Trump vs. China / Saving Facebook From Itself

Newsweek

INTERNATIONAL

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THE NEW IRON CURTAIN?

How the **Kremlin** is trying to **divide** and conquer **Europe**

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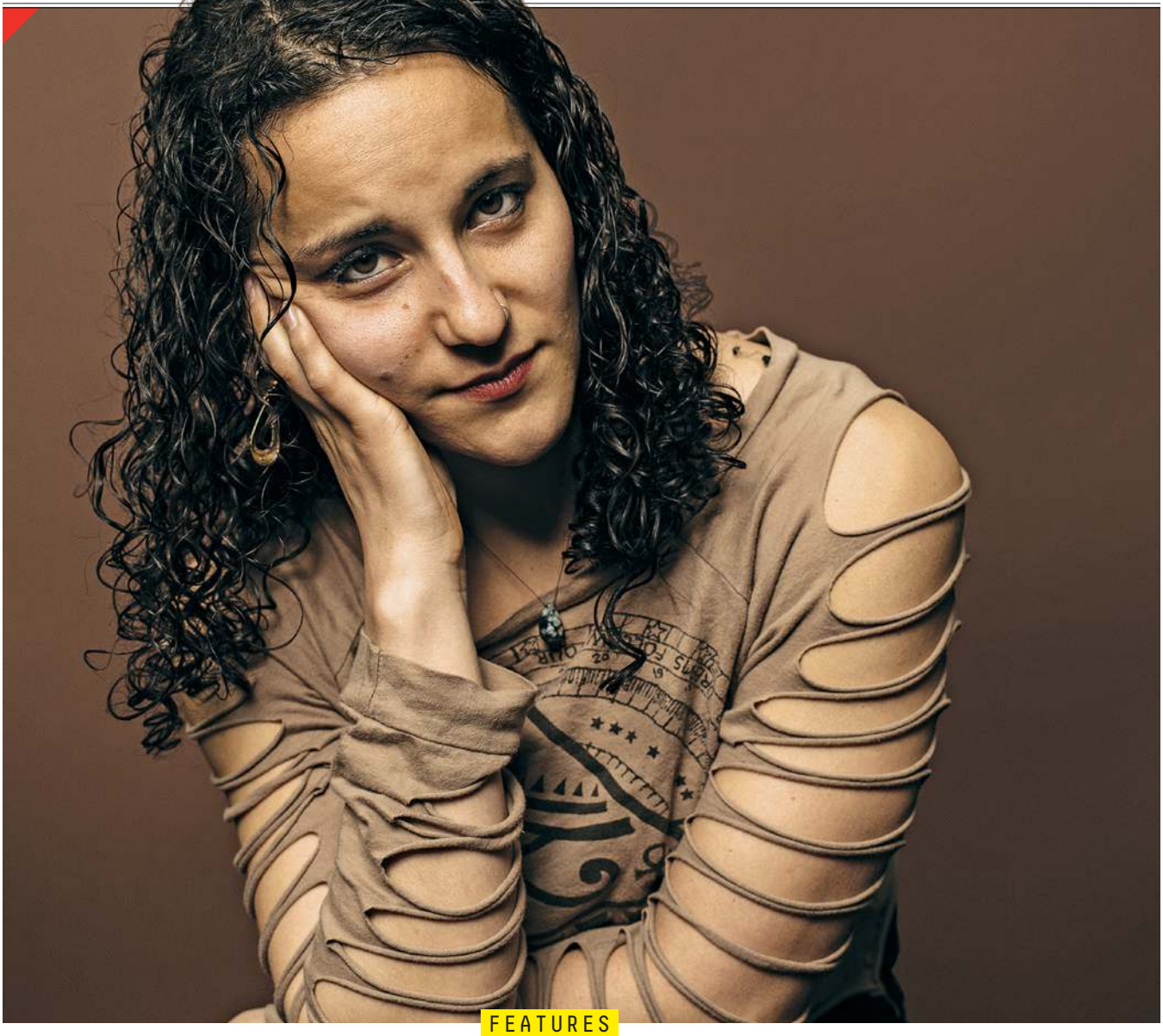

FEATURES

LAW AND DISORDER
Rachel Izzo, above, is one of many sexual assault victims who claim to have been mistreated by New York City police.

COVER CREDIT
Photo illustration by **Picturebox Creative** for *Newsweek*; Photo of Putin by Mikhail Svetlov/Getty

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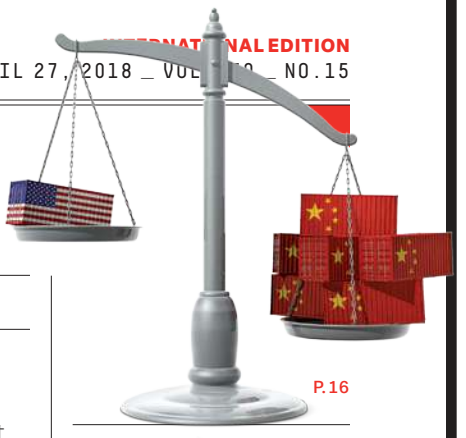

P.16

DEPARTMENTS

In Focus

THE NEW *KAPOW*
With *Avengers: Infinity War,* directors Joe and Anthony Russo continue to bring heart and humor into the Marvel universe.

Periscope

Horizons

Culture

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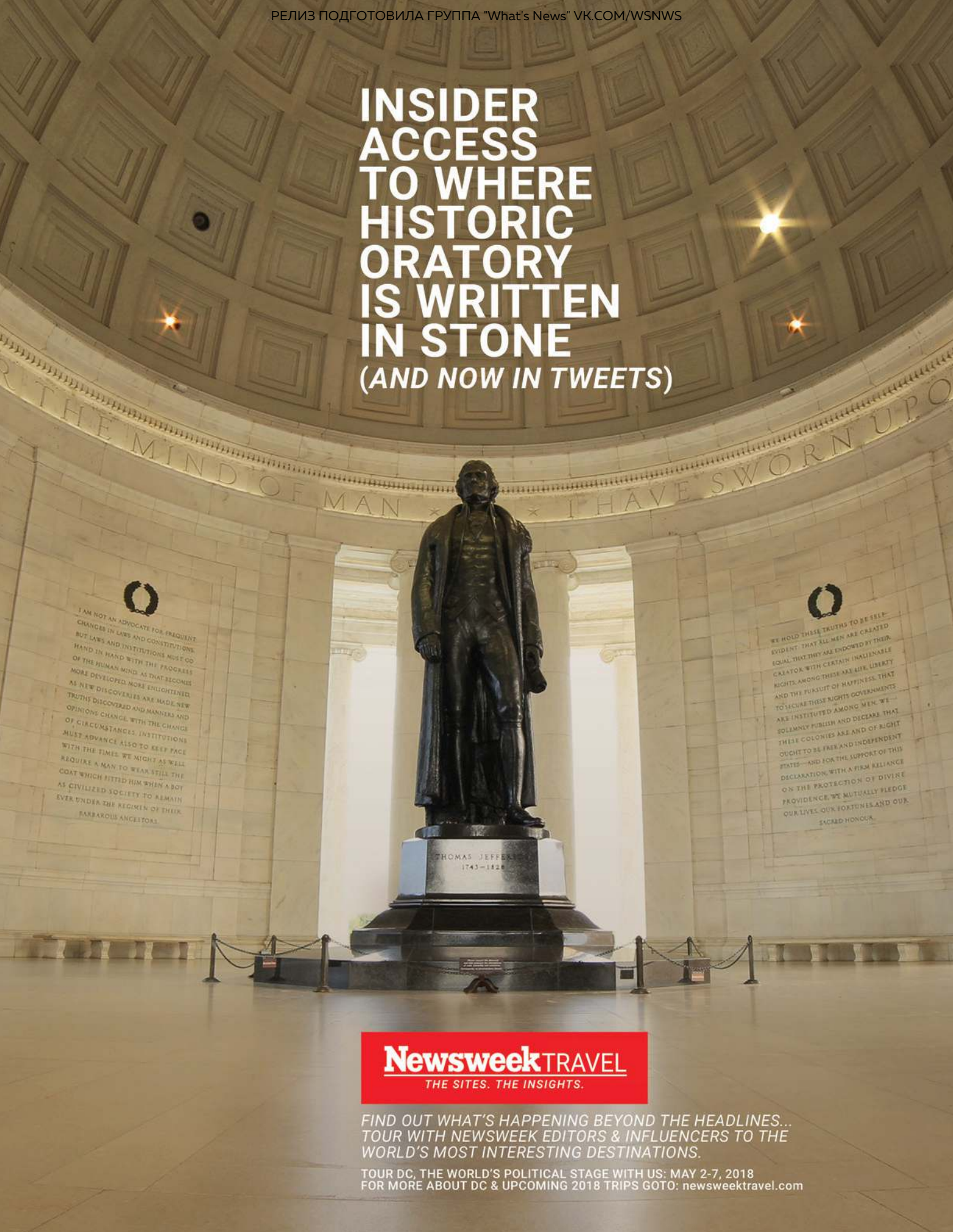


In Focus _ THE NEWS IN PICTURES

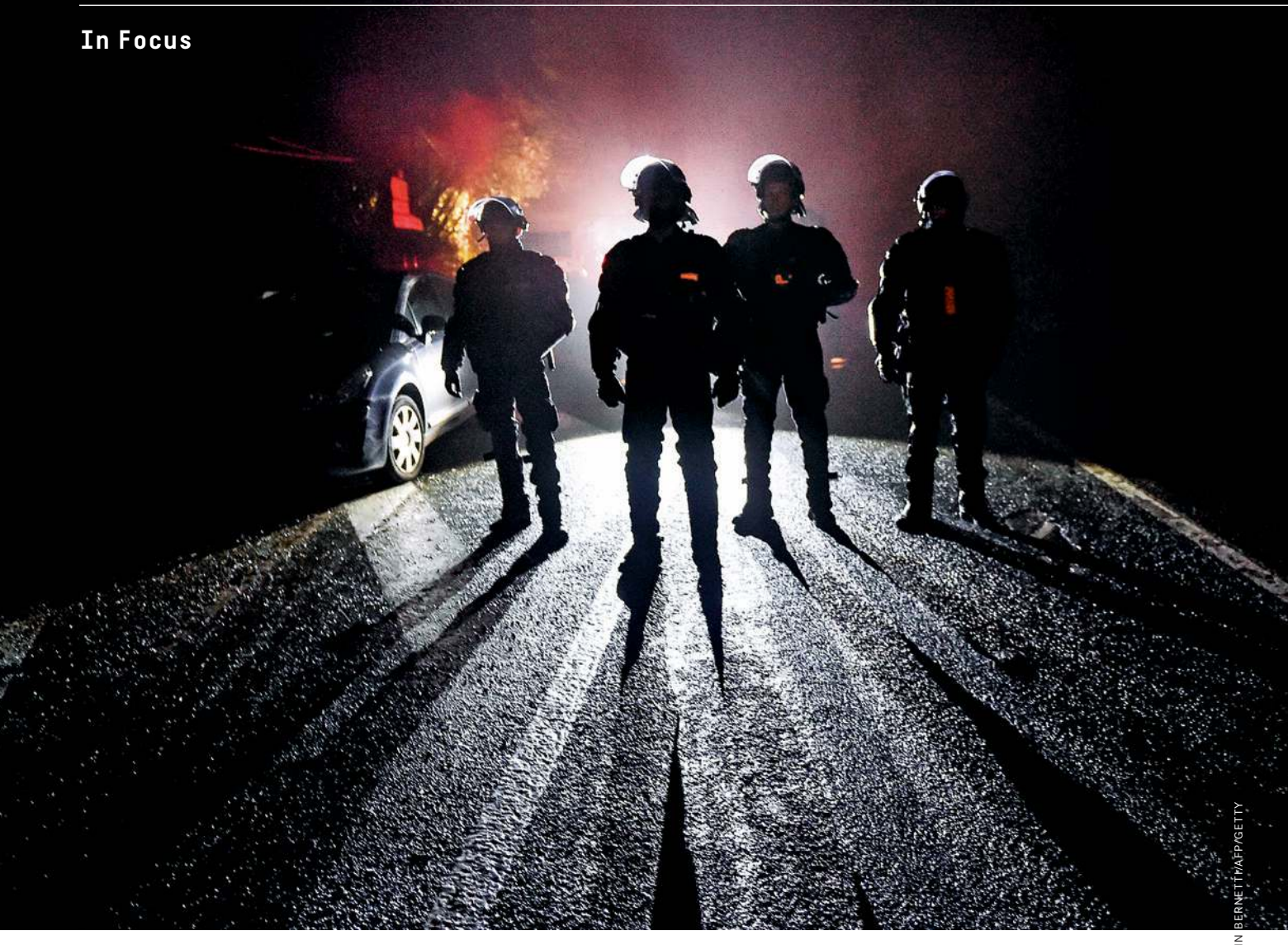
MAR DEL PLATA, ARGENTINA

Whale of an Effort

Rescue workers and volunteers attempt to save a stranded humpback whale on April 9. Despite three days of trying, the 33-foot-long creature died. Conservationists were unsure why the mammal swam aground.

DIEGO IZQUIERDO

DIEGO IZQUIERDO/AFP/GETTY



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: LOIC VENANCE/AFP/GETTY; DREW ANGERER/GETTY; MARTIN BERNETTI/AFP/GETTY

NOTRE-DAME-DES-LANDES, FRANCE

The Riot Stuff

French riot police stand guard on April 9 during the eviction of more than 250 environmental protesters squatting at the site of a proposed airport project. About 2,500 officers stormed the encampment with armored vehicles and tear gas. The protesters responded with Molotov cocktails. Local authorities said 28 police officers and one protester were injured.

→ LOIC VENANCE

UNITED NATIONS

Right-Hand Woman

A day after the U.S., Britain and France launched airstrikes in Syria, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley vetoes a Russian resolution condemning the action during a Security Council meeting on April 14. The aerial assault from the U.S. and its European allies was intended to punish Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for his regime's alleged role in yet another deadly chemical weapons attack against civilians.

→ DREW ANGERER

LAS TRANCAS, CHILE

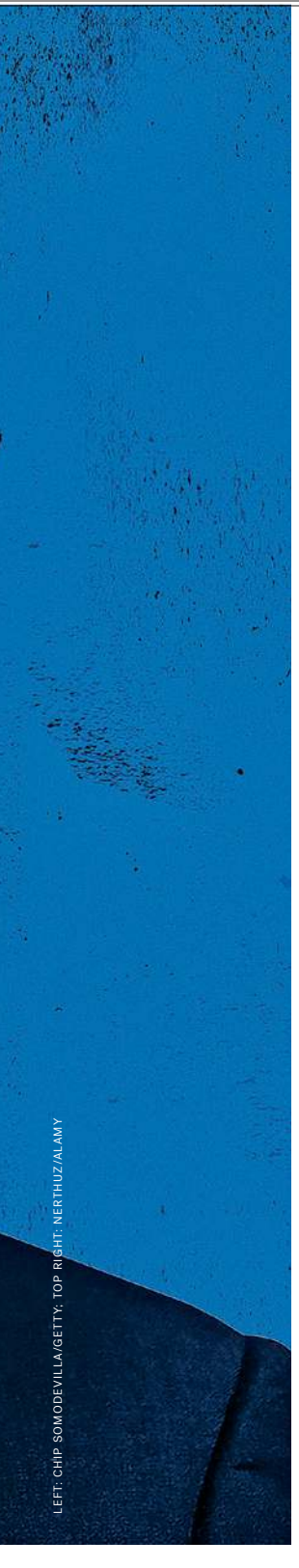
Smoke Signals

Plumes of smoke rise from the Nevado de Chillán volcano on April 6. The government issued an "orange" alert—the second most severe level—around the 10,500-foot-high volcano, located about 250 miles south of Santiago, after detecting a stream of lava in the crater that was capable of spilling over at any time.

→ MARTIN BERNETTI

RO IS ME
To represent Silicon Valley, as Khanna does, is to speak and account for a techno elite given far more to self-celebration than introspection.

"China's ability to retaliate is limited." »P.16



LEFT: CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY; TOP RIGHT: NERTHUZ/ALAMY

POLITICS

Direct Message

Can a young Northern California congressman save Silicon Valley from itself?

AS MARK ZUCKERBERG TESTIFIED IN FRONT of the U.S. Senate Commerce and Judiciary committees, Representative Ro Khanna watched in dismay. This was less because of what the Facebook co-founder and chairman did say—for the most part, bromides about privacy, security and censorship—than because of what the lawmakers arrayed before him didn't.

"This was a missed opportunity," Khanna lamented later that evening in a text message. "The hearing revealed a knowledge gap in Congress about technology." Many of the men and women questioning Zuckerberg were about twice his age, and some were quite a bit older than that. They knew that adversaries like Russia had weaponized social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, but the particulars of the problem clearly eluded them. The 44 legislators who took turns quizzing Zuckerberg showed only a cursory understanding of data collection and encryption, and the lengthy hearing quickly devolved into the kind of exasperating technology tutorial one dreads having to give aging relatives.

It was an amusing day for the purveyors of humorous internet memes. But anyone anxious about the uneasy marriage between democracy and digital technology would not have been reassured. Zuckerberg left Capitol Hill without having to explain the failure that brought him there in the first place: not preventing the improper use of data belonging to 87 million Facebook users by data research firm Cambridge Analytica, which was conducting microtargeting work for Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

Only eight years older than Zuckerberg, Khanna has been called "Silicon Valley's ambassador to Middle America." California's 17th congressional district, which he has represented since 2017, is home to some of the most successful corporations in the world: Apple (market value: $844 billion), Intel ($231 billion), Yahoo ($63 billion), Tesla ($43 billion), eBay ($40 billion) and LinkedIn ($26 billion). Alphabet ($697 billion), with its Googleplex, is one district over, as is Facebook ($483 billion), with its thumbs-up icon announcing its Menlo Park Headquarters, at 1 Hacker Way.

That address captures the mood of Silicon Valley a decade ago: whimsical,

BY

ALEXANDER NAZARYAN

@alexnazaryan

Photo illustration by GLUEKIT

cheeky, maybe even hubristic. This was before anyone had ever heard of the Internet Research Agency, where Vladimir Putin's minions were waging a new kind of war. Psychographic data, of the kind Cambridge Analytica supposedly collected, was not yet for sale to politicians looking for an edge. Trolls were the stuff of medieval legend. And coding savants could not have expected to be lectured by the likes of Senators Chuck Grassley and Dean Heller, as Zuckerberg was earlier this month. The thumb is still there at 1 Hacker Way, but the joke is no longer funny.

"I believe representing Silicon Valley is one of the most important jobs in American politics," Khanna says. To represent Silicon Valley is to speak and account for a techno elite given far more to self-celebration than introspection. Aware of the region's surpassingly good fortunes, and of its closely related tendency to hubris, Khanna has tried to export the former while arguing that it is necessary to tame the latter. He believes that the success of the tech sector is replicable and could serve as economic balm for other parts of the nation, particularly those where mining or manufacturing can no longer vault blue-collar workers into the middle class. Despite troubling disclosures about Facebook and its peers, he believes that most any community would welcome Zuckerberg, along with his Cambridge Analytica problem.

Big Tech has been a remarkably cagey industry, in part because it knows it gives us what nobody else can. It knows that even as we complain about hegemony, we order diapers on Amazon, instead of walking to the corner store. World leaders spar on Twitter, while chefs who once wanted to impress critics now think about what will look good on Instagram. At the same time, Reddit trolls disseminate fake news, which Google algorithms uncritically promote, while terrorists talk freely on WhatsApp, protected by the messaging service's encryption. Silicon Valley is becoming a victim of its own explosive growth, like the too-big-to-fail Wall Street banks that tanked in 2008, plunging the nation into a recession.

Khanna is aware of souring public opinion and has tried to both acknowledge it and reshape it. "You can't be an island of success," he says of the district he represents. "We have to answer the nation's call." If Silicon Valley can answer that call with "humility," Khanna says, the tech behemoths can avoid the kind of onerous regulation other liberal legislators are calling for, such as the General Data Protection Regulation that went into effect in Europe in 2016.

Khanna's indefatigable optimism has positioned him as a potential leader in a Democratic Party unable to reconcile its progressive and centrist elements and desperate for new faces. As a member of the Progressive Caucus, Khanna has advocated for liberal policies such as expansion of the earned-income tax credit. But his corporate past—and corporate constituency—keep him from veering too far into the sort of political fantasy for which Northern California is sometimes known. He may be just what the party needs, a moderate by temperament but by no means a centrist.

"You can have a bold progressive vision coming from Silicon Valley, rooted in patriotism," Khanna says. "And I guess the case study is they elected me."

Yet amid continuing calls to #DeleteFacebook—as well as for Twitter to suspend problematic accounts and Google to live up to its famous "Don't be evil" motto—that sunny vision is increasingly hard to sell, in Washington and elsewhere. And that has forced Silicon Valley's ambassador to play crisis manager, urging patience and promising reform from

"We can't have all of the jobs, all the capital, all of the resources just in Silicon Valley."

JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY

MAKE AMERICA CLICK AGAIN
Zuckerberg's lengthy hearing quickly devolved into an exasperating technology tutorial.

an industry that has never felt the need to listen to politicians.

'A LEGEND IN OUR FAMILY'

If there is an obverse to Trump's America, it is CA-17, a hilly, 185-square-mile refuge south of San Francisco. To the northwest is San Francisco, aglitter with the towering new symbols of techno wealth. To the north and east rise the hills of Oakland and Berkeley, where the graying warriors of the 1960s shuffle down the aisles of organic groceries. The district has only ever sent two Republicans to Congress, the last of them nearly 30 years ago. In 2016, Hillary Clinton won the greater Silicon Valley area with more than 70 percent of the vote; Trump was even less popular there than he was in Manhattan.

Khanna represents the hippies and the techies, but it's not hard to divine where the sympathies of the former Stanford economics instructor lie.

His parents immigrated to the United States from India in 1968. Because of his name and his dark brown skin, Khanna is one of those Americans fated to field questions about where he is really from. The answer is Philadelphia, where he was born in 1976. But it is also India, where his maternal grandfather, Amarnath Vidyalankar, was an activist and politician who spent time in prison. "He was a legend in our family," Khanna says, calling him "the deep inspiration for entering public service."

Shortly after Khanna was born, his family moved to the prosperous Bucks County suburbs north of Philadelphia. The neighbors, uniformly white, were suspicious. There had been an Indian family on the block before who had not decorated their house with Christmas lights—a statement of cultural defiance, in the local view. The Khannas adorned their

house for the holidays, defusing fears. He happily spent his childhood in the town and his parents live there still.

Khanna's patriotism is rooted in this suburban experience. "We're constantly embracing history and culture by reshaping. But we can't reject such a thing as American culture," Khanna says. "We should have respect for certain traditions. I don't think we can be a rootless communal culture."

The mere notion of national culture is anathema to many liberals, who now consider it almost a byword for xenophobia. Khanna acknowledges as much, while also realizing that Democrats have largely ceded patriotism to Republicans. "We need to define American culture in a way that's inspiring," he says, one that embraces and includes.

It's a kind of patriotism tailored to CA-17, the only majority-Asian district in the United States, a miniature of the happily multicultural America that Obama promised was about to come into being. A full 71 percent of workers in the valley's technology sector are immigrants.

This inspirational message would, of course, need a messenger. "You need someone who, intrinsically, in their gut, conveys that the 21st century will be a shining moment for

Big Tech has been a remarkably cagey industry, in part because it knows it gives us what nobody else can.

SUITED FOR THE JOB Khanna believes that Hoover, left, was an "extraordinary commerce secretary." The Department of Commerce building, opposite top, still bears his name.

American exceptionalism," Khanna says, without quite saying that he would very much like to be that person.

'A HUGE OPPORTUNITY'

In the spring of 2004, *The Nation* wrote about a spate of liberal challengers to sitting Democratic members of Congress who supported the war in Iraq. "The most serious" of these candidates, *The Nation* declared, was Khanna, then 27 years old.

At the time, Khanna was new to politics, at least as far as his own electoral prospects were concerned. Years before, as a student at the University of Chicago, he'd knocked on doors for a young politician from nearby Hyde Park: Barack Obama. After law school at Yale, followed by a brief stay in Washington, Khanna moved to the Bay Area, where he worked as a lawyer in private practice just as Silicon Valley was recovering from the dot-com burst of 1999 to 2000. He lost the 2004 primary but, five years later, went to Washington anyway, appointed as a deputy assistant secretary in the Commerce Department by President Obama.

Khanna remembers being confounded by the fact that the department was headquartered in a building named for Herbert Hoover. Khanna knew of him only as one of the nation's worst presidents; he soon learned, however, that Hoover was an "extraordinary commerce secretary," as he puts it today, one who helped spur the rise of the commercial aviation industry and reformed the Bureau of Standards, which helped streamline and clarify business practices.

GOING VIRAL Khanna—seen with his wife, Ritu Ahuja, along with Paul Ryan—believes the success of the tech sector is replicable and could serve as economic balm for other parts of the nation.

In 1922, Hoover wrote a book, *American Individualism*, in which he espoused what he called "progressive individualism," with capitalism curbed by a muscular federal apparatus. There was a utopian quality to the book, and Hoover would have been a perfect ambassador for Silicon Valley with his vision of a beneficent capitalism. And in a way, that is his role today. Hoover Tower looms over the campus of Stanford University, where tech giants like Yahoo and Google were born, and the Hoover Institution, a prominent conservative think tank, is housed on campus.

Khanna's approach to Silicon Valley has some touches of Hooverism. He does not believe that onerous regulations are necessary, but he understands that if companies like Facebook, Google and Twitter resist transparency on a variety of issues—data privacy, Russian-controlled accounts that influence our electoral process, a near-monopoly on advertising enjoyed by the first two of those companies—transparency will be forced upon them. Khanna has proposed an Internet Bill of Rights, which would give users power over how their data are being used and when data breaches have taken place. It would also prevent companies from storing those data indefinitely.

"This is a huge opportunity for tech leaders to work with Congress," Khanna says. Otherwise, he warns, the regulatory power will fall to "a bunch of bureaucrats who, frankly, don't know much about tech," intellectual siblings of the senators who haplessly interrogated Zuckerberg. If regulation is inevitable, better that regulation be informed by the industry in question.

THE RUST BELT SAFARI

"You can blend technology optimism with a progressive vision," Khanna likes to say. But he's a somewhat awkward fit with his party's left wing. It doesn't help that he's worth at least $27 million, making him the fourth-richest member of the exceptionally wealthy delegation from California (total worth: more than $439 million, with Darrell Issa of the San Diego area topping the list). Khanna's wife, Ritu Ahuja, is the daughter of Ohio automobile parts magnate Monte Ahuja.

A Republican might well celebrate these as particularly American success stories, but "we were a little nervous," offers Mark Pocan, the Democratic congressman from Wisconsin who co-chairs the 77-member Progressive Caucus. He says, however, that his fears have since been allayed, as Khanna has come out as an anti-trust crusader and an advocate for expanded Medicare. "I could see him being the person on any committee or any issue," Pocan says.

So can others, who have noted Khanna's persistent ambition, his obvious desire to spend no time as a House backbencher (he is one of very few first-termers to have moved his family to Washington). Khanna disconcerted many Democrats by endorsing California State Senate

FROM LEFT: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY; ROMAN BABAKIN/ALAMY; JEFF MALET/NEWSCOM

JABIN BOTSFORD/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY

CARDS ON THE TABLE Trump speaks at a tech roundtable at the White House. Khanna believes economic progressivism is a better path than endless parsing of the Mueller investigation.

leader Kevin de León, who is seeking to unseat U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, whom some regard as insufficiently liberal. A columnist for *The Mercury News* questioned Khanna's "credentials as a kingmaker," given that Feinstein had been in politics for longer than he'd been alive.

At the same time, Khanna has declined to take a far easier means of self-promotion. Unlike many of his House colleagues, he is not especially interested in impeachment. His Twitter feed is not rife with theories about collusion, what Trump was doing in Russia in 2013, how Jared Kushner wooed real estate investors from the Mideast. Instead, as he put it, there is a more basic question: "Where do we want to take America?" For all his faults, Trump had an answer. Democrats have yet to find one. Khanna is among several young Democrats in the House who see economic progressivism as a better path than endless parsing of the Mueller investigation.

Silicon Valley is becoming a victim of its own explosive growth.

It helps, of course, that his district generates more wealth than many small nations. For all the Silicon "districts" out there, nobody has yet replicated the valley's success. But Silicon Valley is a paradise only for those who can afford it. Glimpse the homeless clustered under freeway overpasses, and the market success of Big Tech can seem like a market failure. Khanna has tried to celebrate the valley while condemning the inequalities it has fostered. "I don't want to live in the Silicon Valley that only has Facebook or Google engineers able to live here," he said at a recent forum on affordable housing.

To survive, he believes, the culture of Silicon Valley must be exported beyond the Bay Area. When that happens, he imagines the entitlement will dissipate, like the fog over San Francisco in late afternoon. "We can't have all of the jobs, all the capital, all of the resources just in Silicon Valley," he says. "It's not good for these companies. It's not good for America." He has worked with Representative Hal Rogers, Republican of Kentucky, on Silicon Holler, a project to bring tech jobs to Appalachia. And he recently toured venture capital firms in the Midwest with Ohio Democrat Tim Ryan in a trip dubbed the "Rust Belt Safari."

And he regularly returns to the Bay Area, holding a monthly town hall in his district. At the one in February, Khanna tried to allay constituents' concerns about North Korea, the loss of civility, Russian meddling. Khanna mentioned his trip to Kentucky, joking that his Indian background had been far less alarming to the people there than the fact that he represented California.

"We are a community that believes in America's future," he said. "If we can make this district a model for the kind of America that we want to see—I think that is the best antidote to the policies of Donald Trump."

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OPINION

Tricks of the Trade

Why China could lose in an economic war with Trump

IT WAS A MASTER CLASS IN PUBLIC relations, and one that may have stopped a trade war. For now. While U.S. President Donald Trump stewed about Beijing on Twitter, Chinese President Xi Jinping played the role of the grown-up and struck a softer tone. On April 10, Xi said his country was committed to becoming a more "open" market. As evidence, he offered to reduce tariffs, particularly the 25 percent levy China slaps on imported automobiles, as well as the limits on foreign ownership of auto plants.

The American president liked what he heard. "Very thankful for President Xi's kind words on tariffs and auto restrictions," Trump tweeted. After weeks of declines, U.S. stock prices soared in relief.

Xi may have been relieved too. The conventional wisdom about a trade war between the world's two largest economies is that both sides would lose, bigly. The standoff, in this view, is a lot like two people aiming guns at their own heads, shouting, "Do as I say, or the idiot gets it!"

BY

BILL POWELL

The reality is a bit more complicated. In a trade war with China, the U.S., if it's smart about it, could "win," or least make sure that China loses more. In fact, as Michael Pettis, a professor of finance at the elite Peking University in Beijing, explains, "the dirty little secret of trade is that for diversified economies with large deficits, such as the U.S., a trade war can actually be positive for growth, at least in the short run, as long as the intervention is done correctly." (He and others argue that the U.S. should focus on reducing the amount of money from abroad that flows into the country to rectify trade imbalances.)

When it comes to trade wars, many reflexively invoke the infamous Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930. That measure helped bring on the Great Depression by accelerating a contraction in global trade. The reason this tariff was so monumentally stupid: The United States ran massive trade surpluses—much like China does today. Its domestic economy could not absorb everything it produced. So it exported the difference. At the time, Pettis notes, "the U.S. had the highest absolute trade surplus in history."

Today, that surplus is long gone, and the United States is the world's economic "shock absorber," as Pettis puts it, taking in half of all the globe's excess savings. It's the only economy in the world big enough, and with sufficient capital markets, to absorb those inflows. All that foreign money has to go somewhere, and a decent chunk of it winds up in real estate or the stock market, leaving Americans suddenly feeling richer and more willing to spend than they otherwise

SPARKS FLY If a Chinese-American trade war ensues, import restrictions on U.S.-based Boeing, for example, could be painful to the aerospace giant, its suppliers and shareholders.

TRADING BLOWS Beijing would likely retaliate against U.S. tariffs, but Xi's hand isn't that strong. In fact, China could suffer greatly because of its trade surpluses.

would be. This extra consumption helps fuel the trade deficit.

The U.S. can respond in two ways. It can allow an increase in unemployment, as foreign producers take market share away from domestic companies. But that, obviously, creates political problems. Or it can increase government spending to keep overall demand high and unemployment relatively low. Guess which it chooses?

Would tariffs of the sort Trump has proposed—as to opposed to what Pettis and others believe would be more effective—actually reduce the trade deficit? Probably not. But if the U.S. chooses that route anyway—and Trump has long expressed an affinity for tariffs—the conventional wisdom is that China will retaliate. It's widely assumed that Beijing has significant weapons with which to do so—weapons that could seriously damage the U.S. and global economy.

But Xi knows better. His ability to retaliate is limited. One thing Beijing could do is stop buying U.S. Treasury debt. Hillary Clinton invoked this possibility on the campaign trail in explaining why the United States was in no position to get tough with China. But that outcome is unlikely. If China did not buy American debt, it would have to repatriate the money it earns from trade, which it receives in dollars. To do so would require selling those dollars and buying the renminbi. That would drive up the value of the Chinese currency significantly, putting the exporters who generated the surpluses at risk. As Pettis puts it, selling U.S. debt "is a completely empty threat."

The standoff is a lot like two people aiming guns at their own heads, shouting, "Do as I say or the idiot gets it!"

Xi, of course, does have one advantage in a trade war: He doesn't have to worry about voters. Trump does, and many of his constituents live in states that could be affected by Chinese tariffs on agricultural products or Boeing airplanes. Beijing could try to intimidate Trump and hope he folds.

Yet China's hand isn't that strong. Yes, import restrictions on specific U.S. companies could be painful to them, their suppliers and shareholders. Boeing, for example, is very vulnerable. A sales ban on U.S. products assembled and then sold in China (hello, Apple) would also hurt. But Beijing's ability to inflict pain on the overall U.S. economy is limited, some analysts believe. U.S. soybean producers, for example, could suffer, but we're not talking about another Great Depression.

Beijing, on the other hand, could suffer greatly because of its surpluses. "To the extent that Chinese retaliation encourages greater trade intervention by the U.S. and the rest of the world," Pettis argues, "China is hugely at risk. Any forced contraction in their surpluses requires either more debt or more unemployment."

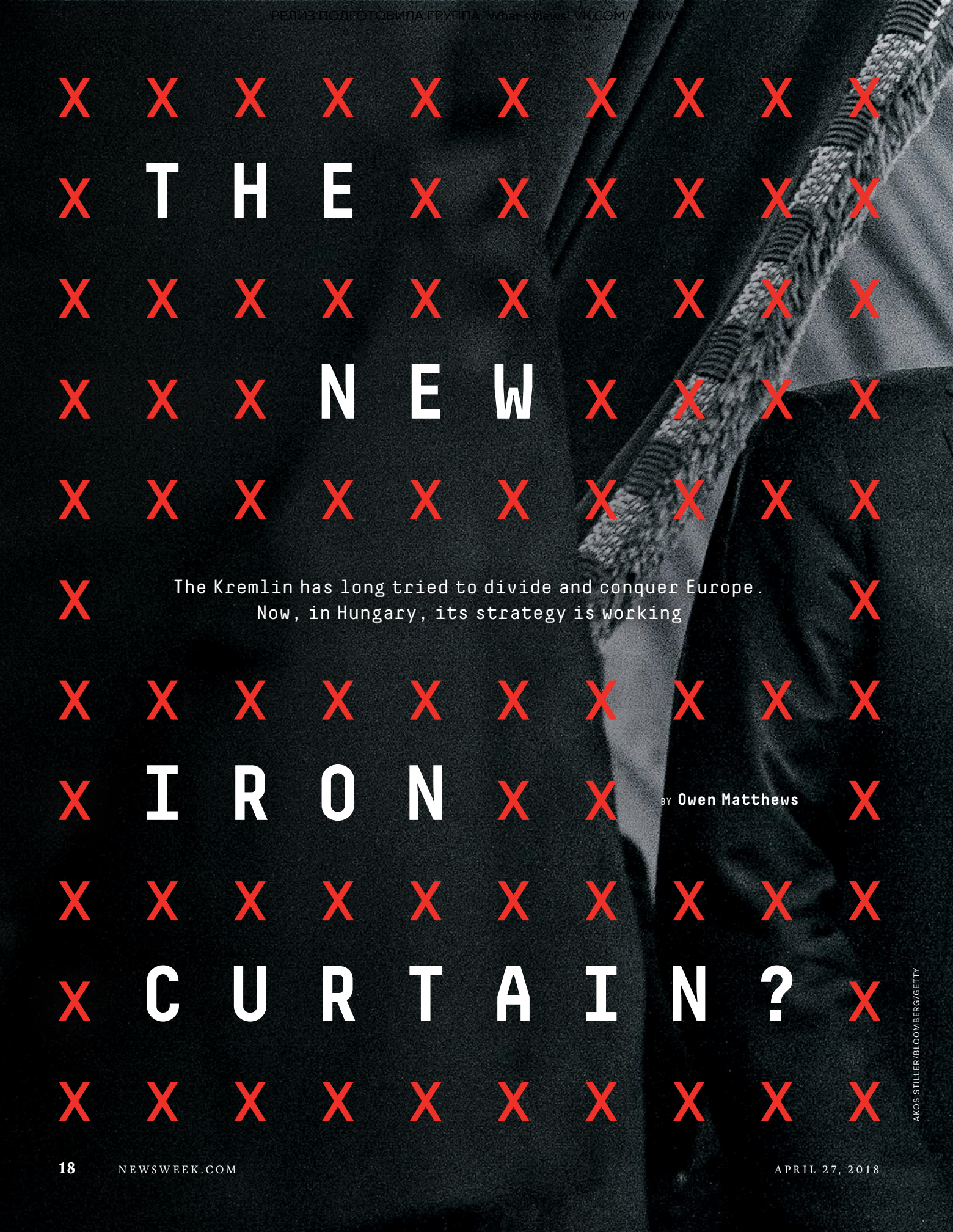
And though Xi doesn't have to worry about voters, he does have to worry about protesters in the streets. He sounded reasonable in early April because he can't really want any part of this game of chicken. Which means it's possible that the specter of a trade war might ultimately vanish and stop haunting the global economy. N

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: TRAVIS DOVE/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; MARK WILSON/GETTY; LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY; PATRICK FOTO/GETTY

THE NEW IRON CURTAIN?

The Kremlin has long tried to divide and conquer Europe. Now, in Hungary, its strategy is working

BY **Owen Matthews**



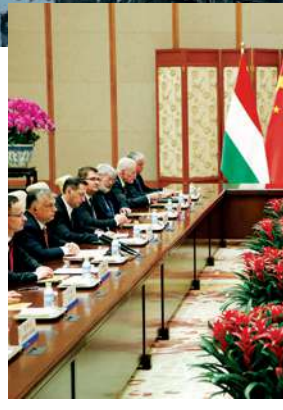
AKOS STILLER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY

STRONGMEN
Putin's support of Orbán has been unprecedented in its scale and scope.

THERE WAS A SPRING CHILL IN THE AIR on April 8, but tens of thousands crowded around the Danube River in Budapest, Hungary, waiting late into the night to hear their hero speak. When he finally emerged, around midnight, they were jubilant, "We have won," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán declared. "We have given ourselves a chance to defend Hungary." Voters had just handed him a landslide victory, a historic third term in office and a supermajority in the parliament. Orbán had run a staunchly anti-immigrant campaign and denounced the European Union as an "empire." And most voters had loved it. So did Russian President Vladimir Putin. For more than a decade, he has helped Orbán spread his divisive brand of anti-EU sentiment across the continent—a process that RT, the Russian state news agency, hailed as "the Orbánization of Europe."

For years, Russia tried to weaken and divide the EU, supporting groups ranging from Catalan separatists in Spain to British Brexit activists. The Kremlin had offered loans to France's National Front and used its propaganda channels to whip up fake news about the persecution of Russian minorities in the Baltics. According to Political Capital, a Budapest-based think tank, Russian-based trolls, Twitter bots and social media sock puppets have been put to work, boosting exaggerated stories of crimes by immigrants and "selling pro-Kremlin narratives within a tabloid, conspiracy package." In the neighboring Czech Republic, the populist, pro-Moscow president, Milos Zeman, was re-elected in February after his pro-EU opponent, Jirí Drahos, fell victim to a concerted smear campaign accusing him of being a pedophile and a Communist collaborator. Most of the stories originated with some 30 Czech websites that Kremlin Watch, a unit run by the Prague-based European Values think tank, has linked to Moscow. The goal? To help pro-Putin sympathizers and sow doubt and discord across Europe, making it harder for Brussels to collectively punish Russian aggression in places such as Ukraine.

The Kremlin has tried to help many of Europe's nationalist parties and politicians. But its support of Orbán has been unprecedented in its scale and scope. It has included not just propaganda but also sweetheart gas deals, multibillion-dollar loans, strategic investments and covert support for violent far-right hate groups. The payoff has been huge—at least for the Kremlin. Orbán has been a pro-Putin voice in Europe, even as the rest of the EU has recoiled from Moscow in the wake of its annexation of Crimea and its support for rebels in eastern Ukraine. The Hungarian leader has spoken out against sanctions on Russia and regularly welcomed Putin to Budapest at a time when other EU leaders were trying to condemn him. He's also installed a Russian-style crony capitalist elite of oligarchs, used loyal businessmen to take over opposition news media and passed legislation to curb the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups. Most important for the Kremlin, Hungary has become the heart of a growing rebellion against the EU's liberal democratic values, principles and rules. "The global rise of conservative nationalism...is the menace of our times," says political economist Will Hutton of Hertford College, University of Oxford. "Europe is reacquainting itself with its darkest demons."



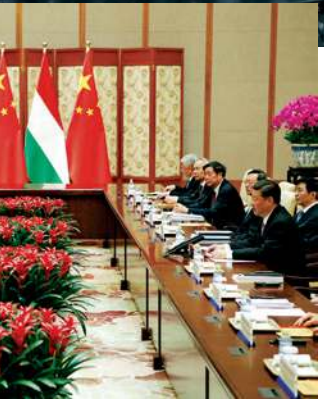
CROWD CONTROL
Soros, left, has accused his former protégé of turning Hungary into a "mafia state" modeled on Putin's. Top, people gather in front of the Hungarian Parliament to hear Orbán, right, speak. Center, a meeting between Chinese and Hungarian leaders.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JASON ALDEN/BLOOMBERG/GETTY; ATTILA KISBENEDEK/AFP/GETTY; LASZLO BALOGH/GETTY; JASON LEE/AFP/GETTY

Russia did not create Europe's populist backlash (or America's, for that matter). But the Kremlin is more than happy to take advantage of it—and in Orbán's Hungary at least, the strategy is working.

Hungarian Renegade

ORBÁN WASN'T ALWAYS A FRIEND TO MOSCOW. HE began his career as an anti-Russian, anti-Communist, liberal dissident. In 1988, he wrote to Hungarian-American financier George Soros—who would later became Orbán's greatest enemy—to ask for help with a scholarship to Oxford University. He got the scholarship, and on his return to Hungary after the fall of Communism, he helped build



Fidesz, a student-oriented, pro-free-market political party. Like many young Eastern European liberals of that era, Orbán believed that joining the EU and NATO would help Hungary overcome its economic stagnation—and free it from Moscow's influence.

In 2004, Orbán's dream was realized when Hungary was accepted into the EU. "We thought that once we joined Europe, that would be the end of all our problems," says Budapest-based publisher Tamas Farkas, a disillusioned early supporter of Fidesz. "Many people...were used to the government looking after all their problems. They thought, We can sit back, and Brussels will make us rich without us doing anything."

Instead, open borders and free trade heralded a massive brain drain of young Hungarians seeking a better life abroad while the economy stagnated. By 2016, nearly 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product consisted of handouts from the EU in the form of subsidies and grants aimed at developing the continent's poorest members. Hungary is today among the greatest net beneficiaries of EU funds, receiving 4.5 billion euros ($5.5 billion) while contributing less than 1 billion euros ($1.23 billion) to the EU annual budget.

At the same time, Hungary also became one of the most corrupt countries in the EU, second only to Bulgaria in graft and official theft, according to Transparency International, an anti-corruption NGO. "People became angry when they realized that the EU was not a free ride," Farkas says. "They began voting for politicians who told them all their problems were caused by outsiders, not by them."

As recently as October 2008, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Georgia, Orbán, then the country's opposition leader, was railing against Russian aggression. "What happened [in Georgia] is something we have not seen since the end of the Cold War," he said. April Foley, then the U.S. ambassador in Budapest, reported to Washington that Orbán believed that the greatest threat to Hungary was "the survival and return of Russia and the far left," according to State Department cables published by WikiLeaks. "Orbán may be no angel," wrote Foley, "but he is on the side of the angels on these issues."

Later, however, as Orbán campaigned in the run-up to elections in 2010, he found that populist, xenophobic rhetoric was a hit with voters. At the same time, his long-serving economic adviser György Matolcsy persuaded him that his liberal worldview was out of date. According to a major investigative project by the independent Hungarian journalistic group Direkt36, Matolcsy managed to convince Orbán that the emerging East would soon become not just the most important economic

> "THE NEW POLITICS IS NOT LEFT VERSUS RIGHT. IT IS GLOBALIST VERSUS NATIONALIST."

AKOS STILLER/BLOOMBERG/GETTY[3]

player in the West but also its dominant political model. In November 2009, Orbán traveled to St. Petersburg to see Putin; the next month, he went to Beijing to meet Xi Jinping, now China's president.

Orbán was apparently impressed by both men. Soon, he was citing Russia and China as exemplary models—and declaring, with the zeal of a convert, his aim of building "an illiberal state based on national foundations" in Hungary. Orbán is like "Benito Mussolini, the former socialist journalist turned fascist dictator," says Vladimir Tismaneanu, a professor of politics at the University of Maryland. "He knows the liberal tradition and the value it places on pluralism. He comes from the civil society and does everything to annihilate it." In April 2010, after a campaign based on his nationalistic new platform, Orbán was elected prime minister.

Putin was evidently no less impressed by Orbán—or at least by the disruptive possibilities of his sudden enthusiasm for nationalist values. But how could Russia help spread his incendiary message?

Billions in Lost Profits

THE ANSWER SOON BECAME CLEAR. ORBÁN, NOW prime minister, returned to Russia in November of that year for a meeting with Putin. There, they discussed a thorny problem that only the Russian leader could solve. In 2009, Surgutneftegas, the Russian state-owned energy giant, had bought 21.2 percent of Mol, Hungary's biggest oil company. The government that preceded Orbán's had prevented the Russians from exercising shareholder rights, which angered Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin. According to the WikiLeaks cables, the U.S. Embassy reported to Washington that Sechin had threatened Mol's CEO that he was "not only fighting with Surgutneftegas, but with the Russian state, which has tools that companies do not have."

The last thing the newly elected Orbán wanted was a showdown with Moscow. Instead, he proposed that Hungary buy out Surgutneftegas's stake in Mol. That would not only help Orbán assert his control over the company but would aid him domestically as well. Sándor Csányi was one of Hungary's wealthiest men, head of the country's largest bank and vice president of Mol. A state buyout of the company would help Orbán curb Csányi's influence—and prepare the way for Orbán to take control of the country's energy market. But for that to happen, Sechin, Russia's oil industry bulldog, would have to surrender the stake. It was a choice, from Putin's point of view, between profits and geopolitics. The latter won out. By April 2011, Moscow's stake in Mol was in Hungarian state hands.

The next favor that Orbán needed from Putin involved MET, the country's gas-trading company. It was originally founded by Mol, but by the time Orbán came to power, its ownership structure was opaque. MET had deals to import gas from both Western suppliers and from Russian gas giant Gazprom. In 2011, gas supplied by the West was cheaper than buying it from Russia, which allowed the middlemen of MET to make much greater profits if they were allowed to wriggle out of long-standing contracts with Gazprom. According to a study by the Corruption Research Center Budapest, a series of decisions made by the Orbán-controlled government allowed MET to increase supplies from the West and netted the company's billions. More important, it allowed utility prices to consumers to fall, further endearing Orbán to voters.

Gazprom willingly paid the price. The Russian company had a so-called take-or-pay agreement with MET, in theory obliging the Hungarians to pay up

x "WE x THOUGHT x x x THAT x WOULD x

POWER PLAY
A state buyout of Mol, Hungary's biggest oil company, helped Orbán curb the influence of Csányi, left. Top left, the Duna oil refinery in Szazhalombatta. Below, the control room of the Paks nuclear power plant.

for the full amount of gas they had contracted to buy, whether they used it or not. And though Gazprom complained bitterly when the German energy company E.ON defaulted on its agreement, it remained silent on the Hungarians' delinquency. That decision cost Russia billions in lost profits. But again, the payoff was political—cheap energy prices were a major factor in Orbán's second election victory in 2014.

Around the same time, Russia also decided to help Orbán with nuclear energy. The Hungarian government planned to build two new reactors to go alongside a Communist-era power station near the central Hungarian town of Paks. Delegations from U.S. nuclear company Westinghouse, French energy company Areva and contractors from Japan and South Korea visited Paks with a view to making a bid. But in August 2013, Orbán privately met with the head of Russia's Rosatom, a state-owned nuclear energy corporation. Though the outcome of the meeting would not become public until Putin and Orbán announced it in January 2014, the Hungarian premier had agreed to award the Paks expansion project to Rosatom without a public tender. A key factor in the decision: The Russian government offered to lend Orbán 10 billion euros ($12.3 billion)—by far the largest investment in Hungary in years.

Putin's Playbook

AS THE SECRET NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PAKS reactor deal were being conducted, a wave of migrants flocked to Europe's borders. The crisis triggered controversy and soul-searching by the continent's most prominent leaders. "The new politics is not left versus right," Steve Bannon, President Donald Trump's former chief strategist, told an audience in Washington in March. "It is globalist versus nationalist." In 2013, Orbán emerged as Europe's most powerful anti-globalist voice, one that enjoyed ridiculing the Brussels elite, to the Kremlin's delight.

Speaking on a holiday that commemorates Hungary's 1848 revolution against the Habsburg Empire, he told a large crowd of admirers that Christian Europe and Hungary were waging a "civilizational struggle" against a wave of mass migration, organized by a network of troublemakers and "NGOs paid by international speculators." Among that last group, he singled out his old sponsor Soros—who funds many civil society groups and a university in Budapest—in terms that came perilously close to anti-Semitic. "Many view such tactics as crude, distasteful and even borderline racist, stirring unpleasant memories from the 1930s," says veteran foreign correspondent and Budapest resident Adam Lebor. "But they worked...because they focused on ideas that challenge Western liberal taboos: sovereignty, effective borders, the importance of a shared history and culture and a sense of national unity."

Hungarian liberals and journalists have been fighting a losing battle against Orbán's undoubtedly popular message of national exceptionalism. "Orbán's bigoted vision leaves me ashamed to be Hungarian," independent journalist Kata Karáth blogged recently. "What I hate most is the way the Hungarian government tries to define what a 'real' Hungarian should be...white, heterosexual, Christian or at least non-Muslim."

Yet Orbán's relentless attacks on refugees and immigrants have proved to be a winning message not just at home but across central Europe. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz and German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer have both echoed his hard-line message on immigration—and publicly

"THAT ONCE WE JOINED EUROPE, BE THE END OF ALL OUR PROBLEMS."

welcomed him as an honored guest. "More and more, political leaders in Europe are coming to the same conclusion," says Fidesz's spokesman, Balazs Hidveghi. "Viktor Orbán is right."

Orbán also took pages out of Putin's playbook: packing formerly independent institutions with his supporters and creating a network of cronies bound to himself through corruption. He used his parliamentary majority to bring formerly independent arms of the Hungarian state and society, including prosecutors' offices, government auditors and the media, under Fidesz control. The EU was outraged. "You signed up to the values of the union. You have violated every single one of them," Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's chief Brexit negotiator, said in March. "You want to keep the EU funds, but you don't want our values."

Soros, meanwhile, has accused his former protégé of turning Hungary into a "mafia state" modeled on Putin's. And the EU has also uncovered extensive evidence that its own funds have been channeled toward enriching Orbán's friends and family. This year, the EU's anti-fraud monitor found "serious irregularities" and "conflicts of interest" in the awarding of contracts for upgrading street lighting in towns and cities worth more than 40 million euros ($49 million), which went to companies owned or controlled by Orbán's son-in-law István Tiborcz. Lorinc Mészáros, the mayor of Orbán's home village and an old school friend of the prime minister's, is a gas plumber by trade but now owns publishers, hotels, a nuclear engineering company and a bank. He has become one of Hungary's richest men during his schoolmate's tenure. Both Tiborcz and Mészáros have denied any wrongdoing.

But as former Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Balázs told CNN in April, "Orbán is...following the Russian model. He...has made a very sharp turn towards Eastern dictatorship."

A Good, Reliable Friend

YET IT WAS IN MARCH 2014 WHEN ORBÁN'S friendship with the Kremlin really began paying off. That's when Russian troops in unmarked uniforms overran the Crimean Peninsula. For most European leaders, the move transformed Putin from unruly neighbor to pariah. That status was cemented in July 2014 when a Malaysian Airlines Boeing plane was shot down over eastern Ukraine by rebels using a Russian army Buk rocket system. Both the EU and the U.S. imposed several waves of increasingly harsh sanctions, which excluded most Russian companies from raising international credit and blocked key Putin courtiers from holding assets in the West.

The EU's position required a unanimous vote of

"ORBÁN IS FOLLOWING THE RUSSIAN MODEL. HE HAS MADE A VERY SHARP TURN TOWARDS EASTERN DICTATORSHIP."

FROM LEFT: DAVID W. CERNY/REUTERS; ALEXANDER ERMOCHENKO/ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY; HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY; ATTILA BERES/MAGYAR NEMZET/REUTERS

GREAT MIGRATION
From left: Migrants walk toward a border crossing in Hungary; the remains of a Ukrainian transport plane in Luhansk; men on top of a tank during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution; and Mészáros, the mayor of Orbán's home village.

all members, and Orbán—along with Greece and Cyprus, Russia's traditional allies—was skeptical about sanctions. A major diplomatic effort, led by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, brought Greece and Cyprus in line. "Sometimes, you have to remind people who is paying their bloody bills," says one EU diplomat who is familiar with the negotiations but was not authorized to speak on the record. "Merkel was very determined to have a united European front against Russian aggression."

Orbán signaled his tacit support for Putin by hosting him in Budapest no fewer than three times after 2014. Putin would drop by on the slimmest of excuses—for instance, in August 2016 to attend the World Judo Championships, where the two leaders sat joking and laughing as they watched the matches. Protesters were kept well away from the Russian president's motorcade, despite having secured permits for demonstrations.

Orbán invariably signaled his skepticism over sanctions, as well as his disregard for the EU's attempts at collectively condemning the Kremlin. "The western part of [Europe] has manifested a very anti-Russian stance and policies," Orbán told a joint press conference in Budapest in February 2017. "The era of multilateralism is at an end."

Putin, in response, called Hungary an "important and reliable partner" for Russia. And being welcome to visit central Europe at a time when Brussels was labeling Russia a rogue state was a huge diplomatic asset. Putin "wants to show NATO and the EU that he has a good, reliable friend," former Hungarian Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky told *The Financial Times* at the time of Putin's 2017 visit. "A Trojan horse within the alliance."

Yet one thing is still holding Orbán back from all-out rebellion against Brussels over sanctions. Most Hungarian voters may be sympathetic to Putin's conservative worldview. But many, especially among the older generation who are Orbán's core constituency, still see Russia as a colonizing power that suppressed a democratically elected Hungarian government in 1956. So when 23 countries in March expelled over 160 Russian diplomats in the wake of the attempted murder of former Russian military intelligence officer Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, England, Hungary expelled one too.

EU sanctions on Russia come up for renewal every six months, and so far, Orbán, for all his rhetoric, has obeyed Brussels's line on every vote since 2014. "There is not one element of our decisions or policies that can suggest that we are closer to Russia or Mr. Putin than any other Western country," insists Hungarian government spokesman Zoltán Kovács.

Putin might hope for more support from Orbán. But as the Kremlin's decadelong bet shows, Russia is ready to play a long game. Its investment has already begun paying dividends. Orbán's landslide victory in April shows that conservative nationalism is firmly entrenched in Hungary and is spreading, as demonstrated by the steady growth of populist parties ranging from Alternative for Germany to the Danish People's Party. According to Hungarian political scientist Ágoston Mráz, what European elites really fear is that Orbán's vision resonates much more deeply among voters than any alternative that Brussels can offer. "National egoism is becoming an attractive alternative to integration," warned European Council President Donald Tusk last year in a stark letter to all heads of European states. "In a world full of tension and confrontation, what is needed is...political solidarity of Europeans. Without [it], we will not survive."

With a sanctions-weakened economy, Russia can't challenge the EU economically. Militarily, despite Putin's recent talk of new generations of nukes and a massive increase in Kremlin military spending, U.S. support for NATO still ensures massive superiority for the alliance over Moscow. But when it comes to propaganda, Putin has proved a master. He seems to know that if the EU is ever to unravel, it's most likely to do so from the inside out.

PAIN AND SURVIVAL
Stirling, who was sexually assaulted, says the NYPD has a deeply rooted problem with how it handles reports of rape.

THE NYPD SAYS IT HAS IMPROVED THE WAY IT TREATS RAPE VICTIMS.

‘The System Has Failed Me’

BUT SOME SAY IT HASN’T GONE NEARLY FAR ENOUGH

by

JOSH SAUL

portrait by

SASHA ARUTYUNOVA

RACHEAL STIRLING'S NECK THROBBED AS the 6 train rumbled over the tracks. It was late afternoon in September 2014, and Stirling was headed uptown from her East Village apartment. She stepped off the subway on 125th Street in East Harlem and trudged toward a boxy brick building, the headquarters of the New York Police Department's Special Victims Division.

She had hoped for a bright, clean office full of relatively friendly detectives, men and women who were eager to help. But when she walked inside, an officer led her down a dark, dingy hallway into a small room with plain white walls. There, she waited nervously, going over what had happened in her mind—details she had filed with her local precinct the day before. Soon, the door opened, and Lukasz Skorzewski, a baby-faced detective in the Special Victims Division, walked in. He sat across the table, and almost immediately, she says, she had a bad feeling. Not only had he not read her complaint, she tells *Newsweek*, but when he asked her what had happened, he seemed confrontational, brusque.

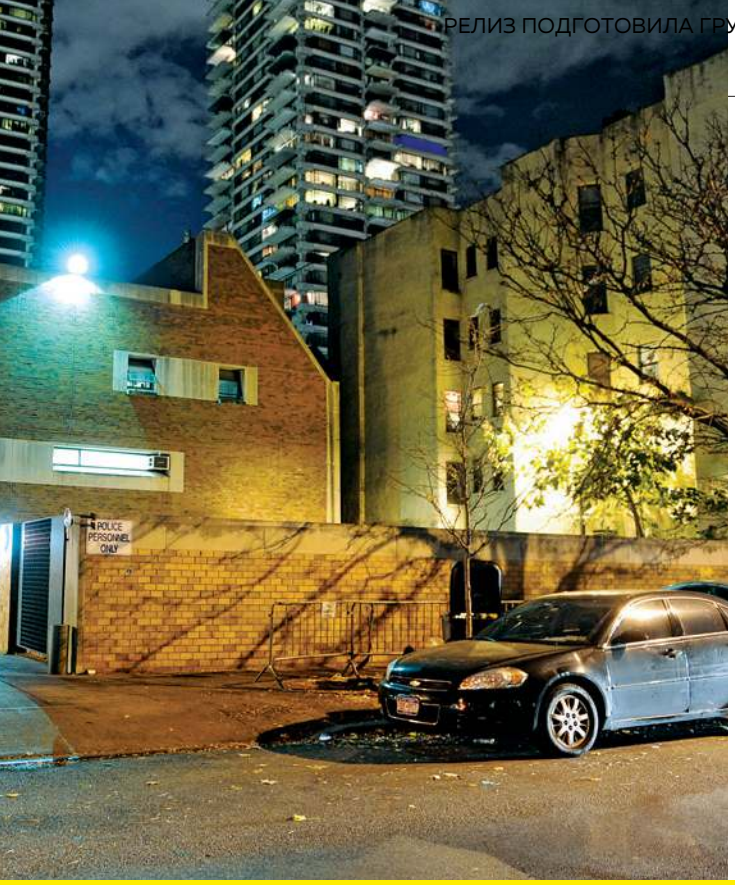
Three days earlier, according to a statement Stirling later made in court, she had been hanging out at her apartment with Juan Scott. He lived on her block, and the two had been enjoying a "carefree summer fling." But as Stirling, then 26, sat barefoot next to Scott on her bed that evening, he suddenly made a confession: He liked to climb onto his roof to watch naked women through their windows, then find them on the street and ask them out. "Kind of makes you wonder how I found you," said Scott. He then started taking off his clothes and suggested they have sex. Stirling felt uncomfortable. His comments were disturbing, she recalls, and she told him she didn't want to sleep with him.

Enraged, Scott smashed a beer bottle on the floor, the shattered glass blocking her path to the door. He started screaming at her and pinned her down, threatening to rape her. Stirling cried and begged him to stop. At one point, Scott slammed Stirling's head into the wall and shoved his fingers inside her. This is it, she thought. This is how I die.

After hours of Scott screaming and sexually assaulting her, according to Stirling's statement, he apologized and used a broom to clean up the broken glass. Stirling realized her only chance to get away from him was to act as if everything was normal, so she pretended she wanted a cigarette and suggested they go outside to smoke. Once they reached the sidewalk in front of the building, Scott asked for a hug and a kiss; Stirling agreed, hoping to keep him calm. They said goodbye, and as he walked away, she stepped back into her building and locked the door behind her. Later, she went to the hospital and learned she had a broken rib, a sprained hip and a concussion.

As she sat across from Skorzewski at the police station,

HER TOO Stirling is one of many sexual assault victims who say they experienced poor treatment by the NYPD. At right, the precinct in East Harlem, which once housed the Special Victims Division.



FROM LEFT: SASHA ARUTYUNOVA FOR NEWSWEEK; CHRISTOPHER SADOWSKI

"THEY TREATED ME LIKE I WAS LYING AND DIDN'T BELIEVE ME FOR AN ENTIRE MONTH."

Stirling's head and hip still hurt. She stared at him, waiting for his response. But he seemed unconvinced by her story, she thought. He told her she should call her attacker to record the conversation and get him to confess to the assault, a standard investigative technique. But the thought of calling Scott was terrifying. During the attack, Scott had threatened to find and rape her whenever he wanted to have sex, and now she was supposed to casually call him up? Skorzewski pressed her, asking, "What are you afraid of?" she recalls in an interview with *Newsweek*.

Stirling breathed. She swallowed her fear. She picked up her cell, dialed the number. The detective told her to act normally, to avoid conflict. They needed Scott to feel comfortable; she had to act as if she'd like to see him again.

At first, Scott seemed suspicious, but Stirling kept talking, mollifying his concerns. And as the detective listened in, Scott eventually apologized for the assault. Stirling felt relieved. Skorzewski had a confession, she thought, and could now quickly arrest him.

Her relief didn't last. After she hung up the phone, she says, the detective told her the attack was just a misdemeanor that wouldn't result in any time behind bars. "He's not going to prison for this," Skorzewski said, then tossed her case file to the side of the desk. (Through his lawyer, Skorzewski did not respond to multiple requests for comment.)

Stirling was stunned. She pleaded with the detective. "If he did this to me, he's definitely going to do it again to the next woman who rejects him," she recalls saying. "He's going to do this again."

'A Long Way to Go'

SIX MONTHS AFTER DOZENS OF WOMEN ACCUSED HOLLYWOOD mogul Harvey Weinstein of rape and sexual harassment, thousands of women have come forward on social media and shared their own stories of mistreatment, under the hashtag #MeToo.

Yet only about a quarter of women in the U.S. who are raped report the attack to law enforcement, according to national data from the Department of Justice. Advocates for sexual assault victims say their reluctance is, in part, related to the ways that police investigate sex crimes. In recent years, Justice Department probes have identified several police departments across the country that regularly fail in their handling of rape and sex crime cases. In Baltimore, federal investigators discovered that detectives rarely tried to identify or interview suspects or witnesses, even when women clearly identified them after being raped. In Memphis, Tennessee, police often failed to submit rape kits for testing, according to a retired lieutenant who testified last November as part of an ongoing lawsuit filed by victims.

New York City has similar problems. Stirling is just one of many sexual assault victims who say they experienced poor or careless treatment at the hands of Special Victims detectives. About half of the nearly 700 sexual assault victims whom the nonprofit Crime Victims Treatment Center in New York City helps each year report some kind of negative interaction with the police, like the detectives appearing bored or dismissive or not calling them back for weeks, says Christopher Bromson, the group's executive director. And about 15 percent of those victims report "egregious" treatment, such as a detective saying something like "This wasn't a rape," Bromson says.

A big part of the problem, critics say: Many investigators in the city's Special Victims Division have little to no prior investigative experience; about a third of new recruits come directly from patrol duty, according to a March report by the city's Department of Investigation, the agency that probes internal corruption. Recruits receive just five days of formal specialized training, compared with six to eight weeks of instruction for a motorcycle patrol officer, the watchdog found.

Prosecutors have said those detectives sometimes mistreat victims, close cases too quickly and discourage people from pursuing prosecution. "The detectives were yelling at the victims and saying inappropriate things, such as 'The district attorney is going to make you look like a slut on trial,'" Lisa Friel, a chief of the district attorney's Special Victims Bureau at the time, said in 2009 in a

confidential draft of an NYPD memo written about a poorly performing Special Victims detective and obtained by *Newsweek*. "They also threatened the victims that they're going to lock them up."

The NYPD says it has undertaken a number of efforts to change the Special Victims Division's culture in recent years, all aimed at treating sexual assault victims with more sensitivity. A special unit now reviews all sex crime complaints, about 8,000 each year, to make sure they're correctly classified as felonies if necessary. Another team investigates cases where police suspect a date rape drug like GHB was involved. The NYPD even moved the Special Victims headquarters from the higher-crime East Harlem location Stirling visited to a calmer spot in the East Village.

In one major reform that began last year, the division began allowing victim advocates to review a sample of random felony cases to help them better understand the process and allow them to weigh in on it. The department also implemented new interviewing training for detectives. This, the NYPD says, is helping it produce better information and evidence from victims without re-traumatizing them. Called forensic experiential trauma interview, or FETI, the technique prioritizes conversation over interrogation, with detectives asking broad questions about what the victim experienced. "It's going to transform the way police interact with victims," Susan Herman, the NYPD's deputy commissioner for collaborative policing, told *Newsweek* in an interview late last year.

The NYPD is the largest police department in the country, and its practices can have an outsized impact on how U.S. law enforcement deals with rape and sexual violence. "I think we as a police agency are far ahead of most police departments in sexual assault investigative services," Deputy Chief Michael Osgood, who took over as head of the Special Victims Division in 2010 as part of an effort to overhaul it, said in the same interview. "I'd be surprised if any other police departments are superior to us."

Critics say problems remain. The recent Department of Investigation report found the Special Victims Division was severely understaffed, with just 67 detectives working 5,661 cases last year. (That's 20 times the caseload of homicide detectives.) In part to cope with the staffing shortage, the division downgraded "acquaintance" rapes—assaults where the victim knows the attacker—according to the report. NYPD leadership instead directed detectives to prioritize "stranger" rapes and cases that attract more media attention. The report called for the NYPD to overhaul the Special Victims Division and double its number of detectives. (In a statement, the NYPD bashed the report as inaccurate and misleading. It said there are actually 85 Special Victims detectives currently catching cases and maintained that the division's investigators are the best trained in the department. An NYPD spokesman added that the total head count in the division increased by 36 people this year.)

The fallout from the report was swift. The City Council held a hearing April 9 as lawmakers proposed legislation to improve the division. "The criminal justice system is not nearly as responsive to victims as it should be," Terri Poore, policy director at the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, a policy group in Washington, D.C., told *Newsweek* in an interview last year. "We have a long way to go." The NYPD's Herman acknowledged as much. "We need to get better," she says.

Stirling—whose story *Newsweek* corroborated with court records, emails and her contemporaneous notes—couldn't agree more. She says her experience with Skorzewski has led her to believe the NYPD has a deeply rooted problem with how it handles reports of rape and sexual assault. As she puts it: "I followed the rules to a T, and that did nothing for me."

'Call the Cops'

AFTER HER MEETING WITH SKORZEWSKI, STIRLING, A COPYWRITER, moved into a family friend's apartment in SoHo. She was terrified

"THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY IS GOING TO MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE A SLUT ON TRIAL."

JEFFERSON SIEGEL/NY DAILY NEWS/GETTY[2]

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
After the arrest of Scott, left, Stirling didn't feel thankful. She felt angry at Skorzewski, above, for how he handled her case.

Scott might return and attack her, and her body broke out in hives from the stress. Every few days, she took a cab to the front door of her apartment so she could sneak in to feed her cat. (She had a roommate, but he often stayed with his boyfriend.)

Stirling hadn't spoken to Scott since she filed charges, but a few weeks later he realized she had reported the attack and began to send her threatening texts. "I will see you eventually," he wrote in a message Stirling provided to *Newsweek*. "You live on the same block."

Worried for her safety, Stirling pressed Skorzewski to look for Scott at his parents' house on Long Island or at his other relatives' East Village apartments. She begged the detective to put him behind bars. "You're the only person who can help me," she wrote in an email. "The sooner this guy is arrested, the sooner I can regain a sense of normalcy." But the detective never responded, she claims.

On October 8, a little over two weeks after the attack, Stirling moved back into her apartment. She was still afraid, but her injuries hadn't healed, and she didn't feel strong enough to move from home to home as a guest. About a week later, around 11 p.m. on October 16, she was getting ready for bed after a long day at work when she heard a loud knock at the door. Her roommate looked out the peephole and spotted Scott. "It's him," her roommate whispered. "Call the cops." Which she did.

Scott stayed in the hallway for about 20 minutes, repeatedly calling and texting her. She answered once, because the number was blocked and she thought it was the police, then hung up when she heard him say, "Please drop the charges." But by the time the patrol officers arrived, about half an hour later, Scott was gone. Stirling told the officers they could probably find him at his apartment down the street. But the officers shrugged, she claims, and declined, saying Special Victims detectives would deal with him in the morning.

Three days passed before Stirling heard from the police again, she says. It was October 19, and a detective called to say Scott was behind bars and she needed to come uptown and identify him. She felt excited, relieved. But the feeling didn't last. When she arrived at the station, the Special Victims detectives told her that Scott had attacked another woman; he had assaulted her only hours after he showed up at Stirling's building. This time, the victim was a stranger. Around 4 a.m. the next morning, he had followed a 20-year-old into her apartment in Manhattan's Stuyvesant Town. Inside the elevator car, he forced her to the ground and pulled up her skirt to assault her with his fingers—just as he had with Stirling three weeks earlier, according to the criminal complaint.

The woman screamed, and residents of the building came out of their apartments to see what was going on. Scott ran, but security cameras captured him fleeing. The next day, a Special Victims detective arrested him at his mother's house on Long Island—the address Stirling says she gave Skorzewski multiple times.

When she arrived at Special Victims headquarters, detectives showed Stirling grainy surveillance photos of the man in the Stuy-Town attack and asked whether he looked like Scott. "Yes," she said. Now that he had attacked a stranger and been caught on tape, the authorities charged Scott with the assault on Stirling, his attack in Stuy-Town and another sexual assault a few months earlier.

The police had finally nabbed the man who had sexually assaulted her. But Stirling didn't feel thankful. She felt angry. They should have arrested him weeks earlier—before he hurt another woman.

"They treated me like I was lying and didn't believe me for an entire month," Stirling says. "It didn't have to be this way."

'Your Credibility Would Be Shot'

AS STIRLING AWAITED SCOTT'S TRIAL IN EARLY 2016, SHE BEGAN researching how police handle reports of rape and sexual assaults. The results shocked her. And one of the first stories that popped up on Google involved Skorzewski. "EXCLUSIVE," a New

York *Daily News* headline said. "Married NYPD cop accused of kissing, groping rape victim after booze-filled night in Seattle." "I was like, 'Holy shit, nobody informed me all that was going on!'" Stirling says.

In June 2013, a little over a year before Stirling's assault, a nursing student named Rachel Izzo, then 23, called the NYPD to report she had been raped in Manhattan. The assailant, she claims, was a writer for a television crime drama. Izzo had met him while she was visiting from Seattle. Skorzewski picked up the case. Izzo was back home in Washington state when she made the report, so the detective and his supervisor, Special Victims Lieutenant Adam Lamboy, flew out to interview her.

They met in a small breastfeeding room at Izzo's alma mater, Seattle University. Izzo felt comfortable on campus, and security told them the room was private and unoccupied. Inside, the Special Victims cops listened as she described how the writer had raped her in his apartment after they had dinner together; the writer undressed her even as she told him she wanted to keep her clothes on. "Are you sure you really said no?" Izzo claims Lamboy asked about two hours into the interview. Izzo felt attacked. She shut down and didn't elaborate when the cops asked if she had any questions.

LEANING IN
In recent months, thousands of women have come forward and shared their own stories of mistreatment under the hashtag #MeToo.

The next day, however, she felt emboldened. She wanted to know how they planned to investigate. Skorzewski asked to chat in person, and after Izzo got off work, the two met to discuss her case. Afterward, the detective asked her to walk with him to a restaurant where Lamboy was having lunch. When they arrived, the latter was drinking at a table outside with his girlfriend and asked Izzo to join them.

She declined, but Lamboy insisted. "It's OK," he said, according to the lawsuit Izzo filed in federal court against both officers and New York City. "We'll protect you." The detectives urged her to order a drink, and over the next 10 hours, they hopped from bar to bar in Seattle's trendy Capitol Hill neighborhood, according to the lawsuit.

Lamboy and Skorzewski got so drunk, the suit alleged, they were cut off and refused service, even as they discussed Izzo's case and other rape investigations in front of her. "You're my favorite victim!" Skorzewski told Izzo.

At some point after midnight, Izzo said she needed to go home. The officers, however, persuaded her to spend the night at their hotel, where Izzo slept on the bed in Skorzewski's room. (He slept on a nearby couch.)

The next morning, Izzo woke up and started watching television, she says. To her surprise, Skorzewski climbed into the bed, touching her and saying he wanted to kiss her, according to her lawsuit. Frightened and confused, she froze. She told him that was inappropriate. He persisted, and she told him she had to keep her clothes on. The detective started laughing, remembering that was what she had told her rapist back in New York City. "Then I just gave up," she says. Skorzewski kissed and fondled her. After a half-hour, Izzo stood up and went into the bathroom, where she started to cry. (In court documents, Skorzewski denied almost all of the claims Izzo made in her suit; Izzo later settled for $10,000, paid by the city, Lamboy and Skorzewski.)

When she returned to the bedroom, Skorzewski confronted her about what had just happened, Izzo claims. "It can't leave this room," he said, according to her suit. Before leaving for New York the next day, Lamboy was more explicit, telling Izzo that her speaking out about their night drinking together could jeopardize her case. "Your credibility would be shot" if people discovered their night out, she was told, according to the suit. (A lawyer representing Lamboy said the lieutenant didn't know about any intimate contact between Izzo and Skorzewski and learned about that only after he returned to New York City.) Izzo felt crushed.

FROM LEFT: ERIK MCGREGOR/PACIFIC PRESS/LIGHTROCKET/GETTY; KYLE JOHNSON FOR NEWSWEEK

“YOU’RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP ME.”

FIGHTING BACK
Upset with how they treated her, Izzo reported Skorzewski and Lamboy to the NYPD’s Internal Affairs Bureau

Over the next few months, Skorzewski texted and called her nearly every day, according to her lawsuit. The two had long conversations about their lives and the cases he was working. Izzo says she knew their continued contact was strange—and she felt he kept in touch to keep her quiet. But after her rape by the man in New York, she was desperate for support, and he was offering it. "[I've] never bonded with a victim like this before," Skorzewski told her.

In October 2013, Izzo says, Skorzewski urged her to fly to New York to stage a call with the man she said raped her to record a confession. During the call, Skorzewski jotted down questions on a notepad for Izzo to ask her attacker. Just hearing her attacker's voice made her feel uneasy, and the attempt to lure him into admitting the attack failed. Afterward, Skorzewski stopped returning her calls, she claims.

Angry and frustrated, she tried his office. A Special Victims detective picked up. Izzo claims the detective told her the division had closed her case and asked her to stop calling—then suggested she hadn't been truthful about the attack in New York. "We don't play games here," Izzo alleges the female detective told her. I'm sorry you had a bad experience, the detective said, "but that does not mean anything criminal happened."

Izzo was despondent, and in April 2014 she reported Skorzewski and Lamboy to the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, the unit charged with investigating police misconduct. Eight months later, the Internal Affairs probe confirmed parts of Izzo's complaint, and Lamboy and Skorzewski eventually pleaded guilty to departmental—not criminal— charges of bad conduct with a victim. Both detectives admitted to acting inappropriately with Izzo, while Skorzewski admitted to being intimate with a victim in a case he was working on, according to records filed as exhibits in Izzo's lawsuit.

As Stirling read about Izzo for the first time, she couldn't believe it. Skorzewski had been under investigation for five months when he took her case. How, Stirling wondered, was that ever allowed?

'I'm So Sorry'

IN JUNE 2016, SCOTT PLEADED GUILTY TO THE THREE SEXUAL assaults. But Stirling still felt wronged by the NYPD. So as his sentencing approached, she prepared a statement blasting the police for how they handled her case. When she discussed it with the assistant district attorney who prosecuted her case, however, he urged her not to criticize the department. "He said something along the lines of 'We want to focus on how awful Juan Scott's actions were,'" Stirling recalls. "'We don't want the story to be about how the NYPD messed up.'"

She didn't relent. Standing before a judge and a crowded courtroom in downtown Manhattan that November, Stirling read her statement. She talked about the concussion she suffered in the attack, how it made it difficult for her to think

A TRAGIC BOND
Together, Stirling and Izzo say they found the strength to call out the NYPD and push for changes so other women are treated better. Below, Lamboy and O'Neill.

'Our Names Are the Same'

NEARLY THREE YEARS AFTER HER ASSAULT, STIRLING RECEIVED AN email from Noah Hurowitz, a reporter who had covered Scott's sentencing for the website DNAinfo. Stirling had contacted him months earlier to thank him for his coverage but hadn't heard back. Now, he had a surprising offer: Would Stirling like to meet Izzo? The reporter had interviewed her for a piece about how the NYPD investigates rapes, and Izzo—who knew of Stirling's case—had asked for an introduction.

Stirling agreed, and Hurowitz connected them via email. The two women exchanged messages and discovered they had a lot in common: "Our names are the same," Stirling recalls thinking. "We're both from Washington state, we were screwed over by the same detective, and we both love cats."

They were both living in New York City as well. So on a cool spring day in May 2017, Stirling and Izzo met for the first time in Cobble Hill, a quiet, fashionable neighborhood in Brooklyn.

"SHE'S REALLY STRONG AND BADASS AND DIDN'T ACT LIKE A VICTIM AT ALL."

FROM TOP: BENJAMIN FRACTENBERG; DAVID WEXLER; ALBIN LOHR-JONES/PACIFIC PRESS/LIGHTROCKET/GETTY

clearly or finish her sentences, as well as how Skorzewski made a terrifying experience even worse. "If the police had taken me seriously, this third assault could have been prevented," Stirling told the court. "The system has failed me at every step of the way." The judge sentenced Scott to 14 years in prison.

Two months later, in January 2017, Stirling delivered her story again, this time to NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill. She had come to police headquarters along with victim advocates who wanted to press the department to improve how it investigates sexual assault cases. Sitting at a conference table, she recounted how Skorzewski had ignored her pleas for help. According to the advocates, O'Neill was dismayed and immediately apologized. "I'm so sorry this happened to you," he said. The advocates said O'Neill told them he believed the FETI training, along with other reforms, would help with the problems they raised. (The NYPD declined to comment on the meeting.)

For Stirling, though, the department's response seemed more talk than action. The NYPD had ultimately placed Skorzewski on "dismissal probation," a punishment in which an employee is nominally dismissed but kept on the job for one year, according to police records filed in Izzo's lawsuit. "When the year is over, so is the probation," BuzzFeed reported in a recent investigation that criticized the practice. Today, Skorzewski is no longer a detective investigating sex crimes, but he remains an officer in the NYPD.

"You'd think the NYPD would want to distance themselves [from Skorzewski]," Stirling says. "He's a liability to their name."

They bought tea at a coffee shop and sipped it as they walked a few blocks east to Boerum Park. They eventually sat down on a bench and talked about what they had been through.

Both recall how Skorzewski hadn't updated them on their cases after their initial reports. Izzo gets angry when she sees news stories about rape or sexual assault, and Stirling had terrifying flashbacks about her attack and nightmares where Scott got out of jail, only to hurt her again as police stood by and did nothing. It felt good, they thought, to have someone who understood what the other was going through. "I hate using this word, but I was relieved to have a 'rape buddy,'" Stirling says. "She understood me in a way that no one else could."

Izzo agrees, adding that many victims she's met are so immersed in their attack, they can't focus on anything else. Not Stirling. "I got this air from her that she's really strong and badass and didn't act like a victim at all," Izzo said. "I really related to that." After about an hour together, the women said goodbye.

Today, they text back and forth at least once a month, trading news stories about rape cases and leaning on each other when they have a hard day. (The revelations about sexual abuse by a U.S. Gymnastics team doctor were especially upsetting to Izzo, who competed in the sport when she was younger.) Together, they say, they found the strength to call out the NYPD and push for changes so other women are treated better.

As Izzo puts it, "We didn't let it kill us." N

ENVIRONMENT

Waterfront View

A new project could finally tell us the amount and location of all the plastic waste in the world's oceans

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
Satellite images may finally give an accurate view of the disposable bags and other plastic garbage filling the ocean.

HUMANKIND DUMPS MILLIONS OF TONS OF PLASTIC waste into the oceans every year. This garbage can harm marine animals, which consume it, or it can enter the worldwide food chain, a danger for humans.

Researchers hoping to address the problem don't know the full scope of it, which has stymied their efforts. They aren't sure where the plastic goes, if it moves with the currents or whether it congregates in certain areas. "Boy, what an advance it would be," says James Carlton, an ecologist at Williams College, "to be able to see the world in a snapshot."

Easier said than done. With existing technology, such an image would have to be captured so high above the Earth's surface that it would be impossible to see the bits and pieces of plastic floating on the water below.

But plastic has a property perfect for spotting from a distance: Infrared light bounces off it more than it does ocean water, making the two easily distinguishable. With the right imaging technology, a concentrated area of inorganic trash can be seen from outer space.

Now, European Space Agency (ESA) engineer Paolo Corradi and his colleagues are trying to create that technology. Specifically, they are building a satellite that will orbit the planet, identifying plastic according to the light rebounding off as it flies.

The method isn't perfect. Images of infrared light taken from a satellite won't penetrate the ocean's surface, so sunken plastic may not register. And something else floating—say, a bubble or a whitecap—could be mistaken for a soda bottle or a shopping bag.

But if it works, the project could help save sea life. Jennifer Provencher, a marine biologist at Acadia University in Canada, says if the ESA satellite finds a region with high levels of plastic, she can study its fish to pinpoint how much they are ingesting. Infrared monitoring via satellite could also track plastic in international waters, which are typically out of reach for most researchers.

Corradi and his colleagues are still working out the kinds of technology necessary to track plastic across the seven seas. And, of course, knowing the location and quantity of plastic in the ocean won't get rid of it. But like any problem, recognition may be the first step toward a solution. N

BY
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FROM LEFT: JONATHAN KANTOR/GETTY; STEPHEN LENTHALL/GALLERY STOCK

Plastic has a property perfect for spotting from a distance: Infrared light bounces off it more than it does ocean water, making the two easily distinguishable.

INTERNET

A Conspiracy of Algorithms

YouTube is finally reckoning with its misleading videos

LOUIE VELESKI HAS SOME interesting opinions. He thinks ghosts exist and humans have never been to the moon. A resident of Melbourne, Australia, Veleski expounds on his points of view on his YouTube channel, Better Mankind, which earns him up to $5,400 a month.

Conspiracy theories, it turns out, are very profitable for the YouTube-inclined entrepreneur. On his channel, Peladophobian, Ryan Silvey, 18 and also from Australia, posts videos like "School Is Illuminati" and "Donald Trump Is Vladimir Putin." Though satirical, the videos may be lumped in with other contrarian or esoteric posts in search results. Silvey makes more than $7,500 a month on average from advertisements that some of his 628,000 subscribers view.

YouTube also makes a bundle. About 55 percent of the money companies pay to put their 30-second ads at the start of popular videos goes to the content creators. The rest goes to Alphabet, the site's parent company. It reported more than $110 billion in revenue in 2017 (up from $90 billion in 2016). Nearly 90 percent of that figure came from ads, and a growing number were on YouTube.

Created in 2005, YouTube is the internet's dominant video content platform. People around the world watch about 1 billion educational videos on the site each day, and more people are using it as a news source. But media reports have implicated YouTube in the spread of fake news and extremism, often on account of conspiracy videos touting false information. With Facebook now under government scrutiny and possibly facing regulation, YouTube is taking measures to ensure its own integrity. And that could mean the end of the conspiracy video business.

Concern about these videos could seem overblown. Take a post claiming a geomagnetic storm on March 18 would "[disrupt] satellites, GPS navigation and power grids across the planet." Some news outlets took the claim as fact until U.S. scientific agencies refuted it. That video was misleading but likely harmless.

But others may have played a part in recent tragedies. The person who drove a car into pedestrians on London Bridge in June 2017 and stabbed patrons in nearby bars may have watched videos from a Salafist preacher on YouTube. After the rally last August in Charlottesville, Virginia, by the so-called alt-right, *The New Republic* called the platform "the Worldwide Leader in White Supremacy." After the Las Vegas shooting in October 2017, *The Wall Street Journal* caught the algorithm suggesting videos claiming the event was a false flag. Until the algorithm changed, the top five results for a search about

BY

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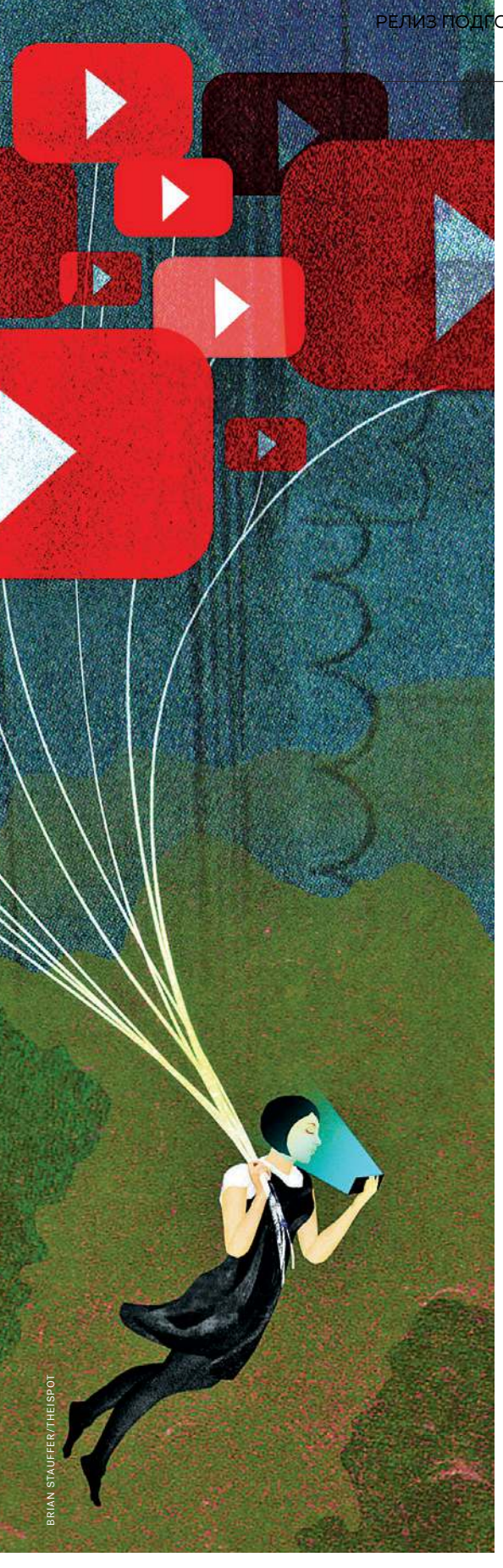
BRIAN STAUFFER/THEISPOT

"Las Vegas shooting" included a video claiming government agents were responsible for the attack.

"From my experience, in the disinformation space," wrote Jonathan Albright, the research director at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, in an essay on Medium, "all roads seem to eventually lead to YouTube."

Addressing the problem is tricky because what constitutes a conspiracy isn't always clear, says YouTube. Do predictions for 2018, including that Italy's Mount Vesuvius will erupt and kill hundreds of thousands of people, count? What about Shane Dawson, who routinely posts videos on his channel but doesn't necessarily endorse what he discusses? One video that posits, among other things, that aliens may be related to the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, began with the disclaimer that "these are all just theories," and "they're not meant to hurt or harm any company."

The difficulty of pinpointing whether or not a post qualifies as a baseless, fringe view is part of the issue. Without a definition, YouTube's algorithm can't filter out such videos from its search results. That's a problem for Alphabet, which is afraid that the spread of conspiracy videos across YouTube could backfire. False information seeping into top recommended video lists could eventually drive customers—anyone who watches YouTube videos—away. "Our brands may also be negatively affected by the use of our products or services," Alphabet's 2017 annual report stated, "to disseminate information that is deemed to be misleading."

Yet the site incentivizes content creators to wander close to the extreme-views edge because they entice users to click. That video by Dawson about the disappeared plane garnered 8 million views, likely earning him—and Alphabet—thousands of dollars. AlgoTransparency, a website that tracks what videos YouTube recommends to visitors, notes that searching for the phrases "Is the Earth flat or round?" or "vaccine facts" in February led to videos claiming to show proof the Earth is flat or evidence that vaccines cause autism, respectively, about eight times more often than videos without a conspiracy bent on these subjects. When Veleski began producing conspiracy-type videos, he received more views—and more money—for them than for those focused on alternative medicine and health topics.

YouTube has some radical views of its own. In January, the site announced that videos on controversial topics like chemtrails (condensation left by airplanes that some people think is dangerous chemicals) would no longer be eligible to run ads. And later this year, panels will accompany any video on a topic surrounded by conspiracy theories, such as the moon landing or John F. Kennedy's assassination. These pop-ups will have supplemental information from third-party sources like Wikipedia (the company declined to name other potential sources).

Veleski isn't looking forward to the change. As he sees it, the encyclopedia-based panels will denigrate what many people consider to be legitimate, if controversial, perspectives on important topics. "To make a topic look silly because it's not mainstream," he says, "I don't think it's entirely fair."

When it comes to true believers, though, the strategy to post facts alongside these videos might not work anyway. Jovan Byford, a researcher at the Open University in the U.K., points out the flaw in using rational arguments to debunk conspiracy theories. "That doesn't work," he says. "Their argument to that will be: Well, that's what they want you to believe." N

GEOLOGY

Big Bang Theory

A supervolcanic eruption 74,000 years ago reveals fascinating evidence of how we might survive a similar event

THE ERUPTION OF A SUPERvolcano constitutes more than your average lava flow. When one of these massive explosions takes place, more than 240 cubic miles of debris are flung out of the volcano. That's so much gunk that it can linger in the atmosphere and reflect some of the sun's light away from Earth, sending the planet into a global winter.

Whether humans can survive these conditions has long been a mystery. The last supervolcano eruption was about 26,000 years ago in New Zealand. Although the geologic record has preserved, for example, a quarter-mile-thick layer of ash at one supervolcano site, it didn't include any evidence about how humans fared during the blast and its aftermath.

A tiny shard of glass may fill in the story. A paper published in March in the journal *Nature* offers surprising new evidence that all but proves at least some groups of early humans survived a gigantic eruption of the Toba supervolcano in Indonesia 74,000 years ago—the largest of the past 2.5 million years. Hundreds of cubic miles of ash were spewed out of the island of Sumatra. The caldera, or crater, created by the event dwarfs that of Mount Tambora, an Indonesian volcano that erupted violently in 1815. That was enough to stop summer's arrival that year, leaving even Europe under a perpetual gray haze that inspired Mary Shelley to write *Frankenstein*.

If the Mount Tambora blast could have such an effect, geologists reasoned, surely a blast from the 10 times larger Mount Toba would have been absolutely devastating to areas nearby and potentially cooled the Earth by several degrees for years on end.

BY

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HAVE A BLAST A tiny glass shard from a volcano near Indonesia's Mount Agung, left, and found near South Africa's Pinnacle Point golf course, right, confirms ancient humans survived a giant eruption.

FROM LEFT: ROSS KINNAIRD/GETTY; ANDRI TAMBUNAN/GETTY

Mount Toba erupted at the start of the human migration out of Africa. Knowing that the fallout would likely have reached the African continent, scientists had long wondered what the experience was like for early humans. The ashfall likely looked like snow, "which was probably something they had never seen before," says Eugene Smith, a geologist at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a co-author of the study. "They may have had no clue what was going on." Did they even survive it?

Enter that tiny piece of glass. Volcanoes often shoot out these minuscule slivers, the product of rapidly cooled lava. But finding them is akin to picking out one specific grain in a shovelful of sand. "It's like one shard for every 10,000 grains," Smith says. And at a microscopic level.

With precise measuring tools to track layers of artifacts, the geologists confirmed that humans lived at Pinnacle Point before and after the blast.

That was the size of the shard found at Pinnacle Point, an archaeological site in South Africa, about 5,600 miles from Mount Toba. Smith and his team believe it was created by Toba's cataclysmic eruption, which means it would have been carried by wind "9,000 kilometers from Indonesia to South Africa," says Smith. "That's pretty amazing."

Smith knows the shard was from Toba because each individual eruption, even of the same volcano, leaves a different chemical fingerprint in that glass. Using precise measuring tools to track layers of artifacts at the same site where the shard was found, the geologists confirmed that humans lived at Pinnacle Point before, during and after the enormous blast.

Smith and his team theorize that Pinnacle Point may have been protected from the food shortages that would have resulted from the cold, dark conditions following a supereruption. Given the site's coastal location, they think the secret may have been plentiful seafood.

"They didn't go extinct," Smith says. "I'm sure they were stressed out, but they survived quite nicely."

MOVIES

Super Size Me

The Russo brothers, co-directors of the most expensive superhero film ever, hold the future of the Marvel cinematic universe in their hands. No pressure

STYLES OF BEYONDLESS
Iceage's new album could burst into the mainstream » P.46

MARVELOUS Four years ago, the Russo brothers saved Marvel from the ire of its fans. Their latest, *Avengers: Infinity War*, doesn't disappoint.

LEFT: RYAN MEINERDING/MARVEL STUDIOS; TOP RIGHT: GONZALES PHOTO/ALAMY

IF CAPTAIN AMERICA SAVES THE WORLD from apocalypse in *Avengers: Infinity War*, you can thank Joe and Anthony Russo: Four years ago, they saved Marvel from the apocalyptic ire of its fans.

The siblings are the directors of the film, which opens April 27, and they joined Disney-owned Marvel four years ago, on the heels of *Iron Man 3* and *Thor: The Dark World*—blockbusters at the box office but bummers for ultra-picky comic book geeks. Both films traded the punchy, bright-colored fun of the best Marvel movies for a muddy, tortured moodiness. Fans didn't want to see Tony Stark (aka Iron Man) suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; they wanted the joyous blend of humor and heroism that Joss Whedon brought to *The Avengers* in 2012, which has grossed $1.5 billion in the U.S. alone.

Enter the Russos with 2014's *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, a witty, meticulously plotted political thriller. The duo had never made a big-budget film before. They came from the world of comedy, directing a couple of features, including 2006's *You, Me and Dupree*, and two of the smartest sitcoms on TV, *Arrested Development* and *Community*. But what seemed like an odd fit proved just right, not only in terms of well-aimed quips (the brothers wisely gave a lot of comedic space to Samuel L. Jackson's Nick Fury) but also in creating a movie that has heart, not just the usual kapow, blam, boom. And because they were new to the genre, they also managed to make the story coherent to die-hards and neophytes.

BY

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For their second Marvel film, 2016's *Captain America: Civil War*, the Russo brothers had a few dilemmas: In two and a half hours, they had to lay the groundwork for two sequels (*Infinity War*, with a rumored budget of $400 million, is the first), launch Spider-Man under Marvel creative control and satisfy a lot of charismatic stars looking for a "hero moment." The film included a total of 12 superheroes, including Captain America (Chris Evans), Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) and Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson); it also introduced Black Panther (Chadwick Boseman).

Once again, the Russos proved deft at juggling action, comedy and emotion—so deft, it became the first Captain America film to gross over a billion dollars worldwide. Their sitcom background proved to be great prep for the large cast. "We really love ensemble storytelling, where you can enter a narrative from different characters' points of view," says Anthony. With *Civil War*, that meant "not every character is in the same dramatic situation. We knew Ant Man (Paul Rudd) and Spider-Man (Tom Holland) didn't have the baggage of the conflict that was pulling the rest of the Avengers apart. They could enter the movie and carry a lighter tone."

Infinity Wars stacks the credits even more, doubling the number of stars. This time there are "22 primary characters and five or six villains," says stunt supervisor Sam Hargrave. For the brothers, that broke down to countless opportunities for funny superhero meetups, a Russo trademark. Joe says the Star-Lord (Chris Pratt) and Thor (Chris Hemsworth) encounter is his favorite, closely followed by Iron Man and Doctor Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch)—"like two narcissistic beta fish trapped in a tank."

Professionally, the brothers also occupy the same space, and they've been collaborating for so long that their working relationship is intuitive. "We don't really have any formal division in terms of how we approach things," says Anthony. Evans had played Captain America twice before meeting the Russos, and what he appreciates is that, despite the massive ambition behind such blockbusters, "they don't make it feel like a huge enterprise. It's as if I'm making a movie with my friends."

They also have an encyclopedic knowledge of film, which comes in handy for motivation. "They get their point across by making references they know we know," Evans adds. "It's never 'Hey, remember, you're angry in this scene.' It's 'Remember that scene in *Heat* when Pacino does this?'"

According to the Russos, *Winter Soldier* was partially inspired by Alan Pakula's 1974 political thriller *The Parallax View* and *Captain America: Civil War* by David Fincher's *Se7en*. Their North Stars for *Infinity War* were John Herzfeld's 1994 ensemble drama *2 Days in the Valley* and Steven Soderbergh's 1998 American crime comedy *Out of Sight*.

Pulling inspiration from outside of the comic book universe has produced quieter, more realistic performances. "Joe Russo has a line, which I make fun of him for but I secretly admire and appreciate," says Johansson. "'Go under,' which means 'Play against your instinct to go big, to make a declaration, to be emphatic.' Those are the nuances that most resonate with fanboys and fangirls."

Hargrave notes the eccentric methods the Russos employed for keeping their sets relaxed, borrowed from his stunt department. What's called "the exercise challenge" encourages cast and crew to stop what they're doing once an hour to do 15 pushups or squats or lunges together.

Beneath the loose structure, though, is rigorous planning. The Russos spent months mapping out the list of character imperatives with screenwriters Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely. "We all sit together with a magnetic whiteboard, with a photo of every character in the movie," Joe says. "We talk through each one in relation to the plot and hammer out their personal stakes. It's an arduous, disciplined process." And one that began with the plotting of *Civil Wars*.

That was the last time Marvel fans saw most of the Avengers, and it ended with them being rocked by the loss of public approval and by friendly fire, with various superheroes turning on each other. Those grudges are preserved in *Infinity War*, especially between the two characters the Russos worked with most extensively: Cap and Black Widow. "They have been most interested in peeling away the layers of Natasha's façade," says Johansson. "She's been running rogue for a few years and has abandoned the idea that there is another, more 'normal' life in the cards for her. She has come to terms with that reality."

In *Iron Man 2* and *The Avengers*, Black Widow was the quintessential killer sexpot. The Russos emphasized context, turning her into a more strategic operative. When SHIELD, the

The Russos "don't make it feel like a huge enterprise. It's as if I'm making a movie with my friends."

STAR-CROSSED BROTHERS In *Infinity Wars*, the Russos take advantage of countless opportunities for superhero meetups, one of their trademarks.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF BRIAN BOWEN-SMITH; CHUCK ZLOTNICK/MARVEL STUDIOS; COURTESY OF MARVEL STUDIOS; FILM FRAME/MARVEL STUDIOS

HERO SANDWICH There are 22 primary characters and numerous villains in *Infinity Wars*. Top, Black Panther (far left), Captain America and Black Widow. Below, Thanos (left) and Dr. Strange.

militarized government organization that brought the Avengers together, fell to a Nazi insurgency called Hydra, she and Captain America forged a friendship. That was a Russo spark of genius—as was the decision to then tear their bond apart in *Civil War*.

Anthony admits he and Joe like to "lean on certain characters more heavily than others," but they've added inspired complications to the web of superhero and sidekick relationships—to the point where a crossover film was the only way to find catharsis. It was their ensemble movies that cracked open what Marvel calls Phase Four, which includes the wildly successful *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017) and the recent *Black Panther*.

So many beloved characters return in *Infinity War*—including T'Challa's entire family and Wakanda support team—that it's easy to forget what many fans will be showing up for: the debut of Thanos (Josh Brolin), an 8-foot alien and the most anticipated villain in Marvel movie history. In over two decades of movies, fans have been presented with Thanos teasers and asides. Let's just say expectations are high.

The computer-generated challenges were the least of it. The Russos' goal was to give Thanos enough emotional heft to make him a supervillain for the ages, not just a purple dude who will, naturally, wipe out half the universe. "The most frightening thing about Thanos is that while he has a horrific goal in mind, he has a lot of conviction," says Anthony. "Some of what he's looking for in the movie is actually very understandable. That, I think, is where it gets very uncomfortable and challenging. You find yourself empathizing with him."

"You don't root for Thanos," says Dan DeLeeuw, *Infinity War*'s visual effects supervisor, "but there's something very charismatic about him. There's a light in Brolin's eyes when he's considering how to deliver a line, and we captured all of that, his whole face almost at pore level." The team used an advanced motion-capture technology called Medusa, and DeLeeuw says they simply kept the camera running while Brolin worked out his character with the Russos. "We even captured his teeth and just enlarged them for Thanos."

Fans, of course, will care less about the verisimilitude of Thanos's teeth than whether the Russos can pull off the most ambitious Marvel film to date. For the brothers, though, coming back to direct the untitled sequel in 2019 will put a cap on a longtime infatuation.

"I'll never forget seeing *Iron Man* for the first time in 2008 and loving that film so much," says Joe. "So having gotten to tell an interesting Iron Man story in *Civil War*, and the fact that these two movies are supposed to be the culmination of this run of Marvel movies that began with the first *Iron Man*? That's major. We love, we adore Robert Downey Jr. The character is looming very large in the sequels—and not just for him but for Marvel."

MUSIC

The New Iceage

On the brink of insanity with Denmark's greatest punk band

LIKE A LOT OF TEENAGERS, Elias Bender Rønnenfelt spent hours alone in his room listening to music. He was a Danish kid growing up in the new millennium, but the sounds that excited him were American and British, from prior decades. "All sorts of New York no wave bands," says the now 26-year-old Rønnenfelt. "David Bowie. Crass. Teen Idles."

One of his favorites: the seminal punk band Richard Hell and the Voidoids. So it was disorienting for Rønnenfelt when Hell, a 68-year-old punk veteran, recently wrote an impassioned essay in praise of Rønnenfelt's band, Iceage. In it, the veteran imagines himself "as a kid lying in my closed-door room in the dark, listening to this band and getting what I need." That was weird to read, Rønnenfelt tells while visiting the New York offices of Matador Records in March. "It's strange," he adds, "when a voice from your teenage bedroom speaks back at you."

He and his bandmates—childhood friends Jakob Tvilling Pless (bass), Dan Kjær Nielsen (drums) and Johan Suurballe Wieth (guitar)—were in the city to promote their fourth album, , which has a sound that could bust through to the mainstream. Not that Iceage intended to be limited to a genre. "We never identified as any," Rønnenfelt says. "It's important to us never to conform or agree with anyone else's idea of what we might be."

The band members have been accustomed to critical adulation since a young age. In 2011, their debut—a taut, 24-minute blast of adolescent angst titled —drew international acclaim, even from critics who otherwise wouldn't give a hardcore record a second glance. It was no fluke: The artful and ferocious followed in 2013, after the band landed a deal with Matador. "The first record was recorded in four days or something like that," says Iceage's longtime producer, Nis Bysted. For *You're Nothing*, "we had maybe five or six days. And we had about four overdubs on the entire record."

Iceage quickly amassed a reputation for brutal, The Birthday Party–esque live shows that teetered on the edge of physical peril (at one point, the band's blog collected photos of fans showing off wounds received at their concerts). Iggy Pop called the group "the only current punk band I can think of that sounds really dangerous." That danger is more brooding on Iceage's most experimental record, (out May 4). The songs are too long, the tempos woozy and slowed, to be called hardcore. There's intensity, but it simmers rather than erupts, with lush violins and horns. Still, don't expect anything less than an aural assault when they tour.

A few days after our interview, I trekked to a basement gallery in Manhattan to see Iceage perform, but by the time I arrived the fire department had already shut down the gig. The next evening, the band successfully played a packed show in a cramped, attic-like performance space attached to a bar in the Bushwick neighborhood of Brooklyn. Iceage blasted through the new album as a sweat-drenched Rønnenfelt gyrated around the small stage. There was no patter—the songs collided into each other, Ramones-style. A saxophonist brought a bleating, free jazz element to the roar. The noise volume evidently caused several vinyl records taped to the balcony to fall loose and land on fans' heads

Such energy takes a toll. In 2015, the band spent four grueling months touring North America and Europe. "Many times we've been on the brink of

BY

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COURTESY OF PITCH PERFECT/STEVE GULLICK

AURAL ASSAULT Iceage's new album is its most experimental record. The songs are too long, the tempos woozy and slowed, to be called hardcore. There's intensity, but it simmers rather than erupts.

insanity," says Rønnenfelt, back at the Matador office, where loud construction noises from outside sounded as if they were auditioning to join Iceage. For *Beyondless*, Iceage will tour America for just two months, beginning in May, and he has mixed feelings about it. "Sometimes you go to a tiny city you've never heard about, and it has the best crowds [because] kids are bored and have nothing to do," says Rønnenfelt. "Sometimes it's dead as hell. And generic and depressing. You never know with these small towns."

Rønnenfelt has developed a reputation as a prickly, guarded rocker and as a gifted writer with a knack for tangled, disturbing imagery. "He has

Iggy Pop calls them "the only current punk band that sounds really dangerous."

these periods when he secludes himself to writing and we don't see much of him," says Bysted. "The lyrics part is something that no one really messes with. He's so brilliant at it."

Bysted has known the singer since he was a precocious 13-year-old, soaking up old records like a post-punk sponge. "He was a really weird kid. Early on, he just knew so much music. He could talk to a 50-year-old guy about music from the late '70s or something weird from the beginning of the '90s."

Rønnenfelt's lyrics elude simplistic interpretation, and *Beyondless* benefits from the singer's dark imagination. On "Hurrah," he seems to adopt the perspective of a bloodthirsty soldier: "Cuz we can't stop killing/And we'll never stop killing/And we shouldn't stop killing," goes the pummeling chorus. "It's about warfare and the cruelty of man and the deep-rooted instinct to kill your neighbor," says Rønnenfelt, who is disturbed by the rise of far-right nationalism in Europe and America. "It's important to acknowledge how dangerous we are, and how that potential lies in most of us."

Rønnenfelt didn't finish high school, but he reads incessantly. Iceage's songs have been inspired by, among other books, by Georges Bataille—which prompted the singer's interest in writing—and Jean Genet's , both notable for their shocking and frank depictions of sexual exploits. He found the word *beyondless* in , a Samuel Beckett book. "He plays a lot with breaking apart language and constructing incorrect sentences that give new meanings," says Rønnenfelt. "*Beyondless* is just a word that I discovered doesn't exist. It still suggests a perfect meaning to me—that beyond followed by less couldn't [exist]."

The paradoxical term also evokes the band's knack for nodding to punk and post-punk achievements of the past while crafting something urgent and new. Richard Hell would be proud—or rather, he is. N

Illustration by BRITT SPENCER

PARTING SHOT

David Tennant

FOR NEARLY FIVE YEARS, DAVID TENNANT WAS THE CHARMING LEADING man (or, rather, the charming leading alien) in the popular British sci-fi series *Doctor Who*. Being typecast as the fun-loving doctor can be hard to avoid, and Tennant remained in the role longer than most. But now, more than eight years after leaving the show, he's been adding more diabolical characters to his résumé: First, the mind-controlling rapist Kilgrave in Netflix's *Jessica Jones*, and now a cold-blooded murderer in *Bad Samaritan*, a horror-thriller that hits theaters May 4.

The latter stars Robert Sheehan (*Misfits*) as a restaurant valet who robs rich people who entrust him with their cars. This seems genius at first—until Sheehan discovers a kidnapped woman tied up in the home of Tennant's character, Cale Ehrendreich.

Tennant insists he's "not consciously" exploring his darker side—he just enjoys a challenge. He spoke to *Newsweek* about getting into a killer's head and watching the new *Doctor Who*.

"The more you can believe that a character like this exists, the more scary it becomes."

What has drawn you to these darker characters?
I just take whatever comes up that feels different and a challenge. For this film, the initial concept—valet parking guys that rob people's houses while they're having dinner—seemed... fantastically obvious. Then this character Cale goes through the middle of the story like an icicle. It felt like it was going to be fun to do and a thrill in an almost old-fashioned sense.

How did you get into Cale's head? He doesn't seem like the most relatable guy.
[*Laughs.*] No, he's not really! You want Cale's psychopathy to be more than just a plot point. You want to feel like there's a reason for it. Because the more you can believe that a character like this exists, the more scary it becomes.

Have you been keeping up with the new *Doctor Who* episodes?
I have! I'm excited to see what's going to happen with Jodie [Whittaker, who is taking on the lead role this October]. I think she's going to be a sensation.

Some fans argue that the doctor can't be played a woman.
I think that argument will be put to rest when Jodie appears on screen. I remember watching the show as a kid—when the doctor changes, it feels like you're losing a dear friend. But then another dear friend pops up, and you fall in love with them almost instantly. *—Anna Menta*

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

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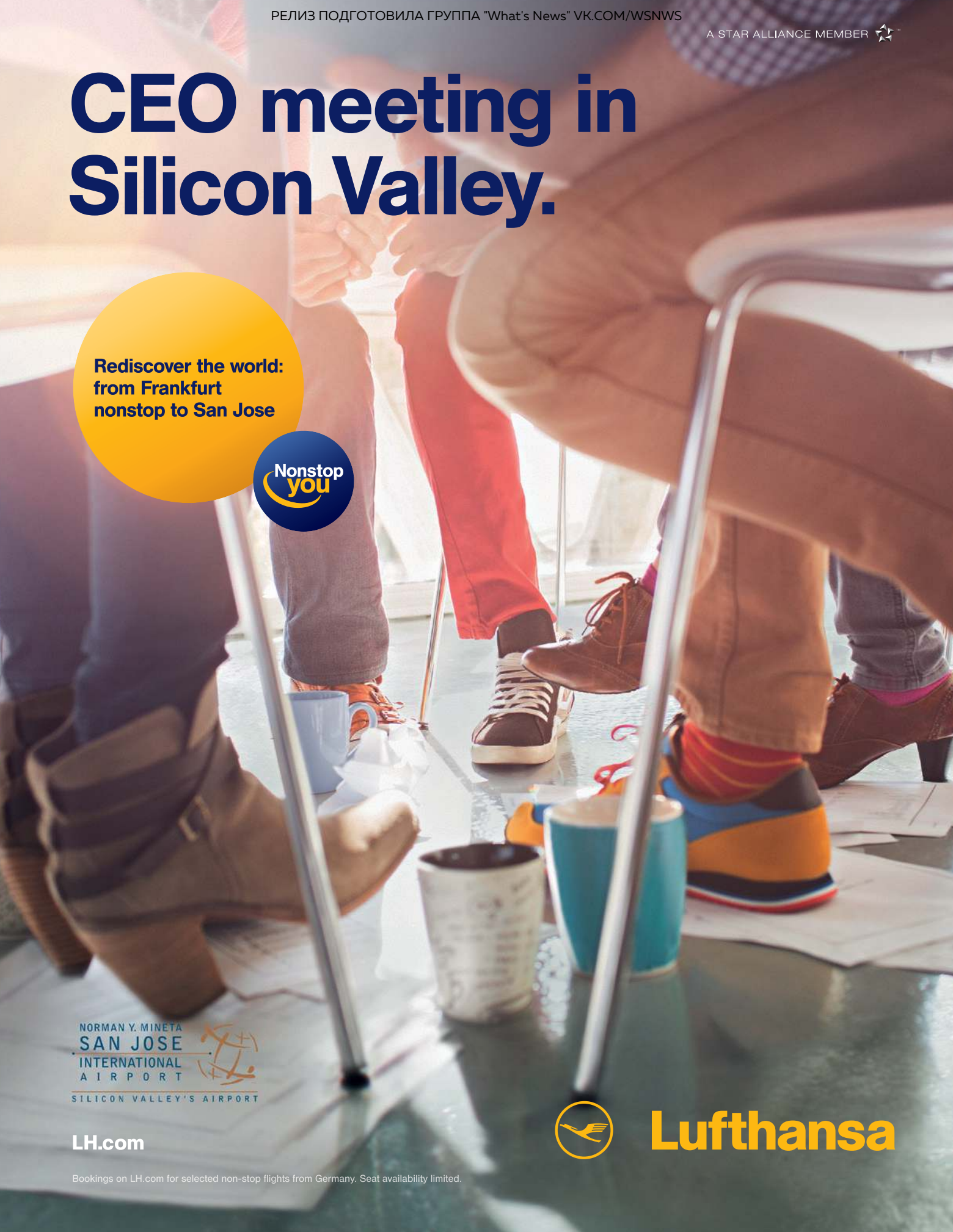
CEO meeting in Silicon Valley.



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