

The Legal Pot Backlash / Trump vs. the Ayatollah

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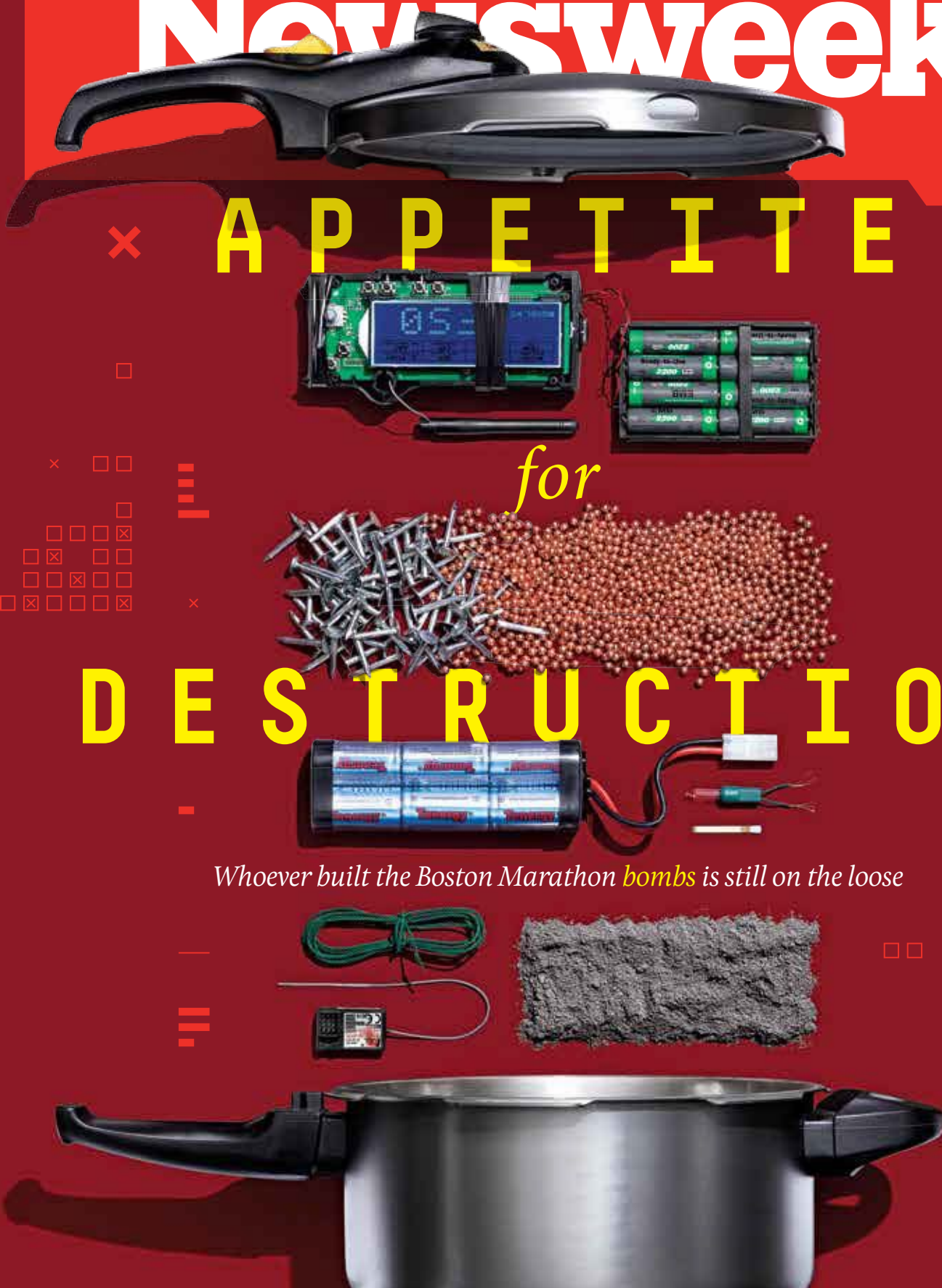
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DESTRUCTION

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FEATURES

A GROWING DANGER

Activists in some California counties are trying to ban marijuana farms to cut off the cartels. They say drug traffickers are importing automatic weapons and using illegal, toxic pesticides that are killing forest animals and poisoning freshwater sources.

COVER CREDIT

Photograph by **The Voorhes** for *Newsweek*



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'I Will Have to Answer Only to God'

Whoever built the bombs that were used at the 2013 Boston Marathon is still on the loose.

BY MICHELE R. MCPHEE

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Kings of the Stoned Age

Legalized pot was supposed to hurt the Mexican cartels, but narcos in California may be using it to plant the seeds of a takeover.

BY JOHNNY MAGDALENO



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HARD-BOILED HERO

In the dark comedy *Small Town Crime*, John Hawkes plays falling-down-drunk Mike Kendall, an ex-cop who is booted off the force for getting his partner and a bystander killed.



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In Focus

— THE NEWS IN PICTURES





KARO, INDONESIA

Kicking Ash

Bus passengers watch thick plumes of smoke rise from Mount Sinabung on January 2. Once inactive for 400 years, the volcano erupted for the first time in 2010 and has been regularly belching clouds of ash since 2015.

📷 → IVAN DAMANIK

In Focus



IBI, SPAIN

Breakfast of Champions

Talk about playing with your food. On December 28, people celebrated the Els Enfarinats festival by throwing flour and eggs at one another. The 200-year-old tradition commemorates a New Testament story about King Herod and the massacre of the innocents.

📷 → HEINO KALIS



WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

Out for an Ice Stroll

It wasn't a miracle, just the predictable outcome of another really cold day. As arctic weather conditions caused the northeastern U.S. to shiver, a woman walked over a frozen part of Long Island Sound on January 7.

📷 → SPENCER PLATT



WASHINGTON, D. C.

Like, Really Smart

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders watches as President Donald Trump addresses reporters on a monitor on January 4, even though he was in the building at the time. A controversial new book, *Fire and Fury*, has roiled the country, depicting the president as mentally unfit for office. Trump dismissed the book, calling himself a "very stable genius."

📷 → CARLOS BARRIA





CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: HEINO KALIS/REUTERS; SPENCER PLATT/GETTY; CARLOS BARRIA/REUTERS



**POWER TO
THE PEOPLE?**

Iranians are again taking to the streets and expressing displeasure with their theocracy.

"The tech sector...has a significant number of men who pay for sex with trafficked women." » P.14



POLITICS

Trump Plans, Allah Laughs

The protests in Iran may have blown up the president's dream of shredding that country's nuclear deal

↑ FEW SAW IT COMING. ON DECEMBER 28, protests erupted in Mashhad, Iran's second largest city, as thousands took to the streets to complain about the country's lousy economy. The demonstrations were unorganized and spontaneous, but they quickly spread nationwide—and morphed into something bigger, more profound. Something that targeted Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, and its supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The unrest, which was still roiling as *Newsweek* went to press, marked the third time in three decades that Iranians have demonstrated en masse against the theocratic regime in Tehran.

The protests are the first fast-moving foreign crisis of Donald Trump's presidency. When they began, the New York real estate mogul was at his Florida resort, Mar-a-Lago, golfing and relishing his lone legislative victory—the tax bill he signed on December 22. The administration—

and the intelligence community—didn't anticipate the chaos, says a national security official, who, like others who spoke to *Newsweek*, isn't authorized to speak publicly about the matter. Trump's first instinct was to support the unrest, and he acted on it almost immediately. "Big protests in Iran," he tweeted on December 31. "The people are finally getting wise as to how their money and wealth is being stolen and squandered on terrorism. Looks like they will not take it any longer. The USA is watching very closely for human rights violations!"

His response wasn't surprising. On the campaign trail and in the Oval Office, Trump has tried to distance himself from the policies of his predecessor, Barack Obama (much like Obama did with his predecessor, George W. Bush). Trump has been withering in his criticism of the Iranian nuclear deal and the Obama administration's lack of initial public support for protesters

BY

BILL POWELL

LEFT: STRAP/GETTY, TOP RIGHT: GETTY

during the 2009 Green Revolution in Iran, which began in response to what the demonstrators believed was a stolen presidential election.

The hard part came after Trump's initial tweet. As the protests continued, the administration had to figure out what, if anything, to do. Trump is still struggling with that question, in part because the crisis came as he was trying to overhaul Obama's Iran policies. In October, the president "decertified" the nuclear accord but didn't blow up the deal. He waived the reimposition of sanctions, which the Obama administration had lifted in exchange for Iran halting its nukes program. Trump wanted to get the U.S.'s European allies to help pressure Tehran to renegotiate parts of the agreement—an effort the Europeans have resisted. Now, Trump is considering scrapping the deal entirely unless Congress passes a bipartisan bill to reimpose sanctions on Tehran if it gets within a year of deploying a nuke.

The chaos in Iran changes the administration's calculus. If the Iranian government cracks down on the protesters harder than it has to date, the White House believes Congress would easily pass the legislation the administration wants. But the Trump team is willing to see how events unfold before making a final decision.

Economics is also a key factor in the White House's approach. Given the issue that sparked the protests, reinstalling painful sanctions "would be shooting ourselves in the foot," a State Department official says, by hurting the average citizens who have taken to the streets. It might make those protesters angrier, and it might also allow Tehran to deflect some of the blame toward the United States. To avoid that, the administration wants to reimpose just the sanctions that target only people or com-

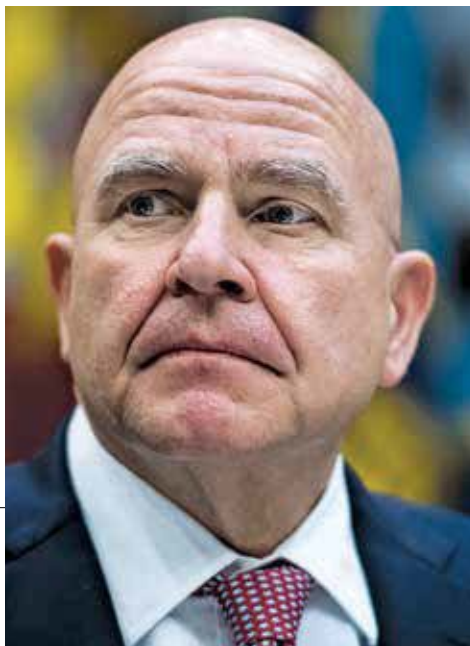
panies closely linked to the regime. It started this process in December, when the Treasury Department began enforcing measures against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's elite military unit. Now, among other options, the administration's Iran team—led by Trump's national security adviser, H.R. McMaster—may focus on a single corporation, a \$95 billion holding company called Eiko, which has significant stakes in everything from oil and gas to telecommunications and finance. The company ultimately answers to Khamenei, the supreme leader, and when Iran signed the nuclear deal, the U.S. and its allies relaxed sanctions against Eiko and several companies thought to be fronts for Tehran.

Beyond that move, Trump administration officials acknowledge they're in a bind. The Iranian regime has been relatively restrained

in its response to the demonstrations. As of January 5, 21 people, most of them demonstrators, had been killed in skirmishes with security forces. But if Tehran uses massive force to put down the demonstrations—akin to what it did in 2009 or, worse, what the Chinese government did in Tiananmen Square in 1989—White House officials acknowledge that the U.S. will punish Tehran economically, even if that means hurting average Iranians—including the working class, which has led the current demonstrations. "[Administration officials] have to be hoping they don't get to the point where the politically dutiful thing to do gets in the way of smart policy," says Ray Takeyh, an Iran analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based think tank.

So far, the administration has been careful to avoid any loose talk of "regime change." Last summer, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson testified before Congress that the White House supports "those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of government." The administration says the unrest lines up with Tillerson's statement, proving that many Iranians yearn for peaceful change in their leadership. The administration is thinking about ways to help demonstrators keep communications lines open—including popular social media applications, such as Telegram and Instagram, which the regime has shut down. But Trump's people insist they are not aiming to topple the government in Tehran. "[They] aren't doing an Iraq here—don't worry

"If body bags start coming home and [we're blamed], it will instantly burn away the good will."



SMART "BOMB" McMaster may lead the administration's efforts to pinpoint Iran sanctions against a single corporation, Eiko.



PAYBACK Rouhani and the ayatollah have no friend in Mattis, who has Trump's ear and served in Iraq, where Iranian-trained militias killed and maimed U.S. personnel.

us, it will instantly burn away the good will our rhetorical support has engendered with the protestors.”

Mattis and McMaster—the two key figures trying to guide Trump through this crisis—are no friends of Tehran. Both were in Iraq when Iranian-trained militias and Iranian-made improvised explosive devices killed and maimed U.S. servicemen there. And as the principal architects of Trump's Middle East policy, they also sense opportunity. The Iranian government instantly blamed the protests on “foreign actors”—by which it meant the United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel. They offered no proof of that, and none will likely come. Few outside the Iranian government dispute that the anger spreading throughout the country is homegrown. But one of the demonstrators' most frequent complaints, to the regime's surprise, could be called Iran First: They want their government to stop spending the country's money and resources on foreign military adventures. The U.S. supports that message too, and the generals around Trump want see if Tehran bows to those demands.

For now, Mattis and McMaster seem to be in control of the administration's thinking on Iran, with Tillerson keeping European allies informed. So far, their mercurial boss hasn't done or tweeted anything outrageous. Indeed, as the unrest in Iran grew in early January, Trump seemed more preoccupied by *Fire and Fury*, a scathing new book about his first year in the White House. And though none of the principals would say it, that's probably a good thing. **■**

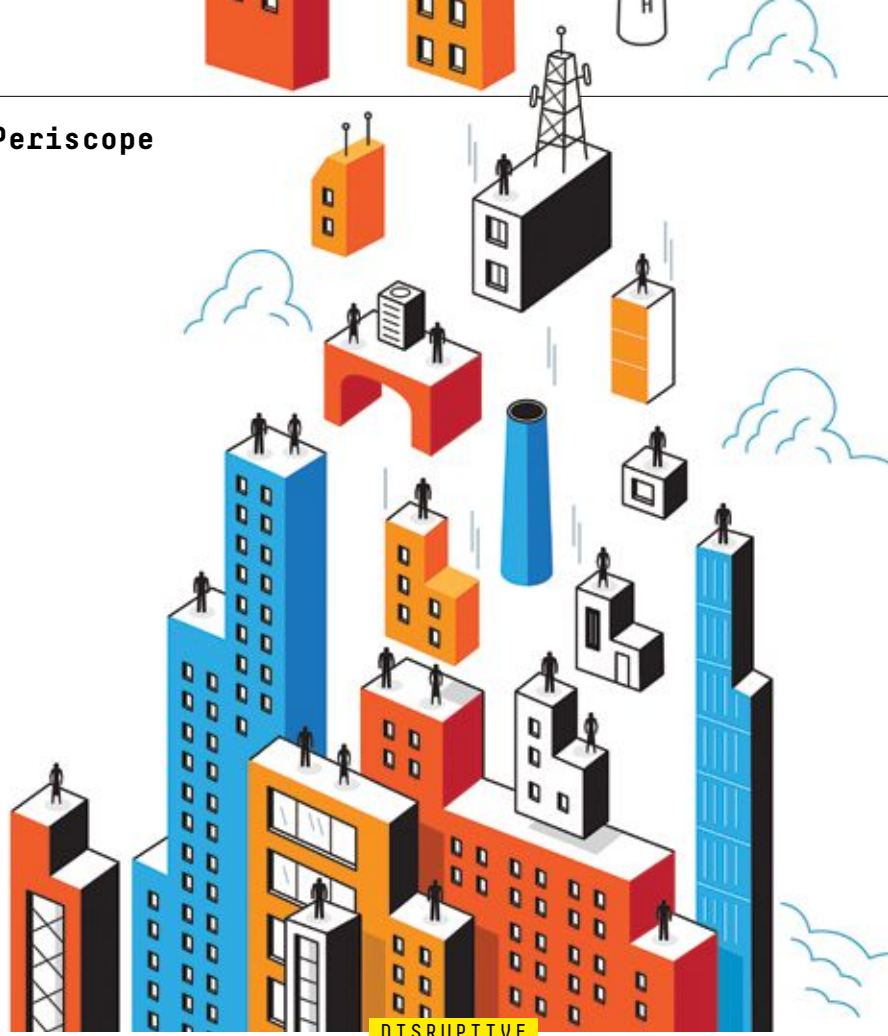
about that. There's absolutely zero appetite for that,” says an adviser to the administration.

Prior to the unrest, however, the Defense Department was trying to figure out ways to confront what it sees as Iranian expansionism in the region—part of the administration's move back toward Washington's traditional support of Sunni allies in the Middle East. In early December, Defense Secretary James Mattis—who in 2013 stepped down as head of the U.S. Central Command in part because he clashed with Obama administration officials over Iran—asked his department to push back against Tehran in places like Yemen, Syria and Iraq without triggering an outright war with Iran.

The administration, many analysts believe, needs to be careful in this battle for regional supremacy.



Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based think tank, says the United States needs to avoid even indirect responsibility for the deaths of Iran's foreign fighters. “Very little in recent history did more to sour the Iranian people on the U.S. than when we supported Iraq in [the eight-year war] with Iran in the 1980s,” he says. “If body bags start coming home and the government can plausibly blame



An Unintentional Act of Congress

The new tax law helps billionaires and accelerates tech's shredding of the old ways of living and working

➤ THE NEW TAX LAW WRITTEN BY House and Senate Republicans will help technology tear apart the way society has worked for 100 years. Which no doubt was an accident on Congress's part, but still.

Two provisions in this law—changes in taxes for homeowners and independent contractors—will add rocket fuel to a decadelong trend toward extreme mobility, which really got moving when Apple introduced smartphones and apps in 2007. In the following few years, we started to figure out that

“cloud computing” wasn’t something you did while under the influence of psilocybin mushrooms. Today, 2.5 billion people worldwide use smartphones, and we’ve come to expect ubiquitous access through the cloud to apps, services, media, friends, family, even money. Now nearly anything we used to have to do in a specific place we can now do wherever—and most of us want more of this. No sane company would introduce a product or ser-

vice that doesn’t include a mobile app. Buy a bottle of Medea vodka and you get an app. (How long before we can just download booze?)

Extreme mobility has broad implications. A generation or two ago, the goal for many American adults was to buy a house, get a job and then live in that home and work for that company for decades. That version of the American dream has been hacked to pieces. Millennials are not buying homes; instead, they easily move when necessary. Homeownership for that demographic has fallen faster than for any age group, according to U.S. census data, and the overall rate of homeownership in the third quarter of 2017 was a paltry 63.9 percent—about the same as in 1967. U.S. homeownership rates peaked at 69.2 percent in 2004, when baby boomers were raising their millennials.

Mobility is even more of a transformational force when it comes to work. Just look at the rise of the gig economy—more people are opting for work instead of jobs. A recent Intuit study estimated that about 34 percent of the U.S. workforce does gig work, and that will jump to 43 percent by 2020. In less than five years, just half of the working population will be tied down by a job.

Technology is the engine of extreme mobility. Apps are key to finding ways to make money, whether it’s driving for Uber, selling stuff on Etsy or doing expert consulting through Catalant. Products like Zoom video conferencing and the Slack business chat app help companies operate virtually, so a team can work together no matter where they are. In every way, we’re freer from place or commitment than at any time since we were hunter-gatherers. Whether that’s good or bad is unclear, but it’s an inescapable reality.

BY

KEVIN MANEY

[@kmaney](#)

The federal tax code has long supported our more fixed lifestyle. You got a tax break to be an employee instead of a gig worker (employees, for instance, end up paying only half of their Social Security tax; employers pay the other half), and you got a tax break on your home's mortgage interest and property tax payments. For much of the 20th century, those tax breaks fit society, encouraging the stability of long-term employment and homeownership. But now those goals are at odds with our lives and our economy.

The new tax law cuts back on mortgage interest and property tax breaks, which is expected to make homeownership less desirable and renting more desirable—which, in turn, should lead to the development of more rental properties, making renting cheaper and easier.

Same with work. The new tax law allows “sole proprietor” gig workers to deduct 20 percent of their revenue from taxable income—a sizable break that will make it even more attractive to get out of a job and freelance. Companies will welcome it. “Firms currently have a lot of incentives to turn workers into independent contractors,” Lawrence Katz, a labor economist at Harvard, told *The New York Times*. “This reinforces the current trends.”

Laudable goals all—if they were in fact the goals of those who wrote this new tax code. But Congress's support of extreme mobility appears to be an accident. The tax changes for homeowners were put in place primarily to offset revenue lost from other cuts, like dropping the corporate tax rate to 21 percent from 35 percent. If Congress set out to write a tax code that increased mobility, it could've gone much further.

For instance, single-payer guaran-

teed health care would be a huge mobility booster. People stay in jobs today just to get health insurance. If we truly wanted work mobility, the nation would separate health insurance from employment. Of course, most Republicans would rather eat cactus needles soaked in battery acid than push for national health care right now, so the new tax law instead tries to cripple the Affordable Care Act.

Then there's the criticism that the new law benefits the wealthy at the

expense of everyone else. Economic mobility has always been at the heart of the American ideal. But instead of making economic mobility more extreme, the new law creates obstacles to moving up and doing better. The Tax Policy Center concluded that nearly 50 percent of the benefits of the tax law would go to the top 5 percent of household earners in the first year of the law. And by 2027, the center said, 98 percent of multimillionaires would still get a tax cut, compared with just 27 percent of households making less than \$75,000.

The next time around, maybe Congress will adjust more aspects of tax law so it aligns with the new extreme mobility. And in keeping with the times, when Congress next passes a tax bill, it needs to make sure there's an app for that. ■

In less than five years, just half of the working population will be tied down by a job.



THE WAY WE LIVE NOW The GOP's tax plan will help technology tear apart the way society has worked for 100 years.



PROSTITUTION

Horny Unicorns

One of the fastest-growing parts of the tech industry is sex trafficking

➤ SILICON VALLEY'S "FEMALE problems" were well known long before the #MeToo movement started toppling piggish men in media, politics and the arts. But emails obtained by *Newsweek* reveal another sordid corner of the tech sector: a horny nest of prostitution "hobbyists" at Microsoft, Amazon and other companies in the Seattle area's high-tech alley.

The emails from the

men, some hoovered up in a sting operation against online prostitution review boards, are often disguised as replies to wrong addresses. "I think you might have the wrong email address," one man wrote from his Amazon work address to a brothel.

"Got it," another wrote from an Oracle email address, to a pimp.

Those emails are among hundreds fired off by employees at

BY

NINA BURLEIGH

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Brothels advertise their proximity to Microsoft headquarters.

major tech companies hoping to hook up with trafficked Asian women. They were on their work accounts because Seattle pimps often asked first-time sex buyers to prove they weren't cops by sending an employee email.

Newsweek obtained the cache of emails via a public records request to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. Law enforcement has been collecting them from brothel computers over the past few years; some were obtained in connection with a 2015 sting operation that netted high-level Amazon and Microsoft directors. The emails date between 2014 and 2016. They include 67 sent from Microsoft email accounts, 63 sent from Amazon and dozens sent from some of Seattle's other premier tech companies, as well as ones sent from major companies based elsewhere but with offices in the Seattle area, including T-Mobile and Oracle. The men who sent the emails have not been charged, and *Newsweek* is not identifying them.

The tech sector's many problems with women—from hostile workplaces and sexual harassment to CEOs with a history of violence against women—have been widely reported. But one aspect of the industry's bad behavior has received little attention: the widespread and often nonchalant attitude toward buying sex with trafficked women, a process made more efficient by internet technology. Some studies even suggest that the tech sector, overwhelmingly male and often requiring long, lonely hours on computers, has more avid consumers of

prostitution than many other fields.

A study commissioned by the U.S. Department of Justice found that Seattle has the fastest-growing sex industry in the country, more than doubling in size between 2005 and 2012. That boom correlates neatly with the boom of the tech sector there. It also correlates with the surge in high-paying jobs, since this "hobby" (the word Johns use online to describe buying sex) can be expensive. Some of these men spent \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year, according to authorities.

In the Seattle area, brothels even advertise their proximity to Microsoft headquarters on the Backpage.com site: "New Open Mind Asian Hot Sweet Pretty Face Nice Body Top Service (Bellevue-Redmond near Microsoft)" or "Certifiably Sexy Student Nuru Massage 69 Tongue Bath (Bellevue-Redmond Microsoft Access)."

LONELY HEARTS CLUB The tech sector is overwhelmingly male and often requires long, lonely hours behind the computer.

The tech sector not only has a significant number of men who pay for sex with trafficked women; it also has enabled traffickers to reach customers more easily and hide their business from cops by taking it off the streets. In one 24-hour period in the Seattle area, an estimated 6,487 people solicited sex on just one of the more than 100 websites that connect buyers with sellers, according to a 2014 study.

Authorities say that trafficked Asian women service hundreds of men each day in Seattle, and that each woman has sex with between five and 15 men a day. Most of the women don't speak much English, and many communicate with clients via phone translation apps. One of the pimps netted in a review board sting in 2015 admitted that many of the women were in debt bondage and in fear for their lives or the safety of their families.

THE SEX INDUSTRY'S YELP

Police and prosecutors in the Seattle area began to focus on the prostitution "hobbyists" with a sting opera-



tion that targeted the operators of three online review boards on which up to 18,000 men rated and discussed a relatively small group of Korean women. On KGirlsDelight.com, for example, men assigned numerical ratings and added specific descriptions of the women, such as their sexual abilities, level of enthusiasm and other attributes. The site reportedly had 1.2 million monthly hits in 2009 (the last year its management publicly revealed numbers).

The sting led to arrests of 17 men and one woman, but only a director at Amazon and another director at Microsoft opted for a trial. The trial date has been repeatedly pushed back and is now scheduled for March 2018. None of the sex workers involved were charged.

The arrests angered libertarians and supporters of so-called sex workers, who argue that most women sell sex by choice and that online review boards help keep women safe by providing a venue for warning them about dangerous men. But The Review Board's comments display a lack of compassion at best, and at worst a pervasive contempt for women. One commenter who had bragged about chaining a woman to a radiator publicly lamented that two of his favorites were leaving Bellevue.

Online prostitution review boards are common in all major urban areas—they are the Yelp of the sex industry—but the Seattle boards were unusual in that men also gathered IRL (“in real life,” in online parlance), calling themselves the League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, to compare notes about the women over drinks in public venues, making it easy for Seattle police to infiltrate and secretly videotape some of the proceedings. “She’s as close to perfect as I think they get made,” one man said, describing a

Korean woman. “Right after K-girls, I’ve always had this thing for Eastern Europeans,” said another. “[A]nyone from a war-torn country. Anything with ‘will work for food.’”

A day after *Newsweek* first contacted Microsoft for comment in late December, an unknown number of Seattle-area Microsoft employees received an email from a human resources official warning them that law enforcement “may have obtained” business cards, badges and emails; it included links to a variety of company policies related to standards of business conduct and responsible use of technology. “You are urged to ensure that you have reviewed and complied with these company policies as well as criminal laws.”

A spokesman for Microsoft calls the timing of the HR warning “coincidental” and denies it was related to the *Newsweek* investigation, although Microsoft had requested access to the records in October, received them in November, but warned its employees only in late December.

John Tymczyszyn, a lawyer for some of the Microsoft employees who received the warning this week, says his clients—who have not been charged and were not involved in the 2015 sting but allegedly have been frequenting brothels whose computers authorities have seized—were alarmed. “I

“Right after K-girls, I’ve always had this thing for Eastern Europeans. [A]nyone from a war-torn country. Anything with ‘will work for food.’”

think anybody that received this email out of the blue would be, you know, scared that there would be career if not criminal repercussions,” he says.

Tymczyszyn, who also represents other accused sex buyers in the Seattle area, questions the judgment of men who used work emails from one of the most cybersecure companies in the world to buy sex. But he says Seattle’s tech giants don’t conduct any sort of training to increase employees’ awareness about or compassion for trafficked women in brothels.

A spokesman for Microsoft emailed *Newsweek* a statement, which said: “Microsoft has a long history of cooperating with law enforcement and other agencies on combating sex trafficking and related topics, and we have employees who volunteer their time and money specifically to combat this issue as well. The personal conduct of a tiny fraction of our 125,000 employees does not in any way represent our culture. No organization is immune to the unfortunate situation when employees act unethically or illegally. When that happens, we look into the conduct and take appropriate action. Microsoft makes it clear to our employees they have a responsibility to act with integrity and conduct themselves in a legal and ethical manner at all times. If they don’t, they risk losing their jobs.”

When *Newsweek* sought comment from Amazon, a spokeswoman first asked to see the emails sent by Amazon employees. (Unlike Microsoft, Amazon had apparently not requested the emails from authorities.) *Newsweek* shared an Excel list with the senders’ names redacted, and when the spokeswoman said she couldn’t comment without seeing more, *Newsweek* sent one full email.

In late December, Amazon informed *Newsweek* that it is “inves-



BUYERS' REMORSE?
John Tymczyszyn, a lawyer who represents accused sex buyers in the Seattle area, questions the judgment of men who used work emails to buy sex. But he says the city's tech giants don't conduct any sort of training to increase employees' compassion for trafficked women.



A study conducted by Polaris, a leading anti-human-trafficking organization, found that more than 700 Asian brothels (or “illicit massage parlors”) are based in Silicon Valley, 20 percent of the total number of brothels believed to be operating in California, although the area’s population is just one-tenth of the state’s total. Comments by online reviewers of those parlors indicate that buyers recognize the women are trafficked. The average age of the women working in the parlors is 45, and some are as old as 70, indicating they have aged out of manufacturing jobs in their home countries and have come to the U.S. to make a living, according to a source familiar with the research.

Alex Trouteaud, director of Policy and Research at Demand Abolition, another national anti-trafficking organization, says the tech sector is a “culture that has readily embraced trafficking.” As an example of the industry’s nonchalant attitude, he recalled that in its early days, Uber published a blog post that analyzed its data on ride sharing, focused on the Bay Area and noted that the neighborhoods with the most prostitution also had the most Uber rides. “They made a map using their ride-share data, like it was a funny thing,” Trouteaud says.

Seattle authorities broke up the review boards in 2015 but did not arrest the women rated on them. Those women have since disappeared from the area, according to Robert Beiser, executive director of Seattle Against Slavery, a volunteer organization that works with trafficked women. “Criminal enterprises stretch across countries and can harm these people and their families,” he says. “They were in debt, and they tried to get out and they were afraid.” ■

tigating” the matter and provided this statement by email: “Amazon’s Owner’s Manual clearly states that ‘It is against Amazon’s policy for any employee or Contingent Worker to engage in any sex buying activities of any kind in Amazon’s workplace or in any work-related setting outside of the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings or business-related social events.’ When Amazon suspects that an employee has used company funds or resources to engage in criminal conduct, the company will immediately investigate and take appropriate ac-

tion up to and including termination. The company may also refer the matter to law enforcement.”

THE DISAPPEARED

At a panel on the issue in 2014, a King County prosecutor said that the Seattle tech community is a major sex consumer, and that the most frequent buyers are middle- and upper-class white men. A law enforcement source in Seattle says that authorities know there is a concentration of buyers in tech, and that Seattle investigators have communicated with detectives in and around Silicon Valley.



□ — WE KNOW WHO KILLED THREE PEOPLE AND MAIMED
260 MORE IN THAT SHOCKING ACT OF DOMESTIC
TERRORISM FIVE YEARS AGO AT THE BOSTON
MARATHON. BUT WHOEVER BUILT THE BOMBS THAT
RIPPED APART SO MANY LIVES IS STILL ON
THE LOOSE, STILL CAPABLE OF KILLING AGAIN

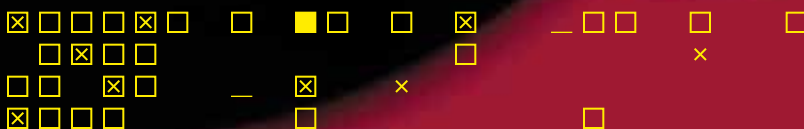
'I Will Have to Answer 0





e nly to God'

Story by MICHELE R. MCPHEE — Photograph by THE VOORHES



AT 2:40 A.M. ON JUNE 9, 2013, SERGEANT DETECTIVE GARY HAYWARD WAS DISPATCHED TO AN ADDRESS NEAR THE CENTER OF THE TONY TOWN OF TOPSFIELD, IN THE NORTH SHORE REGION OF MASSACHUSETTS. THERE, HE FOUND AN ELDERLY WOMAN ON A BENCH OUTSIDE THE TOWN LIBRARY IN HER BATHROBE, SOBBING, HER DISHEVELED AND DISTRAUGHT COMPANION BESIDE HER.

HAYWARD, A PATIENT MAN WITH A CALM DEMEANOR HONED OVER nearly 30 years in law enforcement, sat with the woman, Glenda Duckworth, as she described being forced to climb out of her bedroom window to escape her 6-foot-2, 240-pound son, Daniel Morley, after he attacked her, yelling, "Witch, burn in hell!" She said her son snatched her eyeglasses off her face and began melting them on the stove, threw her in a chair and forcibly drew cat whiskers on her cheeks with a marker, and then chased her into her bedroom, where he jumped on top of her longtime partner, David Bloss. As Bloss begged, "Help me, Glenda!" she climbed out of the window. Bloss wriggled out from under the 27-year-old Morley and escaped out that same window. Together they called 911 from Bloss's cellphone.

Hayward took copious notes as the terrified couple described Morley's breakdown, which had been building over the previous eight weeks, since the day two bombs were detonated near the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Morley's mother had grown so concerned about his behavior that she'd made a psychiatrist appointment for him, which she reminded him of as he assaulted her—"I am your mother, and you need help!"—according to the affidavit she swore out later that day to get a restraining order against him. Her son, Duckworth explained, had long struggled with mental health issues, but since the Boston Marathon bombing, he had become "very dark."

On the morning of April 15, 2013, hours before the explosions, Bloss told detectives, Morley was helping with yard work when he took a phone call, then left without a word. His behavior made Bloss uneasy, so much so that when the news of the deadly explosions on Boylston Street broke, he asked Duckworth, "Where is your son?"

Morley did not come home for two days. When he did, he merely told Duckworth he had gone fishing in Maine with a friend. "His mother was worried," Hayward recalled during a recent interview with *Newsweek*, adding that she was also shocked by her son's callous reaction to the deadly bombings. According to court records, when Duckworth told her son that some of their neighbors had been injured by the blasts and hospitalized, he stared coldly at her and said, "What's the big deal? People are dying all over the place."

Bloss told Hayward that Morley also called the two young women and the boy killed by the explosions "collateral damage."

Hayward took careful notes as the couple talked. Those notes, contained in court documents obtained by *Newsweek*, are now part of a large, complicated argument about suspicions that continue to haunt local law enforcement five years after the marathon bombings. The authorities are sure they captured the two men who carried out that deadly attack—Tamerlan Tsarnaev and his brother, Dzhokhar—but they don't know who made the bombs they used that day or the explosives they had with them a few days later, when they were cornered by various law enforcement officers and agents. They are certain the Tsarnaev brothers didn't make those bombs. So who did?

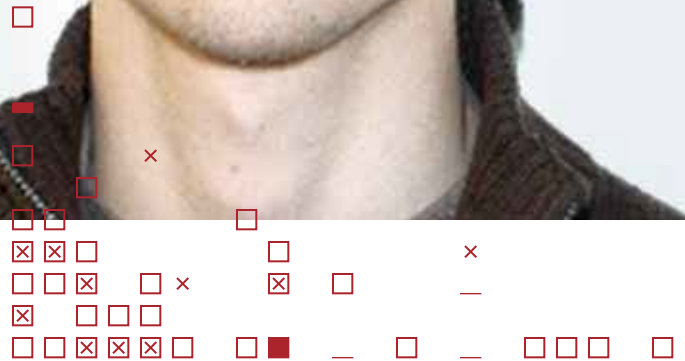


That's why Hayward now calls the domestic abuse case one of the most maddening riddles of his long career. When Morley was coaxed out of his mother's home and hauled away in an ambulance that morning in Topsfield, Hayward and his men made an astonishing discovery: His room was a well-stocked bomb-making facility, and it had several components identical to those in the explosive devices used at the Boston Marathon, down to a box top for a 6-quart Fagor pressure cooker. The cooker was the exact

size and brand the brothers left near the finish line, filled with BBs and shrapnel, powered by Christmas lights and detonated remotely with an initiator constructed from toy car parts.

As Topsfield cops and state police continued their search of Morley's bedroom and a shed in the backyard, the FBI suddenly showed up, leading one trooper to say, "Who called the feebz?"

The FBI has said repeatedly it doesn't know who armed the Tsarnaev brothers for their bloody attack, but cops in the Boston area think that there's a suspect in plain sight and that the bureau and the U.S. attorney are protecting him for some reason. "It is incredibly troubling to look at the facts surrounding this guy Daniel Morley, and have no understanding whatsoever about why the FBI got involved [in his case]...why the charges were dismissed and how the circumstances about his connection to the marathon bombers were kept quiet," says Jerry Flynn, executive



SUSPECT BEHAVIOR Clockwise from far left: Morley at a gun range, Phillipos leaving court during his trial for making false statements to authorities about destroying evidence related to the bombing; Dzhokhar; the apartment the brothers last lived in together; Tamerlan doing mixed martial arts training.



director of the New England Police Benevolent Association, one of Massachusetts's largest police unions. "We are talking about bombs that killed a little boy, two women. We have a dead cop. This kind of secrecy shouldn't be tolerated."

Suspect Black Hat & Suspect White Hat

FEDERAL PROSECUTORS CALLED THE BOSTON MARATHON bombings "one of the bloodiest terrorist attacks ever against American civilians." The youngest victim, Martin Richard, 8, was killed by the second blast, detonated by Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, prosecutors said, as was exchange student Lingzi Lu. Krystle Marie Campbell died in the first explosion, set off by Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Her body was riddled with shrapnel, and she took her last breaths with her best friend, Karen Ward McWatters, at her side. McWatters was one of the 17 survivors who became amputees that afternoon—she lost her left leg below the knee. Four of the 17 lost both legs.

Three dead, 260 injured, and that was only the start of a five-day bloody siege in Boston and surrounding towns. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police officer Sean Collier was killed by the brothers three days after the blasts in a shooting that authorities initially tied to a nearby 7-Eleven gunpoint robbery. Roughly 90 minutes later, a young businessman was carjacked and robbed by the brothers, and another cop, Dic Donohue, was critically wounded during a firefight that left the street littered with 251 spent shell casings from 21 guns. Tamerlan was killed in that shootout, shot nine times, his body then dragged under a Mercedes SUV for 20 feet as his younger brother fled in that stolen car. Dzhokhar's escape set off a frenzied, 16-hour manhunt until he was pulled from a dry-docked boat in a Watertown backyard. While hiding there, near death, bleeding from multiple gunshot wounds, he managed to scrawl a bloody manifesto that included a call to action to his fellow jihadists: "Know you are fighting men who look into the barrel of your gun and see heaven."

That second spasm of carnage began shortly after the FBI released photos of two men they believed were responsible for the bombings—calling them Suspect Black Hat and Suspect White Hat—along with a video of two men with backpacks (one wearing a black baseball cap, the other wearing a white one) walking down Boylston Street, along the race route, minutes before the blasts. (The bombs, packed into 6-quart Fagor pressure cookers, were placed near the finish line, hidden in those backpacks.)

The FBI maintains to this day that the bombers were not known to the bureau before those photos were made public, despite the fact that federal agents interviewed Tamerlan and his family multiple times in 2011 after Russian counterterrorism officials warned the FBI and the CIA that they had intercepted communications between Tamerlan and militants in Russia's Northern Caucasus, where the Tsarnaevs had emigrated from. FBI officials also have yet to explain why bureau agents were in



MORLEY CALLED THE TWO YOUNG WOMEN AND THE 8-YEAR-OLD BOY KILLED BY THE EXPLOSIONS

"COLLATERAL DAMAGE."

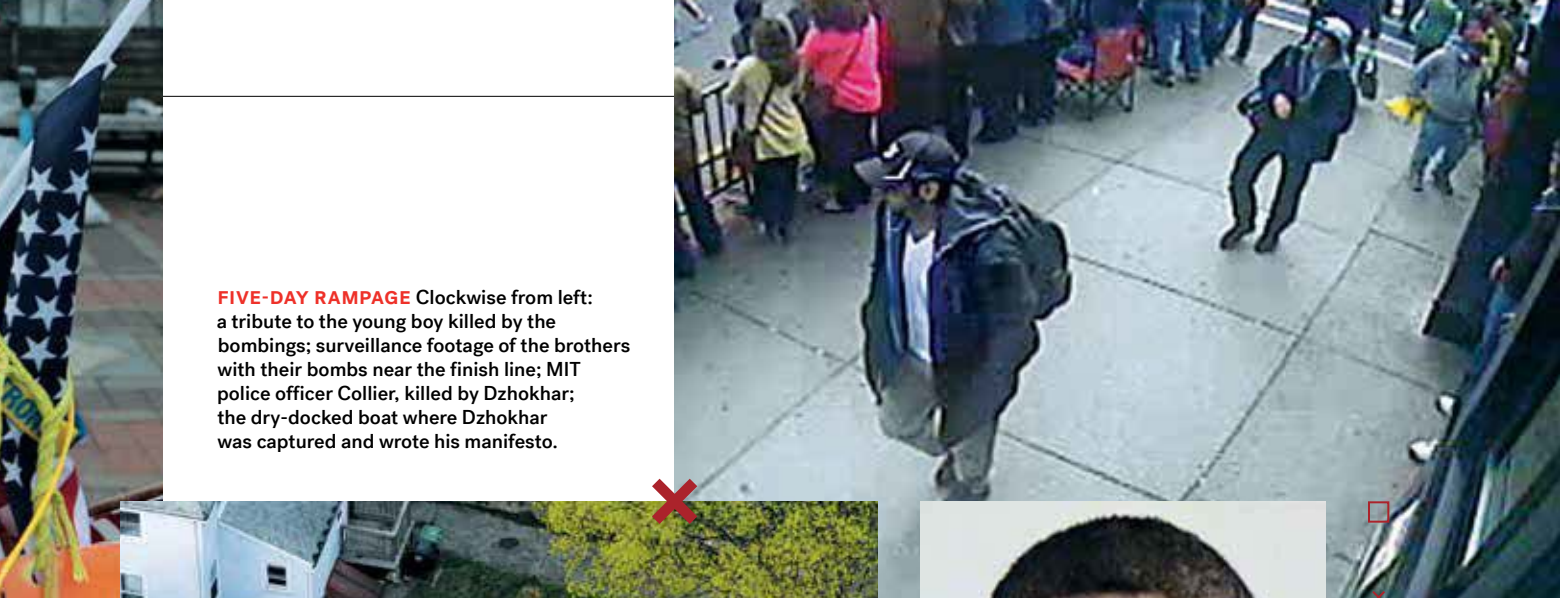


the Tsarnaevs' neighborhood, which is roughly a mile from MIT, the night Dzhokhar killed Collier. Five months later, on October 15, 2015, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley also wondered about that confounding coincidence, which is why he sent a letter to then-FBI Director James Comey. It read, in part: "In the hours leading up to the shooting death of MIT Police Officer Sean Collier and the death of the older suspect involved in the bombing, sources revealed that uniformed Cambridge Police Officers encountered multiple teams of FBI employees conducting surveillance in the area.... Was the surveillance being conducted in Cambridge on the Tsarnaev brothers, their associates or people later confirmed to be their acquaintances?"

Comey did not respond to Grassley's letter, but the Boston FBI field office released a statement three days later: "The Joint Terrorism Task Force was at MIT...on April 18, 2013, on a matter unrelated to the Tsarnaev brothers."

Five years on, that statement still angers former Somerville Police Chief Tom Pasquarello. "The FBI clearly knew more about the Tsarnaevs than they were willing to share with local law enforcement," he tells *Newsweek*. "There are a lot of unanswered questions about that night."

The most important one is: Who shot Sean Collier? A surveil-



FIVE-DAY RAMPAGE Clockwise from left: a tribute to the young boy killed by the bombings; surveillance footage of the brothers with their bombs near the finish line; MIT police officer Collier, killed by Dzhokhar; the dry-docked boat where Dzhokhar was captured and wrote his manifesto.



FROM LEFT: BILL GREENE/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY; DARREN MCCOLLESTER/GETTY; FBI/HANDOUT/CORBIS/GETTY; JOANNE RATHE/THE BOSTON GLOBE/GETTY

lance video of his shooting shows two shadowy figures at the scene. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was convicted of killing the officer, even though a federal prosecutor told the jury in his trial that the video images were too small to “reveal whether the defendant pulled the trigger” but that Dzhokhar was responsible for the killing. (Tamerlan couldn’t be charged because he was dead.) An MIT graduate student who rode his bicycle through the courtyard that night and past the spot where Collier was killed placed Dzhokhar at the scene, telling the jury “we made eye contact.” He couldn’t see the second man near Collier’s cruiser.

Even more intriguing are these two questions: Who held up the 7-Eleven just minutes before Collier was killed, and was that crime merely a way to raise gas money as part of the brothers’ plan to drive to New York City with more bombs?

These and other unknowns continue to swirl around Daniel Morley, in part because two of his friends and a family member say he bears an uncanny resemblance to the man who robbed that 7-Eleven. Surveillance video obtained by *Newsweek* shows a white or Hispanic male with a goatee and a bucket hat approach a cashier. As she opens the register to give him change, he whips out a small silver gun, and she hands him roughly \$200. The police report of that holdup, obtained by *Newsweek*

after a Freedom of Information Act request, is heavily redacted, so that the name of the federal agency that for some inexplicable reason took over the robbery investigation, a long description of the gunman’s actions while inside the store, and a physical description of the suspect are all lined out.

Police initially linked the stickup to Collier’s killing but later backed away from that theory. However, there’s another man in the store’s video, his face obscured, clearly wearing a gray, hooded sweatshirt and carrying a backpack. In the trial of Robel Phillipos, a friend of the Tsarnaev brothers who was convicted of lying to the FBI about evidence he and two friends discarded from Dzhokhar’s dorm room the night Collier was killed, a federal agent testified that Phillipos identified a photo of Dzhokhar wearing a “gray hooded sweatshirt with fluorescent lettering” from an array of “recent surveillance photos from a robbery of a 7-Eleven.”

Were Morley and Dzhokhar together in that 7-Eleven? If so, that would seem to be a vital clue to pursue in one of the most infamous crimes in recent U.S. history, and after Morley was identified as a possible suspect, several police departments shared their suspicions about him with the Cambridge police.

And then, nothing. Morley’s lawyer confirmed to *Newsweek* that his client was never questioned about the robbery.



RUNNING SCARED
Bomb explodes near finish line; Dzhokhar on surveillance camera while on trial; BBs imbedded in legs of a bombing victim; a memorial honoring victims with empty shoes.

— [THERE IS] AMPLE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE TSARNAEVS DID NO



'How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom'

ON MAY 15, 2015, DZHOKHAR TSARNAEV WAS SENTENCED TO death and sent to the Supermax prison in Florence, Colorado, to await his mandatory appeal. His brother Tamerlan had already been buried in an unmarked grave in Doswell, Virginia. Authorities are confident both men are where they belong, but that's a crime only half-solved, because federal prosecutors and FBI forensics experts have indicated in public statements, sworn testimony and court filings that there is "ample reason to believe that the Tsarnaevs did not act alone, that they didn't build the bombs they detonated." Nearly 1,300 pieces of evidence were examined at FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia, and none directly linked the brothers to the construction of those devices. During Dzhokhar's trial, federal prosecutors pointed out that other than scant traces of fireworks powder and the instructions in an online issue of Al-Qaeda's Inspire magazine, "How to Build a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," there was very little physical evidence linking either brother to the building of the deadly explosives. An FBI report on



The FBI showed up at Topsfield police headquarters and seized much of the evidence taken from Morley's home after Hayward executed a search warrant. Morley was never formally arraigned in connection with the charges that Hayward swore out in a criminal complaint, and those charges were abruptly dropped without explanation by the Essex County district attorney. When asked why, his spokeswoman referred questions to the FBI. The FBI wasn't talking, not even when it wordlessly returned the evidence to Topsfield police months after Morley's arrest, blowing off local law enforcement with a dismissive "We didn't find anything," a Topsfield police commander told *Newsweek*.

Why, local cops are still asking, did the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force take over the case against Morley? "Why is the FBI at the scene of a domestic call? Nobody knows," a bomb tech who was there told *Newsweek*.

'I'm Sorry for What I've Done...'

THE STOCKPILE OF BOMB-MAKING MATERIALS IN Morley's room was discovered only because he attacked his mother and her boyfriend. His breakdown led to a four-hour standoff as he barricaded himself inside the house, sporadically yelling that he wanted to hijack an airplane or that he would

T ACT ALONE, THAT THEY DIDN'T BUILD THE BOMBS THEY DETONATED."

the bombing also noted that the devices used were far more sophisticated than those described in the jihadi magazine's recipe.

On May 21, 2014, then-acting U.S. Attorney William Weinreb, who was on the team of federal prosecutors that convinced a Boston jury to sentence Dzhokhar to death, filed a pretrial motion asserting that the bombs were sophisticated devices that "would have been difficult for the Tsarnaevs to fabricate successfully without training or assistance from others.... [S]earches of the Tsarnaevs' residences, three vehicles and other locations associated with them yielded virtually no traces of black powder, again strongly suggesting that others had built, or at least helped the Tsarnaevs build, the bombs, and thus might have built more."

An FBI agent testified in Dzhokhar's trial that the bureau never located the brothers' bomb-making facility. Yet Massachusetts law enforcement officials say the investigation begun by Hayward on June 9, 2013, uncovered what could have been such a facility in the bedroom of Morley, who had ties to Tamerlan Tsarnaev.

Morley was arrested by Topsfield police that day, charged with two counts of assault and battery against his mother and her companion, and with making a bomb threat. And then, nothing.

set the house on fire. The siege ended around dawn, when a police team entered the house in SWAT gear, prompting Morley to emerge with his hands up. He was bundled into an ambulance for a mental health evaluation at Beverly Hospital as Bloss gave Topsfield police a signed consent to search the house, including Morley's bedroom. Bloss told police that Morley had never let him into his bedroom and always kept it locked.

What Topsfield police found when they entered the bedroom was a staggering cache of explosive materials: metallic BBs, electrical wires, batteries, cellphone parts, circuit boards—all signatures of a pressure-cooker bomb and similar to parts recovered on Boylston Street in the aftermath of the marathon bombings. Other materials commonly used in homemade explosives—buckets of aluminum foil, rice flour, tubs of chemicals, bags of powdery rice flour, hobby fuse and wires, batteries, dismantled cellphones, fire starters—were also in the room. There was a collection of empty whipped cream can "hides"—containers that look like cans of whipped cream but are empty so they can be used as a secret stash or, more alarmingly, as homemade grenades. Police were concerned about these because of a recipe they found

written in a notebook on Morley's desk: It was for Thermite, a pyrotechnic composition of a metal powder and a metal oxide that is often put inside such metal canisters to produce small bombs. (A swastika was scrawled on another page of that notebook.) He also had a recipe for chlorine gas, a deadly chemical weapon, and notes that mentioned "magnesium slivers to aid ignition." Morley had plastic zip ties like the ones used by police when they are making large-scale arrests, as well as several knives, decorative swords, a loaded 9 mm pistol and a large, fully loaded Russian bolt action rifle, along with several hundred rounds of high-caliber ammunition. A search of a nearby shed, which Morley's mother described as her son's "work area," turned up a machete, steel wool, a Duraflame log, coffee grinders and shards of metal shavings—all known elements in homemade bombs.

All that was troubling, but it was what Hayward found in a bedroom closet that spurred a "holy shit moment" he says was one of the more memorable events of his life. It was a 24-quart pressure cooker hidden under a pile of dirty clothes, alongside a massive bag of fertilizer, the kind often used by bomb builders, and a duffel bag big enough to stash the pressure cooker. Inside the duffel bag were multiple pairs of blue surgical gloves, the sort used by criminals who don't want to leave fingerprints.

When Hayward realized what he had found, he jumped back and got on his police radio: "Get the bomb squad in here, now!" He then ordered a police cruiser to chase down the ambulance transporting Morley so someone could question him about the pressure cooker. He also had the neighborhood evacuated and the gas main for the area shut off.

As the bomb squad suited up to examine the pressure cooker, a cruiser driven by Topsfield Officer Gary Wildes pulled up behind Morley's ambulance as it arrived in the emergency room bay at Beverly Hospital. Wildes jumped out, opened the back door of the ambulance and asked Morley, "Is that pressure cooker bomb active?"

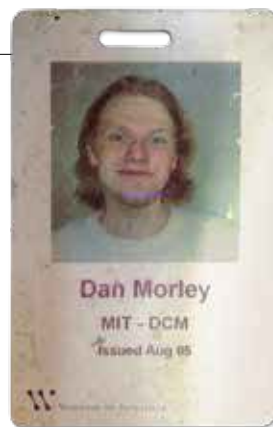
Morley smirked and said, "Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir. It is."

Wildes immediately got on his radio: "It is an active bomb. Repeat. Suspect says it is an active bomb."

By now Hayward knew Morley was a dangerous man with a stockpile of ominous materials, but he says he was more concerned with keeping his cops and the community safe than in following procedure by notifying the Boston Regional Intelligence Center about the bomb factory he'd just discovered. In other words, he did not contact federal authorities to tell them what he'd found, which is why the unanticipated arrival of the FBI that morning was unnerving to cops there.

As Morley was admitted to the hospital for observation, Massachusetts State Police bomb technicians examined the pressure cooker and determined that he'd lied, that it was not a live bomb.

Later that day, Hayward swore out a complaint in Massachu-



FREEDOM IS ANOTHER WORD

The cache of bomb-making materials found in Morley's bedroom included what he told police was a live bomb, right. He also had a wide range of anarchist propaganda—he once accused his mother and her companion of being "slaves to the government."



setts District Court charging Morley with two counts of assault and battery, making a bomb/hijack threat and a threat to commit a crime. He also filed an application for a search warrant in Ipswich District Court, seeking any additional evidence, including "any part, product, ingredient that may be an element or consistent with items used in the making of a bomb or infernal machine," along with "notes, drawings, paperwork, literature, firearms, ammunition or weapons."

Hayward also consulted a terrorism expert to try to gain insight into Morley's troubled psyche. Over multiple interviews, Bloss told Hayward he had harbored great fears about his girlfriend's son from the day Morley moved in with them after he quit his job as a laboratory technician at MIT. Part of that job involved euthanizing mice by the dozens, which according to Marc Pasciuto—the friend Morley said he went fishing with on Marathon Monday—tormented Morley. Pasciuto told *Newsweek* in 2013 that he went fishing with Morley a lot but "couldn't remember" if April 15 was one of those days. Bloss grew increasingly concerned about living with Morley as his angry anarchist tirades, anti-Semitic rants and his beliefs that "women destroyed men" became an unrelenting stream of hate in the weeks after the bombings. Morley also frequently ac-



BOMBS

On March 26, 2014, Essex County District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett filed a *nolle prosequi*—a legal term that means he had dropped all the charges against Morley and would not pursue others. “What’s the point of having laws written to deter exactly what this guy did?” says a retired Boston bomb technician familiar with the case, speaking on condition of anonymity. “Everything this guy had in his house was in violation of the state bomb bill.”

Blodgett gave no explanation, other than the statement issued by his spokeswoman: “Mr. Morley must comply with Department of Mental Health, including medications, and not abuse his family.”

The FBI declined to answer *Newsweek’s* questions about Morley in 2013, refused to answer questions about him during Dzhokhar’s trial in 2015 and declined to do so again last month. Morley’s court-appointed lawyer, Robert LeBlanc, has a simple explanation for the dropped charges, saying in a text message to *Newsweek*, “The FBI got it wrong. Obviously there was a lot of pressure from law enforcement on this case. They followed a lead that led to a dead end with Dan.” When asked why his client had stockpiled so many bomb-making materials, Leblanc said Morley didn’t remember doing that and “he had a breakdown.”

That explanation doesn’t satisfy Hayward, who remains befuddled by the FBI’s handling of his case. Morley never appeared in any courtroom on the charges. His appearance was waived at his arraignment, where his father posted \$20,000 bail, which was returned to him when the Essex County DA dropped all the charges in 2014, while Morley was still confined to one of three separate mental health facilities he resided in full time between June 9, 2013, and June 2015. He was released from Tewksbury State Hospital about a month after a federal jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to death. Cops wonder if that is a coincidence. “That’s a good way to keep someone out of sight until the trial is over,” remarked an MIT police officer who knew Sean Collier but isn’t authorized to speak on the record. MIT police have also declined to answer questions about Morley, his time on campus or the contents of the locker he maintained on campus even after he quit.

It’s unclear who paid for Morley’s expensive inpatient treatment, which led Bloss to ask an investigator, “Could the FBI hide him in hospitals?”

Because his case was dismissed, Morley does not have a criminal record, and he has landed a state job driving a van that transports the elderly.

Morley’s lawyer told *Newsweek* this month that his client is “doing very well and is being productive. Other than that, I can’t say a word.”

Hayward told *Newsweek* late last year that he hasn’t given up on the case, and on the many vexing questions related to that horrific day five years ago. “As more information becomes available,” he said, “we continue to track it.” **N**

“KNOW YOU ARE FIGHTING MEN WHO LOOK INTO THE BARREL OF YOUR GUN AND SEE HEAVEN.”

cused Bloss and his mother of being “slaves to the government.”

Investigators suspect Morley also knew Tamerlan—they were in the same criminal justice class at Bunker Hill Community College in 2008 and were both devotees of mixed martial arts, as was Pasciuto. And Duckworth told Hayward that her son had told her Pasciuto was friends with Tamerlan and that her son was essentially Pasciuto’s lap dog—his driver. The night before she was attacked by Morley, he erupted with an eerie statement that Pasciuto had tried to get him to “do something really bad.” He also made a cryptic confession that night. “I’m sorry for what I’ve done,” he told his mother, “and I have to answer only to God.”

‘The FBI Got It Wrong’

HAYWARD BEGAN TO PREPARE A CASE AGAINST MORLEY IN JUNE 2013, carefully cataloging Duckworth’s and Bloss’s suspicions about him. “I asked them if Daniel had Muslim beliefs,” he wrote in a search warrant affidavit, and was told that “he did read the Quran.” Morley was also studying Russian and Arabic on his computer and had a video that offered careful instructions on how to make a detonator similar to the ones used for the Boston Marathon bombs.

But Hayward’s detailed files never made it into a courtroom, which law enforcement officials across the state find perplexing.



KINGS

OF THE

STONED AGE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
**Morgan
Heim**

BY
**Johnny
Magdaleno**

LEGALIZED **Marijuana** WAS SUPPOSED TO
HURT THE MEXICAN **Drug Cartels**,
BUT **Narcos** IN CALIFORNIA MAY BE USING IT
TO PLANT THE SEEDS OF A **Takeover**



HIGH AND GO SEEK

Law enforcement officers in the forests of Northern California. The authorities are struggling to keep cartels out of the weed business here, even though recreational marijuana became legal on January 1 and medical marijuana has been permitted since 1996.

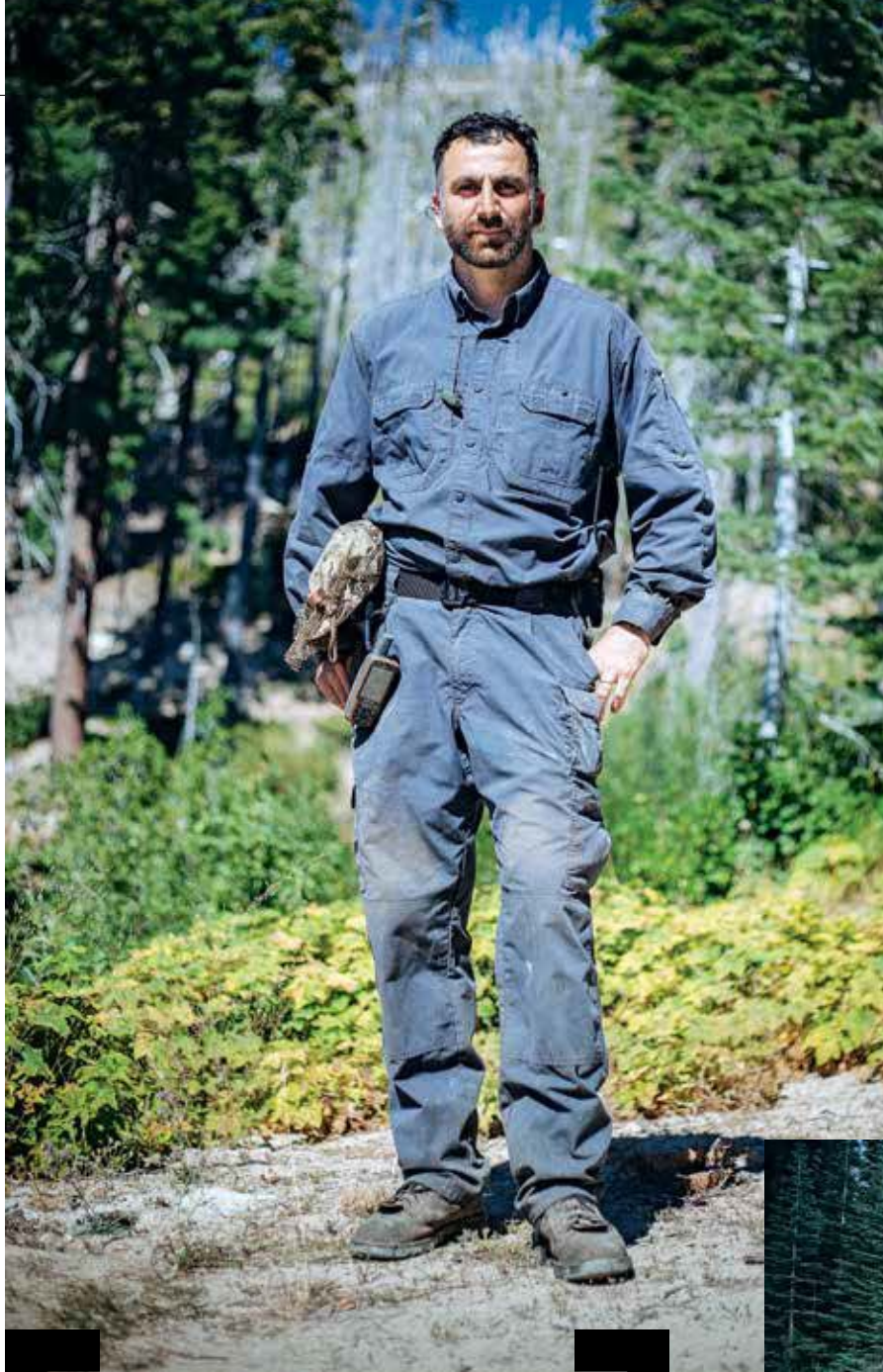
THE FOUR MEN BOLTED THROUGH THE forest, exhausted and bleeding from multiple cuts. When they emerged from the trees on that dry summer night in 2016, they spotted a house in the distance. They ran up to it and knocked on the stranger's door, then frantically asked for help in broken English. The stranger called the police. When the cops arrived, the men told a harrowing story of being beaten by armed guards at an illegal pot farm and fleeing for their lives.

The men, all Latino, described to the police where the farm was located, just outside a heavily forested area in California's Calaveras County. Soon the authorities sent up a team to raid the farm. What they discovered: more than 23,000 marijuana plants producing upward of \$60 million worth of weed. They also found two women they believe were selling marijuana for the Mexican drug cartels.

For months in Calaveras County, a rural, conservative enclave about 125 miles east of San Francisco, this drug bust generated local headlines. But federal authorities say Mexican drug cartels are propping up black-market marijuana farms like this all across Northern California. More than 160 years ago, immigrants, business tycoons and speculators poured into these foothills along the Sierra Nevada to mine the ridges and pan the streams for gold. Now weed is sparking the next gold rush, and law enforcement is struggling to keep cartels out of the game, even though recreational marijuana became legal in California on January 1 and medical marijuana has been permitted since 1996.

For more than a decade, the Mexican drug cartels have been illegally growing weed in the forests of the United States, and federal agencies have had mixed success destroying these illicit crops. Today, California is the epicenter of black-market marijuana in the U.S., with over 90 percent of the country's illegal marijuana farms. The authorities say they're finding cartel-affiliated weed on government-owned lands in states including Oregon, Utah, Washington, Nevada and Arizona, all of which permit some form of medical marijuana. The problem has gotten so bad that in 2016, Colorado began partnering with the Mexican Consulate to bust the narcotics.

Today, activists in California counties such as Calaveras are pushing back, trying to ban cannabis farms to cut off the cartels. They say drug traffickers are importing automatic weapons and using illegal,



LOCAL RANCHERS PATROL
THEIR PLOTS OF LAND WITH
Kevlar vests STRAPPED
ACROSS THEIR CHESTS,
AFRAID THEY'LL STUMBLE
UPON AN **armed crew.**

CROP KILLERS

Gabriel, left, is not only alarmed by the environmental damage he's encountered in his research; he's also worried about the men with guns he's seen. Law enforcement officers, below, are worried about the same thing.

toxic pesticides that are eviscerating forest animals and poisoning freshwater sources. "We're going down the toilet bowl," says Calaveras County Sheriff Rick DiBasilio, "and it's not going to get any better."

But some legal weed farmers in the area say the authorities and their allies are exaggerating the problem, playing on stereotypes about race and crime to instill fear in locals. As Jack Norton, a Calaveras County marijuana grower, puts it, "Just because a guy and his cousin want to grow weed in the woods doesn't mean they're affiliated with 'El Chapo.'"

In early January, the Trump administration gave federal prosecutors more power to go after state marijuana industries, which are still illegal at the federal level. It's still unclear how that move will affect California.

But in Calaveras, legal weed farmers fear a blanket ban would crush the local economy and cut off millions of dollars in taxes from going to local law enforcement. Last year, the cops in Calaveras started using that money to purchase ballistic helmets, ballistic shields and tactical gun sights—in part to confront a black-market takeover by the drug cartels.

'It's Not Cheech and Chong'

ON A RECENT AFTERNOON, SNOW DUSTED THE TREES OF Mountain Ranch, a bucolic stretch of hills and valleys in the center of Calaveras County. Two and a half years ago, the area was almost entirely covered with lush forest, but in September 2015, two days before California created a state licensing system for medical marijuana, a tree fell onto a power line near the town of Jackson, sparking a forest fire that torched nearly 71,000 acres. The blaze fanned out south, incinerating large pockets of Calaveras.

Some of those hills and valleys remain charred, and the clearings reveal what had long been hidden: black plastic tubs filled with marijuana seedlings. These are used by sophisticated, industrial marijuana farms, and many of them are within a 20-minute drive from the Mountain Ranch town center. "It's not Cheech and Chong," says Karen Harper, a member of the pro-legalization Calaveras Cannabis

Alliance, referring to the people who harvest this crop. "They're not lazy-ass hippies. They work hard."

Months after the fire, Calaveras announced a temporary ordinance to regulate commercial marijuana farms. That led to a flood of cannabis investors. The damage from the fire had decimated property values in Mountain Ranch, and investors poured in to purchase land from families whose homes were destroyed. "We call it the green rush," says Bill Schmielt, a local real estate agent.

Now marijuana drives the economy here. A study by the University of Pacific in Stockton found that more than 740 commercial growers in the area generated nearly \$400 million in sales in 2016.

But that study may underestimate the crop's total impact. The county planning department estimates there are anywhere from 700 to 1,500 illegal marijuana farms sprawled across private property or government-owned lands in Calaveras.

Illegal pot farms aren't new to California. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks, which led to tighter control along the U.S.-Mexico border, marijuana plantations have been on the rise in forests across the northern part of the state. That surge has increased over the past three years. In 2014, Stephen Frick, a special agent for the U.S. Forest Service, and his colleagues culled 671,000 plants from national forests in California. In 2016, that figure doubled. Now that the state has legalized recreational marijuana, growers are rushing into rural areas in Northern California to set up illegal farms, with one county even declaring a "state of emergency" last September over the rise of black-market growers. Frick doesn't think that will slow down. "All the indications so far this year are that [seizures of illegal pot] are going to continue to increase."

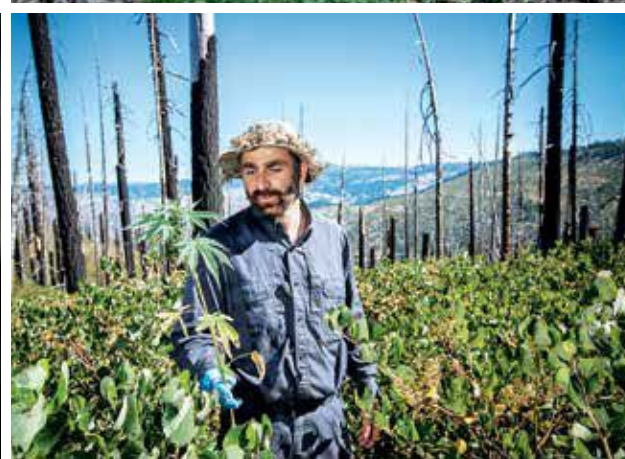
Just east of Mountain Ranch is the Stanislaus National Forest, another prime location for illegal weed farms. Investigators—from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office—have found hundreds of thousands of plants tended by undocumented workers on that government-owned land. "Over 80 percent of the people we arrest in these grows," says Frick, "are here illegally from Mexico."

Many, he says, are from Michoacán, a drug-war-ravaged state in the western part of the country. Frick and other authorities believe the narcos lure workers across the border, promising well-paying





GREEN DAYS Gabriel and the authorities aren't the only ones worried about pesticides, local wildlife and drug-related violence. Some critics want a blanket ban on marijuana in Calaveras. Registered marijuana growers are also concerned, but they still want to stay legal, fearing prohibition would hurt law enforcement and the economy.





jobs patrolling the fields and producing weed on an industrial scale. Others, they say, are brutally forced into it. Cartel players either threaten workers at gunpoint to keep them tending the crops or threaten to kill their family members back in Mexico if they don't finish the harvest. Because the workers aren't U.S. citizens, the cartels know they're unlikely to ask the police for help. Most are afraid to tell investigators who they're working for, or to testify as witnesses. "If I tell you, they'll kill me," one grower told a retired Calaveras law enforcement officer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he thinks cartel members are stalking him and his wife.

In Calaveras, Sheriff DiBasilio says it's very hard to arrest people growing illegally. "We've done hundreds of flyovers" of pot farms with helicopters, he says. "But as soon as they hear you coming, they're gone." Of the growers they have caught, DiBasilio says, the vast majority are undocumented.

Calaveras authorities have never received a confession from farmers that links them to Mexican drug cartels. Yet Frick and the California attorney general's office believe the illegal weed goes into the nationwide pipeline coordinated by organizations such as the Sinaloa cartel and La Familia Michoacana. One piece of evidence? Phone calls and wire transfers of money that travel south, to the border.

Frick and other authorities also point to the cult idols they so often find on the pot farms. The retired Calaveras law enforcement officer says he and his colleagues used to find statues of Jesús Malverde, a so-called narco saint from the Mexican state of

Sinaloa, at illegal farms in Calaveras County after raids. The legend of Malverde is that he was a Robin Hood-like figure during the 19th century. Cartels first used his image in the 1980s as part of a slick PR campaign to suggest that their criminal empire was built to provide economic opportunity for the country's poor. Not all of Malverde's followers are criminals, but in the United States authorities see him as an emblem of the Mexican drug trade. When Chicago cops pulled over a car carrying \$19 million of cocaine in 2010, they said it was the Malverde statue on the dashboard that tipped them off.

When law enforcement started investigating the four battered men who escaped from that Calaveras black-market pot farm, they visited the home addresses affiliated with the two women suspected of running the operation. At one of the homes, they found a shrine to another Mexican folklore saint commonly associated with drug traffickers: the Grim Reaper-esque Santa Muerte. (Members of law enforcement have discovered that figure when busting migrant smugglers, MS-13 gang operations and cartel rings along the U.S.-Mexico border.)

More alarming than these folklore figurines, however, was what they found back at the farm: heaps of trash, dirty black tarps and a makeshift log cabin where the four men lived in putrid conditions. These growers were polluting the forest while reaping an enormous profit—a trade-off that's happening in illegal farms across Northern California.

14,000 Pounds of Rodenticide

HOURS NORTH OF CALAVERAS, DEEP IN PUBLIC forests along the California-Oregon border, 12 tons of plastic trash, thousands of pounds of fertilizers and more than 80 pounds of toxic rodenticides and pesticides lay strewn among towering pines and oaks—turning this Eden into a landfill.

Mourad Gabriel, a wildlife pathologist who runs the Integral Ecology Research Center, first encountered this black-market marijuana farm in 2015. He described its festering conditions in an unpublished cache of research he allowed me to preview. Gabriel estimates that criminal organizations are pouring 14,000 pounds of rodenticide and 750,000 pounds of water-soluble chemical fertilizers into the soil on government-protected land every year. Those estimates are based on his fieldwork on more than 120 illegal marijuana

“JUST BECAUSE A GUY
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farms in public forests across seven counties in Northern California.

At these sites, Gabriel has also found the crumpled, poisoned bodies of bears, deer and mountain lions. One of the chemicals killing these animals: carbofuran, a pesticide that's illegal to use on crops in the United States, though still available for purchase online. "Growers often store the concentrate—bubble-gum pink in color—in soda and Gatorade bottles," Gabriel and his colleagues wrote in a recent op-ed for *The Wildlife Professional* magazine. "Just a drop is sufficient to kill an adult human."

He has talked with men caught tending illegal marijuana farms to learn why they deployed such powerful chemicals to protect their crops. "I would ask, 'Where did you learn these mechanisms for poisoning wildlife?' And they'd say, 'That's what we did back home'"—in Mexico.

Part of the legalization argument is that regulating and taxing marijuana could give California enforcement agencies the funds they need to eradicate illegal farms. But Gabriel thinks it will take years before enforcement can put a dent in the illegal grows that he estimates pop up by the hundreds every year. He points to Humboldt County, about five hours northwest of Calaveras, where authorities are combing through 2,300 applications for growers who want to start selling in California's recreational market. But there are also an estimated 12,700 illegal farms in the county.

Not all of those farmers are claiming allegiance to narco-trafficking clans in Mexico. But what alarms Gabriel, aside from the environmental damage, is the number of firearms. In 2012, he says, he encountered guns at two of the 20 illegal marijuana farms he investigated. Now he's finding them at nearly every site. "This is not Ma and Pa growing out in the hills," says Gabriel. "These are...drug trafficking organizations that are there to protect their investment."

Silent, Sober Majority?

ANTI-POT ACTIVISTS IN CALAVERAS SAY THE influx of firearms and toxic pollution is enough reason to bar the industry as a whole, and most of the county's conservative-held government backs their cause. In November, more than 40 residents packed into a small Calaveras County government meeting as the county planning board worked on a proposal to limit commercial marijuana farms

to just 50. If turned into law, that would kick out nearly 150 farmers who have already started legal marijuana operations—but leave Calaveras's 700 to 1,500 black-market growers untouched.

The meeting quickly grew divisive. As weed farmers and anti-pot activists stood up and shared their opinions on the ordinance, people jeered and hissed across the aisle, yelling at speakers to sit down and booing officials as they commented in favor or against the proposal. "Protect us!" shouted a weed farmer at one point during the eight-hour session. "Protect us!" shouted anti-pot activists in response.

In the far corner, among the anti-pot activists, sat Bill McManus, a potbellied man with a slight drawl whose white moustache is stained yellow-brown by tobacco smoke. He and his colleague David Tunno are the de facto leaders of the anti-pot movement up here. They call themselves mouthpieces for the "silent majority" that wants weed out. Last year, they collected more than 5,000 petition signatures for a ban proposition, which was enough to float it in front of the county supervisors. And Tunno says that number could have been much higher. "A lot of these people are so damn scared they won't even help us. They don't want their name attached to our cause."

Tunno and McManus drum up support with tales of Calaveras residents accidentally driving into an illegal farm, where armed men descend upon their car and threaten to find out where they live if they don't turn back. Or the local ranchers who patrol their plots of land with Kevlar vests strapped across their chests, afraid they'll stumble upon an armed crew. "You don't enjoy your property. You don't go out for walks. You don't have your grandkids up riding the pony, or bicycles or ATV," says McManus. "You can't do that anymore because it's too dangerous."

And it's not just the anti-pot camp that wants the black market shut down. Burch Shufeldt, a registered marijuana grower, claims he's had run-ins with cartel growers near his properties. He showed me the remnants of what he claims was a cartel grow in the Stanislaus forest—a space littered with pots and pans, chem-

GROWING PAINS

A K-9 team in Northern California, right. Below, law enforcement dismantles a grow operation. Regardless of what becomes of the Trump administration's push to enforce federal marijuana laws, Calaveras has until February 2018, when its current weed farm ordinance expires, to make up its mind.






“A LOT OF THESE
PEOPLE ARE
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ical fertilizers and black hoses—and brought me to a mountaintop above his isolated cabin. “You’d come screaming up the hill on a quad,” he says, “and there’d be this huge Escalade sitting right here.”

Six registered pot farmers I interviewed say they believe Mexican cartels or their affiliates are active in Calaveras. But they want to keep weed legal, not only because it’s their livelihood but because their tax dollars help combat the illegal farms. “There’s the hard-core black market with organized criminals,” says Cas Tomaszewski, former director of the Calaveras Cannabis Alliance. “And then there are growers with kids who’ve been doing this here for years.”

A total and complete ban on growing pot would hobble the local economy, he says, and could lead to even more drug-related violence. No commercial cannabis means no multimillion-dollar tax boon for the county and its law enforcement officers, who used marijuana tax funds to raid about 40 illegal farms and seize nearly 30,000 pot plants in 2017. “We’re lucky anybody wants to live in this county,” says Harper, of the pro-legalization Calaveras Cannabis Alliance. “And they want to stop something that provides millions of dollars.”

Regardless of what becomes of the Trump administration’s push to enforce federal marijuana laws, the county has until February 2018, when its current weed farm ordinance expires, to make up its mind. Outside the county planning meeting, McManus and a small group of anti-pot activists talked about the next step in their yearslong campaign. They’d saturated county roads with anti-pot banners, attended hundreds of county supervisor meetings and visited stores that serve the marijuana industry to lambaste business owners. Now their plan is to sit back and watch. Like Colorado, argues McManus, California will see that legalization and more taxes aren’t enough to kick out the black market. “I think it needs to hurt a little bit,” he says, “before it gets better.”

One of the anti-pot activists next to him unzips a compartment in her purse to show me her first-ever pistol holster. No matter what the county’s decides, this group tells me, their only option is to protect themselves from the armed pot farmers who are now their next-door neighbors. “We’re militarizing,” says a local cattle rancher, who asked for anonymity out of fear of being confronted by criminal growers. “We’re all getting bigger guns, we’re all getting bigger dogs, [and] we’re all getting bigger electric gates.” 

HEALTH

Progress Stops Here

Researchers say humans will not be living longer or getting stronger



➤ TAKE A LOOK AROUND, BECAUSE THIS MAY BE AS good as it gets. Some researchers think the human race has reached its physical peak and we may only go down from here, thanks to environmental problems.

For a study published in the journal *Frontiers in Physiology*, a team of French scientists analyzed 120 years' worth of records and research to gauge the varying pace of changes in human height, athletic performance and life span. They note that while there was a surge in improvements in all three areas in the 20th century that mirrored industrial, medical and scientific advances, the pace of those advances has slowed significantly in recent years.

The team looked at world records in a variety of sports, including running, swimming, skating, cycling and weight lifting. Olympic athletes in those sports continually toppled records by impressive margins from the early 1900s to the end of the 20th century, but since then, Olympic record-setters have made just incremental improvements.

We have stopped not only getting faster and stronger but also growing taller, according to the study. The researchers used data gathered by a network of health scientists known as the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD stands for noncommunicable diseases). Their numbers show a significant increase in height (1.37 inches) in both men and women from 187 countries, when comparing those born in 1896 to those born in 1996. But data from the past three decades suggest that heights have plateaued among high-income countries in North America and Europe.

No matter how well we may eat, at some point our genetics hit the brakes, says Jean-François Toussaint, a physiologist at Paris Descartes University. "We won't be able to be as tall as the California sequoias. We have grown taller, but our genome doesn't have the capability to continue growing taller and taller."

That height ceiling is evident even among some of the tallest people on earth—basketball players. Toussaint and his colleagues analyzed data on professional players since the 1920s and found that while we still have towering

hoopsters like New York Knicks star Kristaps Porzingis (7 feet 3 inches tall), the data show the mean height of NBA players has plateaued for the past 20 years.

BY

BY AMANDA ONION

[@akonion](#)



FROM LEFT: MOTOHD/GETTY; HENRIK SORENSEN/GETTY

No matter how well we may eat, **at some point our genetics** hit the brakes.



NOT SO TWIN PEAKS We still have towering hoopsters like New York Knicks star Kristaps Porzingis, far left, but the data show the mean height of NBA players has plateaued for the past 20 years. As for human life span, it's hard to imagine anyone could beat Jeanne Calment, a French woman who was 122 when she died in 1997.

In some African countries, adult human height averages have decreased over the past 10 years, according to the study. Toussaint said in a press release that environmental conditions may be causing human progression to slide. “This suggests some societies are no longer able to provide sufficient nutrition for each of their children and maintain the health of their younger inhabitants.”

As for human life span, it's hard to imagine anyone could beat Jeanne Calment, a French woman who was 122 when she died in 1997, and Toussaint and his co-authors believe not many will. Life expectancy in high-income countries rose by about 30 years from 1900 to 2000, according to a National Institutes of Health study they cited, thanks to better nutrition, hygiene, vaccines and other medical improvements.

But we may have hit our biological limit for longevity. The researchers

found that in many human populations, “it's more and more difficult to show progress in life span despite the advances of science,” says Toussaint. As climate change delivers more frequent heat waves and other harsh weather, he explains, the elderly become more vulnerable and average life spans may continue to dip in some countries.

Not everyone agrees. Some experts think at least a few of us—the super-

As climate change delivers more frequent heat waves and other harsh weather, the elderly become more vulnerable and average life spans may continue to dip.

agers—will continue to stave off the Grim Reaper for longer and longer. McGill University biologist Siegfried Hekimi, for instance, co-authored research in June 2017 suggesting there may be no detectable limit to human life span.

“We don't know how much life span depends on our living conditions,” Hekimi tells *Newsweek* by email. “But it still looks like life span is increasing in response to better living conditions, for those people whose living conditions keep getting better.”

As for our physical performance, Hekimi believes we can do better there too. His clue? The fact that performance-enhancing drugs have been shown to markedly improve athletic performance. Doping may not be a legit way to break records, but Hekimi argues that the fact that it works “suggests that there is room for improvement.” ■

SCIENCE

Feces Happens

Researchers have finally identified a mysterious parasite that bugged Hippocrates 2,500 years ago

THE STUDY OF DECOMPOSED, parasite-riddled human feces does not seem like an especially rewarding one, but for one team of researchers it provided the answer to a 2,500-year-old mystery. Scientists studying prehistoric poop on the Greek island of Kea were able to finally identify the parasitic worms Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician widely considered the father of modern medicine, described in his famous medical texts.

Scientists collected decomposed human poop from the pelvic region of skeletons from the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman periods, then studied the soil produced by said poop. Analysis by University of Cambridge scientists revealed it contained eggs from two kinds of parasites: the whipworm (common in dogs, but can live in the human large intestine) and the roundworm (larger, with some types reaching 3 feet long). A paper describing the discovery was published in the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*.

These two species, researchers concluded, are among those that Hippocrates wrote about, making this the earliest known evidence of parasitic worms in ancient Greece. Hippocrates lived in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., and the medical texts he produced included descriptions of parasitic infections that caused their hosts to vomit up worms, among other unfortunate symptoms.

Decades ago, researchers excavated the discovery site, says study leader

Piers Mitchell, but never studied the ancient skeletons they'd dug up. Instead, they left them covered in poop-derived, parasite egg-containing soil. The worms decompose, but their eggs, protected by a hard shell, do not, which is why they were still waiting for Mitchell and his colleagues 2,500 years after they were laid.

Whipworms and roundworms are still around today and, according to Mitchell, are widespread in

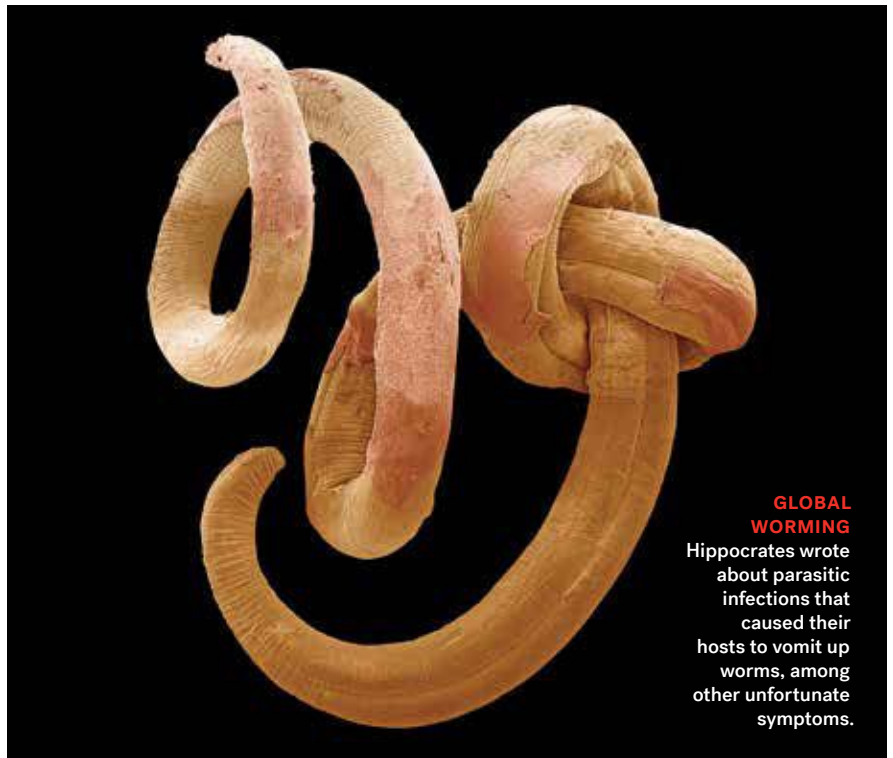
BY

KASTALIA MEDRANO

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developing countries and regions with poor sanitation. A few stray worms in your system won't do much damage, he says, but enough of them can cause dangerous infection and malnutrition. Whipworms are 1 or 2 inches long, while roundworms are roughly 7 to 12 inches.

If all this sounds familiar, it might be because a malnourished defector whose intestines were infested with 10-inch parasitic worms escaped from North Korea in November. And Mitchell says the defector's worms may be similar to the roundworms linked to Hippocrates. Roundworms, he points out, were common in South Korea up until the past few decades—when the country's economy began to improve. Public health in North Korea, at least in this respect, looks a lot more like ancient Greece than it does modern South Korea. **N**



GLOBAL WORMING
Hippocrates wrote about parasitic infections that caused their hosts to vomit up worms, among other unfortunate symptoms.



PINKY AND THE BRAIN

The mice in the study were bred to have genes associated with Alzheimer's disease in humans.

MEDICINE

Of Mice and Dementia

A diabetes drug may find new life as an Alzheimer's treatment

➤ PROMISING NEW RESEARCH suggests that a drug developed to treat diabetes significantly reverses memory loss and brain degeneration in mice. If it does the same for humans, it could be used to treat Alzheimer's disease and other memory-related illnesses.

In a study published online by *Brain Research*, scientists from England's Lancaster University used a diabetes drug known as a triple receptor on mice bred to have certain genes associated with Alzheimer's disease in humans. Researchers waited for the mice to age, giving their disease some time

to develop and damage their brains, then gave them the drug. The animals were then run through a maze test. The mice that had displayed signs of a rodent version of Alzheimer's disease showed improved learning and memory skills.

The results were also seen on a biological level—the mice displayed reduced amounts of plaque buildup in the brain, a characteristic of Alzheimer's disease. They also had reduced levels of chronic inflammation in their brains, slower rates of brain nerve cell loss, and their brain nerve cells were better protected from damage and degeneration.

The results suggest that the diabetes drug has a “clear promise of being developed into a new treatment for chronic neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's disease,” lead study researcher Christian Holscher of Lancaster University said in a statement. This is especially exciting for researchers and clinicians because a new Alzheimer's drug hasn't been on the market since 2003.

The drug combines glucagon-like peptide-1, gastric inhibitory polypeptide and glucagon, three biological molecules known as “growth

BY

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JOE ZELLNER/GETTY

factors”—natural substances, usually a hormone or steroid, that promote growth. The growth factors in this drug specifically affected growth in the animals’ brains. This is significant because the brains of Alzheimer’s patients display growth impairment, which causes brain nerve cells to work less effectively, eventually leading to some of the hallmark symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.

“All cells need growth factors to grow and develop and repair,” Holscher told *Newsweek*. “If there is a lack of it, then neurons start to fail. They don’t work anymore and do not repair.”

In the study, the diabetes drug prevented and even reversed this brain-growth impairment in mice.

The link between diabetes and Alzheimer’s is not as strange as one might think. Insulin, the hormone that diabetes patients have trouble regulating, is a type of growth factor, which is why a triple receptor drug was designed to treat diabetes. According to Holscher, insulin stops working in both diabetes patients and in the brains of Alzheimer’s patients. As a result, the two illnesses are closely linked, and a 2016 study published in the journal *Diabetologia* found that as many as 80 percent of Alzheimer’s patients also have some form of diabetes.

Alzheimer’s disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S., and more than 5 million Americans are living with it. The Alzheimer’s Association estimates that by 2050, as many as 16 million Americans could be living with the disease.

It will likely be a few years before this drug is available to the public, as a number of trials are needed before it can be approved for Alzheimer’s use. Still, these results suggest that one day the disease that has stolen the memories of so many of our loved ones may one day not be irreversible. **N**

RESEARCH

Sweatin’ for the Memories

Exercise might fight off dementia

➤ DEMENTIA DOESN’T HAPPEN ALL AT once, and it’s not well understood what, if anything, can be done to reverse it. But new research suggests that exercise may slow its progression.

Late last month, the American Academy of Neurology issued guidelines for patients beginning to see signs of cognitive decline. “If we can push it back two, three, five, years, that’s a big deal,” Dr. Ronald Petersen of the Mayo Clinic, a neurologist and lead author on the guidelines, tells *Newsweek*. He says some exercise twice a week, 150 minutes total, should make a difference.

Petersen is not recommending that Grandma sign

up for CrossFit or start pole vaulting. He says light aerobic exercise, even walking, could do the trick. He recommends simply doing a little more of whatever it is you’re already doing. Maybe squeeze in an extra couple of walks a week, or add five minutes to the ones you already take.

Dr. Bruce Troen, chief of geriatrics and palliative medicine at the University at Buffalo’s medical school, posits that exercise might help blood flow more readily to parts of the brain that demen-

tia targets. He also points out that research suggests that combining exercise with mental games might give patients more “bang for their buck.” **N**

BY

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MOVIES

Revenge of the Psycho-Nerd

John Hawkes has enjoyed the slow build of his career, often playing miscreants and oddballs. In *Small Town Crime*, he gets to be a hero, of sorts

GOLDEN YEARS

A new documentary re-creates the recording of Bowie's last albums » P.46



➤ WHAT'S THE OPPOSITE OF OVERNIGHT success? Sidling up to it? Or, to borrow from Joan Didion, slouching towards it? Perhaps the latter in the case of actor John Hawkes, whose slow ascent to stardom is thanks to the sort of characters that populate Didion's short stories—men and women who, Dan Wakefield once wrote, “are neither villainous nor glamorous, but alive and botched and often mournfully beautiful.”

Hawkes was once described as a cross between Sean Penn and a Doonesbury character, and there's truth to that, but it doesn't capture the creased soulfulness that makes him ideal for film noir. Like Humphrey Bogart before him, one look at Hawkes and there's no questioning the particular shit show his character is inhabiting. In his latest film, the hard-boiled comedy *Small Town Crime*, Hawkes plays alcoholic ex-cop Mike Kendall, booted off the force for getting his partner and a bystander killed while policing under the influence. Long story short: After a typical all-nighter, Kendall discovers the body of a young woman lying by the road and becomes consumed with finding her killer.

Kendall, by way of the increasingly grizzled 58-year-old Hawkes, is a lot more than cocky self-destruction, his face a furrowed plain of cunning, regret, humor and tenderness. It's a countenance the actor has come to tolerate. “I have an uneasy relationship with my face,” he says with a laugh. “But you see yourself enough times, and you get past ‘I have a big nose’ or ‘I hate the sound of my voice’ to a place where you have peace and comfort with it. That was valuable, to stop obsessing too much.”

It took roughly 20 years for Hawkes to ripen into something irresistible to filmmakers—a decade of mostly nameless roles: Driver of Teskey Truck, Pizza Boy No. 1, Groom, Cowboy. Hawkes was living in Austin, Texas, supplementing his acting with work “in the straight world.” When he moved to Los Angeles in 1996, “I did whatever crappy TV show I could,” he says. “I meet young actors today who tell me they're already prepared to turn things down. I didn't have that luxury. I needed money; I've been a carpenter and a waiter,”

he says. “I liked those jobs. But I was better at acting, and the pay was better—usually—so I did a lot of work for free: AFI and low-budget movies, student films. And I just kept going. I never had much ambition, I guess, but a great deal of passion.”

Hawkes enjoyed the work, but he was perplexed by the reactions of casting agents in L.A. In Austin, he was considered “fairly normal,” but Hollywood saw crazy. The parts he got were “psychos, nerds, psycho-nerds.” One of those psycho-nerds, on a 1999 episode of *The X-Files*, “Milagro,” was a writer with a thing for Agent Scully (Gillian Anderson) and human hearts. Legend has it that creator Chris Carter wrote the part for Hawkes. “Not that I'm aware of,” the actor says with characteristic modesty. He does remember the experience fondly.

It was another five years before he got the part that provided if not mainstream success then at least deeper interest: Sol Star, the Jewish business partner of Sheriff Seth Bullock on the HBO series *Deadwood*. (Like any fan of the series, Hawkes is looking forward to a possible movie next fall.) Stardom, at least in the indie world, came in 2010, with his Oscar-nominated turn in *Winter's Bone* (the film that introduced the phenomenon that is Jennifer Lawrence), followed by two more Sundance Film

Festival triumphs in a row: *Martha Marcy May Marlene* and *The Sessions*.

In *Bone* and *Martha Marcy*, he plays sinister characters in a gothic rural America, but *The Sessions*—about the late poet Mark O'Brien—was something altogether new. O'Brien had been paralyzed since childhood from polio, and the film focused on his attempts to lose his virginity with a sex worker (played by Helen Hunt). The entire performance was delivered on Hawkes's back—excruciating for the actor (his body was painfully contorted for months) but curiously joyful and elevating for the audience, as he emphasized O'Brien's humor. “Not for cheap laughs but to find truth and absurdity and funny beauty wherever I could,” he said at the time. “It's boring to watch someone wallow, even if he has every right to. It's more interesting to watch someone try to solve his problem.”

BY

MARY KAY
SCHILLING

Culture

Small Town Crime, written and directed by filmmaking brothers Ian and Eshom Nelms, came to him through his friend, Octavia Spencer, a co-star in several films. “She called and said, ‘I’ve got a great script I want you to read. I won’t tell you anything about it except that we play brother and sister,’” Hawkes laughs (Spencer is African-American). “I said, ‘That sounds perfect.’”

It was. “A lot of times you read a script and you hope that it doesn’t turn on itself as it goes, that it doesn’t screw up by the last page,” Hawkes says. “This one didn’t.”

He met with the Nelms brothers, who have made multiple shorts and features—low-budget festival favorites like *Waffle Street*—but nothing remotely mainstream. “They talked about films they liked—*Die Hard* and Clint Eastwood films, stuff that I wasn’t super into,” Hawkes says. “But they also spoke of wanting to entertain people, and that’s not usually the thing that comes to mind for independent films.” He chuckles. “There was some mistrust on my part: What do you mean you want to entertain people?”

The siblings clearly respect the tropes of pulp fiction, but they also poke fun at them; *Small Town* is suspenseful and shot with bare-bones efficiency, but it’s also wickedly funny. Hawkes had a smaller role, as an abusive husband, in a similarly savage comedy last year: *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, directed by Martin McDonagh. Hawkes took that job because he wanted to work with Frances McDormand, one of his favorite actors, and Sam Rockwell, an old friend. “Martin and the Nelms brothers get at dark comedy very differently, but they both emphasize surprise,” Hawkes says. “That’s something I always look for in a script.”



CRIME STORY Hawkes with, clockwise from left, Eshom and Ian Nelms, co-star Michael Vartan and Spencer at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival; Hawkes, as Kendall, in his muscle car.

The film was shot on the flat, open roads of Utah, near Salt Lake City—ideal terrain for drunken speeding and careening. Kendall’s bottle-cluttered vehicle is a matte-black muscle car, designed for street racing, so no power steering. Hawkes is no stunt driver. “I’m not even a car guy,” he says. “But I have a driver’s license.

That was my qualification.” Even so, Don Shanks, a legendary stunt driver, let Hawkes do a lot of the driving. “The car was a dangerous beast for sure,” says the actor. “But it became a friend over time.”

His equally treacherous human co-stars—in addition to Spencer and Anthony Anderson, who plays her good-natured husband and Hawkes’s drinking buddy (particularly after Alcoholics Anonymous meetings)—include seasoned character actors Clifton Collins Jr., Don Harvey, Dale Dickey and the great Robert Forster. “He was one of my suggestions, I’m proud to say,” says Hawkes.

Another suggestion: The film’s opening and closing song. As a way into his characters, Hawkes imagines what they might listen to and read. “I’m a book addict—have been since I was a child. But Kendall wasn’t much of a reader, sadly—at least in my mind. Just because he was too

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF SABAN FILMS; ROBBY KLEIN/GETTY; PHOTO 12/ALAMY

“What do you mean you want to entertain people?”

busy fucking up his life,” Hawkes says. “But I brought a lot of music to the set: the Ramones, Stooges, Morphine—bands that have a simplicity but also dangerousness. And when I was in the trailer getting dressed, I popped in the Animals and ‘Good Times’ came on [with the refrain: ‘When I think of all the good times that I’ve wasted having good times’]. I thought, *That’s Mike Kendall.*”

Simplicity and danger are a leitmotif for Hawkes: He’s been a member of rock and punk bands since the early ’80s, when the Minnesota-raised teenager landed in Austin. “I learned to play instruments in front of people, which was the norm back then.” One of his bands, Meat Joy, featured three women, “an unusual lineup for its time.”

Was the name inspired by the Meat Puppets? “No, but we did open for them at the Continental Club in Austin.” His band’s name was found in a book about performance art, featuring a ’60s piece by the artist Carolee Schneemann. “When you’re in your early 20s, trying to break boundaries, you look for crazy, wild, foreign things,” says Hawkes, whose band abstained from Schneemann’s *actual* boundary-pushing, “involving nudity and chicken blood.”

Hawkes never stopped playing and writing songs—one of them, “Bread and Buttered,” is on the *Winter’s Bone* soundtrack, and he sings an eerie ballad in *Martha Marcy*. His current group, Rodney and John, does “a form of rock,” says Hawkes, who plays a lot of instruments but “gets around mostly on

DEAD AGAIN *Deadwood* co-star Dayton Callie, left, with Hawkes, who played Sol Star, one of the quieter roles on the show. “To play someone a little subtler is enjoyable too,” he says.

guitar.” The idea is music with “a lot of grit and dirt in it—including punk, jazz and country textures—but that isn’t earsplitting.”

Hawkes and his partner, Rodney Eastman, are working on a rock musical, his first long-form writing project since his 1996 one-man play, *Nimrod Soul*, inspired by a series of monologues he’d worked on with a successful theater company in Austin. “It ended up at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.,” Hawkes says. “When I got to L.A. and didn’t know anyone, had no money, I began to write my solo play.”

It was a bid for casting directors (he played male and female characters) and a remarkably bold move for an unknown. Hawkes still seems surprised by the reviews—good enough that he traveled with the show for a bit. “I didn’t necessarily get a job directly from it,” he says, “but I got more work because it made me a better and more confident actor.

“When you’re younger,” he adds, “the tendency is to completely divorce yourself from any character you’re playing. Over time, you realize that you’re losing a valuable asset, which is bringing your own experience to a part.”

Hawkes has never been interested in becoming a personality, in “being pushed down people’s throats,” as he puts it. Relative anonymity serves the story, “which is my job,” says the actor, who relishes the collaborative nature of filmmaking. “I haven’t seen every movie I’ve done, but when I do, it’s to enjoy how all the parts fit together—makeup, wardrobe, editing, the other actors. That’s how I learned.” And often what he’s learned, he adds, “is that I could have done better service. Samuel Beckett said, ‘Fail again. Fail better.’” Hawkes laughs. “That’s been very helpful.” **N**





MUSIC

Exit the Duke

A new film re-creates the sessions for David Bowie's last two albums—a suitable farewell for the most private of superstars

➤ FRANCIS WHATELY, THE DIRECTOR BEHIND THE 2013 BBC DOCUMENTARY *David Bowie: Five Years*, was as stunned as anyone when Bowie died of liver cancer on January 11, 2016. Whately, like everyone outside of the music legend's inner circle, didn't know he was ill. And the timing was eerie: Bowie had just released his most daring album in decades, *Blackstar*.

In hindsight, there were clues, such as *Blackstar*'s persistent imagery of death and mortality. "Look up here, I'm in heaven," Bowie sings at the start of one song. And there was the puzzling note Whately received a month before Bowie's death, at 69. "He wrote a rather odd email saying that he was very happy with the new album," Whately says. "And he was very happy with his lot in life. And he said, 'What more can anyone ask for?'"

The filmmaker had noted the strangeness of the message, but figured it was just Bowie being Bowie. "He would often write odd things. His emails were very amusing. And quirky. It was only after he passed away that I thought, OK, was this actually him saying goodbye?"

Indeed, it seems now that Bowie *was* saying goodbye, in email, in song, in

secret. And Whately's new HBO film, *David Bowie: The Last Five Years*, is its own kind of farewell—an recreation of renewed inspiration during the rock star's final years, both before and after he was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2014.

Despite its title (a nod to the Ziggy Stardust track "Five Years"), the film's story begins in 2004, when Bowie suffered symptoms of a heart attack onstage in Germany, bringing what would be his final world tour to an abrupt end. In the film, band

BY

ZACH SCHONFELD

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members recount the frightening moment when Bowie lost his ability to sing. After undergoing an emergency angioplasty, he retired from touring, vanishing into private life in New York City. Years passed. Bowie's 60th birthday came and went. Fans assumed the pop chameleon was done making records. Then, in 2011, members of his band got an email: Bowie was ready to work again.

Whately's documentary provides an intimate glimpse into the recording sessions for the resulting album, *The Next Day*. Whately's dilemma: Bowie ran the sessions like a CIA operation, with the musicians asked to sign nondisclosure agreements and no cameras allowed in the studio.

How to make a documentary with no footage? Whately decided to recreate the sessions, rounding up all the musicians. "I think it was a catharsis for them, to play this stuff again," says Whately.

One of those musicians, Gerry Leonard, Bowie's longtime guitarist, described to *Newsweek* how Bowie directed the songs to completion. "He was a giant to be in the room with," he says. "His vision and his intensity and the range of influence he was drawing from—it was the Goliath of an artist."

The Last Five Years similarly recreates the recording sessions for Bowie's next album, the remarkable and enigmatic *Blackstar*, which eschewed a conventional rock band lineup for funkier, more experimental backing. By then, Bowie was ill. Though he appeared healthy and vigorous when in the studio, Johan Renck, who directed the music videos for "Blackstar" and "Lazarus," recalls Bowie Skyping him to say that he was seriously ill and might die. "I thought for a brief second that he looked scared," Renck recalls in the film.

In a spooky coincidence, Renck had Bowie lying on a deathbed for "Lazarus." It was not intended to represent Bowie's illness. Only later did Renck learn that his star had discovered his cancer was terminal the very week he filmed the video.

Fans craving insight into Bowie's creative process should not miss *The Last Five Years*, but those expecting intimate details of his battle with cancer will be disappointed. Whately chose not to involve Bowie's family, and the film makes no real attempt to breach the wall erected between his public and private lives. "I was a fan of

his music, not of his private life. And he was quite a shy, private individual," says Whately, whose film is the culmination of 40 years of fandom, since he spotted the flamboyant cover of Aladdin Sane as a kid and was "appalled and thrilled in equal measure."

For all of Bowie's showmanship, says Whately, he was "trying to grapple with the bigger themes: fame, alienation, spirituality—what we're doing here, basically," Whately says. "With perhaps the exception of Leonard Cohen, I can't think of another artist who was producing some of their very best work at the end of their life." **N**



ZIGGY PLAYED GUITAR
Clockwise from left: Bowie as Ziggy Stardust in 1973; Whately; Bowie playing a British festival in 2004, the year he stopped touring after suffering a heart attack onstage in Germany.

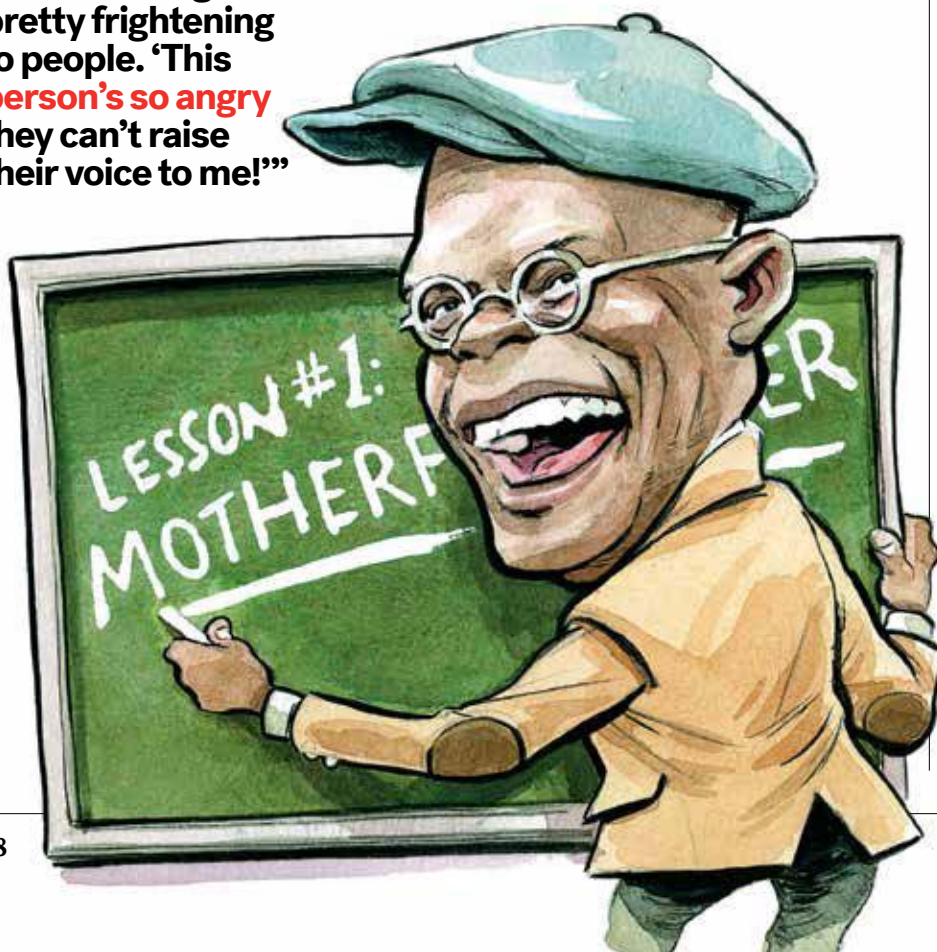


PARTING SHOT

Samuel L. Jackson

➤ HE HAS APPEARED IN MORE THAN 100 FILMS, BRINGING A BIBLE-QUOTING hit man (*Pulp Fiction*), a *Star Wars* character (Mace Windu) and a Marvel crusader (Nick Fury) to vivid life. When the actor is on screen, you pay attention, so who better to command a classroom? Samuel L. Jackson, acting teacher, makes his debut with a course presented by the online education platform MasterClass, which offers the basics to students in 21 lessons. Jackson enjoyed it more than he thought he would. “I didn’t think I was even-tempered enough to watch people do something bad and not be upset by it,” the actor says with a laugh. And nobody wants Samuel L. Jackson mad at them. He is, after all, a master of not just acting but cursing—particularly when motherfucking snakes get on a motherfucking plane. His “Elmer Fudd word,” as he calls it, helped him overcome a stutter that still crops up. “When I try to talk too fast or I’m nervous or there’s tension, it creeps back into my speech, reminding me to take a breath: ‘Stop, motherfucker, stop!’ It just grounds me,” he says. “I don’t know why.”

“Quiet cursing is pretty frightening to people. ‘This person’s so angry they can’t raise their voice to me!’”



What’s the key to swearing well?

Swearing is about making sure that what you say is understood without question. Swear words should be used for emphasis or as a description of what a thing particularly was. If you tell somebody, “It was really amazing,” that’s one thing. But if you say, “It was a motherfucker!” that’s even greater than amazing.

Is it also the energy or anger or enthusiasm you put behind the word?

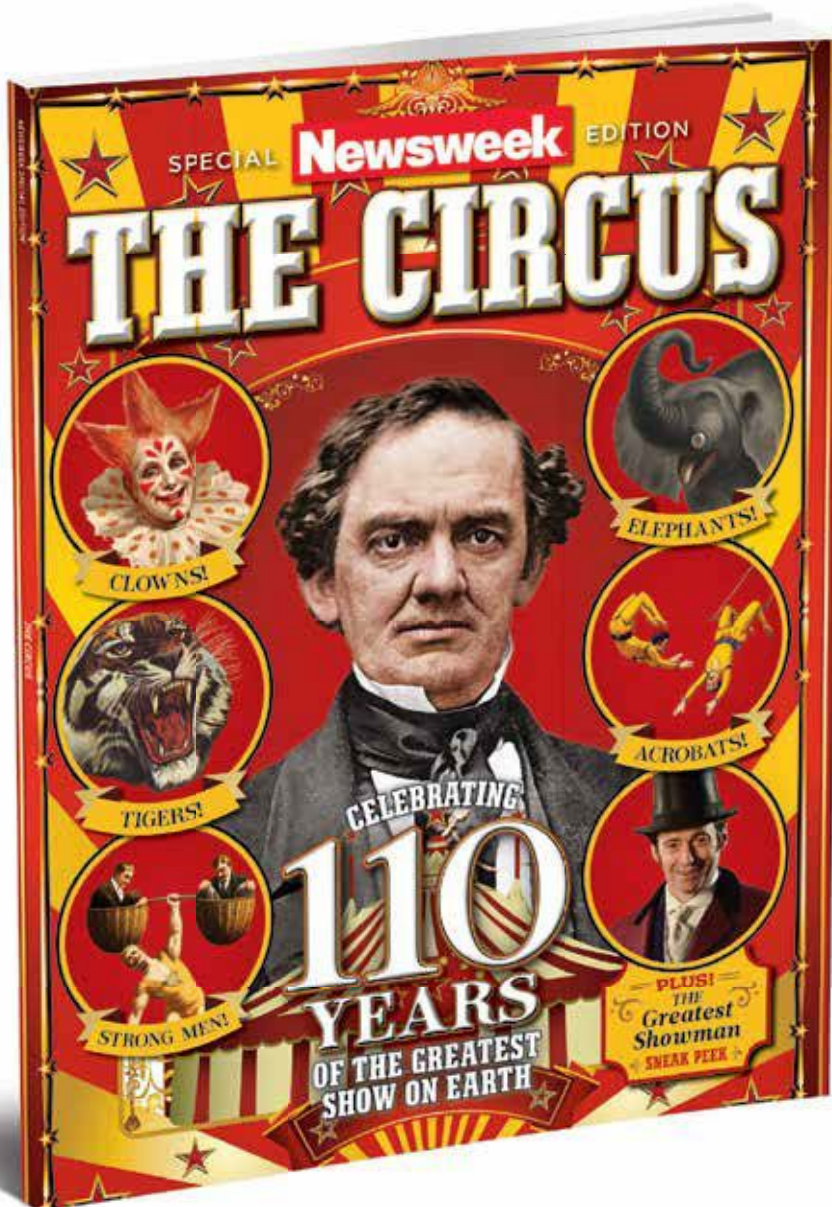
There’s that, but there’s quiet cursing, too. Quiet cursing is pretty frightening to people. They know, “Oh my God, he’s seething! This person’s so angry they can’t raise their voice to me.” (*Laughs*) There’s an explosion building.

You must have people coming up to you all the time, asking them to swear at you.

People do ask me to call them “motherfucker.” Or, if somebody’s just hounding me, hounding me, hounding me: Take a picture, take a picture, take a picture! It’s, like, “Motherfucker, stop!” And they’re happy. They go, “Oh! Yeah!”

It’s something you accept. If that’s their dynamic and that’s how they want to interact with me, if that’s how they perceive me, fine. Nothing I can do about that. It’s something to appreciate, it’s not something to hate. Better to be liked than not liked, so fuck it. —Dante A. Ciampaglia

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