

# TIME

## BUILDING A BETTER BERNIE

ON THE ROAD  
WITH A REBOOTED  
SANDERS CAMPAIGN

by  
ANAND  
GIRIDHARADAS



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A painting of a  
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a star off the E.U.  
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Banksy, in Dover,  
England, on  
May 27

Photograph by  
Vernon Yuen/  
NurPhoto—Getty  
Images

**ON THE COVER:**  
Photograph  
by David  
Brandon  
Geeting for  
TIME

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# Conversation



## WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT...

**THE EQUALIZER** Readers learned about more than just the Women's World Cup from Sean Gregory's June 3/June 10 cover story on women's professional soccer.

John R. Clark of Boulder, Colo., said the story provided insight into not just the athletes but also the world of the sport and "soccer games, past and future." The issue of the gender pay gap in the sport prompted an outcry from readers like BuzzFeed news reporter Molly Hensley-Clancy, who said her tweet about the story was "composed in rage."

"My daughter is presenting this article to her 5th grade class to bring awareness," @DarbyDoug tweeted. Jeff Woll of Mason, Ohio, however, wished the article's discussion of wage differences had gotten deeper into how the men's and women's teams negotiated their contracts.

**IN A NOWHERE LAND** In the same issue, James Nachtwey's photos from Bangladesh and Feliz Solomon's accompanying story on the fight for citizenship rights for

Rohingya Muslims, who fled there from persecution in Myanmar, were "heart-wrenching," wrote Susan Kuhlmann of Omaha. "It is important for all of us to be made aware of these brutalities," she added. Art E.

**'This is beyond sad, and the world does nothing.'**

CHRIS JOHNSON, Facebook

Anthony of Grand Prairie, Texas, appreciated the "sobering" and "insightful" articles on "communities largely ignored in the Western press," also singling out the feature in that issue on ISIS child soldiers.

**'Can't wait for this in the mail and to display in my classroom.'**

@HALLESCOLETTE, on Twitter

**BEHIND THE SCENES** For this week's cover story (page 20), TIME editor at large Anand Giridharadas (*below center*) shadowed Bernie Sanders, the U.S. Senator and 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, through eight states. TIME senior producer Francesca Trianni (*left*) joined them in Ohio to produce an accompanying video. Watch it at [time.com/bernie-video](http://time.com/bernie-video)



**QUIZ** Sanders is one in a crowded group of hopefuls for the 2020 Democratic nomination for President. Test your knowledge of the field with TIME.com's candidate quiz, and see if you can name 24 of the top contenders (including the three at left). Try it at [time.com/democrats-quiz](http://time.com/democrats-quiz)



## Back in TIME D-Day at 75

"The commander of a U.S. base in England said to his airmen: 'May I have your attention, please? This is what we have been waiting for. This is invasion morning.'" So began TIME's report on the Normandy landings of June 6, 1944. Read the full story at [time.com/vault](http://time.com/vault)



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# Hello. *antioxidants.*

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*The power of pomegranates and the polyphenol antioxidants that fight free radicals.*

**SUPER FRUIT WITH SUPER POWER.** We've all heard about antioxidants and how important they are to include in our diet through whole, natural foods. Here we take a deeper look at what makes antioxidants in pomegranates so unique.

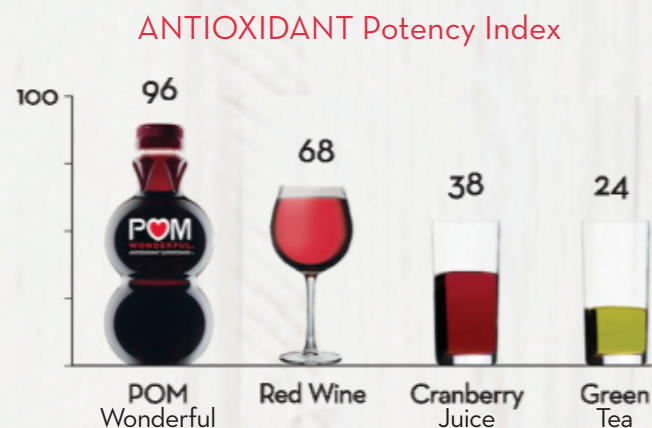
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# For the Record

**COMMENCEMENT 2019** Along with longer days and warmer nights, springtime in the U.S. brings an opportunity for big names to offer big advice to the nation's graduates. Here are some of this year's best words of wisdom—and whimsy—so far:

**'Who said that all of who you are has to be good? All of who you are is who you are.'**

**VIOLA DAVIS**, actor, at Barnard College's commencement at Radio City Music Hall in New York City



**'Life is going to give you a bad turn ... It's just a test. And look at all the tests you passed just to get here.'**

**CYNDI LAUPER**, singer, at Northern Vermont University in Johnson, Vt.



**'Wherever life takes you, take a servant's attitude.'**

**MIKE PENCE**, Vice President of the United States, at Taylor University in Upland, Ind.

**'If you want to save the world, you don't need to be James Bond.'**

**PIERCE BROSNAN**, actor, at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa.

**'There is no beginning without an end, no day without night, no life without death. Our whole life consists of the difference, the space between beginning and ending.'**

**ANGELA MERKEL**, Chancellor of Germany, at Harvard University

**'No matter how tough you may be, everybody needs to ask for help at some point in their lives.'**

**J.J. WATT**, Houston Texans defensive end, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison

**'Ask for it, and if you don't get what you need, ask for it again.'**

**STACEY ABRAMS**, former Georgia house minority leader and 2018 Georgia gubernatorial candidate, at American University's School of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C.

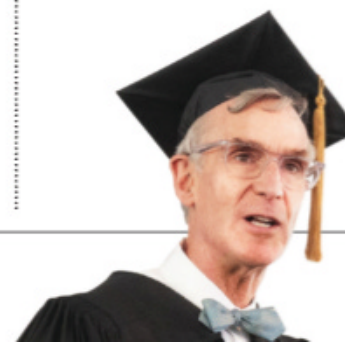
**'Don't use a fake ID to buy wine and then try to pay with a check.'**

**KATIE HOLMES**, actor, at the University of Toledo in Ohio



**'Nowadays we, by that I mean you, are going to have to steer our spaceship, take charge of Earth.'**

**BILL NYE**, host of *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, at Goucher College in Towson, Md.



DAVIS: KATHERINE GERBERICH—COLUMBIA DAILY SPECTATOR; LAUPER: BRENT HALLENBECK—FREE PRESS/USA TODAY NETWORK/REUTERS; NYE: ROB FERRELL—GOUCHER COLLEGE; HOLMES: UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO



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# The Brief

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white lab coat and blue nitrile gloves. They are squeezing a yellow, viscous substance through a filter into a glass funnel. The substance is dripping into a glass beaker below. The background is blurred, showing a white lab coat and a metal stand.

## DRUG OF CHOICE

At a California facility, high-CBD cannabis extract is squeezed through a filter to produce a salve

## INSIDE

TRANSFER OF POWER  
TURNS VIOLENT IN SUDAN

GEORGIA'S ABORTION LAW  
AFFECTS ITS FILM INDUSTRY

A CHEF WHO RESHAPED  
NEW ORLEANS

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAUGHN AND JOHN

# The Brief Opener

## HEALTH

### CBD goes to Washington

By Elijah Wolfson

**T**HE CANNABIS PLANT CONTAINS MORE than 100 compounds known as cannabinoids. Of them, one—cannabidiol, or CBD—presents the U.S. with unique potential in public health and business, as well as a good deal of political and legal confusion. That much was clear at the Silver Spring, Md., campus of the Food and Drug Administration on May 31, as over 120 people spoke to a standing-room crowd at the agency's first public hearing for information about cannabis-derived products—a number that was whittled down by lottery from the 400 who applied to testify.

Backers say CBD has health benefits ranging from curing insomnia to relieving joint pain. Those claims remain unproved, but the CBD business in the U.S. has nevertheless tripled in the past three years; analysts project the industry will be worth over \$20 billion by 2022. But it occupies a legal gray area: local laws on cannabis apply to the compound, but thanks to hemp-friendly provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill, CBD products are generally legal if they're derived from hemp from a licensed grower and contain 0.3% or less of THC (a cannabinoid that, unlike CBD, can get you high). The compound can be found in products from gummies to muscle rubs, available online and maybe even at your local bookstore or burger joint.

And now the politics seems to be lining up behind it too. The farm lobby has been making its case—some two-thirds of U.S. hemp farming is in service of CBD—and both houses of Congress have issued letters telling the FDA it needs to change its approach to regulating the substance, given that the marketplace has already exploded.

The agency was set on a collision course with CBD last summer, when it approved GW Pharmaceuticals' prescription drug Epidiolex, which contains lab-synthesized CBD, for the treatment of a form of epilepsy. This creates a quandary: though commercially available CBD products are not the same as Epidiolex, many are marketed as having the same amount of CBD. But by law, FDA-approved medicines can't also be sold as dietary supplements or food additives. That means, in theory, the agency could enforce a ban on all those gummy bears and other edible CBD products currently on the market.

**YET THE FDA** hasn't stopped the CBD boom, which leads many to believe it considers the compound safe, if not necessarily beneficial. The World Health

Organization has stated that “no public health problems have been associated with the use of pure CBD,” and a mounting body of peer-reviewed evidence suggests the same.

So why not classify CBD as “generally recognized as safe,” like vitamin B12 or caffeine? Some analysts think the FDA is concerned about protecting the integrity of its drug-approval process. “If the FDA just said, ‘Never mind, we’ll make all CBD legal to be marketed as a dietary supplement,’ it would be a disincentive for pharmaceutical companies to continue to do clinical research and trials,” says Rod Kight, a North Carolina-based lawyer who represents CBD companies nationwide. An FDA spokesperson confirmed to TIME that the agency is “interested” in how the incentives for the development of cannabis-derived drugs could be affected if “the commercial availability of products with these compounds, such as foods and dietary supplements, were to become significantly more widespread.”

So the likeliest way forward may be a bifurcated path. On the first, more exclusive, route will be Epidiolex and other lab-made prescription drugs. Lining the other byway will be a bazaar of hemp-derived products—the gummies and muscle rubs. GW Pharmaceuticals, for one, has said it supports this model. “It’s already too late to put this genie back in the bottle,” Dr. Peter Lurie, head of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, says.

Even once the agency makes a decision, dealing with the genie will be difficult—and likely to get more so as the industry grows. If the FDA regulates CBD as a supplement, it can issue guidelines on things like ingredient concentration and child-proof packaging. But its hands are tied by the fact that the companies don't have to tell the agency exactly what they're making. Sometimes they don't even tell customers. A 2017 study found that 26% and 43% of CBD products tested had lower and higher amounts of the compound, respectively, than were listed on their labels. And while the FDA has taken some action against CBD manufacturers making specific condition-related health claims, many companies are still unabashedly marketing their products as curatives for particular illnesses.

“The agency is charged with regulating a marketplace where it doesn't know what's in the market,” says Lurie, who spent nearly eight years working in the FDA. That can't be especially reassuring for GW Pharmaceuticals, which invested a small fortune in playing by the rules, or for consumers. It may also be a while before the FDA acts. The agency wouldn't comment on a timeline, but Kight says he's heard it might take up to three years to issue regulations. “This industry has gone from zero to where it is now in three years,” he says. “Where it's going to be in three more years is hard to even imagine.” □

**\$22 billion**

Projected value of the U.S. market for CBD by 2022

**2,100%**

Amount by which the number of acres of hemp planted in the U.S. increased from 2015 to 2018

**31%**

Share of CBD products tested that actually had the amount of CBD they claimed on their labels



**SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP** President Donald Trump and Queen Elizabeth II arrive at a banquet at Buckingham Palace on June 3, during his first state visit to the U.K. The trip, scheduled to coincide with the 75th anniversary of D-Day, brought the President to London at an awkward time, as Theresa May prepares to stand down as Prime Minister. That didn't stop the pageantry—or Trump from wading into local politics. He endorsed Boris Johnson to replace May and called London Mayor Sadiq Khan a “stone cold loser.”

#### THE BULLETIN

## Sudan's military calls for election after violent crackdown on protesters

AT LEAST 60 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND hundreds wounded in Khartoum on June 3 when the Sudanese military raided a peaceful sit-in calling for democratic reform. Troops shot into the crowd with live ammunition, set tents alight and beat fleeing protesters. By the next day, the once festive camp, which was set up by activists in April after the overthrow of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, was dismantled. So too were hopes that Sudan could peacefully transition to civilian rule after a 30-year dictatorship.

**NEGOTIATION BREAKDOWN** The April coup came after months of popular protest, and led military leaders and opposition groups to agree on a three-year transition to democracy. But talks broke down when the protesters insisted the Transitional Military Council step down for a civilian-led interim body to oversee the transition. The day after the June raid, council leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan declared on state TV that earlier agreements with the protesters would be canceled and that the council would preside over national elections within nine months. The only way to rule Sudan, he said, “comes through the ballot box.”

**HISTORY LESSON** Al-Burhan may have spoken the language of democracy, but to many, the June 3 raid proves the military has little intention of relinquishing power for good. Pro-democracy activists and opposition parties say nine months is not enough time to muster resources, prepare voter rolls and strengthen civilian institutions after three decades of repression. They fear elections would serve up a weak leadership that could be easily overthrown—which is how al-Bashir took power back in the 1980s. This time, the protesters say they have no intention of repeating the same mistakes.

**ON THEIR OWN** U.S. officials criticized the military crackdown, but with little leverage, and even less interest in getting involved in yet another regional uprising, the repercussions are likely to be limited. For their part, the protesters are determined to carry on with the nationwide civil-disobedience campaign that first brought down al-Bashir, even if it brings more crackdowns. “We have no choice,” protest spokesman Mohammed Yousef al-Mustafa told the Associated Press, “but to continue until the fall of the military council.” —ARYN BAKER

#### NEWS TICKER

### U.S. sets up for tech antitrust probes

The Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission are planning to **split oversight of tech companies**, as Congress increases its scrutiny of Silicon Valley. Potential antitrust investigations of Apple and Google would go to the DOJ with the FTC taking Facebook and Amazon.

### Julian Assange wins a legal victory

A Swedish court ruled June 3 that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange **would not be detained over a rape investigation dating back to 2010**, meaning he will not be extradited to the country. Assange, who is currently serving a 50-week sentence in a British prison, still faces the possibility of extradition to the U.S.

### Virginia Beach shooting leaves 12 dead

Virginia's governor on June 4 called for a **special legislative session to consider gun-control measures** after a man who quit his job with the City of Virginia Beach on May 31 then opened fire at the city's municipal center, killing 12 people. The shooter died after a gun battle with police.

## NEWS TICKER

### Canadian indigenous deaths called 'genocide'

After spending nearly three years investigating the high number of disappearances and murders among indigenous women in Canada, a national commission **called the situation a "genocide" for which Canada is responsible**, in a report released on June 3.

### U.S. bans cruises to Cuba

The Trump Administration clamped down on what has been the most popular way for Americans to travel to Cuba since 2016, **banning trips by U.S. cruise ships and most private planes and boats**. The restrictions went into effect on June 5 as part of a wider effort to cut off U.S. revenue to Cuba's communist government.

### Israel fires back at Syria after rockets

Israel said it struck Syrian military targets on June 2 after rockets were fired from Syria at the Golan Heights. **Ten people died in the attack**, according to a Syrian war monitor. The exchange came days after the U.S. said its National Security Adviser would meet with Israel and Russia to discuss regional security.

## GOOD QUESTION

### How will Georgia's new abortion law affect its bustling film industry?

IN MAY, THE DIRECTOR REED MORANO WAS supposed to fly to Georgia to scout locations for a new show for Amazon Studios called *The Power*. The drama series is adapted from a novel by Naomi Alderman, in which young women suddenly develop the power to release electrical jolts from their fingers. At least two scouts hired by the show had been prepping for the director's arrival for months.

But when Georgia Governor Brian Kemp signed the state's "heartbeat" bill on May 7, which effectively bans abortion after six weeks, Morano canceled the trip, pulled the scouts and shut down any possibility of filming in Georgia. "There is no way we would ever bring our money to that state by shooting there," Morano, who won an Emmy for directing three episodes of Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale*, told TIME.

Morano was the first prominent director to publicly pull a project out of Georgia after the legislation passed. Since her announcement, major Hollywood players including Netflix, Disney and NBCUniversal have come out against the bill and said they would consider leaving the state if the law stands. "Should it ever come into effect, we'd rethink our entire investment in Georgia," Netflix's chief content officer Ted Sarandos said in a statement.

**THE CONTROVERSY ILLUSTRATES** that "Hollywood" is no longer one place. A decade after a generous entertainment tax incentive kicked off the state's rise as a production powerhouse, the Georgia film industry employs 92,000 people and in 2018 generated \$9.5 billion in economic impact. Since the incentive kicked in, that state has handed out more than \$1 billion in tax credits to massive projects like *Stranger Things*, *The Hunger Games*, and Marvel movies including *Black Panther* and *Avengers: Infinity War*. It now hosts the production of more top-grossing movies than California. But as Hollywood tries to wield its power to enact change, members of Georgia's film and television community fear their livelihoods will be threatened over a policy many of them do not support.

Several film insiders in the state say the effects of the boycott are already being felt, with producers shifting gears and searching elsewhere for filming locations. "I'm lost," says Tom Jordan, a cameraman who worked on films including *Saving Private Ryan*. "I've been thinking about going out of state."

Kathy Berry was one of the scouts on *The Power*; she had just bought a house in Savannah and was settling down for what she thought would be a five-season run when she was told she had been let go. "We're in panic mode," Berry says. "The sky is falling."

Production designer Molly Coffee has worked in Georgia for a decade. "Over the last month, I've had two interviews that basically disappeared as they explore other options in other states," she says.

Democratic state senator Jen Jordan, who gave a speech against the abortion bill that went viral, tells TIME, "A boycott would punish the wrong people. If [film workers] stay here and help elect people that really reflect the values of everyone in the state, that's when you're going to see real change." For his part, Kemp has dismissed the calls for a boycott, telling a state Republican convention in May, "We are the party of freedom and opportunity. We value and protect innocent life—even though that makes C-list celebrities squawk."

As tough abortion restrictions make their way through the legislatures of other states with rising film communities, like Alabama, Louisiana and South Carolina, film workers there brace for similar challenges. Berry is fearful that those industries will go the way of North Carolina's, which flourished in the early 2010s before its film-tax incentive was repealed and the state passed HB2—a law that directed transgender people to use public bathrooms that matched the sex assigned to them at birth—and productions fled en masse.

Georgia's law is expected to be challenged in court, so it may never take effect. It has already had an impact, though, and Morano hopes change comes swiftly so the livelihoods of film workers are not imperiled for years to come. "The best thing we can hope for is everyone has a united stance and pulls the money out," she says. "Maybe we can have a quick reversal to these laws and then everyone gets what they want." —ANDREW R. CHOW

**'There is no way we would ever bring our money to that state by shooting there.'**

**REED MORANO**, a director who pulled her Amazon series from Georgia after Governor Kemp signed the bill

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# Milestones

## WON

The **Scripps National Spelling Bee**, by eight students who reached a draw when organizers said they were running out of difficult words after midnight on May 31.

## APOLOGIZED

Twitter, for blocking accounts **criticizing the Chinese government** shortly before the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4.

## RULED

That Olympic runner **Caster Semenya can compete in all races** for now, by a Swiss court on June 3 when it temporarily suspended rules that would require her to take hormone-suppressing medication.

## PLANNED

That the U.S. will send **Homeland Security agents to Guatemala**, the Trump Administration said, to work with local authorities to deter migrants.

## PLEGGED

That Finland will become **carbon-neutral** by 2035, by the country's new liberal government on June 3.

## ANNOUNCED

The shutdown of **iTunes**, by Apple on June 3. It will be replaced with apps for music, TV and podcasts.

## CHARGED

Former Parkland, Fla., school resource officer **Scot Peterson**, on counts related to not protecting students during the shooting there last year, by Florida authorities on June 4.



*Chase, seen here in 2014, inspired the character Princess Tiana in the Disney movie The Princess and the Frog*

## DIED

### Leah Chase

*Chef who changed a city*

By Walter Isaacson

WHEN SHE MADE ROUX FOR HER SHRIMP-AND-SAUSAGE GUMBO (1 cup peanut oil and 8 tbsp. flour) in her joyfully elegant restaurant in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans, Leah Chase, who died on June 1 at age 96, stirred very slowly with her wooden spoon until it blended to the color of café au lait and could bind together all the diverse ingredients. So, too, did the binding magic of her roux and her smile extend to people.

During the 1960s, local civil rights leaders gathered regularly at Dooky Chase's, the art-filled epicenter of Creole cuisine that she and her husband founded in the 1940s, to meet not only with Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, but also with members of the white political and social establishment who were dedicated patrons.

"Food builds big bridges," she liked to say.

And thus she transformed not only New Orleans cuisine, but also its political and social life with a smile as radiant as her bread pudding and a sense of humor as spicy as her gumbo—which she once protected with a slap on the hand when Barack Obama tried to add hot sauce without tasting it first.

*Isaacson*, a former editor of TIME, is a professor of history at Tulane University

## ENDED

### What is a Jeopardy! winning streak?

AFTER TAKING HOME \$2.46 million on *Jeopardy!*, contestant James Holzhauer was within \$60,000 of the show's all-time winnings record when, on June 3, his 32-game streak came to an end.

Holzhauer's signature style could be summed up in two words: big money. Early in the game he would jump around the high-value answers at the bottom of the board. Then, when he hit a Daily Double, he would bet most of his pot (a risk for which his career as a sports gambler left him prepared) and effectively double his score if he answered right. Critics complained that this steamrolling strategy was no fun to watch. But his loss—on the day he was expected to break the record, earning the show its highest ratings of the season—proved *Jeopardy!* is still competitive.

His legacy will live on as new players adopt his strategy, and are perhaps inspired to invent their own. After all, bold wagers allowed librarian Emma Boettcher to dethrone the champ. Holzhauer didn't break the game after all. But he did make it more exciting.

—EMILY BARONE









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LightBox

## Staying above water

As the swollen Mississippi River continues to ravage the Midwest, members of the Missouri Army National Guard—using traffic pylons as funnels—fill sandbags to prevent more flooding in Clarksville (pop. 440) on May 31. Water levels in some locations along the river have approached records set during the Great Flood of 1993, one of the worst in American history, and the flooding is expected to continue for weeks to come.

Photograph by Hilary Swift—The New York Times/Redux  
▶ For more of our best photography, visit [time.com/lightbox](http://time.com/lightbox)



# WE ALL HAVE

# THE POWER



Pearl, childhood cancer survivor; and Arnold, leukemia survivor.

# TO STAND UP



# TO CANCER



Lori, breast cancer survivor.



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Pictured: Heroes from Marvel Studios' *Avengers: Endgame*. Survivor photos by Kevin Lynch.



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# The View

TECHNOLOGY

## THE THREAT OF BIG OTHER

By Shoshana Zuboff

George Orwell delayed crucial medical care to finish *1984*, the book still synonymous with our worst fears of a totalitarian future—published 70 years ago this month. Half a year later, he was dead. Because he believed everything was at stake, he forfeited everything. But today we are haunted by a question: Did George Orwell die in vain? ▶

INSIDE

WHAT RAMADAN TEACHES THAT OTHER HOLIDAYS MAY NOT

CHINA'S CONTRADICTIONS ON TIANANMEN SQUARE

CORRECTING THE MYTH OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

# The View Opener

Orwell sought to awaken British and U.S. societies to the totalitarian dangers that threatened democracy even after the Nazi defeat. In letters before and after his novel's completion, Orwell urged "constant criticism," warning that any "immunity" to totalitarianism must not be taken for granted: "Totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere."

Since *1984*'s debut, we have assumed with Orwell that the dangers of mass surveillance and social control could originate only in the state. We were wrong. This error has left us unprotected from an equally pernicious but profoundly different threat to freedom and democracy.

**FOR 19 YEARS**, private companies practicing an unprecedented economic logic that I call *surveillance capitalism* have hijacked the Internet and its digital technologies. Invented at Google beginning in 2000, this new economics covertly claims private human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data. Some data are used to improve services, but the rest are turned into computational products that predict your behavior. These predictions are traded in a new futures market, where surveillance capitalists sell certainty to businesses determined to know what we will do next. This logic was first applied to finding which ads online will attract our interest, but similar practices now reside in nearly every sector—insurance, retail, health, education, finance and more—where personal experience is secretly captured and computed.

In the competition for certainty, surveillance capitalists learned the most predictive data come not just from monitoring but also from directing behavior. For example, by 2013, Facebook had learned how to engineer subliminal cues on its pages to shape users' real-world actions and feelings. Later, these methods were combined with real-time emotional analyses, allowing marketers to cue behavior at the moment of maximum vulnerability. These inventions were celebrated for being both

effective and undetectable. Cambridge Analytica later demonstrated that the same methods could be employed to shape political rather than commercial behavior.

Democracy slept while surveillance capitalism flourished. As a result, surveillance capitalists now wield a uniquely 21st century quality of power, as unprecedented as totalitarianism was nearly a century ago. I call it *instrumentarian power*, because it works its will through the ubiquitous architecture of digital instrumentation. Rather than an intimate Big Brother that uses murder and terror to possess each soul from the inside out, these digital networks are a Big Other: impersonal systems trained to monitor and shape our actions remotely, unimpeded by law.

Instrumentarian power does not want to break us; it simply wants to automate us. It does not care what we think, feel or do, as long as we think, feel and do things in ways that are accessible to Big Other's billions of sensate, computational, actuating eyes and ears. Big Other knows everything, while its operations remain hidden, eliminating our right to resist.

Because this power does not claim our bodies through violence and fear, we undervalue its effects and lower our guard. Instrumentarian power exiles us from our own behavior. It delivers our futures to surveillance capitalism's interests. And it undermines human autonomy and self-determination, without which democracy cannot survive.

Surveillance capitalists falsely claim their methods are inevitable consequences of digital technologies. But Orwell despised "the instinct to bow down before the conqueror of the moment." Courage, he insisted, demands that we assert our morals even against forces that appear invincible.

Seven decades later, we can honor Orwell's death by refusing to cede the digital future. Like Orwell, think critically and criticize. Do not take freedom for granted. Fight for the one idea in the long human story that asserts the people's right to rule themselves. Orwell reckoned it was worth dying for.

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*Zuboff is the author most recently of The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*

## SHORT READS

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

### The cost of keeping in touch

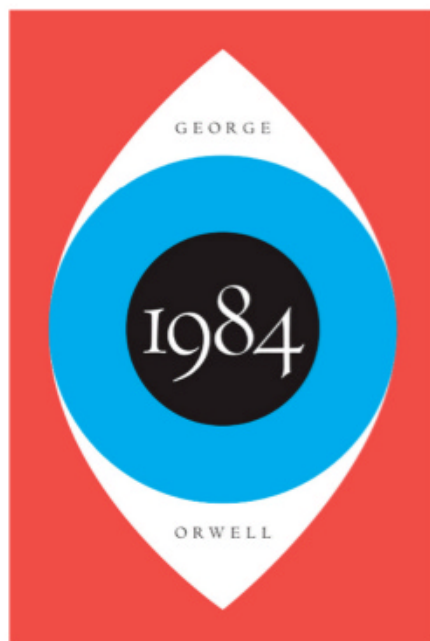
**State governments often unjustly profit from charging prisoners when they make phone calls,** endangering their ability to stay in contact with their families, writes Clint Smith. For prisoners, a phone call "is one of the only ways to stay connected to a world you're scared will forget you."

### Old problem, odd solution

"I've seen and helped concoct a few pretty odd and mostly unsuccessful peace plans" for the Middle East, writes Aaron David Miller, a former State Department negotiator, who says **the likelihood of success for the Trump Administration's plan regarding Israel and the Palestinians appears to be "slim to none."**

### A celebration of having less

**"As opposed to holidays centered around indulgence, Ramadan strips you down and humbles you,"** writes Ahamed Weinberg. He looks forward to the month of starving: "I can't wait to once again reset my ego. And I can't wait to get farther away from our society's demands than ever before."



*In January 2017, 1984 topped Amazon's best-seller list after a Trump adviser popularized the term "alternative facts"*

THE RISK REPORT

## How the Tiananmen Square massacre changed China forever

By Ian Bremmer



OVER THE COURSE OF six weeks in 1989, Chinese students and those they inspired gathered in central Beijing in Tiananmen Square. It began as a spontaneous outpouring of respect and grief following the death of reformist leader Hu Yaobang, but the event then took on a life of its own as mourning became protest against corruption and repression and a call for greater political freedom. The demonstrations expanded to other Chinese cities.

As the crowds swelled, some within the Communist Party leadership began to fear that the protests might continue to expand and to threaten the Communist Party's political dominance. A cat-and-mouse game began as the state tried to find ways to move security forces into the square to end the Tiananmen occupation and as the protesters looked for ways to block them. As the crowds grew, so did the audience of people watching from around the world.

Then the decision was made. On June 4, 1989, Chinese tanks used the cover of darkness to force their way into the square. In the process, the Chinese government massacred at least hundreds, maybe thousands, of its own people, most of them students.

Three decades later, the fight over Tiananmen continues. On the rare occasion when a Chinese state official addresses these events at all, it is to justify the decision. On June 2, 2019, China's Defense Minister described the events of 1989 as "political turmoil that the central government needed to quell, which was the correct policy." Because of this, he said, "China has enjoyed stability, and if you visit China you can understand that part of history."

On the one hand, it's hard to

understand how a visit to China can shed light on the events of that era. Yes, China's people have much more access to information today than they did in 1989. Yet, particularly when it comes to a subject as sensitive as the protests and massacre in the square, the Chinese state keeps a tight grip. Those who use social media in China must register accounts under their real names, and the authorities can demand access to those names whenever it wants.

The government also uses state-of-the-art censorship tools to erase mention of a number of politically sensitive search terms or to redirect the user toward other subjects. Video recognition software can detect images related to the square and its bloody history. In short, China's leaders have come as close as technically possible to erasing all record of what happened.

On the other hand, the Chinese Communist Party leadership has presided over the largest economic expansion in human history. In 1989, when adjusted for differences in purchasing power, China's economy generated just 4.11% of global GDP. Today it's 19.24%. There is an obvious human dimension to this success. Market reform in China has undeniably lifted hundreds of millions of people from poverty. Nearly two-thirds of the population lived on \$1.90 per day or less in 1990. In 2015, it was less than 1%. Per capita income increased by more than 900% over that period, and infant mortality rates fell by more than 80%.

Thirty years after the murders in Tiananmen Square, China presents a contradictory legacy. Its leadership has provided opportunities for a better life to a larger number of people than any government in history. And China remains a police state, where citizens can't publicly acknowledge that this mass murder ever took place. □

**China's leaders have come as close as technically possible to erasing all record of what happened**

ADVICE

## Forget work-life balance

Balancing work and life is a strange aspiration. It suggests work is bad and life is good. But they are not opposites. Work has uplifting moments and those that drag us down. It's more useful to treat it the same way you do life: by maximizing what you love.

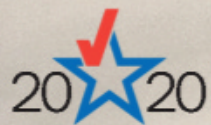
The simplest way to do this is to spend a week in love with your job. This sounds odd, but all it really means is to take a pad around with you for an entire week at work, and assign any activity you can to one of two columns: "Loved It" or "Loathed It."

Our research reveals that 73% of us claim we have the freedom to modify our job to fit our strengths better, but only 18% of us do so. Your challenge is to change the content of your job over time, so it contains more things you love doing and fewer you ache to escape.

The most helpful categories for us are not "work" and "life"; they are "love" and "loathe." Our goal should be, little by little, to intentionally imbalance all aspects of our work toward the former and away from the latter.

—Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall, co-authors of *Nine Lies About Work*





# Once more, with feelings

If Bernie Sanders wants to change America,  
first he may have to change himself

By Anand Giridharadas





*Sanders addresses  
Michigan's electorally  
famous Macomb  
County on April 13*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
DEVIN YALKIN FOR TIME

# Bernie Sanders wants to make a joke.

Pretty good joke, he thinks. He is slumped in a window seat in coach on a plane parked at Chicago O'Hare. He has about an hour in transit to get the joke into his next speech. Before deplaning, he pulls his hair forward, but only on the left, the side one may call Bernie, as opposed to the more combed right hemisphere—Senator Sanders. Off the plane. The selfie requests start. O.K., but quickly. O.K., why not, sure. Ooh, was that a Macaroni Grill? Anyone want to go in on a pizza with him? Sausage pizza, O.K. Then selfies with the kitchen staff. Good people. Hardworking people. His people.

His speech for tonight is ready, but Sanders wants to scrap the planned opening for his pretty good joke. Does Terrel—Terrel Champion, his body man, who has mastered the art of knowing when to talk to the Senator and when to leave him be—have the printer? Of course. Last-minute checks about tonight. RSVPs? Good shape—better than early 2015, when barely anyone knew him. A woman at the gate wants a selfie, but Sanders is fixated on the print-out of the joke. “Onnnnnnnne minuuuuute,” he barks. He loves The People. People can be trickier.

The junior Senator from Vermont flies over the country he aspires to govern, with its crop circles and caterpillar-shaped suburbs and community pools and rail yards full of shipping containers. Soon his silver SUV is rolling through Davenport, Iowa, past a brick building with a sign for German mustard and a soon-to-open hookah bar. The election is a year and a half out, but the crowd at the venue is feverish. Men in boots just off shifts. Young people who may or may not work in the gig economy and listen to the podcast *Chapo Trap House*. A woman in a purple nurse's uniform. Beefy guys in trompe l'oeil camo.

He takes the stage and tosses off his blazer. He is taller in real life than on television, though he shrinks by stooping. His cuffs aren't carefully folded once or twice à la Farm State Casual, but rather jammed up his forearm. “Before I get into my remarks here in Davenport,” he begins, “I did want to make a few comments.” But now, instead of just launching the joke he worked so hard to print out, he first warns them about it. “I wanted to tell you—I'm being funny here, so don't get excited—that I was a little bit apprehensive about

coming back to Iowa.” He reminds them how President Trump had falsely linked wind turbines, which are ubiquitous in Iowa, to cancer. “So I was sitting here wondering,” he says, “if I come to Iowa, am I and my staff going to get cancer?”

Running for President is like doing stand-up. You try bits, see what sticks. The room liked it, so the next morning the joke resurfaces in Muscatine, again with a warning, because Sanders, who can be funny unintentionally, is making an effort at some of the performative aspects of politics he has long sneered at. “I told a funny joke yesterday,” he says to the audience, adding: “I try. I don't have the world's greatest sense of humor.” Several hours later, in Fairfield, he tries again. It takes another day for Sanders to offer the joke without advance notice.

On the way out of Oskaloosa, wind turbines appear. A viral video opportunity. The SUV carrying Sanders, the staff van and the luggage-bearing minivan all swerve to the side of US 63. Sanders, with a few aides, prepares to cross the two-lane highway. “Be careful!” he yells. It's the kind of Old World, survivalist caring Sanders is capable of in public: *Don't die; Have you eaten?; Remember your luggage; Don't leave your charger.*

Now the Senator, 77, stands before the wind farm in his gold-buttoned blazer and slacks, looking like a traveling Rotary Club speaker, facing a cameraman in yellow skinny jeans who looks young enough to be his grandson. He improvises, theatrically throwing his hands over his ears, as if protecting himself from the allegedly carcinogenic turbine sound. “Oooohh, that noise,” he cries. “Can't think.” He takes his hands down. “Just kidding. No noise.” He moves into a more serious riff. The opener is funny, but his video team finds it gimmicky. So they cut it.

Sanders first ran for office in 1972, campaigning for an open Vermont Senate seat on the Liberty Union Party ticket. He lost, attracting 2% of the vote. One of his opponents was a Democratic state representative named Randolph Major. As Sanders recalls in a memoir, Major invented a “brilliant publicity gimmick”: skiing around the state to meet voters. Sanders later complained, “Here I was, giving long-winded statements to a bored media about the

*A Sanders rally in Pittsburgh; as in 2016, his following skews young*





Bernie

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major problems facing humanity, and the TV cameras were literally focused on Randy's blisters." Sanders was 31. He was, even as a young man, an old man.

Now, nearly a half-century later, he is an old man who enraptures the young. The Senator who once rejected gimmicks and complained "modern American politics is about image and technique" now scripts jokes and asks after his Twitter likes. He is pretty much the same man he has always been, but he is determined to take advantage of being one of the more improbable top-tier presidential contenders in American history.

When Sanders ran for President in 2016, it was because he felt important ideas were unrepresented. Many of his positions were dismissed as radical, vague, wide-eyed. Yet as the 2020 race gathers intensity, much of the Sanders program has become de rigueur for progressive and centrist Democrats alike: single-payer health care, massively subsidized college education, a \$15 minimum wage, a federal jobs program. Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey supports some form of Medicare for All. Former Vice President Joe Biden recently embraced a \$15 minimum wage. The idea of federally provided jobs, evocative of the New Deal, has gone from being a far-out Sanders talking point to an idea that has more moderate adherents like Senators Kamala Harris of California and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York.

During eight days on the campaign trail with Sanders this spring, I heard one refrain as much as any other: a "funny thing had happened" since 2016, and Sanders' ideas were no longer "radical." "Brothers and sisters, we should be enormously proud that we have come a long way in transforming politics in America over the last four years," he told a crowd one sunny April afternoon in Warren, Mich.

Sanders has changed the debate in great measure because he has never really changed himself. His consistency is the selling point—his mantras against billionaires stealing the American Dream, the system being rigged, working people needing to form a movement to take power back. And yet he is now running against nearly two dozen competitors, many of whom have chipped away at his distinctiveness by emulating his stances, and just being Bernie may not get the job done. Sanders is solidly

## Sanders focuses on the human toll of a rigged system

in second place behind Biden in national and state polls. And while the movement he built in 2016 has proven durable, there are few signs that it's growing. Between March and May, according to a national survey by Monmouth University, Sanders' support dropped from 25% of likely Democratic votes to 15%, as several rivals increased their share.

There is a feeling in Sanders' orbit that he will, in certain ways, have to evolve if he wants to do more than change the conversation. Tell his story more. Navigate the shoals of racial and gender politics with greater awareness of contemporary expectations and his own blind spots. Overcome his self-image of being a solitary outsider—alone, unheard, disrespected—and cultivate allies. "It's one thing to talk to your 20% to 25% who are your core believers, but we've got to work on persuading people into the fold," Faiz Shakir, Sanders' campaign manager, told me. "And that's why it takes, I believe, a continual evolution of the message, freshening up the message and also sharing more about him."

Changing the conversation isn't nothing. William Jennings Bryan (three times the Democratic Party nominee for President) changed the conversation. Eugene Debs (five times the Socialist Party nominee) changed the conversation. George McGovern (who lost 49 states to Richard Nixon in 1972) changed the conversation. But activists and prophets seldom earn the chance to end up in command of the 4th Infantry Division or sit knees-to-knees with Vladimir Putin.

Yes, Sanders has already changed the game. A question lingering over him is, To win that game, can he change?

### FEEL THE PAIN

IF THE KEYWORD OF BERNIE 2016 WAS *rigged*, Bernie 2020 is about *pain*. It is a campaign about stress and anxiety, about tens of millions of people suffering alone, together.

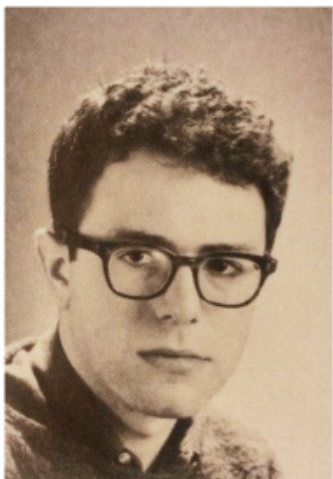
I traveled some 6,000 miles with Sanders this spring, by bus, plane and van: Manhattan; Moline and Davenport and Muscatine and Burlington and Fairfield and Oskaloosa, Iowa; Las Vegas; Washington; Madison, Wis.; Gary, Ind.; Coopersville and Warren and Detroit, Mich.; Lordstown, Ohio; Pittsburgh and Bethlehem, Pa. Talk of a rigged system has hardly vanished, but now Sanders focuses on the human toll of a rigged system, rather than just the profiteering and exploitation and lobbying and campaign contributions he is famous for decrying. As one staffer explained, Sanders is "assigning an emotion" to the rigging. He is, in this and other ways, learning to be personal.

"From the very beginning, he was always concerned about policy. Always concerned about making a meaningful difference. He didn't have time for the niceties," Jane Sanders, the Senator's wife and closest adviser, told me. "He has, over time, really become more—he's still very issue oriented, but he's placing focus on the people and the impact that those policies have."

That new focus was evident this spring in a less familiar event format for Sanders: intimate, almost confessional town halls. A panel of three or four ordinary citizens would share stories of their hardships, and others in the audience would share their own tales, and Sanders would respond with a mix of awkward sympathy, synthesis of their situations and his stump speech.

In the theater of a Burlington, Iowa, school one afternoon, three panelists, all women, sat onstage with Sanders. The first, Carrie Duncan, spoke of her trouble getting health insurance: not having coverage when she worked in a school cafeteria in a nonunion job, getting coverage when she landed a union job in an ammunition plant and then losing it again because of rising costs. "The fat cats continue to grow richer by drinking from the big bowls of cream that us little cats get for them," she said. "It's time to make the fat cats meow!" A nurse practitioner named Teresa Krueger spoke of living with Type 1 diabetes and her work caring for patients with that condition, many of whom cannot afford insulin, which has surged in price over recent years.

Then came Pati French. "I've been



### LIFE AND LOSS

Clockwise from top left: with his mother and older brother; his arrest at a protest in Chicago in 1963; with Jane and their newly blended family in 1988; at the University of Chicago

married for 26 years and had three great kids,” she said. “We have had a good life. We have made lots of memories.” Then she told the story of her son. Trevor was into music and politics, and in 2016 he canvassed for Sanders. He also had a pill addiction. He struggled and then he got help and got sober and was seven months clean with his own job and apartment and was proud of himself. Then he felt a surge of anxiety, the old demons returning, and went to a clinic and got 140 pills and instructions to go see a counselor when a vacancy came up. But he didn’t get in before an accidental overdose killed him. “We have never been the same,” French said. Sanders, turning bright red and somber with emotion, reached

out and gave her a few comforting pats.

The audience began to give their testimonies. A woman spoke of the dearth of mental health care resources and how she had lost two of her friends to suicide and seen others struggle to get help—“including myself, who I have almost lost many times.” A man who works at McDonald’s spoke of scraping by on nine bucks an hour. A man from the local steel plant spoke of jobs vanishing to India and the Czech Republic. And a woman who grew up on a family farm spoke of crop prices falling and bankruptcies climbing.

As these stories and emotions poured in, they landed on the shoulders of a man who is, depending on whom you ask, a person of great empathy or a gruff cur-

mudgeon. “I think everybody thinks I’m very somber and very angry and very, very serious,” Sanders told me in Ohio, “which is half true.” Faced with these testimonies of struggle, Sanders doesn’t usually do what other leaders do in our therapeutic culture: doesn’t hug people, tell them he feels their pain, ask follow-up questions about how the family is doing. What he does with their pain is analyze it; contextualize it; connect it to laws and agencies and instances of greed they may not know about; and offer it back to them as steaming, righteous, evidence-based anger. People tell him of the bill they can’t pay that keeps them awake, and he tells them that the chief executive of the local insurance company makes however-many million. Throwing percentages at them like little darts, he gives them the statistics that might explain their pain, gives them a thesis to connect the dots of their lives. He teaches them to look at themselves in a new way—systemically.

“There’s a lot of individual credit and blame in a capitalist society,” Jane Sanders told me. She described Bernie’s message in the town halls as: “You know, this is not an individual failure that you’re having trouble meeting your bills, or that your health has suffered because you can’t afford health care. He tries to give them a context that says, ‘Hey, stop blaming yourself. Start thinking about how you, in a democracy, can help change the system.’”

After a few of these town halls, Sanders’ own stoicism makes more sense. He begins to seem almost a secular priest: People come to him with stories of despair, and he lifts their pain up into the air, to a place where it is no longer personal but something civic. He gives them the language and information to know it isn’t their fault. His speeches are like that hug in *Good Will Hunting*. It’s not your fault; it’s not your fault. The system did this. Big corporations did this. A bought-and-paid-for government did this. He connects their pain to the pain of others, and in the process that pain is remade, almost transubstantiated, into a sweeping case against a corrupt system. The priest, in this metaphor, doesn’t reveal himself because his job is to float above his own feelings, own needs, own desire to be liked. His job is to make space for, make sense of and make use of your pain.

This covenant with his supporters is

his great achievement. No rival for the Democratic nomination has anything quite like it. Even Steve Bannon, the right-wing populist who ran Donald Trump's presidential campaign in 2016, admires it. Sanders' agenda is "a hodgepodge of these half-baked socialist ideas that we've seen haven't worked," Bannon told me in his office on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, sitting in front of a painting on which the words FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS were written above a monkey sitting on a Coca-Cola box. But, he said, "Bernie has done a tremendous job of galvanizing a segment that hasn't gone away. I mean, he has a real movement."

Building a following fueled by pain and personal hardship is an especially big accomplishment for a candidate who is himself so emotionally inaccessible, reluctant to share more than the barest glimpses of his own history and inner life. "Not me. Us." is his 2020 campaign slogan, and he means it. "Almost to a tee, what defines a politician is they love to tell their story," Shakir told me. "He has absolutely zero inclination to do that. He abhors it."

Sanders seems to believe the public doesn't have a right to know him more intimately—even though there is abundant evidence that the essential character traits of our Presidents eventually shape all our lives: Bill Clinton's appetites; George W. Bush's certitude; Barack Obama's instinct to hire bankers; Donald Trump's narcissism. In our first interview, on a bench in the Des Moines airport, I asked Sanders a simple question: How did he first experience the idea that people blame themselves for systemic problems? "Well, before we get to me," he said, "what the political revolution is about is the millions of people beginning to stand up..."

Many of Sanders' advisers are eager for the Senator to get more personal. They know they have a good story to tell. Sanders is, after all, the son of an immigrant, a first-generation college student who grew up in a paycheck-to-paycheck family. He is a Jew whose relatives were murdered in the Holocaust, campaigning in an era when the President of the United States has said a group of neo-Nazis contained "very fine people." He was at the 1963 March on Washington when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. confessed his dream. His aversion to personalizing can be self-defeating.

These days, Sanders is trying to go

there. "As I return here to the area that I was born, let me say a few personal words," he said at the March 2 kickoff of his campaign in Brooklyn. "As we launch this campaign for President, you deserve to know where I came from—because family history, obviously, heavily influences the values that we develop as adults." He talked for a few moments about his childhood and his parents, looking even graver than he usually does, staring at his notes constantly. "I know where I came from!" he screamed, out of nowhere and with great feeling. "And that is something I will never forget."

BERNARD SANDERS GREW UP IN A cramped, rent-controlled apartment, No. 2C, in a six-story brick building on East 26th Street in the Midwood neighborhood of Brooklyn. He was the son of a paint salesman dad who immigrated from Poland and a homemaker mom born in New York. He grew up playing punchball in the street, attending Hebrew school on weekends, poking around Chinese and Jewish eateries on Kings Highway, and running cross-country at James Madison High. The family wasn't poor, but there wasn't enough not to worry.

In one of our interviews, Sanders told me he and his brother Larry slept on living-room sofas for much of their youths. "The first time I had my own room was, I think, my second or third year at the University of Chicago," he said. In school, young Bernie felt inferior: "Baseball gloves other kids got were the better gloves, and the sneakers were better sneakers, and the clothing was better." When Sanders thunders, "I know what it does to a family to live paycheck to paycheck," he seems to be excavating his own pain. I tried to understand what that looked like.

"It looked like a lot of arguments between my mom and my dad," he told me. "Virtually always over money. And, you know, my mother wanted more than we had, and there was always pressure on my father, and it led to a lot of stress." He has written that "almost every major household purchase—a bed, a couch, drapes—would be accompanied by a fight between my parents over whether or not we could afford it." In Sanders' telling, his father was more content with what they had because, born into poverty in



Poland, he knew worse. It was different for Sanders' mother: "She was an American. And she said, 'Let's do this. I want a home of our own.'" She longed to leave the rent-controlled apartment where her children slept on a sofa. She died at 46, her dreams unrealized.

Jane Sanders was more willing than Bernie to talk about that death. "He was 19 when his mother died," she told me. "And his father died right after that, a year later, and his brother moved to England." (Given her husband's lack of enthusiasm for discussing his past, Jane can be forgiven for these details being just slightly off: he lost his father two years after his mother. His brother moved to England after Bernie finished college.) "He was alone in the world, you know?"



I think that is a very strong impact. He doesn't need other people's approval. He is used to being an independent because of all that." As an origin story, it offers another way of looking at the Senator's record as the longest-serving independent in congressional history.

"And so he's alone, right?" Jane continued. "Think about that. He's alone in the world. He's at University of Chicago. He's spending most of his time in the stacks, rather than in class, reading about everything." Among the books Sanders found were those of Debs, the Socialist leader about whom he would later make a documentary. It was at this time, orphaned and at a distance from his brother—who had introduced Bernie to serious reading and, he has written, "opened my eyes to

*Sanders in Warren, Mich., during his spring tour of battleground states*

a world of ideas that I otherwise would never have seen"—that the future Senator became interested in civil rights. He joined the campus chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality and helped lead a sit-in against university administrators for discriminating against black students in off-campus housing.

He became so consumed by activism that a dean, seeing his low grades, suggested he take time off. "He's not a partyer," Jane said. "No drugs and no alcohol. He was not into that, so that college experience at that particular moment in his life, I think really formed the foundation of his life's work."

I asked Jane if she thought her husband had ever processed that string of losses. "I don't think he bothered to process it at the time," she said. "I think that they both escaped it." Later on, she said, both brothers grappled with the pain and meaning of their parents' lives—assisted by a 2013 trip they took to Poland with their wives.

I asked Jane whether Bernie's early pursuit of justice could be seen as a way of coping with loss. "I don't know," she said. "I think at that point in our lives, no matter who we are, we're searching for ourselves. And if our entire family at that same time is gone, you have nothing to lean on. So I think the search becomes more important and more dramatic." Deserted at that time by love—warm, messy, emotional, individual—Sanders found justice—

cool, systematic, analytical, collective. A justice he now seeks for all of us.

In that Ohio hotel, Sanders repeated his mantra about personal life being unimportant. “I don’t talk about myself all the time. I get criticized for that. But, you know—”

“You’re learning to do it a little more,” I cut in.

“I’m learning to do it a little bit. All right?”

The interview was over.

## THE I-94 PRIMARY

AMERICA BLURS BY: FAIRFIELD INN, Maggiano’s, AMC, Canon, Courtyard Inn, Applebee’s. Adult toy stores, tractors the size of Sanders’ boyhood apartment and homes tucked behind woods with a lone floodlight bearing witness over the garage.

The message of the Bernie 2020 Midwest battleground states tour was not subtle. The campaign wants to prove it can recapture states former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton lost to Trump in 2016. One of those states is Michigan. And, within Michigan, Macomb County is the kind of place Sanders thinks he needs to win.

Macomb is the county that made “Reagan Democrats” famous. It is 80% white, full of those non-college-educated, white, working-class voters—the Diamond Medallion Priority Pass members of American politics. And so on that April afternoon in Warren, Sanders made his case to a county that had voted for John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush (only once) and Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

He began by listing states that Trump won. “We’re here today to say, That mistake is not going to be repeated in 2020,” he shouted. The word *mistake* was the crux of the pitch: in his retelling, Trump ceased to be a demagogue who campaigned on bigotry and jingoism, and any appeal of those ideas among Macomb voters remains unexplored. “When he was running for President,” Sanders said, “the very biggest lie that he told here in Michigan and in Vermont and all over this country was that he was going to stand with the working class of this country.” In this rendering, Trump is a President whose sin is having pretended to be Bernie Sanders while turning out to be Paul Ryan.

Perhaps this is what victory in Macomb, and Macomb-like places, demands:

a redacted retelling of 2016, so a candidate can indict Trump without indicting anyone who voted for him. Earlier on the tour, in Madison, Wis., Sanders had been even more explicit. “I can understand why people voted for Trump based on what he said,” Sanders told the crowd. “There is a lot of pain out there.” He said this even though there is now good evidence that voting for Trump was more associated with a desire to stay on top than with suffering at the bottom. Later, in Pittsburgh, Sanders would declare, “Hey, Mr. Trump, you’re not like you say you are.” Which is both true and seemingly in denial of all the ways the President is totally what he said he’d be.

With Trump in the White House, Democrats cannot ignore Macomb. But there are other votes that need to be courted. Minorities and women, and black women especially, are the lifeblood of the modern

## Sanders is a crusader with little patience for small, human things

Democratic Party—and for them, Sanders’ way of diluting the truth about Trump voters can be troubling.

The dilemma came to a head an hour later. We got off the bus at Detroit’s Sweet Potato Sensations, a bakery famous for its sweet-potato pies (\$14 for a 9-in.). The audience was almost entirely African-American women. Sanders stood among them and took questions. A woman named Janis Hazel rose. She said she used to work for Representative John Conyers, a long-serving former House member from Michigan. Conyers (with Hazel’s assistance) had long ago proposed a bill mandating a commission to study how reparations for descendants of slavery might be undertaken in the U.S. Hazel asked Sanders whether he backed the idea, which Conyers had reintroduced each session until he resigned in 2017 over allegations of sexual harassment.

Before she could finish, Sanders cut

her off, undermining the proposal by reminding people that it is merely for a “study.” She tried to complete the question, and again Sanders jumped in. “Well, I’ve said that if the Congress passes the bill, I will sign it. It is a study.” He pivoted. “You know Jim Clyburn from South Carolina? Clyburn has a bill which I like. He calls it ‘10-20-30.’” The plan calls for 10% of all funds from certain federal programs to go to distressed communities to rebuild those communities.

Afterward, Hazel told me she felt Sanders avoided her question. As it is, he had only recently come around to his tepid support for studying reparations. And his irritation at being pinned down on the issue was revealing. The dismissal of a mere “study” suggested an unfamiliarity with what advocates for reparations seek: a program so sweeping it would be impossible to administer without years of forethought.

The interaction also called into question Sanders’ ability to navigate the complex social terrain that is the Democratic electorate in 2019. A room full of black women who didn’t seem bought into the Sanders agenda were trying to figure out, as all voters are, if he got them. There were a thousand ways in that moment to say, “Yes, I back reparations” or even, “No, I don’t, and here’s why,” and still convey your grasp of what lay beneath the question—the desire to be seen and reassured that your community wouldn’t be forgotten. But Sanders didn’t do that.

THE DEMOCRAT WHO EMERGES TO TAKE on Trump in 2020 will have to compete for those Reagan Democrats and those black women, two tribes living in different worlds, a short distance apart on I-94. An issue like reparations is a perfect example of how difficult this can be; pleasing Detroit may hurt you a few exits to the north.

In presidential elections past, the tension between what Macomb wanted and what Detroit wanted tended to be resolved in Macomb’s favor. But 2020 seems unlikely to repeat that history. It is being called the “woke primary” by people on the Republican side, because of the early pressure on candidates to take positions on questions of race and gender and identity—questions that matter to people other than white working-class men. The high maternal

mortality rate for black women. Transgender rights. The question of when physical contact between men and women escalates from friendly to predatory. The problem of combating hate crimes.

The woke primary is a challenge for Sanders. In part because he is an old-style leftist whose overriding lens is class, not identity. In part because woke culture often craves the kind of gesturemaking to which he's allergic. And in part because Sanders seems to struggle with the expectation that a 77-year-old white guy needs to learn, evolve and prove that he "gets it," even if he was at Dr. King's march.

The 2016 campaign left a residue of doubt about Sanders' ability to navigate both ends of I-94. Critics complained that his signature campaign advertisement, set to Simon and Garfunkel's "America," featured overwhelmingly white faces. His campaign leadership was "too white, too male," as Sanders himself has put it. There was the time in 2015 when Black Lives Matter activists, unsatisfied with Sanders' responses to the problem of police violence against African Americans, interrupted a town hall at which Sanders was speaking. "Shall I continue or leave?" Sanders asked. "I've spent 50 years of my life fighting for civil rights and for dignity," Sanders added, turning toward the protesters. "But if you don't want me to be here, that's O.K."

The Sanders campaign is adamant about two things: First, the notion that Sanders has a "black problem" or a "woman problem" is made up—a narrative pushed by the Clinton camp in 2016. The campaign says that Sanders actually does well among young voters of all groups; his support weakens as people climb toward his age. And, second, yes, there were real problems that weren't a planted Clinton narrative, and they are working hard to solve them. Every major team on Sanders' 2020 campaign now has women in leadership roles; the campaign claims a majority of its national leadership team is female. Shakir is the first Muslim-American boss of a major U.S. presidential campaign. In response to sexual-harassment complaints in 2016, the campaign announced a slate of measures and published detailed guidelines to curb the behavior.

But what makes Sanders an awkward fit with the woke era goes deeper than mis-

steps. He is philosophically committed to a view of the world that can sometimes conflict with the expectations of 2019 identity politics. As a democratic socialist, he sees economic inequality as the paramount issue in American life—and racism and other injustices as derivative of it. When asked, for example, about the 2015 death of Freddie Gray after being taken into custody by Baltimore police officers, Sanders talked about the "short-term" fix of police reform, before suggesting that the "long-term" solution was better employment opportunities to get young African Americans off the streets—which isn't necessarily a fix given that police have also gunned down unarmed black men in their cars and backyards.

David Sirota, a Sanders speechwriter and senior adviser, calls him a devotee of "the actual Dr. Martin Luther King," as opposed to King the symbol. Sirota says

### **He sees economic inequality as the paramount issue in American life**



Sanders is committed to "a multiracial, class-unifying agenda," in keeping with King's Poor People's Campaign, which married the quest for civil rights with outreach to poor whites. Briahna Joy Gray, Sanders' press secretary, who is black, insists Sanders' universal emphasis is appealing to many working-class African Americans, who favor programs like Medicare for All and free public college. A Quinnipiac poll of likely Democratic voters in late March found Sanders is the second most-popular candidate among African Americans, after Biden, with twice as much support among such voters as the leading black candidate, Harris. As reporter Perry Bacon Jr. of the political site FiveThirtyEight put it, "While some black political activists may dislike the Vermont Senator, there is little evidence that black voters do." However, it's also true that Sanders remains less popular among black voters than the electorate at large.

Some members of the campaign say Sanders can improve at translating his dedication to social justice into the language of now. "Obviously, we've got to do a better job of communicating that record and that vision," Jeff Weaver, a longtime adviser, told me. Sanders, he said, needs to articulate his ideas "in a culturally competent way."

### **LONELY NO MORE**

ONE OF THE FINAL STOPS ON SANDERS' Midwest battleground tour was a nurses' convention at the Mohegan Sun Pocono "racino"—a mix of racetrack and casino—in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Sanders stood before a room full of nurses in red T-shirts and spoke to them about their own hardships, with real empathy and knowledge. He mentioned patients who cut their pills in half to save money, and nurses who spend hours on the phone haggling with insurance companies. The nurses roared the roars of being seen. He was serving them anger made of their pain, and they lapped it up.

Then, having spoken about their lives, he vanished. No time for pictures, no handshakes, no hugs. He told them how essential they were to the republic, and peaced out. You could see the disappointment in many of the nurses as they rushed to the front to no avail, confused into believing that a man seeking their vote might be interested in them as people, not just as examples of a thesis.

The racino was not a fluke. Along our 6,000-mile journey, when Sanders came upon a voter in an airport or on a sidewalk and the situation demanded a smile, he gave the smile my 4-year-old gives when he knows that greeting our dinner guests nicely is the price of staying up. He didn't display a typical politician's interest in people's names, how long they've worked in a place, their story—unless it was an event about their story. He barely engaged with the press, not even just popping onto the bus to say hi and build goodwill. Sanders is a crusader with little patience for small, human things—macro-compassionate, micro-cantankerous. "There is a gruff, no-nonsense aspect of his personality," Gray told me. "It's not reserved for people; it's reserved for, I think, what he perceives as distractions from people. Distractions from the issues that really matter." But will the traits of the crusader,

which have gotten him to the threshold of the threshold of power, be enough to get him through the door? Or does the crusader—too focused on health care to do small talk—need to learn that sometimes you have to ask about someone’s kids to get everyone’s kids health care?

The relational side of politics may matter more for Sanders in 2020 than it did in 2016. Then, Sanders benefited from being the clear alternative to Clinton. In 2020, he is still a rare bird but no longer unique. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts also talks about a “rigged” system, but offers a contrast in demeanor, gender and can’t-stop-won’t-stop policymaking. Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Ind., targets many of the same Midwestern, Trump-curious, white, working-class voters, but is a sunny young guy who is about reclaiming the right’s freedom-and-security patois.

Faced with such competitors, Sanders will need to broaden his appeal beyond diehards. “A movement that wins,” Shakir says, “is a movement that grows.” And to grow, Sanders may have to be more than a moral crusader. He may have to cultivate people who aren’t fully on board with democratic socialism but are drawn to who he is and what he stirs in them. He may have to use every last tool of political connection. Which is why it matters that he sort of hates using many of those tools, and doesn’t even own some of them.

It is possible to argue that Trump’s election proved these human qualities don’t matter anymore. Maybe all the flesh-pressing and self-revelation and courting of the media, county chairmen and other political gatekeepers is no longer how the process works. Maybe the process is now citizens’ drinking in the candidates via social media and cable. Among the many differences between the front runner for the Democratic nomination, Biden, and Sanders, who sits in second place, is whether the performance of humanity still matters in politics. Biden vs. Sanders is a perfect experiment—tactile vs. sterile, too much rubbing vs. rubbing people the wrong way.

When I asked Shakir what Sanders needs to do that he has not done before to grow his following, he mentioned “things behind the scenes that probably aren’t as well-observed,” like making phone calls to local leaders. He cited a small dinner the

Senator had attended with labor leaders after his big rally in Pittsburgh. The example surprised me, because it sounded like something politicians do all the time.

That Sanders is innovating on such things 47 years after he first ran for office tells you that 1) he has gotten far being himself, and 2) his aides aren’t sure being himself will make him President. He has done quite well playing the role of the back-bencher, the righteous loser, the gadfly who can’t get no respect. But he is now a top contender for the presidency, much loved and much hated, and one test he faces in 2020 is whether he can overcome the personal toll of his own immense achievement.

This is, after all, a man who spent decades “shouting at a cloud,” as a staffer on a rival campaign put it to me, half-put-down, half-compliment—a man who has characterized his own life story as “a story of struggle.” He saw something and said something about America that was gauche to say for most of his career. “I have cast some lonely votes, fought some lonely fights, mounted some lonely campaigns,” he wrote four years ago as he launched his 2016 campaign. And the loneliness of his fight gave rise to the tendencies you’d expect: suspicion of everyone but his most trusted counselors, contempt for the press, paranoia about “the establishment” being out to get him, fixation on the Big Picture at the expense of individual human pixels. He fought on, and the trends he spoke of intensified, and people started to see that maybe the world was flat only for Thomas Friedman, maybe it was the best time in history only for Steven Pinker and maybe inequality truly was a big problem. Suddenly both Republicans and Democrats were running against the “rigged system,” and billionaires from Aspen to Davos began to feel unloved.

IN SO MANY WAYS, SANDERS LED THAT turn. He made his message mainstream enough to win 22 states, pulling Clinton to the left in the process. He helped change the conversation about capitalism and how it relates to that other great national institution, democracy. He inspired many young activists who worked for his campaign in 2016 to run for office—including an organizer who is now Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York. Yet those years of shouting,

*Sanders in Pittsburgh on April 14, the first visit by a leading Democratic candidate*

feeling unheard, being unheard, left scars. And belated validation can rewrite, or reinforce, habits bred by marginalization: It can inspire magnanimity and outreach—or harden a feeling that you were always right and most others wrong or corrupt. It can foster growth—or justify a refusal to evolve, because what got you where you are is consistency. It can make you feel safe—or justify a siege mentality, because the higher you rise, the harder they are going to work to stop you.

What will it be for Sanders? Can he seize upon the moment he created? Can the warrior for justice learn to be open, adaptive and human in ways that give his message a wider airing? Even in this late season of his life, Sanders has a choice about which version of himself he wants to present to the American voting public, and what he is willing to let himself become.

I keep thinking of a moment in Las Vegas that made me realize we don’t know the answer yet. We had just landed at the airport. We headed for the SUV that would take us to the Paris hotel and casino. But there was a mishap: the local organizers hadn’t known I was joining. When we found the SUV, we realized we were one seat short. Sanders’ aides, in a hurry, looked at me like, “Bye, dude.”

Sanders, who had been preoccupied with luggage, now caught wind of the issue. And I watched it come over him: a transfixing, physical sense of righteousness. It wasn’t about logistics; it was about justice. At that point, he had spoken to me just once in any real way in days of traveling together. He had no interest in me in the normal ways. *Oh, you live in Brooklyn? I used to live in Brooklyn. What part?* But the prospect of my exclusion bothered him. Even as I said I was fine, he asked if there was any way to squeeze me in. Checked the back row. Maybe I could put a suitcase beside him, between the seats, and sit on top. But something had to be done, because to him it just was not right. And in that moment Sanders became a little clearer to me: He isn’t the person you want sitting beside you on a long boat ride, passing time. He’s the person who will notice when you fall overboard and begin to drown. □







LEAVE  
MEANS  
LEAVE

TEA  
CHIPS





## Essay

# HOW BREXIT BROKE BRITAIN

Three years after the vote, the U.K. remains in pieces **By Jonathan Coe**

ON A FRIDAY EVENING IN JULY 2012, 80,000 PEOPLE gathered at the Olympic Stadium in East London to watch the opening ceremony of the 30th Olympiad. Some 27 million British people watched it on their televisions, and many more around the globe. Expectations were sky-high and tinged with skepticism. Many of us sat down to watch the ceremony in that typically British frame of mind—ironic, self-deprecating, pragmatic—which did not predispose us to be impressed.

But impressed we were. It's very hard to articulate a resonant, complex vision of your own national identity without resorting to cliché, but the creators succeeded that night. They did it by using humor—by deploying witty and creative use of British icons such as James Bond and Mr. Bean, by digging deep into our great cultural and political heritage. The fact that audiences in other countries were bemused, apparently, by some of the more specific cultural references only confirmed the ceremony's determination not to project the well-worn, flag-waving, red-London-bus version of Britishness that the rest of the world was used to seeing. As a result, millions of Britons went to bed that night fired up and inspired, proud to be part of such a confident, inventive and quirky country.

Fast-forward to just short of four years later: Thursday, June 16, 2016. It's one week before voting in the Brexit referendum called by David Cameron primarily to heal long-term splits within his Conservative Party. A national debate

# Essay

supposedly about membership in an economic and political bloc had become, instead, about many things—one of them immigration—and discussion had become bitter and polarized. The arch-Brexiteer Nigel Farage set a low point that morning, grinning and joking with reporters as he posed before a gigantic poster showing a column of dark-skinned migrants lining up to cross an E.U. border. The tagline: **BREAKING POINT: THE E.U. HAS FAILED US ALL.** Later that same day, a far-right extremist murdered a young British lawmaker, Jo Cox, in the street. Few British people went to bed that night feeling anything but shock and disgust.

Brexit is a lesson in how quickly a country can degenerate into division and factionalism, and how tenuous are the bonds that hold us together around the vexed issue of national identity. Of those two competing representations, which one shows the real United Kingdom—the intelligent, forward-looking, inclusive one articulated in that Olympic ceremony, or the insular, ungenerous one expressed on that poster? Three years after the vote, the answer is still far from clear. Britain today is just as divided as it was in June 2016, if not more so.

**ONE THING IS CERTAIN**, at least: Brexit is not primarily about Britain's membership in the European Union, and never was. Polls conducted before 2016 show the British public was far more concerned with pressing issues like housing, education, health and welfare. Instead, the narrow majority for Leave was patched together from a grumbling coalition of discontents that had been bubbling away beneath the surface of British life for at least 10 years. People were suffering the effects of a punishing government austerity program, ostensibly designed to deal with the shock of the 2008 financial crisis. Anxieties about immigration were being remorselessly stoked by populist newspapers. And there was a growing mistrust of the political class in general, after dubious expense claims by lawmakers were the subject of a lengthy newspaper exposé in 2009.

The majority for Brexit was wafer-thin—just 2% of the population—and casual observers may wonder how Britain should have allowed such a radical change in its constitutional and geopolitical arrangements based on such a shaky mandate. But we Brits live in a winner-takes-all culture: our first-past-the-post electoral system and addiction to reality-TV contests are different symptoms of this. We do not have the political culture of coalitions and compromises upon which our European neighbors' governing systems depend. Our media also thrives on drama and sensationalism, and in the days after the referendum, it celebrated the result with all the drunken fervor of soccer supporters after a freak goal three minutes into injury time. The days and weeks after the referendum vote could have provided a space for reconciliation and calm reflection. Instead they became an occasion for frenzied triumphalism. The rift between Leavers and Remainers became even more bitter and entrenched, setting the tone for what was to come.

## **Brexit is not primarily about membership in the E.U., and never was**

The premiership of Theresa May set these divisions in stone. Chosen by her party to replace Cameron, she did not attempt to unite the country around this fractious issue but instead laid down red lines and talked in populist slogans like “Brexit means Brexit.” As her government twisted itself in knots negotiating a withdrawal deal with the E.U. leadership, her authority slowly slipped away—especially after the disastrous 2017 election in which she lost her parliamentary majority. By the time negotiators emerged with a compromise deal, lawmakers had long refused to engage with the reality of the sacrifices Brexit would require.

At this point, a crucial fact about Leave's victory in June 2016 became impossible to ignore: namely, that it had not just been narrow, it had been vague. During the referendum, campaigners had been skillful at stirring up resentments but had not set out in sufficient detail the nuts and bolts of leaving the E.U. or what Britain's future relationship with Europe should be. When Brexit was an ideal, nebulous, undefined notion, just about 52% of the electorate could coalesce around it. When it had to be translated into political reality, nobody could agree what “it” was meant to look like.

And so, after Parliament repeatedly rejected her deal, May announced her resignation and became the latest Conservative Prime Minister—after Cameron, John Major and (arguably) Margaret Thatcher—to have their authority destroyed by the party's poisoned relationship with the E.U. Now the country must temporarily put aside the business of Brexit as the Conservatives spend time on a wasteful and divisive campaign to find a new leader and Prime Minister. And the leading contender would appear to be the artfully shambolic former London mayor Boris Johnson.

To understand why this should be so, you must appreciate that there is nothing the Brits love more than an eccentric or, better still, a “character.” We pride ourselves on our sense of humor, but have rarely stopped to think how often we use it to avoid thinking seriously about things. It was Johnson, after all, who as a Brussels newspaper correspondent in the early 1990s began to send back dispatches from the E.U. making out that the whole thing was a comical racket run by crazy bureaucrats who filled their time (and wallets) drafting absurd regulations on such ephemera as the shape of bananas on sale in our supermarkets. The myth took hold and,



PREVIOUS SPREAD: MCFADDEN; BBC; TAPIR; COURTESY LEIPZIG ZOO; ALAMY (3); GETTY IMAGES (17); THIS SPREAD: MCFADDEN; BBC; REES-MOGG; ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES (7)



in 2016, overshadowed any serious discussion of the E.U.'s role as a long-term peacekeeper and facilitator of supranational cooperation. That the myth's wisecracking originator could soon be Prime Minister shows how fundamentally unserious British politics has become since then.

Another figure from outside the mainstream of British politics has stepped into the void created by May's departure—Farage, the former U.K. Independence Party leader hailed as “Mr. Brexit” by President Donald Trump. This shrewd political operator doesn't bother much with the minutiae of policy detail but aims to reach his followers at a deeper, more powerful gut level through beery, blokeish plain speaking. Farage staged a series of Trump-style rallies up and down the country this spring stoking the resentment of voters bored and frustrated by the intractability of the Brexit process—and won his new Brexit Party first place in the European election in the process. The narrative of betrayal Farage likes to cloak in his saloon-bar rhetoric is dangerous in Britain's current febrile atmosphere; the xenophobic energies unleashed by the 2016 campaign, according to the government, led to a 41% spike in hate-crime offenses in the month following the referendum. This lingering trend has contributed to the rise of far-right figureheads like Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, an anti-Islam agitator who goes by the name Tommy Robinson

## Our political class remains paralyzed by its commitment to delivering the undeliverable

more truthful: A country at war with itself. A country divided along lines of age, education, wealth and opportunity; a country seen quite differently by the old and the young; a prickly union in which provincial England had a very different sense of identity from metropolitan England, and felt little of the sense of “Europeanness” that Scotland, for instance, expressed strongly through its votes to stay in the E.U. Asked, on June 23, 2016, what kind of collective identity it wanted to assert, the U.K. replied with one loud, clear, unanimous voice: “We don't know.”

In a strange way, David Cameron did the U.K. a backhanded favor in calling his referendum. We may have no answers to the core, intractable questions that the referendum raised about our culture, national identity and sense of belonging. But at least, now, we have begun to talk about them.

*Coe is a London-based writer whose new novel, Middle England, will be published in the U.S. on Aug. 20*

and whose public appearances have stirred up unrest. Feelings also run high on the Remain side, although March's People's Vote rally, a hundreds of thousands-strong pro-E.U. protest in central London, passed without violence, and anti-Farage protesters have adopted the tactic of dousing him with milkshakes (the especially thick version from U.S. burger chain Five Guys being the variety of choice).

**THESE INCIDENTS TESTIFY** to the bitterness of Britain's current political deadlock. Still stunned by the referendum result, and cowed by the way it was talked up in the media as an overwhelming mandate, our political class remains paralyzed by its own commitment to delivering the undeliverable. And so here we are. The U.K. is expected to leave the E.U. on Oct. 31. Nobody is any clearer as to what form this exit will take, or who will be the Prime Minister that oversees it. Meanwhile, all the resentments that lay behind the vote continue to bubble away unaddressed.

Through creativity, humor and a certain sleight of hand, the architects of the Olympic opening ceremony presented, that night in 2012, a vision of Britishness around which most of the country felt they could unite. But it was a fleeting moment, and an illusory one. What the referendum revealed was probably much

## ANARCHY IN THE U.K.

The Brits lost the plot since the vote to leave the E.U. **By Tina Brown**

GIVEN THAT MORE THAN 70% OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE dislike President Donald Trump, his outsize state visit to the U.K. was a rare uniting force in the midst of the civil war over how to say F.U. to the E.U. His presence offered some ironic consolation that the past three years of furious argument in Britain are linked to more global nationalist fevers of which Trumpism is only the biggest, blimp-size expression.

Yet the nervous breakdown in Britain has had its own unique loony flavor of a country trying to remember what it stands for. For decades the loss of empire was compensated for by the victory of World War II, celebrated with such pageantry in Portsmouth this week. The post-war generation was consumed by the earnest task of building a better world. That's long ago. The last hard patriotic triumph most Brits recall was Thatcher's 1982 invasion of an obscure dot in the South Atlantic, the Falkland Islands, to wrest it back from another place no one wants to read about, Argentina. Now all that's left of Hope and Glory is Brexit champion Nigel Farage's Union Jack socks and the certainty that the Queen is the last person who still knows how to behave in public.

The irony is that before David Cameron, Theresa May's predecessor as Prime Minister, fecklessly called in 2016 for a referendum on Europe to pacify a rabid arm of his own party, few people in the country at large gave a toss about it. But the very word *Remain* on the ballot called up the smugness that was anathema to the boiling white working class. Who wants to Remain in a place where Tory austerity cuts have stalled your income, Polish immigrants are ahead of you for a National Health Service appointment, and the *Guardian*-reading media elites tell you you're racist if you say so? Vote OUT of that, mate! Stuff it to Jonny Foreigner! Brexit devolved into a civil war of identity: an English counterrevolution between nationalists and internationalists, country geezers vs. young metropolitans, Little England vs. Great Britain with the Scots and Irish Celts such staunch Remainers that the Scots could be driven to independence and Northern Ireland pushed to unite with the Republic. U.K. RIP.

From the moment a flotilla of pro- and anti-Brexit boats dueled on the Thames the week of the Brexit vote, the tone was set for successive national absurdities. Unlikely heroes and antiheroes emerged. A viral favorite was John Bercow, the barrel-chested Speaker of the House of Commons, whose calls

for "Order, order, order" over the brawling M.P.s have soundtracked the opposite of his exhortation. May's doomed attempt to play the straight man was torpedoed by her stunningly awkward dance-on to Abba at a conference that Allison Pearson of the *Telegraph* likened to a "stork being struck by lightning."

Many of the leading characters in the national meltdown don't even take themselves seriously, let alone require us to. The thatched charlatan Boris Johnson, with his faux-Falstaffian ways, depends on everyone's being in on the joke that he has no principles. Now that he's the front runner in the Tory leadership contest, he has proved there is no lie you can't recover from if you have mastered the sly vernacular of British irony and gone to Eton. The gangly country squire and Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg often answers interview questions in Latin.

On the other side, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is an unreconstructed '70s socialist who presents as a refugee from the pre-Thatcher Winter of Discontent when undertakers went on strike. His limp endorsement of Remain and anti-Semitism within his party have shorn him of support. All good news for Brexit's Mr. Toad, Farage, who is capitalizing on the boredom most Brits feel with the one-story news cycle to form his own party to lead the nation off the cliff.

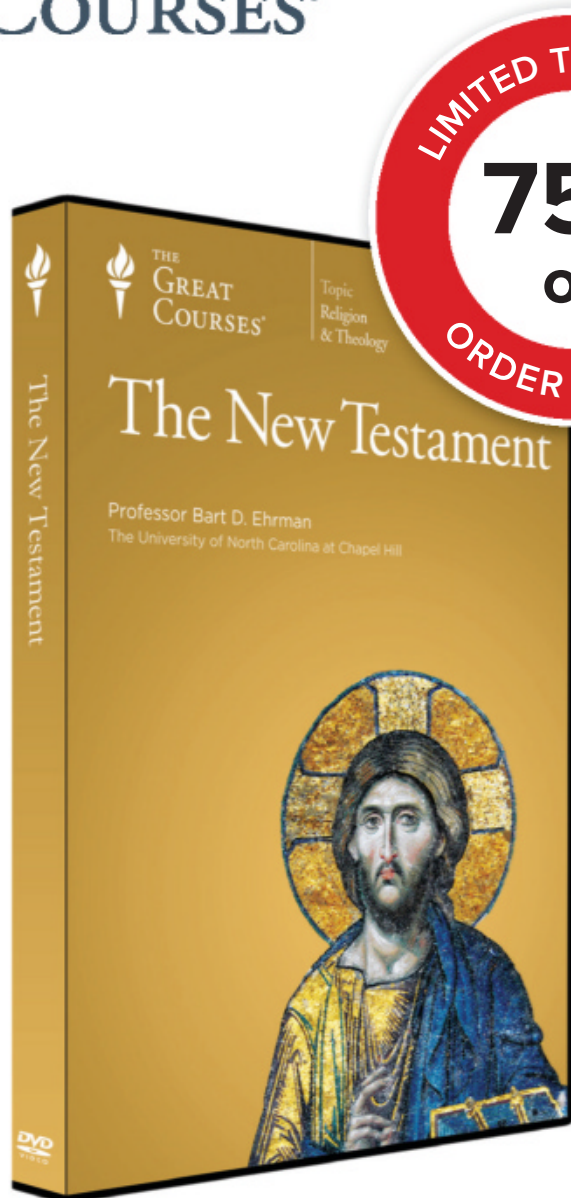
The problem with this long-running farce is that it obscures Brexit's dire likely outcome—the impoverishment of a shrinking nation in the cause of a mirage of sausage-and-mash "sovereignty." Fittingly for a brain-dead nation, British politics now lives in a cartoon strip.

Churchill characterized Britain's appeasement government in 1936 as "undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent." People like Farage regard Britain's Remainers as today's appeasers. The Brexiteers are at war not to safeguard Great Britain but to end it.

### All that's left of Hope and Glory is Brexit champion Nigel Farage's Union Jack socks

*Brown is the author of The Vanity Fair Diaries*





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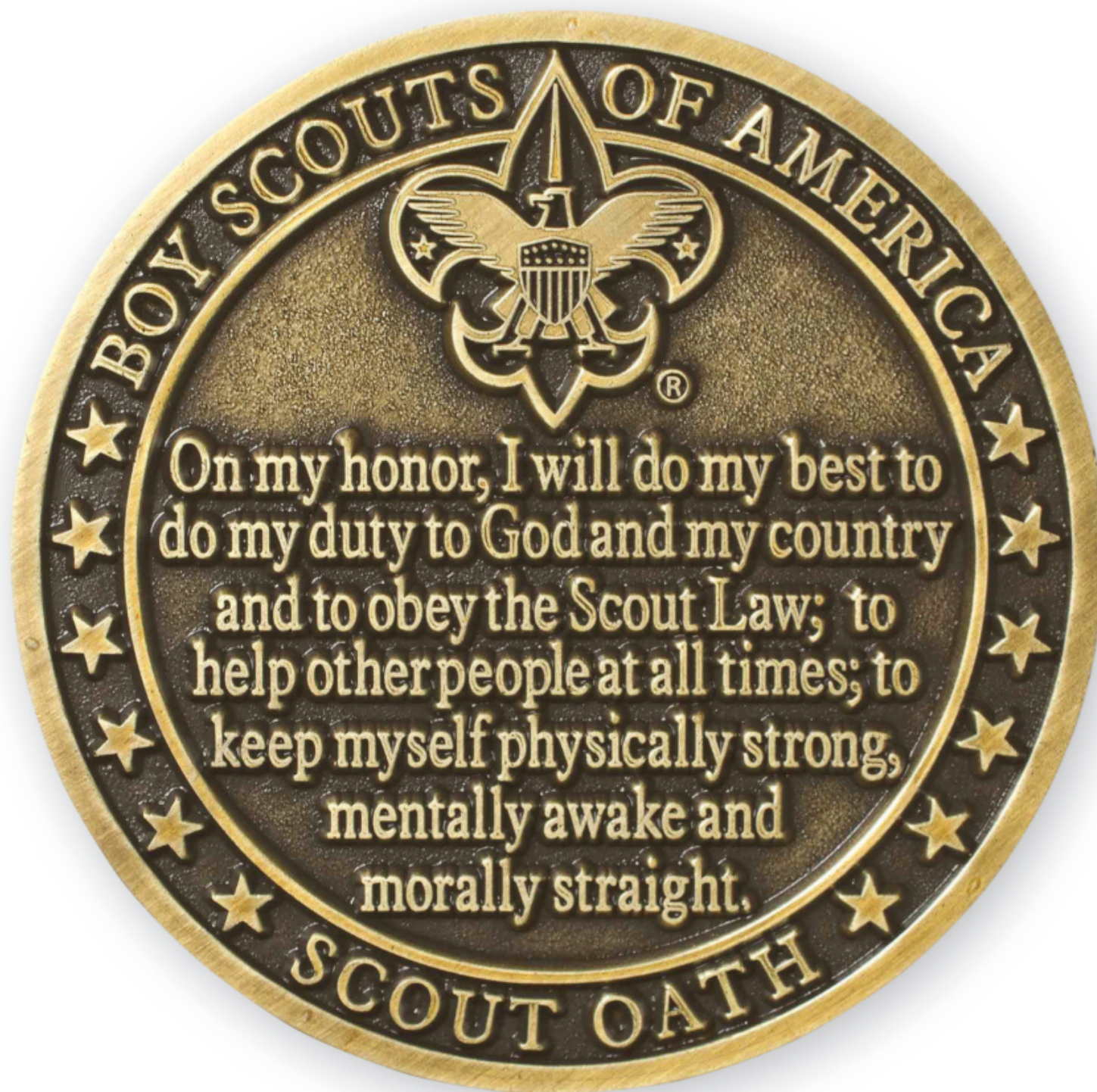
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Nation



*These former boy scouts say the organization's sex-abuse problem is worse than anyone knew.*

**THE WINDOW FOR JUSTICE MAY BE CLOSING**

***By Eliana Dockterman***



ANONYMOUS, 17

***“I trust my nana more than anyone. She’s the wisest woman I know. So I told her first years ago. Now, I have been hearing good things about this whole #MeToo movement. I figured, yeah, if I could help this not happen to other kids, then why not join?”***



# Nation

FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO, EDWARD PITTSOON SAYS, the scoutmaster who had taught him to use a compass and light a campfire said he was going to teach Pittsoon about sex. The scoutmaster invited Pittsoon, who was 12, to his house and asked him to lie on the bed. The man assured the boy he had seen other boy scouts naked. “This is the normal way to learn about sex,” Pittsoon recalls the scoutmaster telling him. “He said, ‘But don’t tell your parents what I’m doing. They wouldn’t think you’re mature enough. They wouldn’t understand.’” The man told Pittsoon a “dirty story,” pulled down his pants and masturbated him. Pittsoon can’t remember if this happened once, or if the scoutmaster invited him over again a few weeks later, but he does remember pulling up his pants after a few minutes and walking out of the room. “He called after me, calling me a baby and trying to make me feel guilty,” Pittsoon recalls. “I just wanted to go home.”

About four years later, Pittsoon, furious that the man remained a scoutmaster, told his parents what had happened. He says they spoke to the bishop at their family’s local church in Northern California, the same church that sponsored the Boy Scouts troop, and the scoutmaster was quietly removed from his position. Pittsoon says he also spoke to the bishop, but as far as he knows, nobody reported the scoutmaster to the police. Now, Pittsoon is one of hundreds of men and boys hoping for a last chance at restitution in case the Boy Scouts, hit by costly litigation arising from abuse allegations, file for bankruptcy.

Attorneys say they’ve collected information recently from more than 500 men and boys whose accounts of rape, molestation and abuse indicate the Boy Scouts’ pedophile problem is far more widespread than the organization has previously acknowledged. These men are speaking out for the first time, and several of them detailed their allegations of abuse in interviews with TIME. (TIME was not able to confirm the men’s specific accounts but spoke with others who said they’d been told of the incidents. TIME also obtained a police report filed by one of the individuals alleging abuse.)

The men hope to illuminate a problem that has plagued but never fully exposed the Boy Scouts, an institution that for 109 years has vowed to teach youngsters good manners, useful skills, and a sense of right and wrong. For generations of men, the Boy Scouts have been central to their identity as good citizens. Presidents from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush have touted their scouting credentials as proof of a virtuous grounding. Lawyers for the ex-scouts, though, paint a picture of an organization that has failed not only those who were abused, but the entire country: the Boy Scouts of America is a federally chartered nonprofit that must provide annual reports to Congress, and attorneys for the former scouts say the organization did not include information about



abuse accusations in those records. “They were reporting ... that they were a wholesome organization,” says Tim Kosnoff, one of the attorneys, “when they were kicking out child molesters at the rate of one every two days for 100 years.”

In a statement to TIME, the Boy Scouts denied withholding any relevant information from Congress or enabling abusers. “For decades, the BSA has provided Congress with a yearly report that meets the requirements of our charter.” But separately, the Scouts’ chief executive, Michael B. Surbaugh, has acknowledged that the organization “did, in at least some instances, allow individuals to return to scouting even after credible accusations of sexual abuse.” “I am devastated that this ever occurred,” Surbaugh added in a May 28 letter to lawmakers looking into the Boy Scouts’ handling of abuse claims.

**FORMER SCOUTS HAVE** brought hundreds of individual sex-abuse cases against the Boy Scouts over the past several decades, and in 2010, a judge ordered the organization to make public an internal

**JAMES KRETSCHMER, 56**  
**“[The sleeping bags] were made of down, and if it’s not colder than heck, you don’t zip them. I felt breath on my neck and felt somebody fondling me. I just froze up and pretended like nothing was happening. I thought maybe it would go away.”**



**KENDALL  
KIMBER, 60**

***“I felt cheated because the only thing I was good at was being a scout. But after that happened, I just walked away ... It makes me sick to my stomach. He went after everybody in my family. I guarantee you he has gone after many others.”***

list of men accused of preying on boys. Within Scouts headquarters, the list was known as the P Files or Perversion Files. In January, a sex-crimes expert hired by the Boy Scouts to analyze these files testified that she found 12,254 boys had reported experiencing sexual abuse at the hands of at least 7,800 suspected assailants between 1944 and 2016. Academics who research child sex abuse tell TIME that number is a gross underestimation. Many boys were likely intimidated or shamed out of reporting their assailants, who often held influential positions in local churches, schools or businesses.

The cascading claims of misconduct invite comparison to the Catholic Church’s sex-abuse scandal. In both cases, institutions entrusted with the care of boys responded by protecting themselves instead of the victims of abuse. The Catholic Church faced more than 10,000 accusations of child abuse in the U.S. between 1950 and 2002, according to one report.

In fact, many of the former scouts who have waited decades to come forward say they were inspired by other victims who spoke out about long-ago abuse both in the church and in the entertain-

ment, media and sports industries and saw their perpetrators toppled from powerful positions and, in some cases, prosecuted. Those testimonies have also spurred several states to extend the statute of limitations on sex-abuse cases, opening the door to more legal claims. The Boy Scouts quietly hired lobbyists to push against such laws for fear of facing an onslaught of criminal cases.

Kosnoff, who has brought more than 100 cases against the Boy Scouts since 2007, calls the Boy Scouts’ behavior a century-long cover-up. Indeed, so many individuals have sued the organization alleging harassment, molestation and rape that insurers have refused to pay out settlements, arguing in court filings last year that the Boy Scouts could have reasonably prevented the abuse. Kosnoff had retired to Puerto Rico when he learned that the Boy Scouts were considering bankruptcy—a tactic some Catholic dioceses have used to stall lawsuits against them. Outraged, the lawyer recruited attorneys from two other law firms to launch a national ad campaign in March to draw clients. Their goal is to lay the groundwork for possible legal action even if the Boy Scouts file for bankruptcy and a judge sets a deadline for new claims to be filed.

“We’re struggling to keep up with the response,” says Kosnoff. The legal team says the men who have come forward so far have named more than 300 “hidden predators” who did not appear in the Perversion Files. TIME is not publishing their names because a suit identifying them has not been filed. However, Kosnoff would like to push the Boy Scouts to list the names of the men his clients have accused in a public database. Based on his experience representing church abuse victims, Kosnoff worries that bankruptcy proceedings could bury the names of potential assailants: “The assailants who would otherwise be identified in lawsuits get enshrouded in darkness, and these predators can continue to operate.”

That’s Pittson’s fear as well. He has tracked down the man he says abused him on Google. “He’s still alive,” says Pittson, now a 70-year-old retired transit supervisor in Vallejo, Calif., with five sons. “I would love this guy to answer for what he’s done. It’s not too late.”

The man Pittson named, who’s now 86, denies ever being a scoutmaster in California or knowing anything about Pittson’s allegation. “I don’t remember any of that. You must have the wrong person,” he told TIME.

**AT ITS 1972 PEAK**, membership in the Boy Scouts numbered more than 6 million. Families across the country were eager to enroll their sons in the organization that touted mentorship from older men and bonding activities with other boys, including camping trips. It was on one such trip, in 1961, that Pittson says he first became aware of his scout-

# Nation

master's strange behavior.

Pittson and the rest of his troop were sitting around a campfire in the woods with the man, who like all scoutmasters was an unpaid volunteer. He suggested the group of 12- and 13-year-old boys stand up and start pulling down each other's pants — and the scoutmaster's pants as well. He called them “pantsing parties,” and Pittson says he frequently proposed them during scout outings. Another time, the scoutmaster was driving Pittson and a few other boys to a meeting. Pittson recalls that one of the boys had started dating a girl, and his friends were teasing him about the romance. “I'll pay you \$5 if you have sex with her,” he remembers the scoutmaster saying.

Pittson has never been shy about sharing his story. He has told family members and girlfriends, and he blames the abuse for broken relationships. “He planted this seed in my head. Boys talk about sex at that age, but not as much as he encouraged us to,” he says. “And then with what happened, I felt like I became obsessed with sex and its meaning in my life.” In light of the scoutmaster's mention of encounters with other boys, he wonders if his fellow scouts were abused too.

Many of the men who contacted Kosnoff believe that they were just one of many scouts abused by one perpetrator. Kendall Kimber, now 60, had risen through the Boy Scouts ranks quickly: Growing up in northern California, he'd learned navigation on hunting trips with his father and developed a strong work ethic while peeling potatoes at his mother's restaurant. By 12 or 13, Kimber had been tapped for an elite scouting group, the Order of the Arrow, so he didn't find it strange when his scoutmaster offered to help him with a project he needed to complete to earn the honor. But Kimber says that when he arrived at the man's house, the scoutmaster handed Kimber a *Playgirl* magazine and asked the boy to perform oral sex on him. Kimber, terrified, did so.

“I was very small in stature for my age and was kind of intimidated anyway because of that,” he says. “I felt cheated because the only thing I was good at was being a scout. But after that happened, I just walked away [from scouting]. I was done.”

Kimber did not know it then, but the same man allegedly abused two of Kimber's close relatives in the same troop. The men revealed their trauma to one another after one of them saw the lawyers' ad urging victims to come forward. Kimber suspects that the same scoutmaster also abused his younger brother, but he'll never know: Kimber says his brother died of complications from drug abuse years ago.

The relatives kept the abuse to themselves when they were kids, but the secret grew like a tumor inside the family. Each boy began to show signs of trauma. Two turned to drugs. One drank heavily. “Me? I don't really know how to describe me. I don't smoke, and I don't do drugs. But I guess I'm extremely jaded to-



ward people,” he says, pausing. “It makes me sick to my stomach. He went after everybody in my family. I guarantee you he has gone after many others.” TIME was unable to obtain updated contact information for the man Kimber says abused him.

James Kretschmer, 56, says a scout leader targeted him during a treasure hunt during a retreat in Washington State. The man gave the group of 11- and 12-year-old boys different coordinates that would lead them all to the same point and promised that the boy who reached the final location first would be rewarded with a bag of candy. Kretschmer won.

“Of course, when I look back, I think, wow, the coordinates all led back to the scout leader's tent,” Kretschmer says. The scoutmaster congratulated Kretschmer, and things seemed normal until the boys crawled into their green sleeping bags later that night. Kretschmer left his open.

“They're made out of down, and if it's not colder than heck, you don't zip them up because you'll sweat to death in them,” Kretschmer says. “And then I felt breath on my neck and felt somebody fondling me. I just froze up and pretended like nothing was happening. I thought maybe it would go away.”

**EDWARD  
PITTSO, 70**

**“He told me, ‘This is the normal way to learn about sex.’ He said, ‘But don't tell your parents what I'm doing. They wouldn't think you're mature enough. They wouldn't understand.’”**



**ANONYMOUS, 60**  
***“Back then, you were just supposed to bury it. But it never goes away. I never stop thinking about it. Every day, I’m reminded of it. Even to this day, I don’t like strangers touching me at all, even on the shoulder. I jerk away.”***

This is the one memory that sticks with him. He’s blocked out most of the rest and can’t recall the name of his abuser. He calculates, though, that the abuse lasted for four to six months. As an adult, Kretschmer has struggled with alcohol problems and spent years in and out of counseling and on antidepressants. “I’ve been married and divorced four times,” he says. “And I will stand up and say right now it’s probably because of the simple fact that I built a shell to protect myself because of the trauma.”

**STUDIES SHOW THAT** survivors of child sex abuse are at increased risk of psychological and physical ailments, including PTSD, depression, drug abuse, diabetes, heart attack and stroke. The lawyers say “many” of their clients have turned to alcohol, drugs or even crime to cope with their pasts. “Imagine being sodomized as a 7-year-old and trying to process that,” says Kosnoff. “It’s a ticking time bomb in your soul. It just erodes a person from the inside out.”

Experts say boys struggle with such a violation of trust differently than girls do. Eli Newberger, a pediatrician who studies child abuse at Boston Children’s Hospital and who has testified in cases involving pe-

dophilia in the Boy Scouts, says men tend to disclose instances of assault at a much later age than women.

“There is a stigma of coming forward for both women and men,” he says. “But unfortunately for men, there is this extra shame that you were not able to protect yourself, that you were found to be powerless.” He adds that in certain parts of the country, men who were abused by men additionally fear coming forward and facing homophobia, even if—or especially if—they do not identify as queer.

A 60-year-old Massachusetts man, who says he and other boys in his troop were raped over a dozen times in the woods by a scoutmaster as teenagers, still cringes when someone he does not know comes too close. “Even to this day, I don’t like strangers touching me at all, even on the shoulder,” says the man, who did not want to be identified. “I jerk away.”

A 17-year-old from Michigan is still struggling to process the abuse. He says his scoutmaster targeted him around the age of 7, just as his parents had separated and he was at his most vulnerable. “He did stuff below the torso area, if you get my drift,” he says. (Attempts to reach the man he accuses by phone and on social media were unsuccessful.)

The Michigan boy revealed the details of his abuse years later to his grandmother “because she’s the wisest woman I know.” Since the abuse had transpired long ago, it didn’t seem like there was much they could do. “I sort of dropped it, and she sort of dropped it, until a few months ago when I was on my computer and she was watching TV,” he says. His grandmother spotted the lawyers’ advertisement and tapped her grandson on the shoulder. She suggested the teen might find closure, but he also wants the decades of abuse against children to stop. “I have been hearing good things about this whole #MeToo movement,” he says. “I figured, yeah, if I could help this not happen to other kids, then why not join?”

The Boy Scouts say that they’ve made changes in recent years to identify and eliminate abusers from the organization, including creating the 24-hour “Scouts First Helpline” to report misconduct. The phone line “is one of many resources we provide volunteers, staff, parents and others to support reporting of any account of suspected abuse or behavior that might put a youth in our programs at risk,” the Scouts said in their statement to TIME.

But a Maryland mother who says her then 14-year-old son was sexually abused by two older teenage counselors at a Boy Scouts camp last year didn’t find it helpful. When she called, she says the person who answered was not an expert trained in handling abuse allegations, but a volunteer working from home; she could hear their dogs barking in the background. She also says the person who answered told her she would have to visit the police station with her son and file a report if she wanted to alert authorities.

The distressed mother says she called the help line after first contacting the camp director. She told the director that the two counselors had shoved their penises into her son’s shorts pockets while taunting him in a changing room. “Boys will be boys,” she recalls the camp director telling her. After several more calls to various members of the Boy Scouts organization, she and her son went to their local police station and filed a report. The accused camp counselors, who were both minors, denied the allegations to police and to the camp’s director, and no charges were filed.

**EVERY BOY SCOUT** knows the scouting oath by heart: be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. “My son recited those words every single week,” says the teenager’s mother. “What we as a family just cannot get over is the fact that those values were completely violated.”

In their statement, the Boy Scouts say their policy is to encourage help-line callers to contact law enforcement themselves, “because the person reporting the abuse typically has the most information about the matter and the authorities, therefore,

will want to receive the report directly from them.”

Today, the Boy Scouts count about 2.4 million young members and a million adult volunteers in their ranks. In the face of public pressure to be more inclusive, and to bolster membership, the Boy Scouts dropped the ban on adult leaders who are “open or avowed homosexuals,” and began admitting girls and transgender kids in 2017. Conservative organizations have protested the changes, while liberal groups have argued they’ve moved too slowly.

But nothing has affected the Scouts’ public image like a landmark sex-abuse lawsuit in 2010. That year, an Oregon jury ordered the organization to pay \$18.5 million in damages to a sexual-abuse victim. The judge ruled that the Boy Scouts must make public the so-called Perversion Files.

The lawyers who represent the latest men coming forward say that about 90% of the names of their alleged abusers do not appear in the files. They sent a letter to the Boy Scouts on May 6 to ask how the organization planned to deal with the new allegations. The Boy Scouts responded that, if provided with the full list of names, they would report all the suspected perpetrators to the police. “We believe victims, we support them, we pay for counseling by a provider of their choice, and we encourage them to come forward,” the Scouts said in their statement to TIME. “It is BSA policy that all incidents of suspected abuse are reported to law enforcement.”

The lawyers have also asked U.S. Representative Jackie Speier of California to pressure the Boy Scouts to explain how they plan to curb pedophilia in the organization. In November and again in May, Speier and several other lawmakers sent letters to the Boy Scouts’ national leadership asking for details on their screening process for potential scoutmasters and on the reporting process for abuse victims.

Surbaugh, the chief executive, responded that the organization has “some of the strongest barriers to child abuse that can be found in any youth-serving organization.” In a June 3 letter to the lawmakers, he said the Boy Scouts now require criminal background checks, conducted by a third party, on adults who want to volunteer with scout troops. A new background check is required each time an adult switches troops, Surbaugh said. Additionally, he said that since 2011, the Boy Scouts have had a “mandatory reporting policy” that requires everyone involved in scouting to alert authorities if they suspect a child is being or has been abused.

In the absence of accountability for the Boy Scouts, Pittson says a great burden falls on the victims. “I always felt guilty that I haven’t done enough, that this guy was out there probably molesting other kids,” he says. “I have always wondered about those kids through the years.” □

**‘They were reporting ... that they were a wholesome organization when they were kicking out child molesters at the rate of one every two days for 100 years.’**

—Tim Kosnoff, attorney

# HELP SAVE THE FRIDGE

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*“It feels a little bit like I’ve come full circle,” says Thompson, who started out in comedy, of playing a comedian in her new film*





Culture

# Laughing all the way

EMMA THOMPSON GETS SERIOUS ABOUT  
COMEDY IN HER NEW MOVIE *LATE NIGHT*

By **Eliza Berman**



EMMA THOMPSON AND I ARE SUPPOSED to be shopping for sneakers. I've primed her with visions of the kinds of "trainers"—if you're British, and she is—we'll see on today's tour of Los Angeles' hip streetwear stores, guided by me, a person who knows about neither Los Angeles nor the fresh kicks for which the cool kids will sleep on the sidewalk but never actually wear. Problem is, the first three sneakerhead meccas I'd mapped out had their graffitied gates down. And I don't have the heart to tell her I've lost hope, because I've never seen a person greet so many closed doors with such certainty that the next one will be, *must* be, open.

Thompson, two-time Academy Award winner and Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire, has been forcing open closed doors for nearly 40 years. We are on the hunt for sensible footwear because she disavows high heels, objecting to what she calls "a torture thing." At the 2014 Golden Globes, she went onstage barefoot, dramatically tossed her Louboutins over her shoulder "and never looked

back." For her damehood ceremony in November, she sauntered up to Buckingham Palace in Stella McCartney sneakers, prompting sore-footed fans on Twitter to upgrade her, by popular vote, from dame to outright queen.

Her latest character also has a fondness for sneakers. In *Late Night*, written by and co-starring Mindy Kaling and directed by Nisha Ganatra, she plays Katherine Newbury, a late-night host who has been on the air for three decades but, growing out of touch, is at risk of losing her show. (In the real world, there are no female late-night hosts on major networks.) Her mediocre jokes are pitched in a writers' room as white and male as the Alabama state legislature. She's uninterested in trading cerebral guests like Doris Kearns Goodwin for a YouTuber who makes videos about her dog's butt. Enter Kaling's Molly, whom Katherine reluctantly brings on as a "diversity hire" to help her recapture her relevance.

Katherine is a dinosaur who needs a woke, youthful guide to illuminate the

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIELLE LEVITT FOR TIME

# Culture

blind spots that come with her age, race and privilege. Thompson, on the other hand, is doing just fine on her own. She's been an activist since long before we preferred, or expected, our celebrities that way. She's protested the Gulf War and the Iraq War, fracking, arctic drilling and Brexit. Recently she's spoken plainly and fervently about the #MeToo movement, climate change and the refugee crisis. She speaks plainly and fervently—and irreverently and wittily—about pretty much everything. It's kind of her thing. It's ruffled some, especially in her home country—one headline a decade ago read: **DOTH THE LADY PROTEST TOO MUCH?** She's never seemed to think so.

One week from this early April morning, Thompson will turn 60, and she's feeling it more than she felt 40 or 50. "Suddenly you'll be in this place where all the roles that society has so successfully forced upon you—from daughter to wife to mother to professional person—could be questioned. You could take these things away from your face, one after the other, and go, 'Who actually am I?' Which I've always thought was a terribly boring question, and I now find fascinating."

But even as she meditates on who she is without the context, one can never truly escape their context. And Thompson, who for so long was ahead of her time, finds herself in a time when women are getting their due, protest is popular and caring is cool. Has the moment finally caught up to Emma Thompson?

**IF YOU WEREN'T WATCHING** regional British TV in the 1980s, you might have missed a spiky-haired Thompson playing a hapless slacker who accidentally sat on her roommate's cat. And if you skipped right to the string of 1990s period dramas that made her the only person ever to win Oscars for both screenwriting and acting, you might have missed the fact that much like her character in *Late Night*, Emma Thompson wanted to be a comedian.

Thompson grew up between London and Scotland, the child of actors Phyllida Law and Eric Thompson. At Cambridge, she was one of the few women admitted to the Footlights, a sketch-comedy group that counts several members of Monty Python as alumni. Fellow member Stephen Fry, who performed with Thompson throughout the '80s,

told *TIME* in an email that although the Footlights had been "distressingly male," it was not her gender but "her frankly radiant presence and range of extraordinary skills as a performer" that stood out. "Like Athena, she seemed to have been born fully armed," he wrote. Among her weapons were a knack for character and boundless charisma. She dabbled in stand-up; a short clip of her performing at 23 appears in *Late Night*, though little was usable because the raunchy subject matter ("sexually transmitted diseases and Margaret Thatcher, which were both pretty big at the time") didn't fit her character.

Thompson didn't abandon comedy after that—she just got famous for something a little more corseted. In the early 1990s she appeared in the Merchant Ivory period dramas *Howards End* and *The Remains of the Day*, playing women who were pragmatic and witty but restrained by circumstance. She was hired to adapt Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, and later to star, based on a parody of Victorian-era manners in her late-'80s sketch show, *Thompson*. (She married her *Sense and Sensibility* co-star Greg Wise, with whom she had a daughter, Gaia, in 2000, and informally adopted a teenage Rwandan orphan, Tindyebwa Agaba, in 2003.)

Kaling fell in love with Thompson the comedic performer at age 11, when she saw her in then husband Kenneth Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing*. (The pair split in 1995, amid allegations of an affair between him and Helena Bonham Carter that was heavily covered by the tabloids.) Kaling wrote *Late Night* in part to tell a funny story based on her experience as an Indian-American woman breaking into a nonmeritocratic Hollywood. But she also wanted to create a vehicle for Thompson. "She has the gravitas and the comedy chops to pull this off," says

◆  
**'Starting in comedy, I was always the only girl. So in a sense you kind of have to be one of the boys.'**



Kaling. "And since no one else is going to write a role like this"—one that encourages a postmenopausal woman to devour the scenery—"I thought I should do it myself." Audiences responded: Amazon bought the movie for \$13 million in one of the biggest deals ever at Sundance.

As Katherine, Thompson plays a woman who broke the glass ceiling by leaning away from her femininity. Her wardrobe is all neatly tailored variations on menswear, her hair short and unfussy. She's witheringly unsentimental, referring to longtime staffers by number instead of name. "Anyone who started in that world will have been very alone. Starting in comedy, I was always the only girl," says Thompson. "So in a sense you kind of have to be one of the boys."

When she accepted the Oscar for Best Actress for *Howards End* in 1993, Thompson said she hoped her award "inspires the creation of more true scene heroines." Over our pre-shopping breakfast, throughout which Thompson poaches bites of sausage and potato off my plate, I say it feels old hat to ask if things have gotten better since then. She says I'm not the only young woman who's apologized for asking her that exact question. "The point is that



◆ Thompson describes co-star Kaling's script as "darts to the truth of the matter"

Much of Thompson's appeal comes from her candor—which has a way of telegraphing as relatability. When at her home in Scotland, she says, "I virtually grow a beard."

Still, in the trigger-happy media culture of 2019, trolls are always waiting in the wings to call out a gaffe, or even "cancel" a person wholesale. Celebrities are held accountable for even the slightest perceived hypocrisy. A few days after her birthday, Thompson participated in a protest against inaction in the face of climate change (three cheers!) but flew on a carbon-spewing airplane to get there (three jeers!) but planted trees to offset the emissions (forgiven?).

It's all a bit much. So is she anxious? "No," she says. "I suffer from guilt. But that's a mental habit, and any habit you can train yourself out of." A therapist can help—she's been seeing hers for about 15 years. Her guilt, unlike many people's, isn't rooted in religion. "Perhaps it would have been easier if there had been some place to get the guilt from. Catholics can go to confession, get rid of it." She's not sure where hers comes from. "It's just a very overinflated sense of responsibility."

By this point we are adrift in a sea of Uggs, having long given up on sneakers. She grazes the tufts of sheepskin that beg to be petted like patient Pomeranians. At last she comes upon a glass case displaying miniature booties, and before I know it, despite my objections, I'm holding a box containing tiny black Uggs that Thompson has purchased for my 10-month-old daughter. If our goal was sensible footwear, we've ended up instead with winter boots for a person who cannot yet walk.

But Thompson's undeterred. Call it guilt, call it the aim to please that lives deep within the soul of any performer. She's entering a new decade, she's tuning out the peanut gallery, and she wants to make funny movies and get arrested at the next protest and buy ridiculous shoes for a stranger's child. "I haven't got very much time, so what do I really want to do?" She thinks for a moment. "Actually what I want to do is be uplifting." □

it's still absolutely a relevant question. These things don't get solved in 10 years. It takes 100 years."

Thompson has been characteristically unshy about taking a stand against harassment in Hollywood. "I am constantly amused by blokes going, 'I mean, we just don't know how to behave now.' What the f-ck are you talking about? Just behave like a normal human being. I'm sorry, it just makes me laugh so hard. But also really want to smack them." Her expression hardens. "Really want to smack them."

In February she wrote an open letter about her decision to pull out of a Skydance Animation movie, *Luck*. The company had recently hired John Lasseter, the Disney Animation Studios executive who was ousted following allegations of sexual misconduct. "If a man has made women at his companies feel undervalued and disrespected for decades," she wrote, "why should the women at his new company think that any respect he shows them is anything other than an act that he's required to perform by his coach, his therapist and his employment agreement?"

She's taking it upon herself to introduce practical solutions. After wrapping *Last Christmas*—a rom-com she wrote and appears in, due in November—she

arranged an informal meeting with any women who wished to discuss their experience on set. On future projects, she plans to do something similar before shooting begins. "Because sometimes it's simply not possible to turn around to someone more powerful than you, whom it would be very expensive to fire, when you are a very cheap person to rehire."

Between now and the end of the year, audiences will see her not just in *Last Christmas* and *Late Night*, which opens wide on the same day, June 14, as her return to *Men in Black*, but as a controversial politician in *Years and Years*, an HBO drama that debuts in the U.S. on June 24. Meanwhile, she's writing and plans to direct a *Nanny McPhee* musical. She may be getting older, but she's not slowing down. If anything, her foot is on the gas.

**ON THE SUBJECT** of feet: I don't want to tell Thompson I have a blister. With each step it throbs against my shoe. The irony of wearing a 3-in. heel to go sneaker shopping with a hater of heels is not lost on me, but the impulse to impress a dame dies hard. Plus, I'm not the only one who's made an effort. "I am wearing a bra today in your honor," she tells me. "One doesn't want to shock and appall."

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# Time Off

**MONTEREY  
MERYL**  
Hollywood  
prestige comes  
to TV as Meryl  
Streep joins the  
second season of  
*Big Little Lies*



## INSIDE

THE BEST OF THE  
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

THE JONAS BROTHERS'  
SURPRISE COMEBACK

POET OCEAN VUONG'S  
STUNNING DEBUT NOVEL

## TELEVISION

### As mediums merge, Meryl graces TV

By Judy Berman

**Y**OU HEAR HER BEFORE YOU SEE HER. LESS than three minutes into the second season of *Big Little Lies*, as images crescendo into violence, a familiar, mellifluous female voice whispers the first line of the premiere: “Celeste.” As Nicole Kidman’s Celeste awakens, screaming, from her nightmare, cool gray eyes peer down at her through wire-rimmed glasses, radiating calm, concern and a hint of menace; the small mouth puckers determinedly. And in TV’s most anticipated character debut of 2019, Meryl Streep arrives in Monterey.

It’s not as if *Big Little Lies* was suffering from a lack of star power. The female-driven HBO miniseries, whose popularity and awards appeal catalyzed an absorbing second season that premieres on June 9, was a product of the friendship between two of its executive producers and stars, Kidman and Reese Witherspoon. It came stacked with an A-list cast even beyond those two, co-starring Shailene Woodley, Laura Dern, Zoe Kravitz, Alexander Skarsgard and Adam Scott. Behind the scenes, Emmy-winning creator David E. Kelley (*Ally McBeal*, *The Practice*) and Oscar-nominated director Jean-Marc Vallée (*Dallas Buyers Club*, *Wild*) upped its cultural cachet. (British filmmaker Andrea Arnold, best known for her 2009 indie masterpiece *Fish Tank*, directs Season 2.) The addition of Streep only confirms that TV is now capable of drawing ensembles that could rival those of any *Ocean’s* movie.

In the 21st century, tectonic shifts in the entertainment industry have undermined the decades-old assumption that cinema can be art but—PBS aside—television rots your brain. Yet since *Big Little Lies*’ 2017 debut, the hierarchy of film over TV acting has ceased to exist. This year’s Oscar-winning lead actors, Rami Malek and Olivia Colman, ascended directly from the small screen. Meanwhile, Julia Roberts made *Homecoming*, Mahershala Ali revived *True Detective*, and Amy Adams gave a stunning performance in *Sharp Objects*. *Fosse/Verdon* turned on the interplay between Sam Rockwell and Michelle Williams. When George Clooney’s *Catch-22* hit Hulu in May, hardly anyone seemed to notice.

This isn’t just a sign that TV is catching up to film as an art form. As streaming changes the way we consume episodic entertainment, blockbuster franchises are increasingly reliant upon serialized storytelling, while monoliths like Disney, Apple, Amazon and Netflix keep finding new ways to disrupt both industries. As a result, the mediums are actually converging. Despite the fuming of traditionalists like Steven Spielberg—who recently dismissed Netflix releases such as Alfonso Cuarón’s Oscar-winning *Roma* as made-for-TV movies—and the terrifying power of megacorporations in the new entertainment landscape, this confluence has the potential to revitalize what we watch.



▲  
*The Monterey Five—Jane (Woodley), Bonnie (Kravitz), Madeline (Witherspoon), Celeste (Kidman) and Renata (Dern)—return*

**THE DIVISION** between film and TV has always felt somewhat artificial; they are not two distinct art forms but rather subsets of the same, just as novels and short stories are both types of literature. For decades, these commonalities have been reflected in the substantial overlap between the two mediums’ funders, distributors, facilities and technical personnel. The biggest change, in recent years, is in the attitudes of audiovisual media’s most visible creative workers: directors, screenwriters, actors. Once a stepping-stone to big-screen fame and freedom, TV has become less of a grind thanks to the increased budgets, flexible time commitments, audience specificity and sheer demand for diverse, original programming ushered in by cable and streaming. For those at the top of the food chain, it serves as a refuge from superheroes, CGI and scripts flattened for international appeal—and a place to experiment with long-form storytelling.

This has made it a godsend for some of cinema’s greatest behind-the-camera talents. In defiance of the cliché that television is a writer’s medium while a movie belongs to its director, the



roles of filmmaker and TV creator have proved pretty fluid. The triumphs of TV auteurs like Vince Gilligan, Amy Sherman-Palladino and HBO's three Davids (Chase, Milch, Simon) in the 2000s opened the floodgates for movie-makers on the small screen: Vallée did *Big Little Lies* and *Sharp Objects*, while Jane Campion made *Top of the Lake*. As platforms proliferate and culture fragments, even creative weirdos like Paolo Sorrentino (*The Young Pope*) and Gregg Araki (*Now, Apocalypse*) can sell shows without selling out their oddness.

Meanwhile, an influential new generation of creators—like Ava DuVernay, Cary Joji Fukunaga and Jordan Peele—has used this moment to carve out unprecedented careers. Moving seamlessly between movies, TV, fiction, nonfiction, realism and fantasy, they're building filmographies whose common thread isn't a form but a set of styles or themes. DuVernay has made a big-budget kids' movie, a prestige historical biopic, a straight-to-Netflix documentary, a miniseries about the Central Park Five and a Southern family drama—each a meditation on the

intersections of race, gender and justice that's uniquely suited to its format. Steven Soderbergh was a pioneer of this eclectic approach, interspersing action romps and micro-budget indies with fascinating TV projects, from Cinemax's *The Knick* to the experimental Washington-pundit drama *K Street*, which aired way back in 2003 on HBO.

An influx of funds into the television sphere, at a time when risk-averse movie studios only have eyes for franchise spectacles and supercheap horror schlock, has certainly facilitated this shift. Netflix—which is expected to spend \$15 billion on content this year—dropped heaps of cash on shows by Baz Luhrmann (*The Get Down*), the Wachowskis (*Sense8*) and *Frost/Nixon* writer Peter Morgan (*The Crown*), with notoriously mixed ROI. While racking up astronomical episodic special-effects bills, *Game of Thrones* opened the window to single-episode shoots in excess of 55 days. Now Disney and Apple, which will both launch streaming services this year, have their wallets out. And if Spielberg—who, incidentally, has an anthology series in the works with Apple—doesn't like watching movies on Netflix, maybe he could persuade the studio system that funded *Ready Player One* to take calls about grownup films from some of the great directors the streamer has bankrolled, like Dee Rees (*Mudbound*) and Tamara Jenkins (*Private Life*). If the 2000s were the golden age of TV, then in recent years TV has expanded so dramatically—and filled so many long-standing voids in American entertainment—that generalizations about its quality are now impossible.

**THE CONVERGENCE** of film and TV isn't just a boon to filmmakers who've been elbowed out of the multiplex by the blockbuster-industrial complex. It's also good news from a purely artistic perspective. Increasingly, the biggest difference between the two forms isn't quality, budget or screen size; it's length. If brevity is key to the genius of the classic 96-minute western

*Stagecoach*, then David Milch's brilliant 36-episode western *Deadwood* demands the slower pace of television. A recent spate of book-to-TV adaptations, *Big Little Lies* included, has proved that novels often fare best as serials too—which is exactly what *Harry Potter*, *James Bond* and the Marvel Cinematic Universe all are.

David Lynch must have understood all this 30 years ago, when he created *Twin Peaks*, his warped riff on soap operas and cop shows that would've made no sense as a stand-alone film. So it was dispiriting when, in the run-up to the 2017 revival *Twin Peaks: The Return*, he described the new season as an 18-hour movie. By the year's end, the series was popping up on film critics' annual best-of lists, implying that the real distinction between movies and TV is merit—that when TV reaches a certain level of quality, it's not really TV anymore.

Whether because Lynch is in class by himself or because *Big Little Lies* was originally understood as the premium-cable equivalent of a chick flick, no one is trying to claim the latter show as cinema. Yet it also reflects

auteurist sensibilities. Known for gritty realism, Arnold uses a grayed-out color palette to subvert the glittering California seascapes and real estate porn of Season 1. When there's sun, it's all glare and no shine. These choices complement the new episodes' most intriguing theme: climate change, and the extent to which adults must educate children about it.

Once again, the result is a compelling argument for the convergence of film and TV. *Big Little Lies*' episodic structure mines soap-opera tropes, building suspense over an extended period. At the same time, Oscar-worthy performances from its movie-star leads sell characters that could, in lesser hands, be momzilla stereotypes. *Big Little Lies* doesn't need Meryl Streep for her cinematic prestige. It needs her because it has a delectably passive-aggressive grandmother character that only Meryl Streep could play. □

**'When they set the bar high, we just called Meryl.'**

**REESE WITHERSPOON,**  
on how *Big Little Lies*  
addressed daunting  
expectations for Season 2,  
on *Good Morning America*



Mary Ann (Linney) and Anna (Dukakis) tell new Tales

## TELEVISION

### An updated *Tales* proves you can go home again

By Louis Peitzman

EACH EPISODE OF *TALES OF THE CITY* CLOSES ON A SHOT OF the rainbow flag, which almost feels a little on the nose—until it doesn't. The Netflix miniseries is a sequel to the earlier television adaptations of Armistead Maupin's novels about the intersecting lives of the largely queer residents of 28 Barbary Lane. But it's also an update, and so is the flag. Instead of the traditional six-color variation, it's the newer version unveiled in 2017, incorporating black and brown to reflect the black and brown members of the queer community.

This updated flag represents the newer San Francisco this *Tales of the City* depicts, one that's more queer, more inclusive and less white. It's a dramatically different city than the one Maupin documented when he began writing the *Tales* books in 1974, one that's been shaped by the gay-rights movement, the AIDS crisis and the tech boom—sweeping changes that were depicted in the nine books, which inspired three TV miniseries adaptations.

Netflix's *Tales of the City* jumps ahead a couple decades from where the last of those miniseries, *Further Tales of the City*, left off, with several actors reprising their roles. Mary Ann (Laura Linney) returns to 28 Barbary Lane—the “chosen family” apartment complex where she once resided—to celebrate the 90th birthday of wise landlady Anna Madrigal (Olympia Dukakis). Mary Ann also needs to reconnect with the people she

left behind: her best friend Michael (Murray Bartlett, a recast from the original), her ex-husband Brian (Paul Gross), her socialite pal DeDe (Barbara Garrick) and her estranged daughter Shawna (Ellen Page). There are new additions too—Michael's boyfriend Ben (Charlie Barnett); Margot (May Hong), a lesbian artist; and Jake (Garcia), a trans man discovering his sexual identity.

**YOU'D BE FORGIVEN** for feeling overwhelmed: this is a lot of ground to cover. And while fans of the original will likely dive into this new series with warm nostalgia, newcomers may have a harder time parsing the specifics of these impressively convoluted backstories and relationships.

Yet that may not be so important. This *Tales of the City* is more concerned with the thematic story it's telling—how to reconcile the gay-rights movement and feminism of the '70s with a more progressive 2019 understanding of those ideals. When Ben calls out Michael's older, white gay male friends for their casual use of anti-trans slurs, one of the men angrily counters that Ben has no context for the struggles of his gay elders, particularly the sheer loss of life they endured at the height of the AIDS epidemic.

But the series is also eager—like Anna herself—to right past wrongs. When the first adaptation was released, a cis woman was cast in the role of Anna, a trans woman. Here, we get a flashback to a younger Anna, played by trans woman Jen Richards, in an episode featuring a diverse cast of trans actors. The show as a whole reflects a more contemporary understanding of what inclusion should look like: actors of color, trans and gender-

nonconforming actors, and actors with disabilities. Even as shows like HBO's *Looking* and films such as *Love, Simon* have marked steps forward when it comes to queer representation, *Tales of the City* remains uniquely committed to showcasing a fuller spectrum of the LGBTQ experience. These stories of queer lives, told with frankness and honesty, feel distinctly of this moment. □

▼  
Margot (Hong) and Jake (Garcia) help update a staple of the queer canon for contemporary viewers







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Banderas, staying afloat

## MOVIES

### Three dazzlers from Cannes

For movie lovers, the Cannes Film Festival, which ran from May 14 to May 25, is a harbinger of cinematic pleasures to come. Standouts from the 72nd edition include Bong Joon-ho's biting funny and beautifully crafted satire *Parasite*, the first South Korean movie to win the Palme d'Or, the festival's top prize. And Quentin Tarantino's *Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood* proved to be an affectionate delight: it follows a washed-up television cowboy (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stuntman sidekick (Brad Pitt) as they tool around 1969 Los Angeles around the time of the Manson murders—though the movie is, at its heart, a valentine to the late actor Sharon Tate, played with touching vivacity by Margot Robbie.

But the festival's best treasure may be Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar's semiautobiographical *Pain and Glory*, featuring Antonio Banderas as an aging filmmaker reckoning with his numerous aches and pains as well as, possibly, the end of his career. Banderas deservedly won the festival's prize for best actor: everything about *Pain and Glory* is awake and alive, and through Banderas' performance, Almodóvar's nerve endings become ours as well. —Stephanie Zacharek

## MOVIES

### A portrait of a house, and city, in flux

WHERE, OR WHAT, IS HOME? THAT question has as many answers as there are humans to ponder it. In *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*, Joe Talbot's odd and wonderful debut film, two young black men, best friends and natives of that often romanticized yet deeply complicated city, take a semi-dilapidated Victorian house under their wing. It has special meaning for one of them, Jimmie (Jimmie Fails), whose grandfather built the house in 1946—or so Jimmie believes. Jimmie's family lost the house years ago; it's now owned by a high-strung, middle-aged white woman with no sense of its past beyond its obvious, aged beauty. (Its high market value, given its prime Fillmore District location, is a given.)

Jimmie and his friend Montgomery (Jonathan Majors), a soulful writer and artist who seems transplanted from another era—his uniform is the loose tweed jacket and sock-and-sandal combo of a Beat-era bohemian—visit the house with religious regularity. Jimmie often brings paint to touch up the house's fading exterior trim, while avoiding the house's cranky owner. His devotion to the house is meditative, representing not just his own childhood

memories but a sense of belonging that goes back generations. The house also fuels his love of beauty. Glass light fixtures that dip down like lazy, benevolent tulips, Art Deco cigarette boxes shaped like champagne bottles: he and Montgomery share a deep, unspoken ardor for the past, understanding how old, whispered secrets live on in objects.

It would be correct to call *The Last Black Man* a story about gentrification, but that word hardly captures the movie's mystery and its heartbeat. (The story is by Talbot and Fails, based on Fails' own experience; Talbot wrote the script with Rob Richert.) This isn't just a story about displaced communities, it's about displaced souls, people so connected to history that they never feel quite at home in the present. Majors and Fails give fine performances here, in tune with each other but also with the pulse of the city that surrounds them, a universe of tech hipsters, of old-style hippies, of black kids hanging out on the streets of their own neighborhoods, far from the places where big money is made or spent. *This* is San Francisco now, but its neighborhoods—and its houses—harbor truths that can't be signified in dollar signs. —S.Z.



Majors and Fails: living in San Francisco's present while rooted in its past

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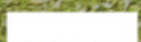
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REVIEW

## A boy band returns anew

By Raisa Bruner

THE JONAS BROTHERS AREN'T THE FIRST boy band to make a comeback play. New Kids on the Block broke up for 13 years but have been back together touring for the past decade; meanwhile, the U.K.'s Take That is still one of the most popular acts across the pond, despite member shake-ups over the years. The Backstreet Boys put out a No. 1 album in January and just wrapped a Las Vegas residency. Even the Spice Girls, arguably the biggest girl group of the '90s, are in the midst of a reunion tour, sans Posh Spice. But all these groups have one thing in common: they're trading on nostalgia, filling set lists with early hits and pandering to fandoms that first fell for them in their heyday.

Nostalgia might be gratifying, but that doesn't make it cool. The Jonas Brothers' secret weapon is that the first time they were pop superstars, they weren't all that cool. When they launched in 2005, the three teenage brothers—Nick, Joe and Kevin—were pastor's kids from Wyckoff, N.J., who made guitar pop that earned them a spot in the Disney fold, starring in original movies like *Camp Rock* and, eventually, their own Disney Channel series, *Jonas*. Their four albums were beloved by kids and tweens, but less so by the mainstream pop establishment; the band never had a No. 1 single. After they split, Nick found success as a solo artist with steamy R&B tunes like "Jealous"; Joe fronted the pop-rock outfit DNCE, notching a monster hit with the song "Cake by the Ocean"; and Kevin started a family with his wife Danielle and began working in real estate. The boys grew up. So did their fans.

**GROWING UP** is a hard thing for pop stars to do, especially those who emerge from the big machine of children's-entertainment behemoths like Disney and Nickelodeon. The Jonas Brothers' contemporaries, like Miley Cyrus and Demi Lovato, have navigated tricky territory as they matured in the spotlight, trying to earn musical bona fides while shedding their family-friendly public personae. By pursuing solo enterprises, Nick, Joe and Kevin each managed to find a groove independently, even if they drew attention for their personal lives as much as their projects: Nick tied the knot with actor Priyanka Chopra last year, and Joe wed *Game of Thrones* star Sophie Turner this spring. They became celebrities in their own right, trading purity rings for wedding rings.



▲  
*In addition to their new album, Happiness Begins, out June 7, the Jonas Brothers (above, from left, Joe, Kevin and Nick) released a documentary this month and are working on a memoir*

Which might be why their first single together in over a decade, "Sucker," released in March, ended up marking a high-water point in their career, both in terms of its casual swagger and its commercial success: it was the band's first No. 1 single. Produced by OneRepublic front man Ryan Tedder, who's helmed hits for everyone from Taylor Swift to Beyoncé, the song sounds more like an earworm Maroon 5 might release than something you'd hear on Radio Disney. It's adult, confident, even sexy. (So is the music video, which starred all three brothers' wives; it's up to over 146 million views on YouTube.) For their new album, *Happiness Begins*, out June 7, they tapped more pop hit-makers, including Max Martin and Greg Kurstin; it's a bid for the Top 40 jugular more than a nostalgic cash-in. They seem, authentically, to be having fun. "Coming back together wasn't because they needed it," says their longtime manager Phil McIntyre. "They came back together because they missed doing it together."

It's an impressive feat for a band that might have seemed doomed to go the way of Hanson, but it's also a testament to the public appetite for something that feels at once new and familiar that the Jonas Brothers have managed to pivot so effectively into a grownup pop group. "Sucker" is just the beginning. They quickly followed it up with a song called—what else?—"Cool." □

FICTION

## A painful search for love

By Viet Thanh Nguyen



OCEAN VUONG READ FROM HIS POETRY AT the Los Angeles public library two years ago. I was onstage with him as his interviewer, and what struck me about Vuong was his marvelous combination of vulnerability and strength. His frame is petite, his voice almost ethereal, and his moving poems explore the pain of being queer, a refugee, a poet and a member of a working-class family deeply impacted by

the Vietnam War. The poems from his book *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* expose raw hurt, love and joy, and in performing them, he demonstrated the confidence required to reveal himself.

Vuong does the same in his compelling, emotional first novel, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, written as a letter from a Vietnamese-American narrator to his mother. The protagonist is known only by the nickname his grandmother has given him, Little Dog, and bears some resemblance to Vuong himself, or at least the Vuong portrayed in his poems. Building on the themes of *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*, the novel adds a plot in which the teenage Little Dog, a perpetual outsider, finds love with a white boy, Trevor. The two meet working as manual laborers in the tobacco fields outside Hartford, Conn., where drug and alcohol abuse are rampant among poor whites. Their love is transgressive in more ways than one: it is both queer and interracial.

Trevor suffers from an addiction to OxyContin, while Little Dog is haunted by the Vietnam War, through the ways it has traumatized his grandmother Lan and his abusive, conflicted mother, who takes out her frustrations on her son. What both women saw in the war flashes through the pages of the novel, as in the moment when an American soldier—a boy—points his M-16 in Lan's face while she holds her young daughter. Mother and daughter know what most Vietnamese and too few Americans know—that the war burned not only soldiers but also civilians, including women and children.

**LITTLE DOG FINDS SOLACE** with Trevor, and their intensely physical relationship brings them together, highlighting key oppositions within the novel: death and sex, pain and pleasure, excrement and ecstasy, violence and love. The climax of the novel is also the climax of their passion, a powerful depiction of Trevor's penetration of Little Dog: "The feeling brought on, not by tenderness, as from caress, but by the body having no choice but to accommodate pain by dulling it into an impossible, radiating pleasure." To open oneself up to another is to risk being overpowered. But in being overpowered, Little Dog finds his own strength—through possessing Trevor, finding knowledge of himself and becoming a writer.

By daring to allow himself to be hurt, Little Dog finds, at least for a while, that most precious of resources: love. Like-



^  
*Vuong was born in Ho Chi Minh City and immigrated to the U.S. with his family as a child*

wise, Vuong as a writer is daring. He goes where the hurt is, creating a novel saturated with yearning and ache. Little Dog is turned inside out by his search for validation, and Vuong imbues his quest with meaning that extends beyond the personal. Little Dog pushes back against those who would criticize his writing when he says, "They will tell you that to be political is to be merely angry, and therefore artless, depthless, 'raw,' and empty. They will speak of the political with embarrassment."

Vuong refuses to be embarrassed. He transforms the emotional, the visceral, the individual into the political in an unforgettable—indeed, gorgeous—novel, a book that seeks to affect its readers as profoundly as Little Dog is affected, not only by his lover but also by the person who brought him into the world: "You're a mother, Ma. You're also a monster," Little Dog writes. "But so am I—which is why I can't turn away from you."

*Nguyen is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of The Sympathizer*

HISTORY

## Truths beyond the textbooks

By Lily Rothman

THROUGHOUT THE PROMOTION OF Beacon Press' *ReVisioning American History* series—in which each book tells the nation's story through the lens of a marginalized group—the authors kept getting the same question, usually from a teacher: Is there a version of this for kids?

"They are hungry for resources," says Beacon senior editor Joanna Green. "They know their students want something that's more radical."

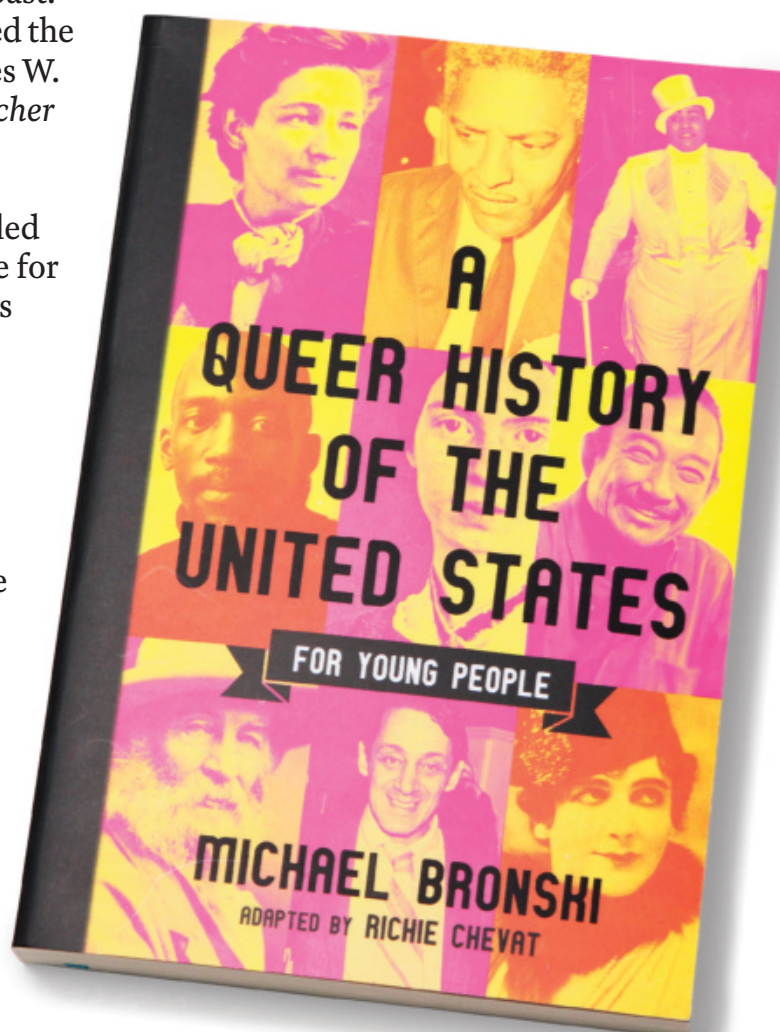
So Beacon is responding, starting with *A Queer History of the United States for Young People*. The adapted version of a 2011 book by Michael Bronski, released in time for the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising this month, is full of stories of people who prove that issues of gender and sexuality have always been part of the American narrative. In July, the series will continue with a YA adaptation of *ReVisioning's* take on the indigenous perspective. And these aren't the only books offering students a different take on the stereotypical textbook version of the American past. Separately, the New Press published the first young readers' edition of James W. Loewen's 1995 classic, *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, in April.

Demand for what Green calls "counter-textbooks" has been fueled by factors including student desire for more diverse stories; requirements like the California law that now mandates LGBT-inclusive social-studies curriculums; and larger shifts in the field of history, as the idea trickles down to classrooms that a study of the past is incomplete if it highlights only the perspective of the powerful.

But packaging new history texts for kids isn't just about using shorter sentences and vocabulary words. Loewen says

one of the hurdles in adapting *Lies* came in the section on the Vietnam War, which in the "grownup" version is told through that conflict's iconic photography. Were those images so brutal that schools wouldn't want a book containing them? Loewen decided to leave some out, replacing them with a note explaining that choice.

Other challenges go beyond the pages of the books. Though historians widely agree about the benefits of studying the past from more diverse points of view, says James Grossman, executive director of the American Historical Association, debate remains about how to achieve a good balance. Efforts to change how schools teach the American story can provoke backlash, but educators calling for more resources are clearly willing to keep trying to get it right. After all, it's one thing to ask adults to reconsider their long-held ideas about American history—and another to offer young people a more robust view in the first place. □



➤ *Walt Whitman, Bayard Rustin and others feature in the book*

CHILDREN'S AND YA

## Open pages, open minds

It's never too early to discover diversity. From exploring gender identity to defining intersectionality, these summer books for young readers celebrate inclusivity.



**IT FEELS GOOD TO BE YOURSELF**

**Theresa Thorn; illustrated by Noah Grigni**

Engaging art and simple explanations encourage even the youngest readers to freely express themselves.



**INTERSECTIONALLIES**  
**Chelsea Johnson, LaToya Council and Carolyn Choi; illustrated by Ashley Seil Smith**

Diversity takes center stage in this welcoming introduction to intersectional feminism, a joyous affirmation of how we are all connected.



**LIKE A LOVE STORY**  
**Abdi Nazemian**

Three teens in New York City come out and come of age during the era of the AIDS crisis.

—Cady Lang

# 8 Questions

**Ethan Brown** The founder of Beyond Meat, the plant-based-meat company that recently went public, on a future without eating animals

**H**ow did spending time on a farm as a child shape your views about animals and meat? I grew up in the city, in Washington, D.C., and College Park, Md. But my dad grew up in the country and bought a farm to start a weekend dairy operation with less than 100 Holstein cows. I fell in love with life outdoors and the animals that surrounded us. I began to question the difference between animals in the agricultural system and the ones we kept as pets. And as I became an adult, I understood that it was a cultural, and not biological, justification for the difference.

**You began your career in renewable energy around the time of the California energy crisis in 2000. What brought you from fuel cells to meat?** For me it wasn't wildly different to think about how we create food to fuel our body that has less impact on the earth—it was simply a question of energy use. I began to understand the role livestock plays in climate. It's not necessarily just the car you drive or the light bulb you screw in. It's also very much the protein you put in the center of your plate. It dawned on me that if we want to solve climate, we have to solve livestock. And we were having these discussions over steak.

**Why is it so important to move away from animal meat?** It's four major issues. There is a global problem that we can't support the number of livestock. There are the human health issues around eating red and processed meat, which is associated with heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Then you have to look at the effect on climate, natural resources and the sheer volume of water it takes to keep livestock. Lastly, there's animal welfare.

**Your products replicate the taste and texture of meat. But eating animal meat is almost a visceral need for many people.**

**IT DAWNED ON ME THAT IF WE WANT TO SOLVE CLIMATE, WE HAVE TO SOLVE LIVESTOCK**



**How do you persuade them not to?** You don't build a business telling people not to eat what they love. You build a business helping people to eat what they love, and more of it. It's about separating meat from animals. When you think of meat in terms of its composition, it's five things—amino acids, lipids, trace minerals, vitamins and water. None of that is exclusive to animals. Animals spend massive amounts of energy consuming plants to make protein. We start directly with the plant material [pea protein] and build from that.

**How do you describe your own eating habits?** I've been vegan for at least 16 years. But I routinely test meat [from animals] for taste and spit it out.

**There has been some backlash against claims that locally grown foods and plant-based products have a smaller environmental footprint. Do they?** We commissioned a study with the University of Michigan, and the numbers were staggering. There were 90% fewer greenhouse-gas emissions from producing one of our burgers compared with a beef burger from livestock. And one Beyond Meat burger uses 93% less land than a beef burger. I view that as something that could have a powerful impact on the world economy.

**Some scientists are building synthetic versions of meat. Do you see them as competitors?** I think it's a good thing. I didn't get into lab-grown meat because coming from the energy field, where we were trying to cost down fuel cells and couldn't get the economics right, I feared getting involved in another big science where we couldn't see a commercial end.

**What is your favorite way of eating plant-based meat?** I'm thrilled about our breakfast sausage. I love making Bolognese. But hands down, a great burger is my favorite. —ALICE PARK

**NEW**  
FLAVORS



# RISE THEN SHINE



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