

Far Right's Pedophile Obsession / Washington's Tax Cut Orgy

11.24.2017

# Newsweek®

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FEATURES

**FROM RONALD TO DONALD**

Once an establishment conservative, Laura Ingraham has adopted all of Trumpism's populist fervor. Her own prime time program on Fox debuted shortly after her latest book, *Billionaire at the Barricades*, was published.

**COVER CREDIT**

Illustration by **Max-O-Matic** for Newsweek



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BY BILL POWELL

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# In Focus

— THE NEWS IN PICTURES





SARPOL-E ZAHAB, IRAN

# Shaken

People warm themselves after a powerful earthquake racked this city near the Iraqi border on November 13. The quake left at least 407 dead and thousands more injured. Aid workers rushed to the scene, but some complained that the relief effort was slow. "There has been no help yet," said a man in a video posted by the Iranian government newspaper online. "Neither food nor water, no clothing, no tents. There is nothing."

📷 → POURIA PAKIZEH

## In Focus



MEDINACELI, SPAIN

### Flaming, Raging Bull

Medinaceli, Spain—Welcome to the Toro de Jubilo, an ancient festival in central Spain that involves revelers attaching balls of tar to the bull's horns. Then they light them on fire, as these folks did on November 11. Once the balls are lit, celebrants release the animal, which is covered in mud to protect it from the flames and toy with it until the fire goes out. Critics want the festival banned, saying it's cruel to the bulls.

📷 → CESAR MANSO



MANILA, PHILIPPINES

### Grip and Grin

President Donald Trump linked hands with, from left, Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on November 13 during his 10-day tour of Asia. Trump ignored reporters' questions about human rights and boasted of his "great relationship" with the authoritarian Philippine leader, whom critics charge with leading an extrajudicial killing campaign against drug dealers and users.

📷 → NOEL CELIS



HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

### You Too?

A protester at a #MeToo rally on November 12 makes a pointedly silent statement about misogyny in the movie business. Thousands gathered to build on the #MeToo movement and to speak out against the rampant sexual harassment in the entertainment industry as well as in media, politics and other fields.

📷 → MARK RALSTON







CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: CESAR MANOSO/AFP/GETTY; NOEL GEIJS/AFP/GETTY; MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY



**HOAX US POCUS**  
Cernovich falsely suggested that leftist protesters at Columbia were marching in support of pedophilia.

"It's Yuletide in Washington, and the Republicans are decorating their tax bill with trillions of sparkly ornaments." » P.12



POLITICS

# The Kids Are Alt-Right

Why pro-Trump provocateurs are using allegations of pedophilia to smear the left

**➤** ON OCTOBER 30, A TROUBLING IMAGE MADE its way across Twitter. It showed student activists at Columbia University in New York City protesting Mike Cernovich, a pro-Trump journalist and author who was delivering a speech to a Republican group on campus later that evening. The photo showed several people hoisting a banner. "No white supremacy," it said. "No Mike Cernovich."

Between those two messages was another: "No pedo bashing." At the bottom of the banner was the rainbow-colored logo of the North American Man/Boy Love Association, also known as NAMBLA.

Cernovich's supporters quickly lit up the internet with a combination of derision and outrage: Liberal activists and social justice warriors had presumably become so unhinged, they were now defending sexual deviants. NAMBLA, they implied, was leading the resistance to the Trump administration.

Well, not quite. A report emerged on Gothamist the following morning: "Mike Cernovich Stole My Photo, Lied About It on Twitter, and Sold Trump Jr. on Yet Another Fake Conspiracy," said the headline of the

article, written by freelance journalist Jake Offenhartz. He described how he'd seen right-wing counterprotesters unfurl the banner.

"What they wanted," Offenhartz wrote, "was for people to share photos of the stunt online, which I did, noting in a tweet that the banner was planted by the Alt Right."

Offenhartz discovered that Cernovich and his supporters deliberately posted the photo without its context—that is, suggesting that leftist protesters were, in fact, marching in support of pedophilia. Offenhartz complained to Cernovich, who removed the photo from his Twitter account.

But that led to a fresh spurious complaint: that Twitter had censored the image. That tweet, by Infowars writer and prominent conspiracy theorist Paul Joseph Watson, garnered a like from the president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., as well as tens of thousands of others.

The episode is part of a troubling new trend among social media users, conspiracy theorists and some journalists on the far right: leveling false accusations of pedophilia against

BY

ALEXANDER NAZARYAN

[@alexnazaryan](#)

Democrats and liberals in hopes of smearing them. The charge has frequently been made by Cernovich; conspiracy theorist Jack Posobiec, who recently started a pro-Trump super PAC; and Infowars founder Alex Jones, the most prominent conspiracy theorist in the nation and an energetic supporter of the president.

Lawrence Rosenthal, who heads the Berkeley Center for Right-Wing Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, speculates that “fever dream projections” regarding pedophilia may have to do with concerns about the widespread erosion of traditional family patterns, the kind Republicans frequently discussed in the “culture war” years of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Like many people I spoke to for this piece, Rosenthal struggled to understand the right’s fixation on pedophilia. Cautioning that this is mere speculation, he says some on the right have resorted to the pedophilia accusation because lesser “charges”—homosexuality, interracial marriage, one-parent households—no longer have the power they once did. “What are you gonna do to make them seem worse? I offer you pedophilia,” he says.

The most notorious pedophilia-related smear recently promulgated by the right is Pizzagate, a lurid conspiracy theory alleging that Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager, John Podesta, had operated a child sex trafficking ring out of the basement of Comet Ping Pong, a Washington, D.C., pizzeria. Cernovich was one of the early proponents of this conspiracy theory. So was Jones, whose Infowars site and radio show serve as a clearinghouse for the most fanciful right-wing conspiracy theories.

In December 2015, Donald Trump, then a candidate for the

Republican nomination to the presidency, appeared on his show. “I will not let you down,” he told Jones. “You will be very, very impressed, I hope, and I think we’ll be speaking a lot.” There is no evidence Trump believed in or promoted Pizzagate. But it fit perfectly with his narrative of “Crooked Hillary.” Jones simply took that narrative to perverse extremes by suggesting the Clintons engaged in some of the most heinous crimes imaginable. “When I think about all the children Hillary Clinton has personally murdered and chopped up and raped, I have zero fear standing up against her,” Jones said four days before the election.

It was in the weeks immediately after the election that Pizzagate

found its greatest traction on the right. Posobiec—who gained notoriety during the presidential campaign for posing as a protester brandishing a “Rape Melania” sign at a Trump rally—showed up at Comet Ping Pong to record a video of his investigation there. But “managers saw him take his camera into a backroom where a child’s birthday party was underway,” *The Washington Post* reported.

Posobiec and his friend were asked to leave, but that only turned them into fringe heroes—and Pizzagate into an obsession. The fever broke on December 4, when a North Carolina man, Edgar Welch, showed up at Comet Ping Pong with an assault rifle, looking to, as the *Post* put it, “rescue sexually abused children he believed were hidden in mysterious tunnels.”

Earlier this year, Cernovich engaged in a Twitter feud with cartoonish Vic Berger IV, who’d mocked Cernovich in a video. As the argument escalated, a few internet trolls made abusive comments on Twitter, some of them related to a photograph of Cernovich with his infant daughter. From this, Cernovich deduced that they were pedophiles and that Berger was operating a pedophile ring.

Jesse Singal, who covered the Berger incident for *New York* magazine and writes about the far right, says pro-Trump provocateurs like Posobiec, Jones and Cernovich know what will generate an online audience and wouldn’t resort to the pedophilia charge unless it was popular.

Singal compiled a list of people and organizations Cernovich had either called pedophiles or charged with supporting pedophilia. It includes Clinton’s running mate, Virginia Senator Tim Kaine; the liberal outlet Salon.com; *New York Times* CEO Mark Thompson and his

**“My belief that the left is full of pedophiles is every bit as sincere—and more supported by evidence—as the left’s belief that Trump supporters are Nazis.”**



HAND HOLDING PHONE BY DANIEL LEAL-OLIVAS/AFP/GETTY



**REALLY TALL TALES**  
The preoccupation with pedophilia hobbled Yiannopoulos, below, but that hasn't stopped Posobiec, left, from pushing conspiracy theories like the one about Comet Ping Pong.



stream Media Trying to Normalize Pedophilia.” A video by Watson about the rally at Columbia in late October—“Does Antifa Support Pedophilia?”—argues that it shouldn’t matter that the pro-pedophilia banner was a hoax.

“Should we really be surprised that Antifa is embracing pedophilia?” Watson asks, despite there being no evidence of such support. He then asserts that “elements of the left embrace elements of pedophilia because they are degenerate scum who don’t have any morals or principles.”

I asked Cernovich, who sometimes appears on Jones’s radio show, why he so frequently returned to the charge of pedophilia. During the course of our lengthy email exchange, he stood by his claims that the left supports pedophiles. But he also made clear that those claims were a retribution for liberals calling Trump supporters Nazis. “My belief that the left is full of pedophiles is every bit as sincere—and more supported by evidence—as the left’s belief that Trump supporters are Nazis,” he wrote. “When people view us as evil demons, how can they be surprised when we see the worst in them, and view them as being defined by the worst acts of their members?”

The preoccupation with pedophilia has helped hobble the once-promising career of Milo Yiannopoulos, who was forced to resign from Breitbart News after a recording came to light in which he joked about child molestation.

He later apologized, but he also seems convinced that the allegations of pedophilia against liberals have merit. The “scent of moral putrefaction,” Yiannopoulos told me, “hangs heavy in the air.”

Perhaps, but as the old adage goes, whoever smelt it may have dealt it. **N**

former employer BBC (one of whose personalities, Jimmy Savile, had indeed engaged in child molestation); the mainstream conservative magazine *National Review*; and Senator Ben Sasse, a Nebraska Republican. Cernovich once also tweeted that he was “100 percent sure” Singal “was a sexual predator. He has all the telltale signs of a date rapist.”

David Carroll, an associate professor of media design at the Parsons School of Design who studies the far right, says Cernovich and Posobiec carefully track internet usage patterns and know what generates clicks

from their base. They also understand the psyche of the right. “Right-wing people are interested in purging unclean elements,” Singal says. Studies have found that the disgust response is stronger in people who identify as political conservatives. Singal notes the purity fixation is especially strong on Infowars, where Jones already “has the type of viewership that believes... the government [is] slipping chemicals into our water.”

A search for the term *pedophilia* on Infowars brings up about 32,800 results, including articles with headlines such as “As We Predicted, Main-

FROM TOP: CARLOS BARRIA/REUTERS; ALEX WONG/GETTY; DREW ANGERER/GETTY

TRUMP

# The Tax-Cut Orgy

Trump and the GOP are hosting a special-interest bacchanal the likes of which Washington has never seen

**↑** THERE'S CHAOS IN WASHINGTON—and many of Al Mottur's clients are worried. A leading lobbyist for Brownstein Hyatt Farber and Schreck, Mottur has been in the capital for decades. But the 50-year-old has never seen anything like Congress's attempt to completely rewrite the tax code by Christmas. And many of his firm's clients are afraid they'll get slapped with new taxes. "The enormity of what [the Trump administration is] trying to do to the economy and the tax code," he says, "is inversely proportionate to the time they're giving it."

Is Donald Trump really draining the swamp? Not so much. He's just changing the water. The December holidays are about a month away, but the Republicans are already decorating their bill with trillions of sparkly ornaments. The biggest giveaways include a huge reduction in the corporate income tax rate—from 35 percent to 20 percent—and the elimination of the estate tax. (It affects only a few thousand extremely wealthy families, including the Trumps and their in-laws, the Kushners.) Beyond the bill's big-ticket items, there are small ones that have special interests eager to hire top talent like Mottur to cover their assets. He's loath to talk about what he's doing behind the scenes, but he's urging clients to remember that any deduction Congress preserves means lawmakers have to find another perk to eliminate. "It's

like moving place cards for a wedding," says Maya MacGuineas, head of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a D.C.-based think tank focused on the deficit. "If you cut one thing, you have to replace it with another."

This special-interest saturnalia is exactly what Trump promised to eliminate. Lobbyist registrations are up more than 100 percent in 2017, and one public-interest group thinks \$1 billion could be spent by organizations trying to persuade Congress to do this or that. If Congress's current efforts lead to a simpler tax code, greater economic growth and benefits for average Americans, that might be an acceptable downside. But in its current iteration, the Republican plans in the House and Senate do very little of that, according to independent analysts. As Trump's economic adviser Gary Cohn told CNBC recently, "The most excited group out there [about the tax plan] are big CEOs."

It's no wonder the Trump-Republican plan has incited liberals to form a lobby called Not One Penny—a nod at how the wealthy don't deserve any new tax breaks. The group has held rallies featuring giant Trump puppets and attracted speakers like House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California. It has also launched ads lambasting a similar trickle-down plan passed in Kansas that pushed the state into



fiscal chaos. "It was an abject failure," a Republican farmer, Mike Faul, says in the ad; he had supported the Kansas measure and now regrets it. The GOP may soon feel the same way about the new plan in D.C.

No one thought changing the tax code would be easy. The last time a president completely revamped it was in 1986, when Ronald Reagan and the Democrats agreed on a law that lowered rates and eliminated loopholes. But that happened only after years of work. Since then, the loopholes have returned, despite the

BY  
**MATTHEW COOPER**  
 @mattizcoop

FROM LEFT: DANE MARK/GETTY; DOUGLAS GRAHAM/ROLL CALL/GETTY



**RAKING IT IN** Mottur has been in the capital for decades. But the 50-year-old has never witnessed anything like Congress's attempt to completely rewrite the tax code by Christmas.

legislation this year. But from the beginning, the process has been mired in haste and secrecy. Instead of holding public hearings about the plan, in late September, House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, along with Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and Cohn, who is director of the National Economic Council, privately hashed out some broad principles.

Lobbyists descended on Capitol Hill, trying to influence the blueprint. When the outline came out, some interest groups were relieved: It didn't live up to Trump's promise to repeal the so-called carried-interest provision on hedge funds, which allows partners to be taxed at a 20 percent rate, far below what their secretaries might pay.

When Brady released the House plan in November, the lobbying

many lawmakers in both parties who aren't happy about it.

Unfortunately, neither party can agree on the appropriate remedies. During President Barack Obama's second term, Representative Dave Camp, a Michigan Republican, fought hard for sweeping changes in the tax code, creating working groups of Democrats and Republicans to come up with a bill. The Dems opposed it, and the bill never went far.

Trump and the GOP need the current tax plan to fare better, since they've failed to pass any major

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**Even Trump's top economic adviser admits: "The most excited group out there [about the tax plan] are big CEOs."**

scrum only grew bigger and rougher. The Business Roundtable, which represents the nation's largest corporations, launched TV ads to keep the corporate rate low. The RATE Coalition (Reform America's Taxes Equitably), which is backed by big businesses ranging from Aetna to Walmart, used veterans of Democratic and Republican administrations to make a case for why corporate cuts would raise family incomes. (Never mind that lowering businesses' taxes could wind up funding stock buybacks, not building new factories.) Meanwhile, the National Association of Realtors blitzed lawmakers with emails and mobilized brokers to preserve the mortgage-interest deduction, which the House GOP plan limits.

Other interests are taking part in the tax orgy too. Teachers are pushing to keep a deduction for classroom supplies. Charities are fighting the plan's big hike in the standard deduction, fearing fewer people will itemize their taxes—the only way to write off charitable contributions. Universities are freaking out; the House GOP plan would require their endowments to pay a tax on investment income and scrub the deduction for interest on student loans.

Meanwhile, state and local lawmakers—along with public employee unions—are livid over plans to eliminate the state and local tax deduction that dramatically eases the burden for people in high-tax states like New York and California. All these interest groups are ramping up the pressure on Congress. In early November, lobbyists crowded into the Ways and Means hearing to influence the amendments to Brady's bill. Some got what they wanted: Pro-lifers and would-be parents, for instance, restored an adoption tax credit.

None of these efforts mean the

bill will pass; it could easily unravel, depriving Trump and the GOP of a much-needed win. The House bill, for instance, adds to wealth inequality, according to multiple analyses that show most of the benefits go to the rich, especially those who live off capital gains. It also adds \$1.5 trillion to the national debt, which some fiscal conservatives oppose. And the corporate tax cut is so enormous, it exceeds even what the Business Roundtable was once touting.

**“It’s like moving place cards for a wedding. If you cut one thing, you have to replace it with another.”**

**SWAMP ROT** Trump, right, and Ryan show off postcards for tax filing. The two have touted the outlines of a tax plan, but Washington's special-interest saturnalia is exactly the sort of crookedness Trump promised to eliminate.

If the bill does go through, it's unlikely to be the model of simplicity—or engine of economic growth—that its advocates claim. Some Americans could find it easier to do their taxes next April, but companies will face “more complex rules,” says Michael Mundaca, co-director of the national tax department at EY (formerly known as Ernst & Young). And despite claims by the GOP to the contrary, for many businesses and individuals, “the role of tax consultants will be more important,” Mundaca adds.

America, welcome to the swamp of the future. **N**

DREW ANGERER/GETTY





## KAVALAN WHISKY: WHERE THE CASKS RULE

*Whisky judges said of the 2016 World's Best Single Cask Single Malt, the Kavalan Solist Amontillado: "Essentially, what we have here is a toffee smoking a cinnamon-flavoured cigar." But how exactly does Kavalan achieve all these flavours?*

Whisky writer Jonny McCormick has said that Kavalan's "secret weapon" is its maturation warehouse, and what Jonny says about whisky is generally always true. Housed in Kavalan's two warehouses are about 150,000 casks made of oak, a semi-porous natural product that provides this world-class Taiwanese spirit with its unmistakably complex layers.

When Kavalan whisky sleeps in these American oak casks, it interacts with the walls of the casks, rapidly drawing the remnants of whichever wine or spirit the cask previously held, be that bourbon, port, red or white wine or sherry. The Kavalan Classic, the brand's first iconic release back in 2008, is matured in no less than six different types of classic casks to achieve a distinctive formula.

That's just for starters. Then, through Kavalan's 'Maturation Redefined' ageing

process, the whisky also assumes intense notes of vanilla - through the extraction of a property of oak called 'vanillin'; as well as caramel and marzipan - through 'furfural'; together with coconut - through oak's lactones.

Yet, as with men, not all casks are created equal. This makes the question of which casks hold Kavalan, critical. How well a cask is made, from the quality of the oak down to the joinery of the barrel; its size and types of oak; and how well it is seasoned, toasted and charred, all influence the singular character of the final whisky. This is where the skill and craft of Kavalan's master blender, as well as his 30 onsite coopers, come into play.

CEO Mr YT Lee sends his master blender to scour the globe for world-class cask suppliers. Mr Lee trusts Chang's wood sense, honed from 12 years of guidance under the world's leading whisky expert, the late Dr Jim Swan. Chang's quest takes him to France, South Africa, the US, Australia, Portugal, and Spain: parts of the globe where the highest quality cooperages operate.

Take the Solist Amontillado, which is matured in premium, extremely rare casks, previously used for biological ageing under the highly specialised Spanish 'velo do flor' and 'criaderas and solera' method. Along with the Solist Manzanilla, the Amontillado is the poster boy for

Kavalan's rare Sherry series, launched in the US last year.

Chang, like Dr Swan, chooses coopers that pay careful, loving attention to their wood and the spirits held within. He handpicks those casks that will sail back to Taiwan to help produce 9 million litres of liquid gold every year.

Before the 'big sleep,' Kavalan's 30 strong coopers will meticulously treat those wine barrels destined to hold the 2015 World's Best Single Malt, Kavalan's Solist Vinho Barrique. They follow a secret formula devised by Dr Swan and Chang, toasting and setting the casks alight to activate their volatile compounds and to create extra layers of aromatic compounds.

It's a labour of love and all of it takes place in two ultra high-performance warehouses. Here, an Asian whisky will ripen into one of the world's finest drops, characterised by its extraordinary flavour and complexity.

*\*Benefiting from the world's highest quality oak casks, the unique combination of intense summer heat and cool winter breezes, as well as the purest water source in Taiwan, Kavalan whisky has been pioneering the art of single malt whisky since 2006. Kavalan takes both the old name for Yilan County where it is based and the indigenous people who settled the land. \**



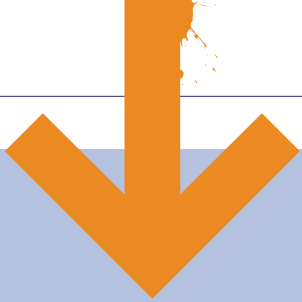
**WHO GETS DIPPED?**

Hannity has been a vehement defender of Trump, and the president has reciprocated, even asking for the host's guidance on immigration.



# Mas





FOX NEWS was wildly successful  
before Trump, and has been in a swoon  
since he became president,  
but can too much love be **FATAL?**

# sochism Tango

by  
**ALEXANDER  
NAZARYAN**

Illustration by  
**MAX-O-MATIC**



**FOX NEWS IS** destroying America. Its anchors are humorless propagandists for President Donald Trump, lacking dignity and honesty, humility and heart. The cable news network is a spigot from which right-wing misinformation flows unceasingly, flooding the nation with untruth, making millions wonder whether Barack Obama was born in Hawaii, as he claims, or in Indonesia, behind a mosque where fanatics plotted the destruction of America and the National Football League.

OR

**FOX NEWS IS** saving America by telling truths you won't hear on CNN or read in *The New York Times*, where liberal pieties prevail. It speaks for the millions of forgotten Americans in small towns whose newspapers are mostly filled with factory closings, foreclosure auctions and obituaries for the victims of fentanyl and despair. Fox News is the bulwark that keeps at bay political correctness, socialism and soccer.

OR

**FOX NEWS IS** America—glorious and exasperating, bellicose and enthralling. At battle with itself and outside forces, Fox News helped create the splendid turbulence of our political civic life and is now threatened by it. You read Alexis de Tocqueville to understand the nation in its infancy. You watch Fox News commentator Sean Hannity to glimpse the nation in midlife crisis, mournful for past glories, a little despondent about present ills, but unfailingly optimistic about the future. For once, China and California are vanquished, and this flailing little century will belong to America, as did the glorious one before it.

"IT'S JUST EVERYWHERE," SAYS LAUREN DUCA, A POLITICAL COLUMNIST for *Teen Vogue* of Fox News (she's a favorite target of Fox host Tucker Carlson). Like many progressives, she charges Fox with feeding on "conservative paranoia" while manufacturing it, a brutally effective and profitable feedback loop. Her parents watch it, she tells me. So do my mother and uncle, hooked long ago by its loathing for the Clintons and its love of Israel. It plays at Duca's gym. It plays at mine too. Actually, a confession: I am the one who turns the television to Fox News. Because while I find much of Fox News objectionable, I also find much of Fox News irresistible.

### 'A Vulgar Turn of Mind'

VISITING THE YOUNG AMERICAN REPUBLIC IN 1831, DE TOCQUEVILLE marveled at its flourishing free press. In his native France, he would write in *Democracy in America*, "almost all [the press's] power is centered in the same spot, and vested in the same hands." The press was, like the country itself, decentralized and unruly. The typical American journalist had "a scanty education and a

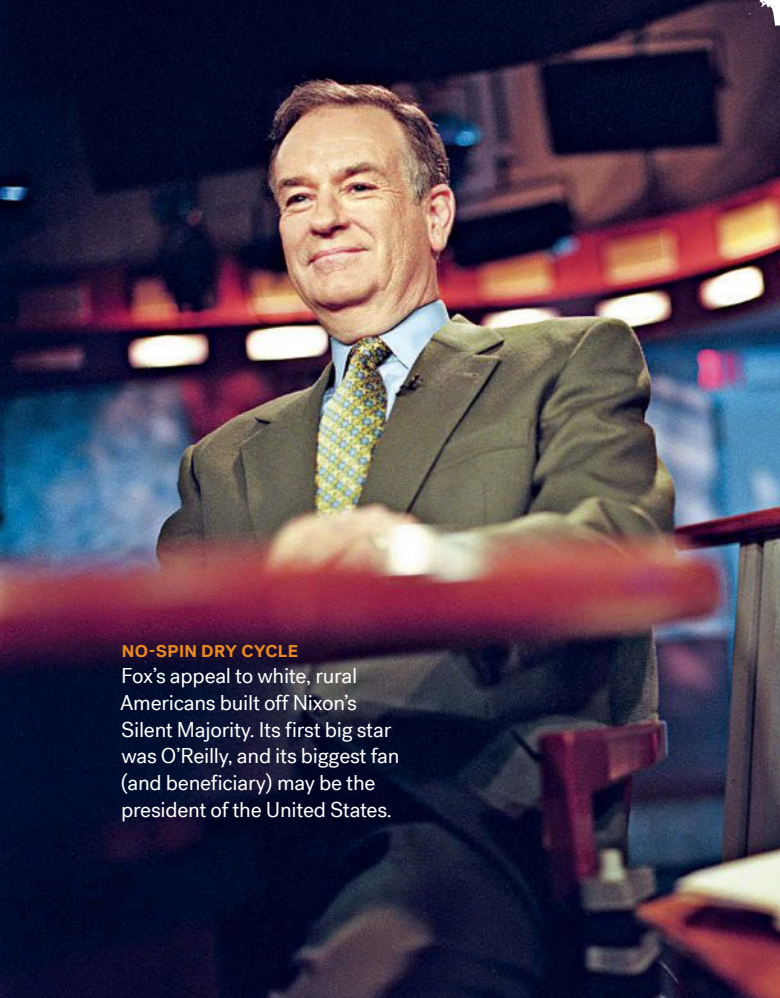
vulgar turn of mind," he wrote, and made "an open and coarse appeal to the passions of the populace; and he habitually abandons the principles of political science to assail the characters of individuals, to track them into private life, and disclose all their weaknesses and errors."

More than any other major media organization in modern American history, Fox News has found a way to appeal to those "passions of the populace." The network represents a strain of populism that political scientist Richard Hofstadter described in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, his classic 1963 study of demagoguery. Hofstadter wrote that modern American anti-intellectualism had its birth in the erosion of the agrarian society de Tocqueville had observed a little more than a century before. "As a consequence, the heartland of America, filled with people who are often fundamentalist in religion, nativist in prejudice, isolationist in foreign policy, and conservative in economics, has constantly rumbled with an underground revolt against all these tormenting manifestations of our modern predicament."

Fox News has managed to turn that underground revolt into above-ground theater, a captivating spectacle of "homicide bombers" and "coastal elites," of truth-telling patriots and politically correct traitors. In doing so, it has managed to convince people whose views may once have been considered fringe or extreme that they are, in fact, part of a silent majority bound by a vision of America where the right's deepest fantasies are realized: abortionists jailed, Muslims detained and Rosie O'Donnell deported to Antarctica.

Fox News is often accused of trafficking in outrage, but it offers viewers something far more valuable than that: self-assurance. Outrage is rooted in certitude, a conviction that the other guy isn't just wrong but flagrantly, offensively so. Take climate change. What a bummer, right? Not if you watch Fox News, where only about one in four references to global warming was truthful, according to a 2014 study by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

And let's be honest, MSNBC peddles in outrage as eagerly as FNC. Only Fox News did it first, and still does it better.



**NO-SPIN DRY CYCLE**  
Fox's appeal to white, rural Americans built off Nixon's Silent Majority. Its first big star was O'Reilly, and its biggest fan (and beneficiary) may be the president of the United States.



## 60 Percent Fake

DESPITE WHAT ITS DETRACTORS SAY, FOX NEWS DID NOT singlehandedly turn America into warring political factions that cannot agree on taxes, guns or when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Many point to 1994 as the year when the rift began to show, when a GOP led by House Speaker Newt Gingrich clashed with President Bill Clinton on many of the same issues that now animate the right: gay marriage, abortion, welfare. Fox News has played on that polarization, offering itself as a refuge from the slings and arrows of outrageous bullshit slung by the mainstream media. Bill O'Reilly, the network's first prime-time star, invited viewers into a "no spin zone." Unlike the sedate news anchors on NBC or CBS, he delivered his take on the news with, irresistible passion. Everything outraged him. A man with that much feeling had to be telling the truth.

CNN and MSNBC were slow to catch on to this shift from staid objectivity. And despite recent ratings gains, they've never really caught up. They wish they could engender the same ferocity of feeling, the fealty of viewership. But they can't, because they are merely cable news networks. Fox News isn't a network; it's a worldview.

That worldview is shared by Donald Trump, who reportedly watches several hours of Fox News each day. There has never been a relationship this close between a sitting president and an American media organization. Trump and Rupert Murdoch, chairman of the network's parent company, 21st Century Fox, are friends who talk regularly. Murdoch has offered him advice on media strategy; last March, Trump fired the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, Preet Bharara, who was conducting a federal investigation into how Fox News handled sexual misconduct claims.

Mark Knoller of CBS found that since becoming president, Trump has given 20 interviews to Fox News. He has given 18 to all other major American news organizations, and none to CNN. And why would he? Just to have his balls busted by Jake Tapper once again? Trump once needed CNN, but that's no longer true. Now he uses his bully's pulpit to taunt the supposedly "failing" network. (He may also use the Justice Department to block a merger between AT&T and Time Warner, the parent company of CNN.)

One of Trump's more recent interviews with Fox News was with Lou Dobbs, whose show airs on the Fox Business Network. Dobbs was once on CNN, but then his views on immigration got a little too extreme. So now he's a Murdoch man. Dobbs began the interview with a smooch: "You have accomplished so much."

Trump said he watched Dobbs's show "absolutely almost all the time," and that while journalism was rife with fake news—a term he falsely told Dobbs he invented—Fox News was always singularly fair to him. Trump also insisted that Dobbs tell him who

should be appointed the next chairperson of the Federal Reserve.

Dobbs smirked throughout, pleased with the president and himself. He said that while some on "the left" (in Fox News terminology, there are only Trump loyalists and "the left") loathe Trump, he was "one of the most loved and respected" presidents in American history. Polls indicate that is not even remotely the case. Dobbs surely knows that, and just as surely doesn't care. According to a 2015 analysis by PunditFact, 61 percent of what's said on the network is either a partial misrepresentation or an outright lie.

Even though Trump and Fox News are waging many of the same battles, they are not in the same foxhole. Not even the man with the nuclear codes could save the network from a recent rash of high-profile sexual harassment and racial discrimination lawsuits that have reportedly sapped morale; an intense ratings battle with CNN and MSNBC; an audience well into senescence, as suggested by nightly advertisements for gold, mops and life insurance; and fears that when Murdoch control to his hands sons, Lachlan and James, they will expurgate everything that has set Fox News apart from its competitors and made it phenomenally profitable. "Every news organization faces new challenges because of Trump," says Erik Wemple, media critic of *The Washington Post*. "It just so happens that Fox News's new challenges are potentially catastrophic."

## Springtime for Nixon

WHEN RUPERT MURDOCH ANNOUNCED THE NEW NETWORK THAT would come to be known as Fox News in 1996, the *New York Times* television critic Bill Carter was not impressed. "With no name and no formal plan for distribution," he wrote, "the promised



CATRINA GENOVESE/WIREIMAGE/GETTY

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**ROGER THAT** Ailes, seated, the television visionary who built Fox News, honed his messaging for a conservative audience while working on the presidential campaigns of Nixon, Reagan and Bush.

channel inspired widespread doubts about its long-term survival among competitors and cable industry analysts.” But, he added, Murdoch had one formidable asset: Roger Ailes. For nearly three decades, Ailes had stood at the thrilling and dangerous intersection where television and politics meet. During the 1968 presidential campaign, he’d worked for Richard Nixon, helping the candidate understand the medium that had helped John F. Kennedy defeat him eight years before. In an interview with *U.S. News & World Report* two years after Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey in ’68, Ailes was asked if TV experts can create misleadingly favorable images of politicians, who lack qualifications for high office. “Television doesn’t have that much control,” Ailes said. “Even if we tried to make something out of nothing, we couldn’t get away with it.”

That was a teensy bit disingenuous. In an unsigned memorandum from 1970 uncovered by Gawker in 2011 and titled “A Plan for Putting the GOP on TV News,” some unnamed official in the Nixon administration describes Fox News 26 years before the network’s birth: “Today television news is watched more often than people read newspapers, than people listen to the radio, than people read or gather any other form of communication,” the 15-page memo said. “The reason: People are lazy. With television you just sit—watch—listen. The thinking is done for you.” That gave the White House an opening “to provide pro-Administration, videotape, hard news actualities to the major cities of the United States.” There is a comment from Ailes in the margin: “Basically an excellent idea.”

Ailes’s first foray into cable news was in 1974. TVN (Television News Inc.) had been started the year before by conservative beer magnate Joseph Coors. It lasted just one more year. Ailes returned to politics, working on campaigns for Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, telling the latter he looked like “a fucking faggot” in short-sleeved shirts. During the 1988 campaign, Ailes worked with Lee Atwater, the GOP strategist who perfected the politics of grievance that have worked so well for Republicans ever since.

After Bush’s victory, Ailes went back to television. In 1994, as CNBC’s chief executive, he launched America’s Talking, an interview-heavy network whose on-air talent included Steve Doocy, now on *Fox & Friends*; Chris Matthews, who these days can be seen blowing his gasket on MSNBC; and Ailes, who hosted a show called Straight Forward. Sometimes, Straight Forward featured a guest host, a flinty Long Islander whose regular gig was at Inside Edition. His name was Bill O’Reilly. Like TVN, America’s Talking lasted about two years. It ceased programming on July 15, 1996. Two weeks later, *The New York Times* reported that Murdoch had hired Ailes.

Fox News is the deep resentments and paranoia of Nixon, crossed with the tabloid sensibilities of Murdoch. The former explains its overt appeal to the silent majority, a phrase Nixon used in 1969 in reference to working-class whites dismayed by the Black Panthers, campus activists and the long-haired freaks of Haight-Ashbury. Fox News evinces a similar dismay at similar groups, only instead of the decidedly unphotogenic Nixon, you have an army of leggy blondes and guys in power ties who look as if they hunt their own steaks. Ailes created an alternate universe in which Nixon was still—and always would be—president.

### ‘Skinny Ghetto Crackhead’

FOX NEWS, LIKE NIXON, HAS A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP WITH the truth. Nixon told the truth plenty of times; he just happened to have lied about a burglary at a certain Washington office complex. Fox News, in that regard, is a block of cheese moldy on the outside, with a mostly edible interior of straightforward news programs like *Happening Now* and *Special Report With Bret Baier*. At 3 p.m., you might find Shepard Smith denouncing Trump’s tweets or defending journalists. Then it’s Neil Cavuto, who might leaven the day’s events with a song from Joe Piscopo, the entertainer and sometime conservative pundit. This band of on-air non-ideologues is led by Chris Wallace, the charmingly nasal son of legendary *60*

FOX NEWS offers  
itself as a refuge  
from the slings and  
arrows of **OUTRAGEOUS**  
**BULLSHIT** slung by  
the mainstream media.

*Minutes* host Mike Wallace who frequently does what he can to steer the network away from the political extremes. “Every time Chris Wallace tells the truth on *Fox & Friends*, it’s an important moment for conservative America,” says Brian Stelter, CNN’s media critic and host of its Sunday morning press review, *Reliable Sources*.

Wallace also hosts a talker, *Fox News Sunday*, but Stelter was presumably referring to moments such as the one in June when Wallace excoriated Pete Hegseth of *Fox & Friends* for calling the investigation into Russia’s election meddling a “nothing burger.” Or the moment in the spring of 2008 when he scolded *Fox & Friends*’s Brian Kilmeade: “Two hours of Obama bashing may be enough.”

“I don’t think [Fox] is state-run TV,” says Joe Concha, a media reporter for *The Hill* who regularly appears on the network. “I hear so many different opinions on one topic.”

The best example of that is a clip from last summer of a monologue by Fox News contributor Eboni K. Williams. On the Monday after the bloody weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia, Williams was in her Harlem apartment, just waking up. On the other end of Central Park, in midtown Manhattan, *Fox & Friends* was busy praising Trump for his moral clarity on race in America. Producer



FOX NEWS

TALKING FOX HEADS

This page, clockwise from right: Wallace; Fox and Friends hosts Ainsley Earhardt, Brian Kilmeade and Steve Doocy; Williams. Opposite page, Hannity on-air with former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, and doing some selfie-promotion at the last GOP convention.



Rob Monaco had called to see if Williams wanted to do her “Ebony’s Docket” segment on *The Fox News Specialists*, an afternoon show. (It was canceled in early September, but Williams remains a contributor to the network.) Williams, a lawyer by training, uses “Ebony’s Docket” to discuss legal matters. She told Monaco there was nothing on her mind, but about an hour later, she called him back and said she wanted to do a segment about Charlottesville.

Plenty of people had already denounced Trump’s response to Charlottesville by then. Almost none of those denunciations went viral, as that day’s “Ebony’s Docket” did. The segment was a testament to what Fox News can be when it isn’t busy stoking fears about gender-neutral bathrooms. It gave a young African-American woman raised by a single mother the platform to criticize a sitting president known to be close to the network’s most powerful figures. That doesn’t mean everything, but it does mean something.

“I was willing to give you the benefit of the doubt,” Williams said, looking into the camera. “I can no longer do that, Mr. President. No more benefit—all doubt.” She hoped the president would address the misguided young men who’d descended on Charlottesville. “I am asking you to address their anger, address their misplaced fears.” She concluded with a plea: “Let them know that this is America, land of opportunity, and there is indeed enough to go around.”

I met Williams soon after she’d been in New Orleans for a meeting of the National Association of Black Journalists. There, she had

been forced to defend her work on Fox News. It is something she has to do often, and for good reason: African-Americans make up only 1 percent of Fox News’s viewership, reflecting the belief that the network is largely for whites, that even someone like Williams, though seemingly an ally, is only there for the appearance of diversity.

Maybe they remember the time O’Reilly attacked the rapper Common (“a guy who sympathizes with a cop killer”) or the time he attacked the rapper Ludacris (“a thug”), or the time he attacked U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (“James Brown wig”). There was also the time Jesse Watters, an O’Reilly protégé, was accused of racism for a 2016 segment in which he used the crudest stereotypes (“Am I supposed to bow to say hello?” and “Do you know karate?”) to depict the residents of New York’s Chinatown as ignorant about American politics and not really all that American. But he wasn’t the one who called Obama a “skinny ghetto crackhead.” That was family values zealot Brent Bozell, speaking on Fox News in 2011.

Williams considers O’Reilly her “rabbi.” Despite his long history of sexual misconduct, Williams says she never witnessed inappropriate behavior by him. She also believes most attacks on Fox News are hypocritical. “If you look at the cable news landscape, and if you want to point to a black woman hosting a show,” Williams says, “they don’t exist on the other networks. CNN doesn’t have any black women.” Fox News has two: Williams and Harris Faulkner of *Outnumbered*, which features mostly female hosts.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ANDREW HARRER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; PAUL MORIGI/GETTY; DREW ANGERER/GETTY; MAURY PHILLIPS/WIREIMAGE/GETTY





“Despite public relations efforts to the contrary, business at 21st Century Fox continues to operate more akin to **18TH CENTURY FOX.**”

Williams recently helped Gianni Caldwell, an African-American political consultant who leans right, get hired as a Fox News contributor. Williams says the diversity on Fox News isn't cosmetic. She gets emails from self-described far-right Republicans who tell her that she's made them reconsider Black Lives Matter.

But there have also been death threats, in particular after Charlottesville. To her defense came Hannity. “This is a national disgrace that people cannot accept differences,” he tweeted. In a season of political ironies, Hannity lecturing about civility may have topped even a billionaire's rhapsodies about the working class.

### Donald? Duck!

IN HIS 2015 STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF FOX NEWS ON THE AMERICAN politics, Bruce Bartlett, an adviser to both Reagan and George H.W. Bush, admitted that, like many conservatives, he welcomed the arrival of Fox News to an overwhelmingly liberal mediascape. “Finally, conservatives did not have to seek out bits of news favorable to their point of view in liberal publications or in small magazines and newsletters,” Bartlett wrote. “Like someone dying of thirst in the desert, conservatives drank heavily from the Fox waters.”

But the water was tainted. Bartlett argues that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 “radicalized” the network, endowing it with an

anti-Muslim slant it retains to this day. The election of Obama, though, may have been the best thing that happened to the network, allowing it to play the role of beleaguered outsider, the underdog taking

on a globalist elite that cared nothing for the jobless miners of West Virginia. Obama was worldly, sophisticated, rational, deliberate. Fox News was none of those. But it was American, unlike the new president (right?). Trump started appearing on the network, touting his investigation into Obama's supposedly faked birth certificate. A 2010 survey found that 31 percent of Fox News viewers didn't think Obama was born in the United States.

Top Republican strategist Rick Wilson blames Fox News for the dissolution of the principled conservatism that was his party's core. “As the country has devolved into increasingly hermetic ideological silos, Fox has constantly reassured the GOP base that their support of Trump still makes them conservatives, even though he's an authoritarian statist with poor impulse control and lacks a conservative bone in his body,” he says. “It's made them billions and cost the GOP its soul.”

GOP apostate Charles Sykes, author of the recent book *How the Right Lost Its Mind*, told Politico, “Pro-Trump viewers want a safe space... They want a reliable outlet that will defend the president and attack his critics, and Fox has apparently decided

that it's going to give them that."

But even though the network is now identified with electing Trump and bolstering his presidency the way Yoko Ono is identified with breaking up the Beatles, Fox News wasn't a Trump booster until well into the Republican primary. "During the election, it felt like Fox News was keeping Trump at arm's length—at first," says Joe Muto, a former associate producer for O'Reilly who wrote revealingly about working at Fox News in a 2012 series of Gawker dispatches. The Hill's Concha concurs. "Drudge had more to do with electing Donald Trump president," he says, referring to the Drudge Report, a clearinghouse for conservative news that, in the midst of the election, recorded 1.47 billion monthly visitors. Those visitors were offered a cavalcade of anti-Hillary Clinton calumny.

Concha also points out that CNN gave Trump disproportionate coverage in the crucial early days of his campaign, when it was easiest to dismiss it as a stunt. During the primary season, 78 percent of CNN's coverage of Republican candidates was focused on Trump, according to the Media Research Center; former Florida Governor Jeb Bush was second, at an anemic 12 percent. After he was fired by Trump in June 2016, campaign manager Corey Lewandowski quickly found a home on CNN as a paid contributor, where he defended Trump with snarling loyalty. Several months later, it was revealed that Lewandowski was still on the Trump payroll.

Casting all the blame for Trump on Fox News removes responsibility from the rest of the media. CBS chief Les Moonves said it best: "It may not be good for America," he said of Trump's run for office, "but it's damn good for CBS."

### Witch Hunt Is Which?

TRUMP HAS BEEN CRITICIZED BY DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS FOR saying that "many sides" were to blame for the violence in Charlottesville that claimed three lives. Yet if you were one of the 1.6 million Americans who tuned into Fox & Friends that morning, you would have no clue the president was embattled once again.

The most watched morning program in the nation, Fox & Friends opened that day's show as it always does, with an attractive woman in a short, bright skirt—in this case, Abby Huntsman, daughter of former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman—seated on a couch between two generically handsome men in conservative suits and primary-color ties (Doocy and Hegseth). There was no outrage on Fox & Friends, and there was no despair, of the sort you would have found on MSNBC's flagship Morning Joe, where contributor Donny Deutsch, an advertising executive,

was blasting Trump as a "pathetic, sniveling little man."

The mood on Fox & Friends that morning was of gently perturbed optimism as Doocy read a White House statement that had to be issued on Sunday because the president's statement on Saturday did not condemn white supremacists with nearly enough force. Hannity is the network's dark heart, but Fox & Friends is the sunny smile Fox News offers to the world. It manages to hold that smile for five full hours.

On that Monday in August, there followed a segment with an African-American professor from Vanderbilt, Carol Swain, who blamed what happened in Charlottesville on "identity politics and multiculturalism." She urged a restoration of "American national identity," without explaining what that was.

More recently, there was what *Teen Vogue's* Duca calls "the cheeseburger incident." On the late October morning that special counsel Robert Mueller handed down his first indictments in the federal investigation into the Trump campaign's collusion with Russia, Fox & Friends decided to investigate differences in cheeseburger emoji. Fox News is genius at this kind of misdirection, guiding viewers away from news that doesn't fit with its political agenda. "We report. You decide," is the Fox News motto, but it's impossible to have any credible opinions on the Mueller investigation if it is discussed in passing, and dismissed as a "witch hunt." And then it's back to the cheeseburger emoji, the War on Christmas, the War on Cops...

The master of such misdirection is Hannity, who recently moved into O'Reilly's coveted 9 p.m. slot. As of early November, Hannity had devoted several monologues to the Clintons, "America's most corrupt political family" (11/6); the "ruthless political machine that mowed down anyone" who'd stop Hillary Clinton from becoming president (11/3); the sale of uranium to Russia and the "painful steps" Clinton, as secretary of state, took along with Obama to "cover it up."

The deal involving Uranium One, a Canadian mining company, was covered on the front page of *The New York Times* in 2015, but each night, Hannity treats that entirely legal transaction like a fresh Watergate. Then there are Hillary's email servers. Hannity loves talking about those servers. There were also hard drives scrubbed with BleachBit, a product he mentioned so frequently, I became convinced he was a paid spokesman for the stuff.

Hannity is now the prime-time leader in cable news ratings. Second is his colleague Tucker Carlson. Unlike Hannity, who makes no overtures to people who don't agree with him, Carlson presents himself as a principled, considerate conservative, which may be why

"Fox has constantly reassured the **GOP BASE** that their support of Trump still makes them **CONSERVATIVES**. It's made them billions and cost the GOP its soul."

he has received some fawning coverage in the mainstream media. Earlier this year, for example, *The Atlantic's* Peter Beinart declared that Carlson was “offering a glimpse into what Fox News would look like as an intellectually interesting network.” Several days later, Carlson devoted a long segment to how some Roma who'd recently arrived in the United States defecated in a public park.

“Tucker Carlson is what happens when you leave William F. Buckley Jr. in the microwave for too long,” says *Teen Vogue's* Duca, referring to the *National Review* founder, the embodiment of establishment conservatism. Carlson has something of an obsession with Duca, likely because she bested him on his show last December. She had become famous for an essay about Trump's “gaslighting” of America, and Carlson brought her on to be “another lamb to slaughter,” as she put it to me. But while he is usually able to laugh and frown his liberal guests into submission, Duca proved smarter, wittier and quicker than Carlson. This was an exception, as Duca well knows. YouTube is full of clips in which Carlson “destroys” some enemy, including but certainly not limited to CNN's Jim Acosta, a feminist, “the antifa-loving professor,” a “First Amendment hater,” “a silly Democrat,” a Black Lives Matter “rabid racist,” Lena Dunham, “abortion apologist Planned Parenthood VP Dawn Laguens,” a “millennial climate activist moron.”

Usually, he isn't so much destroying as he is humiliating. The climate activist “moron,” for example, was California activist Erin

Schrode. After she began to express concerns about Trump's presumed nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt, Carlson cut her off. “It doesn't sound like you know a ton about this,” he said. Schrode then calmly listed the ways Pruitt, as Oklahoma's attorney general, attempted to stifle federal regulations at the behest of energy companies. In response, Carlson noted that she had studied liberal arts at New York University. “Do you have a degree in the hard sciences?” he asked.

Carlson didn't debate Schrode. He denigrated her and then dismissed her. The point wasn't to show that she was wrong—it was to show that she was a fool, as is everyone who believes in environmental regulation. What he did was trolling. Trolling of the left, of course, has been President Trump's signature accomplishment. It may, in fact, be the defining principle of Trumpism.

### The Red, White and Gray

WHEN THE NETWORK LAUNCHED 21 YEARS AGO, THE RIGHT-WING media consisted pretty much of Rush Limbaugh's radio program and *National Review*. What was a scrubland two decades ago is today a teeming jungle, from The Daily Caller and Breitbart News to the One America News Network and Infowars. They are all much smaller than Fox News, but they shorten the network's reach, with young people in particular. The average Fox News viewer is a 68-year-old white male, according to Nielsen, which tracks television viewership. He may be a loyal viewer, but he doesn't have much company in other demographics. Doug Creutz, a media expert for the financial company Cowen and Co., wonders, “Do they have a strategy for bringing in younger viewers?” He says the network appears to be “hoping that as people get older, they gravitate” toward Fox News. (Fox News declined to make its executives available to *Newsweek* for interviews, despite repeated requests.)

Demographics isn't the only concern. Cable packages are losing out to “cord-cutting” services like Netflix and Hulu. *Variety* estimates that 22 million Americans will cancel cable subscriptions in favor of streaming this year, a trend that is only growing. Moreover, while older people may continue to watch cable, a 2015 Pew Research Center study found that 61 percent of millennials—who make up a good part of the demographic most coveted by advertisers—get their news from social media sites like Facebook.

Despite that, Fox News still has impressive ratings. It has been the most-watched cable news network for the past 15 years; it has not been bested in prime time in 190 months. The list of the most-watched cable news programs is essentially the Fox News roster. Yet Maddow has, in recent months, sometimes bested her Fox News

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**HEIR TO BE GREAT?** Rupert Murdoch, flanked by his sons James, right, and Lachlan. There are rumors that the sons are uncomfortable with the tone of prime time Fox News, but even if that's true, will they dare mess with a profit juggernaut when they are running the shop?

KARWAI TANG/WIREIMAGE/GETTY



competitors. On August 16, MSNBC edged out both CNN and Fox News for total viewership, the first time it had done so in its history. Trump's rise may have been lucrative to Fox News; Trump's presidency is proving immensely profitable to his detractors.

### 'The President Wants This Now'

ON MAY 16, FOXNEWS.COM REPORTER MALIA ZIMMERMAN PUBLISHED an article with the following headline: "Seth Rich, slain DNC staffer, had contact with WikiLeaks, say multiple sources." Zimmerman said Rich, who'd been killed in an unsolved shooting the previous summer as he walked home from a bar in Washington, D.C., was the source of the Democratic National Committee emails that soon after his murder appeared on WikiLeaks. Zimmerman cited "law enforcement sources," as well as the work of Rod Wheeler, a private investigator who sometimes appears on Fox News.

Zimmerman's story became a favorite of Hannity's. He had Wheeler on his show and kept insinuating that his own "investigation" would soon prove Rich, not the Russians, gave those emails to WikiLeaks. This came a day before the Justice Department Mueller as the special counsel for the federal Russia investigation. The efforts of Zimmerman and Hannity offered a counter-narrative that exculpated Trump while suggesting a crime on the Democrats' part.

A week later, Fox News retracted the story. In its place is a statement declaring the piece "was not initially subjected to the high degree of editorial scrutiny we require for all our reporting," Hannity also indicated he'd put the Rich story aside.

In July, Wheeler filed a lawsuit alleging the Rich story, as reported by Zimmerman, was an invention concocted with the direct knowledge of the White House. The lawsuit includes a text message sent to Wheeler by Ed Butowsky, the prominent Republican donor who'd hired him to figure out who killed Rich. The Fox article, Wheeler alleges, included conspiratorial conclusions he had not reached. Which appears to have been the point. "The president just read the article," Butowsky's message said, effectively casting Trump as an impatient Fox News editor. "He wants the article out immediately."

Wheeler's lawsuit is one of many against Fox News in recent years. The first sexual harassment lawsuit against O'Reilly, for example, was filed in 2004, 13 years before he was forced off the network, a fall from prominence that played out in public (and continues to, with recent revelations in *The New York Times* that he paid \$32 million to a Fox News contributor who accused him of sexual misconduct). By that time, O'Reilly and Fox News had settled with five other women because of the sexual misconduct claims they'd made against him; 20 women made similar accusations against Ailes, the network's powerful chairman, who died earlier this year. Trump defended both men, aware of how he much owed them.

Last spring, about two dozen current and former Fox News employees filed sexual and racial discrimination lawsuits against Fox News. "Despite public relations efforts to the con-



**BILE FROM WHEREVER** Former Fox host Megyn Kelly drew a sexist tweet from Trump in response to her tough questioning of him about his treatment of women during a Republican primary debate.

trary, business at 21st Century Fox continues to operate more akin to 18th Century Fox," says the plaintiffs' lawyer, Douglas Wigdor, who is also representing Wheeler.

I spoke with several of those plaintiffs. "It was like a chauvinistic dictatorship," said Jessica Golloher, a Fox News Radio correspondent who tells me she was "treated like a vapid 10-year-old."

This summer, Fox News declined to settle with Wigdor's clients for \$60 million. Meanwhile, the number of on-air personalities who've left or been fired or suspended over sexual misconduct continues to grow: Eric Bolling of Fox News Specialists, fired for sexting female co-workers; Charles Payne of the Fox Business Network, suspended for misconduct relating to an extramarital affair with a colleague (his return to the network was recently announced); and Bob Beckel of *The Five*, for addressing an African-American employee with what the network called an "insensitive remark."

Can anyone save Fox News from itself? Many place their hope in James Murdoch, the 21st Century Fox executive who will likely succeed his father as the company's leader. He apparently has a couple of liberal bones in his body. After the deadly violence in Charlottesville, he pledged \$1 million to the Anti-Defamation League, expressing "concern" about Trump's reaction.

FROM TOP: JAAP ARRIENS/NURPHOTO/GETTY; ERIC LIEBOWITZ/FOX/GETTY

Among the many lurid details in a *New York Times* story about O'Reilly's \$32-million settlement, the most astonishing may have been that, despite knowledge of the settlement, Fox News gave him a four-year, \$100 million extension. That revelation dispelled all talk of having finally expelled the rank ghost of Ailes. An interviewer confronted James Murdoch about O'Reilly's contract. "That was news to me," he said. "I can't make sure that everyone in the business doesn't behave badly at times, right?"

One of Trump's 20 Fox News interviews came on September 28, as he was introducing the Republican plan to cut taxes. It was with Hegseth of Fox & Friends, conducted right before a rally in Indianapolis about the tax plan. For the most part, the interview was not about taxes. Trump said he thought NFL franchise owners were "afraid" of their players, which is why the national anthem protests were continuing. He blamed the failure to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act on a hospitalized Republican senator. There were no senators, Republican or otherwise, in the hospital at the time. Even Kilmeade, as eager a Trump booster as Fox News has, seemed rattled by the exchange. This was the headline on a story I filed the next morning about the interview: "What the Hell Was Trump Talking About on Fox & Friends?"

A few hours later, I got an email: "You consider this newsworthy? Do you actually do any substantial reporting, or do you just sit in front of your laptop fabricating worthless pieces of reporting?" The writer asserted that "America needs an honest, viable press. It's what has kept us from becoming a North Korea, or Venezuela. We don't have that now."

A few days later, a shooter in Las Vegas killed 59 people, and I wrote about how the far right was doing its best to pretend the murderer was not a white male of Christian background. Again, the reader who'd been upset by my take on the Fox News interview wrote to me: "Certainly you're better than this."

I emailed back, probably annoyed. He emailed back, and, soon enough, we were in an exchange largely free of vitriol. But largely free of agreement too. In the days that followed the Vegas shooting, we had a civil discussion in which we outlined divergent realities.

He told me I could call him John and reveal the following personal details: He's 56, lives in New Hampshire, works in sales.

It was obvious that John was well informed. "I voraciously read most mainstream news," he said, name-checking Newsweek, Yahoo, CBS, NBC. Still, there was something elusive and frustrating about the exchange. We were shouting at each other underwater, and in the place of cogent arguments, there were only gurgling noises.

I asked John if he watched Fox News. "Less than 2-3 hours a week," he said. "Mostly Tucker."

I'd been watching Carlson too. In the days before John and I'd exchanged emails, Carlson had railed against the liberals who, in his eyes, enabled the sexual predations of Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. He defended Trump's tough new immigration stance and condemned those who wanted to tear down statues of Christopher Columbus for the explorer's treatment of indigenous Americans. He defended gun rights, over and over, even as Las Vegas remained a blood-soaked crime scene.

Watching even a couple of hours of this would have tainted the news John saw elsewhere. I speak from experience. Having spent the last several months watching Fox News steadily, I find that the voices of Hannity and Carlson have wormed into my brain like prehistoric jungle worms, gnawing away at once-solid neural links. I fully expect, one day soon, to come home from

work and tell my wife that I'm tired of the left maligning the Confederacy and destroying our collective heritage. I hope it doesn't happen, but it probably will.

"If you are focusing on Fox News as the reason why Trump won, you still don't understand why he won," John warned in an email.

With all due respect, John, there was, at the very least, a correlation between watching FNC and voting for DJT. In January, the Pew Research Center found that "Americans who say they voted for Trump in the general election relied heavily on Fox News as their main source of election news," with some 40 percent of Trump voters

turning to Fox News as their main source of news.

And earlier this fall, a study out of Stanford—"Bias in Cable News: Persuasion and Polarization"—confirmed the power of Fox News to sway hearts and minds. And votes. It found that, for presidential elections, "Fox News increases Republican vote shares by 0.3 points among viewers induced into watching 2.5 additional minutes per week." Conversely, watching MSNBC an additional 2.5 minutes per week had no impact on electoral outcomes.

But in another sense, John is right. Fox News has given powerful voice to a segment of the population. The people who watch Fox News are not going away. Nor is their despair about the digital economy, their suspicion of immigrants and their discomfort about race. As for the nation de Tocqueville observed nearly two centuries ago, of gentlemen farmers and intrepid woodsmen, a nation untamed and untameable, estranged from Europe, in love with liberty—we were a nation already hooked on Fox News, even if we didn't know it just yet. ■

"I don't think it is  
**STATE-RUN TV.**  
I hear so many  
different opinions  
on one topic."



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan welcome U.S. President Donald Trump and his wife Melania Trump at the Palace Museum, or the Forbidden City, in Beijing on November 8

## UNDER THE GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

### Donald Trump's visit bodes well for China-U.S. relations

**A**fter Chinese President Xi Jinping engaged with his U.S. counterpart, Donald Trump, in deep and friendly exchanges at the Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida in April, Trump made a state visit to China from November 8 to 10. The visit is the result of active political and diplomatic interactions between the two major nations and will exert an important and exceptional influence on bilateral relations at a time when the international order is under profound transformation.

In Beijing, Xi and Trump held official talks. They also witnessed the signing of contracts and two-way investment agreements worth

more than \$250 billion between Chinese and U.S. companies in sectors including energy, manufacturing, agriculture, aviation, electronics and automobiles.

The two visits pave the way for a Xi-Trump era of Sino-U.S. relations, ushering in a new cycle for bilateral ties. Meanwhile, Trump's visit, taking place right after the successful 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), is of real significance for the largest developing nation and the most powerful Western nation to discuss reform and development strategies.

#### **New interaction**

Since Trump was elected in November 2016, the Chinese Government and the U.S. Government have successfully passed a transitional period and established smooth connections. Xi and Trump have also built friendly work and personal connections through two face-to-face meetings and nine phone calls. The four newly established high-level mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation—in the areas of diplomacy and security, economy, law enforcement and cyber security, and social and people-to-people exchanges—developed during the two presidents' Mar-a-Lago meetings have

already been launched, and the first round of dialogues were successfully held. The frequent visits, meetings and phone calls between Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have also prepared the way for Trump's visit to China.

China has made progress in its diplomatic relations with the U.S., which helped stabilize the bilateral ties at the time of the change of the U.S. leadership. In the fields of economy and trade, the 100-Day Action Plan of the U.S.-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue has yielded early results.

On the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, China proposed a dual-track approach for promoting denuclearization of the Peninsula and establishing a peace mechanism in parallel, and strictly implements the UN Security Council resolutions on Pyongyang.

On the South China Sea issue, China has well demonstrated its crisis management abilities.

In terms of the Taiwan question, by adhering firmly to the one-China principle, China has properly handled the matters of President-elect Trump's phone conversations with Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen last December and the U.S. arms sale to Taiwan in June worth \$1.42 billion.

China's strong arguments on just grounds have deepened the opposite parties' awareness of the sensitivity of issues related to China-U.S. relations, earned their respect and dealt with Trump's unconventional way of thinking and behaving so as to avoid risks and clear barriers to bilateral dialogue and cooperation.

The 19th CPC National Congress attracted great attention from the political, business, academic and military fields in the United States. The views and remarks from them so far show that what concerns the U.S. most is not ideology and change in the international order, but the kind of signals the CPC National Congress has released on reform, especially on economic adjustments and market reforms, from which the U.S. is seeking opportunities for self-development and cooperation.

The United States' internal situation and foreign policy require a stable China-U.S. relationship. Since Trump took office, he has stressed "America First," which in fact means prioritizing the nation's economic recovery to stabilize his administration and putting the U.S. interest in the first place when dealing with global issues. The U.S. is unwilling to bear much responsibilities overseas, and needs

China's cooperation.

The Trump administration has not held back from exiting current international systems that are not related to, or even go against, U.S. interests. It has also shown that it tacitly recognizes, or currently has no time to attend to, China's approaches to reforming the current global order, such as its promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative.

## Sensitive issues

With this trip, Trump showed a positive attitude toward China-U.S. relations, but what he cares about most and wants the most results on are two topics—economy and trade, and the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue—which deeply concern the two nations' domestic politics.

China is the largest trade deficit source country of the United States. According to statistics from the U.S., its merchandise trade deficit with China was \$347 billion in 2016, accounting for nearly 50 percent of its total merchandise trade deficit. Although the U.S.' service trade to China has been in surplus, the scale is far smaller than that of goods trade.

China pushed forward the 100-Day Action Plan of the U.S.-China Comprehensive Economic Dialogue to promote bilateral ties in goods trade, opening of the service industry and international cooperation. For example, China granted safety certificates to two U.S. genetically-modified agricultural products, recommenced U.S. beef imports, lifted access restrictions on corporations with foreign capital, and allowed U.S.-funded e-payment service providers to enter the Chinese mainland market. However, the Trump administration wants more. It seeks breakthroughs in industries such as steel, clothes, mechatronic engineering, finance and services, as well as in getting U.S. investments in China the quasi-national treatment. The U.S. also looks to significantly reduce its trade deficit with China.

Nonetheless, according to China's customs service, China's trade surplus with the U.S. for the January to August period this year stood at \$168.06 billion, up 6.5 percent year on year. The surplus in August alone hit \$26.23 billion, a record high since September 2015. The huge goods trade imbalance comes from the difference between the two nations' economic development stages and U.S. restrictions on exports of high-tech products to China. Addressing these issues requires efforts from both sides. But the U.S. is adopting a negative

attitude toward easing restrictions on high-tech exports to China and continuing negotiations on bilateral investment treaties. As a result, there is a long way to go before the two governments come up with a plan that they both can agree on.

Addressing the trade imbalance between the two nations is beneficial to China's supply-side reform, to a better world economic development, and to avoiding global hyperinflation against the backdrop of many countries' ceasing quantitative easing and shrinking their balance sheet. Looking into the future, the world's two largest economies should negotiate for win-win and mutually beneficial results, and Trump's visit to China can be a turning point for the better.

The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is the Trump administration's top security concern in the Asia Pacific region. In the past several months, North Korea has pushed forward development of its nuclear weapons technology, carrying out a sixth nuclear test, frequently launching medium-range missiles and achieving a major technological breakthrough. The state is getting closer to being able to launch a transcontinental ballistic missile carrying a nuclear warhead capable of reaching U.S. territory. The United States feels highly threatened by Pyongyang's behavior, arousing two voices within the country—one calling for resorting to military force; the other, for acquiescing in the fait accompli.

In this complex situation, Trump remains hesitant. Besides threatening the use of force, his administration has been pushing Beijing to manage and control Pyongyang and impose a blockade on the country, transferring part of the pressure to China.

In the past several months, China has been actively implementing UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea and has participated in multilateral sanctions. The Trump administration also gained a more direct sense about the irreversibility of Pyongyang's nuclear strategy.

In spite of the sound and close interaction, Beijing and Washington still have doubts on each other's strategies, so there is a high risk of misunderstandings. Whether the largest emerging power and the largest established power can rise above competition for global power and join hands to push the international order in a rational direction is not a question that can be answered through a single high-level visit. It requires long-term effort.

But one thing is certain. The frequent high-level exchanges between the two nations send the world an important signal: In the transformation of the international landscape, China's gain might not be the United States' loss, and vice versa. ■



By An Gang

The author is an op-ed contributor to *Beijing Review* and a researcher at the Pangoal Institution



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Comments to [yanwei@bjreview.com](mailto:yanwei@bjreview.com)



PHOTO-ILLUSTRATION BY KATY LYNSS;  
PHOTO OF INGRAHAM BY WIN MCNAMEE/GETTY





Once a staunch Reagan Republican, Laura Ingraham has become Trump's top tub-thumper—and Fox's new star. But is her love for the Donald genuine?

**OR SOMETHING MORE CYNICAL?**

# CONVERSION THERAPY

by  
**BILL  
POWELL**

# I

T WAS ELECTION NIGHT 1984, and Laura Ingraham, a student at Dartmouth College, was drinking and dancing at a hotel when the returns rolled in. She and her friends, all conservatives, had plenty of reasons to celebrate. President Ronald Reagan was drubbing Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale (Reagan wound up winning all but one state), and Ingraham fondly recalls the “seething leftists” who paraded by, horrified as they watched the young conservatives cheer. “God,” she tells *Newsweek*, “I loved the ’80s.”

She’s enjoying the Donald Trump era almost as much. Once a true believer in the Reagan gospel of supply-side economics, massive defense spending, a muscular foreign policy and traditional family values, Ingraham has fully embraced Trumpism, adopting all of its anti-establishment fervor. And with the New York real estate mogul in the Oval Office, she has parlayed her national radio show and frequent appearances on Fox News into her own nightly prime-time program (*The Ingraham Angle*) on the conservative network—the ultimate media perch for a right-of-center pundit.

The decision to hire Ingraham comes at a crucial point for Fox News: Bill O’Reilly, for years its prime-time powerhouse, resigned in the wake of multiple sexual harassment accusations last summer. Ingraham joins Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson in trying to stabilize prime-time ratings while the channel’s rabidly anti-Trump counterparts, CNN and MSNBC, have narrowed Fox’s ratings lead. Her show debuted on October 30, just after she completed a national tour promoting her latest book, *Billionaire at the Barricades*, about the forces that propelled the president to victory last year.

This is Ingraham’s moment. She has become, in the words of Michael Graham, who hosts a daily political show on Ricochet, the number one conservative podcast platform, the most “strident backer of the president and his agenda in all the media.” Which is saying something, considering that Hannity seems to mindlessly agree with whatever the president says.

Ingraham’s ardent support sets her apart from other Reagan conservatives, the so-called “Never Trumpers” on the right, like Bill Kristol of *The Weekly Standard* or Jonah Goldberg of *National Review*, who believe much of what Trump stands for—from immigration to trade—is heretical. It’s why many “establishment” Republicans, as Ingraham caustically refers to them, belittle the president, mostly in private, but some increasingly in public, such as GOP Senators Bob Corker and Jeff Flake.

Ingraham, on the other hand, claims she can draw a straight line from Reagan to Trump. In her new book, she argues that what unites them is “populism,” broadly defined as “returning power to the people.” More specifically, she says, it means building the wall on the U.S.-Mexican border, getting tough with China on trade and being very skeptical of foreign wars, particularly in the Middle East.

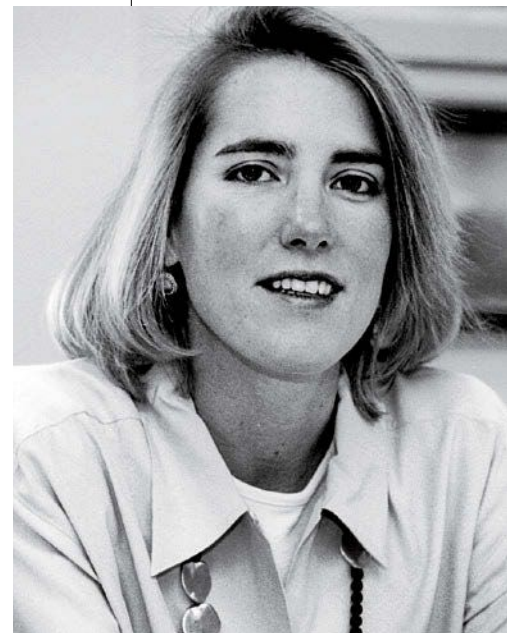
Reagan would have opposed many of these positions, Ingraham’s critics point out, and even mentioning the two presidents in the same sentence makes some Reagan-aunts livid. It also makes them wonder: Does Ingraham really believe this nonsense? Or is she just cynical?

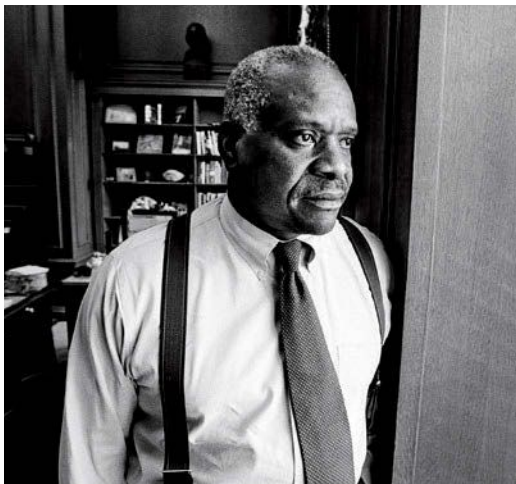
### ‘He Could Totally Win’

INGRAHAM WAS AN EARLY FAN OF Trump’s, but she was nevertheless surprised in June 2016 when her phone rang and it was Don Jr. on the line. He asked her if she would speak in prime time at the GOP convention in Cleveland. The press was full of stories “about how few prominent Republicans were willing to take the stage at the RNC,” Ingraham recalls. But she didn’t hesitate to say yes. It was the first time in modern U.S. political history that a prominent media figure endorsed a nominee at



**HEAR, HERE** Clockwise from top: Ingraham joined the attack on Flake that drove him out of the Senate; she clerked for Thomas on the Supreme Court; a live broadcast of her radio show from Iraq; sparring with comedian and liberal activist Janeane Garofalo.





INGRAHAM

his convention. It was a big moment for her—and for Trump—and the speech introduced her to a far bigger audience than she'd ever had before.

Ingraham told that crowd she was raised in Glastonbury, Connecticut, where her father owned a car wash and her “mother waited tables until she was 73.” Her family “flew the American flag every day, not just on the Fourth of July.” And as a teenager, she was watching the news in the early '70s when she asked her mother why protesters against the Vietnam War were burning the flag. “Because,” her mother said, “their parents didn't teach them about respect.” The convention crowd loved it.

After graduating from Dartmouth—where she was the first female editor of *The Dartmouth Review*, a prestigious conservative campus paper—Ingraham became a speechwriter in Reagan's administration. She then went to law school at the University of Virginia, shuttling around Charlottesville in a banged-up Honda with a vanity license plate that read “FARRIGHT.” After law school, she clerked for Ralph Winter, a widely respected federal judge on the Second Circuit in New York, and then for Clarence Thomas on the Supreme Court. She went on to work at Skadden Arps, the prominent, white-shoe Wall Street law firm.

Ingraham's passion for conservative causes didn't wane, and her intellect—along with her looks—attracted attention: She was on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* in 1995 for a story on young conservatives, and her media career started in the late '90s. She had a show on MSNBC and a radio program whose audience steadily grew. For the next decade or so, on a variety of platforms, Ingraham voiced standard conservative views: She hammered President Bill Clinton over his dalliance with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. And after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, she supported President George W. Bush's invasions of Afghanistan and then Iraq. As Ingraham, who used to fill in for her on the radio, puts it: “If you had told someone five years ago that Laura would be out leading the cheers today for a pro-abortion, thrice-divorced, never-voted-in-a-Republican-primary New York businessman, it would be seen as a very clever joke.”

Ingraham attributes her messy public divorce from the mainstream GOP to what she now calls “the tragic” presidency of Bush. Originally a fervent

She went to law school at the University of Virginia, shuttling around Charlottesville in a banged up Honda with a vanity license plate that read **“FARRIGHT.”**

FROM TOP: MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY; DAVID HUME KENNERLY/GETTY; JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC/GETTY; PIF MILITARY COLLECTION/ALAMY; ROBERT A. REEDER/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY

supporter, Ingraham soured on him (as did many Americans) as the Iraq War got increasingly messy. In 2006, she traveled to Baghdad, and while visiting the Shiite slum of Sadr City, saw the glowering resentment “from pretty much all the locals.” What, she asked herself, are we doing here?

Iraq wasn't his only offense. Bush nominated a crony, Texas lawyer Harriet Miers, for the Supreme Court rather than a true conservative. That, for Ingraham, was shameful. And when the Republicans nominated John McCain as their presidential candidate in 2008 and Mitt Romney in 2012, her discontent intensified. She viewed the former as someone who cares too much about what *The New York Times* says about him. Romney is a “fine man” but lacked the necessary ability to punch back.

Ingraham's increasing disaffection with the establishment GOP didn't seem to dent her popularity. She has never been a ratings monster like Rush Limbaugh, but over the past decade, she attracted a steadily growing audience. Which meant her disdain for Republicans in Washington was a problem for party leaders. That became clear for the GOP leadership in 2014. Ingraham campaigned for an obscure, Tea Party-backed economics professor, David Brat, in what seemed like a quixotic primary against the then-House Majority Leader Eric Cantor for his seat in Virginia. At a rally at a Richmond country club, she was a featured speaker, and an overflow crowd turned out. Ingraham was stunned. “It was then I knew he could totally win,” she told *The New York Times*. To the surprise of many, he did.

The GOP establishment got some revenge in 2016 when Ingraham had kind words for—and gave significant air time to—another obscure primary opponent: Paul Nehlen, who ran against Speaker of the House Paul Ryan. The latter won by a wide margin. But Ingraham's trashing of Ryan—who had been lukewarm about Trump—showed her divorce from the establishment GOP was final.

It also showed that the fissures in the party went deep. Like Ingraham, Ryan is a movement conservative. As the vice presidential candidate in 2012, Ryan was meant to reassure conservatives who suspected Romney was a “squish.” In Ingraham's view, Ryan was also a squish, never doing enough to oppose President Barack Obama's agenda.

Today, many Republicans wonder where their party will stand post-Trump, and they're baffled by

#### WITHER GOP?

Ingraham doesn't think Trump is an aberration for the Republican Party; she believes he is its future, that he has set a new path for the party.



her argument linking the current president to Reagan. Sure, Trump wants to be a tax cutter like the Gipper. And he advocates “peace through strength,” as Reagan did. But the Hollywood star turned politician had a coherent philosophy, one steeped in the ideas of conservative thinkers, including Edmund Burke, Friedrich von Hayek and William F. Buckley. Trump, his conservative critics say, has no governing framework; all he has is his gut. Ingraham says she gets this: Reagan was a “once in a generation politician,” while Trump is “a work in progress. Believe me, I’m not saying Trump is Reagan.”

And unlike many on the right, Ingraham thinks she knows what comes after Trump for the GOP: more Trumpists: “The issue set that he

is passionately pro-Trump. So much so that Graham, the veteran conservative host—and a Never Trumper—decided to get out of the game. “They don’t want to hear arguments. They’re operating on emotion,” he says. “It’s pointless to talk to them, which kind of defeats the purpose of ‘talk’ radio.”

That changing audience is why some hosts and pundits on the right suspect there is another explanation for Ingraham’s odd political journey: “Because the core radio audience and Fox audience is so pro-Trump, this is a smart host following where the listeners were leading,” says one rival who doesn’t want to criticize Ingraham publicly. Ingraham’s show, which debuted on October 30, has generated solid ratings. She has focused on con-

“It’s pointless to talk to them, which kind of defeats the purpose of **‘TALK’** radio.”

ran on and was elected on isn’t going away.”

At a recent campaign rally in Scottsdale, Arizona, for Kelli Ward, a former state senator challenging Flake, the incumbent in the GOP Senate primary, a large, raucous crowd turned out to hear Ingraham speak on behalf of the candidate. She used many of Trump’s slogans, from “build the wall” immigration policy to “America first” economics. She mocked Trump’s political “enemies” and told the crowd it was time to “melt the snow-Flake.” A few days later, Flake, whose approval rating in the state had plunged, thanks in part to his hostility to Trump, withdrew from the race.

### The 24/7 Reality Show

INGRAHAM INSISTS HER TRANSFORMATION FROM Reaganite to Trumpist is genuine. But there is an alternative theory out there, one rooted in the realities of the media business. The halcyon era of right-wing chat radio is over. Audiences have been stagnant or shrinking for years. And Fox News’s ratings have been wobbly, especially since O’Reilly’s departure.

Yet much like Fox, the core right-wing audience

conservative causes she believes important—trashing celebrities who in the wake of the mass shooting in a church south of San Antonio mocked those saying the victims were “in our prayers.” But she has also hammered home Trump’s populist message, ripping Ed Gillespie, the GOP candidate for governor in Virginia who lost badly on November 7, for not fully embracing the president before the election.

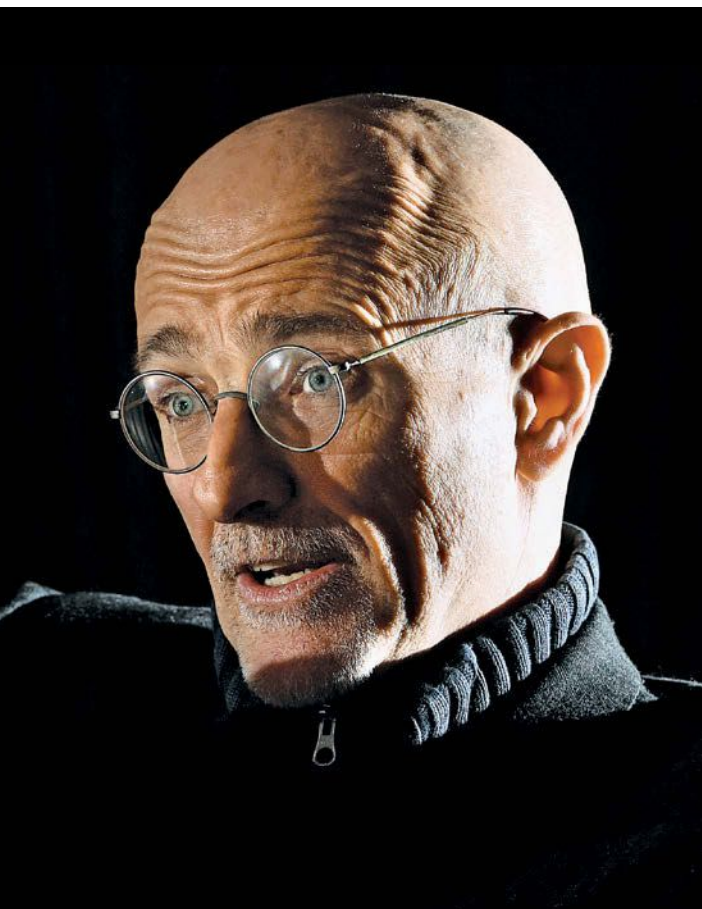
Though some of her rivals doubt her sincerity, the president doesn’t. The White House contemplated making her communications director after Sean Spicer and then Anthony Scaramucci departed. She was interested—she’s slammed the administration for failing to stick to a consistent message. But her friends say she felt she would be more helpful to the administration in her current position. Ingraham is reaping the financial rewards that come with her position as a conservative media star. Who would trade that in for daily battles with a hostile press corps that shredded Spicer, while coping with an impulsive, unpredictable boss?

Laura Ingraham may be one of Donald Trump’s biggest fans, but she ain’t crazy. **N**

**MEDICINE**

# Heads or Tales?

A surgeon planning to attempt the first human head transplant is either a brave pioneer or delusional



**➤** SERGIO CANAVERO CLAIMS HE CAN MAKE YOU immortal, but there's a small catch. He first wants to chop off your head.

If that's not a deal-breaker, you'll be happy to hear that the Italian neurosurgeon has announced he will perform the world's first human head transplant in China sometime in December. (He's vague on details, possibly for security reasons.) He will remove the head of a patient—an unidentified Chinese national—and attach it to a donor body, origin (and cause of death) unknown. The spinal cord will be fused and the blood vessels and muscles attached. The patient—same head, new body—will be kept in a coma for around a month while he (or she?) heals. Canavero says that if successful, his patient will eventually be able to walk again.

If his plan sounds ludicrous, that's because it is. Nobody knows how to fix a broken human spinal cord, and the scientific evidence that supports Canavero's approach is highly questionable. Oh, and the ethics of performing an unproven procedure that jeopardizes one (or possibly two) human lives are sketchy, at best.

None of that deters Canavero, so hold on to your hats.

**PAGING DR. FRANKENSTEIN**

The human spinal cord is a long, thin tube of nerves that connects almost every part of the body to the brain. It is the pathway that allows the brain to give commands to the body, and the cells there are highly specialized—so much so that once damaged, they are effectively lost for good. Regenerating damaged spinal cord cells is extraordinarily difficult.

In the U.S., there are an estimated 12,500 spinal cord injuries every year, which is why Canavero is not the only scientist desperately trying to mend spinal cords. In the 1960s, renowned scientist L.W. Freeman experimented on rats, cats and dogs

to find out if there were any circumstances under which spinal cords would repair themselves naturally. He removed small

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BY

**HANNAH OSBORNE**

[@hannah\\_osborne](#)

FROM LEFT: JEFF J. MITCHELL/GETTY; SEBASTIAN KAULITZK/SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY/GETTY



#### HEAD CASE

Despite years of research, doctors have never been able to fix a broken spinal cord, but Italian surgeon Sergio Canavero, opposite, says he will soon attempt the world's first human head transplant.

sections of spinal cords, then waited to see what would happen. Of the 66 animals that survived his surgery, six eventually regained what he deemed a “good” level of motor function.

That appeared to be an impressive achievement, but it did not necessarily apply to humans. The cut Freeman made was sharp and clean, but when humans injure their spinal cords, the tear is messy. Regardless, Canavero says Freeman’s work “shone light on the path,” inspiring him to delve deeper into lesser-known spinal cord research.

He eventually found something else that excited him. After a skiing accident left a woman paralyzed in 2005—her spinal cord was completely severed—surgeons in the U.S. removed the damaged part and filled the gap with collagen, hoping the ends would fuse together naturally. A year and a half after the surgery, the woman could move her legs again.

Canavero decided this success, which defied dogma, demanded more research. “I had been taught spinal cord regeneration is not possible,” he says. “That was the proof that I had to accelerate the whole process.”

The key, Canavero believes, is polyethylene glycol, or PEG, a type of gel that accelerates spinal cord fusion. He thinks that making a clean cut and then applying the gel would allow the spinal cords to fuse, rather than remaining frayed. That fusion would restore the pathway necessary for signals from the brain to reach the rest of the body.

He and other scientists on his team have released several papers that appear to show that his technique could work. In a study published in the Wiley journal *CNS Neuroscience and Therapeutics*, rats regained the ability to walk 28 days after being paralyzed. In Canavero’s mind, once

you have the spinal cord problem figured out, the rest of the operation is just a case of connecting tissues.

He decided his plan should at least be given a try, which is why he announced in 2013 that he was going to do the world’s first human head transplant. This did not go down well. The scientific community was outraged—fellow neurologists condemned him as a fame-hungry narcissist who should

be put in jail if he performed the operation. One prominent surgeon, Hunt Batjer, from the University of Texas Southwestern, also said that whoever underwent the surgery faced a fate “worse than death.”

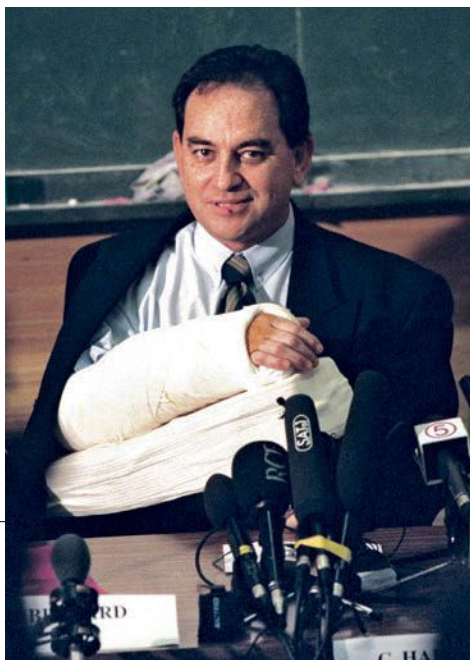
In theory, a disembodied head could survive in suspended animation, staying alive with blood from the donor body but incapable of controlling any bodily function—and in incredible pain, says Jerry Silver, a professor of neurosciences at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio who has spent his career seeking a cure for paralysis. The head will have a “miserable existence,” where it won’t be able to breathe or control its own heart rate—a fate far worse than being a quadriplegic. The head’s windpipe would be attached to a respirator, so it could be ventilated, and it could remain alive like that for days.

Scientists also ripped into the work Canavero cites as evidence supporting his approach. One study, by a team of South Korean scientists involved in Canavero’s project, drew considerable criticism for something published in the journal *Surgical Neurology International (SNI)*. They had severed and re-fused the spinal cords of rats. Four of the animals drowned in a laboratory flood after the surgery. But instead of repeating the experiment, they concluded it was a success because the one surviving rat could move a bit.

This was one of a series of studies on head transplants published in *SNI*—a journal which Canavero just happens to be the editor of.

Silver says the studies Canavero uses are not good enough because they used small numbers of animals, often with no control group. Plus, animal models supposedly showing fixed spinal cords do not justify

**THE BEAT GOES ON** Barnard, left, performed the first successful human heart transplant. Clint Hallam, below, received the first hand transplant. Valery Spiridonov, right, a 30-year-old Russian with a muscle-wasting disease, volunteered to be Canavero’s first head transplant patient.



FROM TOP: BETTMANN/GETTY; STÉPHANE RUET/GETTY





doing the same with people. “You’re not going to jump from rodent to human,” he says, adding that Canavero’s head transplant plan is “criminal.”

And regardless of whether these experiments lend support to Canavero’s theories, they are also disturbing. A rat with the head of another rat sewn onto its back or an unconscious monkey with Halloween-esque neck stitches is outside the bounds of acceptable scientific inquiry and threatens to turn Canavero into a Dr. Frankenstein

**“If you still have a brain that’s alive... then to **take that head off** and take the body away, are we possibly killing someone?”**

figure creating monsters under the guise of scientific research.

Karen Rommelfanger, neuroethics program director at Emory University, raises one other intriguing caveat: the possibility that this operation is a sanitized version of murder. “If you still have a brain that’s alive...then to take that head off and take the body away, are we possibly killing someone?” she says.

Darren Ó hAilín, a doctoral student studying molecular medicine in Germany at University Medical Center Freiburg, says human head transplants are a very long way off, and that Canavero and his researchers are offering “disparate pieces of the puzzle and creating the illusion of a cohesive plan.” In reality, all we have as of now are “a mishmash of preliminary experiments.”

Instead of patiently and meticulously building on their findings, says Ó hAilín, Canavero is charging ahead. “He’s going directly to the press with pictures of a monkey’s head stitched into a monkey’s body and saying, ‘Here, we did it.’”

Canavero objects to the notion that past studies have lacked a control, a group of patients who did not receive the experimental treatment, so the results can be compared. He contends that only one of the studies lacked a control group, and that in that case, it wasn’t necessary. He and his team severed the spinal cord of a dog, which subsequently appeared to regain some movement. As a single case study, it provides proof (in Canavero’s eyes) that the spinal cord can be re-fused.

He sees his work as akin to the Wright brothers finally taking to the air for the first time. “It was just one plane, but it was enough to prove flight was possible,” he says. The dog, says Canavero, is like his first plane.



## TWO HEADS BETTER THAN ONE?

Canavero has at least one kindred spirit in his field: Xiaoping Ren, from Harbin Medical University, in China. He will assist Canavero with the operation in December. Ren has performed thousands of head transplants on mice. The pair connected after Canavero published his human head transplant plan. “It was like falling in love,” Canavero says, describing their first meeting. “Two minds from such a distance that wanted to do the same thing. It was incredible.”

Now, they will have a chance to work together on their shared dream.

Canavero says the people who want this operation are willing to risk everything because they have nothing left to lose—they have no quality of life and are, in all likelihood, dying a slow and painful death. If the transplant fails, then at least they will die knowing that no effort to save them

**“Can you imagine the pain from all those cut things? That’s the worst. The head is going to wake up in pain.”**

was spared. If it succeeds—well, then they have made medical history. And, of course, are still alive.

Silver objects to the notion that Canavero is giving someone a last chance at life. The memory of a monkey head transplant he witnessed as a postdoctoral student and the knowledge of what the patient could be facing is too much to overcome. “It looked horrifying,” he says of the monkey, “and in pain.” Even if Canavero were able to get some of the nerve and sensory

fibers to fuse, says Silver, the pain could be unbearable.

“Every muscle, the bones, everything has been severed,” says Silver. “Can you imagine the pain from all those cut things? That’s the worst. The head is going to wake up in pain.”

Even if Canavero manages to connect the two ends of the spinal cord, the brain will not be able to take control of a new body, Ó hAilín explains. Although it’s true that our brains constantly rewire from the day we are born to the day we die, expecting a brain to adjust its wiring to a whole new body is wishful thinking. “What happens if those wires don’t connect?” says Ó hAilín.

Doctors also fear how the body will react to its new brain. In any transplant, the body sees the new organ or limb as foreign tissue, and the immune system attacks it. Patients who have a transplant have

**“The people who want this operation are willing to risk everything because they have nothing left to lose.”**

to take immunosuppressant drugs for the rest of their lives to prevent this rejection. And if the immune system attacks the new part despite the drugs, it has to be removed.

Canavero dismisses this problem, certain that a rejection of the head can be managed in the same way as a kidney or heart. But there is no evidence that immunosuppressants can overcome a body's reflexive rejection of a new brain.

There is also a potentially staggering psychological impact. The brain may not be able to accept its new body, a phenomenon seen with other transplant surgeries. Clint Hallam, the world's first hand transplant patient, had it removed after becoming “mentally detached” from it—he could not see it as part of his own body.

None of this concerns Canavero. He believes that if his patient survives the operation, they can deal with any subsequent issues as they arise. In the 1960s, Christiaan Barnard performed the world's first heart transplant, doing several things that today would probably be considered unethical—technically speaking, the donors he was removing beating hearts from may not have been dead. Barnard also had to have known some people would die as a result of his operation, but he proceeded anyway, and now, heart transplants are a common—and lifesaving—procedure.

Canavero is aware of the danger

and places some responsibility with the patient, who has volunteered. “Let's not be stupid—this is a risky surgery. But informed consent means that whoever goes under [my knife] knows full well what lies ahead and is in such a crippling condition that there is no other strategy for them.”

He also points out that uncertainty is part of medical advances. Gene editing and immunotherapy techniques currently being developed also come with risks, Canavero points out. One immunotherapy trial had to be put on hold last year following the death of three patients.

Canavero sees his forthcoming operation as a boon for not just people in need of spinal cord surgery but all humanity. Medicine, he says,

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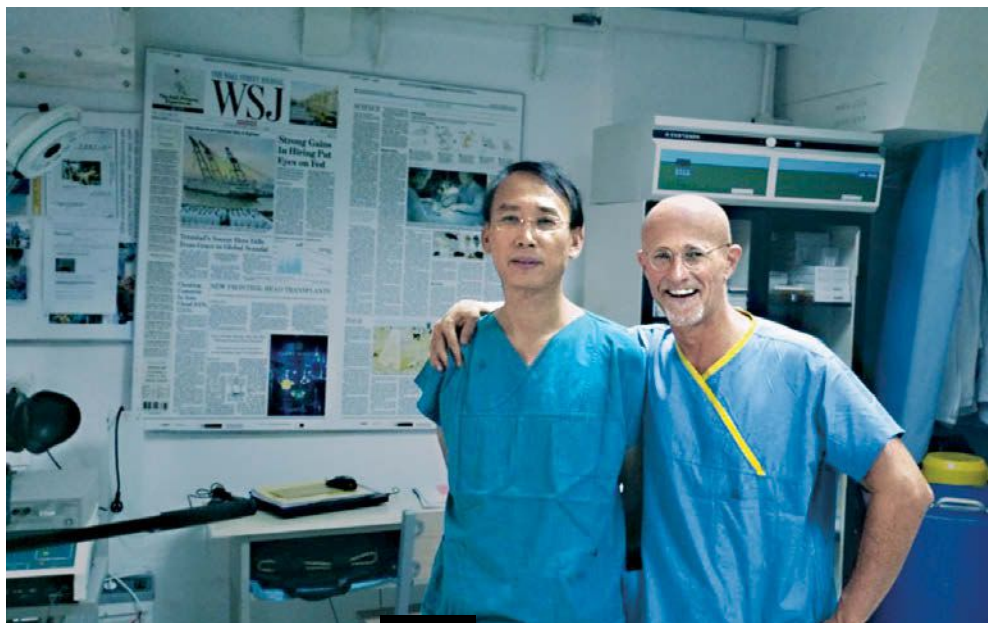
**LIKE MINDED** Canavero and Chinese surgeon Xiaoping Ren, who has performed thousands of head transplants on mice, hope they can pull off the first human head transplant in December.

has failed us. Despite all our best research efforts, we still haven't got a cure for cancer, HIV, malaria and countless other fatal conditions. Breakthroughs, he believes, will come only by taking risks.

If successful, the operation would provide a treatment option for people with quadriplegia or muscle-wasting diseases that leave them incapable of moving. A body riddled with cancer could be replaced, for example. The most radical possibility is that transplanting heads could lead to a form of immortality—swapping an old body for a new one whenever it's required, like changing tires on a car.

Although there are many issues that are unresolved, Canavero is undeterred and his team is planning to operate in December. If he succeeds, Canavero will become a giant in the history of medical research.

And if the operation fails, he vows to try again. He knows that's the only way to get ahead. **N**

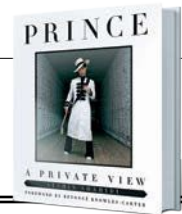




MOVIES

# Feels Like Teen Spirit

What Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird* gets absolutely right about adolescent angst



**➤** FROM ITS OPENING SHOTS—A MOTHER AND daughter driving home from a tense college visit—Greta Gerwig’s indelible new film (and solo directorial debut), *Lady Bird*, is suffused with the distinct agonies of adolescence: Every slight, every betrayal is all-consuming and devastating; every flirtatious gesture imbued with impossible promise; every crush’s name must be scribbled on a bedroom wall in Magic Marker.

The story, which starts in 2002, chronicles a tumultuous year in the life of Christine “Lady Bird” McPherson (Saoirse Ronan), a 17-year-old high school senior whose preferred nickname is the embodiment of her freewheeling spirit. (“Is that your given name?” an impatient teacher at her Catholic school asks. Yes, she replies: “It was *given* by myself to myself.”) Lady Bird has dyed red hair and an impressive knowledge of Alanis Morissette singles. She commits to everything she does—whether high school theater or pursuing a pretentious boy—with glorious enthusiasm and fierce individualism.

The film’s working title was *Mothers and Daughters*, and much of the emotional heft hinges on the titular character’s constant squabbling with her eternally aggravated mom (played with admirable complexity by Laurie Metcalf), who loves her daughter but can’t seem to express it. Lady Bird is desperate to flee what she considers the faceless mediocrity of her home and hometown (Sacramento, California) to claim some small measure of greatness. Her grades, however, are well shy of great, and, as her mother keeps reminding her, the family can’t possibly afford Yale or Columbia; they can barely afford in-state tuition.

Gerwig established herself as a skillful screenwriter with *Frances Ha* (2013) and *Mistress America* (2015), each about young women navigating creative ambitions and messy personal betrayals in Obama-era New York City. Both were collaborations with her partner, writer-director Noah Baumbach (this year’s *The Meyerowitz Stories [New and Selected]*). *Lady Bird* is all hers and seems a more personal endeavor, with plot details reminiscent of Gerwig’s own upbringing in Sacramento. She has rejected the term *autobiographical* in interviews, stressing that the brash,

rebellious Lady Bird is not much like her teenaged self. (The character gets kicked out of a school assembly for mouthing off at an anti-abortion speaker. She plots when and how to lose her virginity. She relentlessly pursues—and wins over—the cute boy in her theater class, only to discover, in one of the film’s great tragicomic sequences, that he is gay.)

Gerwig doesn’t star—or act—in this film; at 34, she’s too old to play a high schooler. But Ronan (pictured)—five years out of high school herself—is exceptional. With her mix of exuberance and American sense of entitlement, it’s easy to forget she’s Irish.

There’s warmth, specificity and authenticity in Gerwig’s depiction of high school’s particular tortures. Aside from Lady Bird ditching her dorky best friend (Beanie Feldstein) for a cooler crowd—an overly familiar subplot—the story and characters are nuanced and free of clichés. (The tone is reminiscent of *Lucas*, David Seltzer’s low-budget 1986 classic.)

*Lady Bird* illuminates perfectly the way teens flit from identity to identity in their search for “themselves”; their deep, unutterable yearning for escape (even as they simultaneously crave the comforts of home); and the accumulation of countless tiny humiliations.

Why doesn’t the film take place in the present day? One reason, I suspect, is to avoid our current Instagram- and Snapchat-fueled obsessions; 2002 was a simpler time, when some (wealthy) teenagers had cellphones but most did not. And Gerwig’s choice locates the story at a moment of historical anxiety both distant and vivid: The Iraq War unfolds on television in the background of scenes, and 9/11 is a fresh trauma. Lady Bird muses that it will be easier to gain acceptance to colleges in New York because everybody else is “afraid of terrorism.”

There are lighter, funnier period signifiers: Justin Timberlake and Dave Matthews Band hits blare at parties. Lady Bird’s hipster crush has a Cannibal Ox poster on his wall and lugs around Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of the United States*.

Gerwig also attended a Catholic high school, graduating in 2002. She did escape to a prestigious East Coast college (Barnard). And she found that measure of greatness. *Lady Bird* is her proof. **N**

BY

ZACH SCHONFELD

[@zzzaaaaaccchhh](https://twitter.com/zzzaaaaaccchhh)

MUSIC

# Getting to Carnegie Hall Is No Joke

A celebrated program for young classical musicians demands a lot, but the payoff can be huge—just ask Yo-Yo Ma

**➤** THE DRIVE FROM BURLINGTON, Vermont, to the Upper West Side of Manhattan takes about six hours, a fact 16-year-old Rowan Bauman Swain knows all too well. Rowan, her younger sister and her mother, Heather, have made that round trip most weekends from September to May for the past five years. They leave Vermont on Friday afternoon, as soon as classes are out at the private school where Heather teaches, and spend the night with family or friends in New York to be rested for Saturday morning. At 7 p.m. on Saturday—less than 24 hours since their arrival—they get back on the road to Burlington, arriving at home 1 a.m. Sunday.

“Every year, my family reassesses our commitment,” says Rowan, but she and her mother believe they’ll continue until she graduates from high school. “Juilliard’s Pre-College Division is unparalleled,” says Heather.

A part of the world-renowned arts conservatory, Pre-College isn’t for dabblers; the program admits only students who have the talent for a career in music, like Rowan, a cellist. Graduates include classical superstar Yo-Yo Ma, New York Philharmonic Music Director Alan Gilbert and Grammy-winning pianist Emanuel Ax.

Each year, about 500 musicians

from grades two through 12 apply to the program. Fewer than 100 are accepted, and the subsequent dedication required is grueling. Pre-College does not offer full-time academic instruction; students attend *in addition* to their normal schooling. The

program’s private lessons in performance, classes on music theory and courses covering a variety of electives run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, with occasional

recitals that go until 10:30 p.m. The price tag for what amounts to one day of instruction: \$11,400 for 36 weeks.

And that’s just tuition. Forty of the 300 students commute weekly from as far away as the West Coast. Additionally, 30 percent are international. “We have families that have split up for this purpose,” says Pre-College Director Yoheved Kaplinsky. “We have people carrying

BY  
**ARVIND DILAWAR**

**The school’s prestige has driven parents of international students to crazy lengths. “We found kids who were literally homeless.”**



FROM TOP: NAN MELVILLE; CARLIN MA; ROBERT ALEXANDER/GETTY





#### ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS

Clockwise from top: A Pre-College Division performance; the New York City campus; Swain, who has traveled to Manhattan from Vermont for a single day of classes for five years.

the burden of two residences and a lot of trips back and forth.”

Eylul Esme Bolucek, a 17-year-old from Turkey, enrolled four years ago. To do so, she and her mother—who gave up a career as a doctor—moved to New York from Ankara, where her father remains, working to support his daughter’s desire to be a professional pianist. “Our family is very close, so it’s hard,” she says. “But I knew I wanted to play music for the rest of my life since I was young.”

The school’s prestige has driven some parents to crazy lengths. After it was discovered that students had been left to live alone in Manhattan or worse—“We found kids that were literally homeless,” says Kaplinsky—international students must now be housed with legal guardians.

Pre-College teachers come from around the world too, and the Trump administration’s attempts to enact a travel ban against citizens of Muslim countries has turned the program into an unintended symbol of the great value of cultural exchange. “The shift in the atmosphere in the U.S. has caused tremendous fear and anxiety among our students and their families,” says Kaplinsky. “The rage that I feel is immense.”

She tried to organize press to highlight the sacrifices and successes of the Pre-College Division among Muslim students, but those who agreed to participate quickly backed down, afraid of becoming targets. “I can’t argue with that,” Kaplinsky says, but the school “will do everything in our power” to keep the program available to the students. “We will protect these kids with our lives.” **N**

*The Pre-College Division presents more than 200 performances between November and May. For details, go to [juilliard.edu](http://juilliard.edu).*



BOOKS

# The Prince of Pool

In a revealing look at the Purple One, his onetime personal photographer shares private moments and hidden skills

**➤** HAS THERE EVER BEEN A POP star more effortlessly photogenic than Prince? The man even looked remarkable in his passport photo. Everybody knows this, but nobody knows it as intimately as Afshin Shahidi, the late superstar's personal cinematographer and photographer through 2011.

The partnership began in 1993, when the Iranian-born, Minnesota-raised Shahidi was invited to work on a music video at Prince's estate, Paisley Park, in Chanhassen,

Minnesota. "They had told me several times, whatever you do, don't stare at Prince," he says. "But I was in awe of him and just stood there and stared."

A decade of images are captured in Shahidi's new book, *Prince: A Private View* (St. Martin's Press, \$21), featuring a foreword by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter. The access was unparalleled: After he became Prince's exclusive

photographer, no one else was allowed to shoot him. "He would do a tour, like Musicology in 2004, in a 35,000-seat arena, and he wouldn't

BY

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
@zzzzaaaaccchhh

AFSHIN SHAHIDI. FROM "PRINCE: A PRIVATE VIEW" (4)



**“He reminded me of Tom Cruise in *The Color of Money*. He would put the balls in and strut around the table.”**

allow a single camera besides mine,” says Shahidi. “I felt great responsibility for capturing his performances because there was no one else there.”

Prince was a legendary control freak. As the photographer remembers, he was once summoned by Prince to the studio at Paisley Park to take his passport photo—something most people accomplished at Kinko’s. “Prince came [in] looking *magnificent*, like he was ready to go to the Met ball or something,” says Shahidi. “It seemed a little over-the-top for a passport photo. First, I said, ‘You look fantastic!’ Then: ‘I think they want these photos to be pretty simple, just showing your face. I would dress down a little bit.’ Prince looked at me like, ‘Are you serious?’”

Eventually, Shahidi convinced him to change. “He was a little sheepish. When he left, I thought, Did I *really* just ask Prince to change his clothes?” Sometime later, the singer returned in his definition of simple. “He had mussed his hair up a little bit.”

There was little that Prince didn’t control in his world. An astute businessman, he schooled Shahidi in the art of the deal. The photographer had been giving his photos to the Associated Press and other wire services for free. “I wasn’t trying to make money off those images,” says Shahidi, who received a salary from Prince. “He asked me, ‘Why are you giving these images away?’ I told him I was doing it for his publicity;

that’s how it’s done. People go to wire services to find pictures to put in a magazine or whatever. He said, ‘No. I’m Prince. People will come to you for my images.’” Shahidi set up a website forthwith.

Hanging out on the road revealed skills beyond music. Among them: pool shark. “We were at a club with a table—I think it was in Chicago,” he says. “I had played pool throughout college; I was pretty good.” Shahidi remembers thinking he’d go easy on

**U GOT THE BOOK** Clockwise from left: Playing pool at Paisley Park in 2006; Shahidi’s passport photo that same year; a relatively anonymous Prince on a New York street in 2004; the cover of the book.

his boss, let him win a few games. “And Prince proceeded to basically clean the table two times in a row before I even had a chance to shoot,” says Shahidi. “When I finally got to play, he beat the pants off me. He was *that* good.” Prince was cocky about it too. “He reminded me of Tom Cruise in *The Color of Money*; he would put the balls in and strut around the table.”

One of Shahidi’s favorite memories is of arriving at Paisley Park one morning; he was on time for an appointment, but it was earlier than usual. “I went to the side door, expecting one of the engineers to let me in. I rang the bell, and no one came. I rang it again. The door opened, and it was Prince, in a do-rag and house shoes. He had clearly just woken up. I chuckled a little. ‘What’s so funny?’ Prince said. He was annoyed. I told him, ‘In a million years, I never expected you to open the door. I think it’s humorous.’ He said, ‘Well, don’t get used to it.’”

On Shahidi’s next few visits, Prince made a point of being the one to let him in. “Each time he’d say, ‘Don’t get used to it.’” **N**



## PARTING SHOT

# Gene Simmons

**➤** GENE SIMMONS, OR GENE KLEIN, OR CHAIM WITZ (HIS HEBREW NAME) or the Demon, as he's known to fans of the hard-rock band Kiss, used to teach sixth grade in Spanish Harlem before the band was founded in 1973. It convinced him that school is useless when it comes to teaching "mortgages or capitalism or the cost of marriage or the cost of divorce." You know, the important things. Which is why the rock legend has written his eighth book, *On Power: My Journey Through the Corridors of Power and How You Can Get More Power*—a sort of Cliffs Notes that you can "stick in your back pocket and take wherever you go," he says. "Sit on a toilet, on a plane, on a train and just leaf through it."

Simmons, whose business acumen has made Kiss a massively profitable machine (there's a Kiss cruise, a Kiss limo service, a Kiss golf course...), wrote the book to "dispel notions of politically correct language and get to the point that power and money is not necessarily good or bad. It's amoral, just like fire." And he should know.

**If women want power, and if they're looked at as **sexual objects**, for God's sake, use it.**

**You have famously abstained from booze and drugs since Kiss formed. You have also famously indulged in a lot of sex. What's your attitude on women and power?**

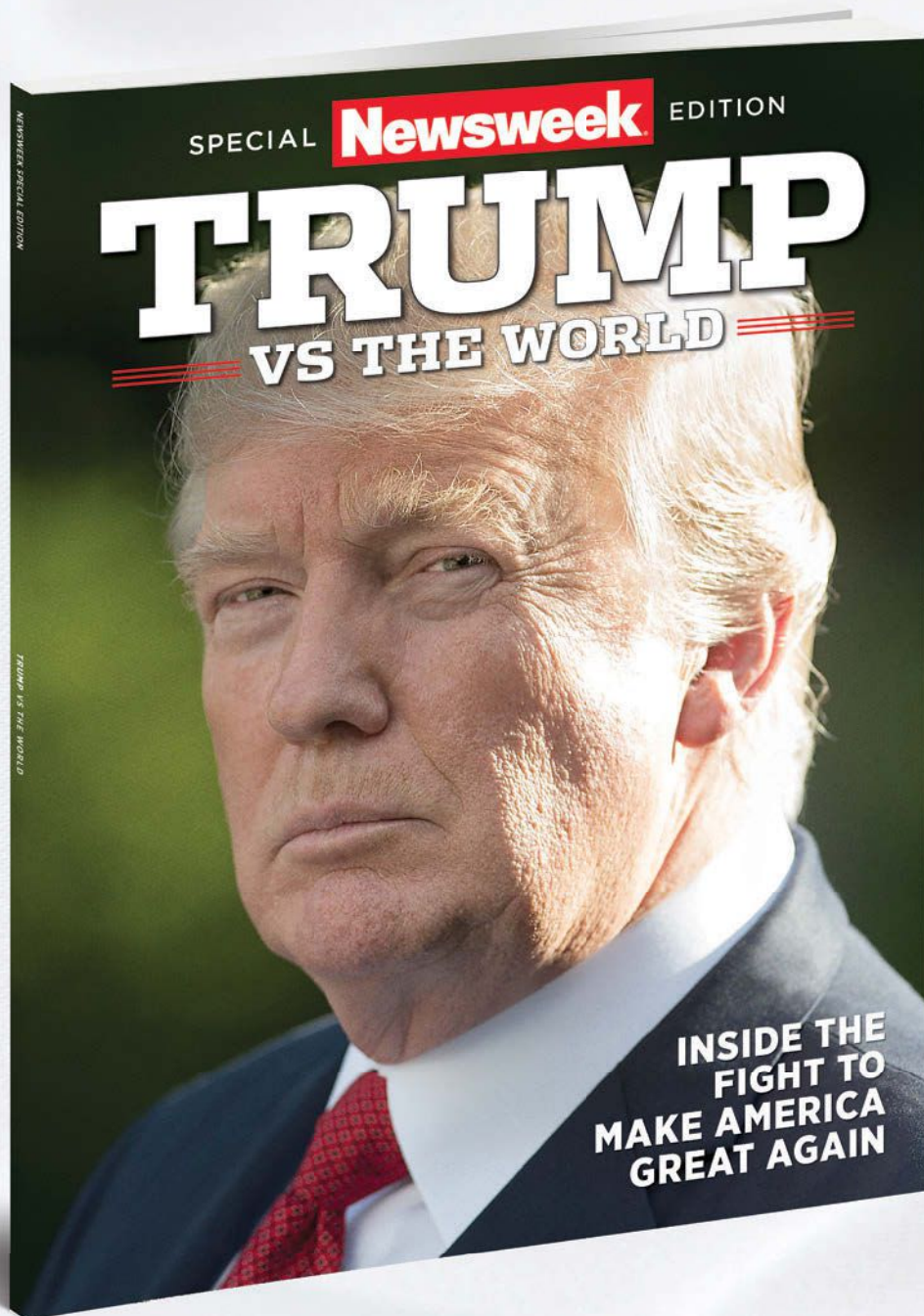
Women have something going for them that men don't: their physical self. My suggestion is, if women want power, and if they're looked at as sexual objects, for God's sakes, you use it to your advantage. Models do. The Kardashians do. You don't have to be talented or do much of anything. If you happen to be born with the right genes, you may as well use it [before you] lose it. That doesn't mean you're sleeping around. Of course, some women may want to do that—you know, I want to marry a rich guy, and I'm willing to trade myself as currency. That's OK too. It's like being born with this tongue. It got attention, so I used it to my advantage.

**That philosophy might not go over too well right now. If nothing else, would you say that for promiscuous women there's a double standard?**

You are correct; it is completely accurate that there is a double standard. Men are not looked at sexually, by and large; women are, whether they like it or not. And if they're promiscuous, they're called certain names—by other women, too. A promiscuous man isn't called anything, and certainly not by other men. I didn't create these rules, they simply exist. —Jeff Perlah



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# MARK'S CANCER WAS VERY AGGRESSIVE BUT THEN AGAIN SO WAS OUR TREATMENT

Thanks to a very determined oncology team that he now calls family, Mark never gave up hope. Battling both lymphoma and acute leukemia, his life was spared at John Theurer Cancer Center at Hackensack University Medical Center, one of the most comprehensive cancer programs in the country. It's here that our experts are pushing the boundaries of science and innovation to heal the human body and spirit.

See what hope looks like @ [jtcancercenter.org/mark](https://www.jtcancercenter.org/mark)



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