



HARRYS  
OF  
LONDON

NEVER PEDESTRIAN  
[harrysoflondon.com](http://harrysoflondon.com)



# Inside the 'Dump Trump' Crowd

INTERNATIONAL

12.04.2019

# Newsweek®

# AFTER ISIS

**FOR  
SYRIA'S  
KURDS,  
THE REAL  
BATTLE  
IS JUST  
BEGINNING**

ISSN 2052-1081



9 772052 108010

15 >

ABU DHABI DH35  
ALBANIA €6.25  
AUSTRALIA \$11.00  
AUSTRIA €6.25  
BAHRAIN BD3.5  
BELGIUM €6.50  
CHINA RMB80  
CROATIA HKR70

CYPRUS €6.50  
CZECH REP CZK180  
DENMARK DKR49.95  
DUBAI DH35  
EGYPT ££ 65.00  
FINLAND €7.60  
FRANCE €6.50  
GERMANY €6.50

GIBRALTAR £6.05  
GREECE €6.50  
HOLLAND €6.50  
HONG KONG HK80  
HUNGARY FT1.800  
IRELAND €6.25  
ISRAEL NIS35  
ITALY €6.50

KUWAIT KD3.00  
LATVIA €6.50  
LEBANON LL10,000  
LITHUANIA €8.99  
LUXEMBOURG €6.25  
MALTA €6.50  
MONTENEGRO €8.30  
MOROCCO MDH70

NEW ZEALAND \$14.00  
NIGERIA \$3.40C  
NORWAY NKR45  
OMAN OR 3.250  
POLAND PLN28  
PORTUGAL €6.50  
QATAR QR65  
MALAYSIA RM27.90

ROMANIA LEI 42.00  
SAUDI ARABIA SR35.00  
SERBIA RSD1035  
S LEONE SLL30,000  
SINGAPORE \$11.95  
SLOVAKIA €6.50  
SLOVENIA €8.50  
SOUTH AFRICA R55.00

SPAIN €6.50  
SWEDEN SKR60  
SWITZERLAND CHF8.90  
UK £4.95  
US \$8.99  
ZIMBABWE ZWD4.00



Nicole Kidman

# EVERYONE CAN SAVE A LIFE WITH **HANDS ONLY CPR**

It takes less than a minute to learn at [handsonly.nyc](http://handsonly.nyc).

Ronald O. Perelman  
Heart Institute

**NYC**  
City of New York

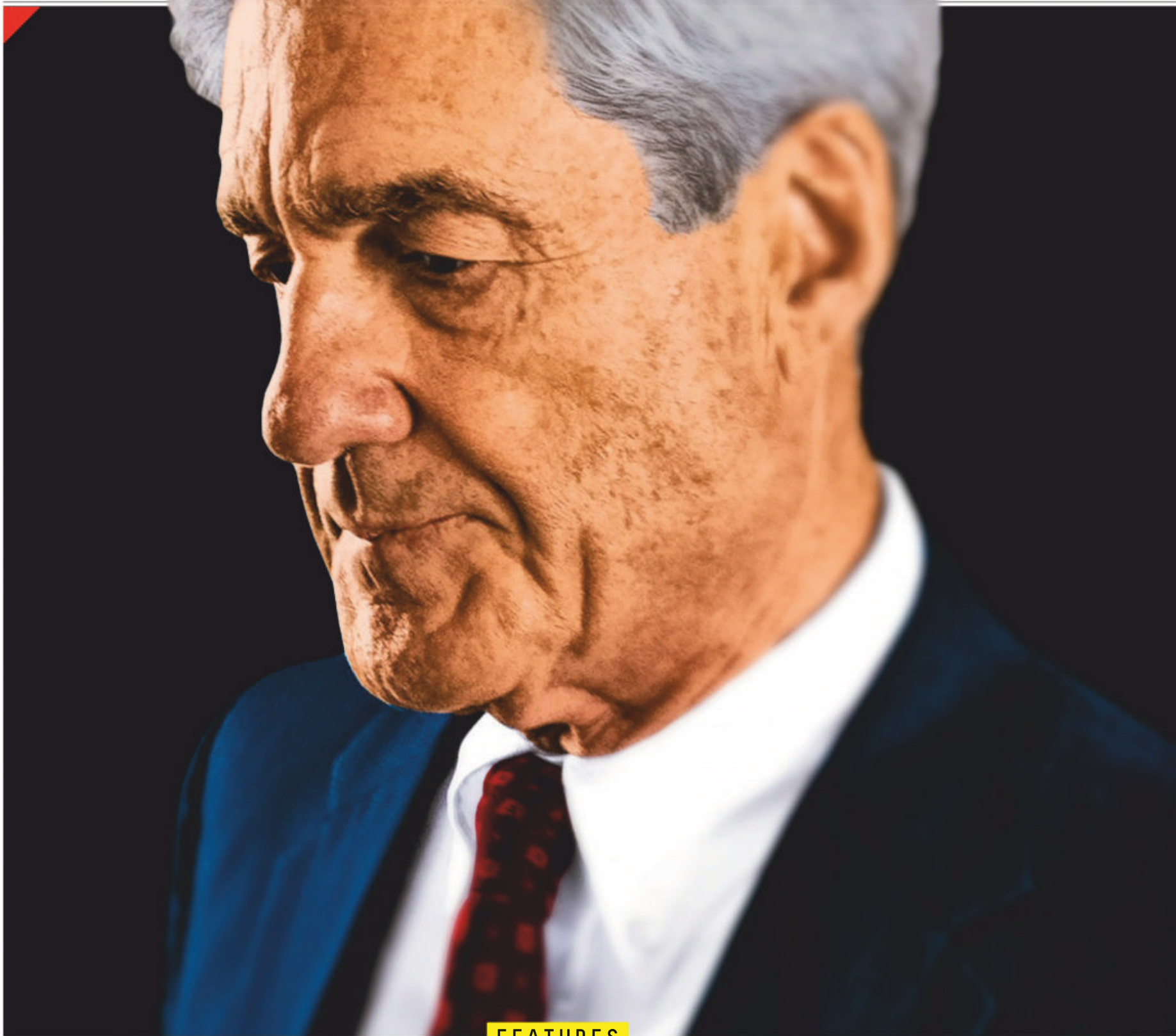
**PUBLIC**  
FOUNDATION



**HANDS  
ONLY  
CPR**

Everyone Can Save A Life





## FEATURES

**'TOTAL EXONERATION'**

As President Donald Trump spun the results of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe, his conservative opponents weighed how to continue the fight.

**COVER CREDIT**

Photograph by Delil Souleiman/AFP/Getty



For more headlines, go to  
**NEWSWEEK.COM**

24

**Party Pooper**

How special counsel Robert Mueller crushed the dreams of the conservative 'Dump Trump' crowd with his apparent finding of no collusion.

BY BILL POWELL

32

**After ISIS**

The Kurds led the fight against ISIS in Syria. Now, as America considers its withdrawal, these U.S. allies face an existential threat from their neighbors.

BY KENNETH R. ROSEN



## DEPARTMENTS

### In Focus

**06 Chennai, India**  
Festival of Spring

**08 Estaquina, Mozambique**  
Cyclone Idai

**Gaza City, Gaza Strip**  
Israeli Airstrikes

**London**  
Political Paralysis

### POWER OF THE PEN

Award-winning biographer Robert Caro discusses his new book on how he became an expert on political power.



### Periscope

**10 Education**  
An End to Affirmative Action?

**16 History**  
Robert Caro Talks Power and Politics

### Culture

**42 Movies**  
1999: Hollywood's Best Year Ever?

**48 Parting Shot**  
Hank Azaria

GLOBAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF \_ **Nancy Cooper**

CREATIVE DIRECTOR \_ **Michael Goesele**

EXECUTIVE EDITOR \_ **Mary Kaye Schilling**

DEPUTY EDITOR (US) \_ **Michael Mishak**

DEPUTY EDITOR (EUROPE + OPINION) \_ **Laura Davis**

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR \_ **Fred Guterl**

### EDITORIAL

Breaking News Editor \_ **Juliana Pignataro**

London Bureau Chief \_ **Robert Galster**

Politics Editor \_ **Jason Le Miere**

Gaming Editor \_ **Mo Mozuch**

Entertainment Editor \_ **Maria Vultaggio**

News Editor \_ **Jon Haworth**

Deputy Editors \_ **Jen Glennon** (Gaming)

Associate Editors \_ **James Etherington-Smith**,  
**Hannah Osborne** (Science), **Dom Passantino**,  
**Harriet Sinclair** (Politics)

London Sub-Editor \_ **Hannah Partos**

Copy Chief \_ **Elizabeth Rhodes Ernst**

Senior Copy Editors \_ **Bruce Janicke**, **Joe Westerfield**

Copy Editors \_ **Marlaine Glicksman**, **Karin Halperin**,  
**Catherine Lowe**

Contributing Editor, Opinion \_ **Lee Habeeb**

Editorial Assistant \_ **Jason Pollack**

### CREATIVE

Director of Photography \_ **Diane Rice**

Contributing Art Director \_ **Michael Bessire**

Senior Designer \_ **Paul Naughton**

Assistant Photo Editor \_ **Alessandra Amodio**

Contributing Production Director \_ **Melissa Jewsbury**

Digital Imaging Specialist \_ **Katy Lyness**

Art Assistant \_ **Annie Kozak**

### WRITERS

David Brennan, Nina Burleigh, Dan Cancian,  
Brendan Cole, Shane Croucher, Chantal Da Silva,  
Sam Earle, Benjamin Fearnow, Kashmira Gander,  
Ari Georgiou, Nina Godlewski, Nicole Goodkind,  
Katherine Hignett, Dory Jackson, Jessica Kwong,  
James LaPorta, Tim Marcin, Cristina Maza, Anna Menta,  
Tom O'Connor, Ewan Palmer, Callum Paton, Maria Perez,  
Tom Porter, Bill Powell, Nicole Rojas, Roberto Saviano\*,  
David Sim, Jeff Stein, Marc Vargas, Janice Williams,  
Christina Zhao (\*Contributing)

### VIDEO

Video Production Manager \_ **Jessica Durham**

London Video News Editor \_ **Daniel Orton**

Bangalore Video News Editor \_ **Nandini Krishnamoorthy**

Senior Video Producers \_  
**Alexandra Rosenmann**, **Sho Murakoshi**

Video Producers - **Sean Billings**, **Chiara Brambilla**,  
**Rufaro Ndoro**, **Frances Rankin**, **N. Ravichandran**,  
**Holly Snelling**, **Alexis Wierenga**

Motion Graphics Producers \_ **Gogoull Kirouchenaradjou**,  
**Justin Maiure**, **Simon Vella**

### PUBLISHED BY

### Newsweek LLC

Chief Executive Officer \_ **Dev Pragad**

Chief Content Officer \_ **Dayan Candappa**

Chief Operating Officer \_ **Alvaro Palacios**

Chief Financial Officer \_ **Amit Shah**

Chief Technology Officer \_ **Michael Lukac**

General Counsel \_ **Rosie Mckimmie**

VP, HR Business Partner \_ **Leiann Kaytmaz**

SVP Global Creative Director \_ **Robert Lee**

Director, Content Strategy \_ **Nalin Kaul**

Senior Digital Marketing Strategist \_ **Adam Silvers**

Managing Editor, Branded + Native Content \_ **Paula Froelich**

Editor, Branded + Native Content \_ **Dan Avery**

Global Executive Producer \_ **Alfred Joyner**

Global Head of Programmatic + Partnerships \_ **Jeremy Makin**

SVP, Product + Business Intelligence \_ **Luciano Costa**

VP, Programmatic Sales \_ **David McClain**

Senior Sales Director \_ **Chantal Mamboury**

Head of Subscription Operations \_ **Samantha Rhodes**

Newsstand Manager \_ **Kim Sermon**

NEWSWEEK (ISSN2052-1081), is published weekly except one week in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December due to combined issues.

Newsweek International is published by Newsweek Magazine LLC, 25 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LQ, UK. Printed by Quad/Graphics Europe Sp z o.o., Wyszow, Poland

For Article Reprints, Permissions and Licensing [www.NewsweekReprints.com](http://www.NewsweekReprints.com)



# HELP SAVE THE 'WOW'

These giants of the animal kingdom need help. Despite their strength and cunning they're no match for a poacher's rifle. For 50 years WWF has been securing protected areas worldwide, but these aren't enough to stop the killing. To disrupt the sophisticated criminal gangs supplying animal parts to lucrative illegal markets, we are working with governments to toughen law enforcement. We're also working with consumers to reduce the demand for unlawful wildlife products. Help us look after the world where you live at [panda.org/50](https://panda.org/50)

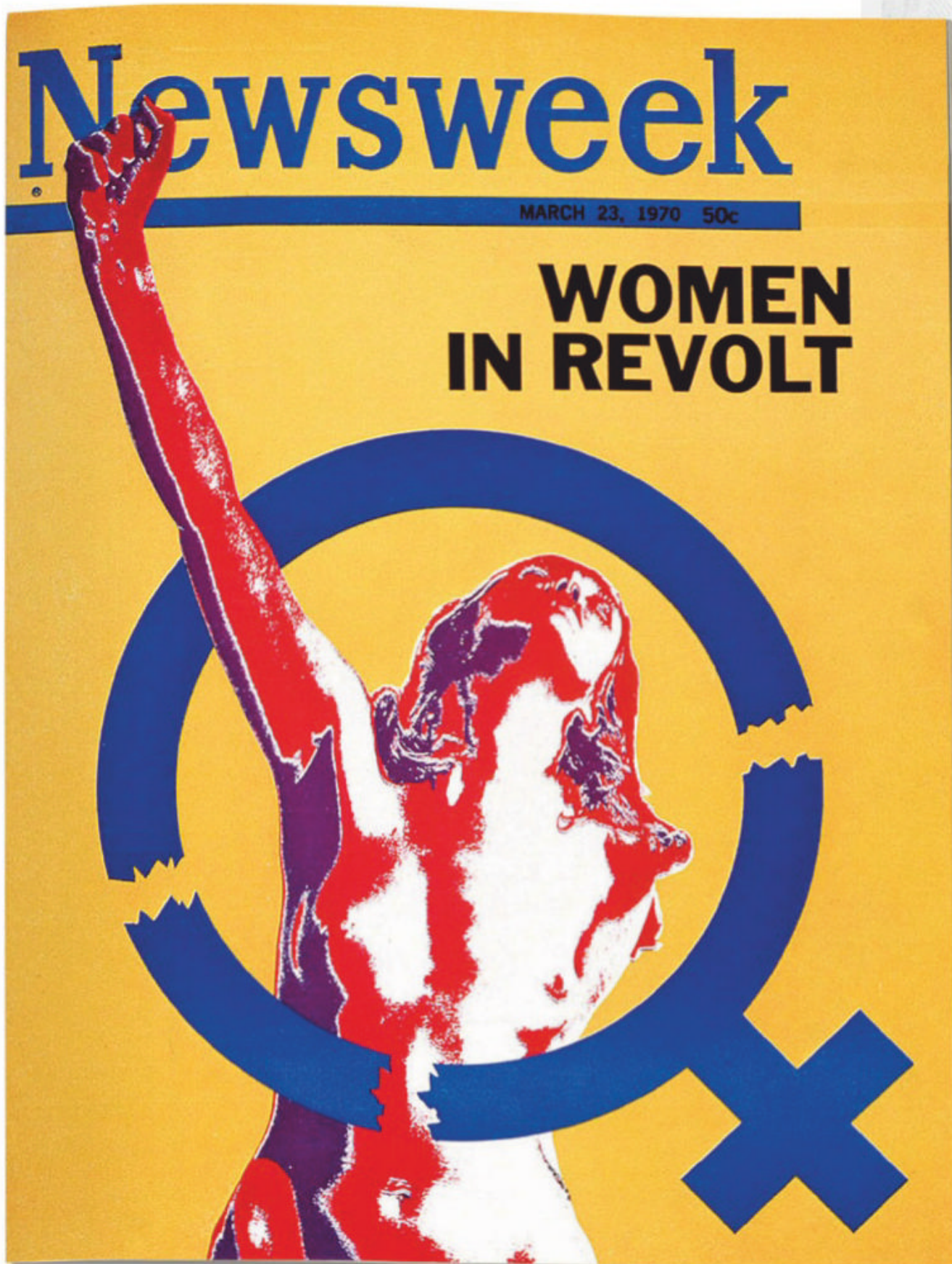


Silverback Western lowland gorilla.

© NaturePL.com / T.J. Rich / WWF



# The Archives



**CLASS ACTION** Top right: Female employees announce their lawsuit against *Newsweek* for gender discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Eleanor Holmes Norton, third from left, a future U.S. representative, was their attorney.



**1970**

This March 23, 1970, cover story about the women's movement was written by Helen Dudar, a freelancer. At the time, *Newsweek* editors didn't believe that any of the staff's female researchers, newspaper clippers or mail girls were up to the job of writing a story. Even as the magazine hit newsstands, though, 46 female staffers announced they were suing for gender discrimination—the first such suit filed against a U.S. employer.

"In the '60s and '70s, only men were hired as writers," says Lucy Howard, who was then a researcher. "It was the system, and we accepted it—until we didn't."

"Margaret Montagno was the person who kept us together, kept us focused, cut through our dithering with a few pithy sentences. And she was brave enough to be the named lead plaintiff," Howard says.

Margaret Montagno Clay became a *Newsweek* writer and editor before leaving the magazine in 1978. She died March 18 in Los Alamos, New Mexico, at age 79, having opened doors for all of us who came after her.

Nancy Cooper

**GLOBAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

FROM TOP: BETTMANN/GETTY; RICHARD LEY





Tinalbarka wants to be a lawyer.  
She and her family fled violence in Mali.

# We stand together #WithRefugees

PHOTO: © UNHCR / A. DRAGAJ

worldrefugeeday  
[www.refugeeday.org](http://www.refugeeday.org)





# In Focus

— THE NEWS IN PICTURES







CHENNAI, INDIA

# Color Blinded

Pink water cascades across a boy's face during Holi celebrations on March 21. The popular "festival of spring"—celebrated at the end of winter on the last full moon of the lunar month—has spread beyond India and Nepal to other countries in Asia. Participants use water guns, water balloons and their hands—and anyone is fair game.

📷 → ARUN SANKAR





CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: MAHMUD HAMS/AFP/GETTY; YASUYOSHI CHIBA/AFP/GETTY; ISABEL INFANTES/AFP/GETTY





ESTAQUINHA, MOZAMBIQUE

## Waiting on a Friend

Women line up on March 26 to receive supplies from a South African disaster relief organization in the wake of Cyclone Idai. The storm smashed into Mozambique on March 15, unleashing hurricane-force winds and rain that flooded much of the center of the country and then battered eastern Zimbabwe and Malawi. The cyclone affected almost 3 million people, of whom nearly 500,000 have been driven from their homes.

📷 → YASUYOSHI CHIBA



GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

## Fire and Fury

Flames and smoke rise above buildings in the Gaza Strip after airstrikes on March 25. The Israeli military said it struck Hamas targets in retaliation for an earlier rocket attack that the militant group launched against central Israel. Authorities say seven people were injured in each incident. A cease-fire was announced just hours after the back-and-forth.

📷 → MAHMUD HAMS



LONDON

## May Day

Brexit protesters rally around an effigy of Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May on March 23. The country has been mired in political paralysis over a deal to leave the European Union; on March 29, Parliament rejected a withdrawal agreement for the third time. The deeply unpopular May had offered to resign as an incentive for lawmakers to back her proposal, but it still failed. As of press time, the U.K. had until April 12 to propose a new way forward.

📷 → ISABEL INFANTES









EDUCATION

# An End to Affirmative Action?

Why the college admissions scandal could grant critics' wish to scrap the race-based program

**R**ACKETEERING, MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, celebrities, the Ivy League: The alleged conspiracy by the wealthy and well-connected to ensure their children's admission into elite colleges goes beyond Hollywood scandal. The story inflamed already smoldering concerns about the ways that money corrupts the supposedly meritocratic college admissions process. If any aspiring students across America—and around the world—still believed that every applicant had the same shot, they and their parents now know for certain that that's not the case. There are already calls for reform.

But the process of taking privilege out of the system might bring an end to something else: affirmative action.

Race-based affirmative action, a concept introduced in the 1960s during the civil rights movement, has been steadily losing public support to alternative, race-blind methods of college admission. A February poll by the Pew Research Center indicated that 73 percent of American adults do not think colleges and universities

should consider race or ethnicity when making admissions decisions. Over 60 percent of black respondents and 65 percent of Hispanic respondents did not want race to factor in admissions.

The Trump administration has also attacked the system. A conservative Supreme Court will likely soon hear a case about Harvard, accused of using racial screening to limit the number of Asian-American students accepted. But the alleged scheme by more than 50 celebrities, business executives and rich parents to fix SAT scores and bribe athletic coaches to get their kids into college could be what finally kills the controversial policy.

"People are using this as an argument against affirmative action because these rich students had their own type of advantages," says Ivory Toldson, a Howard University professor and editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Negro Education*.

"They're saying we need to level the playing field, and that also means ending race-based admissions."

The scandal and the now-intense public scrutiny of the system

BY

NICOLE GOODKIND

[@nicolegoodkind](#)



illuminate the fundamental unfairness that pervades American universities. Americans idealize U.S. colleges, and so do the tens of thousands of foreign students who apply each year—many of them participants in corrupt application systems in their own countries.

University officials and politicians alike are now under pressure to clean up the process. Some education analysts are considering possible alternatives—including lotteries. What better way to neutralize the influence of nonquantifiable factors than to nix them all?

The most obvious target for reform is the legacy preference. Applicants with family members who attended the school to which they are applying have an advantage—and if the parents are generous, even better. Legacies tend to be white and relatively well-off. At Yale, one of the universities touched by the scandal, about 12 percent of the students on campus are legacies.

There's also public support for an end to legacy admissions. Nearly 70 percent of American adults do not want schools to factor legacy into admissions decisions, Pew found. A serious attempt at reform, says Richard Reeves, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, could eliminate all legacy-based admissions.

But, he added, if you're going to work toward a system of total meritocracy, affirmative action might have to go as well. "It's this weird sort of stalemate," he says. "One of the reasons people are reluctant to address legacy is because there is this unspoken deal where we have legacy but also affirmative action. I think we're reaching a tipping point, and the whole system will come under scrutiny, and rightly too."

Affirmative action and legacy preferences are tied together politically, says Daniel Golden, a Pulitzer

Prize winner and author of *The Price of Admission*, the book that first reported that Jared Kushner's father gave millions to Harvard ahead of his acceptance. "In the states where affirmative action has been banned through court decisions or referenda, legacy preferences drop too."

After Texas A&M announced in 2003 that it would no longer consider race in admissions, it also ended preferential treatment for legacies, citing the "obvious inconsistency" of giving preference to relatives of alumni in a supposedly merit-based system. The school saw a 114 percent increase in diversity over the next 13 years.

Campus officials credited a combination of using hard data for admissions and establishing connections with underserved schools in Texas. The university decided to admit all Texas students who ranked in the top 10 percent of their class, no matter how competitive the high school. "Every student who is at A&M must know...that he or she and all students here have been admitted on personal merit," then-A&M President Robert Gates said when the policy was announced.

At the same time, A&M sent recruiters to high schools in east and south Dallas, predominantly black and Hispanic areas, to build relationships with students. At W.W. Samuell High

School in south Dallas, where 90 percent of the students are on public assistance, that outreach paid off. "Everyone wanted to attend A&M," Thelma Gonzalez, the school's college adviser, told the Texas Tribune.

"Affirmative action is not working hard enough to balance the disproportionate way college admissions are stacked to advantage wealthy white students," says Richard Kahlenberg, senior fellow at the Century Foundation and author of *The Remedy: Class, Race and Affirmative Action*. "One of the interesting things about the top 10 percent rule as a form of affirmative action is that it did bring in a lot more economic diversity and racial diversity than the old-style use of race-based admissions."

Texas, Florida and California have all replaced their affirmative action programs with systems that guarantee a certain percentage of top high school students admission into their public universities, with varying degrees of success. All schools, however, found effectiveness increased when the programs were coupled with significant outreach to disadvantaged student populations.

"I don't think there's any reason to think a version of the top 10 percent plan couldn't work in every state," says Kahlenberg. "The admissions system is tilted toward the advantaged, and the genius of the top-10-percent plan is it took out those advantages.... It didn't do it completely, but it's a start."

Howard University's Toldson agrees that the 10 percent rule can aid students who don't go to top high schools and lack the resources of wealthier students. "One of the things that I've observed from speaking at high school graduation, and I've spoken at schools considered the worst of the worst, is that their valedictorians and scholarship recipients and student

**At Harvard University,  
71 percent of the  
school's black and  
Latino students  
come from wealthy  
backgrounds.**





**VERITAS** The scandal illuminated the ways that money corrupts the admissions process. Left: Harvard Business School. Bottom: Charles Kushner gave millions to Harvard—and Jared got in.

leaders are great and could survive anywhere,” he says. “And when they do gain admittance into universities, those students have done well.”

Currently, the minority students who gain access to top schools tend to come from high-income, privileged backgrounds. At Harvard, 71 percent of the school’s black and Latino students come from wealthy backgrounds, Kahlenberg found.

“The current system of preferences encourages strategic behavior rather than meritocracy,” says Richard Sander, a professor of law at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a critic of affirmative action. Just as wealthy parents work to game the admissions system, admissions officers work to game affirmative action guidelines.

But many scholars disagree that a truly meritocratic admissions system is contingent on ending affirmative

action. “Affirmative action is a policy that is designed to expand opportunity, and legacy admission is designed to hoard opportunity,” says Natasha Kumar Warikoo, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and author of *The Diversity Bargain: And Other Dilemmas of Race, Admissions, and Meritocracy at Elite Universities*. “It’s problematic to put them in the same category. Critics say we should get rid of all of that stuff

and have a meritocracy, but we know that the outcome of admissions to the most elite colleges is an outcome in which disadvantaged groups are systematically underrepresented. Colleges should figure out ways to change that rather than focusing on legacy.”

It’s not that affirmative action doesn’t work, says Warikoo; it’s that it does not go far enough in addressing inequality so pervasive that by the time a student is a high school senior, it’s often too late to redress. Pipeline programs that aid underprivileged students from a young age might be more effective. Unlike Reeves, Warikoo is not optimistic about potential systematic changes. “I don’t foresee any dramatic changes to legacy admissions,” she says. “Sadly, the only thing that might be forced to change is affirmative action.”

Warikoo was referring to *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*, a lawsuit that questions whether Harvard violated the Civil Rights Act by potentially discriminating against Asian-American applicants. The suit, heard in a Massachusetts federal court, touches on key aspects of affirmative action: The plaintiffs argue that admissions officers must remove race from their criteria to give Asian-Americans a fair chance. The case is expected to work its way up to the Supreme Court.

“Eliminating race-based affirmative action and implementing policies that would ensure a unique freshman class without using race is clearly the will of the American people,” says Edward Blum, who has long fought to end affirmative action and is president of Students for Fair Admissions.

“There are race-neutral admissions



policies that can be implemented that will result in a unique, well-balanced freshman class with kids from different backgrounds and geographic areas,” says Blum. If schools eliminated preferences for legacies, children of faculty, and athletes, and sought out students from modest socioeconomic backgrounds, he says, there would no longer be the need to use racial classifications and preferences.

The Harvard case, however, would seek to end affirmative action without an alternative in place.

“Make no mistake about it, the engineer behind this litigation is intent on sowing divisiveness amongst communities of color in an effort to dismantle diversity programs and civil rights protections that benefit all people of color,” wrote Sarah Hinger, a staff attorney at the American Civil

Liberties Union’s Racial Justice Program. “Not talking about race doesn’t erase discrimination; it reinforces the privileges of white applicants by ignoring the ways in which deep-seated structural racial inequality impacts individuals.”

The allegations of outright fraud that recently became public bring

## All over the world, wealthy parents find ways to get a brand-name American diploma for their child.

up real problems with the current admissions system, says Toldson, but it’s important to be careful of “Trojan horse” arguments that could further disadvantage minority students.

Still, the admissions scandal resonates with middle-class Americans, says Reeves. “It’s such a different world, where fame and wealth ensure different treatment. These institutions are not serving most Americans, and this story is an egregious reminder of that. I hope this wakes us up to what fairness looks like.”

Political momentum is already building. Democratic Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon introduced a bill in March that would prohibit college donors from receiving a tax break before or during a family member’s enrollment there. “Middle-class families don’t have access to this back door for their children,” the senator said in a statement. “If the wealthy want to grease the skids, they shouldn’t be able to do so at the expense of American taxpayers.”

Illegal admission rings, after all, are exceedingly rare. What is far more prevalent is the legal leg up that wealthy teenagers have over their less-privileged peers. After arresting those participating in the recent scam, U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling of Massachusetts explained why these parents are in trouble. “We’re not talking about donating a building so the school is more likely to take your son or daughter,” he said in a statement. “We’re talking about deception and fraud, fake test scores, fake athletic credentials, fake photographs and bribed college officials.”

It’s telling that Lelling did not say, in contrast, what happened with



**TOO MANY VALEDICTORIANS** There are enough outstanding students to fill elite colleges twice over. Is a lottery the answer?



a student who applied and gained admission through his or her own merit, says Reeves. “He’s saying one way of bribing your way into a place is wrong, but the other way is all right.”

But even if legacy and affirmative action admissions were entirely eliminated, constructing a purely meritocratic system would be difficult. It’s well known that elite colleges have more qualified students applying than seats to fill. Former Harvard President Drew Faust has said that “we could fill our class twice over with valedictorians,” all of whom would arguably do well at the hallowed institution.

So how do admissions officers choose between those students without considering unmeritocratic factors? A lottery system could be one answer, Peter Stone, a professor of political science at Dublin’s Trinity College, has suggested. In the 2013 analysis “Access to Higher Education by the Luck of the Draw,” published in *Comparative Education Review*, he wrote that when two students are similar academically, “lotteries guarantee that irrelevant (i.e., unfair) reasons will hold no sway over the tie-breaking process.”

Other systems, wrote Stone, are unreliable and arbitrary. “Fairness thus requires random selection under the right circumstances, and these circumstances frequently occur in the realm of higher education admissions.”

Reeves is also in favor of a lottery. “I was recently speaking with the president of an Ivy League school, and he gave me what he considered the baseline grade-point average and SAT scores for admissions. But, he told me, about 10 times as many people apply with those merits than they can admit.” They’re all qualified applicants, Reeves added, so “pull their names out of a hat and run a lottery.”

The best part of a lottery system is

that applicants are not left wondering why they weren’t accepted. “Everyone knows why they won, and everyone knows why they lost,” says Reeves, “instead of having a sneaking suspicion that they were admitted because they played the oboe or their dad knew someone or because they were black or Hispanic.”

Warikoo agrees. “There is already so much chance baked into the admissions system, a lottery would just expose that,” she says. “People currently think that if you get into Harvard you must be better than everybody else, but those are false understandings. There are tons of amazing people who don’t get in.”

But no college in the United States has attempted such a system, and perhaps with good reason, says Golden. “Whatever criteria you set up, people will find a way to game it,” he says. “If there were a lottery based on grades, high schools would be eager to give students better grades.”

In 1997, after Texas Governor George W. Bush signed into law a decree that automatically granted Texas high school students in the top 10 percent of their class admission to all state-funded universities, Golden visited a high school that, he says, had managed to count 15 percent of students as being in the top 10 percent.


Even if schools don’t game the system, Golden predicts, universities would never go for the idea. Why pick at random when you can choose a legacy student whose parents have deep pockets? “American universities are businesses,” he says. “They’re looking to make as much money as possible, and sometimes when it comes to a collision between academic quality and financial gain, greed wins.”

One way to diminish the role of greed is to address the anxiety that rewards it. The problem with elite

institutions is not in their admissions process, says Wilfred McClay, the G.T. and Libby Blankenship chair in the history of liberty at the University of Oklahoma. “I’m not going to pretend there isn’t a difference between Harvard and Suffolk County Community College, but I think this situation where the Supreme Court is made up entirely of Harvard or Yale law school graduates is wrong,” he says. “Parents were willing to do anything to game the system to get their kids these advantages, not because the education was better but because the legitimization of social position would be better.”

All over the world, wealthy parents find ways to get a brand-name American diploma for their child. “Students from China go through really sophisticated test prep and intermediaries to get accepted to our schools,” says Golden. “They have admissions advisers writing their essays.... The colleges take these kids because they pay full tuition and because they want to open lucrative international branches of their schools.”

Just days after the celebrity admissions scandal exploded into view, another slipped under the radar. Federal authorities arrested five Californians accused of helping Chinese students obtain visas by taking their English-language tests for them. Over 40 students were able to attend schools like the University of California, Los Angeles, and Columbia University because of the alleged scheme.


“In a perverse way, the desperation of these rich parents testifies to the value of a degree from an elite college,” says Golden. “In what other country would parents go through such criminal and outrageous lengths to get their children into college? It’s a weird backhanded tribute to the mystique and allure of an American college degree.” 



HISTORY

# Path to Power

Prize-winning author and presidential chronicler Robert Caro has a new book. And no, it's not about Lyndon Johnson

 AS A YOUNG MAN WORKING AT *Newsday* in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Robert Caro caught on to something that his peers seemed to be missing: True political power doesn't come from voters or televised congressional hearings. Exhibit A was Robert Moses, the master builder who spent billions creating nearly every piece of modern infrastructure in and around New York City—without once facing a public election.

Fascinated, Caro would go on to research and write *The Power Broker*, the seminal, award-winning biography of Moses, beginning a nearly 60-year investigation into what power is and how it's obtained. His revered 1,000-page tomes about Lyndon Johnson would follow, but his career as America's authority on political power almost didn't happen.

"Robert Moses didn't want me to write about him and really had me stymied," Caro tells me on a brisk March morning. "Moses kept all of his papers on Randall's Island, and there were guards everywhere." Then, he got a phone call from Mary Perot Nichols, a former muckraking columnist and city editor of *The Village Voice* who, at the time, was working as director of public relations for the New York City Parks Department. It just so happened that there were copies of Moses's files

sitting in a basement in Central Park. "She said, 'I know where his papers are, and I can get you the key.' That was one of the great moments of my career."

Caro delves into the stories behind his best-sellers in *Working*, his new book composed of essays and repurposed interviews that give insight into one of the most celebrated minds in American letters. The 83-year-old author has a lengthy memoir planned for later, but he wanted to get something out quickly—you know, just in case. "I can do the math," he says.

Caro still handwrites all of his books before typing them up on his gray Smith Corona Electra 210. He purchased 17 of them when they were discontinued 30 years

ago, and now he's down to 11. When I meet with him, he sits on one side of his very large desk next to the handwritten pages of his next book, the fifth and final volume in the definitive biography of America's 36th president. Behind him, pinned to a large corkboard, is the book's outline. He tells me to not look at it too closely.

Clad in a red cashmere sweater and tortoiseshell glasses, the octogenarian likes to do things the old-fashioned way. (When his wife and longtime research partner, Ina, calls, he can't figure out how to answer the phone.) It's his commitment to turning every (physical) page that keep his fans

waiting years for each new book, and his penchant for detail and mise-en-scène has gained him a cult following among history buffs and literati alike.

I met with Caro at his office, a repurposed three-bedroom apartment (the kitchen, he tells me, is just for coffee) across the street from Central Park, to discuss his approach to power, the current political climate and how Johnson almost didn't become president.

**This book is pretty out of character for you; it's only 207 pages. Why did you decide to keep it so short?**

My books are about political power, and I think it's important that people understand how it works in America. But I think I've learned some things while researching and writing about *how* you learn about political power. I took a few months out from doing the Lyndon B. Johnson books to put a few thoughts down on paper.

**Have you always had confidence in yourself?**

Confidence doesn't have anything to do with it. I didn't know I wanted to be an investigative reporter. When I started going through files for the first time, I said, "Oh, I love doing this." Why do I love doing it? I don't think I've figured it out yet.

**You study power, and you've been around a lot of powerful people. Have you ever been intimidated by them?**

No, I never did feel intimidated.

**"People today have forgotten the power of government to do good."**







**You talk to these people who hold so much power, yet you hold this power over them as a reporter.**

I have power over them? That's not a thought I entertain. You're just trying to describe what they've done. It's more like you're thinking, Oh, it's going to be so hard to describe how they did this.

**You talk about moments when you were brought to tears by the fate of Moses and the childhood of Johnson. Clearly, you see the good in complicated figures. Is that how you approach the current situation in Washington, D.C.?**

I'm fascinated by what's going on in Washington right now. It's never been more important that people understand how the political process works. What the Senate and House do now to counter this president is really important.

There's this immense propensity of government to affect people's lives—to help them by bringing [them] electricity, voting rights and civil rights; and an immense capacity to injure people, like running highways right through their neighborhoods or [sending them to fight in] Vietnam. But people today have forgotten the power of government to do good.

I have an eye problem, and there's one clinic in New York with a specialist for it. When I got there, the waiting

room is this huge room, and the first thing I noticed is that I was the only white face in this entire room; there were a lot of mothers and people of color and a lot of kids with very thick, Coke-bottle glasses. I asked my doctor, "Before Medicare and Medicaid, what percentage of these kids would have been here?" He reads surprised and says, "Absolutely none. They wouldn't have been able to afford this."

So look what Medicare and Medicaid did. This is one example; multiply it by thousands, you know? That's the power of government.

**You posit that Johnson won his 1948 Senate race only because the Democratic primary was stolen. Did that challenge your belief in our system of government?**

It cast a real light for me. I wanted to write a book about the political system, and stolen elections are a part of our political history. I thought I knew something about politics and power, but I'm constantly finding out how little I know about it.

**Would Johnson have become president if not for that stolen Senate election?**

He regarded that Senate run as his last chance; he was going to retire from politics if he lost. And the fact is, he lost. But he didn't retire from politics because of this election, and he went on to become president. As a result, we had this huge escalation of Vietnam and the human suffering that it caused. On the other hand, we have Medicare and Medicaid and voting rights. That election was a very pivotal moment in American history. **N**

**PAST IS PROLOGUE** "Stolen elections are a part of our political history," Caro says. Left: Johnson, center, in 1956, after winning leadership of the Texas delegation to the Democratic National Convention.

**"It's never been more important that people understand how the political process works."**



BETTMANN/GETTY



# A new era for Japanese shipbuilding



"Thanks to our superior technology, we can create products that tackle environmental issues"

Naoki Sugiyama, President,  
Musasino Co. Ltd.

From the 1960s up to the turn of this century, Japan was the world's largest shipbuilding nation, at one point producing about half of all new ship tonnage in the world.

However, Japan's dominance has subsided in recent years as its global market share of CGT (compensated gross tonnage) has fallen to 20 percent, with China now the leading global shipbuilder. Ahead of Japan in second place is South Korea, whose shipping industry has been buoyed by government financial support in recent years due to the impact of the 2008 economic crisis on demand for new vessels.

Recently Japan, backed by the EU, took a case against South Korea to the World Trade Organization, claim-

ing that the government subsidies are unfairly reshaping the global shipbuilding market, which could prolong the current oversupply of vessels that is damaging to the sector.

But Japan is not just depending on the WTO ruling in its effort to win back market share from South Korea. It has also devised comprehensive plans to revive its shipbuilding industry and has targeted a 30-percent market share of completed ships by 2025, by leveraging the nation's technological prowess to build environmentally friendly vessels adopting the latest technologies.

In 2020 worldwide maritime regulations on sulfur oxide emissions are set to significantly increase the demand for environmentally friendly ships. And Japanese companies that are strong in environmentally friendly technology, such as Mitsui Engineering & Shipbuilding, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Tsuneishi Holdings Corporation, are preparing to take on Chinese and South Korean rivals by positioning themselves to meet this new demand.

"Our target here at Tsuneishi Shipbuilding is to reduce Co2 emissions by 40 percent by 2020 in comparison to 1990. We are currently at about 30 percent," says Takao Kawamoto, president of Tsuneishi, a company which builds bulk carriers, container carriers and tankers and celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2017.

Also leading the charge are com-

panies like Musasino Co. Ltd., which develops marine equipment, systems and sensors that have supported safe and reliable cargo handling operations in the global shipping industry for more than 60 years.

"Most ships use heavy fuel oil, a dirty fuel high in sulfur. The challenge is how to reduce emissions if we're still using that fuel. Success will come from our ability to build ships that can meet the regulations coming upon us," says company president Naoki Sugiyama. "Thanks to our craftsmanship and superior technology, we can create products that tackle environmental issues."

Aside from greener ships, Japanese companies are also pioneering the use of fourth industrial revolution technologies such as robotics and IoT, and aim to launch self-navigating vessels by 2025.

"We are currently partnering with different universities in order to start using robots in our shipbuilding operations. We also are collaborating with Kyushu University in order to develop laser-arc hybrid welding," says Tsuneishi's Mr. Kawamoto.

Meanwhile, Musasino is also supporting their shipbuilding client's digital transformation with its 'Smart Network' platform, which it has developed based on its signal processing technology.

"Our entire firm runs on digitalized systems and we're able to provide our clients with technologically advanced

20%

Japan's global market share in  
CGT deliveries  
(OECD report 04/10/2018)

24%

Japan's market share in global  
container ship tonnage  
(on order market)

25%

Japan's market share in global  
tanker and gas carrier  
(on order market)

products," says Mr. Sugiyama.

"Our Smart Network enables data to be sent directly to onshore offices via satellite. As part of that network, we recently released our MDE (Multi Digital Interface Equipment), which is a versatile product that can also bring in data from third party equipment. We're looking to lead the industry's digitalization with MDE and Smart Network, and integrate ships and their onshore offices."

CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETY  
THROUGH OUR TECHNOLOGY  
AND CREATIVITY

**YAGI**  
INDUSTRIES

[www.yagihk.co.jp/en](http://www.yagihk.co.jp/en)

**MUSASINO**  
[www.musasino.biz](http://www.musasino.biz)

MARINE INDUSTRY LEADING TANK  
MONITORING – LEVEL MASTER



# The backbone of *monozukuri*

## 70%

SMEs represent 70% of Japan's total employment

## 50%

SMEs represent 50% of Japan's added-value manufacturing output

## 39%

of Japanese SMEs have overseas offices

## 67.8%

of Japanese SMEs plan to expand exports over next 3 years



"What distinguishes Japanese *monozukuri* is the knowledge and craftsmanship that have been cultivated throughout the years. I also believe that Japan's manufacturing strength resides in the stability of its SMEs"

Kanzo Shimizu, President,  
Nichiei Kakoh Co., Ltd.

Japan's global reputation for its manufacturing prowess, underpinned by the dedication to *monozukuri* (craftsmanship), is often associated with the big players like Toyota, Sony and Panasonic. But the true strength of Japanese manufacturing lies with the multitude of SMEs that provide high-

quality parts and components to these larger companies to build their final products.

While most of these SMEs are not as well known as Japan's giants, they form the backbone of the service sector and are a crucial part of the manufacturing and export supply chain. In 2016, the Economic Census for Business Activity estimated that SMEs and LMEs (large medium-sized enterprises) accounted for nearly 97 percent of all Japanese enterprises. Japan's SMEs employ 70 percent of the total workforce and are responsible for 50 percent of total manufacturing output.

Japanese brands have had to deal with emerging competition in recent years from China and South Korea, who have tried to replicate *monozukuri* to varying degrees of success. But what differentiates Japan's manufacturing industry from its regional competitors is the support of its strong and stable SMEs, many of which have a long-standing history in innovation and technology that cannot be matched by their counterparts in China and South Korea.

"What distinguishes Japanese *monozukuri* is the knowledge and craftsmanship that have been cul-

tivated throughout the years. I also believe that Japan's manufacturing strength resides in the stability of its SMEs," says Kanzo Shimizu, President of Nichiei Kakoh, a company which manufactures state-of-the-art adhesive paper and film for customers in the printing, electronics and automotive industries.

"From abrupt changes in management to lack of capital, SMEs in other Asian countries aren't stable. In Japan, SMEs are extremely stable and their production ability is maintained constantly throughout the years."

Another competitive edge of Japanese SMEs is their incredible ability to adapt to change, be it technological or market-oriented, which is particularly important in the era of globalization and the emergence of fourth industrial revolution technologies.

Japan's shrinking domestic market has forced the nation's SMEs to expand their operations overseas in recent years, both by following bigger Japanese companies to new markets and by finding new customers in those markets.

"Inevitably, alongside other companies, we feel that we have to move to overseas markets. International markets represent 10 percent of our sales. In the years to come, we definitely have to increase this percentage," says Mr. Shimizu.

"Consequently, we are following the big names that localized their businesses outside Japan. Those companies require a certain level of trust towards their suppliers, and as we have already acquired that trust, our expansion strategy is to follow our customers.

"We are especially targeting foreign markets that require functionality. Since our field is B2B, we understand that we need to put something so the customer realizes that our products are unique to Nichiei Kakoh. The most appealing point that we want to translate to potential customers is that our products aren't simply 'Made in Japan'; they are 'Made by Nichiei Kakoh'."

Yagi Industries, meanwhile, is

also pushing for global expansion. For years, Yagi has supplied high performance bearings and clutch rotor bearings for car giants like Toyota, and is particularly targeting the growing U.S. automotive market in its overseas strategy.

"Right now, our main target is North America, as there are 270 million cars running. This represents a huge market of 14 million new plus 40 million used cars. Also SUV and truck numbers are expected to continue growing until 2023," says president, Norihiro Yagi, who also highlights Yagi's competitive advantages over other companies in the industry.

"One of our key competitive advantages is that we have been able to vertically expand, meaning we are able to manage every process of our production line in house. This allows for cost reduction in areas such as inventory stock fees and transportation expenses, which in turn results in more appropriate pricing for our customers and more flexibility," he says.

"We are very proud of having access to technologies that most of our competitors do not. Some of them include fully enclosed die forging, coreless forging, composite forging and automatic forging just to name a few."

One of the major changes in manufacturing right now is the growing adoption of fourth industrial revolution technologies, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data and advanced robotics. And it is an area in which Japanese SMEs are forging ahead.

"For this year, we will introduce IOT on-site as we plan to improve the productivity and reduce defects by arranging computers at the work site that can form unified processing of accumulated production data," says Mr. Yagi.

Small, agile and technologically adept, Japan's SMEs have been the backbone of *monozukuri* for decades and are now following the Japanese big players abroad in the quest to bring their high-quality products to new markets.

ALWAYS  
CHALLENGE  
SOMETHING  
NEW

日栄化工株式会社 NE-tak  
NICHIEI KAKOH CO., LTD. 6508091 / 6504001  
www.netak.co.jp



# Toyo: the power behind the battery

From cell phones and laptop computers to wireless speakers and electric toothbrushes, lithium ion batteries power the devices we use every day. First introduced to the market by Sony in 1991, these rechargeable batteries also have many industrial uses and power the charge-up electronic vehicles (EVs) that are set to become ever-more prevalent on our roads each year.

Fueled by increasing demand for smart devices, EVs, and the growing need for automation and battery-operated industrial equipment, the lithium ion battery market is projected to grow at an average yearly rate of 16 percent, from \$374 billion in 2018 to \$92.2 billion by 2024.

Aside from the task of meeting this growing demand, ensuring the high performance, safety and environmental friendliness of these batteries is also a big challenge for electronics and automobile manufacturers, many of whom depend on the superior battery testing equipment developed by TOYO System.

Automotive companies, for ex-

ample, have used TOYO's testing machines to develop the battery technology behind many well-known hybrid vehicles. Worldwide PC and electric communication device manufacturers also depend on TOYO's equipment to manufacture laptop and phone batteries, while many universities and research institutions also employ TOYO's machines in battery development and innovation. This small-yet-agile company's diverse list of clients reads like a who's who of the electronics and automobile industries.

"As an SME, we only focus on producing one particular product: secondary battery testing systems. Throughout the years, we have accumulated expertise in the production of secondary battery testing equipment and today, we're proud to cover all types of different batteries," says president and CEO, Hideki Shoji, who was named Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of the Year in 2009.

"To reach such a diverse clientele, we have had to integrate

our battery testing systems to meet various testing equipment requirements for the different needs of each company. We cover different industries all over the world and we're proud to say that we're a one-stop company."

In light of the growing demand for lithium-ion batteries in the United States, TOYO established its American subsidiary TOYO System USA in Ohio in 2013, through which it offers a series of TOSCAT and TOSMAC testing equipment to its U.S. customers. Moving forward into the era of Big Data, Toyo aims to continue to expand its presence and tradition of excellence in the U.S., Europe and beyond by leveraging on its massive capacity for data collection to offer more services to its customers.

"As our employees conduct testing on a daily basis, they gather an incredible amount of data. We must systematically collect that data and analyze it to further understand our market," explains Mr. Shoji. "Investing in data-man-



"We cover different industries all over the world and we're proud to say that we're a one-stop company"

Hideki Shoji, President  
and CEO, TOYO System

agement is a crucial factor for our company's development. From this data, we will be able to create more services, ultimately allowing us to diversify from an integrated manufacturer, to a unique company that is an integrated manufacturer and service provider."

# Asahi's ceaseless innovation

In a natural disaster-prone country like Japan, civil engineers are constantly trying to develop new ways to make buildings and structures more resistant to earthquakes, tsunamis and heavy flooding. And the pace of civil engineering development in disaster prevention has only accelerated following the Great Earthquake of 2011 and subsequent Tsunami, which exposed many structural weaknesses that civil engineers have and continue to address.

Established in 1952, Asahi Inovex manufactures fabricated structural metal and steel, as well as heating/cooling panels for residential buildings. Its outstanding metalworking technology has been used in offices, hospitals, hotels, public facilities and sports facilities throughout Japan, helping buildings to stand against major earthquakes.

The company's cutting-edge technology is the result of its long-standing commitment to ceaseless innovation – hence the 'Inovex' part of its name. One of its most renowned and widely

used innovations is the 'Auto Gate', an automatic gate that aims to prevent tsunamis and rivers from flooding.

"The 'AutoGate' is designed to open-and-close by reacting to water levels on the inner and outer side of the gate. Consequently, it does not require man-power to operate," explains company president Mikihiro Hoshino. "The product has existed in the market since 1998, long before the Tohoku earthquake in 2011. But due to the national disaster, the demand increased and we introduced it to more areas."

Over the 20 years of the product's existence, Auto Gate, which was awarded the The Prime Minister's Prize in the Fifth Monozukuri Nippon Grand Award in 2013, has been installed at around 2,000 sites in Japan, and that number continues to grow. The plan is to have 30,000 Auto Gates installed across Japan over the next century, while the company also aims to expand the product to Southeast Asia, where it is already in use in Thailand. Also on Asahi's



Asahi Inovex's 'Auto Gate'

radar is Europe, where torrential flooding continues to become a greater problem because of climate change.

"Two things are under consideration in our R&D activities right now. Firstly, we are trying to increase the capacity of the 'Auto Gates' themselves to serve as tsunami preventers, as our current gates have only been preventing river overflows," adds Mr. Hoshino.

"Secondly, we are making a new type of gate purposed to serve different applications. The idea is to take the automatic

opening-and-closing function and apply it to civil purposes, such as in living quarters or sewage systems. Therefore, we are expanding into areas the company hasn't touched yet."

Whether it's in civil engineering, the steel division, 'Auto Gates', or its environmentally friendly heating panels, the company sees many avenues for growth in the future. "The next target for the company is to diversify our segments and expand in different divisions," concludes Mr. Hoshino. "With our capable and trusting workforce, future possibilities are endless."



# Brains behind the beauty: how Japanese SMEs drive cosmetics innovation

There is much more to Japan's booming cosmetics sector than a handful of recognizable corporate giants, with a multitude of smaller firms specializing in manufacturing components that make up the innovative final products.



"The goal of Ichimaru Pharcos is to explore the countless possibilities that natural products have to offer"

Yoshihiko Ando, President & CEO, Ichimaru Pharcos

Eternal youth has, since the dawn of time, been the ultimate fantasy of human kind. Our obsession with youthfulness, and by association, beauty, has transformed the global cosmetic and personal care market into an industrial giant expected to generate

more than \$600 billion by 2020.

As a nation reputed for its perfect skin, young looks and healthy diet – not to mention a long-established tradition in the use of cosmetics (*Geisha*) – Japan has all the fundamental criteria to tap into the world's booming wellness demand. According to Euromonitor International, Japan's annual beauty and personal care market is today about \$50 billion in size, second only to the United States. While well-known brands such as Shiseido and Kanebo have made quality and attention to detail core components of their portfolio, and as a result, helped Japanese cosmetics products gain a globally sought-after reputation, like so many other Japanese industries, there is much more to its cosmetics sector than a handful of recognizable corporate giants.

"SMEs in the cosmetic field occupy a similar role to their peers in the automotive sector," explains Yoshihiko Ando, President and CEO of Ichimaru Pharcos, a leader in the

research and development of natural active ingredients for the cosmetic industry. "While end consumers are aware of the brands making the final vehicle, such as BMW, Honda or Ford, these companies are but the assemblers. When you look at the parts and pieces necessary to produce a modern car, you will find a multitude of smaller firms specialized in manufacturing precise components. We are exactly the same."

Indeed, while the general public will most likely recognize the names L'Oréal and Shiseido, similarly to car makers, these large firms are only famous for releasing and branding final products. At lesser-known companies such as Ichimaru Pharcos, on the other hand, much work goes in behind the scenes to develop the active ingredients that compose these end products. It is within these smaller businesses, says Mr. Ando, that the innovation for which Japanese products are coveted originates.

"Since flagship organizations are extremely large, they do not have the flexibility to invest a large sum of capital and human resources on developing niche technologies. While their ability to research innovative products is well-known, these large companies decide to outsource niche-market research to specialized firms," says Mr. Ando. "Consequently, they commission a part of their research to OEMs and R&D-focused companies, such as Ichimaru Pharcos, to develop functional substances. As a result, the objective of SMEs is to create innovative solutions that can cater for the desires and needs of larger firms."

In recent years, international consumers have manifested their interest for natural and organic products in particular, an area in which Ichimaru Pharcos specializes. However, while the company president argues that utilizing natural components in beauty products has become "a necessity", such trends must continue to be supported by "accurate science".

"Comparable to the fashion industry, which changes from season to season, the cosmetic world is constantly evolving. At Ichimaru Pharcos, we put great effort in remaining on top of the latest market trends," says Mr. Ando. "That being said, the

cosmetic world isn't all about glamor. For products to work effectively, they must be backed by functional technologies and scientific evidence. The scientific part of the cosmetic industry is where Ichimaru Pharcos shines."

Such focus on innovative measures, backed up by proven science, goes a long way to explaining why in the USA, and internationally, the mania for Japanese cosmetics products has exploded in recent years. For instance, from 2012 to 2015 exports of cosmetics from Japan to America more than doubled, passing from an estimated 7 to almost 15 billion JPY, and making America Japan's favorite non-Asian destination for cosmetics.

Ichimaru Pharcos' own natural cosmetics innovations include the award winning Juvecol Proteoglycan, a patented salmon cartilage extract developed for MayPro, the leading global cosmetics supplier. Juvecol, which won the prestigious NEXTY Award for Best New Ingredient of 2017, induces the generation of collagen, supports the production of hyaluronan found in soft connective tissues, and enhances the proliferation of keratinocytes essential to protecting the skin from damage and stress.

Explaining his company's success, Mr. Ando says: "At Ichimaru Pharcos, we were one of the first to import the natural cosmetics trend to Japan. As a matter of fact, we became the first Japanese cosmetic product manufacturer to use natural ingredients only. Throughout our history, we have accumulated a long track record of technological breakthroughs. The goal of Ichimaru Pharcos is to continue exploring the countless possibilities that natural products have to offer."



#TheWorldfolio  
#JapanTheWorldfolio

DISCOVER MORE AT  
THEWORLDFOLIO.COM

PRODUCED BY  
THE WORLDFOLIO

Antoine Azoulay – Country Director  
Alexandre Marland – Editorial Director  
Sean Mapleden – Chief Market Analyst  
Daiki Hijikata – Market Analyst  
Marta Z. de Castro – Coordinator  
Sonal Malkani – Interpreter

**QUALITY OF LIFE**  
Proven Science for Real Results.

**FEEL GOOD IN YOUR OWN SKIN WITH JUVECOL®!**

A collagen complex for skin and joint health.\*

**Juvecol®**  
Collagen Complex

Improves skin elasticity and hydration\*  
Reduces wrinkles and brown spots\*  
Supports healthy joints\*

30 VEGICAPS (100mg) | DIETARY SUPPLEMENT

**THE 1<sup>st</sup> USA product featuring Ichimaru Pharcos' NEXTY award-winning Juvecol® proteoglycan!**

For more info visit [www.juvecol.com](http://www.juvecol.com)

\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.





“Journalism I don’t see elsewhere until later, if at all.”

[NEWSWEEK.COM/TRY](https://www.newsweek.com/try)



SAVE 57%

# Subscribe

FROM €2.11 PER WEEK



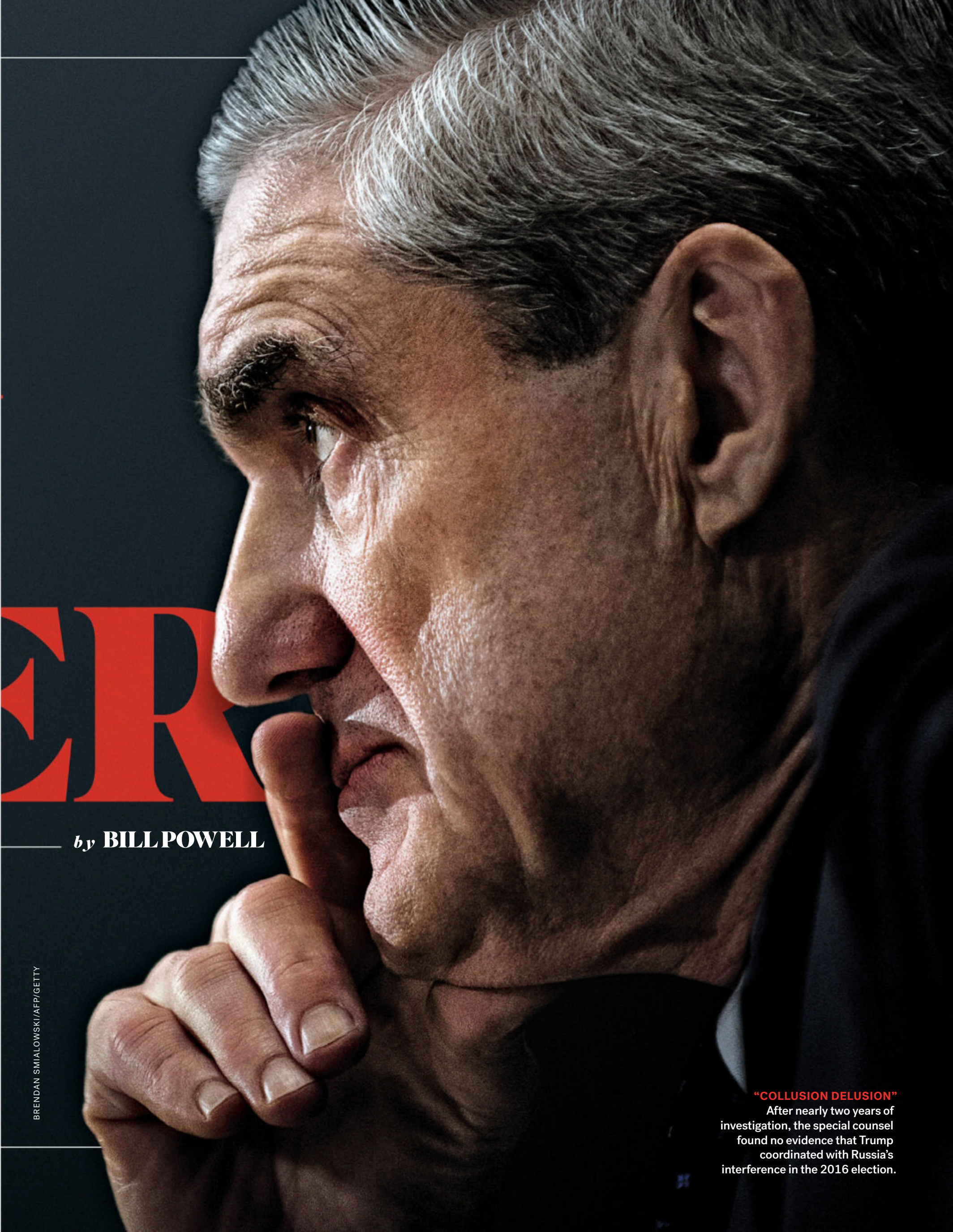
---

# PARTY POOPIE

How Robert Mueller **CRUSHED** the GOP's 'Dump Trump' crowd

---





# CR

*by* **BILL POWELL**

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY

**“COLLUSION DELUSION”**

After nearly two years of investigation, the special counsel found no evidence that Trump coordinated with Russia’s interference in the 2016 election.



“C

OMplete and total exoneration.”

Donald Trump’s words echoed across Washington on a Sunday afternoon in late March as Attorney General William Barr revealed the long-awaited conclusions of the Russia-gate probe. Indeed, after nearly two years of investigation into Kremlin interference in the 2016 campaign, special counsel Robert Mueller had found no collusion. And while, according to Barr, Mueller carefully noted that his report did not completely exonerate Trump on the charge of obstruction of justice, the president blew through the legalese, knowing the distinction would make no difference to much of the American public and certainly not to his loyal Republican base. “It’s a shame that our country had to go through this,” he said before boarding Air Force One for the nation’s capital after a weekend of golf at his Mar-a-Lago resort. “To be honest, it’s a shame your president had to go through this.”

He added, “This was an illegal takedown that failed.”

Republicans celebrated. Democrats griped. Presidential contenders, a *New York Times* headline blared, would now have to emphasize—gulp—*issues*. But it was yet another group that felt the sting almost as much: the Never Trumpers.

For much of the past two years, this constellation of Republican lawmakers, conservative pundits and policy wonks, and GOP operatives had hoped Mueller would help rid them of, as they saw him, the crude political rube who had hijacked their beloved Grand Old Party. Some campaigned loudly for Trump’s demise, on Twitter and cable news. Others, however, operated mostly in the shadows. Like dissidents in an authoritarian country, they held secret meetings in a conference room of a little-known Washington think tank called the Niskanen Center. About once a month, they shared private polling data on Trump, passed along the names of political activists around the country who opposed the president



and, perhaps most important, discussed potential primary challengers who could lead the “Dump Trump” movement.

Just weeks before the Mueller news, a group of lobbyists, congressional aides and policy experts from conservative think tanks spent an entire session talking about how to sell free trade and fiscal restraint to voters in the age of Trump. Now, these Republicans face a reinvigorated and vengeful standard-bearer, fully embraced by a party establishment no longer encumbered by the looming threat of a criminal indictment from Mueller. “The cloud hanging over President Trump has been removed,” said Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham.

Publicly, the Never Trumpers say their unlikely cause endures. “This was never about Mueller or the Russia investigation,” says Rick Wilson, the Florida-based Republican operative and author of *Everything Trump Touches Dies*. “It’s about his unfitness for office.”

#### JUDGE & JURY

After Mueller delivered his report to Barr, left, and his deputy, Rod Rosenstein, right, they decided not to pursue obstruction of justice charges. Above: Trump with GOP leaders. Opposite: A protester at a Los Angeles impeachment demonstration in 2017.

“He’s incompetent and really bad for the party,” says Mike Murphy, the veteran GOP strategist, “and he’ll hand the country over to a party that’s going full socialist.”

“We need to see the Mueller report,” conservative commentator Bill Kristol wrote on Twitter, echoing Democrats on Capitol Hill. The evidence “will confirm he ought not be re-elected.”

FROM LEFT: ALEX WONG/GETTY; MARK WILSON/GETTY; RINGO CHIU/AFP/GETTY





## POLITICS

now the ones on the offensive, with the president pledging to investigate the “treasonous” people behind the Mueller “witch hunt.” A Reuters/Ipsos poll found Trump’s job approval jumping 4 points, to 43 percent, in the wake of the findings.

Some Never Trumpers asked for anonymity to speak freely post-Mueller, an acknowledgment of the changing political currents and Trump’s new lease on life. “I’m not going to deny that this is a win for Trump, a big win. And it makes our job harder,” said one leading Never Trumper. “He’ll get a bounce from this. The question is: Will he piss it away by being Trump?”

DUMPING TRUMP HAS ALWAYS BEEN A QUIXOTIC EFFORT. Throughout his tumultuous presidency, he has remained overwhelmingly popular among registered Republicans. His approval rating among party members is 84 percent, according to a recent

**“This is a win  
for Trump. The  
question is: Will  
he piss it away by  
BEING TRUMP?”**

But privately, members of this group acknowledge the dream is dying, if not already dead, with the herculean task of bringing down an incumbent president from inside the party now infinitely harder, if not impossible. Yes, a bevy of other investigations in state and federal prosecutors’ offices, as well as in Congress, are proceeding on everything from hush money payments to money laundering to illegal donations, and Mueller’s confidential report—Barr has vowed to release a public version in the coming weeks—may yet contain damaging details about Trump’s conduct. But for the moment, it seems the single, largest bullet is gone. After nearly two years of Russia-gate frenzy and impeachment talk, Democratic leaders are moving on, attempting to pivot to health care and other kitchen-table issues. And Trump and the GOP are



Harvard CAPS/Harris poll. GOP critics, like former Arizona Senator Jeff Flake, soon found their own campaigns foundering when they questioned the president, his positions or his appointees. “This is very much the president’s party,” Flake, who decided not to run for re-election to Congress last year, told *The Hill*. “When you look at the base and look at those who vote in Republican primaries, I think that is clear.”

But while much of the rank and file who supported others in the 2016 primaries got over their shock—winning the general election tends to heal a lot of political wounds—a significant minority didn’t, haunted by the image of Trump accepting the Republican nomination to the sounds of the Rolling Stones’ “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”



Unsurprisingly, many of them hail from Bush World—those who helped George W. in 2000 and 2004 and then Jeb in 2016—believers in a mainstream Republicanism that defined the GOP for generations: fiscal conservatism, expansive free trade, muscular foreign policy. They watched from the wings as Trump humiliated “Low Energy Jeb” and ridiculed “compassionate conservatism,” paving the way for nativism and nationalism.

“Do we want some payback?” asked Wilson, a strategist for Jeb Bush in 2016. “Sure we do.”

Murphy, who ran Bush’s 2016 super PAC, chuckles when he hears that. “Yeah,” he cracks, “I’m the idiot who blew \$100 million on Jeb.” The longtime consultant has been a strategic force behind many of the GOP’s rising stars for decades. Before running Bush’s lavishly funded operation, he was an adviser for John McCain’s “Straight Talk Express” bus campaign in 2000, Mitt Romney’s campaign for governor of Massachusetts in 2002, Jeb’s successful bids for Florida governor and Arnold Schwarzenegger’s gubernatorial campaigns in California. His motive, he says, is political.

Trump, Murphy argues, means “political death for the party.” Last year’s midterm elections, he says, were a referendum on the president. Moderate Republicans, independents and suburban women all fled the GOP in droves, leading to a loss of 40 congressional seats and control of the House. For any number of reasons—Trump’s crudeness and his harsh tone on immigration among them—he does not see them coming back in 2020.

nonprofit, Sarah Longwell, have tried to entice several GOP politicians, including Flake, former Ohio Governor John Kasich and Nebraska Senator Ben Sasse. All have declined. He has had one prominent nibble: Larry Hogan, the popular GOP governor of Maryland who won two terms in a deep blue state. His father, a congressman from Maryland, was famously one of the first GOP politicians to turn against President Richard Nixon during Watergate.

But even Hogan, who has opposed Trump on immigration and fiscal policy, has said publicly that the Mueller report was going to influence his thinking, and he declined comment when *Newsweek* sought to clarify his position after the special counsel news. He is, however, still planning on attending the Politics & Eggs breakfast organized by the New Hampshire Institute of Politics in April, a tradition for all candidates testing the presidential waters. When I spoke with him in March, he was clear-eyed about the prospects. His biggest worry?

“1884,” he said, in reference to the last time a sitting president was denied his party’s nomination.

For now, the only Republican actually leaning toward running against Trump in 2020 is William Weld, the 73-year-old former Massachusetts governor who ran for vice president on the Libertarian ticket in 2016. But Kristol and others worry that anyone who opposes a reality-TV sensation like Trump needs to be a star in his or her own right—that is, someone who is already nationally recognized and could plausibly be president.

Mitt Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential nominee, sparked

## “It’s hard to know **WHAT PLANET** these people are on.”

Murphy views himself as the chief communicator of “a Paul Revere project,” trying to persuade grass-roots activists—some 10,000 to 13,000 nationwide, all in his digital Rolodex from past campaigns—that Trump will drag down the party in 2020. Even post-Mueller he believes Trump is “political anthrax” that would wipe out Republicans up and down the ticket. Whether GOP voters listen is an open question.

In January, a Marist poll found that 44 percent of Republicans want Trump to face a primary challenger. Other surveys have found similar results in New Hampshire and even higher numbers in Iowa.

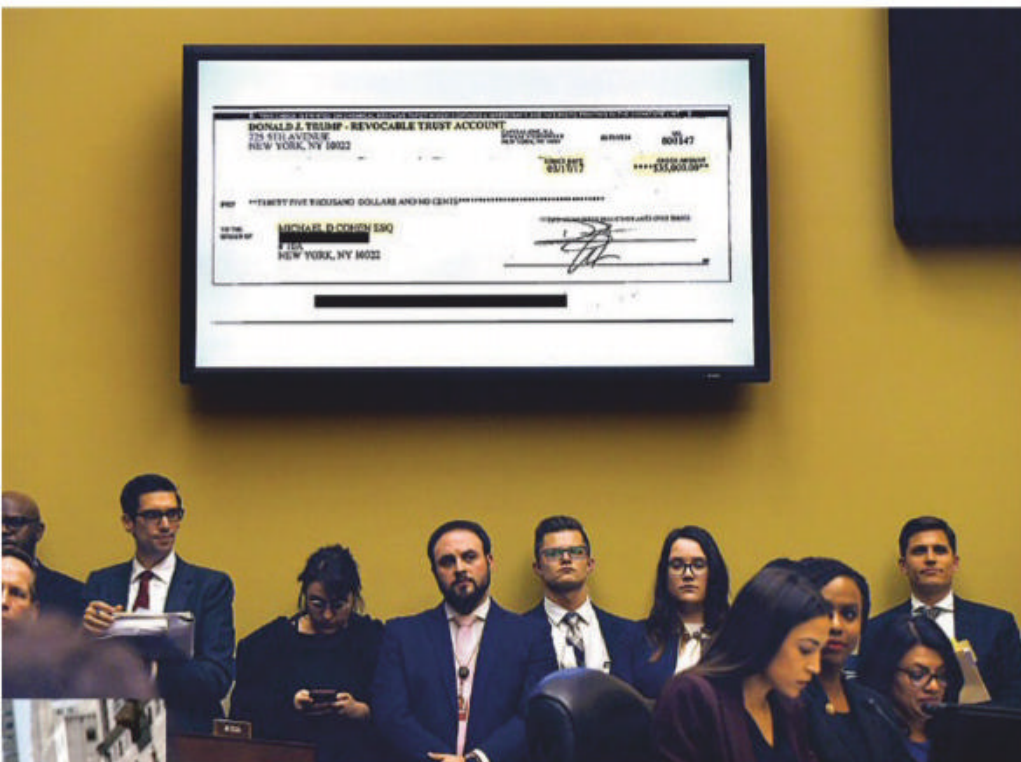
The task of finding that challenger has largely fallen to Kristol, the neoconservative political analyst who helped recruit Sarah Palin to revive McCain’s flagging presidential bid in 2008. He too has objections to Trump’s policies—the president’s isolationist strain and his disdain for traditional American alliances in particular—but his opposition seems more visceral. He considers Trump a “boorish clown” and believes his alleged sexual dalliances with a porn star and a pinup model are beyond the pale.

Kristol and his deputy at the Defending Democracy Together



FROM TOP: BONNIE JO MOUNT/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY; MATT MCCLAIN/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY; STEPHANIE KEITH/GETTY; GEORGE FREY/GETTY





**DISLOYAL OPPOSITION** From top to bottom: Maryland Governor Hogan, who has flirted with a primary challenge; an exhibit of a check is seen as Michael Cohen, Trump's former attorney, testifies before Congress on February 27; Trump supporters near New York's Trump Tower on March 23; Weld, a former GOP governor of Massachusetts, is leaning toward challenging the president in 2020.



interest in January, when, as a new senator from Utah, he penned an op-ed in *The Washington Post* trashing Trump. “With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable,” he wrote, adding, “I will speak out against significant statements or actions that are divisive, racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, dishonest or destructive to democratic institutions.”

Romney tells *Newsweek* he’ll praise Trump when it’s warranted—“and on the economy and on judges, he’s done well”—but criticize him when he fails to live up to the office’s stature. “It may be an old-fashioned notion, but the president is a role model for some people, even in 2019, and I think [Trump] has to keep that in mind.” Did that mean he was considering a primary challenge next year? “I’m here to be a senator from Utah,” Romney says.

WITH LITTLE MORE THAN POLITE TALK ABOUT “QUALITIES OF character,” Trump’s camp should be breathing easy, right? Not exactly. When Weld announced an exploratory committee in February, the president’s political high command wasted no time trashing him. Corey Lewandowski, who helped run the Trump campaign in 2016, called him “a pathetic opportunist” who “just wants to stay relevant.” Steve Stepanek, a Trump ally who heads the New Hampshire GOP, said Weld “isn’t a Republican, and we don’t want him back.”

The reason for the vitriol against even an obscure former governor was simple: When an incumbent is challenged in his own party, it weakens his chances. Ronald Reagan ran against Gerald Ford in 1976; former Senator Edward Kennedy tried to unseat Jimmy Carter in 1980; and Pat Buchanan led a populist uprising against George H.W. Bush in 1992. All three presidents survived those challenges but lost their general elections. That’s why one senior Trump political adviser acknowledges, “Obviously, we don’t want any part of [a primary challenge]. We’d be much better off spending our time and money defining all these lunatic left-wingers running for the Democrats.”

What would a primary challenge look like? For starters, any candidate who goes for it has to assume he or she will lose, Murphy says. “If you’re liberated, you’re truly dangerous,” he notes. And the case against Trump? His presidency is one of “uncivil, loud incompetence.” He and others cite as examples the recent government shutdown; Trump’s “obsession,” as Wilson puts it, with the border wall; and his affinity for trade wars. Longwell, Kristol’s deputy at Defending Democracy Together, says, “I want there to be a viable, responsible Republican governing party,” and she bets a lot of other GOPers across the country agree with her.

It is difficult to overstate the contempt with which Trump’s campaign operatives, and most of his supporters, view this assessment. “It’s hard to know what planet these people are on,” says Lewandowski. Team Trump rejects every single aspect of the Dump Trump critique.

They start with a fundamental point: The people fantasizing about ousting Trump seem to be operating from the premise that a conventional Republican presidential campaign can be success-



ful: tax cuts, deregulation, smaller government, free trade and more legal immigration at home, American strength and leadership abroad. “That’s McCain in 2008, Romney in 2012. The last candidate to win as a standard Republican was George W. Bush, and that was a long time ago,” says a key Trump political operative. “These people seem to think that he’s this political accident and that once he’s gone the GOP can just go back to what it was and somehow actually win a presidential election.”

This source adds, “That is the very definition of insanity.”

Trump supporters argue that the politics of three issues in particular—trade, immigration and America’s role in the world—have been irrevocably changed by his election. They believe the surest way for the GOP to lose the three key states that gave Trump the presidency in 2016—Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin—is to run a “free trade is great” campaign. In the battleground Midwest, “no one believes that,” says Lewandowski, “and you can sure as hell bet the slouching toward socialism Democrats are not going to run to the right of Trump on trade next year.”

Trump’s advisers insist that a hard line on immigration keeps his base solidified. And even though a dozen Republican senators revolted and voted against emergency funding for the border wall in March, Trump’s political advisers believe the issue has quiet resonance outside Washington, among Americans who don’t “sit around and get lectured about how they’re racists on CNN and MSNBC every night,” as one White House aide puts it. In this calculus, the GOP might attract moderate suburban women in northern Virginia or Main Line Philadelphia by toning down the rhetoric about illegal immigrants, but they’ll say goodbye to Mahoning County, Ohio, or Macomb County, Michigan.

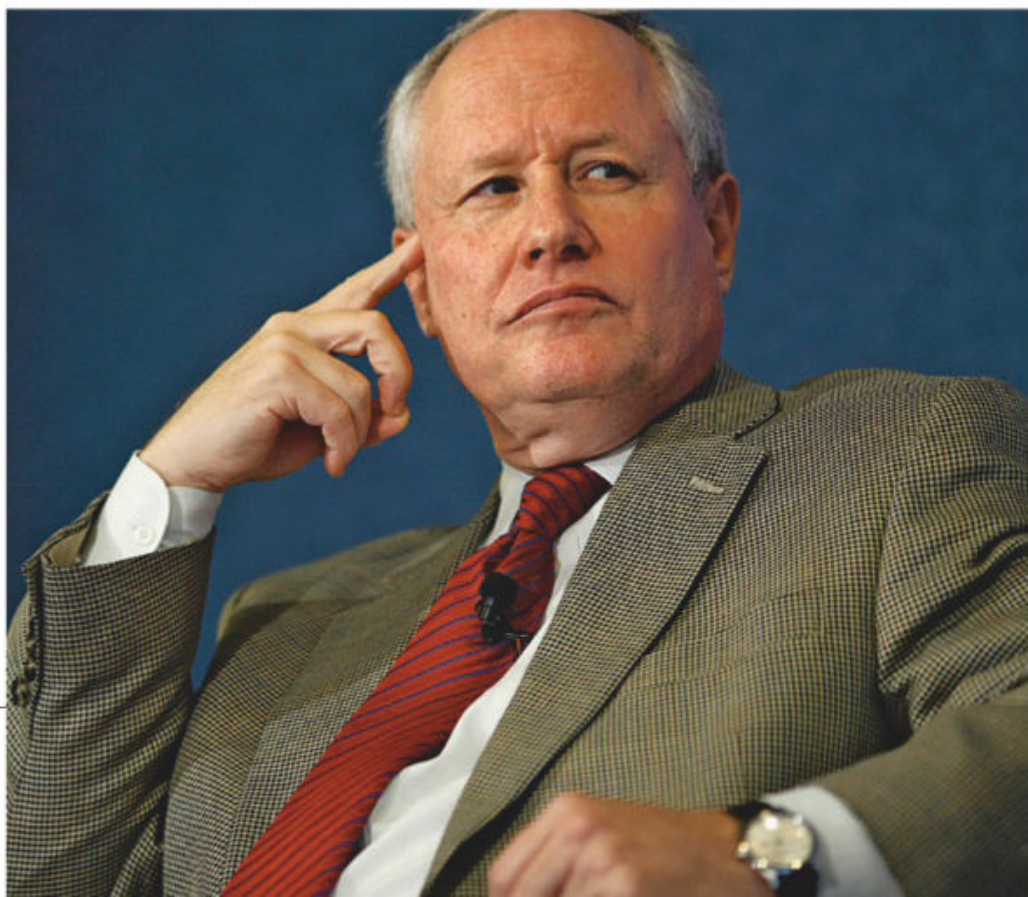
On key foreign policy issues, where many mainstream Republicans in Congress are uneasy with Trump’s desire to pull U.S. troops out of Syria and Afghanistan, his political advisers say all the president has done is ask common sense questions: What are we doing in Syria if ISIS is gone? Why, after 18 years, are we still in Afghanistan? And shouldn’t our NATO allies pay at least a little more toward their defense? Is that really so outrageous to ask? “The fact that the foreign policy establishment, both Democrats and Republicans, gets so upset when Trump talks about this stuff is simply a reflection of how ossified they are,” says a Trump adviser.

Moreover, the president’s backers point to the numbers. Sure, some Republicans say they’d like to see someone challenge Trump, but the most recent poll by The New Hampshire Journal, taken in the midst of the government shutdown, showed that 80 percent of GOP respondents approved of Trump’s performance in office. Only 10 percent disapproved. In Iowa, the numbers are similar. And now, Team Trump argues, the end of the Mueller “witch hunt,” as Trump repeatedly called it, “will boost our numbers everywhere,” says Lewandowski. “Bank on it.”

Trump’s supporters like the fact that on taxes, gun rights and

#### HEALTH SCARE

A day after the Mueller report news, the Trump administration announced a move to invalidate Obamacare. From top to bottom: Representative Bobby Scott, flanked by Democratic leaders, talks about health care legislation on March 26; a steel barrier runs along the border near Calexico, California; Kristol.







## POLITICS

a fair number of Republicans in Congress, some of whom counseled him to use the post-Mueller moment to move on and push big-ticket items on his policy agenda, as other scandal-plagued presidents have done. But so far, Trump has given them little indication that he would change his bombastic ways.

“There are a lot of people out there that have done some very, very evil things, some bad things, I would say some treasonous things against our country,” the president told reporters during an Oval Office meeting a day after the Mueller report reveal. “And hopefully people that have done such harm to our country—we’ve gone through a period of really bad things happening—those people will certainly be looked at.”

Later, he redoubled his attacks on the media as the “Enemy of the People” as his press secretary tweeted out a *New York Post* graphic dubbed “Mueller Madness,” a basketball-style bracket of “angry and hysterical” Trump “haters,” including Kristol.

Those who know Trump best say to expect more of the same. “If you think Donald Trump will just let this whole thing go without

# Even post-Mueller, Murphy believes Trump is “**POLITICAL ANTHRAX**” that would wipe out Republicans in 2020.

the judiciary, he has governed very much as a conservative, “one of the most conservative presidents in a generation,” argues New Hampshire GOP campaign consultant Greg Mueller. The economy is strong, the stock market’s up, “what’s not to like?” GOPers in New Hampshire are willing to set aside the “stylistic and character critique of the president and support him again. They like him.”

Some conservative operatives and analysts believe the Dump Trumpers are making a big strategic mistake in even thinking about trying to run a conventional, Romney-like candidate. Conservative columnist Philip Klein wrote recently what a lot of conventional Republicans in the House and Senate worry about: “If somebody runs...on a traditional free market and free trade platform and gets slaughtered by Trump, it only bolsters the strength of the populist movement within the party and makes the traditional conservatives look even more irrelevant.” Further, he notes, a primary challenge that weakens Trump and ends up in his defeat in the general election will only further inflame distrust among the grass roots toward elites. “I’m not sure we want to go down that road,” says one GOP congressman.

SO WILL A CHALLENGE EVER MATERIALIZE? MUCH DEPENDS on Trump. His seat-of-the-pants governing style still nauseates

capitalizing on it politically, then you don’t know Donald Trump very well,” former campaign and White House adviser Steve Bannon tells *Newsweek*. Says another longtime friend, “Donald Trump fights back, and he goes after his enemies. Always has, always will.”

But even as pundits began debating the dark overtones of political retribution and the risk of overreach, Trump shocked the system again. His Justice Department backed an appeal to entirely invalidate Obamacare in a federal district court in New Orleans. Surprising both parties, Trump then declared, “The Republican Party will soon become the party of health care.”

The Democratic leadership, which used health care as an issue to great effect in the 2018 midterms, immediately pounced. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi introduced legislation that would enhance the Affordable Care Act, and several Democratic presidential candidates denounced the administration’s court filing. “We will not let the Trump administration rip health care away from millions of Americans,” Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren tweeted. “Not now. Not ever.”

This seemed to be the kind of unforced political error that the Never Trumpers say defines Trump’s presidency and will doom the GOP’s chances in 2020. If that turns out to be the case, they will at least be able to say this: We warned you. **N**

FROM TOP: TASOS KATOPODIS/GETTY; SCOTT OLSON/GETTY; CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY



## FINAL DAYS

In late March, the Syrian Democratic Forces declared the “100 percent territorial defeat” of the Islamic State group. From left: Destroyed vehicles in the final ISIS encampment on March 24 in Baghouz; a boy stands amid demolished buildings on February 16 in Hajin.

# AFTER

CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY (2)





**The Kurds** LED THE FIGHT AGAINST ISIS IN SYRIA. NOW, AS AMERICA CONSIDERS ITS WITHDRAWAL, THESE U.S. ALLIES FACE AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT FROM THEIR NEIGHBORS

*by* Kenneth R. Rosen

# ISIS





**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?**

Female fighters from the SDF attend a demonstration in support of an imprisoned Kurdish militant leader on February 15 in the city of Qamishli. Opposite: Trump shows a map of the last patch of ISIS-controlled territory as he departs the White House on March 20.



IT WAS EARLY FEBRUARY, AND THE MAIN thoroughfare through Hajin was a mess of concrete and rebar. Structures were toppled, and children played in the wreckage, surrounded by unexploded artillery shells poking from the earth like daisies.

The small town in the Euphrates River Valley in southeastern Syria had long been a Kurdish outpost and, until recently, a battlefield amid the death rattle of the Islamic State militant group. American and French munitions and warplanes, backing Kurdish-led militias, repeatedly blasted ISIS forces here, reducing the extremists' self-declared caliphate to a tiny sliver of territory—and then to nothing.

But as Kurdish civilians began returning from displaced-persons camps, there was a deep sense among locals that victory was far from assured and peace far from secure. ISIS was not so much falling as transforming. Instead of an occupying army, it was becoming a stateless insurgency, directing suicide bombings, setting up roadside bombs and installing random checkpoints to trap unsuspecting civilians into pledging continued allegiance.

More concerning for the Kurds, though, was another development: the U.S. exit from Syria. Having declared ISIS defeated, President Donald Trump announced in December plans to withdraw the roughly 2,000 American troops that, for the past four years, had trained, armed and supported the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces. The partnership not only fostered military victory but also lent unprecedented political clout to the Kurds, a historically marginalized minority. The SDF came to control about a quarter of Syria's territory amid the country's bloody civil war, with oversight of valuable farming and energy resources.

Kurdish leaders had hoped that this elevated status—and the U.S. alliance—would lead to a new model of self-governance, if not total autonomy, for their people in Syria. But now, with the impending U.S. withdrawal, those dreams are quickly dwindling.

The Kurds face existential threats from all sides. Turkey views the Kurds—and the SDF-affiliated militia known as the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG)—as terrorists, and it backed a two-month offensive in the city of Afrin to prevent the Kurds from

gaining a foothold in northwestern Syria, near the Turkish border. Meanwhile, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is also determined to shrink the group's territory, eager to retake lands that the Kurds adopted as they swept ISIS from city after city. For the most part, the presence of American troops has served as a deterrent.

Now, the Kurds see a simple equation: Either the Americans stay and stabilize the region, or they leave and put the Kurds in their neighbors' crosshairs. "There is no third option," says my driver Osama, who asked me not to use his last name for fear of retribution. "The war in Syria is like the Third World War."

POLITICAL CONFUSION IS NOT NEW TO THE KURDS. THE OTTOMAN Empire largely ignored them until oil was discovered in what is today northern Iraq, due east of Syria's Rojava region. After World War I, Britain took over, and its feckless divisions of land left out the Kurds—a legacy that still haunts the region.

Tension has been most pronounced in Turkey, where, since the 1980s, the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has waged an insurgency for autonomy. Like Turkey, both the U.S. and the European Union have long designated the PKK a terrorist organization.

But as the Arab Spring arose and Syria descended into civil

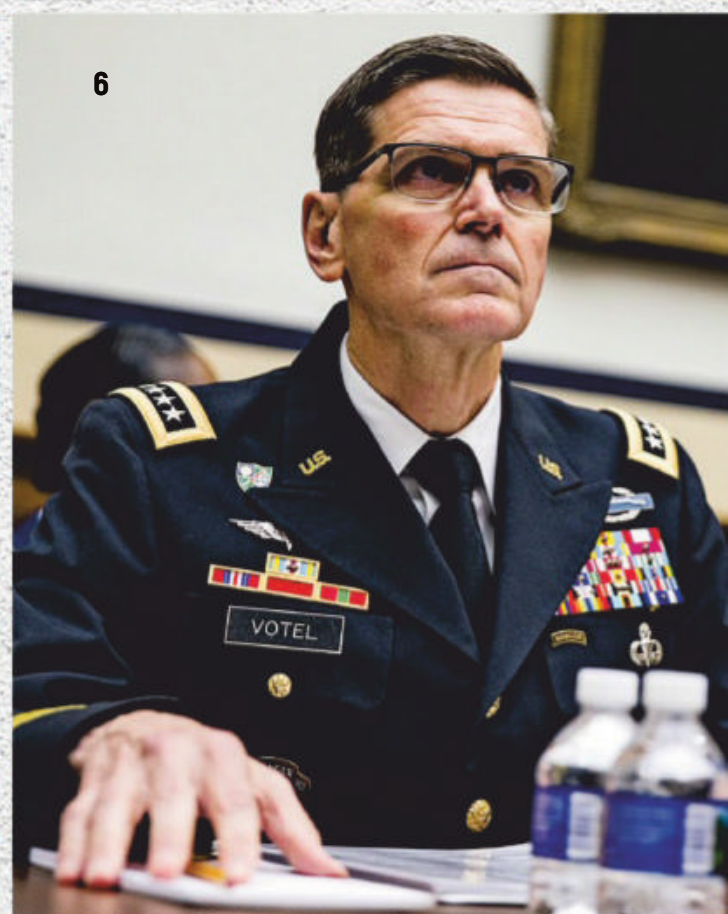
**“IF THE UNITED STATES  
WERE TO DISAPPEAR  
TOMORROW, *JUST POOF*,  
THE SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC  
FORCES WOULD COLLAPSE.”**





### THE COST OF WAR

- [1] People carry a coffin during a funeral in southeastern Turkey after a suicide bomber linked to ISIS attacked a wedding in 2016, killing 50 guests.
- [2] SDF fighters pose for a photo with the American flag onstage after a ceremony announcing the defeat of ISIS in Baghouz. [3] Mattis, who resigned after Trump's announcement of a troop withdrawal in Syria.
- [4] An SDF member holds up the militia's flag at the iconic Al-Naim square in Raqa in 2017. [5] A supporter of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan holds the Kurdish national flag atop one of the bronze lion sculptures in London's Trafalgar Square. [6] Votel, who told U.S. lawmakers ISIS largely "remains unrepentant, unbroken and radicalized."
- [7] A woman is arrested by Turkish anti-riot police during a demonstration to protest a Turkish operation aimed at ousting the Kurdish People's Protection Units from Syria. [8] Women and children evacuated from the final ISIS holdout of Baghouz. [9] An SDF fighter stands guard as people line up at a scanning area for ISIS evacuees. [10] Seized ISIS weapons found in Baghouz.
- [11] Syrian demonstrators in the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli hold a portrait of Assad in December 2018, asking for the Syrian army's protection from Turkey. [12] U.S. soldiers carry the remains of Scott Wirtz, one of four Americans killed by an ISIS suicide bomber in January.











PREVIOUS SPREAD: 1: AHMED DEEB/GETTY; 2, 10: CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY; 3: JONATHAN ERNST/GETTY; 4: BUI-ENT KILIC/GETTY; 5: SION TOUHI/GETTY; 6: SAMUEL CORUM/GETTY; 7: OZAN KOSE/GETTY; 8, 9, 11: DELIL SOULEIMAN/GETTY; 12: MARK WILSON/GETTY





THIS SPREAD, FROM LEFT: BULENT KILIC/AFP/GETTY; BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY

war, allegiances began to blur. All sides soon found a common enemy in ISIS, which capitalized on the unrest and seized large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria, creating a rogue state the size of Britain. The YPG led the fight against ISIS in the region, and, in 2014, the U.S. approved plans to arm it and support its military campaign with airstrikes. Troops followed, mostly in advisory roles.

The U.S. presence in Syria, however, has always been shadowy, so much so that soldiers do not wear patches to denote their military company insignia. (Their commanders denied requests for interviews.) The military is not there by U.N. mandate, and Congress never authorized occupation. Despite this, the U.S. built bases in the Kurdish north.

For the U.S., staying could be as bad as withdrawing. Not only are troops' lives on the line but the commitment could mean spending billions of dollars more on a conflict with no foreseeable end. It also runs the risk of a devolving situation, like Afghanistan, where U.S. troops have advised a nearly 20-year peacekeeping mission that only recently has seen movement toward promising peace talks. Moreover, an U.S. military presence in a country that does not sponsor it is a foreign policy more akin to colonization.

All of this has driven Trump's desire to, as he put it, "get out." The president's sudden announcement in December of plans for an immediate withdrawal shocked the Kurds, as well as his own administration; Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis resigned, as did the special presidential envoy to the international coalition fighting ISIS. The international backlash prompted Trump to reverse course, and in February he offered a compromise: a "peacekeeping" force of 400 troops—half to counter Iran, which supported Assad in the civil war, and half to back the Kurds in a "safe zone" on the Turkish-Syrian border.

Some experts see a continued U.S. presence as key, both for the Kurdish-led coalition forces, which have grown to an estimated 60,000 with American funding, and for a U.S. counterterrorism strategy.

---

**LAST THROES** Veiled women and wounded men on crutches fled the last jihadi village in eastern Syria on March 6 after U.S.-backed forces pummeled the besieged enclave. Above: Dunford.

---



**“WHEN THEY SAY THAT THE AMERICANS WILL LEAVE, I, FRANKLY, GOT VERY SAD. I TELL MY COUSINS THAT WE WILL SEE WHAT HAPPENS.”**

In 2018, Turkish forces invaded Kurdish territory in northwestern Syria. When the SDF moved to fight them, ISIS staged a comeback. Even with U.S. air support, the militia was spread too thin.

“If the United States were to disappear tomorrow, just *poof*, the Syrian Democratic Forces coalition would collapse,” says Max Markusen, associate director of the Transnational Threats Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, in Washington, D.C. “Turkey would invade. That’s the first thing that would happen.”

Then there’s the threat of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an Al-Qaeda affiliate that has grown to hold 5 percent of northwestern Syria, opposite the Kurds’ territory. These small pockets of insurgents—similar to those in Afghanistan, as well as the ISIS affiliates in Africa and the Philippines—could be seeds for future conflict. Last fall, Jennifer Cafarella, a research director and Syria analyst at the nonprofit Institute for the Study of War, outlined the risk.

“The experience of the Syrian war will be as formative for Al-Qaeda as the Afghan jihad,” she said. “Syria is the next Afghanistan.”

FOR NOW, THE KURDS SEEM TO BE EXPLORING ALL OPTIONS. In December, Kurdish representatives turned to Assad in the hopes of forming an alliance, perhaps undermining and signaling the end of their fight for some sort of autonomy. They are also looking to Washington, which has sent conflicting signals in recent weeks.

In late March, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that U.S. military leaders were drafting plans to keep as many as 1,000 troops



# “WE WANT TO HAVE A QUIET LIFE WHERE NO SUICIDE BOMBERS KILL OUR CHILDREN.”

in Syria—the product of protracted talks and disagreement among American, European, Turkish and Kurdish leaders over how a Syrian “safe zone” would work. But in the hours after publication, General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared the report “factually inaccurate.”

“We continue to implement the president’s direction to draw down U.S. forces to a residual presence,” he said in a statement.

Among the people, sentiment toward the U.S. is mixed. Some, like Abdullah Salim, a 30-year-old farmer from Hajin, express bravado about the ability of Kurdish forces to protect him, regardless of American help. “If ISIS returns or if Turkish invaders come here, the tribes of the area will push them back,” he says. “And we will do the same if the Assad regime attacks us.”

But others describe a more tenuous existence, dependent on U.S. troops. Warshin Sheko, a 27-year-old appliance salesman in Manbij, fled Syria during the civil war and lived in Turkey for four years before returning home in February. His town sits at the crossroads of regime territory, to the south, and areas controlled by Turkey, to the west and north. It is also the gateway into the independent region of Rojava, where the majority of Kurds live.

“Our cousins were calling us and telling us that the conditions were fine and stable, and they were saying no one would wrong us,” he tells me as he warms his hands over a gas stove in his shop. “But when they say that the Americans will leave, I, frankly, got very sad. I tell my cousins that we will see what happens. The situation is good now, as Americans are there, and that the area is stable, and that people have good jobs and are working.”

Khamis Mohammed, a 42-year-old shop owner in Manbij, also maintains that America must stay to protect the Kurds. “As a fact, as long as America is here,” he says, “Turkey cannot do anything.”

ISIS, however, can. As the final battles for land played out in March, U.S. military leaders warned that the group was simply changing form as it lost its last speck of territory in Syria.

“What we are seeing now is not the surrender of ISIS as an organization but, in fact, a calculated decision to preserve the safety of their families and preservation of their capabilities,” General Joseph Votel, the head of the U.S. Central Command, told lawmakers. “The ISIS population being evacuated from the remaining vestiges of the caliphate largely remains unrepentant, unbroken and radicalized.”

A few days before I visited Syria, four Americans—two U.S. soldiers, a Defense Department civilian and a contrac-

tor—were killed in a suicide attack outside a Manbij restaurant frequented by Westerners. As many as 16 additional civilians died in the January 16 attack, which members of ISIS claimed, although the group had not been a presence in the city for more than four years.

Within a week, the restaurant was cleaned and open for business. Abu Omar, 30, watched the scene from a nearby storefront. “The bomb blast was a terrorist act, and it harmed the civilians and the environment more than it harmed the Americans, who are there to defend us and fight for us,” he says. “We want to have a decent life where humans can live with dignity, and we want to have a quiet life where no suicide bombers kill our children.” **N**

→ **Kenneth R. Rosen** won the Bayeux Calvados-Normandy Award for war correspondents and a Clarion Award, and he was a finalist for the Livingston Award for international reporting for his reporting from Iraq.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: AMER ALMOHIBANY/AFP/GETTY; DELIL SOULEIMAN/AFP/GETTY; FADEL SENNA/AFP/GETTY; BULENT KILIC/AFP/GETTY

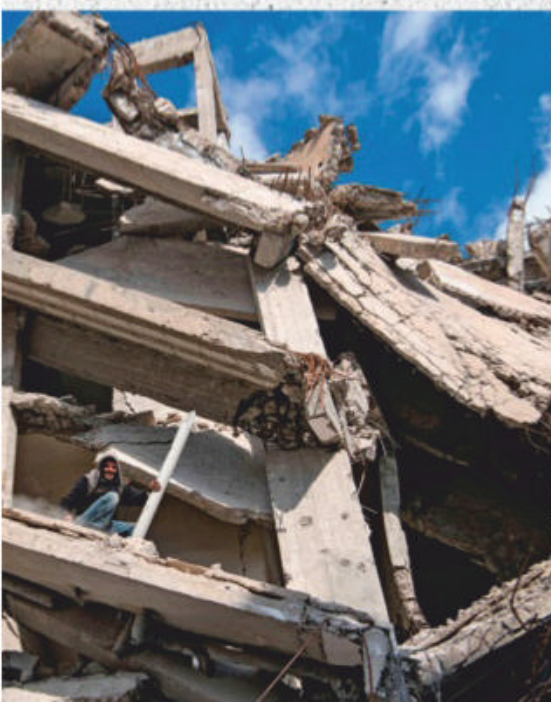


# The Long Road Ahead

AFTER EIGHT BLOODY YEARS, THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR IS COMING TO AN END. BUT **reconstruction** WON'T BE EASY

In late March, after a four-year, American-backed operation, coalition forces finally drove the Islamic State militant group from its final patch of territory in Syria.

The bigger challenge, however, will be ending the ongoing civil war and rebuilding Syria to bring home millions of refugees and internally displaced people. This means creating a state that can provide safety, security and opportunity that forestalls further rebellion and devastation.



It's a daunting task, unlikely to happen anytime soon. The nature of Syria's government and the likely shape of any war accords portend an empty peace, if not a frozen conflict, and years of further suffering, potentially fomenting further conflict in the region and providing a continued haven for terrorists.

The cost of the Syrian civil war has been immense. Almost half a million people have been killed, half the population has been displaced, and the cumulative loss to the gross domestic product from 2011 through the end of 2016 has been estimated by the World Bank to total \$226 billion. As yet, there have been no definitive estimates of the cost of reconstruction, although the Syrian government wishfully has mentioned \$400 billion.

But as long as Bashar al-Assad remains in power, nothing close to that will come into the country. Instead, reconstruction will be piecemeal. The government will likely use its revenues to support projects by cronies in favored areas. People throughout Syria may use remittances and any income they have to rebuild houses. Russia and Iran will restore selected assets—oil and gas infrastructure, for example—and engage in some rebuilding when they can get funding and

## DAMAGE CONTROL

The Syrian civil war has killed almost half a million people and displaced half the population. The Assad government estimates the reconstruction price tag at \$400 billion.

perhaps an ownership interest. But future sanctions may stall even these paltry efforts.

In the right circumstances, Syria would benefit from multilateral assistance, bilateral assistance and private-sector participation from the wealthy Western countries. Indeed, the Syrian and Russian governments have made clear that they would like the United States and the European Union to contribute substantial amounts.

However, the U.S., Germany and France have all explicitly said no or avoided saying yes. And the Americans and Europeans are so far committed to the unanimously approved United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, which calls for "credible, inclusive and nonsectarian governance... free and fair elections...to the highest international standards of transparency and accountability," none of which are likely under the Assad government.

Notably, without the U.S. and EU, there is likely to be no large-scale participation by the World Bank or other multilateral institutions. And neither Russia nor Iran have the resources to fund massive reconstruction.

With its Belt and Road efforts to connect the Eurasian landmass, Africa and other parts of the world, China would seem to be a candidate for providing reconstruction funding. But Beijing tends to be cautious with investment in war zones, and its funding comes largely in the form of loans for infrastructure construction projects, often carried out by Chinese companies, rather than grants or investment. (Information from Pakistan and Kenya, two sites of Chinese-funded activity, suggest that loan terms can be onerous.)

The Gulf states and other Arab countries are also limited. In August 2018, Saudi Arabia contributed \$100 million, but this was for stabilization to provide

basic services in northeast Syria rather than to help the country reconstruct and thrive. And Riyadh has its own budget difficulties, preferring to do business with friendlier, more stable countries.

So Syrians themselves will likely need to fund some level of their own reconstruction. Wealthy businesspeople are likely to invest in projects, perhaps with overt or unstated government participation, in government-controlled areas and likely involving land stolen from refugees and other displaced Syrians. And people receiving remittances from abroad will use them for personal reconstruction projects, such as rebuilding homes.

The real challenge will be whether the West will take further steps to block any activity in Syria if Assad stays in control. In January, the EU added 11 prominent businesspeople and five entities to its sanctions list on the grounds that they were building on land expropriated from displaced Syrians. And the U.S. Congress is likely to approve a rigorous Syria sanctions bill, a previous version of which gained the support of the White House.

As of publication, Syria is a frozen conflict in a divided land, with a Turkish protectorate in the northwest that was holding thousands of Al-Qaeda members, a U.S. protectorate in the northeast that included elements of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and a Syrian government area run by a dictator.

Bringing a stable peace to Syria requires reconstruction that knits the country together. With Assad in control, that seems unlikely. Instead, Syrians will see the kind of strict internal security measures that triggered revolts in the first place, providing fuel for more unrest—and a security challenge to the region for years to come. ■

→ **Howard J. Shatz** is a senior economist at the nonpartisan, nonprofit Rand Corp.



[illegible]





#### PARTY LIKE IT'S 1999

Raftery delves into the year's best and biggest films: *The Iron Giant*, *The Best Man*, *Cruel Intentions*, *Magnolia*, *The Sixth Sense*, *The Phantom Menace*, *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Election*, *American Beauty*, *The Virgin Suicides*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, *Run Lola Run*, *The Matrix*, *Fight Club*, *American Pie*, *Being John Malkovich*, *The Blair Witch Project* and *Office Space*.

TOP RIGHT: KIM SIMMS/IFC

#### MOVIES

# We Lost It at the Movies

Ultimate film fan Brian Raftery makes an entertaining case for Hollywood's best year ever—and why we're still living it

A FAVORITE FILM IS DEFINED BY TASTE AND emotion, the moment in your life when you see it and whether it lingers in your imagination. It is entirely personal. More tangible criteria define a great year in film: total box office, strides in ambition and innovation (whether it's storytelling, cinematography or special effects) and perceived cultural impact. In that regard, you'd have to include 1939, which yielded *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Stagecoach*, among many others. There's 1969 too, when Hollywood began to mirror the nation's deepening cynicism and mistrust of the status quo, as seen in the films *Midnight Cowboy*, *Easy Rider*, *The Wild Bunch* and *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*

But is there a greatest year? Brian Raftery makes a good case for one in *Best.Movie.Year.Ever.: How 1999 Blew Up the Big Screen* (Simon & Schuster, on sale April 16). The lifelong movie nerd was a young writer at *Entertainment Weekly* in 1999 (full disclosure: I was among

his editors) when a cover story made that proclamation. After leaving *EW*, Raftery went on to write about culture for *GQ* and *Wired*. He also continued to inhale films, and over the next two decades he came to believe there was something to that cover line. After interviewing over 130 people for his book (including David Fincher, Reese Witherspoon and Christopher Nolan), Raftery realized he wasn't alone in believing 1999 to be Hollywood's best ever.

That year saw an astonishing breadth of quality and variety, from indie insta-classics *Being John Malkovich* (Spike Jonze's directorial debut) and *The Blair Witch Project* to box-office bonanzas like *The Matrix* and *The Mummy*. (It also saw the industry-changing launches of Netflix's monthly DVD subscription and Apple's AirPort technology.)

*Best.Movie.Year.Ever.* is packed with behind-the-scenes anecdotes from creators, as well as Raftery's sharp, fair-minded and witty analysis—the culmination of over 30 years of an unwavering love for the big screen.

BY

MARY KAY SCHILLING



**Let's get right to the argument: Why 1999 as opposed to, say, 1939 or 1969?**

Those are extraordinary years! But 1999 felt like the culmination of everything that had come before, as well as a sneak preview of the future. Hollywood was in a strange place: Movies were still massive, but audiences were tiring of uninspired franchises, sequels and TV adaptations—like the infamously awful *Batman & Robin*. The big studios' momentum had also been eclipsed by the decade's indie-film boom. Even that movement was getting predictable, though. I worked in a video store in the '90s, and I can't tell you how many wannabe-cool, quirky dramas and lamestain Gen X comedies were pumped out then.

In 1999, you see executives, just as they did in 1939, start pouring tons of money and big stars into original, inventive, gotta-see-it-to-believe-it spectacles like the Wachowskis' *The Matrix*, David Fincher's *Fight Club* and even Stanley Kubrick's last film, *Eyes Wide Shut*. But they also turn to younger outsider voices—just like they did in 1969—which leads to David O. Russell's *Three Kings*, Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*, Spike Jonze's *Being John Malkovich* and Alexander Payne's *Election*.

Mostly, though, I think of 1999 as a very idea-driven year, with the movies digging deep into pressing cultural and social problems, some of which we were just beginning to reckon with—like the thrill and terror of technology and our struggle with our identities and bodies. Some of them left you feeling pulverized, like *Fight Club*, or anguished, like Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*. But they were all trying hard to connect with the viewer on a very personal level.

**Looking at the list of 1999 films, even the "lesser" offerings were satisfying and watchable, including *Girl, Interrupted* (with Angelina Jolie's Oscar-winning performance), *Bowfinger* and *Dick*. Julia Roberts had two big romantic comedies, *Notting Hill* and *Runaway Bride*. Someone out there is probably a *Big Daddy* fan.**

*Big Daddy* is huge! It's *still* Sandler's biggest non-animated film. I had to exclude or cut many worthy movies for lack of space, including the documentary *American Movie*, *The Straight Story*, *Dick*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, the *South Park* movie and *Deep Blue Sea*—one of the last great big-budget B movies. There just wasn't enough room to properly explore super-smart sharks chomping Samuel L. Jackson in half.

**You describe 1999 as a "culture rupture." Did that have something to do with it being the year before a new millennium?**

Some of these movies—like *Boys Don't Cry*, *The Matrix* or *Being John Malkovich*—had been in development since at least the mid-'90s, so not precisely. But I also don't think these movies arrived at the same time by accident. Even though the last few years of the '90s were prosperous, the internet and 24-hour news contributed to a sense that we were radically speeding up,

and that led to some anxious searching, like, "Wait, who the hell am I, exactly? What's my place in the modern world? Do I even have a place?" The "culture rupture" came about as a result, with concerns about how we live spilling into what we watched. It's why Cameron Diaz dives into John Malkovich's head, for example. The new millennium gave everyone an unconscious deadline for figuring their shit out.

**You use the chapters to delve into industry trends. Were you aware of them at the time, or were they revealed as you watched all the films again?**

I didn't fully put together just how many of 1999's movies were about white-collar dissatisfaction. It's not just *Office Space*—a breezy movie dealing with very real existential frustration; it's in *The Matrix*, *Fight Club*, *American Beauty*. Even *Malkovich* has this idea of escaping from the day-in, day-out drudgery of cubicle culture. That complaint might seem quaint in the era of WeWork and remote offices, but being overly defined or trapped by your job still resonates.

It's also striking how many of the movies deal with identity and the desire to literally be someone else. Obviously, that's in *Malkovich*, but it's also in *Boys Don't Cry*, Anthony Minghella's *Ripley* and smaller films like David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*. That's why I can't buy that it was a coincidence that these movies showed up at once. Some communal unease was circulating, even if we couldn't articulate or recognize it then.

**Puzzle box master Christopher Nolan brought his debut, *Following*, to Slamdance in 1999. And two other sanity-stretchers, as you call them, grabbed the glory at Sundance: Doug Liman's *Go* and**

**"It's striking how many of 1999's movies deal with identity and the desire to literally be someone else."**





**DISAPPEARING ACTS**  
Clockwise from left: Brad Pitt in *Fight Club*, the *Malkovich* poster and Hilary Swank in *Boys Don't Cry*, playing real-life trans man Brandon Teena, who was murdered in 1993. She won the Oscar for best actress.

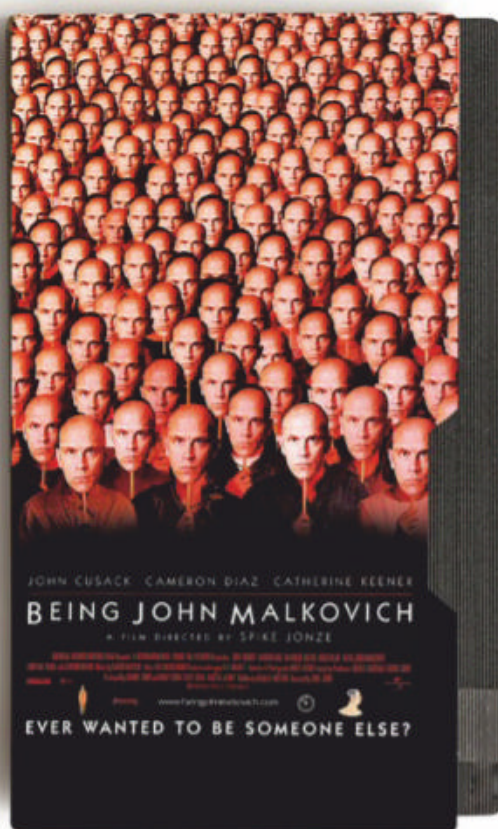


### Tom Tykwer's *Run Lola Run*. What made time-shifting so appealing?

I agree with Nolan's own theory that the advent of VHS, and later DVD, made viewers more comfortable with the idea of pausing and restructuring a story. But I also think the success of Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* [1994]—not the first movie to futz with chronology but the first to make \$100 million and earn a bunch of Oscar nods for doing so—gave filmmakers permission to screw around with narrative norms. And in the case of *Go*, *Following* and *Lola*, it helped that the directors weren't

simply breaking up the narrative for fun: All of that timeline shifting helped it sprint along, especially in *Lola*; the storyline doesn't merely fracture, it starts all over again. It really teased the possibility of reinvention at a time when the idea of new beginnings was on a lot of people's minds.

**Alan Ball's *American Beauty* won best picture that year, proving once again that the Oscars, at least in terms of legacy, are a crapshoot; *Beauty*, which also won original screenplay and best actor for Kevin Spacey, is widely considered one**



### of the worst choices now. But you make a smart case for why it's better than people might remember.

I wasn't a fan when it was released—and made that clear in very obnoxious ways at many a holiday party that year. Later on, there was a lot of sneering: "Oh, this is just a big-screen TV movie." But having rewatched it several times, I've come to believe that the things that worked against the movie then have a posthumous power: A movie about a skeezy middle-aged guy and his Nazi-next-door neighbor might have seemed a bit much in 1999, but it's almost too timely now.

### Speaking of timely, was there one film that, 20 years later, seems particularly prescient?

A few, actually. The not-so-soft misogyny that Tracy Flick [Reese Witherspoon] suffers in *Election* is something we're all more attuned to nowadays. *Malkovich* really gets at where we are with the internet: We can live vicariously through someone else, or even hijack their existence to a fairly terrifying and self-destructive degree. And the shits-and-giggles mayhem wrought by *Fight Club*'s space monkeys reminds me of the way online harassment works: destructive, points-scoring battles with no ideology behind them, other than to bring something down.

But none were as forward-looking as *The Matrix*. The idea of taking the red pill versus the blue pill—one of which dropkicks you into reality, the other one shielding you from it—is something we do every day: Do I click on this story that I know will make me scared or angry, or do I click on the picture that will distract me? And the movie's notion that our machines are slowly overtaking us and draining us of energy—I feel that right now.



### What other films did you come to appreciate?

It's more that the lens through which I viewed these films has changed. I loved *The Insider* when it came out, but I was mostly responding to it as a young movie nerd who wanted to watch Al Pacino and Russell Crowe butt heads. And also, probably, because it was a newsroom thriller—one of my favorite genres. Twenty years later, I appreciate the warnings it was raising about corporate malfeasance: It starts as a takedown of the tobacco industry and ends as a cautionary tale about the dilution of journalism by higher corporate powers. It was hard not to think of that while watching HBO's Theranos doc [*The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley*] and listening in as Elizabeth Holmes's lawyers tried, and failed, to intimidate a reporter.

The same applies to *The Sixth Sense*: In my 20s, it was a very cool mystery with good twists. As a parent, I realize how much of it is about the primal fear we have about our kids: that, no matter what we do, we can't protect them or even fully understand their concerns. So many of the movies of 1999 dealt with complex, existential concerns, and you grow along with them.

### Why a chapter on *The Mummy*?

**Yes, it made a lot of money, but is it groundbreaking or even good?**

It's actually a pretty fun movie, but I paired it with *Eyes Wide Shut* because they both help exemplify a key reason why the Hollywood of 1999 feels so distant now: This was the era of the superstar actors who guaranteed huge opening weekends; because of that, they were granted massive salaries and power. Nowadays, the franchises are the marquee names. I like the cast of the new *Star Wars* movies, but if *Episode IX* only starred Gilbert Gottfried

**BULLET TIME** “Machines overtaking us and draining us of energy—I feel that right now,” says Raftery, opposite page, of *The Matrix*, right, which starred Keanu Reeves and Hugo Weaving.

and a piece of toast, it would still clear \$250 million in its first weekend.

In 1999, the big draws were stars like Mel Gibson, Harrison Ford and Tom Cruise, who was so valuable he could put all of Hollywood on hold for two years while he made *Eyes Wide Shut* with Kubrick. Or someone like Julia Roberts could make two \$100 million-grossing movies in one summer. Studios were worried about actors getting too powerful, not to mention expensive. The focus became finding younger, more affordable talent. That's how you get Brendan Fraser, who had gone back and forth between indies and studio films in the '90s, being handed a massive summer blockbuster like *The Mummy*.

### Twenty years later, how has the business of movies changed the most dramatically?

There's no middle anymore. It feels like you have to make a film for either \$1.5 million or \$150 million. That's a simplification, of course, but the kind of system that could sustain \$20 million to \$70 million movies like *Three Kings* or *Election* hardly exists anymore. With so many viewing options available, and no more DVD market to help offset losses, the major studios need recognizable franchises and reboots—the movies people will go to on opening weekend, both here and overseas, and especially in the now huge market of China.

A few years ago, this was starting to get me down; it felt like the films that steer the cultural conversation were disappearing. But Jordan Peele's *Get Out*, Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird* [both

2017], or deeply personal smaller movies like Paul Schrader's *First Reformed* [2018], prove there's still room for singular artists. And when franchise-moviemaking yields something like *Black Panther*, *Mad Max: Fury Road* or the last few *Mission: Impossible* films, it's deeply satisfying. I just miss the days when a filmmaker could get tens of millions of dollars for a completely new idea.

### Are there 1999 films that wouldn't or couldn't get made today?

Nearly all of the major movies would have trouble getting that kind of funding. When Fincher was originally talking to Twentieth Century Fox about *Fight Club*, he said there were two ways of doing it: the super-cheap “anarchist cookbook”-style version and the sleeker, big-star style, which is the one he wound up going with. Were *Fight Club* being adapted for the screen in 2019, it would be that scaled-down version. Maybe indie studios like Blumhouse would make it, or A24, or maybe no one studio would touch it at all, given the subject matter.







Or they would be made but not as movies. I could see *Boys Don't Cry* as a limited FX series; or *Election*—a really detail- and character-packed novel—as an HBO miniseries; or *The Blair Witch Project* as some sort of found-audio podcast experiment. People still crave these kinds of stories, they're just not always seeking them out in theaters anymore.

Right, so 1999 was significant for another reason: It saw the beginning of the creative shift to TV, with the debut of David Chase's *The Sopranos* on HBO. Turned out being able to say *fuck* on cable—among other things—would produce a golden age of the small screen. And that's evolved into an even smaller screen, and the *only* screen, of a new generation. I just binged Natasha Lyonne's Netflix series *Russian Doll*; it offers a radical pleasure similar to the films of 1999. Does it matter that it's not a movie? I don't think it matters at all to younger viewers—many of whom, as you note, simply categorize everything that comes to them via a screen as the same

species of content and don't have any TV-versus-movie hang-ups. I am crazy about television, and 20 years later it has definitely replaced movies as the higher power of popular culture. That said, I don't think any medium can be quite as immediate and impactful as

**“None were as forward-looking as *The Matrix*. The idea of taking the red pill versus the blue pill is something we now do every day.”**



film. A lot of the 2018 movies that knocked me out—*First Reformed*, *Eighth Grade*, *Minding the Gap*, *Burning*, *Shoplifters*—stayed with me for weeks, if not months. So as much as I fall into long relationships with TV shows I love, there's nothing like disappearing into a movie for two hours and never fully re-emerging.

#### **What would be your pick for best picture of 1999?**

I love *Malkovich, American Movie* and, even though it sends up a lot of red flags for some people—and not without reason—*Fight Club*, which was equal parts scarring and hilarious, a rare thing. But I vote for *Election*. I could give you a million specific reasons, from the script to the performances, but it's simply because it feels perfectly executed, in every way possible. And for what it's worth, a lot of the people I interviewed, including David Fincher and Sofia Coppola, put it at the top of their list, or very near it.

#### **Desert island question: What five films from 1999 could you rewatch forever?**

These aren't necessarily my top five, but for pure replayability: the *South Park* movie, because it's so catchy; *Election*, because it always feels like it was made yesterday; *Malkovich*, because it makes me laugh; *Three Kings*, because I find it so exciting—and because it's also stuck in a desert; and, I kid you not, the reviled-at-the-time *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*. I will be debating and rethinking that movie for the rest of my life—even if I'm all by myself.

#### **And you know I'm going to ask: What's your worst movie of 1999?**

To quote Dru Hill: I'm going straight to *Wild Wild West*. 



## PARTING SHOT

# Hank Azaria

**➤** *BROCKMIRE*, IFC'S ROUGH-AND-FUNNY COMEDY, STARTED AS A VIRAL SHORT video on the Funny or Die website. Hank Azaria—known for films like *The Birdcage*, the TV series *Huff* and voicing multiple characters on *The Simpsons*—plays a sportscaster, once baseball's youngest play-by-play man, who was fired after a foulmouthed on-air meltdown over his wife's infidelities. The first season of the series followed Jim Brockmire in drunken disgrace as he calls games in a small town, sparring and boozing with Jules (Amanda Peet), the equally damaged owner of the local team. Season 2 went darker; Jim has split with Jules and moved to New Orleans, where his in-the-bag, postgame tirades are making him famous again. After some seriously self-destructive behavior, he ends the season sober. With Season 3, the show's creator, Joel Church-Cooper, has hit the reset button, and Jules is back. Will Jules and Jim get back together? "I won't spoil it for viewers, but they certainly keep trying," Azaria tells *Newsweek*. "Having read Season 4 scripts, I *can* say it will be very Amanda Pete-heavy."

## Is it harder to be funny when Brockmire is sober?

It certainly makes me more of a straight man—the comedy comes out of his agitation and impatience. I miss playing insanely drunk and wasted, but it was also fun to do Brockmire's slow burn of attempting to round out as a human being.

## Season 3 is set in central Florida?

Right, in Orlando. Joel uses my character to relentlessly tee off on things that he does not like, and one of them seems to be central Florida. Brockmire doesn't care for it.

## What's it like to be part of something as embedded in American culture as *The Simpsons*?

One of the writers said it well: The show has been poking fun at our institutions for over 30 years. Now it's become an institution, like the government or the postal service or the highway system. It's a little weird.

## What are your memories of working with Robin Williams on *The Birdcage*?

It's easy to hyperbolize when you're eulogizing someone, but, honestly, he was the sweetest, gentlest movie star I've ever met. And so hilarious. We would be shooting in the Paramount parking lot, and tourists would come by, and every movie star would run the other way—he would go and perform for them. That was so Robin. —Maria Vultaggio

The comedy now comes out of Brockmire's agitation. I miss playing **drunk and wasted.**





# HOME & HERD

Providing sanctuary for more  
than 20 years



**LEARN MORE** at [www.elephants.com](http://www.elephants.com)