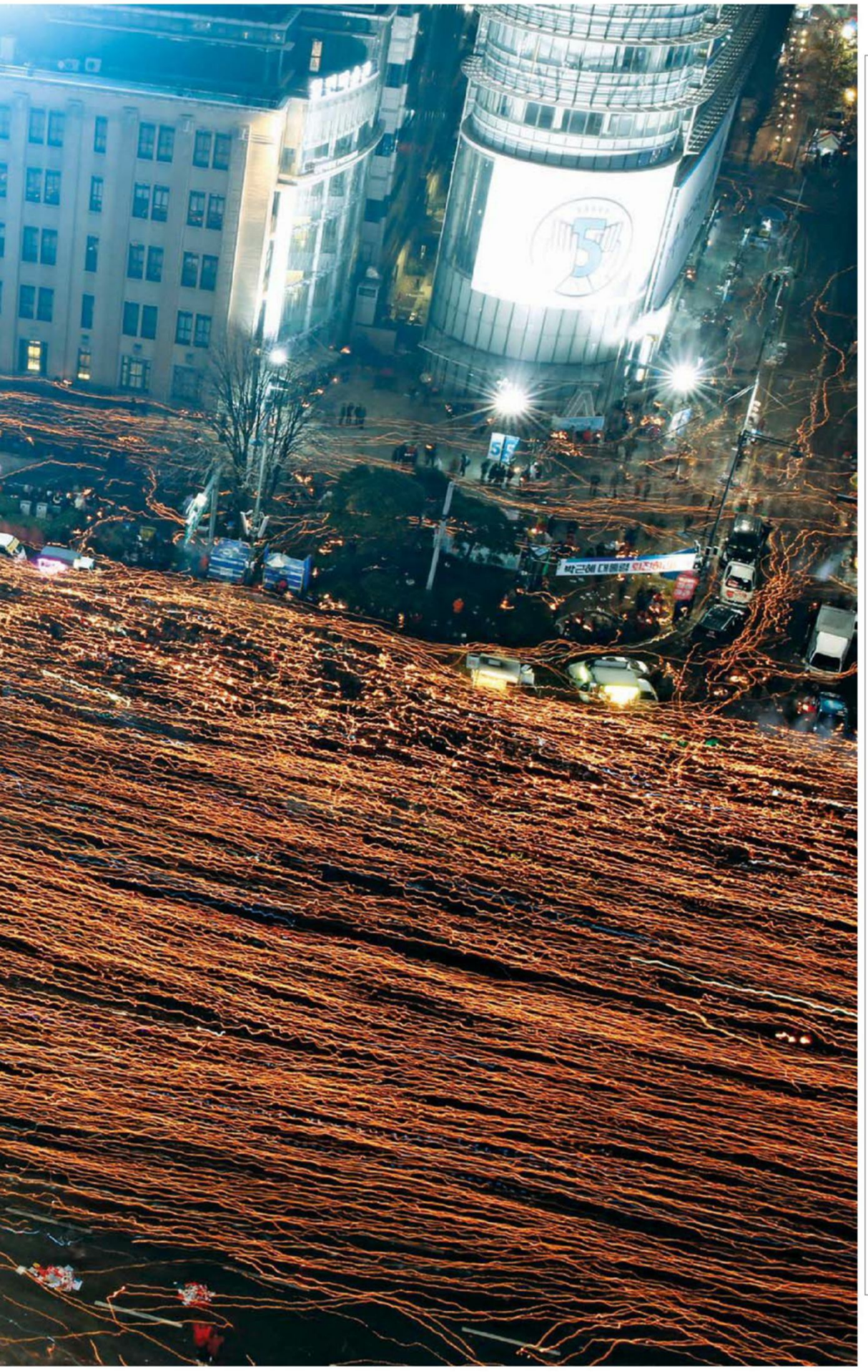
CUBA

High Fidelity

Artemisa province, Cuba—Marlon Mendez poses in his bedroom on November 27, two days after the death of Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary who ruled the Caribbean island nation for almost 50 years. Mendez, 10, lives near Havana and idolizes Castro, even dressing up in green fatigues to imitate the "maximum leader" who invited Mendez to his home for a meeting in 2014, according to Reuters. Cubans are unclear what Castro's death means for their country, especially as his younger brother, Raúl, remains president.

ENRIQUE DE LA OSA

KIM KYUNG-HOON/REUTERS



SOUTH KOREA

Time-Lapse Collapse

Seoul, South Korea—Hundreds of thousands of protesters holding candles take over the streets on November 26 for the fifth week of demonstrations calling for the ouster of President Park Geun-hye. The country's first female president faces allegations that she helped force major corporations like Samsung and Hyundai to donate $69 million to foundations controlled by a close friend, according to *The New York Times*. The crisis has paralyzed the government.

KIM KYUNG-HOON

MARK LENNIHAN/AP

USA

Teflon Don?

New York—It has been only weeks since Donald Trump won the presidential election, and already he's mired in controversy. First, the president-elect, seen leaving *The New York Times* on November 22, suggested he might not put his business in a trust to prevent conflicts of interest. Later, Trump, who lost the popular vote, ranted about a recount effort in three Midwestern states. "I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally," he tweeted, a baseless charge, analysts say.

MARK LENNIHAN

GORAN TOMASEVIC/REUTERS

IRAQ

Smoke 'Em if You Got 'Em

Qayyarah, Iraq—More than six weeks have passed since Iraqi and Kurdish forces, with help from the U.S., began trying to drive the Islamic State group (ISIS) out of Mosul. The coalition has made steady advances, despite the militants' torching of oil fields, like the one shown here on November 23. But the battle has killed far more soldiers and civilians than expected, and the death toll may rise exponentially as the coalition moves farther into the city.

GORAN TOMASEVIC

FACEBOOK DEAD

Divisive politics and fake news are hurting the country and could kill the world's biggest social media platform

IMAGINE GOING on Facebook and finding no political posts—just your friends and their updates. It would feel like pulling on clean underwear after wearing a single pair for a week on a desert hike.

Fake news? That's only the start of the tempest about to roll through Facebook headquarters. The site is turning into a septic tank of polluted politics. It's becoming a party you want to leave because everybody got drunk and obnoxious. No new social network is going to beat Facebook by copying Facebook, but we might get fed up with all the politics and fake crap on Facebook and turn to something refreshingly different. Right there you can see the leak in Facebook's tire: the left glove that drops and leaves an opening for a rival to punch it in the face.

"There's a real risk this is doing great harm to the brand," I was told by a Facebook insider who has been part of recent conversations at the top of that behemoth but asked not to be identified because the person didn't want to alienate the company. This source said the election aftermath might be Facebook's "Tylenol moment"—a reference to the 1982 poisoning deaths of people who ingested Tylenol capsules laced with cyanide. That crisis nearly crippled its maker, medical giant Johnson & Johnson.

Think back just a couple of years, before the 2016 election cycle and before Facebook set itself up as the world's newswire. Facebook grew to a billion users by being a *social* network. It's where you found old friends and kept up with family. I just looked back at my 2014 Facebook timeline. Almost zero politics! And that's how most people liked it. Many users back then even beseeched friends to avoid political posts, or muted the violators if they persisted. In real life, most of us don't want to argue politics with our friends and family, so why would we want to do it online?

Then, over the past two years, Facebook aggressively morphed into a media site. It set up deals with publishers to populate all our timelines with stories. It subtly encouraged users to

BY
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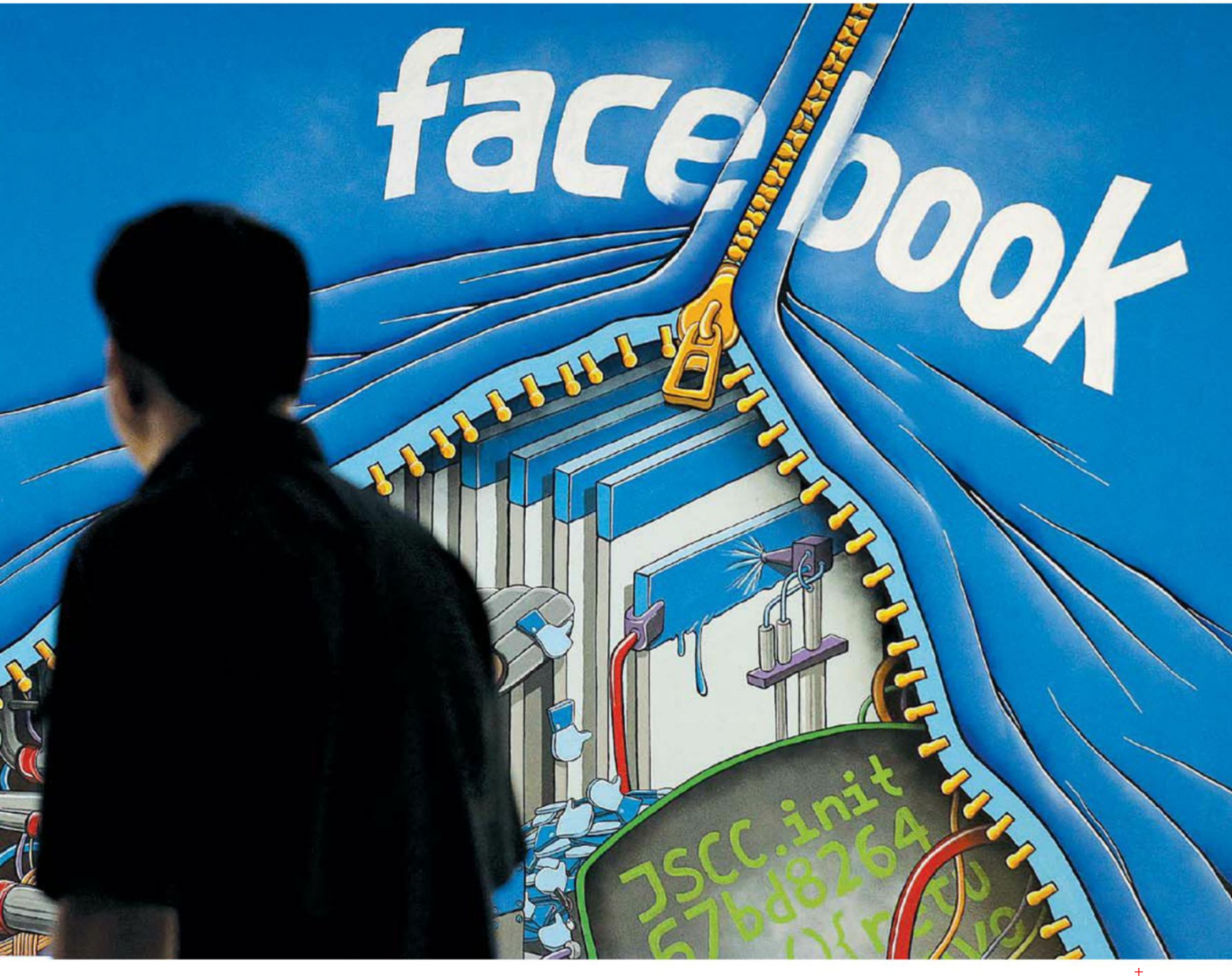

JEFF CHIU/AP

THAT'S HOW THE DARK GETS IN: Divisive views and fake news pumped up engagement on Facebook during the election, but they created a potentially fatal rend in the company's fabric.

+ **THE FAKE SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH: During the recent U.S. election, a lot of Facebook users didn't care if something in their feeds was true, says a media literacy professor.**

DENNIS VAN TINE/STAR MAX/IPX/AP

post stories and to "like" and comment on them. Facebook, of course, did this with its own goals in mind. To maximize profit, Facebook needs to keep users engaged and on the site as long as possible, and to get those users to create or interact with all the content in their feeds. That thrum of activity helps Facebook's algorithms more deftly target ads to more people, which makes Facebook even more attractive to advertisers.

Since politics is traditionally news, of course that topic started to slip into our feeds, and Facebook's setup encouraged sinister practices. As users zip through their news feeds, scanning only the headlines, they are more likely to click on and share stories that are outrageous or stir emotions. In other words, Facebook—unwittingly, from what I hear—incentivized clickbait "news" over more serious news, and the success of clickbait opened the way for fake news. "We're more likely to share inflammatory posts than non-inflammatory ones, which means that each Facebook session is a process by which we double down on the most radical beliefs in our feed," writes Mike Caulfield, an expert in learning environments. "Marketers figured this out and realized that to get you to click, they had to up the ante. So they produced conspiracy sites that have carefully designed, fictional stories that are inflammatory enough that you *will* click."

It's hard to say whether Facebook is the chicken or the egg in this wave of political propaganda—whether it helped create the acidic and divided politics around the world or if the ugly political environment merely found an accommodating home on Facebook. No doubt it was some of both, and the result is that our feeds are now overwhelmed with wingnut political content that gets amplified even if it's crazy. During the election, a lot of Facebook users just didn't care if something was true, says Paul Mihailidis, a media literacy professor at Emerson College. "They saw it as a way to advocate," he says. "They see a catchy headline, and the default is to share." If you look globally—the U.S., the U.K., France, Colombia, the Philippines—politics are getting more caustic, not less. In this kind of

environment, all the media outlets that now rely on Facebook's audience are driven to flood us with click-worthy headlines that play to our fears and anger. Every trend line points to more of what we're growing to hate on Facebook.

And what's Facebook going to do about it? It can't ban political posts; it would lose its position as a media outlet and blow out its bottom line. This conundrum is Facebook's Innovator's Dilemma, as described in the book by the same name. The company is making too much money with this product to make changes that would bring in less money, even if the company knows that's what its users really want. The more money the company makes as a news outlet, the harder—as a public company with demanding shareholders—it will be for Facebook to change course. The news industry has spent the past couple of years lamenting Facebook's power, yet news might turn out to be Facebook's OxyContin—it made it feel great for a while, but ingest too much and it could wind up in a ditch with a tattoo on its face.

Despite recent statements by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg about his efforts to rein in fake news, he won't be able to do that easily. Zuckerberg hit on the reason when he said it would be problematic to set up Facebook editors or algorithms as "arbiters of truth." Because—what's truth? Centuries ago, it was true that the world was flat. When I was a kid, a mom would sit in a car's front seat and put her baby on her lap and not wear a seat belt. If someone said that was insanely unsafe, you probably would've blinked quizzically and said, "That's not true."

Facebook apparently is working on software that would flag or block fake news. Last year, Google published research on a knowledge-based trust algorithm that would sort for truth. Some college kids recently got attention for creating a Google Chrome extension they called FiB that automatically labels allegedly iffy sources. British technologist Peter Cochrane recently talked to me about developing software he called a truth engine. These might succeed in banning certain sites or identifying stories likely to be fake because they come from a single source, and yet software solutions can probably never overcome the problem that truth to me might not be truth to you, and truth today won't necessarily be truth tomorrow.

If all its political garbage can't be filtered or eliminated, Facebook will become vulnerable to a challenger. Let's say a new social network defines the category in a new way—make it more about our connections and our lives while banning media. Maybe it would have some new twists built around artificial intelligence or virtual reality. Such a competitor could disrupt Facebook the way the personal computer chewed at the market for IBM's expensive mainframes, or the way Airbnb has cut into Marriott's business. If users devote even some of their limited attention to a new social network, Facebook's momentum will stall.

Competitors may already be kicking at that door. Snapchat's parent will go public at a valuation of more than $25 billion, in part because it's starting to eat up some of the time people used to spend on Facebook. At least Facebook has been smart enough to buy properties that so far remain free of news pollution. Its Instagram and WhatsApp are more purely for social sharing and messaging. It bought virtual reality company Oculus VR, which could usher in a new way to socialize in a parallel cyberworld. Still, none of Facebook's other properties likely come close to pumping out the profits of the mother site. (Facebook doesn't break out results for its different properties.)

> ALL THE MEDIA OUTLETS THAT RELY ON FACEBOOK'S AUDIENCE FLOOD US WITH HEADLINES THAT PLAY TO OUR FEARS AND ANGER.

One constant about the technology industry is that every seemingly bulletproof superpower at some point has a Waterloo. It happened to IBM, AOL, Microsoft, Intel; and it will happen to Apple, Amazon and Google. You might be witnessing Facebook's moment of truth, in a very literal sense. If Facebook turns into a bottomless cesspool of competing political "truths," a lot of us are going to soil ourselves and escape to something else.

INVENTING FIDEL

How *The New York Times* helped create the myth of Fidel Castro as a genial Latin American Robin Hood

YEARS BEFORE Fidel Castro, the defiant leader of revolutionary Cuba, died on November 25, his demise had been reported many times. The first was nearly 60 years ago, when the front pages of *The New York Times* and other newspapers flashed headlines about his death in a botched invasion of Cuba on December 2, 1956. The Cuban government, led by Fulgencio Batista, had spread the false story to stamp out a Castro-led insurrection, and for months the world believed that Castro, and his younger brother, Raúl, had met their inglorious end on a forlorn Cuban beach.

The truth of Castro's unlikely survival wasn't known until the following February, when an American newspaperman braved army roadblocks, often in disguise, to see the rebel in his mountain hideout in Cuba's Sierra Maestra. It was just after dawn, with a weak winter sun slipping over the mountains and the forest dripping from overnight rain, when the thick brush parted and into the clearing strode a young and very much alive Castro. It was February 1957, and the American reporter was mesmerized.

"This was quite a man—a powerful six-footer, olive-skinned, full-faced, with a straggly beard," wrote Herbert Matthews in his exclusive front-page story in *The New York Times*. "The personality of the man is overpowering. It was easy to see that his men adored him and also to see why he has caught the imagination of the youth of Cuba all over the island. Here was an educated, dedicated fanatic, a man of ideals, of courage and of remarkable qualities of leadership."

That meeting between Matthews, a 57-year-old war correspondent and distinguished editorial writer, and the 30-year-old revolutionary with a law degree, marked the beginning of what would become a complex—and, to some, troubling—relationship that helped propel Castro to power. It also raised early concerns about the truth of what appears in the news, or (as it is more commonly known today) "fake news."

Over the next five years, Matthews's reporting created the myth of Castro, a genial Latin Robin Hood fighting for the poor and powerless. The writer's glowing profiles earned the Cuban leader the sympathy and support of the American public. They also helped solidify Castro's standing on the island and played into the revolution's dramatic about-face, which eventually led to the missile crisis in 1962 that nearly left the Western Hemisphere in cinders.

WINNING THE PRESS WAR

Fidel Castro's rise began on December 1, 1956, when the young lawyer, along with Raúl, the Argentine doctor Ernesto "Che" Guevara and 79 young Cuban rebels tried to land their overloaded wooden yacht, the *Granma*, on the southeastern shore of Oriente province in Cuba. They planned to join supporters on land and launch a rebellion to depose Colonel Batista, who had ruled the

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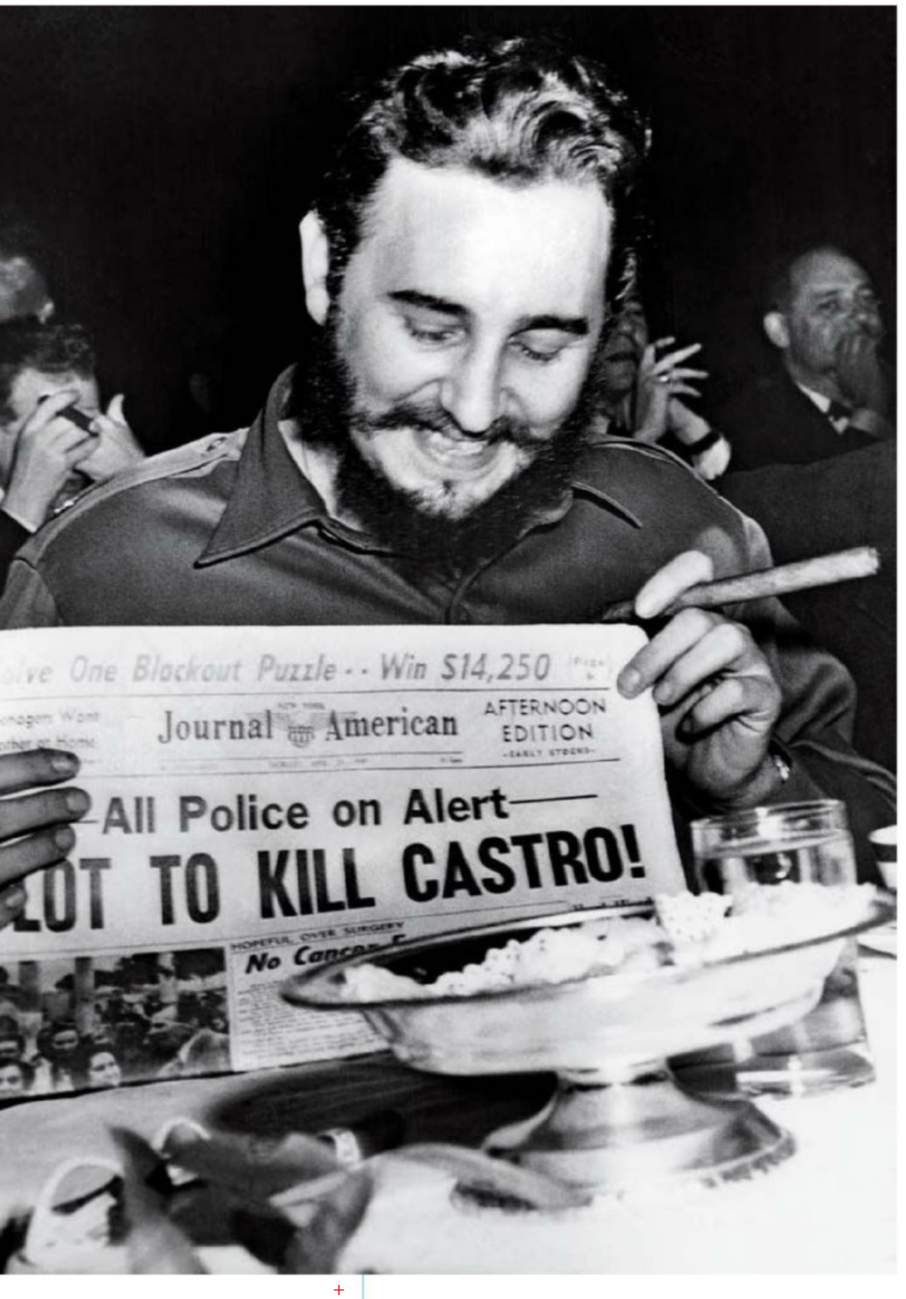

BETTMANN/GETTY

BEARDING THE LYING: Castro was adept at working the press to his advantage, and reveled in mocking false stories about him.

country on and off since 1933, sometimes behind a puppet president. After being out of power for a few years, Batista ran for president again in 1952. Facing almost certain defeat, he launched a coup and scuttled the elections, including the congressional race in which Castro was a candidate.

Castro then took up arms against the Batista regime, and on the morning of July 26, 1953, he stormed the heavily guarded Moncada military barracks in Santiago, on the eastern end of the island. The attack turned into a fiasco, as Batista's army rebels slaughtered or captured most of the would-be revolutionary rebels. Castrol and his brother got away, but Batista's troops later caught them and sent them to prison. Less than two years later, Batista, thinking the rebellion had died, released the brothers and others who took part in the attack.

But the Castros weren't finished, and they immediately resumed the fight. The two brothers made their way to Mexico, where they enlisted support and raised money to buy arms and that second-hand yacht, *Granma*, vowing to return to Cuba, or die, by the end of 1956.

The rebels set sail from Mexico on November 25, 1956, exactly 60 years before Castro's death, but they arrived in Cuba two days later than planned, missing the uprising that was supposed to have coincided with their landing. That

MATTHEWS HID HIS CONTROVERSIAL NOTES IN HIS WIFE'S GIRDLE.

wasn't all that went awry. Instead of anchoring off a shallow beach, the boat ran aground in a mangrove swamp, far from shore. The rebels waded through chest-high water, leaving most of their supplies behind.

Batista's forces were waiting for them. His planes strafed the rebels as they struggled toward land, killing many—but not all. That night, newspapers around the world carried a United Press International report that planes and ground troops had wiped out the rebels, including their leader, Castro.

Most of the rebels were killed or captured, but the brothers, Guevara and a few others scrambled from the beach to the foothills of the Sierra Maestra, the crucible of Cuban revolutions. They set up camp, treated their wounds and began to recruit new supporters. For several weeks, Batista's government continued to report that Castro was dead, and he remained uncharacteristically silent. Then he decided it was time to let the world know the truth.

He knew Cuban reporters feared Batista too much to tell his story, so he sent for a foreign correspondent. *The New York Times* reporter in Havana, R. Hart Phillips, had covered Cuba for decades, but few on the island knew Phillips was a woman, one of the few female correspondents at that time.

Phillips was surprised to learn Castro had survived, but she feared that writing such an incendiary story would get her expelled. Besides, Castro was considered a hothead, and what she knew of the botched Moncada attack gave

her little confidence that his rebellion would succeed. She turned down the interview, then offered it to her office mate Ted Scott of NBC. Scott also said no—for the same reasons.

Phillips realized that the only way a journalist could do the story would be to fly in, interview Castro and then leave Cuba before the story ran. She called New York and passed along the information to Matthews, who was eager to conduct the interview.

Accompanied by his wife, Nancie, Matthews arrived shortly afterward. They waited in a Havana hotel for several days until they received a signal that the trip into the foothills was on. Their plan was to go into the mountains disguised as an American planter and his wife, scouting property.

The ruse worked. The army waved the couple through barricades as they made their way to the Sierra. The rebels took Nancie to a safe house and brought Matthews to the edge of the Sierra, where he began a strenuous overnight climb. Cold, tired, hungry and ravaged by mosquitoes, Matthews reached the rebel encampment before dawn and waited there with his entourage until Castro emerged from the forest.

They talked for hours, sometimes in English but mostly in Spanish, with Matthews taking sparse notes on a few sheets of folded paper. He recorded a description of Castro's rifle with telescopic sight, and he counted the rebel soldiers hovering nearby. Matthews shared some of the rebels' food, and he and Castro lit up cigars. Before leaving, the reporter asked the rebel leader to sign and date his notes to prove the interview had taken place, then Matthews rejoined his wife. One of Castro's men drove them back to Havana, where they boarded a plane to New York, Matthews's controversial notes hidden in his wife's girdle, where they knew she wouldn't be searched.

'CHAPTER IN A FANTASTIC NOVEL'

Matthews wrote three articles about this dramatic encounter. The first ran on Sunday, February 24, 1957, as *The New York Times* announced on its front page that Castro—believed dead since the previous December—was not only alive but also gathering strength. Most important, Matthews presented a version of Castro that did not want power for himself. "Above all," he quoted Castro saying, "we are fighting for a democratic Cuba and an end to the dictatorship." Castro vowed that his goal was to restore constitutional government to the island and hold elections. The Cuban revolutionary said he harbored no animosity toward the United States or the American people, and he mentioned nothing that even remotely resembled communist ideology.

When that first article appeared, Batista's government called it "a chapter in a fantastic novel." Despite the appearance on the front page of Castro's signature beneath a photo of him holding his telescopic rifle, Cuban officials noted that there was no photograph of Castro with the *Times* reporter.

The following day, the *Times* ran a blurry photograph of Matthews and Castro huddled together, smoking cigars. The poor quality of the photo had kept it out of the paper until Havana challenged the integrity of the story.

Batista's censors kept most foreign newspapers out of the country, and they heavily edited those they allowed in. Even the copies of *The*

WAR BY OTHER MEANS: Che Guevara said the *Times* stories about Castro gave the rebels something bigger than a military victory.

ALEXANDRE MENEGHINI/REUTERS

New York Times delivered to the U.S. ambassador's office ran without Matthews's articles. But Castro supporters in the United States were clever. They pulled together mailing lists and sent photocopies to thousands of supporters, opinion-makers and business leaders. Soon everyone in Cuba knew Castro was alive and continuing his revolt.

For almost two years afterward, Castro fought Batista's army. But once the administration of President Dwight Eisenhower suspended arms sales to Batista in 1958, the end was clear. On New Year's Eve 1958, while Matthews attended a party in Havana and Castro remained holed up in the Sierra, Batista fled Havana for the Dominican Republic with his family, a few close supporters and a pile of loot. The next day, rebels swooped into the capital and took control.

Castro came down from the mountains and made his way slowly across the island. On January 8, he triumphantly entered Havana, a day after the Eisenhower administration officially recognized the new government, which was composed of moderate Cuban officials, and limited Castro to overseeing the armed forces. That arrangement didn't last long.

'I AM A MARXIST-LENINIST'

When Castro came to the United States a few months later, he was greeted like a celebrity. Although Eisenhower refused to meet him, he did talk with Vice President Richard Nixon, who said afterward that Castro "is either incredibly naïve about communism or under communist discipline—my guess is the former." In New York City, Castro spoke in front of the Overseas Press Club. For the first time, he boasted of fooling Matthews into believing his forces were far stronger than they actually were by marching the same men around in circles during the famous interview in the Sierra.

Matthews always denied that he had been tricked, but there is no doubt he was blindsided by Castro's secret embrace of Marxist ideology, as were many Cubans, including some who fought side by side with him. Rebel commander Huber Matos considered Castro's turn to communism as a betrayal, as did many others. Cubans across the island and in the United States blamed Matthews, as well as *The New York Times*, for complicity in the treasonous act.

Matthews maintained extraordinary access to Castro and continued to defend him and his revolution, insisting it was not communist "in any sense of the word," even as Cuba turned increasingly toward the Soviet Union. But after Castro proclaimed his revolution "socialist" just as the Bay of Pigs invasion got underway in April 1961, Matthews acknowledged the truth. Finally, during a fiery five-hour speech at the end of 1961, Castro defiantly declared, "I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I shall be to the last days of my life."

The power of manipulated news to shape world events was clear even then. Years after the revolution, Guevara wrote in his memoirs that Matthews's articles gave the rebels something more significant than a military victory. Many others saw it that way too. For years, anti-Castro Cubans picketed outside the *New York Times* headquarters, and mentioning Matthews's name in Miami's Little Havana still causes Cubans of a certain age to spit.

> MENTIONING MATTHEWS'S NAME IN MIAMI'S LITTLE HAVANA STILL CAUSES CUBANS OF A CERTAIN AGE TO SPIT.

In the former Presidential Palace in Havana, now the Museum of the Revolution, an entire display case is devoted to the 1957 encounter between Matthews and Castro. On the seaside Malecón, Havana's most famous boulevard, a monument to Cuban heroes includes a brass plaque with Matthews's name.

And deep in the Sierra, on a hidden plateau that can be reached only by a several-hour trek across peasants' cornfields, through dense forests and across a muddy stream, stands a stone monument that memorializes the encounter between the American journalist and the rebel *comandante*—an encounter that created the myth that continues to inspire and haunt both countries to this day.

ANTHONY DEPALMA, a former foreign correspondent for *The New York Times*, is author of *The Man Who Invented Fidel*.

WATER PROTECTORS AND WATER CANNONS

Behind the front lines of the long and occasionally violent standoff in North Dakota over a massive pipeline

ON THE night of November 20, in 25-degree weather, police shot water cannons into a crowd of activists huddled on a bridge on Highway 1806 in North Dakota. The activists, who call themselves "water protectors," object to Energy Transfer Partners's (ETP) plans to drill a segment of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) under the Missouri River. The controversy has been burbling since the spring; the confrontation that night began when some activists attempted to remove a barricade of burned-out vehicles that has for months been blocking a road that leads to the construction site.

Some news reports claimed that activists had set fires and that the police were simply trying to extinguish them. But my social media feed, full of updates from firsthand observers, told a different story: It said police in riot gear were firing water cannons, along with tear gas, rubber bullets and concussion grenades, to keep activists from crossing the bridge. These reports were later confirmed by *The Washington Post*. A few people in the crowd might have been burning sage, which has ceremonial value to the Sioux and is thought to promote healing. Other accounts indicated that some protectors, trapped on the bridge by police vehicles, started small fires to protect their drenched companions from hypothermia. Police reportedly extinguished those fires as well.

At least 17 protectors were taken to hospitals, said Dallas Goldtooth, an organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network, according to the Associated Press. And *The Bismarck Tribune* reported that only one person was arrested.

I was plugged into this social media feed because I had just returned from a reporting trip to the area. For three days in early November, I camped out at the Oceti Sakowin camp that is about a two-hour drive south from Bismarck, North Dakota, and close to the DAPL construction site. After reading so many conflicting versions of events at the site, I had come to see what was really going on. I also wanted to understand what was prompting people to travel to an isolated area to put themselves in harm's way.

DAPL is controversial because of its proximity to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Some fear that it will leak into the Missouri River and poison the water supply of downstream communities such as Fort Yates, tribal headquarters of the Standing Rock Sioux.

But even if the pipeline never leaks, it still bears troubling implications. The DAPL was supposed to run north of the mostly white town

BY
MICHAEL BENNETT COHN
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HELL FREEZING OVER: Police in riot gear fired a water cannon, tear gas and rubber bullets at activists to prevent them from crossing a bridge leading to the construction site.

STEPHANIE KEITH/REUTERS

of Bismarck, but the route was changed after the Army Corps of Engineers determined that was a "high consequence area." The Native Americans in Fort Yates resent the obvious implication that their community is an area of low consequence for an oil leak. Furthermore, although the pipeline is on land owned by ETP, the Sioux claim it is theirs, according to the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

Since the spring, people from all over the country (and some from outside the country) have gathered at Oceti Sakowin in solidarity with the Sioux Nation to protest the pipeline. On November 14, the Army Corps of Engineers issued a statement saying that "additional discussion and analysis are warranted" before the pipeline can continue, effectively ordering the work to be suspended. In other words, the Corps invited the Sioux to make a convincing argument that the pipeline, if completed, would leak oil into the river. It's difficult to imagine a scenario in which the Sioux convince the Corps that the drilling should not continue for safety reasons, since it has doubtless already heard all the evidence.

Despite the Corps's statement, much of the related work for the pipeline has been done, and the construction site remains staffed and guarded. DAPL construction has, at times, paused, but steps have never been taken to undo the work completed. As one protector put it in a Facebook post: "The drill is on the pad," meaning a heavy and expensive drill had been moved into position. That suggested the Corps's "additional analysis" was about to wind down and construction was about to resume.

"HE TOLD ME: 'YOU'RE NOT A WARRIOR. AT LEAST NOT YET.'"

PIPELINES AND FOOD LINES

Before I saw the situation at Standing Rock firsthand, I had imagined it as a large construction site, with a crowd of ragtag young people in a small campsite nearby. Most of the news coverage I'd read laid out a straightforward dichotomy between chaos and order: The police were protecting jobs, industry and property against a small group of self-destructive young people with abstract and high-minded ideas about the environment. What I found was a highly orga-

nized community of thousands—young and old; men, women and children—living in what is very much like a little town. The lifeblood of that town is the constant influx of donated food and the volunteer cooks who prepare it.

The group I traveled with started in Minneapolis, where we loaded up a car with both fresh and dry foods donated by a local nonprofit. When we arrived at the camp, after checking in with the volunteer greeter at the entrance, we drove to the first kitchen tent we saw, which was full of supplies and staffed by volunteer chefs, cooks and dishwashers. We added our food to the piles of surplus on the ground outside, which were not guarded—either the kitchen would eventually use them or campers would take from them as they liked. One of my fellow travelers went inside the tent, rolled up her sleeves and started chopping vegetables. She returned to do it again the next day.

There are five major kitchens in the camp. They serve three meals a day, and campers can drop by and make snacks anytime. All these meals and snacks are free—donated food prepared by volunteers. It is also popular; at dinner time, people may wait in line for over an hour. (The elderly are served first, followed by children.) That first night, my plate was piled high with roast pork, chicken, rice and kale.

There are also culinary adventures to be had outside the kitchens. One morning, I saw a deer being butchered; it ended up in venison stew, which was served in one of the kitchens. I also came across a shirtless Australian man in a little encampment surrounded by jars of bone broth, prepared by an elaborate process in which apple cider vinegar is used to break down the bones. I asked if I could try some.

"I do give it to the kitchens, so you may taste it in stew later," he said. "But I only give the straight broth directly to certain people. Elders, relatives and warriors." The broth-maker looked me up and down. "You're not a warrior," he said. "At least not yet."

In addition to the donation, preparation and serving of food, there are many other ways to contribute to the camp ecosystem. Examples include chopping firewood, staffing the school for youngsters, collecting and sorting trash, and guarding the camp entrances. There is also a "legal tent" for lawyers who, among other things, advise water protectors on their civil rights and what to do if they get arrested.

Water protectors is the term used within the

BRIDGE TO SOMEWHERE: A road leading to the site has been blockaded for months by burned-out vehicles,

community for everyone there. Native Americans in the community are referred to as "relatives," while nonindigenous folks who have come to help are "friends." The use of the word *protester* is discouraged, partly because it implies a passive role and partly because it puts the focus on the pipeline and the police protecting it.

A subset of those "friends" and "relatives" are the "warriors," who join "direct actions" at the "front lines." Which is to say they sporadically get into confrontations with the police. To participate in an action usually means to either physically impede work on the pipeline or to show solidarity for those who are doing so. Sometimes, as noted above, the "warriors" get tear-gassed, pepper-sprayed and/or shot with rubber bullets, beanbags and/or water cannons. And sometimes they get arrested.

Direct actions are planned by organizers in the camp but kept secret from most in the community until the last minute, for fear that a spy might tip off the authorities.

RUMINATIONS ON FACEBOOK HILL

On my last day in the camp, I was standing on a promontory at its edge, an area known as "Facebook Hill" because that's where the best cellphone reception can be found. It also offers a great view of the camp. I was up there in the early afternoon, taking photos and sending updates to friends, when I noticed a continuous trickle of water protectors filing by. I surmised that a direct action was underway, so a friend and I followed.

We were headed for Turtle Island, a small sacred burial ground on the other side of a swift current of cold water, perhaps 20 feet across, that is a tributary of the Missouri River. (Turtle Island is also the term many Native Americans use for all of North America.) I later learned that this spit of land had been a site of contention since at least the previous four days, when activists had attempted to build a bridge over the water. Now nearly 100 police officers had taken up a position at the top of the mounds, which stood perhaps 50 feet high. Although the mounds were rounded at the top, they dropped at a sheer angle, almost like a cliff face.

I stood at the water's edge with a few hundred other protectors. At first, there was just shouting. "You don't have to do this!" someone told the police. "We love you!" someone else shouted.

The crowd parted for a pickup truck, towing a trailer holding two canoes, headed for the water. A rowboat was also on the way. A moment later, the canoes were in the water, with three protectors sitting in one, two in the other. One of the relatives turned to the crowd, holding up a wetsuit. "We have room for another warrior," he said.

A young man stepped forward, and two minutes later he was suited up and in the canoe. The canoes and the rowboat then crossed the narrow channel. There were multiple return trips to ferry more protectors across, and before long there was a little beachhead on the other side. Some of the protectors were already scaling the burial mound. From the top, the police looked down—we could see them only in silhouette. One of them fired a tear gas canister toward some protectors. It rolled down the hill, shooting smoke, and got caught in a ridge partway down the steep slope. A climber who was near where it landed moved with surprising agility and made his way to the canister from upwind. He grabbed it and threw it into the water. The crowd cheered.

Water protectors who had already made the trip across shouted back to the rest of us, "Come over! We need you!" More tear gas was fired as more and more "friends" jumped into the water and swam toward the hill.

> "'YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS!' SOMEONE TOLD THE POLICE."

I contemplated jumping in and thought, I wonder what that broth tastes like.

I never got to find out. More relatives arrived at the scene, announcing that they were speaking on behalf of the elders, who wanted the warriors to retreat to avoid jeopardizing a tenuous truce. I joined the majority of the protectors who heeded this request and returned to camp.

The protectors trapped on that bridge near the construction site on November 20 had fewer options. Freezing from the water cannon spray, eyes burning from tear gas, boxed in by police vehicles, they had no safe retreat.

ETP has vowed to finish the pipeline by year's end; the activists have vowed to protect the water. Only one side can prevail.

STEPHANIE KEITH/REUTERS

LESS MONEY, MO' PROBLEMS

Originally hailed as a victory over tax cheats and swindlers, India's radical plan to recall much of its currency could end in disaster

ON NOVEMBER 8, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a surprise recall of more than 80 percent of the country's cash in circulation, his supporters hailed the measure as an ingenious "surgical strike" against corruption and tax evasion. Everyone else was too busy running to the ATM.

Before the move, Modi had made little progress in fulfilling his campaign promise to bring back billions in untaxed "black money" stashed abroad so he could deposit it in the bank accounts of India's poor. Washington, D.C.–based corruption watchdog Global Financial Integrity recently estimated that an average of $50 billion a year in illicit funds flowed out of India from 2004 to 2013, while bureaucrats, politicians and business tycoons amassed huge fortunes from influence peddling, backroom deals and outright graft.

BY
JASON OVERDORF
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CHANGE PLEASE: Prime Minister Modi recently announced that anyone holding 500- and 1,000-rupee notes had to exchange them for new bills before December 31. After that date, the old money will become worthless.

ALTAF QADRI/AP

Some Indians were so disgusted by this corruption that, much like Donald Trump's supporters in the U.S. or Britain's Brexiteers, they applauded Modi's radical gambit—believing any action would be better than continuing to do nothing. But as it becomes more and more clear that replacing old notes with new ones will, at best, result in a small loss for the biggest crooks and only a short hiccup in the bribery business, the scheme is rapidly looking less like a clever economic maneuver than a brilliant but potentially disastrous piece of political theater.

The idea behind the recall was simple. Overnight, India announced that anyone holding 500- and 1,000-rupee notes had to exchange them for new bills before December 31. After that date, the old money will become worthless. The catch: The government is allowing people to swap only 4,500 rupees (about $65) in the old notes for cash. Anything more than that has to be deposited, thus creating a paper trail. Theoretically, this would either force those hoarding cash to come forward and pay taxes or their money would be worthless. Plus, anyone caught with more than 250,000 rupees in canceled notes—about $3,500—is now subject to investigation.

To prevent word of the plan from getting out, which might have allowed the biggest violators to exchange their big notes in advance, Modi reportedly opted to make the radical move in secret. He apparently relied on the advice of a few top advisers.

He would have done well to seek further counsel, because his plan has now thrown India's economy into chaos. The secrecy meant the country's mint couldn't print or distribute new notes until the announcement—so banks are struggling to meet demand. Even worse: Indians are standing in long lines to exchange or deposit their old notes, or withdraw cash just to buy groceries.

Black money—cash hidden to avoid taxes—is pervasive in India. Yet it's not only that police officers, tax collectors and politicians demand bribes to do their jobs or look the other way, says Surjit Bhalla, senior India analyst at the New York–based Observatory Group, an advisory company specializing in monetary and fiscal policy. Virtually anyone who buys real estate in India pays for it at least partly under the table, and even the poorest Indians routinely forgo receipts to avoid paying sales tax. "Everybody," says Bhalla, "has been made to commit this crime."

Black money can also represent proceeds from legitimate business, while illegal income from bribes or conflicts of interest can be "white"—as long as someone has paid taxes on it. So the politicians in Parliament or various state assemblies, many of whom have somehow earned tens of millions, if not more, after taking office, can pay taxes on their bribes and still get away with it. Recalling and replacing big bills won't do much to stop this malfeasance, Bhalla says. As long as bribery continues, the new clean notes will swiftly turn into dirty ones. Corruption, it seems, has little to do with the denominations of the bills—except that large notes take up less storage space.

Meanwhile, violators keep as little as 6 percent of their hidden income in cash, according to some estimates. They invest the rest in property or gold—of which Indians hold some 15,000 tons, according to a conservative 2011 estimate from Citigroup, or they wash it by sending it abroad and bringing it back again as foreign investment.

> THE SCHEME IS RAPIDLY LOOKING LESS LIKE A CLEVER ECONOMIC MANEUVER THAN A BRILLIANT BUT POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS PIECE OF POLITICAL THEATER.

Then there's the question of legality. Lawyers from India's political opposition have questioned whether some elements of Modi's plan—such as denying people access to their own money—are against the law. Others see the move as an exercise in propaganda. "This is politics as a vast morality play," wrote Indian political analyst Pratap Bhanu Mehta in *The Indian Express*, a left-of-center daily. "Literally every citizen is being enlisted (or conscripted, if you prefer) in a policy cause."

This isn't the first time a charismatic nationalist has used a simple, good-vs.-evil narrative to push a radical economic measure. In 1958, China's Mao Zedong called upon millions of citizens to

wipe out the country's rats, sparrows, mosquitoes and flies to fight disease and prevent crop losses. And like Mao's campaign, which engendered a plague of locusts by wiping out the sparrows that ate them, Modi's strike against corruption has led to some unexpected and painful consequences.

About 400,000 trucks were stranded around the country as of November 14 because their drivers had no valid bills to pay for incidentals (including bribes) on the road, according to the All India Motor Transport Congress—suggesting there may be shortages of essential supplies in the near future. Sugar processors have reportedly made only partial payments to workers, reserving whatever valid bills they had to pay for fuel needed to run their cane-mashing machines, while other factory owners have given workers several months' salary in canceled notes to get rid of the old denominations. Critics say Modi's move could even lead to a significant economic slowdown. As K.C. Chakrabarty, a former deputy governor of the central bank, warned, "You have stopped market transactions for 70 percent of the economy."

Yet Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have deflected any criticism of the pain and suffering resulting from the move by saying only people sitting on stacks of black money have reason to complain—recasting the serpentine lines at bank branches nationwide as a vast people-laundering machine: Criminals go in, and patriots come out.

By making or at least seeming to make the rich suffer alongside the poor, recalling the big notes could give Modi room to execute other measures that would otherwise be rejected as favoring the rich—such as lowering property taxes to reduce the incentive to evade them, Bhalla adds, "This gives them a certain credibility [with the poor]."

At least in theory. Lines at the bank are getting shorter in cities, while wealthy and middle-class Indians have adjusted by using debit and credit cards for more purchases—as well as downloading payment apps in record numbers. But such workarounds are not available to hundreds of millions of citizens who have also seen their salaries withheld or their sales drop because of the sudden lack of cash. Small shopkeepers who cater to the poor say business has plunged by as much as 80 percent (even in the capital, vegetable vendors, casual laborers and countless others operate entirely in cash). In rural India, there are fewer than 10 bank branches for every 100,000 people, and many open for business only two days a week.

Though Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has promised everything will be sorted out within 21 days, a local newspaper recently estimated it could take as long as six months to replace all the canceled notes with new ones, based on the speed at which the mint is working. Such reports are no easier to verify than the opposition claims that BJP insiders and big donors were given advance warning so they could convert their big notes into gold, jewelry and real estate. Other reports suggest some of the worst hit among the rural poor still support the measure—which they believe will not only punish the corrupt but also lead to a more equal society.

If the chaos does continue, Modi's BJP will pay dearly in a series of upcoming state elections early next year. However, like other populist leaders around the world, he may have a better grasp on public opinion than his opponents. N

END OF THE LINE: The goal behind Modi's surprise move was to crack down on corruption and tax evasion. But the recall has led to some unexpected consequences. Among them: tremendously long lines at banks.

JITENDRA PRAKASH/REUTERS

SOME $50 BILLION A YEAR IN ILLICIT FUNDS FLOWED OUT OF INDIA FROM 2004 TO 2013.

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EAST AFRICA'S RISING STAR

During the 50 plus years since independence, Kenya has firmly emerged as East Africa's dominant economy and a leader on the continent. The nation contributes nearly 50 percent to the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and is setting its sights even higher on the heels of a burgeoning middle class. Judging by the country's investment climate and the performance of its private sector, the upward trend looks set to scale new heights. Nairobi, the nation's vibrant capital, attracted the most foreign direct investment (FDI) on the African continent at city level in 2015, beating Johannesburg, which had held the spot since 2010, according to a report by FDI Markets, an investment monitoring platform. The East African giant boasts a solid regulatory framework, a mature financial system, coupled with an educated workforce. It is easy to see why capital has been steadily flowing into the country.

"We do have a reasonably well-regulated legal framework, which is working, compared to many of our neighbors," says Dr. Yogesh Pattni, executive director of Victoria Commercial Bank, among the best performing financial institutions in the country. "This is critical for investors who would want to see and be assured of a management system that will resolve issues in case there are any."

The country's banking and finance sector features quality institutions: from global brands like Citibank, to household names like First Community Bank, Kenya's leading Islamic bank. With a presence in over 100 countries, Citibank is unique in Kenya as it is able to bring its international knowledge to a local level, and vice versa. CEO of Citibank Kenya, Joyce-Ann Wainaina, explains: "Citibank is the only corporate and investment bank in Kenya…it works with the banks themselves to give them access to trade on the global market."

With a sizeable private sector, Kenya is making further regulatory reforms in an effort to reduce the cost of doing business and creating greater transparency. As a gateway to East Africa and a trade and logistics hub, infrastructural improvement projects aim to improve roadways and ports. Over US $20 billion has been committed to infrastructure development through public-private partnerships. These improvements are something companies like Coast Industrial & Safety Supplies, a market leader in the industrial supplies market, and Alpha Logistics, a marine and logistics support services provider, hope will help strengthen their operations. The scope of such improvements encompasses a range of sectors, giving domestic companies a boost.

"The government has also put in place a lot of initiatives to ensure that the supply of electricity becomes more consistent and cost competitive. As a result, Kenya-based companies are competing successfully with multinationals," says Darshan Chandaria, CEO of Chandaria Industries, the largest tissue and hygiene products manufacturer in the region. Additionally, the mining sector is also emerging as a key area for economic growth. Base Titanium, one of Kenya's more prominent mining companies, has helped to put the mining sector on the map through the Kwale Mineral Sands Project, Kenya's first process plant.

Many Kenyan companies are now competing on a global level bolstered by the strength of the economy and backed by the quality of their products. Sasini Tea and Coffee is one such company. It sells premium Kenyan tea as well as coffee, which, given the climate of the country, comes with a unique flavour. "We are networking and benchmarking ourselves to the best national and international standards, to ensure that we are sustainable in the long term and are shifting our strategy to target the high-end market," says CEO Moses Changwony.

According to a report by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, Kenya's economy is expected to grow at a rate of 6 percent between 2017 and 2020, nearly double the global average. Evidently, and despite challenges, Kenya has continuously proven its economy to be robust, by and large due to the strong performance of its private sector.

CAPITAL MARKETS AUTHORITY - TRANSFORMING KENYA INTO THE HEART OF AFRICAN CAPITAL MARKETS

The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) is an independent, statutory agency tasked with regulating and developing efficient capital markets in Kenya. It plays a crucial role in the economy by facilitating the mobilization and allocation of capital resources to finance long-term investments. CMA carries out its mandate of regulating and developing the Kenyan capital markets through a regulatory framework that is designed to meet, and exceed, this objective. Among the initiatives launched by the agency was the Capital Market 10 year Master Plan (CMMP 2014 - 2023), which represented a significant milestone in the history of Kenya's capital markets. Launched in November 2014, the Master Plan is driven by the industry's target of positioning Kenya competitively, through the development of dynamic and liquid capital markets based on international standard financial market infrastructure. It further recognizes the central importance of a legal and governance framework that fosters an open and competitive marketplace, attracting investment. The plan´s implementation is expected to transform Kenya into the "Heart of African Capital Markets".

The CMMP says Paul Muthaura, CEO of CMA: "has been central in ensuring that the industry as a whole is more aligned on strategy, direction and priorities in the transformation of the Kenyan capital markets."

DIRTY DEEDS, DIRT CHEAP

Sextortion is on the rise as laws and law enforcement rush to catch up

HE THREATENED women from his apartment. And from a burrito joint. He even did it from a Lowe's hardware store. Ryan Vallee of New Hampshire, now 22, first targeted some of his high school classmates when he hacked into teenage girls' email and social media accounts to steal naked photos of them, then threatened to post the photos online unless they sent him more sexual images.

After he broke into the Facebook and Gmail accounts of one teen in 2012 and stole sexually explicit photos, Vallee texted her, "If you don't want me to set that as your profile picture on Facebook take your bra off.... You have 15 minutes.... I hacked you once I can hack you again."

Vallee hacked the accounts of eight other women over the next year. What he did is known as sextortion, a growing online practice in which criminals obtain sexual photos of their victim and then threaten to expose the images if the victim doesn't send more or comply with other demands. "It's blackmail, but instead of the reward being financial, it's a sex act," says Brooklyn lawyer Carrie Goldberg, who regularly represents sextortion victims.

When Vallee pleaded guilty in late August, it was for computer fraud and identity theft, since sextortion is not currently listed as a specific offense. That's an oversight two U.S. congresswomen are trying to change with the Interstate Sextortion Prevention Act, a bill they introduced in July as part of a growing push against the manipulative threat. "We are seeing anecdotally that these cases are exploding," says U.S. Representative Katherine Clark, a Massachusetts Democrat and co-sponsor of the bill, along with Indiana Republican Representative Susan Brooks. Clark tells *Newsweek* that a major problem with the lack of a federal law is there's no consistency when criminals are sentenced. Predators who use sextortion to target minors can be charged with child pornography and given long prison sentences, but criminals who use the practice to target adults can get off with much lighter penalties. "The Department of Justice is paying more attention to sextortion, and they are very eager to have a particular federal statute that they can use."

The proposed Sextortion Prevention law is just one example of increased attention to the crime. In April, a Department of Justice report declared sextortion "has become a major threat in recent years." The Brookings Institution produced a detailed report on sextortion in May that investigated 80 cases of it and said, "For the first time in the history of the world, the global connectivity of the Internet means that you don't have to be in the same country as someone to sexually menace that person."

Local law enforcement agents have also noticed an uptick in sextortion. A detective with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, Christie Hirota, tells *Newsweek* that reports of sextortion have gone up at least 50 percent since she joined a task force in 2012 combatting crimes against children. Hirota says she's worked with victims

BY
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LOUIS TURNER/GETTY

as young as 9 years old and describes how predators will groom victims to gain their trust and obtain naked photos. "They'll start having conversations, and at some point the child may send an image to the person, maybe just [her] breast," Hirota says. "The adult will ask for more photographs—they want genitalia—and they say, 'If you don't, I'm going to send it to all your friends.'"

Philip Caputo, 27, used that strategy to force a 13-year-old girl in San Antonio into a sort of virtual sex slavery. The California man first sent the girl sexual photos of another young female and told her she needed to take and send him similar photos, then he threatened, "If you don't send the images, I am going to hurt your family," according to federal court papers.

The girl complied, but Caputo kept pressuring her and demanding she send him increasingly graphic photos and videos of herself almost every day throughout 2013. The girl told authorities that Caputo left her "living in fear." When FBI special agents searched Caputo's email accounts, they found over 1,600 sexually explicit photos of minors. He pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation of a minor and child pornography raps in May and was sentenced to 15 years in prison on November 7.

Vallee, the New Hampshire man, was arrested again in March on suspicion of sextortion while out on bail for the first set of charges. He pleaded guilty to a 31-count indictment this summer and is scheduled to be sentenced in January, with his plea agreement stipulating a sentence of between four and eight years behind bars.

When Vallee began his sextortion plot about five years ago, many police and federal agents weren't aware of sextortion or how to prosecute it, experts say. Goldberg says her first sextortion case was representing a 17-year-old Michigan girl in 2014 who reported that an online predator had pressured her into sending naked photos and was continuing to harass her. When Goldberg contacted federal and local authorities, both told her there was nothing they could do. "No one wanted to touch it," she says. "The fight against [sextortion] has changed so dramatically.... Back then, two and a half years ago, we didn't have the support of law enforcement. But now we do."

"IT'S BLACKMAIL, BUT INSTEAD OF THE REWARD BEING FINANCIAL, IT'S A SEX ACT."

RANSOM DEMEAN: A sextortionist may hack an account to get revealing pictures, then threaten to disseminate those images unless the victim gives them more pictures.

AYE, ROBOT

ALL THOSE DIRE PREDICTIONS ABOUT THE AUTOMATED ECONOMY SOUND LIKE A SCI-FI HORROR FILM FROM THE '50S: ROBOTS ARE COMING TO TAKE YOUR JOBS, YOUR HOMES, YOUR CHILDREN. EXCEPT IT'S REAL. AND IT HAS A HAPPY ENDING

BY KEVIN MANEY

NEXT TIME you stop for gas at a self-serve pump, say hello to the robot in front of you. Its life story can tell you a lot about the robot economy roaring toward us like an EF5 tornado on the prairie.

Yeah, your automated gas pump killed a lot of jobs over the years, but its biography might give you hope that the coming wave of automation driven by artificial intelligence (AI) will turn out better for almost all of us than a lot of people seem to think.

The first crude version of an automated gas-delivering robot appeared in 1964 at a station in Westminster, Colorado. Short Stop convenience store owner John Roscoe bought an electric box that let a clerk inside activate any of the pumps outside. Self-serve pumps didn't catch on until the 1970s, when pump-makers added automation that let customers pay at the pump, and over the next 30 years, stations across the nation installed

WHAT HATH GAS WROUGHT? The automated gas pump killed a lot of (bad) jobs and created many new jobs for more skilled workers.

TAIT SIMPSON/GALLERY STOCK; PREVIOUS SPREAD: OCIACIA

these task-specific robots and fired attendants. By the 2000s, the gas attendant job had all but disappeared. (Two states, New Jersey and Oregon, protect full-service gas by law.)

That's hundreds of thousands of jobs vaporized—there are now 168,000 gas stations in the U.S. The loss of those jobs was undoubtedly devastating for the individuals who had them, but the broader impact has been pretty positive for the rest of us.

"AN INTELLIGENT MACHINE CAN BE DESIGNED TO BE A BRILLIANT MATHEMATICIAN."

As has happened throughout the history of automation, some jobs got destroyed by automated gas pumps, but new and often better jobs were created. Attendants went away, but to make the sophisticated pumps, companies like Wayne Fueling Systems in Texas, Bennett Pump Co. in Michigan and Gilbarco Veeder-Root in North Carolina hired software coders, engineers, sales staff and project managers. Station owners took their extra profits and turned their stations into mini-marts, which needed clerks, and built more gas stations, which needed more pumps from Wayne, Bennett or Gilbarco, and those companies then hired more people.

Consumers spent less money on gas because they weren't paying for someone else to pump it. That left them more money for iPhones or fish tacos ordered on Seamless, creating more new kinds of employment.

A generation of gas station attendants got smoked, but the automation sent some clear signals that relying on such unskilled jobs isn't a great career plan. Those signals led to more parents encouraging their kids to go to college. In 1970, 14 percent of men held four-year college degrees, and 8 percent of women did. By 2015, that was up to 32 percent of men *and* women. So over time, we took hundreds of thousands of people out of the pool of those who might want a gas station attendant job and pushed them up, toward the professional job market, adding a lot of value to society and their wallets.

Economists have demonstrated time and again that automation helps overall standards of living rise, literacy rates improve, average life span lengthen and crime rates fall. After waves of automation—the Industrial Revolution, mechanization, computerization—we're way better off in almost every way. As Matt Ridley details in his book *The Rational Optimist*, in 1900, the average American spent $76 out of every $100 on food, clothing and shelter; today, he or she spends $37. To buy a Model T in 1908 took about 4,700 hours of work; today, the average person has to work about 1,000 hours to buy a car that's a thousand times better than a Model T. The United Nations estimates that poverty was reduced more in the past 50 years than in the previous 500. If progress has been less kind to the lower end of the workforce, it still helps that segment live better than before, at least by making products more affordable and better at the same time.

And now, even with software automating all kinds of work, there are signs that the technology is creating more jobs than it destroys. U.S. census data released in September showed the largest annual drop in poverty since 1999. Nearly 3 million jobs were created from 2014 to 2015. Donald Trump won the presidential election by promising to bring jobs "back" to America—a promise believed by many who feel left behind by technology-driven shifts. Yet all evidence suggests that the jobs lie ahead, created by moving forward.

It's hard to see how anyone could argue that we'd be better off today if Roscoe had never installed his automated device.

RAGE AND IMPOTENCE

THIS IS THE scary part of the story.

The world's top tech companies are in a race to build the best AI and capture that massive market, which means the technology will get better fast—and come at us as fast. IBM is investing $1 billion in its Watson; Amazon is banking on Alexa; Apple has Siri. Google, Facebook and Microsoft are devoting their research labs to AI and robotics. In September, Salesforce.com announced it's adding AI, called Einstein, to its business software. Its value, CEO Marc Benioff said at the launch, will be in "helping people do the things that people are good at and turning more things over to machines."

AI will lead us into the mother of all tech revolutions. The last time anything came close was around 1900, when the automobile, telecommunications, the airplane and mass electrification all came together at once, radically changing the world from the late 1800s to the 1920s. Such times are particularly frightening. "A society that had established countless routines and

habits, norms and regulations, to fit the conditions of the previous revolution, does not find it easy to assimilate the new one," wrote economist Carlota Perez in *Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital*, her classic book. "A sense of impotence and frustration accumulates and a growing incongruence is experienced between the new and the old paradigm."

That's what we're feeling today as a panoply of powerful technologies come crashing together. AI is the most important, the "ur-force," as tech philosopher Kevin Kelly calls it. Emerging right along with AI are robotics, virtual reality, blockchain, 3-D printing and other wonders. Each would be huge by itself. Together, they will swirl into that roaring EF5 tornado, blowing down the industries and institutions in its path.

We've networked the entire world, put computing devices in the hands of 3 billion individuals and created the largest pool in history of educated people working in economies that encourage innovation. Over the past decade, we've built a global computing cloud and moved our shopping, friendships, work, entertainment and much else about life online. In this hyperconnected global market, waves of automation can get invented and deployed warp-speed faster than at any time before.

The speed of this transformation will be difficult to handle. New inventions usually permeate society only when people are ready for them. In research my co-authors and I did for our book *Play Bigger*, we found that the ideal time for a tech startup to go public is when it is between six and 10 years old. After searching for a reason, we concluded that even in today's whiz-bang tech environment, it takes at least six years for a strange new business idea (think streaming music in 2006, when Spotify was founded) to catch fire. Most people's brains can't adjust any faster.

Today's AI-driven revolution is coming so fast that we have trouble even imagining how it will turn out. Jeff Hawkins, founder of AI and brain research company Numenta (and inventor of the Palm Pilot), tells me that AI today is at a point similar to computing in the early 1950s, when pioneers first laid down the basic ideas of electronic computers. Less than 20 years later, computers made possible airline reservation systems and bank ATMs and helped NASA put men on the moon—outcomes no one could have foreseen from the early '50s. Guessing the impact of AI and robots in a decade or two is proving even harder. "Twenty years from now, this technology will be one of the major drivers of innovation and technology, if not *the* major one," Hawkins says. "But you want specific predictions? It's impossible."

THE UNEMPLOYMENT LINE STARTS HERE

TRUCK DRIVER is the most common job in the world—3.5 million of them in the U.S. alone. Over the summer, the Dutch government ran a successful test of driverless trucks crossing Europe. Uber recently paid $680 million to buy Otto, a startup working on auto-drive trucks and founded by former Google AI specialists. Consulting company McKinsey has predicted that within eight years, one-third of all trucks on the road will drive themselves. In maybe 15 years, *truck driver* will, like *gas station attendant*, be an anachronism.

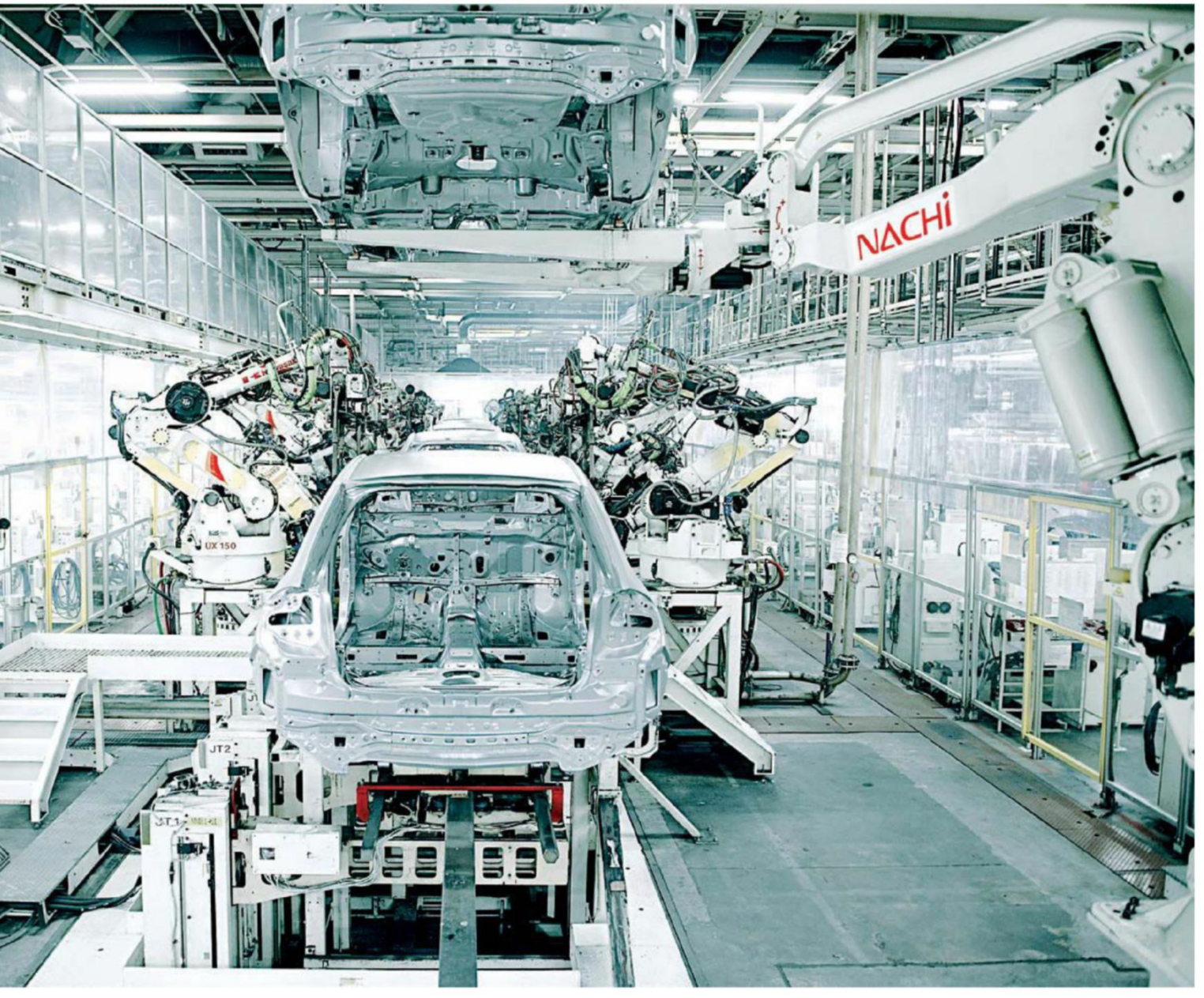
Uber invested in Otto not just to operate trucks but because Uber wants to run fleets of self-driving cars. In September, it began testing such a fleet in Pittsburgh. Canada's postal service wants to send drones instead of vans to deliver rural mail. Millions of driver jobs of all kinds could swirl down AI's drain before Trump finishes his four-year term.

SOME TECHNOLOGISTS HAVE SAID 90 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION WILL END UP OUT OF WORK.

Within maybe five years, AI will be better than humans at diagnosing medical images and better than legal assistants at researching case law, Surya Ganguli, a leading AI scientist at Stanford University, tells me. Hawkins says we will eventually make machines that are great mathematicians. "Mathematicians try to figure out proofs and mathematical structure and see elegance in high-dimensional spaces in their heads," he says. "That's not a 'human' thing. You can build an intelligent machine that is designed for that. It actually lives in a mathematical space, and its native behaviors are mathematical behaviors. And it can run a million times faster than a human and never get tired. It can be designed to be a brilliant mathematician."

If you do something predictable and rote, then sometime in the next 10 years you'll probably feel like a gas pump jockey, circa 1980. One by one, companies will eliminate or marginalize your work. It will happen to the least educated first and fastest, hitting drivers, waiters, factory

AUTO-GENESIS: Robotic assembly lines cranking out millions of self-driving cars could steer the trucking industry into the dustbin.



SIMON PETER HENRY/GALLERY STOCK

workers and office administrators.

Then the robotization of work will eat into more knowledge-based jobs. Low-level accounting will get eaten by software. So will basic writing: Bloomberg already uses AI to write company earnings reports. Robots today can be better stock traders than humans. It won't be long before you'll be able to contact an AI doctor via your smartphone, talk to it about your symptoms, use your camera to show it anything it wants to see and get a triage diagnosis that tells you to either take a couple of Advil or get to a specialist.

Versions of AI have been around for decades. Google's search engine is so accurate because it is built on AI and learns from billions of searches. AI is how Facebook directs items you most likely want to see to your news feed. But for AI to be powerful enough to drive a truck or diagnose patients, it needs a few things that are just now exploding onto the scene. One is enormous amounts of data. Now that we do so many things online, every action gets recorded and stored, adding valuable data that can fuel AI. The Internet of Things is putting sensors on people, in cars, in nature. To analyze that data and feed it into AI software takes enormous computing power, which has now become available and affordable to even a tiny garage startup through

cloud companies like Amazon Web Services.

Put it all together, and we'll soon be at a point when AI can get built to do almost anything, including, possibly, your job.

That realization has set off a panic that is going viral faster than the latest Kim Kardashian butt photo. A research paper from Oxford University proclaimed that machines will take over nearly half of all work done by humans. Some technologists have said 90 percent of the population will end up out of work. There are smart, seemingly rational people who believe the U.S. should institute a "guaranteed basic income" so that the masses who won't be able to find work can avoid depredation.

In September, to help soothe the public and forestall intervention from government, most of the giants in AI formed a group called the Partnership on AI. "We passionately believe in the potential for [AI] to transform in a positive way our world," Google's Mustafa Suleyman said, Yoda-like, at the time.

"The concern is not that robots will take human jobs and render humans unemployable," Jason Furman, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, said in a recent talk. The worry is that the speed of AI's encroachment on jobs "could lead to sustained periods of time with a large fraction of people not working."

President Barack Obama recently weighed in about AI. "If properly harnessed, it can generate enormous prosperity and opportunity," he said as guest editor of *Wired*. "But it also has some downsides that we're gonna have to figure out in terms of not eliminating jobs. It could increase inequality. It could suppress wages."

In the long run, we'll find equilibrium. But the transition in the short term will suck for a lot of people you know. And maybe for you.

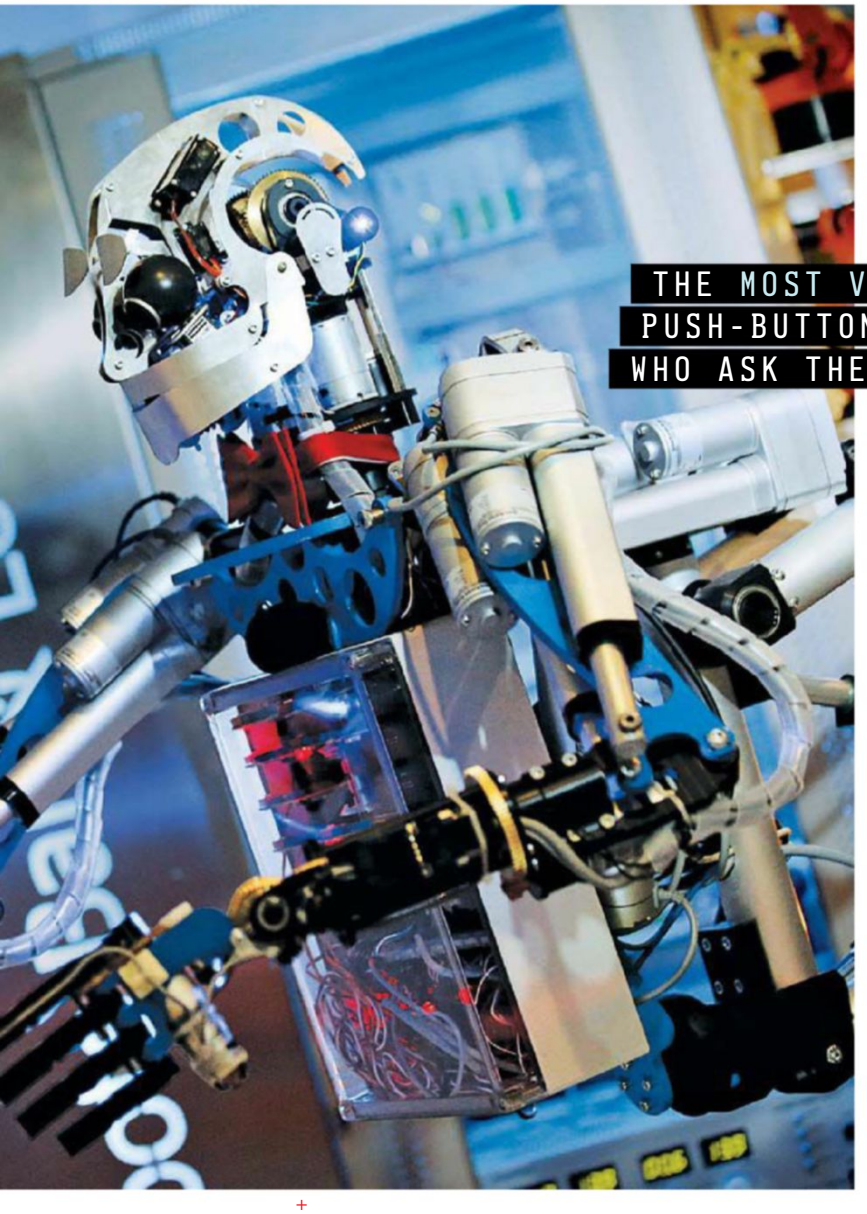
HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE AI

AND YET, there's a happily ever after in here. Somewhere.

I talked recently with Ryan Detert, who started a company called Influential, which is built on AI from IBM's Watson. The AI scours social media to find "influencers" who have a large number of followers and analyzes the online personality of those individuals. Then the company can work with brands—Kia and Corona are among its clients—to find influencers who match the traits of their target audiences. The brands then pay the influencers to tout the products. This is creating an entirely new job of brand influencer, not to mention new kinds of jobs at Influential and companies like it.

Over and over again, the robot economy will invent work we can't even dream of today, much as the internet gave birth to unforeseen careers. Nobody's grandmother was a search engine optimization specialist. Today, that job pays pretty well.

Along the way, AI will also help people learn how to prosper in the age of AI. Sal Khan started Khan Academy by developing online tutorial videos for math and science students. In its next phase, the organization is deploying AI in its lessons. The AI gets to know the student and understand how the person is learning so it can go over old



MAKE MINE A DOUBLE: An Oxford University research paper estimates that half of all work done by humans can be done better, faster and cheaper by robots.

FABRIZIO BENSCH/REUTERS

material or add more challenging stuff. Khan's vision includes helping masses of people continually learn new skills that will make them more relevant in fast-changing job markets.

AI will be better than anything today at helping you find whatever new jobs it creates. AI will power software that gets to know you, your skills and your desires and will constantly monitor job openings and freelance opportunities all over the planet for you. The U.S. Department of Labor says there are about 8 million unemployed people and 4.5 million open jobs. An AI matching system can bring those numbers down dramatically by making sure more people find work.

Successful people in the AI age will focus on work that takes advantage of unique human strengths, like social interaction, creative thinking, decision-making with complex inputs, empathy and questioning. AI cannot think about data it doesn't have. It predicts what you want to see on Facebook based on what you've already liked. It can't predict that you might like something that's entirely different. Only humans can think that way. As Kelly says, the most valuable people in an age of push-button answers will be the people who ask the most interesting questions.

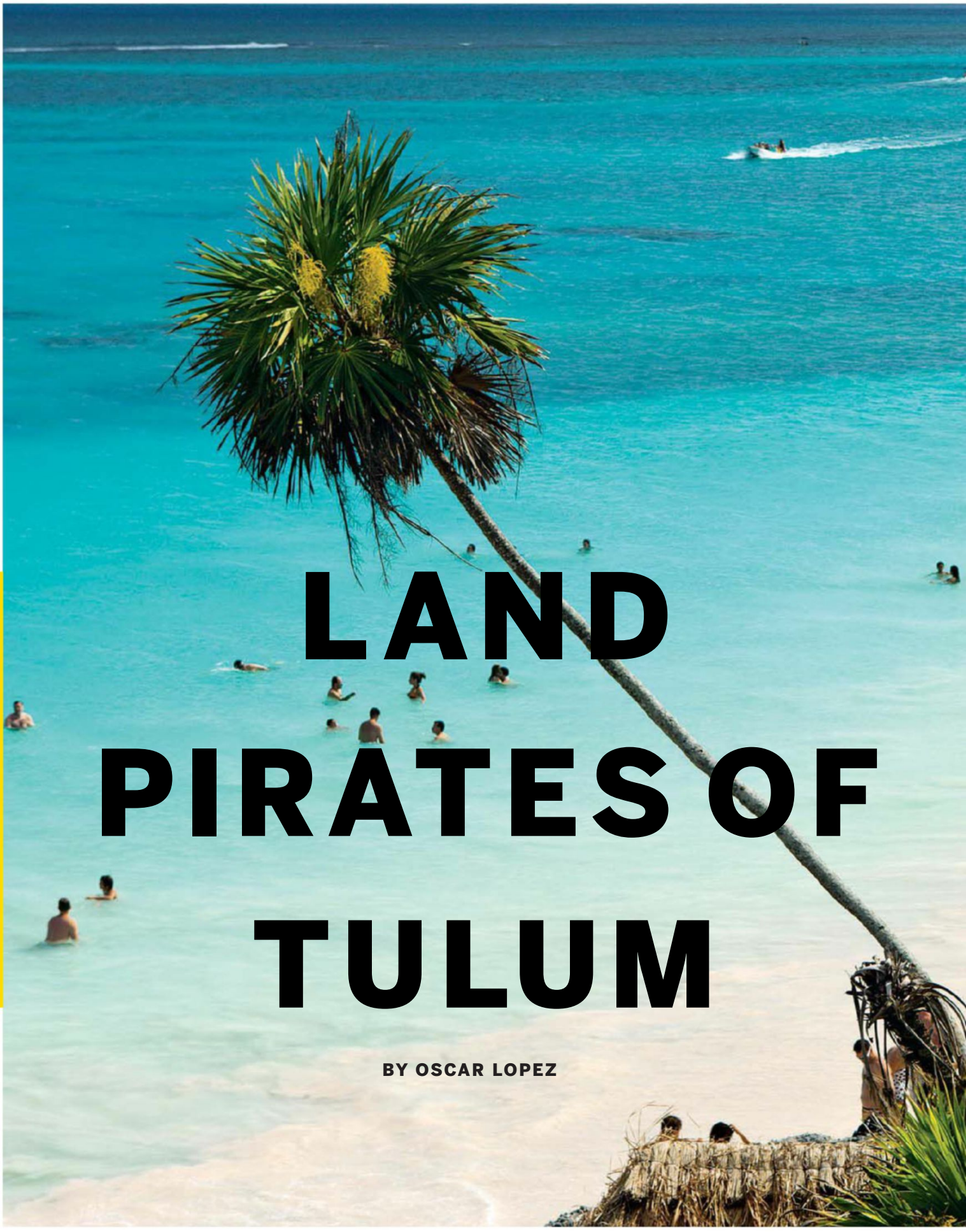
THE MOST VALUABLE PEOPLE IN AN AGE OF PUSH-BUTTON ANSWERS WILL BE THE PEOPLE WHO ASK THE MOST INTERESTING QUESTIONS.

AI's proponents say it will collaborate with us, not compete against us. AI software in a conference room could listen to the conversation in a business meeting while constantly searching the internet for information that might be relevant, then serve it up when asked. "It can bring in knowledge of the outside world that the humans might not be aware of," says Ganguli, and that means the humans can make better decisions.

About a year ago, I saw cancer researcher M. Soledad Cepeda give a talk about AI in her work. She said AI software can analyze in two seconds the amount of data and text that a research assistant would need two weeks to plow through. That frees up the assistants to do more thoughtful work and speeds up the scientists' search for cures.

In that way, by acting as our collaborator, AI will give us a chance at cracking our most pressing problems. It promises to help us end cancer, ease climate change, manage bursting cities and get our species to Mars. Of course, we don't know if we'll succeed at any of that, but one certainty is that we can't do it without AI. So if you're still standing at that gas pump filling your tank, here's what the robot, based on its decades of experience, will tell you about the new robot economy: The one thing worse for the human race than developing AI would be stopping the development of AI.

If this is a fairy tale about work and jobs, AI is both the bad witch and good witch—destroyer and creator. In such stories, good almost always wins. But in the middle of the story, the characters don't know that. And that's where we are now: face to face with the monster for the first time, doing everything we can to get through the scary forest alive.



LAND PIRATES OF TULUM

BY OSCAR LOPEZ

HOW A HIPSTER CARIBBEAN PLAYGROUND BECAME A TOXIC DEN OF MURDER, CORRUPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL RUIN

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE: Known for its beautiful beaches, Tulum has become increasingly popular, and its property prices have soared.

"THEY CAME with machine guns. My granddaughters on the beach started screaming. They took away our phones so we couldn't call for help. Then they took our land."

It was a warm Sunday morning in September, and I was speaking with Maria Isabel Caro in Tulum, Mexico. A small town on the Caribbean coast, Tulum has become a popular tourist destination where "eco-chic" travelers can practice yoga, enjoy gourmet vegan meals and shop at bespoke fashion boutiques while staying at any of the dozens of luxury hotels lining the town's pristine tropical beach.

When Caro arrived here 30 years ago, however, there wasn't a hotel in sight: It was just a stretch of vacant land about 40 miles from the nearest city. She built a house on a small beachfront property and lived there with her family until three years ago. Then, on the afternoon of July 19, 2013, policemen stormed into her home. "My daughter-in-law was pregnant, and they just shoved her aside," says Caro. "They told us to get out, that they were taking our house."

The police declared her house had been built illegally and the state was repossessing it. Caro's home was one of 14 properties the authorities took control of that day, including several hotels from which tourists were thrown out on the street, luggage in hand. Since then, there have been three more forced evictions, with the latest occurring this past June when hundreds of armed men raided 17 more. "It's all about money," says Caro. "Getting rich by throwing people off their land."

Over the past five years, as Tulum has become increasingly popular and property prices have soared, environmentalists and residents like Caro have been battling business moguls and powerful politicians who are colluding to develop the land as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the city's infrastructure is floundering, with raw sewage spilling into one of the largest underground river systems in the world. The damage may soon get much worse—a massive new real estate project with a murky past could see Tulum's population explode tenfold in less than a decade. As Olmo Torres-Talamante, a local biologist, tells *Newsweek*, "This is the dark side of paradise."

A CLIMATE OF TERROR

The day we spoke, Caro and other evicted hoteliers and landowners met with Luz María Beristain, a state senator who was demanding the federal government intervene in Tulum to halt the forced evictions. As tourists lounged on the beach or swam in the turquoise water, Beristain told the group gathered at the Hemingway Romantic Eco Resort, "I'm ashamed that this is happening in my country."

The resort's owner, Paola Sbrizzi, a boisterous Italian woman who has lived in Tulum for 17 years, had invited the senator to speak at her hotel. "I came here on vacation," Sbrizzi says. "I fell in love, and I never left." Though she is now a Mexican citizen, many of the hotels and restaurants in Tulum are owned by foreigners—which is why the embassies of France, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands sent a letter this

summer to Mexico's foreign secretary demanding a "deep and serious investigation" into the forced evictions. "We are living in a climate of terror," Sbrizzi says. "I'm not taking deposits for reservations, because I don't know if I'll still be here in December."

Others feel frustrated that Tulum's rampant growth has led to this. In June, Larissa Juarez was evicted from the cabin her family built in 1999, when there was just a handful of hotels. "It was a place to be close to nature. We didn't even have electricity for years," she says. "Just candles." But five years ago, developers began building more and more hotels on the strip. "Everything changed when the New Yorkers arrived," she says. Tulum has become so popular with young American tourists that it's been referred to as "the Williamsburg of Mexico," after the hipster neighborhood in Brooklyn.

"THE hotels advertise themselves as being 'eco chic. But they throw their sewage water straight into the ocean."

"We've had CEOs and millionaires from Berlin, Paris and New York," says Henning Schaub from Design Hotels, which manages the Papaya Playa Project hotel. René Redzepi, the chef behind famed Copenhagen restaurant Noma, recently announced he'll open a pop-up restaurant in town next year, serving meals for $600 a person. This kind of high-priced attention has made Tulum's real estate worth fighting for and, perhaps worth killing for.

After a two-hour meeting with the hoteliers, Beristain led us all down the beach to survey the evicted properties. Many remain empty but heavily guarded, and as the group approached one of the hotels, half a dozen men swarmed upon us, some brandishing sticks and heavy chains. They demanded to know what we were doing there, why we were filming. The atmosphere was tense, but we assumed that having an elected official with us offered some protection. "We're just here to see the great work you're doing," said Beristain. "I'm a senator, so please don't hurt me. It would send you straight to jail."

"Where do you think I've come from?" replied a rough-looking man with a moustache. "I'm not afraid of you."

As we backed away, one of the men lifted his shirt to make sure we saw the pistol sticking out of his jeans. Beristain led the group farther down the beach. "They're the new pirates of the Caribbean," she said.

ISRAEL LEAL/AP; PREVIOUS SPREAD: REINHARD DIRSCHERL/ULLSTEIN BILD/GETTY

SUNSHINE AND SOLDIERS: As Tulum has grown, environmentalists and residents have become angry over a number of forced evictions. They are now battling business moguls and powerful politicians who are colluding to develop the land as quickly as possible.

'DARK LEGAL LAGOON'

The complex story behind the evictions begins in 1973, when then-President Luis Echeverria designated some 25,000 acres in Tulum as communal farmland. Since then, the original farmers have divided the plot into many smaller pieces and sold them off, bit by bit. After 30 years of buying and selling, often with dubious contracts, it's hard to know who owns what. Almost all the original farmers have left, and much of the land is now owned by real estate moguls. "It's a dark legal lagoon," says Mario Cruz Rodríguez, the director general of tourism for Tulum. "And it's severely damaging our reputation."

The conflict in Tulum has proved deadly. In 2009, José Velázquez López, a local journalist who had accused local authorities of corruption and mismanagement, was shot and killed while driving through Tulum. Three years later, Álvaro López Joers, a lawyer representing some of the evicted hoteliers, was shot dead in his office. Neither crime has been solved.

Numerous investigative pieces by Mexican journalists, including a 2015 report in *Newsweek en Español*, have uncovered a complex web of forged land deeds, dubious lawsuits and counterfeit contracts pushed along by corrupt judges and government officials, including former Governor Roberto Borge. (Borge did not respond to numerous *Newsweek* requests for an interview. When contacted by

DARK SIDE OF TULUM: The Schiavon family from northern Mexico has laid claim to much of the beachfront land for years and reportedly instigated the latest evictions.

phone and told he was speaking with a journalist, he said, "You've got the wrong number" and hung up.) "For evictions of this size, you need everything to work like clockwork," says Pedro Hernandez, who owned a hotel that was seized in 2014. "No one but a governor has that kind of power."

The Schiavon family from northern Mexico has laid claim to much of the beachfront land for years and reportedly instigated the latest evictions—signs outside many of the evicted hotels claim the land is their property. (A lawyer for the family did not respond to a request for comment.) Roberto Palazuelos, who owns several hotels in Tulum, says the Schiavons' claim is legitimate. Nicknamed "the Black Diamond" for his dark tan and piercing blue eyes, Palazuelos is an actor best known for playing villains on Mexican soap operas. He says that he bought his land back from the family a year before the last evictions and that other hoteliers should do the same. "They're just being stubborn," he says.

But hoteliers feel the matter should not be settled by buying back

TULUM has been referred to as "the Williamsburg of Mexico."

property they say is already theirs. "Ownership of the land should be respected," says Fernando Jimenez, owner of Naay Beach Club, who was evicted in June. "If there is a dispute, it should be resolved through a legal process. If we lose, too bad, we'll pack up and go. But that's not what's happened here."

As for the seized properties, many in Tulum dread what will happen to them and how radically the town may change. "They want to build huge hotels," says Sbrizzi, noting that several of the snatched lots sit side by side, creating one large piece of land. "Just imagine this place covered by giant, all-inclusive resorts."

'DON'T DO BUSINESS WITH MEXICO!'

When you drive into Tulum, you're slapped in the face with a dramatic choice between ancient culture and modern excess. On the left, signs point to the remains of an ancient Mayan city overlooking the ocean. On the right, they point to Aldea Zama, the largest real estate development in Tulum. As you draw closer to the city, the advertisements for it multiply, all depicting tropical vistas, infinity pools and bikini-clad models posing in front of brand-new condos.

The project was launched by MayaZamá, a real estate company that, according to its website, is "best known for the balanced sustainable communities it creates within the Yucatan Peninsula." The company's partners, "have been in business for the

past 30 years...their respect for their land mandates that major parcels remain as they inherited them—pristine and preserved."

MayaZamá's partners include real estate mogul Emilio Díaz Castellanos, who, along with several others involved in the company, has been linked to cases of property fraud and corruption across the peninsula. Another prominent partner is Rodolfo Rosas Moya, a businessman who's been called "the man who made Donald Trump hate Mexico" because a deal involving properties owned by Moya ended in

"I'M ashamed that this is happening in my country."

litigation. "I have a lawsuit in Mexico's corrupt court system that I won but so far can't collect," Trump tweeted last year. "Don't do business with Mexico!" (Neither Rosas Moya nor Castellanos responded to several requests from *Newsweek* for comment.)

The MayaZamá group has been buying property in Tulum since at least 2006. In September of that year, the company purchased nearly 800 acres from the Institute for State Patrimony, which manages government property assets. One week after that sale, the IPAE's director, Francisco Garibay Osorio, resigned following allegations of corruption.

Over the next 10 years, MayaZamá bought hundreds of acres from the IPAE, most of it at below-market prices. This includes nearly 50 acres that had been donated to the state university for a research and sustainable development campus. Documents show that the property was valued at $5.4 million in 2008; one year later, MayaZamá paid just $1.3 million. In 2014, MayaZamá's associates divvied up a separate, smaller property that had also been intended for the university. Included in the beneficiaries of the deal: a company registered to Garibay Osorio. (Garibay Osorio could not be reached for comment.)

For Tulum residents, dubious land deals like these are part of a long history of corruption and nepotism. According to Fabiola Cortes, an investigative journalist and lawyer, Borge sold at least 44 properties that were state land at undervalued prices to the benefit of his friends and associates.

Borge left office in September. Since then, several investigations have revealed cases of real estate corruption involving the governor, including properties on the island of Cozumel that the Trump family had been considering as a potential investment. In November, the administration of Governor Carlos Joaquín filed a criminal complaint against Borge for selling off more than 23,000 acres to benefit his relatives, employees and business partners. "There has not been a single area where we did not find significant irregularities in the [previous administration's] management of resources," said Rafael Antonio del Pozo Dergal, secretary of public management. "The loss is enormous."

FROM LEFT: VICTOR RUIZ GARCIA/REUTERS; OSCAR LOPEZ FOR NEWSWEEK

PARADISE LOST? Though Tulum looks pristine, the town's infrastructure is floundering, with raw sewage spilling into one of the largest underground river systems in the world.

PRISTINE BEACHES AND RAW SEWAGE

MayaZamá owns over 1,000 acres in Tulum, including a stretch of pristine beachfront land. This makes it one of the largest property owners in a market that has grown exponentially in value. For analysts who have studied Yucatán's rampant real estate growth, this process is all too common. Luis Alberto Salinas, from the geography department at Mexico's National Autonomous University, spent a year investigating MayaZamá in 2012: "They're generating huge amounts of wealth by dispossessing public land," he says. He's witnessed similar processes across Latin America: "It's a device of globalization, creating exclusive spaces for the wealthy, for foreigners."

Nuri Paulina Arias Muñoz, a property consultant in charge of sales for Aldea Zama, says exclusivity is what sets Tulum apart from other megaresorts nearby like Playa del Carmen and Cancún: "The people who live here are artists and models, people with high purchasing power." Still, she says the development also benefits locals, acting as an "economic pull" for people from all over the state and beyond.

Elidea López Menez, who has lived in Tulum for nearly 30 years, says Aldea Zama "creates a bit more work so people can prosper." She was a maid at a condo there, working eight to 12 hours a day, six days a week. Menez lives in the southern section of Tulum, and although it's less than a mile from Aldea Zama, the contrast couldn't be starker. Instead of wide, paved avenues, the streets in her neighborhood are cracked, broken and dotted with piles of garbage. While Aldea Zama's condos gleam in the Caribbean sun, Menez's home is a narrow concrete house she shares with eight members of her family. The smell

of raw sewage is overpowering: The city has a water treatment facility, but only about 30 percent of the houses are connected to it. "Things aren't very good here," she admits. "There's no sewer system downtown."

Menez says her family members often get sick. "Every time there's a change in the weather, it affects my granddaughter. She gets a stomach ache and diarrhea." Jose Gabriel Lopez, a gastroenterologist and director of Tulum's Red Cross, says the health issues faced by Menez and her family have become common among residents, in part because of the sewage problem. "I've seen a 30 percent increase in gastrointestinal diseases in the last year alone," he says. "The health system here is still very deficient. The city just lacks infrastructure."

Down on the beach, things aren't much better. Juan Antonio Acosta Giraldo is a microbiologist and biotechnologist who runs a local plumbing and engineering company. He estimates some 80 percent of Tulum's hotels lack proper water treatment. "The hotels advertise themselves as being 'eco-chic,'" says Juarez, a recent evictee. "But they don't care at all about the ecosystem. They throw their sewage water straight into the ocean."

A 2013 study of Tulum's underground river system published in the *Journal of Environmental Protection* found that many hotels "dump sewage directly into mangrove swamps or inject the improperly treated wastewater into saline water just below the freshwater." As a consequence, "fecal contamination is widespread."

Local wildlife is also in trouble. From May to October, loggerhead and green sea turtles, both endangered species, arrive in their hundreds to lay eggs on Tulum's beaches. Female turtles lay up to 300 eggs, but the survival rate for their offspring is extremely low: "For every 1,000 turtles I help release into the ocean, only one will make it back to the beach," says Cuauhtemoc Sayago, who runs Tulum's turtle protection program. On an increasingly crowded and polluted beach, this abysmal survival rate could plummet. Developments like MayaZamá and others are also rapidly encircling Tulum National Park, home to endangered species like jaguars and ocelots.

Trash too has become a serious issue. "There is no garbage system," says Xavier Peralta, an environmental activist. "It's all just dumped in the jungle." Some 6 miles west of town, the city's dump is a sprawling, towering mass of waste. "Imagine what happens when it rains and that rotten broth is filtered underground."

He adds, "Tulum is a ticking time bomb."

'ONE BIG PIECE OF SWISS CHEESE'

Tulum sits on the eastern edge of the Yucatán peninsula, a lush arrow of land made up of soluble rock like limestone and dolomite. This means rainwater doesn't stay on the surface to create rivers or lakes; instead, it filters underground, forming an intricate network of caves and rivers. Over time, some freshwater caves collapse, leaving sinkholes—the cenotes that pepper the peninsula.

"It's one big piece of Swiss cheese," says Sam Meacham, a cave diver and director of the Center for Investigation of the Aquifer System of Quintana Roo. He has spent two decades exploring the Yucatán. "We've got two of the largest cave systems on the planet," he says. "One is right here in Tulum." For Meacham, the importance of these cave systems isn't just their geology but also the insight they provide into human history, as many are filled with archaeological remains: In 2007, Mexican divers found the skeleton of a teenage girl dating back 12,000 years—one of the oldest skeletons ever found in the Americas. "These cave systems are time machines," says Meacham.

AS we backed away, one of the men lifted his shirt to make sure we saw the pistol sticking out of his jeans.

Torres-Talamante, the local biologist, says the significance of the underground cave system can't be underestimated: "It's like the Amazon." To show me exactly what he meant, he took me diving in the deepest cenote in the state, aptly named the Pit.

Just a narrow gash in the middle of the jungle, the Pit descends over 300 feet underground. Filled with clear, fresh water, the cave opens up into a huge cavern. Shafts of light pierce the dark, illuminating giant stalactites pointing down into the deep. Embedded in the walls of the cave, Torres-Talamante pointed out, are fossils of seashells and other crustaceans dating back millions of years. At 90 feet, the cave's freshwater meets the heavier saltwater down below, forming a ghostly green hydrogen sulfate cloud. Decomposing trees that have fallen from the jungle above stick up through the cloud, like a haunted forest. "It's nature's cathedral," Torres-Talamante says wistfully once we are back on dry land.

Unfortunately, cenotes like the Pit might not remain crystal clear for much longer. A 2010 study in *Environmental Pollution* found traces of domestic sewage and even cocaine in the cave systems beneath Tulum, concluding that "land and water management in the region is fragmented, and is often ineffective in the face of pressure to develop the tourism and recreational industry."

Because these underground rivers are interconnected, polluting one cenote can affect the entire system, but Torres-Talamante says the contamination is easy to ignore because it's happening underground: "The heart that can't be seen can't be felt." Yet the water still flows into the ocean eventually, where the effect of this contamination is more obvious. "All of us who've worked in this field have borne witness to [reefs'] destruction," says Roberto Iglesias-Prieto, a professor of biology at Penn State University who's been studying the reefs off the coast of Mexico for 20 years.

Over the phone, he explained that wastewater, even when treated for solid contaminants, increases the levels of nitrogen and phosphorous in the ocean, which produces algae. The algae competes with the corals for nutrients and causes disease and

bleaching in the reef. "When combined with climate change," he says, "the result is disastrous."

The problem is widespread. Reefs off the coast of Tulum are part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, the largest in the Western Hemisphere, touching Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. According to the 2010 study in *Environmental Pollution*, the system has seen a 50 percent loss of coral cover over the past 20 years. "It's an ecocide," says Gustavo Marín Guardado, an anthropologist with Mexico's Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology. "Everything is being thrown into the underground rivers as if they were black holes."

OSCAR LOPEZ FOR NEWSWEEK

BOOM AND BUST: Tulum's problems could soon get much worse. A massive new real estate project with a murky past could mean the town's population explodes tenfold in less than a decade.

THE AMAZING MYSTICISM

Though the long-term outlook is grim, the environmental situation in Tulum is still manageable: The city receives just a fraction of the millions of tourists who visit nearby Cancún and is home to fewer than 30,000 people. But MayaZamá will attract thousands of new inhabitants—not just the development's actual residents but also people like Menez who will move here to work as maids, cleaners, cooks, gardeners and more.

Prospero Espinosa is an environmental lawyer who assessed MayaZamá's development proposals on behalf of the Mexican Center for Environmental Law. According to his report, if the group's current plans go ahead, the town's population could increase tenfold in less than 10 years. "The project isn't sustainable," says Espinosa. "It's not responsible. It's not viable."

MORE than once, Tulum's land disputes have ended in murder.

In a city already struggling with garbage disposal, sewage treatment and environmental conservation, the result could be disastrous. The report concluded, "The impact of this growth would be brutal, devastating and uncontrollable."

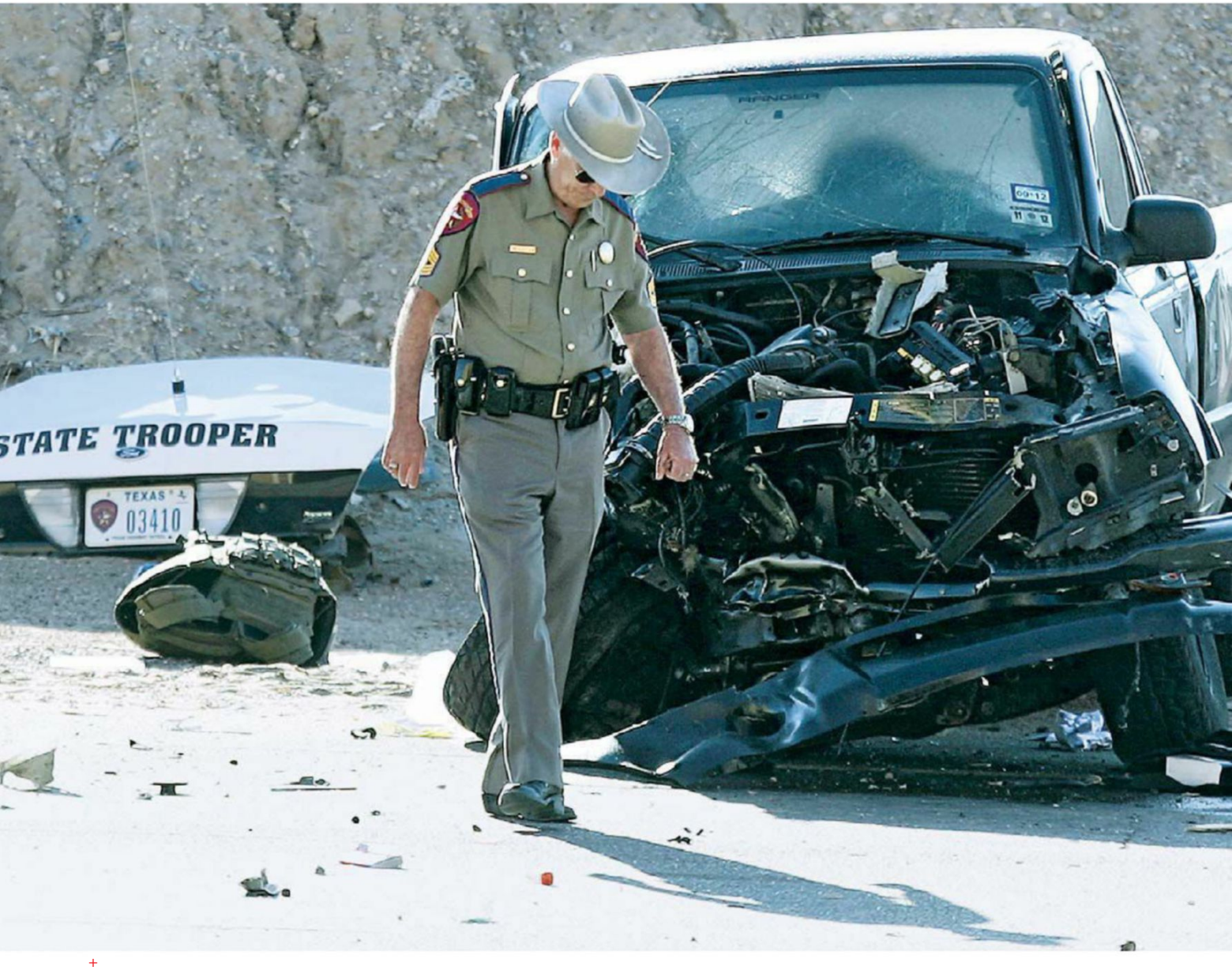
And while MayaZamá is by far the largest and the most controversial real estate project in Tulum, there are dozens more in development around the city, all offering the same luxurious eco-chic experience. On a warm Friday night in September, a real estate company called Los Amigos held an event to celebrate the launch of its next venture: Central Park, a new luxury condominium project billed as "the new icon of Tulum."

The launch took place on the southern side of the city, not far from where Menez lives. Illuminated with spotlights like a Hollywood premiere, the event was filled with elegant socialites sipping cocktails and nibbling hors d'oeuvres. A woman on stilts waltzed through the crowd, followed by a man dressed as a Mayan warrior but covered in sequins. A group of acrobats spun flaming wheels above their heads, juggled torches and spit fire.

"The mysticism is so amazing in Tulum—you can almost taste it," said a prospective investor standing next to me, before being whisked off by one of the real estate agents to view the swanky showrooms. As the developers unveiled their pièce de résistance, a giant flower-shaped solar panel, other prospective investors raced to put down deposits on luxury condos. "We've received 60 building permits this year alone," said a real estate agent as she wooed another client. "It's the Tulum boom."

This reporting was supported by the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

VICTOR CALZADA/THE EL PASO TIMES/AP



RUNNING SCARED: It's estimated that police car chases in the U.S. kill up to 2,500 people each year.

GOOD SCIENCE

WEB TRAFFIC JAM

A Spider-Man-style web could cut down on deadly police chases

BY **STUART MILLER**

HIGH-SPEED police pursuits are a newscast staple because the footage is so dramatic—but also because something often goes awry. Annual estimates of the damage due to police chases range from 8,000 to 55,000 injuries, and 350 to 2,500 deaths. More than a third of those killed are bystanders or passengers. Leonard Stock, a 50-year-old roofer from Peoria, Arizona, has devised a relatively low-tech solution in his garage that he believes can save lives.

At the press of a button, his Grappler Police Bumper drops from the front of a car. When the patrol car pulls close to a fleeing vehicle, the driver shoots, Spider-Man-style, a rope webbing attached to bars on the police car's bumper. The rope wraps around one of the bad guy's rear wheels and forces the car to slow. It also lets police stay tethered to the target car.

Police do have other options, like tire deflation strips or the PIT (precision immobilization technique) maneuver, in which the police bang into the side of the fleeing car. But these "have risks," says Lon Bartel, president of the Peoria Police Officers Association, who is intrigued by the Grappler. Stock acknowledges his device isn't for every chase, explaining that police must briefly get close to the car they are chasing—from mere inches to 4 feet, depending on how far the axle is set in from the end of the car. "You would not try this at 80 or 100 miles per hour," Stock says; it's too dangerous. But when the car is going 40 or 50 mph, using the Grappler "would be a piece of cake."

The Grappler joins a small but growing market. OnStar from General Motors allows subscribers or the police to use a remote to force a stolen car to slow to a stop. The innovation with the greatest impact so far has been StarChase, which debuted in 2009 and is now used by over 100 law enforcement agencies. Police can be as far as 50 feet away when they shoot a small StarChase GPS tracker that attaches with adhesive to a fleeing car. That allows police to track the car from a safe distance without a chase and to approach only when it's safe. "The goal," StarChase President Trevor Fischbach, "is to remove the adrenaline from the situation."

FROM BAD TO CURSE

Swearing has its own home in our brains, separate from where we generate polite conversation

WHEN BENJAMIN BERGEN was working on his book about profanity, the reaction he most often got was bafflement. Why would he want to write about vulgarity and cussin'? His answer, as a cognitive scientist, is that expletives are more than just offensive expressions we let slip when we stub a toe or a ?#@%*! driver cuts into our lane. They offer a unique window into the brain, largely because of an intriguing finding: Swearing comes from a different part of the brain than the rest of our language.

Researchers are now exploring the impact swearing has on listeners in greater detail. In particular, they're interested in studying how slurs and other abusive terms can affect their intended targets. For example, researchers would like to know whether middle schoolers experience higher levels of social anxiety when other kids batter them with profanity.

Bergen explores these questions in his new book, *What the F: What Swearing Reveals About Our Language, Our Brains, and Ourselves*. Studying how and why we swear has taught researchers much about where language originates in the brain and the impact profanity has on our psyches.

It wasn't long ago that the subject was as taboo as the words themselves. In the 1950s, academic inquiry into profanity was like sex research—controversial and strongly discouraged. Yet attitudes shifted with time, and swearing studies became less stigmatized. One of the most interesting and important findings to emerge over the years is that words come from more than one part of the brain. "We have two assembly lines that produce words," says Bergen.

BY
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Researchers made that discovery in part by observing patients with severe brain injuries and advanced neurodegenerative diseases. Often cited is a 19th-century stroke case in which a patient with brain damage lost the ability to form and understand speech, a condition known as aphasia. But he was able to swear, saying, "I fuck!" That was particularly unfortunate, since he was a priest.

Patients with Tourette's syndrome have also provided evidence that language has multiple sources in the brain. Tourette's syndrome is an inherited neurological disorder characterized by involuntary behavioral tics. For one in every 10 patients, these tics manifest as outbursts of swearing or offensive remarks, such as "You're ugly." This phenomenon, known as coprolalia, is thought to be due to a malfunction in the basal ganglia, responsible for inhibiting unwanted or inappropriate behaviors.

Regular speech is generated in the left hemisphere, in an area of the brain close to the surface. The cerebral cortex, or "gray matter," is associated with higher processes like thought and action. "It's sophisticated," says Bergen, "and comports with the idea of what it means to be human."

Swearing, on the other hand, is generated much deeper in the brain, in regions that are older and more primitive in evolutionary terms, says Bergen. These regions are often found in the right hemisphere in the brain's emotional center, the limbic system.

Nearly every language in the world contains profane words and expressions. "There's a point at which ordinary words don't express our needs, but a profanity can do that," says Michael Adams, a linguist at Indiana University and author of the new book *In Praise of Profanity*. Profanity makes up half a percent of the average person's daily vocabulary, according to psychologist and linguist Timothy Jay, who began his study of profanity more than 40 years ago.

"These are words that express intense emotions—surprise, frustration, anger, happiness, fear," says Jay. "[Swearing] serves my need to vent, and it conveys my emotions to other people very effectively and symbolically.... Where other animals like to bite and scratch each other, I can say 'fuck you,' and you get my contempt—I don't have to do it physically." Of course, there's no protection against a primitive physical response, especially when that contempt is expressed in a bar. Profanity serves other purposes too. Lovers use it as enticing sex talk; athletes and soldiers use it to forge camaraderie. Profanity is even used as a celebratory expression, says Adams, citing "Fuck yeah!" as an example.

The meaning of a profanity changes with time, culture and context. Swearwords have been around since the Greek and Roman ages and maybe earlier, but the things people consider offensive have shifted. "People of the Middle Ages had no problems talking about sex or excrement. That was not their hang-up," Adams explains. "Their hang-up was talking about God disrespectfully...so that was what a profanity was."

Also consider that few people today recoil upon hearing "damn," as they did in 1939, when the movie *Gone With the Wind* was released. Clark Gable's Rhett Butler shocked audiences and Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh) when he said, "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."

We've since moved away from blasphemy as the most offensive type of profanity, says Bergen. "Now slurs are the worst ones." Most swearwords fall into four categories: religion, sex, excretion or derogatory terms. And depending where you are in the world, there can be different takes on what's considered profane. In Chile, it might be seafood: "*Que te folle un pez,*" or "I hope you get fucked by a fish." In Italy, you might hear "*porca miseria*," akin to the British "bloody hell." The Dutch might scorch you with "*krijg de kanker*"—"get the cancer."

PROFANITY MAKES UP HALF A PERCENT OF THE AVERAGE PERSON'S DAILY VOCABULARY.

But why do we use these expressions? What do they do that can't be accomplished with "darn it" or "what the heck"? The answer is that profanity is produced in areas of the brain that control emotion. "There is some evidence that the amygdala, the part of the brain involved in detecting threats, is activated when we hear taboo words," says the noted linguist Steven Pinker, producing an emotional buzz we can't get from "darn it."

Swearing still makes many people uncomfortable—including Bergen's mom, who hasn't yet finished his book. But many of us use it. It's a deeply ingrained part of our culture. "It's a rare bird," says Bergen, "who has never let slip a profane word." Damn right.

MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS

FEELS SO GOOD: Swearing is generated deep within the primitive part of the brain, often in the emotional center. It exists in nearly every language in the world.

A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR SPECIES

Leprosy passed from humans to squirrels long ago and could come back

LEPROSY, that ancient, disfiguring disease thought to have been eradicated hundreds of years ago, has been hiding out in Britain, in a most unlikely place. A recent study published in the journal *Science* says researchers found two species of the bacterium infecting red squirrels in Ireland, Scotland and several isles off the English coast. On one of them, Brownsea Island, they discovered a medieval strain nearly identical to that found in a skeleton buried some 730 years ago in Winchester, about 50 miles from Brownsea. "It is remarkable that [the bacterium] has persisted for centuries undetected," wrote Roland Brosch of France's Pasteur Institute in a commentary accompanying the study. He added that those looking to control the disease must accept the possibility that there are undiscovered sources of leprosy "existing under our noses."

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is caused primarily by the *Mycobacterium leprae*, though recent work has shown that a closely related bacterium known as *Mycobacterium lepromatosis* can cause it as well. These bacteria infect the skin, very slowly destroying the tissue and associated nerves, leading to terrible disfigurement. The infection can be cured with antibiotics, but treatment may take a year or longer.

The pathogen was likely transferred from humans to animals hundreds of years ago, says one of the study's authors, Stewart Cole, director of the Global Health Institute at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne.

Xiang-Yang Han, a physician and researcher at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, was surprised the team found leprosy in squirrels with and without signs of infection. "You don't know what animal is carrying the organism, so some may carry the disease without showing it, and they could potentially pass it to people," he says.

It's unclear where exactly *M. lepromatosis* came from, but likely from some type of animal, Cole says.

Many scholars say an Egyptian papyrus dated 1550 B.C. is the first known documentation of a case of leprosy. The disease showed up in Greece in the fourth century B.C., when Alexander the Great's soldiers returned from India. The pathogen made its way to Rome in the first century, when Roman soldiers came back from Asia Minor. Europeans then carried it to the Americas.

Over the centuries, the variety of *M. leprae* in Europe changed slightly, picking up its own unique genetic signature, which allowed researchers to show that the same type infected the medieval victim and the modern-day squirrels.

Brownsea was once an inhabited island with a castle, but it is now a nature reserve known for its mostly healthy population of red squirrels. Native to Britain, the squirrels have declined markedly since the introduction of eastern gray squirrels from North America, which kick their little butts when it comes to competing for food and resources. The researchers found *M. leprae* in these Brownsea animals, as well as *M. lepromatosis* infections in animals in Ireland, Scot-

BY
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KING OF THE HILL: A papyrus dated 1550 B.C. provides the first known documentation of leprosy, a disease that figures prominently in the Bible. Now it has been found in red squirrels.

OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA/AP

land and the Isle of Wythe.

The red squirrel is only the second animal known to carry leprosy. The first is the nine-banded armadillo, found throughout the southern United States. These animals often live in semi-urban areas close to people, and research suggests they can pass the disease to humans. In 2015, there were 178 new American leprosy cases, most of which likely derived from the animals, Cole says. Worldwide, leprosy continues to infect millions around the world, with 220,000 new cases per year, 60 percent of which occur in India.

Animal experts blamed a 2015 spike of leprosy cases in Florida on a spate of real estate projects in areas where armadillos live, leading to increased interactions between man and those beasts. They also noted that the animals can spit, and contact with bodily fluids is how the pathogen is spread. So if you see an armadillo, it's best to keep your distance. (Though you are still unlikely to get leprosy even if you cozy up to one, due to the difficulty of contracting leprosy and its relative rarity.)

The disease was originally passed to armadillos from people in the last hundred years or so, Cole adds. That form is the same as the kind that infected medieval Europeans, and there's no evidence leprosy existed in the New World prior to a century ago. Scientists know that because it leaves marking on skeletons that can be recognized and studied.

ARMADILLOS CAN PASS LEPROSY TO HUMANS, SO DON'T LET ONE SPIT ON YOU.

Richard Truman, chief of the laboratory at the National Hansen's Disease Program, says he doesn't think humans will ever eradicate leprosy. That's primarily because once it has been established in populations of wild animals, like squirrels and armadillos, it spreads widely in these species. This is known as "amplification," and the same thing happens with diseases like malaria in mosquitoes. It would be impractical to try to kill or treat all animals with the disease, Truman says. Furthermore, as the current study shows, animals may carry it without showing symptoms.

This study doesn't suggest Britons are more likely to get leprosy than previously thought, but "knowing this can help people avoid contact with these animals," Truman says—which is probably a good plan, regardless, because even a healthy red squirrel can bite. And there's no cure for that.

THE PANIC WOMB

President-elect Trump hasn't said he's anti-contraception, but some women aren't waiting to find out

EACH NOVEMBER, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy runs a social media campaign to make people more comfortable talking about birth control. The hashtag: #ThxBirthControl. This year, however, #ThxBirthControl had even more significance for many women. In the wake of the election of Donald Trump, some health advocates and insurance experts warned women to prepare for the possibility that they may lose free access to birth control, along with other health care services, after Trump is sworn in this January.

Throughout his campaign, Trump vowed to repeal President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act, which requires health insurance companies to provide free contraception to all women who request it. It's unclear whether Trump will change this mandate. While he has said he plans to uphold other provisions of the law, such as making it illegal for insurance companies to deny coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, the president-elect hasn't publicly addressed maintaining free access to contraceptives.

But it's not just the prospect of losing health insurance coverage that is creating the anxiety. Many women are especially worried about Vice President–elect Mike Pence's history of limiting women's access to basic health care services as Indiana's governor and what that may mean once he is influencing national policy. Pence is primarily a proponent of abstinence because it's far more effective than birth control and doesn't require insurance. (He once said encouraging condom use is "too modern and liberal.") In the week following the election, Planned Parenthood received 20,000 donations in Pence's

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MARK WILSON/GETTY

BIRTH-CONTROL DILEMMA: IUDs have a 1 percent failure rate, but at $500 to $1,000, they are too expensive for women whose insurance doesn't cover them.

name. They definitely weren't from the vice president–elect.

Both Trump and Pence have vowed to defund Planned Parenthood and appoint Supreme Court judges who would overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Trump once called Planned Parenthood an "abortion factory," even though abortion services make up only 3 percent of all clinical care provided by the organization. On the other hand, 34 percent of the services obtained at Planned Parenthood clinics provide patients access to contraception, according to the organization's 2013-14 annual report.

On November 13, in an interview with *60 Minutes*, Trump said that if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, abortion regulation would go back to the states. A woman unable to get the procedure could simply "go to another state."

Some women are already worried they soon won't be able to access or afford basic health care, and they have urged one another on social media to visit a gynecologist for an intrauterine device before Trump takes office. Planned Parenthood clinics and other women's health care providers report a surge in patients requesting IUDs. They have an approximately 1 percent failure rate, which makes them the most effective contraception available. An IUD, after being inserted by a physician, prevents pregnancy for as long as three to 10 years. So some IUDs would outlast the president-elect's tenure.

IUDs are not cheap, but this fix-it-and-forget-it method of birth control has become far more popular in the past five years, thanks, in part, to the Obamacare provision. Without health insurance coverage, a woman could expect to pay between $500 and $1,000 for the device. Before Obamacare, even having health insurance didn't guarantee a free IUD or other contraceptives. And an insurance company could write a policy for a young woman that wouldn't cover maternity care, pregnancy or contraception.

Though Trump says he is anti-abortion, he hasn't given any indication that he's anti–birth control. During an interview on *The Dr. Oz Show* in September, he said birth control pills should be available to women without a prescription. That policy change, which has already occurred in California and Oregon, makes it easier to buy birth control pills. However, it doesn't necessarily make them affordable, since insurance companies aren't required to cover other medications, such as ibuprofen, which don't require a prescription.

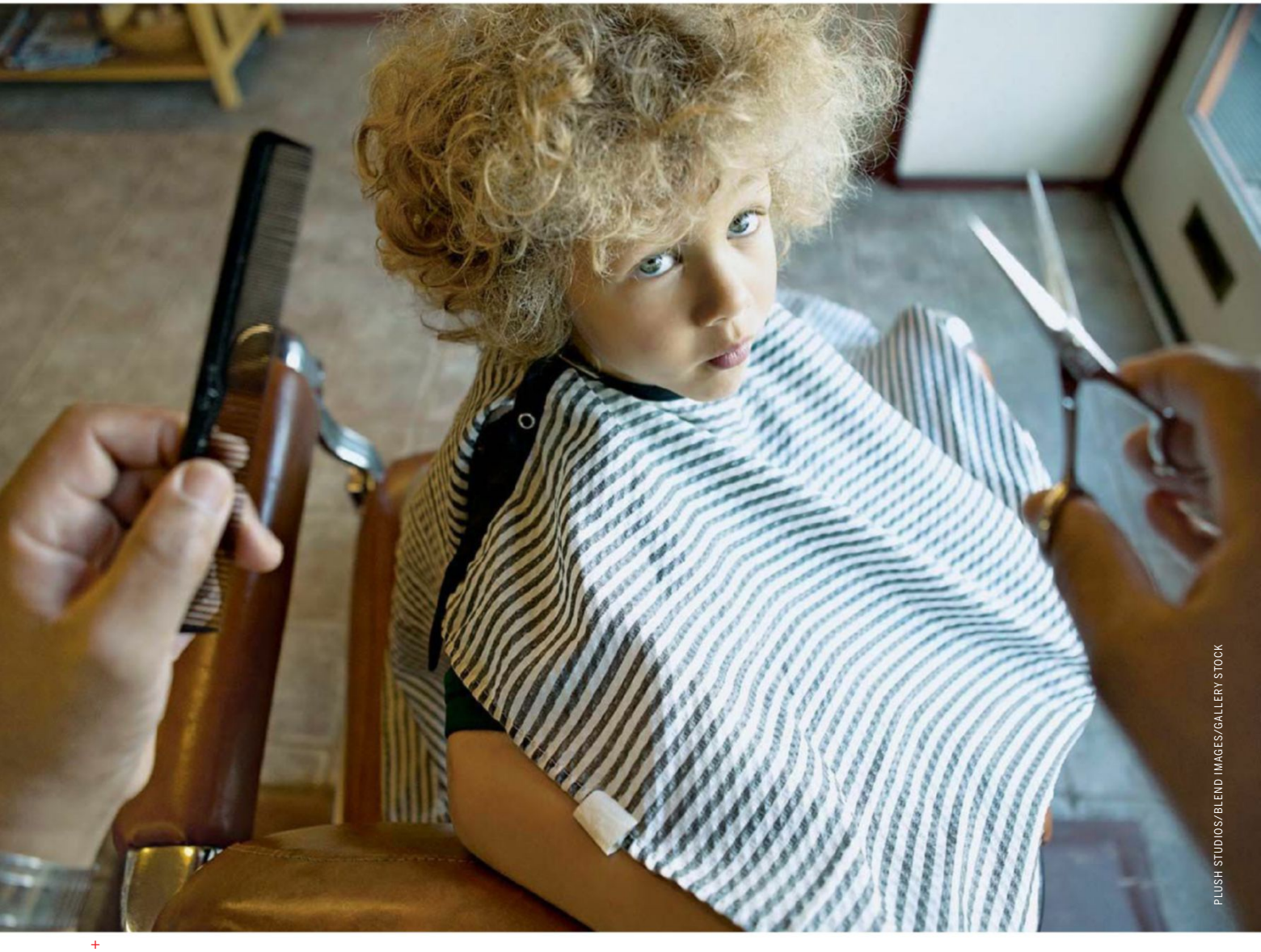
Limiting access to the pill can be detrimental to women's health in ways that have nothing to do with preventing pregnancy. Lawmakers often forget (or ignore) that sometimes doctors prescribe birth control for reasons not involving pregnancy prevention. The pill, the patch and IUDs are offered to women who have erratic menstrual cycles, experience painful periods or suffer from ovarian cysts. The pill is also sometimes prescribed to treat acne and alleviate symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. For some women, losing access to hormonal contraceptives is like telling people with clinical depression that they can't take antidepressants or limiting a diabetic's access to insulin.

While Pence and scores of other conservatives question the morality of safe sex and claim that contraceptives are a waste of tax dollars, most of those who vote in the U.S. (Republican or Democrat) say they favor policies that make it easier for people to obtain a full range of birth control options. According to a survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, more than three-quarters of people who say they're Republican think birth control is a basic part of women's health care.

MORE THAN THREE-FOURTHS OF REPUBLICANS THINK BIRTH CONTROL IS A BASIC PART OF WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE.

Even if Trump plans to dismantle Obamacare to limit reproductive health care access, it could take months, if not years, to change the existing system. "It is not going to be a snap-your-fingers change," Alina Salganicoff, vice president for women's health policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation, told *The New York Times*. And even if the birth control mandate disappears, she added, most insurance plans would continue to cover many contraceptive options. Before Obamacare, 28 states required health insurance companies to cover birth control, according to a 2015 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation, and 85 percent of employer-provided plans offered this benefit.

Repeal of the health care law would leave some 22 million people without insurance and with little or no access to contraception. If Obamacare has taught us anything, it's that health policy is rarely a fix-it-and-forget-it venture.



PLUSH STUDIOS/BLEND IMAGES/GALLERY STOCK

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THE BARBER OF UNCIVIL: Posted complaints about Supercuts, with the incriminating selfie, are a bizarre exercise in mutually assured humiliation.

WE HAVE THINGS TO DISGUST

Social media offers a massive collection of glorious corporate screwups (if you know where to look)

BY
JOE VEIX
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IN THE BURSTING septic tank that is social media, amid the flow of hoax news and hate speech from accounts with anime avatars and alarming reports of our country's bleak descent into an autocratic kleptocracy, there's not much left to enjoy. Still, it retains at least one entertaining utility: as a corporate complaints department. Not because it offers brands a chance to help customers (who cares?), but because it offers a bountiful public display of corporate screwups.

A decade ago, if a hair was baked into a pizza at a Domino's in Des Moines, the customer might have complained to the manager, and the matter would have been quietly resolved—refunds and coupons for free Cheesy Bread all around. Now that customer will take a disgusting photo, post it and complain for the whole world to enjoy.

See for yourself: Scroll through messages sent to any major brand and witness an endless stream of justified rage. Even better, type into the Twitter search bar "@dominos + nasty" and click the photo tab. Behold, a NSFW slideshow of gag-inducing failures of industrialized food: hairs and bugs and dog nails and dark brown Parmesan cheese allegedly from 1842. This search formula works for nearly every corporation. Swap out "nasty" for other adjectives, like "gross" or "sick," and a whole new set of photos appears.

The complaints come in distinct genres, some more amusing than others. Gripes about telecom and airline companies are typically boring variations of "My service isn't working" and "My flight was delayed" and "Why don't you all kill yourselves for inconveniencing me, an important person." There isn't anything surprising, though there are exceptions. A search for "@comcast + technician + bathroom" turned up a gem sent from user @TNiekowal in 2014: "You owe me $3.79 for a bottle of Febreeze [*sic*]... and your technician should be ashamed by what he just did to my bathroom. #seeadoctor." The company never responded, and it's unclear if

said technician ever sought medical help.

The more interesting kind of complaints are those directed at fast-food and chain retail companies, because they often come with alarming photographic evidence. While an internet connection outage can't be photographed, morbid discoveries in food are appallingly easy to snap. Perhaps because of the visceral disgust the photos can trigger, food horror is a reliable form of clickbait. Two recent examples: In 2015, a woman found what may have been a tongue-eating parasite in a can of tuna, and later that year a man almost munched into a Subway sandwich that had a dead mouse as a topping. Eat fresh!

That Twitter and Facebook became massive databases of PR disasters is sort of accidental, the confluence of a few factors. Since the platforms are fundamentally advertising services, they naturally attract brands. They're also designed for both the venting of petty grievances and shallow engagement with other users (including those aforementioned brands). Plus, shouting at a brand on social media—where people are spending all their time anyway—is easier than navigating through a phone tree maze to argue with a flustered agent who has no power to fix anything.

This results in *a lot* of complaints. There were 5 million tweets directed at major brands per month in 2015, according to a 122-page guide published by Twitter to help companies better handle customer service issues. How many of those are complaints is difficult to say, but there are enough that companies have invested heavily in bolstering their social media customer service teams. Time Warner Cable tripled its support staff in 2015.

It's a system that's easy to mess with. Someone registered the Twitter account @UnitedAirlanes, and complaints meant for the airline poured in. "God has given me a great, beautiful funnel through which angry people flow in the worst possible mood," the person running the account wrote on Tumblr and used this power to mock angry people. To a customer annoyed that her airline miles could buy her only worthless DVDs, the account responded, "United Airlanes reminds you that DVDs are as sharp as they are archaic, and that cutting tools will be valuable on the island."

Perhaps the best complaint tweets are those directed at Supercuts. To demonstrate their botched haircuts, customers are forced to take selfies. Here we can view overly ambitious buzzcuts and disturbing patches of naked flesh and bang trims so severe they'd offend even a German expressionist painter. Each image—taken quickly inside midsize sedans and strikingly drab suburban homes—features the same expression of wry disappointment. Rather than gazing outward at the perverse failings of mass production, these complaints instead gaze back at the complainee. We get to *see* their reactions, along with the haircuts that are far from super. Many offer a sarcastic "Thanks, Supercuts."

Beyond the superficial entertainment of laughing at gross photos and bad haircuts, there's something more significant here. These small moments of public revulsion exist within the same feeds that brands use to push their carefully calibrated, cynically optimistic identities to the world. This juxtaposition undermines their advertising and comes across as gleeful agitprop.

Unfortunately for the person posting these, it isn't clear what, if anything, is accomplished; they seem to humiliate all parties involved.

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"YOU OWE ME $3.79 FOR A BOTTLE OF FEBREEZE... AND YOUR TECHNICIAN SHOULD BE ASHAMED BY WHAT HE JUST DID TO MY BATHROOM. #SEEADOCTOR."

Maybe that is the point? It's mutually assured destruction: If I must endure a bowl of *pasta alla roach* or a haircut that makes it look like my head was shoved into a wood chipper, they might reason, then I can at least force some social media marketing intern from Villanova to share some of that pain. The public shaming might also force a response from a real person at the company for an issue that'd otherwise be ignored—assuming the account isn't run by bots. Or perhaps this gives those complaining too much credit. It's likely just rash impulsiveness, tweets sent in moments of sound and fury, signifying nothing (this might also account for the many spelling errors).

They aren't totally futile, because they provide us with cheap entertainment. And for that, let's say earnestly, for once: Thanks, Supercuts.

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VOCABULARY TEST: The term *post-truth* surged in popularity this year in discussions of how politicians defended their positions on Brexit.

REX/AP

Lies, Damn Lies and Post-Truth

When we need it most, a new way to say "that's not true"

BY **CONOR GAFFEY**
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THE ELECTION of Donald Trump as president of the United States and the U.K.'s referendum decision to leave the European Union propelled **POST-TRUTH** to the status of international word of the year, Oxford Dictionaries announced in mid-November.

The word has been in the air for over a decade, but its usage spiked recently. In 2016, the adjective has become particularly associated with the phrase *post-truth politics*, denoting "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief," the company stated. The term was used frequently during campaigning ahead of the British referendum on EU membership in June, with both the Leave and Remain campaigns accused of making many misleading declarations. The Leave campaign, for example, said leaving the EU would save the U.K. $435 million per week, only to later drop the claim after the vote for Brexit.

Post-truth politics also came to the fore in Trump's successful campaign, with the Republican candidate making outlandish claims about immigrants and his call to ban Muslims from entering the country. "It's not surprising that our choice reflects a year dominated by highly charged political and social discourse," said Casper Grathwohl, president of Oxford Dictionaries.

According to the company, the earliest use of *post-truth* was recorded in a 1992 essay by a Serbian-American writer, Steve Tesich. His usage was the first to imply a sense that truth has become irrelevant, rather than the more obvious meaning of "after the truth was known."

Other contenders on the 2016 word of the year shortlist were:

ADULTING: a noun used to describe the practice of behaving like a responsible adult, popular among millennials who have an ambivalent relationship with the concept.

ALT-RIGHT: an ideological group associated with extreme conservative views.

BREXITEER: a campaigner for Brexit.

CHATBOT: a computer program that engages in conversation with human users.

COULROPHOBIA: an extreme fear of clowns, perhaps induced by the recent spate of people dressed as morbid clowns in various countries.

GLASS CLIFF: a noun used to reference a woman or minority group member ascending to a position of power, but which is innately precarious. Theresa May's appointment as British prime minister, for example, was an event associated with the term.

HYGGE: a noun derived from Danish culture, associated with a feeling of coziness and comfort.

LATINX: a gender-neutral noun used to describe a person of Latin American origin.

WOKE: an adjective used to describe the quality of being alert to injustice, particularly racial, in society.

Last year's winning "word" was the "face with tears of joy" emoji. Apparently, there was little use for that this year.

SQUEEZE PLAY

Native American tribes are getting into winemaking, expanding and diversifying tribal economies beyond casinos

LONG BEFORE they first had contact with Europeans, the Chumash people occupied 7,000 square miles of exceptionally fertile land near what is today Santa Barbara. The conquest and settlement of California, first by Spain and then the United States, hemmed in the Chumash, making them secondary citizens on a land they thought had been granted to them by the gods. In 1901, the tribe was confined to 127 acres on the Santa Ynez Reservation. For most of the 20th century, that reservation, like most others across the nation, was a nearly invisible ghetto where Native Americans languished.

Richard Gomez was born into this world. Today a tribal elder of the Chumash, he remembers long days of fieldwork on his grandparents' farm and waiting for a truck to arrive with government handouts of food and clothes. Prospects began to improve for the tribe in the early 1990s, when the Chumash opened a casino, and by 2004, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that "each of the 153 members of the Santa Ynez band has

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A VINE DISTINCTION: Gomez is the only certified female Native American winemaker in the U.S.

BENNY HADDAD

received more than $1 million in casino income."

In 1994, Gomez's daughter Tara was heading off to college. Family trips through California's wine country had put her on a path unusual for Native Americans: She wanted to study winemaking. Although many tribes frown on alcohol as a ravaging force introduced by whites, the Chumash paid for her to attend Fresno State University, which has a well-regarded enology program. She later studied in Spain, as well as in the increasingly well-regarded wine country of California.

Some two decades later, Tara Gomez has the distinction of being the only certified female Native American winemaker in the United States. The winery she runs with the help of a single full-time employee is called Kitá, which translates into "our valley oak" in the Chumash language of Samala. And though she grows traditional European grapes, those grapes come from a vineyard that sits on what became, in 2010, Chumash land once again, after more than a century of dispossession.

The Chumash are not the only tribe turning to winemaking, since gaming has provided some Native American tribes with money to invest. Eager to diversify beyond poker and blackjack, they've sought to tap into a growing eagerness from the American consumer to drink and eat locally and ethically.

Some tribes remain uneasy about winemaking because alcoholism plagues many Native American communities. Others see a natural evolution of how Native Americans fit into the nation's cultural landscape. Winemaking, after all, is predicated on the notion of terroir, an understanding of the land in all its subtleties. And who has a more intimate understanding of that land than those who have lived on it (and off it) for thousands of years?

ALCOHOL IS TABOO

Cultural wariness about drinking remains strong in Native America. "We'll do a big dinner, and we can't sell alcohol," says Loretta Barrett Oden, the chef and food historian of Potawatomi descent who has worked tirelessly to reintroduce Native foods to Native people—and to pair them with wine. As we sipped a spicy, muscular blended Tuluk'a red, sold under the Séka Hills brand by the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation of Northern California, Oden recalled her grandfather, back home in Oklahoma, making dandelion wine.

Earlier this year, Darlene Gabbard wanted to hold a fundraiser for breast cancer awareness and donate the proceeds to the American Indian Cancer Foundation. She was told, however, that the cancer charity does not accept donations from alcohol companies. The alcohol company Gabbard has run for nearly two decades stands out for being the nation's first Native American winery. Founded in 1998 in the Yadkin Valley wine region of North Carolina, Native Vines was a pioneer at a time when most Americans had not yet developed sophisticated tastes for wine.

Gabbard belongs to the Lumbee Tribe, which is native to North Carolina. She has no formal winemaking experience but argues that "all the training in the world can't create a good palate." Having started making wine in the 1990s as a hobby, she decided to open a commercial winery at the urging of family and friends. She started researching how other Native wineries went about marketing their wares, only to discover there weren't any. "The Native American community has been supportive," Gabbard tells me, "but with limitations. They're proud of me as an Indian and a woman, but alcohol is taboo." She says that while she is sometimes allowed to have a booth at a powwow, she is forbidden from pouring samples.

> STORY MAY BE WHERE NATIVE AMERICAN WINE HAS AN ADVANTAGE OVER VIRTUALLY ALL OF ITS COMPETITORS.

Like most Native American winemakers today, she uses the vinifera grape varietals from Europe, not the muscadine grapes endemic to North America, which tend to produce sweeter, lower-quality wines. But the wines Gabbard makes include apple and plum varietals. These may be a deviation from what's in fashion today, but a decent approximation of what some Native American tribes may have been drinking before contact with Europeans.

THE NEW BUFFALO

Casino gambling is sometimes called "the new buffalo," a reference to that animal's economic importance to Native people in premodern times. But in recent years, tribes have started to diversify. That has been the impetus behind Séka Hills, whose vineyard is in the Capay Valley of California. It is owned by the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, based in these hills northeast of San Francisco. As in the case of Kitá, gaming allowed the tribe to expand its portfolio.

For the Yocha Dehe, gaming means the Cache Creek casino, one of the largest in California. Tribal Secretary James Kinter tells me the Yocha Dehe wanted to "diversify out of gaming" in part because some expressed the fear that the rise of internet gambling could vitiate casino profits. Agriculture seemed like a natural progression for the Yocha Dehe—or, rather, a return. "We're from here," Kinter says. "We've been here since time immemorial—4,000 years."

The Séka Hills wines were tasty but unpretentious classic California offerings. Even better is the brand's elderberry balsamic vinegar, maybe the best I've ever tasted. The olive oil and honey from Séka Hills are very good too. The tribe has a tasting room and hopes to eventually press 200,000 gallons of olive oil per year.

By reaching beyond wine, Séka Hills is pursuing a clever strategy, aligning Native interests with the artisanal movement. Native Americans can lay claim to "the original farm to fork" movement, says Oden, the chef and culinary activist.

Not every tribe, of course, has land in California, where 85 percent of American wine is produced (it also leads in olive oil production). Take the Twisted Cedar wines, made with grapes from Lodi and Clarksburg, in the fertile region south of Sacramento. The tribe for which the wine is named, however, the Cedar Band of Paiutes, is based in Utah—perhaps some of the least hospitable country for growing wine in the world. According to a 2014 article in *The Salt Lake Tribune*, the Paiutes also discovered an existing network through which to distribute their wine: the nation's Indian casinos.

POUR ME A STORY

Wine is a drink, but it is also a story. The story of California pinots, for example, is of a New World underdog besting its French rivals; the story of Yellow Tail belongs in fraternity basements and East Village apartment shares. You are never just drinking; you are also listening. Story may be where Native American wine has an advantage over virtually all of its competitors. The few sentences of backstory on a wine label rarely say anything interesting or original, but the circuitous journey of Native Americans back to the land, back to cultural relevance—that is a story that demands far more than bland enological copy.

I shared this observation with Tara Gomez as we drove in a golf cart through her vineyard near the Santa Ynez Reservation and its Chumash Casino. She grows mostly Rhône and Burgundy grapes, and her wines are the most well-regarded in the Native American category—and the most expensive. *Wine Enthusiast* praised her 2013 grenache blanc for "ever-evolving in the glass without going overripe," awarding it 92 points. (That wine also received high praise from my father-in-law, who has been drinking California wine for four decades but has a continental palate.) Her cabernets and syrahs routinely score in the 90s on Terroirist, the popular wine blog.

> LOOKING TO DIVERSIFY BEYOND GAMING, TRIBERS ARE TAPPING INTO A GROWING EAGERNESS TO DRINK LOCALLY AND ETHICALLY.

Gomez took me to a rise where, standing beneath an oak, we could see the bowl of the valley and the mountains that rose all around. "I feel like I'm in my element here in the vineyard," she said. "It's an honor to be representing the Chumash nation." Her vineyard isn't yet a decade old, while some of her European competitors have been making the same wine, on the same land, for centuries. But her people have been on this land for even longer. They have lived through harvests plentiful and meager. Now the grapes grow fat in the shadows of the valley oaks, and it is time to press them into wine.

LEADER OF THE FREE COMEDY: Baldwin did Trump for *SNL* during the recent campaign, but he's not interested in doing it anymore.

DANA EDELSON/NBC

Hell Toupee

Don't bother us with the list of Supreme Court nominees! Who's going to play President-elect Trump on *Saturday Night Live*?

BY
JOHN WALTERS
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PRESIDENT-ELECT Donald Trump is not the only New Yorker who recently had some problems with his transition game. *Saturday Night Live* failed to consider the possibility that the erstwhile star of NBC's *The Apprentice* might become the 45th president and has no one in the cast to play him in its sketches. Alec Baldwin has been portraying the Donald on *SNL* this season, but he said in a radio interview, "I'm trying to shed the Donald Trump cloak."

Who will the show's longtime producer, Lorne Michaels, nominate to impersonate the most bombastic and histrionic commander in chief in the show's, and perhaps the nation's, history?

Since its inception in 1975, *SNL* has parodied presidents without pause. Chevy Chase's Gerald Ford gave way to Dan Aykroyd's Jimmy Carter, which handed over power to Phil Hartman's Ronald Reagan, which yielded the Oval Office to Dana Carvey's George H.W. Bush, which ceded the podium to Darrell Hammond's Bill Clinton, paving the way for Will Ferrell's George W. Bush and then Fred Armisen's Barack Obama. *SNL* cast members have impersonated leaders of the free world with keen dialect precision (Hammond's Bill Clinton) and eerily similar physical features (Hartman's Reagan). And, as with Chase's Ford, they have sometimes done nothing to suggest a facsimile. The only thing unprecedented about a presidential impression on *SNL* would be no impression at all. So what is Michaels to do, other than flee to his native Canada? Here are some suggestions:

Darrell Hammond: A gifted impressionist, Hammond spent 14 seasons as a cast member, though his only current duty is as the program's announcer. He has done Trump on *SNL* before, so choosing him poses little risk—which is why it feels like a cop-out. In the spirit of Trump's campaign, Michaels needs to drain the swamp of incumbents.

Beck Bennett: Now in his fourth season, Bennett has the recommended daily allowance of obnoxiousness to portray Trump, but he cannot land this role because his physical features suit him ideally to play either Russian President Vladimir Putin or Vice President–elect Mike Pence.

Kenan Thompson or Aidy Bryant: Both are hilarious physical comedians and, like Trump, overwhelm any scene they're in. Who cares if neither is a tall white man? Knowing how greatly it would annoy Trump to be played by a black man or woman would be half the fun.

An Outsider: Might Michaels consider some new talent to fill this hole in his cast? How about ninth-grader Jack Aiello of suburban Chicago, whose Trump impression went viral last June? Or comedian Anthony Atamanuik? Not only is his Trump impersonation spot-on but his "white power" riff is as incisive as anything *SNL* has put out all season.

Donald Trump: Why not? Indications are that the president-elect plans to spend his weekends at Trump Tower in Manhattan, a scant seven blocks north of *SNL*. Besides, he has hosted the show and is a former NBC employee, so he doesn't even have to file a W-9.

Then again, we'd never find out if he did file a W-9.

Our next president, who is going to be tremendous, believe me, has two months to put his team in place. Michaels has a tighter deadline, because every seven days, there's another Saturday night.

WAR SONGS

If the militaristic poetry of Solmaz Sharif scares you...good

ONE POEM lists American military operations: Beastmaster, Hickory View, Riverwalk, etc. Another lingers with dark, dry humor on "WARHEAD MATING" and "HEIGHT HOLES." A third injects missile-technology lingo into the Book of Ecclesiastes: "For what is your life? It is even a THERMAL SHADOW."

The poet responsible for these verses is Solmaz Sharif, and when I met her at a fashionable Oakland, California, café, she looked like one of its fashionable denizens, not someone who was a 2016 National Book Awards finalist for *Look*, her first book of poetry, which is political and confessional—and relies heavily on terminology from the U.S. Department of Defense's *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

Not even the title of the volume is exempt from this intriguing confluence of the personal and the martial. *Look* is an invitation to the reader, but this most quotidian of words also describes, according to the defense dictionary, "a period during which a mine circuit is receptive of an influence." Life was, for Emily Dickinson, "a Loaded Gun." For Sharif, it is a mine primed to blow. The title poem (which contains the Ecclesiastes reference) moves from a moment of intimacy to a Hellfire missile being fired at Iraq to a kind of unease about America today, as befitting a poet born in Turkey to Iranian parents who settled in Los Angeles. As far as poetry goes, this is closer to *Apocalypse Now* than John Ashbery.

Which is how Sharif wants it. The job of a poet, she says, is to be "a bane to the republic. Because the republic is built on a destruction of language. A kind of obliteration of language that will enable and excuse violence against bodies. My job is to interrogate and agitate that as often as I can."

Moving between the personal and political, her poetry is always in a state of tumult—a state of

BY
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HANNAH ENSOR/THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA POETRY CENTER

GOOD WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT: Sharif says the job of a poet is to be "a bane to the republic."

war. All of the words from the *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* are rendered, as above, in all caps. The effect is a muraled wall riddled by gunfire, photographed and turned into art.

Sharif tells me that she wanted the military terms to act as "these little disruptive markers of violence" that would remind readers that war is a constant presence in our lives, as much here as it is over there. She points to the varnished table where we sit, to her crumbled scone and my avocado toast. War was happening here too, she says. Only we needed the courage to see it. Perhaps because of her ethnicity, or her convictions, Sharif sees it everywhere:

My father is not afraid of
SEDITION. He can
SEIZE a wild pigeon off a Santa Monica
street or watch
SEIZURES unfold in his sister's bedroom —
the FBI storming through.

Although the first-person voice throughout *Look* is not always Sharif, the poems do follow her family's journey. Some of the poems are about her uncle, who was killed in the Iran-Iraq war. Sharif wasn't yet born when he died, yet she evokes him with the kind of battle-worn sorrow that the ancient Greeks lavished on their war dead:

Just, DESTROYED.
DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION.
Yes, there was EARLY WARNING.
You said you were especially scared
of mortar rounds.

Sharif is a child of conflict, born in Istanbul because her parents had fled Iran after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. They then moved to the United States, her mother going to the University of Alabama, her father working odd jobs in the Northeast. She imagines his experience—the classic immigrant tale—in a poem that has her father "driving a cab in Poughkeepsie, lifting lumber in Rochester...my baba downing Bud Light by the Hudson." The image, like so many in *Look*, is precise and evocative, the poetic equivalent of a drone strike.

Sharif's parents eventually settled down in Los Angeles, where Sharif spent most of her childhood. She went to college at the University of California, Berkeley, and graduate school at New York University. It was back in Los Angeles, when she was helping a photographer friend with a project, that she became enthralled by the military dictionary.

The early curiosity became a book that took Sharif eight years to write and publish. Recent Man Booker Prize winner Paul Beatty had his novel *The Sellout* rejected 18 times by publishers; Sharif estimates she got as many rejections for *Look*, maybe more. "And I want to send thank-you notes to all of them," she says with laughter.

Her manuscript was finally acquired by Graywolf Press, the small but revered Minneapolis-based publisher that has introduced readers to Maggie Nelson and Eula Biss, as well as Tracy K. Smith, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 2012, and Elizabeth Alexander, who read at President Barack Obama's first inauguration. In a poetry preview for 2016, Graywolf Executive Editor Jeff Shotts called *Look* "a hugely ambitious work, one of those scorching first books that announces a singular presence in poetry."

Critics have agreed, with *The New York Times* calling the book "excellent." Bookforum noted that "there's something automatically evocative about the bureaucratic language of war, in the particular mismatch between the casualness of some words, the technological specificity of others, and the death hiding behind them all." Tellingly, that review was written by a national security reporter for The Intercept, where Glenn Greenwald, who helped make the Edward Snowden leaks public, is an editor.

To be on the National Book Awards shortlist was "bizarre" for Sharif, given how many rejections *Look* received along the way. Even more bizarre: "Trump might be president during the ceremony," she noted, speaking a few days before the election. We were fretting over the polls in North Carolina and New Hampshire when Sharif considered an aspect of the Trump presidency that I had not contemplated before:

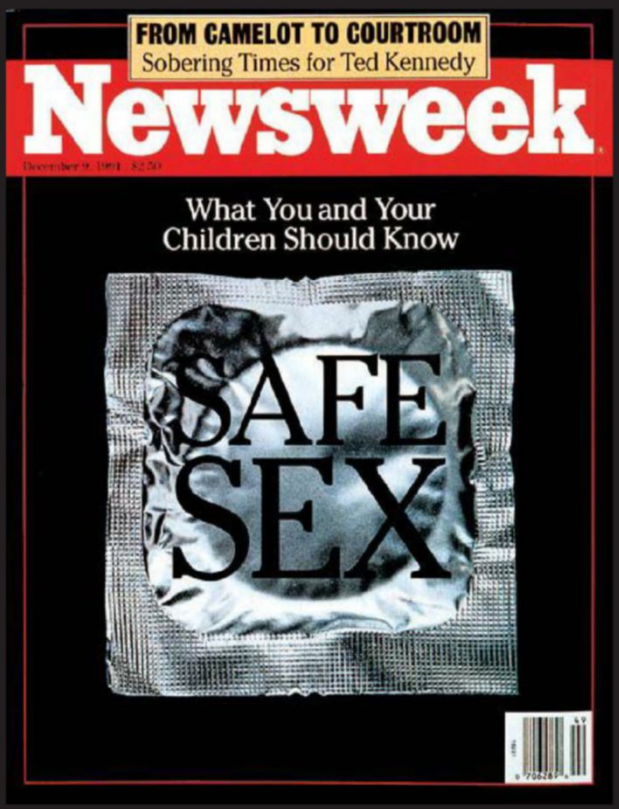
THE MILITARY TERMS ARE "MARKERS OF VIOLENCE" THAT REMIND US WAR IS A CONSTANT PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES.

"Who's that inaugural poet going to be?" Kid Rock, we ultimately decided.

Several days later, Trump did get elected president, while Sharif lost out on the National Book Award. Many around the nation have despaired over Trump's victory, yet for an unabashedly political poet like Sharif, all the xenophobic rhetoric represents something else too: the stuff of which poetry is made.

REWIND

25 YEARS

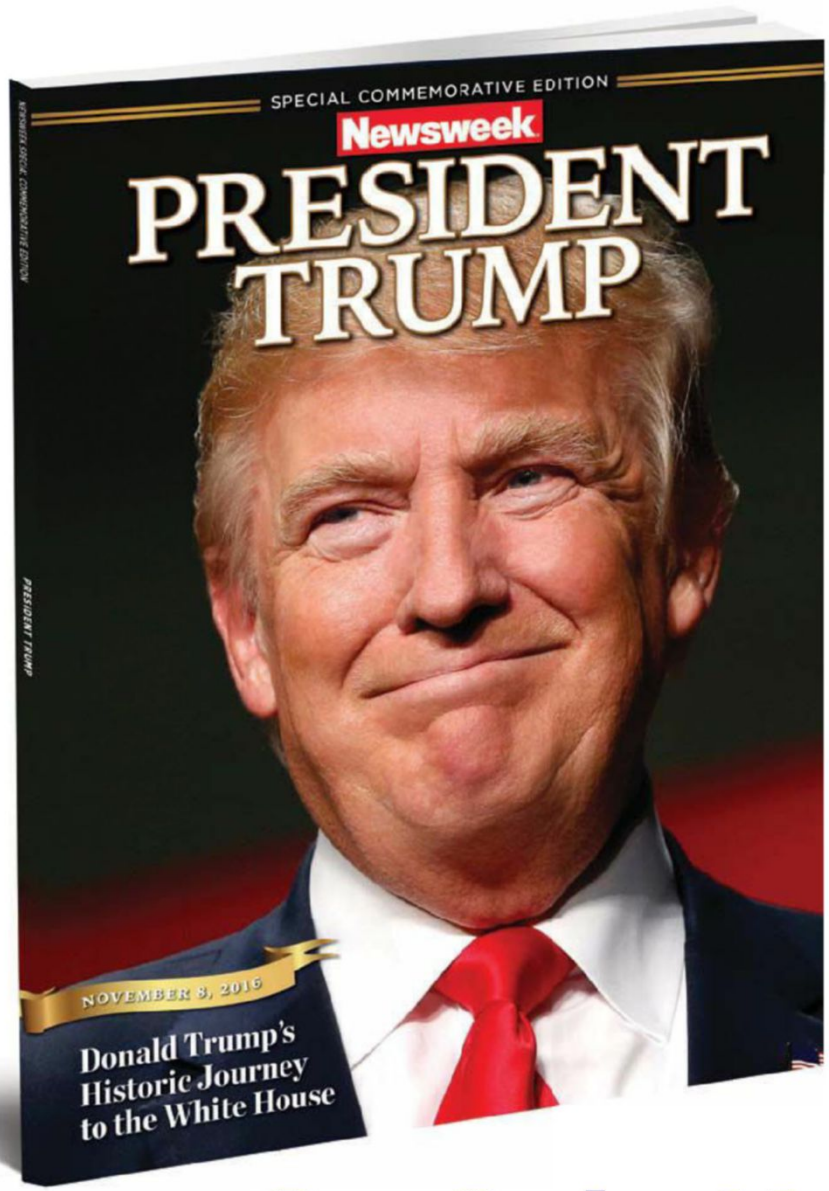


DECEMBER 9, 1991

IN "A FORTRESS MENTALITY" BY TOM POST, ABOUT REFUGEES IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE "BACKLASH OF RESENTMENT AND FEAR"

"In Hoyerswerda, a small city in the German state of Saxony, skinheads attacked a dormitory for refugees from Vietnam and Mozambique. Terrified and bleeding, the foreigners fled for their lives—only to run into a crowd of local residents who had turned out to cheer the neo-Nazis.... A week after the Hoyerswerda attack unleashed a spree of neo-Nazi assaults across the country, Chancellor Helmut Kohl finally expressed his 'regret.' The incidents, he said, could 'damage Germany's reputation in the world'—as if the violence were more a public relations gaffe than cause for national outrage and revulsion."

The story behind Trump's stunning victory



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