

TIME

THE FORGOTTEN CRISIS

Photographs by
MOISES SAMAN

Hawa Al Muhajer, 27, lost her leg during Sudan's civil war, which has claimed some 150,000 lives and forced almost a quarter of its population of 50 million to flee their homes



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Photograph by Moises Saman for TIME

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From activism to entertainment, these 12 people are leaving their mark on their industries, the U.S., and the world

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Kid of the Year

Tejasvi Manoj, 17, saw a problem, and found a way to make the world safer for seniors

By Jeffrey Kluger



The future of health care

TIME hosted the second TIME100 Health Leadership Forum on Sept. 9 in NYC, featuring panels on burnout, primary care, and improving access to women's health. Above, from left, actor Selma Blair, who has multiple sclerosis, discussed the skyrocketing costs of care for patients with chronic illnesses with Blood Cancer United CEO Dr. E. Anders Kolb and Amazon One Medical chief medical officer Dr. Andrew Diamond, whose organizations were sponsors of the event, and TIME senior correspondent Alice Park. At right, TIME CEO Jessica Sibley is flanked by Kalahn Taylor-Clark and Cristal Downing, right, both of sponsor Merck. More about the event at time.com/health-forum



On the covers



Video still via StringerHub/AP



Photograph by Zerb Mellish for TIME



Photograph by Moises Saman—Magnum Photos for TIME



Photograph by Hong Jang Hyun for TIME

Reel talk

TIME has rounded up the most anticipated movies of the fall. Hugh Bonneville leads the household one last time in *Downton Abbey: The Grand Finale*. Stephen King fans can look forward to adaptations of both *The Long Walk* and *The Running Man*. Director Richard Linklater also has two films, *Blue Moon* and *Nouvelle Vague*. And Noah Baumbach and Emily Mortimer have written *Jay Kelly*, about the friendship between an actor, played by George Clooney, and his manager (Adam Sandler). See the full list at time.com/movies-2025



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The Brief



AMERICAN CRISIS

BY ERIC CORTELLESA

The killing of Charlie Kirk and the political violence that haunts the nation

INSIDE

THE IMPACT OF WILDFIRES
ON AIR QUALITY

HOW GIORGIO ARMANI CHANGED
THE COURSE OF FASHION

THE 2025 LIST OF THE WORLD'S
BEST COMPANIES

PHOTOGRAPH BY TESS CROWLEY

CHARLIE KIRK WAS DOING WHAT HE SO OFTEN did—working a college crowd, prodding and provoking students in debate. The 31-year-old founder of Turning Point USA was at Utah Valley University near Salt Lake City on Sept. 10, surrounded by thousands of students gathered in an outdoor courtyard. It was the first stop of Kirk’s fall campus tour, and he was seated beneath a tent emblazoned with the words **THE AMERICAN COMEBACK**. Kirk became a star in these settings. Since founding his right-wing advocacy organization at 18, he proved peerless at channeling youthful discontent into political energy, shaping a movement with national reach.

As Kirk fielded questions from the audience, a shot rang out, striking him in the neck. Panicked students scattered. Kirk was rushed to the hospital. Grisly footage of the shooting rocketed across social media. Inside the West Wing, staff sat in shocked silence, scrolling their screens to see the latest updates. At 4:40 p.m., Donald Trump announced Kirk’s death on Truth Social. “No one,” the President wrote, “understood or had the Heart of the Youth in the United States of America better than Charlie.” He leaves behind a wife and two young children.

In recent years, the prospect of a political assassination like this, carried out before a stunned crowd in broad daylight, has hung over a nation riven by factional fury. Elected officials whispered about it in green rooms and on campaign buses. When the moment arrived, it unfolded with chilling precision: a campus stage, a microphone, a single gunshot. Where it will lead now is an ominous question with no obvious answers.

Kirk was one of the most powerful and incendiary figures on the American right, the tireless tribune of Trump’s young army. To admirers, he was a defender of free expression in hostile territory; to critics, a provocateur who thrived on the rancor of the age. The size and fervor of his audiences spoke to his place in the conservative firmament. “The most influential voice of my generation,” as Trump adviser and family friend Alex Bruesewitz puts it.

America is a nation shaped by political violence and steeped in its aftershocks. The 1960s were scarred by political assassinations, from Kennedy to King. But in recent years, acts of brazen violence have been the grim drumbeat of a debased national politics. In 2021, the year Trump supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol, there were more than 9,600 recorded threats against members of Congress, according to the Capitol Police. The following year saw a hammer-wielding assailant attack Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s husband Paul in their San Francisco home and the attempted stabbing of New York gubernatorial candidate Lee Zeldin at a campaign rally. In 2024, Trump himself faced two attempts on his life, including the history-bending afternoon in Butler, Pa., when he turned his head at the instant an assassin fired, the bullet grazing his ear instead of piercing his skull.

This year the threat grew more insistent. The residence of Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, was set on fire by an arsonist; a gunman shot two Democratic Minnesota legislators and their spouses; two Israeli



^
Moments after the gunshot on the campus of Utah Valley University on Sept. 10

embassy staffers were shot and killed outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C.; a man shouting “Free Palestine” tossed Molotov cocktails at a pro-Israeli demonstration in Boulder, Colo.; and a gunman who allegedly held antivaccine views opened fire at CDC headquarters in Atlanta.

“I think the evidence is clear that we’re at a dangerous point of potential escalation,” says Shannon Hiller, executive director of Princeton University’s Bridging Divides Initiative, which tracks political violence in the U.S. She argues that a range of forces—the widespread use of dehumanizing rhetoric, the availability of firearms, the spread of disinformation, vanishing trust in institutions—have converged to create an intractable problem. “It’s the confluence of all of these things that we’re living in,” she says. “And it’s why it’s so hard to put a finger on a single solution to get us out of it.”

KIRK’S PATH to national prominence was unlike that of other MAGA icons. Born in a Chicago suburb, he gravitated toward conservative politics in a predominantly liberal enclave. At 17,



he volunteered for a Republican U.S. Senate campaign. He drew notice by writing an essay for the right-wing site Breitbart News, alleging his school textbooks were freighted with liberal bias. Kirk's zeal caught the attention of Bill Montgomery, a businessman and Tea Party activist, who urged him to forgo college and dedicate himself fully to political organizing.

With Montgomery's seed money, Kirk founded Turning Point USA. He had a knack for finding wealthy patrons drawn to his entrepreneurial panache. GOP megadonor Foster Friess was one of them, writing a check for \$10,000 to help get the fledgling organization off the ground. Republican strategist Michael Biundo was among many to observe how confident Kirk was from the jump. "He always loved the challenge of changing the hearts and minds of the youth. He saw them as the future, the turning point to move the needle of conservative policies and principles," Biundo says. "He took the battle right to the campuses with both his words and his debating style. His impact in this realm cannot be overstated."

What began as an effort to rally

Outside the Orem, Utah, hospital where Kirk was treated

'He took the battle right to the campuses.'

—MICHAEL BIUNDO, GOP STRATEGIST

college students against liberal orthodoxy morphed into something bigger. Kirk made headlines with his "Professor Watchlist," which targeted academics accused of suppressing conservative speech or promoting left-wing propaganda. He reveled in provocations that delighted the right and incensed the left. Kirk argued some gun-violence deaths were a reasonable price to pay for preserving the Second Amendment, called for a "patriot" to bail out Paul Pelosi's attacker, helped to spread baseless rumors that Haitian migrants in Ohio were eating people's pets, and once called the Civil Rights Act a "huge mistake." The list of people he offended—often intentionally—was as long as his roster of supporters.

Over time, Turning Point grew into a well-funded, multipronged organization: a media outlet, a voter-turnout machine, and a hub for student chapters on thousands of high school and college campuses. "They're all symbiotic," Kirk told me a few weeks ago. "They all feed one another."

Kirk was not initially a Trump backer. During the 2016 Republican presidential primary, he supported Scott Walker and Ted Cruz before endorsing Trump. During the thick of the campaign, an associate arranged a meeting with Donald Trump Jr., who hired Kirk on the spot. For the rest of the campaign, he worked as Trump Jr.'s assistant, a role that vaulted him deeper into Trump World and secured his place within its inner orbit.

After Trump's victory in 2016, Kirk returned his focus to Turning Point and quickly fashioned himself into one of the President's most zealous defenders. He shed the vestiges of Reaganite libertarianism and embraced the national-populist framework that undergirded Trump's

political project: restricting immigration, imposing tariffs, rejecting foreign entanglements. “It’s not a metamorphosis,” he once told me. “It’s a journey.” In 2019, Kirk launched Turning Point Action, a political group dedicated to defeating Democrats and boosting Trump-aligned Republicans. The COVID-19 pandemic propelled him to a new level of prominence. Kirk began recording multiple podcasts a day, railing against mask mandates and school closures. He became a fixture on Fox News, where his tirades caught Trump’s attention. One evening, Kirk delivered a phrase that crystallized conservative anger: “The cure cannot be worse than the disease.” Trump heard it, liked it, and began repeating it himself.

In the years that followed, Kirk became one of Trump’s most unshakable allies. He amplified Trump’s false claims that the 2020 election had been stolen and pressed the case for J.D. Vance as Trump’s running mate. By 2024, Turning Point was running the voter-mobilization drive in Arizona that the campaign relied upon, an effort that helped return the pivotal swing state to Trump’s column. By then Kirk had amassed millions of followers across social media, and *The Charlie Kirk Show* became one of the most popular political podcasts in the country. He was a one-man persuasion campaign on Trump’s behalf, helping the Republican notch a surprisingly strong performance with young voters last November.

After Trump’s return to the White House was assured, Kirk decamped to a donor’s condo in West Palm Beach to help manage the transition, vetting prospective appointees for loyalty. When Trump took the oath of office, Kirk stood only steps away.

THIS SUMMER, I joined Kirk in Phoenix, where we spent hours talking as he showed me around

Turning Point’s headquarters, a sprawling six-building complex, each devoted to another wing of the labyrinthine organization he had conjured from scratch. When I walked in, he was dressed in a T-shirt and sweatpants, padding around in his socks and anxiously checking the score of the Chicago Cubs game. He and his aides were deep in planning a fall speaking tour, anticipating ever larger crowds.

Kirk mused about writing a book on the core tenets of MAGA. But his focus, as ever, was on building a movement that could endure for years to come. He was thinking about who might carry Trump’s torch forward. “If J.D. wants to run, he has my full support,” Kirk told me. “I will do everything in my power to make him President. Row one, day one.”

For Kirk’s friends and allies, the assassination is shattering—both for the personal loss and for what they fear it portends. “Unfortunately, I don’t think it’s going to be the last, which is why it’s so scary,” says Representative Anna Paulina Luna of Florida, the first Turning Point alumna elected to Congress. Her words carried the tremor of recognition: in American life, acts of political violence have rarely been isolated. The murder of Martin Luther King Jr. fueled riots across the country; the shooting of Gabby Giffords deepened the atmosphere of paranoia and mistrust; the Jan. 6 attack, with its scenes of armed men roaming the Capitol, enraged the left and illustrated the extreme grievances gripping the right.

Kirk’s sudden, public death risks joining that chain. His killing could become not just a tragedy but a catalyst—an event that radicalizes ever more Americans, less an aberration than a feature of our increasingly perilous national politics. □

‘We’re at a dangerous point of potential escalation.’

—SHANNON HILLER,
BRIDGING DIVIDES
INITIATIVE

ESSAY

The right to live

BY GABBY GIFFORDS

I MOURN FOR CHARLIE KIRK’S family. I didn’t agree with almost anything he said, but he had a right to speak. Just as he had a right to go on a work trip and return safely to his wife and two young children at home in the state we share, Arizona.

Just as Melissa Hortman, former speaker of the Minnesota state legislature, deserved to be safe at home with her husband and her dog. Instead they were all three shot dead together one night in June.

Just as President Donald Trump had the right to campaign without fear of being assassinated, as two different people tried to do last summer.

Just as I had the right to meet with my constituents safely on Jan. 6, 2011—the day when instead I, a young Congresswoman in a purple district, was nearly assassinated. Eighteen other people were shot, and six were killed.

Our stories are unique, but what Charlie Kirk, President Trump, Melissa Hortman, and I all have in common is that someone who wanted to kill us had a gun.

We can and should talk about political violence, and its toxic relationship to political rhetoric. We can and must talk about social media’s role in these moments. We all, as individual Americans, need to do a better job considering our words. But anyone who responds to preventable tragedies like this—tragedies that over time begin to erode the very fabric of our country—by refusing to face the problem of gun violence and crime head-on is missing the point.

What we share, and what puts all of us in danger—from elected leaders to little children, like those shot while praying in church in Minnesota a few weeks ago—is the overwhelming prevalence of guns in this country and the loopholes that



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*Giffords at the Gun
Violence Memorial
on June 7, 2022*

make it appallingly easy for dangerous people to access them.

IN AMERICA, WE NOW HAVE more guns than people. Many states take sensible steps: background checks, extreme risk-protection orders, and safe-storage laws—all policies that help reduce gun crime and gun deaths. Other states—like Utah, which year after year receives an F on the annual Gun Law Scorecard released by my organization, GIFFORDS—do far too little to save lives.

I was gutted to learn that Charlie Kirk died while speaking there—and it's also true that in Utah, someone dies from gun violence every 20 hours. Utah has expanded gun access in recent years, and gun deaths have increased along with that, soaring by 45% since 2014 and more than doubling over the past two decades, according to the CDC. Too many know the pain of having a family member killed by guns, in that state and across the country. In fact, mere hours after Kirk's shooting, at least two students were shot at a high school in Evergreen, Colo.

Americans of both political parties desperately want this violence to end. Nine in 10 Republican voters want to close loopholes that allow criminals and dangerous people to get their

hands on guns. Ask parents what they want for their children's education, and they say again and again that keeping their kids safe from gun violence is their top priority. The American people are far more united than their representatives in Washington. That is why 92% of Republicans support background checks on all gun sales, 80% support laws to get untraceable ghost guns off the streets, and a surprising 78% support requiring a license to own a gun (just as Americans need licenses to drive cars). Yet Congress refuses to act.

It is physically very hard for me to speak because of my injuries from the bullets that hit me that day in January, and after watching yet another political shooting violently steal someone's life before our eyes, it's even harder to find words. So I want to speak plainly to my former colleagues in Congress, both the House and the Senate: Do something. Take action. Pray also if you want, but understand: your job is action.

**Americans of both
political parties
desperately want
this violence to end**

Nobody goes to the polls to elect someone to pray for them. We vote because we trust the people we elect will pass sensible, moderate policies that make our country a better, safer place to live and raise a family.

We may never be able to eliminate all gun violence. But we must realize that all gun violence is preventable. We know what to do to make our country safer for all of us, and our elected representatives can do it immediately. Come to the table, as Republicans and Democrats, to pass solutions to the epidemic of gun violence that's killing both of us. There's no shortage of policies with a history of bipartisan support: closing background-check loopholes, supporting violence-intervention programs, funding law enforcement—including the brave agents at the ATF who catch violent criminals and crack down on the small percentage of gun dealers who break the law—among many others. Above all: prioritize American lives over the donations and profits of gun-industry CEOs.

When I was shot, my friend Judge John Roll was killed. He was a Republican. We didn't always agree, but we still worked together for the good of our state. Also killed was Christina Taylor-Green. She was only 9 years old and had just been elected class president at her elementary school. Their families will never be whole again, just as the Kirk family will never be whole again, and I hold them all in my heart.

I call on my colleagues in Washington to show courage, not cowardice. I call on them to show loyalty to our country and our common values, and to do the single most important thing they can for their constituents: keep them safe.

*Giffords is a former U.S.
Congresswoman*

ENVIRONMENT

Are wildfires setting us back on air pollution?

BY SIMMONE SHAH

WILDFIRES ARE REVERSING THE GAINS made by decades of clean-air standards in Canada and the U.S., according to new data published Aug. 28.

Researchers at the University of Chicago released their annual Air Quality Life Index (AQLI), which tracks air pollution and how it impacts life expectancies. This year's report analyzed data collected in 2023. That year, as Canada faced its worst wildfire season in history, with more than 40 million acres of land burning, the flames caused air-pollution concentrations to rise to levels not seen since the AQLI began recording air-quality data (2011 in the U.S. and 1998 in Canada).

Both nations had made great strides in lowering air pollution—but the wildfires reversed that progress. The two countries saw the highest increases in air pollution worldwide in 2023, despite both having strict air-quality rules at the time. The fires elevated pollution levels in pockets of the U.S. and also changed the geographical distribution of pollution: the most polluted counties in the U.S. are typically concentrated in California, but in 2023, wildfires caused counties in several other states, including Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, and as far south as Mississippi, to be included among the most polluted.

Pollution released into the air from fires and other sources is measured in micrometers, or millionths of a meter. Particles no larger than 2.5 micrometers in diameter are known as PM_{2.5}, and data from AQLI shows that concentrations of PM_{2.5} increased by 1.5% around

the world in 2023 compared with 2022 levels—reaching nearly five times the World Health Organization guidelines. Long-term exposures to PM_{2.5} pollution can increase the risk of heart disease, lung cancer, stroke, and other health conditions.

THE FINDINGS ARE a stark warning about what could be a new reality for air quality. This year's fire season has been the second worst on record, with a total of 18.5 million acres burned since the beginning of 2025. Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires, with the largest spikes occurring in the Western U.S. and the boreal forests of northern North America and Russia, according to a NASA study.

This change comes at the same time that the Trump Administration is working

to roll back clean-air standards in the U.S. In March, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that it plans to undo landmark pollution standards, including the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which regulate harmful pollutants like particulate matter.

The Administration has also proposed revoking the 2009 “endangerment finding,” which determined that greenhouse gases were a threat to public health and provided a legal basis for regulating them under the Clean Air Act. Researchers say that climate change and air pollution are deeply linked and that lowering carbon dioxide emissions, which raise global temperatures and worsen wildfires, is an essential part of reducing air pollution.

“Both climate change and air pollution are driven by the same source—fossil fuel combustion from vehicles, power plants, and industry,” researchers wrote in the report. “In this respect, reductions in fossil fuel consumption have the potential to decrease air pollution concentrations and the risks of disruptive climate change.” □



Long-term exposure to particulates from wildfire smoke brings health risks

The fire season in 2025 has been the second worst on record

MILESTONES

RESIGNED

Prime Ministers

Departures routine and not

JAPAN

The 11 months that **Shigeru Ishiba** served was just about half the typical tenure in Japan, where premiership turnover is common. Ishiba's Sept. 7 announcement was presaged by runaway inflation and two consecutive election losses by his Liberal Democratic Party, which has been hampered by financial scandals. For the first time since 1955, the party controls neither legislative chamber.



NEPAL

There was nothing routine about the departure of **K.P. Sharma Oli**. He stepped down on Sept. 9 as parliament burned and prisons emptied, a day after 19 people were killed while protesting the government's ban on social media platforms where Nepal's Gen Z called out corruption and condemned the conspicuous consumption of officials' children, whom they dubbed “nepo kids.” In the worst unrest in decades, Oli's house was also torched.



FRANCE

The Sept. 8 resignation of **François Bayrou** was compelled by a no-confidence vote intended to force embattled President Emmanuel Macron to call new elections. Instead, Macron, wedged between far-right and far-left parties, vowed to revamp his governing coalition and name yet another new Prime Minister, who would be the fifth for France in less than two years. Bayrou had held office only since December.





DIED

Giorgio Armani

Changed the course of fashion

WHEN GIORGIO ARMANI, THE FOUNDER of one of the world's most revered fashion brands, died at 91 on Sept. 4, he left behind a legion of extraordinarily beautiful clothes. Few outfits, however, encapsulate his impact as well as the iconic champagne-and-silver suit Jodie Foster wore when she won the 1992 Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

Foster had entrusted herself to Armani after her 1989 Oscar outfit—an overly fussy blue party dress—made it onto several worst-dressed lists. She did not have to go far; Armani had set up a specialist VIP dressing room on Rodeo Drive following the publicity he got for designing Richard Gere's unstructured suits in *American Gigolo*. His strategy was working: in 1990, so many celebs, male and female, wore the label for the Oscars that *Women's Wear Daily* dubbed it “the Armani Awards.” He was one of the first to see the Oscars as a potent fashion event.

The symbiotic relationship he created with celebrities—he

made them glamorous, and they returned the favor—helped him with brand extensions: the perfumes, sunglasses, and watches that finance many labels' high-fashion lines. Other designers—Valentino, Versace, Oscar de la Renta, to name a few—also successfully courted celebrities, but few had as much sway as Armani.

Foster's pantsuit, with its flowing lines and subtle blush and cream palette, was classic Armani: impeccable tailoring in service of a relaxed silhouette. She looked like a million bucks, but she also looked like she wasn't trying too hard. Later that year she was on the cover of *People's* Most Beautiful People issue.

The suit also marked a pivot away from the bold looks of the '80s toward a quieter sophistication. Armani was part of a generation of designers who ushered in a less formal fashion era, one that would allow men and women to look refined without looking stuffy.

In due course the informality would take people all the way to grunge and eventually put CEOs of multimillion-dollar companies into hoodies. And as designers tied their fortunes to famous people, famous people realized they could sell clothes just by wearing them, and started their own lines.

The fashion world Armani just departed is different from the one he entered when he started his label in 1975. It's more fragmented, less orderly, more enmeshed in the culture of fame and of never-ending updates. But at least in part, it's a world he helped build. —BELINDA LUSCOMBE

➤
Armani's clothes, Foster said, allowed her “to be subtle”



ENGAGED

Pop superstar **Taylor Swift** and American football player **Travis Kelce**. The couple announced the news in an Instagram post on Aug. 26.

CANONIZED

Carlo Acutis as the Catholic Church's first millennial saint, on Sept. 7. Acutis, who died of leukemia at 15 in 2006, developed a website documenting miracles and was credited with two himself.

REMOVED

Skin-cancer lesions from former President **Joe Biden**, in surgery, his spokesperson announced on Sept. 4.

KILLED

At least 2,200 people, after three **earthquakes shook Afghanistan** over several days at the end of August and start of September. More than 3,000 people were injured.

NAMED

Chloe Malle, as the new head of editorial content at *American Vogue*, on Sept. 2. Malle succeeds Anna Wintour, the longtime leader of the magazine.

NICKNAMED

The Department of Defense, as the **Department of War**, after President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order on Sept. 5.

PLANNED

An end to school vaccine mandates in Florida, state officials announced on Sept. 3. The move would make the state the first to withdraw from the widely accepted public-health practice.

WILDFIRES: SELCUK AGAR—ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES; ISHIBA: KYOSHI OTA—BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES; OLI: GAO JIE—XINHUA NEWS AGENCY; GETTY IMAGES; BAYROU: ALAIN JOCARD—AFP/GETTY IMAGES; ARMANI: PAUL STUART—CAMERA PRESS/REDOX; FOSTER: PAUL HARRIS—GETTY IMAGES



Formation

China's People's Liberation Army took the world stage on Sept. 3 in a massive military parade marking 80 years since the end of World War II. Russia's Vladimir Putin, North Korea's Kim Jong Un, and Iran's Masoud Pezeshkian applauded the show of strength, which included undersea drones, laser air-defense systems, and new intercontinental ballistic missiles.

THE BULLETIN

What genocide scholars see in Gaza

ON AUG. 31, THE INTERNATIONAL Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) became the latest organization to address the question of whether Israel's policies and actions in Gaza meet the legal definition of genocide. "The government of Israel has engaged in systematic and widespread crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide," read their resolution, which 86% of members approved.

DEFINING GENOCIDE The IAGS resolution cited Article II of the United Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which defines genocide "as a crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part." It does not include political groups

or what is known as "cultural genocide." The resolution said Israel's actions in response to the terrorist attack committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, have not only been directed against Hamas "but have also targeted the entire Gazan population." The IAGS argued that Israel has "forcibly displaced nearly all of the 2.3 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip multiple times" and cited estimates that more than 90% of the housing in the territory has been damaged or destroyed.

LEGAL ACTIONS Israel was previously accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice in a case submitted by South Africa in December 2023. Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as for Ibrahim al-Masrii, a Hamas leader Israel said it killed last July, and whose death Hamas confirmed in January.

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE Oren Marmorstein, a spokesperson for Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, rejected the resolution, calling it an "embarrassment to the legal profession and to any academic standard." He added, "It is entirely based on Hamas' campaign of lies and the laundering of those lies by others." Israel has previously strongly denied that its actions in Gaza constitute genocide, citing its right to defend itself; Netanyahu, in an address on Aug. 13, called allegations of genocide "ridiculous" and a "blatant falsehood." —CALLUM SUTHERLAND

A new class of super companies


BY CHARLOTTE HU

IN THE PAST YEAR, TARIFFS, AI, AND CHANGING CONSUMER sentiments have made once dominant companies reshuffle their growth strategies. New giants emerged amid this shift. Nvidia, which this summer became the first public company to hit \$4 trillion in market value, tops TIME and Statista's new statistical ranking of the World's Best Companies of 2025. The list measures employee satisfaction, revenue growth, and sustainability transparency. Nvidia rose through the ranks on a wave of growing AI demand and a well-performing gaming division.


Many companies ranked high on the list have benefited from that enthusiasm for AI. Microsoft, ranked second on this list and right behind Nvidia in market value, also saw surges in revenue throughout 2024 driven by AI and cloud computing. Apple—which topped the World's Best Companies list in 2024—is notably absent this year because of a decline in revenue from 2022 to 2024, which many Wall Street analysts have postulated could be due to the company's falling behind on AI. But tides may be turning as the behemoth figures out its footing in the new tech landscape; CEO Tim Cook said on a third-quarter earnings call that the company is significantly growing investments in AI, embedding it across devices and platforms. In July, after the study period for this list, Apple reported 10% year-over-year revenue growth—the biggest bump since 2021.

Nike (No. 14) is the highest-ranked Apparel, Footwear, & Sporting Goods company, surpassing luxury giant LVMH (No. 21) and athleisure queen Lululemon (No. 36). The company faced a few rocky years because of competition from breakout brands like On and Hoka, and last year brought in a new CEO, Elliott Hill, to invest “heavily in big sport moments and key product launches to win back our brand voice,” Hill said in an earnings call in June. In summer, game-day looks for tennis champions Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner bumped sales.

Drugmaker Novo Nordisk (No. 15) is also innovating to stay ahead. Building on the popularity of its game-changing diabetes and weight-loss drugs Ozempic and Wegovy, the company is now launching an oral semaglutide to retain its lead against rivals like Eli Lilly. “When we think about the obesity market in the U.S., everyone knows we’re in a competitive environment,” David Moore, EVP of U.S. operations at Novo Nordisk, said in an earnings call in August. “We’re still growing. The market’s growing.”



NVIDIA.
Nvidia's Blackwell architecture supports massive generative AI models



Ford saw significant growth from its commercial-vehicle and hybrid lines



The utilities giant has become a leader in helping companies reduce energy use

TIME TOP 20 WORLD'S BEST COMPANIES 2025						
RANK	COMPANY NAME	HEADQUARTERS	OVERALL SCORE	SUSTAINABILITY RANK	EMPLOYEE-SATISFACTION RANK	INDUSTRY
1	Nvidia	U.S.	97.6	90	53	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
2	Microsoft	U.S.	96.0	351	1	IT, Electronics, Hardware, & Equipment
3	JPMorgan Chase	U.S.	95.0	224	14	Banking & Financial Services
4	Alphabet	U.S.	94.6	583	2	Technology, Media, & Services
5	Amazon	U.S.	94.2	611	3	Technology, Media, & Services
6	Meta	U.S.	93.3	98	111	Technology, Media, & Services
7	Volkswagen Group	Germany	93.3	477	5	Automotive Industry & Suppliers
8	BBVA	Spain	93.1	35	71	Banking & Financial Services
9	Airbus	Netherlands	93.1	139	7	Aerospace & Defense
10	Cigna	U.S.	93.0	84	163	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
11	DBS Bank	Singapore	93.0	185	58	Banking & Financial Services
12	Allianz	Germany	92.9	91	46	Insurance, Health Care, & Social Services
13	Ford	U.S.	92.5	217	31	Automotive Industry & Suppliers
14	Nike	U.S.	92.5	50	11	Apparel, Footwear, & Sporting Goods
15	Novo Nordisk	Denmark	92.4	140	93	Chemicals, Drugs, & Biotechnology
16	Booking Holdings	U.S.	92.4	14	132	Hospitality, Travel, & Leisure
17	Mastercard	U.S.	92.3	4	140	Banking & Financial Services
18	Deutsche Telekom	Germany	92.2	29	19	Telecommunications Services
19	Schneider Electric	France	92.0	36	44	Engineering, Manufacturing, & Medical Technology
20	General Motors	U.S.	92.0	180	73	Automotive Industry & Suppliers

See the full list at time.com/worlds-best-companies





SPORTS

In a great rivalry, a great victory

IN 2025, FOR THE FIRST TIME in modern tennis history, the same two men met in three major tennis tournament finals in the same year. Carlos Alcaraz, 22, of Spain, won his first duel with Italy's Jannik Sinner, 24, at the French Open in Paris; that comeback—a five-set, five-hour-plus thriller—still stands as the year's outstanding sports moment. Sinner got Alcaraz back with a clinical four-set victory at Wimbledon. But on Sept. 7, under the watchful eye of President Donald Trump and a host of other celebrity attendees, Alcaraz outlasted Sinner 6-2, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 in an inspiring effort that put all his brilliance on display. He reclaimed the world No. 1 ranking, and the U.S. Open win—the second of Alcaraz's career—already gives him six grand-slam championships. "I'm seeing you more than my family," Alcaraz told Sinner after the match.

Tennis fans are a spoiled bunch. Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer retired; Alcaraz and Sinner quickly emerged. They split the 2025 majors, with a pair of victories apiece. Sinner, who won the Australian Open, became one of four men's players ever to have reached the finals of all four major tournaments in the same season, with Rod Laver, Federer, and Novak Djokovic the others. He had an awesome year.

Last and best word, though, goes to Alcaraz.

—SEAN GREGORY

Carlos Alcaraz reaches for a Jannik Sinner shot at the U.S. Open final on Sept. 7 in New York City

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAVIER ROJAS—ZUMA PRESS WIRE/REUTERS

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ARGENTINA

An Economic Renaissance

Argentina is undergoing a dramatic economic surge that many describe as a new dawn for South America's second-largest nation. For the first time in over a decade, inflation is falling sharply, and Argentines are seeing the purchasing power of their wages stabilize – restoring confidence and fueling optimism among the country's citizens. Analysts at Santander expect the economy to expand by more than 4% this year, with growth being led by energy, mining, agriculture and other sectors linked to natural resources.

While some may credit President Javier Milei's unorthodox approach to governance and the shift he has initiated toward a more market-driven economic model, Argentina's economic resurgence also reflects the vision and acumen of its business leaders. It's a success story that is increasingly catching the eye of the international investment community. According to government sources, market deregulation efforts are expected to generate substantial annual investment this year, with \$15 billion in the energy sector alone.

Home to the vast shale oil and gas reserves of Vaca Muerta, Argentina has always held huge energy potential. Today, that promise is being realized as the oil and gas sector emerges as one of the most dynamic engines of Argentina's economic revival. The combination of a business-friendly administration and renewed investment confidence has encouraged companies to seek ways of capitalizing on this potential.

With foreign investment flowing back into the sector, Argentina's state-run energy giant YPF is embracing innovation, streamlining operations and ramping up shale oil and gas production to reduce Argentina's reliance on imports and position the country as a key energy exporter in the region. "The goal is for Argentina to export \$30 billion a year, and we are committed to driving the entire industry forward," says YPF president and CEO Horacio Daniel Marín. "And because that goal is relevant to the entire country, it inspires and motivates everyone."

YPF's ambitions are echoed across Argentina's private sector oil and gas companies, including PAEG, which through a series of strategic partnerships has grown into the country's largest privately-owned integrated energy

company. "My vision is to grow by offering solutions that meet the needs of our country, of the international market, and of the communities we interact with," says president and chairman Alejandro P. Bulgheroni, who -- like Marín -- is a fierce champion of his sector's drive to sustainability.

Both men are aware that high emission intensities from oil and gas operations are not inevitable. They recognize that these emissions can be addressed cost-effectively through rigorous international operational standards, firm policy actions, and the strategic deployment of advanced technologies, digitalization, automation, and advanced drilling.

As one of the world's largest exporters of soy, corn, and beef, Argentina's agricultural sector also remains vital to the country's development. Recent reforms have spurred the adoption of new technologies to improve yield, efficiency, and sustainability as the sector seeks to strengthen its international presence and promote growth across the whole continent. "We are aware that not just Argentina but all of Latin America needs to enjoy economic growth and has the potential for it," says Gonzalo Tanoira, president of San Miguel, the country's leading citrus producer and exporter. "We must share good ideas and solidify Latin America as a unified economic force."

Agriculture's significance to the economy led to agricultural machinery manufacturing becoming one of Argentina's first ancillary industries to take root and flourish. That industry is now playing a critical role as Argentina develops advanced solutions that are helping modernize agriculture and, in the process, sharpen Argentina's competitive edge in global markets.

The sector is also contributing to improved global food security. "We must bring the system of no-till farming to the world," says Rosana Negrini, president and owner of agri-tech and farm machinery specialist Agrometal. "The world's population is heading towards 10 billion people and land productivity is becoming critical."

These success stories are examples of the spirit of innovation and ambition that is contributing to a rise in both consumer and investor confidence in Argentina. The nation is home to companies with bold ideas and a commitment to growth—and its long-awaited golden age of business may well now be upon us.

AGROMETAL – Nurturing a Legacy of Success

No-till farming, a revolutionary approach to agriculture, has seen an explosion in popularity in recent years. This surge is thanks to its incredible power to boost soil health and longevity, drastically cut erosion, and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers. Latin America has been a leader in this sustainable shift. Argentina, for example, saw its no-tillage land jump from a mere 1.4% in 1990 to a remarkable 90% by 2020. Much of the credit for pioneering this highly productive and environmentally friendly seeding technique goes to Agrometal, a company celebrating 75 years of innovation and leadership this year.

Founded in 1950 by a group of 47 entrepreneurs in the farmlands of Monte Maíz, Agrometal began life manufacturing basic farm implements. The company has come a long way since and is now the country's undisputed leader in precision seeding. Agrometal exports Argentine agricultural know-how to over 10 countries and is adapting its designs to the specific needs of markets as diverse as Latin America, Eastern Europe, and South Africa. Many of the company's products also have European Community Certification, and its work on the international stage includes technical training as well as demonstrations of sustainable farming practices.

Agrometal's commitment to no-till farming started in 1956 with the appointment of Juan Carlos Negrini, Monte Maíz's first-ever practicing accountant. But Negrini didn't just manage the books; he had much bigger plans. As general manager and then chairman, he pioneered the technique that has revolutionized how the entire country now cultivates its land.

Negrini also proved to be an astute businessman, and on taking up his post he turned Agrometal from a limited company into a corporation. In 1961, it became the first and only agricultural machinery company in Argentina



Rosana Negrini
President of AGROMETAL

to be listed on the Buenos Aires Stock Exchange in a move that solidified its reputation for transparency, ambition, and long-term vision. The company has never looked back and by 2024 was posting annual revenues of \$64 million.

Agrometal's roots are still in Monte Maíz, and the company remains the largest employer in southern Córdoba. Its nearly 50-acre industrial complex -- including six acres of covered production space -- is a hub for technological excellence. Agrometal's seeding machines are renowned for their precision and durability and can be used for various crops and soils.

Negrini died in 2000 but his legacy lives on under the presidency of his daughter, Rosana Negrini. "As a child the company was like a sister to me and we grew up together," says Rosana, who initially set out to study medicine but then switched to public accounting and business administration to support her father. "It was clear to me that the best way to honor him was to keep up his good work." Rosana joined the company in 1985 and rose steadily through the ranks to

become vice president and, eventually, president on her father's passing.

Since then, Rosana has kept the company focused on the principals of innovation that her father prescribed to all those years ago, while being a pioneering trailblazer in her own right. As president, Rosana makes sure that Agrometal's commitment to innovation is evident in every new product it develops -- with advanced electronics, variable dosing, sensors, and GPS guidance guaranteeing that its machines are as intelligent as they are efficient.

After 25 years as president, her passion shines through. "Every day is a new opportunity to learn, grow, and improve, and I am committed to leading with integrity and dedication," Rosana says. "We believe the key to success lies in nurturing a talented and motivated team capable of turning great ideas into reality. My mission is to inspire and guide them toward ambitious goals, but always with a focus on the well-being of our customers and continuous improvement."

Rosana clearly inherited her father's business acumen as well. Under her leadership, Agrometal weathered the 2001 crisis -- and then went on to build a strong financial position and launch a state-of-the-art plant three years later. This was followed by the root-and-branch digitalization of all aspects of its operations.

As the third generation of the Negrini family prepares to uphold the company's legacy, Rosana has taken a bold step by appointing Adolfo Felippa as general manager. An engineer from Córdoba with international experience and a global mindset, Felippa is now at the helm, driving Agrometal's growth and innovation with a hands-on approach and a clear vision for the future.

"Seeding is where food begins," Rosana says. "We must teach the world that a well-planted seed becomes a food product. But the land also needs care."





PAN AMERICAN ENERGY GROUP: Energizing Industry and Development

Alejandro Pedro Bulgheroni is a renowned Argentine-Italian businessman with extensive experience in the international energy sector, someone who has been involved in the business world from an early age.

His vision and leadership have had a profound impact on the energy industry and the broader business landscape. He has been the recipient of numerous international awards for his contributions to the economic and social development of Argentina and the region, for his strong commitment to corporate social responsibility, and for his dedicated support for various initiatives in education and community development.

He is the founder and chairman of PAEG, which under his leadership has grown into Argentina's largest privately-owned integrated energy company through a succession of strategic partnerships and mergers. Either directly or indirectly, PAEG provides employment to more than 20,000 people and has established a strong presence in the exploration, production, refining, and marketing of oil and gas. The company has also consistently demonstrated its commitment to innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence.

The following is an excerpt from our meeting with PAEG Chairman Alejandro Pedro Bulgheroni.

Q: Can you tell us about your academic and professional background and how you started PAE and other business ventures?

APB: My father, Alejandro Angel Bulgheroni, entered Argentina's hydrocarbons industry in 1959. I joined part-time in 1965 during my engineering studies and later pursued oil & gas management courses in the U.S. Upon my return, I gained five years of hands-on experience in Argentina's oil fields, working in engineering, drilling, exploration, and production. As Operations Officer, I oversaw the bidding processes, contracts, and hydrocarbon exploration and production in Argentina and internationally. Starting in 1974, I focused on expanding operations across the region, driven by the belief that international growth was essential for the company's future. Bidas's international ventures began in 1977 with offshore operations and continued in 1978 with a development project in Peru. I became president of Bidas in 1985, after my father's passing.

During 1990 I participated in the transformation of Argentina's energy sector, leading to increased oil and gas production. Bidas won a significant international tender in Turkmenistan in 1991, achieving substantial oil and gas discoveries, but later had its assets confiscated by the government. After winning an arbitration case, Bidas was partially compensated.



Alejandro Pedro Bulgheroni
Founder and Chairman

To expand internationally, Bidas partnered with Amoco (later acquired by BP), forming Pan American Energy LLC in 1997. In 2010, a 50/50 joint venture with CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Corp.) was formed, which later became known as BC Energy Investments Corp. In 2012, a vertical integration strategy led to the acquisition of Exxon's refining and marketing operations in Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay, resulting in the creation of AXION Energy. This was followed by a major expansion of the Campana Refinery in Buenos Aires, which improved environmental performance and fuel quality.

AXION Energy was recognized as the "Refinery of the Year" in Latin America by the World Refining Association for its environmental sustainability and operational excellence.

In 2006, the Bolivian government confiscated the company's subsidiary, Chaco, but the company received compensation after winning arbitration in early 2016.

In 2017, an agreement with BP and CNOOC led to the merger of upstream and downstream operations in Argentina, creating Pan American Energy Group, SL.

PAEG traces its origins to the company founded by my father in 1959. Since his passing in 1985, I have led the company, overseeing its exponential growth into what it is today—the largest privately-owned integrated energy company in the region, and I have served as chairman and president since its inception.

Simultaneously with the activities of PAE [PAE is an oil and gas producer, while PAEG is a larger entity formed by merging PAE with AXION Energy] mentioned before and starting in 2003, I developed my company in the USA, Beusa Energy Inc., an oil and gas production company that participated in what became known as "the shale revolution," which enabled the United States to significantly increase its oil and gas production.

The assets of this company were later sold, allowing us to focus our efforts on the pressure pumping business. Today, Evolution Well Services — a company that is part of the Beusa Energy family — operates 14 fleets providing 100% electric fracturing services to the leading oil and gas operators in the U.S. The company has developed a revolutionary approach to exploit unconventional reservoirs, with a strong focus on reducing environmental pollution and applying cutting-edge technologies to improve operational efficiency.

Additionally, I founded Dynamis Power Solutions, a company that provides mobile power units delivering energy solutions through a combination of gas turbines and battery technologies. These solutions support a wide range of commercial industries with both temporary and permanent power needs.

Q: What in your opinion are the primary reasons for PAEG's phenomenal growth?

APB: Growth is driven by leadership, strategic vision, leading by example, consistency in actions, being open to change. I have always believed in achieving growth through strategic partnerships. I am never hesitant to form partnerships, provided the right partner is selected and the terms are clearly defined from the outset. It is essential to negotiate management conditions that ensure a strong influence on decision-making, safeguarding alignment with long-term goals and maintaining a productive collaboration. As an entrepreneur, I have always taken calculated risks, knowing that it is the highest risk that, if successful, will drive growth even faster.

Throughout my life, I have thrived in a dynamic and exciting world. I have always had a passion for technology and have consistently supported R&D initiatives across all our projects. I've also made it a priority to analyze how future advancements from other companies and research institutions could impact our diverse business operations. Being aware of past actions is crucial to avoid repeating mistakes and learning from successes. History helps us understand our current context and allows us to reflect on our decisions and their potential future consequences.

Q: How is PAEG leading the way in terms of sustainability and treatment of CO2 emissions?

APB: PAE Group is very conscious that high emissions intensities from oil and gas operations are not inevitable. They can be addressed cost-effectively through a well-established combination of high international operational standards, firm policy actions -- and the strategic deployment of advanced technologies, digitalization, and automation, and advanced drilling and completion equipment.

Our strategy to reduce emissions from our oil and gas operations is built on three core principles. Firstly, we focus on accurate measurement to identify opportunities for emissions reduction. Secondly, we design proactive processes aimed at enhancing energy efficiency, aligning with our sustainability goals. Lastly, we prioritize operational efficiency, ensuring that these initiatives minimize our environmental footprint while maintaining performance.

Q: Why are social development programs important to PAEG?

APB: We work through public-private partnerships to generate social, economic, and environmental value in the communities close to our operations. We focus on four areas of work: Education, Culture, Health and Sports -- and Local Development. We carry out more than 125 programs in collaboration with technical partners and NGOs, reaching over 340,000 people directly or indirectly.

In Education and Culture, we implement a Comprehensive Support Plan for Education in the provinces where we operate. In Health and Sports, in 2024 alone, we trained over 15,000 healthcare professionals, and for more than 20 years we have been running the 'Creciendo Juntos' (Growing Together) Program, which has resulted in Chubut and Neuquén achieving the lowest historical infant mortality rates at the national level.

Since 2005, the PAE Pymes Program (Small and Medium Enterprises) supports more than 2,500 SMEs and 600 entrepreneurs, helping them in process certification, business development, as well as financing for their activities.

Concerning the Environment, we have focused on the study and care of more than 20 emblematic species.

Q: What do you see as the most attractive areas for the company's growth?

APB: My vision as an entrepreneur is and has always been to grow by offering solutions to the needs of our country, of the international market, and of those of the families that are part of the communities we interact with. We are committed to the sustainable growth of our businesses, aiming to increase our oil and gas production and reserves through the development of our areas, mainly in Cerro Dragón and Vaca Muerta in Argentina, the second-largest unconventional natural gas reserve and the fourth-largest oil reserve in the world.

We are investing intensively on the development of our gas reserves and just recently PAEG has discovered shale gas (unconventional gas) in the D-129 formation in Chubut— which until now had only been found in Vaca Muerta.

We foresee an increase in global LNG demand driven by economic growth in Asia and the growing energy consumption in the technology sector, among others. Together with Golar LNG, we have recently created the company Southern Energy, whose objective is the installation of two floating liquefaction vessels in Argentina that will produce liquefied natural gas for export markets, the first one on 2027 and the second one in 2028. Recently, three other companies have joined this project.

The access to global markets for gas through these floating liquefaction vessels is a major first step for our country to become an export hub. We will continue to expand our renewable energy projects, as well as those involving critical materials like lithium. Along these lines, we are beginning operations in lithium salt flats in the north of Argentina. In Mexico we are one of the leading private oil producers. Focused on sustainable operations, we have two Production Sharing contracts in the Cuenca Salina del Istmo Offshore Basin: in Tabasco Litoral, the Hokchi Block -- and in Veracruz, the Block 31. In Bolivia we are part of the development of Margarita-Huacaya, the most important gas field in Caipipendi Area in the Tarija Basin.

It is our policy to enhance our competitiveness primarily through the application of state-of-the-art technologies. We are implementing advanced technological solutions to protect the environment and developing and implementing management processes to continue improving our performance in HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment), as well as ensuring the safety of our employees, contractors, and the communities in the areas where we operate.

We are convinced that the best way to fulfill our commitment is to have trained and dedicated personnel and to adhere to international practices that guarantee the development of responsible operations. The Oil & Gas production sector, particularly oil, has always experienced cycles of price fluctuations, driven by factors such as geopolitical situations, shifts in global supply, production disruptions, or changes in expectations regarding future demand. While companies naturally prefer stable and predictable prices, this has not always been the case, nor is it likely to be in the future. As a result, businesses must remain adaptable to the ever-changing market conditions.

Q: What are the biggest challenges you face in achieving these goals?

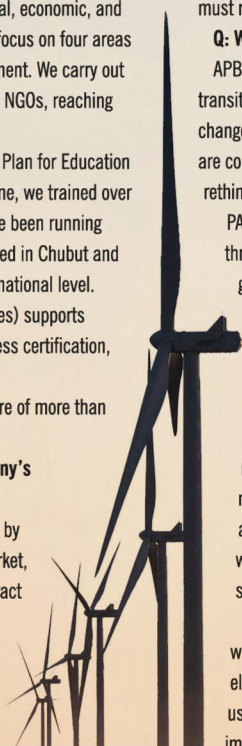
APB: As for challenges, we are not indifferent to the global obstacles of the energy transition. Political instability, economic and geopolitical crises around the world, climate change concerns, and continually growing global demand for energy are all factors that are constantly reshaping the landscape. These evolving realities require a fundamental rethinking of policies and investments to adapt and respond effectively and timely.

PAE Group is proactively facing all these challenges by improving its production costs through more efficient processes and the incorporation of cutting-edge technology. The growth potential is vast. With annual investments exceeding a billion dollars, our company's strong financial position enables us to leverage two to three times our current debt to fuel further expansion. Additionally, we enjoy healthy cash flow, positioning us to seize a wealth of opportunities for continued growth.

Q: What makes you optimistic about the future?

APB: It is our job as an industry to provide solutions. We must keep in mind that many technologies can be clean and safe, but today they are not accessible and do not compete with the energy provided by natural gas. In the case of the development and adoption of more expensive technologies, it would create an inflationary impact worldwide that would be difficult to accept and could be especially concerning in struggling economies.

The future lies in sustainability and innovation, with oil and natural gas production, more electrification in transport and industry, greater use of nuclear and renewable energies, and improvements in storage and efficiency.



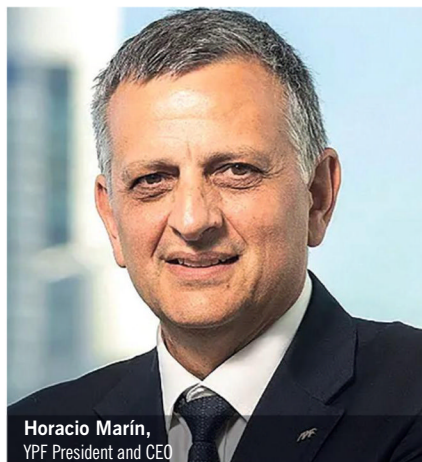
YPF — Powering Progress



This June, Argentinian President Javier Milei flew to Rome to meet Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. At the top of their agenda was an agreement between YPF, the largest energy company of Argentina, and the Italian energy giant ENI. Both look forward to engaging in a huge project to produce LNG from Vaca Muerta, the second-largest reserve of gas of the world. The project between both companies includes the production, treatment, transportation, and liquefaction using floating units with a total capacity of 12 million tons of LNG per year. This agreement is part of Argentina LNG, an integrated project with an ambitious goal of exporting 30 mtpa (million tonnes per annum) by 2031. Forecast to generate more than \$100 billion over the next 20 years, the project aims to establish Argentina as one of the world's top LNG exporters.

President Milei was accompanied on the Italian trip by Horacio Marín, YPF's 50th president and CEO. Marín has more than three decades' experience in the oil and gas sector as well as holding several business diplomas from elite U.S. educational institutions. He is widely believed to be the right man to oversee this radical transformation of both company and country.

Marín has headed YPF since December 2023 and was always destined to lead this seismic change. Founded in 1922, YPF has been a cornerstone of the country's industrial and economic evolution. After being privatized and acquired by Spain's Respol in 1999, YPF was partially re-nationalized in 2012, and the Argentine government still holds a 51% controlling stake. With the remaining 49% of its shares publicly traded through its listing on the New York Stock Exchange, YPF combines international investment standards with a deep affinity to the Argentine national identity and, with Marín in charge, the courage to change.



“YPF REPRESENTS THE ARGENTINE SPIRIT AT ITS FULLEST. IT'S A BELOVED COMPANY WITH OVER 100 YEARS OF HISTORY.”

“My life has always been about transformation and growth, and that's exactly what we are doing at YPF,” says Marín. Inspired by President Milei's call to create shareholder value, Marín initiated the highly ambitious YPF 4x4 initiative, designed to quadruple the company's value in just four years and generate annual hydrocarbon exports of between \$20 billion and \$30 billion. If successful, Argentina will become the world's fifth-largest gas exporter. At today's prices, it would be the third-largest standalone project globally. This would put oil and gas on equal par with Argentina's agricultural exports in terms of its contribution to the nation's GDP, without ever running the risk of falling hostage to climactic conditions as its peers in agribusiness frequently do.

Marín had, in fact, already started work on the YPF 4x4 before he took up his current position and had quickly identified the four building blocks required for YPF to reach its

goal: investment in core assets; the divestment of underperforming assets; maximize upstream and downstream efficiency; and the formulation of a major LNG export strategy.

Each of these pillars share a common belief, and that is the importance of the country's massive unconventional oil and gas formation at Vaca Muerta. Although YPF controls 50% of its acreage, its exploitation has until recently been hampered by bottlenecks in the development of the infrastructure required to realize its full commercial potential. Marín is addressing this issue and has been the driving force behind the construction of the 270-mile, \$3 billion Vaca Muerta Sur pipeline that will pump the formation's hydrocarbons to a coastal export terminal in Rio Negro. The pipeline is expected to transport up to 550,000 barrels per day by 2027.

Marín is also on a mission to generate shareholder value by divesting YPF of as many of its underperforming conventional oil fields as he can by encouraging local SMEs to take them over. “This rationalization is helping reorient YPF as a non-conventional, fully integrated energy firm,” he says.

And a highly digitalized one at that. With the nerve center on the 26th floor of YPF's Buenos Aires headquarters, the company's real-time intelligence center processes 35 million data points daily in its bid to optimize the company's upstream and downstream operations. YPF's Luz division, meanwhile, is pioneering Argentina's ambitions to integrate renewables into its energy mix.

“Everybody at YPF is both proud and honored to be working on this national and corporate transformation,” Marín says. “The road ahead may be rugged, but we like to think of ourselves as drivers of an all-terrain 4x4 tractor. We are ready, willing and able to traverse some very rough ground.”

When the going gets tough...

The View

SOCIETY

UNITED STATES OF FOOTBALL

BY TODD ROGERS AND AUDREY FELDMAN

Being a pro football fan can be good for you and for those around you. As a new NFL season begins, you don't have to know the difference between a cover-four and a Tampa-2 defense to put on a hat, make a friend at the shop, and build a new family tradition. In an era marked by epidemics of loneliness and political distrust, sports fandom is one simple and universally accessible medicine. ▶

INSIDE

WHY TRUMP CAN'T SHAKE
HEALTH QUESTIONS

INSIDERS WARN AI COULD MAKE
INEQUALITY MUCH WORSE

HOW ONE COMPANY INVESTED
IN THE ENVIRONMENT

We've seen it firsthand. Todd once spotted someone in a Philadelphia Eagles hat at a local shop and instinctively shouted "Go Birds!" The reply came back instantly: "Go Birds!" A few minutes later, Todd had invited his new friend George and his son to his family's weekly watch parties. They showed up with cheesesteaks, and by the end of the season, more of George's family had joined.

These stories aren't unusual. More than 70% of Americans consider themselves football fans. Over a third think Super Bowl Sunday should be a national holiday, and half say the Monday after should be a paid day off. The NFL isn't just the most-watched entertainment in America—it is one of the country's last unifying institutions. On any given Sunday, tens of millions of Americans tune in, creating a shared national ritual that cuts across differences. For those who care about social connection and civic life, fandom is a surprisingly powerful path to both.

Decades of research show that fans have wider friendship networks, stronger feelings of belonging, and less alienation. Ben Valenta and David Sikorjak called their book *Fans Have More Friends*, and it includes national survey evidence that fans place more trust in their neighbors and in the institutions that keep communities running.

Psychologist Daniel Wann has shown that identifying with a team helps people meet core needs like belonging, identity, and meaning. A 2023 study found that attending live sporting events was linked to higher life satisfaction, less loneliness, and a stronger sense that life is worthwhile—gains similar to those from landing a new job after being unemployed. And one U.K. field experiment found Manchester United fans were nearly three times more likely to stop and help an injured jogger if he wore their team's shirt rather than a rival's or no shirt at all. Taken together, the data show that fandom helps people connect, trust, and step up for others.

These bonds matter because many of the groups that once knit American communities together have been unraveling. As Robert Putnam documented in *Bowling Alone*, the



Eagles fans cheer as their team takes on the Cowboys in Philadelphia on Sept. 4

decline of churches, neighborhood associations, and bowling leagues that once anchored civic life has coincided with shrinking trust—both in one another and in democratic institutions. The loneliness epidemic declared by the surgeon general in 2023 underscored the stakes: social isolation can shorten lives and harm health.

At the same time, Americans increasingly live in ideological silos. Democrats cluster with Democrats, Republicans with Republicans. We shop for different brands, watch different shows, and consume different news. Social media and polarization make it all too easy to avoid people who see the world differently.

FEW INSTITUTIONS STILL ATTRACT large, diverse, and deeply engaged groups. Professional sports—and especially football—is the rare exception. Week after week, people who might otherwise have little reason to cross paths come together as fans. In 2024, 18 of the 20 most-watched television broadcasts were NFL games. The only other entries were one presidential debate and the Oscars. Last year's opening weekend averaged 21 million viewers per game. Liberals and

conservatives follow football at nearly equal rates, as do men and women, and people of different racial and ethnic groups. Many fans even rank their team loyalty as central to their identity—on par with religion or politics.

The NFL has real problems, from head trauma to racial disparities in leadership; until 1946, Black players were effectively banned. These problems need fixing, as the civic benefits of today's fandom are too meaningful to ignore.

It's hard to think of any other institution that is so broadly representative of the country—and so passionately embraced. There are endless ways to join in, from swapping texts during games, to trash-talking with friends in fantasy leagues, to, yes, striking up a conversation with a stranger. So wear your jersey with pride. You may be greeted with a spontaneous "Skol!" "Gang Green!" or "Go Birds!" Returning the cheer is a small step toward strengthening your community—and maybe making a new friend to watch with next week.

Rogers is a professor of public policy and Feldman is a doctoral student at Harvard University



The Risk Report By Ian Bremmer

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

JUST THREE MONTHS AGO, ISRAEL and Iran fought a 12-day war that shook the Middle East. Missiles and drones flew in both directions, but with a major assist from the U.S., Israel established dominance of Iran's airspace, repeatedly struck nuclear and military targets across Iran, and killed 30 security commanders and 19 of Iran's nuclear scientists. Iran's retaliation accomplished little that might deter Israel in the future.

A return to war is unlikely. Though Iran likely retains a stockpile of enriched uranium and the means to rebuild enrichment capability, the Israeli-American bombing campaign ensured it is now several years away from being able to produce a nuclear weapon. Israel has also essentially normalized direct strikes inside Iran's borders and demonstrated its ability to inflict significant damage to the regime. Israel can carry out limited "mow the grass" operations if Iran makes sudden progress in rebuilding its nuclear program, and it can strike more missile bases and air-defense systems to keep Iran's defenses down.

For its part, **Iran can't afford war. It will retaliate if and when Israel strikes again, but the response will be carefully calibrated to avoid a dangerous escalation** it is less able to fend off. Iran is in a far weaker geopolitical position today than it was before Oct. 7, having lost much of its allied network—from Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon to Bashar Assad in Syria—that Tehran had long relied on to deter Israel and project power regionally.

For now, the Iranian regime remains stable. The country's water and energy shortages have triggered a few demonstrations, but a post-war security-force crackdown has prevented any re-eruption of the Woman, Life, Freedom protests that rocked the country in 2022. Any return to high-intensity war might jeopardize the regime's control.

Yet, even if Iran can avoid another war, pressure on its economy, and therefore the regime, is about



An oil depot burns after an Israeli strike in June

to go up. Iran faces the imminent "snapback" of U.N. sanctions. At the end of August, the three European governments that signed the 2015 deal to block development of a nuclear weapons program—Britain, France, and Germany—triggered the return of U.N. sanctions on Iran in response to its decision to halt cooperation with inspectors.

Barring an unlikely diplomatic breakthrough, these sanctions will be reimposed on Oct. 18, just after the snapback deadline expires. Washington has already hit Iran's oil and mining sectors and banned the use of U.S. dollars in commercial

transactions. The E.U. has also imposed penalties over the violent suppression of past protests and Iran's military support for Russia's war on Ukraine. But U.N. sanctions would be far more sweeping and likely to cause a considerable decline in Iran's oil revenues and put additional pressure on its economy.

IRAN HAS SIGNALLED to the Trump Administration that it's open to talks, but the White House appears set on squeezing Tehran further before new bargaining can begin. The official U.S. position is that Iran must first make major concessions on uranium enrichment, and such a climbdown is unlikely. In the meantime, Washington can use the threat of U.N. snapback sanctions to push Iran's leadership deeper into a corner.

Tehran is not without sympathizers and clients. Though the U.S. has slapped sanctions on those who move Iranian oil, China continues to discreetly buy the country's crude. Its major energy companies and banks remain effectively walled off from the Iran oil trade, which limits their risk of penalties. But the bigger picture for Iran's oil revenue is

darkening as other potential buyers hang back. Floating storage—tankers containing Iranian oil that have no current destination—surged from 5 million barrels to 30 million over the first half of 2025. At the very least, that means Iran will have to offer bigger discounts, and accept lower revenues, to attract more takers.

The Islamic Republic has weathered many storms since the 1979 revolution, and may well survive a few more. In the wake of the recent Iran-Israel war, Tehran has worked hard to sell survival as victory. But the troubles are only going to grow. □



CO₂ Leadership Report
By Justin Worland
 SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION filed plans in early September to cancel approval for two large wind-farm projects off the coast of New England, which represent an estimated value of nearly \$15 billion and a source of new electricity in a time of growing demand.

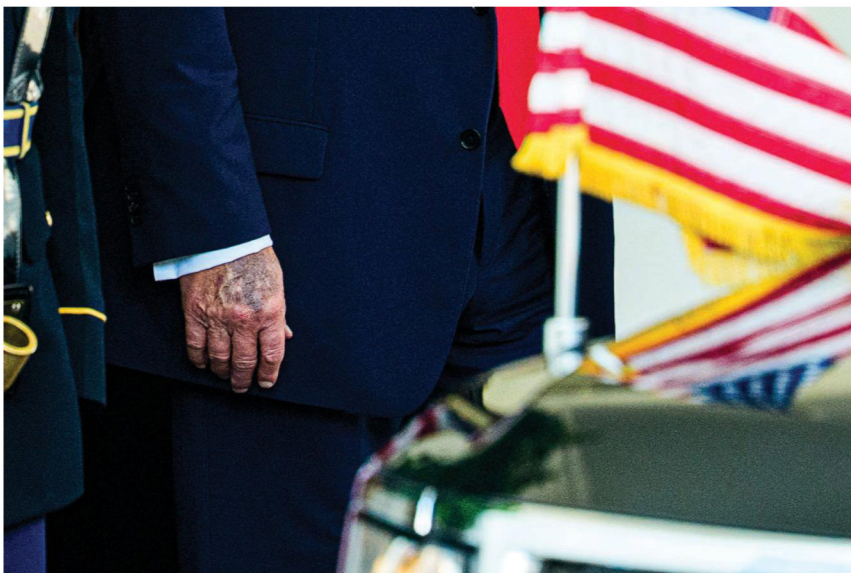
And the full-throated push against wind is more than an anticlimate move. By targeting investments that are already in train and in some cases close to completed, President Trump's action strikes against the core of the free market and private enterprise. While past administrations have certainly changed subsidies and regulatory requirements, targeting projects with active construction presents an unprecedented level of regulatory uncertainty.

"Permitted energy projects of any type shouldn't be halted at such a late stage," Martin Durbin, senior vice president of policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, wrote in a Sept. 3 blog post. "Revoking wind permits today opens the door to uncertainty for all types of energy projects in the future."

The message to anyone making a big capital investment: The success of your project may depend on Trump's favor. Under these conditions, **it will be hard not only to invest in the energy transition at scale but also to build a whole lot of necessary infrastructure.**



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The D.C. Brief
By Philip Elliott
 SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

WHEN DONALD TRUMP HAS SPOKEN of late, many Americans have been less interested in his words than his appearance. Is he wearing more makeup than usual? Any new bruises? Is he steady? It is perhaps a reasonable response after so much talk circulating this summer about whether Trump is at death's door—or through it.

After years of being told Trump is the model of health, an exemplar of youth, and a man always in his prime, some are feeling a tad skeptical about his well-being—so much so that the public is conditioned to doubt even their own eyes when it comes to Trump's existence.

After all, earlier this year the White House physician praised the President's health by boasting that he logs "frequent victories in golf events." During his first term, Trump's doctors kept him just one pound away from being classified as obese but said he was nevertheless a machine. "Some people just have great genes. I told the President if he had a healthier diet over the last 20 years he might live to be 200," Dr. Ronny Jackson said in

2018, years before being elected to Congress. During the 2016 campaign, Trump's personal physician released a letter lauding his excellent health—one that Trump himself dictated, it was later reported.

So it is completely understandable that doubters of all stripes would buy into the false rumors of Trump's imminent, or possibly recent, demise. They build upon the White House's announcement that Trump has been diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency. Big-handshake energy was the excuse offered up for the clear bruising on his hands, despite visible makeup deployed to hide it. During an Aug. 15 Alaska summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, questions emerged about Trump's gait.

"I didn't see that," Trump said on Sept. 2, brushing off a question

'He dictated that whole letter.'

—DR. HAROLD BORNSTEIN, DONALD TRUMP'S DOCTOR, ON A LETTER ABOUT HIS HEALTH

<
Bruises were visible on
President Trump's hand
on Aug. 25

about his noted scarcity over the
Labor Day weekend.

FOR THAT MEDIA-OBSESSED President, the protest rings hollow. But it also underlines a dynamic that should make Americans regardless of party affiliation take notice: When Trump came to power in 2017, 49% of Americans saw him as not honest or trustworthy, according to YouGov polling. The same survey now finds 56% don't believe what he says. (In fairness, CNN's final poll on Bill Clinton's presidency had 58% of Americans saying he was not honest or trustworthy.)

Presidencies crumble when they lose credibility. President George W. Bush arguably never recovered after he seemed untethered from reality in the response to 2005's Hurricane Katrina. It's why Republicans thought they had their version of that when Barack Obama seemed to drift in 2012 after the attack in Benghazi, Libya. Joe Biden aborted his re-election bid last year after a public meltdown on a debate stage.

That last example has even Trump's fanboys asking questions. "There is obviously something going on with Trump that the White House is covering up," Nick Fuentes, a white nationalist and influential far-right figure, asserted on social media. "This is literally Biden 2."

Trump and his team have tried to dismiss the comparison, but these things tend to snowball. Trump knows this. On Election Day 2016, 61% of voters told the exit polls they did not think Hillary Clinton was honest or trustworthy. But here's the rub: 64% said the same of Trump, and he went on to victory. Trump has always been a healthy exception to the rules of politics, including it seems even on his health.



In the Loop

By Billy Perrigo

CORRESPONDENT

AT A LAKEFRONT VENUE IN SWEDEN in August, 18 individuals from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, the U.K. AI Security Institute, the OECD, and other groups gathered for an invite-only summit. On the agenda: arriving at an understanding of the likely ways advanced AI will impact the "social contract" between working people, governments, and corporations.

One outcome of the so-called "artificial general intelligence social contract summit" was a list of four draft statements. They paint a grim picture of where the world could be headed, absent significant interventions by governments and societies.

"AI is likely to exacerbate increasing wealth and income inequality within countries, worsening economic conditions for many working and middle-class people and families," the first reads.

"AI will increase inequality between countries that have access to AI infrastructure and those that don't—both in terms of access to benefits as well as ability to respond to shocks," says the second. "Without intervention, AI-enabled inequalities may lead to the political dominance of wealthy individuals and corporations, eroding democratic institutions and increasing levels of political dissatisfaction," the third says.

And the fourth: "The encroachment of AI systems and the erosion of the value of labor could lead to the increasing disempowerment of most humans, causing a degradation in individual well-being and purpose."

The attendees, who were present in their personal capacities, not as official representatives of their organizations, agreed between saunas that the existing social contract—in which people receive security and a stake in society in return for their labor—could be in trouble because of AI, says Deric Cheng. He is the director of research at the Windfall Trust, a non-profit founded this year to grapple with these issues.

"We're essentially worried that labor will be disempowered relative to corporations, and also to some degree that governments might be disempowered relative to corporations," Cheng says. "The obvious result of lower labor power is decreased real wages."

This view holds that people in wealthy democracies enjoy a high standard of living not because of their rights enshrined on paper—but because of their ability to withhold their labor.

Fortunately, attendees also identified several possible actions that governments could take to push things in a better direction. For example: developing new institutions, in the vein of the IMF, to ensure that wealth derived from AI is distributed globally, rather than within the one or two powerful countries where AI companies are located. States could also run pilots today for policies like basic income and reduced working weeks, to gather evidence about what kinds of safety nets are effective.

A grim picture of where the world could be headed with AI



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For a twice-weekly deep dive into the AI revolution, sign up at time.com/intheloop

CLIMATE

Patagonia's idea of a global investment

BY DAVID GELLES

EARLIER THIS YEAR, A TITANIUM MINE WAS SLATED for construction on the edge of Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp, an unusually diverse ecosystem that is home to some of the country's most pristine wetlands. If built, the mine would likely have unleashed catastrophic pollution in the area.

Then in June, the project was called off. In a stunning deal, the company behind the mine announced it had reached a \$60 million agreement to sell the site of the proposed project to a group of conservationists. There would be no titanium mining on the edge of the Okefenokee, after all.

It was a hefty price to pay for a tract of backwater marshland, but the conservationists had deep-pocketed backers, including Patagonia, the outdoor-apparel brand founded by rock climber Yvon Chouinard.

Two million dollars of the funds used to protect Okefenokee came from the Holdfast Collective, a group of nonprofit entities that since 2022 has donated the profits generated by Patagonia to nonprofit groups fighting climate change.

It is an arrangement unlike almost anything else in corporate America. Rather than distributing earnings to shareholders, or letting executives keep the money for themselves, Patagonia gives away most everything it makes.

That kind of philanthropy is unusual in an age when many billionaires flaunt their wealth with megayachts and Wall Street firms work to extract profits from their investments. But it is a structure that is in keeping with Patagonia's unique history of charity and conservationism.

Back in 1972, when Chouinard was still making rock-climbing gear, he heard about a plan to divert and develop the mouth of the Ventura River, which flowed just behind his office and then into the Pacific Ocean, shaping one of the best surf breaks in California. If the plan went ahead, the waves that drew Chouinard to Ventura in the first place could be gone.

Beyond the waterway's importance to the surf, Chouinard and his pals knew that as recently as the 1940s, the Ventura had been a major spawning ground for thousands of steelhead trout and Chinook salmon. But over the years, the river had been dammed upstream, drying it up and killing the fish.

Chouinard wound up backing a young environmental activist named Mark Capelli who led an effort to halt development on the Ventura. Thanks to Chouinard's financial backing, the development was halted, the river was protected, and the surf break was preserved.

Capelli wasn't a businessman and Chouinard wasn't an activist at this point, but the men shared an affinity for nature and a willingness to challenge authority. "We were



^
The Okefenokee Swamp is home to threatened and endangered species like the indigo snake and wood stork

both marching to our own drummer," Capelli said.

THE CHECK FOR CAPELLI was the first environmental grant Chouinard ever made. One small donation had made a difference, and Chouinard understood for the first time that his money could have an impact.

Years later, on Earth Day 1989, Chouinard hosted an activist named Rick Klein at the Patagonia offices in Ventura. Klein, a native Californian who had first visited Chile in the 1970s and fallen in love with the land, had come straight off the plane from South America, and he was there to ask Chouinard for money.

He was running an organization called Ancient Forest International, working to preserve old-growth trees around the globe. In particular, he was trying to protect a 1,100-acre swath of forest in southern Chile that was home to ancient araucaria, also known as monkey puzzle trees. Rumor had it that a New Zealand-based timber company wanted to buy the land, situated in the Cañi mountains, and



clear-cut the trees to make paper for fax machines.

Klein described the land and unfurled a spread of nine photographs he had taped together, displaying a majestic vista of forests and lakes. It was a rare opportunity to preserve pristine land, he told Chouinard. Klein had already raised money from another philanthropist; would Chouinard help?

He didn't hesitate. Chouinard was in for \$40,000. That was an enormous commitment and took even his family by surprise. "It wasn't a great time for us financially," his wife Malinda Chouinard said. "Is any time a good time to spend an unbudgeted \$40,000?"

Chouinard told Klein that if he wanted to raise more money, he should go to San Francisco and hit up Doug Tompkins, his best friend and the founder of another clothing company, Esprit. Chouinard was sure his friend would match his contribution. He was right. When Klein arrived in San Francisco, Tompkins cut the activist a check on the spot. Klein now had most of the funds needed to save a unique stand of ancient forest.

All profits are used to protect wild lands

AS CHOUINARD GREW WEALTHY thanks to Patagonia's success, he began allocating much of his money to the acquisition of undeveloped land. He built himself homes in exclusive locales, including the foothills of the Tetons in Jackson, Wyo., and the beach in Ventura. He acquired property in the exclusive Hollister Ranch, north of Santa Barbara, Calif.

But most of his swelling fortune was funneled toward environmental activism and conservation. Along with Tompkins, he bought up vast swaths of Argentina and Chile, helping fund the creation of a new network of national parks. He also contributed to a new protected area on the southernmost tip of Argentina, known as Peninsula Mitre.

And in 2022, Chouinard gave away the company to a series of trusts and nonprofit organizations including the newly created Holdfast Collective, which now turns over all of Patagonia's profits to environmental causes including large-scale conservation.

In its first year of operation, Holdfast made 690 grants and commitments totaling more than \$61 million. There were big donations for conservation efforts, including donations to help protect the Vjosa River in Albania. The Nature Conservancy got \$5.2 million to buy 8,000 acres in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta to protect a fragile waterway. And Holdfast has already blocked other mining projects as well.

Shortly after Chouinard gave away the company, Greg Curtis, the former deputy general counsel of Patagonia who now runs Holdfast, heard about a campaign to impede the construction of Pebble Mine, a proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska. Within days, Curtis had committed to providing the final \$3.1 million needed to buy up some critical parcels of land, scuttling the mining project. In total, the Holdfast funds helped protect 162,710 acres of wilderness around the world in its first year of operation. And now, the money is helping protect the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia.

In some respects, Patagonia has hardly changed since Chouinard founded the company. More than five decades on, Patagonia's profits are still going to grassroots groups working to protect nature, perpetuating, with an almost manic level of consistency, the approach Chouinard first took when he gave his initial grants to Capelli and the Friends of the Ventura River some 50 years earlier.

And yet in restructuring Patagonia to ensure that its profits are used to protect wild lands, Chouinard accomplished something remarkable, turning a for-profit corporation with \$1 billion in annual sales into one of the biggest environmental philanthropies in the country.

"It changed the whole way the company operates," he said of Patagonia's commitment to the environment. "We make all decisions based on: Is this the right thing for the home planet?"

Excerpted from Dirtbag Billionaire: How Yvon Chouinard Built Patagonia, Made a Fortune, and Gave It All Away by David Gelles. Copyright © 2025 by David Gelles. Reprinted by permission of Simon & Schuster Inc.



REBOOTING SOUTH KOREA

PRESIDENT LEE JAE-MYUNG
ON HIS PLAN TO KICK-START
HIS NATION'S ECONOMY—
AND COURT DONALD TRUMP

BY CHARLIE CAMPBELL/SEOUL

◀
PRESIDENT
LEE JAE-MYUNG
IN SEOUL
ON SEPT. 3

IT WAS NOT HOW LEE JAE-MYUNG ENVISIONED HIS FIRST DAY ON THE job. Following his election as South Korea's President on June 3, Lee's staff arrived at their new offices in central Seoul the next morning to find rooms strewn with trash and desks equipped with monitors but bereft of computers, which had all been piled in a corner. It was a struggle to get doors unlocked and find even basic stationery.

"It was a very busy and chaotic period," Lee, 61, tells TIME in his only Western media interview since taking office. "I thought that we had done much preparation in advance, but it was not sufficient."

Behind the chaos was his disgraced predecessor, Yoon Suk-yeol, whose December declaration of martial law plunged the East Asian nation of 50 million into six months of political paralysis that concluded with Yoon's impeachment—and, after a snap poll, Lee's election.

Just over 100 days on, the new leader has moved with such speed that the chaos he encountered on his first day seems like a distant memory. In Seoul, one of the world's most densely populated cities, he has imposed a 600 million won (\$430,000) cap on mortgage loans for property purchases to quell an overheated housing market. A new labor law, meanwhile, has reduced legal liabilities for striking workers, and some \$10 billion of cash vouchers ranging from \$110 to \$330 have been distributed to every citizen, depending on income, to boost local businesses.

"One of my biggest accomplishments is that South Korea's domestic political situation has been stabilized," he says.

For all the action at home, perhaps his greatest challenge was external: the turbulence caused by Yoon's martial law declaration meant that South Korea languished half a year behind other nations in negotiating a new trade deal with the Trump Administration. Seoul and Washington

PHOTOGRAPH
BY HONG
JANG HYUN
FOR TIME

have had a free-trade agreement since 2012, and last year South Korea sent cars worth \$34.74 billion to the U.S.—accounting for about half of the Asian nation’s auto exports, a figure that plummeted when the Trump Administration imposed levies of 25%. On July 31, Lee negotiated a reduction to 15% in exchange for pledges to invest \$350 billion in the U.S. and other concessions.

It was a critical milestone—and one that is central to Lee’s plan to reenergize a moribund economy. The home of world-leading firms such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG spent decades at technology’s vanguard, but fortunes have wilted in recent years because of a stifling regulatory environment, demographic pressures, and fierce competition from China. After years of steady decline, South Korea’s GDP grew by only 2% in 2024, less than half the Asia-Pacific average.

Lee, who has hiked spending on science and technology by almost 20%, wants to turn things around by creating a “super innovation economy.” His government, he says, will invest \$71.5 billion over the next five years to transform South Korea into one of the top three AI nations worldwide. And in July, Tesla inked a \$16.5 billion deal to produce AI chips at Samsung’s new semiconductor foundry in Texas.

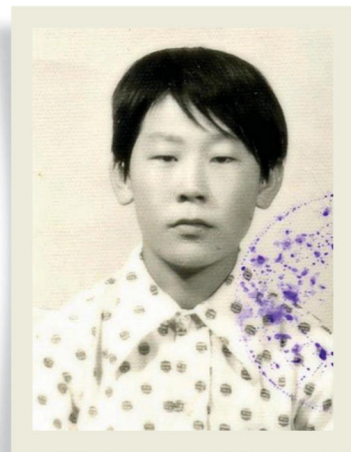
Geopolitically, Lee wants to position South Korea as a “bridge” between East and West. Leaders of Lee’s progressive Democratic Party have traditionally been closer to China, hostile toward former colonizer Japan, and kept the U.S. at arm’s length. Lee, however, pointedly made Tokyo his first foreign visit en route to Washington and pledged to work “as partners” with Japan’s Prime Minister in the neighbors’ first joint statement in 17 years.

Lee’s actions are meant to reboot South Korea. The West may think of his nation in terms of space-age technology and zeitgeist-defining cultural phenomena like *KPop Demon Hunters*, though in truth South Korea battles the lowest birth rate, top suicide rate, and highest youth unemployment of any developed nation. Lee is clear-eyed about the stakes. South Korea is in “a very serious crisis,” he says. “To address these issues, we need to bring our economy back on track for growth and increase opportunities for our people.”

His pitch is that securing South Korean prosperity and boosting its role in sensitive supply chains can help regional security too. In October, South Korea hosts the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation for the first time in 20 years, and Lee hopes the event—due to be attended by the leaders of both the U.S. and China—can catalyze his nation’s return to Asia’s top table.

However, threading the needle will not be easy. On the same day Lee sat down with *TIME* in Seoul, less than 600 miles away Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed Russia’s Vladimir Putin and North Korea’s Kim Jong Un to Beijing to commemorate 80 years since the end of World War II. Other dignitaries included the leaders of Iran, Belarus, and Myanmar—a motley cohort dubbed the “axis of upheaval” by the Western press—in a clear rebuke to the U.S.-led order. “I think China wanted me to attend, but I didn’t ask further,” laughs Lee.

Against this backdrop, critics say Lee may be tilting too close to historic ally the U.S. But there are also questions whether Washington remains a reliable partner, not least since the arrest by ICE officials of over 300 South Korean workers at a Hyundai Motor–LG car-battery factory in Georgia on Sept. 4, which prompted Lee’s Foreign Ministry to express “concern and regret.”



LEE’S 1978 HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION APPLICATION-FORM PHOTO



The Inauguration of the 21st President

Lee, however, insists South Korea remains well-placed to act as a “bridge of exchanges and cooperation” in the region by cementing ties with the White House. “We will stand together with the U.S. in the new global order, as well as supply chains centered on the U.S., but there is a need for us to manage our relationship with China so as not to antagonize them.” Otherwise, Lee concedes, there’s “a risk that South Korea could become the front line of a battle between two different blocs.”

‘WE WILL STAND TOGETHER WITH THE U.S. IN THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER.’

—LEE JAE-MYUNG

LEE IS NO STRANGER to a challenge. Born the fifth of seven children in a poor farming family in South Korea’s rural east, he would trudge daily for two hours

each way to elementary school before returning home to plow fields. Lee quit school at 13 and lied about his age to work in factories, where shady bosses would often withhold workers’ wages. At one job, Lee’s wrist was crushed in a pressing machine, an injury that left him officially designated as disabled. In constant pain, the young Lee even attempted suicide. Asked about his ascent from



LEE BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A LAWYER

Complex—where South Korean factories could access North Korean labor by the shared border. Though South Korea’s then President Park Geun-hye halted operations in response to North Korea’s fourth nuclear test, the new statement explicitly absolves Pyongyang of any responsibility, and has been framed by conservatives as kowtowing to the Kim regime.

A combination of these and other factors led Lee’s approval rating to fall from 63% in late July to 51% in mid-August. It has since rebounded to its previous high. The trigger? Lee’s successful courtship of—and negotiation with—Donald Trump.

THE SOUTH KOREAN LEADER played his hand deftly, arriving at the White House on Aug. 25 with a golf putter customized for Trump’s stature and engraved with his name, two cowboy hats emblazoned with MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, as well as a foot-long model of an ironclad turtle ship to symbolize Korea’s shipbuilding traditions. When the U.S. Commander in Chief took a liking to Lee’s pen, that was proffered too.

Then there were the compliments: about the Oval Office’s gaudy new decor, a surging stock market, Trump’s diplomatic prowess. “Many wars in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, and in the Middle East are coming to peace because of the role that you are playing,” Lee gushed.

There had been a sense of trepidation going into the meeting, with Trump posting on Truth Social just hours earlier: “WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOUTH KOREA?” and hinting at a “Purge or Revolution,” in reference to investigations into ex-President Yoon. Lee’s team feared they might be walking into the kind of ambush sprung on Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky or South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa. In the end, things were cordial, with Trump praising Lee as “a very good guy.” It helped, of course, that other than encomiums Lee brought hard cash—half a trillion dollars of it. Aside from the \$350 billion already agreed to, Lee unveiled an additional \$150 billion of investments in the U.S., including Korean Air Lines’ buying \$50 billion in Boeing.

But behind the scenes Lee faced tough questions about the \$350 billion investment fund he had put together for the U.S. Would it be all cash? And who would swallow any losses from the investments? The U.S. demands were so strict that “if I were to agree then I would be impeached!” says Lee. “So I asked the U.S. negotiating team for a reasonable alternative.”

With no agreement on these issues, it was perhaps unsurprising that Lee focused on praising Trump for his prior diplomatic success with Kim Jong Un, while urging him to re-engage with Pyongyang. Trump met three times with North Korea’s leader, including at the demilitarized zone that has split the peninsula since the 1950–53 Korean War. However, his budding bromance with Kim exploded dramatically at a summit in Hanoi in 2019, when both leaders left early while blaming each other for the failure to build on an earlier consensus on “denuclearization” achieved at a prior summit in Singapore.

For Lee, pushing for South Korean engagement is not without risk. Public opinion turned against his Democratic Party predecessor Moon Jae-in precisely because he appeared preoccupied with concessions to their Stalinist neighbors. Yet rekindling diplomacy’s greatest soap opera with Kim is something that does interest the U.S. President, who told reporters “I’d like to meet him this year.” And indulging Trump on Kim could help Lee downplay bugbears with Seoul. “Lee probably brought up North Korea to take Trump’s attention away from the trade and investment issues,” says Naomi Chi, a professor at Hokkaido University.

Trump’s yearning after a Nobel Peace Prize is no secret—Israel, Pakistan, and Cambodia have nominated him so far—and Lee may use that chimera to keep Trump onside. It’s also a diplomatic push that would



MAKING A HEART AT HIS JUNE 4 INAUGURATION

IN THE OVAL OFFICE WITH DONALD TRUMP ON AUG. 25

that nadir to his nation’s top job, Lee breaks into a bashful grin: “It was hard to die, and if I can’t die, why not live better?”

Much like his nation, rising from among the world’s poorest following the Korean War to ninth biggest economy in 2020 (it is 13th today), Lee’s life was poised for a remarkable turnaround. Despite no formal secondary education, he was accepted to law school and passed the national bar exam immediately after graduation. Following a period immersed in human- and labor-rights cases, he entered politics, serving first as Seongnam city mayor, and then later as governor of Gyeonggi province. He ran for President in 2022—but lost to Yoon by 0.7%.

Now finally in office, he faces economic headwinds. Alongside lackluster growth, South Korea’s national debt has surged to \$930 billion over the past year, raising questions about his ambitions to transform his nation into an AI superpower. Next year’s budget includes funding for 150,000 GPUs, or processors specialized for AI. But it isn’t even clear that South Korea’s creaking electricity grid, which is struggling to meet the country’s current needs, can keep up with Lee’s ambitions.

Lee has also courted criticism for pardoning controversial allies, and over a formal apology for the 2016 shutdown of the Kaesong Industrial

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT, COURTESY OF THE LEE JAE-MYUNG PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN (2); CHIP SOMODEVILLA—GETTY IMAGES; LEE JIN-MAN—POOL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



▲
PRESIDENT LEE
AT WORK IN HIS
OFFICE ON SEPT. 3

necessitate engaging Pyongyang's chief sponsor Beijing, possibly lowering the temperature between the world's top two economies and elevating South Korea's global standing as Lee's "bridge."

Asked whether he would nominate Trump for a Nobel Peace Prize for rapprochement with the North, Lee replied that "if there is concrete progress on this issue . . . there is no other person who would deserve that prize."

THE PROBLEM IS defining progress. Few believe Kim would countenance relinquishing his nuclear deterrence, given the fates of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein, both toppled after abandoning their weapons programs. "The best the U.S. could hope for is nuclear arms talks, not denuclearization," says Kim Chol-min, a Seoul-based North Korean defector who used to handle the leadership's secret funds and uses a pseudonym for security. "All sanctions lifted in return for partial destruction of nuclear weapons."

But rolling back the strict U.N. sanctions regime imposed in 2017, which has rendered economic cooperation between Seoul and Pyongyang virtually impossible, would be hugely controversial. Still, a focus on arms control makes sense. North Korea is estimated to wield at least 50 nuclear bombs and may have the capacity to produce 10 to 20 annually. Lee points out how North Korea agreed in 1994 to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for heavy oil and light water reactors. (The deal collapsed in 2003.) He advocates "negotiations to partially ease or lift sanctions" on North Korea in exchange for a three-stage process: arms suspension, reduction, and finally denuclearization. "And I believe that President Trump would be on the same page."

—
**'IT WAS HARD
TO DIE. AND IF
I CAN'T DIE, WHY
NOT LIVE BETTER?'**

—LEE JAE-MYUNG

Of course, any deal depends on North Korea's willingness to sit down. But today the regime is flush with an estimated \$20 billion reaped from arms sales to aid Putin's war in Ukraine, and Lee's conciliatory measures have been met with scornful ripostes. Last year, Kim symbolically demolished the Arch of Reunification in Pyongyang while his influential sister Kim Yo Jong dismissed Lee's remarks about restoring inter-Korea trust as "a fancy and pipe dream."

In the end, even failure may serve a purpose. While Trump's previous North Korea engagement flopped by any objective measure, it probably didn't in the mind of the former reality-TV star, for whom success is measured in column inches, breaking-news alerts, and shattered protocol. We live at a moment when flattery is strategy, and Lee's providing Trump the stage he craves may be a canny act of distraction diplomacy from a leader who knows more

than most about beating the odds.

"Korean people have an indomitable will," says Lee. "My life trajectory has similarities. Although there are many difficulties in front of us, I believe that we will be able to prevail." —*With reporting* by STEPHEN KIM/SEOUL □

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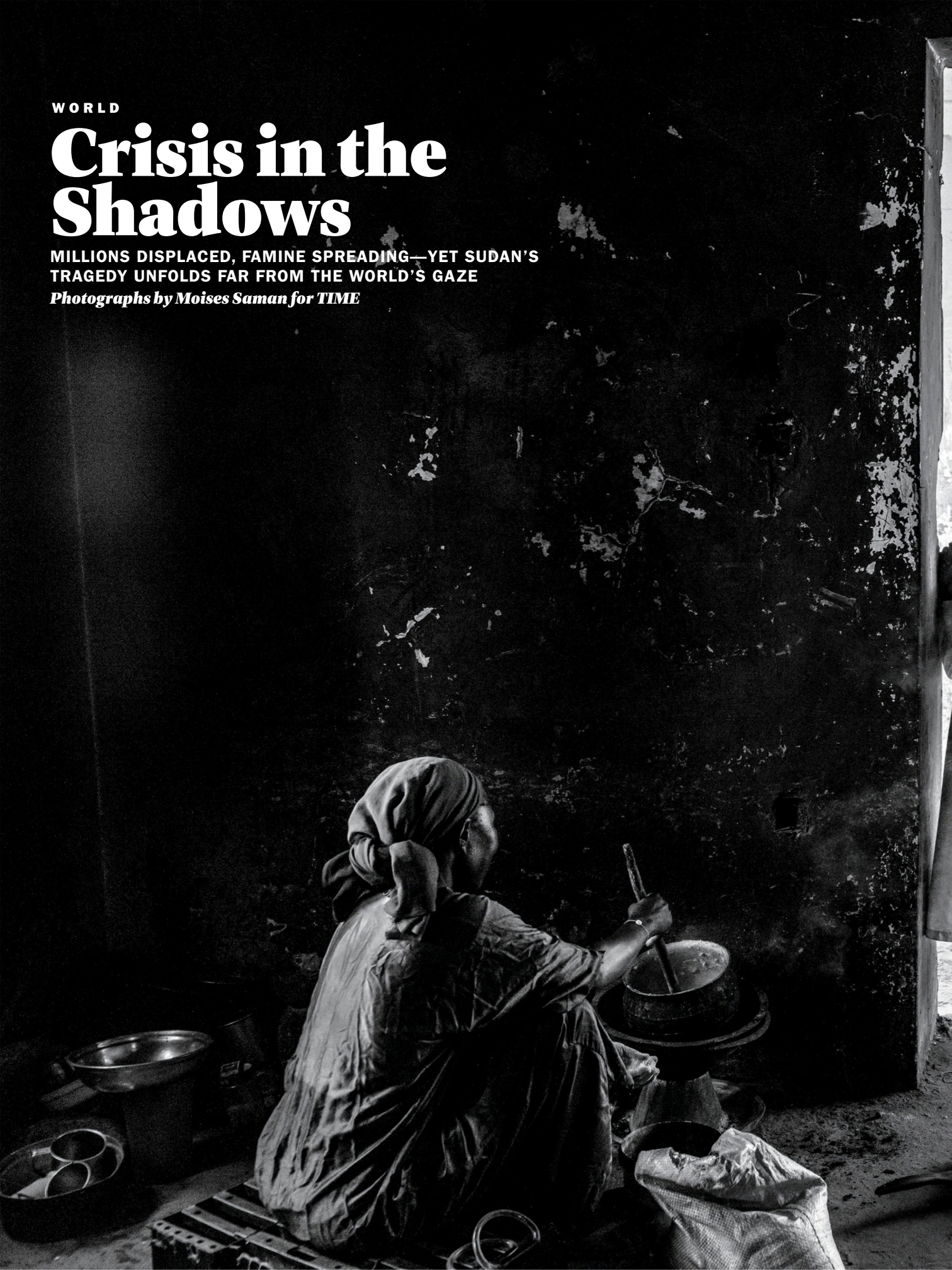


WORLD

Crisis in the Shadows

MILLIONS DISPLACED, FAMINE SPREADING—YET SUDAN'S TRAGEDY UNFOLDS FAR FROM THE WORLD'S GAZE

Photographs by Moises Saman for TIME





A woman cooks in the shadows of a former orphanage while children move through adjoining rooms, now converted into living quarters for families displaced from Khartoum. The abandoned compound on the outskirts of Al Junaynah, in West Darfur state, shelters dozens who fled Sudan's civil war.

Invisible anguish is especially wretched. That has been Sudan's lot during two years of brutal civil war—slaughter that has claimed some 150,000 lives and forced almost a quarter of its population of 50 million to flee their homes.

Yet this forgotten war has received scant attention from an international community preoccupied with carnage in Ukraine and Gaza, and rising tensions in East Asia. That Sudan's plight remains largely hidden is what struck Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Moises Saman when he spent almost two weeks in Darfur, and Sudanese refugee camps in neighboring Chad, in July and August. A veteran of covering conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya, and Syria, Saman hitched rides on U.N. planes and trudged along mud tracks to reach this arcane frontier at Africa's beating heart. By embedding with the international NGO Médecins Sans Frontières, or Doctors Without Borders, he photographed maimed civilians, grieving mothers, and children conjuring games from the trash of people who have nothing to spare.

“What makes this conflict unique is the fact that it's in the shadows,” says Saman. “This huge civil war is having such deep humanitarian consequences but has not been given the attention it deserves.”

It's a conflict that officially began in April 2023 when a vicious power struggle erupted between Sudan's armed forces and its powerful Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group. But the



Two Sudanese boys rest on a rocky hill overlooking the vast sprawl of Aboutengue refugee camp, home to tens of thousands who fled Sudan's West Darfur region. The camp, near Chad's eastern border with Sudan, became a haven after fighting erupted in 2023. Many here belong to the Masalit ethnic group, which bore the brunt of targeted attacks and mass killings by militias aligned with the RSF.



underlying tribal, religious, and political tensions have simmered for decades. Many of the tens of thousands who fled to Aboutengue refugee camp in eastern Chad belong to Sudan's Masalit ethnic group, whose slaughter by militias aligned with the RSF was declared a genocide by the U.S. in January, echoing an earlier genocide designation in 2004.

At Aboutengue, Saman documented how limited access to clean water, shortages of food, and overstretched health services compound the trauma of displacement. Meanwhile, the onset of the rainy season has exacerbated already deplorable conditions, transforming dust into thick sludge, flooding fragile shelters, and bringing swarms of malaria-carrying mosquitoes. Recent aid cuts have deepened hardships for families. Relief organizations estimate that the Trump Administration's slashing of USAID has shuttered 4 of every 5 emergency food kitchens catering to displaced Sudanese.

The U.N. estimates 7 million women and girls in Sudan have lost access to essential reproductive health services, leading to a spike in stillbirths, preventable maternal deaths, and newborn mortality. Saman photographed 24-year-old Khadija, who uses an alias for security and fled the capital Khartoum while eight months pregnant.

"We escaped as explosions hit near our house," she told him. "We left with nothing." Khadija underwent a clandestine cesarean in a makeshift clinic only for her baby to die hours later.

By traveling across the border into RSF-controlled western Darfur, Saman also met rebel combatants and captured the sorrows of their wounded fighters and bereaved kin.

"What I found interesting is the parallels in how the civilian population is suffering," says Saman. "Be it families aligned with the RSF, or fleeing the RSF, they find themselves displaced, under a lot of stress, without access to proper food, medical attention, or shelter. It speaks to how this war is affecting everybody."

Sadly, it's also a conflict without any glimmer of resolution. For while historic animosities fuel the fighting, Sudan is yet another proxy conflict between the Middle East's squabbling theocracies, with Qatar and Iran major backers of the Sudanese government, and the UAE bankrolling the RSF, according to U.N. sanctions monitors. (Abu Dhabi steadfastly denies stoking the bloodshed.)

The grim irony of Sudan's predicament is that Africa's third largest country boasts significant mineral reserves, including huge quantities of gold, as well as vast swathes of arable land. Yet foreign powers feuding over these precious resources have destroyed countless lives as well as any hope of a prosperous future. Adds Saman: "These are people that just want to survive until tomorrow." —CHARLIE CAMPBELL



▲
▲
An RSF fighter mans a checkpoint on Krending bridge, which spans the Wadi Kaja river. The bridge was partially destroyed by surge waters during last year's rainy season, underscoring the compounded nature of Sudan's crises: armed conflict layered over environmental vulnerability. The war, now in its third year, has fractured the Darfur region into isolated enclaves controlled by rival forces. Civilians navigate both violence and failing infrastructure to survive.



^
^
In a former classroom on the outskirts of Al Junaynah, families displaced from Khartoum make their home among chalk-covered walls and broken furniture.

The blackboard still bears English lessons on pronouns and nouns. With fronts sprawling across Sudan, the war has paralyzed normal life in the nation of 50 million.

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^
Families wait inside Al Junaynah Teaching Hospital, one of the few public hospitals still functioning in West Darfur, supported by Médecins Sans Frontières. Once a regional referral center, it now operates under extreme strain as Sudan's war enters its second year, with thousands injured in fighting and an escalating health crisis driven by displacement, hunger, and disease. Most medical facilities in the region have been destroyed or abandoned, forcing the remaining hospitals to care for overwhelming numbers with limited staff, scarce medicines, and almost no international funding.

^
A woman under a mosquito net reclines beside her child in a former orphanage on the outskirts of Al Junaynah. Families displaced from Khartoum by Sudan's civil war sleep under nets to guard against malaria, which surges during the rainy season and is the leading killer of children under age 5.





◀◀ Malaz Barra Adam, 22, a youth leader in Aboutengue refugee camp, lost two brothers to Arab militias aligned with the RSF during ethnic violence in Al Junaynah. Since fleeing Sudan in 2023, she has lived with her family in this sprawling camp just inside the border of Chad that is now home to tens of thousands of displaced people. Life here is a daily struggle. The current rainy season has turned narrow footpaths into deep mud, flooded fragile shelters, and contaminated water sources, compounding health risks. Malaz does not believe she will ever return to Sudan. Her greatest hope is to finish her education and help other young refugees find a path forward amid the uncertainty of exile.

◀ Salah Bakir, 30, leans on crutches inside a dimly lit room of a former orphanage now serving as a shelter on the outskirts of Al Junaynah. A civilian from Khartoum, Salah was injured during clashes in the capital before fleeing west with his family. Like thousands of others displaced by a war between rival generals, he now lives in an abandoned building hundreds of miles from his home.



Hussein Al Jubir, 25, recovers at a hospital in West Darfur after losing parts of both legs during an airstrike involving the RSF and the Sudanese armed forces. Since erupting in 2023, the internecine war has killed tens of thousands, displaced millions, and left hospitals looted and destroyed.

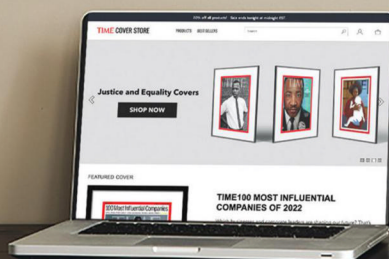


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TIME

Latino Leaders

*From ENTERTAINMENT to ACTIVISM,
SPORTS to SPACE, these 12 PEOPLE
are making their MARK on their
FIELDS, the U.S., and the WORLD*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARISOL ORTEGA FOR TIME



Daniel Lubetzky

Investing in change

Daniel Lubetzky, the Mexican American businessman who turned Kind snack bars into a global powerhouse, started his first company right out of law school: a joint venture between Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians, and Turks to produce and distribute a line of spreadable pastes. “Trade among peoples breaks stereotypes,” says Lubetzky, 57, who is now perhaps best known for being one of the Sharks on ABC’s *Shark Tank*. “It cements relations between people.”

While the business did not survive, and did not lead to lasting peace in the region, Lubetzky has not given up on the benefits of bringing people together. These days he devotes more of his time and resources—he’s worth a reported \$2.3 billion—to an effort called Builders, focusing on media, education, and civic action. “A builder is a moderate that takes action,” he says. A pilot project in Tennessee convened people to discuss ways to reduce gun violence and helped lead to the passage of a state law.

Lubetzky believes ordinary people can get leaders to do the right thing, even in a situation as complex as Gaza: “We need to create a condition so that this never happens again, so that you never allow extremists on either side to take people in an extremist, absolutist path that denies the humanity of the other side. Or else we’re going to condemn all peoples to an eternal battleground.”

—Belinda Luscombe



IGNACIO ‘NACHO’ JIMENEZ

Shaking up the cocktail scene

Even as a kid growing up in León, Mexico, Ignacio “Nacho” Jimenez loved food, but he didn’t consider it a career path until he moved to the U.S. and started working in restaurants. Still, as he navigated the industry, he found that prestigious establishments didn’t take him seriously. “Back then, working in Mexican restaurants didn’t mean a thing in terms of experience,” says Jimenez, 47. “And I had a Mexican accent as well.”

He kept at it, though, and eventually he began looking for ways to connect to his roots through his work. “I hadn’t really explored that part of myself,” he says. “I’d kind of been hiding it away in order for me to be accepted.”

Today, he runs Superbueno, a Mexican American cocktail bar in New York City. In June, he won the James Beard Award for Outstanding Professional in Cocktail Service, which he calls “validation” for his hard work. “I always wanted to challenge the way that we looked at Mexican food, culture, the way that you think we do things,” he says, “so my menu is designed with that intention.”

—Chantelle Lee



DAPHNE FRIAS

Climate storyteller

Daphne Frias, who lives with cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair for mobility, has highlighted her own experiences and those of her local community to advocate for climate and public-health solutions that are inclusive of everyone. She tells the story, for instance, of growing up in a Dominican family in West Harlem and commuting from her predominantly Spanish-speaking, immigrant neighborhood to downtown Manhattan for school: “I even saw the differences in air quality,” says Frias, now 27. “I would wake up in the morning and it’d be really hazy and foggy, and then as we got downtown, the air would clear up.”

Last fall she joined a conversation with U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres about the importance of listening to youth voices. In 2023, she served as lead accessibility consultant for the March to End Fossil Fuels. “The more that we continue to silo disability and climate,” she says, “the further we will actually be from creating equitable climate solutions.” —Simmons Shah

LIZA COLÓN-ZAYAS

Tenacious performer

When Liza Colón-Zayas became the first Latina to win the Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series, in 2024, for her performance on *The Bear*, she expressed shock that she'd won in a field that included Meryl Streep and Carol Burnett. Then, clutching her trophy, she said, "To all the Latinas who are looking at me, keep believing."

Her victory doubled as a triumph for the women of her community. "It's important to me that people who look like me not give in to feeling discouraged," says Colón-Zayas, 53, who is of Puerto Rican descent and has been acting for more than three decades. "I felt that for so long about myself."

Now up for a second Emmy, Colón-Zayas intends to use her platform to promote "authentic, empowered, and layered" representation. —*Judy Berman*



Gustavo Ajche

Deliveries with dignity

In the past couple of years, delivery workers in New York City have won crucial protections thanks in large part to the organizing efforts of Los Deliveristas Unidos, a collective co-founded by Gustavo Ajche. A Guatemalan immigrant who arrived in New York in 2004, Ajche got his start delivering pizzas and saw how little power delivery workers had to protect themselves from terrible working conditions. “A lot of delivery workers face bad things but think that because they’re an immigrant, they don’t have the right to speak up,” he says.

Los Deliveristas Unidos has secured a string of victories: bathroom access, tip transparency, a minimum wage of \$21.44 an hour. In February, New York State Attorney General Letitia James announced a \$16.75 million settlement with DoorDash for using tips to subsidize delivery workers’ guaranteed pay. And New York City is constructing the first federally funded “Deliverista Hub,” for workers to charge their phones and access other services between deliveries.

Ajche, 41, sees a disconnect between how people think about delivery workers and the food they order. “They don’t like immigrants, but they use our labor,” he says. “We’re fighting for dignity for working-class people.” —Andrew R. Chow



ISABEL ALLENDE

Iconic author

OVER THE COURSE OF HER CELEBRATED career, Isabel Allende has published 31 books, with her works translated into 42 languages. If that output seems impressive, it can at least in part be attributed to ritual. “I start all my books on Jan. 8, and I often don’t have an idea what I’m doing,” she confesses.

Allende, who was born in 1942 to Chilean-diplomat parents in Peru, lived in Santiago for much of her first three decades but was forced to flee her homeland after Chile’s 1973 military coup. She spent 13 years in Venezuela, where she wrote her debut novel, *The House of Spirits*. By the time she moved to the U.S.

in the late ’80s, she was already a best-selling author.

The recipient of such accolades as the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters from the National Book Foundation, Allende points to “pain and love” as themes that permeate her work.

“And by pain I mean loss, separation, death,” she says, “but there’s this other side, this luminal side that is love that permeates everything.” In her description of the latest novel, *My Name Is Emilia del Valle*, she suggests another unifying thread as well: “I like to give voice to those who have been silenced—women, the people who are defeated, the people of color,” she says. “I mean, history is always written by the white men and the winners.” —Juwairiah Wright



TOM LLAMAS

Reporting the facts

As the first Latino anchor and managing editor of *NBC Nightly News*, Tom Llamas knows he has one job. “I am a Hispanic reporter, but I’m a reporter,” he says. “I think my value, and the value of NBC News, is that you’re just going to get the news.”

Llamas, 46, was born in Miami to Cuban immigrants. Because his parents had fled communism, “I think they really realized that things like freedom of the press, voting, being an educated citizen, all those things are incredibly

important,” he says. He started interning at Telemundo at 15 and has worked at ABC and NBC, covering top news stories like the Lahaina wildfires, the war in Ukraine, the death of Pope Francis, and the 2024 presidential election.

Llamas, who succeeded Lester Holt in June, takes the anchor chair at a time when more Americans are getting their news from social media than from TV, according to a May YouGov poll, and digital platforms are eclipsing news organizations as trusted sources. Still, he says, in a world of social media chatter and AI-fueled aggregation, the work he and his colleagues do is more important than ever. —Charlotte Alter



Katya Echazarreta

Space advocate

In 2022, Katya Echazarreta became the second Mexican—and the first Mexican woman—to travel to space, launching aboard a Blue Origin rocket. The flight lasted little more than 10 minutes, but back on earth, Echazarreta, 30, hopes to make her influence felt in a far more enduring way.

She has become a fierce champion of space innovation, establishing her own foundation—the Fundación Espacial Katya Echazarreta—which provides free admission to space camp for kids from Mexico and around the world. And she has lobbied to broaden two provisions in the Mexican constitution so that they cite space as a sector to be prioritized for development and give the legislature the power to pass appropriate laws. The amendments have been approved by the Chamber of Deputies and are pending before the Senate.

Also on her résumé: a Barbie in her likeness as part of Mattel’s “Role Models” series, a Mexican *Vogue* cover, and appearances on CBS’s *Mission Unstoppable*. And she has over 400,000 followers on Instagram and TikTok. Having given birth to her first child last year, Echazarreta has a newfound sense of investment. “I believe that as a mother, and particularly as a Latina Hispanic woman,” she says, “it’s important to continue with these goals and dreams, which are going to prove to be very important for the next generations.” —Jeffrey Kluger



KARL-ANTHONY TOWNS

All-Star athlete

Although Karl-Anthony Towns grew up in Piscataway, N.J., as a fan of the New York Knicks, his Olympic dreams lie elsewhere. At the 2028 Games, Towns hopes to represent the Dominican Republic, the birthplace of his late mother and a country he’s forged close ties to, having first competed for the Dominican national team when he was 15. In 2024, Towns announced he was providing major funding for a youth basketball training facility near the city of Santiago. The arena will also include classroom space. “They gave my mother life,” says Towns, 29, of the DR. “It’s only right I give them mine.”

His other priority, of course, is helping New York win its first NBA title in 53 years, while rallying the city’s 700,000-strong Dominican population behind him. “I know you want me to find words,” he says, “but words can’t describe how bad I want to win a ring.” —Sean Gregory



MARCELLO HERNÁNDEZ

Mining life for laughs

Marcello Hernández loves to work. He may be most recognized for his *Saturday Night Live* characters like the Latino heartthrob Domingo and Bad Bunny's nephew, but he's also been busy outside the show: He was in *Happy Gilmore 2*, shot the upcoming film *72 Hours*, and is preparing for a Netflix special through his 30-show comedy tour.

Though the political landscape has shifted with wholesale immigration crackdowns and a President demanding fealty from media, Hernández, 28, says he doesn't consider himself "a very political person." He does not, however, shy away from making his background central to his comedy. "If you come to my show, you'll see it's a big part of my identity—the fact that I was raised by immigrants—and I'm very grateful for that," says Hernández, whose mom is from Cuba and dad is from the Dominican Republic. "I'm the first American in my family, and I realize that the opportunities that I have are because my parents were able to leave their country and come here."

At *SNL*, he says, the funniest material wins. "If people laugh in the writers' room, and at the dress rehearsal, and if the host and the musical guests like it, you have a chance," Hernández says. "I never have to be like, 'Can I please speak Spanish this week, Lorne?'" —*Solcyré Burga*





ISABELA MERCED

Ascendant actor

IN THE PAST 14 MONTHS, ISABELA Merced has appeared in Fede Alvarez's *Alien: Romulus*, Season 2 of HBO's *The Last of Us*, and James Gunn's *Superman*. But Merced, 24, has no plans to rest on these giant franchises. Her next two projects, lower-budget indies that are both directed by Latina women and produced by Merced or her friends, excite her just as much as the blockbusters. "They're the opposite of what I've been doing recently, and a reminder to myself that I'm not just an actor—I'm also capable of creating my own stories," she says.

Merced, who changed her stage

name from "Moner" to "Merced" in honor of her maternal grandmother and her pride in her heritage, is constantly working to center Latino voices on her social media as well as in her music career. She sings in both English and Spanish, and in August released a song in collaboration with Tony Succar—the first Peruvian to win a Grammy Award.

It's "stupid," Merced says, when people think artists should keep their views to themselves, and she regularly highlights the centrality of her Peruvian identity, her queerness, and her political values in life. "Before I was even an artist, I was an American citizen, and I am proudly a daughter of an immigrant," she says.

—Rebecca Schneid

Emma Rodriguez-Ayala

Valuing women's sports

Emma Rodriguez-Ayala, the general counsel and chief administrative officer at Ariel Investments—a Chicago-based firm with \$13.5 billion in assets under management—spent a healthy chunk of 2024 delving into the analytics of women's sports. What she and her colleagues found was compelling. Given recent increases in viewership and attendance, media rights for leagues like the WNBA and National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) are tremendously undervalued.

In January, Ariel announced the launch of Project Level, the company's first fund focused on women's sports investments, with Rodriguez-Ayala, 43, running its day-to-day operations. It has already invested in the NWSL's expansion team in Denver, which begins play next season, and League One Volleyball, a network of some 2,000 youth teams that also started a professional league this year. The fund hopes to raise at least \$500 million to build out its portfolio.

Rodriguez-Ayala, who hails from Mayagüez, P.R., hopes to show young professionals who look like her that they, too, can make waves. "It's something that I think about a lot," she says. "People know they can be in the room." —Sean Gregory



KiD

A TALENTED CODER
AND TIRELESS
VOLUNTEER, TEJASVI
AIMS TO GIVE BACK

PHOTOGRAPH BY
ZERB MELLISH
FOR TIME

LEO

THE UNNAMED CYBERCRIMINALS trying to scam seniors out of their money got more than they bargained for when they targeted Tejasvi Manoj's grandfather back in February 2024. Tejasvi, then a 16-year-old junior at Lebanon Trail High School in Frisco, Texas, was driving home from Scouting America camp with her father when he suddenly noticed five missed calls on his phone—all from his 85-year-old father. He called back, and the older man reported that he had received an urgent email from another relative, Tejasvi's uncle, asking for \$2,000 to settle an unexpected debt. Given the apparent emergency, Tejasvi's grandfather was prepared to transfer the funds—but her father urged him not to and the grandfather, at the suggestion of his wife, then called the uncle to see if the request was legitimate.

"I never asked you for money," came the response. "Please don't send anything until I can look into what's going on."

It was a near miss for the unsuspecting senior. The fact that criminals would seek to take advantage of an old man's lack of sophistication about the workings of the internet galled Tejasvi. When she got home she went to her room and immediately began researching how common such scams are. *Very common*, it turns out.

THROUGH HER HARD WORK, 17-YEAR-OLD TEJASVI MANOJ HOPES TO CREATE A SAFER WORLD FOR SENIORS

BY JEFFREY KLUGER

In 2024, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center received nearly 860,000 reports of scams, with potential losses exceeding \$16 billion. Of those, acts of fraud targeting people over the age of 60 accounted for nearly \$5 billion, a 32% increase over the previous year. Seniors represent a target-rich cohort for the bad guys. They're typically retired, sitting on pensions and 401(k)s, and may be naive to the techniques favored by con artists and reprobates who run riot on the internet. According to the Federal Trade Commission, the number of older adults who lost more than \$10,000 to online scams increased fourfold from 2020 to 2024. For those who lost \$100,000 or more, the increase was sevenfold, for a total of \$445 million in 2024 alone. And none of those figures includes losses victims were too embarrassed to report.

"Tejasvi was surprised that there was such a lack of awareness among her grandparents," says Aishwarya Manoj, her mother. "It was like, Why did you not know? That's when she went on with her research and found out that it was not an isolated case with her grandparents, but a much larger problem."

OLDER AMERICANS clearly need protection, and Tejasvi was determined to

provide it. Within the year she had built and launched Shield Seniors, a website designed to educate the 60-plus demographic about what online scams look like, analyze suspicious emails and messages users upload, and, if the communications prove fraudulent, provide links to report them. The site is currently available in a private preview mode only, pending more R&D

TEAM

YEAR



TEJASVI PRACTICING MARTIAL ARTS AS A MIDDLE SCHOOLER



PRESENTING SHIELD SENIORS AT THE TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL IDEAS CHALLENGE



SCOUTING TOOK TEJASVI INTO THE COCKPIT, WHERE SHE EARNED HER AVIATION BADGE



and fundraising, but is already—like its creator—making itself known. Tejasvi was recognized with an honorable mention in the 2024 Congressional App Challenge; delivered a 2025 TEDx talk in Plano, Texas, about the need to build “digital bridges” to all demographics; and makes occasional appearances at local assisted-living facilities, demonstrating her website and teaching seminars about cybercrime.

“I remember going to my first seminar and I was super nervous,” says Tejasvi, whose work has earned her recognition as TIME’s Kid of the Year for 2025—and as the first such honoree to also be a TIME for Kids Service Star, taking part in our sister publication’s program highlighting young people making a positive impact. “What if no one shows up? What if I totally mess up?” She didn’t mess up—totally or otherwise. “There were so many people who were really interested—taking notes on their notepads, which was really nice. At the end some of them came up to me with questions, and I was able to help them.”

Shield Seniors didn’t come easy. For one thing, Tejasvi had a lot of other activities to attend to. She is active in Scouting America—recently receiving her Eagle Scout rank—and plays violin in her school orchestra. She tutors Bhutanese refugees online in math and English through an organization called Vibha, a nonprofit involved in

workforce and scholastic development in India. She also does volunteer work—serving on the leadership board of the North Texas Food Bank Young Advocates Council and packing meals, with the social-enterprise company TangoTab, for families facing food insecurity.

“I started volunteering in sixth grade,” she says. “I think it’s really important; if you’re lucky yourself, you want to make sure other people feel loved and lucky too.”

SHIELD SENIORS PRESENTED another way to do that, and Tejasvi was well prepared to do the coding that would make the project possible. Both of her parents work in the IT domain—in fact, her father Manoj Ganapathy adds, “everyone in my family is into tech”—and she grew up fluent in the language of computers.

Tejasvi began coding in eighth grade, taking cybersecurity classes and attending summer programs sponsored by the nonprofit Girls Who Code. She has also gotten involved in CyberPatriot, a joint

‘GOING TO MY FIRST SEMINAR I WAS SUPER NERVOUS. WHAT IF NO ONE SHOWS UP?’

—TEJASVI MANOJ

Air Force and Space Force program to spark interest in cybersecurity and STEM disciplines among young people.

“I code mostly in Java and Python, and a bit of HTML,” Tejasvi says. “I really love the fact that you can solve problems with your computer, and I really like creating.”

Throughout the development of the site she tapped her on-site experts—her parents—for help, and reached outside the home too. Aarathi Rajamanickam, a neighbor and software-engineering manager in the banking sector, has served as Tejasvi’s mentor for several years and regularly provided counsel.

“Because I work in cybersecurity I see these kinds of [fraud] cases come by on an almost daily basis,” says Rajamanickam. “For Shield Seniors I’ve been a mentor, I’ve been a guide, I’ve been a sounding board.”

Then, in February, after an early version of the site was ready, a story about Shield Seniors and Tejasvi appeared in the *Dallas Observer*, bringing her to the attention of the people at AARP. “They set up a meeting where I walked them through the website, and they were very impressed,” Tejasvi said in a follow-up email to TIME. “They provided feedback and guidance, and shared my work on LinkedIn, helping me connect with a wider network of people.”

The website that has resulted from all of this work is equal parts intuitive, smart, and artful. Shield Seniors is divided into four principal sections. The first is labeled “Learn,” and helps users master the basics of internet security, such as the importance of creating strong passwords, understanding privacy settings, knowing what information to share and what not to share, and, most important, recognizing what a scam looks like. “Make sure to be aware of common tactics used to scam seniors, such as by creating fake charities,” the website reads. “Be careful with unexpected messages, especially those that rush you or seem too good to be true.”

The second section, labeled “Ask,” takes users to a chatbot that answers questions. Interacting with a population that was already approaching middle age when the internet appeared, Tejasvi’s bot keeps its answers simple—holding them to two sentences or even less.



ORA DEVELOPERS – A Beautiful Balancing Act

In an era in which companies vie to demonstrate their sustainable credentials, ORA Developers stands out as a company that has successfully balanced environmental responsibility with luxury destination creation. “Sustainability is what’s going to drive us forward in terms of preserving the Earth,” says Khaled Morgan, the company’s chief development officer.



Khaled Morgan
CDO of ORA Developers

Founded in 2016 by Egyptian entrepreneur Naguib Sawiris, ORA Developers quickly made a name for itself with the quality and creativity of its luxury residential projects. One of its signature developments is Silversands North Coast, a coastal site that includes mixed-use retail, entertainment, and residential units. Guided by the philosophy that “space is luxury,” its commercial areas are blended for synergy, while its residential units overlook landscaped gardens, large open courtyards, or the immensely popular Zed East Sports Club.

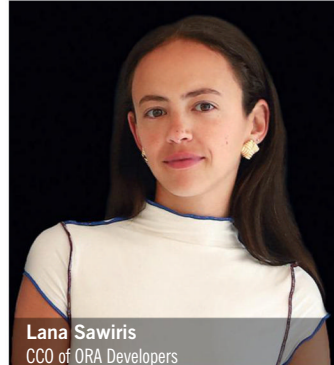
“What sets ORA apart is our ability to deliver scale with soul,” says Morgan. “We don’t just build projects, we build communities.”

ORA Developers’ projects span four continents and are symbols of global excellence in Grenada, Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, Pakistan -- and now the United Arab Emirates, where work is well under way on the Bayn development. A brand new 4.8-million-square-meter-master-planned coastal community, the Bayn project lies halfway between Abu Dhabi and Dubai and will be home to approximately 32,000 residents.

Designed around the principle of the “15-minute city,” Bayn combines natural landscapes, open spaces, and contemporary living in one destination. It is anchored by a marina, beach, lagoon, parks, schools, healthcare, and a business park. Like Zed East, it is built to deliver a fully self-sufficient lifestyle with a strong focus on mobility, nature, and human connection.

“At ORA, balance isn’t just a design principle, it’s in our DNA,” says Lana Sawiris, chief commercial officer at the company. “We’ve always believed the most meaningful spaces are the ones that create harmony between people and place, nature and innovation, culture and possibility. That belief touches everything we do, from the way we design communities to how we shape everyday living.”

Bayn was born from that philosophy and, with a name derived from the Arabic word for ‘between’, it is not just a meeting point between Abu Dhabi and Dubai but also one between land and sea, privacy and connection, and stillness and energy. “To us, Bayn is balance made physical,” says



Lana Sawiris
CCO of ORA Developers

Lana, “and when everything’s in the right place, you can just feel it.”

The company’s expansion strategy reflects a balanced approach to growth, with Morgan estimating that the management team devotes half its time to strengthening existing operations and the other half to pursuing new opportunities globally. He believes this dual focus enables the company to identify and develop new opportunities, while simultaneously ensuring that

established properties receive continued investment and refinement.

“We aren’t just developers who walk away when we hand over a project,” says Morgan. “When we deliver the units to our customers, we are also very much concerned with the experience they’re going to have after that. This applies to hotel guests as much as to somebody who has bought a villa or an apartment.”

Another of ORA Developers’ defining characteristics in the luxury development space is its integration of sustainability as a core business principle, rather than an afterthought or marketing add-on. This has been especially evident at Bayn, which is situated in a region where fresh water is at a premium and summer temperatures make it almost impossible to walk outside.

To address these challenges, Morgan and his team developed a master plan designed to work with the environment—harnessing the climate to maximize solar energy use. They also planned an EV-friendly road network to reduce the average number of car trips, and devised water reuse systems to irrigate Bayn’s green spaces.

By embedding such sustainable practices into their core business model, ORA is building resilience against future environmental regulations while appealing to increasingly eco-conscious luxury consumers.

Today, the company manages a real estate portfolio with an estimated total sales value of over \$43 billion, spread across 35 million square meters of land, at an investment cost of \$25 billion. The ORA story is still unfolding, particularly in the UAE, which Morgan notes has proved to be an extremely accommodating business environment. Last year, for example, the company entered into an agreement with the U.S.-based real estate specialist DLC to develop Discovery Dunes, an exclusive members-only residential community outside Dubai.

With its carefully calibrated approach, ORA Developers is poised for even greater growth.





“If you ask ChatGPT or Gemini questions about cybersecurity, they are going to give you, like, 10 paragraphs of answers with very hard-to-understand terminology,” she says. “That works for some people, but it doesn’t work for most older adults.”

“What her portal does, for lack of a better word, is to dumb it down,” says Rajamanickam, “to kind of make it very simple.”

The third section, labeled “Analyze,” is where the true brains of the site live. When users click this tab they’re directed to a page that allows them to upload a suspicious text or email, which an AI system will then analyze with what Tejasvi says is 95% accuracy at determining what’s a scam and what’s not a scam. Then, it goes beyond just providing a digital thumbs-up or down.

“It will also explain why,” she says, “because our goal for Shield Seniors is to make sure older adults are independent and know what to look for. We want to make sure they’re able to navigate the online world confidently, with independence, and with dignity.”

Finally, the site includes a “Report” section that allows users to rat the fraudsters out. The site provides links to 14 private and government groups that accept and act on complaints, including the FBI, the Better Business Bureau, the Social Security Administration, AARP,

the SEC, and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Just which group is the right one to contact depends on just which kind of fraud was committed. The FBI, for example, is a sort of one-stop-shopping site for all manner of cybercrime, including identity theft, computer intrusions, investment fraud, phishing, and ransomware. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau responds to complaints involving financial products and services including bank accounts, credit reports, and payments made or requested.

“This is supposed to bring people a sense of ‘You’re not alone,’” says Tejasvi. “A lot of people are embarrassed that they got scammed, but this isn’t something you should be embarrassed about. It’s just a learning experience. You should report it to help make sure it doesn’t happen to anyone else.”

SHIELD SENIORS IS a formidable site, with a formidable array of resources provided to give users redress—or

‘OUR GOAL FOR SHIELD SENIORS IS TO MAKE SURE OLDER ADULTS ARE INDEPENDENT.’

—TEJASVI MANOJ

at least the satisfaction that they’ve blown the whistle on bad actors doing bad things in what should be a safe public space. The site itself is made to feel safe too. Tejasvi designed it with large-font type to make text easier to see and read, and a soft, blue theme intended to be soothing to people who may come to the site fresh from a scam and be fearful or frazzled. Tejasvi test-drove early versions of the site with her grandparents and other older members of her community before she settled on its current design.

Still, Shield Seniors is very much a work in progress. It currently relies on a free AI engine, which limits its power and the size of the audience it can host—hence its private preview status. Tejasvi’s fundraising work is partly devoted to allowing her to transition to a larger, commercial AI platform. “We plan to open it to a wider audience once we secure funding to support broader access,” she said.

Meantime, like every other high school senior, Tejasvi is looking ahead. For college, she plans to apply to at least one school close to home—the University of Texas, Austin—as well farther afield, with her eye on schools ranging from Georgia Tech to Purdue. No surprise, she intends to major in computer science and minor in AI or cybersecurity.

And she’ll keep working to expand and improve Shield Seniors—and her personal footprint as well, hoping especially to be welcome in more assisted-living facilities where she can interact with seniors face-to-face. For now, she’s had the opportunity to visit just a few, with others telling her to come back when she’s had a little more experience. “I’m a bit young, I guess,” she says.

But that’s not stopping her from getting the message out as best she can, as she continues to advocate for seniors to become savvy and independent in cyberspace, and for their family members to help them gain the necessary experience and confidence.

“Just make sure to check up on your loved ones,” Tejasvi says, asked if she has any advice for those who want to join her in that quest. “Make sure that they’re staying safe online.” □

Time Off



PRAIRIE NOIR

BY JUDY BERMAN

Ethan Hawke plays an investigative reporter in a new series from the creator of *Reservation Dogs*

INSIDE

DWAYNE JOHNSON TACKLES
A DRAMATIC MMA STORY

JUDE LAW AND JASON BATEMAN
PLAY BROTHERS ON THE OUTS

DAVID LAUREN ON THE FICKLE
BUSINESS OF FASHION

THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN A WHITE MAN who cares." A character named Marty, played by the great Keith David, issues this lament in the premiere episode of the FX crime drama *The Lowdown*. The white man in question is the show's protagonist, Lee Raybon, an anticorruption crusader investigating a powerful family in his home city of Tulsa, Okla. And although Marty may be the first to diagnose his affliction, he is not the only person of color in this story who suspects our hero's bravery and righteousness—traits that those who doubt him might call foolhardiness and sanctimony—stem, in part, from his privilege. Whether this means he's uniquely positioned to topple Goliaths or bound to lose and too blithely self-assured to realize it remains to be seen.

His predicament combines the perspectives of two *Lowdown* executive producers: creator Sterlin Harjo, best known for the transcendent FX coming-of-age dramedy *Reservation Dogs*, and Ethan Hawke, who stars as Lee. A self-styled "truthstorian," which is a quirky way of saying he's an investigative journalist bent on exposing historical injustices, Lee is shambolic, tenacious, hyperliterate yet earthy, and a bit wild-eyed, with a paucity of concern for his own safety and a searing social conscience. Characters like this have become Hawke's specialty. The 2018 film *First Reformed* cast him as a minister whose painful past coalesces with an environmentalist awakening in an epic crisis of faith. His performance here most recalls his tragicomic portrayal of John Brown, the heroic but unhinged abolitionist whose quixotic raid on Harpers Ferry helped catalyze the Civil War, in Showtime's 2020 adaptation of James McBride's *The Good Lord Bird*. That *The Lowdown* makes passing reference to Brown is surely no coincidence.

But if Lee constitutes familiar ground for Hawke, he's practically terra incognita for Harjo, an indie filmmaker of Seminole and Muscogee descent whose work has always centered Native Americans. His choice to follow up the kaleidoscopic *Rez Dogs*, which launched the careers of its young, Indigenous cast, with a star vehicle in a trendy genre might raise eyebrows. Yet the shows have more in common than the many overlapping names in their credits. *Rez Dogs* was, at its core, a portrait of a community. A funny, shaggy, character-rich mystery that can't quite equal its predecessor but is still first-rate TV, *The Lowdown* interrogates what it really means to serve one's community. In his defiance of a social order that incentivizes individual greed and punishes solidarity and truth telling, Lee embodies the often professed, rarely tested belief that those born with structural advantages owe something to their neighbors.

THE LOWDOWN BILLS ITSELF as a "Tulsa noir," and the location is just as crucial to its atmosphere as is the knowingly pulpy style. Born, raised, educated in, and still a resident of Oklahoma, Harjo has set almost all of his projects in the state. "*Rez Dogs* was my love letter to rural Oklahoma and where I grew up," he said in a recent interview. "*The Lowdown* is my love letter to Tulsa, where I currently live." Its fond yet critical depiction of a dust-caked 21st century



▲
Harjo on set
with Hawke and
Armstrong

melting pot—situated at the intersection of the Southern and Western U.S. and bursting with big personalities of all ages, classes, backgrounds, and identities—revolves around the quaint block that houses the rare-book shop Lee owns and lives above. A record store and a 24-hour diner with a neon sign give the neighborhood a nostalgic feel that complements the show's noir aesthetic and grounds a tale whose lead is in constant, chaotic motion.

The catalyst for Lee's latest frenzy is the death of Dale Washberg (Tim Blake Nelson), the disfavored scion of a locally influential clan about whom Lee recently published a scathing exposé. While authorities are quick to rule the fatal gunshot wound self-inflicted, and some speculate that the article drove Dale to suicide, Lee knows enough about the Washbergs to suspect foul play. There was tension within the family. Though married to Betty Jo (Jeanne Tripplehorn, a hoot in femme-fatale mode), Dale was rumored to be gay. His widow doesn't exactly look too broken up; less than a week after his death, Lee spots her snuggling with Dale's brother Donald, an oleaginous candidate for governor played by Kyle MacLachlan. (Naming



a potentially villainous mogul turned politician Donald is hardly a subtle choice, but Harjo avoids belaboring the point by staying focused on his fictionalized Oklahoma.)

Lee tools tirelessly around Tulsa, collecting clues about what really happened to Dale by any means necessary. He digs into a mysterious company that has been buying up property in diverse, working-class North Tulsa and goes undercover with white supremacists. His adventures give the show a bit of the manic unpredictability that made *Rez Dogs* so much fun. (One wild digression involves backwoods caviar bootleggers.) But this is a bloody business. We know Lee is onto something, in part, because people keep beating him up. The bandages and bruises only underline the physicality of Hawke's performance. Wiry and wired, Lee, in his almost masochistic willingness to endure pain in service of his cause, calls back to *First Reformed's* self-destructive zealot.

His ability to bounce back after getting shoved into car trunks and having his neck used as an ashtray lends the show's violence a cartoonish quality. What makes *The Lowdown* more than a self-aware genre exercise, though, is

the way Harjo challenges Lee's hubris. Over the course of the five episodes I screened (out of eight total), he's increasingly forced to confront the reality that he is not invincible. His body is aging. A cranky old buddy played by Peter Dinklage, in an Emmy-worthy guest appearance, is a cautionary tale about how idealism can curdle, turning someone like Lee into "one of those people who hates everything." He still cares for a long-suffering ex (Kaniehtiio Horn, a.k.a. *Rez Dogs'* Deer Lady) who is the mother of his bright teenage daughter Francis (Ryan Kiera Armstrong, excellent). Especially once Francis starts tagging along on his missions, Lee has to acknowledge that he's endangering the people he loves. Which means he must work out what is worth sacrificing in service of his precious truth.

RESERVATION DOGS WAS one of television's rare masterpieces, woven from a lifetime's worth of observations and obsessions, existential struggles and in-jokes, and shot through with a sparkling thread of spirituality. Its teenage characters, scheming to realize their dead friend's dream of moving to California, are a skeleton key that unlocks a multigenerational Indigenous community. Death permeates life in an echo of Harjo's films; *Four Sheets to the Wind* unfolds in the wake of a suicide, while *Barking Water* chronicles a terminally ill man's final road trip. Another of his abiding themes is the choice young Native Americans face, of whether to stay home and preserve shrinking communities or represent them in the outside world; *Rez Dogs* explores it thoroughly, showing empathy to characters no matter what they decide. Harjo has said that he and co-creator Taika Waititi's aim was to "capture what it felt like to hear your aunts and uncles telling stories and lying and exaggerating and talking

about mythology and superstitions.'

It's the kind of all-encompassing artistic statement that can be made only once. *The Lowdown* is, by necessity, a more limited undertaking that nonetheless succeeds on its own terms. Like *Rez Dogs*, it's kinetic. Both shows mix humor, philosophy, and principled outrage, riding the roller coaster of daily life in a world of stunning beauty and glaring injustice instead of conforming to any prepackaged TV format. *The Lowdown*, too, draws on Harjo's personal experience, in this case collaborating with reporters on documentaries for the Tulsa media company This Land Press.

I can't say, because I don't know how the season ends, whether Lee turns out to be the kind of saint who's effective enough in his fanaticism to save Tulsa from malign forces, or if he's just laboring under his own white-guy delusions of grandeur. He's such an outsize presence that it takes a while to realize how little we're told about his past. Yet Harjo deepens his conflict, between the personal and the communal, with every episode. Introduced as a stranger at the diner, Marty, another lover of literature, becomes Lee's foil—a Black man who has put aside moral qualms in pursuit of prosperity but is increasingly unhappy with the person he's become.

What is clear from Harjo's body of work is that for him, the individuals who come together to form the communities we call home are, in all their imperfections, the very reason to defend those communities from anyone who would do them harm. In *The Lowdown*, those people include Deidra (Siena East), the sardonic Indigenous bookstore clerk who scoffs at a retreat for "white ladies doing sweat lodges," and Ray (Michael Hitchcock), a savvy gay antiques dealer who gets swept up in Lee's investigation. It includes tabloid editor Cyrus (Michael "Killer Mike" Render), whose salacious cover lines and well-founded wariness toward Lee belie his wisdom and loyalty. It even includes us—the viewers who, as Harjo immerses us in his vividly populated, deeply humanistic fictions, become part of those communities too. □

**The Lowdown
interrogates what
it really means
to serve one's
community**

CHINA WATCH

PRESENTED BY CHINA DAILY 中國日報

Stories unfold under an azure canopy



Inner Mongolia, once a land of nomads, now offers summer retreats and delicious cuisine

BY FANG AIQING
and YUAN HUI

“The yurt-like sky holds the vast green land within. Beneath its azure canopy, the infinite wilderness thrives. The wind bends the grass low, revealing sheep and cows.”

For many Chinese, these lyrics from a song of the Northern Dynasty (386-581) bring to mind the Chilechuan, the plains of the Chile (Tiele) people, a northern nomadic tribe that once lived at the foot of the Yinshan Mountains in what is now Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

For anyone keen on catching a glimpse of majestic grasslands, Inner Mongolia beckons as an inevitable option. The autonomous region is like a crown capping the country at its very north, stretching about 1,500 miles from east to west.

This expansive terrain, most of it perched on a plateau more than 3,200 ft. above sea level, boasts varied landscapes — temperate prairie, alpine meadow and desert steppe — framed by dense forests to its east, fertile plains in the south and a sprawling sea of dunes in the west.

Summer's copious rainfall revives the grasslands, transforming them into lush green canvases. Wildflowers bloom, livestock graze, wetlands glisten, and the sun paints the sky with golden and ochre hues.



The flower-shaped *shaomai* is a signature dish of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia autonomous region. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Because of a lack of records, it is hard to tell where exactly the extensive land of Chilechuan was located. However, throughout history the Yinshan Mountains have held important geographical and strategic sway. Extending more than 746 miles east-west in central Inner Mongolia and northern Hebei province, they marked the boundary of subhumid and semiarid climates and delineated the divide between agricultural and nomadic civilizations.

Hence, war, trade and cultural integration all took place here. Portions of the Great Wall and border towns were built across dynasties. Artifacts that blend numerous cultural styles were discovered. Lines of poetry were passed down.

Over the years, Zhang Wenping, director of Hohhot's institute of cultural relics and archaeology in Inner Mongolia's regional capital, has been

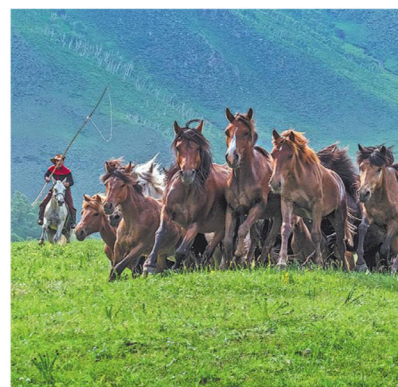
studying the northern nomadic tribes that historically thrived in Hohhot, once called Shengle.

In 258 the Xianbei tribes settled along the banks of the Dahei River and built the city of Shengle as their winter base. The regime later established its capital there, gradually campaigned southward, and eventually founded the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), ruling over some core parts of the Central Plains region and promoting cultural integration.

The Chile tribes were also known as Gaoche, named for the large-wheeled carts they used to travel through tall grass, thick snow and marshlands. After the Chile were defeated by the Xianbei people in the early fifth century, they served as border guards for the Northern Wei Dynasty around the Yinshan Mountains area, north of its agricultural zones, Zhang says.

The lyrics at the start of this article were part of a pastoral song in the Xianbei language that has been lost to time. It tells of the undulating hilly grasslands on which Chile nomads herded, with slender, white fluffy herbage that grew taller than regular grass. As herders rode galloping horses, the sheep and cows in the distance seemed to vanish and reappear amid the swaying grass rustling in the wind.

Today a restored plain just 9 miles from downtown Hohhot re-creates that vision. Set against the backdrop of the towering Daqing Mountains, part of the Yinshan range, this area has been developed since



Sightseeing trams shuttle through the grassland in Huanghuagou (Yellow Flower Ravine), a popular summer getaway in Ulaanqab. QIN YU / FOR CHINA DAILY





The Naadam festival is an annual summer celebration of the Mongolian ethnic group, encompassing diverse competitions and a display of traditional music and dance. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY



The sight of horses galloping across the expansive grasslands is an iconic image of Inner Mongolia. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



The Chilechuan Grassland in Hohhot is a perfect spot for visitors to delve into authentic local culture. XU TING / FOR CHINA DAILY

2012 into a leisure retreat.

Visitors stroll, cycle and camp here, enjoying a pastoral interlude close to urban life.

The Chilechuan Grassland seeks to revive the memories that historically defined the land of Hohhot at the foot of the Yinshan Mountains: a former frontier of dynastic governance and the gradual integration of northern nomadic tribes into Chinese civilization.

About 90 minutes' drive from Hohhot, 250 miles or so from Beijing, lies a well-preserved alpine meadow, the Khuitenshil Grassland, in Ulaanqab, spanning the eastern slopes of the Daqing Mountains at an average elevation of 6,890 ft.

At its western end lies Huanghuagou (Yellow Flower Ravine), a 6-mile stretch with a depth of 980 ft., popular with summer tourists.

Sightseeing trams shuttle through the grassland as wind turbines spin in the distance. Animals graze, undisturbed by the intermittent grass waves in the wind or the fleeting shadows of passing clouds.

Close by, wildflowers burst into view — white, yellow, pink, blue and purple — some tall and proud, others tiny and delicate, dancing in the breeze.

Of course, no visit is complete without sampling the local flavors. While debate rages over where Inner Mongolia's best lamb is found and how it should be cooked, Hohhot proudly champions its own specialty: *shaomai*, also known as *shumai*. These delicate, flower-shaped buns, steamed or pan-fried with thin crystal wrappers and savory mutton filling, are often eaten with brick tea.

Wang Zhiqiang, secretary-general of Inner Mongolia's *shaomai* industry association, said in a recent interview with Hohhot Daily that the wrappers are made from Bayannur wheat, the lamb comes from Xiliin Gol, and the leeks from Tumd Left Banner. It is a regional symphony of flavors and an apt metaphor for Inner Mongolia's diverse and interwoven cultural landscape.



Online
Watch the video by scanning the code.



The International Youth Entrepreneurship Port of the China (Hunan) Pilot Free Trade Zone Changsha Area organizes a business tour in May 2024. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Young entrepreneurs thrive in Changsha

BY YUAN SHENGGAO

Changsha, capital of Central China's Hunan province, is often hailed as a metropolis that never sleeps due to its nighttime economy. But the city's development goes beyond consumer spending; it also thrives on its capacity to attract young entrepreneurs to stimulate innovation and technological advancement.

He Yao, founder of Changsha Feishi Technology, pursued remote driving technology in Changsha after earning his master's degree from Hunan University in 2020. He established his company at the Hunan Xiangjiang New Area College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Park.

Growing up in a mining area in Chenzhou, He dreamed of replacing miners with intelligent machines. "Having seen the tractor perform tasks under remote control, it became clear that many industrial sectors still operate in challenging environments. If intelligent operations could replace manual labor, there could be significant market potential," he said.

In just three years, He led his team to complete and deliver nearly 1,000 remote control systems, bringing the vision of unmanned vehicle operation to life. Now, Feishi has become a key technology partner for industry giants such as Sany Heavy Equipment and Huawei. Additionally, its innovative solutions have won more than 10 prestigious awards at home and abroad.

"From technology development to market entry, the park always anticipates our needs in advance," He said.

As an integral part of the Xiangjiang New Area's sup-

port system, characterized by "one core park, one service center and multiple incubation bases," the innovation and entrepreneurship park spans 14,350 square yards. It provides a comprehensive incubation ecosystem, enabling student startup teams to progress from laboratories to the market.

Leveraging the park, the Xiangjiang New Area is accelerating a support system for creative incubation and industrialization. The Yuelu Mountain National University Science and Technology City has established 40 incubation bases, four proof-of-concept centers and eight pilot test bases to aid the swift market transition of research outcomes.

Changsha also extends a welcome to international talent. The International Youth Entrepreneurship Port of the China (Hunan) Pilot Free Trade Zone Changsha Area, which pioneered the launch of the "entrepreneur visa" for international youth, has been offering assistance with visas as well as startup support.

Odjo Rachald, a 26-year-old entrepreneur from Benin in West Africa, began his business at the port after graduating from Central South University in 2024.

"I've found that Changsha is full of diverse opportunities," said Rachald.

Rachald was awarded the first "entrepreneur visa" by the FTZ Changsha area in 2024, and he established a company trading in agricultural machinery between Hunan and Benin.

"I want to create a brand for African agricultural products and be its spokesperson myself," Rachald said, expressing hopes to deepen economic and trade cooperation between Hunan and Africa.

FEATURE

A fighter reckons with his turbulent past

BY RORY DOHERTY/VENICE

THE DAY BEFORE *THE SMASHING MACHINE* PREMIERES at the Venice Film Festival in early September, Mark Kerr describes his emotional state as “vibrational.” It’s tough to pin down where jet lag ends and nerves begin, but not long before audiences will see Dwayne Johnson act out his life story, the 56-year-old former mixed martial arts fighter is just trying to roll with the absurdity of the moment. Entrusting your story to someone and putting it out there for public consumption is no small thing, even when you’ve lived out much of that story in the public eye.

Kerr’s battle with painkiller addiction and a strained, volatile relationship pushed his fighting career, once on the cusp of historic achievement, to its breaking point. And the man Kerr entrusted it to is writer-director Benny Safdie, best known for co-directing the 2019 crime drama *Uncut Gems* with his brother Josh. In Venice, Safdie effuses about his subject’s generosity and vulnerability, and Johnson makes headlines for sobbing following the film’s premiere, as his own journey to tell Kerr’s story launches his transition from blockbuster action star to Serious Actor—the Oscar buzz began long before anyone had even seen the film.

It’s an emotional time for them all. As Safdie said to Kerr at the outset, “You lived your life so we can all feel it.”

THE SMASHING MACHINE, which opens in theaters Oct. 3, focuses on an intense period from 1997 to 2000, but Kerr’s fighting career began as a high school wrestler in Toledo, Ohio, then at Syracuse University. After graduating, he moved to Arizona to train for the Olympic team. When he didn’t make the cut, he needed to make money. First Kerr hired himself out as “barroom brawler.” But in the early 1990s, MMA was burgeoning in popularity. The 1993 formation of Ultimate Fighting Championship ensured that the few-rules, multistyle approach of MMA had an official American home. “When I started, I had no clue what I was getting into. Then the UFC got a hold of me. I had this drive to be considered a professional, not like the toughest kid scooped up off the playground.” MMA was a combat-sports disrupter—you could no longer be the “best of the best” if you had spent your whole life training in just one of the martial arts. Kerr’s aggressive style and decisive victories earned him the nickname the film borrows for its title.

But in the late ’90s, the sport faced an existential threat: After sustained political pressure over brutal matches, cable networks began refusing to air fights, and states began to ban matches. Fighters like Kerr migrated to international tournaments in Japan. “It had gotten a bad reputation, undue. If you don’t understand something, you fear it, you label it. ‘Oh, it’s barbaric, it’s like cockfighting.’” Those were the words favored by Senator John McCain, a leader in the fight to ban the sport, though 10 years on,



From left: Johnson presents the UFC Hall of Fame trophy to Kerr in June; Johnson as Kerr in the film; Kerr after a UFC tournament in 1997

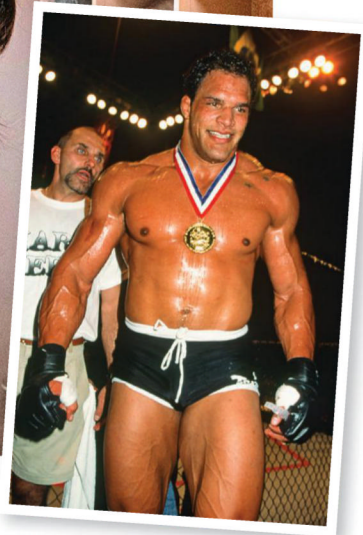
he changed his tune, citing new rules.

The sport’s value has only increased: in August, Paramount procured exclusive UFC streaming rights for \$7.7 billion. But Kerr’s career didn’t last long enough to benefit. In the movie, when we see him in Japan’s illustrious Pride Fighting Championship, he was addicted to painkillers; in 1999, he survived an overdose. He retired in 2009.

DURING THE TIME the film covers, Kerr was using pain meds regularly, not knowing it could result in life-threatening addiction. Every fighter knows they have a limited number of fights, and pain meds were the only way to maximize longevity and therefore income. “I [didn’t] have time to sit on the sidelines to heal. It became an easy solution for the moment, but a complex solution long term.”

Opioid addiction, an epidemic nationwide, is distressingly common in nearly every contact and combat sport, yet Kerr found himself isolated. “I couldn’t get on the internet and search like I can today. It’s this shame that I carried around, kept me quiet.”

When *The Smashing Machine* isn’t



my son saying, ‘Dad, do you think you can stop drinking?’ I bounced around a couple car dealerships. It just wasn’t clear that I have so much more to offer than this little tiny parcel of me I was giving to the world.”

THE IDEA TO BRING Kerr’s story to the screen originated with Johnson, who crossed paths with Kerr in the late ’90s when both men trained at Gold’s Gym in Venice, Calif. The actor saw this as a chance for a meatier role after years of tough-guy action parts. When Safdie encountered glimpses of Kerr’s story in a 2002 HBO documentary, he related immediately. “I was like, ‘I know what it feels like to be that guy.’ Maybe it’s because certain things have happened in my family [where] I’ve had to put my own feelings to the background for the benefit of somebody else,” he says.

In 2019, when Johnson’s agent contacted Kerr to acquire his “life rights,” Kerr felt out of his depth—he wasn’t steeped in the language of entertainment law, and didn’t understand what it meant when the film was “greenlit.” Johnson announced the project that fall during a UFC event at Madison Square Garden, and while the actor had briefly spoken with Kerr about it, Kerr describes that conversation as “almost transactional.”

When the pandemic hit, and development of the project paused, Kerr tried to stop paying attention to the film’s prospects. “I had Dwayne’s cell-phone number for four years. I didn’t call or text once.” Four years later, just before A24 announced the film with Safdie attached, Johnson called Kerr, and the tone was completely different. “It was heartfelt, like, ‘I’m ready to do this. I’m ready to take on something completely different from what I’ve ever done.’”

Kerr consulted informally on Safdie’s script. “There are certain parts where he wanted clarity,” Kerr says. “Not clarity of what happened, but emotional clarity.” In one of their earliest conversations, Safdie told Kerr his entire life story to address how intense and uncomfortable the project could be for Kerr. “If you’re going to trust me telling your story, I’m going to trust you with my story.”

During production in Vancouver, Kerr was most involved during “fight week,” where he worked with Johnson and the stunt team to nail details that serious MMA fans would notice. After the cameras stopped rolling, Safdie kept in close touch. “I know what it’s like when you’re done with a movie and actors leave. He’s been burned by people, and I didn’t want him to have that with this.” He’s clearly pulled this off. Kerr sums up his feelings by recalling a piece of wisdom he received from producer Dave Koplan: “Sometimes you make a movie. Sometimes you create a family, and this created a family who made a movie.”

In the Venice hotel lounge where Kerr sat for our interview, a member of his entourage makes sure to tell me I’ve been talking to a legend. And 25 years after his peak, Kerr is reckoning with that legendary status. On a Zoom call a week earlier, he had recalled how his UFC Hall of Fame induction ceremony cemented a sense of closure: “DJ asked me backstage, ‘How do you feel, brother? You’re home.’ I said, ‘It’s not a feeling. It’s a vibration.’” □

situating audiences backstage at Kerr’s matches, it takes us to Phoenix, where he lived with his girlfriend, Dawn Staples. Staples, played by Emily Blunt, was a recovering alcoholic, and the couple’s fraught journeys with sobriety led to feelings of abandonment and resentment. They separated after Kerr’s 1999 overdose and stint in rehab, only to reconcile months later.

“What I was doing was incredibly selfish. Dawn wanted to feel important. The only thing important was fighting, then drug and alcohol use. I look back on it, she’s a little girl asking to be loved, and I’m a little boy that doesn’t know how to accept or give it.”

Kerr’s career never recovered from his seismic defeat at Pride in May 2000, but he and Dawn reconciled and married, staying together until 2006 and raising a son. Kerr fought occasionally, always resulting in defeat. “So much of my identity is tied up in who I was as a fighter,” says Kerr. “It took me forever to realize it’s what I did, not who I am.”

After his last fight, Kerr knew he still had a lot to figure out. Sobriety was a huge part of that. “I’ve been sober for seven years. It took

‘Sometimes you make a movie. Sometimes you create a family.’

**MARK KERR,
QUOTING PRODUCER
DAVE KOPLAN**

TELEVISION

Brotherly love and loathing in a New York City thriller

BY JUDY BERMAN

THE BLACK RABBIT IS THE KIND OF MANHATTAN restaurant that invariably gets described as a clubhouse. Nestled in the armpit where the FDR Drive meets the Brooklyn Bridge, the fictional multistory establishment that gives the Netflix thriller *Black Rabbit* its title boasts a historic location, a killer menu, a celebrity co-owner, and a fashionable clientele. As its proprietor, the charismatic former rock front man Jake Friedken (executive producer Jude Law), explains to the crowd assembled there for a trunk show of high-end jewelry, this is “a place where the night could go anywhere.” Almost immediately, it does. A pair of masked thieves burst in, thrusting guns in people’s faces and demanding the jewels.

After this energetic intro, *Black Rabbit* takes viewers back in time a month to trace the convoluted origins of a robbery that is still in progress when the show cuts away from it. The trouble begins when Jake’s ne’er-do-well older brother, Vince (executive producer Jason Bateman), returns to the city after a stint in Reno, Nev., that ends with him running over a guy who tried to steal the rare coins he was selling. Given how much money and anxiety Vince has cost him, it’s tough to understand why hardworking Jake would welcome him back behind the Rabbit’s bar.

The foundation of their complicated relationship is the show’s animating mystery. When it stays focused on its two leads—and especially when they’re playing off each other—*Black Rabbit* can be riveting. But the choice creators Zach Baylin and Kate Susman make to overload their scripts with plot instead of deepening the story’s many secondary characters flattens the brothers’ world. Though it was shot on location, this is a New York of dated archetypes that might have carried a feature but can’t sustain eight episodes.

You can see why Bateman and Law would want to throw their weight behind the project. Their roles are meaty: native New Yorkers who escaped a chaotic Coney Island household to become stars of the city’s Y2K-era rock revival with their band, the Black Rabbits. Jake was the pinup, while drummer Vince was the artist—and the drug-abusing liability, a dynamic that has persisted. Before the Rabbit, Jake was managing a famous multihyphenate artist, Wes (Sope Dirisu), now a partner. Vince was the dreamer who saw the potential in a dilapidated space that



As brothers, Law and Bateman play off each other brilliantly

he would ultimately be too busy drinking, snorting, and gambling to help transform.

THIS DICHOTOMY, the sweaty striver vs. the tortured genius, isn’t novel, but the show complicates it via the sinister smarm baked into many of Law’s best performances and the embattled decency palpable beneath Bateman’s Cousin Itt makeover. There’s good in Vince, rotten in Jake, and gray area in their symbiotic relationship.

One trait the brothers share is that they’re both terrible with money. Which makes *Black Rabbit* the kind of thriller that derives its pressure from a desperation to raise an impossible amount of cash in an unfeasibly short period. Whether such a plot comes across as a tired trope or the reinvention of a classic depends on execution; in *Black Rabbit*, it’s a little of both. A clubby restaurant makes a novel setting, but the number of new messes the Friedkens create gets repetitive. Our glimpse at their formative moments arrives too late to serve the needs of the story.

But the real missed opportunity is the failure to give the dozen-plus characters around the Friedkens much personality or purpose. Children, exes, chefs, and skeezy associates are short on interiority. *Black Rabbit* is worth watching for its stylish direction, propulsive pace, and most of all Law and Bateman’s brilliantly cast brother act. But technical polish and faithful execution of genre conventions can’t elevate a show beyond competence. In its own terms, *Black Rabbit* is a workmanlike Jake, not a visionary Vince.

Though it was shot on location, this is a New York of dated archetypes

Black Rabbit is now streaming on Netflix

TIME

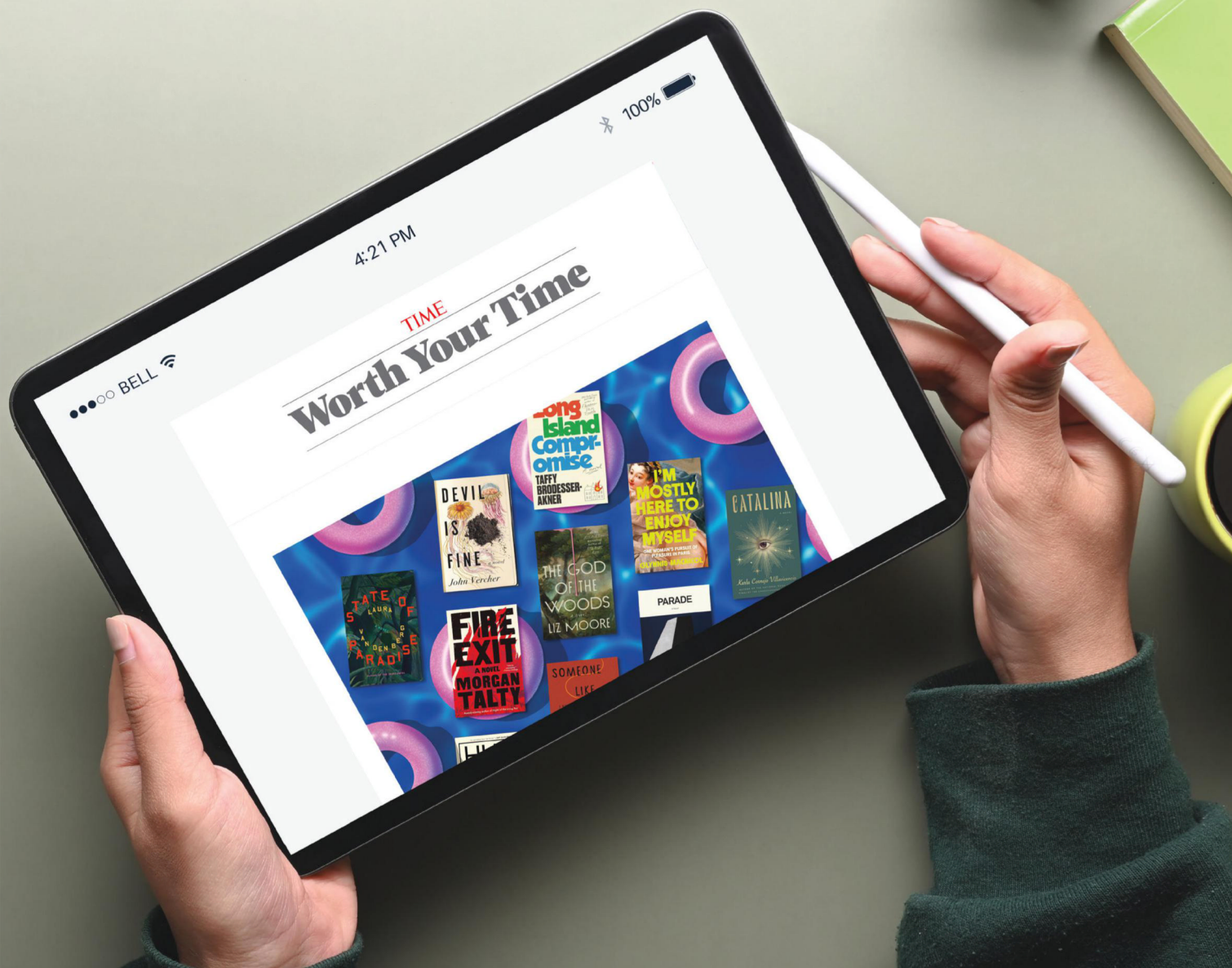
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David Lauren The fashion executive talks about AI, tariffs, and working for his father for 25 years

You're the chief innovation officer and chief branding officer at Ralph Lauren. What does that actually mean you do? Every time we design products, there are stories that inspire those products. My job is to help bring those stories to life, to inspire our customers to want to be engaged in our world. Sometimes it's creating events, sometimes immersive experiences online, sometimes it's a fashion show in China.

A lot of people don't want to work for their parents. What's it like to work for my dad? My dad is my best friend. He's my mentor and inspiration. I am so lucky to have somebody who cares about what I do and wants to educate me. The good thing, when he loves what I do, is that your dad, your mentor, and your boss loves something. But there's nothing more painful than when your dad, your mentor, and your boss doesn't like your idea, and I live with that a lot as well.

What is the purpose of your new AI tool, Ask Ralph?

We want to give people the confidence to live their better lives. This is a tool to create a personal connection with a customer, because you're taking clothes that mean nothing, and finding a way to make them personal. It's like having Ralph Lauren in your back pocket, 24/7, as if you could pick up the phone and ask Ralph Lauren what to wear.

Do you have a favorite Ralph Lauren era? I'd been with my dad as we drove across the West. I watched him discover all these great Navajo blankets and the great Western saddles and Western art, so to see it come onto the runway and still impact designers today is amazing. A designer in Paris just put a horse on the runway. That's very Ralph Lauren.

Ralph Lauren has a wide range of businesses. Is there any new area you'd like to move into?

We've just started a hospitality business. Our coffee and our restaurants are probably as popular as our Polo shirts and our sunglasses. I think there's an opportunity to allow people to live in the Ralph Lauren ads. We'd love to open hotels.



A lot of the label's growth this quarter came from Asia and Europe. Are you worried about tariffs? We are constantly monitoring the ecosystem and the business dynamics in the world. Our job is to navigate as best we can, and so far I think we're doing very well.

You have a family with a big legacy. You have married into a family with a big legacy. How do you make sure that your three children do not feel too much privilege and also do not disappear under the weight of being a Bush and a Lauren? We both believe that we came from lives that were privileged but full of values. It's wonderful to have access, and it's wonderful to feel like you have a great name, but that comes with responsibility, and a legacy of families that believe in work. My father still comes into the office all the time; Lauren's grandfather [President George H.W. Bush] and her uncle [President George W. Bush] really believe in making the world better.

Ralph Lauren as a company is known for being progressive, and the Bush family is known for being conservative. Is there tension in the in-law political leanings? Not at all. We believe in what we believe in. And I think everybody has done a great job making the world better.

Do the kids wear all Ralph Lauren? There's never been any pressure from my father. Whatever we love, we love. My father has shopped at Walmart and Kmart and wears it very publicly. It's more about the fact that we do love what he makes. My kids right now are into soccer jerseys and the New York Yankees, and thank God, we have a partnership with the Yankees, so it's working for us. —BELINDA LUSCOMBE

TIME 100

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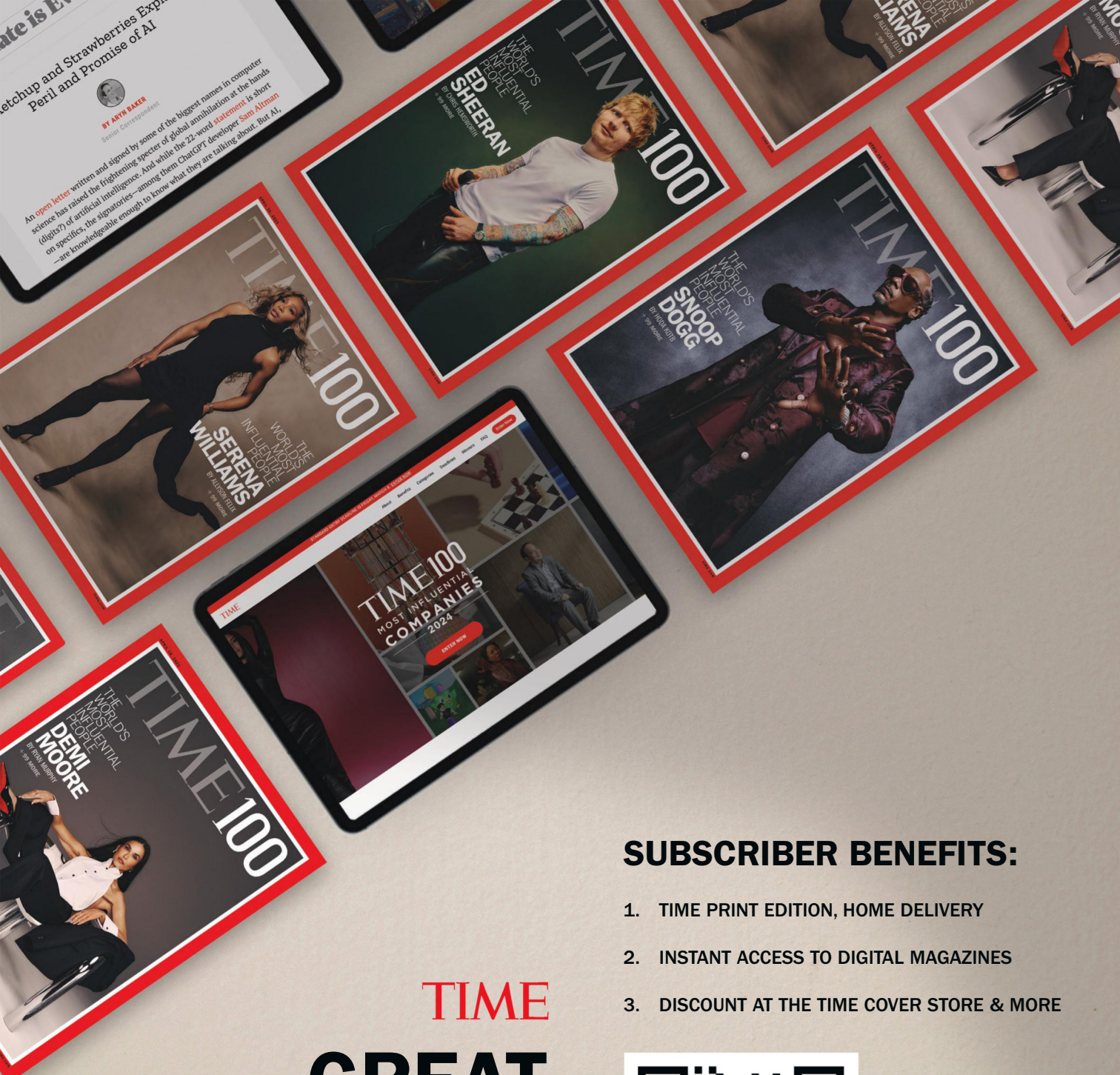
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Peril and Promise of AI

BY ARYN BAKER
Seneca Correspondent

An open letter written and signed by some of the biggest names in computer science has raised the frightening specter of global annihilation at the hands (digits?) of artificial intelligence. And while the 22-word **statement** is short on specifics, the signatories—among them ChatGPT developer **Sam Altman**—are knowledgeable enough to know what they are talking about. But AI,

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