

# EPOCH INSIGHT

## Media Break From America

*By Petr Svab*



# The Changing Media Landscape

**AMERICAN LEGACY MEDIA ARE INCREASINGLY** abandoning middle-class values and instead tailoring their content to the taste of the elite class.

The firing of Fox News host Tucker Carlson exemplifies the issue.

In this week's cover story, read how veteran industry professionals view the shift.

"I think there's been a trend of the news media making decisions contrary to its own financial interests, and that tells you there's something else, or somebody else, calling the shots," says Sharyl Attkisson, an independent journalist formerly with CBS News.

Attkisson describes the phenomenon of media bosses stopping stories, leading reporters to understand which stories they can touch and which they can't.

The consolidation of media organizations in the digital era has only made matters more complicated.

And while journalism used to be a blue collar job, "the journalist class has become part of the elite, and so they see the world through an elite lens," says Batya Ungar-Sargon, deputy opinion editor at Newsweek.

The elite's distaste for middle-class values puts constraints on freedom of expression. Stray from their ideology and they will "make it impossible for you to ever have your opinion again," says Ungar-Sargon.

As a result, corporate media today are relying solely on their politically homogenous audience to survive.

Read more about how the media are divorcing from the people, in this week's cover story.



JASPER FAKKERT  
Editor-in-chief



**ON THE COVER**

American legacy media have become subservient to the political elite, alienating the common man.

ILLUSTRATION BY THE EPOCH TIMES, DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES

## EPOCH INSIGHT

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News media are becoming increasingly disconnected from the middle-class audience.

An illegal immigrant climbs over the border fence into the United States from Tijuana, Mexico, on May 10. The Biden administration officially ended its use of Title 42 on May 11.

GUILLELMO ARIAS/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

# SPOTLIGHT

## Joyful Celebration

### CHILDREN GREET A LION DANCER DURING A CELEBRATION

for World Falun Dafa Day on May 13, in New York on May 7. On World Falun Dafa Day, which marks the day the practice was introduced to the public in China in 1992, Falun Gong practitioners and supporters celebrate how the practice has brought truth, compassion, and tolerance to people's lives.

PHOTO BY SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES



# The Week

**An Amish man puts hay**  
into a line for baling  
in Ronks, Pa., on April 26.

PHOTO BY RICHARD MOORE/THE EPOCH TIMES



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*“Given the end of the [public health emergency], there is no justification to delay any further.”*

Rep. Mike Johnson (R-La.), on calling for the Biden administration to end its COVID-19 vaccine mandate for health care workers



**36%**

A Gallup poll found that only 36 percent of U.S. adults had a “great deal” or a “fair amount” of confidence that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell would do or recommend the right thing for the economy.

**40%**

President Joe Biden’s approval rating has been at 40 percent recently, close to the lowest level of his presidency, as Americans are unhappy about his handling of immigration and inflation, a Reuters/Ipsos poll shows.

**“[The border crisis is] the largest homeland security intelligence failure since 9/11.”**

Tom Homan, former acting director, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement



**21.4%**

Sales volumes of Bud Light fell by 21.4 percent in April amid calls for a boycott by critics of the brand’s engagement with transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney, according to Beer Business Daily.



**75,000 EMPLOYEES**

President Joe Biden and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen have been sued by a union representing some 75,000 government employees demanding that the administration ignore the debt ceiling on grounds that the borrowing limit is unconstitutional.

**52%** — A Bankrate survey found that at least 52 percent of U.S. respondents reported that their personal finances were having a negative impact on their mental health, a significant increase from 42 percent a year ago.

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**MEDIA**

**Tucker Carlson Announces New Show on Twitter**

**FORMER FOX NEWS HOST** Tucker Carlson has released a video saying he will bring a new show to Twitter.

“Starting soon, we’ll be bringing a new version of the show to Twitter,” Carlson said in his first remarks about his future post-Fox plans. He also praised Twitter, which was bought by Tesla owner Elon Musk late last year, for being one of the few “platforms left that allow free speech.”



Rep. James Comer (R-Ky.) (C) and other House Republicans hold a news conference on the findings of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability in Washington on May 10.

**CONGRESS**

**Biden Family Received \$10 Million From China, Foreign Interests: House Oversight**

**A HOST OF BANKING AND OTHER RECORDS** made public on May 10 by House Committee on Oversight and Accountability Chairman James Comer (R-Ky.) depict a complex money laundering scheme involving millions of dollars from foreign entities that investigators contend went to President Joe Biden and nearly a dozen members of his family.

In a 36-page memorandum summarizing the committee’s findings to date, investigators described examining thousands of bank records and legal documents depicting nearly two dozen limited liability corporations established by Biden family members to receive payments from private clients, corporations, and foreign governments, including China and Romania.

“Biden family members and business associates created a web of over 20 companies—most were limited liability companies formed during Joe Biden’s vice presidency,” the memorandum reads. “Bank records show the Biden family, their business associates, and their companies received over \$10 million from foreign nationals’ companies. The Committee has identified payments to Biden family members from foreign companies while Joe Biden served as Vice President and after he left public office.”

**CHICAGO**

**Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot Declares Emergency Over Immigrant Surge**

**CHICAGO MAYOR LORI LIGHTFOOT** has declared an emergency as the sanctuary city reaches a breaking point as it struggles to cope with an influx of illegal immigrants bused from Texas border towns.

Lightfoot requested that Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker mobilize the National Guard to provide staffing and logistical support as the housing of illegal immigrants spills over from established and new facilities into police stations, where some are temporarily sheltering.

Chicago has received more than 8,000 illegal immigrants since August 2022, stretching its resources to the limit.

**GOVERNMENT**

**NIH Renews Controversial Grant to EcoHealth for Coronavirus Bat Study**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH** (NIH) officials have reactivated a previously terminated \$576,290 federal grant to EcoHealth Alliance to study how outbreaks of deadly viruses such as SARS, MERS, and now COVID-19 originate from wildlife and can be passed to humans.

The grant was suspended three years ago over concerns about grant term violations.

EcoHealth, the nonprofit organization that for years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic used NIH funds to conduct coronavirus research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China—the Chinese facility under scrutiny for its work on dangerous bat coronaviruses—announced in a statement that the new four-year grant would be used to study “the risk of bat coronavirus spillover emergence.”



Security personnel stand guard outside the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 3, 2021.



Iain Duncan Smith attends the annual Conservative Party conference in Birmingham, England, on Oct. 3, 2022.

**UK**

### Sanctioned Lawmakers Condemn UK's 1st Ministerial Visit to Hong Kong Since 2018

**THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT** has come under renewed criticism from lawmakers as a government minister visits Hong Kong for the first time since 2018.

A number of parliamentarians who have been sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) condemned the government for sending the minister for trade talks, with former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith saying the government was set to “prostrate” itself before the Chinese regime.

The visit comes after lawmakers lambasted the government for inviting Chinese deputy leader Han Zheng—who was in charge of Hong Kong affairs during the CCP’s suppression of the 2019 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong—to the coronation of King Charles III.

**HEALTH**

### A 30-Minute Call Per Week Can Raise High Blood Pressure Risk: Study

**A STUDY** has found that spending just 30 minutes talking on a cellphone per week is linked to a greater risk of blood pressure, a major cause of heart attacks and strokes.

The study was published in the European Heart Journal-Digital Health.

Researchers found that those who spent half an hour once a week, even hands-free, were 12 percent more prone to higher blood pressure, also called hypertension.

Furthermore, six hours of weekly phone chats raised the risk to 25 percent.



The study found that spending at least 30 minutes talking on the phone led to a 33 percent higher chance of hypertension for participants who had a high genetic risk of hypertension.

**PAKISTAN**

### Former Pakistani PM Imran Khan Arrested, Sparking Violence

**PAKISTAN'S ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY** has arrested former Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Islamabad High Court, threatening fresh turmoil in the nuclear-armed country as clashes erupted between Khan supporters and police, killing at least one protester.

Khan's arrest came a day after the powerful military rebuked him for repeatedly accusing a senior military officer of trying to engineer his assassination and the former armed forces chief of being behind his removal from power last year.

Khan is Pakistan's most popular leader, according to opinion polls.

The clashes left one of the protesters dead and injured 12 people, including six police officers in the southern city of Quetta, provincial home minister Ziaullah Langove said.



Supporters of former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan clash with policemen in Islamabad on May 10.

**US-UKRAINE**

### Biden Admin Sends Another \$1.2 Billion to Ukraine

**THE PENTAGON** says that the Biden administration is sending Ukraine a military aid package worth up to \$1.2 billion “to bolster [Ukraine’s] air defenses and sustain its artillery ammunition needs.”

The total value of aid to Ukraine from the United States amid the conflict now exceeds \$37.6 billion, according to an updated fact sheet. Of that, more than \$36.9 billion has been sent to Ukraine since the start of Russia’s invasion in February 2022.

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**EPOCH ORIGINAL**

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Final War" is a film that is so relevant to current events and so important that we're offering it to EVERYONE for free. It will answer your questions about the pandemic, the impending invasion of Taiwan, and how the CCP works to keep the United States occupied with at least four global adversaries.

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# The Week in Photos

**(Right)** Performers at the Orange County Asian Festival at Woodbury Common Premium Outlets in Woodbury, N.Y., on May 6.



**(Above)** Residents of two flood-affected villages board canoes in Bushushu, Democratic Republic of Congo, on May 8. The death toll from floods and landslides triggered by heavy rains in the area had risen to more than 400, with thousands still missing.



**(Above)** An elderly woman walks through a trench at a park in Kyiv, Ukraine, on May 6.



**(Left)** A dog takes part in a skateboarding competition during Pet Expo Thailand in Bangkok on May 7.



**(Left)** Children play at Cardiff Castle during the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla in Cardiff, Wales, on May 6.

**(Left)** People take pictures of the Rahmede highway bridge as it's demolished, near Luedenscheid, Germany, on May 7.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP-L: MARK ZOU / THE EPOCH TIMES; QUEROHOM/ND/EBG/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; ROMAN PUPPE/GETTY IMAGES; NA FASSENDER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; MATTHEW HORWOOD/GETTY IMAGES; LAUREN DECCA/GETTY IMAGES

An Amish farmer heads to the field in Lancaster County, Pa., on April 27. Outside pressure to modernize farming practices is felt within the Amish community.

PHOTO BY RICHARD MOORE/THE EPOCH TIMES

PENNSYLVANIA

# AMISH TAKE A STAND AGAINST GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Farmers work hard to adapt while holding fast to cherished tradition—the government, however, presents a whole different challenge

By Allan Stein





**(Far Left)** Buggies sit outside a house in Lancaster County, Pa., on April 27. The horse and buggy is still the primary means of getting around for the Amish. **(Left)** An Amish woman rides a scooter-like bicycle in Lancaster County, Pa., on April 26. Traditional clothing for women are long dresses, aprons, and bonnets.

**“Farming is not a textbook. You learn things from your parents, from experiences.”**

*Jesse Lapp, owner, Old Windmill*

**L**ANCASTER COUNTY, Pa.—Among the historic Amish settlements in southeastern Pennsylvania, faith, fidelity, and long days working in green fields are the root of traditional farming.

Together, they support and nourish a community and culture steeped in biblical teachings.

In Lancaster County, west of Philadelphia, the Amish hold fast to many of the old ways. Their primary means of getting around is still horse and buggy, and they use herbal remedies for many common ailments.

The Amish of Lancaster County are also humble and private people (many Amish don't like having their photographs taken or names publicized). Shunning pride and vanity, they experience a particular joy and satisfaction

in living close to the earth, free of the stress and pressures of outside worldly entanglements.

Many Amish still speak a German dialect called “Pennsylvania Dutch,” living and conducting themselves in an uncomplicated manner.

Traditional clothing—long dresses, aprons, and bonnets for women; trousers, shirts, jackets, and hats for men—distinguishes them from the world of “the English,” the term used to denote non-Amish.

The peaceful simplicity of Amish life has its allure and also everyday challenges and economic realities while interacting with the larger society around them.

Some small multigenerational farm owners, like Jesse Lapp, try to adapt to these influences through “agritourism” and diversification into the trades, while still passing their wisdom and

traditional farming methods down from generation to generation.

“If you don't pass on the techniques from one generation to the next, it gets lost,” said Lapp, 44, owner of Old Windmill Farm in Ronks, Pennsylvania, an unincorporated farming community 63 miles from Philadelphia.

“Farming is not a textbook,” said the farmer, who learned how to work the land from his father, who learned it from his father and those before him.

“You learn things from your parents, from experiences, what your parents struggled with. You learn from that.”

However, strictly organic farmers in Lancaster County, such as Amos Miller, are confronted with government regulations that they see as hostile to Christian values and personal choices in producing food.

Today, Miller, 45, is at the center of a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

lawsuit accusing him of violating federal food safety laws.

There have been financial penalties and threats of jail time over selling non-federally inspected and “erroneously labeled” milk and meat at Miller's Organic Farm of Bird-In-Hand, Pennsylvania.

Miller views the case as a form of government overreach targeting small organic farms to regulate them out of existence.

“There are many farmers that would like to continue to be farmers,” Miller told The Epoch Times.

“It's in our culture. We love farming. But the food system is so monopolized and regulated that we can't be true farmers. You can't make a living on the farm.”

The Amish population in the United States consists of four primary groups: Beachy Amish, Amish Mennonites, New Order Amish, and Old Order Amish

whose forebears fled religious persecution in Europe during the early 18th century. They have different views regarding the use of modern technology.

“The Amish do not consider technology evil in itself, but they believe that technology if left untamed will undermine worthy traditions and accelerate assimilation into the surrounding society,” according to the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College on its Amish Studies website.

“Mass media technology, in particular, they fear, would introduce foreign values into their culture. By bringing greater mobility, cars would pull the community apart, eroding local ties.

“Horse-and-buggy transportation keeps the community anchored in its local geographical base.”

As a population, the Amish are among the fastest-growing in the United States,

with more than 300,000 located in 32 states. More than 60 percent of the Amish population live in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana in local congregations called church districts.

In Lancaster County, the Amish population is about 45,000 adults and children.

Old Windmill is a fourth-generation family farm on 65 acres, raising about a dozen head of cattle, pigs, goats, chickens, horses, and mules. The owner said he decided to expand into agritourism to supplement cash flow.

“Bigger farms is the way to make a living,” the owner told The Epoch Times. “Everything is mass produced. When my grandfather was farming, they had a chicken house. They had some eggs to sell. They had a tobacco barn right here.”

He said Old Windmill Farm left dairy farming as it became more labor intense and costly. His crops include ♣

ALL PHOTOS BY RICHARD MOORE/THE EPOCH TIMES



(Top) An Amish farmer's team of mules pulls a hay baler at Old Windmill Farm in Ronks, Pa., on April 26. (Above) A young Amish man works in a metal workshop in Ronks, Pa., on April 26. Most Amish people still use older technology.

rye, corn, alfalfa, and soybeans, rotating with the seasons. He uses an old hay baler drawn by four mules, a hay rake, and other gasoline-driven engines.

"We don't have modern machines; we have machines manufactured maybe in the 50s. Some are antique machines as well," he said.

A local metal fabricator makes parts to repair the machines when they break down.

"There are diversified farms" using more modern tools, the owner said. "We're sort of die-hard" using older technology.

A typical day at Old Windmill Farm begins at dawn when the lights go on and the roosters start crowing.

"If you're a farmer in the Amish community, you get up around 4:30 or quarter of five," he said.

"Most shops in the area are operating around 6 o'clock. It's a 10-hour day. We're still farmers in mindset. You get up early and make the best of the day."

Early morning is an opportune time to begin the day with prayers and meditation, and everyone is different in that regard.

Lapp and his wife have four young daughters and three sons enrolled in a local public school. As a rule in Amish society, the children don't attend school past the eighth grade. Instead, they go to work helping in the family farm or business.

"We learn to make a living with our hands," the Old Windmill farm owner said. "The Amish are very competitive in general, having good products and good milk to sell and having good products in general. It's a way of making a living without having to go to college.

"I'm also a [stonemason] by trade. I have to work down toward Philadelphia for more high-end work."

He said he dreamed of becoming a stonemason in his youth. He likes to work with natural stone, building retaining and landscaping walls.

"If you work with stone or masonry and with your hands, there's lots of pride in that. Working with the fields and keeping them as free of weeds as possible," he said.

He speaks of pride in terms of the satisfaction of a well-done job. The Amish take pride in everything they do, wheth-

er it be making clothes, building furniture, or baking pies.

"We put energy into it. We put pride into it. The little, precise things make a difference," he said.

Although the high standards of craftsmanship may come with a higher price tag in the store or market, local goods made with Amish hands are worth the expense, he said.

"You teach your children to do their best on the farm or in the shop. To put pride into a thing, it makes all the difference in the world if your children can attain that," he said.

Lapp said the challenge facing the Amish today is whether to diversify commercially by incorporating more technology while responding to a changing economy. More Amish now use computers, email, and cellphones in their daily lives.

He considers the federal case against Miller an indication of the government encroaching on traditional small farming.

"It's in a sense more [government] management. It's keeping tabs on the smaller farms, too

"It could be a lot worse, for sure," said Miller, who was recently slapped with an \$85,000 penalty for contempt in federal court over his alleged noncompliance with USDA food safety laws.

The government initially sought \$300,000 in fines, "so they get paid for harassing us," Miller said.

"I'm concerned. The regulations are a burden. You can't be true farmers."

The 4,000 members who purchase his unpasteurized milk, fresh meat, and poultry pay a one-time \$35 fee.

"We take it back to the natural way of farming. The members love our products because of that mindset," Miller said.

"We're not here to be money collectors. We want the right to farm."

Miller believes that "if God wanted pasteurized milk, He would have put a pasteurizer on the dairy cow. We've completely intervened as humans and made things unhealthy."

Product quality, and safety, begin to suffer when animals are confined in a poor environment with little sunlight and access to clean, natural feed hay, he said.

**"We learn to make a living with our hands."**

*Jesse Lapp, owner, Old Windmill*

"If they're on an unnatural diet—if they're just fed corn and soybeans—that's completely unnatural. But if you take that back to where God has put the animal out in the pasture, roaming around, in the sunshine, and you don't use chemicals or harsh fertilizers on the soil, it actually is an extreme benefit and medicine in the raw milk from the cattle out on pasture," he said.

Miller's troubles began in 2016 when the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) identified listeria in raw milk at Miller's farm.

Listeria is a disease-causing bacteria in harvested, packaged, or processed food, whose flu-like symptoms can last for days or weeks.

The FDA reported that two people became sick with listeriosis after allegedly consuming milk from Miller's farm, and one of them died.

Miller says there was never any clear link between his milk and the cited instances of contamination and illness by the government.

"Our members concluded that preservative-free is the best," Miller told The Epoch Times.

"If you use preservatives on the meat, how can the body break it down? It's so preserved, the body can't break it down, and the body starves to death because the body isn't getting true value in preservatives."

A USDA investigation resulted in the government seizing more than 3,000 pounds of Miller's meat and poultry from his 55-acre property in 2019.

On April 4, 2019, U.S. Attorney William McSwain announced a civil lawsuit to prevent Miller's farm from "continuing to violate federal food safety laws."

Miller's case drew the support of his members and the public, garnering



**(Clockwise from top L)** An Amish farmer checks moisture in a hay bale in Ronks, Pa., on April 26. Miller's Organic Farm in Bird-in-Hand, Pa., is involved in a legal dispute over federal food safety laws. A young man cuts grass for hay in Lancaster County, Pa., on April 27. A young Amish man uses an arc welder in a metal workshop in Ronks, Pa., on April 26.

thousands of dollars through various online fundraisers.

"My grandfather took a stand in the 1950s and '60s against sending his children past the eighth grade," Miller said.

"He went to jail for that. He stood strong in faith. His goal was to keep children on the farm. He could teach them on the farm—keep them away from worldly views. He set a great example. My goal is to do the same.

"It's hard to make a living and deal with the modern ways the government promotes."

Miller said the USDA wants him to devise an intervention plan to bring him into compliance. He disagrees in principle and faith.

"They want us to get a license to comply with all the rules and regulations. We feel it is the wrong direction. They

can change it all and pick on a farm and see something wrong and pull the license. You're out," Miller said.

A spokesman for the agency told The Epoch Times that the "USDA does not comment on ongoing litigation."

Next to his faith, organic farming travels close to biblical teachings, said Miller, who regards the land as a gift and blessing.

As a steward of the land, he considers organic food healthier because it doesn't have chemicals and preservatives in processed food.

"We believe in staying intact with nature. That's very important. You get closer to creation with farming," Miller said.

"I still think the old-fashioned way is the best. Horse farming is ideal. Horses take no gasoline, and they create fertilizer for the soil. A true farmer believes

in feeding the microbes in the soil. If we don't have any microbes, we are done with producing food for our nation."

In Lititz, Pennsylvania, a quiet farming community about 13 miles from Bird-in-Hand, Jesse Stoltzfus said that the reality for many of the Amish now is that they "all can't be farmers."

"So, if the father isn't home as much, it's not as much a community as it was years back. We all have jobs," said Stoltzfus, 32, sporting the traditional bowl-shaped Amish haircut and long beard signifying that he's married.

He and his wife have three young children. Stoltzfus dons the same simple clothing style other male Amish congregation members wear: black pants and jacket and a bright straw hat with a black headband.

Stoltzfus raises 400 chickens on 16

acres. He wants to do more with animals rather than grow produce because of the water supply. He works at a nearby farm selling farm seed, fertilizer, and animal nutrition.

"I'm still connected with agriculture," Stoltzfus said. "I want to work at home. That's my goal. I'm gravitating toward that."

Stoltzfus said that every Amish community member chooses whether or not to join the local church and get baptized, or to raise children like any other family.

Most children join a youth group when they turn 16 to search for a future spouse. However, some young people may choose to experience life in the outside world of the English, but that percentage is low, he said.

"I'm going to say everyone at that certain age—whether you're Amish or not—needs to figure out certain things, whether to join a church or not," Stoltzfus said.

"Technically, they don't leave. They still dress Amish and have the Amish haircut and all that for the most part."

Stoltzfus said the Amish way of life offers stability and a sense of belonging that only exists to a different degree among outsiders.

"I had wonderful parents. The most powerful thing to keep someone in the family is unity and peace. For most, it's unity and togetherness in the family and community. That's hard to find anywhere else," he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic made people more aware of the importance of good nutrition, he said. Suddenly, everyone wanted to know where their food came from.

"So, they will support their local farmers as much as they can. I think that's great," Stoltzfus told The Epoch Times.

On traditional farming, Stoltzfus said the outside pressure to modernize is felt within the Amish community. More small farmers are now moving toward regenerative agriculture and raising their food.

"People are becoming more aware of the harm conventional farming is doing. All Amish farming equipment is horse-drawn, but limiting in some respects," he said.

"A farm will be more sustainable if you share equipment. It will be more resilient. If you don't share equipment, that's where the challenge comes in financially.

"With tourism, if you want to make a living on a smaller scale, you can—better than many places because we can get more pounds per acre; a better yield than a lot of places."

**60%**

**MORE THAN 60 PERCENT** of the Amish live in Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Indiana.

**300,000 PEOPLE**

**AMISH ARE ONE OF THE FASTEST-**growing populations in the United States, with more than 300,000 residing in 32 states.

He said he supports Miller in his legal battle with the federal government.

"I respect him for what he's doing. He will open it up for the community if he sticks to his beliefs. He's opening the gateway for all of us. In my opinion, what he's doing is not illegal," Stoltzfus said.

When COVID-19 swept across the country in 2020, Lancaster County's Amish community wasn't immune to the virus. The owner of Old Windmill Farm said there were deaths associated with the coronavirus.

The religious enclave became one of the first to achieve "herd immunity," according to news outlets.

Most Amish in Lancaster County chose not to get the COVID-19 vaccine, the farm owner said.

In Ronks, a local welding shop owner expressed mixed feelings about the government's handling of the pandemic.

"Honestly, when that pandemic hit, I trust to say the majority of our people sort of hit panic mode," he said.

"All of a sudden, we were faced with a pandemic. I was like, 'This is the real

thing. We need to take care of this and keep our social distancing.'"

The shop owner said the local church suspended Sunday services, which raised questions about how and when to reopen.

"The bishop of our church came around and said we were going to have church—this was after the pandemic hit," he said.

"We skipped church a few times in this district. And then, we decided to have church again, and they left it up to each individual whether to shake hands.

"I went to church that morning and decided I wouldn't shake hands. Some people were shaking [hands], some people weren't. These little children came around and looked up at me and wanted to shake my hand. I held my hand back.

"I regret that to this day."

The Old Windmill Farm owner said the virus helped unite the Amish community and strengthen their faith.

"The Amish are very cautious—as all Christian groups are. The Bible talks about what's to come. We're always cautious about things coming up—cautious about the COVID thing. Cautious about the vaccines. We're always cautious about things against the Bible and our faith," he said.

Today, the question is the degree to which the Amish wish to have contact with the larger society of the English.

The farm owner said many adults would prefer to remain faithful to the past and adapt as they must.

"Most Amish kids are uncomfortable with the outside world because they're not exposed to it," he said.

For Miller, it's a matter of keeping the traditional organic farming that's central to the Amish way of life free of an intrusive federal government.

"The government giving us a hard time united us as a community. It made us stronger—together. The goal of Amish leaders is to keep families on the farm. That keeps the community together. It brings us closer to nature. That's an important thing in our community," Miller said.

"Sometimes, when you go through a trial, it puts you in a better relationship with God. I feel this has put me in a better relationship with God. God does things for a reason." ■

# States Fight ESG Agenda, Despite Costs and Long Odds

*Boycotts, bans, and antitrust actions are proving 'effective,' state treasurers say*

BY KEVIN STOCKLIN

*BlackRock's office building in New York on July 16, 2018. The New York City comptroller suggested that BlackRock could lose the business of New York City's pension funds if it doesn't support ESG goals.*

PHOTO BY LUCAS JACKSON/REUTERS

**A**S CONSERVATIVE STATES PUSH BACK against the progressive agenda of Wall Street banks and asset managers, some analysts are warning that “anti-ESG” states will pay a price for taking on Wall Street and the ESG industry.

North Carolina State Treasurer Dale Folwell has enacted several measures, including calling on Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager, to resign over what Folwell says is the company’s excessive focus on controversial political causes.

“Why am I spending time on this drama when all I hired this person to do was manage and make us money?” Folwell said.

He told The Epoch Times that North Carolina is both a client of BlackRock, having hired the company as an investment manager, and a shareholder, owning \$55 million worth of BlackRock shares.

Folwell has also taken back the state’s proxy votes, its rights to vote on the corporate shares it owns, from BlackRock “so that [Fink] can no longer politicize our North Carolina money,” he said. Some of the state’s investments managed by BlackRock are longer dated and can’t be moved to another firm overnight, but Folwell negotiated lower management fees on the funds that remain with BlackRock.

Like BlackRock, many of the world’s largest banks and asset managers have become advocates for the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) movement, which calls for financial institutions to use their power to compel companies to get in line behind issues such as climate change and social justice.

**ESG Conflict Heats Up**

State efforts for and against the ESG movement have been heating up recently. In 2023 so far, conservative states have proposed 99 anti-ESG bills, compared with 39 in 2022. Seven became law, 20 failed to pass, and 72 are still pending. At the same time, left-leaning states, such as New York, California, and Illinois, are fighting back to support the ESG industry.

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander wrote in a letter to Fink: “Your 2021 letter to CEOs committed to ‘supporting the goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 or sooner’—in line

**Many state officials say ESG is a version of central planning that’s a far cry from the free exchange of goods, capital, and labor.**



*People walk down Wall Street in New York, in this file photo. Wall Street banks and asset managers have become advocates for the ESG movement.*

with BlackRock’s pledge as a signatory to the Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative (NZAMI)—and asked businesses to disclose how they are integrating their own net zero plans into their long-term business strategies.

“Unfortunately, despite these repeated proclamations ... BlackRock now abdicates responsibility for driving net zero alignment in its own portfolio by saying that it does not ask companies to set specific emissions targets.”

He said BlackRock could lose the business of New York City’s pension funds if it falters in its support of ESG goals and that he would be “re-assessing” the city’s business relationships with all of its asset managers, including BlackRock, “through the lens” of its “climate responsibilities.”

At the same time, some say that red states should think twice about fighting the ESG industry.

A report last month by Institutional Investor states that “state pension funds or other powerful players in at least five Republican-controlled states say that instead of creating excellence, these new culture-war policies are interfering

with the market and could cost pensioners and taxpayers billions of dollars.”

A Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania study estimates that after Texas passed laws boycotting banks that it deemed to be discriminating against fossil fuels, “cities will pay an additional \$303 million to \$532 million in interest on \$32 billion in bonds” during the first eight months after the law went into effect. The study inferred that eliminating the largest U.S. banks from underwriting Texas’s municipal debt caused the cost of issuance to rise.

A report by S&P Global (formerly Standard & Poor’s), whose subsidiary S&P Global Ratings, a rating agency, provides ESG ratings, cites a study by As You Sow and Ceres, investor advocacy groups that support the ESG movement, that predicts that six other states that are considering enacting laws such as those in Texas could face up to \$708 million in higher borrowing costs.

“On Feb. 1, the North Dakota House of Representatives—where Republicans hold a superma-



*Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, the world’s largest asset manager.*

majority—voted down legislation that directed the state treasurer to boycott investment firms over their ESG policies,” the report reads. “One week later, the board of trustees overseeing Kentucky’s \$7.9 billion County Employees Retirement System bucked a recent decree by State Treasurer Allison Ball to divest from BlackRock Inc. and other investment firms over their fossil fuels policies.”

But in some states, this doesn’t reflect their experience.

**States Find Ways to Cope**

Florida, which shifted \$2 billion away from BlackRock in December 2022, has felt “no ill effects,” Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis told The Epoch Times.

“When the team started looking at the performance of our short-term fund managers, BlackRock has really performed at the middle of the pack,” Patronis said.

According to Folwell, North Carolina has reduced its state debt to the point that it’s “not issuing debt.”

“We’re actually investing money in things that earn higher rates of interest,” he said.

This has reduced his state’s dependence on Wall Street underwriters for its bonds, but not all states are in this position.

“It’s much easier to replace an investment manager, and that happens all the time in the regular course of business,” Utah State Treasurer Marlo Oaks told The Epoch Times.

“On the banking side, it’s more challenging; that’s where you’ve seen the consolidation of so much power in the hands of such a small group of banks.

“We’re now seeing why that’s a problem, because it’s reducing the competition and the ability to serve the market in a capitalistic way.”

As a result, as Utah works to shift business away from left-wing financial institutions, it has built flexibility into its laws to allow banking relationships to continue if terminating them would harm the state.

**ESG Agenda Hurts the Poor Most, Critics Say**

Many state officials say the consequences of ESG initiatives on their communities include shortages, inflation, and a decline in living standards, especially for the poor.

“I just had a deep conversation with [ESG rating agencies] Moody’s, Fitch, and Standard & Poors about this,” Folwell said. “They come into these small communities who are having a difficult time making their pension or their health care payments and having a difficult time keeping their water and sewer systems solvent, and they say: ‘How many electric vehicles do you have?’” ❖

**99 BILLS**  
 IN 2023 SO FAR, conservative states have proposed 99 anti-ESG bills, compared with 39 in 2022.

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**\$708 MILLION**  
 STATES THAT are considering enacting laws that oppose ESG efforts could face up to \$708 million in higher borrowing costs.

FROM: SPENGLER/ATT/GETTY IMAGES; MICHAEL M. SANTAGRO/GETTY IMAGES



Patronis said, “When you have this activism, investors trying to force higher costs for energy conversion by forcing wind or forcing solar into the mix, it’s on the backs of somebody who can least afford it.”

On the charge that fighting the ESG industry is “interfering with the market,” the Democratic Party has recently taken an uncharacteristically pro-corporate stand against political influence.

*Florida Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis says that the consequences of ESG are “on the backs of somebody who can least afford it.”*

**“When you have this activism, investors trying to force higher costs for energy conversion by forcing wind or forcing solar into the mix, it’s on the backs of somebody who can least afford it.”**

**Jimmy Patronis**, chief financial officer, Florida

In a Wall Street Journal op-ed titled “Republicans Ought to Be All for ESG,” Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) claimed that “America’s most successful asset managers and financial institutions have used ESG factors to minimize risk and maximize their clients’ returns.”

“Republicans talk about their love of the free market, small government and letting the private

sector do its work,” Schumer wrote. “But their obsession with eliminating ESG would do the opposite, forcing their own views down the throats of every company and investor.”

In a February interview, however, Vanguard CEO Tim Buckley said, “Our research indicates that ESG investing does not have any advantage over broad-based investing.”

Vanguard is the world’s second-largest asset manager.

Many state officials say ESG isn’t “the market” but a version of central planning that’s a far cry from the free exchange of goods, capital, and labor.

Rather than interfering with markets, state officials “are interfering in the collusion that’s happening in the marketplace,” Oaks said.

“You’re seeing collusion in the form of these financial alliances like the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero and all of the verticals underneath it. When you say all actors have to adopt this, that’s not the market,” he said.

According to Oaks, many people confuse ESG investing with what was formerly called socially responsible investing, or investing in companies that support particular values. ESG investing, by contrast, is a buy-and-hold strategy in which large institutional investors purchase shares in companies and then control how they’re run. He cited the case of Exxon Mobile, in which activist asset

manager Engine No. 1 was able, with the support of institutions such as BlackRock and California pension funds, to put climate activists on Exxon’s board with the goal of reducing oil production.

“That was a group of institutional investors pushing their agenda onto a company, which impacts the entire marketplace and has serious ramifications for all of us,” Oaks said. “You’re substituting our pluralistic marketplace for centralized control.”

**Too Big to Resist?**

Some have argued that asset managers such as BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street are so large, each with trillions of dollars of assets under management, that states with only tens or hundreds of billions of dollars to invest will have little influence over them and will suffer for attempting to defy them. But state officials say they’re scoring points regardless.

“I’ve met half a dozen treasurers that in the last couple of months talk about personal meetings with Larry Fink,” Patronis said. “I’m sure [BlackRock] are doing their own damage control based on what Florida did.

“We made them feel a little self-conscious. I feel like that’s a win.”

In December 2022, Vanguard pulled out of the Net Zero Asset Managers initiative, a coalition of 301 asset managers committed to using their share ownership to compel companies to enact ESG-friendly policies.

“We don’t believe that we should dictate company strategy,” Buckley said following the announcement.

Oaks said: “I’m going to be very interested to see how Vanguard votes their shares. In this proxy season, they went from 21 percent support for ESG down to 8 percent.”

In March, several insurance companies pulled out of the U.N.-backed Net-Zero Insurance Alliance (NZIA), including Munich Re, Zurich Insurance Group, and Hannover Re. The founding members of NZIA, Allianz and Swiss Re, stated that they’re “monitoring developments” regarding whether they’ll stay in the alliance.

“In our view, the opportunities to pursue decarbonisation goals in a collective approach among insurers worldwide without exposing ourselves to material antitrust risks are so limited that it is more effective to pursue our climate ambition to reduce global warming individually,” Munich Re CEO Joachim Wenning said.

**Antitrust Actions May Be Looming**

The issue that Wenning raised regarding the risk of antitrust actions may also be coming to the fore this year. In December 2022, Republican

House Representatives launched an antitrust investigation of progressive activist organizations, including Climate Action 100+, which Republicans allege “seems to work like a cartel.”

“Woke corporations are collectively adopting and imposing progressive policy goals that American consumers do not want or do not need,” reads a letter sent to executives of the Steering Committee for Climate Action 100+. “When companies agree to work together to punish disfavored views or industries, or to otherwise advance environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals, this coordinated behavior may violate the antitrust laws and harm American consumers.”

Derek Kreifels, CEO of the State Financial Officers Foundation (SFOF), told The Epoch Times: “The thing that really makes me laugh out loud is when I hear that the majority of people want ESG. We’ve got more than half the country on our side.”

The SFOF, an organization of state treasurers that generally opposes the ESG movement, includes 35 state officials from 28 states, with combined assets of nearly \$3 trillion.

Even as the divide between conservatives and progressives grows wider, it also presents an opportunity for “companies that want to come in and just do their duty to shareholders, banks that want to be banks, fund managers that—shocker!—want to just bring the best return for investment,” according to Kreifels.

“The companies that are doing that, they’re the ones that all the people want to talk to right now,” he said. “There is an exodus happening, maybe not en masse yet, but there is an impact.”

Oaks said: “ESG is really an effort to push a political agenda through the capital markets, and those whose agenda is being exposed are saying, ‘Oh, you’re harming yourselves by exposing us.’ To me, that says we’re being effective.” ■

**28 STATES**  
**THE SFOF, AN** organization of state treasurers that generally opposes ESG, includes 35 state officials from 28 states, with combined assets of nearly \$3 trillion.

*“ESG is really an effort to push a political agenda through the capital markets,” Utah State Treasurer Marlo Oaks says.*





A worker observes machinery in a brine pool at a lithium mine in the Atacama Desert of Chile, on Sept. 12, 2022. Chile is the No. 1 producer of lithium from brine extraction.

## MINING

## China's Bid to Control Lithium in Latin America

*Not a smooth ride for China as it faces new challenges in the 'white gold' rush*

By Autumn Spredemann

IT'S BEEN CALLED "WHITE GOLD" in the mining industry. Latin America's lithium deposits have become a new El Dorado, a commodity conquest that China is angling to control.

China is among the top three lithium producers in the world, along with Australia and Chile. The Asian nation also commands an estimated 80 percent of global electric-battery production, which is driving the current surge in demand for lithium.

China has injected billions into the economies of lithium-rich nations such as Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia over the

past decade in a bid for preferential access to the mineral.

However, with Chile and Mexico being the latest to announce the nationalization of their lithium industries, China faces new challenges to its goal of controlling the "white gold" rush.

Latin American countries have a long history of botched attempts at creating long-term profit from resource nationalization. It's a cyclical phenomenon driven by commodity booms and inflated prices.

When the state takes control of industries, it creates more significant short-term revenue but also comes with serious long-term setbacks.

Problems such as lack of innovation,

corruption, inefficiency, political infighting, and reduced investor interest have plagued nationalization efforts throughout the region since Hugo Chavez's regime in Venezuela.

Today, the commodity boom has come full circle during a new wave of leftist leaders in the region. Subsequently, some analysts say China's grab for Latin America's lithium is in for a rocky road ahead.

"Lithium is the hot new thing leftist governments want to nationalize," Evan Ellis, a Latin America research professor for the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, told The Epoch Times.

He said China's projects will likely bear the brunt of political strife, espe-

cially with nationalistic governments. The aptly named "lithium triangle" nations of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile have been battling disruptive, opposition-led protests for years.

This type of unrest often affects the mining sector. Poverty-stricken populations on the outskirts of billion-dollar foreign projects often become resentful because of a lack of benefits for local communities.

But, according to Ellis, China's checkbook could still help move stuck projects forward.

In the lithium triangle, he said, "China has a role in all three 'cookie jars.'" If enough Chinese money is involved, he thinks it could help "bend the rules."

### Eyes on Chile

Within the realm of global lithium producers, Chile is second only to Australia. It generates an estimated 26 percent of the world's total supply from the Atacama Desert, which holds the largest proven reserves at 9.3 million tons.

However, Chile is the No. 1 producer of lithium from brine extraction.

On April 20, Chilean President Gabriel Boric announced that his administration would begin transferring the nation's vast lithium operations from private sector giants such as SQM and the U.S.-based Albemarle to a state-owned company.

"This is the best chance we have at transitioning to a sustainable and developed economy. We can't afford to waste it," Boric said during a televised news conference.

Boric's announcement arrives on the heels of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's decree that handed over control of the nation's lithium to a state-owned company in February this year.

"What we are doing now ... is to nationalize lithium so that it cannot be exploited by foreigners from Russia, China, or the United States," Obrador said during a press event in Sonora.

Boric's similar proclamation caused waves in the international community. Chile has always been a solid investor bet because of its relative political stability and open cooperation with foreign businesses. The sudden shift in operations has drawn skepticism



**"Lithium is the hot new thing leftist governments want to nationalize."**

Evan Ellis, professor,  
U.S. Army War College Strategic  
Studies Institute

from analysts and officials, who question whether the country will remain a serious player in the lithium market.

Moreover, there are protests on the horizon for Chile's mining sector because of the water-intensive nature of brine extraction.

"You might think we're mining lithium for the 'green energy' transition. But the reality is, the concern doesn't just arise from local community concerns. There are U.S. environmental groups that are very active in Chile, training activists how to oppose lithium mining," professor John D. Graham said during a Wilson Center event on April 25.

### Cautionary Tale

In Bolivia, nationalism of the mining sector, including lithium, has been a thorn in China's side.

However, in January, President Luis Arce signed a \$1 billion deal with Chinese firms Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Guangdong Brunp Recycling Technology Co., and CMOC Group Ltd. for access to Bolivia's highly sought-after lithium reserves in the Uyuni salt flats. China's businesses will work alongside the state-owned lithium company YLB in hopes of producing 25,000 tons a year starting in 2025.

But Ellis points to the repeatedly fumbled iron ore project in the Bolivian jungle, El Mutún, as an example of how money can't buy everything in Latin America.

The Bolivian government awarded the Chinese company Sinosteel a project to extract iron ore in the mineral-rich El Mutún mountain in 2016.

Production was scheduled to start in 2019. To date, the gates of the El Mutún facility remain closed.

Shifting priorities amid political regime changes during the pandemic and a never-ending series of kickbacks to departmental officials have been blamed for the lengthy stall in the \$450 million contract.

It's a pattern seen often in the region. Politics, civil unrest, and corruption can sink even the biggest projects.

Some locals predict that a similar fate will befall China's lithium deal with YLB.

"It always happens like this. There's a lot of talk about a project, like at El Mutún, then nothing," Christian Vargas told The Epoch Times.

Vargas is a former professor of economics and lives in Bolivia's largest city, Santa Cruz. He said his country's leftist government has struggled to bring Bolivia's lithium to the market for years.

"Chile produces more than us, even though our reserves are bigger," he said. "It'll happen the same way [with lithium] in Uyuni. Every civil group will want their 'cut,' or they'll stop the project."

But a neighboring country within the lithium triangle has taken the lesson of failed nationalism to heart: Argentina.

"Argentina's lithium sector has thrived through a decentralized, pro-market strategy," said Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America program at The Wilson Center.

He also pointed to "excessive state control" as the primary cause of Bolivia's inability to bring its vast lithium resources to market.

Because of Argentina's pro-market approach, analysts predict that it could become one of the world's foremost lithium producers over the next 10 years. However, like in many nations in the region, the upcoming presidential election and frequent protests could threaten the emerging lithium club member.

Ellis said Argentina is a more promising business model for lithium in terms of extraction and industrialization on a larger scale, despite having the smallest reserves.

"It's where China has the most access to go in and do what they want to get the lithium out." ■



*Iowa mother Sarah Hurm felt pressured to have an abortion when she was pregnant with her fourth baby. However, she immediately regretted her decision and went through the reversal process, which transformed her perspective on abortion.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH HURM

DRUG APPROVAL

## *Mother Reversed Abortion Pill and* **SAVED HER BABY'S LIFE**

*As abortion pill approval is litigated in the courts, women are sharing their concerns*

BY SAMANTHA FLOM

**AS THE LEGAL BATTLE OVER THE U.S.** Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) controversial approval of the abortion drug mifepristone continues, women whose lives have been affected by its use are stepping forward to share their experiences.

Sarah Hurm is an Iowa mother of four who became pregnant in 2018 with her fourth child by a third father.

She feared the judgment she would face for getting pregnant again and faced pressure from the baby's father to handle the situation "responsibly" with an abortion. Hurm set aside her reservations as a Catholic and decided to have a chemical abortion.

At her appointment, Hurm was told that her baby had a strong heartbeat—a fact that unexpectedly brought her to tears.

At that time, the Iowa Legislature was considering a ban on abortions after a fetal heartbeat could be detected. And while the ultrasound technician told Hurm she should consider herself "lucky" that the law hadn't taken effect yet, she found herself wishing that it had.

"I wanted a way out, but I just didn't know what else to do, so I continued with the appointment and ended up taking the mifepristone," she told *The Epoch Times*.

### **A Change of Heart**

The process of a chemical, or medication, abortion involves two drugs: mifepristone and misoprostol. The mifepristone, taken first, blocks the pregnancy hormone progesterone, causing the uterine lining to break down and the life of the unborn child to end. The ♦





A woman looks up information about mifepristone on a computer in Arlington, Va., on May 8, 2020. The FDA has acknowledged serious adverse effects from the drug, which is known to have caused more than two dozen deaths and hundreds of hospitalizations.

misoprostol is taken afterward to expel the deceased child and other tissue from the uterus.

Though some women start the process at home, Hurm took the first pill in front of the abortion provider and was then given the next set of pills to be taken in the following days.

“As soon as I took that first pill, I felt the weight of my decision,” she said. “I was hit with just intense emotions—despair, regret, grief, panic. And so, I went home, and I just broke down.”

Later, while picking her children up from day care, she experienced yet another wave of regret.

“Picking them up, seeing their little faces, I just kept thinking ... ‘You guys are loved, you’re happy, you’re getting to live your life. Why doesn’t this baby deserve that?’”

At that moment, Hurm knew she had made a mistake. After coming across

an ad for the Abortion Pill Reversal hotline, she dialed the number and was referred to a local provider, who said her baby’s heartbeat was detectable, but “not great.”

**53%**  
MIFEPRISTONE is used for 53 percent of abortions performed in the United States, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

The doctor stressed that the reversal process—which involves taking high doses of progesterone—might not be successful, but Hurm was determined to try.

“I remember saying, ‘I don’t need

promises, I just need hope. I just need to know I have done everything I can to try and reverse this decision.”

After weeks of treatment, Hurm received the encouraging news that she would likely carry her baby to term. And in January 2019, she delivered a “perfectly healthy, happy, yet colicky” baby boy.

And while both she and her son were able to avoid the life-threatening complications others have endured from mifepristone, she said the experience has transformed her perspective on abortion in general.

“I have become unapologetically pro-life, but from a very compassionate standpoint,” she said.

**The Big Picture**

While other women who have had chemical abortions may feel like they made the right choice for themselves,

Laura Simpson, a Kentucky mom who adopted both of her sons, stressed that such decisions affect not just pregnant women, but also those who can’t become pregnant.

“You may have an unplanned pregnancy and ... maybe God has that baby intended for somebody else,” she said. “I just think that people don’t see the big picture in all of that.”

As a Christian couple who struggled to conceive a child of their own, Simpson and her husband saw adoption not as a last resort, but as the path God had always intended for them to take.

“We did feel that everything failed because we were supposed to adopt,” she said, noting that about two years after they adopted their eldest son, they felt called to adopt again.

But by that point, it was 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic made the already difficult process of adoption that much harder.

After experiencing months of let-downs, Simpson’s husband wanted to give up, but she said she believed their child was still out there. In desperation, she prayed for guidance and that, if they were meant to adopt again, God would send her husband a sign.

The next day, the Simpsons received a call from their adoption agency—a baby boy had been born at their local hospital, and his mother had specifically chosen them to be his parents.

The baby’s birth mother, they learned, had taken the abortion pill months earlier but didn’t realize until she was 31 weeks pregnant that it had failed.

But the child’s survival was not the only miracle at work, Simpson noted.

“The biggest miracle in all of this is that when the birth mother was looking through the parent profile books, she got to ours and was like, ‘These people look familiar.’ ... She knew who we were because my husband had coached her in basketball 10 years before. So he was the reason that she chose us,” Simpson said.

And that piece of information, Simpson said, was all the proof she—and her husband—needed to know that her prayer had been answered.

“And, miraculously, [the baby] made it, and he’s now with us, and he’s thriving, and he does not seem to have any side effects from the drugs,” she said.

**Legal Challenge**

Mifeprex, the brand-name version of mifepristone, was first approved by the FDA in 2000, but a lawsuit filed in November asserts that the agency, under political pressure, rushed that process.

Filed by the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine and four doctors, the lawsuit has raised a stir among abortion proponents who fear that the pill’s approval will be revoked, limiting access to what has become the most common method of abortion (accounting for 53 percent of abortions) in the United States, according to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute.



**“I have become unapologetically pro-life, but from a very compassionate standpoint.”**

Sarah Hurm, mother of four

Although the FDA has assured that mifepristone is safe and that its approval was based on a “thorough and comprehensive review,” the agency also acknowledges that serious adverse effects—including more than two dozen deaths and hundreds of hospitalizations—have been associated with its use.

On April 7, a federal judge granted a nationwide injunction temporarily blocking FDA approval for the drug as the litigation process plays out. However, a week later, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals partially overturned that decision, and then on April 21, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in to stay the injunction, allowing the pill to remain widely available.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America President Alexis McGill Johnson said her organization was “relieved” by the court’s decision but

would not become complacent.

“We can take a breath, but we are not losing our vigilance,” she said in a statement. “Anti-abortion politicians and their allies will not stop until abortion is banned nationwide. Medication abortion is very much still under threat—as is abortion and access to other sexual and reproductive health care.

“While mifepristone’s approval remains intact and it stays on the market for now, patients and health care providers shouldn’t be at the mercy of the court system. Planned Parenthood will continue to fight so that everyone can make their own decisions about their bodies, lives, and futures.”

But Simpson said she felt that women were not being adequately informed to make such decisions.

“When they choose to take these abortion drugs, I just think so much more needs to be included—you know, therapy, education. I just feel like people aren’t educated enough to make that decision, and it’s really sad,” she said.

Likewise, Hurm said she feels that the drug’s serious adverse effects, which can include hemorrhaging and sepsis, show that it isn’t safe.

“I personally believe that the approval was rushed,” she said, “especially because there’s so many women who went through with a chemical abortion who come out saying, ‘I had no idea about this,’ or ‘I hemorrhaged,’ or ‘I have complications from it.’”

“There’s not enough truth surrounding this drug. And I feel like women deserve so much better than hemorrhaging alone in their bathroom while flushing their deceased child down the toilet.”

And to reveal the truth, she said, compassion will be needed from those on both sides of the argument going forward.

“We really need to search out the full truth—even if that means sitting down with someone you don’t agree with and just hearing their side. We can’t get to truth by sitting and yelling at each other from both sides, but not listening,” she said.

“So I just think we need to lead with love but also understand that women and children deserve better than the war that’s going on right now.” ■

FROM L. OLIVER/DOUTLE/RYA/FP VIA GETTY IMAGES  
COURTESY OF SARAH HURM



*Tucker Carlson speaks during 2022 Fox Nation Patriot Awards in Hollywood, Fla., on Nov. 17, 2022.*

PHOTO BY JASON KOERNER/  
GETTY IMAGES

**MEDIA**

# ***MEDIA BREAK FROM AMERICA***

*Tucker Carlson's firing underscores legacy media divorce from Americans, media insiders say*

**By Petr Svab** *News Analysis*

**U**.S. CORPORATE MEDIA ARE becoming increasingly disconnected from the concerns and aspirations of Americans. According to several media insiders who've explored the issue in depth, these organizations have become subservient to the elitist political and corporate class, espousing values increasingly alien to the common man.

The recent firing of Tucker Carlson, formerly Fox News' most popular host, is somewhat emblematic of the broader issue. Whatever led the network to fire him, it must have outweighed the preferences

of its audience and even its financial interests, noted Sharyl Attkisson, an independent journalist formerly with CBS News.

Attkisson speculated that whatever the stated reason was, Carlson was taken "off the stage so that he can't be effective in 2024" in influencing the presidential election result, adding that it's not the first time she's noticed this phenomenon.

"I think there's been a trend of the news media making decisions contrary to its own financial interests, and that tells you there's something else, or somebody else, calling the shots," she said. "If not, then it would simply do the things that

were journalistically appropriate and would make money or service viewers.

"When they're making decisions contrary to all of that, they're serving interests to further a narrative on behalf of corporate or political interests."

She said the digitization of media has allowed political and commercial power brokers to manipulate, infiltrate, and control the media landscape.

"It's happened over the past maybe 20 years or so," she said, adding that "they've figured out how to totally coopt the media."

That goes beyond news outlets to include tech and social media companies that serve as digital news distributors.

"All you have to do is get your people hired there and start shaping those policies. And you've used very few resources and little money to be able to control this vast environment where everybody goes for their information," she said.

It hasn't been mere bias, she said. There's been a relatively quick shift from news executives welcoming "off-narrative" stories to rejecting them.

"If you found facts that were contrary to what

interests and then work their way up because the media outlets have accepted their role as serving these narratives," she said.

Yet 10 to 15 years ago, when she tried to convince her bosses and colleagues to reverse this trend and create barriers against such influences, she was met with little acceptance.

A major reason for the lack of resistance to such influences appears to be the viewpoint alignment between the media and the political elites.

News reporting used to be a low-paid working-class profession. With the professionalization of media in the 20th century, journalists made better for themselves, but they seldom made it beyond the middle class.

The digital era decimated local press and sparked major consolidation. As a side effect, today's journalists at major legacy outlets can easily work their way up to six-figure salaries, noted Batya Ungar-Sargon, deputy opinion editor at Newsweek.

"Journalists now do make good money, and that's because there's so many fewer of them," Ungar-Sargon said.

*The New York Times building on April 15, 2020. The newspaper caters to an "affluent, elite, very woke, left, progressive group," a media insider says.*



FROM: CHUNG IHO/THE EPOCH TIMES, YORK DU, THE EPOCH TIMES



**"News media making decisions contrary to its own financial interests ... tells you there's something else, or somebody else, calling the shots."**

*Sharyl Attkisson, journalist*

they wanted to expose, there were certain bosses that were stopping these stories. And that became really prevalent in the 2012 time period," she said.

Individual reporters would quickly get the message.

"I have friends at The New York Times and Pro Publica and other places," she said. "They understand what stories will not make it, will not get published in any prominent place. So they go in a different direction."

Serving the narrative dictated from the top would ultimately supplant merit in determining career advancement.

"It's not an accident that these people serve the

Journalists now often hail from the same schools and colleges, live in the same neighborhoods, and frequent the same cocktail parties as the political elites.

"The journalist class has become part of the elite, and so they see the world through an elite lens," she said.

For a time, news media could get away with some degree of elitism—even with a mostly middle-class audience—as the middle class would naturally aspire to the elite culture. That maxim, however, appears to have lost much of its power with the ascension of progressivism as the default elite ideology, together with various post-modern, ♦



People walk past an advertisement featuring Fox News hosts in New York on Feb. 4, 2022.

FROM L: SPENDER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES; BAO QIU/THE EPOCH TIMES

Marxist, and even Maoist influences.

The ideology is instilling “hatred for basic middle-class values like siding with the victims of crime over criminals, or thinking that there are only two genders, or thinking that Dr. [Martin Luther] King was right and we should strive to live in a color-blind society,” Ungar-Sargon said.

It’s nothing new that the elite distances itself from middle-class values, she noted, adding that that could even be the definition of the elite.

Yet paradoxically, the values the elite have decided to shun “for the first time in American history are actually quite good and quite accepting of everybody and truly [promote the belief] that we all should live in dignity because we’re all created in the image of God,” she said.

It’s the ideas pervasive among the elites that are raising eyebrows, according to Ungar-Sargon.

“What’s trending now among the elites, the gender stuff, that’s just a very, very, very heavy lift for normal people,” she said.

That, in turn, has constrained artistic expression, in her view.

“All of the culture and art that’s being produced for the upper-middle class is just terrible. It’s just bad art, it’s bad writing. Because it’s all terrified of being judged by this amoral power-hungry upper-middle class that’s lost its way and lost its values,” she said.

The digitization of media has to some degree enabled legacy media outlets such as The New York Times to survive despite increasingly alienating most of the population, she said.

“In digital media, the premium is not on the breadth—how many people, how wide your readership is—it’s on the level of engagement of your core readers: how much they’re clicking, how many angry comments they’re posting, how long they’re staying on the page. And the most engaged readers are always the most extreme,” she said. “So The New York Times started catering to this affluent, elite, very woke, left, progressive group.



**“The journalist class has become part of the elite and so they see the world through an elite lens.”**

*Batya Ungar-Sargon, deputy opinion editor, Newsweek*

“The aesthetics of the upper-middle class now are transgender aesthetics, that’s kind of what’s being elevated by brands. ... To normal people who have not been to college where they’ve been taught that there’s an infinite number of genders ... there’s going to be a fundamental break there.”

The progressive narrative on race, which emphasizes race in every conversation and context, sounds distinctly racist to ordinary Americans, and “that is the thing that they are the most horrified to be,” she said.

Moreover, the elite culture has turned intolerant, she said.

“If you sort of poke the bear and say things that the elites are not willing to hear, the response is so brutal,” Ungar-Sargon said. “They really try to run you out of town and run you off the airwaves and make it impossible for you to ever have your opinion again.”

It wasn’t always like that, she said.

“It used to be that what the elites wanted was to read a newspaper that their squash partner who was Republican was also reading,” she said.

“It would be embarrassing to an elite 40 years ago or 30 years ago to read a newspaper that was so biased in favor of their point of view.”

Over the past decade, however, the elites have become increasingly insulated and politically homogenous, according to Ungar-Sargon.

“That’s what The New York Times has become, so 91 percent of its readership now is Democrat—because it’s insulting to the intelligence of Republicans to read it,” she said.

Most of the legacy media suffer the same problem to different degrees, she noted.

“When only 6 percent of Americans are getting their voices heard in 96 percent of media outlets ... that’s really bad,” she said. ■

**O**N APRIL 26, A LAWYER for former President Donald Trump, Timothy Paratore, along with three additional lawyers, sent a 10-page letter to the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio). The letter seeks Turner's intervention in special counsel Jack Smith's criminal investigation regarding Trump's alleged mishandling of classified documents.

The letter details, for the first time, Trump's side of how a supposedly unremarkable document packing and storing issue culminated in the Aug. 8, 2022, raid on Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, as well as in the possible indictment of a former president for mishandling classified documents.

What remains unclear, however, is the strategy being pursued by Trump's legal team in sending the letter. Shutting down the special counsel investigation isn't within Congress's power, most notably because of the separation of powers. The second demand from Trump's lawyers, that Congress change the laws regarding how classified documents are handled by the executive branch, is equally puzzling. Congress is split, so even if they wanted to, Republicans can't change laws.

However, the bigger problem related to this second demand is that it appears to be an indirect admission that Trump's Mar-a-Lago documents were mishandled.

This would represent a marked shift from the Trump team's previous tack, which was to claim that Trump had unfettered declassification powers and that, therefore, it was logically and legally impossible for him to have unlawfully retained classified documents.

The objective of the apparent shift in strategy may be to draw President Joe Biden into the matter. Biden has his own classified documents scandal, having retained, in various locations, a trove of classified documents from his time as a senator and as vice president, including in his Delaware garage, which was also being used by his son Hunter Biden.

By blaming Trump's and Biden's problems on imprecise rules and procedures in how former presidents

CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

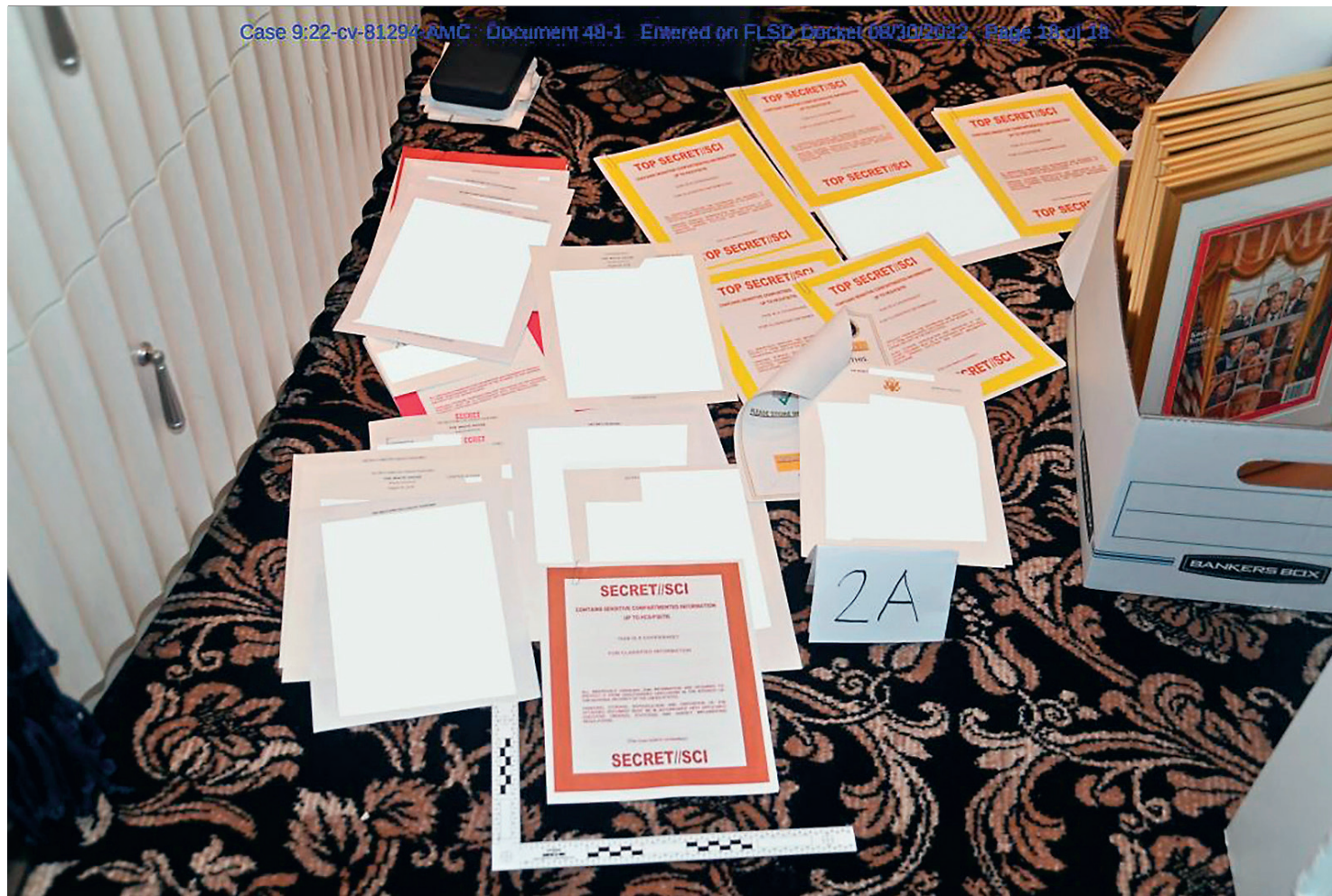
# The Potential Implications of Trump's Legal Team's Letter to Congress

*Lawyers' strategy behind letter remains unclear*

*News Analysis* By Hans Mahncke

*Former President Donald Trump arrives at an event at the Mar-a-Lago Club in West Palm Beach, Fla., on April 4.*

PHOTO BY JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



(Left) Documents seized during the Aug. 8, 2022, raid by the FBI at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., in a photo released on Aug. 30, 2022. (Above) Attorney Timothy Parlatore leaves the U.S. District Court in Washington on Dec. 22, 2022.

and vice presidents handle documents, both Trump and Biden could be painted as victims, rather than as guilty parties.

However, such a strategy comes at a heavy price. First, as mentioned, it involves a concession that Trump's documents were, in fact, mishandled. Trump's lawyers lay the blame for that at the hands of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), which they claim didn't assist Trump in packing up documents at the White House. This is alleged to have been a departure from previous practice.

Trump's lawyers also blame the haste of leaving the White House for why the documents ended up in Mar-a-Lago. They further blame this on the fact that previous presidents were two-term presidents and had more time to pack up, but, in reality, they have opened the door to claims that Trump himself created the haste by refusing to concede the presidential election. This also reignites issues such as the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol breach, which don't help Trump's cause.

Second, Trump's team makes a related admission that, had NARA offered its assistance, Trump "would have accepted the offer and there would have been no reason to transfer the documents to Mar-a-Lago."

Again, this goes against the previous narrative that Trump had declassified all documents and was therefore entitled to retain them.

Third, Trump's lawyers admit that when Trump received the first NARA request to return all documents with classification markings in January 2022—four months before the grand jury issued a subpoena for the documents—"President Trump asked his staff to retrieve 15 boxes that had been moved to Mar-a-Lago so he could see what was in them before they were sent to NARA in Washington, DC." But the lawyers concede that Trump didn't review the boxes "due to other demands on his time" and that Trump "subsequently directed his staff to ship the boxes to NARA without any review by him or his staff."

Apparently, this concession was

made to explain why boxes that contained documents marked classified and assorted personal items and presidential records ended up in the hands of NARA.

However, acknowledging that Trump intended to go through the boxes but ended up not doing so creates new problems. Most conspicuously, it paints Trump's Mar-a-Lago operation as sloppy. But the bigger problem for Trump is that by conceding that he intended to participate in the January 2022 search for documents, Trump's lawyers have opened the door to claims that Trump might have participated in the May 2022 review of documents after the grand jury subpoena for those documents was issued.

This is a crucial admission for potential criminal charges against Trump because Trump's main legal problem is that one of his lawyers signed a certification claiming that all documents marked classified had been returned pursuant to the grand jury subpoena. This turned out to be incorrect after the FBI's raid uncovered additional docu-

ments marked classified.

In their letter, Trump's lawyers argue that the grand jury certification pertained only to documents that were found and not to all documents that may have been kept at Mar-a-Lago. However, the certification doesn't make this distinction. It states that "any and all responsive documents accompany this certification."

Special counsel Jack Smith might use the admission that Trump intended to personally get involved in the January 2022 documents search as evidence that Trump was involved in the subsequent search and perhaps in the false certification. Trump could still claim that his lawyers did all the searching and that it had nothing to do with him, but this latest admission will allow Smith to question that narrative.

The strongest argument put forward by Trump's lawyers is that the manner in which Trump and Biden have been treated in their respective cases is very different. Trump's home was raided, but Biden was allowed to conduct his own searches, even after several batches of classified documents had been found in various places. Trump's lawyers also make the point that Biden kept his classified documents for many years, going back to his days in the Senate, whereas Trump had his documents only for about one year. Biden's documents were moved and stored at multiple locations, but Trump's were always in the same place.

While these are strong arguments, it

remains unclear what the purpose of involving Congress is, given that the case is with a special counsel in the executive branch.

It also remains unclear why Trump's lawyers made concessions, seemingly without gaining anything in return. While the letter hasn't been widely covered in the media, there is no doubt that special counsel Smith has taken note and that he will use the various admissions in the letter against Trump.

### Trump Team Tricked by DOJ

On a broader level, perhaps the most notable thing about the letter is the confirmation that Biden's Department of Justice (DOJ) tricked Trump and his team into thinking that they were working together to amicably resolve the issues surrounding the documents while, in reality, the DOJ was trying to entrap Trump.

The first time they were tricked was in the run-up to the grand jury subpoena, when Trump's lawyers claim to have been cooperating, only to have the subpoena sprung on them. Trump's lawyers lament that "by unleashing a grand jury subpoena, DOJ intended to put President Trump on the defensive, not to invite his cooperation."

Inexplicably, despite having been tricked once, only to be slapped with the May 11, 2022, grand jury subpoena, Trump's team was again tricked into cooperating when the DOJ's Chief of the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section of the National Security

Division, Jay Bratt, went to Mar-a-Lago on June 3, 2022. According to Trump's lawyers, Trump personally met Bratt, and Trump's team was led to believe that the DOJ would "ask to return to Mar-a-Lago and examine all the boxes." Apparently, Bratt reinforced this belief when he asked that an additional lock be installed in the area where the boxes were being kept.

According to the letter from Trump's lawyers, "President Trump and Mr. Corcoran [a lawyer for Trump] understood this to be the beginning, not the end, of working cooperatively with Mr. Bratt and DOJ to resolve any outstanding concerns about the boxes. President Trump did not imagine that, rather than accept his offer, Mr. Bratt would abruptly discontinue the dialogue and seek a search warrant, apparently eager to criminalize this document dispute with NARA."

While Trump has many genuine grievances regarding his treatment at the hands of Bratt and the DOJ, these issues should have been addressed as soon as they arose. For instance, the NARA request for documents could have been contested or at least debated. Instead, Trump's team cooperated and sent NARA many boxes of unexamined and unvetted materials. Notwithstanding Trump's cooperation, NARA used the contents of those boxes to instigate a criminal investigation of Trump.

Similarly, the resultant grand jury subpoena should have been challenged at the time for being both vague and overbroad. Instead, Trump's team again tried to cooperate, only to be served with a search warrant that was itself based on the assertion that Trump's cooperation had been inadequate. Yet, even after these events, Trump and his team continued to try to cooperate, only to be served with a search warrant.

Trump and his lawyers should have been well aware that they were dealing with people who were not seeking cooperation but were out to get them. Just as with previous attempts to entrap Trump, including the Russia collusion hoax, the Ukraine impeachment affair, and the Capitol breach investigation, the documents saga was an entrapment scheme all along. ■

*A man driving a front loader shifts soil containing rare earth minerals to be loaded at a port in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province, China, in this file photo.*

PHOTO BY STR/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

INDUSTRY

# CHINA'S RARE EARTH DOMINANCE

America fails to grasp importance of CCP's hold on critical minerals, analysis finds

BY NATHAN WORCESTER

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, CHINA'S powerful grip on rare earth elements has motivated action by Congress and multiple presidents.

Millions in government funding went to a U.S. rare earth and critical mineral refinery and a rare earth separation plant.

Reps. Guy Reschenthaler (R-Pa.) and Eric Swalwell (D-Calif.) recently reintroduced a bill that would create a tax credit for domestic rare earth magnet production.

Yet, a soon-to-be-released paper argues that the United States' leaders have failed to address what it characterizes as "China's top-down, sovereign-monopoly."

A co-author of that analysis, mine owner and consultant James Kennedy, criticized the proposal.

"The tax credit will result in massive and exclusive production of low-temperature magnets," he told The Epoch Times in an April 28 interview.

Kennedy's analysis highlights China's control over the commercial separation of several important rare earths—namely holmium, terbium, and dysprosium.

Those three elements are crucial for making the high-temperature neodymium magnets in electric cars, weapons systems, and other applications.

Kennedy said that without access to those elements in a separated form, U.S. companies will only be capable of producing low-temperature magnets.

"No one will make high-temperature magnets because the tax credit would not cover the differential in cost," Kennedy told The Epoch Times.

It would ensure, he said, that "China retains control over high-temperature magnets and thus EVs [electric vehicles], wind, and U.S. weapon systems."

He made the point even more starkly in an April 17 interview with The Epoch Times. As far as high-temperature magnets are concerned, the United States isn't even in China's league.

"This is not a misprint—China controls 100 percent," he said.

## China's Rare Earths Juggernaut

Kennedy co-authored his paper with rare earth experts from around the planet. Some remained anonymous for fear that drawing attention to China's market power would jeopardize their careers.

The analysis warns Americans not to ignore China's strategic vision on rare earths, arguing that past assessments by the United States and its allies have erred by assuming the country mainly thinks in terms of financial gain.

"China's motivations are not merely economic in the traditional sense. Rather, these

mineral resources are being leveraged as a geopolitical fulcrum for China's economic advantage and technological domination of downstream technologies and related industries," it states.

As rare earth elements have become a geostrategic flash point, the United States and its allies have stepped up support for miners and processors outside of China.

For example, the Department of Defense awarded Australia's Lynas Rare Earths \$120 million in 2022 to construct a Texas-based rare earth separation plant.

Pavel Molchanov, an energy analyst with the investment services firm Raymond James, noted that China's share of rare earth mining has declined recently.

BP's latest energy review shows that China produced 59 percent of the world's rare earth elements in 2021. That's down from much ↔



*Soldiers load missiles into a Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle in Fort Carson, Colo., on April 28, 2022. Western governments are pursuing defense electrification policies that could place more stress on rare earth vulnerability.*

closer to 100 percent in 2010, according to statistics gathered by the U.S. Geological Survey.

“Historically, there was no political concern around rare earth supply outside of China,” Molchanov told The Epoch Times in an April 25 interview.

“Therefore, if the project-level economics were not very attractive, then it simply would not get done.”

He attributed the shift in the West’s attitude to “China’s aggressiveness and lack of predictability on the world stage,” citing its posture on Taiwan and its support for Russia against Ukraine.

Molchanov also pointed out that the United States isn’t alone in seeking to decouple from China even as it pursues ambitious climate goals that will increase demand for Chinese-dominated materials. The European Union also wants to reduce its dependence on China for rare earth elements.

“As we look towards the end of this decade, I think China will be well below half of the world’s rare earths supply,” Molchanov said.

Kennedy said he thinks it’s a little too early for the United States and its allies to celebrate.

“When China went from producing 97 percent of the world’s rare earths to roughly 60 percent

now, everyone went around blowing their victory horns. We’re not winning. We’re a stooge. We just got played,” he told The Epoch Times.

Kennedy said he believes China is deliberately moving mining outside its borders while expanding its control over magnets and other valuable downstream products.

“China didn’t want to pollute its country anymore or exhaust its resources, so it created a margin opportunity for producers, and that is where we are at this exact moment,” he said.

“If they could do that, they can also reverse it,” he added.

### Military Weakness

These days, rare earths and other critical materials often enter the news cycle in connection with the so-called green transition from fossil fuels and the internal combustion engine to wind power, solar power, and EVs.

“The energy transition has barely begun and the U.S. finds itself increasingly dependent on China for rare earths and other critical materials,” said Guillaume Pitron, a French journalist known for writing about rare earths and other raw ma-

FROM: MICHAEL OMBLO/GETTY IMAGES COURTESY OF JAMES KENNEDY

terials, in the foreword to Kennedy’s analysis.

Yet Molchanov emphasized that EVs and similar technologies are a relatively small part of the rare earths story.

“Neodymium is used in electric vehicles, but I certainly do not want to portray this as purely a question of sustainability or energy transmission. It’s actually much more of a national security issue pertaining to aerospace and military applications,” he said.

An anonymous critical minerals adviser agreed with Molchanov about rare earths’ importance to defense.

The adviser, who was involved in drafting Kennedy’s report, told The Epoch Times how the United States bungled critical materials, opening an opportunity for China: After the events of 9/11 and well into Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History,” the United States was all-in against terrorism.

“While China was expanding in different regions, the U.S. had its eye off the ball. When it finally got terrorism to a low boil, it realized, ‘Wait a minute, they’re all over the world. They’re all over Africa.’ They’re picking up all these resources—kind of like playing Monopoly with someone, and they’re even buying up Baltic Avenue and Mediterranean Avenue, even the little tiny crappy pieces,” the adviser said in an April 26 interview.

“Strategic competition is always a competition for strategic resources,” he added.

Current military technologies already make rare earths a vulnerability. In addition, Western governments are pursuing defense electrification policies that could place more stress on that weak point.

During a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm affirmed her support for the Biden administration’s push for rapid electrification of military vehicles.

The British army announced plans for “battlefield electrification,” including through the expanded use of EVs.

Molchanov noted that China isn’t the only country with large reserves of rare earth metals.

According to BP’s latest energy review, Brazil and Russia are also particularly rich in the elements, with reserves dwarfing those of Australia and the United States.

The Russia–Ukraine war has only cemented Russia’s close connections with China.

The anonymous critical minerals adviser described the United States’ involvement in the Russia–Ukraine war as “a total distraction,” including when it comes to critical minerals.

Brazil, meanwhile, has entered into many new agreements with China under its new left-wing president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

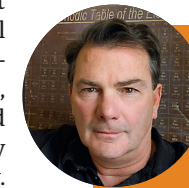
### Arrogance and Miseducation

In Kennedy’s view, the rare earths issue is in keeping with a broader trend of Western hubris. Washington insiders, he said, have often let him know they haven’t bothered to read China’s own English-language reports on its “One Belt, One Road” and “Made in China 2025” strategies.

Westerners, he said, are “so arrogant that if they read the reports, they just think that it’s Chinese grandstanding.”

“But it’s not,” he said. “They’re very consistently delivering on their goals. Look at us. We don’t deliver on any of our goals but we do a tremendous amount of grandstanding, a lot of virtue signaling.”

For many analysts who have spoken with The Epoch Times, problems with the quality of STEM education in the United States are a serious issue for the country as it competes with China on rare earths and other critical minerals.



**“China didn’t want to pollute its country anymore or exhaust its resources, so it created a margin opportunity for producers.”**

James Kennedy, mine owner and consultant

Kennedy’s analysis stressed China’s numerous university programs, national laboratories, and other research endeavors devoted to rare earths. The United States and the West, by contrast, are barely competing.

In a recent interview with The Epoch Times, the Claremont Institute’s David P. Goldman described engineering education in the United States as “alarmingly poor.”

“The smartest kids go to the big tech companies, where they hope to become millionaires by the time they’re 26,” he said.

“A lot of the science degrees go to foreigners,” the anonymous critical minerals adviser told The Epoch Times.

“This education deficit is probably going to be one of the most painful things that we face as a country,” Kennedy said, adding that many professors who might have been able to teach the relevant skills four decades ago are retired or deceased.

Resenthaler declined to comment to The Epoch Times. ■



SOUTH CAROLINA

# ***GENDER IDEOLOGY RIPS APART FAMILY***

*Parents say the system was  
weaponized against them*

***By Darlene McCormick Sanchez***

*Gil and Gabriella Reid at  
their farm in Belton, S.C.,  
on March 25. Even a farm  
in rural South Carolina isn't  
safe from social justice strife.*

PHOTOS BY JACK ROBERT FOR THE EPOCH TIMES





Like many parents across the country, the Reids find themselves battling radical gender ideology. In the fall of 2022, the Reids discovered their 17-year-old daughter wanted to transition to a boy.

**G**IL AND GABRIELLA REID live on a 48-acre farm outside Anderson, a town in South Carolina where a church and historic courthouse dominate the quaint central square.

They raise sheep and chickens and grow rye, clover, and Bermuda grass for feed. It's where their daughters helped out with collecting eggs and tending the livestock.

Life is quiet on the farm, with picturesque vistas of windswept sunflower fields and shamrock-green pastures. Until recently, the world's troubles seemed far away, like the murmur of a distant radio.

But even a farm in rural South Carolina isn't safe from social justice strife.

Like many parents across the country, the Reids find themselves battling radical gender ideology. It has torn their family apart, they say.

In the fall of 2022, the Reids discovered that their 17-year-old daughter wanted to transition to be a boy, the couple told *The Epoch Times*. Against their wishes, she left home.

For about four months, they didn't know she was living with the family of one of her high school teachers.

As they tried to understand what was happening, Anderson School District 2 denied the Reids' request to view their daughter's mental health records, citing privacy laws, according to the couple.

During this time, the Reids faced two neglect investigations brought on by complaints from their daughter and the family with whom she was staying. The Reids say the accusations weren't true but served to put them on the defensive.

State documents provided by the parents indicate that they were cleared of wrongdoing.

But it left the Reids feeling that the entire system—from the schools to

social services and the law—had been weaponized against them.

They still just want their daughter back.

### Extreme Ideologies

Over the past two years, parents across the country have discovered that their children's schools are pushing extreme ideologies.

They learned that teachers were telling children they can choose their gender. They found lessons pushing tenets of critical race theory that divide people into groups—oppressors or victims—based on gender or race.

Many schools were using the Biden administration's guidance on Title IX to substitute gender identity for biological sex. And that was cited as justification for supporting a student's desire to "transition" to a new gender, use a different name or pronouns, and keep that a secret from parents.

These incidents have sparked lawsuits and legislation.

Transgender activists contend that minors should have the right to change their gender and that the government should protect that right.

In response, conservative lawmakers in some states have introduced legislation to counter what they say are destructive policies that destroy families and harm children and society.

In South Carolina, where the Reids live, Republicans in the state Senate and House are advancing several parental rights bills, including SB 234, HB 3485, and HB 3197.

These bills would require school districts to create parental involvement policies and would prohibit care providers from soliciting or providing health care services to children without written parental permission.

HB 3197 would specifically raise the age of consent for health care services from 16 to 18. It would strengthen parents' rights to view their children's mental health records.

### Halting Gender Modification for Minors

South Carolina is aligned with a broader effort in Republican-controlled legislatures nationwide to stop gender modification procedures for minors.

Another dozen states, including Texas and Florida, are considering similar bans.

At least 11 states—Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota, and West Virginia—have already enacted laws restricting or banning transgen-

der procedures for minors.

Schools shouldn't be a place of indoctrination, and parents' rights to raise their children are being subverted, according to Kristen Huber, chief communications officer for Citizens Defending Freedom.

"School districts work behind closed doors, actively suppressing parental involvement in their students' education," Huber told *The Epoch Times* in an email.

The issue of a parent's right to access his or her child's medical and mental health records isn't clear in South Carolina, making the matter ripe for legislation, according to Hal Frampton, senior attorney with Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal group.

Parents need more clarity on their rights to care for their children and direct their children's upbringing, education, and medical treatment, Frampton told *The Epoch Times*.

Predicaments such as the one faced by the Reid family have driven more states to delineate parental rights, he said.

"We're seeing these kinds of situations occur more and more where schools are transitioning children, or children are accessing transition-related care or something of that nature, without a parent's knowledge or consent," Frampton said.

When the laws need to be clarified, the courts settle disputes.

### Keeping Secrets From Parents

In the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit in Boston, the parents of an 11-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy are suing the town of Ludlow, Massachusetts, the Ludlow School Committee, and a string of staff members. The parents'

## "School districts work behind closed doors, actively suppressing parental involvement in their students' education."

*Kristen Huber, chief communications officer, Citizens Defending Freedom*

lawsuit claims that school officials and staffers were hiding information concerning discussions on gender transition with their children.

During the 2020–21 school year, Stephen Foote and Marissa Silvestri learned that their 11-year-old daughter had spoken with a teacher about depression, low self-esteem, and possible same-sex attraction, according to the lawsuit.

Silvestri emailed her daughter's other teachers, informing them that they would be getting professional help for her, according to the lawsuit. She asked that no one have any private conversations with the girl regarding the matter.

But when their daughter emailed her teachers that she identified as "gender-queer" two months later, a school counselor disregarded the parents' request, the lawsuit alleges.

According to the lawsuit, the counselor met privately with the child and told the staff to conceal the student's new preferred name and pronouns.

At about that time, the parents learned that their son also had expressed an alternate gender identity, according to the lawsuit.

The school's librarian—who was affiliated with Translate Gender, an organization that shares resources about gender and gender identity—was meeting secretly with children, the lawsuit alleges.

The parents complained that Ludlow school personnel concealed critical information about their children and "publicly maligned" their assertion

*Life was quiet on the Reid's 48-acre farm, with picturesque vistas of windswept sunflower fields and shamrock-green pastures.*



FROM L. JACK ROBERT FOR THE EPOCH TIMES, COURTESY OF THE REIDS



**“It’s the way that society is trying to purposely groom and manipulate children.”**

Lenox-Mae Reid, sister

of parental rights as “thinly-veiled intolerance,” according to the lawsuit.

Similar lawsuits against schools have been filed around the country.

**Changing Genders Is ‘Hip’**

The Reids partially blame their daughter’s school for her confusion.

Gil Reid said he believes that she was exposed to LGBT lifestyles from “social media and the modern educational system.”

*The Reids partially blame their daughter’s school for her confusion. They said they believe that she was exposed to LGBT lifestyles from “social media and the modern educational system.”*

“She has learned that homosexual behavior and all this trans stuff is very, very popular and very hip,” he said. “She says she wants to be an individual. But what she really wants is to be in the mainstream, or what’s really popular now.”

Things started spiraling out of control when the teen told her parents in September 2022 that she wanted to transition to be a boy, Gabriella Reid said.

Lenox-Mae Reid, the couple’s 20-year-old daughter, learned the news after seeing a TikTok video of her sister using a different name and male pronouns, she told The Epoch Times.

At about this time, Gabriella Reid found out her daughter was wearing a chest binder to flatten her shape.

She tried talking to her daughter, she said, telling her God created her as a girl.

But the teen argued that she had the right to be a boy if that’s how she felt and that she had been talking to someone at

school about it, her mother said.

The Reids wouldn’t agree to go along with their daughter’s desire to “transition.” They allowed her to speak to their family doctor about her gender dysphoria, they said. But the girl grew increasingly angry when the doctor didn’t affirm her.

She went missing on Oct. 25, 2022.

Gabriella Reid thought her daughter had come home on the bus but quickly realized that the girl wasn’t in the house, she said.

Worried, the Reids called the local sheriff’s office. Lenox-Mae Reid, who was home after commuting from college that day, suggested some places the deputies could check.

A sheriff’s report categorized the incident as a runaway call. The report states that deputies contacted a school resource officer, who gave a possible address for their daughter.

ALL PHOTOS BY JACK ROBERT FOR THE EPOCH TIMES



*(Top) Photos of Gil and Gabriella Reid’s daughter at their home. (Above) Gil and Gabriella Reid look at drawings by their daughter. The Reids are hoping to reunite with their daughter.*

Eventually, deputies found her and brought her home that night. Deputies wouldn’t say where their daughter had been, the Reids said. And their daughter was defiant, also refusing to say, Gil Reid said.

“If they didn’t tell you where I was at, I don’t have to tell you where I was,” he recalled her saying.

Gabriella Reid was simply relieved their daughter was home safe, she said.

The next day—the Reids’ wedding anniversary—their daughter again didn’t return home from school.

**A System Stacked Against Parents**

This time, a social worker showed up at their home, saying their daughter claimed that they were neglecting to feed her, they said.

The accusation was false, the parents insisted. They asked the social worker where their daughter was.

Their daughter was in a safe place, the social worker told them.

The social worker recommended letting her stay there but wouldn’t say with whom the girl was staying, the parents said.

“Our kids have never been without,” Gabriella Reid said. “Their wants, their needs have always been met, even before they even think it sometimes, it seems.”

Lenox-Mae Reid backed up her parents’ testimony, saying her sister was never deprived of food at home.

“She would go into the pantry so many times during the day eating anything,” she said.

The visit from the social worker was worrisome, the couple said. They felt attacked and like they were at a “significant disadvantage,” Gil Reid said.

“We were a little bit afraid, to be honest with you—that we were somehow about to be roped into a situation where we were going to be blamed for something that we hadn’t done and have her just taken away from us completely,” he said.

They didn’t want to have to keep calling sheriff’s deputies to bring their daughter back home, the parents said. They never gave permission for her to stay with anyone. And they never gave up their parental rights, they said.

But they felt helpless, at that point, to bring her back again, they said.

About four months later, on Feb. 14, Gil Reid received a text message from a number he didn’t recognize.

The message was asking permission to get “medical treatment” for his daughter. He didn’t respond and still hadn’t confirmed where his daughter was staying, he said.

The question seemed odd, Gil Reid said, because his daughter could seek medical attention on her own at 16, according to state law.

That same day, another social worker showed up at their home, saying a complaint had been filed accusing the parents of neglecting their daughter’s medical needs.

The new social worker then revealed that their daughter was staying with her teacher, the parents said. The teacher’s husband had sent the text asking for “treatment,” they were told.

A document from the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) shows that the complaint of neglecting their daughter’s medical needs was investigated and classified as “unfounded.”

While cleaning her daughter’s ♦♦



*Gil and Gabriella Reid stand near Belton-Honea Path High School in Honea Path, S.C. The Reids feel that the entire system, from the schools to social services and the law, had been weaponized against them.*

room, Gabriella Reid found class excuse slips with the teacher's name. The slips indicated that the teen had been meeting with the teacher at school before moving into the teacher's home.

**'Intentionally Attacked'**

Looking back, Gil Reid said he feels that his daughter was able to manipulate the school system.

The school never alerted them that their daughter was experiencing gender confusion, his wife noted.

The teacher "has colluded to remove our child from our home without calls and due process whatsoever," Gil Reid said. And the school system is responsible, he said.

"They have intentionally attacked us in a way to keep us on the defensive," he said.

But Jason Johns, Anderson School District 2 superintendent, told the Reids in an April email that many of their assertions were incorrect.

Johns told the Reids that he was sorry for the trouble they were experiencing.

However, he said, DSS indicated that there was an agreement between the Reids and another family concerning their daughter's living arrangements.

"The school only became aware of this arrangement in January," Johns wrote.

"The school does not have the authority to dictate where a student lives. This is between that student and their parents."

He also told Gabriella Reid that teachers were directed to use pronouns "consistent with her birth certificate," when referring to her daughter, along with her birth name.

Johns also said the school had made more than "25 phone calls and emails" to a school portal concerning their daughter. But the Reids said those calls were made through encrypted messages that they didn't recognize as being from the school district.

Johns hasn't responded to an emailed request by The Epoch Times for comment. Assistant Superintendent Lester McCall didn't return a voice message. The teacher who took in the Reids' daughter didn't respond to a phone message or email asking for comment.

**Hoping to Reunite**

Gil Reid said he still has hope for a positive outcome. But it might be too late, he said.

"I would have never dreamt this would happen in my backyard," he said.

Gabriella Reid said she talked with her daughter last week after learning that the girl had left the teacher's home and was living with a friend.

She told her daughter that she loved her and wanted her to come home.

Her conversation with her daughter gave her hope. She was relieved to learn that the girl hadn't moved further in transitioning.

"She's the last thing I think about, and I pray for, and the first thing I see [in my mind]" each day, Gabriella Reid said.

Lenox-Mae Reid said she knows her family isn't alone in dealing with gender ideology. She said families need to understand that it isn't their fault and that they aren't alone.

"It's the way that society is trying to purposely groom and manipulate children," she said.

Lenox-Mae Reid loves her sister, she said. But she also loves her parents and feels their anguish.

"My parents are so heartbroken over this," she said. "It's almost like they're shells of themselves walking around."

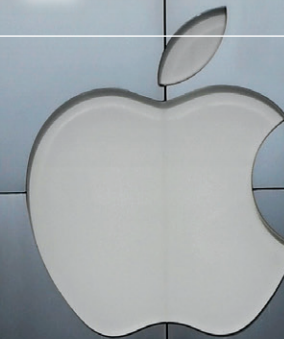
The gender ideology struggle is bewildering for families, Lenox-Mae Reid said.

"People don't understand what it's like until you see somebody close to you going through it," she said.

"It really is disturbing, because that person is choosing to reject what they were born as and wanting to turn into something just completely unnatural." ■

JACK ROBERT FOR THE EPOCH TIMES

# Perspectives



**A woman walks past an Apple store in Beijing on Aug. 3, 2017. Apple now has 54 stores in China.**

PHOTO BY GREG BAKER/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



**MARXISM DISGUISED**

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INSIDE

# Thomas McArdle



## Marxism Disguised

American businesses are embracing Karl Marx's doctrines in a new guise

**D**ISNEY HIGHER-UPS have admitted to indoctrinating children in radical sexual and gender ideology. The Carhartt work clothes company required its more than 3,000 employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19, despite conceding that “we are aware some of our associates do not support this policy.” Keurig Dr Pepper Inc., the third-largest soft drink company on the continent and owner of Snapple, acceded to George Soros-financed activists and pulled ads for conservative Sean Hannity’s prime-time Fox show during Donald Trump’s first year as president.

This is but a tiny sample of businesses in America going “woke” in recent years. Many of them apparently think that they’re eradicating racism, embracing diversity, and keeping up with the times; obviously, they’re forgetting or disregarding the millions of consumers who support and defend traditional family values. But less appreciated is that these firms, by supporting the left’s extremist cultural agenda, are also ingesting a slow poison to wither away their own, and everybody else’s, economic freedom.

Few, even among conservatives with an eye on political affairs, realize it, but wokeness is a clever adaptation of Marxism for circumstances in the 21st century, now that social media facilitates the left’s instantaneous slander of those who stray from the radical party line. It has its roots in Goethe University’s Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, as it’s now called.

What began as a straightforward Marxist study group refocused in the 1930s under the influence of leftist academics such as Max Horkheimer toward a mission to “examine the entire material and spiritual culture of mankind” and ultimately revolutionize the entirety of society. This meant

straying beyond class differences in fomenting conflict to other social distinctions; today, that means race and sexual deviation.

### Many businesses apparently think they’re eradicating racism, embracing diversity, and keeping up with the times.

And there’s no question that Horkheimer was a genuine locked-and-loaded Marxist revolutionary.

“The revolution won’t happen with guns,” he declared nearly a century ago. “Rather it will happen incrementally, year by year, generation by generation. We will gradually infiltrate their educational institutions and their political offices, transforming them slowly into Marxist entities as we move toward universal egalitarianism.”

Fast forward to today: Charles A. Price, associate professor at Temple University’s College of Education and Human Development, describes the shift in focus perfectly clearly.

“In order to understand modern society, you have to pay attention to the power relationships among members and groups,” Price said. “First, we got critical legal studies, which challenged the idea that the law is fair and impartial. As that tradition developed, there were other scholars who came along and said, ‘We need to go a step further and add race because race and power in the United States are inseparable.’”

So critical race theory developed and, according to Price, has now “become a tool and a political struggle.”

And the liberal University of California–Berkeley’s website states that the courses of its program in critical theory “(a) explore the concept of critique in German idealism and Marxism;

(b) provide intensive exposure to the Frankfurt School and its legacies; and (c) robustly engage contemporary forms of critical theory, as well as to debates on social norms.”

In addition to wokeism’s emphasis on group identity carrying over from Marxism’s class identity, another important resemblance to the ideology of Soviet Russia and Xi Jinping’s China is wokeism’s abhorrence of the norms of rational discourse. While Twitter mobs canceling their targets may not produce actual blood, the similarity to the intolerance of Chairman Mao’s Cultural Revolution is undeniable. American companies embracing wokeness is paralleled in the Chinese Communist Party’s exploitation of capitalist practices.

Vladimir Lenin described how communists were allowed to engage in internal debates but that once a decision was made by the party, dissent wasn’t tolerated, to the point of the dissident losing his life.

“The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local Party organizations implies universal and full freedom to criticize,” Lenin stated in an instance of doublethink that George Orwell may well have been considering when he wrote “Nineteen Eighty-Four,” “so long as this does not disturb the unity of a definite action; it rules out all criticism which disrupts or makes difficult the unity of an action decided on by the Party.”

Debate behind closed doors, but be silent in the open air.

American businesses are embracing Marx’s doctrines in a new guise, with race and other sources of disparity replacing class. The objective is the same for woke fanatics as that of any communist: to tear down our civilized, ordered society based on liberty—including destroying those very businesses that are today serving as useful, self-destructive fools.

# Anders Corr



## China Ties Weigh on US Brands

Apple, Nike, Adidas, and Disney are under congressional pressure

**T**HE PRESSURE IS ON for the biggest U.S. brands, including Apple, Nike, Adidas, and Disney. On May 2, two leading congressmen demanded that the fashion brands confirm that their supply chains are untainted by slave labor in China. Sourcing from forced labor in the country’s Xinjiang region, where a genocide is underway, is now against U.S. law.

Apple is so dependent on workers and consumers in China that on May 3, a Financial Times article called Apple a “Chinese company.” Apple has 54 stores in China, and its chief executive officer, Tim Cook, recently praised Apple’s side-by-side growth with the country as “symbiotic.”

“After inking a secretive 2016 agreement to invest \$275bn in China’s economy, workforce, and technological capabilities, the iPhone became a best-seller,” according to the article. “In reality, Apple is now as much a Chinese company as it is American.”

The author noted the difficulty of extricating Apple from China by shifting production to other countries: “Even small shifts risk retaliation by Chinese overlords who might retaliate by turning Chinese consumers against Apple products.”

At the same time, given the increasing public realization of the threat from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), brand-conscious Apple managers are doing just that by reshoring manufacturing facilities to less controversial places such as India, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Ireland.

After a visit to California last month, Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), who chairs the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, said that Apple and Disney face the greatest hurdles from inevitable future economic decoupling from China.

“Apple’s at the heart of what is the

most complex aspect of this competition, which is companies that have a massive presence in China are going to have to deal with the fact that some form of selective economic decoupling is inevitable,” he told Bloomberg.

### U.S. and Chinese companies are finally feeling the heat for their unacceptable collaboration with the CCP.

Companies linked to China that have customer bases in the United States—including Huawei, TikTok, Shein, Temu, Zoom, and Binance—are also distancing themselves from China or seeking loopholes. Lawmakers claim that China’s fashion companies exploit a “de minimus” loophole that waives U.S. tariffs on imports under \$800 sold directly to consumers.

Congress should close the loophole immediately. All purchasers of goods from China should pay the same high tariffs.

The fashion companies queried this week by the congressmen about their China supply lines must answer questions about whether they use materials made with slave labor in Xinjiang.

Lawmakers who demanded answers from the fashion companies include Gallagher and Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), the committee’s ranking member.

They are delving deeper into allegations made in congressional testimony from March that some U.S. companies are in violation of the 2021 Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which bans products of dubious provenance from Xinjiang. Unless companies can prove that their supply chains in the region are squeaky clean, they are in violation of the law,

according to lawmakers.

In an escalation against the fashion companies, the congressmen gave them a short deadline to provide information about their materials suppliers, supplier audit policies, and other supply chain practices.

Gallagher, former Attorney General William Barr, and Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) have also been critical of The Walt Disney Company. Rubio wrote an open letter in 2020, signed by Gallagher and other lawmakers, criticizing Disney for apparently collaborating with the CCP, including by filming parts of the movie “Mulan” in Xinjiang. Despite the ongoing genocide, Disney apparently cooperated with Xinjiang’s CCP propaganda and security offices.

The letter, which asked for further information about any cooperation with the CCP, read, “The decision to film parts of Mulan in the XUAR [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region], in cooperation with local security and propaganda elements, offers tacit legitimacy to these perpetrators of crimes that may warrant the designation of genocide.”

U.S. and Chinese companies are finally feeling the heat for their unacceptable collaboration with the CCP to the point of normalizing its totalitarian practices in China and abroad. To stop the threat from Beijing to human rights, the United States and its allies are unfortunately forced to accelerate economic decoupling.

While decoupling entails short-term risk to supply chains and could cause higher prices to consumers, it will also increase jobs in the United States and among its allies. It will reindustrialize our economies, making supply chains more resilient in the long term. And doing nothing is even riskier. Limiting the economic control of the CCP is the best option in today’s increasingly illiberal geopolitical environment.



## First Quarter GDP: Weakness

As bad as the first quarter looks, the details tell of worse

**E**CONOMIC ACTIVITY in the first quarter disappointed. Real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a paltry 1.1 percent annual pace between January and March.

That was better news than a zero-to-negative figure that would have indicated recession but a poor showing nonetheless. The details behind this overall measure painted an even less attractive picture, suggesting that recession in coming months and quarters is more likely than not.

Worries about the economy's underlying strength first emerged this time last year when the Commerce Department reported a 1.6 percent decline in real GDP. When the second quarter report showed another drop of 0.6 percent, many in the business and financial communities declared that the economy was in recession. The White House objected to this assessment.

Debate on the matter only died down when the third-quarter report showed a reasonably strong 3.2 percent annual real growth rate, and the fourth quarter showed a weak but decisively positive 2.6 percent growth rate. Now, the first quarter's weakness will likely reignite the debate. It should. The picture is of a troubled economy.

The Commerce Department's report for this first quarter of 2023 identified only two sources of strength—and even they are suspect. One is the American consumer. On the surface, things here look good. After a slow 1.0 percent annual growth rate during last year's fourth quarter, overall consumer spending accelerated to a 3.7 percent pace of expansion during the January–March period. All the surge, however, occurred in durable goods sales, particularly autos.

Alone, sales of autos and parts

accounted for almost half the overall GDP growth for the quarter. Because auto sales have trailed during the entire post-COVID recovery, surges of this kind are more likely a sign of catchup than a reason to expect future gains. What is more, inflation tends to support short-lived surges in sales of durable goods, such as autos, as people buy quickly to beat future price increases rather than save for a future purchase and lose the real buying power of the money in the interim. For obvious reasons, such behavior, though rational, has limited staying power.

### Low import growth figure reflects generally slow spending growth.

Net exports were another seeming source of strength. The Commerce Department reports that real exports of goods and services rose at a 4.8 percent annual rate during the quarter just passed, while imports rose at only a 2.9 percent rate. The difference added to measures of overall production and growth. But the difference also suggests that the domestic U.S. economy is growing at a less robust rate than the rest of the world. Many products sold in this country—both to consumers and businesses—are imported or contain imported parts. Slack in the pace of imports growth betokens slow sales generally.

It is noteworthy in this respect that the sales strength otherwise occurred in autos, since most cars sold in this country—whether an American or a foreign brand—are manufactured domestically and so tend not to raise measures of imports. In other words, the low import growth figure reflects generally slow spending growth.

Most worrisome are two sharp

declines. Housing fell at a 4.2 percent annual rate during the quarter, and business purchases of productive equipment fell at a 7.3 percent rate. The first is hardly a surprise. For months, residential construction and sales figures have given evidence of the housing slump. Weakness in housing always translates in time to weak sales in appliances and household goods generally. The drop in equipment sales signals a fall in business confidence that can only slow the pace of future economic activity.

What is more, since innovations are usually built into machinery, slack equipment purchases point to slower productivity growth in coming months and quarters. Also indicating slack future productivity growth is the deceleration in purchases of technology and systems, what the Commerce Department refers to as “intellectual property products.” These increased at only a 3.8 percent annual rate, barely more than half the pace of earlier quarters.

To be sure, drawdowns in business inventories did disproportionately detract from growth during the first quarter. Rebuilding these inventories will undoubtedly improve the overall look of this spring's quarter when reported in July. But these inventory gyrations say little about the underlying strength or weakness in the economy. If anything, any catchup in the coming quarters will be muted. Because high and rising interest rates have made retailers and wholesalers keen to keep inventory stocks lean, they are less likely to rebuild inventory stocks as actively as they otherwise might.

On balance, this first quarter GDP report offers little to no encouragement. If, for the time being, reason remains to reject the recession designation, the signs—and the Federal Reserve's continued rate hikes—point in that direction by the second half.



## Biden Seeks Dialogue With China

The president reportedly wants a summit with Xi, but Beijing ignores him

**T**HE WHITE HOUSE hopes to restore regular dialogue with Beijing, months after a Chinese spy balloon flew over U.S. airspace, causing Secretary of State Antony Blinken to call off his scheduled trip to China in early February and further straining relations between the two countries.

Washington plans to start economic engagement first, expecting it to result in the resumption of talks between President Joe Biden and Chinese regime leader Xi Jinping.

For almost two months, Washington and Beijing have been discussing a potential trip to China by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to resume economic dialogue. Still, no decision has been made so far.

White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby confirmed that the administration is still in talks with China about a potential trip for both secretaries to discuss trade and economic issues.

“The president views our relationship with China as a strategic competition. He also believes that the United States is in a great position to succeed in that competition,” Kirby told The Epoch Times. “We're not looking for conflict with China, and we want to keep the lines of communication open.”

In a recent interview, Blinken also expressed a desire to visit China soon to ensure that competition between the two countries “doesn't veer into conflict.”

The meeting between House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen in California in early April, followed by China's military drills around Taiwan, has further deteriorated U.S.–China relations.

On April 17, the Justice Department charged two individuals for oper-



### For almost two months, Washington and Beijing have been discussing a potential trip to China by Secretaries Janet Yellen and Gina Raimondo to resume economic dialogue.

ating a secret police station in the Chinatown district of Manhattan on behalf of the Chinese regime. The White House condemned Beijing for its transnational repression and malign influence.

Despite the growing tension between the two countries on numerous fronts, Biden is reportedly pursuing another summit with Xi, but Beijing has been giving him the cold shoulder. Both leaders last met on Nov. 14, 2022, in Bali, Indonesia, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit.

“At this point, Xi won't even accept a phone call from the American president,” Josh Rogin, a Washington Post columnist, said in a recent article.

He also said Biden's pursuit of economic diplomacy is risky and will lead nowhere.

“Seeking such dialogue makes political sense, but it risks lifting U.S.

pressure on China without achieving real gains in return,” Rogin said.

When asked why the Biden administration is still pursuing a meeting with China in light of all the frustration in Washington, Kirby said it's essential to address issues through dialogue.

“Look, the U.S.–China relationship is the most consequential bilateral relationship in the world,” he said, noting that much of that consequential nature stems from economic and trade issues rather than security concerns.

“That's why it's important to get Secretary Blinken back to Beijing. That's why it's important to get Secretaries Yellen and Raimondo also over there to talk about these issues. It is precisely because we do not agree on everything with the Chinese that we want to keep talking to them.”

Last month, Commerce Department officials traveled to Beijing and Shanghai to lay the groundwork for a possible trip by Raimondo.

In April, Yellen also said she hoped to travel to Beijing “at the appropriate time.”

“My hope is to engage in an important and substantive dialogue on economic issues with my new Chinese government counterpart,” she said during a speech on the U.S.–China economic relationship at Johns Hopkins University.

In a recent speech, U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns highlighted the challenges he faced in thawing relations with Beijing.

“What we really need is a more broad-based engagement at the Cabinet level, and the United States is ready for that,” Burns said on May 2 at a Stimson Center event.

“So we hope that the government here will be ready as well. And it's hard for me to predict at this point when this kind of reengagement will reoccur, but we have never supported an icing of this relationship.”

**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



## Destruction of Capital

*Asset inflation may be a major source of financial instability*

**I**NFLATION IN ASSETS inevitably leads to bubbles bursting.

In the period when central banks were glad to see limited consumer price increases despite large increases in the money supply, they created massive inflation in assets. Throughout the quantitative easing era, bond prices spiked, equity valuations soared, house prices increased significantly above affordability levels, and multiples in private equity and venture capital rose to all-time highs.

Asset inflation preceded consumer price inflation, and it may be a major source of financial instability.

The Bloomberg U.S. house price index has slumped 20 percent since the beginning of monetary contraction, and the evidence of the burst of housing price inflation is a clear signal of capital destruction. Monetary contraction leads to a decline in asset prices that subsequently creates a reevaluation of the asset base in financial firms, from banks to venture capital firms.

The importance of capital destruction in the fight to curb inflation is often ignored. Economists tend to believe there's little correlation between the prices of everyday goods and services and the valuation of financial assets, because many willingly reject the monetary cause of inflation, and rising valuations are also a monetary phenomenon.

In the same way that financial asset inflation precedes consumer prices in monetary expansion periods, capital destruction appears earlier than consumer price index inflation declines in monetary contraction times. Without significant writedowns in financial assets, it's exceedingly difficult to see a true disinflationary process. Why? Because elevated valuations of financial assets lead to looser lending



**Financial asset prices lead the inflationary burst, and only capital destruction in those same asset prices can truly reduce the prices of goods and services.**

standards, complacent levels of credit growth, and rising consumer prices.

When central banks become the lender of first resort instead of the lender of last resort and switch their focus from inflation to “financial stability” in the form of keeping high asset prices (equities, bonds, and houses), then they also abandon the reduction of consumer prices as an objective. The role of central banks isn't to keep equities, bonds, and house prices rising, let alone to prevent a natural and even healthy correction.

You may say that central banks don't aim for rising financial asset prices, but the evidence supports the opposite argument. Central banks do care about markets because they believe in the wealth effect's impact on the real economy. When people feel that their homes are more valuable and their stocks are worth more,

they're inclined to spend more and take more credit. This wealth effect is also proof of what I mentioned before: Financial asset prices lead the inflationary burst, and only capital destruction in those same asset prices can truly reduce the prices of goods and services.

The issue arises when central banks ignore excessive valuations in financial markets for an extended period of time. Once that situation arises and we live, as we did in 2020, in the “bubble of everything,” it becomes increasingly difficult to combat inflation without a financial market scare. The collapse of some regional banks in the United States is evidence of capital destruction. The asset base declines fast, deposits leave, and the unrealized capital loss is larger than the quoted market capitalization.

A massive increase in the quantity of money led to the inflation burst of 2021–2022. The findings shared in a recent Bank for International Settlements Bulletin, a 2020 Firstlinks article by professor Tim Congdon, and a 2022 Wall Street Journal op-ed by John Greenwood and Steve Hanke show the undeniable causal effect on inflation of the substantial increase in money growth well above real gross domestic product. We're now experiencing the opposite effect. Money growth is plummeting, the credit impulse is fading, and the capital destruction manifested in the decline of most asset prices is starting to be a significant leading indicator of a more aggressive slowdown in the economy.

Central banks can't engineer a soft landing for the economy when they created a large bubble that requires significant writedowns in most financial firms and a credit crunch with it.

The bubble of everything leads to the slump of everything, and capital destruction will be the leading indicator of disinflation.

SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

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

# Fan Yu

## Investing: Cutting Through the Noise

*Every decade has at least one thematic investing winner*

**A**S AN INVESTOR, IT'S very easy to look at the current environment and shake one's head.

There's a tremendous headwind. Given the number of headlines involving inflation, the debt ceiling, incompetence in Washington, geopolitical risks, China, and so forth, some investors may just give up and stash away their cash.

But that could prove to be rather short-sighted. If your investment horizon is three, five, 10, or more years, there could be opportunities out there. No matter the environment, there are asset classes or industries that thrive—not forever, but certain themes will have staying power over a period of time.

Every decade has at least one thematic investing winner, Morgan Stanley investment strategists pointed out in a note to clients.

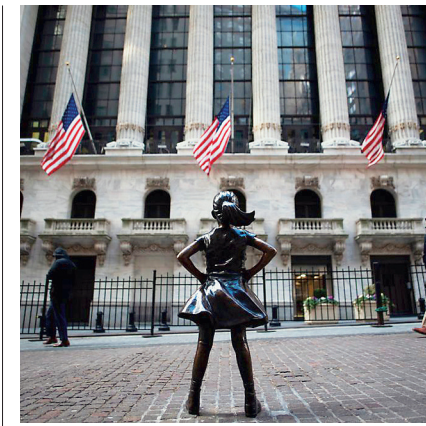
During the high-inflationary 1970s, for example, it was gold. In the recessionary 1980s, it was Japanese stocks. In the roaring 1990s, it was tech stocks—until the dot-com bubble burst. In the 2000s, it was oil and energy. And in the 2010s, it was big tech and the so-called FAANG (Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Google) stocks.

In fact, just 1 percent of companies generated 40 percent of all shareholder returns since 2000, Morgan Stanley's research noted.

What are some of the potential secular winners of this decade?

**OBESITY:** More than half of the country is overweight or obese. And Eli Lilly could have on its hands one of the iconic drugs of the decade. Tirzepatide, marketed under the brand name Mounjaro, is shown to be able to drop more than 20 percent of a patient's weight.

Other companies are also joining the arms race to develop drugs to treat obesity and related illnesses. At a conference at the beginning of the year, Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said he believes that the



**Just 1 percent of companies generated 40 percent of all shareholder returns since 2000.**

market related to weight loss, diabetes, and related issues will become a \$90 billion industry by the year 2030.

**Cyber and Data Security:** Cybersecurity isn't a new industry, but it's quickly becoming an extremely important one. Cyberattacks and hacks continue to increase every year, costing governments, companies, and consumers billions of dollars annually and untold trauma.

By 2027, the number of digitally connected devices, such as computers, smartphones, smartwatches, and “internet of things” devices, will double in number compared to today. And almost every consumer and every company large or small needs to consider cyber security protections.

Firms involved in this sector include Fortinet, Palo Alto Networks, and Darktrace.

**Nanotechnology and New Materials:** Nanotechnology relates to applications involving materials less than 100 nanometers in size. The production of these microscopic materials has tremendous upside and application

across numerous industries, including life sciences, consumer products, defense, green technology, and more. As an industry, nanotechnology could grow to almost \$130 billion by 2027.

Companies involved in nanotechnologies include Analog Devices, Applied Materials, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., and Thermo Fisher Scientific.

**Space:** Space is the final frontier, as we know from Star Trek. The broader space economy has enormous potential, although much of it is still untapped. The space industry could be extremely broad, including space tourism, space exploration and commodity gathering, and space defense.

Investor Cathie Wood manages ARKX, the ARK Space Exploration & Innovation ETF, which is an actively managed fund with holdings selected by Wood's team. Firms involved in this sector include Leidos, Planet Labs, Rocket Lab USA, and AeroVironment.

**Food and Water Security:** It may be basic, but necessities such as food and water shouldn't be taken for granted in today's environment of soaring inflation, global wars, pollution, and increasing global population.

Given this backdrop, companies involved in providing clean water, making food and agricultural production more efficient, and water/food infrastructure could become increasingly more critical.

Firms related to these fields include Xylem, Itron, Yara, Deere, and Adecoagro.

This is nowhere near a comprehensive list. Several other potential thematic winners include fintech/digital payments, waste management, robotics and automation, and artificial intelligence/machine learning.

The idea is to look forward and seek opportunities even during times of distress. But, as always, investors need to do their research and keep a long-term investment horizon.

THOUGHT LEADERS

# The 'COVID Cartel's' Manipulation of America

*A pandemic plan that called for mass vaccination, concerted effort to suppress early treatment*

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.)

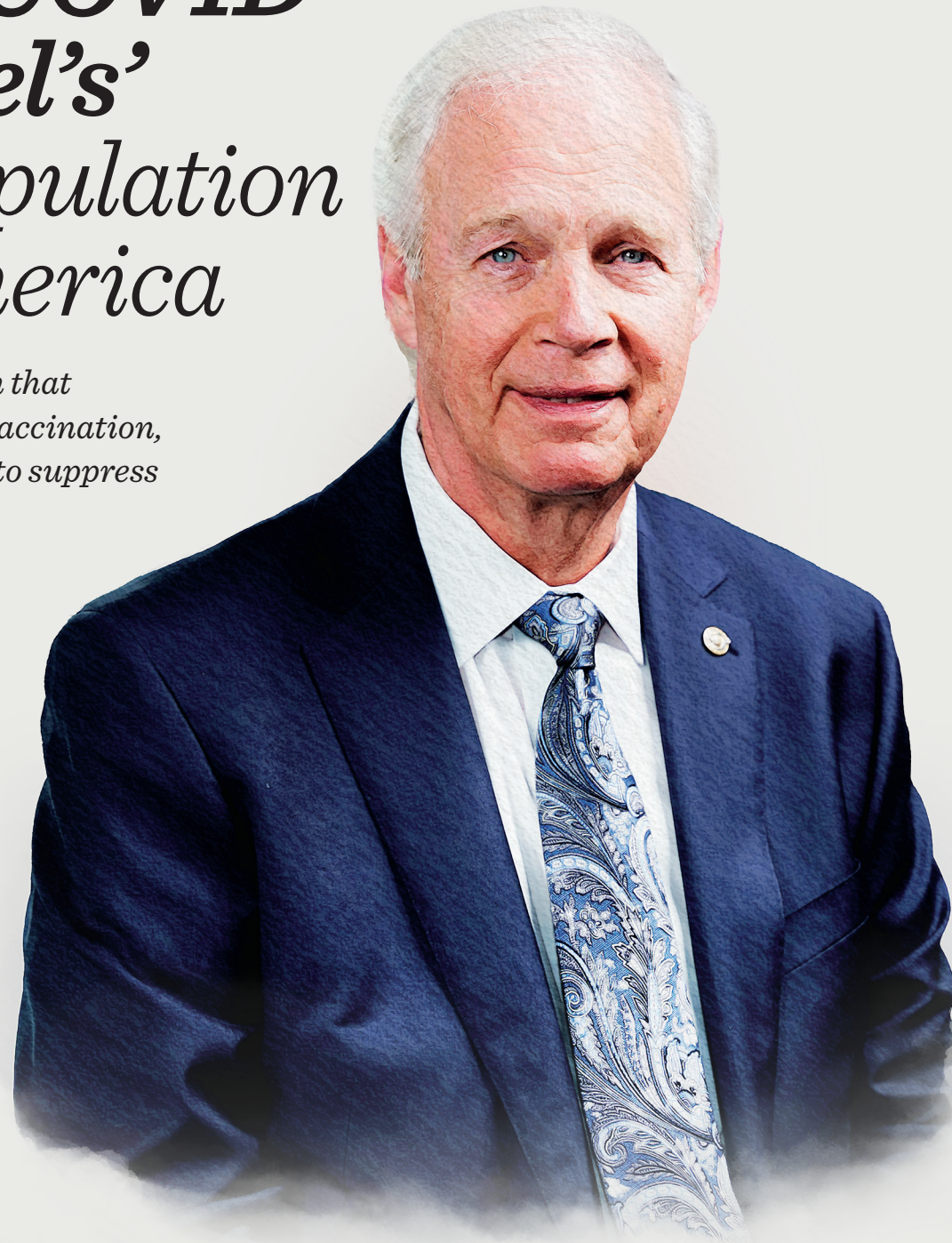


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**“I** T WAS INSANE,” SEN. RON Johnson (R-Wis.) says. “Of our response to COVID I would say that’s probably the best word to sum it up: insane—a miserable failure.”

In a recent episode of “American Thought Leaders,” host Jan Jekielek spoke with Johnson, who is a member of the Senate committees on the budget, finance, and homeland security and governmental affairs. They discussed the global push for mass vaccination and the concerted effort to suppress early treatment.

Johnson has spearheaded efforts to change America’s COVID-19 policies and has hosted a number of hearings and roundtables on early outpatient treatment for COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine injuries.

He also shares his thoughts on the Russia–Ukraine War and what he sees as the path forward for the United States.

**JAN JEKIELEK:** I’m going to dub you a COVID response skeptic. From the beginning, you were asking big questions about this whole idea of shutdowns.

**SEN. RON JOHNSON:** I’ll take that moniker. Science is all about being skeptical. One of the greatest tragedies of the pandemic is we haven’t even been allowed to ask questions.

I remember early on in the pandemic watching the video coming out of China with everybody in their moon suits. We didn’t know what we were dealing with. We had certainly heard of Ebola and MERS [Middle East Respiratory Syndrome]. Ebola had about a 40 percent death rate or infection fatality rate. MERS had something like a 30 percent rate. Were we dealing with something like that? We just didn’t know, until we had the Princess Cruise. John Ioannidis’s analysis of what happened on the Princess Cruise has stood the test of time.

This was a deadly disease if you

**“I was called an anti-vaxxer, which is probably just underneath murderer, rapist, racist, and pedophile—the last thing you want to be called is anti-vaxxer.”**

were elderly and had certain comorbidities. But if you were young and healthy, it was a flu-like type of disease. I glommed onto that analysis. I also knew that there was no way you could shut down the American economy the way people like Anthony Fauci were talking about it: a 50-day shutdown to flatten the curve.

What exactly are you going to shut down? We’re still going to need hospitals. We’re going to need pharmacies, grocery stores, and gas stations. The economy had to continue to operate.

On one of our Senate calls with Anthony Fauci, I asked: “Dr. Fauci, you’re proposing these shutdowns. Are you taking into account the human and economic devastation you’re contemplating here?”

He just cavalierly said: “Senator, that’s somebody else’s department. I don’t worry about that.”

If you’re a doctor, you may be specialized, but you have to treat the whole patient. You have to understand what your cure is going to do to the patient. He couldn’t have cared less. Very early on, nothing about our response made sense.

I was an early advocate for early treatment. I heard about the possibility of the drug hydroxychloroquine. If you remember, a state senator in Michigan was successfully treated with hydroxychloroquine. I heard about Dr. Zelenko, and Didier Raoult in France. I’m reading about these things. My concern was that we wouldn’t have enough of the drug.

I’m calling up the head of Novartis

and texting him. They donated 30 million doses to the national stockpile, but it wasn’t being distributed. My main concern was, again, would we have enough manufacturing capacity for a cheap generic drug like hydroxychloroquine?

I had never heard of ivermectin at that point. I knew about vitamin D, which by the way, Anthony Fauci took and told no one. Isn’t that curious? He upped his intake of vitamin D. Why wasn’t he talking about that early on?

For whatever reason, there was a concerted effort to not research or push any kind of early treatment, anything that might mitigate and lessen the severity of the disease.

It was just: “Get tested. We’ll spend tens of billions of dollars on tests. But if you test positive, do nothing, go home, isolate yourself, and hope you don’t get so sick that you have to go to the hospital.”

But if you do go to the hospital, then we’ll slap Remdesivir in your arm, costing over 3,000 bucks. You’ve had doctors on here, I’m sure, talking about the harm that can do to your kidneys. We’ll put you on a vent, knowing that 80 to 90 percent of people that went on ventilation never got off it.

It was insane. Of our response to COVID I would say that’s probably the best word to sum it up: insane—a miserable failure.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** What was it that you knew? You said you were reading different things, but what was it that



you knew to look at that a whole lot of people didn't?

**SEN. JOHNSON:** With John Ioannidis's study on the Princess Cruise ship, he said, "OK, we'll get through this."

I didn't have the level of fear that they imposed on the rest of society.

That was their main tool. The technocrats and the Faucis made sure the world was deathly afraid of this. As a result, you're looking for some relief from that fear.

Then, you have a guy like Fauci saying: "I've got the cure here. I've got a vaccine."

We didn't look at all the different generic drugs that were on the shelf. They've been used safely for decades. They had the kind of properties that you'd be expecting in terms of being antiviral or anticoagulant or working with respiratory illnesses. We just threw all that aside.

There was nothing in a pandemic plan that called for shutdowns. Fauci first said, "Masks aren't going to work."

And they didn't. All you needed to know was, "Here is the particle-sized virus and here are the opening pores of the mask—this isn't going to work." They might be marginally effective, but they weren't something that you would impose on everybody in society.

We shut down all the mom and pop shops, but we let the big box stores stay open. Bobby Kennedy writes in his "A Letter to Liberals" that a 2021 study showed there was almost a \$4 trillion transfer of wealth from the middle class to the Big Tech social media giants. Those are the people that were in charge of the narrative.

That is what has opened my eyes. I've been referring to them as the "COVID Cartel." I'm talking about the Biden administration, the federal health agencies, Big Pharma, and legacy media. The Big Tech social media giants and Big Pharma captured the media as well.

Unfortunately, it's easy to manipulate a population, and the best way to manipulate them is with fear.

I had an asymptomatic case of COVID in late September, early October 2020. I was around people, and because I'm going to the White House and that type of thing, I was always being tested. I tested positive and never had a symptom. From that experience, I suppose I had less fear, plus I had natural immunity.

In a later interview, I was asked if I was going to get the vaccine. I said: "I've already had COVID and I've got natural immunity. It's probably going to be better than the vaccine."

## "One of the greatest tragedies of the pandemic is we haven't even been allowed to ask questions."

I was savaged for that. I was called an anti-vaxxer, which is probably just underneath murderer, rapist, racist, and pedophile—the last thing you want to be called is anti-vaxxer.

I had the good fortune of being connected to doctors and medical researchers who had a completely different take, which is why in January 2022, I held the event "COVID-19: A Second Opinion." I thought it was about time the public heard a different opinion on how we should be handling this pandemic, a different opinion on vaccines and vaccine injuries in general.

When I first talked to Bobby Kennedy about this, he said: "We're about the same age. When we were growing up, we got three vaccines. Now, it's 60 or 70, and they're doing them in multiples."

Again, I'm not a doctor or a researcher, but there's so much of this information out there that certainly

concerns a guy like me. Why doesn't it concern the Anthony Faucis and the Collinses and Walenskys and the people who have replaced these folks? Why doesn't it concern our federal health agencies? The answer is pretty obvious—they are completely captured by Big Pharma.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** I would worry that if Big Pharma has captured our agencies, what if the Chinese Communist Party has captured Big Pharma?

**SEN. JOHNSON:** They certainly have influence on medical journals and universities, and access to all the

research we're funding. It's a pipeline right to the Chinese government. That was so absurd about what Anthony Fauci did in funding all these studies, subcontracting them out to people who then subcontracted them out to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. If you are cooperating in any way, shape, or form with a Chinese entity and Chinese citizens in science, you're basically cooperating with the People's Liberation Army. There's no innocent explanation for what we see there.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Senator, in this recent Twitter Files dump that Matt Taibbi published, there's a lot of COVID-related communications and censorship of some specific accounts. Taibbi basically says that it's as if these public health people are acting to elicit a particular behavioral response as opposed to presenting truthful information. I find this deeply troubling.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** There's a very interesting panel that's on videotape from the Milken Institute in 2019. Rick Bright, who was the guy who sabotaged hydroxychloroquine, is on a panel with Anthony Fauci, and they're bemoaning the fact that we don't have a mass vaccination program. One of them says, "It's probably going to take a pandemic to really accomplish that goal." This is in 2019. Well, they got their pandemic.

I don't know what charade was being played in terms of development of the vaccine. They had been working on mRNA. They were just waiting for an opportunity to unleash it globally as part of a mass vaccination program. That's what this has all been about. Yes, it meant profits for the pharmaceutical companies.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Some people have called it collusion. How did that happen, not just on this issue, but on many others, along with the idea that vaccination was the only solution?

**SEN. JOHNSON:** I wish I had the full answer. You're Anthony Fauci, and you've got a government agency that is granting hundreds of billions of dollars of research grants to hospital systems and research universities. You've got grants from the Wellcome Trust and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and they're all about vaccines. When you have that money flowing, people don't buck the system.

These guys are all in the same circle. They're all going to the World Economic Forum. They've been brazen about how they've allowed their discussions to be videotaped, and how open they are in terms of their plans. It's astounding. You almost can't believe what they're saying. In many respects, the world is being run by a very elite group of individuals.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Just to clarify, are you saying you think the World Economic Forum runs the world, or is it the billionaires?



"When we were growing up, we got three vaccines. Now, it's 60 or 70, and they're doing them in multiples," Johnson recalls Bobby Kennedy saying.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** There is an excess of influence by very powerful people. The World Economic Forum is one group. Bill and Melinda Gates, their trust, is supposed to be beneficial, and, in many cases, it probably is. The Wellcome Trust is probably very beneficial. But when you're in charge of making those types of donations to different important causes, causes that are certainly publicized in the press, you have an inordinate amount of influence over what the process is.

The American public, as we talked about earlier, is easily propagandized. It's easy to pull the wool over their eyes and it's done repeatedly. It's done by the Left. I'll bring partisanship into this. The radical left has infiltrated virtually every institution, not only in America, but globally. It's a leftist agenda.

It is an agenda that wants to control the population. They think they're so smart. They think they're such great angels that they need the power to direct your life, and that you're not smart enough to direct your own life. You need them to be telling you when

you can walk outside during a pandemic and whether or not you need to wear a mask. It's grotesquely arrogant and full of hubris.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** There's a powerful structure which has formed, and I call it the megaphone. It's basically the structure that allows for the creation of a perceived consensus around an issue in society.

For example, with the Russia-Ukraine War, there is a perceived consensus about what should be done, or with COVID, that all the vaccines are safe and effective. Some portion of our population is quite susceptible to this, even switching 180 degrees on their viewpoint within 24 hours. I would not have believed this until we saw it in action.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** There's not one person in charge, there's not two or three people in charge, but there's a group of individuals that have pretty much the same Leftist viewpoint—that again, think they're smart and the better angels. If you give them

all the power, they can create a utopia. It doesn't work, and they won't admit that this hasn't worked.

They'll commission a study that says the vaccine saved 2 to 3 million lives. Okay, where's the data on that? Prove that to me. They don't have the data. That's what we're battling. We're up against powerful forces.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** One of the areas where spending has been criticized lately is on the Russia-Ukraine War. I believe this is something that you voted in support of.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** I was on Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I was the European chair and the ranking member on the European subcommittee. I've been to Ukraine a number of times.

I know the Ukrainian people want what we want. They want to shed the legacy of corruption, the endemic corruption in Ukraine. That's really what Zelensky's platform was—to defeat corruption in Ukraine. So I'm sympathetic with it.

And let's face it, Putin is evil. Ukraine doesn't threaten Putin. He just wants the territory. He's bombing population centers. He's committing atrocities and war crimes. But you have to recognize reality. It's not a fair fight, and it's not a level playing field. The only way you stop Putin is if you respond in kind and threaten Russian populations. Nobody's going to do that because they've got nuclear weapons.

I don't see an acceptable result for this war. You can just see more and more death, and more and more destruction. At some point in time, you have to recognize that reality. I voted for the first appropriation very early on. Then, there was a hope that showing support for the Ukrainians and providing them with the lethal defensive weapons they needed would spank Putin hard enough to leave. That didn't happen, and I don't



*"Anthony Fauci took [Vitamin D] and told no one. Isn't that curious? He upped his intake of vitamin D. Why wasn't he talking about that early on?" Johnson asked.*

see that happening.

To me, this has got to stop. We're not going to like the result, but we will like the result less the longer this drags on and more Ukrainians are slaughtered and more of Ukraine is destroyed. I don't see how this gets any better. It just keeps getting worse and worse. At some point, it has to be ended.

I don't think Putin would have invaded if Trump would've been re-elected. We could have visibly ramped up the defensive weaponry earlier on. There are things we might have done to prevent it. But since it has started, I just don't see any result that we're going to find acceptable.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** Senator, let's go back to thinking about what to do here now. Challenging these industrial complexes that we've been talking about may seem daunting to the common man and woman.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** First of all, you start with the basic problem-solving process. Coming from manufacturing, I'm solving problems all the time. It's just a basic process. First, you have to admit you have a problem, then you have to properly define it. Once you've defined it, then you take a look at what the root cause is. Then, you can start designing solutions. In

Washington, D.C., it almost always starts with a solution that's beneficial to somebody, and it's generally about spending money. The solution is always about spending money.

The real overall solution is that we need to reduce the size of the federal government and its influence over our lives. As it relates to federal health agencies, we need to define the mission of what those government agencies do. We need those government agencies. We need an agency that actually does protect the American public in terms of food and health safety. We need a CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] that gathers health information on chronic illnesses and reports it, and then makes their grants responsive to what we're seeing.

They should not allow Big Pharma and outside interests to corrupt their mission. We could do it for a whole lot less money and with a lot fewer people.

This country is something rare and precious, and it was built because people had the freedom to dream and aspire and create. If you crush that freedom, people won't dream, create, and build. We'll become Venezuela, and we can't let that happen.

I'm not going to let them defeat me. They've tried to silence me, to marginalize me, but it hasn't stopped me.

**MR. JEKIELEK:** People say that fear is contagious, but one of the things I've learned from the pandemic is that courage can also be contagious. Senator Ron Johnson, it's a pleasure to have you on.

**SEN. JOHNSON:** Thank you. I really appreciate what you're doing and what The Epoch Times is doing. You're doing real journalism, and that's what this country needs. That's what the world needs. ■

*This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*

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# Embracing the Concept of Eudaimonia

*The journey may create more happiness than arriving at the destination*

By Jeff Minick



**I**N THE DECLARATION OF Independence, Thomas Jefferson penned one of the most revolutionary sentences ever written: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

These words fly in the face of human history, with its dismal litany of tyrants and emperors, masters, and slaves. Today, we consider Jefferson’s pronouncement a given, like some axiom in geometry, which is in fact how he framed it. If asked, however, could we explain what he meant by “the pursuit of happiness?”

We shouldn’t be too hard on ourselves if we have trouble with that question. Search online for “What did Thomas Jefferson mean by the pursuit of happiness?” and you’ll find a dozen diverse thoughts and opinions.

Some people, for instance, might translate Jefferson’s pursuit of happiness as running after hedonistic pleasures, like children dashing to the display counter of an ice cream shop. Others might interpret it as a summons to seek material wealth, aiming to live the good life with a house in the Keys and a Mercedes roadster in the garage.

Given Jefferson’s education and temperament, however, he likely intended a more philosophical connotation, as some of those search

results tell us. Let’s go with an ancient Greek word that Jefferson knew well, “eudaimonia,” and select that mouthful of vowels as his synonym for happiness.

## The achievement of a goal doesn’t guarantee happiness.

Eudaimonia essentially means a life well lived. It’s a form of happiness, yes, but attached to virtue and found in our best selves. The adjective “flourishing” is often associated with eudaimonia.

And now, we’re getting somewhere. To rightly pursue a life of happiness, of eudaimonia, means awareness of two tangential circumstances. First, we experience eudaimonia in the pursuit of a goal as well as in its achievement. Consider how many older couples reminisce about the early days of their marriage, when they were living in a walk-up flat and living on beans and rice. “We were happy then,” they laugh. That’s eudaimonia at work.

On the other hand, the achievement of a goal doesn’t guarantee happiness. All too often, the pilgrim reaches the end of a quest only to find disappointment rather than a holy grail. The young woman who graduates from college and medical school and wins that long-coveted M.D., may

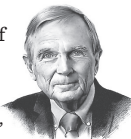
find her success empty, an enormous let-down. She sought eudaimonia at the moment of accomplishment rather than looking for it on the trail she followed to get there.

In his TED Talk, “A Recipe for Eudaimonia,” Jay Kannaiyan describes a motorcycle trip he made from the United States back to his native India, traveling through Mexico, Latin America, and Africa. Along the way, he prepared his favorite dish, chicken curry, for his hosts. Through the joy and comradeship inspired by these shared meals, Kannaiyan found moments of eudaimonia, an ideal that he describes as being one’s “best self in each and every moment.” Kannaiyan’s motorcycle trip served as his pursuit of happiness.

At the end of his talk, Kannaiyan asks: “How can you find eudaimonia in your life? It’s actually all around you. You are surrounded by things that are true, good, and beautiful. Just know that when those three ingredients are present, you are experiencing human flourishing, and you have attained a state of being that is higher than simply being happy.”

I encourage readers to watch Kannaiyan’s video. Meanwhile, here’s to a very eudaimonic day to all of you! ■

**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



Whether you call them PWC or Jet Skis, these nimble little craft are a great way to keep cool on hot summer days.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAWASAKI

## Waterway Adventure Machines 79

**SET IN FORT LAUDERDALE’S** highly desirable and close-to-everything Seven Isles neighborhood, this waterfront home is ideal for active families. 70

**WHILE THE ORIGINS OF** the margarita are shrouded in mystery, it was an instant hit that went on to become one of the most-ordered drinks in major U.S. cities. 75

**INSTEAD OF GOING ON** vacation, use set-aside cash to add your favorite spa amenities to your home, transforming it into a year-round retreat. 76

INSIDE

# Las Olas Style

*This waterfront home embraces the South Florida lifestyle*

By Bill Lindsey



**This home is ideal for the family** that enjoys the outdoors. It's a five-minute drive to the beach, business, dining, and retail districts.

**I**N 1917, LAS OLAS BOULEVARD WAS A dirt track running across a swampy area between the beach and the downtown area. Today, it's a bustling road cutting through Seven Isles, one of the most desirable areas in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and provides access east to the beach or west to downtown in about five minutes from this beautiful residence.

The five-bedroom, seven-bathroom, 7,420-square-foot home is set on an 11,680-square-foot waterfront lot that provides immediate, no-fixed-bridges access to the adjacent Intracoastal Waterway or the Atlantic Ocean a short 15-minute cruise away, with dockage for vessels up to 80 feet in length.

The two-level home was built in 2017 using concrete blocks and hurricane-rated windows to shrug off the fury of tropical storms. It's ideal for family life as well as entertaining, with an airy kitchen equipped with Wolf and Viking appliances, custom cabinets, and a central island with a breakfast bar. Generous floor-to-ceiling glass walls on both levels can

be opened to let the ocean breeze in.

The formal dining room and spacious living room, complete with a fireplace for the very rare days that the temperature drops below 70 degrees Fahrenheit, both look out over the saltwater pool and jacuzzi, al fresco dining area with outdoor kitchen, and the dock beyond. The backyard is tastefully accented with region-appropriate palm trees.

An elevator and an architectural staircase accented with living moss lead to the second level and the master suite, which has a private wrap-around balcony overlooking the pool and dock. This section of the home provides the owner with a wide array of creature comforts, such as large walk-in closets and a spa-quality bathroom with a rainfall shower, soaking tub, dual vanities, and dual water closets. The master suite is buffered from the other bedrooms for optimal privacy for all occupants.

Other notable features include a glass-walled three-car garage, a golf simulator, and a home office/entertainment room. ■



**SEVEN ISLES HOME  
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- 5 bedrooms
- 8 bathrooms
- 7,420 square feet
- 11,680-square-foot lot

**KEY FEATURES**

- 80 feet of dock space
- Glass-walled garage
- Saltwater pool and jacuzzi

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**(Above)** The master bath is equipped with an oversized soaking tub for a great spa night at home.

**(Top Right)** At the entry, a staircase leads to the bedrooms, while the open floor plan draws the eye to the living areas and pool beyond. **(Right)** The home's sprawling open floor plan provides a casual, comfortable atmosphere, and view of the dock and pool area from all angles.



ALL PHOTOS BY LUXURY PRODUCTION STUDIOS / ONE SOTHEY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY

# Guide to Athens

Local Athenians share their top recommendations for exploring their ancient city

By Phil Butler



One of the “must-see” Athens attractions is the Parthenon atop the Acropolis.

PHOTO BY GEORGE PACHANTOURIS/GETTY IMAGES

“A GREAT CITY, WHOSE IMAGE DWELLS IN the memory of man, is the type of some great idea,” Benjamin Disraeli wrote in 1844. “Rome represents conquest; Faith hovers over the towers of Jerusalem; and Athens embodies the pre-eminent quality of the antique world, Art.”

Every year, more than 6 million travelers visit the sprawling city named for the mighty Athena. They come, sometimes without knowing, to discover the eternal soul of the place that poet and philosopher John Milton called “the mother of art and eloquence.”

One of the “must-see” Athens attractions is the Parthenon atop the Acropolis. The National Archaeological Museum adjacent is another “bucket list” attraction, housing unimaginable treasures. And for some, the best parts of the city lie at the stunning seaside that cradles the metropolis.

Walk the colorful back alleys or shop near Monastiraki Square or Plaka. Along the way, be sure to embrace getting lost, finding your way, and discovering what life here is really like—taking cues from some of the Athenians who know the city best.



**The Promoter: Cultural Masterpieces and Nightlife Hot Spots**

Alex Tripodis is the founder and CEO of Efluencer Digital Marketing Agency. He’s also the founder and owner of GuestList.gr, the principal at Stigma Productions, and the former publisher of Nowitsdark Magazine.

Athens visitors should make an early start and explore Plaka and Monastiraki. In these areas, one masterpiece after another unfolds before you. The Ancient Agora, the Temple of Athena Nike, the mighty Acropolis, and the new museum are just a few.

I enjoy Plaka. You can shop for souvenirs, visit high-end galleries, and sample Greek foods and wine. Drop by Hircus at 16 Athinaidos Street at Agias Eirinis Square. In addition, it’s an excellent place for brunch.

I suggest you take in Gazi nightlife. For the 18- to 20-somethings, Dirty Blonde-loft at Persefonis Street is a hot spot. It’s one of the biggest multilevel nightclubs in town. For a different vibe, head to Juan Rodriguez Bar at 3 Pallados Street in Psiri. This speakeasy is classy, majestic, and seductive.



**The Actress: Sophisticated Suburbs, Shopping Streets, and Day Trips**

Eva Galani is a Greek film, theater, and TV actress and mother of three. She has appeared in Greek TV series, commercials, and movies and was co-host of the American show series “Europe After Dark.”

More than **6 MILLION** tourists visit Athens every year.



The city of Athens is just over 15 square miles.

Athens is home to **148 theater stages**, more than any other city in the world.

A collection of ancient artifacts at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, the largest archaeological museum in Greece.



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP L: COURTESY OF ALEX TRIPODIS; THE PICHON TIMES; FRABANTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF EVA GALANI



Lake Vouliagmeni in the Athenian Riviera is famous for its mineral waters, which are known to have healing properties.

A visit to Athens would only be complete with a visit to the Acropolis, its Parthenon, and Plaka beneath. Here, you'll feel the authentic energy of the city. But Athens is a massive city with lots more to do.

Athens has everything from cocktail bars to rooftops overlooking the Acropolis and courtyards reminding of the Greek Isles. The surrounding suburbs also have scores of sophisticated restaurants, clubs, and bars with good music and original menus. My favorite is a family-owned traditional Greek restaurant called Stis Ellis (which means "at Elli's") in the Agia Paraskevi neighborhood.

For shopping, visit pedestrian-only Ermou Street (and the surrounding areas). Afterward, snap some photos at Syntagma and Monastiraki squares. I recommend the MacArthurGlen outlet in Spata, near the airport.

If you're up for a short day trip, I suggest visiting Lake Vouliagmeni, with its deep green ther-



**Shop for souvenirs**, visit high-end galleries, and sample Greek foods and wine in the neighborhood of Plaka, Athens.

mal waters. It's just under half an hour south of the city. A bit farther south, the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion is genuinely a "bucket list" attraction.



**The Lawyer: Courts of Ancient Athens, Adventure, and Perfect Beaches**

Nick Grammenos is a supreme court lawyer practicing civil, commercial, corporate, and criminal cases. He studied law and criminology in France and Greece and opened Grammenos Law Firm more than two decades ago.

Athens is a city full of energy that always offers something to explore. Like any local, I recommend the Acropolis and Acropolis Museum as the first places to visit. However, my tip as a lawyer is to see the Areios Pagos, where the courts of ancient Athens took place. The night views from here are unforgettable.

After the Acropolis attractions, you'll be hungry. Luckily, some of the best places to eat are beneath the Acropolis. The Plaka, Thission, and Psiri neighborhoods have many great restaurants.

For the more adventurous, rent a RIB (rigid inflatable boat) to take in the coasts south and west of Athens. This is the best way to find perfect beaches, some hidden and deserted. Be sure to troll past the Temple of Poseidon and then disembark to dine at the Naos Cafe Restaurant just across from the temple. ■

*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.*

**If You Go**

**Fly:** Athens International Airport (AIA) is the biggest airport in Greece. Seven U.S. cities offer direct flights, including Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, and Newark.

**Getting Around:** Most of the city's major attractions are located within walking distance or can be easily reached by public transport. Athens has a fast metro system, trams, and buses.

**When to Go:** The best time to visit is late spring or fall, when the weather is comfortably warm and there are fewer tourists.



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SVEN HANSCHKE/SHUTTERSTOCK, SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF NICK GRAMMENOS; SVETLANA RYAJENISEVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

**ANATOMY OF A CLASSIC COCKTAIL: THE MARGARITA**

*Tequila, lime, and orange liqueur make a splendidly simple, dangerously easy-drinking icon—that everyone wants to take credit for*

*By Kevin Revolinski*

REMEMBER MY FIRST margarita outside the United States: Playa del Carmen, Mexico, in 1993 while awaiting a ferry to Cozumel. It was a two-for-one deal, so I ordered two—one for me and one for my travel buddy, Dave. And, probably predictably, we ended up with four drinks. Small drinks, I thought, chilled but with a couple of ice cubes; not an icy slushie. Down they went. Then down we went, missing the next two ferries and rushing to make the last of the day.

Life lesson: The potency of a classic margarita is not to be trifled with. The sweet-sour balance of lime and orange liqueur masks the burn of the booze, and on a hot day, well, you may just miss your ferry!

The brain-freeze-inducing slurry I expected has its charm. And in fact, the first frozen margarita machine, invented in 1971 by Dallas restaurateur Mariano Martinez, is currently enjoying its retirement in the Smithsonian.

But while the original drink was splendidly simple, its story is anything but.

Vernon Underwood, who worked as an early U.S. distributor for tequila brand Jose Cuervo, claimed that in 1937, he asked Los Angeles bartender Johnny Durless to make a cocktail to help promote his brand. However, evidence suggests that Durless had been making it before Underwood's suggestion. Regardless, by 1945, Jose Cuervo was advertising a margarita recipe with equal parts Cuervo,

**MARGARITA**

- 2 ounces Blanco tequila**
- 1 ounce orange liqueur (Cointreau, Triple Sec, Curacao)**
- 1 ounce lime juice**
- Lime wedge**
- Coarse salt**

Sprinkle salt in a dish. Moisten the rim of a rocks or coupe glass with the lime wedge, then roll the rim in the salt.

Mix the ingredients in a shaker full of ice, shake well, and strain into the glass over ice.



**(Left)** Start with a 100 percent agave blanco tequila, which is clear and typically unaged and has a strong agave flavor. **(Right)** Orange liqueur and lime juice add a sweet-sour balance that masks the burn of the booze.



**Salt** cuts the bitterness, and makes the other flavors pop.



Few cocktails are more refreshing than a classic margarita.

Triple Sec, and lime juice.

But Tijuana restaurant owner Carlos "Danny" Herrera claims he created it in 1936 for an actress who could only drink tequila due to an allergy (my eyes are rolling already), and that his recipe was based on shooting tequila—salt, shot, lime—but in gentler proportions. If he were alive today, David Negrete, a hotel manager in Tehuacán, Puebla, might beg to differ, having also invented it that year.

Alternatively, consider the daisy cocktail, which was popular in the early 20th century and is made with the hard liquor of your choice—gin,

whisky, brandy, rum—with lemon juice, orange liqueur, a bit of syrup, and a top-off of soda. It's in the ballpark, but why is this relevant? Because "margarita" is Spanish for "daisy," and one origin story has an Irish barman in Tijuana accidentally grabbing tequila for a customer's daisy.

Meanwhile, Sara Morales, an expert on Mexican folklore, contests that the drink's creator was the namesake owner of Bertha's Bar in Taxco, Mexico, in 1930. We may never know. ■

*Kevin Revolinski is an avid traveler, craft beer enthusiast, and home-cooking fan. He's based in Madison, Wis.*

Adding several spa-quality amenities can transform a home into a prime staycation destination.

PHOTO BY RICHTERFOTO/GETTY IMAGES



# ADD SPA AMENITIES TO YOUR HOME

*Why travel to an expensive spa when you can create one at home?*

By Bill Lindsey

**T**HINK ABOUT WHAT MAKES going to a resort so pleasant: lush landscaping; the sound of murmuring waterfalls; delicate aromas to soothe the soul; amenities such as huge, walk-in showers; relaxing seating areas throughout the property; and soft music playing unobtrusively in the background—all working together to create a relaxing, welcoming atmosphere.

Most homes don't quite fit this description, but with a bit of effort, they can. Start slowly and add elements that deliver a big impact. The only constraints are time and money; the more of both that are available, the bigger and faster the transformation. The goal is to make home a favorite staycation destination and every day at home a pleasure.

When considering what to add, keep in mind that the goal is to excite four of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, and touch. Taste is a bit of a challenge, so perhaps leave that to the menu of "Home Spa."

### First Things First

The easiest place to start may be at the home's entry. If there's a walkway or path leading to the front door, consider adding a bit of whimsical topiary, tinkling chimes hung from trees, intricate paver stones, fragrant flowering plants, or water features such as a burbling wall-mounted fountain.

## The goal is to make home a favorite staycation destination and every day at home a pleasure.

When it comes to water features, lightweight fiberglass models are relatively easy to install, giving the appearance of vintage stone fountains at a fraction of the cost. Some are ready to use, powered by a small solar panel, while others require a source of 110-volt electricity. In order to create the sense of arrival one experiences upon arriving at a spa, the front door should be freshly painted and sport a clean, thick doormat, perhaps bearing a design or a welcoming phrase.

### Through the Front Door

Stepping inside, consider a fresh coat of bright white paint on the walls, with artwork sized to fit the room. Perhaps use a cabinet to display vintage knick-knacks or other interesting objects. Ornamental rugs provide sensory input, too, creating a unique feel as they are walked upon—from intricate Persian or Oriental weaves to those crafted of natural fibers, including jute, sisal, leather, or wool.

Plants add texture and interest ➔

**The secret** to creating the spa experience is engaging the senses of sight, smell, sound, and touch, with touches such as pleasant aromas, flavored water, textured floor coverings, and colorful art.



**One of the easiest** yet most impactful "home spa" upgrades is using hotel-quality pillows and linens in the bedrooms.



**Whimsical landscaping** accents create a sense of arrival, playing an important role in transforming a home into a spa.



**The bathroom is a great place** to start a home spa transformation, making it a place to recharge and refresh with a soaking tub, walk-in shower, and thick, luxurious towels.

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A koi pond with a waterfall feature can transform a boring backyard into a tranquil, relaxing refuge.

to any room, but there are many that actually help make it a healthier place to be. Species including ferns, jade plants, and snake plants can thrive indoors, where they not only produce oxygen but also purify the air by removing toxic substances. Using an electric air purifier is another way to enhance the “home spa” atmosphere.

Resort spas aren’t cluttered, so keep the living room functional without being crowded, with comfortable seating for conversations or for lounging and enjoying quiet music. Take a hard look at the dining room to see if it’s time to upgrade with a new table, chairs, and overhead lighting. Refreshing or replacing the artwork on the walls can also create a more convivial atmosphere.

**Wellness Spaces**

Most resort spas have a gym and a quiet room ideal for relaxing with a book and a steaming mug of aromatic tea, so determine if either an entire, under-utilized room is available, or even a section of a larger room. If the kids have left for college, their rooms are fair game to become a gym; a multi-station exercise system and a stationary bike or a treadmill can transform an ordinary room into a destination. Keep the spa experience going strong by equipping the gym with towels, a big-screen TV, and a source of chilled water.

Bedrooms can be upgraded to spa

quality by changing out comforters and pillows for hotel-quality linens, adding throw rugs, adding a large-screen TV, and installing unobtrusive aromatherapy systems, being careful not to go overboard on scents that may prove annoying to the room’s occupants. For a spa-quality bathroom, at the very least, bring in thick, plush, hotel-grade towels and bathmats. If the budget allows, consider upgrading to a walk-in shower with a rainfall shower head, a soaking tub, and a towel heater. If there’s still cash available, replace the vanity and mirror, and install a floor heating system.

**Nature’s Paradise**

In the backyard, add wind chimes; plants that create a dense, exotic environment; and water features. Fountains, and even koi ponds, are available in durable resin and can be installed by “handy” homeowners.

Create a secluded al fresco dining spot or a firepit. Set up a hammock to enjoy an afternoon siesta or a good book in the sun’s rays, where you can top off with a safe dose of natural vitamin D and enjoy how the warmth relaxes your muscles. Install outdoor speakers to provide a relaxing soundtrack. Overachievers may want to consider adding a jacuzzi and an outdoor shower with a rainfall head, but don’t forget a screen of foliage or bamboo to ensure privacy. Enjoy your stay at Spa Home! ■



LIFESTYLE  
**CHECK IN AT SPA HOME**

Make your home a resort



1

**DIY Upgrades**

Many spa-quality amenities can be added or installed by “handy” homeowners. Explore YouTube channels and garden stores for how-to information and advice.



2

**Don’t Move—Improve**

Instead of spending on a vacation, add spa amenities that can be enjoyed year-round, such as converting a spare room into a gym or installing a koi pond in the backyard.



3

**Sensory Improvements**

The goal is to add touches that can be smelled (flowers), felt (rugs), heard (fountains), and seen (artwork), to create a pleasant, restful atmosphere inside and outside the home.

THIS PAGE FROM L.A. NI ROFOAH/SHUTTERSTOCK; THE POOL TIMES

**NO PROP?  
NO PROBLEM!**

This collection of personal watercraft has something for everyone

By Bill Lindsey



**Ready for Takeoff  
YAMAHA FX LIMITED SVHO**

\$19,999

Yamaha’s flagship WaveRunner is a head-turner that lives up to its jet fighter looks. The hull has been redesigned for 2023 to wring every bit of performance from the 260-horsepower supercharged engine that lets it skip across the water at up to 65 miles per hour. It features boat-like amenities, including an audio system, trim and tilt, and a seven-inch touchscreen to monitor engine functions and access GPS charts.



**Bring Friends  
KAWASAKI JET SKI ULTRA 310X**

\$18,299

You’ll need to hang on tight to the Ultra 310X—powered by a 310-horsepower supercharged, fuel-injected, four-cylinder engine, it has a top speed of 67 miles per hour. Redesigned for 2023 with a sleeker, more streamlined lower deck, it has room for three on the ultra-comfy “Ergo-Fit LXury” saddle that’s made with shock-absorbing urethane and designed to seat the passengers a bit higher than the driver, for unobstructed views.



**The Best of Both Worlds  
WAVEBOAT JETSKI BOAT**

**CONTACT FOR PRICING**

Sometimes, you want a personal watercraft to go play on the waves, but if you want to bring friends and family along, you really need a boat. The WaveBoat JetSki Boat solves this dilemma; the hull mates to almost any personal watercraft, instantly converting the two into a runabout. Hulls are available from 14 feet to 21 feet, with options including a T-top for shade and sound systems.



**Another Way to Water-Ski  
KRASH FOOTROCKET**

\$13,199

Inspired by the original Jet Skis, this speedster is designed to let the operator do all types of wild stunts, including a full flip off its own wake, or to ride the waves created by a wakeboard boat. Powered by a 130-horsepower engine and weighing a mere 308 pounds, the Footrocket allows you to go water-skiing anytime you want without needing a boat and someone to drive it.



**Action Hero  
SEA-DOO SPARK TRIXX**

\$8,199

The Sea-Doo Spark Trixx lives up to its name, thanks to a slew of innovative features that allows even those new to personal watercraft to safely perform a number of impressive tricks. The Intelligent Brake and Reverse stops the Trixx on a dime and makes docking a breeze, while the Variable Trim System raises the nose a bit to make it easier to do the waterway version of “wheelies.”



**Are there books you'd recommend?**  
We'd love to hear from you. Let us know at [features@epochtimes.com](mailto:features@epochtimes.com)

**RECOMMENDED READING**

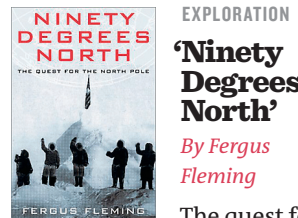
*This week, we feature an urban planner's engaging guide to building on Mars and a suspenseful novel about eight strangers who meet one fateful day.*



**FICTION**  
**'Waste of a Life'**  
By Simon Brett  
Declutterer Ellen Curtis finds her life

turned upside down. The elderly owner of the house she's revamping ends up dead, likely poisoned, and police are looking at several suspects, including her. Meanwhile, her two grown children have fled their own troubles to set up camp in Ellen's house, as a rival declutterer spreads lies about her and as a man rekindles her romantic interests. If you're looking for a mystery mixed with eccentrics, humor, and the trials of everyday life, this book fits the bill.

SEVERN HOUSE, 2022, 192 PAGES



**EXPLORATION**  
**'Ninety Degrees North'**  
By Fergus Fleming

The quest for the North Pole fascinated the world. It was one of the last few exploratory adventures left on Earth, and it was filled with mystery, danger, and miscalculations. Fergus Fleming's work about the numerous attempts to reach the North Pole and catalog its discovery is a masterful retelling of those attempts, which resulted in disaster, proved fraudulent, or ended successfully and brought glory to the country and its men who accomplished the feat. This is a great book about the human spirit.

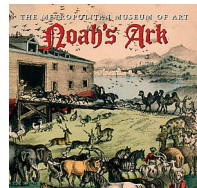
GROVE PRESS, 2003, 496 PAGES



**FICTION**  
**'The Time Has Come'**  
By Will Leitch

This is contemporary fiction that takes place in Athens, Georgia. The specific setting is a beloved pharmacy—Lindbergh's—that's reminiscent of nostalgic drugstores of decades past. The main protagonist is a fourth-grade teacher convinced that something sinister lurks in its history. She plans drastic action to prove that she's correct. On a hot June evening, her path crosses with those of seven other individuals. Choices, consequences, and connections (and humor) coalesce in a fateful and tense encounter.

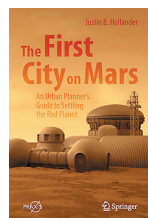
HARPER, 2023, 304 PAGES



**FOR KIDS**  
**'Noah's Ark'**  
By Linda Falken

Featuring fine works of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's (and others') vast collections, the Biblical tale of Noah's Ark is impressively presented. Its timeless resonance rings true as works from different periods and cultures accompany the epic story of diligence, faith, and hope. Details about the works are found in the back for further study.

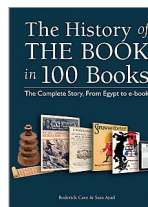
ABRAMS BOOKS, 2015, 32 PAGES



**SPACE**  
**'The First City on Mars'**  
By Justin B. Hollander

Someday there will be a city on Mars occupied by humans from Earth. The question is whether it'll be a planned community or a jumble of structures, such as McMurdo Station in the Antarctic. This book explores the issue. Professional urban planner Hollander presents a serious, scholarly approach to such a city. He examines how to build on a foreign planet with a hostile environment, makes a serious attempt at resolving these difficulties, and offers his own possible design.

SPRINGER, 2023, 286 PAGES



**CLASSICS**  
**'The History of the Book in 100 Books'**  
By Roderick Cave and Sara Ayad

This history isn't a classic, but it points the reader to several dozen books that do fit into that category. Many of these older books affected their own age but are neglected or forgotten today; all document, chronologically, the evolution of books. Soyer's "The Modern Housewife," Sterne's "Tristram Shandy," the Indian "Panchatantra," the medieval "Roman de la Rose"—these and others are discussed here, and many remain in print. Beautiful illustrations add to the pleasure of this history.

FIREFLY BOOKS, 2014, 288 PAGES



**Ian Kane**  
is a U.S. Army veteran, filmmaker, and author. He enjoys the great outdoors and volunteering.

**ENTERTAINMENT**

*This week, we feature a surprisingly hopeful film about a burned-out wrestler and a '50s disaster film that set the template for the genre.*

**NEW RELEASE**



**'Master Gardener'** (2023)

▶ Narvel Roth (Joel Edgerton) is a man with a mysterious past who steadfastly looks after the sprawling environs of well-off dowager Norma Haverhill (Sigourney Weaver). When he reluctantly agrees to make Mrs. Haverhill's disturbed younger relative Maya (Quintessa Swindell) his pupil, their lives are thrust into great peril.

This is a capable, if slightly derivative, thriller that features amazing cinematography to go along with its convincing performances, specifically by Edgerton, who oozes with equal parts mystery and menace.

**THRILLER**

**Release Date:**  
May 19, 2023

**Director:**  
Paul Schrader

**Starring:**  
Joel Edgerton, Sigourney Weaver, Quintessa Swindell

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 51 minutes

**MPAA Rating:** R

**Where to Watch:**  
Theaters

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**A QUINTESSENTIAL DISASTER MOVIE**



**'The High and the Mighty'** (1954)

▶ When an airliner has one of its engines burst into flames over the Pacific Ocean, skilled but troubled pilot Dan Roman (John Wayne)

makes a valiant effort to land the plane at an airport rather than in water. This rousing air disaster film features deft direction,

entertaining performances, and nail-biting scenes that make you consider what you'd do in the same situations.

**ACTION | ADVENTURE | DRAMA**

**Release Date:**  
July 3, 1954

**Director:**  
William A. Wellman

**Starring:**  
John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Laraine Day

**Running Time:**  
2 hours, 27 minutes

**Not Rated**

**Where to Watch:**  
Kanopy, Amazon, Vudu

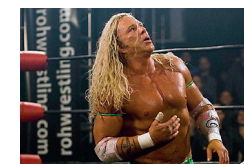
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**INDIE PICK**

**'The Wrestler'** (2009)

▶ Randy "The Ram" Robinson (Mickey Rourke) may have been popular in the 1980s, but he's faded since then and works a menial job. When a chance at an anniversary match comes calling, Randy's heart condition may prevent the possibility of a big comeback.

This is a heartfelt film that features an excellent soundtrack and earthy performances by its cast, particularly Mickey Rourke and Marisa Tomei. At its core, it's about reconciliation, being true to



yourself, and never giving up on dreams no matter how far-fetched they may seem.

**DRAMA | SPORT**

**Release Date:**  
Jan. 30, 2009

**Director:**  
Darren Aronofsky

**Starring:**  
Mickey Rourke, Marisa Tomei, Evan Rachel Wood

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 49 minutes

**MPAA Rating:** R

**Where to Watch:**  
Redbox, Vudu, HBO Max

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT INEXPLICABLE DISAPPEARANCES**

**'Missing 411: The Hunted'** (2019)

▶ This thought-provoking documentary follows former detective Dave Paulides as he presents numerous cases of hunters who have either gone missing in national parks and forests or been lost in extremely bizarre conditions.

Boasting outstanding cinematography of the natural world, this is a thoroughly researched film with informative interviews and a surprising twist near



the end. Whether you believe the conclusion or not, it'll make you think twice before venturing off into the wilderness alone.

**DOCUMENTARY**

**Release Date:**  
June 25, 2019

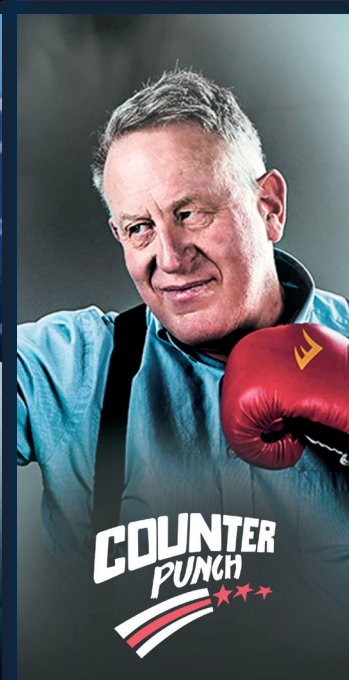
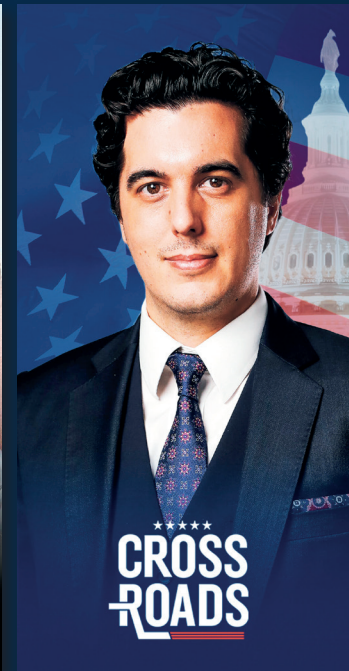
**Director:**  
Michael DeGraziar

**Running Time:**  
1 hour, 37 minutes

**MPAA Rating:**  
Not Rated

**Where to Watch:**  
Plex, Vudu, Tubi

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



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## Grocery Etiquette

*When you head to the store for yogurt and coffee, remember these tips*

We all tend to view a trip to the grocery store as a boring, mundane task during which we may tune out a bit. However, manners matter everywhere, so take note of the following tips.

By Bill Lindsey

### 1 Grazing Is for Cows

An all-too-common sight in the grocery store is shoppers casually munching on grapes or eating chips from the bag as they cruise up and down the aisles. This is OK if the shopper pays for the chips at checkout, but it's stealing when it applies to grapes or other items with a price that's determined by weight at the register. If the store has an associate handing out samples, take one—not three—and move along.

### 2 Pick a Lane

Grocery carts are a handy way to hold multiple items while shopping, but they tend to be big and not all that nimble. For those reasons, take care to not inadvertently block an aisle, and pay attention to avoid accidentally ramming into another cart or, worse, tailgating another shopper and then hitting them. Just as we do while driving our cars, stay on the right side of the aisle and allow plenty of room for the other guy.

### 3 Patience Is a Virtue

There are always others shopping while you're at the grocery store, making waiting in line a strong possibility at the deli or meat counter or when it's time to check out. If you find yourself waiting to be served, be patient and be ready. That means having your credit card, check, or cash ready to pay. And don't be that person who ignores the maximum items rule in the express lane, even by just one.

### 4 Nightly News

While grocery shopping alone, resist the urge to take or make calls, except for brief calls home to ask for preferred styles of pretzels or ice cream flavors. No one wants to hear your conversation about your day at the office, especially if you're using earbuds. If you realize that you're being overheard, don't glare at the other person—apologize and get off the phone.

### 5 Mirror Image

It's true that the grocery store is hardly the casino at Monte Carlo, where the patrons are expected to be decked out in glamorous outfits, but one should make an effort to be moderately groomed and presentable before heading out. Stop in front of a full-length mirror before leaving home and evaluate your overall appearance. Ask yourself, "Would Mom be OK with this outfit?" and if the answer is "yes," then you're good to go.



CSA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

# 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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