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# CHINA'S TEST

by Charlie Campbell

*Preventing the Next Outbreak*

by Pardis Sabeti

*The Economic Threat*

by Ian Bremmer

# TIME

VOL. 195, NO. 6 | 2020



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A caucus site in  
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Photograph by  
September Dawn  
Bottoms for TIME

**ON THE COVER:**  
Illustration by  
Edel Rodriguez  
for TIME

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# Conversation



## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

**WHAT MAKES JOE RUN** Molly Ball's Feb. 10 cover story about former Vice President Joe Biden and his run for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination left his supporters feeling energized.

On Twitter, @Bri\_66nylv wrote, "This is what presidential looks like," while @EWarthen wrote, "We need [Biden] more than ever." Others, however, like Bruce Elliot of La Conner, Wash., felt that Biden may be "unelectable" given his son Hunter's association with President Donald Trump's impeachment, and Biden's past vote for the war in Iraq was a "deal breaker" for Twitter user @gragstonlaw. For some, the takeaway lay in between: Biden is "not perfect," wrote @wendyc78757, but is "the only one" who "can bring back stability in our country."

**'We will also get the lovely, purpose-driven, brilliant @DrBiden as FLOTUS.'**

@SHIRLSADAMS on Twitter

**HOW TO SAVE CAPITALISM** JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon's Feb. 3 op-ed on saving capitalism sparked debate on whether the system is worth saving. Raymond Allison of Longmont, Colo., said Dimon had "very good ideas," and Margaret Johnston of Middle Island, N.Y., praised him for creating change from within.

But Dean O'Daffer of Wenatchee, Wash., said the answer must involve fossil-fuel divestment, and Nathan Hurwitz of Newtown, Pa., argued that the world

**'The view from the bottom is a lot different than from the top.'**

ALAN MCLARTY, Windsor, Colo.

needs a new model, "in which people AND corporations are incentivized to act for the good of society."

## Back in TIME

**James Taylor**  
March 1, 1971

TIME hailed folk musician James Taylor in 1971 as "in tune with the troubles of his age"—a voice for young Americans who felt "alienated," "troubled" and "dislocated." Back then, he said he sang "because I don't know how to talk." Nearly 50 years later, he is much more settled and talked plenty to TIME about how those early years shaped his approach to music today for the feature on page 48. Read the 1971 cover story at [time.com/vault](http://time.com/vault)



**ACTION!** On TIME.com, go behind the scenes in "Sakhawood," the growing movie industry in the Russian wilderness. Photographer Alexey Vasilyev spent a year documenting the people (like Violetta Khristoforova, below, star of *The Cursed Land*) who bring the films to life. More at [time.com/russia-films](http://time.com/russia-films)



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‘With his death, not only my family lost a loved one; but the whole world, and the monarch butterfly and the forests lost, too.’

**AMADO GÓMEZ,** brother of Mexican conservationist Homero Gómez González, who was found dead on Jan. 29 after campaigning against illegal logging in the winter habitat of monarch butterflies; a second butterfly activist, Raúl Hernández Romero, was found dead on Feb. 1



**8**  
Number of Australian Open titles won by Novak Djokovic, as of his latest victory, on Feb. 2

‘It does seem a little ironic.’

**SHOHREH BAYAT,** Iranian chess referee, in an email to the *New York Times* on the context for U.S. embassies’ tweets of support when she said she was afraid to return to Iran: immigrants to the U.S. from that country face restrictions imposed in 2017

‘YES, HE DID.’

**MITT ROMNEY,** Utah Senator, saying on Feb. 5 that he would vote to remove President Donald Trump from office; Senators had to answer whether the President committed “high crimes and misdemeanors”; Trump was acquitted, with Romney the only Republican voting against him

**Love**  
A Japanese billionaire nixed his public search for a girlfriend to join him on a trip to space



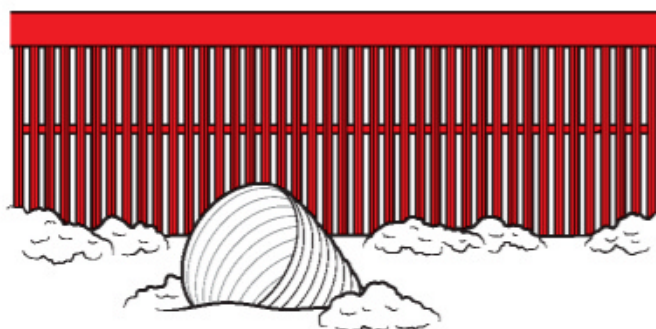
**Hate**  
The San Antonio Zoo announced an offer to name a rat or roach after your ex; the critters will be fed to other animals

‘I don’t believe this is happening.’

**A LOS ANGELES ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL EMPLOYEE,** after a plane making an emergency landing dumped jet fuel over the school in January, in a 911 recording made public on Feb. 3

**0.82 miles**

Length of the longest-ever smuggling tunnel across the U.S.-Mexico border; authorities announced on Jan. 29 that it had been uncovered between Tijuana and San Diego



‘THIS IS WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR, JUSTICE.’

**SAULOS CHILIMA,** Malawian politician, after the nation’s constitutional court on Feb. 3 overturned the results of last year’s election, citing poll irregularities, and reinstated him as Vice President of Malawi



NEW ENGLAND

SOUTHEAST

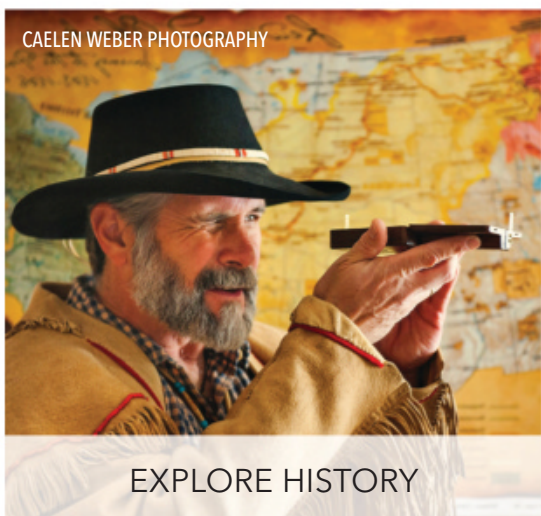
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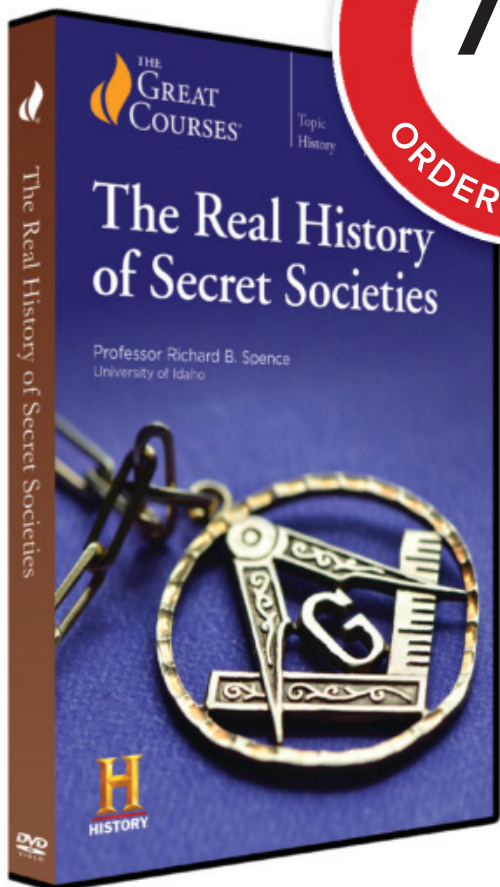
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# The Brief

**VICTORY LAP**  
In a triumphant week, President Trump delivered the State of the Union address, on Feb. 4



## INSIDE

SIX MORE COUNTRIES FACE  
TRUMP'S TRAVEL BAN

A REALLY CLOSE LOOK AT THE  
SURFACE OF THE SUN

POST-BREXIT SCOTLAND LOOKS  
TO E.U. FOR SECESSION SUPPORT

PHOTOGRAPH BY JARRAD HENDERSON

## POLITICS

# Emboldened Trump makes his 2020 case

By Brian Bennett

**I**T'S DONALD TRUMP'S MOMENT TO NOT SCREW UP. He's survived impeachment, the greatest challenge to any President. He's tightened his grip on the GOP, delivering bolts of fear by Tweet and governing from the base to drive astronomical approval ratings among Republicans. He's presided over a humming economy and record low unemployment.

Now, with his acquittal by the Senate, Trump has the chance to build his case for a second term. His odds look pretty good. A Gallup poll released on Feb. 4 shows his approval rating ticking up to 49%, the highest since he took office. He is in some ways stronger than ever, with an aura of resilience bolstered by a real expansion of the power of the presidency.

But a major question looms over Trump's re-election effort—can he avoid another self-defeating mistake? His numbers may be up, but he's the only modern President never to have cleared 50%, and some experts attribute his approval struggle to the near constant scandals and investigations of his presidency, many of his own making. From defending white supremacists and obstructing the investigation into Russia's aid to his 2016 campaign, to triggering the impeachment inquiry by pressuring Ukraine to help in his 2020 one, "Trump finds a way even in great moments to wreck them," says Republican pollster Frank Luntz. "It's his own fault," adds Luntz. "His Twitter outshouts his accomplishments."

**TRUMP IS PLANNING** to do a lot of shouting in the coming months. He'll step up the pace of his re-election rallies, appearing in New Hampshire before the next major Democratic primary as he did in Des Moines, Iowa, on Jan. 30. His campaign flooded Iowa with more than 80 surrogates to bring out voters for the largely uncontested Republican primary. It was a test run of the machinery he'll need to win swing states in November. "He's going to be on the road a ton," says a White House official.

In Washington, Trump's team has already pivoted from the impeachment trial to the policy proposals he'll pursue with an eye to re-election. That includes a push for new legislation to reduce drug prices and improve medical billing. He'll also go on the attack, finding ways to punish so-called sanctuary cities that Trump accuses of protecting immigrants in the country illegally. He's pressing his senior military and homeland-security officials to build hundreds

of miles of wall by late August, when the Republican National Convention kicks off.

On balance, Trump can consider himself fortunate. Democrats gambled that by drawing attention to his alleged abuse of power, they would make the case if not for removing him from office then at least for voting him out. But overall, Trump's approval rating has moved only in small degrees since the impeachment inquiry began last fall, with most Americans only becoming more entrenched in their devotion or disdain for him.

If anything, his acquittal by the Senate seems to have offered a modest boost for Trump: 63% of Americans now approve of how he is handling the economy, an increase of 6 points since November, Gallup found. The same poll has shown a slight backlash against Democrats since impeachment began. The percentage of people holding positive opinions of Democrats dropped from 48% in September to 45% at the end of January.

By surviving his trial, Trump has also increased the power of the presidency itself. His lawyers argued that even if Trump did leverage military aid to Ukraine for his personal political purposes, that's not an impeachable offense. Trump's acquittal could "unleash the President's ability to use the federal government's vast powers for his own political ends," says Ken Hughes, an expert on abuse of presidential power at the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

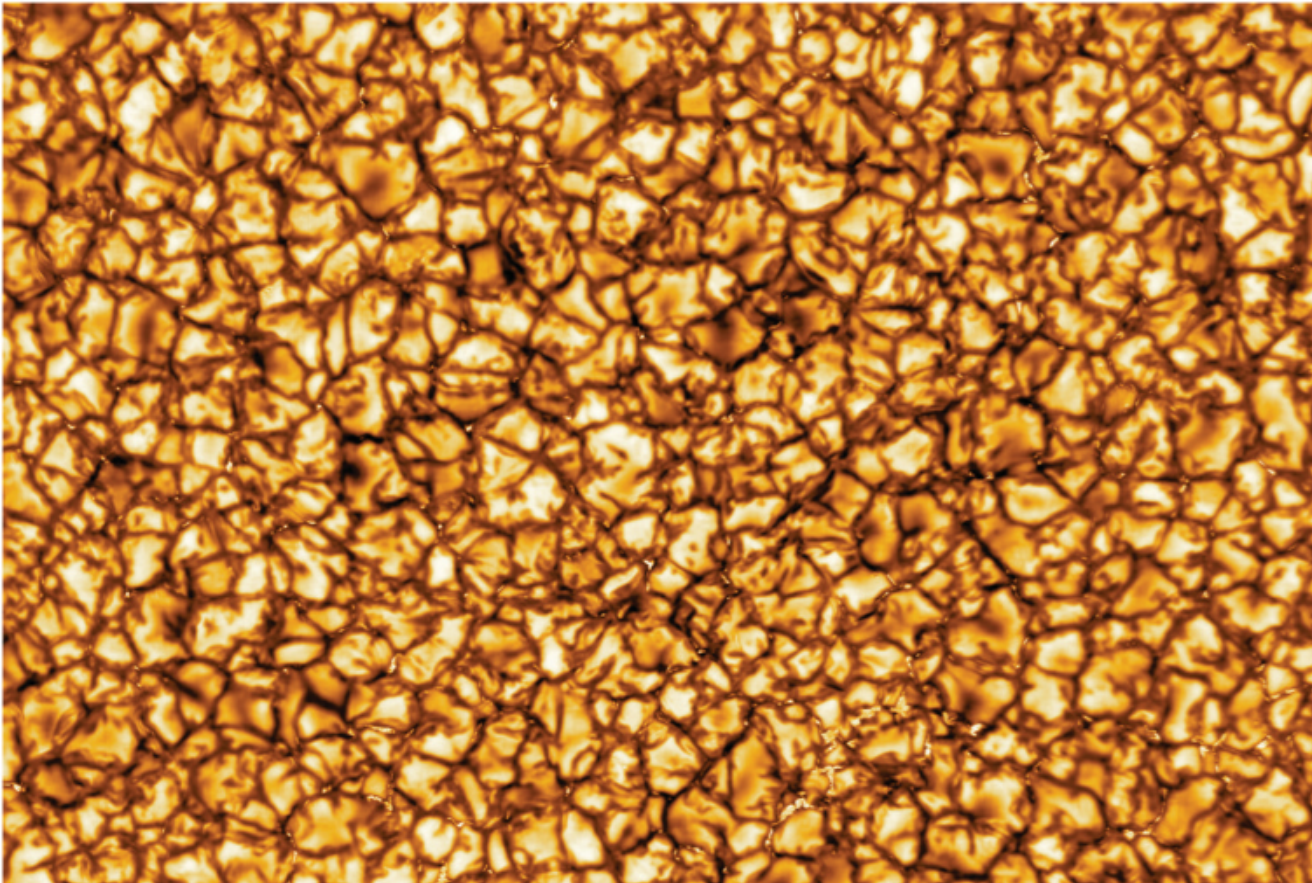
For now, Trump heads into his re-election campaign with an emboldened sense of authority, and how he handles this moment will be a key factor in the 2020 outcome. The last time Trump felt so exonerated was after Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified in July about Mueller's decision to close his investigation into Trump without charging the President. The next day, Trump spoke to the president of Ukraine and asked for the favor that sparked impeachment. Trump's team intends to make Democrats pay for impeachment if it can. Tim Murtaugh, director of communications for the Trump re-election campaign, says the campaign will work to contrast Trump's actions on national security, the economy and trade, "while the Democrats have tried to prevent him from doing his job."

Trump's State of the Union address, which his team titled the "Great American Comeback," reflected a similar effort to be both optimist and attack dog. "If we hadn't reversed the failed economic policies of the previous Administration, the world would not now be witnessing this great economic success," Trump told the chamber, eliciting groans from Democrats on a night punctuated by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's ripping up a copy of his speech from the dais. The speech could mark the start of Trump's postimpeachment comeback. But that may require staying on script. — *With reporting by* TESSA BERENSON/WASHINGTON

**'Your name will be tied to his with a cord of steel and for all of history.'**

**REPRESENTATIVE ADAM SCHIFF,**  
lead House impeachment manager, urging Senators on Feb. 3 to convict President Trump





**EXTREME CLOSEUP** The highest-resolution image ever taken of the sun's surface was released on Jan. 29, courtesy of the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope in Maui, Hawaii; it's able to differentiate features as small as 18 miles across on a star with an 870,000-mile diameter. The cell-like structures seen here are each about as big as Texas, and result from processes that bring heat from inside the sun to its surface.

#### THE BULLETIN

## Trump's travel ban expands to six new countries

Protests over President Donald Trump's "travel ban" immigration policy began just days after his Inauguration in 2017. Now, as he faces re-election, he's doubling down. On Jan. 31, the ban was extended to six additional countries. The new rule, which goes into effect on Feb. 22, will withhold immigrant visas for applicants from Nigeria, Myanmar, Eritrea and Kyrgyzstan and restrict access to the U.S. diversity visa program for people from Tanzania and Sudan.

**SECURITY STATE** The Administration says the latest ban affects nations with "deficiencies in sharing terrorist, criminal, or identity information" and has always framed the policy as a matter of security. But during the 2016 election, Trump called for a block on Muslims entering the U.S., and the initial 2017 ban—which applied to seven Muslim-majority countries—faced challenges on the grounds that it was discriminatory. (A revised version was greenlighted by the Supreme Court in 2018.) The six newly blocked countries all have large Muslim populations.

**OUTCRY HAVOC** Trump's political opponents joined advocates in condemning the latest ban. In a joint statement, Democratic Representatives Jerrold Nadler of New York and Zoe Lofgren of California said the Judiciary Committee planned to discuss legislation that would strengthen prohibitions on religious discrimination in immigration and limit executive authority on the matter. In the meantime, some applicants will be able apply for waivers.

**FEEDBACK LOOP** In Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, one civic group's anti-ban petition highlighted its impact on U.S. citizens with family there; nearly 8,000 immigrant visas went to Nigerians in fiscal year 2018. And rights groups expressed concern for potential immigrants from Myanmar, where the Rohingya Muslim minority faces persecution. But Trump's base tends to respond well to hard-line immigration policy—so as the 2020 race continues, the reaction that politicians hear may come from closer to home. —ALEJANDRO DE LA GARZA

#### NEWS TICKER

### Pompeo visits Ukraine, offers reassurances

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo **reaffirmed U.S. support for Ukraine's "struggle for freedom, democracy and prosperity"** during a visit to the country on Jan. 31, just as President Trump's impeachment trial—on accusations related to withholding military aid for Ukraine—was coming to an end.

### E.U. rejects U.S. peace plan for Middle East

The E.U. said on Feb. 4 it **couldn't support key elements of the Trump Administration's plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**, as it "departs" from "internationally agreed parameters." The plan, which gave a green light to Israel to annex parts of the West Bank, was also rejected by the Palestinians.

### Trump Admin reverses land-mine rule

The White House lifted a restriction on the use of antipersonnel land mines outside the Korean Peninsula on Jan. 31, saying the Obama-era ban could put U.S. forces at **"a severe disadvantage during a conflict."** More than 150 countries have joined a 1997 treaty banning the use of antipersonnel land mines.

## NEWS TICKER

### Half a million flee last rebel Syrian province

More than 500,000 people in Idlib, the last rebel-held enclave in Syria, have **fled their homes since Dec. 1**, the U.N.'s humanitarian arm said Feb. 4. An uptick in fighting between the Russian-backed Syrian army and Turkish-backed rebels raised fears of a final showdown.

### Students face record homelessness

More than 1.5 million U.S. public-school students were **homeless at some point over the past three years**, according to data from the 2017–2018 school year published Jan. 29 by the National Center for Homeless Education. That's a 15% increase from 2015–2016 and more than double the number from 2004–2005.

### U.K. sets 2035 as deadline for clean cars

The sale of new gasoline, diesel and hybrid cars will be **banned in Britain from 2035**, according to government plans announced Feb. 4. The ban would not be the first of its kind: Norway will ban new gas and diesel cars from 2025, while Ireland, Israel, Slovenia, Denmark and Sweden all aim to follow by 2030.

## GOOD QUESTION

### Brexit finally happened. But will Scotland end up back in the E.U.?

ALTHOUGH BRITAIN OFFICIALLY EXITED the European Union on Jan. 31, not everyone in the U.K. has given up on E.U. membership. On Feb. 2, the Scottish National Party (SNP), which wants Scotland to secede from the U.K. and then rejoin the E.U., celebrated when former European Council President Donald Tusk said the bloc would be “enthusiastic” about letting Scotland back in.

The U.K. accused Tusk, who left his role in November, of encouraging “separatist tendencies” across Europe. But Scottish leaders hardly need encouragement. Brexit—backed by only 38% of Scottish voters—has heightened tensions between Edinburgh and London, with SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon arguing Scots are being “dragged” out of the bloc against their will. She has demanded a referendum on Scottish independence in 2020.

Ever since Scotland and England united in 1707, a small minority has wanted to split. But the SNP's rise to dominate Scottish politics over the past decade has made those voices louder. Competence and popular leftist policies were arguably more key to the SNP's rise than support for independence, which hovered below a third until 2014. That year, the U.K. government held a referendum on independence. Though the pro-independence camp lost, its 45% of the vote was higher than expected, and reinvigorated the cause.

Brexit has since fueled support for independence, which some recent polls put at 50% or higher. It's also made the E.U. more sympathetic to Scotland's independence movement, says James Mitchell, a politics professor at Edinburgh University. “The advantages of Scottish membership would far outweigh any disadvantages for the E.U.,” he says. “Also, Brexit was a slap in the face, so Scotland rejoining could be a symbolic boon.”

But Brexit has also created practical obstacles for an independent Scotland. It would now border a non-E.U. country, requiring border checks between deeply intertwined regions—similar to the problem at the Irish border that complicated Brexit talks. Economic headwinds from Brexit and independence would also make it harder to clear fiscal hurdles for new member states.

Whatever the E.U. says, Scotland needs the support of the U.K. Parliament to call a referendum—something Prime Minister Boris Johnson has ruled out. Johnson has a large majority in Parliament and is planning a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign urging Scots to protect the union.

But pressure looks set to build. Sturgeon hasn't ruled out eventually holding a non-binding poll to prove a mandate for independence, and the SNP will likely promise a referendum in its Scottish Parliament election manifesto next year. “If Johnson thinks love-bombing Scotland will work, he doesn't understand what happens up here,” Mitchell says. “There's a perception that we want to head in a different direction. That divergence isn't going to stop.” —CIARA NUGENT

## SPORTS

### Changing gear

On Jan. 31, World Athletics ruled that **Nike's Vaporfly shoes**, which use a new material to create a spring effect the company claims can make runners “up to 4% more efficient,” are legal for use in competition. Here, more rule-testing regalia. —Melissa Godin

#### ILLEGAL INCHES

In the Stanley Cup finals in 1993, Marty McSorley of the L.A. Kings used a hockey stick that was curved more than NHL rules allow. He got a penalty for using it, and the Montreal Canadiens took the title.

#### SPEEDY SUITS

In 2010, FINA, which governs competitive swimming, put a ban on full-body polyurethane and neoprene suits after an unprecedented number of world records were broken following their introduction.

#### STICKY SITUATION

In 1981, the NFL outlawed Stickum, a gluey substance some football players put on their gloves to help them catch, as it left a mess on the ball. Grip-friendly silicone gloves that don't leave residue are still permitted.



NIKE: NORIKAZU TATEISHI—THE YOMIURI SHIMBUN/REUTERS; HIGGINS CLARK: DEBORAH FEINGOLD—CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES; MAYHEW: DAVID JACOBS—SIMON & SCHUSTER/AP

# Milestones

## DIED

Former WorldCom chief **Bernard Ebbers**, on Feb. 2 at 78. He was sentenced in 2005 to 25 years in prison for his role in an accounting scandal, but released in December because of failing health.

> **Daniel arap Moi**, Kenya's longest-serving President, on Feb. 4 at 95.

## ACQUITTED

**Three doctors** involved in a 2010 euthanasia, by a Belgian court on Jan. 31, in a test of the country's assisted-death law.

## DROPPED

Apprehensions at the **U.S.-Mexico border**, for the eighth straight month, in January. The total of roughly 29,200 represented a 10% drop from December.

## DROPPED OUT

Democratic Presidential candidate **John Delaney**, on Jan. 31.

## DIAGNOSED

Conservative radio host **Rush Limbaugh**, with advanced lung cancer, an illness he revealed on Feb. 3.

## REVISED

The number of U.S. **service members injured in Iranian missile strikes** on bases in Iraq on Jan. 8, up to 64, by the Pentagon on Jan. 30.

## ISSUED

A warrant for former South African President **Jacob Zuma's arrest** on corruption charges, on Feb. 4, after he failed to appear in court. His lawyers say he was receiving medical care outside the country.



*The first suspense novel by Higgins Clark—above in 2002—is currently in its 75th edition in paperback*

## DIED

### Mary Higgins Clark

#### *The Queen of Suspense*

IN 1969, WHEN MARY HIGGINS CLARK PUBLISHED HER DEBUT, *Aspire to the Heavens*, she was a widowed mother of five in her 40s, who found the time to write early in the morning, often waking at 5 a.m. to put pen to paper. Her work ethic led to commercial success a decade later after she released her first suspense novel, *Where Are the Children?* The mystery thriller catapulted the writer to prominence in the genre and eventually earned her the nickname Queen of Suspense.

By the time of her death at 92 on Jan. 31, Higgins Clark had written more than 50 best-selling novels. In the U.S. alone, her books have sold more than 100 million copies. Most of Higgins Clark's stories are centered on women dealing with crises, whether haunted by past trauma or thrown into peril after witnessing a crime. In a 1997 interview with the *New York Times*, the author said she wrote about "nice people whose lives are invaded." Her most recent novel, *Kiss the Girls and Make Them Cry*, published in November 2019, fits the bill, following a female journalist as she investigates a murder at a television news network.

In focusing her narratives on relatable and realistic characters, Higgins Clark crafted addictive page-turners that resonated with readers. After her death, her longtime editor Michael Korda wrote about this quality: "She was the Queen of Suspense, it wasn't just a phrase; she always set out to end each chapter on a note of suspense, so you just had to keep reading."

—ANNABEL GUTTERMAN

## DIED

### Alice Mayhew

#### *Insiders' edition*

By **Walter Isaacson**

WITH A SALTY PASSION THAT could be abrupt but endearing (most of the time), book editor Alice Mayhew, who died on Feb. 4 at 87, helped create the nonfiction genre of the blockbuster Washington insider tale. For almost 50 years, she shepherded waves of writers whom she prodded to combine journalistic reporting with literary storytelling. She had a theological belief in chronological narrative, and would slash from a manuscript any self-indulgent diversions and scribble in the margins "all things in good time" when an author tried to flash forward or circle back when telling a tale.

Books were her life, and with her raspy laugh and intense stare she helped her writers turn half-baked notions into sharply themed stories. Those who benefited from her skill were legion, beginning with Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, whose Watergate reporting saga she shaped into *All the President's Men*. But her greatest joy, I believe, came not from her famous writers but from the fledgling ones she helped launch, year after year, into her charmed realm of Alice Authors.

*Isaacson, a former editor of TIME, wrote seven books for Mayhew, including biographies of Albert Einstein, Steve Jobs and Leonardo da Vinci*



## After cancer took his mother, **James Allison** taught our immune systems how to fight it

By **Alice Park**

THERE ONCE WAS A BOY IN ALICE, TEXAS, WHO saw things a little differently from everybody else. Influenced by his father, a “country” doctor, he was drawn to science instead of football and conducted biology experiments in his parents’ garage. When he was 10, someone gave him a harmonica, but he never took a lesson or learned to read music, so he wandered the woods mimicking what he’d heard on the radio. A year after that, his mother died following a long struggle with lymphoma. What he still remembers decades later are her last, bedridden days when he spent hours holding her hand, and the burns singed on her neck from the then rudimentary radiation treatments. He would lose two uncles as a teen and later his brother to different forms of cancer. There is a satisfying catharsis, then, in the fact that James Allison would earn the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his pioneering work in developing a new way to fight cancer.

It’s still hard for Allison to admit that his family’s tragic cancer history played a role in shaping the research career that ultimately led him to succeed where others had failed: discovering how to co-opt the body’s own immune cells to attack and destroy tumors. “I guess doing something about cancer was always kind of there in my mind,” he says.

As he tells his story in his office at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Allison’s gravelly voice, edged with his Texas twang, is low and magnetic, drawing you in the way a country singer pulls people into musical arcs of love, loss, rebellion and redemption. “My mother’s death when I was young hit me hard. I didn’t realize how hard until later on,” he begins. He learned to compartmentalize his emotional family narrative from his growing curiosity about science. When his high school refused to teach evolution, he boycotted biology class, and after his father and the school counselor intervened, Allison earned that biology credit with a correspondence course taught through the University of Texas at Austin. But it wasn’t until he began pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees there in the 1960s that he found a focus for his scientific appetite: a newly discovered set of immune cells called T cells, which at the time were essentially a biological black box. “Nobody really knew anything about them except that they cruised around the body and somehow recognized when something wasn’t right,

### ALLISON QUICK FACTS

#### Firsthand experience

Allison has been diagnosed with cancer three times.

#### Musical medico

He has regularly played harmonica at honky-tonk bars throughout his research career and once joined Willie Nelson onstage for a set.

#### Unfinished business

Since his brother died of prostate cancer, Allison wants to develop the first immune-based therapy to treat the disease.

did something about it and didn’t kill you in the process,” says Allison. “How did they know what were self and what were nonself cells, and how did they know when to react and when to do nothing?”

The mystery was irresistible for Allison, who surmised that there must be some way the T cells were able to recognize things that weren’t supposed to be there—bacteria, viruses, other pathogens and possibly even cancer cells.

It was a critical experiment with mice that ultimately led to the answer and eventually to his Nobel-winning discovery. “I had some mice sitting around that had been cured [of their tumors]. For the hell of it, I thought, What would happen if I inject them with [more] tumor cells?” It was a question born of his inquisitiveness and not part of a formal experiment, so there wasn’t a hypothesis he was testing. It turns out nothing happened—the animals didn’t get cancer—and that was a big deal. “I gave them 10 times, 100 times more tumor cells, but they wouldn’t take. They didn’t faze the mice. That made a big impression on me and made me think, Huh.” He realized that the mice had somehow “remembered” how to recognize and fight the cancer cells; their immune systems had essentially inoculated them against the disease.

**BY THIS POINT**, Allison was working at a satellite research facility of MD Anderson Cancer Center. He says he was left “pretty unsupervised,” which meant he could pick and choose his own research projects, so he began testing his theory that T cells could actually bind with and take out cancer cells. Initially he was disappointed, and it would take a few more decades of stubborn dedication for him to understand why. Revving up an immune response isn’t simply a matter of flipping the right switches and activating the right cells. In order to protect the body’s own cells from friendly immune fire, gearing up a T cell to find and destroy its target involved a multistep process, including releasing a critical safety lock that Allison uncovered. That also applies to cancer cells, which are normal cells mutated to grow out of control.

While other scientists poured their attention into flooring the gas on the T-cell engine, Allison thought, What if you had to both apply the gas and release the parking brake in order for the T cells to get properly revved up? He eventually identified the first molecular brake that protects cancers from destruction by the immune system’s T cells. That molecular brake is now transforming cancer treatment in the form of drugs known as checkpoint inhibitors, so called because they remove the immune system’s natural blockade.

But because his data came exclusively from mice, the biotech and pharmaceutical companies he approached were reluctant to take the risk of



testing checkpoint inhibitors in people. “They said anybody can cure cancer in mice, but it won’t work in humans,” says Allison. “It was insulting.”

Thanks to a friend in the biotech industry, a small company took the plunge and tested his checkpoint inhibitor against a handful of different cancers in people. Bristol-Myers Squibb eventually took notice and teamed up with the company, but even then, the idea of exploiting the immune system against cancer was so unprecedented that Allison had to persuade them to run studies long enough to see results. “I did a lot of yelling and jumping up and down and arguing with people,” he says. “I kept telling them that the tumors in mice always grew before they went away. The immune system needs time. It’s not like a drug that kills within hours.”

In 2006, while Allison was at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, where doctors were testing the checkpoint inhibitor, he met Sharon Belvin. At 22, she had been diagnosed with late-stage melanoma, and her doctors had advised her not to start a family, since they weren’t sure she would survive long enough to raise her

**‘The immune system needs time. It’s not like a drug that kills within hours.’**

JAMES ALLISON, on early tests of immunotherapy

children. But after she was placed on the immune-based drug, Belvin’s tumors shrank away. “She was the first patient I met,” Allison says, tearing up at the memory. “After meeting her, it finally dawned on me. Until then it was abstract, and the full impact of what I was doing didn’t occur to me.” Still in remission, “she stays in touch and sends me photos of her babies,” says Allison.

Belvin is now joined by thousands of cancer patients diagnosed with melanoma, colon, liver, lung, breast, cervical and bladder cancers who are alive because of the checkpoint inhibitors that Allison helped develop. But he is not finished yet. Prostate, ovarian and other cancers are harder to treat with checkpoint inhibitors. So he is pushing to combine different immune-based drugs, many of which were inspired by his original therapy, against these more stubborn diseases. He’s also still playing the harmonica, as a member of two bands, aptly named the Checkpoints and the Checkmates. “If you find something you really love and think about all the time and that gives you joy, don’t worry about what’s going to happen,” he says. □



## How Black Lives Matter is changing Black History Month

By Olivia B. Waxman

FRESHMAN YEAR CAN MAKE ANYONE FEEL UNSETTLED, BUT Seattle teen Janelle Gary felt especially lost when she entered high school in 2015. At home, she watched a wave of gentrification drive change in the historically black Central District neighborhood, and at school, where she was one of the few students of color in an honors history class, she felt as if black perspectives were also in the minority.

Looking back at that time, as an 18-year-old first-year student at Central Washington University, she feels her teacher was “tiptoeing” around hard race-related questions about history. But things were different in her ethnic-studies class, where her teacher Jesse Hagopian remembered what it was like to be the only black kid in a class.

That memory is part of the reason Hagopian, 41, and other educators, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, organized a Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action, now in its third year. What started locally in Seattle in 2016 has grown into a nationwide effort. From Feb. 3 to Feb. 7, teachers—including in the country’s three largest school districts, in New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago—wore BLACK LIVES MATTER shirts to school. The organizers are also calling for black history and ethnic studies to be a requirement in K-12 schools.

Theirs is not a new call to action. It is driven by the same feeling James Baldwin described in 1963: “I began to be bugged by the teaching of American history, because it seemed that history had been taught without cognizance of my presence.” And yet, from that feeling, they are helping Black History Month—and the year-round teaching of the topic—evolve to a new stage.

“I definitely think that Black Lives Matter encouraged people to learn about other movements that came before,” says Tatiana Amaya, 19, a freshman at Claremont McKenna College in California who took a required black-history course in her Philadelphia high school. “It’s central to understanding that black oppression still exists today.”

**BY PAINTING** a white-supremacist vision of the American past, the 1915 movie *The Birth of a Nation* inspired a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. It also helped inspire Carter G. Woodson, “the father of black history,” to set the record straight.

“You had this understanding from the historical profession, from popular media, from literary works, that African Americans have no history, and if they are written about in history, it’s not something that is respectable,” says Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, history-department chair at Harvard and current president of the group Woodson founded, now called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. “Woodson started an organization, and literally a movement that exists to this day, to correct those lies.”



▲  
*Students in Milwaukee learn about history during Black Lives Matter at School week in 2019; the national effort is now in its third year*

While African Americans had been educating one another about their history for decades, vital new textbooks came out in the years that followed. The civil rights movement led to further growth of the discipline; by the time February formally became Black History Month in 1976, the Black Power movement had fueled a new emphasis on “what’s unique about being a black person in America,” says Higginbotham. And many educators say that just as a time of crisis for African Americans fueled Woodson’s vision, this moment in time is proving to be a new turning point.

“Whenever there’s a tragedy in black America, there’s always been an uptick of black-history courses, most recently [with] Black Lives Matter and police shootings,” says LaGarrett King, professor of social-studies education and founding director of the Carter Center for K-12 Black History Education at the University of Missouri. Social media has fueled teacher discussion on how to contextualize the news, and current events have piqued student interest.



And yet, for the most part, educators say, K-12 students who do learn about black history are still hearing about the same historical figures over and over: Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman and former President Barack Obama—lives that are worthy of study but do not exist in a vacuum. That’s why LaGarrett King describes the state of black history in schools as “steadily improving, yet still stagnant.”

Even when it comes to slavery and the civil rights movement, which may be the most recognizable black-history subject areas, the quality of what students are learning has recently come into question. A 2018 Southern Poverty Law Center survey found that only 8% of high school seniors could identify slavery as the main cause of the Civil War. The organization also produced a 2014 “report card” on state standards and resources for teaching the civil rights movement; 20 states got a failing grade.

“One of the problems with getting black history right is we are still trying to use this notion that black history is American history, which sounds good,”

says King. But, he says, that creates a problem when U.S. history is taught, as it often is, as a story in which “every generation has improved our society.”

The trouble with that perspective can be seen, for example, in the teaching of the 20th century civil rights movement, which is where black history ends in many American schools, says Christopher Busey, a University of Florida professor who has researched black history in social-studies standards. When the narrative stops at the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, it can be hard for students to make the connection between those wins and later problems. “When we have more contemporary movements such as Black Lives Matter, people are largely unable to make sense of it because we skipped the war on drugs with Reagan and the targeting of black communities by police,” he says. “Their last conceptions of black citizenship are tied to this idea that we all had a dream, we overcame, and Obama was elected President.”

**NOW, HOWEVER,** there are signs of change. Seven states launched commissions in recent years designed to oversee state mandates to teach black history in public schools, and Illinois requires public colleges and universities to offer black-history courses. To meet the rising demand for resources, at least six black-history textbooks are on the market, and online lesson plans abound.

In 2005, Philadelphia became the first major U.S. city to require students to take a class in black history to graduate. Confining black-history lessons to February, as many schools do, is “the exact opposite” of what Woodson envisioned, says Greg Carr, department chair of Afro-American studies at Howard University, who led the team that developed the Philadelphia curriculum.

In addition, to give students more perspective on black experiences worldwide, African-diaspora units are being piloted in Advanced Placement (AP) Seminars at 11 schools, up from

two in the 2017–2018 school year.

Data on the impact of learning African and African-American history are hard to come by, but there are already indications that new curricula are making a difference for some students. In the 2018–2019 school year, 80% of students in five schools that offered the AP African-diaspora pilot passed, according to Kassie Freeman, who played a key role in developing the seminar and is a senior faculty fellow at the Institute for Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College.

Anecdotes from teachers and students also suggest that black-history lessons have been effective. Since Philadelphia teacher Abigail Henry, 36, started organizing mock trials on subjects like whether George Washington “promoted the institution of slavery,” she’s noticed that students who are usually quiet and withdrawn have earned some

**‘Whenever there’s a tragedy in black America, there’s always been an uptick of black-history courses.’**

LAGARRETT KING,  
professor of social-studies education  
at the University of Missouri

of the highest grades. Makaia Loya, 17, a student in Denver, says it was a lesson about Malcolm X that reshaped her career goals. “I grew up thinking, ‘I’m getting as far as I can from the ghetto,’” she says, “and now I’m like, ‘As soon as I

leave and have something to bring back, I’m coming back.’” And Pascagoula, Miss., senior Kinchasa Anderson, 18, says a field trip last fall to Medgar Evers’ house gave her a new appreciation for how history affects her life today. “It just struck me—these people really put their life on the line for us,” she says, “for my generation, for generations to come.”

And in that feeling, these students are themselves part of the connection between history and lived experience. As Jeanne Theoharis writes in *The Rebelious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*, Parks’ political awakening began at a young age, as she learned what an understanding of black history could do.

“The revelation of black history would indelibly shape Rosa McCauley Parks’ life,” Theoharis writes. “She saw the history of black survival, accomplishment, and rebellion as the ultimate weapon against white supremacy.” □

# LightBox

## Half-century mark

The Kansas City Chiefs scored 21 unanswered points in the fourth quarter of Super Bowl LIV in Miami on Feb. 2, overwhelming the San Francisco 49ers 31-20 and ending five decades of frustration. The heartland franchise last won a Super Bowl in 1970. For defensive tackle Derrick Nnadi the celebrating began with a snow angel in confetti and continued the next day, when he announced that he'd pick up the adoption fee for 91 dogs at a Kansas City, Mo., animal shelter.

*Photograph by Shannon Stapleton—Reuters*  
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# The View

SOCIETY

## CLOSING THE PLEASURE GAP

By Katherine Rowland

In 2014, I stood in an auditorium as a parade of women told U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulators that their libidos had only a fraction of their former power. Some said the decline was gradual. Others said it was “like a switch that went off.” “I don’t even think about sex,” one woman lamented. “I am able to grit through it,” said another. ▶

INSIDE

THE FAILURE OF  
EDUCATION REFORM

AN EVANGELICAL PASTOR'S  
CASE AGAINST TRUMP

WHY OLDER AMERICANS  
AREN'T RETIRING

# The View Opener



The women were there to weigh in on whether female sexual dysfunction represents an unmet medical need. Their testimony described the personal fallout of low desire, which, along with related sexual concerns like difficulty reaching orgasm, affects one-quarter to half of American women, experts estimate. Such complaints are commonly chalked up to female biology. But in the five years I spent talking to 120 women across the U.S. about pleasure, low desire rarely stemmed from a medical malady or a psychological condition. Rather, it was often a healthy response to quietly unwanted or lusterless sex. Heterosexual women in particular shared that their partners routinely dismissed their pleasure or that they had themselves absorbed the idea that it was a lesser priority. What emerged was that a lack of sexual entitlement diminished what they received and what they felt they could rightly claim in their lives.

These dynamics pervade women's intimate relationships, contributing to struggles like orgasm disparities, chore-like sex, unenthusiastic consent and pretending. Moreover, they inform how women physically feel. The sole purpose of the clitoris, so far as science can tell, is to confer pleasure on its owner, yet possession of this organ is no guarantor of delight. As one woman put it, "My genitals feel dead."

Direct experience or close knowledge of sexual trauma was a persistent undercurrent, and some women attributed their dimmed sensation to episodes of harm or to feeling objectified, inappropriately sexualized or socially unsafe. Many women also said they were so caught up in their heads—surveilling their performance, critiquing their physique, hastening an encounter to a conclusion or tending to their partners' pleasure—that they couldn't register what was happening in their bodies.

Researchers use the term *sexual concordance* to describe the extent to which mind and body are in sync. Studies using sexual images have shown that men react bodily and report that they are most aroused by stimuli that conform to their sexual orientation. Queer women also display a specific response, reacting most positively to images of other women. But heterosexual women had a disconnect: despite evidence of being physically

***If women struggle in overwhelming numbers to inhabit their own bodies, it is a measure of being made to feel undeserving or less than***

aroused by images of couples, of men, of women, even of copulating bonobo apes, they declared themselves unmoved.

Meredith Chivers of Queen's University in Ontario, a leading expert in this field, told me, "We continually underestimate women's sexuality." Yet she cautioned against concluding that women's genital reactions are a truer marker of sexual interest than their verbal accounts. One possible explanation for this discrepancy, she says, is that we desire things that we connect to pleasure. For lesbian women, intercourse is more consistently associated with gratification, so images of other women will activate a positive response. But penetrative sex results in orgasm for a minority of heterosexual women, and for some, who equate it with pain, guilt or obligation, it may spark outright aversion.

**A HALF-CENTURY AGO**, researchers William Masters and Virginia Johnson stated that the range and depth of women's pleasure "infinitely surpasses that of man." However, they also found that women internalized "prevailing psychosocial influence," like the equation of desire with impurity, that might interfere with their sexual response. Anthropologists have similarly observed that in cultures that expect women to enjoy sex as much as men do, women have regular orgasms, whereas cultures that question the propriety of female pleasure are home to greater sexual difficulties.

Fortunately, these findings suggest

that erotic potential is not etched in stone. If women struggle in overwhelming numbers to inhabit their own bodies, it is a measure of feeling, or being made to feel, undeserving or less than. But as dire as this sounds, it is also cause for hope. It's far harder to rewire biology than it is to alter belief.

For one married lawyer, who for decades assumed she was "frigid," kindling eroticism was a process of claiming the freedom to do as she pleased in her intimate life, which eventually meant having consensual relationships with men other than her husband. For another woman, experiencing desire meant drawing new boundaries. Raised to believe she should make herself available and pleasing, she came to equate intimacy with allowing her body to be relentlessly accessed. After working with a sex coach, she gradually stopped viewing sex as a grudging performance for her partner's benefit. By learning to say no, she was able to start saying yes.

While their paths to sexual healing varied, the women I spoke to made plain that satisfaction was rooted in their social power, in being entitled to explore their sexuality and in feeling equal to their partners. Pleasure and its value can be learned and, once learned, are not readily relinquished.

*Rowland is the author of The Pleasure Gap: American Women and the Unfinished Sexual Revolution, from which this essay is adapted*

## EDUCATION

# Tests did not save schools, but money could

By Diane Ravitch

THE EDUCATION-REFORM MOVEMENT that started with George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind law has failed to improve education. Its narrow emphasis on standardized testing has failed. From Bush's No Child Left Behind to Barack Obama's Race to the Top to Donald Trump's push for school choice, the reformers have come up empty-handed.

These "reformers" relied on the business idea that disruption is a positive good. Reformers have historically called for more funding, better-trained teachers, desegregation, smaller class sizes. The disrupters, however, banked on a strategy of testing, competition and punishment.

Congress passed No Child Left Behind in 2001. Test every child every year in grades 3 to 8, Bush said, reward the schools where scores went up, punish those where scores did not, and great things happen: scores rise, graduation rates increase, and the gaps between racial groups get smaller. Public schools across the entire nation continue to be saddled with an expensive regime of annual standardized testing that is not found in any high-performing nation.

Obama doubled down on Bush's punitive approach with Race to the Top. In 2009, this \$4.35 billion program offered states a chance to win hundreds of millions of dollars if they evaluated teachers by their students' test scores, shook up or completely restructured schools with low test scores or turned low-performing public schools over to charter operators. This combination was supposed to lift the test scores of all students. It didn't.

Faced with federal mandates, states and districts spent billions of dollars on testing, crowding out untested subjects like history and science and reducing time for recess and play. They spent billions more to adopt the Common Core standards, along with new online testing, software and hardware.

Test scores on the federally funded National Assessment of Educational Progress—known as the Nation's Report

Card—have been stagnant for the past decade. The scores of the lowest-ranked students declined.

Charter schools on average do not get higher test scores than public schools, and in some states—like Ohio and Nevada—charters dominate the state's list of the lowest-performing schools.

**HOW DO WE IMPROVE** our schools? We begin by recognizing that poverty and affluence are the most important determinants of test scores. This strong correlation shows up on every standardized test. Every

standardized test is normed on a bell curve that reflects family income and education; affluent kids always dominate the top, and poor kids dominate the bottom. Nearly half the students in this country now qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, which is the federal measure of poverty. We can ameliorate the impact of poverty on children by making sure that they have access to nutrition, medical care and housing.

If the billionaires supporting charter schools and vouchers are serious about improving education, they would insist that the federal government fully fund the education of students with disabilities and triple the funding for schools in low-income districts. Teachers should be paid as the professionals they are, instead of having to work at second or third jobs to make ends meet. Teachers should write their own tests, as they did for generations. States and districts should save the billions now wasted on standardized testing and spend it instead to reduce class sizes so children can get individualized help.

Children and schools need stability, not disruption. They need experienced teachers and well-maintained schools.

All of this is common sense. These are reforms that work.

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*Ravitch is the author of Slaying Goliath: The Passionate Resistance to Privatization and the Fight to Save America's Public Schools*

## SHORT READS

► Highlights from stories on [time.com/ideas](http://time.com/ideas)

### A preacher's message

Robb Ryerse is a pastor in Arkansas who ran for Congress as a Republican. Now, as the political director of Vote Common Good, he's urging evangelicals not to vote for Donald Trump. **"A deal with Democrats is better than a deal with the devil," he writes.**

### Correcting the record

Many people think white and black Americans had little contact in the Jim Crow era, but in fact they lived in close proximity even under segregation, explains University of Houston professor Andrew Joseph Pegoda. **"The division that did exist was instead one of opportunity and of respect."**

### Continued conflict

Though President Trump calls his peace plan for Israel and Palestine the "deal of the century," Rashid Khalidi, author of *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*, says it's extreme and one-sided. **"Any formula advanced as a resolution of the conflict that is not squarely based on principles of equality and justice will inevitably fail," he writes.**



## It's time to retire old ideas about retirement

By Tara Law

CRAIG OGELBY WORKED IN PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS for about 40 years before calling it quits in 2007. He regretted it almost instantly. Just one month after retiring, he took a new job as a principal in New Jersey. “I really just did not think through my decision to retire,” says Ogelby, now 72 and working as a consultant. “I thought I was ready, but I soon realized that I need to continue to be active.”

Like Ogelby, many Americans are rethinking the latter end of their careers. As of February 2019, more than 20% of Americans over 65 were working or looking for work, nearly twice the 1985 rate. Workers are retiring three years later on average than they did in the 1980s, according to Matthew Rutledge of Boston College's Center for Retirement Research. The phenomenon could give the wider economy a boost, as older workers keep earning (and spending) money.

What's keeping older Americans at work? For one, their health is generally better, allowing them to stay at their jobs longer—Americans' life expectancy at birth reached 78.7 years in 2018, compared with 73.7 in 1980.

Finances also matter. The age required to receive full Social Security benefits is being gradually increased to 67, leading some workers to stick around until they can get their maximum benefits. Furthermore, employers are switching from pensions, which for some workers become substantial enough to comfortably replace their paycheck in retirement, to contribution-based plans like 401(k)s, which are typically less dependable as a sole retirement account but can grow so long as a worker keeps making contributions, with no age limit.

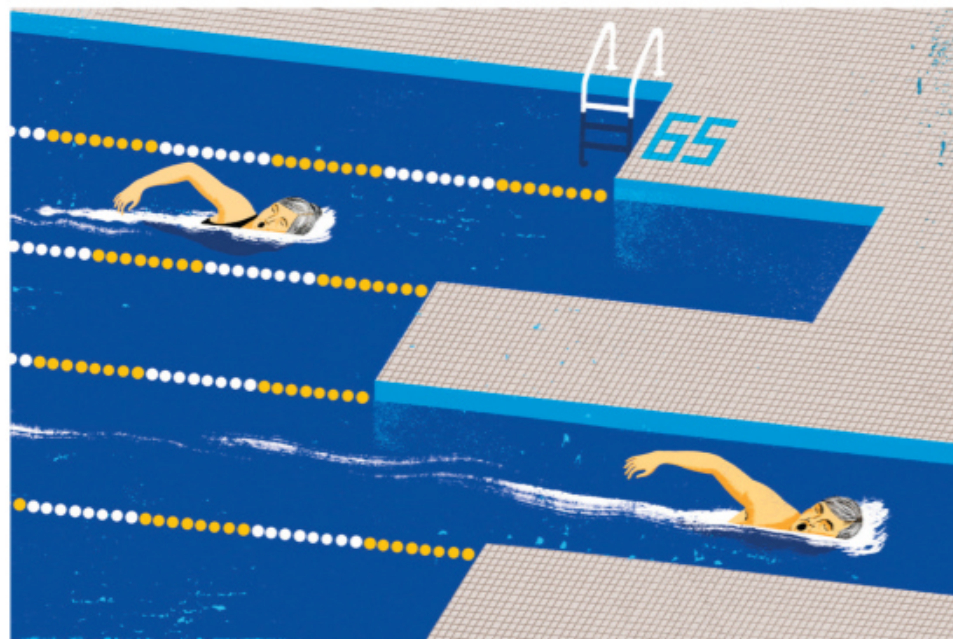
Then there's the psychological factor. For career-driven people like Ogelby, downshifting from a career-first mindset into the “permanent vacation” of retirement can be unmooring or even downright scary. It may, after all, be one of the last major life changes we make on our own. Nancy Schlossberg, a professor emerita at the University of Maryland who has written several books on retirement, says it's the little stuff that retirees wind up struggling with the most. “When you leave [work], you are giving up your relationships with colleagues, you are giving up your role, you are giving up your assumptions about the world,” she says. “But most important, you are giving up your routines: where you stopped for coffee, where you dropped your cleaning off on the way to work.”

Of course, many Americans have less agency when it comes to their retirement plans. Less-educated workers tend to retire earlier, for instance—the average retirement age for males with less education than a college degree barely budged between the 1980s and 2016, increasing only from 62.6 to 62.8, according to Rutledge. The gap exists in part because less-educated workers tend to have more physically demanding jobs that wear people down. Others retire because saving money while barely making ends meet begins to feel like a Sisyphean undertaking. “A lot of people think, no matter what they do, they're really never going to be able to save very much,” says Rutledge. Still others can't find work that matches their skill set in our rapidly evolving economy.

**THAT'S THE CASE** for Angela Carambot, a 56-year-old New Yorker who says her lack of a college degree has held her back for decades since she lost a service job at a publishing firm 20 years ago. “Before, it was always train on the job,” says Carambot, who's planning to go on Social Security as soon as she can. “Now you have to

have this, you have to have that. And I didn't have any of these.”

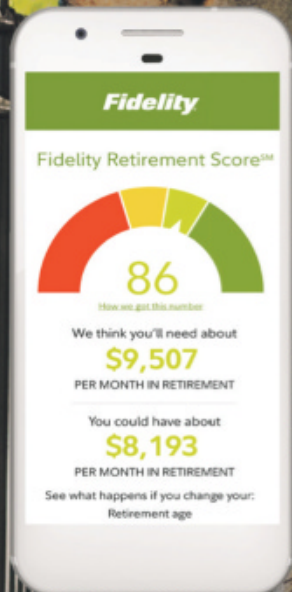
But for those who have the luxury of delaying retirement, the benefits can extend beyond their bank accounts. Staying in the workforce can give older Americans a chance to try something different, whether it's part-time or consulting work in their longtime field or a totally new venture. Even absent a major change, work can give older Americans an often necessary sense of purpose. That's the case for Ruth Schwartz, a 74-year-old academic who teaches a graduate-level database course at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J. “I thought to myself, What am I going to do for 40 years? It's not like it used to be where you retired at 65 and you died at 75,” says Schwartz. “I know other people who are just happy to sit at home. I can't imagine it.” □



**‘I thought I was ready, but I soon realized that I need to continue to be active.’**

CRAIG OGELBY, 72, a longtime educator whose retirement lasted just one month before he went right back to work in a new school

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20★20

# Adrift After Iowa

CAUCUS CONFUSION CLOUDS THE SEARCH FOR A NOMINEE

BY MOLLY BALL AND  
LISSANDRA VILLA/DES MOINES

**BUTTIGIEG**  
*claims victory at his  
caucus-night party at  
Drake University in  
Des Moines*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS FOR TIME



## J

JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT ON A GRAND STAGE IN IOWA, Pete Buttigieg went for it. “By all indications,” the Democratic presidential candidate and former mayor of South Bend, Ind., declared, “we are going on to New Hampshire victorious!” Supporters chanted, “I-O-W-A, Mayor Pete all the way!” as Buttigieg gave a soaring speech about unity and change, boasting of a new American majority that could beat President Donald Trump.

The spectacle was a bit surreal, and not only because the campaign could barely fill an Iowa coffee shop a year ago. Buttigieg had not officially won anything yet. While his staffers had compiled internal numbers suggesting a win, official results from the Iowa Democratic Party had yet to arrive because of glitches with a smartphone app and other issues that delayed final election results from Iowa’s more than 1,700 caucus precincts well into the week.

But as the count came in over the ensuing, Buttigieg appeared to be right. With more than three-quarters of the caucus vote tallied as of Feb. 5, he was projected to edge Senator Bernie Sanders in the official metric for victory, state delegates. Sanders was projected to have won the raw first-round vote in the quirky multistage caucus system Iowa clings to, allowing the Vermont liberal to claim a measure of victory as well.

The split decision in Iowa was a stumbling start to what is now likely to become a long, hard-fought slog to the Democrats’ convention in Milwaukee. For a year now, a record-breaking and well-credentialed field of Democratic candidates, packed with governors, Senators, businessmen and a former Vice President, has spent tens of millions of dollars and untold hours crisscrossing Iowa’s frozen cornfields, industrial cities and college towns, sparring over competing visions for the party and seeking to persuade voters that they were best positioned to topple Trump. For a gay 38-year-old former mayor of a midsize city and a 78-year-old democratic socialist to emerge on top in Des Moines is a sign of how far the party has to go to settle the battle for its future.

Iowa traditionally winnows the primary field, codifying voter preferences and persuading low-polling candidates to give up. This time, not a single candidate dropped out, and the Democrats flew out of Des Moines with the picture more muddled than ever. Rather than moving toward a consensus nominee, Democrats appear more fractured and uncertain



**SANDERS**  
addresses  
supporters at  
a rally in Ames  
on Jan. 26

than before. It’s as if the party’s collective anxiety about November has paralyzed it, rendering it unable to make a decision.

Sanders, who appears better positioned than Buttigieg in the upcoming contests in New Hampshire and beyond, is now the closest thing the party has to a front runner. “Bernie is definitely in the driver’s seat for the entire primary,” says Ian Sams, former spokesman for Kamala Harris and a veteran of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 presidential campaign. The Democratic nomination is as likely as not to go to an avowed enemy of its establishment who is not even a member of the party.

Lagging Sanders and Buttigieg was Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts Senator whose ambitious liberal policy proposals rocketed her to the top of the field before voters began to fret that Trump would wield them against her. Former Vice President Joe Biden, long the national polling leader, hobbled to a distant fourth-place finish.

If the results were a surprise, the bigger shock



was how long they took to arrive. The caucuses were marred by technological and logistical problems that undermined confidence in the result, though there was no evidence of irregularities in the count itself. Turnout was lower than many expected, projected not to exceed the caucuses of 2016, which also ended in procedural chaos.

Trump and his allies took the occasion to gloat over the Democrats' misfortune. On the eve of his impeachment acquittal, the incumbent's approval rating hit a career high. And Mike Bloomberg, the billionaire former New York City mayor who's gaining in national polls after pumping some \$300 million into what once appeared to be a quixotic effort, announced he would ratchet up his massive national staff and advertising push, casting himself as the savior who will rescue the party from its early-state confusion.

**BIDEN SEEMED RELIEVED** to have left Iowa behind. "I'm not gonna sugarcoat it, we took a gut punch," he said on Feb. 5 in Somersworth, N.H. His

**BIDEN**  
*at a town hall  
in Des Moines  
on Feb. 2*

**WARREN**  
*holds a meet-  
and-greet at a  
pub in Cedar  
Rapids on  
Jan. 26*

weak showing hurts his central argument, that he's the candidate most likely to defeat Trump, and it amplified concerns about his ability to go the distance in the primary.

The campaign tried to project confidence, but just a week earlier, Biden himself had said it would be difficult for a candidate who finished more than 7 percentage points behind the winner to survive; the preliminary results showed him 11 points behind Buttigieg in the delegate race. Biden's senior hands argued he would get another look from the party's center thanks to Sanders' surge. But there's only so long a campaign can survive without results. Biden's fundraising already was lackluster; Iowa wasn't going to help.

Warren's third-place showing left her in a tough spot, a distant second to Sanders among liberals, with little apparent success adding moderate voters. Warren had invested heavily in Iowa, building a field operation even rival campaigns hailed as the best in the state. But her conditional embrace of a Medicare

for All health plan that would upend America's existing insurance system turned off moderates without winning over Sanders supporters.

In the final days in Iowa, Warren tried to position herself as a unity candidate, arguing her populist proposals would draw crossover votes in the general election. She pointed to women candidates' success in the 2018 midterms to argue that a female nominee would be the best matchup against Trump. As she prepared to leave Iowa, Warren touted her campaign as "built for the long haul," noting it has staff in 31 states. "The path to progress runs through courage, not fear," she told her supporters.

The primary beneficiary of Biden's slide and Warren's strategic missteps was Buttigieg. "Pete has been making a fresh-start, new-generation electability argument," says Democratic strategist Bryan DeAngelis, who is neutral in the race. "It's a different electability argument than Biden's, and it is appealing to a large bloc of Democrats."

A hyperdisciplined intellectual who may be the party's most polished performer since Barack Obama, Buttigieg leaned on the power of storytelling, betting that voters who are tired of partisan division are eager for reassurance about the future. In the weeks before the caucuses, he spent much of his time in rural counties that swung from Obama to Trump, promising to "put the chaos behind us" and recruiting former Republicans alienated by the President. Like Obama, he pitched a vision of hope and unity, arguing that America is flawed but forgivable, that her sins are venial but not mortal, and that bigotry can be melted by love. "Our message about belonging is designed to make everyone feel welcome, and my own search for belonging of course partly has to do with being different because I'm gay," he tells TIME.

Buttigieg hoped his Iowa showing would translate to new traction in New Hampshire. "The idea of electability has to be centered somewhat around who can bring people together and who can build a big-tent Democratic Party," Lis Smith, a senior Buttigieg adviser, said at a roundtable hosted by Bloomberg News. "We are the only campaign that's actively aware of that and actively pursuing that."

For his part, Sanders has sought to expand beyond the zealous coalition that powered his upstart challenge to Clinton in 2016. This time, Sanders built a ground game that his campaign says knocked on 500,000 doors in Iowa in the month before the caucuses and courted Latinos with a blizzard of bilingual mailers, a variety of Spanish-language ad buys and 22 paid Latino staffers in the state. Chuck Rocha, a top Sanders adviser, estimates the campaign spent \$1.5 million in bilingual outreach in Iowa alone.

The Sanders surrogate machine sustained him while he was stuck in Washington for impeachment. "It's so important that we just keep our noses down and keep organizing and keep phone banking and

knocking on doors and doing what we can," Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tells TIME, "because this thing is not over until the nomination is secured."

The prospect that Sanders could triumph in Milwaukee freaks out the party's pooh-bahs, who fear his far-left positions will alienate swing voters. "The Democratic Party has been asleep at the switch," says Jonathan Cowan, president of the centrist think tank Third Way, who is actively trying to stop Sanders. It's not too late to stop him, Cowan says, but Democrats have to treat him like a front runner and consolidate their support behind a single moderate candidate quickly. "If you wait until April or May," he says, "it will be too late."

Mingled with the angst, however, is a fear that attacks on Sanders will only make him stronger, as many of his supporters thrive on antiestablishment fervor. The Iowa caucus confusion fed a related vein of conspiratorial thinking, as liberals on social media pointed to the failed app's connections to the Democratic establishment as well as to the Buttigieg campaign as evidence of some anti-Sanders plot.

## THE PROSPECT THAT SANDERS COULD TRIUMPH IN MILWAUKEE FREAKS OUT THE PARTY'S POOH-BAHS

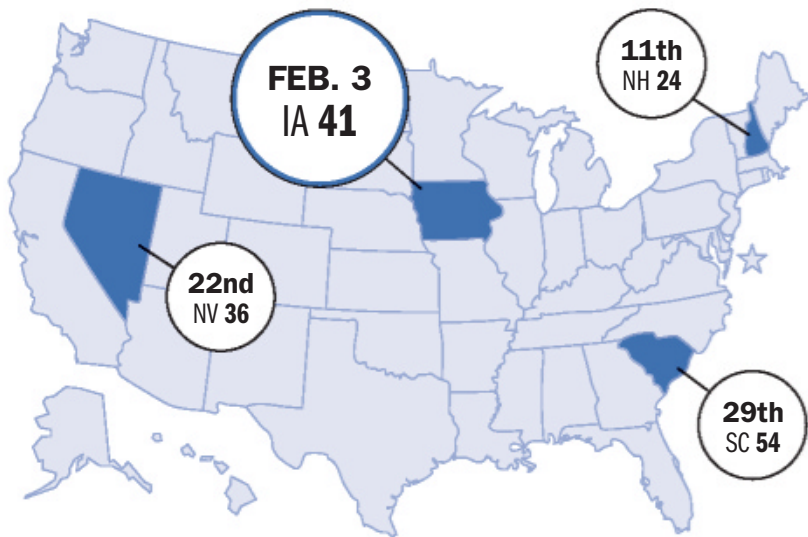
**THE COMING STATES** appear to favor Sanders. The Vermonter won New Hampshire by 22 points in 2016 and is polling well ahead of the Feb. 11 primary. Then it's on to the Nevada caucuses on Feb. 22, where the Democratic electorate is heavily working class and Latino. In the past it has been strongly influenced by momentum from the first two states, making it potentially another Sanders stronghold. One key factor will be the powerful Culinary Workers Union, which represents the hotel and casino workers of the Las Vegas Strip and operates a formidable turnout machine, but has not yet endorsed a candidate.

South Carolina's primary on Feb. 29 is dominated by African-American voters, and polls have strongly favored Biden. The Vice President's campaign has regarded the state as a backstop. Black voters were a major weakness for Sanders four years ago, but his campaign has spent the intervening years making a major push for African-American votes and has made inroads, particularly with younger black voters.

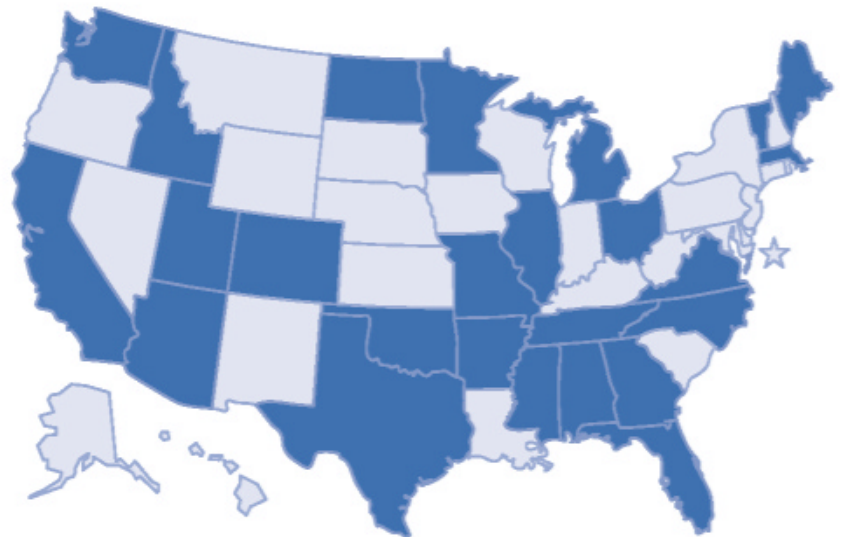
With Super Tuesday, the delegate fight gets serious. The four early states are important for narrowing the field and establishing narratives, but only 4% of the party's total delegates will be awarded in February. On March 3, when 14 states are scheduled to hold primaries, a staggering one-third of the total delegates will be awarded in a single day. By the time March is over, two-thirds of all delegates will be spoken for. "When we get to Super Tuesday after the first four states, we will be in a strong position," says Symone Sanders, a senior Biden adviser.

## The path ahead

Of the 3,979 delegates available in the Democratic primaries, a candidate will need 1,990 to clinch the nomination



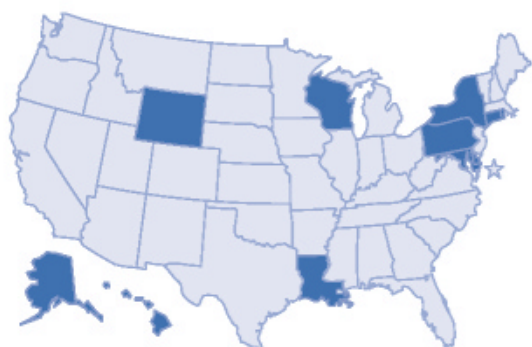
**FEBRUARY** 155 delegates



**MARCH** 2,448 delegates

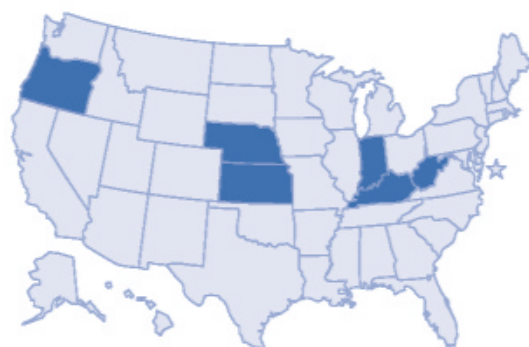
<b>3rd SUPER TUESDAY</b>			<b>10th</b>	<b>14th</b>	<b>17th</b>	<b>24th</b>	<b>29th</b>
AL 52	MA 91	UT 29	ID 20	MP* 6	AZ 67	GA 105	PR* 51
AS* 6	MN 75	VT 16	MI 125		FL 219		
AR 31	NC 110	VA 99	MS 36		IL 155		
CA 415	OK 37	D* 13	MO 68		OH 136		
CO 67	TN 64		ND 14				
ME 24	TX 228		WA 89				

\*AMERICAN SAMOA      \*DEMOCRATS ABROAD      \*NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS      \*PUERTO RICO



**APRIL** 854 delegates

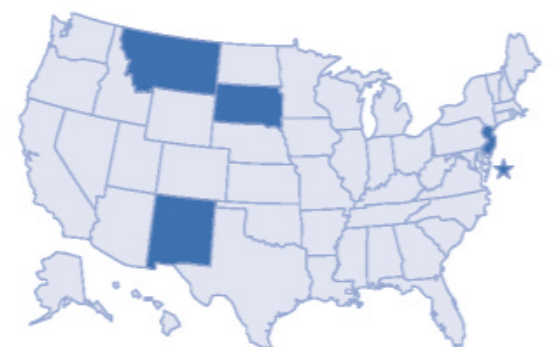
<b>4th</b>	<b>7th</b>	<b>28th</b>
AK 15	WI 84	CT 60
LA 54	DE 21	MD 96
HI 24	NY 274	PA 186
WY 14	RI 26	



**MAY** 300 delegates

<b>2nd</b>	<b>5th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>19th</b>
GU* 7	IN 82	NE 29	KY 54
KS 39	WV 28	OR 61	

\*GUAM



**JUNE** 222 delegates

<b>2nd</b>	<b>6th</b>
DC 20	VI* 7
MT 19	

\*VIRGIN ISLANDS

But it's here that Bloomberg is making his stand, a billionaire gate crasher loathed by the left who is blanketing the airwaves with ads that bash Trump and cast the candidate as a pragmatic, results-oriented leader. His strategy of skipping the first four contests is unprecedented but beginning to look prescient. After the Iowa mess, Bloomberg's campaign said it would double its massive TV effort and boost its field staff to more than 2,000. And while populists like Warren charge he's trying to buy the nomination, there's evidence Bloomberg's millions are making an impression on voters: he's now polling in double digits nationally.

All the campaigns are girding for a delegate fight. The perennial nightmare scenario of an undecided race going into the convention appears likelier than it has been in recent memory. It all adds up to a party racked with anxiety on the eve of an election many consider the most consequential of their lifetimes. "The angst is so intense," says John Norris, a Warren backer and former chair of the Iowa Democratic Party. "We are so concerned about getting it right. We feel an intense responsibility, we're all talking about it. But there's no definition of what it means to get it right." —*With reporting by CHARLOTTE ALTER, PHILIP ELLIOTT and ABBY VESOULIS/DES MOINES* □



A black and white profile photograph of Xi Jinping, the Chinese leader, looking towards the left. The image is partially obscured by the text overlay.

World

# **CRISIS MODE**

The coronavirus outbreak presents  
the greatest threat yet to Xi Jinping's  
ambition for a Chinese century

**BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL/SHANGHAI**



*President Xi Jinping said  
on Feb. 5 that China is  
“confident and capable” of  
handling the coronavirus*

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAOLO TRE

## *IT TOOK EIGHT HOURS FOR A DOCTOR TO SEE WU CHEN'S MOTHER AFTER SHE ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL. EIGHT DAYS LATER, SHE WAS DEAD.*

The doctor was “99% sure” she had contracted the mysterious pneumonia-like illness sweeping China’s central city of Wuhan, Wu says, but he didn’t have the testing kit to prove it. And despite the 64-year-old’s fever and perilously low oxygen levels, there was no bed for her. Wu tried two more hospitals over the next week, but all were overrun. By Jan. 25, her mother was slumped on the tile floor of an emergency room, gasping for air, drifting in and out of consciousness. “We didn’t want to see my mom die on the floor, so we took her home,” says Wu, 30. “She passed the next day.”

Because she did not want a spell in jail for dissent to compound her grief, Wu asked TIME to refer to her by a pseudonym—a reasonable request and one that carries with it a measure of what each virus death means to the People’s Republic of China. The novel coronavirus known as 2019-nCoV threatens more than the 24,000 people known to be infected as of Feb. 4 or the 492 it has killed. It also looms over the national rejuvenation project of President Xi Jinping and the rigid, top-down rule being tested by all that the disease brings with it, including distrust in a population the government pledged to keep safe. Since China belatedly acknowledged the severity of the outbreak, every organ



of the Chinese state has been harnessed to enforce an unprecedented quarantine on 50 million people across 15 cities. China’s government has unleashed a 1 billion yuan (\$142 million) war chest to fight the outbreak amid a frenzy of construction work that, among other feats, erected a 1,000-bed hospital in just 10 days. That there was no cot for Wu’s mother may be understandable, given the time it took to comprehend the disease and how quickly it spread. But what to make of a government

PREVIOUS PAGES: A3/CONTRASTO/REDUX;  
THESE PAGES: GETTY IMAGES



^  
*An empty highway in Wuhan, the city of 11 million where the outbreak began in a market, on Feb. 3*

that cannot abide the grief of a daughter who took her ailing mother home rather than see her die on a hospital floor?

Transparency is essential to public health. But in China, doctors who reported the reality of the outbreak have been arrested for “spreading rumors.” Officials were pictured pocketing supplies meant for frontline medical staff, who were reduced to cutting up office supplies for makeshift surgical masks. Meanwhile, the ruling Chinese Com-

munist Party (CCP) has already started leveraging the crisis for propaganda by lionizing cadres leading containment efforts. “No crisis is too deadly that they can’t take a time-out to promote the party through manipulation of it,” says Scott W. Harold, an East Asia expert at the U.S. policy think tank Rand Corp.

In the fall of 2017, Xi took the podium at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People to claim that China’s version of one-party autocracy offered an option for “coun-

# World

tries that want to speed up their development while preserving their independence.” Western democracy was messy and flawed, the argument went. In the years since that speech, China’s hubris has grown, nurtured by the tumultuous U.S. presidency of Donald Trump and the disintegration of the multilateral world order. But the coronavirus crisis threatens to rattle China’s authoritarian apparatus. “A major test of China’s system and capacity for governance” senior party chiefs called it on Feb. 3.

The 2019-nCoV outbreak is infecting some 2,000 people daily in China and has spread to at least 25 countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a “global health emergency.” And the fear is not limited to health. Global commerce now hinges on China’s \$14.55 trillion economy, which in turn is governed by an opaque, authoritarian regime tightly coalesced around one man. Xi, burnished by a resurgent cult of personality, has amassed more power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. He has leveraged Beijing’s economic clout to forward ambitions at home and abroad but also has struggled as no previous leader. “Since Xi came to power, problem after problem have occurred on his watch that he seems unable to effectively manage,” says Jude Blanchette, a China analyst at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. These include popular unrest in semiautonomous Hong Kong, a disruptive trade war with the U.S. and now an unfolding health crisis.

For decades, the sales pitch for China’s single-party rule was the superior performance of its political system when faced with both short-term crises and long-term challenges. It built thousands of miles of high-speed rail and helped drag hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. By 2022, McKinsey predicts 550 million Chinese will be able to call themselves middle class—about 1.5 times the current U.S. population. Still, that benevolent narrative has deteriorated under Xi. Now the coronavirus threatens to undermine further his mission to have China stake out the next century as America did the last.

**IN 2019**, China overtook Soviet Russia as history’s most enduring communist state. The seven-decade longevity of the CCP can be attributed in no small part



Evacuees from Wuhan, mostly German nationals, leave Frankfurt’s main airport on Feb. 1

to abandoning great chunks of Marxist-Leninism; instead of centralized planning and top-down targets, China embraced markets and devolved considerable power to its regions and cities. Local party bosses were encouraged to make bold decisions to boost the local economy, like setting up heavily subsidized means of production.

As a result, China boomed but also became a network of little fiefdoms and

power centers, where local bosses vied for influence and corruption flourished. Xi came into power in 2012 convinced rampant graft posed an existential threat to the party. To him, only an ideological renaissance coupled with an anticorruption crusade could save China from going the way of the Soviet Union.

A bland apparatchik by reputation, Xi climbed the career ladder as a provincial bureaucrat, eventually emerging as a compromise candidate for the post of China’s top leader. His lack of a power base led party elders to believe he would remain malleable and easy to control. Global leaders hoped he might push through long-awaited economic and social reforms.



They were wrong. Soon after taking power, Xi announced his “China Dream” of a grand national rejuvenation, later speaking about returning China to “center stage of the world.” Far from embracing Western-style market reforms, Xi calcified state control over the economy and stocked its bureaucracy with flunkies and yes-men. Today party zealotry permeates all of Chinese society. The head of China’s national Film Bureau has ordered movies “must have a clear ideological bottom line and cannot challenge the political system.” China’s journalists have been instructed to follow “Marxist news values.” Artists can only produce works that “serve the people and socialism.” One

#### THE RISK REPORT

## THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK

By Ian Bremmer

There are many ways to measure the costs of coronavirus. There have now been more than 24,000 officially reported cases, and nearly 500 people have died, but we’d be wise not to have much faith in these figures. A report from the *Lancet* estimated that as of Jan. 25 the true number of coronavirus cases in Hubei province, which includes the city of Wuhan, was not 761, as officially reported, but 75,815.

The impact on China’s economy will be considerable. Quarantine and internal border controls have been imposed, and local officials are now overcompensating in response to criticism from Beijing that they were slow to respond to the initial outbreak. Businesses and schools are likely to remain closed for weeks. Economic activity in many Chinese cities is sharply reduced.

There is also the mounting economic cost for the entire global economy. The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 knocked one to two percentage points off China’s GDP that year, which then cost one-quarter to one-third of a percentage point in global growth, according to estimates. The larger number of infections from the coronavirus suggests the impact could be more severe this time for both China and the world. What happens in China matters more than ever for the rest of us. Its share of the global economy has surged from 8% in 2002 to 19% today, and it’s now the world’s second largest economy.

Companies in other countries dependent on Chinese supply chains are already facing a slowdown: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Italy and the U.S. have all imposed travel restrictions. Asian countries will see a sharp reduction in the number

of arriving Chinese tourists, an important source of growth.

Oil prices have fallen 20% over the past month on expectations of lower demand from China and reduced sales of jet fuel as flights are grounded. Press reports suggest that China’s daily crude-oil consumption has fallen by 20%, an amount equal to consumption in Britain and Italy combined. OPEC and Russian officials are now debating whether to cut oil production to buoy prices. Prices for metals and other construction materials have fallen.

This is also a hit to the “Phase 1” trade deal the U.S. and China concluded last month. China was already unlikely to purchase the additional \$200 billion of U.S. goods over two years that it committed to buying. The slowdown will make that figure hard to achieve.

But the greatest cost will come to China’s reputation as a reliable trade partner. In developed countries, health care systems are quick to identify public-health risks and better able to respond to them. China’s top-down authoritarian political system makes things worse. In the early stages of these kinds of crises, local officials try to avoid blame from Beijing by hiding information about outbreaks and the extent to which health facilities are overmatched. In later stages of the crisis, they overcorrect to show Beijing they’ve taken charge of the problem.

In the process, China creates the impression that it has learned little since the SARS crisis, giving the rest of the world reason to try to reduce its dependence on China for growth and production.

We’re moving closer to the day when it is China’s increasingly hefty economy, not America’s, that’s most to blame for a global recession.



advertisement for sperm donors required applicants ages 20 to 45 with “excellent ideological qualities” who “love the fatherland,” and are “loyal” to the party’s “mission.” Mao may have had his Little Red Book, but Xi has a personalized app distributed to all 90 million CCP members, with a directory of his speeches and quizzes on his life and political thought.

His mission is to forge a singular Chinese identity that restores the nation’s ethnic Han majority to a golden age, on the basis of fealty to his party. “Xi Jinping is fundamentally a Han chauvinist with a ‘historic mission’ to make China, Han China, great again,” says Professor Steve Tsang, director of SOAS China Institute at the University of London.

And he’s willing to go to extreme lengths to do it. In China’s restive Xinjiang province, a systematic campaign of forced

▲  
*Empty stalls in the Qianmen area of Beijing on Feb. 1; the Chinese capital has closed down public spaces*

internment has transformed the area into a dusty expanse spotted with camps where more than 1 million Uighur Muslims and other ethnic minorities are held extrajudicially, according to the U.N. What began as a campaign to battle radical Islam in the region has mutated into an enormous project of ideological re-education. On the routes where Silk Road caravans once traveled, a sophisticated surveillance apparatus shrouds the wider populace in an AI-powered panopticon, where every action is watched, recorded and judged by algorithm.

Those who fall foul of it are sent

to learn the error of their ways. Nurlan Kokeubai, 56, never found out the charges against him. But from August 2017 to April 2018, he was detained in a re-education camp close to the city of Ili, in Xinjiang province. For four hours each morning, Kokeubai says he and his fellow inmates were forced to watch videos of Xi carousing with dignitaries and overseeing military exercises. They were also ordered to memorize Xi’s eponymous “political thought” and documents from the 19th CCP Conference, where Xi removed presidential term limits to enable himself to rule for life. Those that resisted were beaten with sticks or strapped to a metal chair for interrogation. “They weren’t testing our knowledge or loyalty,” Kokeubai told TIME in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to which he has since fled. “They were just filling us with this propaganda.”



**PRESIDENT TRUMP** has kept mum on the Xinjiang camps as he negotiated a provisional agreement in the trade war. But when the coronavirus broke, his Administration did not hold back. “I don’t want to talk about a victory lap over a very unfortunate, very malignant disease,” Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a TV interview on Jan. 30. “The fact is, it does give business yet another thing to consider ... I think it will help to accelerate the return of jobs to North America.”

Forty years after Beijing and Washington normalized relations, the two are diverging rapidly. Under Trump, the U.S. has been disentangling its firms and, yes, supply chains from China’s through taxes, tariffs and punitive investment curbs. Western investors are also cowed by ideological hurdles and looking elsewhere, given China’s market is now so-

^  
*Plastic bottles serve as makeshift protection—over face masks—at Beijing’s main airport on Jan. 30*

phisticated, saturated and tricky to exploit. Washington has banned Huawei, the world’s biggest telecoms equipment manufacturer, from its key infrastructure and urged allies to do the same. In U.S. universities, Chinese researchers have been purged as academia, wary of espionage, lurches into Sinophobic McCarthyism. The patient optimism that colored the George W. Bush and Obama administrations has largely evaporated.

But it’s a mistake to ignore Xi’s own agency in this process. “[Last year] was a landmark in the structural shift of how the United States views its relationship with

China,” says Tsang. “But the decoupling wasn’t started by Donald Trump. It was originally prepared by Xi Jinping himself.” Every one of Xi’s signature economic policies has sought to reduce China’s reliance on the U.S. and grow its own empire. His \$1 trillion Belt and Road Initiative builds connectivity across Eurasia and Africa. The “Made in China 2025” campaign aims to propel China to the forefront of strategic industries currently dominated by Silicon Valley, such as semiconductors, aerospace, AI and robotics. The Chinese government has even ordered all state departments to remove foreign-made computer equipment within three years.

Xi does not stand alone, though he is surrounded by clients rather than friends. China is now more closely aligned with Russia than at any period since Mao and Nikita Khrushchev fell out in 1956.





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*A medical worker disinfects a hotel converted into a quarantine zone in Wuhan, on Feb. 3*

The Belt and Road Initiative is drawing nations across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East into Beijing's orbit (and often into its debt). The U.S. may have asked 61 countries to shun Huawei, but only three—Japan, Australia, New Zealand—have acquiesced. The next decade won't be defined by an iron curtain but two blocs vying for influence within every nation that isn't firmly in the liberal democratic or autocratic camp. And, for one side, the coronavirus is being sized up as an opportunity. Asked whether import levies on China should be dialed down given the crisis, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro demurred. "Let's remember why the tariffs are in place," he said.

**CONFRONTING AN OUTBREAK** requires more than just an ability to throw up hospitals in a few days; it necessitates trust. And from the beginning, China's public response to the virus has raised questions. Even multinational institutions like WHO are feeling this as the coronavirus worsens. The organization was unable to rule on the severity of 2019-nCoV following its first meeting on Jan. 22, apparently because of resistance from Beijing. (WHO referred to "divergent

views.") Notably, despite WHO's insisting that travel bans to China would not be necessary, a dozen nations introduced stringent restrictions, including the U.S., Australia and North Korea. If you believe China's official figures, 2019-nCoV has a fatality rate of just 2%—about the same as regular influenza and a far cry from the 50% of Ebola or the 10% of SARS. Why then, observers might well ask, has China placed entire cities in lockdown, quarantined tens of millions and mobilized troops?

Here is the downside of Xi's system of top-down control; nobody acted until they got word from the top, and then everyone wildly overreacted in order to satisfy the leader. This was evident in



Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, where the outbreak began, and the official response lurched from cover-up to overreaction only after Xi addressed the crisis. “The full CCP apparatus didn’t kick into gear to address the coronavirus until Xi had weighed in on the matter,” says Blanchette. Notably, the President himself has kept a low profile since the outbreak began and was not seen in public for eight days after the Lunar New Year.

Now, throughout China, fear is mixing with inchoate rage. In Hubei province, people from Wuhan are ostracized. But in other provinces, people from anywhere in Hubei are shunned. Videos circulating on social media show vigilantes tooling up to protect their villages. In one video, a

## GOING AROUND

What we know about how coronavirus spreads—and what you should do about it:

### HOW DOES CORONAVIRUS COMPARE TO THE FLU?

Like the seasonal flu, the virus spreads through airborne droplets. Currently, Americans are far more likely to get the flu, which affects millions each year.

### WHAT IS R<sub>0</sub>?

“R-naught” is the number of people one patient will infect, on average.

Coronavirus estimates vary from 1.4 to 4.8 people. SARS is in the 2-to-4 range, while measles estimates are as high as 18.

### CAN MASKS KEEP US HEALTHY?

Surgical masks can block large droplets, but viruses can be small enough to slip through gaps. The CDC recommends that sick patients and their caretakers wear them.

### WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?

The best ways to fend off coronavirus, the flu and other airborne illnesses are to wash hands and avoid sick people.

man in a dark jacket and wide-brimmed hat guards a bridge with a pistol. In another, a man in an orange puffer jacket sits on a table at the entrance to his village, brandishing an enormous sword. All have signs nearby with a common theme: outsiders cannot pass.

Even in Beijing, apartment building guards are checking the IDs of everyone who enters and banning those from Hubei—rent-paying tenants included. Videos emerge of Hubei residents scuffling with gas station staff who refuse them service. Sometimes mass brawls erupt when a Hubei resident tries to force himself past an improvised roadblock. “Don’t blame us for being rude if you are from Wuhan and you don’t self-quarantine,” wrote one poster on China’s Twitter-like microblog Weibo. “You should just shoot them because they are killing us!” wrote another.

The ideological revival behind Xi’s “China Dream” may have rendered the political system more decisive but also more prone to error. Under Mao, local officials were also hesitant to act until they had clear signals from the top. Rather than assess issues through a purely governance lens, China’s bureaucracy is forced to balance both technocratic and political concerns. Meanwhile nativist vigilantism spreads almost as fast as the virus.

Some questions—whether the virus becomes a pandemic (or reaches epidemic levels on two continents), how many people it infects and how many lives it takes—remain shrouded in uncertainty. But the crisis has already demonstrated that the centralization of political power under Xi has made Chinese society brittle. The question now is what it will endure before it begins to crack.

Wu’s mother was cremated the evening she died. A battered container truck arrived at 9 p.m. and packed her body in with countless others. Instead of 2019-nCoV, her death certificate simply reads “viral pneumonia.” Wu signed a permission slip for the cremation but was told her mother’s ashes won’t be released until the crisis has abated. “They say that there are more than 300 dead now,” says Wu, “but I think there are many more.” Distrust, it turns out, is infectious too. —*With reporting by* AMY GUNIA/HONG KONG

# Viewpoints

## THE PANDEMIC OF XENOPHOBIA

By **Sonia Shah**

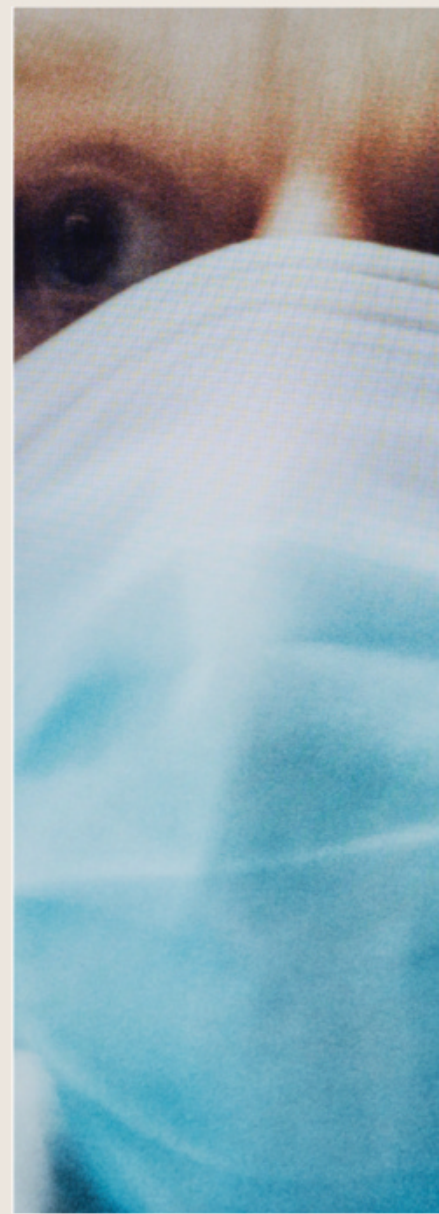
Even as public-health experts race to contain the novel coronavirus outbreak, a potentially more fearsome and shadowy pandemic grows—this one aimed at uninfected people unjustly fingered as potential carriers.

Calls for bans on the movement of peoples of Asian descent—which would subject millions of people to unnecessary and potentially life-threatening entrapment—are trending on social media, while in real life the normal rules of social cohesion have started to break down. Societies facing novel pathogens have often engaged in the scapegoating of marginalized populations, especially when the infective source can be linked to a distant place and the disease associated with racially distinct “foreign” peoples.

There’s reason to suspect the pandemic of xenophobia in the wake of today’s coronavirus will wreak havoc. Public fears of contamination by invasive foreigners reached a fevered pitch even before the first case of pneumonia at the Wuhan seafood market hit the news. Right-wing populist leaders have long singled out foreigners as vectors of crime, terrorism and disease, as if they alone posed such threats.

Since the advent of germ theory in the late 19th century, public-health authorities have tackled infectious diseases as a problem of invasive microbes. As a public-health strategy, that approach works. But as shorthand for understanding our risk of disease, it leaves out critical context. Instead of considering the universe of microbial threats around us and our personal risk of disease, which emerges from the dynamic interplay between pathogen, immune system and environment, we zero in on the aspects of contagion that are hallmarks of invasion: the foreignness of the germ and the pace of its dispersal.

We highlight foreignness in the way we name pathogens: it’s the “Wuhan” flu; the “Ebola” virus, named after a river in the Democratic Republic of Congo; the “Spanish” influenza, even though that microbe didn’t originate in Spain. Tellingly,



we don’t apply this same nomenclature when an epidemic originates closer to home. HIV, discovered in NYC in the 1980s is not “NYC-1,” and MRSA, which first exploded in Boston, is not, say, “the Boston plague.” Novel pathogens with deadly effects spread from even the most anodyne of places: the MRSA-infected AstroTurf of a college football field, the flu-virus-filled barns of a state fair.

News outlets such as Fox News are now using the same inflammatory language to depict the coronavirus outbreak that they employ to describe migrants. Such overtly alarmist rhetoric will almost certainly increase public pressure for discriminatory and even unlawful policy measures aimed against socially disempowered populations. Heightening people’s awareness of contagion around them inflames their xenophobic sentiments.

The deadly potency of a bio-pandemic usually dissipates quickly as our immune systems adapt. Until society evolves as well, the fear and panic will persist.

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*Shah is the author of The Next Great Migration: the Beauty and Terror of Life on the Move*

## EARLY DETECTION IS A KEY DEFENSE

By **Pardis Sabeti**

The epidemic of a new coronavirus is a stark reminder of the threat infectious diseases pose, but there’s one encouraging development. Within weeks of the virus’s being reported, scientists in China quickly isolated and sequenced the virus and shared the data with the international research community, accelerating global efforts to develop diagnostics, vaccines and therapies.

The world got a head start because the Chinese scientific community had a robust disease-monitoring network in place to detect emerging flu strains, and had experienced SARS.

This wasn’t the case with the Ebola virus epidemic that ravaged West Africa from 2014 to 2016. The world wasn’t looking. By the time the virus was detected, it had already been circulating for months. The same holds true for the Zika virus, which we now believe was



circulating in South America for more than a year before being detected.

Viruses have a molecular “clock” that allows us to estimate when they first jumped to humans or entered a particular human population—genomics’ version of carbon dating. Based on the limited initial genetic diversity seen in the 2019-nCoV genome, we believe that scientists in China detected this outbreak within weeks of its start.

That speed of detection is unprecedented and crucial. Time is of the essence when it comes to responding to outbreaks. For Ebola and SARS, too much time had passed: the viruses mutated and became potentially more dangerous.

All three recent outbreaks demonstrate the power of genomics in guiding our response to these emerging threats. Current genomics technologies can tell us about the virus’s origins, spread and underlying biology. They also make it possible to have working diagnostics shared around the world within days.

But we need to leverage these genomic tools and dramatically increase our capabilities. China achieved near real-time

response because it had the infrastructure in place; most countries in the Global South, which are disproportionately impacted by viral outbreaks, do not. Most countries and most U.S. states still do not have the capability to detect 2019-nCoV on-site.

The 2019-nCoV epidemic not only underscores the need to increase our investment in genomics, diagnostics and information technology, but also the importance of incorporating them into our routine health practices.

We’re still a long way from controlling 2019-nCoV, and a painful human toll may still lie ahead. And while the world pays close attention to 2019-nCoV, around 100 or more other outbreaks are reported every year, and Ebola is still devastating the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Let’s hope that we all learn from this experience to build the worldwide systems we need to react quickly, no matter the threat.

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*Sabeti, a TIME 100 honoree, is a member of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard*



*Travelers in the arrivals halls at New York City-area airports in early February*

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## **LESSONS FROM EBOLA**

**By Dr. Peter Piot**

We should not be surprised by this new coronavirus, but are we ready for a potential pandemic?

Early action is critical to stemming outbreaks. Look no further than the glaring failures in the initial responses to HIV, and to Ebola in West Africa.

The International Health Regulations’ all-or-nothing approach must reform. In most emergencies, there is a spectrum of alerts—think of hurricanes with levels of severity from Category 1 to Category 5—and it should not be a binary decision for health.

Receiving less attention is the unprecedented threat 2019-nCoV poses to Africa, a continent battling multiple outbreaks, including the world’s second largest-ever Ebola epidemic. The silver lining is the recently established Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which is working to enhance preparedness and response.

The 2014 Ebola outbreak highlighted a failure in the R&D system to tackle infectious diseases that affect relatively smaller populations in poorer countries. This is why the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) was created, and it has issued three contracts to develop vaccines against 2019-nCoV.

Where we have an effective vaccine, we must move from an expensive reactive response to a proactive one, vaccinating frontline workers to ensure the first line of defense is not paralyzed.

This outbreak reminds me more of a new flu epidemic than of SARS. More transmissible but, from early data at least, lower mortality.

We do know how to stop pandemics: more international collaboration, community engagement and knowledge sharing.

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*Piot, a TIME Person of the Year, is director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*

HEALTH

## THE RACE FOR A VACCINE AGAINST THIS VIRUS, AND THE ONES COMING AFTER

By Alice Park

WHEN CHINESE RESEARCHERS PUBLICLY posted the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus, scientists got busy. Nearly a dozen pharmaceutical companies launched programs to develop drugs or vaccines against the new virus, 2019-nCoV. Both are needed, but vaccines are preferable to drugs, since immunizing people against infections is the best way to prevent spread of the disease and protect entire populations. Members of the infectious-disease team at the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) immediately went to work on their vaccine; they alerted researchers at Moderna Therapeutics, based in Cambridge, Mass., to be ready in three months to manufacture the first promising candidate for testing and, if the vaccine proved safe and effective, to ramp up production for however many doses would be needed to protect the public.

That's not a lot of time, but Moderna may have a new way of hot-wiring the laborious development process to meet that deadline.

2019-nCoV belongs to the coronavirus family, which includes SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome), which were responsible for two of the more deadly epidemics in the past two decades. While vaccines are the strongest weapons that health officials have in preventing pandemics, they take time to develop. Traditional methods require growing large amounts of virus or bacteria, which takes months. Researchers then either kill or compromise the microbes so they can't cause disease anymore, or they turn these microbes into production factories

to churn out huge amounts of viral or bacterial proteins. Either way, the goal is to set off the immune system's alarms indicating that foreign and unwelcome characters have launched an infection. Once the body sees these microbial red flags, immune cells target them or make antibodies that mark them for destruction; these cells and antibodies then remain as sentries for recognizing future invasions by the same microscopic marauders.



Empty beds at a Wuhan exhibition center, among several facilities retrofitted into hospitals

Researchers at Moderna, rather than growing and using the coronavirus itself, are packing their vaccine with mRNA—the genetic material that comes from DNA and makes proteins. Moderna's idea is to load its coronavirus vaccine with mRNA that codes for coronavirus proteins that NIH scientists have identified as most likely to trigger alarms for the human immune system. Immune cells in the lymph can process that mRNA and start making the proteins in just the right way for

other immune cells to recognize and attack them. Dr. Stephen Hoge, president of Moderna, says, "mRNA is really like a software molecule in biology. So our vaccine is like the software program to the body, which then goes and makes the [viral] proteins that can generate an immune response."

IT CAN ALSO be scaled up quickly—a necessity as new diseases emerge and move swiftly through unprotected populations. Now the researchers at Moderna are scrambling to debug the genetic software, ensuring that the final mRNA product for their strongest vaccine (along with a handful of backups) is as biologically stable and reliable as possible. Within a

few weeks, when satisfactory mRNA is made, it will become the key component of the vaccine that will be tested on people. The work is being funded by the recently formed Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, a group of public and private organizations dedicated to speeding development of new vaccines.

If the vaccine is effective in generating strong immune reactions against this coronavirus, it could still take months to complete testing. But it could serve as a template for other

vaccines against the next, as-yet-unknown coronaviruses that might emerge in coming decades. Once the scientists know the genetic makeup of a virus, they can quickly pick out the specific proteins it uses to make people sick and create the mRNA coding for those proteins to put into a vaccine. "Fundamentally and conceptually, it would not be a big deal to do that," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, tells TIME. "We would be ahead of the game." And with newly emerging viruses, that could mean the difference between a local outbreak and a global pandemic. □

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# L O N G

# R O A D

# H O M E

At 71, James Taylor  
looks back—  
and settles in for  
an encore

BY RAISA BRUNER

IT'S A DREARY AFTERNOON, SO JAMES Taylor is building us a fire. First he drags a bucket of kindling into the living room of his sprawling western Massachusetts house. Then he kneels on the rug in front of the hearth and begins, with deliberate precision, to chop up a few choice pieces of wood with a hatchet. Once the fire is crackling, he slowly unfolds himself into a standing position—all six-plus feet of him, still lanky and imposing at 71—and settles into a plush armchair. It's the kind of scene that, in any other household, would be soundtracked by Taylor's own music: the calming strains of "Carolina in My Mind" or the bittersweet tenderness of "Fire and Rain."

That Taylor has ended up here—happily making music at the studio he built on this property, surrounded by his twin teen sons, wife of 19 years Kim, and an aging, wheezy pug, Ting—

is more of a surprise to him than you'd think. Today, Taylor is a Grammy winner, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer and recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors and Presidential Medal of Freedom. But 50 years ago, when he got his big break with his celebrated album *Sweet Baby James*, he was a lost 21-year-old teetering between stardom and self-destruction. Now he's looking back, excavating the dark corners of his childhood and youth in a new Audible Original memoir, *Break Shot*, that tracks his conflicted adolescence and path to becoming one of America's most memorable troubadours. He's also releasing his 19th album, a selection of acoustic reconstructions of old classics, many of them the Broadway show tunes on which he was raised.

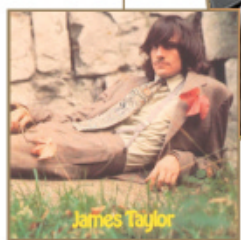
Taylor has spent years trying to understand why the process of growing up was so arduous for him, attempting to "re-parent" himself—and figuring out how to do better for the next generation. "A sort of radical thing happened to my family," he muses, "so I go back and re-examine it. How did this family—seemingly well-positioned—how did this family come off the rails the way it did?" It's fitting that now his twin sons are about to leave home, their departures underlining his quest to set his own youth to rest.

Back by the fire, Ting waddles over to Taylor and nestles by the low coffee table, crowded with books. Across the room, a Steinway grand piano is masked by framed family photos perched on its glossy expanse. Taylor sips a glass of water, sedate and at ease, the very picture of boomer success. All that's left is reckoning with the journey. "It has been," Taylor says, "a very interesting trip."

**IN 1971, TAYLOR** was a soft-voiced, long-haired guitarist who hopped from New York to London to the Grammys, shying from fame even as it transformed him into an icon. But his path was not preordained.

*Taylor's new audio-only memoir, Break Shot, narrates his complicated youth*

## ACROSS FIVE DECADES



1968

Releases eponymous first album



1971

Tops charts with Carole King's "You've Got a Friend"



1975

Releases his hit sixth album, *Gorilla*



1978

Performs with singer-songwriter Carly Simon, then his wife



1997

Releases *Hourglass*, his 14th album, which wins a Grammy



As a teen, Taylor was pulled out of high school and placed in a mental-health facility. "I luckily discovered music, and it sustained me," he says. Taylor's four siblings and parents were each struggling with their own addictions and distractions at the time too. "The thing is that teenage suicide is so tragic because it's so preventable, and it's not necessarily going to express itself again in your life," he says. "I think that in America particularly we don't pay enough attention to that period of time and how to shepherd young people through it." Music saved him from his darkest impulses, but it was also a radical shift, taking him from a traditional life into the free-for-all of a creative career. "I basically stripped away all of my family's expectations for me. I made myself free. It was scary. And it was dangerous too. The thought of one of my kids doing what I had done when I was 17 years old—" He whistles softly. Taylor headed straight to New York City's East Village after graduating, ending up as a Washington Square Park busker. He leapfrogged soon after to the U.K., where the Beatles signed him to Apple Records, launching what would be a prolific career.

Ever since, Taylor has been a mainstay in American rock and pop culture. He worked with Paul McCartney, Carole

King, Joni Mitchell and, famously, Carly Simon; he's joined Yo-Yo Ma onstage and been featured with Ma's bluegrass group for their Goat Rodeo Sessions, recorded at his studio. And he's connected with the next generation, performing with Taylor Swift, recording a song with Charlie Puth and supporting Barack Obama at political events. He's turned into a reliable mainstay of our musical culture, as well as the sound of lullabies and quiet evenings.

But mixed in over his early decades were regular relapses into addiction and bouts of treatment. "We get a certain

'I never trusted the celebrity aspect. I knew that that was a trap, and inevitably it would betray you.'

programming by the way we're brought into the world. Sometimes that programming is broken. It's inappropriate, somehow; it doesn't work. Then we have to examine ourselves and our upbringing, and become aware of it so that we can change it as much as is possible," he reflects. That attempt at working through his weaknesses played out in public as his music. "It's very self-centered, my art. It's very selfish and personal. But this is what we do," he shrugs. "What you learn is that everybody is self-involved. I think all life is. I've always just presented myself. Sometimes that's embarrassing, sometimes it's too much." But most of the time, people have found solace in his tender, bleeding-heart balladry; his last album in 2015 bested even Taylor Swift, who was named after him, on the *Billboard* chart.

These days Taylor is given to creating art that goes beyond the personal. "That initial mission of self-expression that is so explosive and so powerful—that doesn't last forever," he says. Tumult has given way to craft. Earlier in the day, Taylor poured a cup of coffee—his third—and showed me around the barn studio he designed and built, all light timber and colorful tapestries. In the dripping forest outside, he said, he'd seen black bears and fisher-cats. Inside, the studio buzzed



1997

Joins Aretha Franklin at Bill Clinton's Inaugural gala



2000

Is inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by Paul McCartney



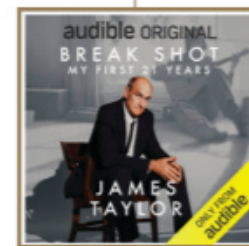
2015

*Before This World* tops the *Billboard* 200 albums chart



2015

Receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom



2020

Releases Audible Original memoir *Break Shot*

with crew moving gear through the lofted space, decorated with sidewalk art from a trip to Brazil, faded old couches and dorm-style lamps. Post-Its—rearranged track listings—filled whole walls, and a skeleton, twisted into a funny pose, perched atop the grand piano.

Taylor eagerly credits the A-list musicians he worked with in the making of *American Standard*, his new recording that rebuilds classics like “Moon River” and “The Surrey With the Fringe on Top” from the ground up. Taylor likes to talk about process; he lights up as he explains why these covers matter to him. “When you discover what the composer originally intended, and then when you take that further,” he explains, “there’s nothing that feels better.” He wants to keep these standards alive—because music, he insists, “is a human language that we manipulate, but it’s also true to the laws of physics. It gives our individuated consciousness—the prison of the self—the slip.” His compulsion to create was a life preserver as a teen, and still shapes him.

**TAYLOR’S UNDERSTANDING** of music as a tool to manage mental health is particularly resonant right now. Much of today’s pop music is deeply confessional, outlining anxieties, fears and pain: a new

generation using art as a way out. The psychological effects of the threats of climatic, economic and political instability are all over Grammy winner Billie Eilish’s haunted lyricism, Lana Del Rey’s nihilistic balladry and Mac Miller’s introspective darkness. Similar societal forces—the environmental movement, the Vietnam War, civil rights protests—also shaped Taylor’s youth.

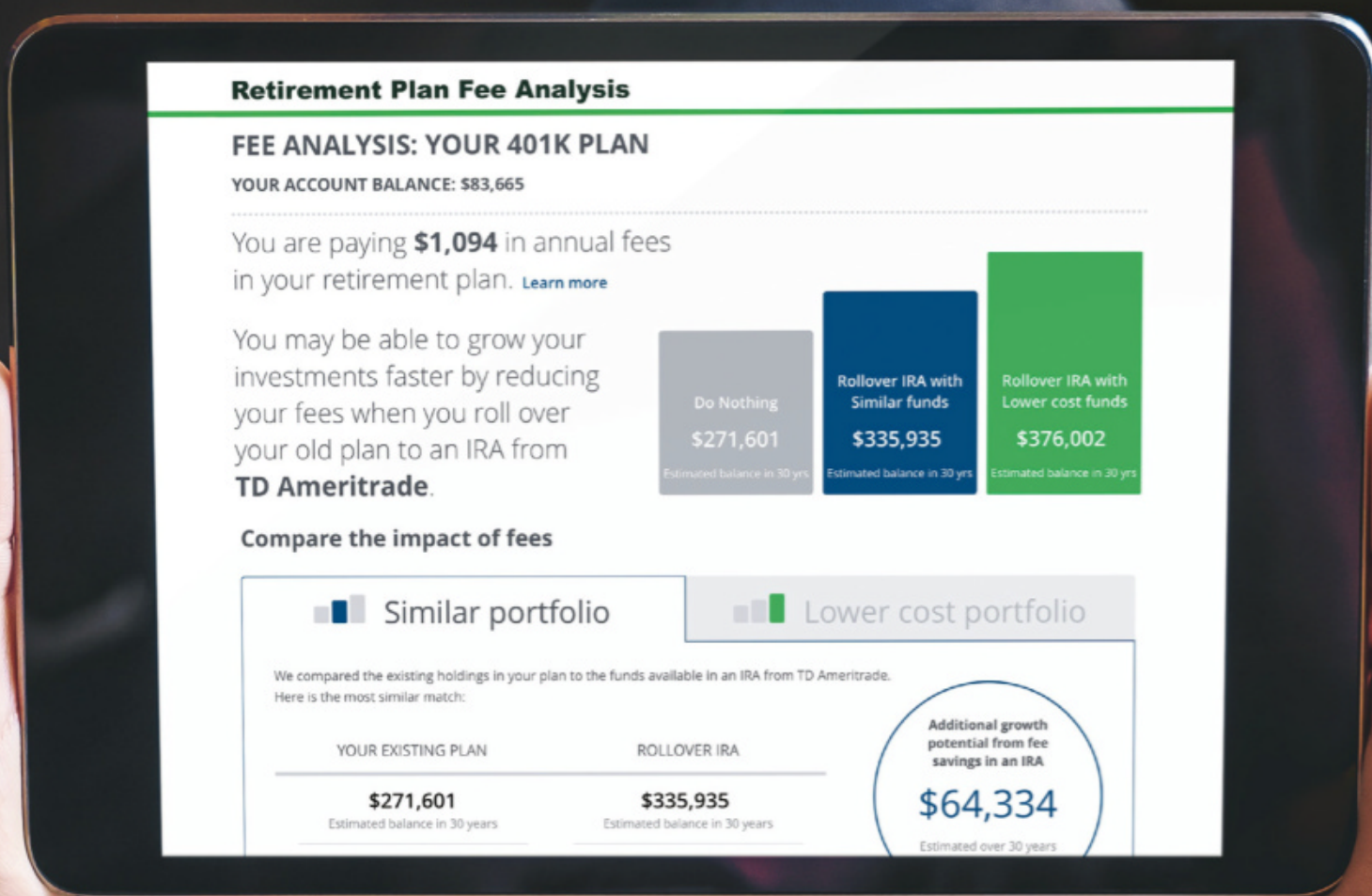
After coming of age into the “postwar baby bubble,” he became part of “that big demographic thing which communicated through its music and its art and its FM radio—and did really think that the world could change. And we did change it. Maybe 5%,” he says. Taylor has never seen himself as a protest artist, exactly. But he has stood for a set of progressive values that America is currently debating, as it did in the 1970s. Right now, he’s incensed by inaction in the face of climate change. “I think we should ration electricity. Or energy,” he suggests. “The thing about protecting the earth, about the great environmental crisis of humanity and our being a scourge on the biosphere, is that it could bring us together. Just like the war effort of WW II. But Jesus, who knows.”

Spend time with Taylor and the hours slip away in these kinds of conversations, narrated by the gentle, gravelly tenor of

his familiar voice. The fire burns merrily; his wife, whom he met when he played with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where she worked, stops by to check on Ting and chat about their sons’ looming college applications. But mostly, Taylor wants to talk about music, what it means to be an artist and how grateful he is to have a career based on craft. “I never trusted the celebrity aspect. I knew that that was a trap, and inevitably it would betray you.”

“Of course,” he says, “there is an end to it. And the end is in sight for me; I’m 71.” He predicts his touring days will wind down as the decade unfolds. His predecessors Leonard Cohen and David Bowie have passed; his peers Paul Simon and Elton John are stepping back, a generation bowing out.

Yet as the day darkens to evening, Taylor still has plenty to say. What does James Taylor represent? He spreads his hands wide: he’s never tried to be anyone but a guy with a guitar and something to get off his chest. Now that the fire of youth is gone, what’s left is wisdom and warmth and a willingness to look back and try to make changes. “There’s only a limited amount you’re going to be able to do,” he says, “but it’s the only hope there is.” □



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# Time Off

**CAGED BIRDS**  
Misogyny is built into our movies. Female-superhero films like *Birds of Prey* are struggling to break free



**INSIDE**

HIGH FIDELITY GETS A MODERN REIMAGINING

LOVE IS BLIND (BUT NOT REALLY) ON NETFLIX

JENNY OFFILL AWAKENS THE DREAD IN WEATHER

ILLUSTRATION BY YAO XIAO FOR TIME

## MOVIES

### Franchise feminism is all the rage. Or is it?

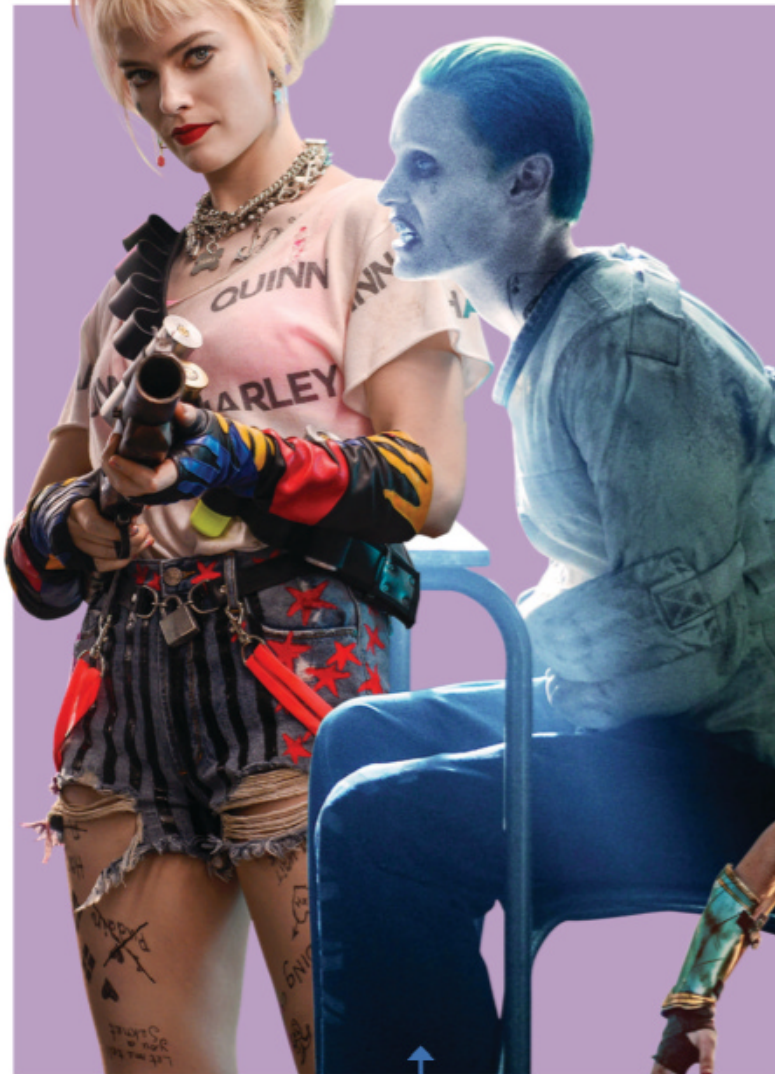
By Eliana Dockterman

**H**ARLEY QUINN IS AN UNLIKELY CHARACTER to try to transform into a feminist icon. The villain—and longtime girlfriend of a physically and emotionally abusive Joker—has been a troubling figure in the *Batman* animated TV series, comics and video games since she was introduced in 1992. Her suffering was frequently used as a punch line: in the popular 2009 video game *Arkham Asylum*, after the Dark Knight gets into an altercation with her, the Joker quips, “Slapping around Harley is my hobby.” Director David Ayer did little to revise that characterization in his critically reviled but commercially successful 2016 superhero movie *Suicide Squad*, Harley’s big-screen debut. The film fetishized her pain: Harley, played by Margot Robbie, sported a jacket reading PROPERTY OF THE JOKER.

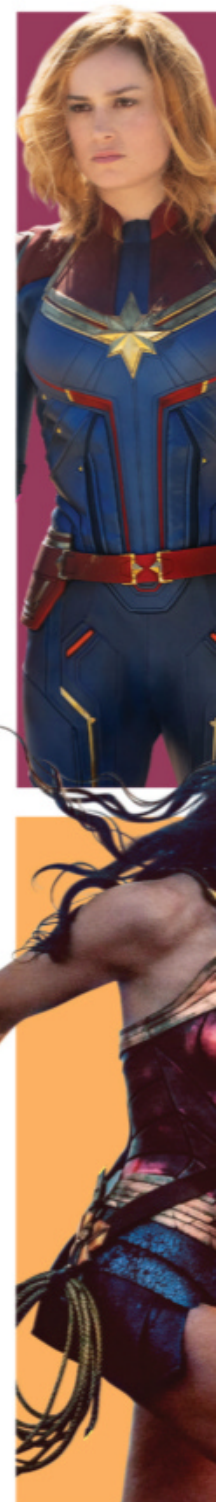
The new *Suicide Squad* spin-off *Birds of Prey*, directed by Cathy Yan, tries to wrench Harley away from that toxic past and create something empowering. Sometimes it succeeds, and when it does, it’s pretty fun. Whereas Ayer’s camera ogled Robbie’s behind, Yan’s concentrates on her face, which can turn from sweet to salty in an instant. Harley trades the stiletto boots she wore in *Suicide Squad* for sneakers (and later Rollerblades). And during one fight against a gang of Gotham goons, Harley sidles up to an ally, Jurnee Smollett-Bell’s Black Canary, and offers her a hair tie. It’s a practical, human moment that cements a relationship between the two women—and one that might never have occurred to the male filmmakers who have dominated the superhero genre until now. (It also answers a question that has vexed female moviegoers for decades: How are you supposed to fight with hair flying in your face?)

But Yan, despite her best intentions, is battling the problematic legacy of a best-selling character. The Clown Prince of Crime has been a major moneymaker for Warner Bros., the studio behind *Birds of Prey*: last year’s gritty *Joker* grossed more than \$1 billion, and its star Joaquin Phoenix is in line to become the second actor to win an Oscar for playing the role. (Heath Ledger was the first.) The Joker’s inclusion in *Birds of Prey* was an inevitable marketing decision. Even though he never actually shows his face, the movie is still haunted by the specter of Harley’s abuser.

*Birds of Prey* is framed as a breakup movie; it’s subtitled *And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn* (“... from the Joker” is implied). Harley performs every breakup cliché in the book: cutting her hair; eating ice cream straight from the carton; and adopting a pet to keep her company, albeit a hyena instead of a dog or cat. Even as Harley begins to establish her reputation as a supervillain in her own right, the Joker’s disembodied voice taunts her. Robbie produced the film; her production company’s worthy goal is to bring complicated women to the



HARLEY QUINN X THE JOKER



**‘That’s what happens when you have a female producer, director, writer ... it’s less male gaze—y.’**

**MARGOT ROBBIE,**  
to *Vogue*,  
on *Birds of Prey*

big screen with movies like *I, Tonya*. But like *Tonya Harding*, Harley Quinn has a lot of baggage.

**SEVERAL OTHER** female directors will soon face a similar dilemma. This year alone, an unprecedented five of the top 10 projected highest-grossing movies will be helmed by women: Yan’s *Birds of Prey*, Niki Caro’s *Mulan*, Cate Shortland’s *Black Widow*, Patty Jenkins’ *Wonder Woman 1984* and Chloé Zhao’s *The Eternals*. But making a female-led action movie is more complicated than handing women weapons and sprinkling girl-power phrases into the script. The massive franchises that now monopolize summer blockbuster season—Marvel, DC Comics, *Star Wars*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Mission: Impossible*, James Bond—

HARLEY QUINN: WARNER BROS.; CAPTAIN MARVEL, NICK FURY: MARVEL; EVERETT (5)



CAPTAIN MARVEL X NICK FURY

IRON MAN X BLACK WIDOW

WONDER WOMAN X BATMAN

Superheroes like Harley Quinn, Captain Marvel, Wonder Woman and Black Widow carry the baggage of the men who preceded them

were built primarily by straight white men. They chose the costumes. They devised the love interests. They cast the female characters as Madonnas or whores. When women are handed a small piece of these franchises, they face an uphill battle to shoehorn feminist narratives into a space that was never designed for them.

This has resulted in wonky work-arounds, like convoluted time-jumping plots to explain why incredibly powerful superheroes like Captain Marvel or Wonder Woman were missing from their respective cinematic universes for nearly a decade. In reality, their delayed appearance can be attributed to Hollywood's anxiety that audiences wouldn't pay to watch female superheroes.

In the case of *Black Widow*, Marvel waited so long to give Scarlett

Johansson her own spin-off movie that her character was killed off in the franchise in the run-up to this year's film. Her solo movie—set in the past—will have to contend not only with her eventual death but also with the long history of harassment the character has endured. The spy was introduced to the franchise in 2010's *Iron Man 2* and immediately dubbed a “very expensive sexual-harassment lawsuit” by the one other female character in the film. Offscreen, Johansson's co-star Jeremy Renner joked about the character's trysts with the other Avengers, calling her a “slut” in a viral interview.

Franchise mania may be fundamentally at odds with these films' much needed efforts to highlight powerful female figures. That puts studios in a bind: audiences have proved that they want to see female heroes with box-office smashes like *The Hunger Games*, *Frozen*, *Star Wars*, *Wonder Woman* and *Captain Marvel*. They're no longer satisfied with the status quo. And yet IP has also proved more profitable than original storytelling. Filmmakers are stuck grafting empowerment onto narratives that are inherently sexist.

**CRITICS AND EVEN PEOPLE** working within Hollywood often deride

comic-book movies as unserious—or, as Martin Scorsese recently put it, “not cinema”—and dismiss their politics. But they remain the most-watched movies in the world and thus can have a profound impact on how audiences perceive power. Studies by the Women's Media Center have found that seeing strong women onscreen boosts girls' self-confidence: little girls who watch Rey become a Jedi in the most recent *Star Wars* films may aspire to be something beyond a love interest or the sidekick in their own lives. And little boys watching it may learn to see female empowerment in a different light than previous generations of men.

In an effort to change the cinematic landscape, some producers have jump-started a movement to acquire IP unburdened by the male perspective. Reese Witherspoon's production company has scooped up books written by women, like *Gone Girl*, *Big Little Lies* and *Little Fires Everywhere*, for female-fronted adaptations, and female filmmakers repeatedly return to works like *Little Women* and *Emma* because of their timeless appeal. Yet persuading men to watch can be a challenge—male members of the Academy reportedly weren't attending screenings of Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* before Oscar voting closed. And these stories are airing on TV or getting smaller distributions in theaters, which means they may never achieve Marvel-level numbers.

Very few stories written by women get the studio push: J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series and Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* books are exceptions, though, notably, Rowling's two movie franchises have centered on male heroes, and both Rowling's and Collins' movies have all been directed by men. But there are plenty of acclaimed female genre authors whose work has never been adapted, and many of their stories feature women of color who still rarely get to play the hero onscreen. Hollywood might consider the untapped gold mine of female-authored beloved intellectual property created by Octavia Butler, Ursula K. Le Guin or N.K. Jemisin for their sprawling cinematic universes. That would probably be easier than trying to “emancipate” Harley Quinn. □





REVIEW

## In a spin on *High Fidelity*, Kravitz covers Cusack

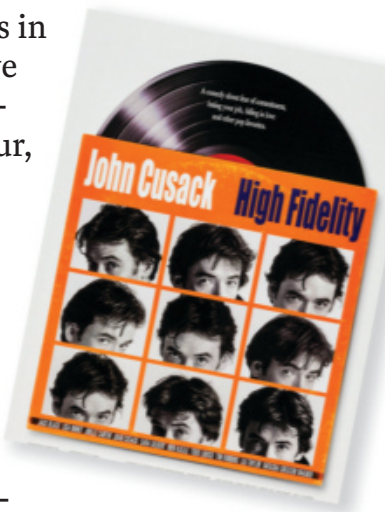
By Judy Berman

FOR ALL ITS MUSIC-GEEK DELIGHTS, *HIGH FIDELITY* WASN'T exactly a showcase for complex female characters. Released in 2000, Stephen Frears' adaptation of the Nick Hornby novel about a self-absorbed record-store owner (John Cusack's Rob) who sabotages his relationships features a roll call of cool Gen X women: Catherine Zeta-Jones, Lili Taylor, Sara Gilbert, Cusack's sister Joan. They are girlfriends, exes, helpful pals of exes—and all either victims of men's arrested development or vehicles for their maturation. Lisa Bonet shows up as a nightclub singer Rob lures into bed by falsely portraying himself as a "sensitive guy."

So it's divine justice that Hulu's 10-episode *High Fidelity* reboot stars Zoë Kravitz, the daughter of Bonet and rocker Lenny Kravitz. Her character's name is still Rob (short for Robin); she still owns a record store (in Brooklyn, rather than the film's Chicago); and she still drowns her romantic woes in sad songs and self-pity. But Kravitz, who's also an executive producer, looks almost identical to her mother in the original. And while it's hard to imagine rooting for Cusack's dour, womanizing Rob in 2020, this revision works.

When we meet Kravitz's Rob, she's a year into mourning Kingsley Ben-Adir's Mac, the newest addition to her Desert Island All-Time Top 5 Most Memorable Heartbreaks list. Bent on proving she's finally over him, she goes on a date with the kind, if slightly basic, Clyde (Jake Lacy). For him, their hookup feels like the beginning of something great; for her, it's just another one-night stand. So she strings him along, denying their chemistry and his kindness by pining for Mac, hooking up with a much younger musician and rehashing what went wrong in

*Frears' film has been adapted before: in 2006, a musical version debuted on Broadway and toured regionally*



< Big Little Lies star Kravitz puts a new face on a modern classic

every past relationship.

Rob's sole source of stability is the record shop she runs with two employees who are also her only friends. Like Jack Black's pugnacious clerk in the movie with a dash of chaotic Tracy Morgan charm, Cherise (Da'Vine Joy Randolph, hilarious) is a singer too busy boasting to make music. And Simon (David H. Holmes) is Rob's gentle ex-boyfriend, who turned out to be gay.

**IF YOU KNOW** anything about New York real estate or the streaming economy, it will be hard to suspend your disbelief that a 29-year-old who isn't independently wealthy could keep her over-staffed record store afloat. Happily, the effort pays off. For music lovers, the show assembles just the right mixtape of genres, eras, singles and deep cuts—from artists like Whitney Houston, David Bowie and the Replacements—in a thoughtful soundtrack overseen by pop's pre-eminent omnivore, Questlove.

What's even more satisfying is how a change in casting shifts the meaning of an old story. Gender-flipped reboots tend to offer female-empowerment bromides and little else, but there's a lot more going on in *High Fidelity*. We get to see women, queer people and people of color for whom music matters just as much as it does for the archetypal straight white male record collector.

In a blow against essentialism, these characters are multifaceted humans before they're representatives of their identity. An episode about Simon integrates the punk bands he prefers to divas.

Smart, sad, difficult and relatable, Kravitz's Rob is neither a standard flirty, klutzy rom-com girl nor a role model. In this *High Fidelity*, it isn't just guys who get to be snobby, caddish or self-destructive.

"I don't wanna lose the person I used to be," a man in the midst of a bender whines to his pregnant wife in one episode. "I like that guy." Her glorious reply: "I don't wanna lose the guy I used to be, either."

**HIGH FIDELITY** premieres Feb. 14 on Hulu

HIGH FIDELITY: HULU; POSTER: EVERETT; LOCKE & KEY; LOVE IS BLIND: NETFLIX



Nina (Stanchfield) gets haunted

REVIEW

## Unlocking a family mystery

Adapted from award-winning comics, Netflix epic *Locke & Key* follows a family in the wake of its patriarch's murder. Hoping for a fresh start, Nina Locke (*Scandal*'s Darby Stanchfield) moves her three children—teens Tyler (Connor Jessup) and Kinsey (Emilia Jones), plus their kid brother Bode (Jackson Robert Scott)—into their dad's childhood home. It looks like your typical Victorian murder mansion, but there's a twist. Hidden inside are several keys. Each has a magical power, like the ability to transport a person anywhere in the world. And evil forces are trying their damndest to steal them.

*Locke & Key* doesn't defy genres so much as collect them. Bode stars in a boys' adventure story; his siblings in a teen drama. Probing her late husband's secrets, Nina stumbles into a psychological thriller. It's fair to wonder who the intended audience is for a series that features both a woman choking her sex partner to death and a little boy flying around like an adorable ghost. But those who don't mind the odd tone—and somewhat shallow depiction of trauma—will find solid acting, sharp dialogue, lush set design and the rare fantasy narrative that feels fresh. —J.B.

**LOCKE & KEY** premieres Feb. 7 on Netflix

REVIEW

## A double-blind 'experiment' in love

IF YOU EVER HAVE THE CHANCE TO appear on a reality show that bills itself as a social experiment, run in the opposite direction. Heartbreak and humiliation, if not grievous bodily harm, are the hallmarks of these series. Netflix's new "experiment" *Love Is Blind* is no different.

In the tradition of risible cable hits *Married at First Sight* and *90 Day Fiancé*, and hosted, for some reason, by Nick Lachey (best known as Jessica Simpson's ex) and his second wife, actor Vanessa Lachey, the show profiles several couples on the fast track to marriage. The twist is that participants don't lay eyes on their beloveds until they're engaged; each "date" consists solely of a chat between one man and one woman in separate rooms. (As is too often the case with dating shows, same-sex couples aren't part of the fantasy.) The hypothesis is that singles who aren't thinking with their libidos will be better equipped to find lasting compatibility.

It's intriguing to watch them get to know each other this way, though the 10-part series rushes through these early encounters to the extent that I often struggled to see how they developed such strong feelings. By Episode 3, a critical mass of

participants—all of them cute, to everyone's relief—are affianced and sent on a romantic beach getaway to fine-tune their chemistry. Later, they return to the "real world" to cohabit, in what is easily the most compelling—and redeeming—stretch of the show, one that observes how couples who committed in a vacuum struggle to integrate into each other's lives, navigating age, race and class differences.

What ruins it is an extremely reality-TV climax in which each participant decides at the altar—in painstakingly selected bridal wear and in front of as many friends and family as are willing to indulge them—whether they're really going to marry someone they've known for only five weeks. Unlike *The Bachelor*, in which every season starts out catty and tacky but grows more earnest and romantic as the field of suitors narrows, *Love Is Blind* opens with a promising, almost high-minded idea before tacking on a schlocky ending. There are couples to root for, sure, some of whom I grew to really like. But I can't imagine I'll be the only viewer to come out of the finale caked in vicarious embarrassment and desperate for a shower. —J.B.

**LOVE IS BLIND** premieres Feb. 13 on Netflix



Women on *Love Is Blind* prepare to fall hard for men they've never seen



**THRILLER**

## Getting away with murder

When Graham Moore won the Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar for *The Imitation Game* in 2015, he revealed in his speech that as a teen, he'd felt so acutely like he didn't belong that he attempted suicide. Reflecting on how far he'd come since then, he encouraged young people who feel like outsiders to hold on and stay weird.

It's fitting then that the best-selling author's latest novel explores what happens when people are made to feel isolated and different. *The Holdout* finds the jurors from an infamous murder trial reconvening for a true-crime docuseries on the case. A decade has passed since the jury, convinced in particular by one juror named Maya Seale, found a teacher not guilty of murdering his teenage student, leading to ongoing harassment and blame for their decision. Now, one of the jurors has evidence that can prove they made the wrong call. But he's murdered before he can reveal it—and Maya, now a defense attorney, is the only suspect.

Flipping between 2009 and 2019 in a tantalizingly paced narrative, Moore unveils the truth about both cases piece by piece, probing the jurors' backstories, the controversial verdict and why one of their own turned up dead. In unpacking the legal strategies of both of the accused, Moore points to the gaping holes in the criminal-justice system and the crippling powerlessness that comes with having to prove one's innocence. —A.G.

**FICTION**

## Weathering the 21st century storm

By Annabel Gutterman

THE NARRATOR OF JENNY OFFILL'S latest novel, *Weather*, is anxious about a lot of things. There's her brother, a recovering drug addict, who inserts himself into her life constantly, to her husband's dismay. There's her precocious young son, who has just switched elementary schools to one that does not allow parents to walk their children into the building. And then, of course, there is the existential dread that comes with working for a podcast in which the host answers paranoid listeners' questions about how to prepare for the end of the world.

Though the world may not be ending quite yet, it often feels like it for librarian Lizzie Benson. In her 2014 hit *Dept. of Speculation*, Offill animates her overwhelmed protagonist through brief, energetic scenes that capture the ironies of modern life, and she continues in this mode, to great effect, in *Weather*. In one such scene, Lizzie cleans mouse droppings from her spice rack with paper towels. But then, laden with guilt over paper waste, she remarks, "I've already undone all the good I'd done in the world until now."

After the 2016 election, Lizzie's nervous energy is only amplified as podcast listeners send increasingly urgent questions about how to ready themselves for an impending doomsday. Their unsettling inquiries are scattered throughout *Weather*, enhancing its already frenetic structure. The effect is an eerily realistic reflection on what it feels like to exist in a bubble of nonstop information.

As Offill showcased in

Weather is Offill's third novel, after *Dept. of Speculation* and *Last Things*

**'I've already undone all the good I'd done in the world until now.'**

**LIZZIE BENSON,**  
narrator of *Weather*

*Dept. of Speculation*, which dissects the intricacies of a marriage over several years, her power comes from her tight, spare prose. This proves particularly poignant whenever Lizzie interacts with her son, who makes delightful observations about a world he's coming to understand. As the duo goes out to eat at a diner, they see a sign that reads NO ANIMALS ALLOWED. "But we are animals, right?" the boy asks his mother.

The plot intensifies with familial drama as Lizzie's brother demands more of her support, which in turn puts a strain on some of her most important relationships. And as these dramas play out, *Weather* evolves from a darkly funny commentary on surviving the 21st century to a timeless examination of the challenges that come with loving and living with the people we hold closest. □



MOORE: MATT SAYLES



“When  
my mom  
was diagnosed with cancer,  
I wanted her  
to have access to  
the best  
treatments  
available.”

**SONEQUA MARTIN-GREEN**  
Stand Up To Cancer Ambassador

Photo By  
MATT SAYLES

## THAT'S WHY I'M SO PASSIONATE ABOUT EXPANDING AWARENESS OF CLINICAL TRIALS

You want the best treatments for your loved ones. My mom's cancer was treated using a therapy made possible by clinical trials. I want all people diagnosed with cancer to have access to the treatments that will make them long-term survivors, like my mom.

Cancer clinical trials may be the right option for you or a loved one. The more information you have about clinical trials, the more empowered you will be to seek out your best treatments.

Learn more at [StandUpToCancer.org/ClinicalTrials](https://StandUpToCancer.org/ClinicalTrials)



# 8 Questions

**Waad al-Kateab** The Syrian documentary filmmaker on journeying through life and loss in her Oscar-nominated *For Sama*

**Y**our documentary has been nominated for an Oscar, and won a BAFTA for best documentary. Did you expect this reaction when making the film? We were working on the film for two years, and we were told by so many people that no one would come to watch a Syrian film, that people are tired of Syria and want more entertaining subjects. We have been overwhelmed by reactions from people all over the world, and I couldn't believe that we were nominated for an Oscar. It makes me proud and grateful for everyone who supported me.

**We see the war in Syria develop through your eyes. You were an economics student at the time. Why did you start filming on your phone in 2011?** To be very honest, the only thing that came to my mind was how important it was to capture anything. During the first two years when the demonstrations in Aleppo were peaceful, we were just trying to do our roles as protesters. We were just trying to organize ourselves as a movement and trying to build evidence, because at that time the regime was denying everything that was happening.

**How did the people around you react to your filming?** In 2013, I started filming daily life. My friends were kind of annoyed by the camera at the time, and they didn't really understand why I was going out to film a massacre, or film them eating or having a nice time. They would tell me to stop.

**What changed?** I lost my best friends, Gaith and Omar. It gave us the feeling that we didn't know when we would be killed. After Gaith was killed, we were all sitting together and I showed everyone the footage I had. Since then, no one told me not to film. We really believed that this was the only way to tell the story because we never thought that we would make it out.

**“THERE'S SO MUCH OF MY FOOTAGE THAT I WON'T USE FOR MEDIA, BUT FOR EVIDENCE OF CRIMES”**



**Your footage archive spanned 500 hours and was filmed from 2011 to 2016. Was it a conscious decision to jump back and forth in time in *For Sama*?** If it was truly chronological, it wasn't going to reflect the experience at all. We wanted people to understand that there was a reason for all the hard decisions we took, and it was because of hope, love and great moments that we lived through and shared with the people of Aleppo. The flashbacks give an understanding of what we went through.

**You gave birth to your daughter Sama in 2016. What do you think is the impact of viewing conflict through the eyes of women?** I lived through that situation. I was a mother and I was one of that community, so I really understood and could see all the details of that life. The way that the film started, just with one person with no equipment, shows that it was a journey over five years, with many struggles. If I knew that I was going to survive, I wouldn't film some of the things that I did, or speak to some of the people in the way I did.

**You play several roles in this film: journalist, volunteer, parent. Was it difficult to balance those responsibilities?** There was no balance. Day by day, I was just trying to do everything I could, for my daughter, for my husband, for myself, for the filming and the situation. There's so much of my footage that I won't use for media, but for evidence of crimes.

**What do you hope people take away from *For Sama*?** My story finished three years ago when I left [for the U.K.] with my family. We survived and we are safe, but there are more than 3 million people still in Syria suffering from the same circumstances. I hope people join our action campaign against the bombing of hospitals and stand in solidarity with Syria. —SUYIN HAYNES



*I wish to train  
with astronauts*  
**Addison, 8**  
Wilms tumor

WHERE THERE'S A *wish* THERE'S A WAY.

*For children battling a critical illness, a wish is more than a dream. It can be a turning point that can give them the emotional and physical strength to keep going.*

.....  
**WISHES NEED YOU ★ WISH.ORG/GIVE**  
.....

**Make-A-Wish.**