

THE EPOCH TIMES SPECIAL REPORT

EPOCH INSIGHT

UNITED STATES OF CRIME

A plague of violence is changing
the streets of America as
progressive policies play out

**SPECIAL
REPORT**

**CRIME ON
THE RISE**

WEEK 40, 2022

United States of Crime

DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, the United States has seen an explosion of crime in major cities across the country.

This surge includes murders and shootings, as well as robbery and theft.

Experts point to the passage of new laws, disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and ideologically driven district attorneys who refuse to prosecute certain crimes.

At least 75 district attorney's offices now fall into that category, representing 1 in every 5 Americans.

Two of the cities that have seen the sharpest increases in crime are New York and Los Angeles.

While the NYPD has been arresting people in record numbers, bail reform and other policies allow many criminals to quickly return to the streets, with some even being rearrested on the same day for another crime.

In Los Angeles, Myra Millan, manager of a 7-Eleven, recalls how her store was robbed three times this year and how it left her despondent.

"You don't know what to expect, who to trust and who not to trust," she told Epoch Insight.

Read this special report about the surge in crime and the solutions that are offered.

JASPER FAKKERT
Editor-in-chief




ON THE COVER

Crime is on the rise in the United States. Learn what's behind the trend and what can be done about it.

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EPOCH INSIGHT

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Cities that adopt progressive justice policies are pervaded by crime.



A man is arrested after a shootout in Portland, Ore., on Aug. 22, 2021. | MATHIEU LEWIS-ROLLAND/AFP via Getty Images

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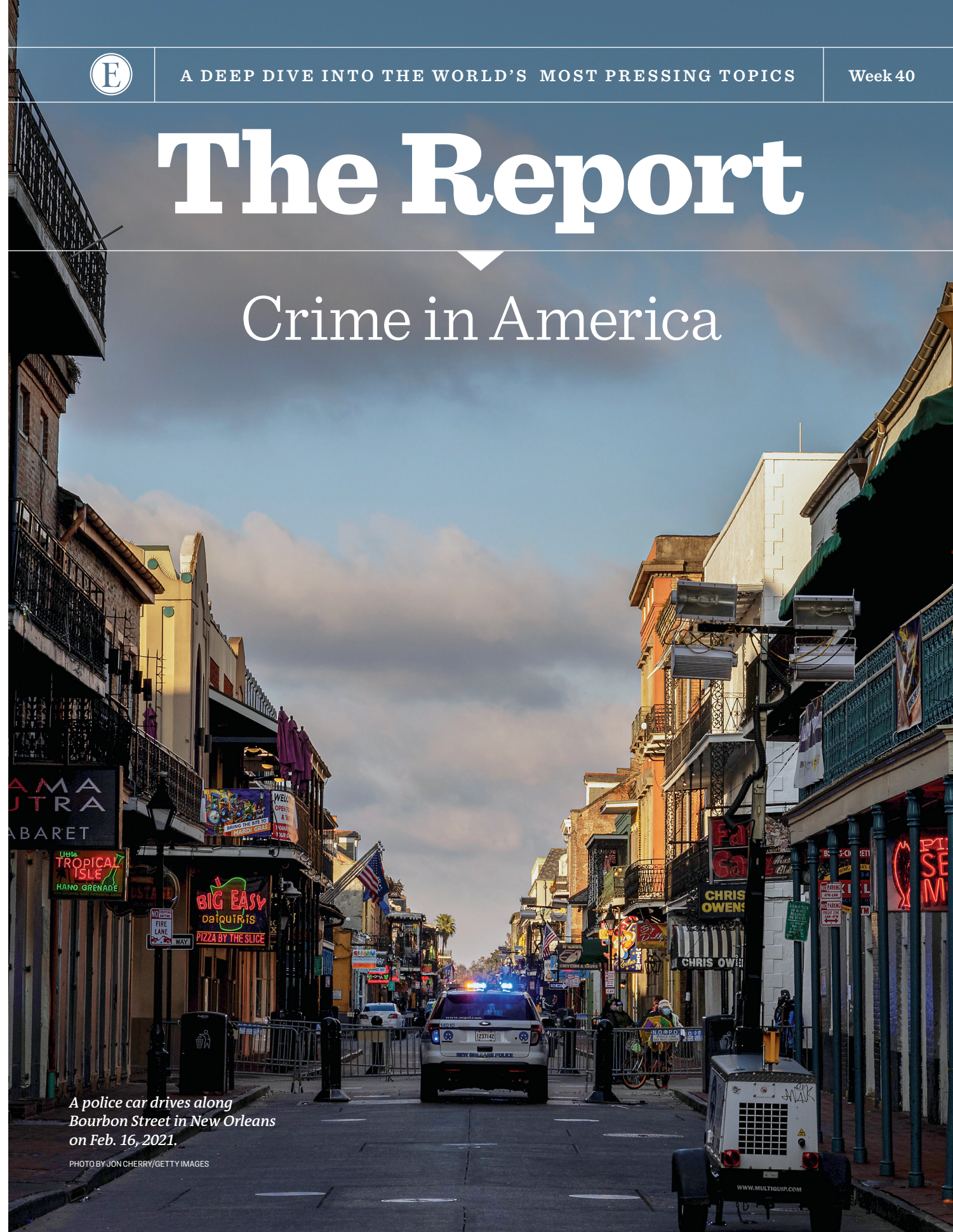


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The Report

Crime in America



A police car drives along Bourbon Street in New Orleans on Feb. 16, 2021.

PHOTO BY JON CHERRY/GETTY IMAGES

A Washington State Trooper works at a crime scene in Lacey, Wash., on Sept. 3, 2020.

PHOTO BY NATHAN HOWARD/GETTY IMAGES



REFUSAL TO PROSECUTE, LOWER PENALTIES, AND RESTRICTING POLICE ARE ALL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, EXPERTS SAY

BY PETR SVAB *News Analysis*

GROWING TREND

CRIME PERVADES US CITIES WHERE ALLOWED

AMERICA IS EXPERIENCING A major increase in crime. Upon a murder explosion that started in 2020, other forms of criminality also have metastasized over the past year or so, particularly robberies, carjacking, burglaries, and theft. Police agencies across the country report perpetrators becoming more brazen and systematic.

The wildfire of villainy is fueled by an atmosphere of lawlessness and diminished accountability, but it doesn't spread indiscriminately—many areas have successfully resisted it.

After the crack epidemic abated in the early 1990s, America enjoyed decades of generally declining crime. Even after murder spiked in 2015 and 2016 and then again in 2020, other forms of malefaction stayed on a downward trend, particularly crimes targeting property such as theft and robbery.

That is no longer the case.

Of the 150 law enforcement agencies that submitted data to the FBI for the first half of 2022, about 60 percent reported increases in property crimes. Nearly one-third reported upswings in murder and robbery greater than 20 percent and almost a quarter reported increases in burglary and theft exceeding 20 percent, compared to the same period a year earlier.

Retailers reported a 26 percent increase in organized theft in 2021, according to the latest survey by the National Retail Federation, an industry group. More than 70 percent said the risk of theft, organized retail crime, and violence toward personnel increased last year. More than 80 percent of the respondents said organized theft has gotten more aggressive and violent.

Among major cities, about 1 in 3 saw robbery shoot up by more than 20 percent in the first half of this year. One in 5 experienced murders going up by more than 20 percent, compared to the first half of 2021, according to a survey by the Major Cities Chiefs Association, which draws data from 70 large police jurisdictions across the country.

A number of cities, however, have not only resisted the crime wave, but actually achieved substantial reductions. In Columbus, Ohio, both murder and robbery collapsed by nearly 40 percent, according to the survey. Robbery dropped by 30 percent in Oklahoma City. Also seeing improvements were Indianapolis, Houston, Boston, and Detroit.



The key to these dramatic differences lies in the understanding of justice by law enforcement officials in these areas, several experts told The Epoch Times.

De-incarceration

Large swaths of the United States, particularly in urban centers, have been influenced by an ideology that's nihilistic toward the country's existing criminal justice institutions, according to several experts.

That influence often manifests through reforms and policies that make it more difficult or even impossible to put many criminals behind bars.

The most prominent factor has been the election of district attorneys espousing a de-incar-

Emergency personnel work at the scene of a shooting in Milwaukee on Feb. 26, 2020.

ceration agenda, who then refuse to prosecute whole swaths of crimes.

Another factor has been the passing of state and local criminal justice reforms that lower the penalties for crimes to the extent that, in many cases, the punishment becomes ineffectual as a deterrent.

Yet another factor has been the reforms that make police work more difficult. Some jurisdictions, for example, have banned police from pursuing a criminal who is escaping in a vehicle, except in extreme circumstances. In some areas, police have been severely restricted in use-of-force measures to pacify a resisting suspect. Such measures, in turn, have contributed to an increase in retirements and resignations of officers in these areas.

Some localities have virtually abandoned petty theft prosecutions.

60%

OF U.S. LAW

enforcement agencies reported increases in property crimes for the first half of 2022, according to the FBI.

70%

OVER 70 PERCENT

of U.S. retailers say that policies such as increasing the felony threshold for theft, eliminating cash bail, and reducing penalties for repeat offenders have led to greater losses from organized retail crime, a survey shows.

40%

IN 2020, 40 PERCENT

fewer people were sent to prison than in the year before, according to DOJ.

“We have disorder on the streets with addicts and mentally ill people basically running rampant in major cities and a lot of them dying. And then we have an increase in organized and disorganized street violence,” said Sean Kennedy, a criminal justice expert at the Maryland Public Policy Institute, a liberty-oriented think tank.

“And we see police forces overwhelmed where they're not even treading water; they're just popping their head out every once in a while, as they drown.”

The de-incarceration agenda also got a boost during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was cited as a justification to release thousands of prison inmates as well as to temporarily shut down the court system. Even after the court system restarted, it often only held remote hearings while facing a backlog of cases.

In 2020, 40 percent fewer people were sent to prison than the year before. In California, 66 percent fewer were sentenced, and in New York, 60 percent fewer. The national prison population dropped by more than 200,000, according to Department of Justice statistics.

Defenders of the reforms and policies have argued that the new regime only shows leniency toward lesser offenses and still metes out punishment for serious crimes.

But because the leniency is made a matter of policy, rather than case-by-case consideration, it creates gaps in enforcement, some experts pointed out.

“Think about criminal justice as an equation: Police times prosecutors times judges. And that gives you a criminal justice result,” said Thomas Hogan, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, and a former federal prosecutor.

“If you go back to your high school math, if any of those police, prosecutors, or judges go to zero, then the sum of the equation is zero.”

It doesn't take long for criminals to identify and exploit such gaps.

“Criminals are sensitive to law enforcement policies” and commonly know the law and think things through, Hogan told The Epoch Times.

“People shouldn't be surprised by that,” he said.

“[Criminals] figure out relatively quickly that if a carjacking with a gun is going to get you 10 years in prison, and carjacking with a knife is only going to get you six months in prison, well, yeah, they're going to use a knife instead of a gun.”

NICO DINIZZO/GETTY IMAGES



Workers clean up the window display of a store after it was looted, in Chicago on Aug. 10, 2020.

A carjacking is a fitting example. An increasingly rare offense just a few years ago, it has been recently on the rise, as reported by a number of large police departments.

It's particularly troubling, according to Hogan. "Carjackings are a classic canary in a coal mine for violent crime," he said. "When carjacking starts to go up, that means that prosecutors and law enforcement have lost control of the city."

Car theft has plummeted since the 1990s due, in major part, to security improvements that make it difficult to hot-wire a vehicle. There are sophisticated ways to overcome the obstacle, such as by cloning the car keys, but "generally the only way to get your hands on a car is to take it from the owner while it's running," Hogan said.

That's one of the reasons why carjacking is on the rise, but not the only one.

"The reason that people are engaging in carjackings these days is not to steal cars per se," Hogan said. "In other words, these are not generally organized car theft gangs, who are then reselling the cars.

"These are carjackings that are occurring to commit other crimes. People are engaging in carjackings because they're going to commit another crime using that car.

"So they may be going to do a drive-by shooting; they may be going to do a robbery. But knowing how much video surveillance is out there, they know they need to use somebody else's car to throw off the investigation."

In San Francisco, petty theft has become so pervasive that police statistics don't even capture it because victims largely don't report it anymore.

Carjacking used to yield harsh punishment because the perpetrator can be slapped with federal charges on the premise that the vehicle has moved in interstate commerce.

"The person would get a really substantial sentence," Hogan said.

That practice has subsided, however.

"You're not seeing that on the federal side anymore, and the local prosecutors are being overwhelmed by the cases and either can't solve them, or when they do solve them, they're not giving them stiff enough sentences," he said.

Mass Theft

Organized retail theft has also been associated with the progressive reforms.

More than 70 percent of the retailer survey respondents opined that policies such as increasing the felony threshold for theft, eliminating cash bail, and reducing penalties for repeat offenders have been associated with greater loss from organized retail crime.

Hogan gave two case studies to underscore the point.

"San Diego and Detroit, two very different places, right? One is relatively wealthy and sunny. And its demographic population probably skews more Hispanic on the minority side. Detroit, very poor, very cold, the minority population skews more towards the black population. But both of them have prosecutors, police chiefs, and mayors who are not going to be lenient with organized retail theft. And as a result, those cities are not seeing the same level of organized retail theft because they're arresting people. Two totally different cities," he said.

"On the other hand, you've got two cities like San Francisco and Philadelphia, again, totally different cities, geographically, demographically. But you're seeing huge increases in property crimes and retail theft crimes, because there, in both cities, you have a prosecutor, a police chief, and a mayor who are relatively lenient on this sort of stuff. We're allowing retail theft to go largely unpunished. And as a result, you are getting large organized retail theft rings that are working those cities."

It's relatively common for prosecutors to go easy on shoplifters. The first, second, and maybe even the third time, the offender may get off with a ticket and no charge, Hogan said. But if the criminal keeps at it, they'll get slapped with a misdemeanor and may end up in jail.



A police officer talks with a man in handcuffs following a reported shooting in Myrtle Beach, S.C., on May 23, 2020.

Now, however, some localities have virtually abandoned petty theft prosecutions.

"That means you can do it over and over again, right? And so that clearly sends a signal," he said.

Such a gap in enforcement, then, can be exploited systematically.

"When individual criminals realized, 'OK, I could walk into a store and basically fill up a shopping cart full of stuff and walk out and nobody will stop me,' it didn't take long for organized criminals to realize that they could turn this into a profitable enterprise," Hogan said.

"When they figured this out, all they did was scale it. Instead of one person going in and doing it and realizing the profit for themselves, they organize this into gangs, into groups, and turn it into a full-scale commercial operation. That full-scale commercial operation is now costing the American consumers billions of dollars in increased prices for their goods as the retail establishments who are suffering these losses pass on those costs to the honest consumers."

In New York, petty theft increased nearly 43 percent this year, compared to the same period in

2021. In San Francisco, the problem has become so pervasive that police statistics don't even capture it because victims, it appears, largely don't report it anymore.

Based on law enforcement investigations in several states, the theft is driven by organized groups that buy stolen merchandise for \$1 or \$2 a piece from so-called boosters, who are usually drug addicts, homeless, and petty criminals who walk into a store, grab whatever they can—sometimes filling up whole trash bags with items, ♣



People prepare for a car caravan protest to call on officials to release inmates from jails during the pandemic, in Los Angeles on April 7, 2020.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; SEAN RAYFORD/GETTY IMAGES; ROBYN BECK/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES

from baby formula to razor blades—and simply walk out. Some stores have hired security guards, but if the thieves come in a group, it's almost impossible for the guard to stop them all. Boosters sell the loot to fences, or middlemen, who then transfer it to warehouses, sometimes run as semi-professional distribution centers. The merchandise is then sold online through platforms such as eBay and Facebook Marketplace.

There has been some success busting the operations at the distribution side.

In 2020, five people were charged in California in the largest retail theft ring bust the state had ever seen. The group was reselling stolen merchandise internationally, including moving the goods abroad and laundering the proceeds back into the United States, according to the authorities. Some \$8 million worth of merchandise was recovered and nearly \$2 million seized in cash and from bank accounts, local media reported. The suspects, however, ultimately ended up with sentences ranging from three years in prison to probation and a month in jail.

In February, a Chicago couple were arrested for stealing merchandise from delivery trucks at a distribution center warehouse. Goods worth more than \$2 million were recovered.

In March, authorities arrested five people in Los Angeles for running a retail theft ring that fleeced retailers for merchandise worth more than \$500,000, selling it online internationally.

In May, the New York Police Department busted 41 people accused of involvement in a retail theft ring in the city. Goods worth more than \$3.8 million were recovered.

The sums involved, however, hardly add up to anything compared to the tens of billions retailers lose to theft every year, based on industry survey estimates.

Brazen

Many law enforcement agencies have reported a change in attitude on the part of criminals: They have become more impudent and reckless.

"What we're seeing are offenders who are completely emboldened. They're using guns to shoot people, commit carjackings, and they're doing it at all hours of the day and really all over the city," U.S. Attorney John Lausch, who's responsible for the Northern District of Illinois, including Chicago, told WLS-TV last year.

This year, shootings are down almost 20 per-



Inmates at the Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, Calif., in this file photo. The de-incarceration agenda cited the COVID-19 pandemic as justification for the release of thousands of prison inmates.

cent in Chicago—still 33 percent above 2019 levels. On the other hand, robberies are up 26 percent, theft 65 percent, and car theft 66 percent.

In New York, shootings are down some 13 percent this year—but still more than 70 percent above the 2019 level. But middle-of-the-day shootings, occurring between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., have actually increased almost 10 percent this year from the same period in 2021.

A loosely organized car theft group in Milwaukee, calling themselves the "Kia boys" for their penchant for stealing cars of that brand, have gone so far as to allow themselves to be featured in a YouTube documentary. Clips in the video show presumed juvenile car thieves driving recklessly, sometimes crashing. One of the self-proclaimed members said that some Kia boys have stolen as many as 300 cars. There are no real consequences for them—a misdemeanor charge and three weeks in jail for stealing a car, he said.

FROM JUSTIN SILVANO/GETTY IMAGES, MANHATTAN-INSTITUTE.ORG

Last year, more than 10,000 cars were stolen in the city, up from fewer than 3,500 in 2019. This year, so far, more than 6,300 have been stolen.

The car theft avalanche was preceded by a sharp increase in violence.

In 2020, Milwaukee saw 189 murders, breaking its homicide rate record set in 1991. A year later, that record was broken again, with 193 murders.

This year is shaping up to be worse yet—already, 170 have been murdered, an increase of 23 percent from the same period in 2021.

Violent crime can serve as a precursor for other types of crime because it drains police resources, according to Kennedy.

"Because the other crime, violent crime, is spiking, it opens a window for petty crime. It allows for police to look the other way or not focus on [it] because they have a bigger fish to fry," he said.

Living in Washington, Kennedy has noticed

that police now take much longer to respond to non-emergency calls.

"We're going back to the bad old days," he noted.

No Complacency

While crime in general tends to be concentrated in poor, urban neighborhoods, there seems to be little room for complacency even for Americans living in communities that have remained relatively crime free.

While smaller towns are still incomparably safer than large cities, that comfort considerably diminished in 2020.

In 2019, towns with a population under 50,000 had a murder rate of less than 2.9 per 100,000. That same rate was more than 3.7 in 2020, according to data reported to the FBI. That's almost as high as that of 2019 in New York, which was 3.8.

"Crime is contagious," Hogan said, particularly because of "spillover effects."

"Those organized crime rings that operate in the cities with impunity eventually will spread out into smaller jurisdictions around the cities," he said.

Everett, Washington, a suburban city of 110,000, located north of Seattle, saw violent crime surge by almost 50 percent, including a 133 percent increase in murder and an 83 percent jump in robberies in the first half of 2022, compared to the first half of 2021. Tacoma, a city of 220,000, located south of Seattle, experienced a violent crime increase of 75 percent, including a doubling of murders and robberies.

"If you have a vigorous enough response, then, yes, you can dampen the effects of crime increasing that are leaking in from all over the place, and your marginal increases will be smaller than other places, but you're still going to see increases," Hogan said.

A common mantra among public officials in recent years has been that it isn't possible to "arrest your way" out of the problem and that what needs to be addressed are broad-scale difficulties that help crime fester, such as addiction, poverty, and homelessness.

Hogan and others, meanwhile, argue that none of the softer, long-term solutions will be effective unless there's also accountability for criminals. The most immediate solution, they prescribe, is returning to a more traditional, and tougher, law enforcement. ■



"When carjacking starts to go up, that means that prosecutors and law enforcement have lost control of the city."

Thomas Hogan, adjunct fellow, Manhattan Institute

'DE-PROSECUTORS'

Progressive DAs Disrupt Justice System

*These district attorney's
offices have jurisdiction
over 1 in every 5 Americans*

BY PETR SVAB

Protesters rally to support
inmates on hunger strike,
at the entrance of the
Rikers Island jail complex
in Queens, N.Y., on Jan. 13.

PHOTO BY ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



A NEW BREED OF LOCAL prosecutors has taken district attorney's offices around the country by storm in a coordinated campaign that's tearing at the foundations of the American justice system. The ideology that underpins their agenda is antagonistic to the traditional conception of criminal justice and, if taken to its logical conclusion, demands its destruction, several experts told The Epoch Times.

Such DAs have been variously called "rogue prosecutors," "de-prosecutors," or "Soros prosecutors," based on the fact that progressive billionaire George Soros has prolifically funded their campaigns and support structures. They started to enter the scene around 2014 and have quickly become a major power bloc, controlling at least 75 DA offices with jurisdiction over 1 in every 5 Americans, including half of the country's 50 most populous cities, according to research by Sean Kennedy, a criminal justice expert at the Maryland Public Policy Institute, a liberty-oriented think tank.

"They believe that the criminal justice system is excessively punitive and racially biased and that it is irredeemable," he said. "So they're trying to undermine it from the inside."

The "rogue prosecutor movement" traces its roots to the "prison abolition movement," according to Zack Smith, a former federal prosecutor who's been writing extensively on the phenomenon as a legal fellow at The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank.

"There is actually a movement; it's a Marxist movement that believes we should abolish prisons in the United States," he said.

"Many members of this movement ... bought into the idea that our criminal justice system is systemically racist, that we have a problem with mass incarceration, we arrest too many people, incarcerate too many people. And so because of that, they want to lower prison population, and they want to basically make many, many things that have traditionally been crimes either not be crimes or make the punishment for them very minor, like a speeding ticket, civil infraction."

Proponents of this idea, however, must



A police officer patrols on Broadway in Chelsea, Mass., on May 14. Soft-on-crime policies established by DAs tend to demoralize police, who may see their work as pointless if, after an arrest is made, the suspect is quickly back on the street.



"There is actually a movement; it's a Marxist movement that believes we should abolish prisons in the United States."

Zack Smith, legal fellow, The Heritage Foundation

have been aware that it would be very difficult to convince legislators to enshrine such a policy into law, Smith suspects.

"What is very clever about what George Soros and others figured out is, rather than doing the hard work of getting the legislature to actually change the laws, decriminalize certain things, ... they figured out they can elect district attorneys to office," he said.

"And if the DA won't prosecute crimes, they won't seek sentencing enhancements. It doesn't matter how many arrests the police make; the criminal won't be held accountable."

The most common tactics of the DAs include establishing policies not to prosecute entire segments of crimes, such as theft under a certain threshold and

nonviolent offenses more broadly, as well as to undercharge crimes to avoid mandatory minimum sentences. They also tend to avoid charges that would lead to "immigration consequences," meaning serious charges that could trigger the deportation of a criminal alien, according to Kennedy.

"Victims are particularly ignored and disregarded by these offices," he noted.

Efforts of the DAs are sometimes amplified by state or local legislations that make it more difficult to put a criminal behind bars, such as by preventing judges from setting bail.

Fallout

Implementation of the policies tends to coincide with increases in crime, though not necessarily across the board or right away. It appears it sometimes takes some time for criminals to learn the ropes of the new regime. Sooner or lat-

er, however, they start to take advantage of it, several experts have pointed out.

"The message these individuals are receiving is that there's not going to be any consequences for their actions. If they're not going to be held on bail, if they're not going to be prosecuted, then what's the incentive for them not to keep repeating the same actions over and over and over again?" Smith said.

The policies also tend to demoralize police, who may see their work as pointless if, upon arrest, the suspect is quickly back on the street.

"Taking somebody to jail is a hassle because you have to get off your beat, get them in a car, take them down to booking, potentially spend hours filling out paperwork, all for what?" said Thomas Hogan, an adjunct fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute and former federal prosecutor.

Some departments have simply ceased to arrest people for the crimes they know won't be prosecuted anyway, he said.

There are exceptions, though.

In New York City, crime has increased, but arrests have gone up, too. That's because the New York Police Department (NYPD) deals with five different DAs, one for each borough, according to Hogan. Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg falls into the Soros-backed ranks, but the other ones aren't necessarily onboard with the de-incarceration agenda—or at least not to the same extent. Moreover, the NYPD is large and powerful enough that they "do their own thing," Hogan said.

"NYPD's response was, 'You make your decisions what you're going to do after we arrest them, but we're going to arrest them anyway,'" he said.

Advantage of Surprise

To some extent, the influx of Soros-backed DAs has "caught pro-public safety organizations, individuals, and the public off guard," Kennedy said.

"These are very sleepy races. Prosecutor races are low-attention, low-spending, low-on-the-ballot affairs," he said.

Soros, however, went in with duffle bags of money.

"It's just unprecedented the relative amount of money he gives," Kennedy said.

"Giving a million dollars to a local DA candidate, what has occurred here in northern Virginia, and millions of dollars to Philadelphia and Chicago and New York and Los Angeles ... that is unprecedented and almost unfathomable."

Over the past decade, Soros and the groups he substantially funds have dished out more than \$40 million in direct spending on DA campaigns, according to a June report by the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund (LELDF), a Virginia-based nonprofit, which Kennedy co-authored.

Before any formidable opposition could mobilize, Soros-backed candidates were sweeping up elections left and right.

"He caught people off guard because nobody expected anyone to do that," Kennedy said.

'Constellation'

Soros didn't stop at just funding the campaigns. He also wrote checks to progressive nonprofits, which then provided comprehensive support to the DAs.

The LELDF report claims that more than 500 political action committees



Progressive billionaire George Soros at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on May 24.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JOSEPH PREZIOSA/FP VIA GETTY IMAGES; FABRICE COFFRINI/AP VIA GETTY IMAGES; HERITAGE.ORG

(PACs), 501(c)(4) social welfare nonprofits (sometimes called “dark money” groups), and 501(c)(3) charities tied to or funded by Soros are engaged in his criminal justice agenda. They “conduct research, provide technical training, and conduct advocacy campaigns” in support of the agenda in general and the DAs in particular, the report says.

The Brennan Center for Justice and Vera Institute of Justice, for example, would issue papers backing the progressive DAs and their policies. Fair and Just Prosecution would provide training and perks, such as hosting “domestic and international junkets” for the DAs, the report says.

The Partnership for Safety and Justice, meanwhile, stands for a coalition of other groups that back the DAs through on-the-ground advocacy, lobbying, and media campaigns to create a perception of public support, Kennedy said.

The groups form “a constellation that operates in tandem but independently of each other” and a “self-reinforcing ecosystem,” he said.

In 2019, for example, Fair and Just Prosecution sponsored an outing in Portugal attended by at least a dozen Soros-backed DAs, including Dan Satterberg (Seattle), Larry Krasner (Philadelphia), Beth McCann (Denver), Marilyn Mosby (Baltimore), Kim Gardner (St. Louis), and George Gascón (Los Angeles).

Race Argument

One of the cornerstones of the progressive prosecutor ideology is the argument that the U.S. system of justice is racist because it leads to a greater proportion of black people in the prison population.

But the argument is “misstated,” according to Hogan.

“The proportion of people who go to prison should be reflective of the people who are offending,” he said.

“So, if there is a disproportional level of offending across various races, yeah, there will be a disproportionate level of people who are going to prison for those races. But as long as it tracks offending rates, then it’s not disproportionate.”

Available data seem to back Hogan’s argument.

Black people were identified as offenders in 50 percent of murders and made up 51 percent of murder arrestees; they



were identified as offenders in 59 percent of robberies and made up 49 percent of robbery arrestees; for aggravated assault, the numbers were 42 versus 33 percent; for rape, 27 versus 25 percent, according to 2020 data provided to the FBI by about half of the country’s police agencies.



“‘Rogue prosecutors’ want to sabotage the criminal justice system and remake the world anew in their own ideological image.”

Sean Kennedy, criminal justice expert, Maryland Public Policy Institute

“The only logical way to get the prison population to exactly reflect the racial proportions of the United States would be to let some guilty people go free or to lock up some innocent people,” Hogan said.

Based on that argument, the Asian population would be “tremendously underrepresented in prisons,” he noted.

“Is our response that we need to lock up more Asians? It can’t be. But it’s the

logical conclusion of this racial proportionality argument regarding crime.”

Advocates of the race argument counter that black people may offend more often because they’re driven to it by a system of law and culture that’s fundamentally constructed to put black people at a disadvantage.

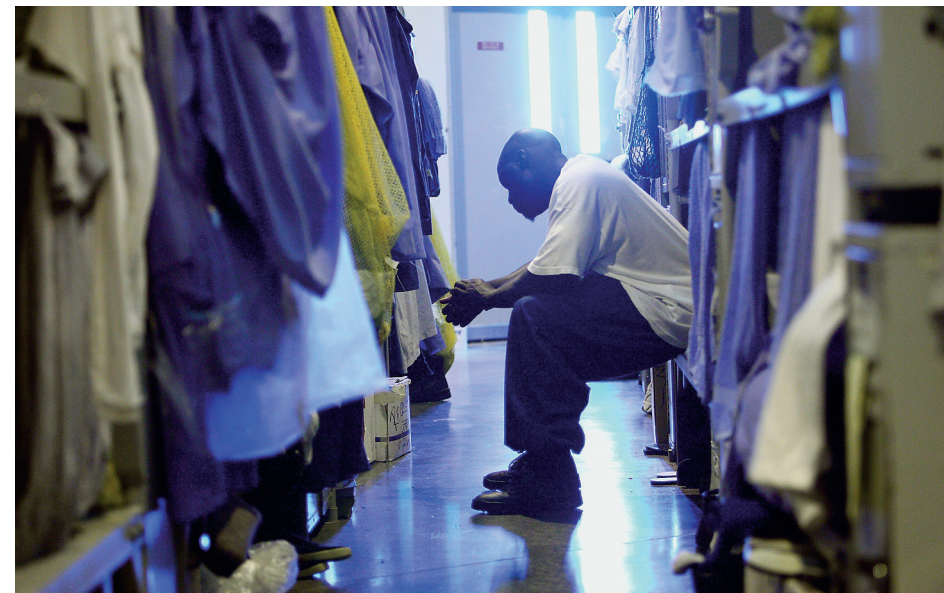
The logical conclusion of such an argument is that the American culture and its institutions, including the whole justice system, need to be fundamentally recreated based on a different set of values.

But it may follow, then, that the current system and culture need to be razed first, which may explain why the “rogue prosecutors” seem to be unfazed in their convictions even when facing carnage in their jurisdictions.

“There’s definitely a subterfuge or sabotage component to it,” Kennedy said. “They want to sabotage the criminal justice system and remake the world anew in their own ideological image. And it’s proving to be utter disaster.”

Smith concurred. “The sad irony of that is that a lot of these so-called reforms are being implemented to help black members of the community, to help other minority members of the community where they live,” he said.

“But if you look at the crime statistics, if you look at who’s disproportionately victimized by crime, especially violent crime, especially shootings, it tends to be other young black men. And so the



very people these reforms are supposed to help are actually the ones who end up being hurt the most by these policies.”

Not all progressive DAs are necessarily true believers willing to take their policies to their ultimate ends, according to Hogan.

“There are ... prosecutors who are simply riding a political wave and who are seeing that these policies are popular,” he said, expecting that “they will change their minds and change their policies if they’re not popular anymore.”

Some may also have a genuine change of heart.

“There are some people who have been lured into this ideology and received the support of George Soros and his groups, and have turned their back on him,” Kennedy said.

George Soares, the DA in Albany, New York, “was one of Soros’s first funded candidates” but later, apparently, went off script and returned to a more traditional law enforcement philosophy, according to Kennedy.

Kim Ogg, the DA in Harris County, Texas, which includes Houston, “was one of the first members who went to the Fair and Just [Prosecution] conferences” and “hosted them even in Houston,” he said.

In the past few years, however, she’s criticized some parts of the progressive policy agenda, including bail reform.

Mass Incarceration

Another common argument among

leftist progressive activists is that the United States puts too many people behind bars.

The country indeed sports one of the highest incarceration rates in the world. But simply letting criminals off the hook isn’t a solution, according to Smith.

“It’s not first-time, low-level, nonviolent drug offenders who are sitting in prison. It’s repeat violent offenders. And so when you hear someone say they want to reduce the prison population substantially, that necessarily means releasing people who have committed very violent crimes; crimes like rape, robbery, burglary, even murder in some cases,” he said.

About 4 percent of inmates are behind bars for drug possession as their most serious offense, according to data from the Department of Justice and the U.S. Sentencing Commission (pdf, pdf).

In state prison systems, which house nearly 9 out of every 10 inmates, almost 60 percent were serving time for a violent offense, and another 12 percent for a burglary or a weapons violation at the end of 2019.

In federal prisons, about 45 percent of inmates currently serve time for a drug crime—mostly trafficking.

Since reported property crimes outnumber violent ones about 5 to 1, the numbers indicate that offenders are already unlikely to spend much time in prison for a nonviolent offense.

(Far Left) The San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, Calif., on July 8, 2020.

(Left) An inmate at the Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, Calif., in this file photo.

Entrenched

Countering the progressive DAs is no easy task, according to Kennedy, who’s personally helping with one recall effort in northern Virginia.

“And a lot of the jurisdictions where these prosecutors won, they are very difficult to dislodge, because they are liberals in big liberal cities where the Democratic primary is the only game in town, and all you have to do is appeal to very liberal Democratic primary voters,” he said.

“If you have a lot of money and strong ideology, convincing that narrow subset of voters that your policies are just or working, or [that you] just need more time or whatever, is very easy to do.”

Indeed, a number of the Soros-backed DAs have easily sailed through reelections already, though they did so “before crime really got out of control,” Kennedy said.

“We will see what happens in the next few years if crime stays elevated, especially in these jurisdictions, if the public gets sick and tired of it,” he said.

In recent years, though, there has been some successful resistance to the progressive DAs.

In Suffolk County, Massachusetts, a more law-and-order-minded DA won against the Soros-backed candidate in the Democratic primary, de facto guaranteeing her election.

In Baltimore County, a “tough-on-crime” Democrat defeated a Soros-backed challenger, Kennedy said.

In Little Rock, Arkansas, a Republican defeated the Soros-backed Democrat for the Pulaski County DA office.

On the other hand, Soros-backed candidates won in Portland, Maine, and rebuffed a challenger in Burlington, Vermont, earlier this year.

Still, Soros’s success rate has dropped significantly, according to Kennedy.

“Finally, the tide is turning where these Soros prosecutors don’t just waltz into office every time they go on the ballot,” he said.

“When there’s organized opposition—and a good candidate, to be honest—to oppose the Soros prosecutor, then we’re seeing success.” ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES, JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES, MDP/OLYMPIA

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Soros Defends Backing Leftist Prosecutors

'If people trust the justice system, it will work,' billionaire funder wrote in an op-ed

By Zachary Stieber

Progressive billionaire George Soros delivers a speech at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 24, 2019.

PHOTO BY FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

BILLIONAIRE GEORGE Soros has defended his support of prosecutors who have implemented a raft of measures that critics say have led to a spike in crime and other negative effects.

Soros said in an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* that he's concerned about crime but also sees a need to reform the criminal justice system, which he described as "rife with injustices that make us all less safe."

"The idea that we need to choose between justice and safety is false. They reinforce each other: If people trust the justice system, it will work. And if the system works, public safety will improve," he wrote, pointing out that black people in the United States are more likely to be in jail than white people, a discrepancy some attribute to racism and others to the difference in crime rates between the groups.

Soros and the groups he funds have financially supported the campaigns of dozens of leftist district attorney candidates in recent years, many of whom have won elections.

They include George Gascón, the Los Angeles prosecutor whose opponents failed to gather enough valid signatures on a recall petition; Lawrence Krasner, the district attorney of Philadelphia; Alvin Bragg, the top prosecutor in New York County; top Chicago prosecutor Kim Foxx; and Kimberly Gardner, the circuit attorney for St. Louis.

The prosecutors share some commonalities. Practically all have implemented policies that include halting or curbing the prosecution of lower-level crimes and moving for some type of bail reform, either eliminating bail or adjusting the bail system.

The prosecutors and their supporters say the alterations are aimed at improving the justice system, but critics say the policies have led to crime spikes.

While the prosecutors backed by Soros oversee 20 percent of Americans, more than 40 percent of U.S. homicides in 2021 occurred in their jurisdictions, according to the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund, a group with the mission of supporting law enforcement.

"Most of these prosecutors pursue radical justice policies upon assuming office

including eliminating bail, dismissing felony cases, and seeking lenient sentences while creating antagonistic relationships with their public safety partners, especially the police," the group said in its report, released in June.

Soros said that the "reform-minded prosecutors" are implementing "an agenda that promises to be more effective and just," including "prioritizing the resources of the criminal-justice system to protect people against violent crime," treating drug addiction as a disease rather than a crime, and seeking an end to "the criminalization of poverty and mental illness."

"This agenda, aiming at both safety and justice, is based on both common sense and evidence. It's popular. It's effective. The goal is not defunding the police but restoring trust between the police and the policed, a partnership that fosters the solving of crimes," he wrote.

Soros also claimed that the spike in crime witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't connected to the policies of the prosecutors he's supported, citing an academic study that "shows no connection between the election of reform-minded prosecutors and local crime rates." He didn't link to or identify the study, and it was unclear where or when it was published. He also said he'd continue supporting candidates whose policy proposals he favors.

Challenges

The op-ed drew challenges from critics, including Rafael Mangual, head of re-



Rafael Mangual, head of research for the Policing and Public Safety Initiative at the Manhattan Institute.

search for the Policing and Public Safety Initiative at the Manhattan Institute.

Soros, Mangual wrote in the *City Journal*, "offered a shallow, essentially data-free collection of platitudes—"If people trust the justice system, it will work"—and incomplete observations," taking issue with the note about black people being more likely to be locked up than white people.

"Such a contention is meant to persuade the reader that these incarcerations are mostly (if not overwhelmingly) illegitimate—the product of racial animus more than anything else. What else could it be? Well, how about disparate rates of criminal offending? A

Bureau of Justice Statistics study of homicides between 1980 and 2008 found that blacks commit homicide offenses at a rate 'almost eight times higher than the rate for whites,'" he said.

The Washington Examiner editorial board, meanwhile, said that Soros's op-ed "was supposed to defend and justify his backing of prosecutors who are extraordinary for being soft on crime."

"But time and again, such prosecutors have shown that their philosophy is inconsistent with justice. Again and again, they release violent career criminals who victimize ordinary citizens going about their business," the board said, noting examples from Virginia and Illinois.

"Criminal justice reform was once popular and bipartisan. But Soros and his soft-on-crime prosecutors have been busy destroying the consensus that previously existed behind it," the board concluded. "By applying leniency when complete-

ly inappropriate and letting predators loose on their communities, he is killing off any chance for genuine common sense to rule the day and mete out justice with appropriate mercy." ■

Workers clean up the inside of a store after it was looted in Chicago on Aug. 10, 2020.



FROM TOP: MANHATTAN-INSTITUTE.ORG, SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES



The scene of a shooting in the Harlem neighborhood of New York on Jan. 22.

PHOTO BY ED JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

NEW YORK CITY

CITY IN GRIP

OF ORGANIZED STREET CRIME

High recidivism rate coincides with progressive district attorney's term, bail reform

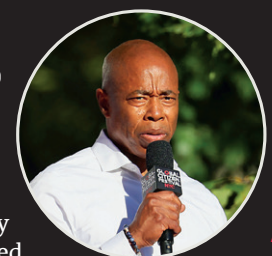
BY PETR SVAB

CRIME IN NEW YORK CITY HAS EXPLODED this year. The last time the Big Apple saw more theft rotting its core, Frank Sinatra was still alive. After a surge in shootings over the previous two years, murders have somehow subsided. Instead, nearly all other forms of crime have mushroomed.

The city's police department, the NYPD, has been arresting people at numbers not seen in decades, but with limited effect—the criminals are often quickly back on the street.

In what appears to be a new trend, street crime has become more brazen and systematic.

Just as in many other major cities across the country, New York is scourged by unscrupulous shoplifters who fill up their bags with merchandise and walk out of the store in plain view. Petty theft is up some 43 percent so far this year, with more than 82,000 reported incidents. That's the most since at least 1995, according to the NYPD crime data portal, CompStat.



NYC MAYOR ERIC ADAMS

noted

that the state is the only one in the country that blocks judges 'from considering the danger an offender poses when deciding whether or not to set bail.'

THEO WARGO/GETTY IMAGES FOR GLOBAL CITIZEN

Grand theft, which usually refers to pickpocketing or theft of more than \$1,000 in value, went up by more than 44 percent, with more than 36,000 incidents—the most since 1998.

Robberies, meanwhile, are up more than 38 percent. The NYPD has identified a new pattern where criminals appear to be more organized and systematic.

“We have seen multiple robberies committed in a short time span and in close proximity to each other,” said NYPD chief of detectives James Essig during a Sept. 7 press briefing.

The criminals will steal a vehicle and then use it for a quick crime spree.

“They use numerous stolen cars, motorcycles, or scooters, and they change the plates during the commission of their crime,” Essig said. “All involve a large number of individuals who break into smaller groups to commit these violent robberies.”

In one such incident on Aug. 29, several young men stole a Honda Civic around 4 a.m. in the posh Park Slope neighborhood in Brooklyn. Less than an hour later, they pulled up on Union Turnpike in Queens and robbed a 7-Eleven convenience store at gunpoint. They hit another 7-Eleven half an hour later and two more stores an hour after that.

The police arrested several suspects, including a minor and an 18-year-old with 78 prior arrests, including seven for robberies.

“He’s 18 years old. He’s been arrested 78 times. How many hundreds of New Yorkers has he victimized, and yet he keeps being released only to go back and victimize others?” NYPD Chief of Department Kenneth Corey stated during a briefing, noting that robbery recidivism has been “sky high.”

Progressive DA, Bail Reform

The street crime boom coincides with Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg taking office in January after winning his race with significant financial backing from progressive billionaire George Soros. Just two days after assuming office, Bragg issued a memo constraining prosecutions for lower-level offenses, including some armed robberies and some burglaries.

Also, in 2019, the New York state legislature approved a bail reform law that bars judges from setting cash bail in many nonviolent and some violent offenses, including most second-degree burglaries and some second-degree robberies.

Some NYPD officers previously told The Epoch Times that the overhaul undermined officer morale, as seeing criminals back on the street shortly after being arrested made the officers’ work seem pointless.

New York Mayor Eric Adams, a former NYPD officer who campaigned last year partially on a law-and-order platform, called for changes to the bail



reform law. He noted that the state is the only one in the country that blocks judges “from considering the danger an offender poses when deciding whether or not to set bail,” according to an Aug. 3 statement from Adams’s office.

Race Question

The push for more lenient treatment of lower-level crime has usually been justified by the fact that the share of black arrestees is greater than the black percentage of a given jurisdiction’s population. In New York City last year, for example, nearly 60 percent of robbery arrestees were black. But the city’s population is less than 24 percent black.

By contrast, more than 40 percent of the city is white, but only about 6 percent of robbery arrestees were white. The argument thus assumes that police single out black people for arrests, and district attorneys should show leniency to robbery suspects to lower incarceration rates among blacks.

The problem with that argument is twofold.

First, nearly 65 percent of robbery suspects were identified as black, while less than 5 percent as

New York City police officers stand guard at the entrance of the Museum of Modern Art in New York on March 12.

FROM TOP: KENA BENANOUR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; ALEX J. ROSENFELD/GETTY IMAGES

white. That means that black suspects were more than 60 percent more likely to be identified as suspects than they were to be arrested for the offense. White people, by contrast, were slightly more likely to be arrested than they were to be marked as a robbery suspect.

Second, while there has been no dispute over helping black youth to avoid prison and stay on the right track, simply not arresting them neglects the second part of the equation—the victims.

“I think we do ourselves a little bit of a disservice when we just say bail reform. Criminal justice reform is the total package, and these laws were meant to address disproportionality in the criminal justice system. But a disproportionate number of our victims are people of color as well,” NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell said during the briefing.

Police Under Pressure

The state’s lawmakers and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul agreed in April to tweak the rules to allow bail for a somewhat wider range of crimes, such as gun-

NY Crime Increases in 2022

- **Petty theft:** Up about 43 percent (the most since at least 1995)
- **Grand theft:** Up more than 44 percent (the most since 1998)
- **Robberies:** Up more than 38 percent

“He’s 18 years old. He’s been arrested 78 times. How many hundreds of New Yorkers has he victimized and yet he keeps being released only to go back and victimize others.”

Kenneth Corey, chief, NYPD

related crimes, hate crimes, and repeat theft offenses.

But police officers have complained about other issues, such as a general disrespect toward the profession, as well as the city’s change in use-of-force rules a few years ago that outlawed some martial arts techniques used to safely subdue resisting suspects.

A 2020 city law says that “no person shall restrain an individual in a manner that restricts the flow of air or blood by ... sitting, kneeling, or standing on the chest or back in a manner that compresses the diaphragm, in the course of effecting or attempting to effect an arrest.”

Such positions are virtually unavoidable in arresting a resisting subject without using a baton, taser, or a gun, according to Renner Gracie, a martial arts instructor who’s been teaching law enforcement defensive techniques from Brazilian jiu-jitsu for more than 20 years.

“Every single one of them [arrests] in which the police is successful ... included momentary, at the very least, pressure on the diaphragm of the subject,” Gracie previously told The Epoch Times.

Arrests that fail or escalate to higher levels of violence are usually those where the officers failed to pin the subject down, he said.

The law is worded so broadly as to make it illegal even when an officer ends up in one of the forbidden positions accidentally and the suspect suffers no injury.

“It’s now going to make it impossible for police officers to overpower somebody without hurting them,” said Robert Brown, former NYPD captain and now a criminal lawyer, in an earlier phone call with The Epoch Times.

Several current and former NYPD officers previously told The Epoch Times that many officers are looking for early retirement due to the increasing difficulty of doing their jobs.

Since 2019, the city has lost more than 2,000 police officers, with retirements slated to be the highest on record, the New York Post reported in June. ■



New York City Police Chief Kenneth Corey speaks at a news briefing in New York on April 12.

Police investigate the scene of a shooting in Orange, Calif., on April 1, 2021.

PHOTO BY JOHN FREDRICKS/THE EPOCH TIME



TROUBLING TREND

California Dream Dwindles **AS CRIME RISES**

‘Property and violent crimes continue to have devastating consequences’

BY JAMIE JOSEPH

LOS ANGELES—MYRA MILLAN, manager of a 7-Eleven in Los Angeles, told The Epoch Times that working at the convenience store has become “scary, because you never know what is going to happen.”

The store, located in the 1800 block of West Olympic Boulevard, was robbed around 1 a.m. on Sept. 13. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) said the suspect “waited in line, walked up to the counter, took out a handgun, and fired one shot over the counter.”

The suspect demanded that employees behind the counter fill a bag with money from the cash register. The suspect fired a second shot over the counter and fled the store on foot with the stolen money.

No injuries were reported, but Millan said it left her and her employees shaken. She said this was the third time the store had been targeted by thieves this year.

“You don’t know what to expect, who to trust and who not to trust,” she said.

The LAPD released security footage of the incident on Sept. 21, asking for the public’s help in finding the suspect.

In January, lifestyle social media influencer Mandy Madden Kelley’s home in the Melrose area of Los Angeles was broken into by an intruder shortly after midnight. She told The Epoch Times at the time that several houses in her neighborhood had been burglarized during the pandemic, too.

“My husband and I felt very scared and unprotected,” Kelley said.

She said that in the 20 minutes it took for the police to arrive, “it was traumatizing to be so helpless.”

Los Angeles crime is a microcosm of what many business owners and resi-



Lifestyle social media influencer Mandy Madden Kelley’s home in the Melrose neighborhood of Los Angeles was broken into by an intruder.

dents alike are facing across the state. With the November election on the horizon, the Los Angeles mayoral candidates, real-estate developer Rick Caruso and Rep. Karen Bass, will have to convince voters why they’re the best fit to handle public safety.

Crime Data

In California’s big cities, safety is a top concern. According to LAPD data, which is reported weekly, robberies were up 17 percent the week of Sept. 19, compared to the same period last year.

The latest crime statistics for the state as a whole show violent crime is on the rise. According to the attorney general’s office, homicides increased 7.2 percent between 2020 and 2021. Despite the increase, officials insist the overall crime rate is low compared to the state’s historic highs.

The violent crime rate in California—measured by the number of violent crimes per 100,000 people—increased 6.7 percent from 437 two years ago to 466.2 in 2021. This number still falls below California’s record high of 1,103.9 in 1992.

“While crime rates remain significantly below their historical highs, property and violent crimes continue to have devastating consequences for communities across the state,” state Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a statement on Aug. 25.

Shootings, in particular, remain an issue, Bonta said, with three-quarters of all homicides in 2021 involving a firearm.

LAPD Chief Michel Moore noted in the department’s most recent data report that in the city there has also been a “troubling increase” in robberies involving firearms.

“The incidences of officers rolling into or coming upon instances of gun violence has increased,” Moore said on Sept. 20. “We are working with our training personnel to talk about and remind officers of the critical importance of their safety, seeking cover, and ensuring that they recognize that there are many more guns in the streets today than in years past.”

Viral videos on social media show a grim reality of organized retail theft, assault, home invasions, and sprawling homeless encampments in the state’s largest cities.

In a recent report by the National Retail Federation, \$94.5 billion in losses were reported, resulting from organized re-



Police officers investigate the scene of a shooting in Sacramento, Calif., on Feb. 28.

tail crime across the country. The survey noted that the top locations for organized retail crime were Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland, New York, Houston, and Miami.

Vern Pierson, El Dorado County’s district attorney, has studied these trends and told The Epoch Times that there’s more behind the data than meets the eye.

“The attorney general puts in their report saying it’s not as high as the numbers for the peak back in the 1990s for homicides, but one of the significant differences that anybody who’s in the criminal justice world should be aware of is that emergency medicine today is tremendously better than it was in 1995 or the mid-’90s,” Pierson said.

A report released in July by Redfin

found the state’s highest out-migration rate are residents leaving San Francisco and Los Angeles, citing mainly the high cost of living, but a few have told The Epoch Times in previous interviews that crime also was a factor.

Data reveal that only a few of the state’s cities are driving the numbers up. The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), a nonpartisan research group, reported in January that Los Angeles, Oakland, San Diego, and San Francisco saw upticks in homicides by 17 percent in 2021. Meanwhile, property crime in 2021 “driven by car break-ins and auto thefts, returned property crime numbers close to pre-pandemic numbers,” the report noted.

Behind the Numbers

Critics point to several of the state’s criminal justice reform policies that have been passed in recent years—such

as Propositions 47 and 57, and zero-cash bail—while those in favor of reform believe the root problem lies in an inequitable environment.

Passed by voters in 2014, Proposition 47 reduced the sentencing for theft from a felony to a misdemeanor if the amount stolen doesn’t exceed \$950. According to PPIC research, the proposition did have some impact on property crimes in that “it may have contributed to a rise in larceny thefts, which increased by roughly 9 percent (about 135 more thefts per 100,000 residents) compared to other states.”

In 2016, Proposition 57, meanwhile, allowed for early parole for nonviolent criminals. Zero-cash bail, also established in 2020, allows criminals to be let out without bail. Lawmakers believed this would give more opportunity to inmates who couldn’t afford bail.

Under Proposition 57, prosecutors are

prohibited from charging juveniles as adults without a judge’s approval. The new law also allowed those convicted as adults for crimes committed as juveniles to appeal their sentences.

“I think we have unintentionally been encouraging a culture to become more violent and more lawless,” Pierson said of the new laws.

Following the trend of reforming criminal justice, district attorneys in both San Francisco and Los Angeles were elected on a promise to boldly reshape the criminal justice system in their respective cities. Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón, elected in December 2020, introduced a series of reforms, including eliminating cash bail, most gun enhancement charges, and the death penalty.

But not all officials agree with the policies. More than 34 cities placed a vote of “no confidence” in Gascón, while Los Angeles Sheriff Alex Villanueva also supported the failed recall effort against the district attorney this year.

“The public face of their plan is, ‘Oh, we want to reimagine; we’re going to reinvest.’ They have all these big, flowery ideas. ‘Let’s reinvest in the community.’ ... ‘We’re going to go to the root cause of crime, and let’s spend our money there, so we don’t have to pay for the consequences,’” Villanueva told EpochTV’s Siyamak Khorrani. “Well, that’s like offering a person in the desert who was dying of thirst and heat: Let’s plant a tree. [It] does absolutely nothing for that person.”

Villanueva has been a vocal critic of Gascón’s policies and accused his office of “not prosecuting any crimes.”

This lax approach to criminal justice, critics say, is the cause of crime.

While the recall effort against Gascón failed in August, San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin was ousted by voters during the June primaries.

“The recall of Chesa Boudin, this rogue, so-called ‘Progressive DA’ who clearly didn’t embrace his required elected role to actually prosecute—his recall should send a clear message across the nation—that serving as District Attorney yet not holding criminals accountable is a dereliction of duty,” Recall Chesa Boudin spokesperson Richie Greenberg said in a statement on June 7.

The turn to a progressive criminal ❖



(Top) A homeless man pushes a cart full of his belongings on a street in downtown Los Angeles on April 18, 2020. (Above) Tents of the homeless on a street in the Skid Row neighborhood of Los Angeles on May 16, 2020.

justice reform strategy was a response to the state's multi-decade history of mass incarceration stemming from tough-on-crime laws, such as the Three Strikes Sentencing Law which served third-time violent or serious felony offenders with

25 years to life.

While criminal justice reform advocates argued the law was too harsh, "it worked," Villanueva said.

The law, which was deemed too arbitrary, locked away numerous nonviolent

suspects for life who committed smaller property crimes.

From 1988 to 2011, four state governors considered the tough approach a priority. But in 2011, California took a turn and released tens of thousands of nonviolent and non-sex offender inmates under the *Brown v. Plata* ruling, which ruled California's prison systems violated the state's Eighth Amendment of "cruel and unusual punishment."

After a long trial, the court ordered the release of enough prisoners for the inmate population to come within 137.5 percent of the prisons' total design capacity. As a result, between 38,000 and 46,000 inmates were released—many of them suffering from mental health issues or psychotic disorders.

"You have people who are being released early, and they're out committing crimes because they're out of custody," Pierson said. "A significant percentage of those people were mentally ill, and they would not be going back into custody because they did the lower-level property crimes. They live on the streets, and the homeless population has exploded as a result of it."

Homelessness

California leads the nation in homelessness.

On any given night in the Golden State, there are more than 160,000 people sleeping on the streets. According to the last point-in-time count in Los Angeles last month, there are 41,980 unsheltered homeless people.

In 2020, about 25 percent of Los Angeles County's homeless population suffered from severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders and 27 percent had a long-term substance abuse disorder, according to the Los Angeles Housing Services Authority. Chronically homeless individuals were reported to have a higher percentage of being addicted to drugs, suffering from a mental health issue, or both.

According to a June 2021 analysis, homeless-related crimes in the city of Los Angeles—that is, any crime involving either a homeless suspect or victim—made up 11 percent of violent crime in 2018, 13 percent in 2019, and 15 percent in 2020 and 2021.

LAPD data this year showed that 23 percent of homicide victims were categorized as "unhoused."

Venice resident Deborah Keaton previously spoke to *The Epoch Times* about a recreational vehicle encampment parked outside her home on Abbott Kinney Boulevard for more than a year. One of the RV dwellers, identified as Brandon Washington, had been arrested several times before. But this didn't stop him from making threats against Keaton.

"He rang the bell, and he was wasted, and he said to me: 'I just need to know all the evil people; Is your husband evil? Because I need to kill your husband,'" Keaton told *The Epoch Times* last November. "It was scary."

Keaton filed a police report and captured the entire interaction on her doorbell camera.

"There's no repercussions for these guys, and they can't be held and they know it. A lot of these guys have been arrested 400 times," she said.

Neighbors alleged at the time that Washington—who often appeared to be on drugs—had prostituted women in the RVs, in addition to dealing methamphetamine to other homeless people. Keaton said that in the summer, a woman was hiding in

her backyard because she claimed that Washington was "pimping her out."

After the community rallied together to urge the city to do something about the transients, the encampment was eventually cleared by LA Sanitation. It's unclear if any of the transients accepted services.



A Firsthand Perspective

LAPD-reported homicides within the first half of 2022 reached a historic high in the past 15 years. In the past two years, data also showed about a third of homicide victims were black men, even though they account for just 4 percent of the Los Angeles population.

This month, popular rapper PnB Rock was shot dead during a robbery while eating at a restaurant in Los Angeles. Prior to his death, he appeared on a podcast and said robberies in Los Angeles have become normalized because it's "so common."

Stan Muhammed, founder of the Venice-based gang interventionist group HELPER Foundation, told *The Epoch Times*: "To walk up to somebody and just kill them—it's become beast-like, almost predatory. There's no regard for life."

The LAPD reported a 14.9 percent in-

crease in robberies between 2020 and 2021 in the city, with a 3.1 percent uptick so far this year compared to the same period last year.

Muhammed, who was incarcerated in the 1990s, said he noticed a stark contrast to today's criminals due to the kinds of drugs available. He was imprisoned for nonviolent offenses, including drug possession and gang association. He established the HELPER Foundation in 1999 to help young adults prone to gang violence and substance abuse to be productive in their communities through group counseling, leadership training, field trips, mentoring, tutoring, job development, job training, and workshops.

"You take the fathers out, you lock up the leadership. There are all these young people growing up without any leadership," Muhammed said.

He said in the 1990s, substances such as fentanyl and meth were uncommon compared to today.

"So, a lot of us were not using that type of substance, but nowadays you get fentanyl and all these other drugs that are causing people to really go insane," he said.

Muhammed said that despite his mother's efforts to keep him on the right track growing up with a Christian upbringing, he fell "victim to the environment" like so many others in his community who grew up seeing violence in the home. He said there is a lack of resources to aid those in communities of color who grew up around gang violence in Los Angeles because "no one really wants to deal with them."

"This stuff has been happening for 40 years," Muhammed said. "It's a civil war is what it is, but it's not being called that; it's called gang violence."

Although the HELPER Foundation receives partial city funds, the coalition is still small compared to the bigger organizations that receive state funding for outreach services and shelter. He said it's easier for officials to fund the same groups because "they've been in bed with these people for so long."

"They feel more comfortable dealing with those top organizations because they don't have to worry about the people with the guns," Muhammed said. "What we have to deal with is the guy who has murder on his mind." ■

FROM TOP: MARIOTZ/GETTY IMAGES, APU GOMES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



POLITICS

Democrats Pass Police Funding Bills

On eve of midterms, House Democrats pass 4 bills aimed at public safety *By Katabella Roberts*

HOUSE DEMOCRATS PASSED a package of bills on Sept. 22 aimed at bolstering police funding and public safety, after Republican lawmakers accused them of being soft on crime amid a surge in violent crime across the United States.

Lawmakers voted to pass four bills as part of the package, including the Mental Health Justice Act of 2022, the Invest to Protect Act of 2022, the Break the Cycle of Violence Act, and the Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods (VICTIM) Act of 2022.

The Mental Health Justice Act of 2022, sponsored by Rep. Katie Porter (D-Calif.), would create a grant program for states and local governments to train and dispatch mental health professionals, as opposed to police, in response to emergencies involving behavioral health.

The Invest to Protect Act of 2022, sponsored by moderate Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.), would raise funding for smaller police departments that employ fewer than 200 law enforcement officers.

The Break the Cycle of Violence Act, sponsored by Rep. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.), would provide grants to fund community violence intervention

Chicago police officers patrol downtown Chicago on Oct. 19, 2021.



Rep. Val Demings (D-Fla.) introduced the VICTIM Act.

initiatives in areas with higher rates of homicide and community violence.

Rep. Val Demings (D-Fla.), who introduced the VICTIM Act, called its passing a “major win for America’s public safety” and said it passed the U.S. House with support from Democrats and Republicans.

The bill would provide funding to local police departments to hire victim support personnel along with investigators to aid in solving unsolved homicides and violent crimes.

Specifically, the legislation would “establish a Department of Justice grant program to hire, train, and retain detectives and victim services personnel to investigate shootings and support victims,” Demings said in a statement.

‘Huge Win for Safety of American Communities’

“Real life is different from television. Half of gun murders in the United States go unsolved, and victims are often left with no justice and little support,” said Demings, who was the first female chief of police of Orlando, Florida.

“I vividly recall being on the scenes of young people, dead as a result of violence, knowing that

their families would soon receive devastating news. I saw as a detective, detective sergeant, and chief of police that violent crimes require a coordinated and professional response to ensure justice. Passage of the VICTIM Act is a huge win for the safety of American communities and will help us put away violent criminals and keep families safe.”

However, the packages, the result of lengthy negotiations between moderates and progressives, also exposed intraparty divisions, as some progressive Democrats were hesitant to accept the bills over concerns about increasing funding for local police departments, which threatened to derail the bills.

Four progressives joined Republicans in voting against the bill: Reps. Jamaal Bowman (D-N.Y.), Cori Bush (D-Mo.), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.). Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) voted present.

Following nearly two hours of delayed negotiations, lawmakers voted 216–215 in favor of a rule setting the terms of the debate on the legislation.

However, it remains to be seen if the package will receive enough support from Senate Republicans to pass.

‘They Don’t Want to Fund the Police’

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) in a speech on the House floor on Sept. 22 was vocal about his lack of support for the package of bills.

“They don’t want to fund the police, they want to addict the police to the federal dollar,” Gaetz said. “And that comes with a more efficient way to ensure centralized decision-making, not the localized decision-making that our Constitution promises and has offered great promise to this country for generations.”

“Do not buy this theory that this legislation is intended to help law enforcement. The best thing we could do for law enforcement is to get out of their way, have their back, and call out politicians who are trying to defund the police and devalue the commitment they make to our communities.”

The latest package of bills comes as violent crime has soared across the United States, surging 4 percent in 2022 when compared to the same time period in 2021, according to a midyear comparison survey from the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA).

Robberies also rose by 12 percent in the first six months of this year compared to 2021, and aggravated assaults were up 2.5 percent. However, homicides were down 2 percent year over year, according to MCCA data.

Meanwhile, calls across the country to defund the police and chronic law enforcement shortages have further exacerbated the situation. ■

4 BILLS PASSED IN HOUSE

1. The Mental Health Justice Act of 2022:

Train and dispatch mental health professionals in response to emergencies involving behavioral health.

2. The Invest to Protect Act of 2022:

Raise funding for smaller police departments that employ fewer than 200 law enforcement officers.

3. The Break the Cycle of Violence Act:

Provide grants to fund community violence intervention initiatives in areas with higher rates of homicide and community violence.

4. VICTIM Act:

Provide funding to local police departments to hire victim support personnel to aid in solving unsolved homicides and violent crimes.

MIDTERMS

GOP Will Win on Economy, Crime: RNC

Republican chair issues memo to GOP candidates in advance of midterms *By Jack Phillips*

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL Committee (RNC) has urged GOP candidates to focus on the economy and rising crime ahead of the 2022 midterms.

A memo sent out by the RNC, dated Sept. 13, states that “Democrats and the national media are determined to try and make abortion the top issue ahead of the midterms, however, the media is not on our side, and we do not answer to them but to voters.”

Its polling shows that 66 percent of voters blame Biden for their economic struggles. Only 36 percent of voters who blamed pent-up demand or corporate greed for such struggles back Republicans, the RNC said.

“Voters have made clear this election is largely about the economy and crime,” the memo reads, citing a poll that found that 55 percent said “rising prices” are more important than abortion.

“Winning this issue is more nuanced than simply pointing out rising prices and the flailing economy. Republicans need to finish their sentences to bring along the 20 million voters who are unsure who to blame and the 52 million who blame corporate greed and pent-up demand.”

The memo came as the Dow Jones slumped on Sept. 13, with technology shares taking the biggest hit, after data showed that monthly consumer prices unexpectedly rose in August. The stock market index hasn’t recovered since. The Labor Department’s consumer price index report shows that the monthly inflation index gained 0.1 percent in August from July, against an expectation of a 0.1 percent dip.

That came several weeks after Biden signed into law the Democrat-backed “Inflation Reduc-

tion Act,” which ostensibly was designed to deal with rising inflation.

Crime

The committee stressed that “crime and safety” are also a top issue for voters for the 2022 midterms, saying that a poll found that “Republicans led Democrats by 16 points on the issue of crime.”

More voters blamed soft-on-crime policies rather than gun laws for rising crime, according to the RNC memo.

A total of 45 million voters said the issue of crime will have a major effect on their vote, and 17 million said that it’s one of their top issues, the memo notes.

“While Biden and out-of-touch Democrats refuse to address the economic peril they created, voters have made it abundantly clear that this election is about the economy and crime,” RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel said in a statement about the messaging strategy. “Meanwhile, Republican candidates are meeting voters where they are and discussing the issues they care about, from the economy to crime and safety.”

Democratic strategists have noted serious political headwinds amid high inflation and pessimism. Nevertheless, they’ve claimed that Biden has won major legislative victories on key issues.

“Republicans haven’t taken advantage of the bad political environment. And they punted on having any agenda or getting anything done,” Biden pollster John Anzalone told The Associated Press last month. “Historically, this should be a 30- or 40-seat win by Republicans. The entire Republican Party has been one big mistake for the past four or five months.” ■

**45
MILLION**

AMERICAN VOTERS SAY the issue of crime will have a major effect on their vote, and 17 million say that it’s one of their top issues, an RNC poll found.

55%

OF U.S. VOTERS SAID that “rising prices” are more important than abortion, according to RNC polling.

66%

OF AMERICAN VOTERS blame Biden for their economic struggles, according to RNC polling.

Two policeman at the U.S. Capitol in Washington on Oct. 24, 2019.

PHOTO BY ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS/
AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FIREARMS

'Glock Switches'

Turning handguns into machine guns becoming popular among gangsters

By Petr Svab

THE RISE IN MURDERS IN RECENT years has been accompanied by another trend: Criminals are increasingly modifying their firearms to enable fully automatic fire, converting simple handguns into tiny machine guns.

Houston police brought 19 cases involving guns that had been modified with what are referred to as "Glock switches" earlier this year, including one related to a shootout that left three police officers wounded. In 2021, a Houston police officer was killed while serving a warrant after the criminal pulled a Glock with a switch and opened fire. In April, six people were killed in a gang shootout in downtown Sacramento, California, where one of the criminals used a gun that had a Glock switch, according to authorities.

There are no comprehensive national statistics on the proliferation of Glock switches, but it seems that they've only been used in a small fraction of violent gun crimes.

"It's largely a novelty," one gun expert told The Epoch Times.

The conversion allows the popular Glock handguns to fire multiple rounds with a single pull of the trigger.

Machine guns are generally illegal to own in the United States. The exception is those made before 1986, which have become prohibitively expensive, and those held by licensed firearms dealers. Because the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) considers guns with Glock switches to be machine guns, getting one illegally can land a person in federal prison for up to a decade.

In 2020, the ATF in Houston confiscated about 30 such switches. In 2021, the number rose to nearly 150, local media outlets reported.

A Glock switch is a small device that's about an

inch in diameter. It snaps onto the back of the gun and applies pressure on the trigger mechanism so that it doesn't stop after firing just one round. A regular Glock with a Glock switch can empty a 30-round magazine in about 2.3 seconds.

Such a firearm is highly impractical, as the rapid recoil and small size make it difficult to control and wildly inaccurate. Because most Glocks use 9-mm ammunition, the recoil is rather strong, causing the muzzle to increasingly jerk upward the longer a person holds the trigger, according to Charles Heller, a firearms instructor and radio host in Arizona.

"If you run a Glock full-auto, you're going to be shooting airplanes pretty quick," he told The Epoch Times.

Such a modified gun becomes more dangerous at close range, according to Heller.

2.3 SECONDS

A REGULAR GLOCK can empty a 30-round magazine in about 2.3 seconds.

A combination of images showing a Glock switch.

"If you can put three to five rounds into somebody instead of one or two, it is more deadly," he said.

There are a small number of such switches that are legally owned by people with the required license. Some law enforcement agencies have them, too, Heller said.

Unlicensed switches have started to proliferate in the past several years after some people in China started to make them and sell them online. They're usually mailed to the United States directly or smuggled in through Mexico, according to the ATF. Some have also been made domestically on 3D printers. The agency has identified about 2,500 people who may have bought one, WGN TV reported in 2019.

An ATF spokesman told The Epoch Times that the agency hasn't released any statistics on



"From 2017 to 2021, machine gun conversion devices recovered by ATF increased to more than 1,500 from less than 100."

ATF spokesman

switches in particular and was unable to verify the figure reported in 2019 "based solely on the information in the article." However, he noted that "from 2017 to 2021, machine gun conversion devices recovered by ATF increased from less than 100 to more than 1,500."

However, that includes other devices that enable fully automatic fire, not just switches, the spokesman clarified via email.

In Heller's view, Glock switches—or machine guns, for that matter—shouldn't be illegal in the first place, according to the Second Amendment, and since the switches are so primitive and can be 3D printed, it won't be possible to prevent people who are willing to break the law from acquiring them.

"The genie is out the bottle on 3D printing; you're never going to be able to quash it." ■



(Top) A former law enforcement officer holds a Glock pistol in Longmont, Colo., on March 24, 2018. (Above) An officer shows a Glock 17 pistol during a gun event in the Brooklyn borough of New York on May 22, 2021.

GLOCK/IFROM TOP: ATF.GOV; RICK T. WILKING/GETTY IMAGES; ED. JONES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGE

GUN CONTROL in Well-Armed America

Any proposition to disarm Americans is a 'pipe dream,' says former federal prosecutor

BY PETR SVAB *News Analysis*

An instructor teaches students how to handle AR-15 semi-automatic rifles, during a shooting course in Jackson, Miss., on Sept. 26, 2020.

PHOTO BY CHANDAN KHANNA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THE DREAM OF A GUN-FREE America has never been more ephemeral. While calls for gun control still abound, the effectiveness of those efforts is thrown into question by the reality of gun ownership. And the disconnect seems to be growing.

Polls suggest that a majority of Americans don't own a firearm and do support stricter gun laws. Gun ownership has stagnated for decades, according to Gallup.

In reality, however, gun sales have been breaking records in recent years, with a significant portion going to new gun owners, according to industry estimates.

Meanwhile, President Joe Biden's expansive gun control agenda so far has been limited to a single piece of legislation that expanded background checks and offered grants for state "red flag" laws, but didn't go as far as banning any particular weapon.

On the legal front, the U.S. Supreme Court in June struck down some concealed carry restrictions in New York, essentially greenlighting challenges to similar statutes in other states.

Any proposition to actually disarm Americans is just a "pipe dream," according to Thomas Hogan, an adjunct fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute and a former federal prosecutor.

Well-Armed

The gun control argument posits that if gun ownership is restricted, it will be more difficult for a bad actor to obtain a firearm and gun crime would thus decrease.

A common counterargument is that areas with some of the strictest gun laws, such as New York, Chicago, or Philadelphia, encounter much more gun crime than many areas with less stringent gun laws.

Proponents of gun control usually retort that the strict laws are neutered by the fact that criminals can obtain guns in a neighboring state where laws may be less restrictive.

Criminals seldom buy their guns legally. A 2016 government survey of prison inmates showed that only about 9 percent went to a gun store or a pawn shop to buy the firearm that they carried while committing their crime, and less than 1 percent got it at a gun show. Almost 43 percent said they found it or got

it online or from a private person, such as a relative or friend. About 6 percent said they had stolen it.

Simply making it harder to legally get a gun does little because the citizenry is already armed to the teeth, Hogan pointed out. In his view, the ship has sailed on making guns scarce and was, in fact, never moored to begin with.

"The first mass-produced item in the United States was the Samuel Colt revolver," he told *The Epoch Times*.

While activists cite the example of Australia, which substantially disarmed its population through a mandatory gun buyback campaign, Americans are armed on a different scale.

For more than a decade, the United States has had more guns than people, and the ratio keeps increasing. Gun sales especially exploded in 2020 and 2021, coinciding with the rise in violent crime. Over those two years, the ranks of gun owners have grown by nearly 14 million, according to an estimate by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), an industry group.

Even among Democrats, about 1 in 9 purchased a gun in 2020, an *Epoch Times* Big Data Poll found.

America has "never been at that point" where gun confiscation would have been feasible, Hogan said.

"Out of the 350 to 400 million firearms in the United States, how many would be handed in?" he asked. "All the lawful gun owners would hand their guns in, but the criminals would not."

Hogan estimated that it would take hundreds of years to disarm Americans, in no small part because firearms don't easily deteriorate.

"You can take your guns, you can bury them in the backyard, and 50 years later, you could dig them up and with a cleaning kit—a very basic cleaning kit—inside of about five minutes, you could have your firearms working just fine," he said.

For more than a decade, the United States has had more guns than people, and the ratio keeps increasing.



The AR-15

Gun control proponents primarily focus on sporting rifles, particularly the AR-15, which they argue was designed to kill people in wars and has no legitimate use in civilian hands. Critics have countered that argument on several levels.

It's true that the AR-15 (the AR stands for ArmaLite, the original designer) was developed for military use. However, its civilian, semi-automatic version has become one of the most versatile rifle platforms and is the most popular sporting rifle in the United States with about 20 million in circulation, according to the NSSF.

Despite their proliferation, rifles are used in only about 1 percent of violent crimes in the United States, while about one in five involve a handgun, according to 2020 crime data submitted to the FBI by about half of the country's police agencies.

For obvious reasons, a criminal's favorite gun is a small, easy-to-conceal pistol, Hogan said.

The AR-15 sometimes has been portrayed as "high-powered" and particularly deadly and other times as not powerful enough to be useful for hunting. Neither argument is quite right.

Most shootings, even mass shootings, occur at a close range where the advantages of an AR-15 over a handgun—accuracy and bullet velocity—diminish, while the disadvantageous bulk and weight become more prominent. The rifle was used in a significant share of high-profile mass shootings, but there's little evidence that the shooters picked it because it was the deadliest weapon. In fact, there are much deadlier rifles than the AR-15 available on the market.

The hunting argument, on the other hand, is outdated. The AR-15 was originally designed to accept the military-use 5.56 ball ammunition, which is indeed unsuitable for hunting. Advances in ammunition technology, however, have en-

A customer purchases a gun in Tinley Park, Ill., on April 8, 2021.

abled the development of many rounds that made the rifle popular among hunters of small and midsize game, particularly hogs.

Then, there's the constitutional argument.

Legal Battlefield

The Second Amendment states, "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Proponents of gun control and even some Supreme Court justices have interpreted the amendment to allow extensive restrictions on gun ownership. They argue that it only protected the right to bear arms for organized state militias, which were transformed into the National Guard after the Civil War.

Second Amendment advocates, on the other hand, say that most of the current restrictions should be nixed. They point out that if the right to bear arms is underpinned by the need to draw a militia from the populace—in no small part to deter the government from becoming tyrannical—then the populace needs to be free to hold firearms.

The Supreme Court ruled in *District of Columbia v. Heller* in 2008 and reiterated in *McDonald v. Chicago* in 2010 that the Second Amendment also protects the right to bear arms for self-defense.

Various parts of gun laws have been constantly pushed in one direction or the other over the past few decades, with Democratic-leaning states adding more restrictions and Republican-leaning states removing some.

The Supreme Court, holding a 6–3 conservative majority, earlier this year dealt a blow to gun control proponents as it struck down a New York state law that made it hard to get a permit to carry a firearm outside of one's home.

The opinion has opened the door to challenging similar laws, such as those banning gun possession in "sensitive places."

Thus, unless the legal landscape changes dramatically, Americans are unlikely to lose their guns anytime soon. ■

1%

Rifles are used in only about 1 percent of violent crimes in the United States, while about 1 in 5 crimes involve a handgun, 2020 FBI crime data show.

14 MILLION

In 2020 and 2021, the number of gun owners in the United States grew by nearly 14 million, an industry group estimates.

SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Experts Chart Road to Lower Crime

‘What’s lacking right now is accountability for anyone’

By Petr Svab

AMERICA IS FACING A VEXING CRIME problem. Even if the causes of the surge in the past few years are correctly identified, it could take many years of sustained efforts to reverse it. However, some solutions could be deployed right away, according to several experts—as long as there’s a will to do so.

“Police departments, they have to get back to the basic blocking and tackling, keeping their communities safe,” said Zack Smith, former federal prosecutor and now a legal fellow with the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. “Prosecutors have to get back to the basic blocking and tackling of prosecuting crimes. And so when that happens, I think the system will begin to function much, much better.”

Murders and shootings, in particular, rose sharply in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021, available data indicates. Other crime followed, particularly robbery and theft.

Experts have identified several factors behind the surge, including new laws that make it harder to arrest and imprison a criminal; lenient, ideologically driven prosecutors; and disruptions to the court and prison systems in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These phenomena have been allowed to take root partly due to complacency over receding crime in recent decades, according to Thomas Hogan, an adjunct fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute and former federal prosecutor.

“During that great crime decline, prosecutors, police, mayors pulled every lever to reduce crime,” he said.

“As a result, people really began to believe, ‘Well, crime’s going to keep going down no matter what. We’ve won the war on crime. We don’t have to do all these things anymore. We don’t have to lock anybody up anymore.’ Now they’re finding out that that’s not true.”

Yet some cities, like Oklahoma City or De-



“If the other end of restorative justice is, ‘No matter what I do, I’m not going to jail for very long,’ then it’s not going to work.”

Thomas Hogan, adjunct fellow, Manhattan Institute

troit, were able to counter the crime wave better than others.

“The triumvirate in any city that will control crime are the police chief, the chief prosecutor, and the mayor,” Hogan said. “In any place where those three are aligned on controlling crime, you’ll probably see fairly low crime. And that’s separate and apart from what their politics are.”

Some cities, where officials and even a large part of the electorate may have been sympathetic to the “defund the police” or “de-incarceration” agenda, are now reconsidering.

“Even in very left-leaning cities with very left-leaning mayors you’re seeing this phenomenon where people are recognizing that you need to have law and order in order for the rest of society to be able to flourish,” Smith said.

Reversing the soft-on-crime policies, however, is not an easy process. District attorneys, mayors, judges, and lawmakers advocating such policies

are often backed by powerful financial players such as progressive billionaire George Soros.

And even if new officials are elected and the policies are officially reversed, the system will still have to deal with emboldened criminals.

“It could take a decade to return to the lows we saw in 2019,” said Sean Kennedy, a criminal justice expert at the Maryland Public Policy Institute, a liberty-oriented think tank.

Alternative Programs

On the other hand, returning to a tough-on-crime strategy doesn’t mean that locking people up will be the only solution. Many reasonable reforms have been implemented over the years to steer offenders back to the right path or prevent at-risk people from falling into criminal ways.

“Traditional law-and-order District Attorneys have really been at the forefront and setting up alternative programs to help people who may need

treatment. Drug courts, veterans courts, domestic violence courts, all of those are reforms that predated this rogue prosecutor movement,” Smith said.

“But the key to those programs is that there’s still accountability. If someone goes to a drug court and they either refuse to complete the program or they won’t complete the program, at that point the District Attorney can step back in and reinstate the charges against them and they can be convicted and sent to prison.”

Hogan agreed.

“The restorative justice model only works if you also have a serious traditional model on top of it,” he said.

In his experience, it does happen that criminals get straightened out and there’s value to giving a criminal a chance to fix his behavior through some program alternative to incarceration.

“That will only work if on the other end of it they know, ‘If I don’t steer away from this then I will end up going to jail for a really long time,’” he cautioned.

“Because if the other end of restorative justice is, ‘No matter what I do, I’m not going to jail for very long,’ then it’s not going to work.”

Ultimately, the jury is still out on whether restorative justice programs are effective, he said.

“There’s just not enough data.”

Prevention

Over the past decade, many violence prevention programs have also been put in place.

Police have increasingly adopted “precision policing” strategies, focusing their attention on the individuals most prone to violence.

“It’s a relatively small cohort of offenders that cause most of the violent crime in every city. And that’s around the world. It’s five percent of the offenders who cause over 50 percent of the violent crime,” Hogan said.

Violence interrupters, often former gang members and ex-cons themselves, have been employed in some cities to mediate conflicts between rival gangs, crews, and factions to prevent the endless cycle of vendetta. Their efforts seem to have yielded some reduction shootings.

Also, various youth mentorship programs, in which at-risk youth would be assigned to an adult with some success to their name who could provide credible guidance on how to make it in life without resorting to crime, have become popular.

Yet, several former gang members who previously spoke to The Epoch Times indicated that aside from getting a second chance it was also the threat of ending up in prison for good that motivated them to turn around.

“What’s lacking right now is accountability for anyone,” Smith said. ■

Officers arrest an intoxicated man in front of a liquor store in Chelsea, Mass., on May 1, 2021.

LOS ANGELES

Impact of Gascón Recall Failure

Crime in LA will get worse before it gets better as DA George Gascón keeps his job

By James Breslo *Commentary*

DESPITE LOS ANGELES'S WORSENING CRIME problem, the effort to oust District Attorney George Gascón, the architect of the soft-on-crime policies that are causing it, has failed. Incredibly, organizers collected more than 700,000 signatures, yet came up 46,000 short of the number necessary to put the recall on the November ballot.

Skeptics are questioning the disqualification of 27 percent of the signatures. However, the bulk of the rejected signatures was from people who signed the petition twice. Organizers were already aware that 20 percent to 30 percent of signatures are typically rejected for that reason or because the signatory isn't registered to vote in the county. In the recall campaign of Gascón's counterpart in San Francisco, District Attorney Chesa Boudin, 30 percent of the signatures were rejected, but there were enough valid ones.

This is the second time that Los Angeles organizers failed to get enough signatures. After failing the first time, it was expected that they would certainly manage to get enough the second time. Meanwhile, the crime problem has only worsened. Furthermore, they had the benefit of the June headlines from San Francisco about the recall of Boudin. The two are of the same ilk. Gascón was his predecessor, and both are George Soros darlings. Yet Angelenos still weren't moved to action.

What will it take before Angelenos wake up? They're like addicts, addicted to progressive, woke politicians, who need to hit rock bottom before getting better. Los Angeles is getting close to that bottom.

Homicides are now at a 15-year high. Auto thefts were up by 59 percent from 2019 to 2021. Burglaries are so prevalent that the police recently issued an "Area Safety Bulletin" about "violent street robberies" by local gangs. The bulletin warns of a rash of robberies whereby residents are targeted based on their cars, with the targets being expensive watches, jewelry, and purses.

The increase in crime is palpable. It's no longer about statistics. Most Angelenos, including me, have been or know someone who has been a recent crime victim.

Gascón, more than any other single person, is responsible. He took office on the first of last year. While serving as the San Francisco district attorney, he masterminded Prop. 47, which converted a host of crimes from felony to misdemeanor in California. Steal less than \$950 and you face only misdemeanor charges. Oh, and his office didn't prosecute 60 percent of the



A woman whose father was murdered in 1980 speaks at a press conference in an effort to recall Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascón in Los Angeles on Dec. 6, 2021.

700,000 SIGNATURES

ORGANIZERS COLLECTED

more than 700,000 signatures, yet came up 46,000 short of the number necessary to put the recall of Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascón on the November ballot.

60%

GEORGE GASCON'S

office didn't prosecute 60 percent of misdemeanor crimes it was presented, and as a result, Los Angeles saw a 49 percent increase in property crimes.

misdemeanor crimes it was presented with! The result? The city saw a 49 percent increase in property crimes. He also effectively ended the requirement of cash bail in San Francisco, making it easy for those charged with crimes to remain on the street and commit more crimes.

Upon being elected Los Angeles district attorney—thanks to \$2.25 million from Soros—he immediately announced that he wouldn't seek cash bail for numerous offenses and would release those currently awaiting such bail. He also said he would never seek the death penalty (despite it being the law in California) and would end charging juveniles as adults. He also announced that he would reevaluate all sentences of prisoners having served more than 20 years. And, of course, he continued his policy of ignoring smaller crimes.

As a result, more criminals are on Los Angeles's streets than



Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón speaks at a press conference in Los Angeles on Dec. 8, 2021.

FROM TOP: MARIO TAMAYO/GETTY IMAGES; ROBBIN BECK/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

A person holds a small Chicago flag depicting bullet holes with blood, in Chicago on Dec. 31, 2020.

PHOTO BY KAMIL KRZACZYNSKI/
AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

LEGISLATION

CHICAGO FACES CURBS TO PRETRIAL DETENTION



THE CRIME-RIDDEN CITY'S NEW
POLICY WILL RELEASE ALMOST
ALL CRIMINAL SUSPECTS

BY PETR SVAB

EVEN AS CHICAGO STRUGGLES through mounting crime, public safety advocates expect that worse times are ahead as the state of Illinois is about to severely curtail pretrial detention—a policy that they worry will put more criminals on the streets statewide.

Already enduring high rates of violent crime for decades, Chicago saw murders skyrocket in 2020 by 55 percent and rise further into 2021. So far this year, murders have eased by 16 percent, but other crime has shot up—car theft is up by 71 percent, other theft by 61 percent, robbery by 17 percent, and burglary by 25 percent compared to the same period last year.

The city's police have been complaining that their efforts to arrest criminals go to waste because they see them quickly back on the streets again. That problem is now poised to become worse with the state's bail reform provisions taking effect in January. The reform, part of a large piece of legislation called the SAFE-T Act of 2021, primarily denies judges the ability to release defendants on cash bonds. It goes further, however, several lawyers and law enforcement professionals told NTD, a sister media outlet of The Epoch Times.

Starting in January, defendants will only be kept in custody pending trial if the crime they're accused of is specifically listed in the law. Nonviolent offenses and some violent ones don't fall into that category, even for repeat offenders. The only crimes for which prosecutors would have an easy way to keep a suspect detained are those that carry life-in-prison sentences, such as murder and some kinds of attempted murder, according to Michael Levinsohn, a criminal defense attorney practicing in Cook County, which includes Chicago.

No drug offenders, including dealers and manufacturers, would be "detainable" pretrial, nor would defendants in any cases in which they could potentially only face probation, such as second-degree murder, robbery, carjacking, or residential burglary, according to Patrick Kenneally, state's attorney in McHenry County, who's suing the state government over the law.

Even for most crimes in which the law would allow detention, prosecutors would have to prove that the person poses danger to a specific person, rather than to the community in general, as is the case currently.

"That seems unworkable from a public safety standpoint," Levinsohn said, noting that "it could be often impossible to really prove that."

He gave the example of a serial carjacker.

"Maybe they're not really a threat to the person they already hijacked, but maybe they're a threat



to the next person. And how do we know who that next person is?" Levinsohn asked.

The requirement also seems unfeasible in courtroom practice, according to Kenneally.

"A lot of times, the state is being asked to run these hearings and to make these offerings of proof 24 hours after the defendant's arrest or 24 hours after the crime. And so we just don't have the time ... to figure out [a] specific and identifiable person they're a danger to," he said.

And even if such a person can be identified, the law requires that all other alternatives to detention must be deemed insufficient by the judge. Such alternatives include house arrest, GPS tracking with an ankle monitor, or checking into a drug treatment facility, among others, which are currently recommended in many cases.

The incoming law curbs punishment for violating such alternative arrangements. For example, if a defendant cuts off the ankle monitor and absconds, the current practice is to issue an arrest warrant, which then gets executed by law enforcement to track the person down or, more

First responders at a crime scene in Highland Park, Ill., on July 4. Starting in January, defendants in the state will only be kept in custody pending trial if the crime they're accused of is specifically listed in the law.

FROM TOP: JIM VONDURSKA/GETTY IMAGES; SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

frequently, busting the person during any future reoffense or encounter with law enforcement.

Releasing Suspects to Address Gaps in Wealth

Under the new law, nothing can be done for the first 48 hours after a pretrial arrangement violation. Then, a notice to appear in court would be issued and handed to a process server, who would try to deliver it at the defendant's last known address. If the defendant isn't at home, the server returns the document as unable to be delivered.

There's no way those notices are going to be served, said Thomas DeVore, a constitutional attorney in southern Illinois running for state attorney general on the Republican ticket.

"People are just going to never get their criminal cases finished, and they're going to be running around on the streets," he said.

Cases with out-of-state defendants would be in worse shape still, he argued, giving the example of a person from a different state caught during

2,000 OFFICERS

HAVE LEFT THE Chicago Police Department over the past three years, according to a former official.

Comparison of Crime Rates in Chicago

2021 versus 2022

- Motor Vehicle Theft: **Up 71%**
- Theft: **Up 61%**
- Burglary: **Up 25%**
- Robbery: **Up 17%**
- Murder: **Down 16%**

Source: Chicago Police Department

a traffic stop in Illinois with a kilogram of heroin in his car. Based on the new law, the nonviolent offender would be released within 48 hours and could simply return home with a slim chance of ever facing any penalties.

Supporters of the legislation portray it as righting injustices in the criminal justice system, specifically "so that low-income people aren't thrown behind bars, while only the wealthy walk free," as Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker put it.

"This legislation marks a substantial step toward true safety, true fairness, and true justice," Pritzker, a Democrat, said during a February 2021 press conference. "We've already seen some opponents of this law spread untruths and promote political fearmongering. But the changes that will be brought about by this new law will bring more justice and more fairness to many who have so often been forgotten."

Levinsohn acknowledged that the legislation would make some of his clients happy, as they would get released, but he still described it as misguided.

"It's a big, complicated law looking to solve a problem that doesn't exist," he said.

In the past, there used to be people needlessly being held in pre-trial custody for lesser offenses, but "that's not really the case right now," at least not in Cook County, he said.

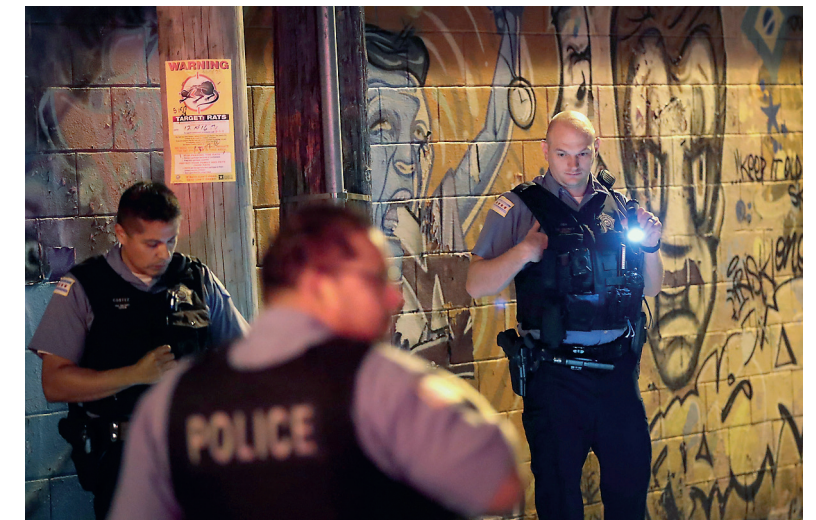
DeVore agreed.

"The court has a desire to let them be free pending trial," he said. "There's no grand scheme by any court to say, 'We just want to hold everybody.'"

Alternatives Off the Table in This Reform

The Illinois Constitution requires that defendants, with some exceptions for the most serious crimes, be given an alternative to pretrial detention. ❖

Police search for evidence after a shooting in Chicago on July 2, 2017.





FBI agents work at the scene of a shooting in Highland Park, Ill., on July 5. Charges carrying life-in-prison sentences, such as murder, are the only crimes for which prosecutors will be able to keep suspects detained under Chicago's new reform, an expert says.

A state law passed a few years ago states that each day in jail counts as \$30 toward one's bond. So for low-level offenses in which the bond may be about \$100, the defendant would be out in a few days.

Then, there are questions about how the legislation was conceived to begin with.

"You'll hear that this bill has been rushed, that stakeholders didn't get a seat at the table, didn't have enough time to read the bill. These are all false narratives perpetuated by the opponents of this cause because at no point have any of the stakeholders brought us legitimate solutions to deal with what we know were unequal and unjust laws," state Rep. Carol Ammons, a Democrat and a vice chair of the Progressive Caucus in her chamber, said during the 2021 press conference.

But both Kenneally and DeVore say prosecutors and police weren't consulted on the legislation.

"We just sort of got pushed out of the negotiations where a lot of this stuff was being done," Kenneally said.

Ammons also argued that the issue has been discussed for years, including an inquiry by a Supreme Court commission, which she was involved in with some of her colleagues.

"We've been on that commission since 2017, trying to deal with the issues of bail reform. So when they say to you that it is rushed, that is a false narrative," she said.

However, the commission recommended against abolishing cash bail, stating that most

counties weren't ready for it, Kenneally pointed out.

And while bail reform has been discussed in the legislature for years, the actual text of the legislation, which is almost 750 pages long, was unveiled just days before the end of the legislative session and pushed through with minimal time to review or debate it.

Pritzker has already signaled that the legislation may need some "tweaks," local media outlets reported.

"They realized they made serious mistakes in this legislation, and they're trying to fix it with the same back-door conversations that created it," DeVore said.

In its current form, however, it would embolden criminals and undermine the police, according to Eugene Roy, former head of detectives at the Chicago Police Department (CPD).

"It, frankly, harms public safety," Roy said, noting that it would "make the criminal element lose any respect for the crime-fighting activities" of the police.

Further Hit to Police Morale

The CPD already struggles to maintain its ranks, with about 2,000 officers leaving over the past three years, Roy said. And the legislation "dramatically affects police morale."

"You put your life on the line, you put a case together, you gather evidence, you make a good arrest, and that person is released within hours to go out and continue their life of crime. It makes you shrug your shoulders and go, 'Why am I doing this?'" he said.

NTD reached out to Pritzker's office for comment but received no response.

But both Kenneally and DeVore described cash bail as a reasonable way to ensure that a defendant shows up for trial and complies with pretrial

conditions. Judges can set the bail low or high based on the financial situation of the defendant, Kenneally said.

DeVore said he's willing to talk about further alternatives to cash bail, but he rejected that the alternatives are to either hold people with no option to post a bond or let them go, in essence, on a promise of compliance.

"This statute, believe it or not, is the worst of both worlds," he said. "Because either scenario is not good." ■



"People are just going to never get their criminal cases finished and they're going to be running around on the streets."

Thomas DeVore, attorney



The Week



Illegal immigrants who have gathered by the U.S.-Mexico border wall board a bus going to the Border Patrol station for processing in Yuma, Ariz., on Dec. 10, 2021.

PHOTO BY CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON/THE EPOCH TIMES

Federal Appeals Court Rules That DACA Program Is Illegal

A FEDERAL APPEALS COURT ON OCT. 6 RULED that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which shields certain immigrants who came to the United States illegally as children from deportation, is illegal.

The ruling by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals affirms a decision in July 2021 by a Texas federal judge—U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen—who declared the DACA program illegal and

blocked new applications but kept the policy intact for current beneficiaries. The appeals court similarly left the DACA program intact for current beneficiaries, which means current DACA recipients can continue to file renewal applications.

The appeals court also sent the case back to Hanen to have him review a revised set of rules that the Biden administration announced in August, to determine its legality.

THIS PAGE FRONT TOP: JIM VONDRUSKA/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF THOMAS DEVORE

“I probably should have tried to be much, much more careful in getting the message to repeat—the uncertainty of what we’re going through.”

Anthony Fauci, White House COVID-19 adviser, about his messaging during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, at an event hosted by the University of Southern California’s Center for Health Journalism.



“With still-strong labor demand and sluggish labor supply, the [U.S.] job market remains very tight.”

Philip Jefferson, governor, Federal Reserve, in a speech at a Fed conference in Atlanta.



\$200 PER TON

U.S. coal prices soared to \$204.95 per ton for the week ending Sept. 30, the highest price since 2005, according to the Energy Information Administration.

208,000 JOBS — Private employers added 208,000 jobs in September, more than the expected estimate of 200,000 by Dow Jones, according to an ADP report.

\$31 TRILLION

The national debt of the United States has **surpassed \$31 trillion for the first time in history**, according to the Treasury Department.

\$29 MILLION

U.S. government agencies sent nearly **\$29 million in taxpayer dollars “directly to Chinese entities”** for joint scientific research over a five-year period ending in 2021, a Government Accountability Office report shows.

1 Million

The number of job openings in the United States fell by more than 1 million between July and August, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



THIS PAGE FROM TOP: ANNA MONE YMAKER/GETTY IMAGE; KEN CEDENO/REUTERSPOOL; SHUTTERSTOCK; RIGHT PAGE FROM TOP: ADRESLATAIF/REUTERS; FREDERIC J. BROWN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

BIG TECH

Judge Halts Elon Musk Twitter Trial to Allow Time to Close Deal

A JUDGE HAS DELAYED Elon Musk’s Twitter takeover trial, giving him three weeks to close his deal to buy the social media platform for \$44 billion after months of his trying to get out of the deal.

The Tesla CEO had asked Chancellor Kathaleen St. Jude McCormick, head of Delaware’s Court of Chancery, to halt the trial scheduled for Oct. 17, arguing it was no longer needed in light of his renewed offer to buy the tech firm for \$54.20 per share, or \$44 billion.

McCormick said the deal needs to be closed by Oct. 28 or the trial originally set for mid-October will happen in November. After the ruling, Twitter indicated that it wants to close the deal by Oct. 28.

Lawyers for Musk had earlier told the court that he had offered Twitter the original price per share if the company agreed to drop the legal action, but Twitter had refused.

VACCINE

‘Positive Association’ Between Vaccine-Related Aluminum Exposure and Persistent Asthma: Study

A STUDY FUNDED BY THE CENTERS for Disease Control and Prevention has found a “positive association” between vaccine-related aluminum exposure and persistent asthma.

Results of the observational study, involving children younger than age 5 who were born between 2008 and 2014, showed that children who were vaccinated with most or all of the recommended aluminum-containing vaccines (>3.00 mg aluminum exposure) had at least a 36 percent higher risk of being diagnosed with persistent asthma than kids who received fewer vaccines (≤3.00 mg aluminum exposure).

Overall, there was a “positive association” between vaccine-related aluminum exposure and persistent asthma, the authors said.



The Bryan Mound Strategic Petroleum Reserve in Freeport, Texas, on April 27, 2020.

ENERGY

Biden to Release 10 Million More Barrels of Oil After OPEC Cut

THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION will release 10 million more barrels of oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve following an announcement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Plus (OPEC+) that it will be slashing oil production by 2 million barrels per day.

The cut marks a setback for President Joe Biden, who visited Saudi Arabia in July to push the kingdom into increasing production amid historically high U.S. gas prices.

Cuts to production are expected to drive up the price of a barrel of oil—and gas prices—worldwide, including in the United States.

ELECTION

Election Software CEO Arrested Over Data Theft, Storing Data on Servers in China

THE HEAD OF MICHIGAN-BASED software company Konnech Corp. has been arrested for allegedly stealing and storing the personal data of Los Angeles County election workers on servers in China.

Konnech CEO Eugene Yu, 51, was arrested in Michigan on charges of stealing “the personal identifying information” of Los Angeles County election workers, according to the county district attorney’s office.

According to the office, Konnech won a five-year, \$2.9 million contract with the county in 2020 for an election worker management software system—named PollChief—that was used by the county in the last California election.

Under the contract, Konnech was supposed to securely maintain the data and only provide access to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. But investigators found that the company stored the data on servers in China.



People vote at the Lincoln Park Senior Center in Los Angeles on Sept. 13, 2021.



Japan Air Self-Defense Force fighters hold a joint military drill with U.S. Marines off Japan's southernmost main island of Kyushu on Oct. 4.

WORLD

US, Japan Hold Joint Military Drills in Response to North Korean Missile Launch

THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN have deployed fighter jets for joint exercises in response to North Korea's test-firing of a ballistic missile over Japan.

The drills were held in airspace west of Japan's Kyushu region and involved eight Japanese fighter jets and four U.S. fighter jets, according to Japan's Joint Staff. "The drills will confirm the Japanese and U.S. forces' readiness, demonstrate the strong determination of Japan and the United States to deal with any situation, and further strengthen the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance," the Joint Staff said in a statement.

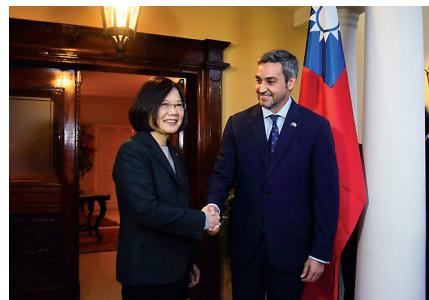
WORLD

Paraguay Seeks \$1 Billion From Taiwan Against China's Pressure

PRESIDENT MARIO ABDO BENITEZ of Paraguay has said that his nation requires \$1 billion in investment from Taiwan to help the Paraguayan government resist pressure to switch diplomatic recognition to China.

"There is Taiwanese investment of more than \$6 billion in countries which don't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. We want from that \$1 billion to be put in Paraguay," Benitez said in an interview with the Financial Times.

Benitez said the \$1 billion investment would help his government "build the argument" about the importance of keeping its alliance with the self-ruled island.



Paraguayan President Mario Abdo Benitez (R) greets Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Aug. 14, 2018.

MEXICO-US

Mexico to Appeal Loss in Lawsuit Seeking to Hold US Gun Companies Accountable

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT says it will appeal its loss in a lawsuit that sought to hold U.S. manufacturers and wholesalers of firearms liable for criminal gun trafficking into Mexico.

The announcement came after Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV of the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts ruled in *Mexico v. Smith & Wesson Brands Inc.* that the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act of 2005 shielded the companies from liability for the harms alleged by Mexico.



The Mexican flag flies near the U.S.-Mexico border in Tijuana, Mexico, on June 30, 2018.

SPACE

SpaceX Capsule Heads to International Space Station

A SPACEX ROCKET has soared into orbit from Florida, carrying the next long-term International Space Station crew, including two Americans, a Russian cosmonaut, and a Japanese astronaut, in a demonstration of U.S.-Russian teamwork in space despite Ukraine war tensions.

A high-ranking official from the Russian space agency Roscosmos said shortly after the launch that the flight marked "a new phase of [Russia's] cooperation" with U.S. space agency NASA.

THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: NORBERTO DUARTE/AP/GETTY IMAGES; MARIO TAM/A/GETTY IMAGES; JOINT STAFF OFFICE OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY OF JAPAN/HANDOUT VIA REUTERS

Perspectives

Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Italian Brothers of Italy party, speaks to media during a campaign rally ahead of the presidential election, in Milan on Sept. 11.

PHOTO BY PIERO CRUCIATTI/ AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



THE LEFT SMEARS ITALY'S NEW PM
Giorgia Meloni isn't fascist, but she's tough on China. **57**



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A new fund mandates that corporations prioritize profits over politics. **59**

INSIDE

Thomas McArdle



Spend, Inflate, Soak the Rich, Repeat

This big-spender president blames capitalism for today's inflation

WE LIKELY HAVE only begun to experience the dangerous pattern of high inflation feeding on itself. Price increases of the current magnitude are something unknown in the lives of most of the public, and the trend of rising costs is proving stubborn.

Food prices were up 0.8 percent month-to-month despite a slight fall in energy prices, according to August's Personal Income and Outlays Report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Consumer prices may have been up only 0.1 percent, as President Joe Biden made a point of touting on CBS's "60 Minutes" last month, but it was paired with an overall inflation rate of 8.3 percent.

A large chunk of the public is apparently only dimly aware of the economic hazards surrounding them.

"I'm not going out to eat like I would like," one 25-year-old recently lamented to NPR. "I'm not hanging out with friends like I would like. It's a Saturday night, and I'm here at home because it's free."

The chances of individuals such as this holding the right politicians accountable are slim to none.

What's most frightening is the prospect of Washington continuing to "fight" inflation not only with more of what caused it, but with policies that will launch a chain reaction of sustained high inflation—or even hyperinflation—in the years to come. It will only end when we recognize that government is the problem and economic freedom is the solution.

This big-spender president, who loves to call himself a capitalist in an "only Nixon could go to China" kind of way, blames capitalism for today's inflation, issuing in the wake of Hurricane Ian "a warning to oil and gas industry executives" not to "use this as an

excuse to raise gasoline prices or gouge the American people." This scolding comes despite the fact that a needle in a haystack is far easier to find than any evidence of the oil industry gouging consumers at the pump.

But a public who is so ill-educated in basic economics upon hearing such bullying via the bully pulpit is likely to imagine hordes of greedy oil men itching to charge above-market gas prices—presumably the way they were doing 2 1/2 years ago, when the average price per gallon was less than \$2, or in the late 1990s when, at times, it was less than \$1.

High inflation will only end when we recognize that government is the problem and that economic freedom is the solution.

These conniving billionaires charged an average of a little less than \$1.20 in the first half of the 1980s. However, they were still charging about the same in nominal dollars at the end of the 1990s—which, in inflation-adjusted terms, was a decrease in the price of gas of approximately 50 percent over that long-term period.

If they're Scrooges, they're acting like the Scrooge after the visits by the ghosts, not before.

Unfortunately, some capitalists like to stick their designer alligator shoes in their mouths. Last month, William Meaney, the CEO of the Fortune 1000 corporate information management firm Iron Mountain, told stock analysts that he was "doing [his] inflation dance praying for inflation."

Meaney felt much the same way in 2018, saying, "I pray for inflation every day I come to work because ... our

top line is really driven by inflation. ... Every point of inflation expands our margins."

In April this year, during an earnings call, the firm's chief financial officer, Barry Hytinen, said, "We do have very strong pricing power," and so for Iron Mountain, inflation is "actually a net positive."

One irony here is that Iron Mountain's clientele is no Joe Sixpacks. The company was founded in 1951 by a mushroom mogul who converted his fungus-growing mines and caves to storage facilities and convinced banks and other institutions to secure their vital records underground and well away from major cities that would be targets of Soviet nuclear attack.

By the early 1970s, it was bankrupt, but after many acquisitions and reiterations, it now counts almost all of its fellow Fortune 1000 firms as clients. When your customers are that wealthy, high general inflation can mask it when you overcharge them.

Iron Mountain is obviously proud of such practices. Still, they doubly deserve their customers by lending legitimacy to the class warfare charges of greed so often launched against them, when the truth is that companies with customers of more modest means simply don't succeed in a competitive marketplace when they ask too much for their wares.

Government profligacy; the resulting inflation; the passage of "inflation reduction" measures that are actually inflation expansion spending sprees; then, the specter of tax increases from the Biden administration and Congress's Democratic majorities, supposedly designed to soak the fat cats but which end up being passed down to consumers—the result is bound to be a dangerous inflation snowball that could go on growing for years.

Anders Corr



The Left Smears Italy's New PM

Giorgia Meloni isn't fascist, but she's tough on China

THE LEFT IS WORRIED about Italy. Giorgia Meloni—whose Brothers of Italy party unfortunately has historical links to Benito Mussolini's fascists and has shown some support for Vladimir Putin's Russia—won 44 percent of the vote on Sept. 26 and is set to become Italy's first female prime minister.

In her teens, Meloni praised Mussolini, which The Atlantic cites, breathlessly warning of "the return of fascism in Italy."

CNN calls her "Italy's most far-right prime minister since Mussolini."

However, it's not quite that dire. Meloni has more recently denounced fascism as a historical footnote to modern conservatism and has said that some actually call her a "traitor" to the 20th-century totalitarian ideology.

In a July 26 Twitter post, she expressed her support for Taiwan, saying she is "always alongside those who believe in the values of freedom and democracy."

China is one of today's closest countries politically to Mussolini's Italy or Hitler's Germany. Yet, Meloni takes a tougher stand against Beijing than do many liberals, who use support for global trade as an excuse to ignore ethics for profit in totalitarian China.

Given that Mussolini's fascism was the original totalitarianism, we can conclude that Meloni is actually less totalitarian than any of the center-left or center-right who continue to support engagement with China.

Italy's last center-left prime minister, Paolo Gentiloni, was still tipping his hat, nine months after the finding of genocide in China, to trade with the country.

Former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, also center-left, reportedly has an adviser "secretly helping him to explore partnerships and establish relations with the right people in China."

The populist Giuseppe Conte, as

prime minister in 2019, was the first and only G-7 leader to lead his country into China's mercantilist Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as "One Belt, One Road").

Italy took a slightly tougher stance on China under its most recent prime minister, Mario Draghi. However, as recently as March, this political independent naively called for open dialogue with Beijing to stop it from supporting Moscow.

Meloni takes a tougher stand against Beijing than do many liberals, who use support for global trade as an excuse to ignore ethics for profit in totalitarian China.

Meloni, a former Italian sports minister, will be tougher. In that role, she called in 2008 to boycott the Beijing Olympics and advocated international mobilization to support Tibet.

In 2019, she called joining BRI a "big mistake" and had since suggested that the China-Italy memorandum of understanding on BRI will not be renewed when it expires in 2024.

After the People's Liberation Army simulated a blockade of Taiwan in August, Meloni promised support against China's "unacceptable" behavior. She called the island democracy a "strategic trade partner." She said that the European Union should maximize pressure against Beijing by deploying political, economic, and diplomatic "weapons at its disposal," including a potential ban on trade if China invaded.

She has criticized the Chinese Communist Party for its human rights abuse in Xinjiang and Hong Kong and its ambiguity in addressing Russia's aggression against Ukraine. She said she

would limit Beijing's economic expansion by providing alternatives such as the European Union's Global Gateway to less-developed countries seeking infrastructure development without the BRI's "Chinese penetration."

Meloni warned of overdependence on supply chains to China, including for computer chips, and advocated friendshoring and nearshoring to bring strategic manufacturing closer to home.

A member of her party, Sen. Lucio Malan, co-chairs the Italian chapter of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, a global forum for legislators to coordinate democratic defenses against Beijing. He also leads the Italy-Taiwan Interparliamentary Friendship Group.

While the left self-interestedly hypes dubious smears about Meloni's "fascism," it should acknowledge her tougher approach to the world's most dangerous dictators of today—those in Beijing and Moscow.

Admittedly, Meloni and her coalition haven't been as clear-eyed on Moscow as she has been on Beijing. But that changed after Putin attempted to sack Kyiv. Now, she supports sending military equipment to Ukraine and is an Atlanticist supporter of NATO and the European Union.

Some centrist media are coming around to grudging support. The New York Times calls Meloni "extreme" but "no tyrant." The Financial Times noted that her election "merits concern but not panic."

"While there are valid concerns about the fascist origins of Meloni's party, what I hear when I listen to her are mainstream Conservative values," wrote the Telegraph's Allison Pearson.

As the duly elected representative of her country, and one who rejected her earlier mistakes, Meloni deserves a fresh start and a fair hearing from all sides of the political spectrum. She deserves the chance to lead Italy with the honor and respect of her peers.

MILTON EZRATI is chief economist for Vested, a contributing editor at The National Interest, and author of “Thirty Tomorrows” and “Bite-Sized Investing.”

Milton Ezrati



Interest Rates Will Go Higher

Recent interest rate increases are just the latest round

FINANCIAL MARKETS sank when the Federal Reserve added 0.75 percentage point to its benchmark federal funds rate on Sept. 21. Markets, having anticipated that rate increase, responded less to it than to what Fed Chairman Jerome Powell promised for the future.

He not only indicated additional rate increases, but revealed how ready policymakers are to risk recession.

Forecasts from the Fed’s Open Market Committee (FOMC) tell the story. Those projections put the target federal funds interest rate by year-end at 4.5 percent, which is more than a full percentage point above the current level. More telling is how this forecasted rate has risen over time.

Last December, when Fed Chairman Jerome Powell was still describing inflationary pressure as “transitory,” the Fed forecast that the rate would be 0.9 percent at the end of this year. In June, the forecasted number rose to 3.4 percent. Now, it has approached 4.5 percent.

Investors can extrapolate this pattern to anticipate still higher targets into 2023. Powell certainly has encouraged them in this belief, making it clear that controlling inflation is now the Fed’s No. 1 priority, almost regardless of any collateral damage that effort might cause.

History reinforces these interpretations. For anyone who can remember or has studied the last great inflation of the 1970s and 1980s, it’s apparent that monetary policy can’t make headway against inflation until interest rates rise to levels that rival the inflation rate itself. Consider that today, even after pushing the federal funds rate above 3.0 percent and with 10-year Treasury yields at almost 4.0 percent, inflation of more than 8 percent still allows borrowers to repay loans with dollars that have lost more real buying power than

those borrowers pay in interest.

This encouragement to use credit must end before the monetary policy can put a crimp on inflation. The need for powerful monetary actions is especially acute now because the fiscal policy does nothing to slow the flow of federal monies into the economy. On the contrary, recent policy, such as student debt forgiveness, has only accelerated that dollar flow.

The need for powerful monetary actions is especially acute now because the fiscal policy does nothing to slow the flow of federal monies into the economy.

In the face of this reality, investors are increasingly coming to terms with the increasing likelihood of a recession. Rate increases have already made such a prospect clear by crimping housing sales and putting downward pressure on real estate prices. Even with a construction uptick in August, new housing starts still stood nearly 13 percent below levels in March, when the interest rate increases began.

Actual new home sales, though up in August, have fallen almost 20 percent from their highs of last January, while the National Association of Realtors reports that the median sales price of an existing home declined 2.4 percent between June and July, the most recent month for which data are available. There is every reason to expect that still higher interest rates will redouble such effects in this important sector of the economy and have similar adverse effects on the economy generally.

The members of the FOMC have begun to recognize this prospect. Last

December, they were forecasting 4 percent real growth for this economy. By June, they had reduced that expectation to 1.7 percent. They now expect only 0.2 percent growth in the nation’s real gross domestic product (GDP) for 2022—statistically no different from zero.

To some extent, this assessment simply accounts for the effect of outright declines in real GDP in the year’s first and second quarters. But the assessment also accounts for the ongoing economic effects of Fed policy. That the forecast now is a little different from recession speaks volumes.

There is always the hope that inflation might dissipate quickly on its own. Though anything is possible, such an event remains highly unlikely. The inflation relief in July and August, though the White House has seized on it, offers no such sign. Without what is clearly a one-time decline in gasoline prices, inflation in August would have shown a rise of close to 9 percent over the past 12 months.

The gasoline price declines can’t last. Daily gasoline prices have stabilized in September, suggesting that the September CPI will, at best, see flat gasoline prices, relief of a sort, to be sure, but not the sharp declines incorporated into the July and August figures. And with winter coming, upward energy pressures will likely return, especially with Russian natural gas off the European market.

Meanwhile, core inflation—excluding food and fuel—accelerated in August.

This picture leaves a future with four key attributes. First, continued concerns over inflation will persist. Second, the Fed will continue to raise interest rates. Third, the Fed’s actions will continue to retard the pace of economic activity. Fourth, the financial and economic environment will continue to weigh on stock and bond prices.

EMEL AKAN is a senior reporter for The Epoch Times in Washington. Previously, she worked in the financial sector as an investment banker at JPMorgan.

Emel Akan



Anti-ESG Movement Gains Momentum

A new fund mandates that corporations prioritize profits over politics

ONLY A FEW YEARS after declaring that “climate risk is investment risk” and mandating corporations to meet certain environmental standards, Larry Fink, chairman and CEO of BlackRock, is facing growing resistance. Even the most ardent champions of sustainable investing are experiencing a rude awakening.

Fink, who leads the world’s largest asset management firm, announced in BlackRock’s 2020 letter to clients that he would place sustainability at the center of his investment strategy and reduce investment in fossil fuels.

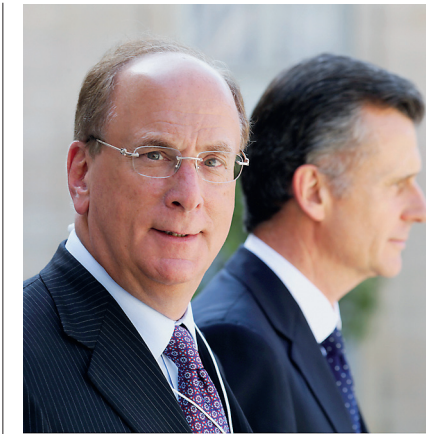
Last month, Fink spoke about his company’s role in the green energy transition at a Clinton Global Initiative event, which garnered him praise from former President Bill Clinton.

“The tectonic shift is happening. ... We’re seeing evidence every day that climate risk is investment risk. And people are waking up to that,” Fink said.

But not everyone in the investment community agrees. For example, Ohio-based Strive Asset Management has started a crusade against the world’s leading asset managers that push for sustainable investing, often known as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing.

The firm, co-founded by Vivek Ramaswamy and Anson Frericks this year, has become the most prominent advocate of the anti-ESG movement.

In August, Strive launched its first index fund, the U.S. Energy ETF (DRLL), which invests in the U.S. energy sector. In the first couple of weeks of trading, the fund has attracted more than \$300 million, which the Financial Times has described as “an eye-catching success.” So far, other “anti-woke” ETFs have struggled to surpass \$25 million in assets, according to the newspaper.



The anti-ESG investment community says that U.S. energy corporations have underinvested in oil and gas production.

The early success of Strive’s energy ETF marks a new era in the anti-ESG movement.

“We’ve been very excited about the amount of enthusiasm,” Frericks told The Epoch Times, noting that the start-up will continue to launch more funds over the next couple of months. “We’re bringing a lot of the shortcomings of the ESG movement to the public’s view.”

According to its founders, Strive intends to leverage the power of shareholder votes to mandate corporations to prioritize profits over political agendas. They’ve been criticizing the three largest asset managers—BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street—for breaking their fiduciary duties by putting too much emphasis on climate change and “stakeholder capitalism” instead of higher returns.

The Big Three manage collectively about \$20 trillion worth of assets and exert “hidden power” on corporate boards because of their voting rights. For example, they owned more than 21

percent of Exxon Mobil Corp. as of June. The anti-ESG investment community says that U.S. energy corporations have underinvested in oil and gas production, in part because of ESG rules imposed by these asset managers. And the insufficient investment has caused a global shortage of energy and inflation this year, they claim.

Not only investors, but U.S. lawmakers, governors, state treasurers, and legislators have also taken a stand on ESG investing as a result.

Tariq Fancy, BlackRock’s first global chief investment officer for sustainable investing from 2018 to 2019, warned about the ESG movement and called it a “dangerous placebo that harms the public interest.”

Jamie Dimon, JPMorgan Chase CEO and a prominent advocate of ESG, recently acknowledged the necessity of investing in the fossil fuel industry. When asked by Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) whether his bank would stop financing new oil and gas projects during a congressional hearing on Sept. 21, Dimon responded, “Absolutely not, and that would be the road to hell for America.”

“We aren’t getting this one right. The world needs 100 million barrels effectively of oil and gas every day. And we need it for 10 years,” Dimon said during the hearing.

A March report by the Harvard Business Review revealed “an inconvenient truth” about ESG funds. Not only did ESG portfolios have poor financial returns, but they also had a “worse compliance record for both labor and environmental rules,” the report states.

Nonetheless, capital flows to sustainable investing have broken record after record. ESG assets globally are estimated to reach \$55 trillion in 2022 and are on track to account for half of all professionally managed assets globally by 2024, according to consultancy firm Deloitte.

DANIEL LACALLE is chief economist at hedge fund Tressis and author of “Freedom or Equality,” “Escape from the Central Bank Trap,” and “Life in the Financial Markets.”

Daniel Lacalle



Markets Crash as Monetary Stimulus Fades

The Fed and other big central banks have caused a massive crisis

THE MAIN ISSUE IN THE economy is that there are two generations of market participants who have only witnessed expansionary policies. That’s why the most pressing question for investors isn’t where earnings are headed or what the rate of change in economic growth is, but when central banks will pivot.

The Federal Reserve and other big central banks have caused a massive crisis. On the one hand, major central banks’ balance sheets have stayed intact in local currency in 2022, and the path of rate hikes is quite accommodating. On the other hand, markets are collapsing. How is this possible? Because central banks believe that their actions carry no consequences as there’s a legion of economists who twist facts to say that there’s no problem. However, the contrary is true. Markets and politicians are so accustomed to easy money that even the slightest normalization causes havoc around the world.

The first issue is that a great majority of the world’s \$90 trillion in reserves is invested in a carry trade against the U.S. currency. The second is that negative nominal and real rates have zombified the corporate world and led governments to feel that debt is unimportant. The third issue is significantly more serious. Investors and governments have been made to believe that announcements of rate hikes and liquidity reductions should be ignored because policymakers ignore them anyhow.

All of this has resulted in an overindebted environment in which corporations with weak strategies found adequate cash to survive and in which multiple expansions in every sector, from listed to private ventures, weren’t an outlier but the norm. And this excess, which has been sustained over the previous 14 years by absurdly



Markets and politicians are so accustomed to easy money that even the slightest normalization causes havoc around the world.

lax policies conducted in times of expansion and recession, has fostered an addiction to gradually more aggressive monetary operations.

We’re taught that central banks must choose between recession and inflation. This is a logical fallacy.

Recessions aren’t caused by central banks raising interest rates. They’re the result of years of excessive debt, malinvestment, and reckless risk-taking.

Markets are crumbling because the seemingly unstoppable expansion of prior years was based on a monetary illusion. Monetary laughing gas makes you smile but doesn’t cure.

Many analysts and investors have warned for years about undue complacency and unjustifiable valuations, only to be dismissed as doomsayers because all you had to do was follow the Fed.

With a minor fall in the global money supply, no substantial reduction in central bank balance sheets,

and extremely gradual rate hikes announced for months on end, markets have plummeted. However, markets can’t accept even minor changes. The junkie requires another fix, a large and steadily increasing fix.

Some commentators now worry that central banks are tightening too quickly, despite the fact that they were silent during the most strange and dramatic increase in the monetary base in recent history.

Those who championed a \$20 trillion expansion in 2020 are partially responsible for the 2022 crash.

The current global economic trainwreck demonstrates the deeply unethical nature of printing money and allowing central banks and governments to become lenders and providers of last resort. It harms the middle class on its way in and destroys it on its way out.

The artificial creation of money is never neutral. It disproportionately favors the first recipients of newly generated currency, the government and the indebted, while severely harming deposit savings and real wages.

The 2020 stimulus plan was the largest ruse ever played on humanity. It was unnecessary in the first place because all that happened was that governments locked us all up because of a health issue. It was unnecessary to incentivize debt, expenditure, or money supply. It just established false bottlenecks in the chain of stimuli, resulting in a worse scenario.

Those who complain about central banks raising interest rates too quickly should have warned about the 2020 lunacy. It no longer matters whether central banks pivot. The fallout from stimulus initiatives is already affecting economic growth and company profitability. Even if rate hikes were slower, markets would have seen a valuation reality check. Bubbles burst. Always. The only remaining question is when.

PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

FANYU is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China’s economy since 2015.

Fan Yu

Economic Questions Ahead of the CCP’s Congress

Investors focus on what economic changes China’s political winds will bring

CHINESE INVESTORS have been battered so far in 2022. They’ll watch closely this month’s twice-a-decade Chinese Communist Party (CCP) National Congress for signs of a shift in economic policy.

There are numerous headwinds facing China’s economy—rolling COVID-related lockdowns, a real estate market downturn, ongoing trade issues with the United States, Beijing’s support of Russia’s war in Ukraine, and a hawkish U.S. Fed. Chinese stock investors have already sustained some big losses in 2022, with the Shenzhen Composite Index down by more than 21 percent and the Shanghai Composite down by 15 percent since the beginning of the year.

All eyes are now on the national congress event in mid-month; investors are keen to see what economic changes are in store after political winds settle.

What are some of the possible policy changes?

One potential shift is to double down on saving the real estate market. Home prices in China have fallen every month in the past 12 months. Soured loans have skyrocketed, with Citigroup calculating in September that almost 30 percent—29.1 percent—of all property loans have become “bad debt.”

Broader and deeper stimulus measures for the property market could be in store this month. In a recent report, Bloomberg noted that it expects authorities to assist developers in finishing stalled and uncompleted housing projects. Support for developers can help politically and economically by propping up banks and demand for new mortgages, as well as alleviating ongoing mortgage boycotts from homeowners.

The irony is that Beijing has been trying to help the property sector



One potential shift is to double down on saving the real estate market.

since the beginning of the year with minimal results. In July, the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) announced 200 billion yuan (about \$28 billion) in low-interest rate loans to state commercial banks in order to give developers enough funds to finish real estate projects. Local governments have also created so-called bailout funds to invest in unfinished projects. Beijing has also loosened restrictions this year on lending to property developers.

Real estate’s importance can’t be overstated. Almost 70 percent of Chinese household wealth is tied up in the housing market. So despite the Chinese real estate market’s Ponzi scheme-like structure—where new waves of buyers are always needed to help pay for the completion of existing projects—the CCP likely has no option but to keep bailing out the market.

Another key economic decision is to drive consumer spending. On the surface, this is a simpler decision than attempting to drive growth in the real estate market.

To that effect, Morgan Stanley

analysts expect a change in China’s longstanding COVID-19 policy. Beijing will likely open up the country to spur consumption, travel, and job growth.

“We expect policymakers to take important steps in the coming months that would allow reopening from spring 2023,” Chetan Ahya, chief Asia economist for Morgan Stanley, wrote in a note to clients on Sept. 26. “The strict COVID management approach has led to challenges of significantly weaker income growth and a sharp rise in youth unemployment—outcomes which are at odds with the policy goal of common prosperity.”

While Morgan Stanley isn’t wrong, this is something Beijing authorities could have done earlier but chose not to. China maintains some of the world’s strictest COVID-19 policies. There have been some tweaks to this policy, but rolling lockdowns and mass testing programs remain in place.

What could be different heading into 2023?

The bank’s thesis is driven by its belief that weaker export growth and real estate market woes won’t only continue but intensify. A sharp rise in urban youth unemployment could unsettle social stability, while fiscal budgets across the country are already stretched.

These issues leave CCP boss Xi Jinping with no option but to decide on a broad reopening in order to stimulate the economy—unless the Party is willing to tolerate a disaster of its own making.

“These preparatory steps could include a renewed vaccination campaign, a reshaping of the public’s perception on COVID and ensuring adequate medical supplies,” Ahya wrote.

Neither of these two levers is desirable for the CCP. But assuming Xi gets an expected third term, he has little choice but to ramp up stimulus in the near term.



“If you dissent from any part of this ideology, you’re branded as racist or problematic.”

Nicole Levitt, a family law attorney

THOUGHT LEADERS

White Lawyer Invokes Civil Rights Act Against Employer

Domestic violence attorney stands up to the racist ideology of diversity, equity, and inclusion

PHOTO BY BAO QIU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Nicole Levitt, an attorney who represents domestic violence survivors, recently filed a discrimination complaint against her employer, Women Against Abuse (WAA), for, among other things, asking white staffers to sign declarations that all white people are racist, including themselves.

In a recent episode of EpochTV’s “American Thought Leaders,” Levitt shares her story with host Jan Jekielek and why she believes woke ideology has corrupted the mission of her employer.

JAN JEKIELEK: Nicole, you work for one of the largest domestic violence nonprofits in the United States, Women Against Abuse. You went into this because this was an important issue for you. But sometime in the summer of 2020, you realized something was amiss.

NICOLE LEVITT: After George Floyd was killed, my organization, like organizations across the country, had DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] trainings and racial justice meetings. It came to a point where I felt the trainings were all relying on stereotypes, discrimination, and scapegoating. And we were also split into affinity groups.

I found the idea of being split up on the basis of race to be regressive, so I stopped going to the meetings. We were still bombarded every day with material about white supremacy. It was really excessive and, frankly, illegal.

It all came to a head for me when we were asked to sign a contract governing our behavior in the legal center.

One of the items was that all white people are racist, without exception. There was no way I was going to sign a statement saying that I was racist, or that all white people were racist, or that all of any race was anything. I refused to sign it, and so I had to go to a meeting with the DEI consultant at the time. It was supposed to be a short meeting, but it ended up being a 90-minute-long thought reform session. The reason they gave me for having to go to the meeting was to ascertain whether I was safe to be around my black and brown co-workers and clients.

MR. JEKIELEK: You’ve told me that people were stunned when you said you didn’t think there was racism.

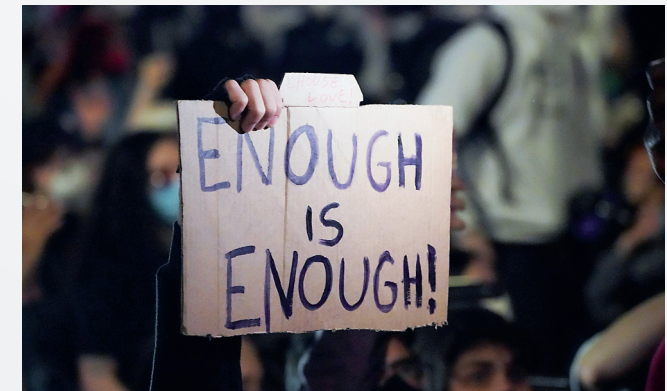
MS. LEVITT: Everyone there is committed to racial justice. We represent black and brown clients, and we do a good job of it. So, I couldn’t see where the racism was coming from. The issue here is the new definition of racism, which is prejudice plus power. But I was stunned. Everyone was looking at me like I had two heads when I said, “I don’t think we are racist.”

If you dissent from any

part of this ideology, you’re branded as racist or problematic. People need to get used to the idea that people might call them racist and not worry about it, or else they’re going to be forever beholden to these ideas. And if they do that, they’ll lose their integrity.

MR. JEKIELEK: What was the reaction to you not participating in the affinity groups?

MS. LEVITT: No one said anything about it. But there was another incident where a colleague had emailed an article about anti-Semitism in the social justice movement. She sent it to the legal center. I chimed in and said, “That’s great. I would hope WAA would support this as well.” And that set off a firestorm of controversy. I got a ton of disapproving emails that accused me of furthering white supremacy, taking the spotlight away from black and brown people, and saying that anti-black racism is so much worse than anti-Semitism. After that, I did have frostier relationships with some of my colleagues. Even management said it was a problematic interaction.



A person holds up a sign at a protest over the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody, in New York on May 31, 2020.

The language being used was so dehumanizing to white people and black people that I didn’t want anything to do with it. I honestly believe that people in the organization espouse this ideology in good faith. I don’t think they’re being malevolent. I don’t say the same about some of the consultants and the originators of these ideas, and the people who are making a lot of money off these ideas.

MR. JEKIELEK: As a result of all of this, you have a case at the EEOC, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Please tell me how that came about.

MS. LEVITT: After I refused to sign the contract and had the thought reform session, I knew I had to do something about it. I didn’t want it to come to this, because I honestly love my job. So I had a choice: Keep quiet or do something. And I chose to do something. My hope is that this will change and I can continue working there, but I don’t know if that’s going to be the case.

MR. JEKIELEK: Let me read something from the document. First of all, “Levitt has satisfied all of the elements for a prima facie case of Title VII discrimination.” You can tell me what that is in a moment. “WAA has admitted to this disparate treatment, including admitting the differences in pay for white employees and promoting segregated work groups to the EEOC.” What is this about differences in pay?

MS. LEVITT: WAA brought in some consultants to do a racial equity audit. The premise of the audit is

BRYAN R. SMITH/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

“We were still bombarded every day with material about white supremacy. It was really excessive and, frankly, illegal.”

to find where white supremacy manifests in your organization. Not, “Does white supremacy manifest in your organization?” but “Where?” They’re going to find it. They needed people on the audit committee, and those people would receive a stipend. They said that the black and brown members of the committee would receive a higher stipend, due to the emotional labor they would have to perform.

MR. JEKIELEK: Before this interview, you said that all sorts of people write to you and say, “We didn’t realize that civil rights law applies to whites as well.” I thought that was astounding. The situation you’re describing is similar to this.

MS. LEVITT: A lot of people are under that assumption, and it’s wrong, because the civil rights laws are for everyone no matter what your color is.

MR. JEKIELEK: What exactly is Title VII discrimination?

MS. LEVITT: Title VII is part of the Civil Rights Act, and it governs the workplace. It forbids discrimination on the basis of race. That’s it in a nutshell. Part of my com-

plaint is also about a racially hostile atmosphere. If you’re subjected to hostile messages about race every day, that can be a hostile atmosphere in your workplace.

MR. JEKIELEK: You mentioned there was also guidance on how you should do your work that you found problematic.

MS. LEVITT: There were a lot of discussions about defunding the police. While there are problems with the police, just like there are problems with almost anything, our clients need the police to stop the abuse. What is a social worker going to do in one of these violent situations? Domestic violence situations are

some of the deadliest calls for police officers. So, if you send a social worker or someone who’s versed in restorative justice on one of these calls, what do you think is going to happen? It could be tragic.

MR. JEKIELEK: What do you hope can happen with your organization? Let’s use it as a model for the bigger picture, too.

MS. LEVITT: Organizations need to realize that this type of DEI training is disruptive to an organization. It pulls organizations away from their core missions, and it’s very divisive. There are DEI programs that aren’t divisive. They don’t divide people by race, because they’re more about bringing them together. And you really don’t need to have any soul-baring sessions at work. Stay focused on your mission.

MR. JEKIELEK: What do you hope the outcome of your suit will be? A lot of people are watching this very closely.

MS. LEVITT: I hope more people stand up. I hope

people realize there are more people like them than they think, and they too can stand up to this. There wasn’t anything special about me that made me do this. Anyone can do it. You just have to put your head down and swim.

MR. JEKIELEK: I wish you the best of success. Any final thoughts as we finish up?

MS. LEVITT: I would like everyone to remember that the civil rights laws are for everyone. This issue, although it’s often painted as a right-wing issue, is not about left or right; it’s about right or wrong. Are we going to allow discrimination, or are we ready to stop it?

EpochTV’s “American Thought Leaders” reached out to Women Against Abuse. A spokesperson acknowledged that Levitt has filed a claim with the EEOC. WAA said that while it “cannot comment on this open EEOC claim,” it believes that “[its] actions in relation to Ms. Levitt and [its] racial equity work were legal.” ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

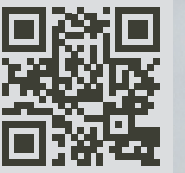


Protesters at a “Black Lives Matter” demonstration in front of the Brooklyn Library and Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 5, 2020.

ANGELA WEISS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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To Fully Live, You Must Love

Helping millennials overcome their fear of dying alone

By Jeff Minick



THAT WAS THE moment,” Bridget Jones says in a voiceover in “Bridget Jones’s Diary.” It’s New Year’s Day, and Bridget is throwing a pity party for one. “I suddenly realized that unless something changed soon, I was going to live a life where my major relationship was with a bottle of wine, and I’d finally die fat and alone, and be found three weeks later, half-eaten by a pack of wild dogs.”

We’ll come back to dying alone, without the wild dogs, in a moment. Recently, I spent some time via internet polls and studies investigating the concerns of millennials. Over the years, I’ve listened to a few young people born between 1982 and 2000 give voice to their anxieties, often about employment or wages, raising children or whether they should have any at all, and wondering, in general, whether their lives were headed in the right direction. Today, inflation and recession have added to those apprehensions, which justifiably top the list in recent polls.

Caring for aging parents is also a millennial concern, which I found endearing, and a worry which is real for some, as many millennials are already attending to parents with health problems. Like the uncertainties listed above, however, this situation is by no means exclusive to Generation Y. Plenty of older men and women also

watch over Mom and Dad.

But as I traveled here and there among these surveys, polls, and studies, an item on one list struck me as unique: the fear of dying alone.

“We’re all going to die, Johnny. Hit the iron bell like it’s dinnertime.”

Cheryl Strayed, advice columnist

In her article “Therapists Say Millennials Worry Most About 5 Specific Issues,” Erin Bunch, herself a millennial, writes that she spoke with two psychologists whose clients had experienced high stress from the fear that they’d never meet a “life partner.” Of the five things listed by Bunch, this concern appears as No. 2 under the eye-catching heading “Dying Alone.” Bridget Jones’s wild dogs may be missing from that scenario, but the dread of ending one’s life in solitude appears real.

But here’s the thing for those fretting over this end game: I doubt you fear dying alone so much as you fear living alone. And by alone, I don’t mean that you lack relatives who love you or friends you treasure. No—if you’re worried about dying alone, I think it’s more likely you’re afraid you’ll go your entire life without bumping hips with someone in the kitchen every evening, or whispering at 2 a.m.: “No, honey. It’s

your turn to get the baby,” or melting when some dimpled toddler calls you Mommy for the first time.

Lots of online articles and discussions center on the trials suffered by millennials as they search for the right partner, and I don’t doubt that truth. Romance in our culture has gone into exile, though it’s there and real if you look for it. And yes, committing to another is a huge decision, and yes, again, that means compromise and hard work.

But whatever happens, whether we find a mate or remain single, it’s not dying alone that should frighten us. It’s whether or not we’ve truly lived.

Cheryl Strayed writes advice columns under the name of Sugar. A man calling himself Johnny wrote to her about his fear of love, asking: “When is it right to take the big step and say I love you? And what is this ‘love’ thing all about?”

After offering encouragement, Sugar advises Johnny to be brave and authentic, and to “practice saying the word ‘love’ to people [he loves] so when it matters the most to say it, [he] will.”

“We’re all going to die, Johnny,” she concludes. “Hit the iron bell like it’s dinnertime.”

Jeff Minick lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. He is the author of two novels, “Amanda Bell” and “Dust on Their Wings,” and two works of nonfiction, “Learning as I Go” and “Movies Make the Man.”



Unwind

Sometimes, a reproduction is better than actually owning an iconic car such as an authentic Ford GT40 or 1963 Corvette Grand Sport, because you can actually drive the one you built.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HILLBANKRACING.COM



Make Your Ultimate Dream Car 74

THE ONLY THING BETTER than visiting a tropical resort is living in one, like this impressive Ed Tuttle-designed property in Phuket, Thailand. **68**

WHEN YOU HEAR “Switzerland,” it’s only natural to think watches, chocolate, and stately architecture, but there’s also 2,000 years of history to explore. **70**

EQUIPPING AN OFFICE goes far beyond chairs and a desk, so consider these fun, creative items to boost your workspace productivity. **77**

INSIDE

An ISLAND Paradise



Located within Phuket's prestigious Amanpuri oceanfront resort community is a truly one-of-a-kind residence

By Phil Butler

A view of the pool area, with its impressive pagoda.

COURTESY OF OWNERS AND SOTHEBY'S CONCIERGE AUCTIONS

IF THE ENGLISH PHILOSOPHER Edmund Burke were right, if "beauty is the promise of happiness," then this expansive oceanfront property in Thailand could be someone's bliss. Offered by Sotheby's Concierge Auctions, the property is located within one of the world's most exclusive resorts.

The residence is both immense and stunningly beautiful, with nearly 34,000 square feet of living space in an Eden-like natural landscape. Situated on almost 1.4 acres of lush headlands in the heart of the unique and luxurious Amanpuri resort community, owners and guests will enjoy unobstructed views of the Andaman Sea.

The villa is laid out on multiple levels in four pavilions enveloped by open-air entertainment spaces. There are four bedroom suites, one in each pavilion, as well as spacious living and dining rooms, a large gourmet kitchen, and a magnificent sunken dining and living room.

Designed by architect Ed Tuttle, the villa's interior features generous use of native Thai teakwood, with antique furnishings to un-

derscore Tuttle's affinity for simplicity, order, tranquility, and comfort. At the center of the pavilions, a signature 50-foot, black-tiled infinity pool extends outward toward the horizon from a poolside cabana and courtyard. Tuttle created a clean design that allows for seamless alfresco living year-round, in an atmosphere of island bliss.

The property is surrounded by a mature coconut grove separating it from the nearby Amanpuri resort facilities, which are available to the owners and guests. The resort, located on the island of Phuket in Thailand on Pansea Beach, offers stunning views, an unparalleled beach club, a spa and wellness center, and sporting and curated experiences for residents and guests.

In addition, within easy reach of the villa are five international golf courses, scuba diving programs, and numerous private charter experiences for fishing and touring on the Andaman Sea. ■

Phil Butler is a publisher, editor, author, and analyst who is a widely cited expert on subjects ranging from digital and social media to travel technology.



OCEANFRONT VILLA AMANPURI RESORT, PHUKET, THAILAND

ASKING PRICE US\$18 MILLION (AUCTION RESERVE SET)

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- 4 BATHROOMS
- 34,000 SQUARE FEET
- 1.4 ACRES

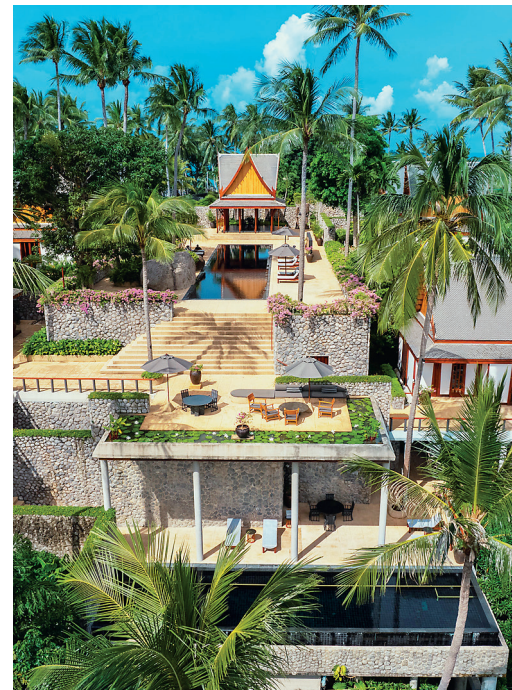
KEY FEATURES

- ED TUTTLE DESIGN
- LUSH INTERIORS
- INFINITY POOL
- RESORT AMENITIES

AGENT

SOTHEBY'S CONCIERGE AUCTIONS

CHRISTINA CHALK, Project Manager +44 7903.944463



(Above) This aerial photo provides a great view of the residence and a bit of the paradise surrounding it.

(Top Right) Generous use of teakwood accents add warmth to architect Ed Tuttle's spectacular design. The sunken dining/living room allows unobstructed views of the pool, the grounds, and the sea beyond.

(Right) Each of the villa's bedrooms has a slightly different layout and design. All the living pavilions have direct access to the pool terrace.



Not Just Business

Geneva's clocks, chocolates, and architecture delight visitors

By Wibke Carter

A boat on Lake Geneva, with the famous Jet d'Eau in the background.
PHOTO BY GENEVE TOURISME



GENEVA IS KNOWN AS A predominantly business city, home to trusted banks and headquarters of international organizations. But its reputation as a source of excellent cultural and culinary experiences is catching up.

The “world’s smallest metropolis” is a beautiful place on the shore of a crystal clear lake with the Alps soaring in the background. Museums fascinate, parks delight, buildings charm with their architectural diversity, and chocolate shops conquer all those with a sweet tooth. The Swiss city will surprise even the most demanding travelers.

Water Galore

Geneva’s landmark is the Jet d’Eau. The fountain can be seen from almost every part of the old town and even when flying over the city at 33,000 feet. It was installed as early as 1886, originally as a safety valve to control the pressure released by the nearby hydraulic plant.

In 1951, Jet d’Eau moved to its current location and the maximum jet height was increased to 460 feet. For a long time, it was the highest water fountain in the world, but the locals weren’t keen on chasing records.

“An old law from the time when Geneva was Catholic states that nothing can be built higher than the cathedral so it’s visible from all angles,” said tour guide Margaux Cañellas. “So when the Prince of Arabia erected a water fountain even higher, a referendum was put to the locals to see if the jet should be extended higher. But they were worried that they couldn’t see the Alps anymore, so here we are.”

Anyone who wishes to be captivated by the impressive interplay of city, lake, and technology should board a “Geneva Tour” cruise from Quai du Mont Blanc. During the one hour voyage, the boat offers unparalleled views of the Jet d’Eau, Mont Blanc (Europe’s highest mountain), and sophisticated Belle Epoque villas on the shore. For smaller journeys, “mouettes,” a type of water taxi, enable crossings to be made from one lakeshore to the other.

“In summer, people just hang around the lake sunbathing or enjoying water sports,” said local Trishala Ratnapala. “A favorite spot is the Bains des Pâquis, public baths and saunas from the 19th century built on an artificial peninsula.”

A City of the World

When strolling through Geneva, the international flair and more than 500 years of traditional watchmakers, gemstone cutters, and jewelers are equally tangible. Many renowned Swiss manufacturers

Sixty parks and gardens cover over **20% of the city.**



Downtown is a six-minute train ride from the Geneva airport.

For an out-of-town excursion, try Switzerland’s third-largest vineyard—only 15 minutes away.



Pralines from Favarger.



The making of a chocolate cauldron at Chocolat Stettler.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: THE EPOCH TIMES; WIBEKE CARTER; GENEVE TOURISME



(Left) The inside of a luxury watch. (Above) Stately buildings in Geneva.

such as Patek Philippe and Rolex are still based in the city, which is also home to more than 100 international organizations. The atmosphere in the city is cosmopolitan; nearly 50 percent of its residents are non-Swiss.

One international who left his mark in Geneva was Charles d'Este-Guelph, Duke of Brunswick. Expelled from his duchy in 1830 in what is now Germany, he fled into exile to various European cities, including Geneva. While staying at the Hotel Beau Rivage, he loved the view so much that he bequeathed his wealth to the city under the condition that a white marble mausoleum would be built from which he could cherish those vistas forever. There had never been a request like this before in Geneva.

"The architecture style here is quite simple as we are a Protestant city. This mausoleum was erected in the New Gothic style, which has nothing to do with everything else. But when you have a close look, you can see that the duke's skull is facing towards the lake and, resting on his back, the view is actually away from it. That's how petty the city fathers could be," Cañellas pointed out.

Green Spaces

Almost opposite the Brunswick Memorial, on the other side of the lake, is the Jardin Anglais, Geneva's most popular city park, which was created in 1855. The famous flower clock, L'Horloge Fleurie, is the symbol of the city's watchmakers. The composition of fresh flowers is planted in such a way that they bloom alternately and change the color of the installation depending on the season. Next to it stands the National Monument commemorating Geneva's integration into the Swiss Confederation.

Another wonderful green space is the Parc des Bastions. It's located on the site of a former botanical garden, so many green plants have been preserved there. Visitors can play giant chess with the locals, explore Einar Palace, and see the University of Geneva building with its library.

The main attraction is the Reformation Wall with its larger-than-life statues of the Calvinist

figures of Theodore Beza, John Calvin, William Farel, and John Knox. Hungry travelers should stop at Kiosque des Bastions, an eclectic brasserie with urban jungle interior design and al fresco dining in summer.

Chocolate Delights

The old town is dominated by the Cathédrale Saint-Pierre, but the real center is the ancient Place du Bourg-de-Four. According to research, town meetings were already held in the square in Roman times and cattle were sold there in the Middle Ages. Today, interesting sights are the Palais de Justice, the exquisite fountain, the Lutheran church, and the statue of Clementine.

Switzerland is famous for its chocolate and Geneva lives up to that standing. Hundreds of sweet concoctions are turned out every day by more than 30 chocolatiers. With the new "Choco Pass," sweet-toothed visitors are able to drop into seven chocolatiers across Geneva and sample some of the best chocolate on their own schedule.

If there's still room, the Chocolate Flavors Tour will reveal the secrets of the origins of chocolate, seduce with six tastings, and maybe settle the question of whether white chocolate is actually chocolate.

"I'm afraid I can't really comment on that," Cañellas said with a laugh. "I'm a neutral Swiss person!"

But in the end, it doesn't really matter, when chocolate bliss is near. ■

Wibke Carter is a travel writer who hails from Germany. She has lived in New Zealand and New York, and presently enjoys life in London.

If You Go

Getting There: Geneva's international airport is connected to 122 destinations.

Getting Around: A digital Geneva Transport card gives you access to trains, trams, buses, and boats throughout the city.

Where to Stay: The city doesn't lack luxury accommodations, but wine lovers should consider the Beau Rivage hotel, known for its exceptional wine cellar filled with rare vintages.

Shopping: Twelve luxury watch manufacturers make Geneva their home; their legendary craftsmanship follows 300 years of tradition.



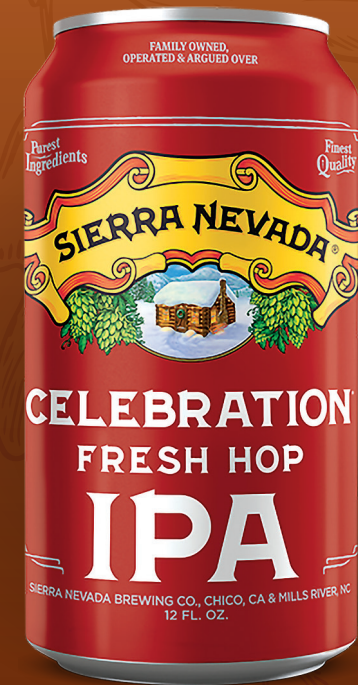
THIS PAGE FROM TOP: L: PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL BEONAREK / SHUTTERSTOCK; GENEVE TOURISME, SHUTTERSTOCK

Fall Beers:

Spiced and Spooky Brews, Beyond the Usual Pumpkin Suspects, to Try Now

By Kevin Revolinski

FALL IS HERE, COLORS HAVE CHANGED, and beer shelves are full of pumpkin ales and Oktoberfest. But maybe that's not your jam. Autumn also means campfire season, and the seasonal release of some really great beers to sip in the great outdoors. Here are some favorites.



SIERRA NEVADA CELEBRATION FRESH HOP IPA

CHICO, CALIF.

The hops in this American-style IPA bring citrus and pine. Fall harvests include hops, and this veteran California brewery (also brewing in North Carolina) has been celebrating that annual event since 1981. This amber-hued, 6.8 percent ABV brew is hop-forward for sure, with Cascade, Centennial, and Chinook, but with a sufficient backbone of malt to give it a very nice balance.



ALLAGASH BREWING HAUNTED HOUSE HOPPY DARK ALE

PORTLAND, MAINE

It's dark like a porter, bringing some coffee and mild chocolate flavors, and hopped a bit more than you would anticipate but gently, with Crystal, Chinook, and Saaz. It's a good medium-bodied brew with a spooky ABV of 6.66 percent, packaged in four-packs of full-pint cans.



GREAT LAKES BREWING NOSFERATU

CLEVELAND

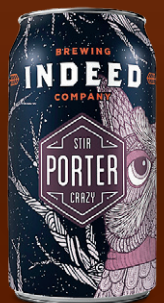
Keeping with the Halloween theme, this is also scary good. The blood-red color is a wink at this imperial red ale's vampire namesake, and while it has a strong malty backbone, a strong hops presence (Cascade and Simcoe) and 8 percent ABV give it just enough bite (sorry!).



ODD SIDE ALES MAYAN MOCHA STOUT

GRAND HAVEN, MICH.

This is one of those recipes that could go wrong in all directions but lands right on target. While it's inspired by spicy Mexican hot chocolate, the central flavor is Dutch chocolate coffee, with very balanced additions of nutmeg, cinnamon, and habaneros. With that spice and 6.5 percent ABV, it'll warm you up as much as the campfire.



INDEED BREWING STIR CRAZY PORTER

MINNEAPOLIS

Stir Crazy is just a great porter: full-bodied, roasted malt and bitter chocolate flavors with some toffee, and 6.5 percent ABV. Available from October to March, this seasonal brew should get you through to spring.

Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.

THE ULTIMATE DIY PROJECT

You can own some of the world's most iconic cars much more easily than you may suspect

BY BILL LINDSEY

There are only five "real" 1963 Corvette Grand Sports, but you can build your own replica that is easier to own and can be driven every day.

HERE ARE CERTAIN CARS that evoke a simpler yet more exciting time, such as a 1960s-era Shelby Cobra, a 1963 Corvette Grand Sport, or a Ford GT40. At first glance, for a variety of reasons from cost to availability, it seems highly unlikely that any of them could end up in your garage. But the reality is, with a few caveats, you can have one.

In 1962, a race car driver named Carroll Shelby modified a British sports car by dropping in a huge Ford V-8 engine. His AC Cobra quickly became wildly popular on racetracks and in driveways because of its eye-popping performance and good looks. Factory records indicate a total of 1,003 Cobras were built between 1963 and 1967, with 890 still existing; recent auctions indicate the current value for an original Cobra is about \$500,000 for the 289 V-8 model, and about \$1.2 million for the 427 Cobra model. The Daytona, a coupe model created to overcome the aerodynamics that limited the open-top car to speeds of 160 mph, was introduced in 1964. Capable of top speeds up to 190 mph, a total of six were built, and sale prices for these models in the early 2000s ranged between \$4 million and \$8 million.

In 1963, the Chevrolet Corvette was

The best way to actually own your ultimate dream car is to build it yourself.

completely restyled, and a new model, the Grand Sport, was announced. Created as a 550-horsepower race-track-ready car, an initial run of five Grand Sports was produced for the 1963 Le Mans race. However, when Chevrolet suddenly ended its racing program, an order was issued to destroy the cars. But instead of sending them to the crusher, Zora Arkus-Duntov, Chevy's director of high-performance vehicles, managed to sneak the cars out and into the hands of drivers such as Roger Penske, who took first place at the 1964 Nassau Trophy Race, alerting Chevrolet that the cars clearly hadn't been destroyed and were exceeding all expectations on the racetrack. Despite that, Chevrolet didn't offer a Grand Sport Corvette until 1996.

The original Grand Sports reside in private collections, including Miles Collier's Revs Institute and car museum in Naples, Florida, making them among the most iconic, sought-after cars ever made.

Ford's GT40 has a secure place on most car enthusiasts' list of dream cars. Its creation was instigated when Enzo Ferrari stepped away from an agreement to sell Ferrari to Ford. Enraged, Henry Ford told his engineers to build a car that would beat Ferrari at the Le Mans 24-hour endurance race, resulting in the GT40: "GT" for Grand Touring and "40" for its height in inches at the windshield.

After a rocky first attempt, the car went on to break Ferrari's dominance at Le Mans by winning it in 1966 through 1969. A total of 87 production cars and 12 prototypes were built, with current values estimated to be in the \$10 million range at auction.

These three cars have two things in common: The originals are exceedingly rare, and modern counterparts are readily available. The term "kit car" ♦♦

BETTER THAN THE REAL THING

Superformance's Cobra reproduction is built under license from Carroll Shelby Licensing, Inc. to ensure maximum authenticity.



These reproduction cars can be licensed for street use, or built solely for track day action. Built as close to the original specs as possible, many are actually compatible with authentic parts.



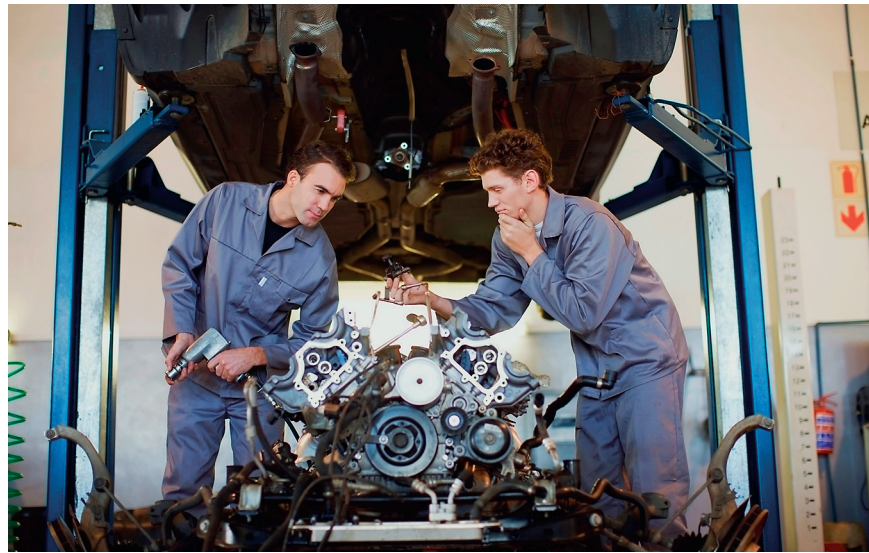
Looking exactly like the Ford GT40s that won at Le Mans, the Superformance model can be used to take the kids to soccer practice, earning the owner "coolest parent ever" honors.



LEFT PAGE: HILLBANKRACING.COM; THIS PAGE FROM TOP: HILLBANKRACING.COM; COURTESY OF SHELBY COBRA; WESTEN061/GETTY IMAGES; HILLBANKRACING.COM



The reproduction cars arrive as a rolling chassis, allowing the owner to complete them by installing an engine and transmission.



The process of building a reproduction may seem daunting at first, but it's designed to be completed by owners with only slightly advanced mechanical skills.

conjures images of dim, cramped garages in which piles of parts are assembled to resemble a classic car. The results can vary wildly, subject to the skill level and patience of the person building the car. That option has been superseded by firms such as Hillbank Motor Corp., whose cars include Cobra, Daytona, GT40, and Grand Sport reproductions manufactured by Superformance.

These cars have been engineered to exactly match original specifications wherever possible while utilizing modern materials, components, and assembly methods. The result is a street-legal vehicle built with many parts that are actually interchangeable with those from the original vehicles.

The Superformance Cobra is the only Cobra reproduction built under license from Carroll Shelby Licensing Inc., and Superformance's Grand Sport is built under licensing from General Motors.

Many of the models can be upgraded with comfort options such as air conditioning and sound systems, making them viable for daily driving as well as track day adventures. The engines and transmissions often are covered by manufacturers' warranties and can be serviced at Ford and Chevrolet dealerships.

Originally founded in South Africa and now operating from facilities in Southern California and South Florida, Hillbank eliminates much of the stress

of building a car by offering a "turn-key-minus" rolling chassis, which only requires an engine and drivetrain to complete. In this way, the owner purchases a car that has been professionally built by skilled technicians to exacting safety and engineering standards, and then he or she installs an engine and transmission to complete the project. The firm also offers fully assembled zero-mile or pre-owned operational vehicles, as well as an ever-changing inventory of notable collectible cars.

It may be that the best way to actually own your ultimate dream car is to build it yourself. ■



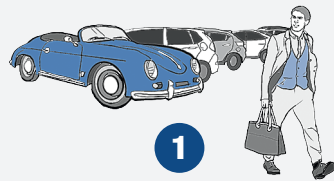
Powered by modern, reliable engines, these cars deliver adventure every time they rumble to life.



LIFESTYLE

SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED

Build your own classic



1

A Reproduction Is Practical

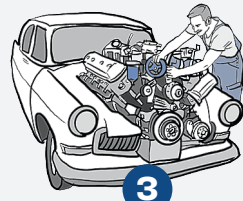
Modern technology, air conditioning, and the ability to have them serviced by a local dealership make these reproduction cars easy to live with. You can use them to commute to work, get groceries, or take an epic road trip.



2

You Can Have It Now

There are only five original Grand Sport Corvettes, and if one were to be offered for sale, the cost would be staggering. But you can order your own rolling chassis reproduction today.



3

Make It Your Own

By selecting the engine, paint, interior features, and optional equipment, you can truly customize a one-of-a-kind car, built by your hands.

THIS PAGE FROM TOP: COISUL/SHUTTERSTOCK; HILLBANKMOTOR.COM

ENHANCING WORKPLACE CREATIVITY



These pieces of fun gear may be just what's needed to jump-start your workplace productivity

By Bill Lindsey



Break-Time Keyboard LOGITECH K580 MULTI-DEVICE KEYBOARD \$49.95

It's best to keep personal email and internet browsing private, without using office computers. Tablets and phones are great ways to access emails and websites during breaks, but this multifunctional keyboard makes doing so even easier. Just under 15 inches long and weighing a scant 19.7 ounces with two AA batteries in place, it can be tucked into a briefcase or backpack. The Bluetooth system can be used with phones and tablets or as a backup computer keyboard.

A Puzzling Creativity Booster JACK PUZZLE \$98

There are times when the best way to get a "stuck" project back on track is to take a mental break, focusing on something completely unrelated to the task at hand. This attractive brass paperweight resembles intertwined jacks, functions as a brain teaser, and might be the perfect solution. Comprising six notched bars that come apart easily, it can be a bit of a challenge to reassemble.



Office Express ARRMA 1/8 TYPHON 6S \$499.99

When you need to send a note to a coworker, the radio-controlled Typhon is much more fun than a boring email. Clip a memo to the wing and use the steering wheel-equipped controller to zoom it down the hall at speeds up to 45 miles per hour, screeching into their workspace. The off-road tires and oil-filled suspension let it climb over any office obstacles in its path. You can operate three at a time for office races.



Toss Ideas Around BASKETBALL HOOP GARBAGE BIN \$49.99

A basketball wastebasket is a must-have for any office; it transforms disposing of memos and lunch menus into a sport, as you pretend to be an NBA superstar making one-handed shots from across the room. At 17.3 inches tall with a backboard that's 11.8 inches wide, it provides a way to concentrate on making the shot that can free up mental logjams about how to move a project forward or resolve serious cases of writer's block.



Pedal-Powered Inspiration XDESK VELO BICYCLE DESK \$799

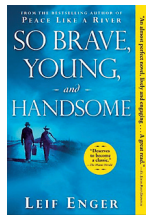
Taking a break for a walk or a quick bicycle ride can be an effective way to help refocus on a work project, but it's not always practical to do so, especially if it's raining or snowing outside, or you're on a tight deadline. This system allows you to ride while you work or take a break, letting you focus on how far and how fast you've gone, which might in turn inspire the solution to your work problem.

Are there books you'd recommend?
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at features@epochtimes.com

RECOMMENDED READING

This week, we feature Laura Ingalls Wilder's most harrowing volume and a feel-good history of two American emblems: baseball and presidents.

FICTION

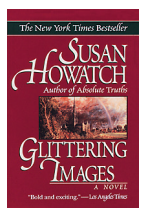


'SO BRAVE, YOUNG, AND HANDSOME'
By Leif Enger

A Turn-of-the-Century Western

It's 1915 and Monte Becket, a father, husband, and writer, is looking for adventure—or at least something to write about. After meeting outlaw Glendon Hale, Becket joins him on a wild journey to the West. A delightful modern Western that pulls at the heart.

ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS, 2008, 272 PAGES



'GLITTERING IMAGES'
By Susan Howatch

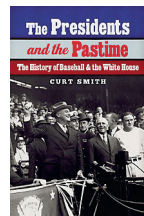
Spiritual Battles

This novel is the first of six in the "Starbridge Series," which begins in the 1930s and tells a story of religious and cultural crises over the next four decades. The characters, many of whom appear in several or all of the books, are vividly drawn and associated with

the fictional diocese of Starbridge and its Anglican monastic order. In addition to the entertaining plots, we see the interplay between culture and faith up through the 1960s, often with devastating consequences for the Church of England.

BALLANTINE BOOKS, 1995, 434 PAGES

HISTORY

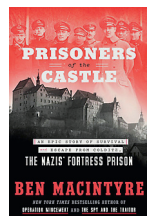


'THE PRESIDENTS AND THE PASTIME'
By Curt Smith

The Honorable Pastime

There's nothing so all-American as baseball, except perhaps U.S. presidents. This book looks at how baseball and presidents interacted throughout U.S. history. All presidents (as of the date of publication) had some relationship with the game. Even George Washington played a version of stickball. Tracking from Teddy Roosevelt's presidency, when the major leagues began, the book spends a chapter on each president, focusing on the good in baseball and in the presidents, regardless of their party.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 2018, 504 PAGES

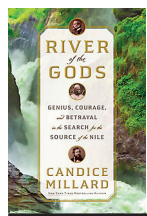


'PRISONERS OF THE CASTLE'
By Ben Macintyre

A New Look Inside Colditz

Colditz was a German World War II prisoner of war camp for incorrigible escapers and special political prisoners. It's so well known that you may wonder if anything more can be gleaned. It can. Based on new information, Macintyre takes another look. He renders the non-British contingents anew, incorporates German accounts, and reveals a spy ring run within Colditz, aided by the German resistance and complete with a love interest.

CROWN, 2022, 368 PAGES



'RIVER OF THE GODS'
By Candice Millard

Searching for the River's Source

Shrouded in mystery for millennia, the source of Egypt's Nile River was a prize of monumental significance that England coveted.

A linguist and lover of literature, Richard Burton, was paired with a young aristocrat and hunter, John Speke, to undertake the expedition for its discovery. Their guide, Bombay, played a pivotal role.

DOUBLEDAY, 2022, 368 PAGES

CLASSICS



'THE CLASSICAL TRADITION'
Edited by Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis

A Treasury of Cultural Riches

Do you want to learn more about the gifts bestowed by the ancients on the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and our own modern times? In this massive collection of roughly 500 articles, several scholars demonstrate the enormous influence of the Greeks and Romans on Western society and culture in everything from city planning to sororities. More than 80 pages of beautiful photos of statuary, paintings, and buildings enhance the text. Conducted by experts, this tour of history is a vivid reminder of the ties linking past and present.

BELKNAP PRESS, 2010, 1088 PAGES

FOR KIDS



'THE LONG WINTER'
By Laura Ingalls Wilder

Hard Times on the Prairie

Hit with a brutal winter, the Ingalls family and their neighbors face possible starvation unless young Almanzo Wilder and a friend can deliver a supply of wheat. An inspiring story for what might become our own long winter. This book is for ages 7 to 11.

HARPERCOLLINS, 2008, 352 PAGES



'GOODNIGHT MOON'
By Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd

A Bedtime Classic

This quintessential bedtime story features soothing, repeating verses as a tucked-in little bunny says goodnight to every familiar thing in his room. Don't be surprised if your little one has this memorized before long. This is a bedtime must.

HARPERCOLLINS, 2007, 32 PAGES



Ian Kane
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author. He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

MOVIE REVIEWS

This week, we look at a couple of buddy comedies about men helping each other in trying times: One is arresting and worthwhile—the other, not.

NEW RELEASE



'Bromates' (2022)

In this fast-paced buddy comedy, good friends Sid (Josh Brener) and Jonesie (Lil Rel Howery) move in together after simultaneous breakups with their respective girlfriends. Along with a couple of other pals, they seek camaraderie in an effort to heal from their misery, but things quickly spiral way out of control. This odd comedy is modeled after the vastly superior "Odd Couple" TV series from the 1970s. It contains an overload of crude jokes and raunchy gags that wear thin before the halfway mark. So, watch at your own risk.

COMEDY

Release Date:
Oct. 7, 2022

Director:
Court Crandall

Starring:
Josh Brener, Lil Rel Howery, Brendan Scannell

Running Time:
1 hour, 38 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Theaters

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AN ENGROSSING ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF MARSHAL WYATT EARP



'My Darling Clementine' (1946)

Henry Fonda stars as iconic figure Wyatt Earp, whose brother is killed when the Clanton clan steals his family's cattle.

When Earp becomes the marshal of Tombstone, Arizona, he and gunman Doc Holliday seek to avenge the murder. One of John Ford's greatest Westerns—with

incredible lighting and cinematography, heartfelt drama and romance, and outstanding acting performances.

DRAMA | ROMANCE | WESTERN

Release Date:
Dec. 3, 1946

Director:
John Ford

Starring:
Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell, Victor Mature

Running Time:
1 hour, 37 minutes

Not Rated

Where to Watch:
Apple TV, DirecTV, Vudu

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

INDIE PICK

'Blindspotting' (2018)

This thought-provoking indie film is about Collin (Daveed Diggs), who lives at a halfway house and is about to get off probation to start a new life. But his erratic bosom buddy Miles (Rafael Casal) might just endanger his chances.

This is one of those rare films that touches on social issues without seeming forced or partisan. The situations that the two main characters find themselves in seem to happen organically—just like in real life.



The comedy-drama feeds the mind and should spark some frank discussions after viewing.

COMEDY | CRIME | DRAMA

Release Date:
July 27, 2018

Director:
Carlos López Estrada

Starring:
Daveed Diggs, Rafael Casal, Janina Gavankar

Running Time:
1 hour, 35 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
Redbox, Starz, DirecTV

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

A POWERFUL, ACTION-FILLED EPIC

'Gladiator' (2000)

General Maximus (Russell Crowe) is a skilled general of the Roman army, who is favored by Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris) to succeed him. But Aurelius's power-mad son Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) plots to seize power for himself.

Crowe is perfect as the tortured hero with the courage and wit to carry out a blood-stained revenge plan. Phoenix is also fantastic as the weaselly villain you love to hate. This is an action-adventure that



will evoke a veritable plethora of emotions. Simply epic.

ACTION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA

Release Date:
May 5, 2000

Director:
Ridley Scott

Starring:
Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen

Running Time:
2 hours, 35 minutes

MPAA Rating: R

Where to Watch:
DirecTV, Vudu, Redbox

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



How to Be Great Campers

RVs are adventure machines, but mind your manners while at the campground

Using an RV or camper trailer to see the country lets you go wherever you want and whenever it suits your whims, but after you're set up, take a moment to dust off your etiquette skills.

By Bill Lindsey

1 Enjoy the View

When visiting campgrounds with your motorhome, travel trailer, truck camper, or van, be a good neighbor by keeping your site neat and clean. Be respectful of nearby campers, making sure you aren't inadvertently the campground eyesore! Tidy your bikes so they aren't strewn around, and clean up after meals, removing all food, containers, plates, and trash. In addition to being unsightly, these items can attract wildlife, ranging from bugs to bears. If you are cooking or have a campfire going, be aware of any strong odors or smoke that might annoy your neighbors.



2 Quiet Time

Regardless of whether your RV is in a campground or a relative's driveway, roaring bonfires and loud music after dark aren't appropriate; be considerate of other campers by adhering to noise rules. Be aware that some folks, especially those with young children, might have earlier bedtimes than you do. Make sure that your campfires are fully extinguished and turn off all exterior lights, as they can be irritating to neighbors and may attract bugs. Don't use loud, smelly generators after dark.

3 Wide-Open Outdoors

Space Invaders is a fun arcade game, but don't be the one who invades the space of others in the campground. If you have a tow vehicle, park it neatly by your camper, within your campsite. Be aware that your slide-out extensions may impinge on the adjacent campsite. If you set up outdoor furniture, make sure it stays within the confines of your campsite. Even if it seems harmless to do so, don't cut across a neighbor's campsite as a shortcut to the laundry, pool, or other areas.

4 Campsite Etiquette

Exploring a new campsite, or neighborhood, is always an exciting adventure, but it's best enjoyed while being courteous to everyone else around. Misbehaving children can spoil the atmosphere for those around you, meaning that running, shouting, or racing on bicycles around the campground shouldn't be allowed. Pets need to be on their best behavior, too. Don't let your pooch bark wildly at squirrels, other dogs, or people; it reinforces bad behavior and is rude to those in nearby campsites.

5 Be a Thoughtful Guest

If you don't require a pull-thru campsite, don't take one unless no others are available; class A and fifth-wheel campers need these sites. Be patient if there's a line to check in for a campsite or at the campground laundry area, showers, or pump-out station. Use the wait to make new friends or, at the pump-out station, to make sure you have gloves and the connector handy to complete the task quickly. Lend a hand if you notice your neighbors needing help with anything.

OSAI IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Courageous Reporting

We believe that investigating and exposing the truth is the only way that we can remain safe and free

CROSSFIRE HURRICANE

ON MAY 25, 2017, The Epoch Times published an article headlined "Despite Allegations, No Evidence of Trump–Russia Collusion Found." The article detailed that—despite a media frenzy at the time—no actual evidence had been uncovered that President Donald Trump or anyone associated with his campaign had colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election.

OUR REPORTING was proven accurate with the conclusion of the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller.

NOT ONLY DID WE NOT BUY INTO the false narrative that Trump colluded with Russia, but we have also been a leader in reporting on the irregular and apparently politicized nature of the FBI's investigation of the Trump campaign. During the past five years, we have published dozens—many of them exclusive—articles on the topic.



ELECTION INTEGRITY

FOLLOWING THE 2020 ELECTION, The Epoch Times was at the forefront of investigating and reporting on the questions surrounding the integrity of the election. Through our fact-based and independent reporting, we were able to uncover multiple irregularities.



ORIGINS OF COVID-19

ON APRIL 15, 2020, The Epoch Times published its documentary "Tracking Down the Origin of Wuhan Coronavirus." The film, which received over 100 million views, explored the origins of the virus, including the possibility of a lab leak. It presents scientific data and interviews with top scientists and national security experts.

YEARS AFTER THE RELEASE of this groundbreaking documentary, the possibility of a lab leak is considered by government officials and experts as the most likely explanation for the virus's spread.



CHINA THREAT

SINCE ITS INCEPTION in the year 2000, The Epoch Times has been at the forefront of reporting on the infiltration of the United States by the Chinese Communist Party. Numerous times over the years, we've broken major China-related stories ahead of other news organizations. In 2003, The Epoch Times was the first media outlet to systematically and continuously report on the spread of SARS, well ahead of most other Western media. We were also the first to report on state-sponsored forced organ harvesting in China—one of the most underreported atrocities of our time—in



which prisoners of conscience are killed for their organs, which are then sold for profit on a large scale.

THE EPOCH TIMES also published the editorial series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," revealing the true nature and history of the Communist Party and inspiring a movement that so far has seen more than 400 million Chinese people quit the Party and its affiliated organizations. Another of our series, "How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World," systematically exposes the evil nature of communism, as well as the harm it has brought and continues to inflict on the United States and the world.

A message and a story you do not want to miss

Dear future subscriber,
If you are sick of the bias, lies, and fake outrage that's business-as-usual in the media today, I believe that you will love our weekly magazine, Epoch Insight.

My name is Kirk Wang, and I am the senior vice president of the Subscription Department at The Epoch Times—the fastest-growing independent news outlet in America.

When The Epoch Times was founded in 2000, I was the first to join the production team in Atlanta. Together, we made our first edition, in Chinese. Thus began our commitment to reporting the truth and exposing the Chinese Community Party and its infiltration in the United States and around the world.

In today's desert of shameless media dishonesty, The Epoch Times has become an oasis for those thirsting for truthful, fact-based coverage of current events. Now, our news magazine Epoch Insight provides an even more refreshing shelter for you to explore.

Produced by our award-winning newsroom, Epoch Insight is a weekly publication that provides big-picture news coverage and in-depth analysis of today's most challenging issues.

Epoch Insight will keep you up to date on the most significant developments in the United States, world, as well as economic news, with exclusive content in the timeless format of a real American news magazine.

You can trust us to provide you with this in-depth coverage because we're committed to honoring Truth and Tradition—and treating our readers with the respect they deserve.

Let me offer you three reasons why honest reporting is absolutely central to every line you read in The Epoch Times and Epoch Insight. Later on, you can assess the truth of my claims for yourself.



Kirk Wang, SVP of Subscription

1. The Epoch Times rejects politically motivated journalism.

Our commitment to tradition is so strong that we believe YOU ought to be able to judge facts for yourself and decide what to make of them.

Many other media corporations want to tightly control what you're allowed to see or read, so that you don't arrive at the "wrong" views.

Not us. When we search for new hires, every single job description emphasizes that the candidate must practice ethical journalism: "Seek the truth and report it." This used to be standard in American newsrooms ... but lately it's been sacrificed by activists who emphasize ideology over facts.

Is it hard to find reporters who qualify? You bet. A lot of journalism schools have taught students to forsake traditional journalistic ethics for newsroom activism.

While this hiring process is laborious, it has proven successful: The Epoch Times has built a team of reporters who are dedicated to seeking and reporting the truth, regardless of whether what they find conflicts with their personal biases.

The Epoch Times takes this principle so seriously that it has never endorsed a political candidate for office. Can you imagine?

2. The Epoch Times is indebted to no one.

Let's face it: If you are beholden to a corporation or conglomerate, you aren't really free to report the facts. That's the problem we see with many news outlets today—they know where their bread is buttered, and their "factual" reporting shows it!

What's more, if your business model depends on getting a ton of "clicks," you aren't really free to report the news honestly. Every single headline is an advertisement looking to manipulate the consumer. (Remember the saying, "If a product is 'free,' there's a good chance that YOU are the product.")

But The Epoch Times is totally independent. We are funded by loyal subscribers like you and generous donors who are proud to support high-quality, trustworthy journalism.

(By becoming a subscriber today, YOU will become part of this movement to restore truth to our country.)

3. The Epoch Times has seen firsthand where ideological manipulation leads.

I have to warn you, this part of the letter gets a little heavy, and I write it with a somber heart.

You see, the founders of The Epoch Times are Chinese Americans who witnessed persecution in communist China.

We started a newspaper that would counteract the total censorship of the press inside China and the world's reporting about China, and let people see the truth, not just the official government narrative.

And for their courageous commitment to the

truth, many Epoch Times journalists paid a very heavy price.

In 2000, China's state security agents arrested the manager of the newspaper's China bureau and 10 journalists. Editor-in-chief Zhang Yuhui received a prison sentence of 10 years, while Epoch Times staff member Huang Kui received five.

Both men were interrogated, tortured, forced into slave labor, and subjected to brainwashing classes. Huang was released in 2004 and Zhang in 2010. However, several other Epoch Times staff members were never heard from again. We fear they paid the ultimate price for their commitment to telling the truth.

So, for us, it's personal. When you have colleagues tortured and killed for honest reporting, you're not going to forsake those principles just because it's convenient. We would dishonor their sacrifice if we gave you anything less than the honest truth.

I'd like to invite you to take a look at this Epoch Insight magazine and decide for yourself if it's the kind of in-depth news you've been looking for.

So please, right now, act on our special offer: only \$1 for your first four issues of Epoch Insight. Just go to **ReadEpochInsight.com**. You'll also enjoy a savings of 45 percent off our regular rate on the next 12 months of superior journalism ... plus other big extras, including complete access to the exceptional content on The Epoch Times' acclaimed website, **TheEpochTimes.com**

In Truth and Tradition,

Kirk Wang
SVP of Subscription
The Epoch Times

What Our Readers Say

“It’s a magazine that’s FOR the American people, not against.”

Vanessa Morrison, medical records clerk

“Well thought out material, thoroughly investigated, and I trust [the] sources.”

Gail F. Sauve, homemaker

“It is straightforward, rather than a lot of speculation or pontificating.”

Jan Hamilton, retired professional

“[Insight] reminds me that there are still a LOT of wonderful, good, and dedicated people in this country.”

Creed Haymond, surgeon

“Unbiased reporting. Short, impactful articles.”

Mark Naumann, photographer

“I can trust what I read and make up my own mind how I feel about the subject.”

Jim Edwards, retired

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