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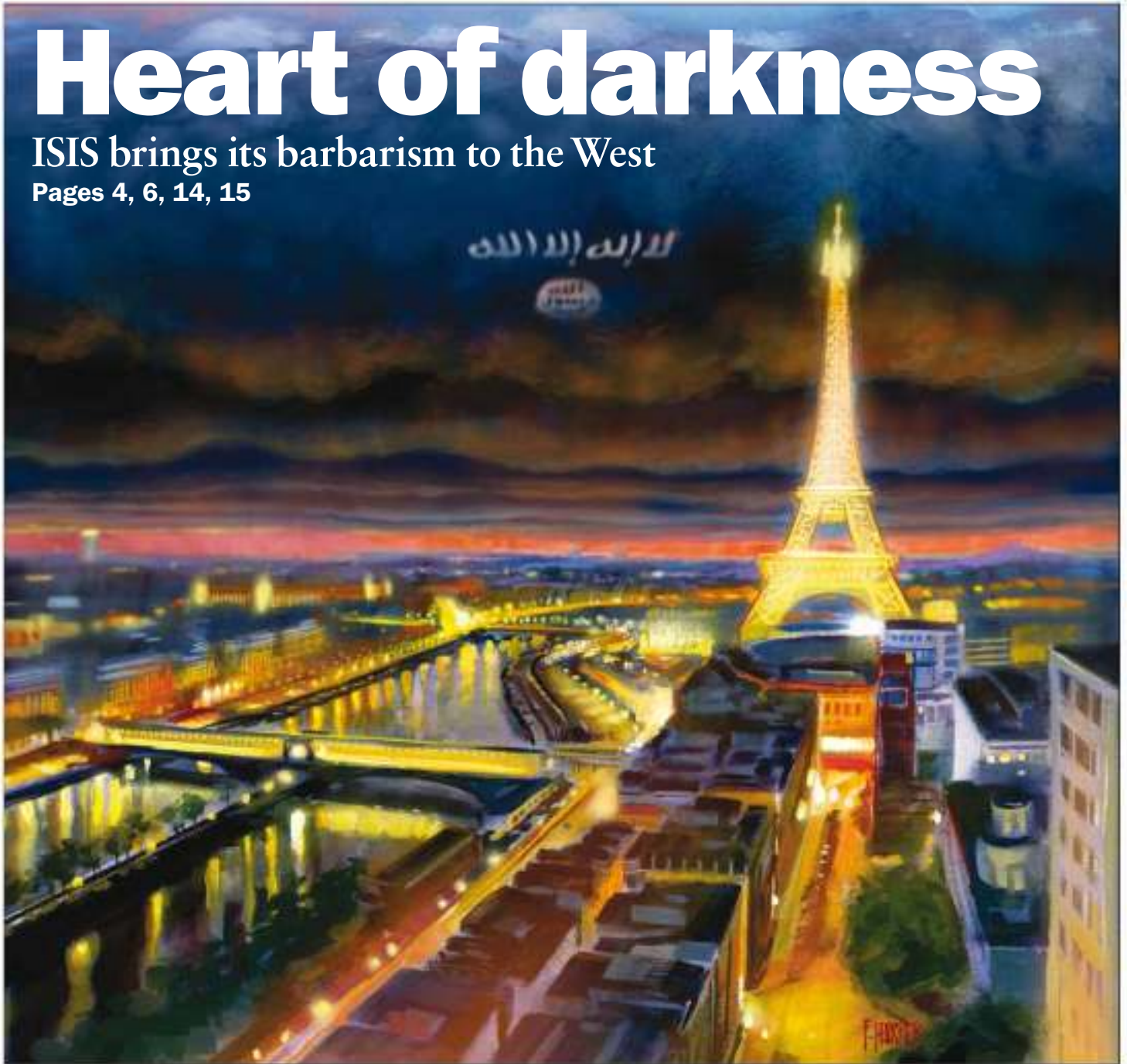
THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Heart of darkness

ISIS brings its barbarism to the West

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Editor's letter

When I rounded the corner onto Fifth Avenue on Sept. 11, 2001, and saw black smoke rising from gouges in both towers of the World Trade Center, my immediate thought was: "This will change everything." I'm sure most of us had the same reaction last week as we began to grasp the scale and savagery of the terrorist attacks on Paris. There have, of course, been many other acts of terrorism over the past 15 years, but this coordinated bloodbath—with assassins raking machine-gun fire over crowds at cafés, restaurants, and a rock concert—was designed for maximum psychological impact. Here, in the City of Lights, were the same Dark Age barbarians who've gleefully crucified, beheaded, and butchered thousands of people across Syria and Iraq.

Within days, France's Socialist president asked to amend the country's constitution; a shaken Europe was pulling back its welcome mat to Syrian refugees and Republican governors and pres-

idential candidates were insisting that the U.S. should turn away all Syrians or accept only Christians (see Talking Points). At a meeting of world leaders, Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama spoke to each other without rancor for the first time in years about the need for a coordinated, international response to ISIS and Syria's chaos (see Main Stories). You have to wonder: Why would ISIS leaders provoke France, the U.S., and Russia into joining in "a grand coalition" to rain 500-pound bombs on their heads? ISIS is losing territory, and some experts speculate it needed a spectacular act of terrorism to boost its recruiting. But perhaps there is no rational explanation: ISIS is a doomsday cult, organized around the belief that it is engaged in a final, apocalyptic struggle with the Crusaders and their sinful modernity. This ideology may belong in the 7th century, but before it fades or is extinguished, it will leave the modern world greatly changed.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

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Terror and death on the streets of Paris

What happened

France, the U.S., and Russia took steps to form a “grand coalition” against the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq this week, as Paris reeled from the worst terrorist atrocity in French history, and security services conducted hundreds of raids to hunt down Islamic radicals involved in the plot. A total of 129 people were killed, and 352 injured, when at least nine militants attacked the French capital in three coordinated groups last Friday night. The bloodshed began just after 9:20 p.m., when two men blew themselves up outside an international soccer match at the Stade de France. A second team of three men drove around the city, gunning down drinkers and diners at two bars and two restaurants with automatic assault rifles. In all, that group killed 39 people, including 23-year-old American exchange student Nohemi Gonzalez. A third heavily armed team stormed into the 1,500-capacity Bataclan concert hall, which was sold out for a show by a Californian heavy-metal band, and used automatic weapons to slaughter 89 people before security forces stormed the venue. Survivors said the attackers shouted, “It’s the fault of your president”—French president François Hollande—for using air power against ISIS in Syria.

ISIS claimed responsibility for the atrocities, calling Paris the “capital of prostitution and obscenity” and vowing more attacks on the West, including Washington, D.C. Amid vastly heightened security in French towns and cities, police conducted more than 300 raids in France and Belgium to find those behind the attacks; the suspected mastermind, 27-year-old Abdelhamid Abaaoud of Belgium, was thought to have been killed in a massive raid on a safe house in a Parisian suburb. Declaring the terrorist attack “an act of war” against France, Hollande vowed a “merciless” response. He launched several French airstrikes on Raqqa, ISIS’s de facto capital in Syria, and made arrangements to visit Washington and Moscow next week to form “a grand coalition” against ISIS. President Obama said he’d welcome further cooperation, but insisted it’d be a “mistake” for the U.S. to send in ground troops. “We have the right strategy,” he said. “We’re going to see it through.”

What the editorials said

These “murderous attacks on France” were “sad and painful” confirmation that ISIS is much more than just a regional threat, said *The Washington Post*. The group had already taken credit for blowing up a Russian airliner over Egypt, and for two deadly suicide bomb attacks in Beirut. Clearly, it is now targeting “everyone who aspires to modernity.” Obama has sought only to “contain” ISIS with airstrikes and ground campaigns by Kurdish and Iraqi fighters. But as long as these “savage foes” enjoy relative sanctuary, “other attacks will follow.”

“The Paris attack is in some ways even more alarming than 9/11,” said *The Wall Street Journal*. Airplane hijackings have essentially been eliminated through enhanced security, but there’s no easy way to prevent “suicidal jihadists with assault rifles and grenades.”



French soldiers mounting the raid that apparently killed the plot’s mastermind

FBI Director James Comey said the agency is tracking “thousands” of people inside the U.S. “who are absorbing Islamic State propaganda on the internet.” Obama must remove the “political restraints” and drive ISIS out of its territory in Iraq and Syria as rapidly as possible. “Kurds and Sunni Arabs will provide most of the fighters if the U.S. supplies the firepower, intelligence, and political leadership.”

If Americans “learned anything from 9/11, surely

it’s the danger posed by an unthinking, emotional response to acts of terror,” said *The Baltimore Sun*. Yet hawkish presidential candidates are already clamoring for a big military response, while governors in mainly Republican states are declaring they’ll refuse asylum to Syrian refugees (see Talking Points), because one of the attackers apparently entered Europe with Syrian refugees landing in Greece. We’re giving terrorists exactly what they crave: “Chest-pumping, outsized reactions to the danger they pose.”

What the columnists said

How did analysts and policymakers underestimate ISIS so badly? asked J.M. Berger in *Politico.com*. This is a barbaric, fanatical group with tens of thousands of fighters and cash reserves of hundreds of millions of dollars—assets that easily lend themselves to attacks on Western targets. Al Qaida, by comparison, had “well under 1,000” followers when it attacked the U.S. on 9/11—an operation that cost just \$500,000. That’s why we need to send in a modest force of American, French, and other Western ground troops, said James Jeffrey in *The Washington Post*. The U.S. may be weary of war, but “we no longer have the time” to wait for local forces in Iraq and Syria to eliminate ISIS for us.

“But then what?” asked Fred Kaplan in *Slate.com*. As we learned so painfully in Iraq, American troops would need to stay there for years, if not decades, to hold ground, and this occupation would serve as a recruitment tool for a “fresh crop of terrorists.” To beat ISIS, we must damage the group’s allure, said Walter Russell Mead in *The American-Interest.com*. The group recruits jihadists with promises of video game-style adventures—marauding across desert towns, firing machine guns from pick-up trucks. We need to step up the war of attrition so that life for ISIS fighters becomes “a miserable affair of holing up, getting shot, running out of food, and putting up with bad medical care.”

Whatever course the West takes, “the easy days are over,” said William Saletan in *Slate.com*. As our fears of being attacked declined as 9/11 receded, we became more concerned about our privacy than about stopping terrorists. But “in a world full of religious violence,” all our options are bad. We can’t track every individual terrorist—it takes 25 agents to follow just one—so we have to “accept some degree of mass surveillance.” We may even need to send more troops abroad. The lull in this war is over. “If Madrid, London, or Mumbai didn’t wake [us] up, Paris should.”

Foreign policy dominates Democratic debate

What happened

The three remaining Democratic presidential candidates switched their focus to foreign policy and the rise of ISIS during the party's second primary debate last week, held in Des Moines, Iowa, a day after the terrorist attacks in Paris. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders criticized Clinton's 2002 Senate vote to authorize the Iraq War—a conflict Sanders directly connected to the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—while former Maryland governor Martin O'Malley criticized Clinton's record as secretary of state under President Obama. "Libya is now a mess," O'Malley said. "Syria is a mess. Iraq is a mess." Clinton responded by touting her foreign policy expertise, listing decades of developments that she said had contributed to the current chaos in the Middle East. "If we're ever going to really tackle the problems posed by jihadi extreme terrorism," said Clinton, "we need to understand it."

As the two-hour debate shifted to domestic issues, O'Malley and Sanders questioned Clinton's ties to the financial industry and argued that her policies would not do enough to rein in Wall Street's excesses. "Let's not be naïve about it," said Sanders. "Why over her political career has Wall Street been the major campaign contributor to Hillary Clinton?" Clinton responded by claiming her support from Wall Street was a result of her work as a New York senator following the 9/11 attacks. "We were attacked in downtown Manhattan, where Wall Street is," said Clinton. "I did spend a whole lot of time and effort helping them rebuild." The response was roundly mocked on social media, but a CBS poll of viewers showed Clinton winning the debate by a 23-point margin.

What the editorials said

"Hillary Clinton should have seen that Wall Street shot coming," said *The New York Times*. It's no secret that "middle-class Americans associate Wall Street with the 2008 meltdown of the economy that cost so many their homes and savings." Those voters rightfully expect candidates to have detailed policy plans explaining how they will prevent another crisis. But instead of offering specifics, Clinton cynically tried to use 9/11 to hide her well-publicized links to Wall Street. "This is what happens when Hillary Clinton the candidate gets complacent."



Clinton: Stumbling on Wall Street

It was a "clumsy effort," said *The Washington Post*, but at least Clinton attempted "to inject a modicum of policy nuance" into the domestic policy debate. While her two Democratic challengers "have nothing to lose by spouting undiluted populism"—demanding the breakup of the big banks and calling for a \$15 minimum wage—front-runner Clinton has to pick policies that will appeal to the entire electorate, not just the Left. Her proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$12 per hour, "still high by historical standards," does exactly that.

What the columnists said

"Bernie Sanders didn't sign up for a foreign policy election," said Gabriel Debenedetti in *Politico.com*. "Yet that's exactly what he's getting in the wake of the Paris attacks." Sanders' campaign soared when the focus was on economic inequality, but the shift to matters of national security plays to Clinton's experience and strengths. Polls show that more than 50 percent of Democratic primary voters are "very confident" in the former secretary of state's ability to handle an international crisis, compared with just 16 percent for Sanders.

Just wait until Clinton finds herself facing a Republican, said Jennifer Rubin in *The Washington Post*. She got an easy ride from her Democratic challengers, who looked uncomfortable attacking their own president's disastrous foreign policy legacy. But there were numerous points in this debate when a GOP nominee "would have gone for the jugular." How about Clinton's refusal to use the term "radical Islam"? (See Controversy.) Or the ridiculous claim that she had a long-term plan for Libya when she encouraged the overthrow of dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi, even though the country has since descended into total chaos?

Those weren't the only gaffes "that will likely haunt her in the days to come," said Chris Cillizza, also in *WashingtonPost.com*. Clinton, 68, gave ammunition to GOP opponents calling for a new generation of leadership when she said, "I come from the '60s, a long time ago" while responding to a question about unrest on college campuses. The attack ad, particularly if Republicans nominate Marco Rubio, 45, "practically writes itself."

It wasn't all bad

■ A Tinder date in Tampa, Fla., didn't end in romance—but it did lead to a life-saving kidney transplant. Rich O'Dea mentioned to his date Jennifer Thomas that his best friend's wife, Erika Bragan, had been on the donor list for three years. A few days after their date, Thomas reached out to see if she could help, and this week, after months of testing, she was scheduled to donate a kidney. "As weird as it sounds," said Erika's husband, Scott, "we have a dating app to thank for saving my wife's life."

■ Two British police officers were expecting the worst when they responded to an emergency call from an elderly couple's home. But Doris and Fred Thomson, both 95, hadn't fallen or injured themselves—they just wanted someone to talk to.

"You can be a bit isolated as you get older," said Fred, who is blind. Rather than lecture Doris and Fred about wasting police time, Police Constable Stu Ockwell and a colleague brewed some tea and spent half an hour chatting with the couple. Fred's "an amazing character and had us in fits of laughter," said Ockwell. "It made my day."



Thomson and Constable Ockwell

■ A Philadelphia gas station attendant has been hailed as a hero after he helped save a female doctor from a suspected carjacker, who'd allegedly kidnapped her at gunpoint earlier that day. Manveer Komer, 25, was working the overnight shift when Nathaniel Rodriguez came in with the doctor and tried to get her to use the ATM. Seeing the woman was nervous and suspecting she was in danger, Komer placed himself in front of the doctor and shouted at Rodriguez to leave. The suspect drove off in the doctor's car and was later arrested. Komer "saved that girl's life," said the gas station manager.

Defining terrorism: Is it 'radical Islam' or 'violent extremism'?

"For Democrats, radical Islam is the Ideology-That-Must-Not-Be-Named," said **Robert Tracinski** in *TheFederalist.com*. Less than 24 hours after last week's shocking ISIS assault on Paris, the Democratic presidential candidates were asked at a debate if they agreed with Sen. Marco Rubio that "we are at war with radical Islam." Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders, and Martin O'Malley all demurred, with Clinton saying she preferred the term "violent extremism" and stressing the importance of not painting terrorists "with too broad a brush." Are Democrats afraid to name the enemy, the way characters in *Harry Potter* were afraid to name Lord Voldemort? The issue here isn't just the Left's painful political correctness, said **Ben Domenech** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. The refusal by Democrats "to call the threat of radical Islam by its name" is grounded in the same naiveté and wishful thinking that has made President Obama's foreign policy such a disaster—especially his passive, half-hearted response to the rise of ISIS. Until we have leaders willing "to grapple with the true nature of today's foe," how can we possibly hope to win?

That's "an uncommonly stupid argument," said **Paul Waldman** in *WashingtonPost.com*. Republicans talk about "radical Islam" as if it's a "magical incantation that once spoken will drive our enemies from the earth." They think it's only the cowardice and weakness of the Democratic Party that keeps Obama and Clinton from using the term. The reality is that ISIS and al Qaeda's main objective is to convince the world's 1.6 billion Muslims that "the West is at war with Islam." This is why responsible U.S. leaders from George W. Bush onward have avoided using anti-Islamic rhetoric that plays into the enemy's narrative. To describe this conflict as a "clash of civilizations," as Rubio did last week, is "to reinforce ISIS's mes-



Anti-ISIS Muslims in India this week

sage that the Christian and Muslim worlds are locked in violent, unresolvable conflict," said **Jonathan Chait** in *NYMag.com*. Unless we can rally the world's moderate Muslims against this violent fringe element, "the West will find itself in an unwinnable struggle."

Winning Muslim hearts and minds is indeed our priority, said **Ayaan Hirsi Ali** in *Foreign Policy*. But that means we have to "engage with the ideology of Islamist extremism." The unfortunate reality is that the Quran's 7th-century text provides "ample support" for the belief that "armed jihad" against nonbelievers is the duty of all Muslims. To combat Islamic terrorism in all its various forms, we have to help our nonradical Muslim allies win the argument that their modern interpretation of Islam is superior—that it truly should be a religion of peace and tolerance.

Separating all Muslims into two categories—radical and not—is overly simplistic, said **Joshua Holland** in *The Nation*. There are hundreds of millions of Muslims whose beliefs are radical or extreme by Western standards (including virtually all of Saudi Arabia), but who oppose the use of violence. It's these fundamentalist Muslims who have the greatest influence over the thinking and actions of the Islamic world, and it's their hearts and minds we most need to defeat the "violent extremism" of ISIS and other terrorist groups. Words matter, said **Amber Phillips** in *WashingtonPost.com*. When American or European political leaders call terrorists "radical Islamists," it alienates many Muslims and helps groups like ISIS recruit. That said, it's sometimes hard not to wonder if some politicians prefer arguing over how to describe the Islamic State because it's easier than "talking about what to actually do about the Islamic State."

Only in America

■ A homeowners' association ordered an Idaho man to remove the Christmas decorations from his front yard because they might be offensive to non-Christians. Jeremy Morris's holiday display features tens of thousands of lights, a live choir, and a life-size Nativity scene. The association objected, calling the display "a nuisance" to residents of other faiths. Morris says the display will stay, and that "religious freedom" is at stake.

■ A Massachusetts woman has won the right to wear a spaghetti strainer on her head in her driver's license photo. Lindsay Miller, a member of the satirical Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, argued that she had a First Amendment right to wear the colander. "I do hope this decision encourages my fellow Pastafarian Atheists to express themselves," Miller said.

Good week for:

Self-discipline, after a Milwaukee cop issued himself a ticket for parking his squad car in a handicapped spot. "The rules are the same for my squad as any car," said Sheriff David Clarke. "Parking there is inexcusable."

Nonverbal communication, after the Oxford English Dictionary named the "face with tears of joy" emoji—the world's most frequently used digital icon—as the 2015 Word of the Year.

Getting off easy, after a Canadian company launched "The Breakup Shop," an online service that promises to "handle the messy work of breaking up" by sending your soon-to-be ex a personalized text (\$10), phone call (\$29), or handwritten letter (\$20) welcoming them to Dumpsville.

Bad week for:

Ben Carson, after his top national security adviser complained that the retired neurosurgeon just didn't seem to grasp foreign policy issues. "Nobody has been able to sit down with him and have him get one iota of intelligent information about the Middle East," Duane R. Clarridge told *The New York Times*.

Life in the slow lane, after a cop in Mountain View, Calif., pulled over a self-driving Google car for driving too slowly—24 mph in a 35 mph zone—and impeding traffic. The officer decided not to issue a summons after realizing there was no driver to ticket.

Safe havens, after a bus station in Dorset, England, began blaring bagpipe music over the loudspeaker to keep homeless people from spending the night. "It seems to be doing the job," said one station worker. "You try getting any sleep with that going on."

Boring but important

Public housing smoking ban

The Obama administration has proposed banning smoking in public housing, a measure that would affect more than 940,000 households nationwide. Advocates of the proposal say banning tobacco in the apartments and indoor common areas of the country's public housing system will improve the health of 1.3 million young and elderly residents, and save \$153 million a year in health care and fire-related costs. "Everyone—no matter where they live—deserves a chance to grow up in a healthy, smoke-free home," said Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. But HUD officials questioned how the ban would be enforced, and expressed concerns that poor residents would be evicted for violations. The department will hear public comments for the next two months.

Fort Dodge, Iowa

Trump's theatrics: With his lead slipping in some national polls, Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump lashed out at closest rival Ben Carson during a 95-minute rant in Iowa last week—warning



A rambling, angry rant

that the retired surgeon has a “pathological temper” that’s incurable, like the sickness of “a child molester.” Trump also mocked voters for supporting the candidate. “How stupid are the people of Iowa?” said Trump. He then staged a dramatic reenactment of Carson’s claim that he tried to stab someone while growing up in Detroit, only to have the knife broken by a belt buckle. “Lo and behold, it hit the belt!” shouted Trump, heaving his own belt outward. Trump’s theatrics left many members of the audience silent and visibly uncomfortable. “I’m just not sure this guy can win,” said one supporter as he left the Fort Dodge auditorium.

Minneapolis

Police shooting: The FBI announced it has opened its own investigation into the fatal shooting of a black man killed this week during a scuffle with Minneapolis police, as protests erupted in the city over the incident. Jamar Clark, 24, was killed shortly after police officers arrived at a home to investigate a report of domestic assault. Officers said Clark was interfering with paramedics trying to help the assault victim, and that he was shot once in the head during the subsequent confrontation with police. Witnesses said Clark was wearing handcuffs when he was shot—a claim police originally refuted, though authorities later said handcuffs were discovered at the scene. At least 51 demonstrators have been arrested at the protests, as they demanded that authorities release video footage of the shooting. Minneapolis mayor Betsy Hodges has called for a federal civil rights investigation.



New York City

Groundbreaking face transplant: A volunteer firefighter who suffered severe facial injuries in a 2001 Mississippi house fire has successfully received the “most extensive face transplant to date,” the New York University Langone Medical Center announced this week. Patrick Hardison, 41, lost his eyelids, ears, lips, and most of his nose and hair in the blaze, and despite undergoing more than 70 skin grafts had failed to regain any “semblance of normal anatomy” until the surgery in August, said Langone’s chair of plastic surgery, Eduardo Rodriguez. In a hugely complex procedure that took more than 100 medical staff some 26 hours to complete, surgeons transferred the full face and scalp of donor David Rodebaugh, 26, who recently died in a Brooklyn bike accident. Rodebaugh’s mother, who gave permission for the transplant, was recently shown a photograph of the results. “Patrick is beautiful,” she said.



Hardison post-op

Price, Utah

Controversial judge: A Utah judge who sparked a public backlash when he removed a 9-month-old foster child from the care of a same-sex couple has officially recused himself from the case. Judge Scott Johansen,



Hoagland, Peirce outside court

of Price, Utah, said he was placing the baby in the care of heterosexual parents because of his “belief that research has shown that children are more emotionally and mentally stable when raised by a mother and father in the same home.” The married lesbian couple, April Hoagland and Beckie Peirce, had gone through extensive home inspections, background checks, and interviews before being approved as foster parents. Johansen was forced to reverse his order amid impeachment calls, and handed the case to a different judge. Judge Johansen had previously faced criticism for prior actions, including ordering a mother to cut off her daughter’s hair to punish her.

Washington, D.C.

Abortion showdown: The Supreme Court set the stage last week for one of its biggest abortion decisions in years, after agreeing to hear a challenge to key parts of a restrictive Texas abortion law that has been mimicked in red states across the nation. The justices will consider two provisions of the Texas law: a requirement that doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges to a hospital within 30 miles; and a mandate that abortion clinics upgrade their facilities to costly, hospital-like standards. If the Texas law is allowed to stand, the number of abortion clinics in the state—now at 20, down from 41 when the legislation was passed in 2013—is expected to fall by half, to 10, forcing some women to drive more than 250 miles to have a procedure. Justice Anthony Kennedy will likely have the deciding vote in the case, which will also determine the legality of similar regulations in at least a dozen other states.

New York City

Goodfellas verdict: In a blow to federal prosecutors, Vincent Asaro, a reputed mobster accused of masterminding the brazen airport heist that inspired the movie *Goodfellas*, was acquitted of all charges by a New York City jury last week. Asaro, 80, had been accused of a range of crimes dating back 45 years, including strangling a suspected informant to death with a dog chain and helping to steal \$6 million in cash and jewels from the Lufthansa Airlines terminal at JFK during the infamous 1978 heist. Prosecutors presented a battery of witness statements, surveillance photos, and audio recordings secretly captured by Asaro’s cousin, gangster-turned-informant Gaspare Valenti. But the defense accused Valenti of framing his cousin in exchange for government payments. Asaro said he was “shocked” by the verdict, and joked as he left the court, “Don’t let them see the body in the trunk.”



Asaro: Cleared over mob heist



Dowling and Gollogly

Clonmel, Ireland

First same-sex wedding: Two men became the first gay couple to wed in overwhelmingly Catholic Ireland this week. Cormac Gollogly and Richard Dowling, both 35, have been together for 12 years and engaged for five. “We are really delighted to be able to do it,” Dowling said, after tying the knot in a small town in County

Tipperary. “Having a full marriage was important to us, so now we can relax and get old together.” In May, Ireland became the first country in the world to legalize gay marriage by popular referendum, rather than by court ruling or government decree. The change took effect this week.

London

ISIS threatens internet: Militants with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria are trying to develop the ability to launch deadly cyberattacks on U.K. targets such as air traffic control systems and hospitals, British authorities said this week. Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne said the U.K. would double its funding to fight cybercrime, to nearly \$2.9 billion in the next five years. “From our banks to our cars, our military to our schools, whatever is online is also a target,” he said. Meanwhile, the international hacker activist group Anonymous said it had begun targeting ISIS, claiming to have leaked personal information about suspected ISIS members and taken down Twitter accounts and websites alleged to be run by militants and sympathizers.

Peñas Blancas, Nicaragua

Turning back Cubans: Nicaragua closed its border with Costa Rica this week to keep more than 1,000 Cubans from entering the country. Cubans fear that the thaw in relations between Havana and Washington may end the “wet foot, dry foot” policy that allows Cubans automatic residency if they set foot on U.S. soil, and hundreds have been trying to get there through Latin America. Costa Rica first detained the migrants at its border with Panama, setting off protests, then gave them one-week transit visas to allow them to cross the country and reach the Nicaraguan border. “The Costa Rican government, in a deliberate and irresponsible action, hurled and continues hurling thousands of Cuban citizens at Nicaragua’s southern border,” said President Daniel Ortega, “unleashing a humanitarian crisis.”



Cubans denied entry

Minas Gerais, Brazil

No drinking water: Some 250,000 people lack drinking water in southeastern Brazil two weeks after dams collapsed at an iron mine, sending 16 billion gallons of mineral-laden sludge through downstream towns. More than nine people died, 19 were missing, and some 500 lost their homes, which were washed away by the flood. Samarco Mineração SA, owner of the mine, says the wastewater isn’t toxic, but biologists disagree, pointing to piles of dead fish, birds, and turtles floating in the red water. “It’s already clear wildlife is being killed by this mud,” said Klemens Laschesfki, professor of geosciences at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Brazil’s government has fined Samarco \$65 million and is comparing the disaster to the 2010 oil spill from BP’s Deepwater Horizon rig in the Gulf of Mexico.



After the flood

Warsaw

No migrants: Poland’s new right-wing government, which was sworn in this week, said that it would not take in any more Syrian refugees in the wake of the Paris attacks unless it received security guarantees from the European Union. The previous liberal government had agreed to take in 9,000 refugees as part of an EU plan to resettle migrants across the continent. Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski said that rather than Syrian refugees being allowed to settle in Europe, they should be trained to fight and sent back to “liberate” their country. Waszczykowski said he wanted to avoid a situation in which Poland and other Western nations would “send our soldiers to fight in Syria while hundreds of thousands of Syrians drink their coffee” in European cafés.



Waszczykowski

**Brasília**

Haitians can stay: The Brazilian government says it will grant permanent residency to the more than 43,000 Haitians who came to Brazil illegally after an earthquake devastated their country in 2010. “This act establishes a period of up to a year for them to request foreign resident identification documents,” said Labor Minister Miguel Rossetto. “Those who are formally accepted by Brazil will be granted stability and security.” The quake killed some 300,000 people and left 1.5 million people homeless. Many displaced Haitians embarked for Brazil.



Rossetto

Getty (2), AP Getty, Reuters

Moscow

Putin vs. ISIS: The Kremlin has vowed vengeance after authorities confirmed that the Russian passenger plane that crashed in Egypt last month, killing all 224 people on board, was brought down by a terrorist bomb. “We will find them anywhere on the planet and punish them,” President Vladimir Putin said of the bombers. “Retribution is inevitable.” Following the Paris attacks, Putin spoke to French President François Hollande and agreed to cooperate on military action against ISIS in Syria. A live TV broadcast in Russia showed Putin in a military control center being briefed by generals in front of a map of Syria. The coordination with France marks a change in strategy for Russia, which until now had targeted moderate Syrian rebel groups fighting President Bashar al-Assad’s regime, rather than ISIS.



A Russian bomber, ready to hit ISIS



Jerusalem

Radical group banned: Israel has outlawed the radical wing of the country’s main Islamist organization, accusing it of inciting violence at a Jerusalem holy site that sparked weeks of Palestinian and Israeli Arab unrest. The ban comes as Israel tries to stop a wave of knife, gun, and car-ramming attacks on Israeli Jews. Police closed 17 organizations affiliated with the northern branch of the Islamic Movement of Israel, searching offices, seizing computers, and freezing accounts. The southern branch, which is moderate, remains open. The northern branch, which favors sharia law, has been telling supporters that Israel plans to take over the Temple Mount and Al-Aqsa Mosque, something Israel has consistently denied. Israeli Arabs plan a demonstration against the ban.

Manila, Philippines

Obama checks China: President Obama called on China this week to stop building artificial islands in disputed waters of the South China Sea. China’s claim to the sea, a vital shipping lane, has alarmed the region. While in the Philippines for the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Obama announced an additional \$250 million in military spending over the next two years to boost maritime security for countries in Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, which will receive two ships. “We have a treaty obligation, an ironclad commitment to the defense of our ally the Philippines,” Obama said. “You can count on the U.S.”



A new Chinese island emerges

Abuja, Nigeria

Military swindle: Nigeria’s former national security adviser has been arrested for allegedly stealing nearly \$2 billion intended for weapons to fight the radical Islamic extremist group Boko Haram. Sambo Dasuki, adviser to former President Goodluck Jonathan, is accused of ginning up fake contracts to buy helicopters and other weaponry that was never supplied. President Mohammedu Buhari, who took office on a pledge to stamp out corruption and revamp the military, fired him in July. It’s been a mystery why Nigeria’s military, with a budget of some \$6 billion, was so under-equipped in the fight against Boko Haram. Soldiers told the Associated Press last year they were underfed and given just 30 bullets each, and many ran off when ordered to fight the extremists.



Dasuki: Thief?

Luanda, Angola

Accused over book: Angolan authorities charged 17 young activists with rebellion against the state for organizing a reading of a book by a U.S. scholar.



Charged with reading a forbidden text

Gene Sharp’s 1993 book *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*—a standard text in U.S. Latin American studies courses—describes how to stage non-violent resistance against repressive regimes. The activists were arrested in June after holding the reading, but weren’t charged until this week. Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos, who has led the country for 36 years, has become increasingly intolerant of dissent. Earlier this year, journalist Rafael Marques de Morais was given a six-month suspended sentence for writing a book alleging links between the Angolan military and the trade in blood diamonds.

Shinyanga, Tanzania

Miners survive on bugs: Five gold miners were rescued in Tanzania this week after surviving 41 days trapped 300 feet underground in an abandoned mine; the body of a sixth miner was also recovered. The miners, who were trapped when a shaft collapsed, survived by eating roots, cockroaches, and the occasional frog, and drinking drops of the muddy groundwater that seeped into their cave. Villagers tried to rescue them for a few days and then gave up, presuming them dead, but last week nearby miners heard their faint shouts. Many Tanzanians mine for gold on a freelance basis in unregulated, unsafe mines, and accidents are common.



A dangerous job in Tanzania

Winslet's parenting tips

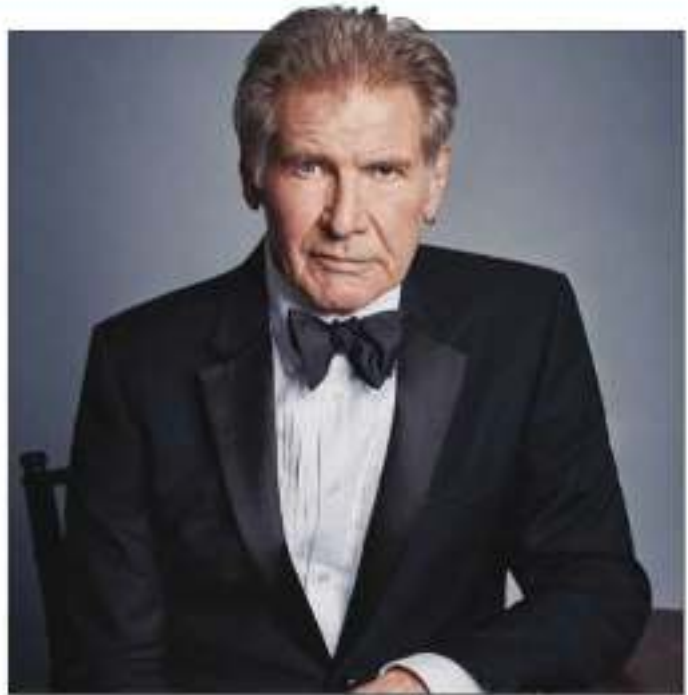


Kate Winslet may have the ultimate modern family, says Jonathan Dean in *The Sunday Times* (U.K.), but she has some old-fashioned ideas about how to raise kids. The actress has three children by three different fathers, ranging in age from 2 to 15. The actress won't allow them to use any social media at home, viewing it as a corrupting influence. "It has a huge impact

on young women's self-esteem, because all they ever do is design themselves for people to like them," Winslet says. "And what comes along with that? Eating disorders. And that makes my blood boil. Parents are losing control." She says parents are letting their kids spend far too much time gazing into screens. "You go to a café and grown-ups are at one end of the table and children on the other, on devices, not looking up. They go into a world, and parents let them. It takes every member of a family to be a family, and there are too many interruptions these days—and devices are a huge interruption. Take the device out of their hand. Let your kids climb trees. Play Monopoly."

Phelps' emotional burnout

Michael Phelps should have quit after the 2008 Beijing Olympics, says Tim Layden in *Sports Illustrated*. The swimmer had just made sporting history, surpassing Mark Spitz's 36-year record for most gold medals at a single Olympics, with eight. But Phelps felt completely burned out. "Mentally, I was over," he says. "But I also knew I couldn't stop. So I forced myself to do something that I really didn't want to do, which was continue swimming." Phelps turned to drinking and gambling to relax, and began regularly skipping training sessions. "Why? Didn't feel like going. Screw it." Things came to a head in September 2014, when Phelps was arrested for driving 86 mph in a 45-mph zone, and subsequently charged with DUI. Days later, he was sitting in an Arizona rehab clinic watching television, when a reporter announced he had been banned from the 2015 World Championship. "Everybody in the room looked over at me. I stood up, walked over and got a drink of water, sat back down, and said, 'Yup, that's me.'" The stint in rehab forced Phelps to confront long-buried feelings about his parents' divorce and his troubled relationship with his dad. "I wound up uncovering a lot of things about myself that I didn't want to approach," says Phelps. "One of them was that for a long time, I saw myself as the athlete that I was, but not as a human being. I look back now, I lived in a bubble for a long time."

Ford's *Star Wars* cynicism

Harrison Ford is not a sentimental guy, says Anthony Breznican in *Entertainment Weekly*. During the filming of the original *Star Wars* movies in the 1970s, the actor quickly built up a reputation for crankiness, repeatedly saying he wished his beloved character, Han Solo, had been killed off. Back in the role of Solo 30 years on, Ford is just as prickly—as one of his new colleagues recently had the pleasure of discovering on set. The young actor, who is playing an X-Wing pilot, asked Ford for advice on how to make flying spacecraft look realistic. "I said, 'Just make s--- up!'" says Ford, rolling his eyes. "I mean it's a movie, man. It's space. You don't fly in space the way you do in an atmosphere." He says he doesn't feel at all proprietary about his character, and doesn't care that someone else will play the role in a scheduled 2018 movie about the young Han Solo. "I got other things to worry about. I got shoes at the cobbler that need to get picked up. I got to get a bike fixed." He appreciates what the *Star Wars* films mean to the fans; just don't expect him to get all gooey about the awe and wonder they feel. "It's not mine, it's theirs. I just work here. Another day at the office."

Gossip

■ **Charlie Sheen** revealed this week that he is HIV-positive and has paid out more than \$10 million in extortion money to keep his diagnosis a secret over the past four years. Sheen, 50, gave the tell-all interview to NBC's *Today* show after a series of publications ran stories on an unnamed Hollywood star with HIV who had unprotected sex with several of his partners.

"I have to put an end to this onslaught," said Sheen. He said he still doesn't know how he contracted HIV, and that he takes four antiretroviral pills daily that have kept his viral load at an undetectable level. The actor said the diagnosis initially sent him into a spiral of drug-taking and depression,



and he began hiring prostitutes—one of whom took a photo of Sheen's antiretroviral medication and threatened to sell the image to the tabloids. Sources told *RadarOnline.com* the actor has had hundreds of "sex partners of all kinds," including men and transsexual hookers.

■ At least two women have discounted Sheen's account that he led with "condoms and honesty" following his HIV diagnosis. Former live-in girlfriend and ex porn star **Bree Olsen** claims she only learned the actor had HIV "right along with everyone else, three days ago." She called Sheen "a monster." The actor has already secretly settled up to 24 lawsuits lodged against him, a source told *RadarOnline.com*, including from a claimant who says she texted

Sheen in despair, asking: "How could you expose me to HIV without telling me?"—to which the actor allegedly responded: "Oops, sorry." At least six more of Sheen's former sexual partners reportedly plan to sue him.

■ **Lamar Odom** still doesn't know why he is in the hospital, and is having to learn how to feed himself and speak again, estranged wife **Khloe Kardashian** has revealed. The former NBA star lapsed into a coma in October after allegedly overdosing on herbal sexual stimulants, cocaine, and alcohol at a Las Vegas brothel. Odom knows he had a brain injury, "but we can't tell him how that brain injury was caused," said Kardashian, "because that will set him back." The 36-year-old Odom is still "really confused," she added. "Sometimes he knows who the president is and his birthday, and sometimes he thinks he's 26, and I say, 'I bet you wish you were 26!'"

How America rates

Most Americans think their country is the best in the world—but global studies paint a murkier picture.

Is the U.S. No. 1?

It is economically. The U.S. is still comfortably the largest global economy, with a GDP of more than \$17 trillion; second-ranked China's is only \$10 trillion. The U.S. has an average after-tax household income of \$41,355—the highest of any of the 34 nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and considerably more than the group's median of \$27,630. All five of the world's largest companies by market capitalization—Apple, Microsoft, Exxon, Berkshire Hathaway, and Google—are American. But in its annual study of well-being in developed nations, the OECD found that material wealth was just one component of happiness. “When you have satisfied your basic needs in terms of income, you tend to believe there are things that matter much more than income,” says Romina Boarini, head of the Measuring Well-Being and Progress Section at the OECD. “People want quality of life.” In terms of overall well-being, the organization found, the U.S. is not No. 1. In fact, it's not even in the top 10, coming in at 15th.



Why is that?

For two primary reasons: A lot of Americans are isolated and feel a lack of social connection; and our poor work-life balance. Full-time American employees work longer hours than those in any other developed nation—an average of 46.7 a week, according to a recent Gallup report—and take fewer vacation days. They also generally enjoy less sleep and leisure time—an hour a day less than the Germans, for example. Our health isn't great, either. The U.S. is easily the fattest nation in the group, with 35 percent of adults either overweight or obese; in Japan, it's just 4 percent. Our wealth is distributed very unevenly; as a result, we have high rates of childhood poverty, and the third-highest birth rate among 15- to 19-year-olds, behind Mexico and Chile. America's murder rate—about five per 100,000 people—is the second-highest in the OECD, behind only Mexico's.

What do other surveys say?

The U.S. is in the middle of the pack in all of them. The U.S. fell from 12th to 23rd in Gallup's most recent well-being index, which found far more happiness in many Latin American nations, including Panama, Costa Rica, and Belize. Why? Social cohesion is strong in these nations, Gallup says, and people there are most likely “to report daily positive experiences such as smiling and laughing, feeling enjoyment, and feeling treated with respect each day.”

The U.S. comes in just 11th on the U.K.-based Legatum Institute's annual prosperity index, which rates Norway and Switzerland at the top. In that survey, U.S. crime rates pushed us down in the rankings: Some 17 percent of Americans said they'd been a victim of theft—comparable to Nicaragua, Panama, and Brazil—while only 74 percent said they felt safe walking alone at night, a level of insecurity comparable to Egypt's and Serbia's.

Which countries are happiest?

Well-being studies are consistently topped by the Nordic countries—the Scandinavian trio of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, along with Finland and Iceland. The so-called Nordic Model involves high taxes and universal social welfare. In Denmark, for example, everyone receives free national health care; by law, new mothers get 18 weeks' fully paid maternity leave; and students pay no tuition. These benefits don't come free, of course: Top earners pay as much as 57 percent income tax, while those in the middle brackets fork out up to 48 percent. Because of high taxation, consumer goods are far more expensive: a new iPhone 6S, which costs \$650 in the U.S., costs more than \$1,000 in Denmark. But the Nordics generally like life under their system. In the U.N.'s most recent World Happiness Report—which ranked Switzerland No. 1—the Nordic nations ranked second, third, fourth, sixth, and eighth. The U.S. was 15th.

What do these indexes tell us?

Happiness is very subjective, making it hard to rank nations that have widely differing value systems. Americans have always put

Seeking 'gross national happiness'

Since 1971, the tiny Himalayan country of Bhutan has refused to use GDP as the overarching way to measure progress. Instead, the nation has focused on “gross national happiness.” By asking its citizens about how they feel on a variety of indicators—from health and education to emotional fulfillment and the environment—officials determine where to focus their attention and funding. In 2011, the U.N. passed a resolution encouraging other countries to follow Bhutan's example. Four U.S. states—Maryland, Vermont, Oregon, and Colorado—now use a “genuine progress indicator” that works along similar lines. But opponents are pushing back, arguing that Bhutan's system has failed to deliver results. Most citizens remain impoverished; political corruption is widespread; suicide rates are high. Bhutan's government may even be cooling on gross national happiness: Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay has called the concept a “distraction.” But the U.N. is still a believer. “Happy people live longer, are more productive, earn more, and are also better citizens,” the organization noted in its 2013 World Happiness Report. “Well-being should be developed both for its own sake and for its side effects.”

a high value on personal liberty, individual autonomy, and climbing the economic ladder; as a result, we have more discretionary income and consumer goodies than nations rated as happier. “We cannot all be like the Nordics,” says MIT economist Daron Acemoglu. But there is something we can learn from the Nordics and the Latin Americans. Studies have found that in general, the “golden triangle” of happiness consists of financial security, a sense of purpose in life, and strong personal relationships and social connections. “People are social creatures and get pleasure from spending time with others,” Boarini of the OECD said. To be happier, experts suggest, Americans should work a little less, spend more time with friends and family, and become more deeply engaged in organizations and their communities.

The emptiness of Facebook empathy

Gracy Olmstead
TheAmericanConservative.com

In the immediate aftermath of the Paris attacks, millions of Facebook users put red, white, and blue picture filters on their homepages, while Twitter users tweeted out such hashtags as #PrayforParis and #JeSuisParis. But do these well-meaning signs of solidarity really accomplish anything? asked Gracy Olmstead. "Online social media campaigns generally make us feel good about ourselves, without forcing us beyond our spheres of comfort." Twitter and Facebook provide a comforting illusion that you've taken an important stand, which may be counterproductive, because it removes the need to actually do something. Remember #BringBackOurGirls, the hashtag created in the wake of Boko Haram's kidnapping of hundreds of teenagers in Nigeria? By the time the next hashtag campaign came along, the stolen girls were all but forgotten. Think of the agony facing Parisians whose friends and loved ones were slaughtered in the massacre. "If we are to be honest, while we can try our best to empathize, both emotional and physical distance will keep us apart." Let's hope the terrified and grieving citizens of Paris "experience true and immediate compassion in the days to come"—not just the superficial kind found in 140 characters.

Trump's repugnant fantasy

Michael Tomasky
TheDailyBeast.com

Sorry, Donald, but "Operation Wetback" is never coming back, said Michael Tomasky. In last week's Republican presidential debate, Donald Trump defended his proposal to deport all 11.5 million undocumented immigrants by citing President Eisenhower's 1954 attempt to deport Mexican workers who'd crossed the border illegally. Operation Wetback, as it was literally called, brutally rounded up several hundred thousand Mexican farmworkers and shipped them across the border by plane, train, and cargo boat. A congressional investigation later compared conditions on the boats to those on "an 18th-century slave ship," and 88 migrants dumped in the desert died of sunstroke. The U.S. couldn't repeat that shameful program today, "even if we had a president who wanted to." In the 1950s, nearly all those rounded up were single men living near the border and in a handful of cities. Today, the undocumented include men, women, and children who've been here an average of 13 years and who have put down roots all over the country. Hunting down millions of people and dragging them away from their children and spouses is "a practical impossibility." Sorry, Donald: It's also not what about 80 percent of Americans want.

Why cops must adapt to scrutiny

Eric Adams
The New York Times

As a former New York City police captain, I know how cops treated uncooperative civilians back in the so-called good old days, said Brooklyn borough president Eric Adams. We called it giving people an "attitude adjustment"—beating, painfully handcuffing, arresting, and sometimes shooting those who gave us a hard time. These brutal tactics were covered up with reports that claimed the suspect "reached for something" or attacked a cop, and were "an inextricable part of the policing culture in America." But that was before nearly every citizen was armed with a cellphone camera, and communities went on alert, having seen with their own eyes cops shooting fleeing suspects in the back, choking them to death, and physically abusing teenage girls. Among cops accustomed to old-school tactics, there is a furious sense of betrayal "at being second-guessed." But police have to accept that scrutiny of their actions is now inevitable—and "will lead to better policing." Departments now must screen out belligerent cowboys, use body cameras to keep both cops and civilians on their best behavior, and train officers to defuse threats whenever possible. "The era of darkness is over."

Viewpoint

"These days, almost anyone has the 'capability' to kill and maim dozens of people with little or no support—the Tsarnaev brothers in Boston, Dylann Roof in Charleston, Adam Lanza in Newtown. The game-changing precedent was set in 2011, when Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Breivik managed to bomb a government building and then slaughter 77 people, mostly children, all by himself. Spectacular terrorism no longer requires spectacular resources. A few outliers in a world of 7 billion people can wreak tremendous havoc. When those few can find like-minded people across wide geographies who reaffirm and tangibly support their desire to kill, the stakes only rise."

Author J.M. Berger in *Politico.com*

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A Singapore Airlines flight had to make an emergency landing after emissions from a flock of flatulent goats in its cargo hold triggered smoke alarms. The cargo plane was en route from Sydney to Kuala Lumpur, carrying 2,186 goats, when crewmembers heard a warning indicating the plane was on fire. The 747 diverted to Bali, where emergency services boarded the craft but were unable to find any trace of fire, heat, or smoke. Inspectors concluded that a harmless buildup of "exhaust gases and manure" produced by the live cargo had triggered the alarm.

■ A new restaurant in Moscow is giving adventurous diners the chance to eat their meals out of the toilet. At the Crazy Toilet Café, customers sit on real toilets and eat lavatory-themed dishes. The \$8



lunch starts with a brown mushroom soup served in a mini toilet bowl, followed by a swirly sausage on a bed of mashed potato, and ends with whipped chocolate ice cream. The café's manager, Inga Yaroslavskaya, is certain the establishment will be a success. "It's not everywhere you can eat good food from a toilet bowl at very reasonable prices," she says.

■ Diners at a Florida hibachi restaurant were treated to a surprise dinner guest when an alleged burglar fell through the ceiling and landed on a table. Police said Justin Grimes, 30, climbed through ceiling tiles in the restaurant's bathroom with the aim of crawling to the manager's office and stealing a lockbox full of cash. But when he stood on a weak patch of ceiling above the dining room, he came crashing through. Grimes tried to run, but patrons tackled him and held him down until police arrived.

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SPAIN

When junk rains down from space

Milagros Perez Oliva
El País

"Houston, we have a problem," said Milagros Perez Oliva. Debris is raining down on Spain from outer space, and pretty soon somebody is going to get hurt. Over the past two weeks, three bizarre-looking, man-made objects have landed in southern Spain. The first two, in the Murcia region, were dense black roundish things a full meter in diameter, and bomb squads were called to investigate them. The third, found in a farmer's field in neighboring Valencia, was a long metal piece that could have come from some kind of aircraft or spacecraft. We know there are millions of fragments of space junk orbiting the planet—

including remnants of old satellites, rockets, and past missions. But for years we naively believed that any chunk that fell out of orbit would simply burn up and disintegrate when it hit the atmosphere and therefore "pose no danger to Earthlings." Alas, that theory has now been proved wrong. But how can we protect ourselves? It's going to be "tough to devise a garbage collection system to go sweep in space"—and expensive. In any case, Spain is not responsible for most of the mess cluttering the sky, even if for some reason we are the landing site. The solution will have to be international.

BELGIUM

A hub of global terrorism

Kristof Clerix
The Guardian (U.K.)

A terrorist plot has once again been traced back to Belgium, said Kristof Clerix. Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the ISIS operative believed to have masterminded last week's Paris attacks, was from the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek, and several of his suspected accomplices have been detained there. This isn't the first time Brussels has been found to be a source of terrorism. Even before the jihadist threat, Belgium served as a staging area for European terror groups like the Red Army Faction, ETA, and IRA. Belgium is attractive to militants for many reasons, including its open borders; its proximity to Germany, France, and the U.K.; and its international population. For jihadists in particular, the Molenbeek

neighborhood, which has high unemployment and a large, disaffected Muslim population, is a choice recruiting ground. Radicalization is made easier by the fact that Belgium lacks local Westernized imams—the clerics in its mosques tend to be Wahhabi radicals imported from Saudi Arabia. Yet despite Belgium's reputation as a terrorist hub, the government has done little to crack down on extremists. The country has just 600 state security officers and a pitiful counterterrorism force. No wonder Belgium has exported more jihadists per capita to Syria than any other European country. Belgium's "lack of an intelligence culture" has "allowed terrorist groups to proliferate."

France: A grieving nation ponders what's next

France has been struck in its very heart, said Mathias Destal and Elodie Emery in *Marianne*. The terrorists from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria did not attack our monuments or our tourist sites. They slaughtered at least 129 of us in the Parisian hangouts where we French go to be French, "to drink a bit, eat a bite, unwind by listening to a rock concert" or watching a soccer game. The Bataclan theater, where at least 89 people were murdered, isn't the city's most famous rock venue, and the restaurants that the terrorists struck are not featured in tourist guides. Unlike the bloody attacks in Paris in January, when jihadists targeted cartoonists at the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, Jews, and police, the terrorists this time butchered a wide spectrum of people: Muslim and Christian and secular, young and old, pensioners and students, united only in their "appetite for a life that is festive, free, and diverse." A French life.

It took a tragedy of this magnitude to jolt French President François Hollande out of his complacency, said Yves Thérard in *Le Figaro*. Finally, after years of coddling Islamists, the president has announced "firm, ruthless" action. France has stepped up airstrikes on ISIS targets in Syria and will amend the constitution to revoke the French citizenship of dual nationals convicted of terrorism. It will lengthen prison sentences for arms trafficking and hire thousands more police—measures the right has long advocated. But to defeat this jihadist menace, Hollande



Mourners outside a bistro attacked by ISIS terrorists

must go further and announce plans to "fight against the Islamization of French youth, close fundamentalist mosques, and control immigration."

Hollande has allowed fear to take over, said *Le Monde* in an editorial. In his desire to seem forceful, he is abandoning the policies of his Socialist Party and "endorsing the proposals of the right and of the extreme right." In foreign affairs, Hollande has always opposed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, yet now he is rushing to cooperate with Russian Presi-

dent Vladimir Putin, the dictator's main backer. On the home front, he is offering to give up treasured civil liberties to fight homegrown jihadists. It's too much. Security is a necessity. "But not at any price."

Many French are too frightened to hear such sober analysis, said Maël Thierry in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Marine Le Pen, head of the far-right National Front, expects a big boost in next month's regional elections. Her pledge to "fortify our national borders" may resonate with a public fearful of terrorists slipping into France along with refugees. French Muslims fear a backlash, said Nathalie Funès, also in *Le Nouvel Observateur*. Within days of the attacks, mosques were being vandalized and Facebook pages were full of "hateful slurs" against Islam and calls to expel Muslims. Attacks on Muslims had already tripled across France in the nine months since the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks—will they proliferate even more now?

Middle East: How to stop ISIS?

Have the Paris terrorist attacks finally awakened the West to the need for boots on the ground against the “wholly un-Islamic band of murderers” known as ISIS? asked **Sabria Jawhar** in *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia). The so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is no longer simply a regional menace, but is now a functioning “country determined to wage war against innocents” everywhere. Yet Muslim and non-Muslim countries alike are unwilling to commit the military resources necessary to defeat these barbarians. The U.S.-led coalition, wary of losing a single Western life, has relied entirely on airstrikes. After ISIS’s attacks in Paris, France also used warplanes as its retaliatory weapon of choice. More force is needed to wipe out this terrorist state. And if the West is not prepared to incur casualties, it won’t defeat ISIS.

But ISIS is already under significant military pressure, said *The National* (United Arab Emirates) in an editorial. It recently gave up territory around the northern Iraqi city of Sinjar “without much of a fight,” and “may or may not be on the run.” Unable to accomplish its original goal of creating a new caliphate, ISIS is now becoming an al Qaida-like terrorist group that carries out “ruthless attacks on soft targets.” It sent suicide bombers into the Turkish capital, Ankara, in mid-October, and blew up a Russian airliner over Egypt not long after. Last week, the extremist Sunni Muslim group staged two suicide attacks on a Shiite neighbor-



A U.S. F-15 takes off from Turkey on an anti-ISIS mission.

hood in Beirut, killing at least 43 people, a day before it hit Paris.

It would be comforting to believe that ISIS has changed tactics out of weakness, but these terrorist attacks show increased reach, said **Anthony Samrani** in *L’Orient-Le Jour* (Lebanon). Despite its setbacks on its home turf, ISIS is “clearly stronger and more dangerous today” than it was a year ago, and now presents “a global threat.” The terrorist attacks are intended not just to frighten people but also to spark civil conflict. The goal of the slaughter in Paris was to pit secular France against French Muslims. The goal of the Beirut bombings was to “trigger Sunni-Shiite conflict” in Lebanon.

Clearly, all parties have underestimated ISIS, said **Riad Kahwaji** in *Al-Monitor.com*. The group feeds on the grievances of disgruntled Sunni communities, such as former members of Iraq’s Baath Party—ousted from power by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion—and the rebels battling Syria’s ruling Alawite regime and its Shiite Iranian backers. “It has used each of these groups to get something it wanted and then devoured them.” It cannot be defeated externally by a Western assault, for it is more than just an armed force: It is an ideology. What the West can do, though, is arm, train, assist, and empower moderate Sunnis in Iraq and Syria. “Only moderate Sunni forces can defeat radical Sunni extremists.”

AUSTRALIA

Removing the stigma of adoption

Jeremy Sammut
The Sydney Morning Herald

Adoption is practically taboo in Australia, and children are suffering because of the stigma, said **Jeremy Sammut**. Of the 43,000 children living in foster homes or other care last year, just 89 were adopted. Authorities are reluctant to permanently sever ties to biological parents, even if they’re abusive. When kids are removed from the family home, they are often sent back again and again, in a “cycle of maltreatment and instability.” This fetishization of the biological family stems from Australia’s dark history of forced adoptions. Decades ago, Aboriginal children and children born to single mothers were wrenched from their parents,

placed in new families, and denied access to their origins. Those forced placements did untold harm, and convinced many Australians “that adoption is an intrinsically harmful practice.” That’s simply false, as shown by the positive experiences of adoptees in many other countries. Modern-day open adoption, in which a child is allowed to learn about and, when appropriate, visit the birth parents is a far cry from the secretive practices of the past. It is “designed to ensure that adopted children do not struggle with their identity.” Australia’s children in care deserve a family—and it needn’t be the one they were born into.

CUBA

Playing the U.S. for cash

Guillermo Antonio Zurga
Analitica.com (Venezuela)

You’ve got to hand it to the Castro brothers, said **Guillermo Antonio Zurga**. They preside over a country with an unsustainable economy, but somehow always find a new “stream of external money” to prop up their socialist state. When the Soviet Union dissolved and Russia cut off Cuba’s funding, they turned to Venezuela. That country’s oil wealth sufficed for some years, but when Venezuela’s economy began to implode, the Castros approached their nemesis, the U.S. Fidel Castro, “the world’s coldest and most ruthless” manipulator, may have ceded the presidency and the negotiations to his brother Raúl, but we can see his “political

genius” behind the whole endeavor. He calculated that his brother could “sweet-talk” that diplomatic novice, President Obama, into lifting the embargo against Cuba without requiring any democratic reforms. This goal has almost been achieved. Cuba has conceded no “compromises toward human rights, free elections, or the establishment of political plurality”—all the concessions have come from the U.S. Soon, the Castros will “enjoy the fruits of the hated capitalism while maintaining a captive and oppressed Cuban people.” How is this possible? Perhaps Obama really does have “a heart tinged with socialist sympathies.”

College campuses: Free speech vs. the right not to be offended

Who knew that our college kids were such “delicate snowflakes”? said **George Will** in *The Washington Post*. America’s campuses have recently been convulsed by a series of mob tantrums, directed by hypersensitive students demanding their universities be made “safe spaces” free from open discussion, discomfort, or pain. At Yale, students reacted hysterically when a faculty member “recklessly said something sensible” about Halloween costumes. Erika Christakis told students she didn’t believe in banning costumes some would consider racist, sexist, or culturally insensitive, since “free speech and the ability to tolerate offense are the hallmarks of a free and open society.” Furious students screamed and cursed at her and her husband, another faculty member, and demanded they resign. Days later, the University of Missouri’s president resigned under pressure from students who said he hadn’t done enough in response to a series of racist incidents on campus. The Mizzou students were subsequently caught pushing and threatening student journalists to keep them out of a “safe space” they had set up to stage their protests. “Let’s not kid ourselves,” said **Mona Charen** in *NationalReview.com*. The new student radicals are tyrants. “Though it is couched in the language of safety, what these little snowflakes want is repression.”

“Don’t be too quick to judge” students for daring to challenge white teachers and administrators, said **Sally Kohn** in *CNN.com*. If they’re yelling, “it’s because they have something important to say.” In the past year, we’ve seen a racist fraternity chant at the University of Oklahoma, a noose hanging from a tree at Duke, and at Mizzou, reports of a swastika drawn with human feces on a dorm wall. At Yale, some black students have to live in a college named for John C. Calhoun, a white supremacist whose ideas helped give birth to the Confederacy. Yet somehow, these very valid issues have been “subsumed in a debate over political correctness,” said **Jelani Cobb** in *NewYorker.com*. But in changing the subject from racism to “freedom of speech,” the critics of campus protesters are engaging in a “self-serving deflection.” When white students think it’s funny to wear blackface and go as “thugs” on Halloween, or hold a “white girls only” party at Yale, the small minority of blacks on these privileged campuses naturally feel threatened and excluded. Freedom of speech guarantees



Protesters at the University of Missouri

that we can “offend the powerful,” not bully the powerless.

That doesn’t excuse the “infantilized” nature of these protests, said **Robby Soave** in *Reason.com*. Yale students complained that the Christakis hadn’t done enough to make the school feel like “a place of comfort and home,” rather than an “intellectual space.” Today’s coddled students don’t just want justice; they want college administrators to “play mommy and daddy” and “hold them while they cry.” Isn’t it the purpose of college “to create an intellectual environ-

ment where students can sharpen their minds”? said **John Daniel Davidson** in *TheFederalist.com*. That process involves debates that are passionate, experimental—and yes, sometimes uncomfortable. But that’s life. The real world isn’t always “secure and cozy,” either.

Easy for you to say, said **Lindy West** in *TheGuardian.com*. It’s no coincidence that the people fretting most extravagantly over political correctness are “harrumphing Reasonable White Men”—people who’ve never experienced true marginalization. Are blackface on Halloween, a noose thrown over a tree limb, and rape jokes really that offensive? Well, “to white people who think the Earth is their toy chest,” obviously not. But to black people or rape victims or trauma survivors “all advocating for their own humanity with various degrees of success and silliness,” yes, this really is a big deal.

So make the case for your grievances, rather than try to censor and punish those who disagree, said **Jonathan Chait** in *NYMag.com*. In a liberal democracy, no subject should be restricted from discussion, even on the grounds of anti-racism and anti-sexism; no speech should be banned as “incorrect.” The moment that happens, politically correct leftism takes a huge and dangerous step toward the Thought Control that occurred under Marxism. Think I’m being a harrumphing Reasonable White Man? Just ask President Obama, who said last week he’s troubled by the censorious atmosphere on college campuses. If your goal is to “make deep changes in society,” said the first black president, you must take on your opponents “in a clear and courageous way.” Silencing offensive views, or calling on “a higher power to protect me from that,” Obama said, is “a recipe for dogmatism.”

Noted

■ Life expectancy in Syria has dropped from 74.7 years in 2005, before the country’s brutal civil war, to 55.7 today. *Vox.com*

■ Despite efforts to improve the American diet and lifestyle—like first lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! campaign—the percentage of obese Americans has actually increased. About 38 percent of U.S. adults were obese in 2013 and 2014, compared with 35 percent in 2011 and 2012. *TheDailyBeast.com*

■ The average size of American homes is ballooning, new data shows. The average

U.S. home size in 2012 was 1,864 square feet, or 28 percent larger than in 1970. Newly built single-family homes, in the meantime, now average 2,657 square feet—57 percent larger than in 1973. *Pew Research Center*

■ Baltimore recorded its 300th homicide of the year last weekend, up 42 percent from 2014’s overall total. The number of killings has surged in the city since it was hit by



rioting over the death of a black man in police custody in April. *Reuters.com*

■ The Wi-Fi password for media members attending the most recent Republican presidential primary debate, in Milwaukee, was “StopHillary.” In response, the Democratic National Committee refused to set a password for Wi-Fi at its own most recent debate, in Des Moines, saying that Democrats “believe in expanding access and economic opportunity for all.” *WashingtonPost.com*

Immigration: Cruz and Rubio collide

“The marquee fight of the Republican race has finally arrived,” said **Tal Kopan** and **Theodore Schleifer** in *CNN.com*. With Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz increasingly looking like the party’s most viable candidates, the two senators “are taking the gloves off over one of the most explosive debates



Rubio, Cruz: Those are fightin’ words.

among conservatives: immigration.” At the heart of the battle is Rubio’s central role in the so-called Gang of Eight, the bipartisan group of senators who tried and failed to enact comprehensive immigration reform in 2013. Cruz criticized Rubio last week for trying “to jam this amnesty down the American people’s throats.” Rubio responded by noting that at the time, Cruz actually proposed “legalizing people who were here illegally” by expanding the number of temporary visas and green cards. Ironically, Cruz’s proposals were designed to divide Republican support and thus “kill the bill,” said **Brian Beutler** in *NewRepublic.com*. But having wooed anti-establishment conservatives with his “supposed orthodoxy and candor,” he may find it awkward to explain that he was just gaming the Washington system all along.

Rubio’s involvement in the Gang of Eight was “a colossal political and policy misjudgment,” said **Rich Lowry** in *Politico.com*. While he eventually

abandoned his own handiwork and declared the bill a mistake, “there is, understandably, lingering distrust” among conservatives. Rubio needs to offer some detailed promises to secure the border—“promises that would exact a real political price if he ever backtracked on them.”

Even that wouldn’t be enough, said **Matt Lewis** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. The only way Rubio can prevent this issue from sinking him in the primaries is to “frame the discussion” on immigration on his own terms. How? By addressing the matter in a big speech, like JFK did on his Catholic faith, and Barack Obama did on the Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

Democrats must be loving this, said **Peter Beinart**, also in *TheDailyBeast.com*. On the one side there’s Rubio, who’s been trying to “show younger, poorer, newer, less white Americans that the GOP gives a damn about them.” On the other side there’s Cruz, “a man who combines Sarah Palin’s worldview, Richard Nixon’s commitment to fair play, and Al Gore’s folksy charm.” Rubio is clearly the candidate Democrats most fear—yet he’s the one being forced to take increasingly extreme positions that will be an albatross in the general election. “Somewhere, a woman in a pantsuit is laughing.”

Syrian refugees: Should we let them in?

“The attacks in Paris have inspired a xenophobic bidding war” among Republicans, said **Dana Milbank** in *The Washington Post*. After a Syrian passport was found alongside one of the Paris suicide bombers, who had posed as a refugee to enter Europe, 30 Republican governors declared their states would not accept any of the 10,000 Syrians President Obama plans to resettle in the U.S. next year. GOP presidential candidates rushed to join “the jingoistic bid to block Syrian refugees.” New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie boasted he’d turn away even “orphans under the age of 5,” while Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz said we should allow only Syrian Christian refugees into the U.S., not Muslims. “While security concerns are reasonable in the wake of a terrorist attack, this knee-jerk reaction is not,” said *The Boston Globe* in an editorial. Refugees seeking to enter the U.S. undergo security checks lasting two years. And most Syrians seeking sanctuary here are innocents fleeing a bloody civil war “far more deadly than the attacks Paris endured.”

“Distrust of the system that will vet refugees is not xenophobia,” said **Jim Geraghty** in *National Review.com*. Remember, all 19 of the 9/11 hijackers entered the U.S. legally on tourist, busi-

ness, and student visas despite being committed jihadists. “And how likely is it that our government and allied governments have a complete list of every member of ISIS?” Until the intelligence community can convince us that they can weed out potential sleeper agents among Syrian refugees—whether Christian or Muslim—“there is no rationale for admitting any of them,” said **Jonathan Tobin** in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. This is not an irrational fear of foreigners. “It’s plain common sense.”

But closing our borders to Syrian refugees “could ultimately produce more terrorism, not less,” said **Richard Fontaine** in *WSJ.com*. Right now, millions of Syrians are languishing in squalor-filled camps across the Middle East. Parents are out of work, children are out of school, and families live in dire poverty. “These are the conditions in which violent extremism takes root.” The U.S. and other Western nations can take some of these vulnerable people in, offer them a new life, and show that we genuinely believe the humanitarian ideals we like to espouse. Or we can turn our back and let ISIS and al Qaida gather new recruits among the desperate. The choice is ours.

Wit & Wisdom

“Saving is a fine thing. Especially when your parents have done it for you.” **Winston Churchill**, quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*

“People talk loud and long, in order to say as little as possible. The really true and interesting things are the intrigues in the background, about which not a word is mentioned.” **Franz Kafka**, quoted in *BrainPickings.org*

“We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next 10.”

Bill Gates, quoted in *ComputerWeekly.com*

“Nothing cleanses your soul like getting the hell kicked out of you.” **Football coach Woody Hayes**, quoted in *the Orlando Sentinel*

“For a politician to complain about the press is like a ship’s captain complaining about the sea.” **British MP Enoch Powell**, quoted in *the North Wilkesboro, N.C., Wilkes Journal-Patriot*

“To make men love their country, their country ought to be lovable.” **Edmund Burke**, quoted in *The Daily Telegraph (U.K.)*

“Normal is just a cycle on the washing machine.” **Whoopi Goldberg**, quoted in *HuffingtonPost.com*

Poll watch

■ **56%** of Americans believe that the values of Islam are “at odds” with America’s values and way of life, up from **47%** in 2011. Public Religion Research Institute

■ **60%** of Americans think that the U.S. should be doing more to attack the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, but **66%** oppose using special-forces troops to fight ISIS in Syria, and **76%** oppose sending in regular ground troops. Reuters/Ipsos

Mobile streaming: T-Mobile's all-you-can- binge plan

"T-Mobile wants to be there for you when you're ready to marathon-watch *Breaking Bad* on the go," said **Roger Cheng** in *CNET.com*. The nation's third-largest wireless carrier is offering customers the option of watching unlimited streaming video on their mobile devices, from companies like Netflix, HBO, Showtime, Hulu, and ESPN, "without eating up their precious allotment of data." T-Mobile's appropriately named Binge On perk launched this week for customers who subscribe to a 3GB data plan or higher. Twenty-four video services are included so far in T-Mobile's all-you-can-watch buffet, with more to come.



As with all free things, there's a catch.

T-Mobile's latest stunt sounds great at first, "but there's a catch," said **Jefferson Graham** in *USA Today*. All that unlimited video will stream in 480p standard definition, much lower than the 720p and 1080p we're used to watching on today's high-resolution gadgets. Imagine the grainy YouTube videos of yesteryear. "Anyone want to go back to those days again?" Some of the biggest players in video are also missing, including Amazon Prime and prime-time content from CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox. YouTube, which doesn't meet T-Mobile's technical requirements, is also conspicuously absent. But give T-Mobile CEO John Legere some credit. When he proclaimed his company an "uncarrier" and abolished two-year wireless contracts, the rest of the industry followed suit, making smartphones cheaper and easier to buy. This service, however, is likely to be a "much tougher sell."

There's a bigger issue looming with T-Mobile's supposedly "free" data, said **Michael Hiltzik** in the *Los Angeles Times*. "It's a fundamental threat to the open internet." By favoring specific content providers, T-Mobile is flouting one of the bedrock principles of net neutrality, which is that all internet traffic must be treated equally and delivered equally to consumers. T-Mobile isn't charging content providers to join Binge On, which would explicitly violate the FCC's rules against paid prioritization, but it can

otherwise set the bar for entry however it likes. Giving T-Mobile and others the power to pick content winners and losers will surely "come back and bite consumers where it hurts."

"What's not to like?" asked **Jon Healey**, also in the *Los Angeles Times*. As long as T-Mobile sticks to the letter of the law, giving customers more data bang for their buck seems like an "unemployed good." Also, T-Mobile's goal here isn't to pick one content provider over another; it's to beat Verizon Wireless, Sprint, and AT&T. Not to mention the cable companies, said **Brian Fung** in *WashingtonPost.com*. More than anything, Binge On is an attempt to grab the business of cord-cutters, who are abandoning traditional cable companies to watch streaming services on their mobile devices. That's why cable giants are flirting with offering their own cell services. In other words, "T-Mobile is trying to become cable faster than cable can become T-Mobile."

Innovation of the week

You don't have to ditch your favorite wristwatch to get in

on the smart-watch trend, said

Nathan

Olivarez-Giles in *WSJ.com*. Chronos, "a slim, stainless steel disk that sticks to the underside of any watch," can turn just about any old-fashioned timepiece into a basic smartwatch, complete with phone notifications and fitness tracking. The Chronos disc, which is small and thin enough to fit about 80 percent of watches on the market, glows or vibrates to alert wearers to phone calls, text messages, and app notifications on their smartphones. Different light and vibration patterns can be programmed for different alerts—say, "purple for an Uber ride arriving." It also can track steps and distance traveled. Chronos is available now for pre-order at \$99, rising to \$129 once it ships in spring 2016.



Bytes: What's new in tech

Get to know 'TensorFlow'

Google just made an announcement that "will send ripples throughout the technology industry for years to come," said **Will Oremus** in *Slate.com*. The company has built a new learning system for machines, called TensorFlow, and is giving it away to developers. Machine-learning software may sound like "gobbledygook to the average person," but it's "increasingly at the core of Google's technology," allowing computers to recognize patterns, make predictions, and "learn from mistakes." Google's speech-recognition tools, photo search, and auto-reply Gmail feature already use TensorFlow. "As with many things Google does, this is at once altruistic and self-serving." Giving away TensorFlow will allow other companies to implement cutting-edge machine-learning algorithms in their own products, but it also will help cement Google's brand of machine learning as the industry standard.

Your smartphone's secret superpower

"Your smartphone could contribute to cancer research while you sleep," said **Amy Wang** in *Qz.com*. Cancer researchers in Australia have developed a mobile app that harnesses a smartphone's processing power while it's not in use. The DreamLab app downloads genetic

sequencing data from Australia's Garvan Institute of Medical Research, crunches the numbers, and then sends the results back to the institute, all while the phone owner is asleep. Vodafone Australia, which helped develop the app, doesn't charge users for the data and says that if even 1,000 people use the app, "cancer puzzles would be solved 30 times faster."

Why auto-play videos are everywhere

Blame Facebook for making auto-play videos ubiquitous, said **Mike Shields** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Publishers are following the social media giant's lead by filling their homepages with videos that start playing without a click. Some 88 percent of videos on 330 top websites now play automatically, according to MediaRadar, an advertising analytics firm. Media companies have traditionally shied away from auto-play videos, but many now assume that because web users have gotten used to seeing them in their Facebook newsfeeds, hostility to them has waned. Video has become a large and lucrative business for Facebook, with video ads pulling in prices up to "20 times higher than prices for display ads." The social network pulls in a "jaw-dropping" 8 billion video views a day, up from 4 billion a day in April.

Gentry

Saved by an experimental cancer treatment

A British toddler dying of an aggressive form of leukemia has been saved by an experimental treatment using “designer” immune cells genetically engineered to destroy cancer. Diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia at 3 months old, Layla Richards spent the better part of her infancy undergoing a barrage of treatments, including chemotherapy and bone-marrow transplants. None was successful. Layla’s parents were told she had only months to live, but they refused to give up. “We asked the doctors to try anything for our daughter, even if it hadn’t been tried before,” her mother, Lisa Richards, tells *NBCNews.com*. In a last-ditch attempt

to save the girl’s life, a team at London’s Great Ormond Street Hospital performed an experimental procedure, known as gene editing, previously tested only on mice. First, new genes engineered to attack leukemia cells were injected into immune system cells, called T cells, from a healthy donor. Then doctors used enzymes that act as molecular “scissors” to render those genes impervious to leukemia drugs and prevent them from attacking healthy cells. Several months after receiving an infusion of the genetically engineered T cells, Layla is cancer free. Doctors say it’s too soon to say she’s cured, but the technique could represent a significant advance in



Layla Richards: ‘Almost a miracle’

cancer treatment. “We didn’t know if or when it would work, and so we were over the moon when it did,” says Dr. Paul Veys. “Her leukemia was so aggressive that such a response is almost a miracle.”



The dark area is the caldera of a massive volcano.

Ice volcanoes on Pluto

When NASA’s New Horizons spacecraft flew past Pluto in July, it offered the first close-up views of the distant dwarf planet. Now, new images from that flyby reveal a world far more bizarre and complex than astronomers ever imagined. Instead of the stark, pockmarked surface they expected to find, Pluto boasts a richly varied landscape of high peaks, dunes, and glaciers—and what may be the first volcanoes ever seen in the outer solar system. The images show two mountains near Pluto’s south pole with definite depressions at their summits. They could be cryovolcanoes, or ice volcanoes, that once spewed frosty slurry rather than molten lava, *National Geographic* reports. The observation must be confirmed with more data, but some astronomers are already convinced. “When you see a big mountain with a hole in the top, it generally points to one thing,” says NASA’s Oliver White. Meanwhile, Pluto also features what appear to be floating mountains as large as the Rockies, which are probably massive icebergs resting on deep pools of frozen nitrogen. Overall, evidence of geological processes, such as glacier flows and volcanism, suggests this planetary enigma, 4.7 billion miles from Earth, is far more

active and dynamic than anyone dreamed. The New Horizons team gets “an A for exploration” and “an F for predictive ability,” says principal investigator Alan Stern. “The Pluto system is baffling us.”

Young kids with heart trouble

Children as young as 8 are exhibiting signs of heart disease, *HealthDay.com* reports. In a new study of 40 kids between 8 and 16, MRI scans revealed that subjects who were obese had an average of 27 percent more muscle mass in their left ventricle, the chamber of the heart responsible for pumping oxygen-rich blood to the body. They also had 12 percent thicker cardiac muscle overall, indicating that their hearts are working harder than is normal. The results were “both surprising and alarming to us,” says lead author Linyuan Jing. In the U.S., obesity among 6- to 11-year-olds has more than doubled over the past three decades. More research is needed to determine whether the abnormalities observed in obese children are reversible. But permanent damage is possible, Jing says. “This should be further motivation for parents to help children lead a healthy lifestyle.”

Lower blood pressure is better

Current blood pressure standards are too high, and aggressively treating people now considered healthy can prevent more heart attacks and strokes and save lives, a new National Institutes of Health study has concluded. Under existing clinical guidelines, healthy adults should have a systolic blood pressure of 140 or lower. In a study of 9,361 adults 50 or older, researchers



randomly assigned participants to receive either standard hypertension treatment or more intensive therapy aimed at lowering their systolic pressure to 120 or below. Over the course of the three-year trial, the people treated more aggressively experienced 25 percent fewer heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular events. Deaths among those patients also dropped by 43 percent. “The general message here seems to be that lower seems to be better,” study leader Paul Whelton tells *Time.com*. Aggressive treatment does raise the chances of side effects, but Whelton says that “the benefits of the lower blood pressure far outweigh the potential for risk.”

Health scare of the week Beware belly fat

Beer belly. Spare tire. Love handles. These seemingly innocuous terms are used to describe the extra fat that accumulates around some people’s waists, but new research suggests so-called central obesity is actually a serious health concern—even for people with a “normal” body mass index (BMI). After examining data compiled on 15,184 adults who were followed for an average of 14 years, researchers found that men and women with higher levels of belly fat have a greater risk of death than overweight or obese adults whose fat is more evenly distributed throughout their bodies. One possible explanation is that belly fat is associated with a buildup of deeper visceral fat that wraps around internal organs, increasing the risk for heart attack and stroke. “People with normal weight according to BMI can’t be reassured that they don’t have any fat-related health issues,” the study’s senior author, Dr. Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, tells *The New York Times*. “Having a normal weight is not enough.”

Reuters, Getty, NASA/JHUAPL/SwRI



Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge

by Matt Ridley

(Harper, \$29)

There's "something profoundly democratic and egalitarian" about the central idea put forward in this book, said Michael Shermer in *The Wall Street Journal*. Science writer Matt Ridley, a Conservative member of Britain's House of Lords and the former American editor of *The Economist*, rejects the popular notion that leaders drive human progress and must answer the call when challenges arise. In a volume that rates as his "best and most important work to date," Ridley argues that most changes in the fields of human endeavor emerge from below, in processes that mimic natural evolutionary change. Like a flock of geese, a pack of cyclists will move with a single mind without any external direction, and society at large functions similarly, he says. Only because our minds crave patterns do we rush to ascribe change to top-down planning and control.



Cyclists model nature's preference for order.

Ridley is right to celebrate the achievements of civilization that have come about through collective tinkering, said Mark Buchanan in *Nature*. "We defeated the dark of night," for example, not by waiting for the arrival of Thomas Edison's lightbulb but by taming fire, developing metallurgy, and achieving countless other technological advances without any thought of how Edison's breakthrough would harness them all. Unfortunately, Ridley's libertarian political views "often intrude on his arguments," inspiring him to litter his book

with cranky complaints about big government and the liberal faith in social engineering. In his world, change that emerges from unfettered human activity is always good, and top-down regulation is always harmful, said Graham Lawton in *New Scientist*. His "highly readable, invariably interesting, but ultimately maddening" book allows no room for counterevidence.

At his most preposterous, Ridley commends the Mexican mafia for being more effective than any government power in bringing order to prisons in California, said Peter Forbes in *The Independent* (U.K.). He blames 2008's global financial collapse not on banks but on excessive regulation, and he speculates that universal health care would occur naturally if insurance companies were left to their own devices. Such excesses "might make you feel you don't need to read this book." But there you'd be wrong. Before he goes off the deep end, Ridley "makes a persuasive case that top-down command in many areas of life is inefficient, smothering, and often tyrannical." A reader "needs to keep a cool head" to see it, but "there are the seeds here of a revolution—or rather, a bottom-up evolution."

Novel of the week

The Japanese Lover

by Isabel Allende

(Atria, \$28)

Isabel Allende has proven again to be "an incomparable storyteller," said Laura Albritton in *The Miami Herald*. Opening a novel by the Chilean-American author is "like running into a beloved friend," because her characters are always captivating and their depths expertly excavated. When we meet Alma Belasco, a wealthy 81-year-old California matriarch, she still carries a torch for her childhood sweetheart, Ichimei Fukuda—a Japanese-American who was once taken away to a World War II internment camp. But that and other historic injustices that Allende weaves in "come across more like stage backdrops than shapers of a human soul," said Pamela Miller in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Her potentially potent story often feels "oversugared with sentimentality." To me, there's "nothing cloying" about it, said Ron Charles in *The Washington Post*. Allende works in quick strokes. Better yet, she's "an author who understands that beneath our poses of literary sophistication, most of us want a rich, engaging story."

Killing a King: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Remaking of Israel

by Dan Ephron (Norton, \$28)



Yitzhak Rabin's assassination was that "rarest" of political murders: one that achieved its goal, said Nancy Macdonald in *Macleans*' (Canada). When young religious extremist Yigal Amir shot the Israeli prime minister at a 1995 peace rally, he brought to an end

a fleeting moment when a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians appeared possible. Two years before, Rabin and Yasser Arafat had signed the Oslo accords, which were supported by a majority of Israelis but enraged a vocal right-wing minority. Dan Ephron, a *Newsweek* correspondent in Israel when Rabin was killed, has now delivered "the best account to date" of the assassination and its impact.

"The book is a Greek tragedy told in split screen," said Jennifer Senior in *The New York Times*. Amir, the drama's villain,

opposed the Oslo agreement from the start, but he might never have conceived of an assassination had he not seen Rabin by chance at a 1993 wedding and been struck by how little protection the prime minister traveled with. Rabin, for his part, had been thrust into the role of peacemaker after a celebrated military career, and his commitment to the cause grew after the signing of the accords triggered a wave of terrorist attacks and convinced him of the impossibility of maintaining Israeli rule over the Palestinian territories. In the end, more than one of Amir's acquaintances missed the chance to turn him in. Rabin, in turn, nearly skipped the rally, then fatefully declined to wear a bulletproof vest.

"It's tempting to speculate about whether Israel might have turned out differently had Rabin lived," said Dexter Filkins in *The New Yorker*. Ephron thinks that it would have, though it's not clear Rabin was ready to take the crucial step of forcing Jewish settlers in the West Bank to relocate. What's more, the Israeli electorate was already becoming more resistant to compromise because a booming birth rate was increasing the relative size of the nation's Orthodox population. Still, peace during the Rabin years had at least slim odds. "Today they are effectively zero."



Author of the week

Hannah Rothschild

Few people are better placed to write a satire about the art world than Hannah Rothschild, said **Roslyn Sulcas** in *The New York Times*. In August, the 53-year-old biographer and documentarian became chairwoman of Great



Britain's National Gallery, inheriting a role her father had filled 25 years earlier. Members of the Rothschild banking dynasty have been arts benefactors for generations, of course, and Hannah had become an expert on the terrain while making films for the BBC. Though her new novel, *The Improbability of Love*, represents her first attempt to fictionalize that milieu, she says she's surprised more people haven't. "It's got everything: extremes of wealth, goodies, baddies. Sometimes, while I was writing it, I would think, 'I've gone too far.' Then I would go into a sale room and think, 'I haven't gone far enough.'"

Rothschild's love of art comes through in the book's most distinctive passages, said **Michael Alec Rose** in *BookPage*. An 18th-century painting that is central to the plot narrates some chapters, bringing to life a fantasy the author nursed as a child while visiting museums with her father. "All the pictures were just hanging around, and I thought, 'If only they could talk, perhaps they would tell us what they've seen,'" she says. Egos and intrigue often carry the story, but its protagonist is a Londoner named Annie who's overcoming a broken heart when she stumbles upon the priceless painting in a junk shop. The novel, at its core, is an exploration of art's true value. "Most people," Rothschild says, "have forgotten to have an emotional reaction with art."

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Best books...chosen by Kevin Barry

Irish writer Kevin Barry, author of the novel City of Bohane, won a new honor this week when his latest book garnered Britain's Goldsmiths Prize. Beatlebone imagines an alternative fate for John Lennon, transporting him to a remote Irish island.

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë (Dover, \$4.50). I was home sick from school, aged 10, and this was lying around the house. I remember being lifted from my skin by it. I was taken from an Irish suburb in the early 1980s and set down on a wind-blasted, 19th-century Yorkshire moor, and into the maelstrom of one of literature's great doomed romances. It taught me that a book could truly be a vehicle.

Everything That Rises Must Converge by Flannery O'Connor (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$16). I risk the wrath of O'Connors everywhere when I suggest that there's a particular time in life when her short stories have the most charge or reverberation, and it's in one's late teens or early 20s. That was when I read this collection, and I was awed by the dense emotional humidity of the world it depicted.

Underworld by Don DeLillo (Scribner, \$20). In the '90s, this offered many young writers a view of what the novel could achieve. It had scope, fun, drama, and pitch-perfect dialogue, but above all it had sentences—sentences of special

gleam and precision. It still sits close to my desk as a reminder and a goad.

Dubliners by James Joyce (Dover, \$4). I read *Dubliners* dutifully in my early 20s and thought, "Sure, fine, these are excellent stories, well-made, yadda yadda." When I returned to them 15 years later, I began to sense the true depths within, depths I could only find after living more of my life.

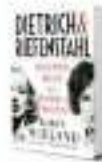
2666 by Roberto Bolaño (Picador, \$22). Just when we thought the novel had no place left to go, here came this splintered masterpiece, a paranoid odyssey told in 900 writhing pages filled with a new, rich, glamorous prose. Bolaño, who died a year before the book's 2004 publication, was a great, maverick, maniacal talent. We'll be considering his influence for generations.

The Writing Life by Annie Dillard (Harper Perennial, \$15). I love books on the nuts and bolts and mechanics and tactics of writing. There is none better than this collection of pieces from the great Annie Dillard, an essayist of savvy, wit, and uncanny insight.

Also of interest...in going separate ways

Dietrich & Riefenstahl

by Karin Wieland (Liveright, \$35)



Marlene Dietrich and Leni Riefenstahl make fascinating counterparts, said Michael Sragow in *The Washington Post*. This "agile" dual biography presents them as embodying Weimar Germany's dream of a new 20th-century woman. Audacious in their careers and their love lives, the actress and the filmmaker "diverged on the crucial moral decision of their day"—whether to back Hitler or denounce him. Karin Wieland gets a few facts wrong, but her approach "generates piercing insights about ambition, ego, and the repercussions of a momentous choice."

It Ended Badly

by Jennifer Wright (Holt, \$21)



"Breaking up is sad business," and the 13 couples profiled in this "odd but intriguing" historical survey made things even worse, said Dawn Fallik in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. The author, a *New York Observer* writer, "often comes across as that friend who thinks everything she says is hilarious, when—not so much." But she's assembled rich detail about nasty breakups such as Nero's with Poppaea and Eddie Fisher's with Liz Taylor. This book "could be a quick, interesting read on a dreary Saturday afternoon."

Twain & Stanley Enter Paradise

by Oscar Hijuelos (Grand Central, \$28)



The late Oscar Hijuelos "spins a great tale" in the novel that turned out to be his last, said Jason Sheehan in *NPR.org*. His goal is to bring alive the decades-long friendship that arose between Mark Twain and the explorer Henry Morton Stanley, and the Pulitzer Prize winner "pulls it off with barely a hitch." His attempt to stitch together fictionalized letters, journals, and manuscripts hampers narrative flow, but "there's a kind of gorgeous magic to the parallel lives he's charting," lives whose different paths tested the friends' early bond.

We Were Brothers

by Barry Moser (Algonquin, \$22)



Barry Moser's "poignant, achingly honest" memoir "raises uncomfortable questions," said Jim Ewing in the *Jackson, Miss., Clarion-Ledger*. The award-winning illustrator looks back on his childhood in 1940s Chattanooga, Tenn., as he ponders why he was able to reject the racism that was so overt in that era and his brother could not. The story is very personal, "but it also can be seen as a metaphor of the modern South"—a place where historic racism remains as inescapable as a bad gene.



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Exhibit of the week**Hippie Modernism:
The Struggle for Utopia**

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis,
through Feb. 28

“Who knew that hippies were so serious or had so many ideas?” said **Pamela Espeland** in *MimPost.com*. Five decades after the flowering of a countercultural movement that, honestly, has not been held in very high esteem, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis has unveiled a sprawling exhibition that proves the hippie generation was surprisingly industrious and influential. It’s a fun show, loaded with posters, films, and several installations that visitors can sit in or even lie down in, like a Relaxation Cube, a roomful of hammocks, and an indoor garden of citrus trees. Not every hippie was a “drug-addled, unwashed loser,” apparently. The artists and designers who got caught up in the 1960s quest for utopia and expanded consciousness turn out to have been early and effective champions of environmentalism, Eastern spirituality, and social equality.

“Far from a nostalgia trip,” the exhibit feels “startlingly topical,” said **Mary Abbe** in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Posters protesting war and demanding social justice “remain all too relevant now,” and even



The Flyhead Helmet: Virtual reality, circa 1968

the devices built to produce altered perception might remind you of cutting-edge 2015 gadgets like Google Glass or 3-D video-game goggles. The Flyhead Helmet, created in 1968 by the Viennese architectural firm Haus-Rucker-Co, immersed the wearer in stereo sound and colored, warped light. Nearby sits a two-person chair, called the

Mind Expander, that encouraged couples to enjoy visual disorientation while entwined together. Meanwhile, the Knowledge Box, a 1962 contraption created by architect Ken Isaacs, mimics the internet by bathing viewers in a wave of news images emerging from 24 slide projectors.

Better-known 1960s artifacts also make an appearance, said **Erica Rivera** in the Minneapolis *City Pages*. A roomful of psychedelic rock-concert posters deliver “pure eye candy,” and images of performers like Jimi Hendrix and John Lennon “lend a sense of familiarity and nostalgia” to the show’s trip back in time. For Millennials, though, the exhibit “may inspire some unsettling questions, such as: What might we see on the walls of the Walker in 40 years if a retrospective on the digital age were to be mounted?” Would a smartphone look familiar to future museumgoers, or would it look like a relic? And will archived Facebook feeds fascinate or bore? Surely missing will be evidence of the optimism so apparent in the Walker show, said **Bob Duggan** in *BigThink.com*. So many artists of the 1960s and early ’70s were fueled by an apparently sincere expectation that science and technology could create a better world. “Hippie Modernism” asks us to look back, sure. It also “calls us to pick up the hippie freak flag and fly it once more.”

Grimes

Art Angels

★★★★★



The music of Grimes is “becoming stranger but more inviting at the same time,” said **Spencer Kornhaber** in *TheAtlantic.com*. Already an icon in the world of alterna-

tive digital music, the Canadian-born songwriter-producer has ventured further into dance-pop territory with her fourth album, yet “it would be deranged to see the results as compromised.” The 27-year-old, who still has a DIY studio ethos and a high, wispy voice, “is taking what a lot of people would consider some of the least dangerous sounds in music and turning them into weapons.” Listening to *Art Angels*, “it can get exhausting to attempt to pinpoint all of the worlds she’s pulling from,” said **Colin Joyce** in *Spin.com*. At one moment, Korean pop meets gospel; in the song “California,” a hint of Sheryl Crow collides with a bit of sped-up Eagles. But always, Grimes twists the familiar toward something otherworldly, as if demonstrating that “every sound, whether cool or cast aside, has some beauty in it—even the ugly ones.”

Bob Dylan

The Cutting Edge 1965–1966

★★★★★



“The shelves of Dylan bootlegs groan,” but somehow our knowledge of the great songwriter “just got deeper,” said **David Remnick** in *The New Yorker*. This new col-

lection revisits the recording sessions that produced his groundbreaking mid-1960s electric trilogy—the albums *Bringing It All Back Home*, *Highway 61 Revisited*, and *Blonde on Blonde*—thus opening a window on “the most intense period of wild inspiration” that this madly prolific artist ever enjoyed. Three versions are available: as a two-disc set, as six discs, or in an 18-disc \$600 box that treats listeners to “every rehearsal, every false start, and every giggle and cough” captured on tape during that 14-month run. Though all versions offer alternate takes of classic recordings, the \$600 package is “where things get truly fascinating,” said **Randy Lewis** in the *Los Angeles Times*. “For anyone remotely interested in how great art is made,” the 20 takes of “Like a Rolling Stone” alone constitute “a master class” in how a driven musician arrives at the sound he’s chasing.

Justin Bieber

Purpose

★★★★★



Justin Bieber’s fourth album is strong enough at times to “turn skeptics into born-again Beliebers,” said **Kenneth Partridge** in *Billboard.com*. Too many songs find the

tarnished pop idol in repentant mode, apologizing for his tabloid-filling exploits of the past two years. But the album’s early singles, “Where Are U Now?” and “What Do You Mean?,” announced a new direction for the 21-year-old, and *Purpose* follows up with a mostly “lush, low-key” blend of dance, hip-hop, R&B, and “classic smooth-dude vocalizing.” The record can’t help but be insufferable here and there—“this is Justin Bieber we’re talking about,” said **Kevin Fallon** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. After some “tiny-violin lamentations” about fame in “I’ll Show You,” he skids off the rails with the platitude-peddling “Children” and the embarrassing spoken-word closing to the title track. But with producers Skrillex, Diplo, and Poo Bear guiding the way, Justin Bieber has done more than say he’s sorry. He’s delivered a record that “ranks among the best pop releases this year.”

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